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Peasants, Professors, Publishers and Censorship:
Memoirs of Rural Inhabitants of Poland’s Recovered Territories (1945-c.1970)

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the phenomenon of memoir competitions in communist-era Poland, focusing on contributions to them by Poles of rural origins inhabiting the lands – known as the Recovered Territories – acquired by the postwar Polish state from Germany in 1945. I explore the history of the memoir method in postwar Poland, the processes involved in producing published volumes of competition memoirs – including editing and censorship, and the use of these sources in communist-era and post-1989 sociological, historiographical and interdisciplinary studies. I focus on existing research both on the Recovered Territories, particularly Polish settlement of those lands and the development of new communities there, and also on postwar peasants’ lives, particularly where theories of social advance are applied. In this respect, this investigation adds to existing literature in social history on early postwar Poland.

My study also contributes to work in censorship studies by considering Polish censors’ approach to quite exceptional sources. Because in many cases original competition entries are available, it is possible to establish where editors, publishers and censors have intervened, something that is rarely possible with standard works of literature or academic scholarship produced under communism. I consider what strategies different scholars used in presenting published sources and circumventing restrictions imposed. Subaltern studies approaches to speaking and its critique of nation-centred historiography are, meanwhile, applied in investigating the intersection of peasant autobiographies, academic research, scholars and Party-state institutions and their discourses, as I consider how the published communist-era compilations of competition entries framed peasant writing, experience, culture and consciousness, and how these frames potentially conflicted with the authors’ own interpretations of their experiences and social reality.

This investigation also contributes to memory studies, a discipline whose approach to communist and totalitarian states is particularly problematic as many studies assume significant restrictions were imposed not only on publication but also on autobiographical memory expressed in usually unrecorded private and local spheres. I explore whether memory studies’ typical approach, based in notions of competing claims might also apply to Poland under state socialism. Bakhtin’s theories of dialogism prove useful in exploring the history of memory under communism, rather than the memory of it – as is commonplace today in oral history-based studies, for example.
It is in respect of censorship studies and memory studies that this thesis makes its most substantial original contributions to research.

My research draws on substantial archival research conducted in Poland, where I explored censorship archives in Warsaw and Poznań, Party and ministerial archives, and the Polish Academy of Science archive, since numerous memoir sociologists and rural sociologists were based there. I also used archives housing original competition entries, the main locations being: The Institute of Western Affairs in Poznań (Instytut Zachodni – IZ), the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Science (Instytut Historyczny PAN – IH PAN) and the Museum of the History of the Polish Peasant Movement (MHRPL in Piaseczno, near Tczew). I consider published volumes alongside original sources where possible, although substantial losses have occurred to the store of popular autobiography.

Chapter 1 outlines the background of Polish memoir sociology and the main methods and theories used in this investigation, ranging from subaltern studies through Bakhtin to autobiography studies. Chapter 2 focuses on memory studies, including the field’s approach to communist and postcommunist countries, before outlining aspects of censorship studies relevant to this investigation. I end Chapter 2 on a case study of the memoir compilation *Miesiąc mojego życia* [A Month in my Life – MMŻ; (1964)] and its treatment by censors.

Chapter 3 explores recent English- and Polish-language historiography on the Recovered Territories, concentrating on, firstly, how historians have used the memoir resources in considering the early postwar years, and, secondly, how peasants are represented within the recent wave of works exploring Polish communism through nationalism and popular legitimation. I end on a case study of one particular memoir by a female settler to the new Polish lands, highlighting the value of the competition entries as thick descriptions.

Chapter 4 investigates the mainstream communist-era memoir movement where the leading analytical concept for approaching peasants and social change was ‘social advance’, developed from Józef Chałasiński’s prewar sociology. I explore how the nine-volume series *Młode pokolenie wsi Polski Ludowej* [The Young Generation of Rural People’s Poland – MPWPL; (1964-1980)] and other memoir-based studies approached peasants and the Recovered Territories, which were often framed as a site of quicker and more intensive social advance and urbanisation. I also explore the autobiographies of Poles who lost their homelands in the prewar eastern borderlands in the context of today’s assumptions that ‘repatriants’, as the eastern Poles were known under communism, were largely absent from communist-era publications.
Chapter 5 considers the academic sociology of the Western Territories, developed at IZ, and how materials from its 1956/57 memoir competition on settlers were used alongside fieldwork. I explore the sociological frameworks developed for analysing migration, settlement and community development, noting that some studies from the 1960s can today be considered forerunners of migration studies and memory studies. Chapter 6 specifically considers the publication Pamiętniki osadników Ziem Odzyskanych [Memoirs of Recovered Territories Settlers – POZO; (1963)], investigating original entries alongside published materials to explore editors’ and academics’ role in censorship, while also investigating how the volume was received in the press.

Chapter 7 explores the production of the four-volume series Wieś polska 1939-1948 [Rural Poland 1939-1948; (1967-1971)] by historian-editors Krystyna Kersten and Tomasz Szarota, who treated these previously-unpublished texts written in 1948 explicitly as historical sources, thus contrasting with previously dominant sociological approaches while also posing specific problems for censors as the editors employed a unique method of summaries in an attempt to make the entire set of some 1700 texts available to readers.

Exploring different approaches to memoir publication, I aim to illustrate the diversity of the published sphere in People’s Poland, while demonstrating the heterogeneity of ordinary Poles’ memories submitted to different competitions between 1948 and 1970. While the value of the archived sources should be quite evident, exploration of censorship and editing processes should demonstrate the value of compilations and indeed communist-era scholarship, which is often overlooked today. By avoiding totalitarian schools of historiography and memory studies, I aim to demonstrate that competition memoirs illustrated ordinary Poles’ agency within historical and social processes, while also stressing their agency over their memories and autobiographical narratives which at the same time were, as in any society, cultural and social constructs.
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Bykowicz, who for months supplied me with competition memoirs, as well as insight into further sources available in Poznań, including the unique uncatalogued materials of IS UAM, where I am thankful to staff who permitted access to the resources. My thanks also the staff of the State Archives in Poznań for their diligence and to Regina Kurewicz at Dom Literatury Biblioteki Raczyńskich for enabling access to materials on Wydawnictwo Poznańskie. In Warsaw, I would like to thank the staff of AAN for fulfilling my high rate of requests for material, as well as the friendly and helpful staff of Warsaw University Library and the National Library. My sincere thanks go to Marek Lidzbarski at MHPRL in Piaseczno for his, and his family’s, hospitality in allowing me to stay at the Museum and use its astonishing stores of memoirs and other materials, making one of the undoubted highlights of this PhD. If I have missed anyone deserving specific thanks, then it is out of carelessness, rather than malice.

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I dedicate this thesis to my family members, dead and alive, whose experiences of migration to the Recovered Territories or deportation to the Soviet Union and onward migration to Britain and elsewhere around the globe ultimately provided the inspiration which led to this project.
Author’s Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to other works, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature

Printed name: Paul Andrew Vickers
**Abbreviations**


AK: Armia Krajowa – Home Army.

APP: Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu – State Archives in Poznań.


CPP: Centrum Pamiętnikarstwa Polskiego – Centre for Polish Memoirs.


IFiS PAN: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk – Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

IH PAN: Instytut Historii PAN– Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

IRWiR PAN: Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa PAN – Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

IS UAM: Instytut Socjologii Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza – Institute of Sociology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

IZ: Instytut Zachodni w Poznaniu – Institute of Western Affairs in Poznań.

KC PZPR: Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej – Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party.

KiW: Książka i Wiedza (publishers).

LSW: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza (publishers).

MMŻ/ MMŻ: Miesiąc mojego życia – A Month in my Life; a 1962 memoir competition. *Italics* signal reference to the eponymous publication.¹

MPWPL/ MPWPL: Młode pokolenie wsi Polski Ludowej – Young Generation of Rural People’s Poland; a 1962 memoir competition. *Italics* signal reference to the nine-volume series.²

MZO: Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych – Ministry of the Recovered Territories.

PAN: Polska Akademia Nauk – Polish Academy of Sciences.

PGR: Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolnicze – State Agricultural Farm.


PMG: Popular Memory Group.

POP: Podstawowa Organizacja Partyjna – Basic Party Cell.

POZO/ POZO: Pamiętniki osadników Ziem Odzyskanych – Memoirs of Recovered Territories Settlers; a 1956/57 memoir competition. *Italics* signal reference to the publication of the same name.³

*PP: Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie* (journal).

PPR: Polska Partia Robotnicza – Polish Workers’ Party.

PPS: Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – Polish Socialist Party.

PRL: Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa – People’s Republic of Poland.


PSL: Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – Polish Peasant Party.

PUR: Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny – State Repatriation Office.

PWN: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe (publishers).

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PZPR: Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – Polish United Workers’ Party.

PZZ: Polski Związek Zachodni – Polish Western Union.


WSNS: Wyższa Szkoła Nauk Społecznych przy KC PZPR – Higher School of Social Sciences at the PZPR Central Committee.


ZBoWiD: Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację – Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy.

ZMP: Związek Młodzieży Polskiej – Union of Polish Youth.

ZMW: Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej – Union of Rural Youth.


ZSL: Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe; United Peasant Party.
Chapter 1: Introduction: Theory and Methodology

If we wish to observe history from the perspective of those people who make history, then there is no better source of historical-sociological knowledge than memoirs. Various forms of writing – something which history had initially made an elite activity – have become a common activity; history has been democratised.\(^4\)

Józef Chałasiński made this statement at the opening of Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Pamiętnikarstwa (Society of Friends of Memoirs – TPP), marking a significant development in the institutionalisation of Polish memoir sociology.\(^5\) It acquired its own organisation outside the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and was granted its own archive, Centrum Pamiętnikarstwa Polskiego (Centre for Polish Memoirs – CPP). Chałasiński’s statement appears in the journal *Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie* (1971-1977). The future of the memoir method seemed bright, having acquired all the features of a separate field of sociology and official support.

However, it benefitted from the wave of Polish state-sanctioned nationalism which saw scholars associated with the memoir method exploit official antisemitism and claim positions freed as Polish academics of Jewish origin were removed from leading positions. State-backing for the method proved a mixed blessing, as the loss of favour for the nationalist faction associated with Mieczysław Moczar also meant his “partisan” faction’s favoured sociologists lost support.\(^6\) The memoir movement was restricted in its development and ultimately lost both its fight for funding and also its journal.

Somewhat ironically, Polish biographical sociology began to lose the impetus it had maintained against international trends just as Western scholarship was reviving its interest in biographical modes. Some exchanges developed between Polish and Western scholars, particularly in the fields of oral history and biographical sociology, resulting in conferences and publications.\(^7\) It is thanks to Paul Thompson’s work that I became aware of the

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\(^4\) Józef Chałasiński, ‘Pamiętnikarstwo XIX i XX w. jako świadectwo przeobrażeń narodu polskiego’, *Pamiętnikarstwo Polskie*, 1 (1971), 7-20 (p. 10). All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.


phenomenon of mass autobiography in communist Poland, as he commented on collaboration with workers’ writing clubs. These were ultimately the reason given by the Polish authorities for restricting the work of the movement, as it shifted away from its traditionally distanced method of issuing public calls for contributions to working directly with ordinary people as autobiographers.

Institutionalisation proved, ultimately, to be the zenith in terms of popular and official recognition of the memoir method in Poland, as over the following decade the memoir boom of the 1960s, in part inspired by various anniversary-based competitions, gradually extinguished. Still, the scale of popular autobiographical writing in postwar Poland is unprecedented. ‘Popular memoir-writing, in short, became a recognized part of the new national way of life, to an extent which had few parallels either in other Communist countries or in the West.’ While the prewar period saw seventeen competitions, almost exclusively organised by academic institutions, there had been 287 by 1966, over 400 by 1970 and around 1000 by 1980 as the press, combatant and local organisations increasingly adopted the competition mode. By 1976, the Centre for Polish Memoirs (CPP) had acquired some 500,000 manuscripts, the vast bulk from postwar competitions, with other autobiographies donated voluntarily and from other institutions including combatants’ and workers’ organisations. Although the number of competitions increased in the 1970s, their resonance was limited compared to the 1960s. The scholars of the memoir movement never repeated the success enjoyed with their 1962 competition MPWPL, which attracted over 5000 entries. Indeed, the initial urge to organise formally memoir sociology came from the fact that the small office at within PAN’s Commission for Research on Contemporary Culture (KBnKW) was overwhelmed by the unexpected number of entries to MPWPL and its parallel competition MMŻ.


3 MPWPL is explored in chapter 4 and MMŻ in chapter 2.
AAN archivist Dariusz Wierzchoś has outlined the fate of the memoir archive, revealing another unintended negative consequence of institutionalisation in the late 1960s. By 1975, the TPP Archive in central Warsaw was overwhelmed by over 40,000 memoirs from 30 collections, hence the move to Rudno. The premises, a former noble palace, were sold by Kołbiel local authorities in 1998 and memoir materials dumped in garages or destroyed. ‘Such was the finale of our 25 years of voluntary toil to save the collections and the deteriorating palace. Efforts are underway to repurchase the palace complex, which is up for sale again.’ These efforts, however, were unsuccessful. Wierzchoś notes remaining materials were stored in detrimental conditions until 19 September 2002 when the Karta Foundation launched a rescue mission, bringing documents to AAN. Some were rotten beyond repair, but others are being restored. Wierzchoś estimates ‘fewer than 20,000 of some 900,000 manuscripts survived’. In an interview in 2010, Wierzchoś noted the most recent surviving materials were from the late 1990s while the oldest were from the early twentieth century. Some were competition entries, others voluntary deposits. Wierzchoś notes that a Central Memoir Archive and Library planned in the 1970s for inclusion within Poland’s National Library never emerged, hence the various temporary solutions, including sociologists privately funding a space in Warsaw before eviction caused the loss of some materials stored there.

Clearly such loss impacts upon any future study, including this one. The significant MPWPL materials are only available in print, with no indication of what changes occurred to the published materials before publication or what materials were considered unsuitable for publication at all. However, the memoir sociologists associated with TPP, CPP and PAN were not the only scholars pursuing the method. IH PAN acquired materials produced in 1948 and ultimately published them between 1967 and 1971 as Wieś polska 1939-1948. Meanwhile, IZ organised three competitions between 1956 and 1970, producing numerous compilations as well as academic studies using the materials. In both cases, the vast majority of original entries have survived and can be used to compare published and original versions, as well as reaching for entries excluded from books altogether. Comparison across centres all publishing sources around the same time, during the mid-to-late 1960s, reveals

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15 Wierzchoś, ‘Zwyczajne życie’.
16 Ibid.
18 POZO (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1963) is explored in chapters 5 and 6.
the variety of scholarly approaches and strategies for publication, as well as the varying
degrees of intersection between academic and popularising use of popular autobiographies.

IH PAN historian Tomasz Szarota, who co-edited Wieś polska, considered communist-era
autobiography studies’ legacy in 2004 and found largely methodological problems rather
than ideological suppression principally responsible for the method’s declining relevance.
‘Interest in “collective memoir writing” faded noticeably in the 1970s and 1980s and then
seemed to extinguish completely, not only because of the dispersal of sources and difficulty
in accessing them, but also because of growing conviction that testimonies’ reliability and
authenticity declined.’

A victim of its own popularising success, rather than simply the
communist authorities, the method became familiar and responses largely formulaic, while
earlier competitions’ entries had been exhausted to the extent that they had been analysable
under communism. Szarota also questioned the value of testimonies ‘published before
1989’, suggesting that ‘they inform of the positive aspects of reality, while historians should
seek knowledge of the other, negative side of “People’s Poland” from other sources.’

Szarota undoubtedly does himself a disservice as the materials published as Wieś polska
reveal significant diversity of experiences during the early postwar years, with the negative
prevailing. Szarota affirms the value of archived materials, particularly those produced before
the 1970s, but questions all communist-era publications. My exploration of communist-era
publications investigates whether publications necessarily reproduced a largely positive
image of state socialist Poland.

Already under communism Szarota commented on the merits for historical research of
published sources, expressing concern that the selection and editing process of the 45
memoirs featured in POZO might undermine their value as sources. He thus suggested that

[f]or historians researching migration, settlement and integration processes,
Pamiętniki osadników will doubtless be a source of primary importance. But we
might also consider whether historians can limit themselves to using only the selected
published sources, or should they become acquainted with the whole set of materials

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19 Tomasz Szarota, ‘Baza źródłowa, wiedza pozaźródłowa i literatura przedmiotu w warsztacie historyka
2004), pp.7-22 (p.12).
20 Jakubczak’s postcommunist histories of the memoir movement focus on aligning the movement to
suffering under communism, rather than noting the successes and popularity of the approach. See:
generated in a competition? I would suggest that reaching for unpublished entries is essential.22

I investigate whether it is always the case that archives are the essential option, while considering what social-historical potential exploration of the communist-era published sphere has.

At Instytut Zachodni, tensions with the authorities were also evident, although these largely stemmed from its foundation through a compromise between prewar scholars pursuing ‘western thought’, or promoting Poland’s claims to parts of what became the Recovered Territories, and the nascent communist authorities. The key figure was prewar National Democrat Zygmunt Wojciechowski who studied at Lwów and Poznań.23 He outlined his intentions for IZ in a 12 February 1945 memo to Edward Osóbka-Morawski, head of the communist-backed Temporary Government.24 Despite being judged ‘alien in class and ideological terms’, owing to Wojciechowski’s association with Dmowski and prewar authorities, IZ secured approval and funding from significant figures, including government deputy leader Gomułka.25 The new authorities’ logic argued that having intelligentsia members promote the Oder-Neisse border, and ‘contribute significantly to legitimising the new political system in society’, outweighed the compromise involved in cooperating with National Democrat sympathisers.26 IZ’s ideological foundations proved a source of tension with the authorities, particularly under stalinism, as it was deemed a nationalist-leaning centre, ‘completely dominated by a group of Catholics gathered by Wojciechowski.’ Even the administrative staff were selected ‘with political Catholicism in mind. The Party has no real influence on the Institute’s work, particularly in methodological terms.’27 Threatened closure after Wojciechowski’s death in October 1955 passed,28 IZ was instead affiliated to PAN and became the leading research institute on Germany and the Recovered Territories, while pioneering the revival of memoir sociology through sociologist Zygmunt Dulczewski. Perhaps the biggest difficulty for IZ after 1956 was balancing its academic research and popularising roles, something Prof. Szczaniecki stressed in 1963 and was repeated at various

24 Ibid., p.246.
25 Ibid., p.250.
26 Ibid., p.251-2.
meetings, particularly where IZ was expected to collaborate with The Society for the Development of the Western Territories (TRZZ).\(^2^9\) Its memoir-based studies were something of bridge between IZ’s academic research and its popularising roles.

IZ’s research on the Recovered Territories faded towards the late 1960s as the new territories were declared fully integrated with Poland. IZ’s memoir-based research focused on the populations of the new lands, whose postwar bonds to the Recovered Territories largely developed through regional and local affinities, suggesting that there was a tension between the political treatment of the new lands and the experiences of populations living there. TRZZ was formed in 1957 to support the cause of the new territories which had been neglected culturally and economically under stalinism, another period when full integration was proclaimed. By 1970 TRZZ also stated: ‘Full integration with the Motherland has been achieved. Today they cannot be differentiated. All the problems of these lands are nationwide problems and only on that scale can they be considered and solved.’\(^3^0\) Its work declared complete TRZZ was dissolved in December 1970 just as Instytut Zachodni’s third competition, which TRZZ had sponsored, was concluding. Polish-West German relations began to improve significantly as Willy Brandt visited Warsaw. That same month Gomułka was removed from power after fatal workers’ protests broke out.

My investigation of the memoir sociology and research on society in the new lands explores whether the communist-era research was necessarily aligned to this homogenising, state-building tendency and the geopolitical objectives in Polish-German relations which IZ was expected to promote. Perhaps it could instead continue to pursue its focus on localised and regionalised aspects of relations between different migrant groups – autochthonous populations remaining in the new territories, central Poles who migrated voluntarily and repatriants, largely forced migrants from areas lost to the USSR.

In the work of the memoir movement homogenising tendencies were evident as its leading concept of social advance led to theories of peasant advance into modern, urban, all-national culture. In some approaches, a degree of teleological inevitability took hold.

At the opening of TPP, Chałasiński stated that memoirs reveal makers of history, so ordinary people who, on the one hand, contribute to the historical process through their social practice. On the other hand, ordinary people contribute to history as a written discourse. There might


\(^{3^0}\) AAN/TRZZ/1546a: Referat na XXIV Rady Naczelnej TRZZ w dniu 2 X 1970 r. w Warszawie, p.12.
be a third variant of history, as a form of teleological progress which, in People’s Poland, was centred upon the Party-state’s declared leading role in working towards socialism. My investigation of postwar memoir sociological considers the intersection of these various modes of history – as inevitable progress, as written discourse and as the product of everyday practice. Henryk Słabek, a Polish social historian associated with IH PAN in the communist period, understood that ‘contrary to appearances, the course of history is determined primarily not by extraordinary events, but everyday practices of millions of people, the masses.’\(^{31}\) Some approaches in People’s Poland certainly saw the masses as historical actors contributing to pre-determined process, while theories of totalitarianism declare that the state directed social action, leaving no place for individual agency.

I ask, though, if People’s Poland was totalitarian, why would it permit a mass movement of popular autobiography and a mode of writing history where ordinary people potentially appeared agentic and autonomous, creating social change through their social practice? I consider whether in their memoirs and subsequently in published studies the autobiographers appeared agentic, or whether the homogenising tendencies of scholarly and official models of social change meant history written through autobiographies appeared planned rather than a result of spontaneous and unexpected outcomes generated in everyday practice. Indeed the Recovered Territories are valid site of investigation in this respect, since there were various plans for organised settlement and institutions in place, yet spontaneity and often chaos prevailed, at least in the initial “pioneer” period and while Poland’s political and social revolution was in its early stages.\(^{32}\)

The migration of millions of people to the Recovered Territories was clearly of historical significance. I explore whether this was recognised in memoir sociology and its approach to the new lands, or whether ordinary people’s actions were incorporated merely into official legitimising claims of historical justice for the nation, or bringing justice for peasants, who could acquire farms in the new lands. Clearly, scholars in involved in memoir sociology framed the approach as an illustration of the rise of ordinary people to historical significance. Perhaps this was merely a reflection of official legitimising claims to represent the will of the people without allowing them power? Or perhaps the memoir movement was indicative of social processes not typical of countries framed as totalitarian, as indeed history was


\(^{32}\) Gomułka’s closing report for MZO highlights the difficulties faced by the authorities in organising settlement, ultimately finding that the authorities were largely powerless to control what occurred. **AAN/295/VII/159 – KC PPR Sekretariat MZO – Sprawozdanie z działalności MZO w okresie 27.XI.1945 do 21.1.1949.**
formed of the actions of millions of people influenced but not directed by state policy? Perhaps, then the memoir movement laid foundations for a social history, evident in this statement.

For history it is not only the biographies of famous people that are important; of equal importance for history are those of the less famous, of those who are rarely written about and yet without them we cannot understand history. If we wish to understand history in terms of a human phenomenon, then we can only achieve such a concept of history through the biographies of those people who made history.33

If communist-era popular autobiography disrupted typical notions of history – both as written discourse and as a process made by elites – then my study must explore relations between ordinary people and academics, academics and the state, and ordinary people and the state. As regards relations between rural Polish autobiographers in the Recovered Territories and scholars I ask: how does mediation by academics affect rural Poles’ ability to speak through their life stories? Did they resonate with heterogeneous experiences or did scholars submit the lives of ordinary people to totalising frameworks? How then, if heterogeneity remained evident, did scholars negotiate censorship institutions when confronted with texts by ordinary people generally not familiar with the state apparatus of control? Did censorship necessarily make published sources largely invalid, as Szarota suggested? What strategies emerged for narratives such as forced migration which conflicted with the demands of the Polish-Soviet geopolitical and ideological alliance?

Zdzisław Grzelak claimed ‘the current explosion of Polish memoirs is proof of entry into the public forum of the masses who experience for the first time the fascination of this debut step.’34 He exaggerates somewhat, as there were mass prewar competitions, albeit relatively few. However, some competitions were particularly resonant, such as the publications produced by Ludwik Krzywicki’s competitions35 and indeed Chałasiński’s own Młode pokolenie chłopów.36 The presentation method of postwar sociology largely drew from Krzywicki, presenting sources separately from analysis and as more or less complete reproductions of entire memoirs or at least of a period in an autobiographer’s life. Chałasiński’s prewar mode of intertwining memoirs with in-depth analysis was less evident,
although the sociological tradition which framed postwar memoir sociology was largely
drawn the work of Florian Znaniecki, Chałasiński’s mentor who also taught the leading
memoir sociologist at IZ, Zygmunt Dulczewski. The legacy of humanist sociology brought
the memoir method particular difficulties under stalinism.

During the initial period of Polish stalinism, which saw sociology removed from the
university curriculum, the Znaniecki school was attacked as the epitome of ‘bourgeois
sociology’. Its ‘idealist theory of society and metaphysical method of social research’ was
denounced in the Myśl Filozoficzna journal, launched in 1951 as the ‘central
philosophical journal’ of the Polish Academy following the inaugural Academic Congress
with the objective of placing Marxist-Leninism at the vanguard of Polish scholarship.
Julian Hochfeld’s article, in particular, spearheaded official critique of field research and
subjectivist sociology, with Znaniecki’s central concept of the ‘humanistic coefficient’
attracting special criticism. For Hochfeld, social research ought to investigate ‘changes in
the forces and means of production’, rather than present empirical studies of individuals’
roles within social groups. Thus autobiographical materials, as ‘an expression of the
subjective feelings and views of their authors’, seemed to have no future in Polish
scholarship. This impression was further compounded with the first issue of Myśl
Filozoficzna containing Chałasiński’s “self-criticism” of his existing research, particularly
Młode pokolenie chłopów, preceded by an editorial note outlining the principles for social
research established at the Academic Congress. Contributing to ‘theoretical generalisations’
based on Soviet and Marxist-Leninist thought, rather than examining actual social processes,
was now the objective. This additional editorial note appeared necessary, it would seem,
because Chałasiński’s highly cautious self-criticism invited interpretations of it as an
attempted defence of fieldwork and empirical studies, even demonstrating their value to the
ongoing social revolution. After its full revival in 1956, the memoir method continued to

37 Julian Hochfeld, ‘O niektórych aspektach przeciwstawności materializmu historycznego i sociologii
38 Hochfeld, ‘O niektórych aspektach’, p.121.
41 Ibid., p.151.
42 Ibid., p.152.
43 Józef Chałasiński, ‘Z zagadnień metodologii badań społecznych’ [Selected methodological problems in social
research], Myśl Filozoficzna, 1-2 (1951), pp.75-105.
negotiate its way between ‘rebellion’ and ‘servitude’, as the title of one study of Chałasiński’s life and work has put it.\textsuperscript{45}

I consider now the founding work of Polish biographical sociology, Thomas and Znaniecki’s \textit{Polish Peasant in Europe and America} which inspires my study because it is a work laying foundations for migration studies as it explores peasants on the move, just as they were during and after World War II as they settled the Recovered Territories.

\subsection*{1.1 The Polish peasant’s agency before 1945}

Considered the founding text of Polish sociological autobiography studies, and the inspiration for Polish popular autobiography competitions, William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki’s vast study, \textit{The Polish Peasant in Europe and America}, uses primarily correspondence between rural Polish migrants in America and their families remaining in pre-First World War Polish lands to explore ongoing transformations among migrants and their home communities. It also features a specially-commissioned life story by one peasant migrant, Władek Wiśniewski.\textsuperscript{46} Znaniecki remained a contentious figure in postwar Poland, although his former students including Józef Chałasiński and Zygmunt Dulczewski pursued his methods in contributing to the development of communist-era autobiographical sociology which, like Znaniecki and Thomas’ study, concentrated largely on social change. \textit{The Polish Peasant} conceives social change as ‘social becoming,’ something ‘viewed as the product of a continual interaction of individual consciousness and objective social reality.’\textsuperscript{47} Their model based in social interaction ascribes agency to people involved in the processes, since ‘[t]he cause of a social or individual phenomenon is never another social or individual phenomenon alone, but always a combination of a social and an individual phenomenon.’\textsuperscript{48}

In contrast to the postwar state’s view that change constituted teleological progress towards socialism and modernity, a process guided by the Party which simultaneously raised up peasants, Znaniecki and Thomas avoid ‘the abstract study of its [change - PV] formal organization, but analyze the way in which it appears in the personal experience of various


\textsuperscript{47} Thomas and Znaniecki, p.1831.

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}, p.44. Italics as in original.
members of the group’.\textsuperscript{49} It is evident how the approach could evoke evident tensions with state-socialist models of change, particularly if postwar sociology were to ‘reach the actual human experiences and attitudes which constitute the full, live and active social reality beneath the formal organization of social institutions’\textsuperscript{50}

Liz Stanley, in an important article on Znaniecki and Thomas’ ‘lost classic’ and its significance for contemporary sociology and autobiography studies, finds their theory of change ‘is neither determined nor entirely voluntaristic’. Instead, change appears ‘an ordinary feature of social life to which people respond as an everyday part of relationships and interactions (and doing so even when such change takes a more dramatic turn)’.\textsuperscript{51} This indicates \textit{The Polish Peasant}’s applicability to People’s Poland when, particularly in the Recovered Territories, change took dramatic forms but was still part of the everyday, demanding constant efforts to adapt to new and changing agricultural, cultural, community, social and political conditions. Indeed, this founding work of Polish memoir sociology was also a pioneering work of migration studies. Peasant migrants appear particularly dynamic as they adapt or abandon ‘pre-existing values’ in favour of an ‘active attitude’ in response to the demands of new surroundings.\textsuperscript{52} Znaniecki and Thomas critique notions that ‘social reformers’ could direct change or responses towards it, criticising developments in socialist ideology at the time of writing. They recognise teleological assumptions which overlook that ‘the cause of a social change must include both individual and social elements. [...] For the same action in different social conditions produces quite different results.’\textsuperscript{53} Individual factors, such as memory, habits or existing social bonds, as well as local specificities, mean reformers should be aware that

these values cooperate in the production of the final effect quite independently, and often in spite of the intentions of the social reformer. Thus the socialist, if he presupposes that a solidary and well-directed action of the masses will realize the scheme of a perfect socialistic organisation, ignores completely the influence of the whole existing social organization which will co-operate with the revolutionary attitudes of the masses in producing the new organization, and this, not only because of the opposition of those who will hold to the traditional values, but also because many of those values, as socially sanctioned rules for defining situations, will

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, pp.1833-4.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, pp.1833-4.
\textsuperscript{51} Liz Stanley, ‘To the letter: Thomas and Znaniecki’s \textit{The Polish Peasant} and writing a life, sociologically’, \textit{Life Writing}, 2 (2010), 139-151 (pp.147-8).
\textsuperscript{52} Thomas and Znaniecki, pp.46-48. The authors give the example of farmers abandoning their opposition to piece-rate work once in Germany.
\textsuperscript{53} Thomas and Znaniecki, p.42.
continue to condition many attitudes of the masses themselves and will thus be an integral part of the causes of the final effect.54

Writing at the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the sociologists recognise that existing values within social relations will often hold greater legitimacy than the values associated with the intended transformation. It is not simply conservatism but social bonds and attachments that shape such apparently oppositional responses. Even when, inevitability, the reformers turn to ‘physical force as a supposedly infallible instrument for the production of social uniformity and stability whenever the desirable attitudes were absent’,55 it is ‘social consequences’ of dis/obedience and not threatened violence that predominantly shape response.56 Their Methodological Note argues that ‘theoretic instruction’57 alone cannot determine a new reality, as social change requires that ‘new mental attitudes must be developed in a certain determined order and gradually’, with sanctions no guarantee of success.58 Most commonly, there is ‘adaptation to the sanction, and the individual develops not the attitude demanded, but another one, a modification of the attitude provoked by the sanction.’ Consequently, ‘a scheme of prudence, a solution of the problem of avoiding punishment or of meriting reward’ develops.59 Polish responses to collectivisation, which was particularly intensive in the Recovered Territories, illustrated this scheme in practice, thus suggesting that even in the new lands where social bonds were largely built anew, social consequences remained significant and those lands were not a blank canvas for postwar authorities to impose their structures and values, whether ideological or as part of a grand narrative of progress towards modernisation. Ordinary settlers’ actions had historical and social agency.

Thomas and Znaniecki’s concern with change as experienced indicates affinities with social history’s interest “in historical ‘losers’ or in nonestablishment views of the processes of change”’.60 Rather than reproduce grand narratives of progress, such approaches show potential ‘casualties of progress’61 alongside ordinary people’s innovative, inventive adaptation to and indeed adapting of the processes through everyday practice, which took

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54 Ibid., p.51.  
55 Ibid., p.52.  
56 Ibid., p.33.  
57 Ibid., p.1873.  
58 Ibid., p.1874.  
59 Ibid., p.1874.  
61 Eley, p.ix.
place not in ‘self-contained microworlds’ – something evident in representations depicting “pre-modern” peasants – but ‘always oriented to the outside and influenced by external factors’.62 There are also similarities with Clifford Geertz’s cultural anthropology and “thick description” approach.63 The sociologists believe autobiographical sources indicate ‘not everything that an absolutely objective observer might find in the portion of the world within the individual’s reach, but only what the individual himself finds.’64 The individuals concerned indicate what is significant in their life worlds, thus disrupting pre-established models of social reality or transformation. Although perhaps overstated, their claim that autobiographical life writing, produced as close to the period under investigation as possible, is ‘the perfect type of sociological material’65 is significant for a memory studies-based approach to history and social change. The individuals’ values of the time, and the particular intersection of local and social conditions, rather than what appears subsequently significant are recorded. Change thus appears as contingent rather than an inevitable outcome.

It is evident why even in 1976, when The Polish Peasant was finally approved for publication in Polish translation,66 the work still proved controversial, requiring redaction and censorship.67 Party sociologist Jerzy Wiatr commented in a paper presented at PAN on 24 April 1974 that ‘insufficiently daring and flexible publishing policy presents barriers to creating works on more controversial and difficult matters.’68 This included translations which were often submitted to GUK in pre-censored Polish versions, something that affected Znaniecki’s works. Wiatr believed this approach ‘does more harm than good.’69 Experts could easily highlight exorcised fragments meaning that a more pragmatic approach was required for works where ‘anti-Marxist or anti-communist tropes are noted but do not dominate’. The solution was to construct Polish-language publications with ‘polemical introductions, or even footnotes referring directly to the text.’70 The Polish Peasant, like many other works and not only in translation, had a state-sanctioned, critical reading,

64 Thomas and Znaniecki, p.1847.
65 Ibid., p.1832.
66 Thomas and Znaniecki, Chłop polski w Europie i Ameryce, with introductory remarks by Józef Chałasiński and Jan Szczepański, Maryla Metelska trans., 5 vols (Warsaw: LSW, 1976).
69 AAN/KC PZPR/ LVIII/472, dok. 6.
70 Ibid.
although this could not guarantee the “correct” reader response to remaining ‘alien or hostile fragments’. 71

Covering a period similar to *The Polish Peasant*, Keely Stauter-Halsted’s 2001 study of peasants 72 indicates resistance to top-down, elite-driven reformist projects of social change and identity construction in Austrian Poland. In investigating national identity constructions and peasant-elite interaction, Stauter-Halsted provides a rare example of a subaltern studies framework being applied to Polish peasantry. Avoiding historiography’s traditional focus on ‘flashpoints’ and political history, her longer-term investigation consider relations between the imperial Austrian state and Polish nationalist circles, between Polish upper-class elites and the rural ‘leadership cadre’ and relations between these local leaders and the rural masses from 1848 to 1914. 73 Stauter-Halsted traces peasants’ ‘active debate about their common futures’ occurring in ‘day-to-day interactions between moments of tumult’ 74 and stressing ‘change in village society comes in small increments as well as convulsions.’ 75 She considers peasants’ own localised exchanges as sites producing visions of past, present and future, as well as the “nation”, differing from elite representations. Also utilising Bakhtin’s concepts, Stauter-Halsted finds elite-led, top-down projects of incorporating rural Poles into an imagined national community failed as a ‘polyphony of voices that eventually emerged to contest national meaning’ 76 brought ‘submerged heterogeneity’ 77 to the surface, with ‘national expectations’ imagined differently by peasants, resulting in ‘splintering of political alliances’. 78 Although elites appropriated authority over defining ‘national meaning’, rising rural consciousness and encounters with these discourses meant further growth of ‘subcultures vying for representation in the dominant discourse.’ 79 The rural masses refused to be simply represented by elites but sought to represent themselves and not only through insurgent moments.

Although bookended by moments of tumult, *The Nation in the Village* explores principally the intervening period whereby day-to-day interactions, localised and private-sphere exchanges involving competing discourses, together with ordinary people’s experiences and

71 Ibid.
74 Ibid., p.8.
75 Ibid., p.7.
76 Ibid., pp.3-4.
77 Ibid., pp.5.
78 Ibid., pp.17.
79 Ibid., 5.
responses are considered historically and politically significant in long-term mechanisms of change. The history of postwar Poland – bookended by the tumultuous origins of Polish state-socialism and its ultimate collapse – means post-1989 historiography foregrounds the national community’s subordination by foreign-inspired authorities before canonised flashpoints mark a teleological advance towards 1989. ‘Actual social life’ in the intervening years largely falls outside the subordination-liberation binary, so traditional political and nation-centred histories struggle to incorporate it. Stauter-Halsted indicates the value of fragmenting the imagined national experience for historical investigation of periods characterised by oppression of the nation. She finds few Poles experienced direct relations with Austrian imperial authorities despite living under their rule and consuming official discourses. Most day-to-day interactions in Austrian-ruled Poland concerned relations with neighbours, while elite concern for national unity had little everyday significance. ‘Movements for national unification and independence that seek to unite disparate social groups behind a single political cause frequently camouflage the heterogeneous nature of national identity.’ The researcher’s task, likewise when considering other periods, is to find evidence of this heterogeneity and multiple loyalties – whether to neighbours, family, fellow peasants, or tradition – while also accounting for social change. This requires exploring localised processes in communities and families, something that the body of communist-era competition entries and related sociological studies enables.

The postwar state promoted its objectives in terms of national unity – albeit framed through the notion of a classless society, while its modernisation project claimed to bring cultural unity. Ultimately, the peasantry was to disappear as a cultural, social and economic class, something that the sociology of Józef Chałasiński outlined, while stressing the tensions between the objective and social reality, meaning ‘casualties of progress’ also emerged. Stauter-Halsted shows the validity of a Bakhtin-inspired conceptual framework to indicate the ‘submerged heterogeneity’ and ‘polyphony of voices’ lost in attempts to create totalising narratives based in nation, class, teleological History or progress towards modernity. Exploring subaltern heterogeneity questions inevitably male-centric and metro-centric

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82 Stauter-Halsted, p.17.
83 Ibid., p.4.
84 Eley, p.19.
models of progress and nation imposed from a centre for peripheries and subordinate groups to imitate. Highlighting subaltern polyphony and diversity avoids framing ordinary people merely as ‘hollow receptors for dominant ideologies,’ but instead as potential social agents who ‘negotiated their own lives, and the world about them, on at least some of their own terms.’

Padraic Kenney recognised a paradox of asserting the agency of ordinary people in communist society, as it can appear as if ordinary people are responsible for their own and their country’s subordination. Kenney counters, noting that

[t]o say that workers shaped the revolutions of 1945 and 1948-50 does not in some way blame stalinism on society, but it does restore their agency. Workers were not helpless victims of an omnipotent state and diabolical ideology but resourceful shapers of their own destiny, able to turn a system to their own advantage and lessen its cruelest aspects.

The agentic historical and social significance of day-to-day interactions, rather than collective defiance and moments of insurgent tumult as singularly significant, prove more important in my investigation of rural Poles lives’ and life stories.

1.2 Everyday life and getting by

In *Weapons of the Weak* James Scott developed the concept of ‘everyday resistance’, which has been applied to the Polish context. The failure of large-scale collectivisation most obviously illustrates how peasants’ ‘individual acts of foot dragging and evasion, reinforced by a venerable popular culture of resistance and multiplied thousand-fold, may, in the end, make an utter shambles of policies dreamed up by their would-be superiors in the capital.’

Although it certainly made a shambles of Warsaw and Moscow’s collectivisation policy, peasants’ everyday resistance – continued in different forms throughout the post-stalinist period – rarely features in the national liberation narrative, perhaps because it took non-insurgent, thus unfamiliar forms, lacking traditional organisation and elite or nationalist inspiration. Meanwhile, recent historiographical works have made peasants central but often

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86 Kenney, pp.335-36.
owing to controversies over Polish-Jewish wartime and postwar relations, which threaten national ‘schematic narrative templates’ of innocence and victimhood. Polish subalterns, particularly peasants and women, appear as malleable, hollow receptors of the wrong nationalism, the ‘mendacious’ type which communist authorities exploited in seeking legitimacy. Rather than homogenise rural Poles and their attitudes, I explore instead ‘everyday strategies of getting by’, which – as Kenney suggested – were often negotiated and resourceful, with peasants adapting, thus changing, new conditions, while also adapting to them. Scott suggests pragmatic adaptation ‘does not imply normative consent to those realities’, since ‘the situation for most subordinate classes historically’ is that

> [t]hey struggle under conditions that are largely not of their own making, and their pressing material needs necessitate something of a daily accommodation to those conditions. Dissident intellectuals from the middle or upper classes may occasionally have the luxury of focusing exclusively on the prospects for long-term structural change, but the peasantry or the working class are granted no holiday from the mundane pressures of making a living.

Consequently, there is ‘no reason to assume that it [“consenting” behaviour] derives from some symbolic hegemony or normative consensus engineered by elites or by the state. The duress of the quotidian is quite sufficient’.

Applying this perspective to rural Poles enables a shift away from a Party-state-centred history and a focus on the senders of propaganda to consider instead subaltern responses to social techniques towards engineering a particular mode of social change. Perhaps Scott’s use of resistance is too emotive and instead ‘getting by’ is more apt for an everyday focus. As Hobsbawm’s general reading of peasant politics suggests, peasants proved ‘capable of “working the system” to [their] advantage – or rather to [their] minimum disadvantage’ by innovatively finding gaps, rather than acting solely at times of ‘insurrections’ and ‘wars of national liberation’. In this way, everyday peasant agency emerges, and not only in the

93 Scott, p.247.
95 Scott, p.xv.
form ‘with which social scientists in the West were most familiar – those with names, banners, tables of organization, and formal leadership’. Subaltern studies, as Partha Chaterjee shows, developed its historiographical approaches over time as ‘the everyday experience of subordination now became the subject of inquiry. Once these questions entered the agenda, subaltern history could no longer be restricted to the study of peasant revolts.’

Scott outlined ‘everyday forms of peasant resistance – the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents and interest from them. Most forms of this struggle stop well short of outright collective defiance.’ Since the principle extractor from Polish agriculture from 1944/45 to 1989 was the state, investigating Polish peasantry could become another study of state-society relations framed as opposition to a monolithically-imagined oppressor-Party. Instead, memoirs show everyday day life as a complex mixture of consenting behaviour towards the state, accommodation, innovative resourcefulness and outright resistance to some policies, but all largely with a goal of getting by. The means employed ‘require little or no coordination or planning; they make use of implicit understandings and informal networks; they often represent a form of individual self-help; they typically avoid any direct, symbolic confrontation with authority.’

Totalitarian historical models declare complete subordination of social reality, including the economy, academic discourse, social interaction and, in their strongest forms, even memory and thought, to the Party-state. However, Scott’s approach can be applied to the peasant experience and to memoir writing, as he suggests that ‘it is at the level of beliefs and interpretations – where they can be safely ventured – that subordinate classes are least trammelled.’ Local, interanimating exchanges remained possible, while the memoir method suggested a safe means for these to become mediated for public reading and presentation.

Timothy Johnston’s Being Soviet (2011), meanwhile, explored in a communist context, principally in the peripheral Republics and new areas of the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1953 a version of everyday resistance framed as ‘getting by’. It occurs as Scott suggested,

96 Ibid., p.xv.
98 Scott, p.xvi.
99 Ibid., p.xvi.
100 See: Gross, Revolution from Abroad – discussed below.
101 Scott, p.322.
in informal, unofficial networks characterising day-to-day interactions, but avoiding foregrounding notions of resistance. Reminiscent of Alltagsgeschichte approaches to society in Nazi Germany, Being Soviet considers how prosaic attempts to get by perpetuated the stalinist system. As ‘the gaping distance between rulers and ruled is reduced’\textsuperscript{102} as Lüdtke showed, simplified post-authoritarian memories rooted exclusively in victimisation, domination or exploitation are troubled.\textsuperscript{103} As Kenney stressed, blaming ordinary people for subordination is not the objective. The aim is to consider the complex historical and social significance of everyday practice within a communist system. Johnston notes ‘official identity’ claims intersected with realities of everyday struggles meaning ‘being Soviet’ emerged as a hybrid of officially-intended and non-aligned practices.\textsuperscript{104} Individuals performing multiple social roles with multiple loyalties practiced ‘bricolage’, thus reappropriating aspects of official identity claims ‘in a manner that was not originally intended by the state’.\textsuperscript{105} Not simply dominated and manipulated, ‘ordinary Soviet citizens’ proved capable of employing ‘creative “tactics of the habitat”’,\textsuperscript{106} working the system in a way which ‘enabled them to stay fed, informed, and entertained in these difficult times.’\textsuperscript{107} Rather than frame such practices as ‘resistance’,\textsuperscript{108} Johnston stresses since ‘most Soviet citizens neither supported or resisted Soviet power, they simply got by.’\textsuperscript{109}

His sources, including autobiographies, reveal little ‘action or speech that was consciously intended to undermine the practices or institutions of Soviet power.’\textsuperscript{110} Following Johnston, I seek to avoid an alternative explanation whereby citizens appear ‘alienated from the regime but powerless to resist its coercive power.’\textsuperscript{111} Even without ‘direct, symbolic confrontation’,\textsuperscript{112} exploring competition memoirs highlights the complex intersection of Party-state aims and social practice, rather than peasants existing in isolation. Johnston’s work also inspires efforts to ensure ‘experiences of ordinary people’ are not simply included to provide ‘added colour to our picture of the Stalin era without providing a clear framework to explain how Soviet citizens related to Soviet power.’\textsuperscript{113} I also consider historians’ and

\textsuperscript{102} Lüdtke, p.4.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p.24.
\textsuperscript{104} Johnston, pp.xxv-xxvi.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p.xxii.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p.vi.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.vi.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p.xiv.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p.xii.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p.xxi.
\textsuperscript{112} Scott, p.xvi.
\textsuperscript{113} Johnston, p.xx.
publishers’ efforts towards securing publication part of these professionals’ everyday getting by at work. This meant exploiting ‘implicit understandings and informal networks’ or ‘individual self-help’ even within Party-state structures, including publishers, the censorship office and indeed the Party itself, to secure publication or other benefits. In Johnston’s work, the Party-state is not the sole historical actor, while a monolithic Party is fragmented into its local realities, revealing local Party cells proved adaptable ‘in a manner that was not originally intended by the state.’ They could become social organisations enabling communities to share in drinking, discussion, fun and fighting, rather appear as the culmination of the ideological transmission belt. Of course, this reappropriation of Party goals meant ‘they had to participate in it. However, their behaviour was “tactical” rather than “resisting” or “supporting” the Bolshevik state.’ While making life more tolerable, ordinary people ensured the system was perpetuated, albeit changing its ideally-intended form through ‘everyday creativity’. Indeed, this proved mutually beneficial for the authorities and the population as it ‘made up for shortfalls in food, friendship, entertainment, and information. State-sponsored mass media and the “tactics of the habitat” were not necessarily in competition.’ Authoritative discourse could present ‘Being Soviet’ according to the state’s ideal and ideological model of ‘Official Soviet Identity’, while ordinary people were quite conscious that ‘being Soviet’ meant something very different in practice, which was centred on ‘the mundane pressures of making a living’ and the ‘duress of the quotidian’ ensured relative conformity. Official and unofficial identity claims intersected and, to different extents, influenced each other, rather than bifurcating public and private.

A binary model of ordinary people, subsumed by official discourse or rebelling against it, obscures the complexities of life in the Stalin-era USSR. Most Soviet citizens neither lived as automatons nor struggled against Soviet power. They innovatively negotiated their way through Soviet society, drawing on the “tactics of the habitat” that were a key element of what it meant to be Soviet in this period. Stressing ‘getting by’ might appear an oversimplification of Soviet life, but in fact reveals greater complexities that simply dividing public/private, official/unofficial or collaboration/opposition.

114 Scott, p.xvi.
115 Johnston, p.xxxii.
116 Ibid., p.xxiii.
117 Ibid., p.xli.
119 Scott, p.247.
120 Johnston, p.xli.
Henryk Słabek, similarly to Johnston as well as Thomas and Znaniecki, considers the history of postwar Polish society as constructed ‘through the prism of millions of individual and group experiences and responses to the real influence of politics on everyday life and perceptions of reality of individuals and entire groups.’\footnote{Słabek, O historii społecznej Polski 1945-1989 (Warsaw: KiW, 2009), p.15.} Postwar realities were co-constructed by society rather than simply determined from above, reflecting Brad Gregory’s assessment of the value of ‘micro-scale highlighting of individual agency’, as it reveals ‘the state’s development and extension was a halting, contested affair; the unprogrammed result of countless, individual social interactions at the local level. But its present institutional power is not thereby diminished.’\footnote{Brad S. Gregory, ‘Review: Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life’, History and Theory, 1 (1999), 100-110 (p.109).} Even the heteroglot competition memoir archive cannot account for all modes of individual and social relations towards institutional power, the state and fellow citizens. However, some varieties of practices and attitudes under Polish state-socialism emerge beyond frameworks suggesting the masses were either passive or insurgent.

The well-documented affinities of cultural anthropology and Geertz’s development of “thick description” with social history have not been applied yet to reveal the memoir archive’s potential as a store of thick descriptions. Hans Medick notes thick description maintains ‘in the most comprehensive manner possible – in the form of a descriptive reconstruction – anything that is new, strange, unknown, and hard to interpret in the cultural “texts” to be explored.’ This contrasts with ‘the so-called hypothesis-testing brand of research, where what is alien and other is all too quickly reduced to the familiar.’\footnote{Medick, p.51.} Rather than adding colour to research by selecting appropriate testimonies, thick descriptions form the inductive basis for developing an image of society built from the bottom-up. Słabek recognised this, as he considered the memoir materials unwieldy, but vastly insightful for considering ‘non-intelligentsia spheres of the population’ through criteria relevant to their experience.\footnote{Ibid., p.17.} He recognises historians’ hopes and expectations attached to mass autobiographical materials have almost always exceeded what has proven achievable in actual studies. However, this might be because they were imagined as sources confirming traditional hypotheses-based approaches. Using an example from his own oeuvre, an exploration of agrarian reform,\footnote{Henryk Słabek, Dzieje polskiej reform rolnej, 1944-1948 (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1972).} he found that using memoirs
it is possible to state for certain only that peasants’ attitudes to the reform were diverse. Historians were aware of the possibility of supporting even contradictory theses using memoirs. In light of this sadly banal truth they stopped using the memoirs even as illustrative material, considering them empirically useless and leading to errors.\(^\text{126}\) Rather than the sources being faulty, it was historiographical approaches which proved unwilling to accept the heteroglot variety of experiences. However, Slabek’s 1972 study did present contrasting views, implicitly questioning official history of agrarian reform. Slabek notes popular autobiography should also inspire further research questions regarding the factors generating diverse attitudes.\(^\text{127}\)

From a traditional historiographical perspective, then, competition memoirs appear problematic, but treated as indications of the attitudes of millions of people whose practices construct social history they come to resemble thick descriptions. Geertz’s cultural anthropology shows culture ‘in ‘ordinary places where it takes unaccustomed forms’.\(^\text{128}\) This means exploring marginalised groups’ meaning making where ‘particular attempts by particular peoples to place these things in some sort of comprehensible meaningful frame.’\(^\text{129}\) ‘These things’ are the ‘mega-concepts with which contemporary social science is afflicted – legitimacy, modernization, integration, conflict, charisma, structure’\(^\text{130}\) This approach can be applied to postwar Poland as mega-concepts on Geertz’s list were appropriated for ideological ends, yet how they were experienced and reframed has been overlooked. Since Polish sociology explored social change, modernisation and, in the Recovered Territories, in particular, the studies produced at IZ and through scholars associated with MPWPL dealt with these concepts as both politicised ideals and their meaning in ‘ordinary places’. The IZ sociology of the Recovered Territories was particularly concerned with localised fieldwork studies. As Peter Burke observed, this form of microhistory approach reveals ‘an individual, an incident or a small community as a privileged place from which to observe the incoherences of large social and cultural systems, the loopholes, the crevices in the structure which allow an individual a little free space, like a plant growing between two rocks’. The ‘links between small communities and macro-historical trends’\(^\text{131}\) are not top-down, but small communities’ creative role in the macro-historical trends emerges. Some communist-era Polish scholarship did highlight peasant agency and the historical significance of

\(^{126}\) Slabek, *O społecznej*, p.18.

\(^{127}\) Ibid., p.19.

\(^{128}\) Geertz, pp.13-14.

\(^{129}\) Ibid., p.30.

\(^{130}\) Ibid., p.23.

'ordinary places’ as sites of large-scale processes and everyday getting by. A 1966 essay by renowned sociologist Jan Szczepański¹³² is important in this respect.

1.3 Szczepański and the peasantry’s past and future

Szczepański critiques many aspects of the official representation of peasants, opening forcefully by noting

    a certain tendency towards understating peasants’ input in the development of postwar Polish society. The leading role in this period has usually been ascribed to the working class. It has been stressed that the construction of the new order, the country’s industrialisation, the reconstruction of industry and towns, have all been completed primarily by the labours of the working class.¹³³

While challenging official class politics’ worker-peasant alliance narrative, Szczepański also presents a sociological critique of declarations that the Polish industrial proletariat embodies an ideal modern model. Instead, Poland’s specific social conditions engendered ‘the peasantisation [chłopienie] of the working class’¹³⁴ and also postwar culture. Peasants thus become ‘an active element’ in urban institutions, industry, offices and schools as they ‘imposed their cultural elements, modes of behaviour and thought on those milieux that they entered.’ Indeed, the ‘peasantisation of the entire society’ occurred with peasants accounting for over 50% of the population. ‘However, this process has been hidden by the fog of ideology, which perceives in the working class the fundamental force, hence researchers’ attentions have been directed principally to workers and intelligentsia.’¹³⁵ He refuses to accept the ideologically-necessary image of backward, conservative peasants, while recognising the social reality of a peasant-based urban economy and culture. ‘Peasants have always been considered objects rather than subjects of history, treated at best as allies of the revolutionary and dominant classes, as the essential foundations for the development of progress – but never themselves an active, progressive social force.’¹³⁶ Indicating affinities with arguments subaltern studies would later develop, Szczepański critiques the discursive

¹³⁴ Szczepański, ‘Rola chłopów’, p.36.
¹³⁵ Ibid., p.38.
¹³⁶ Ibid., p.33.
subalternisation of peasants. Indeed, he defends peasant ‘conservatism’ as useful, healthy scepticism moderating more radical and harmful manifestations of postwar “progress”, with forced collectivisation evidently implied. ‘The peasant masses more than once have proved themselves “moderators” of social progress, putting a brake on overly radical urges and alleviating the effects of radical revolutionary activities.’

As Dariusz Jarosz’s study of peasants under Polish stalinism noted, peasants’ ‘refusal to do certain things’ (to use Hobsbawm’s phrase), produced a mixture of deliberate and unintentional opposition to agricultural policy. Defending peasant farming was not necessarily anti-communist, even if it appeared so to the authorities – or, indeed, to postcommunist historians. As Jarosz noted, ‘[the] strength of such resistance lay in its instinctive character, rooted in the individual peasants’ interests, and stemmed from a deep attachment to the soil. Land itself was the main pillar on which traditional folk culture rested.’ That this ‘behaviour towards communist agrarian policy was one of the basic causes which led to the collapse of Stalinism in Poland’ was an accident, albeit a historically significant one.

However, Jarosz’s declaration of a ‘traditional folk culture’, imagined as a homogenous trait of rural Polish subalterns, means peasants appear less active and purely a conservative, traditionally-rooted mass. For Szczepański, however, peasants ‘adapted urban spaces to their needs, their own demands and their own established ways of life. Through their presence, by keeping to their ways of life, towns acquired a character and mode of existence which was so striking for observers arriving from metropolises.’ Kenney’s study of Wrocław shows how this functioned in practice following the spontaneous conditions of settlement. In the official model, however, peasant responses to urbanisation were little considered, as ‘incorporating them into the urban social classes made them into workers, bourgeois [mieszczanie], intelligentsia in accordance with traditional images.’

Marian Malikowski’s reading of Szczepański’s essay highlights its radicalism for the time of writing, as it revealed tensions between actual peasant experiences of ‘social advance’ and authoritative representations of social advance, with Malikowski adding that competition memoirs achieve something similar. He says Szczepański was

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137 Ibid., p.39.
138 Hobsbawm, p.18.
140 Szczepański, ‘Rola chłopów’, p.35.
141 Ibid., p.38.
probably the first to highlight so clearly that this class’s so-called collective advance which indeed took place on a mass scale in postwar Poland did not result from the authorities’ goodwill in creating such opportunities for peasants, but was in fact consequences of a mix of demographic, historical and political circumstances.

The process involved many ‘excesses which meant the rural population also bore the brunt of the costs of this intensified industrialisation.’ He adds that ‘between the lines (principally owing to censorship, self-censorship, prize-giving policy and the composition of competition juries) many postwar memoirs revealed the same things, although those that won prizes and were published were largely those which revealed rural Poles’ advance as a boon of socialism.’

Anthropologist Chris Hann also recognised postwar rural industrialisation was something of a mixed blessing for rural Poles, as it offered a model of modernising advance which created many casualties of progress. The process also hardly appeared in his model a consequence of planning but more a result of economic necessity.

More problematic is Malikowski’s view that memoirs only ‘between the lines’ revealed these same observations, with publication and prizes limited largely to aligned representations of advance. While the value of the archive of competition memoirs is evident, my study aims to generate recognition of the value of communist-era autobiography publications, as well as associated sociology, by considering in-depth the publication process and construction of the published sphere, rather than dismissing publications outright through generalisations.

Hanna Palska’s essay comparing Chałasiński’s pre- and postwar memoir-based work deemed postwar memoir sociology ideologically instrumentalised for propaganda purposes, although she recognises prewar studies also had a political agenda.

A period of particular ideologisation of competition-based autobiographical writing came, however, ten years later [after MPCh]. Not only was ideology evident in autobiographies, but autobiography acquired a special position in the world of

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143 ‘If the countryside has indeed changed considerably in the socialist period, this has been largely a side effect of imposed industrialisation rather than the planned consequence of policies to modify the agricultural sector. The Polish strategy, like that of other socialist countries, was founded upon systematic discrimination against agriculture, and especially against individual farmers.’ C.M. Hann, A Village Without Solidarity: Polish peasants in years of crisis (New Haven/London: Yale UP, 1985), p.6.
144 Stanisław Dulewicz, winner of POZO, is a clear exception. See section 6.3 here.
ideology. The institution of memoir competitions, created for those who ‘previously had no voice’ had been appropriated by propaganda.\textsuperscript{146}

Palska argues that Chałasiński’s prewar work indicated a benevolent ideologisation of popular autobiography, fitting life stories into a “a collective biography” of young peasants for whom the peasant movement, and ideally the young peasant agrarian wing, was the source of social advance.’\textsuperscript{147} The objective was to contrast with the supposed passivity of peasants evident in the Krzywicki series of memoirs, demonstrating instead an active peasantry with a strong, conscious identity and diverse politics. In this sense, the memoir movement satisfied the objective of “giving voice”, but in the postwar period the institutionalised movement appears to have been incorporated into an ideological monolith.

‘Every biography, in order to serve the system well, had to include a stage of political conversion – a transformative moment in life and consciousness which was to inspire a path from a bad life under capitalism to the best possible life under communism.’\textsuperscript{148} Rather than legitimise a beneficial politics as prewar autobiography aimed to do, postwar competition autobiography was to indicate the postwar order’s popular legitimacy. She believes each usable memoir – for there is a suggestion that not all texts served the system – reproduces an ideal life script, as if it were a microcosm mirroring the postwar state’s grand narrative.

She believes this transformed how the “truth” of a biography was defined, as ‘the question of the relation between a biography and reality, its truth or untruth, was not essential, as each “good example” leading to “transforming social consciousness” was “true”’ at for a project of creating ‘an illusion of reality.’\textsuperscript{149} Contributors were merely to affirm archetypes of Stakhanovite, advancing peasant, political activist, without demonstrating individual or group agency. Instead, ‘advancing rural youths were to affirm only that the political path which new people’s rule was taking was the right path.’\textsuperscript{150}

Although she sets out a highly unitary vision of a published sphere into which competition memoirs were subsumed, thus losing some of their radical political potential and “truth”, she admits that under communism, too, ‘memoirists became discursive in a particular way towards competition announcements.’\textsuperscript{151} She believes that competition announcements sought to determine what contributors wrote, ‘mould their biographical experience to the announcement’s slogans’ having learned ‘the required conventions’ which generated a

\textsuperscript{146} Palska, p.13.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., p.12.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., p.13.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p.13.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., p.14.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p.15.
‘dependency between ideology and vernacular consciousness.’ Postwar memoirs were to become an echo of official claims, rather than a forum for ordinary Poles’ own voices. If there was ‘discursivity’ in postwar memoirs, then centrifugal potential was largely confined to the archive, while published works contributed to a monolithic public history. Again, my objective is instead of assuming consciousness could easily be moulded by ideology to explore the value of published sources and the complexities of constructing the published sphere, which presented a variety of positions and approaches.

As well as publishing Szczepański’s critical essay, *Wieś Współczesna*, the ZSL journal, gathered political and academic figures in 1969 to discuss 25 years of change in rural Poland. Although nothing indicates where elements of the discussion were cut or altered for print, the article nevertheless reveals a diversity of perspectives. Dyzma Gałaj – a co-editor of *Wieś Współczesna*, sociologist and ZSL member of parliament – chaired the debate. His opening contribution outlined a teleological grand narrative of progress which could only culminate in the ‘death of the peasant’. Small peasant farms were deemed ‘a temporary, historical category’ which, like the peasant, ‘must submit to the economic law of the concentration of the means of production; therefore the peasant stratum, too, must be treated as a historical category, something that Marxist social science has long since confirmed and proved.’ A predetermined model will ensure ‘the gradual transformation of this most traditional and backward [zacofana] category which, in our conditions, is the smallholding peasant farm and the associated peasant family.’ Rather than limit debate, the declarations based on Marxist scientific proofs spurred debate over grand narrative claims, with co-editor Zenon Mikołajczyk suggesting his contribution might be ‘heretical’ by declaring peasants were not a ‘backward category’ but a permanent feature of the rural economy and landscape. Warsaw University sociologist Edward Ciupak, meanwhile, stated openly that Gałaj’s narrative has ‘great propaganda and educational benefits by showing the young generation a comparison between villages in the past and today.’ However, Ciupak suggests a ‘specialist audience’ deserves in-depth analysis of ‘the complexities of these changes.’ Others, like

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152 Ibid., p.15.
155 ‘Przemiany społeczno-kulturalne’, p.16.
156 Ibid., p.29.
157 Ibid., p.25.
Mleczko, queried declarations of ‘all-national culture’ suggesting they reflected only urban-centred ideals.\(^{158}\)

Jan Szczepański was the first contributor openly critical of Gałaj’s model, as he defended private farming while considering peasants a ‘class’ rather than a mere ‘category’ or ‘stratum’, thus demonstrating their historical and social significance alongside the industrial proletariat and intelligentsia. He warned top-down reforms would continue to founder against the peasant mode of production just as collectivisation showed ‘private farmers were the only class who could become independent of macroeconomic decisions of planning institutions.’\(^{159}\) If all the resources of stalinist Poland failed, then it seems late-Gomułka Poland had even lower chances of determining ‘peasant consciousness according to plan.’\(^{160}\) Szczepański stresses the significance of a localised ‘filter of microstructures existing in given collectivities meaning responses are not determined solely by contents but by the social mechanism of reception, which adapts the content to thoughts and values recognised in a given milieu.’\(^{161}\) An echo of Znaniecki and Thomas is evident here, while Bakhtin’s notions of heteroglossia prove relevant, too. Effectively, new contents will be adapted into existing structures and only slowing will these transform. Significantly, however, macroeconomic policy is powerless to overcome peasant agriculture.

Bronisław Gołębiowski’s contribution illustrated tensions between autobiographical sources and official narratives. He was familiar with both as a leading memoir sociologist and Party functionary. He comments on editorial work on the then-forthcoming seventh MPWPL volume,\(^ {162}\) where the selected narratives show state institutions’ failure to adapt to changing realities in rural areas,\(^ {163}\) as change took unplanned forms. However, he also affirmed the teleological model of the peasantry’s ‘historification’ into the industrial working class,\(^ {164}\) something which he believes generated legitimacy as ‘the state was an organisation aligned to peasant interests’.\(^ {165}\) Although there are evident tensions in reality, creating two types of peasantry – progressive and traditional in his view – it seems the acceptance of the

\(^{158}\) Ibid., p.22.

\(^{159}\) Ibid., p.19.

\(^{160}\) Ibid., p.19.

\(^{161}\) Ibid., p.19.


\(^{163}\) ‘Przemiany społeczno-kulturalne’, p. 34.

\(^{164}\) Ibid., p.32.

\(^{165}\) Ibid., p.34.
teleological-ideological model overwrites any need to engage with local institutions’ failings.

Franciszek Jakubczak, another prominent memoir sociologist, added that much progress is evident in ‘egalitarian transformations’ in the nation’s labour and class structures, as well as in culture.\textsuperscript{166} Although critical of ‘industriocentrism’,\textsuperscript{167} he attributes still believes thanks to schooling ‘rural Poland contributes on equal terms to the repository of all-national culture.’ The memoir movement is evidence of the consequences of improved literacy, as it becomes ‘in our times proof serving at a state-political \textit{[ustrojowo-państwowe]} and national level.’\textsuperscript{168} The memoirs demonstrate, in accordance with grand narratives of progress, advance from local to ‘supra-local’ and then ‘all-national culture’, with ordinary people becoming co-creators and not only consumers of such narratives. Their sociology also recognised that peasants remained a socio-economic and cultural reality, although for some contributors to the \textit{Wieś Współczesna} debate, like SGGW economist Bolesław Strużek, any declaration that peasants remained necessary even as a ‘temporary’ stage was heretical for any genuine supporter of a modern, socialist economy.\textsuperscript{169}

Ryszard Turski’s 1976 English-language essay highlights, through the translator’s probably unconscious vocabulary choice, what the teleological progress and modernisation narrative implies. ‘The present modernization processes of agriculture ruin the principles and functioning of rural life and make it necessary to adjust more actively to the global society.’\textsuperscript{170} Although adjusting to the demands of a globalised rather than purely socialist economy, the argument’s structure remains unchanged, with peasants deemed incompatible with the imagined modern world. Consequently, rural life must be “ruined” or overcome, with the ‘death of the peasant’ inevitable in terms of way of life, mode of production or culture, with Turski also referencing competition memoirs and Chałasiński’s analyses.\textsuperscript{171} The entire model of advance from primitive communal relations to socio-cultural homogenisation, with peasants ‘fulfilling their needs by relations not with nature but with society’,\textsuperscript{172} indicates affinities with Eugen Weber’s \textit{Peasant into Frenchmen}. It too, problematically, posited the inevitable ‘ruining’ of peasant culture and economy as part of

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., p.40.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., p.38.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., p.41.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., p.42.
\textsuperscript{171} Turski, p.71; see: \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 4, p.18.
\textsuperscript{172} Turski, p.69.
incorporation into a modern nation-state, an analysis which generated Dipesh Chakrabarty reading from a subaltern studies perspective, that this entails ‘an assumed death of the peasant.’

1.4 Subaltern Studies, modernisation and speaking

Rather than assume the death was inevitable, Chakrabarty – like Szczepański – considered the peasant alive. Consequently, an alternative approach is required to explore the particular variants of modernity emerging from peasants’ encounters with it. Chakrabarty considers:

> How do we make the subalterns genuinely the subjects of their history? Surely not by assuming a position in which the ideal nature and shape of modernity is decided from the very beginning by historians or philosophers as intellectuals. That would be inviting the subaltern to a dialogue in which his position was secondary from the very beginning.

For Chakrabarty it was crucial to avoid a situation where ‘the revolutionary intellectual’ and/or the state solely provided models for overcoming ‘the condition of subalternity.’ As Stauter-Halsted showed, there were complex intervening stages of peasants’ advance to or resistance to intellectual-elite visions of the nation. Incorporating peasants into historical narratives should not, therefore, occur solely within a paradigm of movement towards homogeneity, whether national or economic. Depicting our ‘societies structured by the state’ is necessary, Chakrabarty recognises, ‘and this must remain one entirely legitimate mode of producing subaltern histories.’ However, there is no need to assume the state determines all aspects of social reality or that ‘thinking the state’ means emancipation. The memoir archive can reveal how state intentions and claims underwent, even under Polish state-socialism, ‘transgressive reinscription’, to use Peter Burke’s term. Burke stresses ‘the creativity of ordinary people and their active reinterpretation of the message beamed at them by the television and screen and other media.’ Peasants could think the state in their own terms, producing unplanned changes, while also indicating that the subaltern could be someone who ‘survives actively, even joyously, on the assumption that the statist

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174 Ibid., p. 33.
175 Ibid., p. 34.
176 Ibid., p. 34.
177 Burke, *History and Social Theory*, p.92.
178 Ibid., p.102.
instruments of domination will always belong to somebody else and never aspires to
them. The point is not to depict peasants as outside the state’s domination, as if pre-
moderns waiting for incorporation, but to demonstrate aspects of peasants’ ‘inassimilability
to the state’, as David Lloyd recognised. This was not a failure on the part of peasants, but
an indication that, as Spivak saw it, the mode of production and way of life are “defective
for capitalism”. The Wieś Współczesna debate showed peasants were deemed defective
for socialism, too, but theoretical models could not remove them from socio-economic
reality. Szczepański also noted how peasants would continue to haunt Poland’s urban-
industrial classes, deferring their full modernisation, owing to the legacies of postwar
migration and advance.

Weber’s Peasants into Frenchmen is a model declaration of not only the assimilability of
peasants to the state, but also its teleological necessity. He shows transition ‘from primitive
want to needs that are more familiar. We have seen national unity painfully forged at a later
date than is generally supposed. We have seen cultural homogenization following economic
integration, itself achieved after much effort and pain.’ The intellectual assumes authority
to declare what is ‘familiar’, thus normative and desirable. The ‘pain’ was a historical
necessity, but Weber sees no need to recall causalities of progress. While Weber’s study of
late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century experiences means the painful ‘wound [...] does
not bleed anymore’, the proximity of Poles’ postwar experiences, together with the
accessibility of an archive of subaltern writing, mean the casualties or resisters are
impossible to ignore. The Polish experience of an incomplete process, deferred for future
completion, might also question Weber’s insistence upon full integration and modernisation.
His model suggests little peasant influence over the forms or outcomes of ‘acculturation: the
civilization of the French by urban France, the disintegration of local cultures by modernity
and their absorption into the dominant civilization of Paris and the schools.’ All processes
occur from above, both through an impersonal modernity and by urban elites spreading the
idea of “France” to groups declared to be ‘the French’. No resistance was evident as these
masses experienced ‘promotion to citizenship’ and ‘had to be integrated into the dominant
culture as they had been integrated into an administrative entity. What happened was akin to

179 Chakrabarty, Habitations, p.36.
180 David Lloyd, ‘Discussion Outside History: Irish New Histories and the “Subalternity Effect”’, Subaltern
182 Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France, 1870-1914 (Stanford, CA:
183 Chakrabarty, Habitations, p.31.
colonization, and may be easier to understand if one bears that in mind.\textsuperscript{184} For Weber, administrative unity made cultural transformation inevitable, leading to a homogeneous Frenchness overwriting local specificities. The resemblance to colonisation was not troubling, since – following Chakrabarty’s reading of Weber’s logic – ‘it may be all right to practice colonialism on one’s own people if the process brings in its train prosperity for all.’\textsuperscript{185} For Weber, these processes restored a natural unity, overcoming the condition where ‘[d]eprived of the support of elite thought, popular belief broke into a thousand subsystems unintegrated into a comprehensive view of the world.’\textsuperscript{186}

Thomas and Znaniecki explored a similar period, which Weber termed the ‘ascendancy of modernity’,\textsuperscript{187} but were sceptical that such profound transformations of thought and consciousness could be achieved, noting instead a greater hybridisation of subaltern interpretations of reality with official goals. Stauter-Halsted was also sceptical about elites’ abilities to transform reality. However, Weber believes disseminating elite rationalism meant the ‘rural convert to rationalism could throw away his ragbag of traditional contrivances, dodges in an unequal battle just to stay alive, with the heady conviction that, far from being a helpless witness of natural processes, he was himself an agent of change.’\textsuperscript{188} Just as the Party-state claimed to be the sole agent change, meaning only those who joined it could be deemed victorious and contributors to historical transformation, in Weber’s work modernity and the nation assumed similar teleological roles.

Peter Burke’s critique highlights how Weber overlooked social actors’ actual responses as they maintain a ‘multiplicity of social identities’, while ‘alternative memories (family memories, local memories, class memories, national memories, and so on)’ influence attitudes to new realities.\textsuperscript{189} Such memories could make a shambles of totalising, homogenising projects, as ‘unofficial memories, which have been relatively little studied, are sometimes historical forces in their own right’.\textsuperscript{190} It is necessary, he argues, to ‘think in pluralistic terms about the uses of memories to different social groups, who may well have different views about what is significant’.\textsuperscript{191} For Weber, though, such localised concerns are irrelevant as the nation-state’s victory meant ‘popular and elite culture had come together

\textsuperscript{184} Weber, p.486.
\textsuperscript{185} Chakrabarty, Habitations, p.32.
\textsuperscript{186} Weber, p.495.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., p.494.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., p.495.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., p.107.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., p.107.
An idyllic unity had been restored for the good of the masses, with the inequality of the relationship between the France of the cities and the rural peripheries unimportant as progress emerged victorious over peasants once in ‘a world of their own’. Similar claims framed communist-era declarations of all-national culture, uniting rural and urban Poles of all classes, merging patriotic and class-based claims. Burke stresses, how ‘[t]o focus on collective mentalities is to forget that individuals do not think exactly alike.’ Competition memoirs should therefore generate tensions between models and reality as experienced.

Weber’s work influenced Nikodem Tomaszewski-Bończa, current head of Poland’s National Digital Archive, whose 2006 article presented a model of ‘rural geniuses’, effectively “great men”, capable of ‘civilising’ peasants, or transforming them into full citizens and subjects according to an elite model. He focuses on the Konrad Prószyński and his newspaper Gazeta Świąteczna in the Russian partition which the author deems the inspiration for communicating from the nobility to rural leaders and onto the masses particular narratives generating ‘upodmiotowienie’ ("subjectisation"). Peasants were granted subjecthood by nobles, just as they required nobles to emancipate them a few decades previously. This enabled ‘escape from the ghetto of their social class and becoming rooted in the fatherland as part of further stages of “raising national consciousness”’. Here too, peasants prove malleable and inferior, released only from the own worlds or ghettoes once elites deem them ready or necessary for nation-building.

Tomaszewski-Bończa’s unfailing faith in ‘the integral bond of writing and national consciousness’ means there was no alternative but to rise from ‘degradation’ [zbydlecenie] to ‘humanity’, as elite narratives proved irresistible and perfectly effective. ‘Transmission of the intelligentsia’s love to the people was the foundation of a new society. [...] In loving our neighbours we give them subjecthood.’ Only elites possess the agency to drive this process, as subalterns prove powerless otherwise, nor is there any recognition that ‘transgressive reinscription’ of elite claims was possible, or alternative national visions developed, as Stauter-Halsted.

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192 Weber, p.496.
193 Weber, p.x.
194 Weber, p.xi.
195 Burke, History and Social Theory, p.97.
197 Tomaszewski-Bończa, p.75-6.
198 Ibid., p.79.
199 Ibid., p.80.
200 Ibid., p.84.
201 Ibid., pp.86-87.
suggested. Józef Gągor’s 1959 critique of stalinist-era declarations of peasant malleability could also be applied to Tomaszewski-Bończa’s denial of subaltern agency. “We should see in the peasant not a dead object to be acted upon socially and culturally, but to grant him human traits including aesthetic tastes and moral awareness, i.e. the right to criticism and choice. And above all the right to co-create culture.”

Memoir sociologists believed this had been achieved, although they often incoroprated this claim into models based in anonymous historical processes.

Declarations of peasant powerless, whether in relation to great men or national oppression, might not be unexpected in some academic circles. However, when an internationally-recognised scholar with postmodern credentials presents an essentialistic image of peasants, then it seems academic subalternisation of rural Poles is problematically widespread. Ewa Domańska’s Polish-language overview of microhistory suggests MPWPL memoirs used comparatively with Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie’s Montaillou reveal resemblances between attitudes and values of inhabitants of medieval rural France and postwar rural Poland, as if “the peasantry” were a universal, historically constant category. This part of her study contrasts with her belief that microhistorical approaches demonstrate ‘a vision of a world full of respect and tolerance for another person’s difference’. Yet Domańska denies peasants any difference by juxtaposing thematically-similar representations produced centuries apart, finding ‘a narrative about sacred life values which manifests the truth in the deepest sense of the word, while enabling perception in everyday phenomena of the essence of life and humankind.’ She adds that ‘such narratives constitute certain “universals” and are revealed when we compare the “views” of inhabitants of rural 1960s Poland and the inhabitants of Montaillou.’

Her claims seem particularly peculiar since around the time Mikrohistoria was reissued, Domańska investigated objects and things, concluding ‘we have to recognize the presence of nonhuman actors – and that this would mean that they have presence (and not only that they are present) – in order to challenge our relationship with the past.’ Objects are granted agency, proving capable of troubling totalising representations, while peasants are depicted as a universal, unchanging category whose “essence” and “truth”

204 Domańska, Mikrohistorie, p.250.
205 Ibid., pp.252-3.
can be discovered. Whether any other group – defined, say, by gender, sexuality, nationality, race, or religion – could be so represented is doubtful.

Wacław Daruk, a regarded peasant memoirist, questioned essentialising, archetypal representations of peasants in his contribution to a volume marking fifty years of Polish memoir sociology, extending his critique to the Cepelia-type official peasant culture and ‘elites’‘tendency to denigrate peasant creativity without acknowledging that peasants have ‘entered the nave of the state as fully-valued farmers [gosłodarz].’ Memoirs, he argues, can reveal ‘the complex process of changes influencing emancipation and changes in worldview.’ One the one hand, he affirms state-sanctioned narratives, but also calls for recognition of diversity and difference. For Domańska, though, a double-page juxtaposition of specifically selected fragments from Ladurie and MPWPL suffices to establish a universal figure, undifferentiated according to time or place: ‘I am seeking to recognise a figure representing particular personalities – human universals, the stereotypes with which historians (more or less consciously) exploit as part of their own cultural heritage.’ Rather than use microhistory to highlight the ‘difference of the Other’ and the particular intimacy of peasants’ lives, the ‘unexpected ways’ peasants might ‘fashion’ their lives, Domańska seeks to affirm the “peasant” archetype in operation universally across cultures and times in academic historiography. 1960s Polish peasants thus have no other characteristics in her reading beyond essential “peasantness”, hardly therefore resembling the ‘people condemned to oblivion by “grand history” who thanks to microhistorians can speak again.’ There is no effort to test whether memoir materials might, in fact, be a form of subaltern speaking, potentially contributing to microhistory’s emancipatory project or the ‘qualitative and miniature, rather than quantitative and globalising’ she sees in microhistory’s affinities with ‘thick description’. Instead, the ‘historian using the sources gives voice to ordinary people, allowing them to say what values they defended, what were universal, human and timeless matters for them.’ If ordinary people speak through historiography, then it is in order that they aid universalisation and homogenisation, rather than reveal difference. Geertz, of course, recognised difference encountered in ‘obscure’ contexts. Despite claiming to defend the ‘other’, Domańska’s approach to peasants instead resembles, as Elwira

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207 He is best-known for Wacław Daruk, Bez głaskania po głowie: Wspomnienia (Warsaw: LSW, 1973)
209 Domańska, Mikrohistorie, p.256.
211 Domańska, Mikrohistorie, p.273.
212 Ibid., p.273. Stress as in original.
213 Ibid., p.274.
Grossman has outlined, the typical problem that emerges when exploration of the Other in Polish culture is attempted.

There is a strong tendency in Polish culture (and also in some areas of scholarly discourse) to prove the superiority of “sameness” over “difference”, which is said to represent merely a cultural periphery. In order to secure a strong position for the simplified image of monolithic Poland, “the Other” has been often marginalised, ignored or suppressed.\(^\text{214}\)

Domańska’s work tends towards sameness in treating a traditionally culturally peripheral group whose imagined “peasantness” dominates individualising traits located in gender, age, regional origins, political beliefs, religion or even nationality. What is more surprising is that she uses the heteroglot competition sources to present her universalising, essentialising narratives, yet claims ordinary people speak through her and other microhistorians’ works. The competition memoirs could contribute to Said’s outline of a subaltern-studies-inspired historiographical project, which seeks to ‘rewrite’ history ‘from the distinct and separate point of view of the masses, using unconventional or neglected sources in popular memory, oral discourse, previously unexamined colonial administrative documents.’\(^\text{215}\) Meanwhile, Birla’s critique of approaches to speaking such as Domańska’s proves relevant.

[T]he claim on the part of the intellectual that subalterns can and do speak for themselves stands in for not doing anything about the problems of oppression. [...] Spivak asks us to supplement the benevolent intention of “speaking for” with an ethics of responsibility – in the sense of cultivating a capacity to respond to and be responsive to the other, without demanding resemblance as the basis of recognition.\(^\text{216}\)

In Domańska’s work, peasants are recognised but only in their familiar, passive, eternal forms rather than as active agents of social and historical transformation, and thus speak only from a position ‘secondary from the very beginning.’\(^\text{217}\) As Morris found there can be ‘a secret valorization and hypostatization of subalternity as an identity – to be recalled,


\(^{216}\) Ritu Birla, ‘Postcolonial Studies: Now that’s history’, in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Morris ed. pp. 87-99 (pp. 92-93).

\(^{217}\) Chakrabarty, *Habitations*, p.33.
renarrated, reclaimed, and revalidated. Effectively, if members of subaltern communities are to speak, then they should resemble a familiar mode of subaltern.

Spivak’s work in particular considers whether historiography can be written in such a way that would involve subaltern groups speaking on their own terms, rather than being ‘given voice’ by scholars, as Domańska or Paul Thompson’s early oral history work suggested. Such approaches recall the ‘ventriloquism’ critiqued by Spivak, as intellectuals assume the authority to ‘represent’ subalterns who appear ‘transparent’ in predetermined models. Spivak’s essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (I refer principally to the revised edition) critiques subaltern studies’ failure to engage fully with subaltern experience. She believes women’s experiences have been particularly overlooked: ‘The subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in its shadow.’ Part of the cause has been the approach foregrounding ‘the mode of production narrative’ Women populate more significantly ‘the space that is cut off from the lines of mobility’. This becomes evident in rural Poland, where a male-centric model of social change could reinforce women’s subordination in economic and family structures. This model dominated analyses of competition memoirs, which may underscore Spivak’s conclusion to the original version of her essay. ‘The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with “woman” as a pious item. Representation has not withered away.’ I consider, however, whether the tension between analyses and content of memoir compilations might permit the memoir publications to be an indicator of subaltern speaking, rather than affirmation of state-sanctioned, male-centric models of progress, meaning that ‘transparent’ intellectual models become clouded and more ambivalent, as the essay’s revised version suggests.

Spivak uses ‘speaking’ figuratively, as it could involve reading, with speaking conceived as ‘a transaction between the speaker and the listener.’ It could involve reading since she explains, ‘speaking, even seemingly the most immediate, entails a distanced decipherment

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218 Morris, p.8.
221 Spivak, Can, pp.28-29.
222 Ibid., p.41.
223 Ibid., p.21.
by another, which is, at best, an interception.\(^{227}\) For Spivak, then, successful speaking involves completing a speech act, one influencing subsequent utterances, as this indicates the speaker has been ‘heard’. For Spivak, a failed speech act showed “the subaltern cannot speak”, mean[ing] that even when the subaltern makes an effort to the death to speak, she is not able to be heard, and speaking and hearing complete the speech act. That’s what it had meant, and anguish marked the spot.\(^{228}\) It could be argued that censorship of a text indicated a successful speech act, as the speaker had been heard by at least one listener – the censor – who was provoked to respond by silencing subsequent readers’ non-aligned responses. Unsuccessful speech acts would be totalising narratives of some sociological analyses or state-sanctioned introductions which seek to unify readings, ignoring subaltern difference. I ask, however, whether competition-based publications might, in fact, despite censorship, editing and framing still provoke potentially critical readings.

Spivak’s consideration of subaltern speaking also highlights a certain paradox of the competition memoirs. If ‘within the definition of subalternity as such there is a certain not-being-able-to-make-speech acts that is implicit’\(^{229}\) then does publication, and therefore co-construction of the published sphere of national culture, necessarily mean overcoming subalternity? Zdzisław Grzelak claimed ‘the contemporary explosion of Polish memoir writing is proof of the masses’ entry into the public sphere as they experience for the first time the fascination of this debut step.’\(^{230}\) Perhaps the rawness of their entry into the published sphere could disrupt dominant representations of peasant masses, indicating instead subaltern difference as someone who ‘survives actively, even joyously’ outside ‘statist instruments of domination’.\(^{231}\) This would be an unusual position in the postwar published sphere, but one editing or censorship did not seek to fully rectify.

William Andrews’ exploration of early Afro-American autobiography provides insightful context for communist-era Polish peasant memoirs. The authors were assumed to have encountered only authoritative representations of their experience, yet they nevertheless proved capable of disrupting existing limits of published knowledge and the autobiographical form itself. The autobiographers ‘changed the rules by which the game was being played even as they played along with it.’\(^{232}\) This emerged with their ‘reflectiveness

\(^{227}\) Spivak, ‘Can’ (revised), p.64.  
\(^{228}\) Subaltern Talk, in Spivak Reader, p.292.  
\(^{229}\) Ibid., p.290.  
\(^{230}\) Zdzisław Grzelak, ‘Wkraczanie w świat nieznany’, Pół wieku pamiętniarstwa, pp.69-72 (p.70).  
\(^{231}\) Chakrabarty, Habitations, p.36.  
and self-consciousness’ which ‘produces what might be called a running metadiscourse on the assumptions, conditions, and conventions necessary to discourse between black narrator and white reader.’ Subordinated authors commented upon representations in authoritative discourse as they depicted their lives. Mediating editors could not fully align the texts with the expectations of the published sphere, although they shaped how the texts ‘will be received as institutional facts by their white readers.’ Effectively, the editor endows autobiographies with a degree of authority, framing them within acceptable limits even if the publication ultimately exceeded them. The editors’ work thus avoided the ventriloquism of analysis or reducing the authors to the familiar, while avoiding imagining “giving voice” to subaltern as unmediated speakers. If the rules of the game changed after then this implies that editorial-authorial cooperation produced at least partially-successful speech acts as the valorised, hypostatised subaltern identity is disrupted. Andrews shows that inherent to many subaltern autobiographers’ writing was a critique of existing discourses, generating a dialogic exchange between personal experience and public narratives. Stauter-Halsted has already demonstrated how Bakhtin’s concepts are an apt supplement to subaltern studies’ historiographical approaches. An additional value for my study is that Bakhtin’s work was shaped by attempts to speak under stalinism.

1.5 Totalitarianism and dialogism

Historian Jan Gross argued totalitarianism not only ‘confiscates the private realm’ but also ‘privatizes the public realm’ by, for example, engaging local communities and families as ‘instruments of coercion.’ The reappropriation of Party organisations indicated by Johnston would be impossible, since ‘totalitarianism radically modifies the entire structure of the language’ which becomes ‘highly rhetorical, saturated with figures of speech, and rigorously structured into slogans (a sequence of slogans is the perfect text).’ Referencing Barthes, Gross argues all words become value judgements, meaning language use is ‘ritualized’ as ‘[m]etaphor reigns supreme and displaces simple prosaic discourse. Even the most natural, commonplace activities acquire new meanings.’ No longer representing the external world, language is destroyed, which equates to ‘literally, the destruction of the

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233 Andrews, p.27.
234 Ibid., p.30.
235 Gross, Revolution from Abroad, p.117.
236 Ibid., p.236.
Day-to-day interactions, thus everyday history, become impossible because nothing, including thought, remains outside state control. Totalitarianism functions by ‘destroying the capacity for human interaction. Thus, totalitarian language functions as an instrument of social control by depriving human beings of the opportunity to check their ideas against the evidence derived from experience. Consequently, those in power can say whatever pleases them and cannot be proved wrong.’ Language is impoverished to the extent that ‘people can neither make judgements nor draw conclusions about the world around them because their language has been spoiled, they cannot act as independent subjects. They can only obey orders.’ His model of linguistic control and determinism permits ordinary people no agency, invention or resourcefulness. He argues that ‘even though terror has abated and ideology has never penetrated beyond a thin layer of the population [...] language has been spoiled under totalitarianism and with it the possibilities not only of communication but even of diagnosis of social ills.’ In the perfectly regimented society with full command of the new order’s language he believes was implemented initially in 1939-41 in the eastern borderlands before spreading to the rest of Poland, a popular autobiography movement encouraging contributors to dispute official claims would not only be impossible in practice but in fact unimaginable. This ultimate model of Newspeak was not even fully achieved in Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four but was deferred.

Mikhail Bakhtin, however, produced a model of social discursive exchange which maintained that localised interaction inspiring critical diagnosis of social ills not only remained possible but was practiced even under Soviet stalinism. He suggested that the intersection of ‘someone else’s ideological discourse’ and what is ‘internally persuasive for us and acknowledged by us’ causes ‘entirely different possibilities to open up’ including ‘a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us.’ For Bakhtin, ‘internally persuasive discourse (IPD) and authoritarian enforced discourse’ intersect rather than merge (which was the case in Gross’ model) leading to ‘a struggle for influence within an individual’s consciousness (just as they struggle with one another in the surrounding social reality).’ The individual is thus not merely malleable a cipher for

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237 Ibid., p.237.
238 Ibid., p.238.
239 Ibid., p.238.
240 Ibid., p.236.
242 Ibid., p.345.
243 Ibid., p.348.
official claims, but an active agent, processing, internalising, accepting or critiquing authoritarian discourse which cannot be forced to become internally persuasive. Bakhtin recognises that IPD is ‘denied all privilege, backed by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged in society’. It could be conceived as existing in the obscure places outlined by Geertz, or as ‘communicative memory’ as outlined by Jan Assmann. He argues ‘communicative memory’ is predominantly ‘communicated in everyday interaction’ but can draw on elements of ‘cultural memory’, so elements from the canonical store of national memory and culture. He deems it ‘non-institutional; it is not supported by any institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation; it is not cultivated by specialists and it is not summoned or celebrated on special occasions’ and is largely limited to ‘three interacting generations’. I consider the competition memoirs a form of communicative memory – a record of ‘living, embodied memory, communication in vernacular language’ which acquired some institutional forms, thus forming a hybrid form lying between Jan Assmann’s somewhat bifurcated cultural/communicative memory models.

Consequently, such discourse – IPD or communicative memory’ is largely oral and rarely archived, so appears subaltern in Chakrabarty’s sense, as it ‘survives actively, even joyously’ outside state domination. While ‘joyously’ might be a misnomer for much postwar experience, the more relevant term is ‘actively’, suggesting not necessarily insurgent but nevertheless critical and part of everyday strategies of getting by, always in relation to the broader social process and mega-concepts prevalent at a given moment without being subordinate to them.

Internally persuasive discourse – as opposed to one that is externally authoritative – is, as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with “one’s own word”. In the everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else’s. Its creativity and productiveness consists precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition. It is not so much interpreted by us as it is further, that is, freely,

244 Ibid., p.346.
246 Jan Assmann, ‘Communicative and Cultural Memory’, p.112.
247 Ibid., p.117.
248 Chakrabarty, Habitations, p.36.
249 Bakhtin adds a footnote at this point, n. 31, p.346: ‘One’s own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others’ words that have been acknowledged and assimilated, and the boundaries between the two are at first scarcely perceptible.’
developed, applied to new material, new conditions; it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts. Bakhtin stresses that internally persuasive discourse is a set of concepts and fairly complete narratives already established within the individual consciousness, constituting established interpretations of social reality which then intersect with other discourses in a dialogic relationship, being altered by new materials but always adapting to them, rather than being radically transformed. The new materials and conditions are internalised but not in a manner necessarily intended by the sender. The similarities with Znaniecki and Thomas’ work are evident where they considered the multiplicity of influences shaping social action and individual attitudes. Bakhtin stresses that “one’s own word” is hardly one’s own at all, but comprised of internalised, assimilated and reinscribed words of others, influenced by the ‘heteroglossia’ of voices encountered in social situations. This differs significantly from Gross’ vision of a monolithic discourse to be internalised, by force if necessary. As Macraild and Taylor argue, heteroglossia ‘enables people to hold other views of the world, than those that are dominant at any given moment. Thus, it allows for the possibility of freedom of thought, or challenge to hegemony.’

Perhaps challenging hegemony is overstated in the state-socialist context. Nevertheless, thought could remain relatively free even when ‘centripetal’ forces were engaged in efforts towards ‘unitary language’ which, Bakhtin defined as, ‘the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language.’ It is an ideal type which is employed by forces seeking to ‘develop in vital connection with the processes of socio-political and cultural centralization.’ Bakhtin believes completely centralised linguistic control would remain impossible owing to ‘the realities of heteroglossia’ which ensure ‘centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward.’ This occurs in ‘actual social life’ and cannot, for Bakhtin, be suppressed. ‘Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance’.

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250 Bakhtin, pp.345-6.
251 Macraild and Taylor, p.136.
252 Bakhtin, p.270.
253 Ibid., p.271.
254 Ibid., p.272.
255 Ibid., p.272.
exchange would continue as different discourses intersect, the centralising claims always having been read through and reproduced through actual social life, generating heteroglot ‘hybridization’\textsuperscript{256} vis-a-vis the linguistic center of the verbal-ideological life of the nation and the epoch’.\textsuperscript{257}

Macraild and Taylor agree with Bakhtin’s assessment that ‘[e]ven in the most repressive regimes, individuals can find ways of expressing themselves outside of the dominant ideology’ but question whether ‘this be said to constitute resistance in itself’.\textsuperscript{258} The answer depends on whether resistance is the correct term for framing ordinary people’s actions. After all, Bakhtin made clear IPD was largely a subaltern form, existing outside the centres of power. Thus perhaps it was the discourse of getting by rather than resistance, but nevertheless possessed historical significance as it aided subaltern inassimilability.James Wertsch applied Bakhttin’s approach in investigating Soviet-era official history and its legacy in Russian popular memory today. Like Johnston after him, Wertsch recognises how identity resources and texts are not used as senders intend but can be reappropriated, producing dialogic and ‘irreducible tension between active agents and the textual resources they employ, especially narrative texts.’\textsuperscript{259} Receivers respond actively to rather than as passive vessels of ‘state univocality’,\textsuperscript{260} which Wertsch stresses could characterise not only totalitarian countries, but also ‘modern states’ which have ‘sought to control both the textual resources involved in remembering and the particular uses made of them.’\textsuperscript{261}

Wertsch suggests that in the Soviet Union ‘every aspect of life was supposed to be carried out in the public sphere’, indicating something of Gross’ ‘confiscation of the private realm’. However, actual social life and exchanges remained heteroglot with a ‘culture of unofficial discourse’ emerging.\textsuperscript{262} Wertsch finds that today’s researcher’s ‘task becomes one of listening for the texts and the voices behind them as well as the voices of the particular individuals using these texts in particular settings.’\textsuperscript{263} When listening to recollections produced under communism or after 1989/91 it is therefore necessary to recognise which voices are present in speaking. Ordinary people did not simply repeat state-sanctioned claims, although – as Andrews showed in a different context – these resounded, potentially

\textsuperscript{256} Ibid., p.358.
\textsuperscript{257} Ibid., p.358.
\textsuperscript{258} Macraild and Taylor, p.136.
\textsuperscript{259} Wertsch, Voices, p.175.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid., p.74.
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid., p 67.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid., p.133, p.136.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., p.6.
critically, in speech. Wertsch argues ‘state-sponsored histories’ seek to ‘provide the foundation for creating strong collective identity’ meaning differences within the population are overlooked in favour of a homogenously-imagined nation. And this is true in democratic states, too, something James Mark’s 2010 study _The Unfinished Revolution_ found, as postcommunist authoritative discourse resounds in post-1989 testimonies.

### 1.6 The Unfinished Revolution in autobiographical construction

Mark found homogenising tendencies in communist-era and postcommunist state-sponsored histories’ alike, while autobiographical memory was socially and culturally constructed either side of 1989. Mark focuses on Poland and Hungary in exploring public discourses’ influence on making sense of the communist period. He ‘employs personal testimony not primarily to uncover the realities of the interviewees’ Communist pasts, but rather to investigate how the values of post-Communism and liberal democracy have shaped what is permissible to say about their experiences of dictatorship after 1989.’ Postcommunism is shown to construct limits on public autobiographical memory and generates conditions for self-censorship. _The Unfinished Revolution_ argues postcommunist truth commissions and other state-backed institutions, including Poland’s IPN, create ‘new national histories “from above”’ which stifle ‘clashing or multiple perspectives on the Communist past’. Usually such institutes served to establish ‘control over the documentary remnants of the former Communist security services’. Limiting access could protect fledgling democracy from damaging disputes over the past until constructive public debate could emerge. Alternatively, it could shield from scrutiny those assuming power. Either way, ‘a new, unitary consensual history based on a scholarly account of dictatorship’ was to be constructed with scholars’ authority legitimising a unitary account overlooking society’s

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264 Ibid., p.28.
267 The problems with IPN and its historiographical attempts at dramatically reworking the past came to a head with the publication of a 2008 book accusing Lech Wałęsa of being a communist secret agent. The future of the Institute has been widely discussed. See: Adam Leszczyński, ‘Czy IPN może być zbawiony?’, _Gazeta Wyborcza_, 10 January 2011, p.18-19.
268 Mark, p.xxiv.
269 Ibid., p.47.
270 Ibid., p.47.
varied, complex experiences of state-socialism. Consequently, ambivalent strategies of getting by fell outside new state-sanctioned history.

However, popular practice was not fully effaced with Mark finding “the people” inscribed into grand narratives ‘to provide a heroic story of earlier popular resistance to Communism. [...] Thus the past was presented as a series of popular attempts at resistance to topple the regime, and citizens were ascribed a prominent role in the liberation of their country from Communism.’ However, this was not simply an innocent insurgency-centred narrative but a politicised attempt to reject the narrative of ‘elite-level reconciliation that underpinned the transition in 1989’. Mark argues that the IPN-based historical apparatus could influence autobiographical memory, with IPN using its ‘massive archive’ in ‘the creation of processes through which ordinary citizens could re-imagine their own personal histories.’ Information held meant some people could face pressure ‘to re-remember their Communist past in criminal terms, even if they had not seen their former lives in this way before.’ Appropriating the ‘power to name’, IPN could shape perceptions of criminals, collaborators and victims, influencing autobiographical self-representations which were rewritten within ‘an often painful and drawn-out process of coming to terms with the Communist autobiographies they had not only written in public but also believed in and once used as a set of stories through which to understand their lives.’ Autobiographies written either side of 1989 were equally socio-politically constructed, with this also applying to victim stories, as

the growth and power of the victim’s story was not so much the telling of previously repressed histories, but rather a product of new political imperatives in which democratizing, westernizing societies encouraged their citizens to re-imagine themselves as victims of a fallen dictatorship.

For Mark, most postcommunist narratives took this form by means of a national collective memory of victimhood into which “the people” were incorporated. ‘[P]ost-hoc reframing of experiences’ meant omitting the ‘complex compromises that individuals had been forced to make with the previous regime. Rather than acknowledging their varied roles as bystanders,

271 Ibid., p.52.
272 Ibid., p.52.
273 Ibid., p.56.
275 Mark, p.136.
276 Ibid., p.168.
collaborators and the persecuted, individuals were said to be seeking to present themselves only as victims.\textsuperscript{277} Going beyond studies suggesting previous ‘silence about the family past’ brought ‘a reconstruction (sometimes reinvention)\textsuperscript{278} shaped by intersection of public and personal memory, as Victoria Semenova noted, Mark believes politicisation of memory and reworking of biographies ‘in response to new political imperatives’\textsuperscript{279} are specifically a legacy of communism. His conclusion\textsuperscript{280} states

those who lived through the postwar period brought their distinctively Communist understandings of autobiography, loaded with political meaning and intent, into the present; where once they had constructed stories of anti-Fascist and class-based struggle in public to demonstrate loyalty to the Communist regime, or maintained anti-Communist family stories at home, they now carried these same politicized and divisive autobiographical habits with them into the post-1989 era. [... T]he very idea that post-Communist societies had to remake their pasts for a new political age was as much a legacy of four decades of a dictatorial system that had stressed both public and private reinvention, as it was a response to the encounter after 1989 with a western set of norms that demanded commemoration and the working though of difficult pasts as the key to overcoming dictatorship.\textsuperscript{281}

Why politicised social construction of autobiography is \textit{distinctively} communist is unclear. After all, ‘western’ mnemonic norms– inspired by (West) Germany’s experience of working through the Nazi past (\textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung}) – demanded something similar, as Mark himself argues. Still, deeming former-communism the crucial factor reveals the historical irony that postcommunist states’ memory politics ensures the revolution remains unfinished as those in power claiming to break with communism adopt “communist” instrumentalisation of memory for political ends. Mark declaring communism responsible for distorting memory is perhaps another irony, since he replicates the logic of representatives of the politicised memory politics he critiques.

Mark recognises that often successful public autobiographical construction was a skill or ruse, learned to secure material or career benefits, or to avoid negative consequences. He believes this practice transferred into postcommunism, facilitating the construction of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{277} \textit{Ibid.}, p.168.
  \item \textsuperscript{279} Mark, p.215.
  \item \textsuperscript{280} Likewise a passage in the preface: ‘It was this intensely political conception of the life story that those socialized in the 1940s and 1950s transferred to the post-1989 era.’ Mark, p.xxvi.
  \item \textsuperscript{281} Mark, p.221.
\end{itemize}
'correct autobiographies’ bound by ‘profoundly ideological terms’ after 1989. However, *The Unfinished Revolution* overlooks alternative modes of remembering under communism, whether in undocumented day-to-day interactions or in potentially-public state-sponsored memoir competitions, which certainly questions Mark’s unitary autobiographical mode applied across Central-Eastern Europe. While offering an important critique of IPN-type institutions tendencies towards unitary histories, Mark’s argument problematically requires accepting that state-sanctioned communist-era memory successfully transformed social and autobiographical memory processes by ensuring all public representations were necessarily ‘based on historical falsehoods and misshapen memories’, regardless of whether people consciously used such modes. Mark suggests there were alternative memories for private-sphere use under communism, but when his ‘respondents remembered telling family stories as a way of communication other forms of history that would keep alternative, anti-Communist, views of the world alive’, he advises that these may well be postcommunist mnemonic constructs. Memory of memory under communism narrates ‘those national traditions and stories that they believed had been marginalized during the Communist period.’

Mark’s findings suggest the value of using sources produced under communism when studying the period, given politicised postcommunist external narratives, something Zdzisław Krasnodębski also recognises. ‘The process of reinterpretation of individual biographies is driven by a change in collective memory, in publicly accepted interpretations of the past, in official history.’ However, he considers such reworkings typical of autobiography rather than a communist legacy. Mark’s *Unfinished Revolution* suggests totalitarian control over autobiography under communism to critique similar present-day practices in state-sponsored history. It is worth considering aspects of work in memory studies to establish a context for the challenge posed to communist-era and postcommunist dominant public history through reference to ordinary people’s histories.

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288 Krasnodębski, p.261.
Chapter 2: Memory Studies, Censorship and Totalitarianism

This chapter considers aspects of work in memory studies that reflect upon state-socialist societies, critiquing the tendency to opt for a default totalitarian paradigm. Instead, some memory studies work applied to non-totalitarian countries would seem to fit the Polish context better.

2.1 Memory Studies and the nation

Ewa. M. Thompson’s recent essay on ‘Ways of Remembering: The Polish Case’ – for different reasons – also stresses communism’s lasting legacy for memory today.\(^{289}\) The title suggests a singular, national way, which demands European recognition in order to complete the post-communist revolution and end Poles’ struggle to match ‘a western set of norms’.\(^{290}\)

In her narrative, the dominant postwar national memory deserves European recognition owing to ‘denial of access to memory’ under communism, with the failure to overcome this by gaining recognition of Polish and East European suffering at communist hands, evidence that the revolution remains unfinished. She also argues that if Polish and other countries’ memory culture fails to match western norms, given evidence of ‘chauvinism, nationalism, and assorted xenophobias’, then this is a consequence of the ‘impossibility of achieving closure’.\(^{291}\) Her essay indicates the paradox of demanding closure to overcome communist influence, yet requiring the spectre’s presence to justify lasting failings in memory. She also argues that there is also justice in promoting Poland’s state-sanctioned history internationally, since ‘colonial occupation’ under communism ‘severely curtailed’ Poland’s ‘reservoirs of memory’ meaning that ‘[b]etween 1939 and 1989, there was no freedom to remember in Poland.’\(^{292}\) She moderates this subsequently, arguing that ‘of course, Poles did remember even under the Soviets, but these memories were weakened and distorted by the lack of free discussion.’\(^{293}\) No freedom becomes curtailed freedom, and ultimately Poles never in fact ‘lost their collective memory’ and indeed ‘did remember by various means that bypassed the orderly archiving taking place in free countries.’\(^{294}\)


\(^{290}\) Mark, p.221.

\(^{291}\) Thompson, ‘Ways of Remembering’, p.224.

\(^{292}\) Ibid., p.223.

\(^{293}\) Ibid., p.223.

\(^{294}\) Ibid., p.225.
nationalist appropriation of the private sphere noted by Kamal Visweswaran ‘The “home”, then, becomes the discursive site of nationalist victory when the “world” has been ceded to the colonial state.’ For Thompson, theatres, churches and cemeteries became the site of ‘private sphere’ memory, which resisted Soviet domination, even as these theatres were state funded. ‘Foremost among these substitute localities were the country’s theatres, with their intelligentsia audiences and a slew of patriotic actors.’ Here, again, only the elites remember, while the masses simply reproduce the canon of ‘people who are perceived as worthy of remembering – those who died in the various Polish insurrections, those who perished during demonstrations against tyranny, and soldiers who fell on the battlefield.’

Thompson’s model resembles that of Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, whose essay appeared in the comparative volume *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*. Orla-Bukowska’s essay consequently becomes the voice representing the Polish memory and identity to English-language readers. She happily creates a binary of public and private, which overlaps with official and unofficial memory. She argues that although Poland’s borders were moved westwards and political orientation eastwards, ‘the Poles, for the most part, did not follow. A bifurcation of discourse occurred, segregating (though in some areas they would overlap) the official and public from the unofficial and private spheres.’ The overlaps prove insignificant to her essay, as the nation is declared aligned to the ‘unofficial and private spheres’, which coalesce – problematically – around the Church, as if it were isolated from politics. The volume’s editors are critical of the success of ‘institutional memory’, or ‘efforts by political elites, their supporters, and their opponents to construct meanings of the past and propagate them more widely or impose them on other members of society.’ They add institutionalized forms of memory are important but not all-controlling and that leaders exercise only imperfect control over institutional memory’. Yet Orla-Bukowska’s essay means they must declare ‘the church remained robust, kept alive alternative conceptions of history that fuelled political opposition and ultimately emerged triumphant in 1989’. This appears as if elites’ collective memory project functioned smoothly and with full consensus.

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296 Thompson, Ways, p.226.
297 Ibid., p. 227.
299 Orla-Bukowska, p.178.
301 Ibid., p.15.
‘The Poles’ are spoken for, as if forming a homogenous collective possessing shared imagination of national identity thanks to the Church. ‘Instead of separation of church and state, religion was the sole consistent carrier of the national ethos for the divided people, who thereafter fought with the church against the state.’

Problematically, even the Bishop of Kielce become ‘private, unofficial weavers’ of memory. Yet there is no concern to consider what ordinary people were actually recalling or how they responded to elite opposition claims.

For Orla-Bukowska, the entire communist period from 1950 to 1980 had a monolithic memory culture, as ‘official discourse dominated publicly, propagating half-truths and creating [blank spots], while unofficial discourse dominated privately, reverting progressively to an absolute faith in alternative, underground sources of information’. Since the nation is spoken for, this ‘absolute faith’ appears to apply to all Poles. After 1980, the opposition weakened the public/private ‘lining’ before ‘varying private and group memories being incorporated into the public collective memory’ after 1989. The communist-era monolith contrasts with postcommunist diversity, which however becomes centred on the Church-nation bind. No evidence is presented to support her chronology which merges stalinism, the Gomulka and Gierek periods into a singular time of official untruth (‘falsification’) and unofficial ‘historical “truths”’. She claims there was ‘[f]alsification in the form of substition’, meaning that ‘the Battle of Lenino was honoured, not Monte Cassino; the People’s Guard was honoured, not the Home Army; Communist generals were honoured, not those who had served with the Allies.’

Regardless of ordinary people’s experiences in the “false” experiences – all notable centred on male heroes – only today’s dominant narratives of declared true, as representative of unofficial memory. Orla-Bukowska neatly summarises her bifurcated model: ‘If officially all evil came from the West, then unofficially it came from the East.’ There is nothing in between, no dialogic negotiation, no apathy, no everyday memory, as the term ‘the unofficial sphere’ again colonises everyday life for the national cause.

Among the blank spots, the eastern borderlands are foregrounded. ‘Kresy hometowns subsequently ceased to exist, even as tourist destinations; only in the late 1980s did it become

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303 Orla-Bukowska, p.179.
304 Ibid., p.193.
305 Ibid., p.181.
306 Ibid., p.186.
307 Ibid., p.186.
308 Ibid., p.187.
309 Ibid., p.188.
possible to gain a visa, for example, to visit family graves on All Saints Day. Kazimierz Żygulski’s study (discussed below), for example, shows that this was not the case, as people did visit the eastern borderlands in the 1950s and 1960s. His work also shows that Ewa Thompson’s claim that ‘[b]ooks discussing these events were not allowed to appear’ is untrue. Similarly, while correctly noting communist Poland’s ‘official image of the war presented Nazi Germany as the only enemy’ (although domestic “reactionaries” and nationalists were also deemed enemies), Kaja Kaźmierska’s claim that Poles’ experience in the eastern borderlands ‘for some fifty years did not exist in public discourse’ but now ‘has gradually become part of Polish history’ is somewhat exaggerated. Kaźmierska affirms totalitarian paradigms of memory, arguing that even ‘in private discourse [...] individuals were afraid to reveal their personal past. Before 1989, coming from the Eastern border region was a kind of stigma in itself, let alone having engaged in clandestine activities or underground fighting.’ She argues that her oral history work retrieves oppressed memories, doing justice to what was silenced under communism, even as it in fact creates as new dominant memory which omits the variety of experiences to focus on a partisan, heroic memory, mirroring some processes that occurred in 1960s Poland.

A collective study by Pertti Ahonen, Jerzy Kochanowski and others on forced migration in Europe acknowledges that private, family-sphere memory of the eastern borderlands in fact remained even as ‘[t]he authorities attempted to erase all traces of the Borderlands not only from literature and historiography but also from personal biographies.’ However, they acknowledge as ‘the memory of the relocations was, to a large extent, reduced to the level of personal experiences and family memory’, difficulties have subsequently emerged in memory culture, as this ‘produced selective memories, strengthened stereotypes, produced popular myths, and created painful voids in the Polish historical consciousness.’ Rather than present Poles are victims of communist-era memory culture, as Thompson did, these

310 Ibid., 204 n. 20.
315 Ibid., pp.229-30.
318 People on the Move, p.155.
scholars’ approach recognises the difficulties posed for postcommunist memory work ‘as the focal point of collective memory shifted eastwards.’

Mark argued ‘multiple perspectives’ characterise democratic memory, yet numerous studies indicate how after 1989 Polish ‘patterning the national past’, to use Hodgkin and Radstone’s term, ensured ‘denial of incongruous or undesirable elements.’ For the purposes of nationalist memory projects, “the people” are inscribed to justify a unitary national memory, whereas there is evidence that popular or vernacular memory is a potential ‘tool with which to contest “official” versions of the past.’ As Bodnar argued:

Most citizens can honor the basic political structure of the nation, for instance, and still vigorously disagree with cultural leaders about what the nation stands for and what type of devotion it merits. They often express this disagreement not in violent terms but in more subtle expressions of indifference or inventive historical constructions of their own.

Reaching for the memoir archive should enable exploration of these often subtle disputes and disagreements with dominant public histories, whether produced today or under communism.

The value of communist-era memoir competitions in relation to today’s problematic state-sanctioned national memory is evident in relation to ongoing controversies over Polish-Jewish relations, which shifted from the academy to more public and popular debate with the publication of Jan Gross’ Neighbours which questioned national schematic narrative templates of Polish victimhood. Thompson’s essay overlooked the attempts to come to terms with troubling aspects of the national past, preferring instead to present Poles as victims of communist-era memory politics. She argues that ‘under communism, the Jewish Holocaust was polluted by mendacity’, leading to the problems of xenophobia and nationalism. However, communism’s collapse or – somehow – ‘the departure of the Russian army in 1993 brought significant changes to the remembrance of the Shoah in Poland, and the trauma of Auschwitz is beginning to achieve its proper closure.’ Perhaps she has in mind the kind of ‘closure’ the 1944 Warsaw Rising has achieved ‘with the building of a commemorative

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319 Ibid., p.156.
320 Mark, p.xxiv.
324 Thompson, Ways, p.230.
325 Ibid., p.231.
museum.” The state-backed project generates closure because Soviet mendacity or silencing of the uprising is overcome. The Holocaust cannot be treated in the same way, framed as overcoming communist-era mendacity, which Thompson attempts by overlooking the disputes initiated with Gross’ publication on Polish involvement in massacres at Jedwabne and other towns and villages during the war.

In his more recent studies, Gross abandoned the strong form of totalitarian school historiography evident in Revolution from Abroad, investigating instead events overlooked in the communist-era published sphere when any ‘mendacity’ served to protect national dignity. Historian Tadeusz Manteuffel attempted to make explicit such restrictions under communism but found his statement was censored, as he called for recognition that “the history of each nation has both positive and dark sides which cannot be effaced.” The irony of his attempt to speak was that he was commenting on “difficulties with censorship in researching contemporary history.” In Neighbors (2001), Gross included references to competition memoirs from ‘Opis mojej wsi’ (1948) finding contributions published between 1967 and 1971 fell outside both postcommunist nationalist and also state-socialist grand narratives. Gross expressed astonishment ‘at the complete openness of simple people who in 1948 sent to an official institution their recollections, which were so out of synch with the officially approved version of current events.’ Communist-era autobiographers were open about their compatriots’ antisemitism and other factors including ‘collaboration’ with German forces. Perhaps Gross’ surprise also stems from his earlier convictions regarding a communist-era monolith which, in theory, ought not to have permitted such competitions or publications. Gross’ encounter with competition memoirs reveals the multiplicity of versions of the past under communism, with some of these narratives entering the published sphere despite censorship.

A problem in memory studies is that, unlike the shift in social history away from totalitarian school models, notions of total control over published discourse, and even thought itself, prevail.

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326 Ibid., 231.
330 Gross, Neighbours, 252, n.3.
331 See: Gross, Neighbours, pp.152-163 for the section titled ‘Collaboration’.
2.2 Memory Studies and totalitarianism

Certain fundamental principles of memory studies are overlooked for their relevance to state-socialist countries, or at least communist Poland. It is particularly concerning when scholars who collaborated with Polish memoir sociologists under communism later reproduce the totalitarian paradigm. Daniel Bertaux, who even edited Polish scholars’ essays, was among Western academics who attended a Warsaw conference in August 1978 on the biographical method in social sciences. Yet, writing in 1992 Bertaux, homogenised Central-Eastern Europe by ascribing it a single collective memory and stressing the value of scholars’ contribution to the ‘amazing process of recovering a collective memory in the countries formerly ruled by Communist regimes.’ He believes ‘the grip of totalitarianism extended far beyond the sphere of public discourse, where its control was total: it reached into the sphere of private life by preventing parents from telling their children what they had experienced, lest they should end up being denounced for anti-Socialist propaganda.’ Bertaux speaks for all of the former socialist bloc, presenting monolithic public discourse allowing no competing versions of the past, while communicative memory is declared almost entirely restricted. There is no gap where the intersection of official and internally-persuasive narratives might be explored as instead some kind of frozen truth might be uncovered, as Maria Mälksoo’s recent article on European memory politics suggests. Wartime memories and others could simply be retrieved as truth following communism’s collapse which ended ‘politically institutionalized collective memory as an infinitely closed book (à la George Orwell)’. Bertaux at least saw the necessity of untangling the multiplicity of voices when constructing postcommunist narratives, but for Mälksoo ‘enforced official mnemonical stasis’ ended, ‘revealing the falsifications and distortions of the past imposed upon them [socialist countries] by the “mnemonical hibernation” of the


336 Mälksoo, p.672.
communist period’. The retrieved memory, free of falsifications and distortions, would lead through insurgent moments, rather than everyday history. She frames ‘the revolutions in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1980’ as inspired by ‘[f]orms of communicative and cultural memory, which remained largely beyond the control of centralized power’. There is thus again a role for the imagined nation and its symbols, but not ordinary people.

It is evident that Orwell provides for some researchers a shorthand model of memory under communism. Climo and Cattell add Ray Bradbury and Milan Kundera to the canon of fiction writers whose works substitute, with little methodological concern, investigation of actual memory practices under communism. ‘While not evidence in a scientific sense, the dystopias of Orwell’s 1984 [sic] (1949) and Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451 (1967) show the necessity for totalitarian regimes to control memory and the powerful resistance to such control.’ Kundera illustrates that ‘erasing memory’ and “liquidating people” are apparently equivalent, while Bradbury shows intellectuals ‘keeping the memories alive against a future freedom when books can be printed again.’ It is assumed that there must necessarily be a paper archive to mark alternative memory. Opening his introduction to Stalinism in Poland, Anthony Kemp-Welch cites Czesław Miłosz’s Captive Mind: “The emperors of today have understood one simple truth: whatever does not exist on paper does not exist at all.” Such claims privilege an elite-centred memory, with elites ascribed agency for remembering on behalf of the nation.

However, Aleida Assmann’s work provides a useful framework for exploring alternative models of canon and archive, with a variety of sites and sources providing the record of the past. Yet she too ultimately turns to Orwell, making communist societies an exception to a seemingly universal model. Initially, Assmann considers ‘the dynamics of cultural

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337 Ibid., p.659.
338 Ibid., p.659.
memory’, or changing authority of particular stores of knowledge and versions of the past, suggesting historical and pragmatic reasons for social forgetting, including limited space as new experiences emerge. ‘The continuous process of forgetting is part of social normality. [...] If we concede that forgetting is the normality of personal and cultural life, then remembering is the exception.’ Only certain ‘core areas of active cultural memory’ are ‘canonized’ and granted ‘continuous presence’ whether as works of art, texts of ‘historic key events’. Some things might not be actively remembered, but are stored when ‘deemed interesting or important enough to not let them vanish on the highway to total oblivion.’ In the archive and outside ‘active cultural memory’, these elements become secondary ‘reference memory’ and undergo ‘passive remembering’, retrieved if the need arises. Forgetting also has active and passive aspects. ‘Active forgetting’ can involve ‘trashing and destroying’ but are also ‘a necessary and constructive part of internal social transformations’. This can take ‘violently destructive’ forms against other cultures, while ‘[c]ensorship has been a forceful if not always successful instrument for destroying material and mental cultural products.’ She finds the ‘passive form of cultural forgetting’ involves ‘non-intentional acts such as losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind.’ There is no material destruction but they ‘fall out of the frames of attention, valuation, and use’ and remain discoverable in future in ‘obscured depots’. Any social change requires active forgetting, thus it is part of normal social processes. Censorship aims to direct active forgetting, though usually it appears to permit circumvention. Meanwhile, passive forgetting appears commonplace, an accident of time, carelessness and changing tastes. The memoir archive experienced passive forgetting in postcommunist Poland as it was accidentally partly-destroyed, while texts were ‘dispersed in forgotten depots’ or ‘obscure depots’, such as MHPRL in Piaseczno or IS UAM basements. With state-sanctioned active remembering of communism shifting the dynamics of cultural memory towards victim narratives within the familiar national memory

344 Ibid., pp.100-101.
345 Ibid., p.101.
346 Ibid., p.100: ‘The working memory stores and reproduces the cultural capital of a society that is continuously recycled and re-affirmed. Whatever has made it into the active cultural memory has passed rigorous processes of selection, which secure for certain artifacts a lasting place in the cultural working memory of a society.’
347 Ibid., pp.97-98.
348 Ibid., p.99.
framework, this archive of everyday histories largely fell out of attention, valuation and use, and thus it was passively forgotten.

Assmann’s approach to the dynamics of cultural memory appears particularly applicable to Poland’s experience of two intensive periods of transformation and attempts to instrumentalised memory and history, after the war and post-1989. There were attempts to shape the content of active remembering, but ultimately ordinary people could draw on alternative sources, since – as she notes – censorship was not always successful in its controlling aims. Despite all this, ‘totalitarian states’ are made an exception as Assmann’s model of canon and archive classes totalitarian societies alongside oral cultures, as both substitute ‘storing memory’ with rites and ritual.

In totalitarian states, there is also no storing memory, but for very different reasons. In such a state, as Orwell has shown in his novel 1984, every scrap that is left over from the past has to be changed or eliminated because an authentic piece of evidence has the power to crush the official version of the past on which the rulers base their power.

Assmann considers Winston Smith a ‘paradoxical archivist’ charged with ‘rewriting the sources to make them mirror the present concerns. This paranoid effort is deemed necessary for the protection of the state because an independent reference to the past can trigger a counter-history that challenges the totalitarian version of the past and undermines the state.’

By naming no particular totalitarian state, Assmann suggests a generalised model incorporating Central-Eastern Europe. There is no methodological issue, it seems, with using Orwell instead of actual explorations of memory under communism, although – following Assmann’s logic – this would be because no traces of an alternative past could remain, only the eternal present constructed not by active forgetting or destruction, but through what would have to be active falsification of the archive. What becomes evident in memoir publications is that often introductions – as the controversy over publishing Znaniecki and Thomas showed – were required to frame the sources in a way that would ‘make them mirror present concerns’, but the sources remained largely untouched.

An alternative perspective on memory under communism was offered by Rubie S. Watson in 1994. Her approach still seems quite exceptional and rarely practiced as she suggests researching ‘the ways in which many small, incremental acts can alter structures and

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350 Ibid., p.105.
institutions that once seemed entrenched and inviolate. Watson’s early postcommunist work stresses scholars should ‘probe the limits of state socialism in its capacities to colonize and dominate the private and public spaces of ordinary people.’ Anthropological investigation from the bottom up reveals ‘that official histories, while plentiful, never precluded the active construction and transmission of unofficial pasts.’ There was hegemony in public discourse but alternative modes of discourse existed, as she differentiates political, academic and popular spheres, while also noting ‘[c]ontestation both within communities of historians and among ordinary people over how the past was to be represented was never fully eradicated.’ Not only was there not a monolithic discourse in communist states directed by the state, but even particular spheres – such as historiography – are differentiated. This becomes quite obvious if communist-era scholarship is read. She also notes that ‘unsanctioned remembrance’ was not necessarily effaced but was ‘sometimes public’. However, there is no suggesting that this unsanctioned remembrance was necessarily oppositional. Equally, there is no suggestion that unsanctioned discourse threatened the entire system. She notes ‘mounting evidence for the survival of alternative versions of the past’ which indicate ‘that the party’s gatekeepers were not as successful in mandating what could be remembered as we had assumed.’ However, the system of course survived despite these alternative visions’ existence, with Watson suggesting similarly to Johnston that what should be explored are ‘the second economy’, ‘nepotism’, so effectively the features of getting by. Few essays in the volume Watson introduced followed her approach, although Stephen Jones argues that previous failures to explore ‘informal channels of resistance […] has left us with an overblown perception of the power of the totalitarian states. Interest-group theories, when applied to the USSR, did not explore the more everyday spheres of privacy and resistance such as memory and family.’ While, again, ‘resistance’ might be an inappropriate term, Watson and Jones’ approaches show that getting by was achieved without the absolute confiscation of the private realm, and instead

352 Watson, p.10.
353 Ibid., p.2.
354 Ibid., p.2.
355 Ibid., p.4.
356 Ibid., p.6.
357 Ibid., p.15.
memory, family life and everyday economy could develop in relation to rather than dominated by official claims and official policy.

Contrary to his earlier statement regarding absolute control over family memory, Bertaux recognises in *On Living Through Soviet Russia* that ‘everyday life’ and ‘daily efforts of families to survive’ produced their own particular agency, hence – according to Bertaux – their rules became one of the ‘state secrets concealed by the Communist regime’. The goal was ‘protecting the monopoly that the Party seized for steering the historical direction of social change. The monopoly assumed that the only legitimate force for the change, the historical Subject, was the Party.’ It claimed change proceeded along ‘the lines marked out by the Party’ and thus stifled recognition of ‘the existence and legitimacy of Subjects for action other than the Party itself.’ Although ‘the rules of Soviet society’ were obvious to people as they experienced them, and indeed – following Johnston – co-created them, Bertaux feels that the threat was in revealing them in official discourse as this would undermine the Party and its claim to historical agency.

Even though the Party made similar claims in Poland, the published sphere permitted revelations of such rules. Using largely Polish sources, Paul Lewis writing in 1973, for example, noted that peasants found various ways to avoid ‘obstacles to the operation and development of their farms’. Some ‘opt out and avoid contact with State institutions and the socialist sector’, some accept official ‘negation of traditional peasant values’, while others engage in ‘political and economic organisations [...] but more with a view to pursuing traditional (anti- or, at best, non-socialist) objectives through the institutional means available.’ The methods for getting by were evident using Polish sources in the 1970s, which revealed ‘the evasion of bureaucratic procedures, the predominance of personal relationships and manifestations of petty corruption become a form of political influence.’ For Poland, at least, it is necessary to discount the notion that the Party sought to install a monolithic history, subsumed to a permanent present, and control everyday life and memory,

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or efface evidence in the published sphere of alternative modes of remembering, practice and agency.

Some approaches in memory studies applied to normative, Western societies prove more applicable than the dominant approach in memory studies to state-socialist countries. As Wertsch noted above, all modern states seek to produce a unitary, usable history. This means, as PMG have argued, subordinated groups ‘are usually robbed of access to the means of publicity’, which is part of being ‘actually silenced’ or ‘marginalised’ with ‘cultural domination’ stifling claims contradicting ‘dominant memory’.\(^\text{364}\) The groups’ specific memory tends to be incorporated into the dominant memory and its members spoken for. However, PMG propose tracing how “the people”, “the working class” or the female sex do “make history” even under conditions of oppression or exploitation.\(^\text{365}\) This means becoming ‘historians of the present too’,\(^\text{366}\) recognising that ‘knowledge of past and present is also produced in the course of everyday life’.\(^\text{367}\) Such knowledge has ‘sociological importance’, as Bauman noted. ‘Memory is history-in-action. Remembered history is the logic which the actors inject into their strivings and which they employ to invest credibility into their hopes.’\(^\text{368}\) Ordinary people act based on past and present knowledge, framing future actions according to previous experience and existing knowledge, only in part drawn from official sources. If the rules of everyday life were absent from Soviet discourse, as Bertaux claimed then they also struggled to gain representation in “the field of public representations of history”. However, I argue, in Poland too there were ‘contradictory scripts’ and competing actors existing in the context of a “dominant memory” that emerged. As PMG stress, though, ‘we do not mean to imply that conceptions of the past that acquire a dominance in the field of public representations are either monolithically installed or everywhere believed in.’ This is because the public ‘field is crossed by competing constructions of the past, often at war with each other.’\(^\text{369}\) PMG members Bommes and Wright state that investigation of popular memory should explore its interrelation with dominant memory to consider: ‘How is a particular version of the past produced, privileged, installed and maintained as a public and


\(^{365}\) PMG, p.212.

\(^{366}\) Ibid., p.205.


\(^{369}\) PMG, pp.207-8.
national “consensus”? How, above all, does this process bear upon the subordinated historical consciousness [...]?

Totalitarian states appear to offer a simple answer, with domination, rather than hegemony, achieved through state control supported by censorship. As PMG note, there are attempts to forge unitary discourses ‘by direct control (censorship for example) and by a violent recasting or obliteration of whole fields of public history’. However, these need not always have been successful, thus it is necessary to explore how official claims were opposed, rejected and reappropriated, as well as internalised and accepted in the course of everyday life as far as it is reflected in competition memoirs. While ‘competing constructions of the past’ may not have been ‘at war’ with each other in People’s Poland – unless the grand narrative of postcommunist national memory is accepted – there was certainly competition, tension and contestation between different claims.

Lynn Abrams, drawing on Halbwachs, finds the past is ‘modelled, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present’, and ‘an individual’s memory is always situated within a collective or group consciousness of an event or experience.’ In reading PMG, she argued that ‘History-making, or the construction of views of the past in any society, is the product of a struggle for dominance of a particular interpretation of an event or period. And when a hegemonic view emerges it generally excludes or mutes alternative or counter interpretations.’ However, the always and any prove less than universal, as ‘totalitarian regimes’, she argues ‘have the power to suppress not just the public articulation of memories that contradict or challenge official accounts of the past but also the ability to remember at all. In Passerini’s words, “there is nothing left to transmit if nobody is there to receive the message”.

Connerton’s approach initially bears resemblance to Znaniecki and Thomas’ theory of social change, and the role of memory and past habits. ‘The attempt to break definitively with an older social order encounters a kind of historical deposit and threatens to founder upon it. The more total the aspirations of the new regime, the more imperiously will it seek to

371 PMG, p.209.
introduce an era of forced forgetting.\textsuperscript{375} However, Thomas and Znaniecki argue such efforts would meet further resistance or circumvention. Despite the apparent relevance of the idea of foundering on historical deposits to challenging totalitarian paradigms of memory studies, and excluding societies undergoing change, Connerton excludes ‘all totalitarianisms’\textsuperscript{376} from his apparently universal model of ‘how societies remember’. He homogenises various systems under their effort to achieve ‘forced forgetting’.\textsuperscript{377} Where PMG argue that the historical apparatus seeks hegemony and thus structurally excludes particular groups, Connerton believes ‘state apparatus is used in a systematic way to deprive its citizens of their memory. All totalitarianisms behave in this way; the mental enslavement of the subjects of a totalitarian regime begins when their memories are taken away.’ The ultimate goal is that there would be ‘nobody who would ever again properly bear witness to the past’.\textsuperscript{378} If citizens ‘lose their memory’ then it is not because they are targeted directly, but because elites are removed from public positions. Here ordinary people appear not only at the mercy of the totalitarian state but are also dependent upon national elites whom Connerton deems the only people who can ‘properly bear witness to the past’ because under totalitarianism ‘their writing of oppositional histories [...] preserves the memory of social groups whose voice would otherwise have been silenced.’\textsuperscript{379} So, subordinate groups speak only through elites, while the most important voice to be preserved is that of fellow elites representing the nation. Framed as an attempt to unite ‘recollection and bodies’ by exploring ‘commemorative ceremonies’,\textsuperscript{380} the logic of How Societies Remember suggests most bodies are irrelevant, unless the body belongs to elites who provide surrogate stores of cultural memory. Passerini at least stressed that the state where nobody was left to remember was never achieved, nor was the ability to remember completely suppressed.

She noted in fact, ‘the daily, cultural, ambivalent opposition – often mixed with forms of acceptance – that nevertheless obliged the totalitarian powers to attend to negotiation and continuous surveillance.’\textsuperscript{381} In what Passerini stresses is ‘only a partial acceptance of its [“totalitarianism’s”] traditional implications’ she notes that the authorities often negotiated and suppressed to ensure hegemony, rather than to impose a monolithic history – as much of the memory studies work explored above suggests. ‘It is a central assumption of most oral

\textsuperscript{376} Connerton, p.14.
\textsuperscript{377} Ibid., p.12.
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid., p.14-15.
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid., p.15.
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid., pp.4-5.
history that people always have something to say on what is proposed to or even imposed
on them, or at least that potentially every individual has an understanding and interpretation
of his/her history as well as of History.’ Consequently, it is necessary to avoid seeing the
“masses” ‘as containers that absolute powers fill with whatever contents they decide.’

This is what totalitarian theories imply, denying ordinary people agency over their
memories, thoughts or everyday lives. This is why it is crucial to firstly avoid the totalitarian
label and secondly to stress that there always remained an ability to remember. The
historian’s task, or at least the mnemohistorian’s – investigating not ‘the past as such, but
only with the past as it is remembered’ – is to find those traces of alternative stores of
memory, and to explore the masses’ experience of history as active and creative.

‘Mnemohistory is’, as Assman argues, ‘reception theory applied to history.’ And there
were always people to receive the various messages produced under communism.

Wulf Kansteiner’s approach to memory demonstrates a reception theory approach as he also
recognises ordinary people were not only consumers but also producers of history as they
engaged in everyday exchanges following encounters with official state discourse. He argues
that since memory ‘is a collective phenomenon but it only manifests itself in the actions and
statements of individuals’ any successful constructed collective memory requires
reproduction in actual social life, so in the spheres of communicative memory: ‘collective
remembering can be explored on very different scales; it takes place in very private settings
as well as in the public sphere.’ The heteroglot multiple locations of collective memory
make ideal reproduction unlikely as intersecting discourses can alter senders’ intentions,
creating variations of grand narratives.

The larger the collective in question the more important it is that its memory is
reflected and reproduced on a lower level of numeric complexity. For instance,
national memories need to be reproduced on the level of families, professions, or in
other locations where people form emotional attachments in their everyday lives.

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382 Passerini, Yearbook, pp.5-6.
383 Jan Assmann, in Collective Memory Reader, p.209.
384 Ibid., p.209.
385 Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies’,
387 Ibid., p.189 n. 40.
The competition memoirs should therefore be a useful indicator of whether official memory was successfully reproduced and thus became successful ‘collective memory initiatives’\(^{388}\), or whether there were tensions between official objectives and individual memory. It is also of interest how academics, publishers and state institutions mediated any potential tensions. This approach reflects Kansteiner’s model, which called on memory studies to explore the ‘complex process of cultural production and consumption that acknowledges the persistence of cultural traditions as well as the ingenuity of memory makers and the subversive interests of memory consumers.’ These ‘different historical agents’ engage in negotiation and exploring ‘these negotiations helps us distinguish among the abundance of failed collective memory initiatives on the one hand and the few cases of successful collective memory construction on the other.’\(^{389}\) It is clear in Kansteiner’s model that memory makers are not limited to the official sphere, but also exist in communicative or everyday spheres with consumers of public claims becoming makers through exchanges. These are investigated here alongside the mediation of the entry of popular autobiography into the communist-era published sphere. Although censorship was important, it was not the only institution involved.

### 2.3 Censorship

Marta Fik considered the censor ‘co-creator’, an imagined reader causing authors to limit their writing and thought. ‘The censor became a work’s co-author, functioning exceptionally discreetly; indeed, until 1981 no censorial interventions were marked, while later this was done selectively while also employing various subterfuges.’\(^{390}\) Inhabiting writers’ minds, the censor inhibited them, ideally ensuring no unpublishable thoughts developed. Fik marks 1981 as a caesura because on 31 July a law was enacted after Solidarity-led demands meant, among things, censorship had to be marked.\(^{391}\) In law, this was a novelty, although it is inaccurate to suggest that in practice no censorship was marked. Some memoir publications featured decipherable indicators of cuts,\(^{392}\) while some pre-1981 works in introductions made clear that restrictions had been imposed.\(^{393}\) Almost every publication in Poland faced

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388 Ibid., p.179.
389 Ibid., p.179.
392 POZO used a series of ellipses and brackets, for example.
393 Wieś polska 1939-1948 used summaries to show what had been cut, as well using dashes to mark censored cuts.
preventive censorship, and memoir publications were no exception. However, it is perhaps not the case that ordinary people as competition entrants had institutional censors in mind as their principal readers, unlike professional authors. Publication was not a prime objective of many competition entrants, although writing ‘for a prize’ could be, with some entrants interpreting competitions as requiring reproduction of authoritative public discourses. Contrary to Malikowski’s reading, such entries were not necessarily rewarded, while participants sometimes perceived sociological institutions and editorial boards as sympathetic mediators of criticism, enabling it to reach the authorities.

Stanislaw Kondek argues that ‘for the majority of society the activities of censorship were imperceptible.’ Unlike authors or editors, few ordinary people would encounter censorship mechanisms directly, although its effects would be perceptible in the absence of certain themes from public discourse and the concomitant foregrounding of other tropes. Of course, the ‘collective but unofficial’ censor functioning in social groups, as noted by Peter Burke, still influenced contributions by ensuring ‘embarrassing memories’ for the local community or author’s family were omitted. However, the institutional censor was quite probably less of a concern for competition entrants. For editors and publishers, though, GUK’s demands would influence selection and editing in preparing texts for print. Jane Leftwich Curry notes, ‘[i]t was during this production process that much of the real filtering of information and criticism went on. What the censors received had already been censored by writers, producers and editors in the course of their conception and preparation of an article, book or production.’ For memoir compilations, a host of factors affected selection and preparation aside from censorship demands which affected what censors read. There were important questions of sociological or historiographical approaches and analytical frameworks, the intended readership (popular, academic, mixed), what political connections particular editors and compilers had, the permitted length of a publication and the length of a particular autobiography as well as its content. Eventual publications were shaped by a variety of factors, while the involvement of ordinary people disrupts the standard framework of censorship studies.

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Sue Curry Jansen found, ‘[a]ll histories of censorship are histories of elites. That is, they are histories of celebrated or notorious individuals. This elitism in unavoidable because freedom of opinion, unlike regulation of property, industry, mobility, or sexuality, affects only a small minority in any society: those who advocate unconventional, heretical, or revolutionary ideas.’ Historically, the number of people expressing such has indeed been limited, but the limitations come from access to the published sphere and historical apparatus, rather than a limitation on thought. Certainly ordinary people could hold unconventional opinions, but their limited ability to disseminate them, usually meant fewer institutional restrictions were imposed. What archives of censorship usually show then are, as Curry Jansen’s critique outlines, ‘epistemological criminals’ who sought to write, therefore ‘accounts of infamous cases involving prominent figures like Galileo crowd the historical record while the parts played by ordinary people are not usually recorded.’ Certainly the competition memoirs are exceptional in terms of ordinary people playing the part of authors. Usually, ordinary people have been considered, if at all, principally as consumers of discourses and they have featured – at least in modern times of increased literacy – as censors’ imagined readers.

Curry Jansen’s section on ‘Censorship in Socialist Societies’ almost exclusively explores the USSR. However, it nevertheless expounds her thesis that censorship is not purely a result of attempted ideological monopolisation but was also ‘a necessary consequence of state monopoly of the means of communication.’ She therefore situates state-socialist censorship on a continuum of modern societies’ tendency towards unitary discourse owing to the practice of power. She considers how modern non-totalitarian societies also produce a censorship-effect, which ‘encompasses all socially structured proscriptions or prescriptions which inhibit or prohibit dissemination of ideas, information, images, and other messages through a society’s channels of communication whether these obstructions are caused by political, economic, religious, or other systems of authority. It includes both overt and covert proscriptions and prescriptions.’ Any authority within the historical, ideological or state apparatus seeks, as Martin Donahay suggests also, to ‘deny the dialogism of a decentred and fractured subjectivity’ as ‘a response to the dialogic potential of language.’

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398 Curry Jansen, Censorship, p.28.
399 Ibid., pp.99-130.
401 Ibid., p.221, n.1.
context of PMG, the censorship-effect is an attempt to secure hegemony over public discourse, although there will always be slippages and contestation.

Curry Jansen’s continuum therefore includes communist censorship within the ‘power-knowledge’ knot. Any practice of power seeks to ‘control the power to name’, consequently influencing ‘the architecture of arguments’, ‘the logic of assertion’, and ‘rules of evidence’. The strongest form of such control was evidently under stalinism, as the Myśl Filozoficzna articles declared what were permitted arguments and valid sources. Over time, although the Party-state sought to maintain its leading role in History, an evident multiplicity of arguments and evidence emerged in People’s Poland, with competition over the validity of competition autobiographies shifting from a Party-level debate to an intra-academic discussion. Still, restrictions on analyses remained evident as the ‘architecture of arguments’ could rarely incorporate fully the evidence from below. The complexities of framing the memoirs are explored in subsequent chapters. What is crucial to note here, however, is that the usual state-academia or state-elite loci of censorship studies are shifted by the existence of popular autobiographers who seek entry into the field of public representations of past and present as producers, not merely as consumers. Curry Jansen’s work also has, however, important insight for considering the relationship between censorship and consumers of discourses subjected to the censorship-effect. Ordinary people can use and transform official claims against issuers’ intentions.

The lines drawn by the powerful restrict the powerless, but they also inform and instruct them. They present the drama of power to the people. They state the official version of events, procedures, and rules. They tell the powerless what they are up against. The powerless use this knowledge of power to negotiate their own recipes for survival. These recipes may season the gaps in the official version with piety, laughter, scepticism, or contempt. But whether they recommend docile compliance or cunning defiance, folk recipes, wisdom, and lore are inherently subversive. They encourage the powerless to think for themselves.

This passage shows members of subordinate groups – the powerless – capable of thinking critically, heretically and unconventionally, although this might find expression in unfamiliar forms, which do not necessarily aspire to claim authority. The competition memoirs, however, could be considered a form which encouraged such confrontation with

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403 Curry Jansen, Censorship, p.7.
404 Ibid., p.6.
405 Ibid., p.7.
406 Ibid., p.7.
power. While some entries could be framed in accordance with officially-acceptable frameworks, others slipped out, revealing the potentially subversive thought of ordinary people, some within the ranks of Party-state power, others outside it surviving as subalterns.

The memoirs illustrate what Polish expert on the history of censorship Zbigniew Romek found, namely that the Party-state censor did not seek monolithic elimination of all non-aligned representations of past and present. Indeed, even under stalinism Soviet publications were rejected by Polish censors if they were deemed unsuitable for the Polish market.\(^{407}\) Instead, ‘tactical’ passing of critical texts was practiced, even including ‘deviations from the accepted, official mode of interpreting current or past events’, thus creating a safety valve at times of crisis.\(^{408}\) Such deviation seems to apply not only during crisis, but became commonplace, while the state nevertheless maintained control over the general architecture of arguments, meaning that where critical claims appeared, censors were to ensure ‘fragmentation of the described reality.’\(^{409}\) This involved toning down overt criticism to become ‘constructive criticism’ aimed at ‘correcting particular errors or negative phenomena.’\(^{410}\) The censor created an impression of the ‘incidental nature of events’ meaning that ‘lenient treatment’\(^{411}\) of a given text became possible. Restrictions remained strict, however, where there was recognition of ‘the dysfunction throughout the entire system.’\(^{412}\) Only approved Party-state authorities could produce generalising arguments, while published discourse was permitted to fragment reality, concentrating on a particular problem.

However, this system of fragmentation and censorship could be troubled by the fragmented and heteroglot form of memoir competitions and subsequent publications. The 1962 competition ‘Miesiąc mojego życia’ sought diaries depicting one month in a person’s life to supplement the MPWPL life stories. The resulting 1964 publication indicates tensions between the autobiographies, their academic-sociological framing and the objectives of state-sponsored discourse and institutional censorship.

\(^{407}\) KiW publishers, closely associated with the Party, issued *Ludzie radzieckiej wsi* in 1955, a translation from Russian with a 20,242 print run. A reluctant censor, unconvinced by its depictions of rural Soviet life, nevertheless passed the volume but put in his report that ‘I do not believe that similar bland propaganda would benefit anyone and I think that the brochure, despite its ideological value, will not find many supporters.’ AAN /GUKPPiW/376 (31/58), Dokumentacja książek (ingerencje, recenzje) KiW 1955/56, p.9.

\(^{408}\) Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna*, p. 53.

\(^{409}\) Ibid., p.55.

\(^{410}\) Ibid., p.54.

\(^{411}\) Ibid., p.283.

\(^{412}\) Ibid., p.54.
2.4 Miesiąc mojego życia

Launched in January 1962 by Tygodnik Kulturalny and Polish Radio, the competition generated around 2000 entries, around half from women who won seven of ten top prizes. A selection edited by Józef Chałasiński published in June 1964 appeared alongside the first MPWPL volume. MMŻ was repeated a decade later resulting in a second compilation in 1978. I investigate only the 1964 MMŻ volume since it was a companion to MPWPL, with GUK documents also offering insight into official treatment of this volume.

Chałasiński’s introduction describes the published selection as ‘a type of collectively written narrative drawn from the life of contemporary Poland.’ The editor’s caution is signalled by using powieść rather than historia – synonyms for ‘story’ or narrative but a historia carries greater authority, suggesting definitive, rather than fragmented, depiction of everyday life, thus encroaching on the Party-state’s claim to direct history and possess authority over generalisation. Indeed, some memoir publications, including Pamiętniki dziesięciolecia, the first major stalinist-era publication of new popular autobiographies, were granted historical status. Their censor argued ‘these memoirs are a history of People’s Rule in Poland. They depict the organisation of people’s rule, agrarian reform, battling gangs, the Mikołajczyk PSL, changes in people’s consciousness, social advance of workers and the party’s leading role.’ All the fears expressed by Palska are satisfied here, as this volume appears to simply rewrite the historical grand narrative through ordinary people’s experience. However, in framing MMŻ as a narrative, Chałasiński’s caution also reveals the diversity of experiences and multiple histories that exist. Still, Chałasiński positions the memoirs within an officially acceptable framework of social transformation which ‘forms a new strata of cultured people’ who show that divisions between white-collar and blue-collar workers are ‘disappearing’. Peasants are notably absent from this evidently cautious depiction of advance as nascent and limited. He also uses the introduction to highlight tensions between the grand narrative of transformation and women’s experiences, indeed

417 Chałasiński, MMŻ, p.5.
418 Pamiętniki dziesięciolecia, Hanna Reich, ed. (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1955).
420 Chałasiński, MMŻ, pp.6-7.
juxtaposing the two on one page, suggesting that subaltern groups remain ‘cut off from the lines of mobility’. 421

Lower Silesian housewife “Pliszka” wrote to enliven monotonous days, while her husband enjoyed the fruits of social advance. “Leśniczanka” left university to marry her forester husband, with her husband’s work coming to dominate her identity evident in her pseudonym. She feels resentment having sacrificed her ambitions. Low-paid embroiderer and divorcée “Pomorzanka” confesses everyday frustrations. 422 The volume’s structure also highlights subtly how the women opening it are as distant as possible in society from the tiny portion of male miners featuring in the concluding section, 423 whose presence indicates perhaps how few people fulfil the Party-state’s ideal of advance as the book is filled with subaltern, rural and provincial Poles. In their life stories, Chałasiński notes, ‘domestic life, cultural interests and entertainment’ prevail. ‘There is nothing in them about national or world politics’ with only Party members such as “Miernikow” commenting on Party matters. 424 The private realm hardly seems confiscated as the rules of everyday life, including getting by, are evident. Chałasiński finds social relations in provincial Poland seemed characterised by ‘internal looseness – a lack of a social-ideal bond’— so alienation, then an official bugbear – as family relations prove the contributors’ focus. Rather than bring unity and social bonds, urbanisation and social mobility brought social disorganisation. Even people working in a ‘the same occupation in the same town have loose social relations as if they lived in different places.’ 425

Even though ‘numbers of educated, cultured people are increasing, new social bonds between them, even in one occupation, have not yet emerged.’ 426 Chałasiński here demonstrates how the memoirs reveal a gap between perceived social transformation and its reality in social experience, noting that the transformation of society is a long-term project. The disproportionate number of Recovered Territories memoirists selected for publication is unsurprising given the focus on social disorganisation. A decade later, however, Chałasiński presented the new lands as a site where ‘determining one’s place materially, socially and culturally in a changing society and an urbanizing culture come to the fore in

422 Chałasiński, MMŻ, pp.7-8.
423 Women on their work and homes, pp.45-160; Professionals about their work and milieu, pp.161-384; Work, culture and rural transformation, pp.385-530; Work and culture in mining communities, pp.521-583.
424 Chałasiński, MMŻ, p.20.
425 Ibid., p.25.
426 Ibid., p.22.
these biographies’ adding that lives are framed ‘in the category of enlightened and cultured people differentiated by occupation, in the categories of urban culture open to all.’ In *MMŻ*, Chałasiński says ‘privileging the Western Territories in this selection’ was unintentional, a consequence of the entries’ content, which shows ‘the phenomenon of these lands’ great role in the structure of People’s Poland and its socio-cultural transformations.’ While potentially affirming ‘the provinces’ social-cultural advance’, this reading also reveals tensions with actual social life as experienced.

Chałasiński’s concluding remarks on whether ‘there is any notable general socio-cultural process’ evident in the volume are conceptually telling as he notes ‘the formation of a new, open category of educated and cultural people.’ Although he considers this conclusion ‘absolutely positive’, he has evidently shifted from a ‘stratum’ to a ‘category’, suggesting that fewer people are incorporated into these general processes than it first seemed. Indeed, the volume reveals ‘the practical problems for cultural politics’ of social advance where the new intelligentsia’s aspirations might not be fulfilled. Peasants, meanwhile, should be grateful for gaining, or being granted, ‘humanity’ and autonomy despite clearly remaining distant from these apparently all-national processes, as ‘educated farmers are particularly sensitive to the social problems associated with their occupation.’ Other matters appear of little concern as the mode of production takes precedent.

Chałasiński’s introduction and the actual memoirs, generate tensions with grand narrative claims, despite the attempted affirmation. These tensions were something the censor was aware of in assessing the volume, as evident in two reports available at the GUK archive. R. Świątycka’s detailed review (dated 16 April 1964 – the book was passed for printing 27 April 1964) recommended publication only after ‘numerous interventions’ affecting thirty-one problematic passages in autobiographies and four in Chałasiński’s introduction. Świątycka’s nevertheless lenient reading finds Chałasiński ‘foregrounds positive matters, including social advance of ordinary people, and especially women’. Where he indicated problems in ‘the process for the formation of a new postwar society’, she attributes these to

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427 Józef Chałasiński, ‘The Diaries of the Young Peasant Generation as a Manifestation of Contemporary Culture’, paper presented at Third World Congress of Rural Sociology, Baton Rouge, USA, August 1972, p.10. A reprint of the paper is held at BN II 903.373.
434 AAN/GUKP/iW/777, Zespół Instruktażu: Dokumentacja pozycji książkowych PZWL, LSW 1964, p.32.
socio-political and territorial’ upheavals, rather than suggest failings in social or state-society relations. Even ‘the absence in memoirists’ lives of the labour movement or other great social or political movements and the atomisation of society, becoming closed off in the family sphere’ that she acknowledges is passed because she has created herself an acceptable framework for the problems. These factors are all indicators of expected social difficulties, while ‘growing criticism from ordinary people’ is read positively as signalling ‘growing consciousness, aspirations and needs.’

This reading suggests that the censor’s job was not necessarily to find grounds to ban a book or details, but to find precedents and frameworks that enable publication, even where there is evident ambiguity. Światycka found MMŻ ‘a fascinating yet depressing book.’ She accepts the ‘authenticity, which memoirs written years after the fact cannot guarantee, but on the other hand these everyday concerns and problems multiplied by the number of people noting them each day becomes, in the end, an intolerable torment for the reader.’ She thought the ‘inspiring’ elements were overwhelmed as ‘overall, the book creates a fairly depressing image of life in our country.’ ‘Non-sociologist readers’ (a book with a 5,251 print-run was accessible), she fears, would focus on the disunifying everyday details generated by the intensification caused by multiple authors, rather than seek the unifying reading of a depiction of the long and difficult process of advance. Judging the reader, Światycka thinks ‘everyday concerns, errors, mess, bad organisation, absurdities and shortages etc.’ will be more appealing. She finds each memoir shows ‘the same things: empty cooperative shops, where there is nothing but vodka, drinking, nepotism, cliques, laxity, on the one hand impunity, on the other helplessness of the weak. Everyone complains about their pay, that they have too little, even a young judge, a bachelor’. She finds that even if each memoir has nothing that requires intervention as such, the ‘multiplication by the number of people writing from all sorts of regions generates a generalisation which is unbelievably depressing for the reader.’ Drunkenness and nepotism appear 21 times each, while fears over income 15 times. She concludes her outline: ‘It is evident that the Party is absent from these people’s everyday lives’, even when keen members wrote. Światycka’s concern appears to be for the ordinary reader, as if these representations would somehow prove depressing, even as it is accepted that the same type of people wrote these authentic, accurate depictions of life. Indeed, the description of the problematic phenomena is the

435 AAN/GUKPiW/777, Zespół Instruktażu, p.32.
436 Ibid., p.32.
437 Ibid., p.32.
438 Ibid., p.32.
439 Ibid., p.32.
censor’s own interpretation, derived from the evidence, thus she is the one who assesses social reality as comprising impunity, absurdities etc. Perhaps Świątycka’s fears resemble those Bertaux described in the Soviet context, namely that publication might appear to acknowledge an alternative source of historical agency beyond the Party-state, located in everyday actions. Equally concerning for the censor seems to be the fact that contrary to Chałasiński’s reading of the compilation as an ‘absolutely positive’ indicator of advance, the censor believed popular readers would create a competing ‘generalisation’. However, in spite of all this and her overall assessment, Świątycka passed the volume.

Another GUK document, ‘A report on the preventative censorship of MMŻ’,440 details proposed cuts, but reading makes evident that these did not alter the balance of the volume. It remained loaded with the largely negative impressions of life in provincial and rural Poland, with cuts in fact principally affecting past experiences, which emerged in the course of reflecting upon memories triggered in the course of everyday life.441 Criticism of meat quality, for example, remains, but memories of holidays in the eastern borderlands are lacking.442 Another memoirist is open about the discrimination faced by ‘a woman from the village’ both in everyday encounters with bureaucrats or doctors, or in relation to urban Poles’ access to food.443

Reviewers noted the critical potential of MMŻ, although praise to such effect required some Aesopian language. Literary critic Andrzej Kijowski, blacklisted in 1968 for his stance against censorship, reviewed MMŻ in influential literary journal Twórczość, which he edited at that time.444 He initially seems critical by suggesting that the memoirs reveal nothing new about ‘the average Pole’, as they show only what is familiar in terms of a ‘provincial people’s dislike of the great capital’ or indeed ‘any great public institution’. He suggests the high level of criticism evident is because principally ‘rebellious types’ contributed.445 However, these soon become ‘isolated, undervalued, disappointed, or simply sad people, who are driven to write.’446 It seems that the familiarity is not because the people simply represent an archetype of disgruntled provincials, but because they are so prevalent throughout Poland.

441 ‘My husband war arrested in 1945 like many others, and taken to the depths of the USSR, he stayed there in a labour camp until 1948.’ Impavidi progrediamur, MMŻ, pp.310-349 (p.311); AAN/GUKPPiW/808, Zespół Instruktażu, pp.202-228 (p.225).
442 Impavidi progrediamur, MMŻ, pp.310-349, (p.311); AAN/GUKPPiW/808, Zespół Instruktażu, pp.202-228 (p.225).
443 Maryna, MMŻ, 1964, pp.77-93 (p.81 and p.84).
445 Kijowski, Twórczość, pp.105-6.
446 Ibid., p.106.
Apparently trite images prove unconventional in print, as marginalised communities appear where ‘nobody is involved in politics – everyone is an organiser. No one admits to a particular ideological position – and no one engages in ideological polemics (except perhaps where religion is concerned). No one is thinking of escaping their current life, no one is dreaming of a career for themselves or their children. The little life is an ideal; small joys bring the greatest happiness.’ The difference between typical published discourse is evident, as MMŻ shows instead ‘an intimate human truth’, rather than grand narratives of progress and advance. Perhaps to tempt critically-minded readers, and to show censorship had not completely distorted MMŻ, Kijowski details certain entries, particularly repatriant Szczecin doctor “Pytający” (The Questioner).

Concluding his review, Kijowski writes: ‘Let us put this book back on our shelves with a feeling of respect and necessary shame. And solidarity.' He shows that Party-state authorities and Warsaw-based intellectuals alike have overlooked ordinary Poles’ marginalised lives as he presents an ironic critique of claims that ordinary people are incapable of thinking or acting for themselves. MMŻ was exceptional for the time in diagnosing in print social reality, revealing a sphere where ordinary people were acting and surviving in some degree of isolation from state authorities.

MMŻ shows censorship in Poland did not necessarily efface all non-aligned and critical views from the published sphere nor could it control interpretation, although some censorship and memory studies work suggests otherwise. Jadwiga Czachowska’s early postcommunist work states ‘the task of censorship was promoting a particular worldview by erasing opinions differing from the “official” while also introducing an appropriate interpretation.’ MMŻ showed the censor’s job included finding justifications for publishing critical opinions, while the memoirs reflect ordinary people’s willingness to offer alternative views on official claims. Chałasiński’s introduction highlights paradoxes of attempting to mould sources to fit official frames, as what falls outside becomes more evident, particularly as multiple authors’ heteroglossia, even with a single editor, cannot be

447 Ibid., p.106.
448 Ibid., p.107.
449 Pytający, MMŻ, pp.163-176.
450 Kijowski, Twórczość, p.108.
unified into a single interpretation. Indeed, the censor outlined a critical interpretation which she felt entirely likely to be repeated across the country, yet passed *MMŻ*.

*MMŻ*, like other compilations, demonstrates the advantages of a form avoiding intertwining analysis and sources, thus creating space for readers’ individual interpretations. Academic oral history’s standard mode of presentation has been critiqued, but the matter of compilation is rarely analysed in oral history theory, memory or autobiography studies. Jeremy Popkin investigated the relation of ‘collective autobiography’ volumes and reception by considering ‘the phenomenon of autobiographical texts specifically composed for publication as part of a coordinated project, particularly when they are published in collaborative volumes. In these cases, we encounter a form of autobiography with multiple narrators’.\(^{452}\) Although he studied academics’ life writing, his outline proves applicable to similar collective autobiography projects, including memoir competitions. Popkin finds the compilation form raises questions about how our reading of autobiographical texts is altered when we have a number of them side by side. [...] Inclusion in a collaborative volume or series necessarily sets up intertextual connections and interferences with the other selections that the individual authors did not intend; at the same time, it tends to separate the texts included in such a project from those excluded.\(^{453}\)

*MMŻ* highlights some of these issues, particularly construction of narrative cohesion through a single volume where a single community of authors in readers’ minds regardless of authors’ intentions, as Popkin adds.\(^{454}\) This potential community provoked Polish censors’ wariness, particularly as the emerging collectivity appeared partially an embodiment of social advance but largely suggested a nationwide community of disaffected citizens. Popkin’s work perhaps overstates editors’ authority over creating unitary readings through selection from a broad body of sources, partly denying innovative or subversive readings. ‘Even though these prefaces may be very short, they are extremely important in determining how the essays that follow are read. [...] The prefaces and other traces of the editors’ activities in these volumes provide both explicit and implicit evidence of their intentions.’\(^{455}\) There is a tension here between intentions and determination, and I would always side with readers’ abilities to thwart those intentions. On the most practical level, nothing can compel


\(^{453}\) Popkin, p.148.


readers to read from cover to cover, including the introductions. It seems Popkin ultimately recognises the centrifugal force of autobiographical compilations since even where ‘editors’ assumptions are usually clearly stated, the relationship between their framing remarks and the contributors’ essays is often a complicated one. Autobiographies, after all, are supposed to be personal statements, not demonstrations of propositions put forward by someone else. As becomes evident in the following chapter, however, when cited in secondary sources and removed from the context of compilation or the integrity of an entire autobiography, the heteroglot sources are made to serve pre-established theories.

PMG criticised oral history-based works where ‘[p]assages are selected for quotation according to the argument’, while a decade earlier IZ’s leading memoir sociologist Zygmunt Dulczewski recognised similar methodological failings, finding researchers used archived materials for ‘illustrating their own theories and arguments with memoirists’ emphatic statements. Citations from memoirs often serve an ornamental function in academic studies. This approach restricted in-depth analysis of sources in favour of pre-established interpretative frameworks, thus Dulczewski warns, tarnishing the memoir method, giving the materials ‘above all propagandistic significance as they affirm given theses’. While restrictions on interpretative frameworks limited expression of sociological findings, this meant the compilation method was favoured over analytical studies, leaving readers with more room for interpretation.

Zbigniew Romek outlines more subtly tensions in relations between censorship and researchers. Although authorities expected ‘unequivocal assessments and interpretations’ of history and present reality, ‘scholars sought to remain faithful to the facts and spirit of sources. [...] Recent history was so saturated with events and phenomena unacceptable to censors meant that it was impossible to align even a basic level of professionalism with the authorities’ propagandistic expectations. And it is evident that professionalism remained, as ‘the source material gathered by historians on contemporary Polish history increasingly contradicted schematic declarations and arguments accepted by the authorities. The mainstream memoir movement does not feature in Romek’s narrative, although it too

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456 Popkin, p.154.
457 PMG, p.232.
458 Dulczewski, in Pół wieku pamiętnikarstwa, p.57.
459 Ibid., p.57.
460 Romek, Cenzura a nauka historyczna, p.333.
461 Ibid., pp.335-6.
evidently contributed sources which were not only gathered but published, generating tension with schematic declarations.

I explore now recent scholarship on the Recovered Territories and its methodological and empirical approaches, investigating whether it avoids using memoirs decoratively or selectively to affirm pre-established theories.
Chapter 3: Historiography, Memoirs and the Recovered Territories

The previous chapters outlined problematic totalitarian models in memory studies which persist while, as Padraic Kenney recognises, ‘the totalitarian school of historical study’ is becoming less prevalent where social history approaches are applied. However, some recent historiography avoids paradigms of total Party-state domination by framing communism through theories of nationalism. In suggesting the Party-state acquired popular legitimacy by appealing to (or manipulating) nationalist sentiment, predominantly among subaltern groups, ordinary people’s agency over thought and practice is again restricted.

3.1 Kenney’s Rebuilding Poland and the totalitarian school of historiography.

Kenney’s Rebuilding Poland (1997) – a social history of the rebuilding and repopulation of the industrial centres of Łódź, in central Poland, and Wrocław, the Recovered Territories’ largest city – opens by critiquing ‘the totalitarian school of historical study’ whose histories are compelling, straight-forward, and correct but seriously incomplete. As much as they have told us about Polish-Soviet relations and about the development of the planned economy and repressive regime, they have been unable to tell us what the communist experience was actually like.

Kenney stresses actual social life, rather than political history depicting the Party’s intentions, following which ‘the people of Poland played no role in the determination of their future’. Social history, however, ‘recasts and rewrites the entire play.’ It suggests not some parallel existence of “the people” and the state, but their intersection and why communist plans could succeed or fail based on social practice. He shows how ‘economic and social revolution’ (1945-47) and ‘political and social’ revolution of 1948-50, were influenced by ordinary people’s actions and attitudes, with social reality ‘created by both the stalinist regime and the workers themselves.’ As noted in discussing Johnston’s work, the

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462 Kenney, p.2.
463 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
464 Ibid., p.2.
465 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
466 Ibid., p.334.
goal was to show how people could be more than ‘helpless victims of an omnipotent state and diabolical ideology but resourceful shapers of their own destiny, able to turn a system to their own advantage and lessen its cruellest aspects.’ Credit for avoiding stalinism’s most drastic form is thus attributed not simply to a more benevolent (nationalistically-inspired) political class, dissidents or organised elite-intelligentsia opposition.

Szczepański likewise underlined how historiography subjects everyday agency to passive forgetting, with peasants’ role, for example, in settling the Recovered Territories overlooked. 41% of Wrocław’s population was of rural origin, yet officially an image of a modern industrial proletariat was stressed. Szczepański questioned top-down definitions of urbanisation, modernisation and progress, the Party’s leading concepts framing social change. ‘It is of course difficult to define after how many years the process of urbanisation is fully completed and whether, in fact, for some groups full transformation is even possible at all.’ Urbanisation taking the ideal type form, he finds, was less likely than the ‘rustification of the working class’. Hobsbawm also noted that it ‘would be unwise to neglect’ the influence of peasant origins of many people throughout the world who migrated into sites of modernity, meaning ‘history remains a current political force.’

Hobsbawm and Szczepański’s recognition of the historical significance of modernisation’s peasant foundations reflects Peter Burke’s observation regarding social science’s inadequate conceptual framework and progress-centred dominant paradigms. ‘The fact that the terms “urbanization”, “secularization” and “structural differentiation” have no opposites in the language of sociology tells us more about the assumptions of sociologists than about the nature of social change.’ Polish communist-era sociology, despite vast resources dedicated to promoting grand narratives of progress, developed concepts including ‘rustification/rustyfikacja’ or ‘peasantification/chłopienie’ demonstrating tensions and opposite tendencies. IZ sociologist – and Znaniecki’s former student – Zygmunt Dulczewski showed how rural settlers’ experiences deviated from official models, instead revealing ‘deurbanisation of cities’ or their ‘rustification.’ He wrote openly in 1959 of social mobility’s negative consequences, as processes ‘took the form of social disorders.’ The Recovered

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467 Ibid., pp.335-6.
468 Jan Szczepański, ‘Rola chłopów w rozwoju społeczeństwa polskiego’, Wieś Współczesna, 10 (1966), 33-39, p.34
469 Szczepański, ‘Rola chłopów’, p.34.
470 Ibid., p.36.
473 Szczepański, ‘Rola chłopów’, p.36.
Territories’ surfeit of mobility produced paradoxical outcomes, as too much choice and opportunity generated ongoing social instability.\textsuperscript{474}

Kenney’s study finds significant differences in the early postwar social histories of Łódź and Wrocław which suggests postwar state-society and social relations formed not merely through communist repression or imposition but in relation to ordinary social actors’ attitudes, memories and practice, as well as specific local infrastructural conditions. Wrocław, Kenney argues, is commonly assumed to represent ‘the Poland of the future, where social relations were reconstructed in a communist context.’\textsuperscript{475} It is deemed a pioneering site of not only reconstruction but also of social, economic and political revolution. Social historical approaches, though, also acknowledge social disorganisation, \textit{żywiołowość}, or spontaneous, decentralised action which, in Wrocław as in the Recovered Territories generally, meant social structures and relations developed initially outside planned revolutionary models.

Wrocław grew without an organizing force. The state clearly had much less influence over Wrocław’s Polish rebirth than might be expected in communist Eastern Europe. Although there were countless bureaucracies to distribute apartments, ration cards, and jobs, urban life in Wrocław developed on its own. The reach of the state and the parties was severely limited by the extensive damage to Wrocław’s infrastructure by the war, the chaotic influx of people into Wrocław, and the city’s distance from Warsaw.\textsuperscript{476}

If Wrocław could grow without an organising force, then Recovered Territories villages were perhaps all the more capable of doing so. Paul Lewis noted the transmission belt’s faltering effectiveness in rural Poland even in 1969, with the ZSL journal complaining ‘that directives from the district party centre seemed to get lost en route to the village branches.’\textsuperscript{477} The spontaneity of settlement was evident for Kenney today. The question is, however, whether communist-era scholarship could highlight such conditions which would undermine somewhat the grand narrative of Party-led settlement and postwar reconstruction, suggesting an alternative site of political and historical agency, as well as the Party-state’s lack of reach or effectiveness.

\textsuperscript{475} Kenney, p.136.
\textsuperscript{476} \textit{Ibid.}, p.145.
\textsuperscript{477} Lewis, ‘The Peasantry’, p.68.
Officially, the Recovered Territories were framed as justifying Poland’s postwar order, while including some pioneers’ achievements in rebuilding Poland, including restarting factories or various other “firsts”. Of course, the pioneer period was characterised by multiple difficulties, including looting, Soviet robberies, rapes, murders, which memoirists recalled. However, the contentious elements from the past engendered some attempts by the historical apparatus to restrict recognition of the troubled start. The 1961 exchange between Władysław Góra and Krystyna Kersten, noted in Zbigniew Romek’s work, highlights tensions between different narratives of the recent past evident in communist Poland’s published sphere.

Kersten called for open discussion, but Góra – of the Central Committee’s WSNS – deemed this “painting our history in only the darkest of tones” as he rejected a history depicting “chaotic improvisation” executed by ill-prepared, often drunken, local authorities who sanctioned looting. For Góra, the true settlement narrative featured “the heroic, self-sacrificing effort of the majority among new arrivals”. Given the political symbolism of the new lands, public discourse should present only unitary history, rather than follow Kersten ‘in undermining the propaganda image of recent Polish history she undermines trust towards people’s rule, weakens the PZPR’s authority and spreads doubt about its mission to rule the nation.’ Góra sought to maintain a hegemonic public memory, in Romek’s reading, believing this necessary for present-day legitimacy. But Kersten responded constructively, advising that a legitimate official historiography could not be monolithic, noting “lies and silencing uncomfortable facts only harm a Marxist interpretation of history, unnecessarily undermining its truthfulness.” She calls for official acknowledgment of the plurality of narratives of which professional historians and the public are aware. Góra’s response defended historical science’s ability to outline historical development, rejecting “convictions regarding chance and circumstance which, it is claimed, direct historical events, or the belief that history – beyond knowledge of individual events and their causes – cannot define general concepts and laws of historical development.” He disregards evidence that “spontaneity, chance, randomness” significantly shaped the foundation and development of social and state-society relations in the new territories, favouring a theoretical model

478 Kenney, p.141.
480 Romek, Cenzura a nauka, p.324.
482 Romek, Cenzura a nauka historyczna, p.169.
483 Ibid., p.169.
matching postwar Poland’s founding myths. Coming in 1961, this claim coincided with the start of a wave of Polish social history and sociology which returned to the origins of the postwar state, questioning Góra’s dogmatic position.

Kenney’s work, like the studies considered later in my research, indicates the obvious influence of spontaneous settlement. He also questions accepted views that national identity provided a substitute source of stabilisation. ‘The key to social stability on the frontier, in the belief of state, party and church authorities as well as the intellectual community was national identity. The situation in Wrocław ought to have made such consciousness strong, for its society shared common animosities that could unite a community of migrants.’ This belief may be reproduced in current historiographical works (discussed below), but Kenney finds it is difficult to speak of a national community in Wrocław in the late 1940s. The difficult, sometimes starvation conditions and the disorganized administration did not foster a national identity. Even the threats posed by German workers and Soviet soldiers and the lure of anti-Semitism could not compete with the power of the frontier to dissolve national ties. Those who felt their Polishness challenged simply left the Recovered Territories quickly, returning “to Poland” with either a sackful of loot or sad stories of hardship. But many more stayed and sought in the fragmented identities of regionalism some connection to the homes they had left.

If the new lands appeared too alien, then it was easy – at least for voluntary settlers – to depart again. Rather than bonds to an imagined national community (or even class) inspiring pioneers’ perseverance in troubling conditions, settlers sought familiarity in past regional sources of identification. Timothy Snyder argues ‘[i]n new surroundings, “national” characteristics such as religion and language come to the fore. Deportation creates lowest-common-denominator nationalism.’ Kenney’s study found otherwise while Maciej Hejger’s recent research also stresses that competing rather than consensus-based identity constructs were typical during initial settlement, as ‘each group had its own sense of Polish national belonging. This had particular consequences, meaning intra-group differences were often underlined.’ The conditions in the new lands easily revealed how imagined

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485 Kenney, p. 152.
486 Ibid., p. 157.
constructs of national community were undermined once community members encountered each others’ competing identity and memory claims.

The shopkeeper or priest from the same district in Lwów province was more important than the workmate from Poznań who spoke and acted differently. The result was a citywide workforce that could not easily form a community around shared labour experience or class, and that did not seem interested in the wider city or national community either.\textsuperscript{489}

The city was rebuilt and grew but hardly in the organised manner Góra hoped, nor did it become symbolic of the fervent patriotic achievement imagined in the popular pioneer narrative.

Today’s memory of the Recovered Territories focuses largely on the experiences of repatriants and deportees who arrived to the area. This focus fits with the national schematic narrative template of victimhood at Soviet hands, both at the time of deportation and resettlement. Maria Tomczak’s recent research indicates, however, today’s public focus on eastern borderland Poles’ suffering overlooks pioneers’ achievements, complex experiences and motives. Tomczak’s essay is one of few works considering the postcommunist fate of dominant communist-era identity and memory constructs. Voluntary settlers from central Poland are largely absent post-1989, as are repatriants’ contributions to rebuilding – and shaping – postwar Poland. Tomczak questions discursive bifurcation of pioneers and victims, where pioneers emerge as collaborators post-1989 as memory is again ‘instrumentalised’.\textsuperscript{490} Representations of settlers were ‘manipulated’ in 1944-49 and post-1989 by ‘political and social demands’, with all dominant memories considered constructs rather than “truth”. Post-1989 constructs deny popular agency, spontaneity and agency as images of suffering and victimhood became politically useful.

The martyrological layer became so strong that it overshadowed or questioned the earlier image of heroes working for the good of the country and nation. Active pioneers, conscious of their social role, transformed into victims, pawns simply moved from one place to another.\textsuperscript{491}

\textsuperscript{489} Kenney, pp.183-4.
\textsuperscript{491} Tomczak, p. 54.
The same process, she finds, affected ‘the remaining groups living in the Western Territories’, so not only repatriants but central Poles, too, lost their ‘heroic’ status.\(^{492}\) The imagined national community’s victim status is thus protected. Tomczak acknowledges representations of eastern Poles’ experiences of forced migration faced restrictions under communism, but refuses to use these to justify partial postcommunist national memory which overlooks the full range of popular attitudes, practice, and ambiguous identity Snyder referred to.\(^{493}\) Tomczak’s work is an important critique of public history which, in any era, relies on totalising truth claims, positing often binary identities. Settlers, she finds, shuttled between oppositions of ‘conquerors and victims’, even if today’s public memory constructs centre on the latter, while the ‘1940s pioneer-conqueror’ appears today as ‘the embodiment of the ideologically burdened model communist citizen. And admitting to this is undesirable in the III Republic.’\(^{494}\) Not only the heroic image posited by Góra is forgotten but indeed popular agency and achievements are overlooked.

While Tomczak found, without resorting to claims of heroic, private-sphere, elite-inspired resistance, that ordinary people maintained under communism versions of the past and identity not aligned to official models, other scholars consider the Recovered Territories a site of successful state-socialist identity construction. Marzena Giedrojć, in the same volume, believes ‘Western Pomerania became a site for the authorities to create a new “socialist man”’, deprived of traditions and regional bonds, and thus ‘open to manipulation by demagogy and populism.’ She argues that ‘those in power did not allow dissemination of knowledge of what constituted the inhabitants’ history.’\(^{495}\) The memoir method does not feature in her model of attributing full agency to the state authorities in controlling discourse and consciousness, ensuring people ‘identified with the state’.\(^{496}\) Andrzej Sakson, however, frames the Recovered Territories as a ‘postmigration society’ where no single model can account for specific social processes in each new community.\(^{497}\) Sakson believes ‘each community integrated in its own way’, indicating differing degrees of activity within the community and with state institutions.\(^{498}\) Some communities cooperated with state institutions; others were pioneering but with limited state involvement, while other

\(^{492}\) Tomczak, p.55.
\(^{493}\) Snyder, *Reconstruction*, p.209.
\(^{494}\) Tomczak, p.58.
\(^{496}\) Giedrojć, pp.370-372.
\(^{498}\) Sakson, p.271.
communities produced few social bonds as individual settlers focused on their own farms and families. What emerged in the new lands was ‘a human mosaic and its composition and structure determined the speed of integration processes in particular places.’ Consciously or otherwise, ordinary settlers’ existing habits, memories and spontaneous everyday practices influenced broader socio-historical processes. Rural Recovered Territories communities produced ‘a new type of rural community’, not “socialist” as Giedrojć suggested, but one mixing traditional rural features and ‘new traits’ of postwar Poland.

While transformation did not necessarily produce forms the authorities intended, rural life nevertheless differed significantly from prewar forms, as almost all communities were constructed anew (outside the Opole region and areas of Lubusz and Warmia-and-Masuria voivodeships). Kenney noted for Wrocław that into the 1950s and 1960s there too there was intersection of state ‘ambitions to recast society’ and the conditions created in initial settlement. So further changes continued to be influenced by ‘the social relations that the communist state had inherited and those it created’. Social structures and politics continued to be influenced by ordinary people.

Some more recent studies also suggest that ideological pressures and ‘the propaganda machine’ were effective as ‘never before had Polish society been subject to such powerful ideological pressure.’ However, historian Anthony Kemp-Welch recognises gaps between stalinist attempts ‘to subjugate Polish society by rupturing its natural pattern of human relationships’ and the reality that ‘much of the Stalinist indoctrination remained ineffective. Many mentalities remained untouched, older habits and patterns of behaviour endured.’ Totalitarian intentions foundered against social practice, which is what emerges when the historiographical focus is ‘recast’, although theatre-based metaphors resembling Kenney’s can support arguments suggesting there was ‘direction of public life and interference in family and private spheres.’ People acted, at least in public, as the director wanted, consequently ‘each aspect of everyday life was bound to the principles of the political system of the time’ as well as to ‘the social techniques of power.’

499 Ibid., p.271.
500 Ibid., p.271.
501 Kenney, p.335.
504 Ibid., p.10-11.
506 Szarota, ‘Życie codzienne’, p.208.
Early postcommunist exchanges over the recent past expressed multiple perspectives, with *Tygodnik Powszechny* providing a forum for eighteen months from May 1994 for discussions, subsequently compiled in 1996. Leszek Kolakowski refuted myths around increasingly evident all-national resistance narratives, which ‘split the nation’ into ‘sell-out collaborators’ and ‘insurgent patriots’. Instead, ‘social history was made by people not governments, which mainly created barriers’. Michał Glowiński also that noted, most people ‘lived the most everyday existence’. Marcin Kula, meanwhile, stressed state-society relations’ complexity, as ‘symbiosis’ prevailed with both sides seeking minimum disadvantage. Other scholars, including Mara Fik, subsumed everyday resistance into anticommunist nationalist frameworks, declaring Polish society was ‘not only unsuitable for communism, but in fact anticommunist’, and she includes in this not only resistance to “sovietisation” but also ‘the ability to arrange life “in your own way”’.

Getting by is subsumed into national resistance paradigms, rather than being just part of the most ordinary everyday existence. It is clear, however, in all these approaches there was no doubt ‘about the existence of autonomous social action in communist regimes’ which, Sandrine Kott notes, has been posited.

Influenced by Kenney’s work, Małgorzata Fidelis’ 2010 study of women and communist-era industrialisation found ‘[s]heer coercion and repression were not sufficient to create a communist system in Poland. Rather, the imposition of radically new norms involved constant negotiations between the state and society.’ She explores a later period, noting continuities with the founding period in social conditions in People’s Poland. Concentrating on textile workers, Fidelis notes how ‘state-led upward mobility created new roles for women, but the process did not always follow the communist scenario. Instead, Zambrów spinners combined rural and urban identities as well as family and state loyalties.’ Fidelis’ work stresses women’s agency in relation to official structures and discourse. ‘By adapting the dominant political language, women were able to expose profound tensions within the state’s project of equality and thus demonstrate the contingency and vulnerability of the

507 *Spór o PRL*, Marta Fik et al., eds (Krakow: Znak, 1996).
509 Kolakowski, p.154.
512 Fik, in Fik et al, eds, p.123.
entire communist system. While vulnerability might be overstated, contingency and tension did influence working women’s experience of advance. Fidelis foregrounds women who ‘used the state-sponsored social mobility to redefine village traditions.’ Critiquing totalitarian models, she finds ‘stalinism cannot be interpreted solely as a system of terror and oppression. Stalinism also provided opportunities for some social groups, women among them, to break free from the constraints of premodern tradition and reinvent their identities.’ Whether patriarchal traditions were redefined is unclear, likewise the fate of women subalternised further by male-centred social advance is overlooked, but she does stress how hybrid forms emerged deviating from state-sanctioned models.

Fidelis’ study importantly also questions equation of benefitting from advance with popular legitimisation of and support for communist rule, underscoring ambivalence and tensions in popular experience. Friszke, though, framed advancing subordinate groups as socialism’s greatest beneficiaries, making them ‘the most docile of the social strata.’ Friszke deems ‘docile’ strata collaborators, staffing ideological and repressive state apparatus, while, conversely, an ideal nation comprising intellectual elites ‘retained a healthy attitude towards national traditions and religions.’ He finds the masses’ ‘compliant behaviour’ including even superficial participation in political rituals extended ‘political occupation.’ While Johnston noted something similar, he avoided judging the masses, recognising instead the ambivalence of quotidian concerns leading to what Scott termed ‘consenting behaviour’. Effectively, the masses are held responsible for communism to further idealise opposition actions, even if ‘resistance and oppositional were effectively marginal, and what dominated in Poles’ attitudes to communist rule was adaptation and occasionally collaboration.’ The subalternisation of the masses and framing them as inferior members of the nation is evident in Zaremba’s work.

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516 Ibid., p.240.
517 Ibid., p.240.
518 Ibid., p.240.
520 Ibid., p.147.
3.2 Marcin Zaremba and nationalist legitimation of Polish communism

Marcin Zaremba’s exploration of nationalism under communism in Wielka Trwoga\(^\text{522}\) and Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm\(^\text{523}\) make subordinate groups scapegoats for nationalism and anti-Semitism, with his 2005 study of attempted instrumentalisation of nationalist sentiment ultimately purifying the imagined nation by creating an internal, class-based Other whose ‘bassest instincts’\(^\text{524}\) were manipulated and thus tarnished elite-based patriotic nationalism. This internal Other of peasants and provincials, basically those inhabiting the world of MMŻ, cannot access the historical apparatus that would mean it could speak in defence against metropolitan academic historians’ claims. His argument is that legitimacy was achieved through appeals to nationalism and patriotic tropes, ensuring the forces bringing ‘revolution from abroad’\(^\text{525}\) came to be perceived as swoi, “one of us”\(^\text{526}\). By working towards the legitimacy of this official patriotism, the postwar authorities sought the key to controlling social practice, with the ‘authorities gladly pulling on a national costume’ in order to ‘overcome the barrier of otherness between authorities and society.’\(^\text{527}\) The authorities not only monopolised use of national symbols but ‘could impose an interpretation of national symbols.’\(^\text{528}\) This creates tension with Zaremba’s problematic methodological declaration that his ‘interest lies in investigating only the modes of acquiring legitimacy and not consideration of the extent to which Polish society actually considered the authorities, the system or the political elite legitimate.’\(^\text{529}\) The authorities are declared capable of imposing interpretations of reality, while ordinary people are assumed to have been driven by basic instincts. Yet Zaremba presents his work as a theoretical study of mechanisms of power. Legitimation cannot be studied as purely theoretical. Indeed, in Zaremba’s case it was studies in terms of its practical implications as he explored official nationalism’s apparent appeal to subordinate groups.

While officially issuing slogans of internationalism and fraternity between people, the party through its politics in fact preserved negative national stereotypes. Particularly after the war and in 1968 the party relied on the masses’ bassest instincts in order to finally become in their eyes Polish, “one of us”. [...] The Polish

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\(^\text{523}\) Marcin Zaremba, Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm: Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce (Warsaw: Trio, 2005).
\(^\text{524}\) Zaremba, Komunizm, p.399.
\(^\text{525}\) Ibid., p.81: Nationalism was ‘an essential argument in ensuring communist rule was not rejected by society as “foreign”.’
\(^\text{526}\) Ibid., p. 397.
\(^\text{527}\) Ibid., p. 7.
\(^\text{528}\) Ibid., p. 97.
\(^\text{529}\) Ibid., p. 10.
communists’ take on nationalism was thus fundamentally obtuse and boorish [tépy i prostacki], xenophobic, anti-German, anti-Semitic, and to a large extent traditional non-civic [nieobywatelski], trite and blatantly instrumentalist.\textsuperscript{530}

Zaremba’s theory of Polish communist nationalism avoids some simplistic totalitarian paradigms based in rule by force. He believes the authorities genuinely sought popular legitimacy, however this requires the propaganda mechanism to appear fully successful and the Polish masses to be subalternised as fully malleable by appeal to ‘nationalist legitimation’ which was ‘not only the most important but practically the only form capable of legitimising their pretence to rule.’\textsuperscript{531} The consequence was ‘xenophobic, non-civic national community closed to the world’.\textsuperscript{532} Rather than being a consequence of quotidian demands, Zaremba believes he found an explanation for mass conformity in appeals to nationalism, or the wrong type of nationalism.

\textit{Wielka trwoga} has a similar framework where an elite-constructed internal Other declared lacking full subjecthood and national consciousness could be manipulated by ‘national hysteria’.\textsuperscript{533} Presented as social history, the book considers society’s response to prevalent\textit{ trwoga} – an emotion combining fear, trepidation and terror, which dominated ‘the people’s response to the crisis’ of 1944-47, when social, political, economic structures, and indeed Poland’s geography, were in flux before it became increasingly evident that communist authorities would gain power. The Recovered Territories are significant in Zaremba’s study, as fears of Germans – popular and officially-incited forms – intersected with a sense of temporariness. What Zaremba’s model cannot establish, however, is how – if fear were prevalent – foundations of new, functioning communities could emerge.

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir forcefully critiques Zaremba’s approach finding, for example, his concept of ‘peasant culture’ problematic as it homogenises the group, discounting rural Poles’ multiplicity of attitudes and social practices. Instead, in challenging claims of Polish antisemitism, Zaremba ensures ‘peasants and the lower classes generally’ appear ‘demonic’, and this is consistent with trends among ‘younger Holocaust historians.’ Meanwhile, elites and intelligentsia are treated leniently in Zaremba’s study even though they were ‘authors of

\textsuperscript{530} Ibid., pp.399-400.
\textsuperscript{531} Ibid., p. 134.
\textsuperscript{532} Ibid., p. 399.
\textsuperscript{533} Wielka trwoga, back cover.
antisemitic ideology. Women, too, are made scapegoats, particularly prevalently – Tokarska-Bakir notes – through applying stereotypes of ‘hysteria’ as non-speaking subalterns provide ideal scapegoats for defending national dignity. As Tokarska-Bakir notes, more factors shaped social action and attitudes than simply trwoga, yet Zaremba is convinced ‘after the war two phenomena were significant’: uncertainty and temporariness and, on the other hand, ‘a weakening of social control together with fear of punishment.’ For Zaremba, the tensions between these two features resulted in aggressive behaviour expressed against outsider groups. Despite presenting itself as a social history, it overlooks alternative social responses. Instead, Zaremba argues all phenomena ‘connected to revolutionary transformations in social structure’ generated undifferentiated ‘fear and apprehension’ (trwoga).

In considering the Recovered Territories Wielka trwoga comes closest to social history, instead of a polemic with Gross’ Fear. Social disorganisation instigated by war and perpetuated by political upheavals from 1944 produced, for Zaremba, ‘social trauma’, which disrupted established social structures, thus even the Church feared for its future and failed to fulfil its social role. Rural social disorganisation is attributed to a power vacuum following ‘extermination of landowners’ which Zaremba declares part of the ‘extermination of Polish elites’. Disrupted social unity created divisions over how to proceed: should newly-available be acquired land or not. This model implies, improbably, that prewar rural society was orderly, characterised by national solidarity, with landowner-peasant consensus on landlords’ authority. This unity was so engrained that war and upheaval produced a social form of PTSD, so strong and universal that Zaremba, on this basis of this diagnosis, dismisses ‘the myth of Poles’ postwar enthusiasm.’ There is thus no potential for dedicated pioneers in People’s Poland, or indeed simply people attempting to get by.

Zaremba reaches for competition memoirs, postwar research, post-1989 diaries and postcommunist research, but selects only testimonies featuring traumatised individuals – with survivors of concentration camps and Siberian deportation overrepresented – declaring

535 Tokarska-Bakir.
536 Zaremba, Wielka trwoga, p.16.
537 Ibid., p. 17.
538 Ibid., p. 47.
540 Zaremba, Wielka trwoga, pp.91-105.
541 Ibid., p. 103.
542 Ibid., p. 109.
543 Ibid., pp. 109-112.
them representative of the nation’s psychological state. The nation is framed as being represented by these Polish martyrs and victims, who belong among ‘the thousands of citizens of the II Republic who demonstrated attachment to the prewar set of values and norms, as they showed with their heroism of the highest order, their sacrifice and empathy towards others.’\textsuperscript{544} This small group become the nation, \textit{naród}, while those who betrayed the nation never possessed these ‘prewar principles’ are declared \textit{lud}, the people, framed solely as peasants and members of subordinate groups, with tendencies towards violence,\textsuperscript{545} ‘magical thinking’\textsuperscript{546} and ‘a tendency towards deviant behaviour’.\textsuperscript{547} Such people would cooperate with the communist authorities, but victims never would, while it seems that peasant status and victimhood were largely exclusive. Zaremba’s study becomes an exquisite example of Tomczak’s model of what happened to the memory of settlers in postcommunism. He links them conceptually to the \textit{lud}, as deviant behaviour and anomie were ‘continued and strengthened by postwar migration.’\textsuperscript{548}

Zaremba states that he disrupts traditional ‘Polish, “male” historiography of the war’\textsuperscript{549} by exploring the ‘particular place of the so-called Recovered Territories on the map of fear’, and experiences of Red Army rapes and robberies.\textsuperscript{550} However, female victims are instrumentalised as part of national martyrlogical narratives, while most woman are framed by the ‘hysteria’ thesis, responding to the crisis with violence against Others, boorish nationalism or primitive thought. Worthy hero-victims are thus contrasted with ‘[I]udzie \textit{z demobilu},’\textsuperscript{551} or ‘demobilised soldiers, deserters, wanderers, beggars, invalids, orphans, the unemployed, speculators’, labelled the lumpenproletariat whom Zaremba declares the real heroes of the state-sanctioned settlement narrative. Landless peasants\textsuperscript{552} feature among those benefitting from the new system and thus from such groups it ‘recruited its functionaries’, matching Friszke’s model of an internal other benefitting from the state’s advance mechanisms. Zaremba declares the country was run at local and regional level by ‘quarter-literate people from nowhere’, advancing quickly in the ‘social revolution.’\textsuperscript{553} \textit{Wielka trwoga} selects no evidence regarding people who acquired land, settled and ‘returned to “normal

\textsuperscript{544} Ibid., p. 121.
\textsuperscript{545} Ibid., p. 112
\textsuperscript{546} Ibid., pp. 120-1.
\textsuperscript{547} Ibid., p. 124.
\textsuperscript{548} Ibid., p. 126.
\textsuperscript{549} Ibid., p. 170.
\textsuperscript{550} Ibid., pp.158-9.
\textsuperscript{551} Ibid., pp. 197-272.
\textsuperscript{552} Ibid., p. 200.
\textsuperscript{553} Ibid., pp. 202-3.
life”, but believes the norm was people involved with communist-backed institutions or participated in ‘criminal gangs and looters who took part in pogroms and lynchings.’ Zaremba declares looting ‘a mass phenomenon’ in the Recovered Territories – but problematically attributes it to an essentialistic ‘peasant view of the world’, or peasant socio-psychological traits conditioned by poverty and lack. He realises that some contradictions might emerge as not all peasants could be described this way. He poses the question of how to consider ‘a repatriant who acquired a stripped farm who secured essentials from a better-equipped farm and then never again went on such a mission?’ This would be the focus of everyday history, but Zaremba does not consider the complexities of the victim-settler intersection.

Zaremba uses autobiographies published in Wieś polska 1939-1948 to illustrate peasant criminality. Rather than consider this late 1960s publication critically as evidence of narratives questioning state-sanctioned history or national myths, as Gross did, Zaremba selects ‘emphatic statements’ in the manner Dulczewski noted was problematic, to support his argument. He selects a memoir by a member of the village elite who frames the looting of the school as a consequence of the war with villagers becoming “an unbridled mob” demolishing a school and taking things of no everyday use. Zaremba selects just one further similar extract before concluding that such behaviour typified the “interregnum” in borderland areas’ which led to ‘a crazed race to see who could grab the most.’ Memoirs of poet, teacher and regional activist Maria Zientara-Malewska feature to illustrate peasant “greed” in robbing the local Warmian population. Women also feature as looters, but Zaremba relegates to a footnote members of the intelligentsia pillaging books and cultural items. Presumably they were just collecting essentials, according to Zaremba’s proposed typology, with the intelligentsia treated very leniently, even praised by Zaremba, since ‘beyond the official intelligentsia discourse nobody thought looting was

555 Ibid., p.203.
556 Ibid., p.295.
557 Ibid., p.277.
558 Ibid., p.303.
560 Zaremba, Wielka trwoga, p.296.
561 Ibid., p.297.
563 Ibid., pp.299-300.
564 Ibid., pp.301-302, n.89.
wrong. His reading of *Wieś polska* must have been very restricted as he failed to account for alternative peasant voices and their attempts to speak through the competition sources.

The core reason for Zaremba exploring the Recovered Territories becomes evident as he links the ‘village mobs’ and mass westward migration to the Kielce pogrom. Zaremba opts for another medical analogy which demonises Polish peasants (*lud*) while defending elite conceptions of the nation. He suggests the causes of “looting fever” were transmitted virologically.

Breathing the air infected with the looting virus weakened the immunological barrier against committing other crimes. Would it be possible if looting were not so widespread for policemen to break into the Jewish community centre on Planty Street in Kielce (and thus start the pogrom)? Their colleagues in Lower Silesia were, after all, looting unrestrained.

Denied agency over their responses to the crisis, as they are manipulated by state stimuli, the peasantry prove influential, or at least infectious. The theory of weakened social and moral controls is feasible, but the suggested connection between Lower Silesia and Kielce is not substantiated by documentary evidence. The only shared characteristics are occupation and class origins. Left as a rhetorical question, Zaremba makes clear he does not intend to investigate historically the link between looting and pogroms. Yet, this theory based in his virological metaphor becomes central to Zaremba’s polemic with Gross, the main objective of his study.

Where Zaremba refers to the Recovered Territories it is either to set the scene for the pogrom or to highlight how Polish settlers became victims of the ‘spectres of temporariness’ which haunted settlement owing to these looters and the authorities. Memoirs are cited to illustrate this ‘feeling of temporariness’ and other consequences of social disorganisation and the ‘diplomatic war’ creating the Recovered Territories’ ‘uncertain future’. Zaremba selects episodes from memoirs rather than exploring evidence where settlers seek to solve everyday tensions and adapt to the new territories or offer constructive criticism of the authorities’ rural policy. Zaremba’s fear-centred model cannot accommodate such attitudes as he

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565 Ibid., p.307.
566 Ibid., p.308.
567 Ibid., pp.405-508.
569 *Wieś polska*, vol. 1, No 50 (1322a), pp.96-102 (p.99).
570 Ibid., p.99.
foregrounds ‘helplessness, apathy, social disintegration, strong legitimation of the authorities in the Recovered Territories.’\textsuperscript{571}

A second memoirist cited by Zaremba, a rural woman living near Rzepin, also appears pragmatic and critically-minded as she offers her imagined readers – the authorities – advice. ‘Never impose your will to rule on others. If you’re a cobbler, look after your hooves, if you’re a factory man, look after your factory.’ Consequently, she questions the distribution of seats on Rzepin council with PPR awarded twelve of sixteen but SL only four, perhaps borrowing from non-communist discourses. ‘And people ask, why do peasants seem so sad today? \textit{Ask those who came from the east, and you’ll learn the truth.} Go to England, the Labour Party has 75\% support there because only 25\% are farmers. Let workers rule there, but in Poland farmers should rule. That would be the best medicine for the psycho-nervous illness, because then there would be justice.’\textsuperscript{572} Zaremba referenced this autobiography because the memoirist found ‘fear and disgruntlement’ were predominant.\textsuperscript{573} However, her text disrupts Zaremba’s model by presenting a critical, dynamic peasantry, demanding fair political representation. She recognises \textit{trwoga}, or psycho-nervous illness in society, but seeks a means to overcome it as she increasingly recognises the system’s permanence and uses her experience of the occupied eastern borderlands to determine future responses. Partly-censored in publication, with two dashes marking a cut not evident in the archived memoir, the implication remains clear. ‘No one wants to consult with us, everyone is scared. Those who came from beyond the Bug River meet up a few people at a time and whisper. “They didn’t tell us it would be like this. Don’t go – things are just like they are here.”’\textsuperscript{574} Besides indicating censors’ sensitivity to equating the Soviet and Polish political orders, this passage illustrates history-in-action, as autobiographical memory inspires subaltern critiques – based in local interanimating exchanges – of authoritative claims, developing without elites or opposition impetus. Some settlers, the memoirist shows, responded to the crisis with apathy and neglected farms, although the author herself is pragmatic, using experience to negotiate getting by in turbulent circumstances. Her memoir indicates that eastern borderlands experiences existed in the published sphere – indeed, the italics highlight it – while memories of experiences in the occupied east provided foundations for everyday resistance to collectivisation.

\textsuperscript{571} Zaremba, \textit{Wielka trwoga}, p.455.
\textsuperscript{572} \textit{Wieś polska}, vol. 1, No 327 (1063) – wieś Połęcko, pp.457-9 (p.458). [Italics as in published version].
\textsuperscript{573} \textit{Ibid.}, p.459.
\textsuperscript{574} \textit{Ibid.}, p.456; IH PAN, memoir 1063, p.4.
Stressing trwoga, hysteria, violence and disorganisation enables Zaremba to link the Kielce pogrom to the new territories, and thus uses peasant attempts to speak as a means to subordinate the group further, attributing to it essentialistic traits. There were some peasants, though, who could escape association with base instincts, looting and pogroms, with the sole example cited from Kielce voivodeship used to substantiate claims regarding a good type of nationalism. The war ‘strengthened Poles’ national consciousness. To see this all you need to do is reach for wartime poetry filled with national themes.’ The selected memoirist illustrates this mechanism whereby peasants can be salvaged if they match elite ideals, whether through culture or battlefield achievements. He thus stresses in conclusion that those contributing to Jews’ deaths in villages were not local ‘peasant elites’ – the type of people Wielka trwoga salvages – but ‘average peasants [chłopska średnia] in central and eastern voivodeships: poor, uneducated and often primitive.’ For this group, rather than strengthen national bonds, the war engendered ‘civilisational regression’ to ‘a pre-Gutenberg era’ where ‘rumour and gossip’ dominated, inciting ‘an unreflective view of the world’, hence women’s significant role in Zaremba’s narrative of the pogrom, spreading rumours through ‘oral transmission’. Depicting subalterns as primitive, pre-moderns produces an ironic echo of state-sanctioned communist-era discourse where a particular social group was ascribed inherent characteristics which made it an enemy deserving exclusion from the ideal model of the nation. This device worked against kulaks during collectivisation, and against particular ethnic groups, including Jews around 1968 or Germans for a longer period after the war. Zaremba, too, attempts to direct social anger – to borrow a term from Fleming’s study, discussed below – at a homogenously imagined social group declared responsible for failings which taint the imagined nation. Elite-type nationalism and cultural memory are presented as a vaccine against the lud, who through works as Zaremba’s are quarantined, isolated and the nation saved. The masses are homogenised as malleable while intellectuals preserve cultural memory, readying it for inspiring national liberation. Discursive subalternisation scapegoats subordinate groups, making them non-speaking bearers of lowest-common-denominator nationalism while elite patriotism is subsequently elevated.

Meanwhile, repatriant peasants haunt Zaremba’s study as a strange hybrid, appearing both victim of and bearer of traits dismissed as xenophobic and primitive. He suggests that eventually for them the spectres of temporariness disappeared and ‘the time came to come

575 Zaremba, Wielka trwoga, p.129.
576 Ibid., p.618.
577 Ibid., p.631.
578 Ibid., pp.635-6.
to terms with the unwanted reality, becoming accustomed to systemic conditions, which meant political engagement for some, while others escaped into privacy.\(^{579}\) This is the closest Zaremba’s study comes to explaining how social relations formed in the Recovered Territories. However, *Wielka trwoga* fails as social history, not only because it essentialises social groups, but also because it considers only binary options: private or public, engagement with the state or escape into privacy. There is no option for getting by, or forming local community relations. For Zaremba relations could only normalise after communism’s collapse, though his evidence is literally anecdotal – rather than draw on the archive produced by ordinary people under communism. He ends with an anecdote about a postwar settler first painting his fence in 1991, using it to declare that the spectres of *trwoga* had been laid to rest.\(^{580}\) *Wielka trwoga* overlooks incremental change in social practice or ambivalent attitudes as social history, favouring symbolic and apparently definitive gestures by politicians, thus replicating the model of the masses’ malleability by communist authorities. Like Zaremba, Michael Fleming also suggests nationalism was the key to manipulating ordinary people towards securing legitimation.

### 3.3 Michael Fleming and social anger regimes

Concentrating on 1944-1950, Fleming’s study\(^ {581}\) also outlines longer-term consequences of official nationalism intersecting with popular experience, with anti-Germanism a central trope as the regime sought popular legitimacy by appearing ‘as a defender of the national interest’.\(^ {582}\) Zaremba reviewed Fleming’s book, praising Fleming’s originality in exploring why the PPR initially tolerated ‘widespread’ violence. Fleming ‘challenges the most popular answer, namely that the party could do nothing else, since it was small and not in full control of the situation. PPR on the other hand strengthened its position with a divide et impera-policy.’\(^ {583}\) So, rather than spontaneity and uncontrolled settlement being the norm, the PPR appears to have control as it consciously encouraged violence against others as part of a political strategy where ‘ethno-nationalism was also the only model available to restructure the social anger regime to the advantage of the PPP/PZPR.’\(^ {584}\) There is no question of

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\(^{579}\) Ibid., p.445.  
\(^{580}\) Ibid., p.647.  
\(^{582}\) Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, p.573.  
\(^{583}\) Marcin Zaremba, Review of Fleming, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/type=rezbuecher&id=12987> [quotes as in original source].  
\(^{584}\) Fleming, p.3.
popular resistance or ignorance of this manipulation which worked smoothly, as ‘nationality policy’ steered the ‘social anger regime’ and determined ‘the way in which anger/frustration in society is managed, channelled or orchestrated within that society’. Exploiting nationalist sentiment ensured social anger at ‘actions of [NKVD], Soviet Army and the communists’ was redirected towards ‘minority communities, and that this displacement of anger helped the party to connect with a broader constituency and present itself as the only party able to protect “Polish” interests.’

Ordinary people’s actions prove to have had historical and social significance, but not through everyday practice, rather it was through permitting ‘effective exploitation of social prejudice, institutional avarice and sanctioned subjective violence.’ Society submitted not to totalitarian control but the ‘ethno-nationalist logic that defined the immediate postwar period.’ Ordinary people sought ‘national homogeneity’, and promising this ‘communists were able to secure sufficient acquiescence from Polish society to enable them to move forward with their social, political and economic programmes.’ While avoiding the traditional totalitarian model of force, Fleming still presents the Party-state as all powerful – even during the early postwar period in the Recovered Territories when this was questionable. ‘During the period 1944-47 subjective violence was loosely “managed” by the PPR through its publicization of the benefits of national homogeneity and “controlled” through selective interventions according to PPR and state strategic needs. These interventions were responses to both domestic and international pressures and varied depending on the population groups considered.’

The PPR is presented in a rather flattering light, rather than noting the unreliable individuals populating the Party even in Zaremba’s work.

Prażmowska believes Fleming shows ‘what was happening in Polish villages and towns’ by avoiding political history’s framework of revolution from abroad. However, there is little evidence of ordinary Poles’ (or ‘the majority of society’) responses to Soviet occupation and postwar transformations, as Fleming declares the masses’ responses largely homogeneous and controllable through nationalist sentiment. ‘The manipulation of ethno-nationalism played a crucial role in forging a narrative about the future of Poland in which

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585 Ibid., p.2.
586 Fleming, p.20.
587 Ibid., p.147.
588 Ibid., p.144.
589 Fleming, 2.
590 Ibid., p.99.
592 As Prażmowska argues in her review, Fleming challenges the strong totalitarian model, according to which ‘all decisions in areas under Soviet control were either made in Moscow or because communist parties were determined to build states on a Soviet model’. Prażmowska, p.228.
The majority of society believed. Fleming asserts that ordinary people appear, on the one hand, malleable, yet also politically conscious and concerned with the future of the nation. Fleming’s study overlooks some paradoxical forms of anti-Germanism, recorded in traditional archives, where ethnic homogenisation was deferred in preference for financial and economic exploitation of remaining populations. The MZO archive notes numerous communities demanding German populations remain as much-needed and cheap labour for private farmers, while some state farms also relied on German workers. Quotidian concerns and financial calculation proved more appealing than ethno-nationalism or national homogeneity for some.

Fleming concentrates on anti-Germanism’s general political significance, rather than consider nuances in relations between Poles and Germans (or autochthons popularly perceived to be German). Fleming sets out ‘four crucial functions for the Polish government and its Soviet sponsors’ of expelling Germans.

First, it helped to bring the goal of national homogeneity close to realization. Second, it contributed to the substantiation of the idea that the USSR guaranteed Poland’s western border and that the PPR acted as an advocate of the historical national interest. Third, it provided space and resources to resettle Poles transferred from former eastern Poland. And, fourth, it provided a safe target on which the population could vent frustration and anger.

Removing Germans served these functions, but not as smoothly or universally as is suggested. As a typology, the four functions outline neatly official intentions but nothing guaranteed ordinary people would respond as intended, particularly as fear, temporariness, anomie and pioneering spirit all intersected. It is not explained why ‘transferees from the east’, coerced into migrating, would consider an ethnically-homogeneous Poland adequate compensation for eastern borderlands homelands, even after facing – in some areas – ethnic cleansing. Beyond the Party-state’s successful mass manipulation, little explains why anger

Fleming, 74.
AAN/MZO/562, (85672) Repatriacja ludności niemieckiej z województwa Wrocławskiego, 1948. On 15.1.1948 there were in Wrocław voivodeship 65,989 Germans of whom 56,483 ‘were reclaimed by MZO and the Soviet authorities’, meaning that they were to remain, leaving 9506 for deportation. AAN/MZO/ 568, 85678, Reklamacja fachowców narodowości niemieckiej, 1946, p.31. A memo from MZO on 30 March 1946 noted that Germans were still being employed by commune and village authorities. This ‘unhealthy’ situation was to be stopped immediately in order to ‘counteract the demoralising influence of an enemy national element.’ The only exceptions to be made were for technical specialists who were, though, to be given no supervisory roles over Poles. There were cases where ‘on the pretence of employment some Germans’ repatriation is being delayed.’ Deputy Minister Czajkowski, author of the memo, threatened punishment for all non-compliance.
Fleming, p.83.
was not turned against Soviet or communist authorities, especially given the paradoxes of the fourth function. Surely the expulsion removed a target for anger?

In Fleming’s study there is none of the widespread apathy Zaremba outlined. Instead, active anti-Germanism is declared universally effective. Fleming does note that ‘chaos and instability in the “Recovered Territories” continued until late 1947/early 1948, when the Warsaw Government began exerting greater control. Before then, Soviet military authorities failed to control their soldiers’ excesses, which included robbery, rape and murder.’ He also records how this triggered ‘opposition to communist rule.’ However, this was limited as successful nationality policy means Fleming can conclude that ‘the goal of redirecting social anger from the PPR and its Soviet ally was, in practice, achieved.’ Fleming accepts that ‘the maximalist objective of achieving party-nation synthesis was thwarted’ but nationalism remained central to manipulating the population into conformity, while the same mechanisms of ‘representational violence’, which shaped strongly what and when the population drew from the ‘reservoir of antipathy’, could be used to drag Poles into class war and ostracising rich farmers or kulaks. However, Fleming does not indicate why nationally-minded Poles would then turn against other Poles.

Zaremba’s review questioned why Fleming’s study extended to 1950 because in ‘set[ting] the caesura on the year 1950 […] caused certain strands to be treated in a superficial manner.’ The radical shift from national- to class-based antagonism is one such strand as the model of representational violence, discursive control appeared here less convincing. T. David Curp’s book, A Clean Sweep? does, however, attempt in-depth investigation of this shift, as he studies the intersection of nationalism, communism and ethnic tensions in western Poland to 1960.

596 Ibid., p.57.
597 Ibid., p.57.
598 Ibid., p.148.
599 Ibid., p.148.
600 Ibid., p.100.
602 ‘The new political direction that began in earnest in the summer of 1948 placed significantly less emphasis on responding to, or aligning policy with, the perceived concerns of society, and relied more heavily on force to drive through industrialization and agricultural reform. In this context, in which society was increasingly seen as an entity to be acted on rather than worked with, the need to align nationality policy with social sentiment was considerably less pressing, though not jettisoned.’ Fleming, p.142.
3.4 Curp: ethnic cleansing and toxic memoirs

T. David Curp’s 2006 study603 uses competition memoirs extensively, chiefly the *Wieś polska* series and Instytut Zachodni materials, to explore Polish settlement of former German property in the postwar Poznań voivodeship which, until Zielona Góra voivodeship was formed in 1950, included prewar Wielkopolska and the Lubusz lands. Tomasz Kamusella’s review considers *A Clean Sweep?* a comparative study of old and new territories showing ‘differences and continuities in ethnic cleansing in historically and politically different areas of post-war Poland.’604 Richard Blanke’s reading seems more convincing, finding Curp treated the new lands as an extension of Wielkopolska, whose identity and ideology, Curp believes, were transplanted westwards.605 The book’s key theses and terms outlined most succinctly are that:

The Poles of Poznań played a critical role in the postwar national revolution in which Poland was ethnically cleansed by a joint effort of the people and state. A resulting national solidarity provided the Communist dominated regime with an underlying stability, while it transformed what had been a militantly internationalist Polish Communism into a nationalist socialist party.606

Ordinary people initially supported the communist regime because it offered ‘national revolution’, or ethnic cleansing and homogenisation, meaning that communism had to acquire nationalist tendencies. For Curp, there is clear correlation between official nationalism and levels of legitimacy as initial social compliance was curtailed by ‘the subsequent anti-national counterrevolutionary effort’ under stalinism, while state-society cooperation restabilised with Gomułka’s ‘hyper-nationalist politics’.607 Although avoiding totalitarian paradigms and not whitewashing elite nationalism, Curp nevertheless presents the masses as malleable through manipulating nationalist sentiment whether it was the Party-state manipulating it or, later, oppositional elites using ‘national solidarity’ to inspire communism’s collapse.608

My reading concentrates on Curp’s use of competition memoirs to substantiate his central theses regarding western Poland’s ‘ethnic cleansing’ and settlement by ordinary people. I

am interested in how heteroglot autobiographical materials are co-opted for a unitary history. Curp argues that ‘[t]he Poles of Poznań took a leading role in rallying their countrymen to this task’ as ‘Poznań became the crucible for the creation of a new Poland and the destruction of eastern Germany’. Poznań’s reach is unspecified, as it seems to account for the city and wider Wielkopolska region. Whoever the ‘Poles of Poznań’ are, they are ascribed homogeneous traits as ‘the fiercely anti-Communist but highly nationalistic society of Poznań, the church, and the Endecja together pioneered collaboration with Poland’s Communist rulers – to ethnically cleanse their country.’ All social institutions function in unity, together with migrants, whose desire for national unity outstripped their anti-communism.

Poznań was central because prewar National Democrats, including Zygmunt Wojciechowski, associated with the city, established IZ there in February 1945 and cooperated with a revived PZZ (Polish Western Union). According to Curp, ‘[i]n the first months of Poland’s ethnic cleansing and settlement of eastern Germany, the PZZ in Poznań was the single most important organisation in the country for coordinating settlement.’ Even if 60,000 of ‘over 100,000 settlers from Wielkopolska’ who moved in organised migrations to the Recovered Territories in spring and summer 1945 were under PZZ auspices, spontaneous, uncoordinated and unregistered pre-Potsdam migrations still outnumbered those registered. Likewise, Curp’s singular interpretation of the significance of PZZ’s 23,000-strong membership by summer 1945 is questionable. He believes ‘[t]he eagerness with which local society responded to the leadership of the PZZ testifies both to the national and colonial ambitions of the populace.’ Curp generalises about the entire populace, when all these figures indicate is that there were 23,000 members, some of whom may have been nationally-inspired, others may have had more pragmatic motives for joining, including acquiring official permission to migrate, which was achievable without internalising PZZ ideology. Meanwhile, Stefan Banasiak’s respected 1963 study of PUR suggests it could compete for the title of most significant settlement coordinator.

Of the ten contributors to IZ competitions listed in Curp’s bibliography, just two can be considered ‘Poles of Poznań’. Zbigniew Dubert worked in Poznań city in the interwar period,
while Wiesław Sauter (consistently named “Lauter” by Curp) lived in the region prewar. The other eight (half of them repatriants), used to illustrate ‘Poles’ of Poznań’ pioneering role, settled in the Lubusz lands. Even if their only association with Poznań was that it was their voivodeship capital for five years at most, Curp suggests the memoirists internalised the Poznań mentality and fulfilled Western thought’s ideologues’ goals, which coincided with the postwar communist authorities’ objectives towards the Recovered Territories.

Only one repatriant memoirist indicates prewar contact with Poznań Poles. Stanisław Łukasiewicz encountered western Polish stallholders at a Lwów trade fair. Born in 1905, Łukasiewicz is described by Curp as a ‘future officer and colonist of eastern Germany’. He appears destined to perform this role, since – according to Curp – Łukasiewicz attended an ND-inspired talk where he heard “Poland lies far to the West. That Upper and Lower Silesia and the river Odra are all old Polish territories”. The archived manuscript, however, indicates no ND responsibility for this statement, although Łukasiewicz admits he had an openly ND teacher. However, his father was a ‘left-winger’. The teacher with ND sympathies was not responsible for stating western territorial claims, while Curp mistakenly claims the talk came during Łukasiewicz’s 1927 military service in Lwów. This misreading allows Curp to imply long-standing, planned military expansion. In fact, writing about another encounter with Poles from the Poznań region during his military service triggered Łukasiewicz’s memory of a Mr Raciborski’s claims during a secondary school lesson. If this teacher’s surname indicates regional origins – Racibórz was in the prewar German Silesian borderlands – then he potentially had personal connections to the region. Although prewar institutional history influenced Łukasiewicz’s consciousness of Polish territorial claims, his competition entry indicates autobiographical memory’s workings. The writing process triggered recollection most likely stored as passive memory, rather than located in working memory used in everyday interactions.

Nothing suggests ideological inspiration drove Łukasiewicz westwards, yet Curp states ‘for Łukasiewicz, and many other Poles who during and after the Second World War found

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615 For one of them, Marcin Dziubek, it was not even voivodeship capital, as his Lubusz lands district was in Wrocław voivodeship initially before being included in the new Zielona Góra voivodeship in 1950.
616 Łukasiewicz, Instytut Zachodni, P-488-139, 1970. Curp (p.22) gives the wrong reference number – and this one of a number of examples of this in A Clean Sweep? – stating that Łukasiewicz’s memoir is P-739. Footnote 73, p. 246, states that a citation is from Żaba’s memoir, when it actually comes from Konik. Such mistakes make verifying Curp’s use of the memoirs difficult.
618 Curp, p.22
619 Łukasiewicz, cited in Curp, p.22.
620 Łukasiewicz, Instytut Zachodni, P488-139, p.38.
themselves in eastern Germany and claimed to discern traces of Polishness there, these academic exercises helped prepare them for the transformations brought about by the collapse of Germany’s eastern imperial aspirations.\(^{622}\) Curp believes such ‘academic exercises’ directly influenced attitudes and decisions, whereas Łukasiewicz’s text indicates passive remembering/forgetting of school history lessons, retrieved when public representation required a usable framework for his life story. Łukasiewicz’s autobiography is anchored in the upheaval of leaving his homeland near Stanisławów (today’s Ukrainian Ivano-Frankivsk). ‘As I find myself today about 1000km west of my birthplace, I’ve become accustomed to the territory. Regular visits to towns in the area by force of circumstance compel me to adapt to our current home region \([\text{nasze obecne strony}]\).’\(^{623}\) Despite being a reserve officer and labelled ‘colonist’, nationalist ideology is lacking, as even in 1970 Łukasiewicz appears an unwilling inhabitant, depicting migration and then adaptation as forced by circumstance. His writing reveals the spectre of temporariness by referring to ‘our current home region’. He seemingly considers further changes possible. After all, in the eastern borderlands he heard locals term post-WWI settlers ‘incomers from Poland’ whose stay, as locals predicted, proved temporary.\(^{624}\) Łukasiewicz’s memoir hardly satisfies Curp’s ideological-institutional model of settlement, where the Church, Party-state and PZZ formed a monolith driving mass settlement, and even incorporating migrants from the east into the ideology.

Despite the significance attributed to PZZ, few settler-memoirists refer to it. Stefan Mróz’s 1957 text proves an exception, as he recalls his experiences in an eleven-man PZZ-organised group who left Poznań and approached Leszno, around 80km away, on 11 May 1945.\(^{625}\) ‘Each of us feared going deep into Germany. Each of us said that we should stick close to the Polish border just in case anything should happen, we’d be close to home.’\(^{626}\) Each man observed rapt ‘German areas’ \([\text{tereny niemieckie}]\) along the way. Rather than engender ‘colonial enthusiasm’,\(^{627}\) or ensure internalisation of German loss and Polish gains, PZZ ideology is absent as the men designated old lands ‘home’ and the new territories remained ‘Germany’. While the title of Mróz’s published memoir suggests it affirms narratives of integration, the ellipsis draws readers’ attention to an omission revealed in the conclusion:

\(^{622}\) Curp, p.22.  
\(^{623}\) Łukasiewicz, IZ P-488-139, p.41.  
\(^{624}\) Ibid., pp.39-40.  
\(^{625}\) Stefan Mróz, Instytut Zachodni memoir P138 (1957); fragments published as “Czujemy się tutaj... jakoby my się tu urodzili” [“We feel here... as if we were born here”], in Pamiętniki osadników (1963), pp.266-269.  
\(^{626}\) Mróz, IZ P-138, p.2.  
\(^{627}\) Curp, p.5.
‘only now after twelve years do we feel like we were born here.’

Meaning remains unchanged in one sense – at the time of writing Mróz’s family feels at home – but the cut also indicates moderation of uncertainties and setbacks in the decade-long adaptation process. The 1963 ellipsis also omits hope and relief expressed in the immediate post-stalinist period, although nothing indicates this optimism resulted from nationalist legitimation of the Gomułka regime. For Mróz, the Recovered Territories were principally a site of economic opportunity and improved living standards and not framed in reference to his arrival with PZZ.

While Curp’s model foregrounds ideological-nationalist motivation, it also suggests autobiographers constructed post-hoc patriotic frames for their experience. ‘For many Poles, moving westward represented a chance to do well for themselves and do good for their country. Many of the settlers later wrote in their memoirs that even at this early stage, they were convinced that they were reclaiming ancient Polish lands as they sought opportunities to claim empty farms or otherwise improve their situation.’

‘Later’ is key, as ‘reclaiming ancient Polish lands’ is a construct derived from public history, although Curp’s reading of popular autobiography prefers to consider such claims direct representations of attitudes held at the moment of action. This is methodologically problematic as public history provided an acknowledged framework for composing a usable past, assuaging the spectres of temporariness and, in some cases, doubts over the morality of acquiring ordinary Germans’ property. Curp, though, rules out any such doubt, though. ‘In judging just how toxic were Polish attitudes toward Germans, the memoir literature of the 1950s and late 1960s is particularly revealing,’ with Curp adding that for entrants to the 1957 and 1970 competitions ‘wartime experiences loomed exceedingly large, even decades later.’ Consequently, there was ‘catharsis of massive revenge embodied in the ethnic cleansing’, which memoirs document.

Zbigniew Żaba, a Wrocław resident born in a small town now in Belarus, is the first autobiographer summoned by Curp to illustrate ‘toxicity’. Żaba’s 133-page manuscript begins with a twenty-four-page history of the Western Territories, including references to geology, wandering Celtic tribes and Slavic lunar cults. Żaba considers his reinterpretation

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629 Curp, p.44.
630 Curp, p.175.
631 Curp, p.195.
a challenge to German ‘falsifications’,\textsuperscript{632} but acknowledges also Slavic and Germanic cultures’ ‘mutual influences’.\textsuperscript{633} Curp, though, interprets Żaba’s memoir thus:

In his insistence on the Polishness of the Western Territories, and his memories of German humiliations (informed by his experience of losing his home in Wilno to Soviet expansionism and almost his entire family to Nazi imperialism), Żaba’s 1956 memoir echoes the hopes and terrors of his fellow settlers, who continued to fear Germany but had come to regard the Recovered Territories as their home.\textsuperscript{634}

Żaba’s insistence appears a response to 	extit{trwoga}, attempting to convince himself of the permanence of his stay, although this hardly indicates toxicity, as he seeks to adapt to his new homeland. Curp reads Żaba’s text for evidence of ‘Nazi imperialism’ causing his personal loss, thus explaining apparent toxic nationalism. The full memoir, however, suggests Żaba’s family suffered primarily because of ‘Soviet expansionism’.

Throughout the period under the Soviet Union I received no news about my family’s fate in Kazakhstan. Only after four and a half years did I learn about everything. My uncle joined the Sikorski army that was being formed and left for the Middle East. My mother fell victim to the typhoid epidemic: she died in spring 1944 in the town of Szeich-Abbas-Ali [today’s Beruni - PV] in Karakalpakstan on the Amu Darya River.

Only his grandmother survived and returned to Poland.\textsuperscript{635}

Any ‘catharsis of massive revenge’ following ‘German humiliations’ is subdued, since Żaba’s most significant wartime memories concern Soviet occupation of the Wilno/Vilnius region, particularly from 1944 after joining the Red Army. He was initially sent eastwards having spent the German occupation from 1941 mostly on a state-run farm while active in the AK. Readers unaware Żaba’s memoir was from 1957 could be forgiven for believing it was written post-1989, not only because it stresses AK activism and suffering at Soviet hands, but also because he expresses shame regarding Germans’ fate in the Recovered Territories. Żaba recalls arriving in Krosno wearing his Soviet uniform, noting without 	extit{schadenfreude} that ‘[p]assers-by in the street, Germans, were shocked and mistreated, psychologically broken and frightened by the sight of that all-too-familiar uniform.’\textsuperscript{636} Żaba’s empathy might indicate subtly antipathy towards Soviet rule in his Wilno/Vilnius homeland, with anti-Soviet sentiment perhaps evoking bonds with German victims. Human

\begin{footnotes}
\item[632] Zbigniew Żaba, IZ P-81 (1957), p.21.
\item[633] Żaba, IZ, P-81, p.20.
\item[634] Curp, p.176.
\item[635] Żaba, IZ, p.37.
\item[636] Ibid., p.56.
\end{footnotes}
compassion is also evident in describing a Frau Lischke, an ordinary elderly woman sharing
his family’s Wroclaw tenement forced into domestic labour.

We couldn’t bear to look at these people suffering, these poor wrecks, who lost
everything in the war; we couldn’t bear looking at those fearful women and
impoverished children. I asked myself: how could all this happen? What have these
people done to us? Undoubtedly, those people we encountered were in no way
responsible for our nation’s monstrous suffering during the war and occupation. The
real villains escaped like cowards, while those who remained deserved only our
sympathy. During the occupation I met a lot of Germans who behaved impeccably
towards us, Poles. They certainly weren’t Polonophiles, but they weren’t Pole-eaters
[polakożercy] either; they were people also harmed by the war.637

Żaba exhibits a remarkably reconciliatory attitude, free of nationalistic hatred or demands
for collective punishment, hoping instead that German civilians can live without further
suffering. Empathetic, he recognises Germans might judge him ‘an enemy who ordered them
to leave the lands that had been their homeland until now’.638 Rather than eternally Polish,
as his historical narrative suggested, the lands are acknowledge as German homelands, hence
his shame at complicity in their loss. Curp saw ‘delight’639 in Żaba’s memoir at ‘ethnic
erasure’, i.e. ‘total destruction of all signs of specifically German presence in the Recovered
Territories’.640 However, it seems that his life story outlines empathy for human tragedy
above national divisions. He also finds the ‘national solidarity’ Curp thought inspired and
bonded Polish settlement in fact lacking in ‘the melting pot of regional differences’ no
‘unified society’ was evident.641 National solidarity was lacking as he fell victim to persistent
‘krajanism’, or regionally-inspired nepotism disadvantages ‘obeokrajanie’, or those of
alien regional origin.642 As a Vilnius native he felt excluded from Wroclaw’s prevalent (if
invented) Lwowiak culture. Żaba’s experience of krajanism is a practical illustration of
processes noted by Kenney as national identity failed to bond settlers who instead ‘sought
in the fragmented identities of regionalism some connection to the homes they had left.’643

638 Ibid., p.105.
639 Curp, p.175.
640 Ibid., p.83.
641 Żaba, p.124.
642 Ibid., p.126.
Curp cites another memoir as evidence of lasting ‘toxicity’. The 1970 memoir of Galician Jan Konik⁶⁴⁴ should illustrate that Poles deemed legitimate postwar authorities’ claims to defend “the borders of our Polish Fatherland” against German threat.⁶⁴⁵ However, Konik’s full memoir shows that he represented suffering at German hands – digging trenches in Hungary in 1944 – for rather quotidian purposes: condemning his neighbours’ complaints and spitefulness. He deems their apparent hardship irrelevant compared to his experiences of winter 1944 when potatoes became a cherished Christmas gift. Konik also defends the postwar Polish order using his wartime experience but nothing indicates that this necessarily mirrored state-sanctioned nationalism.

In order to live you have to work and work hard, we’ve got a saying, “there’s no supper without hard work”. The Polish People’s Republic and the whole Nation is fighting for a peaceful and good life and for a happy tomorrow for the whole nation, and it is also protecting our borders, the borders of our Polish Fatherland in order to avoid a repeat of 1939 when the Nazis invaded Poland and destroyed it, murdering the population and taking them to concentration camps, including Oświęcim [Auschwitz].⁶⁴⁶

Less a reinscription of official toxicity, Konik seeks to inspire fellow Poles to work hard towards a peaceful, successful future instead of submitting to apathy and fear. Żaba and Konik seem odd choices to exemplify ‘toxic’ attitudes when less ambivalent examples lacking reconciliatory traces are available, such as Henryk Zudro’s memoir. ‘In 1946/47, the German population was being deported en masse. I had the worst prejudice against the Germans then.’ He recalls the murder of Belarusian communists, Jews and Polish partisans. ‘For these reasons every humiliation and misfortune that befell the German people I greeted as revenge.’⁶⁴⁷ Even here, though, Zudro speaks as if his vengeful attitude had passed.

The archive also contains illustrations of another of Curp’s central concepts, ‘national solidarity’, which suggested absence of intra-Polish tensions or alienation among settlers. Curp believes national sentiments bonded Poles to each other and the new political order, at least while the latter favoured ‘nationally revolutionary radicalism’ and avoided redressing property relations and ethnic cleansing’s material benefits.⁶⁴⁸ Once the gains were

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⁶⁴⁵ Konik, cited in Curp, p.177.
⁶⁴⁶ Konik, IZ, P-662-375, p.5.
⁶⁴⁷ Henryk Zudro, ‘Ziściły się moje pierwsze marzenia na Ziemiach Odzyskanych’, P62, POZO, pp.559-574 (p.570); he was born in the former Białystok voivodeship, indicating that his home village of Włoki is now outside the current borders of Poland; he is a farmer in Drawsko Pomorskie in Koszalin voivodeship, aged 29 at the time of writing.
⁶⁴⁸ Curp, p.78.
threatened, popular legitimacy waned while bonds between Poles strengthened. Curp’s work thus supplements Fleming’s by arguing:

while the authorities pursued their socially revolutionary and nationally counterrevolutionary campaigns from above and abroad, ethnic cleansing’s transformation of Polish society ultimately directed many of the outcomes, if not the course, of events in postwar Poland. After 1948, Stalinist efforts to expropriate or destroy the fruits of Poland’s ethnic cleansing by seeking to protect Poland’s remaining minorities, curtail religious influence in Polish society, and reseize German property that Poles had shared out among themselves produced a great deal of popular resistance. This resistance was informed by the region’s pervasive national solidarity, which led peasants and grassroots religious activists to maintain pressure on minorities and undermine the foundations of the authorities’ revolutionary transformations. Polish Stalinism’s efforts to import and impose social revolution and internationalism faced a society united by a domestic and revolutionary national solidarity that would first resist, then break, and finally convert it.\(^{649}\)

National solidarity appears as the central motivation of the state’s politics and the key to popular legitimacy. However, promoting nationalism and national solidarity had paradoxical long-term consequences, as it laid foundations for challenging communist rule. While Curp posits a communist (counter)-revolution from above and abroad, he recognises its foundations in national revolution meant the ideal goals could never be realised. The rudimentary “imagined community”\(^{650}\) evident in 1944/45 ‘provided the people of Wielkopolska with the crude, but efficient outlines of Polishness with which to conduct ethnic cleaning [sic] and erasure’ and subsequently ‘began to form the basis for widespread, decentralized, and effective resistance to the authorities.’\(^{651}\) Curp foregrounds the “nation” as agentic and challenging communism, incorporating the entire population into the imagined nation, therefore overlooking the social variety of attitudes and motives for actions. This national homogenisation within his largely chronological narrative means peasant resistance to collectivisation and the workers’ protests in Poznań in June 1956 are simply linked because his framework suggests all Poles in western Poland possessed a similar nationalist worldview and were similarly incensed by the internationalist counterrevolution, rather than – for example – quotidian difficulties. Curp suggests similarity indicates


\(^{651}\) Curp, p.130.
increased national solidarity in response to the threat of internationalism, or anti-national counterrevolution, in the guise of collectivisation.

Curp also uses Maria Jankowska’s 1957 memoir to explore motives for migration, acknowledging she was part of a group who left ‘seeking new opportunities’ enabled by ‘colonization of eastern Germany’ and the new authorities. She and her extended family left a small farm on sandy soil in an overpopulated Inowroclaw district village for the Gorzów area. Robbed by Soviet soldiers during the journey, her father wanted to turn back. She insisted otherwise because ‘people will laugh at us, let’s go on.’ Informal social control mechanisms remain influential suggesting migration could be motivated by wanting to prove wrong doubting family members and ex-neighbours. Nationalistically-inspired ‘colonial enthusiasm’ hardly seems an accurate description as Jankowska critically reappropriates official discourse, while noting regional tensions.

People said, you zabuźniak, you pozniak, they couldn’t even stand looking at each other, but now people are accustomed to living with each other and their surroundings. They couldn’t stand looking at each other just like the Polish and Russian armies. Sometimes I read in books what a great friendship they have. I’ve thought about it, I know and I’ve seen what sort of friendship it was: a Russkie soldier [żolnierz ruski – sic] stole a Polish soldier’s bike, allocated to him for work. I say to him, the Polish soldier, are you just going to let that happen, and the soldier says, I didn’t get killed on the front so why get killed by such a beast now?

Jankowska indicates popular autobiography’s critical potential, by turning comments on localised intra-Polish tensions into a critique of Poland’s postwar geopolitics. Her anti-Soviet depiction of uneasy alliances required no inspiration by national solidarity or nationalism, even if her recollection of the encounter with the soldier stresses Poland’s subordination. Recollection of regional tensions questions Curp’s certainty that antagonisms were sidelined ‘during the colonization of eastern Germany by channelling intra-Polish social, cultural, and class antagonism into national directions’. Jankowska recalls intra-Polish tensions were so significant in the first village where her family settled, as different groups struggled for power, that they abandoned it for one nearby with a Varsovian sóltyś

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652 Curp, p.44.
654 Ibid., pp.1-2.
655 Ibid., pp.3-4.
656 Curp, p.32.
Although Inowrocław district was in the interwar Poznań voivodeship (until 1938 administrative reforms) nothing indicates what Curp deems “Poles” of Poznań” essential traits influenced either her or her family’s motives for migrating or their attitudes towards communist authorities. Curp’s model, though, would treat her recollection of the Soviet ‘beast’ as an indication that Church-bound anti-communism of Poznań Poles could re-emerge once national legitimacy appeared to fade.

The region’s widespread national solidarity compounded the various problems that the party-state faced in mobilizing their apparatus. National solidarity in the countryside tied together most of the peasantry as well as the rural clergy, teachers, and even some local officials in a common belief that collectivization and the party-state’s efforts at cultural revolution confronted Poles with illegitimate and alien imperial dictates of Moscow and its domestic supporters. This belief led rural society to resist the regime through collective but uncoordinated acts of solidarity. [...] This suggests that what bound the peasantry and their allies together were not informal conspiratorial politics, but the sensibilities of national solidarity.

Although Curp outlined ‘decentralized’, non-insurgent resistance, he in fact attributes to peasant opposition unitary inspiration centred upon national solidarity. No other possibilities are indicated, whether class bonds or even regional krajanizm, as Mróz suggested. Because people of the same nationality helped each other, Curp insists there was national solidarity, in a process of resisting collectivisation which appears uniform across the new lands, even though collectivisation took place in stages. Different levels of coercion affected villages (some villages were never targeted for collectivisation) at different times with different responses employed. Curp’s narrative also ignores that collectivisation was often not imposed solely by Party-state outsiders directly on rural communities but was a negotiated process involving local residents performing multiple social roles – as farmers, activists and Party members – which engendered conflicting allegiances and loyalties. This is evident in the memoir by Marcin Dziubek, which Curp cites but only to show him as a kulak. He does not comment that Dziubek was also involved in the local GRN, PRN and PZPR and responsible for collectivisation, or ensuring that in fact it was never fully implemented. Fleming might consider what emerged ‘divide-and-rule’ but evidence shows some peasants

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657 Jankowska, IZ P-202, p.4.
659 Ibid., p.129.
660 Marcin Dziubek, IZ, P-133, pp.32-34.
negotiating multiple demands to their own – and their community’s – least disadvantage. Curp meanwhile claims the acts were uncoordinated solidarity, but for evidently nationalist ideals offered, at least in imagination, some level of coordination.

Meanwhile, winner of MPWPL (1962) ‘Gospodarz z ołówkiem w ręku’, born in 1929 in Warsaw voivodeship, argued ‘class war’ and collectivisation did not simply divide “society” against “the state”, but created subtler divisions which often followed new fissures, which state authorities and inhabitants alike could not foresee. He argues that ‘rural class war’ broke communities ‘in order to make it easier to rule over people.’ He finds that his village ‘united before the war, during the occupation and the first postwar years through this class war became torn.’ Divisions remained even after the Polish October.661 If his village proved divisible despite the unity he believed had survived the war and revolutionary early postwar years, then intra-community tensions were likelier in the Recovered Territories realities’ where social bonds were fragile or non-existent. It is also significant that ‘Gospodarz’ notes memory of stalinist-era tensions remained prevalent in village life, regardless of state-level political transformation. Equally, if Curp’s study were genuinely comparative between old and new lands, rather than a depiction of Poznań’s colonial expansion into Lubusz lands, then perhaps such differences should have been noted.

Instead, UB archives are used to support Curp’s view of national-solidarity-inspired cooperation between different actors in local communities, forming a homogenous image of responses.662 ‘Security officials spoke darkly of this “tolerance” by local government of kulaks and cited many instances, in which local governing bodies entered into conspiracies to reduce the sowing area of a commune or district, or wrote off substantial tax arrears, and engaged in the “wrecking” of co-ops from within.’ Curp replicates officials’ logic that an ideology or system of thought necessarily inspired non-conformist actions – even though multiple reasons explain local authorities’ failure to collect all taxes and impose quotas, including inefficiency, crop failure, climatic conditions, poor central planning, arbitrary allocation of quotas, poor bookkeeping, everyday spontaneous non-conformity, as well as solidarity, which includes personal favours, krajanism or corruption, rather than just Pole helping Pole. His decentred opposition appears increasingly organised, whereas other historians have recognised such responses’ negotiated nature.

661 Gospodarz z ołówkiem w ręku (no. 5090), in MPWPL vol. 1, pp.66-120 (p.115).
662 Curp, p.127.
Dariusz Jarosz avoids seeing a deliberate divide-and-rule strategy to disrupt national solidarity, noting instead how some local authorities aided peasant opposition, while others pursued benefits derived from implementing central government policy, and many in ‘the local power apparatus’ recognised they were ‘in a particularly awkward position.’ They realised ‘what on the level of party and central authorities’ decrees was to serve “the happiness of the working peasant” and “limiting the kulak”, when put into practice was in fact something which often questioned the very sense of peasant farming’. However, even this apparent hopelessness has political and historical significance following Jarosz, as the central Warsaw authorities needed to respond to the apparent lack of engagement, thus adjusting subsequent ‘directives from “Warsaw” to the local apparatus.’ Signals, often unintentionally, transmitted from below caused alteration to central government policy. Jarosz’s model, avoiding reference to ideology, becomes a real model of ‘uncoordinated acts of solidarity’, so uncoordinated in fact that neighbouring villages could have very different experiences of collectivisation. Peasants’ primary concern was most often not whether policy was nationalist or internationalist, Polish, Soviet or Western, but whether it permitted land ownership, regardless of whether property was the ‘fruit of ethnic cleansing’ or had belonged to Polish landlords. Dyzma Gałaj showed how the authorities sought to combat ‘fetishistic’ attachment to ownership of land and the means of production. Yet for Curp, resistance to collectivisation was located in cultural identities of Catholicism and imagined Polishness, something he stresses in his generalisations about Instytut Zachodni memoirs from 1957.

Curp’s assumes individuals sharing particular characteristics – religion, class, recent history, economic and political system and nationality – must necessarily share a common identity, responding identically to demands, policies and events, rather than forming various hybrid intersections of the groups they identify with. His framing of the memoirs discounts often harrowing effects of attempted collectivisation on peasant farmers, presenting peasants instead simply as nationalists motivated by condemning Soviet policy as anti-Polish not anti-Polish. He also overlooks how the memoirs, written in 1957 especially, were influenced by the prominent public destalinisation of the time, as the ‘era of mistakes and distortions’ was

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664 Jarosz, Polityka, p.7.
665 See: Jarosz, Polityka, especially pp.298-307 on the Recovered Territories.
667 Curp, p.129.
condemned and worked through. The popular legitimacy of the Gomulka government might not simply be due to nationalism but because it was not-stalinist.

Curp’s belief that national solidarity was the product of popular will goes so far that he suggests the worker-peasant alliance resulted from peasant ‘enthusiasm’ inspired by post-stalinist nationalist revival.668 He uses Stanisław Miszczak’s 1957 memoir as evidence, although Miszczak’s entry reveals he hoped the alliance would not be reinstated as policy, since he deemed it a cover for exporting grain to the USSR, rather than a genuine alliance.669 Jarosz saw the alliance as an attempt to justify ‘the exploitation of villages at whose cost the country’s industrialisation took place,’ with this process continuing after 1956.670 With Miszczak directing criticism at the Soviet Union, he overlook mechanisms ensuring domestic exploitation of peasants continued perhaps indicating how, for a short time before restrictions were imposed again – to adapt Fleming’s model – the Soviet Union became a ‘safe target’ for social anger, within a strategy to gain popular legitimacy.

Tomasz Kamusella presents a generally critical review of Curp’s study, although he accepts the theory of ‘national revolution’, which ‘[b]y producing an ethnolinguistically homogenous new Poland, this revolution secured much-needed national solidarity despite the acute conflict between Soviet-backed communists and pro-Western anti-communists.’671 However, if there was solidarity, then this appears to apply to the elites who made a pact with the new authorities, whereas ordinary settlers’ social practice could develop in ignorance of this pact or the ideology of Polish western thought. There was national revolution in terms of producing an ethnically homogenous Poland, but as Kenney noted settlers often ‘sought in the fragmented identities of regionalism some connection to the homes they had left.’672 This fact was evident in several of the memoirs Curp used selectively in his study to affirm his theory without exploring potential alternative readings, as did Zaremba. Both approaches relied on selecting ‘emphatic statements’ rather than working up to explore the experience of mega-concepts of nationalism, legitimacy, social change and others, as Geertz suggested subalterns, or those in ‘obscure contexts’ deserved.

To complete this chapter, I turn to one particular settler’s memoir to explore long-term individual transformations of anti-Germanism, which shifted over time often outside the influence of state institutions. This enables a reading of subaltern memory and experience

668 Ibid., p.171.
669 Stanisław Miszczak, IZ P-38 (1957), part 3, p. 4.
670 Jarosz, Polityka władz, p.500, p.515.
671 Kamusella, p.124.
672 Kenney, p.157.
beyond declarations of inherent nationalism, xenophobia, backwardness, boorishness or any other essential traits scholars have declared.

3.5 Kazimiera Jurkowa and anti-Germanism

Timothy Snyder believes that ‘[i]n new surroundings, “national” characteristics such as religion and language come to the fore. Deportation creates lowest-common-denominator nationalism.’ Curp argued similarly, although Kenney questioned this assumption in *Rebuilding Poland*, finding more complex regional bonds prevailed as Poles encountered each other. I explore the memoir of Kazimiera Jurkowa, a woman settler to the Recovered Territories who initially developed few social bonds there other than to her husband and children. She initially experiences the space as profoundly German, something media discourses underscored, as she remained largely confined to the domestic sphere while inhabiting Świdnica. Despite formally advancing from peasant daughter to urban dweller, the typically-stated benefits of urbanisation are largely absent. Since she arrived from central Poland, her narrative also illuminates the overshadowed experiences of voluntary settlers as eastern borderland Poles, as Tomczak argued, inhabit today’s dominant memory.

Housewife Kazimiera Jurkowa was born in France in 1925 to Polish migrant parents who returned to Małopolska just before the outbreak of war. Jurkowa entered Instytut Zachodni’s 1970 memoir competition with an autobiography based on her diary. An edited version was published in a 1978 compilation whose introduction posited a typical ‘sequence’ or life script for settlers: initial difficulties shift towards concern for increasing material wealth – acquiring a flat, furniture, domestic appliances and eventually a motorbike. The sequence ‘repeats with surprising regularity.’ However, editor Dulczewski recognises it reflects only ‘the selected memoirs’ protagonists.’ Dulczewski also indicates women’s narratives question totalising, male-centric readings of advance, as it is ‘consistently the male head of the family who acquires formal qualifications’ and contributes to Poland’s increasing specialised and educated workforce. Commenting on the Recovered

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674 The original memoir is held in the archive of Instytut Zachodni: P1043-844. The published version will be cited, since there are very few changes to the manuscript.
676 Dulczewski, in *Pamiętniki mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska*, p. 11.
677 Ibid., p.11.
Territories, Dulczewski notes ‘evident symbols of deep-rooted local patriotism’ as settlers become inhabitants who feel ‘at home’ in the new lands.\(^{678}\)

Jurkowa’s text bears the simple but symbolic title ‘W domu…’ [At home…].\(^{679}\) The phrase initially signals her alienation as she remains limited to the domestic sphere, before developing – over years – a feeling that she is ‘at home’ in Świdnica, an industrial centre 60km south of Wrocław. Her entry begins in October 1949, as her husband Tadzik agreed, after four years’ pleading, to move to the Recovered Territories. Jurkowa’s parents, prewar migrants themselves, disapprove. She seeks to appease them, saying ‘we could come back any time we please.’\(^{680}\) The Jureks moved at a politically pivotal moment, as it became clear stalinist agricultural policies would be adopted. Whether the Jureks’ decision to migrate from rural central Poland was connected to collectivisation is unclear but they nevertheless contributed to the early wave of stalinist-era migration to urban areas as private agriculture’s future looked bleak. They avoided the grand industrialisation-urbanisation projects such as Nowa Huta, preferring a more peripheral location. Jurkowa struggled to locate Świdnica on a prewar map, an image symbolising the new lands’ alien nature even 1949, suggesting official efforts to communicate Poland’s new geography were lacking. ‘I found near Breslau at town called Schweidnitz. Mum says it has to be Świdnica and Breslau must be Wrocław, but I’m not so sure.’\(^{681}\) Unofficial discourse, including rumours, shaped popular imagination of the new territories. From relative optimism (‘it probably won’t be that bad’),\(^{682}\) Jurkowa shifted to doubt, influenced by returnees’ and looters’ stories, with Tadzik having gone ahead in October 1949. In November she noted: ‘Yesterday my cousin’s husband returned from looting and said that Germans in Opole poisoned the water supply and loads of people fell ill. What to do?’\(^{683}\) Appearing German on maps, the Recovered Territories are imagined as still inhabited by threatening Germans, as looters’ stories (surprisingly active still in 1949) prove more convincing than official proclamations.

Jurkowa eventually moved in January 1950, once Tadzik secured a flat after an acquaintance abandoned Świdnica. Her first impressions: ‘Świdnica – a disgusting hole rather than a town. A few streets, some run down shacks instead of houses, a few shops with empty shelves and

\(^{680}\) Jurkowa, p.127.
above them badly painted-over German signs bare their teeth."\textsuperscript{684} Run down and desolate, the town seemed alien and threatening principally because of German traces, while hardly fulfilling her expectations of a town. ‘I have a feeling’, she adds, ‘I will never feel right here.’\textsuperscript{685} Their damaged, badly-equipped and poorly-furnished flat strengthened this impression. Although family connections brought them to Świdnica, Jurkowa feels like an outsider as they are Tadzik’s relatives, while regional origins posed barriers to social bonding. ‘I know who’s from where because they ask straight away, which part of Poland are you from?’ \textsuperscript{686} As Kenney found for Wrocław, and Žaba experienced, regional bonds evidently prove the primary factor in determining what social bonds form, aside from gender.

By March 1950, Jurkowa wanted to return home: ‘If it weren’t for the shame I’d face from other people, I’d walk home.’\textsuperscript{687} Her established Małopolska community still exerts a social-control function, so she hopes for a better future in a land of plenty and opportunity. However, her hopes soon fade as gendered restrictions imposed by the economy and patriarchal family life compound material shortages. Tadzik benefitted from labour shortages and switches jobs easily, moving in April 1950 from the communal heating plant to reinstalling the electricity network,\textsuperscript{688} but in May refused his wife permission to work, as he wanted her, rather than neighbours, to raise their daughter.\textsuperscript{689} Consigned to the roles of mother and housewife, Jurkowa is prevented from developing further social bonds while her frustrations, fears and alienation grow in a domestic space whose German past makes it more disturbing. In July 1950 she wrote:

These Hun houses will be the death of me! I wanted to tidy up, at least sweep the cobwebs away, because it’s dark as a cave here. Alas! Even with a broom and standing on a chair placed on the table I can’t reach the ceiling. Apparently this building was once a monastery. I wonder what it was during the war? When I think that maybe some Nazi slept in the bed I sleep in now I feel like setting it on fire.\textsuperscript{690}

The former monastery offers insufficient sanctuary meaning homeliness is associated with her parents’ house despite having lived there only ten years, mostly during wartime. ‘Will this ever become my home?’\textsuperscript{691} Everyday difficulties trigger destructive, anti-German urges

\textsuperscript{684} Ibid., p.130.
\textsuperscript{685} Ibid., p.130.
\textsuperscript{686} Ibid., p.131.
\textsuperscript{687} Ibid., p.131.
\textsuperscript{688} Ibid., p.131.
\textsuperscript{689} Ibid., p.132.
\textsuperscript{690} Ibid., p.133.
\textsuperscript{691} Ibid., p.133.
which were not evident while Tadzik worked at the heating plant and she could enjoy the benefits of urban life, such as visits to the cinema. With him working away six days a week she feels, ‘I know now how time passes for people in prison.’ Only Tadzik’s bonus payment provided relief that month, as she bought books, ‘the fattest tomes possible. I could barely carry them.’ The books had to be consumed, though, in the flat alone with her daughter, where the Nazi-German past haunted her more intensely through the surroundings and the radio. As the situation grew intolerable, she pleaded with Tadzik in August 1950 and again the following February to leave for Nowa Huta which was attracting Świdnica residents. She recognises Nowa Huta could prove equally disenchanting, but it was closer to her family. Tadzik refused to move, though: “I’ve got a job, a flat, I’ve got used to it here.”

Nothing changes in May 1951 when she feels she ‘would like to leave and never return’. Jurkowa questioned Tadzik’s declarations about enjoying a stable life as his work meant he never experienced mieszkanie, meaning both the flat and also actually living in the new lands. Only she faced the difficulties associated with acclimatising to alien home and urban spaces.

While memoir sociology, using titles for volumes like Tu jest mój dom or Mój dom nad Odrą, considered the ‘home’ largely in abstract terms as a sense regional or local patriotism or – by in the 1981 volume Tu jest nasza Ojczyzna – national homeland, Jurkowa’s perspective focuses on the overlooked aspect of settler experiences, namely creation of a homely domestic space. Male peasants’ memoirs tended to foreground production rather than domestic life. Pioneer narratives demonstrated agency in the public and economic sphere. A housewife’s memoir, as Chalasiński noted in MMŻ, can have a disruptive effect on urbanisation- and industrialisation-centred advance narratives. Jurkowa’s memoir becomes a very much everyday history of settlement, which also reveals the significant influence of political changes on everyday existence, which she assesses by drawing on existing memories and experiences. After shopping expeditions for clothes and essentials following restrictions on private traders during the ‘battle for trade’, as spending Tadzik’s bonus became difficult, she notes: ‘We bought everything in private shops because the state shops are empty. I wonder if things will ever be like I remember they were in France? Shelves filled with goods up to the ceiling, so much on offer you didn’t know what to

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692 Ibid., p.134.
693 Ibid., p.134.
694 Ibid., p.136.
695 Ibid., p.137.
France provides the benchmark and an alternative reference memory to official narratives declaring improvements on interwar Poland or an end to capitalist exploitation, while the declaration of superior supplies in private shops is not an anti-communist view but a declaration of fact.

Increasing economic centralisation, albeit inadvertently, brought Jurkowa some relief in November 1951 – a month after returning from five-months at home in Małopolska – as the former monastery was given to a cobblers’ cooperative. The Jureks moved to a four-room flat, sharing the kitchen and bathroom with neighbours. 1952 is presented briefly: Jurkowa declares her life of little interest to readers, with three of eight lines from May 1952 reading: ‘I’d intended to note the more important events in my life. How could I have foreseen that it would be so dull? What to write about when nothing is happening? ’ The editors evidently perceived her chronicle’s value as a contribution to the published record of the new territories’ social history. In August 1952, Jurkowa gave birth to a second daughter in Świdnica, while 1953 was notable principally for Tadzik’s three-month military service from August and several purchases: a camera, a second-hand German bicycle and, having queued for three hours before Christmas, a doll. Her December 1953 entry, however, is reflective rather than descriptive as she takes stock of life away from Małopolska. ‘For years we’ve been living in this west, at the start I thought I wouldn’t last even four months.’ Świdnica, remaining unnamed, continues to seem alien, located in ‘this west’, an unspecified region lacking homely characteristics or an official name. Significant events develop her emotional bonds to the home space, but the surrounding urban and regional spaces remain alien. It is evident, however, that German traces have faded from her narrative and they no longer dominate her surroundings, although any institutional influence on this appears minimal as passive forgetting occurs.

Her two 1954 entries show her eldest daughter starting school and buying a radio, which illustrates supply problems in the socialist economy. She bought a model manufactured in Dzierżoniów, twenty kilometres away, ‘from under the counter’ in Małopolska, as none were supplied locally, she claims. Quite possibly radios were supplied, but perhaps Jurkowa lacked necessary social connections in Świdnica to procure one outside official means. 1955 was notable for a wall between kitchen and bathroom collapsing in April, while repairs began

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697 Jurkowa, p.133.
698 Ibid., pp.137-8.
699 Ibid., p.139.
700 Ibid., pp.139-140.
701 Ibid., pp.140-142.
702 Ibid., pp.142-143.
only in March 1956 despite part of the building being declared unusable.\footnote{Ibid., pp.144-146.} Despite difficult conditions, Jurkowa reflected optimistically on her first six years in Świdnica in January 1956, even regretting delaying migration.

Six years have passed since we arrived in Świdnica. I never even noticed when I stopped thinking about going back.

I regret now not coming straight after the war. Those who came earlier have nice flats with furniture, they can live peacefully and work without constantly adding, bit by bit, to their property.

Tadzik says that what he owns, he earned with his own two hands and needn’t have any misgivings that he took someone else’s property. As if you could have any misgivings about behaviour towards the Germans. After six years’ occupation they plundered us almost completely. They lost the war but kept their loot. It’s us, the victors, who must start from scratch, while they, the defeated, are rich, because they looted the wealth of occupied countries.

And we still haven’t had any repairs. Apparently they’re going to start in March.\footnote{Ibid., p.146.}

Świdnica, now named, appears less alien, as over time the urge to leave fades, while Małopolska is not termed home, although the label was yet to transfer to Świdnica. Jurkowa indicates that into the 1950s, state efforts to equalise property relations had not succeeded as earlier arrivals appear wealthier, with this having evident long-term consequences. Tadzik, meanwhile, might take pride in his self-made man attitude, although he also appropriates authority over the family space, as the sole owner. Germans reappear in Jurkowa’s narrative, framing them as a national Other deserving collective punishment. Tadzik considers former-German property cudze, somebody else’s thus out-of-bounds, regardless as nationality, whereas his wife deems it cudze, belonging to alien German Others and thus claimable as she identifies with a national “we” group of victims. However, her anti-Germanism here serves principally as ammunition in a domestic dispute, rather than to declare identification with fellow Poles in Świdnica or to express gratitude to the postwar authorities.

A less ambivalent reproduction of official history occurs regarding June 1956. However, this proved controversial and marked a rare moment where the editorial intervention was necessary. Jurkowa begins by stating: ‘I’ll let those days speak.’ [Oddaję głos tamtym
Despite producing a clean draft of her diary for the competition, she seems to reproduce her original echo of official statements drawn from radio programmes in response to Premier Józef Cyrankiewicz’s speech condemning protestors. The October 1956 transformation passes, meanwhile, without comment.

This month should be noted as a dark period in history. I can’t understand in whose interest it was to cause the disturbances in Poznań. We’re slowly picking ourselves up from the ruins, we’re doing better all the time, so why destroy it?

I was listening to Premier Józef Cyrankiewicz’s speech on the radio. I like listening to him speak, he has a nice voice and speaks such beautiful Polish. Among other things he said: “if someone raises a hand to our People’s Poland then we will chop off his hand...”

Well, I would chop off the head of anyone like that. If someone raises a hand at his fatherland then he’s capable of the vilest deeds. Were it up to me, then I would have anyone who harms the country hanged publicly and without appeal, even if he expressed the greatest regret and promised to repent. We’d soon be rid of spies and other vermin. The biggest murderer can be spared his life, but anyone who hurts his own country—never!!

Academic editors removed as standard obvious replication of official discourse in competition autobiographies, at least as far as these moments resounded uncomfortably, echoing with periods from which the new authorities had distanced themselves. Perhaps the context of 1970’s workers’ protests also made returning to June 1956 all the more unpublishable. Adding her own comments and patriotic declarations, Jurkowa appears more merciless than Cyrankiewicz. However, by 1970 she too seems to distance herself from her previous attitudes by stressing that she is ‘letting those days speak’, or literally ‘giving voice to those times’, not declaring something she would repeat now. Coming from a period when she remained limited to the domestic sphere, lacking interanimating social interaction and instead consuming only official, media discourse, she distances herself from the duality of voices that emerged, one representing her everyday experience and the other describing political affairs.

While official discourse frames part of her experience, Jurkowa’s memoir also indicates the everyday functioning of passive forgetting. Her memory of June 1956 evidently jarred with her current attitudes, while a decade later, in December 1965, she retrieved by chance some

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706 Jurkowa, IZ P1043-844, p.42.
of Tadzik’s old papers while clearing a drawer, finding ‘some old awards for a hero of socialist labour.’

Stalinism was actively forgotten by the authorities, while her husband’s Stakhanovite achievements, hardly significant at the time since they did not feature in her diary, suddenly re-emerge. ‘It’s not such a daft thing, keeping a diary. You might forget a few things – but it survives on paper.’ Clearly, as Mark showed, autobiographical self-representations were constructed in relation to public discourses. Perhaps if stalinism was not officially absented, then his certificate would retain pride-of-place in the family home, rather than slipping into an obscure depot and passive forgetting.

After turning to official discourse to process the events of 1956, Jurkowa returns to quotidian experiences and everyday language, recalling summer 1957 – the first spent not in her Malopolska village but ‘at home’ with her three children, the youngest born in December 1956. ‘I spent the summer at home with the children. At home... I can’t remember when I began calling our flat that. If I think back to those lands, then it is only because of my parents. I can’t believe that things were ever any different.’

Although an evidently resonant term, and important for being the first time ‘home’ appears in reference to the west, its significance is not equal to its meaning in relation to her parents’ village is not equal. In the west, it applies only to the flat, the domestic space, while in Malopolska it referred to an entire area [strony].

In March 1959, following an apparently uneventful 1958, they moved to a three-room flat, acquiring a vacuum cleaner by May. Their fourth child was born in late 1959, while 1960 was notable because they bought a television. That year Jurkowa was refused a place on evening classes for working people as she was not classed a ‘working person.’ Although she barely reflects upon this episode’s significance, it reveals her subalternisation through exclusion from the mode of production and thus the lines of advance. Technology may have brought all-national mass culture into the home, but education was denied. Only in 1969 could she begin a secondary school course for mothers. This is certainly an improvement, but still overlooks her contribution to others’ economic and social advance. Before 1969, only France had provided her with education. Her rationale for joining the course seemingly privileges the patriotic over the personal: ‘Principally to improve the proportion of people

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707 Jurkowa, Pamiętniki mieszkańców, p.154.
708 ‘GUKPP\W was determined to put an end to no longer actual political interests’, as the term “destalinisation” was barred with journalists having tried to ‘exploit’ the discourse. Pawlicki, Kompletna szarość (Warsaw: Trio, 2001), p.109.
709 Ibid., p.155.
710 Ibid., p.149.
711 Ibid., p.151.
with secondary education in Poland, then, secondly, so that I’m not stupider than my children.’ Clearly the patriotic motive alone is insufficient to motivate her, although the inspiration provided by her children’s improved education stems from improved postwar access to education. However, her autobiography shows women of her generation were invited into processes of advance but were expected to become anonymous contributors to improved national averages, rather than actually access improved economic or cultural conditions.

From 1960, Jurkowa’s diary became an annual chronicle with single entries from December based on original diary entries, with early notes the inspiration for reflection upon changes in her attitudes, something particularly evident in her 1963 entry describing a motorcycle trip with Tadzik around the local area.

And to think I used to call this area [strony] “Hun” when there is so much evidence of the lands’ [ziemie] Polishness!

We have visited a few Piast castles in the area already, and Świdnica even has a cathedral which Bolko of Świdnica, the last of the Polish dukes, started building some 600 years ago.

In July 1950, she described only buildings as “Hun”, as the inside of homes formed the extent of her familiarity with the region. Here, though, she regrets a pejorative attitude to the entire region, which she recognises as strony for the first time. The motorbike opened up greater knowledge of and familiarity with the area, although it seems her perspective is limited to the official heritage industry which is aimed, in any country, at engendering local or national patriotic consciousness. Her historical knowledge is framed by official claims which overwrite German presence in favour of foregrounding the distant Slavonic-Polish past. However, she already evidently practiced a degree of everyday, passive forgetting of the lands’ German past without impetus from official discourses as everyday bonds with the area made it more homely and familiar, and thus less German. Official history serves to make the lands appear more Polish. Prior to 1963, official media-based efforts had been largely ineffective in presenting a usable Polish past that she could incorporate into her process of adapting to new domestic, local and regional surroundings. The areas ceased to be German in the course of everyday life, but nothing had in turn made persuasive their Polishness. Claims of Polishness do not dominate her future perceptions of the lands, as

712 Ibid., p.156.
713 Ibid., p.153.
instead she notes the incremental development of a regional identity, of which she became conscious as she wrote her diary. In 1965 she noted: ‘We never even noticed when all the accepts formed a new language, not Lwów, not Krakow, not Warsaw, but our own Lower Silesian language.’ \footnote{Jurkowa, \textit{Pamiętniki mieszkańców}, p.154.} Where official history stressed national-level unity, Jurkowa reveals how identification takes regional forms in the course of everyday change. A “we” group forms based around settlers and the local region, not an imagined national community, something to which she expressed loyalty in 1956 when she was limited largely to consuming only official discourses.

In her competition entry, with the rewriting process encouraging reflection upon forgotten events noted in her diary, she also reflects upon material changes in her life. In December 1968 she is surprised that nearly two decades previously seemingly mundane purchases had thrilled her. ‘Looking over those notes makes me want to laugh. I can’t believe that such simple thinks, like buying some clothes, were once a significant event for me.’ \footnote{Jurkowa, \textit{Pamiętniki mieszkańców}, p.155.} After all, for Women’s Day 1968 Tadzik bought her a Yugoslavian cooker, adding to the material improvements charted in her autobiography, as emotions associated with earlier purchases was forgotten. Her memoir becomes an indicator of the reality of 1960s ‘advance’ in People’s Poland, which became centred upon material, consumerist improvements, as ideals of growing class or political consciousness drifted. This mode of advance could evidently pose the central authorities problems if further aspirations were not satisfied. While prewar France had been a benchmark for Jurkowa earlier in her narrative, by 1970 that level of aspiration had been supplanted, yet this was not something deemed worthy of recollection.

The family’s material advance certainly matches the model outlined in Dulczewski’s introduction, while the way it was achieved also demonstrates the accuracy of his assessment that “even if the author of a memoir is a women, the background and motor driving the matters described by her are the professional achievements of an advancing male head of the family.” \footnote{Dulczewski, in \textit{Pamiętniki mieszkańców}, p.11.} Quite evidently, Jurkowa is made to be dependent upon Tadzik, whether in buying books for cultural advancement or acquiring a motorbike which intensifies her regional bonds to the new lands. This is not only a consequence of the economic structure based on male-centred advance, but also owing to traditional patriarchal family structures. She may be living in a town but she remains outside the lines of mobility. However, many of her basic processes towards stabilising her existence and adapting to life in the new lands.
took place through her own everyday experiences. She overcame *trwoga* and longing for her homeland in Małopolska in the course of everyday existence over several years. Her anti-Germanism faded with little evident manipulation by the state or her levels of hatred. The most effective institution was probably the official heritage industry, which generated a usable version of Polishness without recourse to anti-Germanism.

As will become evident in the chapter on IZ and the sociology of the Recovered Territories, Jurkowa exemplifies quite evidently its focus on everyday processes of stabilisation, adaptation and integration to the new territories. Although the nation features in her life story, as do Polish-German relations, they do not become its central trope. This memoir shows the functioning of private sphere memory without any indication that private memory, as Ewa Thompson and Orla-Bukowska suggested, was necessarily a site of nation-centred opposition. Overall, despite toxic moments, Jurkowa likewise does not recall the Curp’s image of all-too-nationalist autobiographer-settlers. Equally, she does not appear – when her life story is approached as a thick description – as one of the boorish, xenophobic subalterns who populate Zaremba’s study. Instead, she appears as a woman struggling to adapt initially to new surroundings, before experiencing the frustration of finding herself as a woman outside the lines of social mobility promised by urbanisation and social advance.

I turn now to the mainstream memoir movement where the concept of social advance and nation were central, while the Recovered Territories were privileged as the foremost site of urbanisation, modernisation and advance generally, investigating whether memoirs published in *MPWPL* and other studies from that school necessarily affirmed scholarly theories.
Chapter 4: The Mainstream Memoir Movement and the Recovered Territories

This chapter explores memoir sociology produced by scholars associated with IFiS PAN and Chałasiński’s Łódź sociology department who in 1969 institutionalised the memoir movement through TPP. I term this strand of memoir sociology the ‘mainstream memoir movement’. Its predominant analytical framework focused on ‘social advance’, something various scholars interpreted differently, offering varying degrees of tension with state-sanctioned progress narratives. Greater discrepancies and tensions emerged where peasants’ and women’s experiences featured, as they inhabited – rural subaltern women doubly – ‘the space that is cut off from the lines of mobility’ which was inevitably located in the mode of production. MMŻ indicated this, likewise its nine-volume counterpart MPWPL, published between 1964 and 1980, which is the focus of this chapter.

The project’s long-term development saw publications appear during differing periods as far as state rule, publishing and censorship policy, and agricultural policy are concerned, while the memoir movement enjoyed varying levels of institutionalisation and official acceptance during the period. The heteroglot texts from 1962, exceeding 5000 in number, thus intersected with a variety of public discourses, academic and political objectives. The memoir movement’s relations to state authorities trouble today’s paradigm of a monolithic state-sanctioned discourse, revealing instead how state-approved and state-sponsored projects with large print runs could present memoirs which act potentially with centrifugal force against sociological and official frameworks for past, present and future.

Chałasiński and the movement’s approach to the Recovered Territories – most evident in MPWPL vol. 2 but also crucial to studies beyond the series – provides a productive site for exploring the nation-class intersection, while also considering tensions between Poland’s national and social revolutions, which in Chałasiński’s work are accompanied by an urbanisation-driven cultural revolution of sorts. Bertaux suggested communist authorities sought to monopolise representation of historical agency, but the memoir movement at least declared popular practice historically and socially transformative. I explore whether

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subalterns appearing in *MPWPL* publications and associated sociology were ‘subjects of their history’ or simply representations of ‘the ideal nature and shape of modernity [which] is decided from the very beginning by historians or philosophers as intellectuals.’ This chapter considers tensions produced as official, academic and popular discourses intersected in the work on *MPWPL* and indeed in the texts themselves. I also consider the particular place of the Recovered Territories in narratives of social advance.

### 4.1 Chałasiński and social advance

Zenon Kliszko, a KC PZPR secretary, presented to ZMW in 1966 a clear propagandistic vision of social advance. ‘It is to the alliance with the working class and to people’s rule that rural Poland owes its social liberation, with millions of peasants ripped out of the vicious triangle of “landlord, village mayor and pastor”’. Liberated from ‘backwardness’, limited life chances and ‘the feudal principle of “glebae adscripti”, being tied to the land’, peasants were granted access to ‘all occupations’ while their villages were also transformed. Memoir sociology may have paralleled elements of such claims – for example, overcoming traditional attachments to land, family and parish – but the memoir method also rejected the Party-state’s claims to be the sole historical agent. Instead, it considered the historical and social agency of ordinary people, framing sociologically their encounters with the state’s vision for social transformation.

Chałasiński developed the concept of social advance in Polish sociology in his prewar four-volume competition-based study *Młode pokolenie chłopów* which challenged representations of the peasantry as either passive or a store of national folk culture in favour of arguing for peasants’ historical and social agency. Chałasiński considered his study a response Krzywicki’s *Pamiętniki chłopów*, where – he believed – everyday struggle, passivity and negativity dominated, offering little inspiration for future change directed by peasant aspirations. Methodologically, Chałasiński considered autobiographical and sociological materials future historical sources offering an alternative history of the present,

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723 AAN/ZG ZMW/12/I/12 – III Krajowy Zjazd ZMW [Stenogram z 1 i 3 dnia obrad] 24 i 26 II 1966, pp.11-12.
725 ‘Pamiętniki Chłopów presented a hopeless image of peasant poverty’, showing peasants as ‘passive, and without faith in their own strength.’ Instead, Chałasiński called for recognition of the peasantry’s ‘certainly slow, but evident and fundamental transformation of rural life in Poland.’ Chałasiński, *Młode pokolenie chłopów*, vol. 1, pp.1-2.
challenging standard archives’ bias. ‘Future history will benefit as it ceases to be dependent upon one-sided archival materials and other materials saved by chance.’

MPWPL materials’ historical value was downplayed under communism, but historical studies are now using them. Potentially, these publications are more useful than Młode pokolenie chłopów, as the prewar work placed memoirs within analysis, whereas MPWPL separated memoirs and sociological readings, making readers’ individual interpretations more likely.

The 1962 competition was organised by LSW publishers, ZG ZMW, Komitet Badań nad Kulturą Współczesną [Research Committee on Contemprory Culture] PAN and Zakład Socjologii Wsi [Rural Sociology Centre] IFiS PAN, thus revealing cooperation between publishers, Party-state organisations and academics in organising and promoting this project. Although Warsaw-based institutions took responsibility, a team of then Łódź-based scholars associated with PAN formed the sociological core, with Chałasiński, Eugenia Jagiello-Lysiowa and Jakubczak involved from the outset. ZG ZMW coordinated administrative aspects, dealing with finances, including funding half of the costs, while providing a space for the Competition Office (Biuro Konkursu). LSW covered the other half and agreed to publish findings. The organisers did not foresee the immense response, with 5475 entries submitted. So popular was it that PAN founded a separate body to deal with the materials, while LSW increased substantially the number of pages it had initially agreed to publish. The total cost, estimated with all entries received, was 480,000 zlotys: 150,000 for prizes, the rest funding administration, reading and typing costs. In a 1972 conference paper, Chałasiński outlined the judging processes, with two sets of texts pre-selected by the organisers in collaboration with 32 university lecturers for the jury to judge. There was a set of 114 ‘best works’ and a reserve set of 115, with the top 100 receiving prizes. 2500 entries were by people not working in agriculture, but were instead in education (700), manual labour (500) or administrative, white-collar work (800). Some 1000 were by people who


728 Archiwum PAN/KBnKW Wyk. 286/14, Letter from LSW dated 1.2.62, p.2.

729 Chałasiński, MPWPL, vol. 1, p.29.


731 Archiwum PAN/KBnKW Wyk. 286/14, Projekt preliminarza budżetowego konkursu na pamiętniki młodzieży wiejskiej.

732 Józef Chałasiński, ‘The Diaries of the Young Peasant Generation as a Manifestation of Contemporary Culture’, paper presented at Third World Congress of Rural Sociology, Baton Rouge, USA, August 1972, p.2. A reprint of the paper is held at BN II 903.373.

733 Pół wieku pamiętnikarstwa, English summary, pp.379-86 (p.382).
migrated from villages to towns, while around 1200 came from the Recovered Territories which analyses considered a site of intensified modernisation and advance. These lands were the subject of the series’ only regionally-specific volume.\textsuperscript{734} Entries from the Recovered Territories proved roughly proportionate to their inhabitants’ contribution to the national population (around 22\%, or 1164 of 5290 where the autobiographer’s location could be established). However, entries from those lands were disproportionately represented overall in \textit{MPWPL}.

An editorial committee selected and prepared materials, and comprised alongside the three above-mentioned sociologists, Bronisław Gołębiowski – a student of Józef Chałasiński – Zdzisław Grzelak of ZMW, Piotr Banaczkowski of LSW publishers and Wiesław Myśliwski, a novelist depicting rural Poland. The competition jury, meanwhile, included Józef Chałasiński, Stefan Dybowski (chief editor of LSW), Dyzma Gałaj – high-ranking member of ZSL, editor of \textit{Wieś Współczesna} journal and professor of SGGW, Józef Krzyczkowski – the former assistant director of LSW, Halina Krzywdzianka –head of the Girls’ Council at ZG ZMW, and Józef Tejchma – head of ZG ZMW, parliamentarian and KC PZPR member.\textsuperscript{735} Selection for publication and prizes were separate processes, so publications comprised more than the 229 shortlisted texts.\textsuperscript{736} MPWPL focused on the ‘young generation’, like Chałasiński’s prewar volumes, meaning participants born 1926/7 were at the upper age limit, although some leniency was applied for publication, as volume eight included a memoirist born in 1920.\textsuperscript{737} Entries were written between 1 January and 30 April 1962, a relatively short period, with Gołębiowski noting numerous memoirs were evidently rushed towards their conclusion, while prewar, wartime and early postwar periods consequently predominated.\textsuperscript{738} Already overwhelmed by the number of entries, the organisers refused to sanction an extension. The nine volumes appeared between 1964 and 1980 (the eighth coming in 1972), with -each volume between 500 and 800 pages long and featuring between 25 and 40 autobiographies alongside at least one sociological essay. Some volumes had three essays, often accompanying thematic divisions, with the longest essay over 100 pages.\textsuperscript{739} Each volume had a particular theme, aside from the first \textit{Awans pokolenia}, which presented the best works and outlined the project’s focus on social advance.

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\item[\textsuperscript{734}] \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 2 (Warsaw: LSW, 1965).
\item[\textsuperscript{735}] Chałasiński, \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 1, p.30.
\item[\textsuperscript{736}] Ibid., p.31.
\item[\textsuperscript{737}] P546, ‘Drogę otwarło mi studium przygotowawcze’, \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 8, pp.84-101.
\item[\textsuperscript{738}] Bronisław Gołębiowski, ‘Szkola i wychowanie w zmiennym społeczeństwie (w świetle pamiętników i innych badań)’, \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 6, pp.13-72 (p.18.)
\item[\textsuperscript{739}] Franciszek Jakubczak, ‘O rozwoju pamiętnikarstwa chłopskiego i metodzie dokumentów pamiętnikarskich’, in \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 8, pp.563-667.
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Consequently, not only ‘peasants’ contributed to MPWPL but anyone of rural origins, including those who by 1962 were in urban areas, a fact often interpreted as evidence of successful advance. However, in MPWPL’s sociological analysis, urbanisation could be treated ambivalently, with Chałasiński stating ‘memoirs dispel the illusion the towns offer ready-made solutions to rural problems.’ However, urbanisation and urban culture remained desirable in Chałasiński’s postwar sociological mode.

Elements of prewar approaches to advance remained evident, including Znaniecki’s recognition in the introduction to *Młode pokolenie chłopów* that ‘the social isolation of villages’ was ending as ‘the modern economic system and the grand nation-state community increasingly brought villages within their orbit.’ People’s Poland was to continue nascent prewar modernisation and rural Poles’ social becoming as they approached an increasingly unified, or homogenised, national cultural-economic whole, with peasants ‘an integral part of the nation-state community’. It seems that for Chałasiński postwar conditions following wartime ethnic cleansing made urbanisation more desirable in national terms. Prewar urban areas, he wrote at the time, ‘were largely inhabited by a nationally alien element’ but Polonisation of those spaces was possible after 1945. As Szczepański noted, this would also mean ‘peasantisation’ of those spaces, regardless of official modernisation paradigms. Chałasiński saw post-WWI peasants in terms of experiencing social becoming as ‘a process of entering the national community on the basis of their own peasant legitimation (or identity) [legitymacja].’ They did not do so simply by being raised up by national elites, which accords with Stauter-Halsted’s findings on intra-national fragmentation in post-partition Poland, but exerted agency and influence on the process. I explore whether this remained the case in Chałasiński’s postwar sociology, given the Party-state’s claims to have become the historical representative of the people.

One of Chałasiński’s first postwar approaches to memoirs was in a 1949 collection of miners’ autobiographies. Despite the 3200 print-run appearing in early Polish stalinism, the outline of biographical materials’ sociological value bears little indication of his 1951 *Myśl Filozoficzna* self-criticism where he dismissed *Młode pokolenie chłopów* as ideologically-deficient bourgeois sociology privileging the subjective. In 1949, Chałasiński still argued for a social history exploring ordinary people’s actions and attitudes, implying a

743 Ibid., p.546.
744 Ibid., pp.549-550.
745 The imprint states 15 March 1949 as ‘the date of execution’.
challenge to purely materialist approaches. ‘People create history. It is created by the masses. It can be researched through the material and spiritual creations of human labours. But it must also be researched in the very people who create and who, at the same time, are created by history.’ This means ‘a biography, a life story shows us social history in the ways it is reflected in the consciousness of people who create that history. It is a subjective, one-sided, partial image, but nevertheless one essential in understanding the historical process.’ And that is why sociology uses such sources, he adds.746 Read in conjunction with his prewar work, biographies could counter the partial, one-sided chance construction of archives, showing ‘history’s new creators’747 rather than great men or, in light of postwar transformations.

Chałasiński avoided memoir sociology in its stalinist-era revival, contributing to Nowe pamiętniki chłopów (1955/56) only from February 1957 in an advisory capacity regarding approaches to publication, while Jakubczak used the materials for his doctoral thesis.748 Chałasiński’s Myśl Filozoficzna ‘self-criticism’, meanwhile, continued to be used against him when his work clashed with the authorities. An exchange from December 1959 in Nowe Drogi, the Party journal, saw sociologist Tadeusz Szczurkiewicz criticise Chałasiński for giving an unapproved conference paper abroad, implicitly under Znaniecki’s influence. This cost Chałasiński his positions as an academic secretary at PAN and editor of Kultura i Społeczeństwo. Szczurkiewicz deemed the appearance ‘destructive journalism bearing clear hallmarks of defamation of the social changes completed in the country.’ Chałasiński was accused of hypocritically criticising marxist-leninism, having ‘manifested it so zealously’ in the self-criticism.749 Chałasiński endured ambivalent relations with the authorities, sometimes becoming a favoured scholar, at other times ostracised. Szczepański noted in 1984, in the first reissue of Młode pokolenie chłopów, that Chałasiński’s postwar work was a struggle to balance his passion for Znaniecki’s humanist sociology and ‘Polish culture’s traditional value systems’ with elements of socialist theory.750 Szczepański believed Chałasiński accepted ‘the people’s revolution and the regime of people’s democratisation’ as ‘natural’ and aligned to his ‘leftist liberalism’, but his sociology concentrated not on

747 Ibid., p.23.
ideology but transformations’ consequences for ‘everyday political, economic, social and cultural practice.’ He believed the ultimate outcome of changes would be incorporation of peasants into a unified nation, an objective also evident in his prewar work.

A 1992 volume dedicated to Chałasiński recognised the ambivalence of his relations to power in its title. In *Bunty i służebności uczonego* (‘The rebellions and servilities of a scholar’) Antonina Kłoskowska noted his prewar works’ continuities with marxism as he explored ‘class and status inequalities’. He rebelled against ‘the social order of the interwar Second Polish Republic’ while his faith that postwar Poland would complete his prewar rebellion ensured a degree of servility, to the extent that he ‘compromised’ with the authorities, even ‘serving as an acolyte of the cult of Stalin’. He returned to full official acceptability around March 1968, issuing articles attacking Bauman and Schaff ‘for omitting the national question in their works.’ This recognition proved ultimately inauspicious as he quickly lost official favour and the recognition of the sociological community, as young scholars’ canon omitted him. *Bunty i służebności* largely overlooks his postwar sociology beyond its personal biographical significance, although Jolanta Kulpińska’s postscript mentions MPWPL. She notes those memoirs possess ‘a not always satisfactory documentary character, while in-depth analysis was lacking.’ Certainly nothing comparable to the prewar full-scale sociological analysis in *Młode pokolenie chłopów* emerged, but there were significant essays reading the memoirs through an intersection of sociological models, official versions of postwar society and ordinary Poles’ experiences as narrated.

Chałasiński’s general postwar model of social advance used concepts of *unarodownienie* and *uhistorycznienie* (‘nationification’ and ‘historification’), with subordinate and subaltern groups’ imagined as advancing towards inclusion in history and the nation, something enabled by *autonomizacja* (‘autonomisation’), achieved by abandoning bonds based in traditional communities. Chałasiński avoided Grzelak’s view that autonomy required activism and participation in public life. Chałasiński stressed the necessity of involvement.

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752 The essays by Chałasiński and Gołębiowski in *MPWPL* vol. 9 (1980) declared the process complete.
755 Ibid., 13. This, according to Paweł Spodenkiewicz, also included attending Stalin’s 70th birthday celebrations in Moscow. Spodenkiewicz, ‘Nowe widnokręgi’, in *Bunty i służebności*, pp.22-37 (p.30).
756 Spodenkiewicz, p.36.
758 Ibid., p.104.
in economic production beyond basic peasant farming to achieve ‘upodmiotowienie’ or subjecthood within ‘all-national culture’ which unified the nation through common cultural, mnemonic and economic practices. The very act of contributing to competitions was a sign of peasants’ advance: from oral to written culture.\textsuperscript{760} Indeed, writing signalled becoming part of ‘all humanity’\textsuperscript{761} and, indeed, history. In Chałasiński’s model there are clear parallels with Homi Bhabha’s recognition that ‘peoples without a history’ were transformed ‘into spectral figures, transparent testimonies to the worldly triumph of a secular capitalist modernity.’\textsuperscript{762} In Chałasiński’s approach, ordinary people were to become triumphs of a socialist modernity and nation-state, one implicitly secular, and ultimately homogenised into a single culture, uniting all classes as well as the entire imagined national community.

As part of his public and political rehabilitation, and the memoir movement’s institutionalisation, Chałasiński presented in the August 1969 edition of \textit{Nowe Drogi} his theory of ‘Popular writing and the socio-cultural advance of the peasant strata’. Outlining ‘processes of democratisation of writing and of the book’, memoir writing in People’s Poland shows how ordinary people contribute to the nation’s cultural memory, since he defines the nation as ‘a cultural community connected inextricably with writing.’\textsuperscript{763} Oral cultures, such as peasants, were previously denied authority, but now they contributed as ‘autonomous personalities liberated from socio-cultural subordination to the “higher” classes, contributing directly without other classes’ mediation in a direct bond with the nation and national culture.’\textsuperscript{764} Here Chałasiński suggests the transparency of his and other academics’ own role, blind to the necessity of institutionalisation and the academic prestige required for recognition of peasant writing. Yet Chałasiński saw mass memoirs as bringing about ‘the ultimate end of the monopoly over written culture of “higher” classes and the intelligentsia as a separate socio-cultural class.’\textsuperscript{765} Certainly ordinary people were writing, but it is a question of whether they were heard and therefore spoke through the sociological frameworks and historical apparatus that still mediated and framed their writing. After all, if urban areas were a privileged site of all-national culture, then it seems questionable whether

\textsuperscript{760} MPWPL vol. 2, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{762} Homi K. Bhabha, Foreword, in Chakrabarty, \textit{Habitations}, pp. ix-xiii (p. xi).
\textsuperscript{764} \textit{Ibid.}, p.46.
\textsuperscript{765} \textit{Ibid.}, p.47.
those outside the ideal model of subjecthood were considered full representatives of all-
national culture.

Postwar Polish urbanisation, even in the Recovered Territories – despite their German past
and population changes – reflect Gellner’s view that ‘alienated, uprooted, wandering
populations may vacillate between diverse options, and they may often come to a provisional
rest at one or another temporary and transitional cultural resting place.’ Despite
declarations of completed processes or teleological inevitabilities, it is evident that the
competition memoirs and communist-era sociology encountered principally transitions that
were in progress, with social becoming underway and no guarantee identities or social
structures would come to rest in the officially-desired forms. I explore, then, how memoir
sociology and the works of the associated school dealt with the disunifying experiences of
ordinary as they experienced and affected change in ways, as MMŻ said, that contrasted with
official expectations.

Introducing MPWPL vol. 1, Chałasiński declared ‘all memoirs published in this volume
share a fundamental structure, namely they depict the aspiration to personal autonomy. Their
content explores human fates from the perspective of emancipation and forming an
autonomous personality.’ The focus is clearly on the process, even if the definition of
autonomy was one that meant subsequently forming ‘ties with the national and general
human culture.’ This was to contrast with the prewar ‘impersonal (bezosobowe) existence’
of life in traditional, prewar communities. Effectively, the process could be explored, even
if it revealed ambiguities in the experience of change, because the outcome was fixed on
acceptable goals, namely the death of the peasant in cultural and economic terms, as
‘urbanised open society’ and the ‘traditional rural community’ formed a dichotomy. There
might be no higher or lower classes, according to Chałasiński’s 1969 essay, but perceived
higher and lower forms of civilisation evidently remained. Szczepański, Chałasiński’s
contemporary and colleague, was critical though of ‘looking down on peasants through some
version of the idea of backwardness’ as he preferred to see peasants as ‘an active social
force’ rather than a barrier to be overcome on the road to progress. Chakrabarty noted

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767 Chałasiński, MPWPL vol. 1, p.21.
768 Józef Chałasiński, ‘The Young Rural Generation in the Polish People’s Republic’, in Rural Social Change,
p.251. The original Polish was in MPWPL vol. 1, p.8.
769 MPWPL vol. 2, p. 50.
770 Dipesh Chakrabarty, Introduction, Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the wake of Subaltern Studies
modernisation narratives declare ‘the peasant is a figure of the past and must mutate into the industrial worker in order to emerge, eventually, as the citizen-subject of modern democracies.’ The gender implications of these claims, reproduced in some MPWPL memoir sociology are evident, as advance remained principally a male domain.

The gap between experience and declarations of advance and emancipation becomes even more evident when exploring those outside the mode of production and the lines of mobility. However, in Chałasiński’s work the most subalternised communities were appropriated as evidence of greater emancipation, rather than evidence of failings. So he declares,

processes of autonomization are more characteristic of women’s than men’s diaries. If the former estates-class social structure of the village in general was marked by servitude and lack of autonomy, then women more than men were branded by historical and folk tradition as a non-autonomous being, a household chattel whose life was encompassed by the blind-alley between the cottage and the church parish, far from the broad highway of the nation’s history.

Chałasiński importantly recognises the greater subordination of women within family and local community structures, but his declaration of autonomisation subordinates women’s experiences to a male-centred model where national unity overwrites specificities of women’s experience within patriarchal family structures that remained even if the products of all-national culture, as well as the possibility to add written contributions through memoir competitions, were open to rural women. I consider in my reading of MPWPL memoirs whether women’s contributions were heard through the publications and sociology. One woman settler to the Recovered Territories, published in MPWPL V, experienced domestic violence, abortion and discrimination, and she wrote bluntly: ‘I consider myself worthless, whether in capitalist Poland or People’s Poland.’ A more succinct expression of a sense of exclusion from the paths of mobility leading to the ‘broad highway of the nation’ is difficult to envision, particularly as continuities with prewar Poland emerge, while the malecentric model of advance becomes clear. Fidelis suggests that in People’s Poland ‘in the absence of an independent feminist movement, sociologists kept the question of gender alive.’ There were sociological studies of gender, although they were not always the central focus of academic work and dominant models of change remained male-centred.
Some memoir-based studies did emerge, though, which considered women’s different social experience.\textsuperscript{776}

Barbara Tryfan (1928-2012), a leading figure in the sociology of rural women, questioned declarations of equality, instead identifying cultural, material and social problems which meant ‘the era of equal rights has not yet arrived for women. The development of such rights is hampered by bonds to customs and beliefs, workplace relations and living conditions, and tensions between aspirations and the forms in which they are realised.’\textsuperscript{777} Social norms mean rural women are condemned to unhappy marriages, making them inescapable, and this is more important than the typical focus on whether women have responsible for domestic financial affairs. Here cultural sociology calls for exploration of whether women have free leisure time ‘to develop their own interests’, whether women can overcome ‘social opinion’ if deciding to ‘escape’ an unhappy marriage with abusive or alcoholic husbands.\textsuperscript{778} Her thesis queries economic determinism and considers real women’s life experiences together with the lasting significance of informal social controls.

Fidelis’ later social-historical study found that traditional female roles were continued ‘in the socialist world’, and this was part of ensuring ‘the transition from the old to the new was naturalized rather than revolutionized.’\textsuperscript{779} Transforming the double exploitation of women’s labour, in the domestic sphere and state economy, would only occur as a by-product of changes aimed at male social advance, rather than as part of a planned change. Indeed, Tryfan’s study of Płock found, that industrialisation could in fact setback women’s access to leisure time as the rise of ‘worker-peasants’, who migrated or commuted to urban-industrial work while retaining smallholdings, condemned women to additional work on family farms, making the typical model of advance ‘practically irrelevant to rural families as the fundamental indicator of women’s emancipation, professional work, rarely applies.’\textsuperscript{780}

Some of Tryfan’s work appeared in English, where she realised that there were mental barriers – something akin to habitus and misrecognition – that meant there were barriers to ‘full rights’ which were ‘inherent in women themselves.’\textsuperscript{781} Traditional patriarchal norms


\textsuperscript{779} Fidelis, pp.105-6.

were reinforced while women’s difference was overlooked as male-centred models of advance were promoted. ‘After all’, Tryfan argued, ‘the aim should be not to statistically demonstrate this type of female advancement but to give to each member of society an equal chance for the development of his or her own aspirations and interests, and for the implementation of his or her own model of happiness.’  

Her analysis using rural women’s memoirs from a 1970 competition concluded that if industrialisation produced ‘growth of women’s prestige’ then it was largely an accidental by-product, if it occurred at all. Of course even where ‘the woman took over the running of the farm’ this had ambivalent consequences. The most positive conclusion she can draw is that at least postwar economic and social change made the emancipation question relevant, but rural women still remained at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

The contrast between Tryfan and Chałasiński’s approaches became evident in their papers given at the Third World Congress of Rural Sociology at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1972. Tryfan opened immediately with findings from IRWiR PAN research, which ‘indicated a great gap in living conditions between urban and rural women, due to the differentiation of their respective economic and social conditions and to the differing family patterns.’  

Tryfan differentiates women’s experiences, noting different solutions are required for urban and rural areas. Escape to urban life is proven unrealistic, noting instead how face ‘breaking down the traditional barriers of prejudices and standards of the [...] archaic system of relationships.’  

She goes so far as to note that urban/rural, male/female divides contravene ‘constitutional provisions.’ Tryfan also dismisses top-down models of cultural change, implying a critique of Chałasiński’s work. ‘The development of social awareness, changes of attitudes and customs in the whole complex psycho-social structure of the rural community, its women included, trail behind the penetration into the village of mass media and consumers’ durable goods.’ Even if elements of all-national culture enter rural communities, transformations would not simply follow the ideal forms proposed, but would intersect with actual social attitudes and practices. Although her essay ends with a positive

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783 Ibid., p.315
784 Ibid., p.322.
785 Barbara Tryfan, ‘The Role of Rural Women in the Family’, Third World Congress of Rural Sociology, Baton Rouge, August 1972; Reprint BN II 903.383; Józef Chałasiński, ‘The Diaries of the Young Peasant Generation as a Manifestation of Contemporary Culture’.
787 Ibid., p.1.
788 Ibid., p.2.
789 Ibid., p.2.
representation taken from a woman’s memoir, the image of rural women’s double economic exploitation and rural areas’ general economical and cultural discrimination remains most powerful. She highlights inadequate numbers of cultural centres which are poorly-equipped and staffed anyway, while cultural policy is uncoordinated as:

they [cultural centres] and the mass media will not contribute to arousing interest in and creating cultural habits if not supported by widely organized undertakings in the form of reduced price tickets for artistic representations, adjustment of autobus schedules and transportation of villagers to the theatre, art exhibitions, concerts, etc.  

All-national culture exists as an ideal, but in practical terms, for most rural communities, it is inaccessible beyond the mass media, whose effect is limited on changing rural practices.

Chałasiński’s paper, meanwhile, stressed the Recovered Territories’ significance to memoir sociology, social mobility and urbanisation in a largely positive assessment of postwar transformation. He generalises problematically across all entrants, employing his full arsenal of concepts, suggesting that no one is excluded from transformations in postwar Poland. ‘The diarists from the regained territories glaringly represent a sociological trait characteristic of all their diaries, namely, the many-sided process of social mobility, within the national community.’ Just as he generalised women’s experiences, he states a similarly unitary experience in the Recovered Territories of ‘changes in the internal occupational structure, transformation of the country’s class structure as well as processes of democratization of culture.’ He declares that peasant identification has effectively been overcome as ‘urbanizing culture’ emerges in the biographies. ‘The authors do not pattern their personalities in the categories of former peasant affiliation nor in the categories of entering the working class, but in the category of enlightened and cultured people differentiated by occupation, in the categories of urban culture open to all. Their writings serve precisely such self-determination.’ His idea of self-determination, or autonomy, in fact limits the autobiographers to predetermined forms, becoming transparent illustrations of the new lands as the foremost site of transformation to open society against closed communities, although practical aspects of access are not considered. This is why 14 of 26 prize-winning memoirs came from the new lands, rather than because of what they might symbolise for a national project.  

Chałasiński’s Western audience get little insight into:

790 “No one says today about me: beggar, day labourer, scullion: today I am a citizen of the Polish Republic.”  
791 Ibid., p.12.  
793 Ibid., p.5.
competition memoirs’ heterogeneity. ‘A common trait of the self-image of all these young writers is the urban nature of the culture with which both those who left the village and those who remained identify themselves.’\textsuperscript{794} The spread of this culture is universal, as villages are modernised as a by-product of urbanisation, as ‘a rural-urban cultural sphere’ forms, weakening traditional peasant culture and farming.\textsuperscript{795} For Chałasiński, it was evident that “remaining a peasant became a sign of personal failure in a world that enables all to enjoy opportunities of new socio-cultural self definition.”\textsuperscript{796}

There were certainly more explicit expressions of the peasant ‘inadequacy’ narrative than Chałasiński’s later model, and also more explicit declarations of teleological inevitability of change based on a limited number of satisfactory cases. However, Chałasiński’s model is important because it was predominant in influencing the framing of memoirs though a prevalent cultural paradigm. Dyzma Gałaj’s contribution to \textit{MPWPL} vol. 5 shows that within the memoir movement and its sociology, significant theoretical and ideological tensions were evident as part of a fairly healthy academic culture of debate, even if ideological frames shaped critiques. Galaj critiqued the cultural approach, finding the economic base the most significant aspect of transforming peasant lives. He declared those memoirists who overcome ‘fetishistic attachment to owning the agricultural means of production’ and who ‘trust the socialist state’s policies’ to be those who embody ‘the realistic attitude to the historical role of the masses.’\textsuperscript{797} The rest will simply follow because small private farms are an anachronism\textsuperscript{798} preventing advance, since ‘the owner of smallholdings can only be a peasant, albeit one who works and lives more rationally than others.’ He adds that even a peasant who listens to Paderewski, watches television and gains an education, remains a peasant if the mode of production on the family farm does not change.\textsuperscript{799} Chałasiński’s approach largely ignored the mode of production, suggesting cultural revolution could occur within a peasant economy. Chałasiński’s model was, in fact, more optimistic than Gałaj’s who found that, in reality, there was little evidence of the progressive peasantry he declared representatives of historical change. Those attached to ‘ideas of state agriculture or cooperative farming appear only here and there. Even then these forms remain mere ideas –

\textsuperscript{794} Ibid., p.7.
\textsuperscript{795} Chałasiński, ‘Chłopskie gospodarstwo i rodzina w szerszym kręgu powiązań społeczno-kulturowych’, \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 5, pp.5-11 (p.9).
\textsuperscript{798} Dyzma Gałaj, ‘Gospodarstwo chłopskie i kwestia chłopska w Polsce’, \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 5, pp.27-65 (p.27, p.38).
\textsuperscript{799} Gałaj, ‘Gospodarstwo chłopskie’, p.44.
ill-defined, distant in time and space. For now they are unrealistic, unrealisable models.\textsuperscript{800} Chałasiński could at least declare ‘[t]here is one urban culture open to all’\textsuperscript{801} which he believed was attainable, despite Tryfan suggesting otherwise.

While Palska’s reading of Chałasiński’s MPCh and MPWPL studies suggested that postwar memoir works were largely ideologically-aligned, largely reproducing state-sanctioned discourse thus making the published volumes unsuitable for research, it is evident that there were competing conceptions over what was the ideal model for social transformation. Equally, Chałasiński’s framing of the memoirs shifted over time and with reference to audiences. The framing should not necessarily affect the value of even published sources, and some social historians have recently returned to the MPWPL volumes.

4.2 Research using MPWPL

Ewelina Szpak, using various memoir collections including MPWPL, explores everyday life and state-society relations on PGR farms.\textsuperscript{802} She recognises the sources’ heterogeneity in relation to propaganda-based constructs of ideal PGR inhabitant-workers. She finds ‘there was not a “singular” PGR person, while the community of PGR inhabitants did not appear monolithic.’\textsuperscript{803} Szpak’s reading of the sources is insightful as it considers the development of private-sphere discourse in the intersection with economic realities. Memoir materials are also methodologically problematic because they focus on public roles and production, rather than private life. She considers various reasons for this, including, on PGRs, a ‘lack of private life’, which meant ‘to protect the degree of privacy that private life created’, rather than make it public, like all that surrounded them on state farms. Alternatively there was a lack of language to be imitated for public models to describe private life, while censorship may have restricted depictions of religious life and holidays.\textsuperscript{804} Whether editors removed depictions of festivals from MPWPL cannot be established. Perhaps the time of writing (the first months of 1962) did not trigger holiday-based recollections. Among the variety of explanations, Szpak believes generally self-censorship and unwillingness to share intimate beliefs and experiences were most likely explanations for why, generally, ‘references to emotion, feelings, memories and emotions concerned with a person’s spirituality were

\textsuperscript{800} Ibid., p. 65.
\textsuperscript{801} Chałasiński, ‘The Diaries of the Young Peasant Generation’, p.7.
\textsuperscript{802} Ewelina Szpak, Między osiedlem a zagrodą: Życie codzienne mieszkańców PGR-ów (Warsaw: Trio, 2005), pp.59-61.
\textsuperscript{803} Szpak, Między osiedlem, p.189.
\textsuperscript{804} Ibid., pp.137-8.
omitted. However, a number of memoirs took the form of ‘confessions’ or calls for recognition of problems, suggesting that this generalisation, applied not only to PGR memoirs, is problematic. Stanisław Siekierski, discussed below, suggests that if working up on the basis of evidence, then memoirs suggest spirituality was simply less in people’s lives important than typically assumed. It could be the thesis, rather than the sources, that are inadequate.

Sociologist Jan Mróz’s in-depth comparative study of Chałasiński’s *Młode pokolenie chłopów* and *MPWPL* suggests the postwar collection offers greater insight into personal life because the prewar memoirs ‘write mainly about social matters and rural problems’, while the newer texts ‘describe personal matters, careers, adventures and falling in love.’ The prewar authors spoke as a generation, whereas the postwar autobiographers appeared dominated by individual concerns, he finds. Mróz does not consider whether, perhaps, the respective publications’ forms influenced this, as *Młode pokolenie chłopów* was bound closely to Chałasiński’s analysis, unlike *MPWPL*’s fragmented authors. Mróz finds the postwar personal focus was a consequence of the state appropriating responsibility for ‘rural progress – at least in terms of infrastructure’, thus activism was less important to rural youth. Indeed, the state ‘killed natural activism’ and any willingness to consciously to participate in its objectives. This would seem to reverse Palska’s findings, who believed the memoirs had been incorporated into state models, at least as they appeared in print. Mróz finds politics was privatised as legitimation was centred on the state providing ‘civilisational gains’, including ‘education, cultural life, entertainment’. Mróz, though, sees this as problematic, since communism ‘stifled the previously evident initiative and enterprise, belief in one’s own strength’. Mróz was concerned regarding the consequences for rural youths’ ‘subjectivity.’ However, he does accept that progress was made in terms of structural modernisation, as transformations benefitted rural populations, ‘enabling the social advance

805 Ibid., p.143.
806 Memoirs have been shown capable of highlighting women’s intimate experiences, namely of abortion. See: Paul Vickers, ‘‘Czuję się niczym – czy to w Polsce kapitalistycznej, czy Ludowej”: Images of the Polish Father from women’s communist-era memoirs’, in Postawy rodzicielskie współczesnych ojców/ Paternal Attitudes of Modern Fathers, Maria Kujawska and Lidia Huber, eds (Poznan: WSNHiD, 2010), pp.48-70.
808 Jan Mróz, p.300.
809 Ibid., p.44.
810 Ibid., p.305.
811 Ibid., p.217.
of younger generations’, ‘overcoming rural overpopulation’ and ending the ‘peasant-landlord divide’ in village, as well as ensuring electrification.

In conclusion he praises the communist transformation of rural areas. ‘The state played a large part in this. It limited the level of compulsory deliveries and other financial burdens, reformed the system of contracted sales, created a market for sales and formed rural institutions bringing better supplies to villages, enabling a positive future for agricultural development.’ Mróz does not mention that the state effectively overcame problems that it had largely created itself. He also blames farmers themselves for ‘failing to achieve the levels afforded by the opportunities created,’ holding responsible a list of essential peasant traits, recalling Domanska’s vision. He lists ‘innate pessimism’, ‘obsequiousness towards authorities’, ‘greed’, as well as drunkenness, as factors which prevented investment as money and time were wasted on ‘frivolities.’ Consequently, ‘the “necessity” of demonstrating peasant nature meant that very often farms became secondary concerns.’ For Mróz it seems that an adequate model of peasant farming had been created, although even Chałasiński felt ‘socialism had yet to develop in this sphere its own models. This task still requires solving.’ Ryszard Manteuffel, meanwhile noted that each new leadership declared itself a moderniser, ascribing failures to previous authorities – prewar capitalists under stalinism, stalinism under Gomułka, Gomułka’s rule under Gierek – while never resolving underlying tensions and problems.

Mróz’s study sought to explore memoirists’ opinions of modernisation through comparative readings of two multi-volume publications. However, his conclusions evidently extend beyond the evidence presented. Although he draws from the postwar memoirs important insight into how social attitudes were not aligned to state objectives and politics was largely privatised, his generally sympathetic view of rural modernisation under communism contrasts significantly even with studies produced at the time. Stanisław Siekierski’s two long-term studies of peasant ‘ethos’ and religiosity do, however, focus on what the memoirs state, limiting analysis to a contemplation of statements in a variety of twentieth-century sources including private diaries as well as competition sources, including MPWPL.

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812 Ibid., p.17.
813 Ibid., p.299.
814 Ibid., p.300.
816 Ryszard Manteuffel, ‘Changes in Individual Farming During the 30 Years of the Polish Peoples Republic’, in Rural Social Change, Turowski and Szwengrub, eds, pp.155-172 (pp.170-1).
methodological problem emerges in his innovative histories, however, given the imbalance of available materials covering different periods and questions. For earlier periods, a single source generates generalisations across long periods, whereas later periods, particularly during the memoir boom-era, see homogenisation across a large number of disparate sources and experiences, with compilation volumes often summarised within unitary histories rather than framed as expressions by multiple, competing and contrasting authors. However, Siekierski’s wide-ranging conclusions refuse to homogenise peasants into a singular mass. He consciously avoids earlier scholarly approaches to memoirs which ‘interpreted memoirs specially selected for their studies thus to prove theses predetermined by the researcher.’

Siekierski’s longue durée studies also insisted upon trusting that the researcher possesses ‘sufficient knowledge of the material to demonstrate the essence of the matter to the extent permitted by the data accumulated.’ However, his ‘essence’ means recognising the variety of peasant attitudes and experience. He considers popular autobiography an expression of individual attitudes derived from the social milieux ‘in which he [the writer] was socialised, shaping his personality and before which he must take responsibility for what he writes.’ For Siekierski, then, the texts he explores are all social and cultural constructs, intersecting personal, group and public discourses. ‘Trends and fashions dominant in official culture are less important than forms accessible to memoirists in their own cultural sphere. Official culture is not always accepted as one’s own, and thus one that the author must adapt to.’ This intersection of competing discourses applies also under communism, as it becomes evident that memoirs – even in print – do not reveal an appropriation of official discourse, but the dialogic processes whereby some claims but not others are rejected and some become internally persuasive, but altered by social exchanges. Siekierski notes contestation over the history of 1944/45 land reform and later collectivisation in memoirs, with attitudes dependent upon writers’ role in these processes; whether they were ‘to some extent involved in the process’, a peasant who suffered badly or was among ‘peasants who endured little administrative pressure.’ There was not, he notes, ‘uniform condemnation of collective forms.’ This is a methodological warning that the history of collectivisation cannot be written, even if from today’s perspective it appears there is a definitive account of peasant suffering and rejection. More problematic is Siekierski’s view that the 1955/56 Nowe pamiętniki chłopów collection ‘reflects fully the division between those who try to change

818 Siekierski, Etos chłopski, p.12.  
819 Siekierski, Kulturotwórcze funkcje parafii katolickich, p.37.  
820 Siekierski, Etos chłopski, p.9.  
821 Siekierski, Kulturotwórcze funkcje parafii katolickich, pp26-7.  
822 Siekierski, Etos, p.64.
villages according to central-Party ideas and the rest of the community. A crucial fact is that this was also how most Party activists perceived the divide.\textsuperscript{823} Siekierski overlooks the value of his own approach, noted above, where there were multiple roles that intersected in shaping attitudes. What was evident in some memoirs was that one peasant could be involved in the state structures imposing collectivisation yet oppose them or at least resist them through everyday practice, while becoming a victim of collectivisation. Community members could also be members of the Party apparatus, so bifurcating society on this basis is problematic, as multiple discourses reflected how some Party-peasants tried to satisfy multiple interest groups, their neighbours and superiors at district and voivodeship levels.

Siekierski’s attempt to generalise across competitions accounts for overlooking more ambivalent positions.\textsuperscript{824} Some generalisations, though, prove effective, noting for example that the 1948 \textit{Wieś polska} memoirs were written at a time of social turbulence, so the image of generally conflicted communities reflects a snapshot rather than the long-term historical trends of stable or integrated communities usually evident in competitions.\textsuperscript{825} Disrupting totalising claims that national or ideological mission forged communities, Siekierski finds people were ‘condemned to community’,\textsuperscript{826} forming bonds out of necessity rather than owing to any innate national or ideological bonds. Siekierski’s innovative comparative approach across nearly a century of autobiographical writing, meanwhile, enables him to challenge not only historiographical teleologies or totalisations, but also essentialistic representations of peasants as a homogeneous group lacking ‘historical consciousness’ stemming from peasants’ ‘lack of written culture’.\textsuperscript{827} Siekierski contrasts with Mróz as he recognises that peasants should not simply be blamed for failing to modernise, but rather the state should be criticised for ignoring psychosocial factors: ‘official deprecation of peasant culture and the peasant ethos [...] contributed to lowering the prestige of individual farms, dependant to a significant degree on state policy which sought to abolish private land ownership.’\textsuperscript{828} Peasants were condemned to oblivion as a class and culture, but largely avoided contributing to their own cultural and economic deaths by avoiding cooperation with institutions pushing through top-down transformation. The peasant ethos of attachment to

\textsuperscript{823} Ibid., p.95.
\textsuperscript{824} Ibid., p.103: ‘NPCh are saturated with political and moral deprecation of everything that is connected to good, well-off farming.’
\textsuperscript{825} Ibid., p.97.
\textsuperscript{826} Ibid., p.98.
\textsuperscript{827} Ibid., p.209.
land and the family farm continued by dynamically adapting to new political and economic conditions, so by finding a way to get by as peasant farmers under communism.

Typically, peasants are associated with religiosity, something Chałasiński and Kliszko deemed crucial to sustaining traditional bonds and restricting social change. Gołębiowski judged it a barrier to ‘vertical mobility’ as the Church feared losing adherents to secularisation through urbanisation. Gołębiowski’s sociology stressed the significance of bringing ‘urban culture’ into rural communities, believing this – more quickly than ‘ideological battle’ – would ensure changes to ‘irrational’ traditional rural attachment to the Church.\footnote{Bronisław Gołębiowski, ‘Kościół, laicyzacja, młodzież’, Wieś Współczesna, 2 (1963), 82-91 (esp. pp.85-89).} However, this could also be viewed as shifting responsibility for faltering modernisation to an external agent, and blaming peasants, rather than structural factors. Today’s memory of communism suggests the Church and religious expression were largely suppressed. However, Siekierski argues that neither view was necessarily the case, with the authorities relatively unconcerned by peasant religious practice because ‘it does not influence significantly practical aspects of everyday life.’\footnote{Siekierski, Etos, p.211.} Chris Hann also suggests that the Church largely appropriated the peasant cause because it guaranteed parishioners, rather than the Church inspiring resistance.\footnote{Hann, Village Without Solidarity, pp.108-9.}

Siekierski found that in prewar memoirs there was already a gradual tendency towards ‘religious indifference’ which continued into the postwar period.\footnote{Siekierski, Etos chłopski, p.198.} This conclusion, alongside findings from his subsequent memoir-based study of parishes’ role in peasant communities, might seem surprising in relation to dominant Church-centred imaginings of the nation and the peasantry. He notes that the prewar Krzywicki series in particular ‘include many strong critiques of the clergy, in postwar materials written by activists the Church and parish life cease to exist.’\footnote{Siekierski, Kulturotwórcze funkcje parafii katolickich, p.34.} He denies that there needed to be censorship, since it was more a question of ‘creating a world with the Church and clerics’.\footnote{Ibid., p.208.} However, non-activists attended church and the sources show that its social function was hardly that imagined by those declaring a national leadership role for the Church. Young rural Poles complained about boring Sunday afternoons having attended church primarily for social reasons.\footnote{Ibid., p.67. This continued into 1970s, as he comments on Miesiąc mojego życia 1973, where he notes that people attended church, but without ‘anti-clericalism or complete indifference’; instead Mass was treated ‘like going to a party or heading into town, or down to the lake on a day off. Sundays were mainly for resting or tidying around the house.’ Siekierski, Kulturotwórcze funkcje parafii katolickich, p.208.}
while religious ceremonies appeared as social celebrations rather than sacraments. If there is secularisation, then Siekierski sees it as part of modern social trends, since ‘the process of non-religious functions being taken over by secular institutions is an irreversible trend’, hence the decline in the significance of parish life. There is no indication from Siekierski that the influence of parishes should increase in postcommunist Poland, particularly as he finds opposition to the appropriation by the Church of ‘anticommunist values’, with people perceiving this as an attempt to secure ‘the clergy’s domination over social life’. Post-1989 memoirists would be more willing to express their religiosity and religious practice, but given self-censorship under communism, this is not necessarily an indication of increased religiosity.

Siekierski’s studies are an important demonstration of how it becomes possible to challenge existing dominant representations of particular periods, events or social groups with reference to competition memoirs. If he offers generalisations, then these concern long-term historical trends, such as secularisation, or by noting that the peasant ethos remained attached to land and family, but this was a dynamic attachment which altered and adapted as socio-economic and cultural conditions changed. What emerges from Siekierski’s studies is the heterogeneity of peasant experience and heteroglossia of peasant autobiography. Henryk Slabek noted something similar in his history of postwar Polish society, finding that it became possible to support any view using the memoirs, as communist-era studies showed. However, this methodological drawback could largely be attributed to scholars’ usual approach to the sources. Slabek found that competition memoirs could be used to mark various sub-groups’ attitudes and experiences against pre-established models applied to entire classes or groups.

While Slabek and Siekierski sought to account for the multiple, contradictory and competing experiences of People’s Poland using memoirs, Marek Ordyłowski’s solution to using them in creating everyday histories of life in Wrocław (1991) and Lower Silesian villages (1999) was to construct catalogues of experiences with little analysis. There is a notable shift from his 1991 text’s descriptiveness towards presenting ordinary people as mass victims of totalitarianism in 1999. His use of the sources reflects changes in public constructions a dominant memory of communism.

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836 Siekierski, Kulturotwórcze funkcje parafii katolickich, p.103-4.
837 Ibid., p.218.
838 Ibid., p.213.
839 Slabek, O społecznej, pp.18-19.
Whatever conclusions these various memoir-based studies reached, they all showed that regardless of inevitable censorship and editing, it was possible to use them to depict various experiences of People’s Poland, rather than simply find reproductions from below of state-sanctioned versions of past and present.

4.3 MPWPL: reviews and censorship

The original MPWPL manuscripts are not available meaning only ellipses (...) or asterisms (⁂) indicate redaction. Two censorship reports, on the first and eighth MPWPL volumes neatly bookend the main body of the series (the ninth volume, Odzyskanie młodości, was eventually published in 1980). The absence of full reports on other volumes does not mean they were unproblematic, merely that the GUK archive is incomplete. Exploring the two available reports indicates the changing culture and concerns of censorship alongside more permanent features.

While the censors tended to concentrate on the memoirs published, Nowe Drogi reviewers tended to concentrate on the sociological analysis, even expressing dissatisfaction at the uncritical reproduction of ideal-type urbanisation and modernisation models. The reviewer of MPWPL vol. 3 felt the focus on urbanisation undermined rural activists’ work. The reviewer stresses social disorganisation associated with migration to urban areas, which contrasted with the smooth model of analysis. The reviewer also criticised depictions of the prewar period in ‘increasingly schematic, impoverished’ forms. Rather than celebrate a reproduction of official claims or the emergence of a usable collective memory construct on prewar Poland which could aid legitimisation of the postwar order, the reviewer demands a critical sociology on rural Poland’s problems. The fourth volume was questioned for overlooking recognition of “urban culture” as co-constructed by rural migrants, while the reviewer was not satisfied by claims of ‘all-national’ cultural transformation, since ‘evolutionary changes depend on economic and social resources.’ It seems the editors had foregrounded the superstructure over the economic base. However, Kamieńska’s review of MPWPL vol. 5 accepted the sociological model uncritically, even though it changed little.

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841 There is an additional censorship document referring to MPWPL, vol. 1. AAN/GUK/777 Zespół Instruktażu: Dokumentacja pozycji książkowych PZWL, LSW 1964. The multiple sheets dealing with MPWPL, vol. 1 are all classed as p.36.
843 Ibid., p.136.
Perhaps this reflected Chalasiński-associated scholars’ greater acceptance after March 1968. Censorship documents highlight problems with the selected autobiographical materials rather than their analysis.

The censorship office processed *MPWPL* vol. 1 relatively quickly, with submission on 6 April 1964 and printing approved on 20 May 1964. The haste perhaps resulted from the number of Party-state figures connected to the project, and the pressing deadline for marking PKWN’s twenty-fifth anniversary. In the official chronology, its foundation marked the start of People’s Poland. The ‘Report on preventative control’ from 4 June 1964 outlines cuts and alterations but no general opinion of *Awans pokolenia*. Various themes brought interventions. The joint-first prize winner (P5090) included depictions of the troubling foundations of postwar Poland where ‘blood was spilt in fratricidal battles by various people’, but the future Party-state authorities’ role was removed as he included in ‘mistakes and errors’ at this time the loss of ‘the most valuable people’, ‘they were sent to prisons, into the unknown, just for fighting the Germans in this or that organisation, but not alongside those who meted out justice. But who I am to judge those times? History will be their judge.’ The published version appears to suggest the author draws a thick line under the period, yet he sought to engage with the details despite realising that in current conditions such working through the past was impossible. It is quite possible that the censor encountered an already redacted text, as the report adds ‘Siberia?’ and ‘AK?’ at appropriate moments. Still, even when readers received the published version nothing would prevent them filling the gaps created.

Collectivisation was another subject where explicit declaration of Party-state errors was omitted, yet would be quite obvious to readers. ‘1952-1956 was a period of heavy pressure from the party and state to create collective farms.’ P5090 adds that there was fear to speak out against the measures ‘so as to avoid ending up where you shouldn’t’, implying prison. Of course, where memoirists linked experience of Soviet kolkhozes to Polish collectivisation, then such details were cut, even when P5303 was critical of her fellow villagers’ instinctive anti-Soviet attitudes. Interestingly, she is critical because she sees their

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847 P5090, *MPWPL*, vol. 1, pp.66-120
848 P5090, *MPWPL*, vol. 1, p.72; AAN/GUK/808, p.163.
849 P5090, *MPWPL*, vol. 1, p.72; AAN/GUK/808, p.163.
850 P5090, ‘Gospodarz z ołówkiem w ręku’, *MPWPL*, vol. 1, p.91; AAN/GUK/808, p.169.
attitudes as distracting from genuine everyday problems in Łapy district (Białystok voivodeship). It seems that some degree of anti-Soviet sentiment was beneficial for the Polish authorities, shedding something of a paradoxical light on Fleming’s regimes of hatred idea. The author of P5303 was angered by a policeman’s health-and-safety-inspired intervention into her cooling milk in well, which resulted in a 50 zloty fine on 28 May 1960.

“What have our well and milk got to do with him. He doesn’t drink water from it anyway. And if any of us get ill then we pay for the hospital anyway. I’ll carry on putting milk in the well.”

While defying absurdity and authority in an act of necessary everyday resistance, she also reveals peasants’ resentment at being discriminated in access to state healthcare with this state-sanctioned discrimination meaning the postwar order’s authority was undermined, albeit not in any way that would threaten its stability. This critique instead reveals the everyday modes of opposition necessary in getting by.

The censor was also concerned by depictions of Polish-German relations, although – as will become evident in comparison with work on IZ memoirs – the restrictions on MPWPL seem less strict. P4440 reveals a sense of Polish economic inferiority in a village near Lubliniec, in Poland’s interwar Silesian borderland where significant numbers of Germans remained until the end of the war. After 1956 increasing numbers of those who left or were deported visited relatives remaining in the area, something which frustrated the author because it encouraged people to speak German publicly, which he believed people did ‘provocatively’.

Those returning, meanwhile, flaunted differences in living standards. He is critical of locals who ‘admire each rag or other foreign product.’ Those returning also ‘created various supposedly tragic scenes where relatives seem to cry at their fate – being driven out of these lands.’ The censor passed all this, despite its potential use by the West German revisionist imagined reader. P4440 suggests the author rejects the visitors’ claims to emotional bonds with the region, while dismissing their tragic fate. Instead, he feels these ordinary Germans’ actions are aimed against “us”, a local community here synonymous with the national group.

His work in agricultural administration (livestock section) enables interanimating exchanges with ordinary citizens, but his narrative centres these encounters on questions of national identity and war memories, as he rejects outright any borderland hybridity. He accuses some locals of ‘a complete lack of patriotism’, with some continuing to speak German and ‘complain about the government and regime. +Sometimes they praised Germans not only as farmers+ Sometimes they permitted themselves to praise Germans not only as farmers but...
generally tried to justify their cruelties during the war. Their attitude made me so furious to that I could have shouted or condemned the peasant as a Hun, but then that would have made cooperation impossible. The censor’s interventions firstly restrict indication of troubling autochthon memories of the war, while also removing the most toxic anti-German statements from the author. Also evident, however, is the self-censorship the author practiced in social relations as his agricultural activism took priority over overtly challenging a population he evidently considered German.

A second GUK document on the first MPWPL volume shows that censors processed it in sections, these completed at intervals between 23 April and 21 May 1964. Five A5 sheets, referring to each section reviewed, indicate censorship concerns, often briefly, for example: ‘468 (lata 50-te [1950s])’ or ‘486!’ These fragments were probably directed for more senior review. The published version of the text concerned – ‘Moja droga do Polski’, an autochthon woman’s memoir – nevertheless indicates that problematic issues during Polonisation remained in print. There was discrimination of local children by incoming teachers who deemed Masurians ‘Germans’, mocking their Evangelical faith, and forced Polonisation of first names – Günther became Eugeniusz and Hildegarde Jadwiga. The Old German roots of the latter ‘Polish’ name evidently did not disturb the teacher who, according to the author, imposed a principle of collective responsible for the war locals. Page 486 depicts anti-German abuse of an autochthon student in Szczytno, something the author deemed even more common in other schools. Despite censors’ concerns, this particular memoir was even adapted for the theatre and staged on national television.

Some MPWPL I sections proved unproblematic, with the censor passing pages 259-336 ‘without reservations’, while a single memoir by a PZPR member and Voluntary Work Brigades deputy commander had eight pages questioned, although not all queries brought cuts. Particularly concerning were attempts to return to the stalinist period and rehabilitate aspects ‘former activists’ and activist-workers’ experiences. A different memoir was challenged for overly-critical remarks on ‘the pre-October people’s fatherland as the 25th-

855 AAN/GUK/777 Zespół Instruktażu: Dokumentacja pozycji książkowych PZWL, LSW 1964, p.36.
857 Ibid., p.486.
859 P3302, MPWPL vol. 1, p.669; AAK/GUK/808, p.183.
860 P3302, MPWPL vol. 1, pp.672-3.
anniversary volume was keen to avoid returning to the stalinist period at a time when destalinisation discourse was fading.

However, Chałasiński’s contribution to *Awans pokolenia* was questioned for its critical reading of stalinism, although it was ultimately passed with his recognition that as ‘the kulak became the enemy of the people’ rural flight to urban areas increased, indicating that urbanisation was caused largely by pushing out private agriculture rather than any pull of urbanisation. The socio-economic revolution appears largely imposed on rural communities, rather than a product of will. Chałasiński argues that ‘individualisation’ developed, however, in the sense of losing the traditional, restrictive bonds of close communities. However, urbanisation also brings social disorganisation, suggesting that this individualisation might also generate alienation. Chałasiński is also critical of present-day lasting inequalities in rural and urban youth’s life chances. Statistics cited show how relatively few rural children attend further education, particularly technical and arts colleges. The prospects for a genuine all-national culture seemed bleak, meaning that the declarations of some of his later sociology could be questionable. Despite querying sections casting doubt on models of social advance and postwar achievements in creating class equality, the introduction was passed. While returning to stalinist-era failings was not explicitly welcome, outlining aspirations for future transformations was permissible as the pedagogical and exemplary role of *MPWPL* became evident.

Following Chałasiński’s introductory essay, sociologist and co-editor Eugenia Jagiello-Łysiowa defended private farming, terming it ‘agriculture’ and thus capable of changing and modernising, and proving a site of social advance, rather than something simply to be overcome as ‘peasant culture’. However, an ‘urban mentality’ remains the central objective of modernisation, indicating that even where private agriculture was acknowledged, the cultural death of the peasant was willed. As in *MMŻ*, state institutions are largely absent in the memoirs. Jagiello-Łysiowa finds, ‘It is difficult to see clear evidence of KR, local cooperatives or other rural organisations’ which would suggest ‘incorporation into superior [*nadrzędne*] economic institutions with local or supra-local reach.’

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862 AAN/GUK/777, p.36.
863 Józef Chałasiński, ‘Młode pokolenie wsi w Polsce Ludowej’, *MPWPL*, vol. 1, pp.5-31 (pp.23-4).
864 Despite rural populations still comprising the majority of Poland’s inhabitants, 103,481 urban children went to the more prestigious LO schools, with just 32,803 rural children doing the same; a similar proportion applied to technical colleges (77,935 against 27,595). Artistic middle schools saw just 295 rural pupils join compared to 2217 from urban backgrounds. Chałasiński, *MPWPL*, vol. 1, pp.26-27, citing J. Rybczyńska, ‘Bariery’, *Nowa Wieś*, 17 November 1963.
Nowe Drogi reviewers were sometimes critical of the cultural focus of memoir sociology, it seems that progress could be demonstrated more readily on that front than the economic, despite problems in education.

Like Jagiełło-Lysiowa’s text, analytical essays in MPWPL vol. 8 passed without censorship at a time when Chałasiński’s Baton Rouge paper appeared particularly compliant in depicting rural advance. Censorship conditions, and indeed the position of the memoir movement, had shifted considerably by the time MPWPL vol. 8 appeared in October 1972 with a much smaller print run, just 4305 compared to 20,251 for the first volume. The two essays by Jakubczak and Chałasiński’s foreword867 do not feature among censored or questioned pages listed in a rather limited censorship report.868 The GUK review begins with a methodological comment, noting the volume comprised rural Poles’ ‘memoirs, or rather extended biographies [życiorysy]’.869 The censor-reviewer recognises the texts deviate from standard autobiographical forms, and thus prove novel, a fact perhaps explaining the extensive list of queried pages.870 Some sections underwent review by superiors (pages 524-5 were ‘controlled by comrade [illegible]’), while some issues passed in MPWPL vol. 1, such as references to Hungary in 1956,871 were queried here. Asterisks (*) on pages not listed by the censor suggest significant interventions by publishers or editors, who obviously had the co-authoring, or indeed co-editing censor in mind. There were though evident reinscriptions of official claims regarding equality, indicating peasant distance to urban Poles. One memoirist in volume eight – an officer’s fiancée – notes that ‘those in the towns don’t have any concerns, the main thing is to have something to eat and the state makes sure of it, forgetting if people who genuinely work hard have enough to eat.’872 She reappropriates official discourse, questioning the worker-peasant alliance. ‘I’m sure anyone reading my memoir would be angry at me, and would say that I am wrong, that we’re in the twentieth century, a time of great technological developments, space flights, so how could there be in

867 Józef Chałasiński, ‘Przedmowa’, MPWPL, vol. 8, pp. 5-17; Franciszek Jakubczak, ‘Drogi awansu wychodźców ze wsi w mieście i przesłanki powrotu części z nich do środowiska macierzystego’, pp. 18-58; Franciszek Jakubczak, ‘O rozwoju pamiętnikarstwa chłopskiego i metodzie dokumentów pamiętnikarskich’ pp. 563-667. Jakubczak’s second essay, which concludes the volume, is effectively an updated version of the methodological part of his PhD thesis, which, it seems, was never published in full, perhaps because of its reliance on the Nowe pamiętniki chłopów memoirs, hence his work’s fragmentary reproduction here.
869 AAN/GUK/929, p.147.
a country where peasants and workers rule such inequality. Indeed, such inequality... 

Gagarin’s space race achievements, still fresh in the memory, contrast with many rural citizens’ struggle for basic appliances, while exploitative inequality was clearly evident.

Chałasiński’s foreword shows how sociological contributions to later volumes were not expected to comment directly on the memoirs, which increasingly appeared to be historical documents, but to demonstrate sociology’s position towards current concerns. As well as defending the MPWPL entries as pre-boom materials, thus protected against ‘a certain depreciation in memoirs’ value following numerous unprofessional competitions’, Chałasiński stresses sociology’s need to explore why ‘social initiatives’ are failing. Indeed, little appears to have changed in a decade, if Jagiełło-Lysiowa’s reading is accepted. Peasants’ ‘entry into the nation’ appears to be the most optimistic signal advance, with this process completed by the *MPWPL* vol. 9 appeared, after Chałasiński’s death in December 1979. Indeed, in that volume Chałasiński explicitly declared that ‘a revival of faith in the nation is the fundamental phenomenon accompanying great changes in the internal and external conditions of our country.’ The nation, as an ideal, becomes a historical agent, ahead of the Party-state, but also the people themselves. Certainly this passage could justify Jakucbzak’s post-1989 attempts to incorporate Chałasiński into the canon of patriotic scholars. Gołębiowski added in the final *MPWPL* volume that all Polish peasants now possessed ‘higher values: Poland, solidarity in battling enemies, peasant dignity, all things once characterising only few leaders and pioneers of the class.’ Where quotidian frustrations could not be solved, or the peasant question solved, appeal to the nation and intangible cultural aspects offers an alternative site of apparent advance, difficult to substantiate empirically. Of course, Gołębiowski’s essay – written in February 1979 – would have particular resonance for any readers accessing the book by August 1980 when Solidarity was named, whose history in public discourse has been framed by Church- and nation-centred frameworks, rather than its struggle for economic rights.

The tendency to declare the homogenisation of the peasantry the ultimate outcome of historical and social change was always evident in memoir sociology. However, for most of the memoir movement’s history indications of national incorporation, particularly evident in

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873 P4956, *MPWPL*, vol. 8, p.143.
874 Józef Chałasiński, ‘Przedmowa’, *MPWPL* vol. 8, p.15.
875 Józef Chałasiński, ‘Integracja idei klasowej i narodowej’, in *MPWPL*, vol. 9, pp.5-14 (p.7). The book was accepted for print in January 1980, hence before the large-scale Solidarity-inspired transformations in August that year, and just a few weeks after Chałasiński’s death.
876 Bronisław Gołębiowski, ‘Świadomość podłoża historycznego teraźniejszości w pamiętnikach młodego pokolenia wsi’, *MPWPL*, vol. 9, pp.15-60 (pp.48-9).
Chałasiński’s work on all-national culture and nationification, were accompanied by other scholars stressing integration into the national economy under socialist conditions, with this bringing the cultural and economic death of the peasant. However, in the final volume, the national incorporation is most evident, perhaps possible as the memoir movement was no longer bound to state authorities’ sponsorship and had indeed largely faded from academic and popular view. Even in MPWPL vol. 8, Jakubczak stressed the method’s ideological alignment to the ‘Leninist principles’ of worker-peasant alliance, with the foundations for advance rooted in migration enabled by the ‘return to the Piast lands’. In the final volume, the declarations of national integration of the peasantry accompanied somewhat incongruously sources which showed peasant difference and quotidian concerns with little evidence of national consciousness or that this was a concern.

As the censor of volume eight noted, the authors ‘came from various regions of Poland including the eastern lands’ and they describe their ‘feelings, observations and experiences at various points in their life and interpret them in specific [swoisty] ways.’ This specificity was lost during the course of memoir sociology to various totalising readers based around class, modernisation and, ultimately, the nation, indicating what was to come after 1989. I explore now how the memoir movement’s sociology related to memoirs covering the Recovered Territories which were supposed to be a privileged side of the intersection of its leading concepts: advance, urbanisation, modernisation and nation.

4.4 Memoir Sociology and the Recovered Territories

None of the mainstream memoir movement’s own competitions specifically explored the Recovered Territories, but it did collaborate with IZ, the leading centre for the sociology of the Western Territories, on its third and final competition in 1970. However, the 1200 memoirs submitted to MPWPL from the Recovered Territories roughly equals the number generated in IZ’s three competitions. But with MPWPL original entries unavailable, IZ’s archive of competition memoirs offers more insight for exploring censorship and editing of memories of the recent past. MPWPL, though, is superior for highlighting the intersection of popular memory, academia – including sociological theories and models, and official versions of the past.

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877 Franciszek Jakubczak, ‘Drogi awansu wychodźców ze wsi w mieście i przesłanki powrotu części z nich do środowiska macierzystego’, MPWPL, vol. 8, pp. 18–58 (p.18).
878 AAN/GUK/929, p.147.
IZ scholar Andrzej Kwilecki believed memoir sociology could depict the Recovered Territories showing ‘an epoch of successes, development and progress, which has particular importance for the nation’s image and prestige.’\(^{879}\) The new lands could illustrate a usable past, with the imagined nation appropriating the population’s achievements. The memoirs could evidently prove problematic for supporting a state-sanctioned history, though, since people show not only ‘joyous enthusiasm and consciousness of creating through their everyday labours something truly great’ but also include ‘substantial criticism of people and institutions, their failings and errors which hindered or delayed rebuilding.’\(^{880}\) A Góra-type unitary history of settlement cannot be created on the basis of memoirs, as the foundations of postwar Poland appear in the Recovered Territories particularly ‘a time of complicated processes of adaptation and sometimes painful conflicts.’\(^{881}\) The dominant narrative of ‘missionary’ zeal, Kwilecki finds, was limited to ‘activist-pioneers’, whereas ‘the majority migrated to start a household, overcome wartime losses, make some income, to remain within Polish borders which moved from east to west, or to make a career’. He admits that ‘a large portion of settlers had no idea of western territories traditions, while many expressed doubts as to the permanence of Polish settlement.’\(^{882}\) Even if the sociological models, whether from the memoir movement or – as noted here – IZ focused on sociological processes of change, the narratives that emerge clearly relate to official history and memory by emerging as social histories. Grand ideological or national claims attached to migration may be subsequent constructs around which experiences are moulded, but were rarely motives at the time.

Where the memoir sociologists associated with MPWPL read social change through ideas of nationification, so working towards a unitary national culture and economy, the leading sociological model produced at IZ stressed ‘autochthonisation’, a concept developed by Zygmunt Dulczewski. It designated the culmination of a process of adaptation and integration whereby settlers’ bonds to their new surroundings become equal to those of natives – not necessarily autochthons, but also previous long-term inhabitants, so Germans. The focus was the local community, locality and region, with the nation rarely featuring. Dulczewski first outlined the concept in a 1961 essay,\(^{883}\) positing a model of cultural synthesis where ‘local bonds’ emerge during ‘social adaptation’ shaped by local specific

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879 Andrzej Kwilecki, ‘Uwagi o pamiętnikarstwie na Ziemiach Zachodnich’, *Nurt*, 8 (1967), 5-7 (p.5).
local geographical, climatic, economic and demographic conditions, including settlers’ regional origins. The final stage of the ‘autochtonization of the settler population’ is evident in ‘the formation among the settler population of local patriotism symbolises the development of such strong bonds with the new territories that can be considered equal to those bonds felt by autochthons.’ The preceding stages are: 1) Economic, social and cultural adaptation: accepting local conditions to secure conditions as a newcomer. Autochthons facilitate this as experts on local conditions. 2) Formation of local bonds: this occurs once stabilisation has occurred, with individuals and families beginning to construct homes in the new territories although conflicts between regional groups remain possible. 3) Social integration: this occurs once a new community develops identity as a “we” group ‘in opposition to other territorial groups’. 4) Development of local patriotism: when individuals begin expressing interest in the history, landmarks, monuments and culture of their local area.

In Dulczewski’s model, at least at this point in his sociology, full autochthonisation required historical consciousness based in public, cultural narratives on the region’s heritage and history. Jurkowa, for example, achieved this without formal education, as she became interested in local heritage and declared a bond to a Lower Silesian identity, too, although this occurred without much apparent social integration in terms interacting with fellow Lower Silesians outside the family. It is possible, as the following chapter will show, for stages to be skipped or achieved non-consecutively. In Dulczewski’s model, the focus is on shifting through ‘spontaneous’ or ‘emotional bonds’ towards ‘rational bonds’ with the new lands. Emotional bonds were often located in childhood memories connected to ‘family homelands’ [strony rodzinne], including the central symbol of such attachment – the family home as the site of parents’ investment of capital, time and energy into a locality or region. Other factors generating emotional bonds include favourite places with significant memories attached, or the landscape generally. Dulczewski’s development of the model shifted focus to these private-sphere locations rather than sites of public history, recognising that for settlers the key was feeling ‘at home’ and for a long time old and new localities held sway

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884 Ibid., pp.164-5.
887 Ibid., p. 15-6 (pp.9-12).
as sites of emotional bonds. His approach thus became more an *Alltagsgeschichte* of everyday attitudes rather than a contemplation of national or historical consciousness formation. In 1961, he argued that for full integration, i.e. autochthonisation, to occur, ‘what is known as social history is particularly significant, i.e. history alive in the memories and narratives of inhabitants and reproduced in easily-accessible documents in public spaces, on memorials and landmarks; in a word, these are popularised texts belonging to the fundamental knowledge of each inhabitant.’\\footnote{Dulczewski, ‘Autochtonizacja’, in *Tworzenie się*, p.29.} In later works, this public focus shifted, something explored in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

Here, though, Dulczewski’s sociology, in its adaptation by MPWPL-associated scholars, provides a means of fragmenting some of the mainstream memoir movement’s totalising nation-building narratives applied to the Recovered Territories which were perceived as a site of modernisation and urbanisation. Chałasiński highlighted ‘the opportunities for quick advanced opened up by the Western Territories which required qualified workers in all industries.’\\footnote{Chałasiński, *MPWPL*, vol. 2, p.13.} This was supported from an anthropological perspective by Józef Burszta who declared settlers’ ‘economic advance’ was ‘accompanied by large cultural advance and speedier urbanisation.’ Processes of ‘social transformation’ were, he claims, quicker in the new lands because there were few of the ‘barriers located in socio-culturally stable populations.’\\footnote{‘XXV-lecie Ziem Zaciądznych i Północnych’, *Nurt*, 5 (1970), p.6.} As studies by Kenney and Szczepański showed, and competition memoirs emphasis, rather than linear transformations hindsight suggests, change took multiple directions at differing speeds.

In 1974, Jakubczak edited a collection of memoirs exploring the Lubin-Głogów Copper Basin in Lower Silesia, framing the thirteen published memoirs more critically than in the *MPWPL* volumes. Perhaps this was enabled by the fact the competition attracted just 43 entries, becoming a research project rather than also a public or media event like *MPWPL* or indeed *POZO*. Jakubczak’s introduction stated the new lands’ historical and national significance, with settlers’ cultural and national unity developing in lands fully integrated into Poland, initially framing the volume with reference to state-sanctioned history and public memory objectives, including ‘responding to West German “expellees’” memoirs.’\\footnote{Jakubczak, *Ludzie i miedź*, p.5.}
However, the focus of the study was ‘researching consciousness- and self-based changes to culture and the family, as well as social integration processes’ in conditions of recent socio-economic transformation as the Basin’s developed, alongside longer-term transformations beginning with initial postwar settlement which took the form of ‘turbulent advance [burzliwy awans]’ at a time when ‘institutions of nascent People’s rule’ were developing.

Although the 1970s saw official declarations of the lands’ full integration into Poland and its economy, Ludzie i miedź reveals the legacy of their specificities, particularly the labour shortages which Chałasiński framed solely as a source of advance rather than a structural weakness. Unlike industrialising projects in central Poland located in predominantly agricultural areas, the Basin could draw on no surplus labour, meaning that it struggled to bring the typical benefits, such as combating rural overpopulation and underemployment.

More typical in this respect were Nowa Huta or Puławy, with Jakubczak researching the latter using memoirs, too. The problems in rural areas remained, as Jakubczak himself recognised in MPWPL vol. 8, noting that there were 1,133,700 farms in Poland up to two hectares in size ‘and most could cease to exist if there was other employment available, and more importantly housing, for the million families tied to these farms.’ However, the Basin would do little to enable access to the ‘superiority of the urban social order in civilisational and cultural terms compared to the primary rural order’ because of its location in the Recovered Territories, where the immediate postwar advance was enabled by the surfeit of available housing and jobs. Still, the Recovered Territories retained some specificity into the 1970s as the typical analysis regarding industrialisation as improving civilisational, infrastructural and cultural standards, while generating ‘bonds and developmental interdependence between urban and rural areas’ seemed to apply less strictly. Postwar migration created conditions where families were spread across urban and rural communities. Analyses of projects such as Pulawy overlooked what postwar migration revealed about urbanisation and peasants, with rustification a possibility. Instead a typical

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895 Ibid., p.6.
896 Ibid., p.16-17.
897 ‘The fundamental impact of locating in a rural region a large industrial complex is positive. It creates a dynamic labour market enabling exploitation of reserves of labour and creates conditions for consistently raising qualifications and social status of employees.’ Jakubczak, Ludzie i miedź, p.37.
899 Jakubczak, MPWPL, vol. 8, p.34.
900 Jakubczak, MPWPL, vol. 8, p.25.
901 Jakubczak, Ludzie i miedź, p.33.
902 Jakubczak, Ludzie i miedź, p.40.
model of cultural advance was declared inevitable with those moving into industry bringing ‘urbanisation of the rural population and farmers’ behaviour, and thus contribute to the formation of an egalitarian socialist nation.’ Peasant defectiveness for socialism is evident here, yet Jakubczak revealed in *MPWPL* vol. 8 that the economic base was insufficiently developed to enable the death of the peasant, while the *Ludzie i miedź* memoirs show significant barriers to achieving the urban ideal.

The volume’s first memoir – by an early postwar settler to Lubin, born in 1935 near Nowy Sącz – suggests industrialisation brought improved infrastructure, wages and supplies of consumer goods. However, casualties of progress also feature, including those killed on building sites and discrimination of those excluded from the new mining industry in terms of access to improved wages and goods. A woman memoirist also expresses ambivalence towards industrialisation’s impact. Although Lubin had not been a nice place to live and buildings were crumbling, she judges new-build housing poor quality. ‘Probably for the same money they could have built something more aesthetically pleasing, giving inhabitants a bit of space; after all, building plots are plenty here.’ Jakubczak’s lengthy contribution to the Puławy study declared People’s Poland pursued industrialisation with a ‘humanistic character’, centred on ‘subordinating technical-economic objectives of material and cultural production to producers’ needs, in contrast to capitalist industrialisation, which aims for maximum profit often achieved by degrading migrants from villages and urban workers’. In Lubin, producers, migrants and workers appear not to have been foremost in planning authorities’ minds, while cultural advance is hardly supported as housing blocks were completed inside eleven months as the six-year wait for the Culture House continued. This particularly frustrated graduates of metropolitan universities arriving in the Basin. Regression rather than progress seems evident in some cases, as the technical intelligentsia – the forefront 1970s models of progress – soon accepted the lack of culture, turning to quotidian demands: ‘home, kids, they got sucked into their work’. Indeed, this wave of settlement also acquires attributes of the pioneer spirit as she states ‘only two couples have deserted’. The situation was far from the ideal promised, but new arrivals adapted.

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903 Jakubczak, ‘Puławskie przemiany w świetle pamiętników i badań terenowych’, in *Pamiętniki puławskie*, pp.17-104 (pp.102-3).
904 ‘Drążenie miedziowego szybu’, *Ludzie i miedź*, pp.42-66 (pp.54-55).
905 Another memoirist noted how a ‘sleepy little town is becoming a mighty urban centre, modern and wonderful.’ ‘Rzeczy prawdziwe i nie upiększane’, in *Ludzie i miedź*, pp.133-163 (p.160).
909 Ibid., pp.94-95.
The published texts concentrate largely on postwar settlement, while only the final text presents a full life story from rural struggle to urban-industrial advance. Much of this is due to the author’s origins in the prewar Stanisławów voivodeship in the eastern borderlands and her female gender. The two key traits of prewar subalternisation according to communist-era models – *kresy* origins and being a woman – combine. However, even as she concludes that ‘the great difference between rural and urban areas as existed in the past is slowly disappearing’, it is evident that the difference disappearing is material rather than psychosocial and cultural, as memoir sociology’s dominant narrative promised. She also remained largely excluded from the lines of mobility as she worked harder on the family farm near Głogów. She had a growing market for produce, but only her husband’s income and prestige rose.912

Dyzma Gałaj, writing in 1967 as head of the PAN Centre for Research on Industrialising Regions, noted that in using memoirs “we learn of the extent of assimilation of new realities and contents [*treści*] by different people.” If this is true, then *Ludzie i miedź* suggests that people had internalised the claims regarding industrialisation and the benefits of urbanisation, but used these as the foundation for critiques in a sense suggested by Curry-Jansen’s power-knowledge bind. Jakubczak attempts to align the memoirs by suggesting that their authors in offering constructive criticism ‘support the interests of workers’ and ‘accept the dialectical structure of social reality.’ If this is so, then the authors might be considered as presenting their own synthesis using official theses and the antitheses of their experiences. This contrasts strongly with Chałasiński’s insistence in 1972 at Baton Rouge on presenting the significance of the Recovered Territories in unitary terms as embodiments of grand narratives of modernising social advance, ‘transformation of the country’s class structure as well as processes of the democratisation of culture.’915

However, in *MPWPL* vol. two which was dedicated entirely to the new lands, Chałasiński presented a less totalising analysis. A standard historical grand narrative is followed by a more ambivalent selection of sources, disrupting the more generalising claims evident in the introduction, similarly to his strategy in *MMŻ* which revealed tensions between sociological analysis and popular experience. Chałasiński’s essay was the only material in *MPWPL* vol.

912 Ibid., p.263.
2 aside from the memoirs. He noted initially the historical legitimacy of Poland acquiring the new lands, using IZ work to note that 0.5m of 1.357m Polish forced labourers in the Reich were located in what became the Recovered Territories. Of course, not all of them remained, although the author of P3779 illustrates pre-settlement familiarity, having seen Wrocław along the way to labour in Germany in 1943. However, there is little evidence of patriotism inspiring her migration, as she left ‘on her own initiative, with a youthful urge to start a better life in the new lands.’

POZO memoirist Dulewicz, however, was another forced labourer Chałasiński cited, highlighting this text ‘filled with the spirit of the patriotic mission of pioneers of Polish settlement of the Recovered Territories.’ Chałasiński implies something of a value judgement as Dulewicz becomes a ‘pioneer’ while the spontaneous migration of P3779 appears a lesser contribution to grand historical processes.

Another POZO memoir is selected to illustrate organised settlement, with Franciszek Buchalterz migrating from Przemyśl to Poznań in the interwar period before moving on the Szczecin through the PPR. This fulfilled a dream he had, based in history, of “Polish Piast groups heading to Pomerania to unite Slavonic tribes with the motherland.” His personal destiny fulfilled as he found himself in “eternally Polish” lands, Buchalterz appears to embody the ideologically-motivated settlement that was the centre of Curp’s narrative. Buchalterz may have heard lectures organised by PZZ at the ‘Week of the Western Lands’ held in Poznań between 20-27 April where the history of ‘Piast Poland’ was stressed, but they did not necessarily motivate his migration. However, the reference to POZO memoirs allows Chałasiński to refer to the pioneer grand narrative, since the older MPWPL memoirists were born in 1927 and thus rarely fell into this category, instead most often coming as children or young adults to the new lands. POZO provides the usable framework that enables framing MPWPL in officially acceptable terms.

Chałasiński considers the variety of motives for migration, including the rather less heroic desire for material advance. A successful model of economic migration would be, as the cited example of Żmiąca in Kraków voivodeship shows, where migration overcame overpopulation – and saw “advance” to industry. 276 people left Żmiąca, 98 for the Recovered Territories by 1952, leaving a population of 787. Postwar movements, whether to nearby Nowa Huta or the Recovered Territories, followed an existing social tendency in Żmiąca with Tadeusz Wierbicki’s sociological investigations drawing on Franciszek

917 Ibid., p.6.
918 Ibid., pp.8-9.
919 Ibid., p.7.
Bujak’s pioneering 1903 monograph on the village.\(^{920}\) Polish peasants could migrate within their own country rather than seek improvements abroad was the main change as peasants maintained familiar patterns of economic migration.

In terms of the young generation, Chałasiński uses Dulczewski’s 1961 model to depict memoirists who not only ‘settled down in the Recovered Territories’, but also ‘constructed their identity around emotional local patriotism while also demonstrating historical consciousness’.\(^{921}\) The author of P4465 was used as a model of autochthonisation, moving from to a Lower Silesian village aged 12 in 1946 before rising through education to university, becoming an ideal-type ‘biography of not only professional but general social success.’ Joint-winner of MPWPL P1335 enjoyed a similar model social advance, shifting from peasant to intelligentsia in People’s Poland. Perhaps the recognition was due to the authors achieving a status familiar to the sociologists own? After all, Chałasiński suggests the author of P4465 ‘entered the stratum of Recovered Territories society which is that society’s representative and wants to be its historical representative, a representative of the historical Polish continuity of these lands.’\(^{922}\) For all Chałasiński’s claims of a classless, all-national culture,\(^{923}\) and ordinary people as makers of history, he reproduces a model of elites as the only full and worthy representatives of the nation and history. Only their narratives, rather than everyday practice, can become historical evidence, he appears to suggest. He declares the new lands a site of ‘dismantling old class-strata barriers in culture’ in the tendency towards ‘democratisation of culture in tandem with transformations of society’s class culture.’\(^{924}\) Yet the fullest model of social advance requires that elites represent the lands and their history on behalf of the rest of the population who have yet to acquire fully-recognised historical consciousness. This goes further than Dulczewski’s model of autochthonisation where engagement with local heritage was sufficient, while Chałasiński requires advance through classes.

However, there is tension in Chałasiński’s introduction to \textit{MPWPL} vol. 2 with totalising claims, evident in the memoirs he selected to include first and last for his essay. The first was by a woman whose spontaneous migration questioned subsequent public prevalence of


\(^{921}\) Chałasiński, \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 2, p.41.

\(^{922}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p.42.

\(^{923}\) ‘This process is also characterised by the transformation of a socially stratified space into a national society with a unified class structure within a homogeneous space without fixed class barriers.’ Chałasiński, \textit{MPWPL}, vol. 2, p.45.

\(^{924}\) \textit{Ibid.}, pp.44-45.
male-dominated pioneer claims. The final autobiography to feature in Chałasiński’s essay, meanwhile, shows that even the ideal form of peasant-to-student advance can contain ambivalences. The unitary narrative of urbanisation and advance seems to be disrupted as the author of P5422 shows, contrasting with the ‘narrative of a great, happy success in life’ associated with P4465. This memoirist, born in 1942 in German-occupied Polesie voivodeship, advanced from eastern Poles’ ‘inferior Polishness’ to become a Wrocław medical student. Living in the city he remained evidently still-peasant to those around him, as well as regionally other, even after having arrived in the city in 1960. Wrocław appears not as a site of national or social integration but instead ‘everyone in Wrocław is loose [luźni], lonely. In the grand social structure there is no significant role for either tradition or socio-ideological movements.’ This recalls Chałasiński and the censor’s reading of MMŻ, where the gap between official versions of the Party-state’s leading role in social life and the reality of social anomie and alienation emerge. Although much of the introduction’s focus had been on presenting readings based around successes of settlement whether for the individuals concerned or for society and Poland more generally, here – by effectively deconstructing his own argument – Chałasiński reveals the memoirs’ centrifugal force. Indeed, by ending on this memoir he leaves readers – assuming they conduct linear readings – before they embark on consuming the memoirs with an impression of tensions between grand narrative claims and social reality.

P5422 also undermines theories of national unification posited by Chałasiński as part of the advanced stages of social progress. IZ sociologist Stefan Nowakowski, who conducted some of the first post-Stalinist in-depth field research on the Opole region, commented on the surprising insight of MPWPL and POZO memoir materials for a subject he considered fully covered by other methods. He also adopted some of Chałasiński’s analysis to argue that there is evidence of ‘dramatic processes of the Polish peasant’s “nationification”, shifting from a narrow local community to a broader supra-local community, a regional homeland, limited to the backwaters of Nowogródek or Polesie voivodeships, and into the grand national fatherland’. Although ‘sadness at leaving the old homeland’ is possible, a ‘homogeneously Polish’ territory is declared preferable, free of the ‘threat’ of Ukrainians.

925 Chałasiński, ‘Diaries of the Young Generation’, p.10.
926 Chałasiński, MPWPL, vol. 2, p.56.
and Belarusians. Eastern Polish peasants and women are often instrumentalised as the
greatest symbols of peasant advance through People’s Poland, while eastern Poles’ role in
the nation is one of sacrifice of local homelands for the greater national good. For
Nowakowski, moving to the Recovered Territories brought peasants into ‘all-national
culture’ as they contributed there ‘to a new type of Pole, more progressive than in central
Polish lands or in former territories beyond the Bug River.’ Until Chałasiński’s own 1972
paper, it seems that Nowakowski managed to produce the most totalising reappropriation
of his concepts and theories in relation to the Recovered Territories. Nowakowski
acknowledged the potential heteroglossia of memoirs before homogenising their narratives
into a general social model of ‘entry into the grand collective of the national and ideological
fatherland’ whereas Chałasiński’s MPWPL vol. 2 text fragmented such generalisation.

Chałasiński’s introduction does, however, include elements that do subalternise eastern
Poles, as he claims P3908 – by a repatriant woman – ‘shows the process of escaping the
stigma of an inferior Polishness, the peasant Polishness from “beyond the Bug river”.’ She
abandoned traditional rural bonds ‘transferred from distant eastern borderlands and took root
among the old traditional structure of customs.’ But the author ‘grew into the all-national
culture by emancipating herself from the traditional rural-neighbourly community.’ It
is assumed that this repatriant is herself conscious of her apparently ‘inferior Polishness’,
instead of it being a label applied by others which she deems unfair. Indeed, Chałasiński’s
own prewar research discredited notions of a homogeneous eastern borderlands identity.

It seems here that this memoirist is secondary from the outset to a model of advance and
nationification which fails to account for her exclusion from the mode of production but
stresses her place within the national community as her local community appears to have
integrated, accepting ‘a new homogenously Polish territory without a threat from another
national group.’ It seems that this is drawn not from the autobiographer’s experience but
from Chałasiński’s attempts to present the most positive possible reading of migration. As
P5422 showed, there was no guarantee of national unity or overcoming inferior regional
bonds simply by virtue of fulfilling the standard modes of social advance. Indeed,
Chałasiński’s reading of P3908 generates ambivalence as he suggests particularly weak

931 Ibid., pp.30-1.
932 Ibid., pp.31.
933 Ibid., pp.32.
935 Chałasiński’s prewar Młode pokolenie chłopów differentiated the various regions of the eastern
borderlands which showed varying levels of development and national consciousness.
936 Chakrabarty, Habitations, p.33.
evidence that the Polishness of the lands was appreciated because people ‘no longer call these lands “German territories”’. This merely suggests adaptation, to use Dulczewski’s model, as ‘people have put down roots in this land’, as her published memoir’s title suggests. However, direct identification as Poland is rare. It seems that the author inhabits lands conceived as not-German-but-not-yet-homely, rather than identifying with ‘supra-local, all-national Polishness.’ Adaptation and integration is still in-progress, rather than necessarily completed as Chałasiński suggested.

Born in 1939 in Złoczów district of the prewar Tarnopol voivodeship, this agronomist’s wife moved to Opole region where she completed seven years of basic schooling. P3908 presents memories of the author’s eastern borderlands village but avoids the tendency of other memoirists of her generation to present wartime memories evidently derived from family memory or public histories. Instead, she depicts the local landscape, wildlife and plants alongside early childhood memories including accompanying her grandmother to graze a cow in the forest which ‘was red with wild strawberries, so big, tasty and fragrant they were.’ Public discourses perhaps influenced her recollection of how terribly spoilt the landowners’ children were while she ‘could have no whims. Nobody would satisfy them anyway.’ There is an indication here of poverty and class divisions but nothing to indicate a specifically ‘inferior’ eastern borderland Polishness. She and her family migrated following her father’s return from German captivity. She certainly presented pained memories of losing emotional bonds to her local homeland, even if she was only seven.

Me and a little cousin were on the cart, the wagons loaded, just granny and grandpa couldn’t bear to step away from the house, they couldn’t bid farewell just like that to their entire lives. Both of them for a long time sat crying on the doorstep. They responded to their sons’ pleas, “I grew up here on my land, with my own hands I laid every brick, so here in my own land I want to have my grave.” Force was needed to get them onto the cart.

There appears to be little indication of relief at abandoning the eastern borderland, with the oldest generation experiencing migration as a tragedy, losing not simply a homeland but a home. However, large numbers of family members and neighbours transferred westwards,

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as three uncles, two aunts and their respective families settled a sparsely populated (90 households) village near Opole.\footnote{Ibid., pp.677-8.} Belief and customs also followed, with the villagers refusing to summon doctors, preferring superstitions and traditional medicines, with the author’s scepticism growing during childhood.\footnote{Ibid., pp.678-9.} This inspires Chałasiński’s reading that she overcame the restrictions of her milieu and advanced to a higher cultural level. However, this example reveals a particularly low base, making People’s Poland’s achievement seem somewhat less impressive, especially with all-national culture seeming some way off.

Initially, she felt discriminated as peers from towns enjoyed summer camps while she worked her father’s eight-hectare farm, her labours made more difficult as her father believed fertilisers “burn out the grain.” Other families maintained similar views.\footnote{Ibid., pp.681-2.} Agricultural practices differentiated the eastern Poles from another large group of settlers who arrived from the Zawiercie district, nearby in Silesia. There were open tensions with Lwów-region Poles, too, which could turn violent, although ‘in the end everything settled down.’\footnote{Ibid., p.678.} There may be stabilisation but regional differences remain evident in the village even at the time of writing. Initially, though, inhabitants ‘barely even vegetated’, neglecting their farms while social interaction was limited to church on a Sunday, drinking and then talking about “Ruskies, Chinese, Americans and always predicting war.’ They continued to use this as a reason to neglect “German” farms where fences and barns tumbled, holes in roofs remained. ‘Everyone said – it’s not mine.’\footnote{Ibid., p.682.} This memoir would clearly illustrate \textit{trwoga} and the sense of temporariness outlined by Zaremba, with Chałasiński seeing the traditional parish-home bonds a cause of such attitudes. There is no mention – perhaps owing to editing – of the negative impact of stalinist agricultural policy which made agriculture unviable, potentially disrupting any initial adaptation. If there had been an improvement by 1962, then it is in terms of people caring more for their farms, suggesting that settlers had ‘put down roots’ in the new lands, as the published title suggests. Still, this seems like an early stage of adaptation.

It seems Chałasiński’s reading sought to show that the young generation could be considered a progressive group in the Recovered Territories as they more quickly overcame traditional bonds. However, even though the author eventually moved to a small town, she enjoys none of the benefits of urbanisation Chałasiński’s sociology described. If she overcame subaltern,
eastern ‘inferior Polishness’, then the lines of social mobility evade her as a woman outside
the privileged modes of production, something that affects most woman regardless of urban
or rural location. Consequently, Chałasiński’s reading of the memoirist’s apparent
‘emancipation from her traditional community’ in favour of ‘developing her human dignity
within the framework of all-national culture’ appears unconvincing. If moving to an urban
area brought any benefit, then it was only by negation, as she avoided the double burden of
wives of peasants moving into agriculture. ‘Women were and still are most harmed. Worn
out, aged, wrinkled around their lips and eye. Constantly working and hurried. Heavy work
in the farmyard, at home, in the fields, in the garden. Women did it all. Their own work and
men’s work, from dawn until dusk.’ Indeed, such evidence might support arguments
declaring the necessity of the death of peasant farming, but these additionally burdensome
conditions for women are partly a result of industrialisation which was centred on men’s
advance, while also distributing few resources to enable improvements to peasant agriculture
and lives. Equally, patriarchal families based around norms of masculinity again cannot
be attributed to ‘inferior’ Polishness but affected women regardless of regional origins, as
patriarchy reinforced exploitative domestic practices, partly through symbolic violence
which meant ‘women defended zealously old customs’, while ‘resisting the new.’
Chałasiński sees ‘older people’s opposition’ as a barrier to her escape from ‘neighbourly-
parish traditions’ into ‘all-national culture.’ Certainly there were incidents of older people
accusing her and a female cousin of sexual promiscuity and dressing like boys, while
mocking their will to education. However, Chałasiński’s analysis severely underplays the
significance of gender as the central variable, particularly as the author notes the village
produced young judges, teachers, engineers, doctors, preschool teachers, mechanics and
administrators. But how many of these success belonged to women she does not elaborate.
Clearly, though, regional barriers could be overcome more easily than gendered restrictions.

Her own experience as an agronomist’s wife suggests she was not among the success stories
but instead her husband’s views reinforced her exclusion from the mode of production and
social advance. He wanted to reform agriculture to ensure “the head of the family was the
farmer, not his wife.” He blames farmers’ wives for failures to implement changes, as they

951 ‘It would shame the woman throughout the entire village if one of the men did the laundry or milked a
cow. My father always used to say that only lazy women need men’s help, but clever women will manage
everything all by themselves.’ P3908, pp.682-3.
952 Ibid., p.683.
intervened when reforms were discussed. “Peasants after their wives’ words become strangely diminished, shrunk and half an hour of agitation was for nothing.” He dismisses her experience and local knowledge of ‘every nook and cranny, every farmyard, every farmer’ in favour of top-down, theory-based transformation with little concern for peasant attitudes or real-life knowledge. This contrasts with his wife’s vision of a improved division of labour and investment in facilities improving the quality of life of agricultural producers and the elderly. ‘There would be a public baths, laundrette, domestic appliance rental and other institutions in the village which help people, especially women, in their work. Then every person would feel needed, everyone would get a decent wage for decent work.’ It seems that her voice as a subaltern woman goes unheard not only in her family sphere experience, but her female-centred perspective on rural reform is unlikely to reach the authorities; at least not by traditional means, although the memoir publication could be a small crack in male-domination of public discussion of peasant agriculture. Her very act of writing emerges as an act of rebellion against male domination, rather than a signal of entry into all-national culture which, in its structure as a public discourse, seeks to efface her opinions. She has to write in secret since ‘my husband doesn’t allow me to write what he calls nonsense: “What do you know anyway.”’

This memoirist is subaltern not only as an eastern Pole, as Chałasiński suggests, but predominantly as a woman. She attempts to speak through her competition entry, overcoming the group censor of her local community, the family censor of her husband, but her efforts are unlikely to lead to a successful speech act given the male-centred focus of public discourse and sociology. Indeed, Chałasiński believes that the author ‘submits to her husband in marriage [podporządkowuje się mężowi] and dedicates herself to children; she has no active sphere of her own, whether in work or outside it’. Chałasiński suggests that she willingly submits to her husband, largely as a result of her regional origins. He holds the woman responsible rather than critiquing gender relations, even when the author is explicit in her critique in this respect. He dismisses her writing as ‘largely a substitute activity’, refusing to complete the speech act as she attempts to be heard. She indicates the failings of male-centred models of social advance and agricultural reform, the failings of urbanisation and modernisation, yet Chałasiński reads her only through her regional origins and sees her on her way to incorporation into the nation because she has apparently overcome traditional

955 Ibid., pp.688-89.
956 Ibid., p.690.
957 Ibid., p.691.
rural bonds. Yet her struggle within a patriarchal family structure does not register. He summarises the content of memoirs in *Tu jest mój dom*, as demonstrating ‘the transition from an autochthonism based on domestic life and customs to national consciousness based in written culture and broader supra-local personal connections within national culture.’

Chałasiński declares the Recovered Territories a microcosm of ‘nationwide aspects of transformation’, with the notable difference that ‘geographical migrations were linked here to migrations in a social sense. The social landscape of the country opened up as a result of revolutionary removal of class barriers, enabling easier access to various occupations and transferring from one occupation to another.’

Certainly P3908 contributed to written culture but, like Jurkowa, despite fulfilling the model of migration to urban areas, family life restricts her ability to establish broader connections, while the career opportunities were rarely open to women, even if Fidelis presents an optimistic version of industrialisation and its impact on social structure. As for P3908, this rural subaltern’s speaking failed to catch – the sociologist could not recognise it, unlike efforts from some rural Poles advanced to intellectual status.

In his *MPWPL* vol. 8 essay, Jakubczak cites one female memoirist from Nowe pamiętniki chłopów (1955/56) whose experience of urbanisation is similar to P3908 although it also contains in itself the analysis that was lacking from Chałasiński’s reading of the *MPWPL* text.

‘If I ever broke down in the town, and there were such moments, then it was not because of my rural origins, but because I am a woman. Believe me, the road is yet long before women have an equal start to men’s that would allow them to arrive at the finishing line, given equal abilities, together with men. A woman is always made to understand that she is a woman, that her abilities are limited...’

This author gives a clear indication that it is necessary to consider not simply rural subalterns in People’s Poland as such, but to explore particularly the subalternisation of women whom not only the national economic structure discriminated particularly but also patriarchal family structures. Certainly, memoir sociology and some sections of Polish sociology shifted attentions in this direction in the 1970s, particularly with Tryfan’s work. However, Jakubczak’s PhD thesis, which cited this memoir and was partly reproduced in the eighth *MPWPL* volume, was a significant early contribution to exploring rural women’s lives and

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959 Ibid., p.39.
961 Jakubczak, *MPWPL*, vol. 8, p.47.
962 See the discussion of Tryfan’s work - above.
life stories, even if he did become something of an expert in aligning the memoir movement to official, totalising frameworks. He analysed this fragment, however, to reveal that the mode of production and perceived modes of progress did discriminate women in ascribing them to ‘domestic duties’ while noting the failings in urbanisation as some 50% of women failed to find work outside the home. Where Jakubczak saw structural flaws, Chalasiński saw women’s own failings, preferring to concentrate on the consequences of an imagined ‘inferior Polishness’ preventing her full advance.

Chalasiński’s theory could be perceived as an attempt to subalternise eastern Poles and denigrate the memory of their experiences in their lost homelands. Certainly this appears to be case given the dominance of the repatriant and deportee experience in public memory and official memory today. However, it is evident that P3908 recalled the eastern borderlands, including her own sense of tragedy as a young child leaving a homeland, whose significance had evidently been underscored by family memory. Jakubczak notes that memoirs could depict ‘the truth about Polish attitudes during the occupation and about Nazi crimes’, thus serving as ‘an effective instrument in service of social pedagogy.’ Clearly the experience of the eastern borderlands and the USSR is omitted, but perhaps not because Jakubczak sought to avoid discussing it but because he realised that the ‘truth’ of such experiences could not be publicly represented. This has led to a sense in some recent academic publications, such as Palska’s and Malikowski’s, that the published versions should be dismissed out of hand. Meanwhile, current popular memory publications can be dismissive of the value of communist-era publications as they seek to engage in the kind of corrective of memory that the leading figures of the memoir movement sought for a revived movement around 1989, meaning a focus on eastern Poles, deportees, Katyn and victims of communism.

*Skąd my tu*, a recent compilation of repatriant memoirs, comments that ‘there were plenty of memoirs of settlers to the Western Territories published in People’s Poland. Most showed how perfectly people adapted and the enthusiasm with which they made the new lands home. Rarely could authors describe the truth of why they were forced to leave the Polish Eastern Borderlands.’ The reasons were usually limited to Ukrainian ethnic violence, but ‘not a word about communist authorities’ were possible. ‘Generally recalling longing for the eastern borderlands “local homeland” was not permitted, nor recalling the long-lasting feeling of

963 Jakubczak, *MPWPL*, vol. 8, p.50.
temporariness in the Western Territories.\textsuperscript{965} The collection’s title indicates its objective to be overcoming the “white stains” or blank spots regarding eastern Poles’ experiences, including the Soviet occupation as well as everyday life in the eastern borderlands. At least in Czapliński’s historical introduction there was a recognition that some details may slip through. However, the volume’s editor replicates a strong form of the totalitarian paradigm of memory, making “truth” claims over how things really were. ‘Let us recall, this is how it was: “In 1945 I arrived in Poland from the USSR as part of repatriation.” That was as much information as inhabitants of the entire eastern expanses of Poland could officially express.’ The authorities for 50 years through censorship and creating a ‘taboo’ ‘scrupulously ensured that the causes and conditions of so-called repatriation were cast into oblivion’. By contrast, after 1989, survivors ‘regained the right to a voice, the chance to tell of their experiences.’\textsuperscript{966} While historian Czapliński offered nuances regarding official forgetting, showing different levels of restriction on particular experiences, the editor Tyszkowska presents an all-powerful censor imposing total forced forgetting in a fully-homogenised postwar period. There is no recognition that postcommunist memory could likewise be a construct.

Reading across different communist-era publications suggests that while there were certainly directives to avoid negative representations of the USSR and the Red Army, the question of the eastern borderlands was not universally restricted by censorship. Reflections upon the work of IZ and IH PAN reveal more details, particularly because original memoirs are available for comparison with publications, something that makes in-depth analysis of the question of censorship and MPWPL difficult. However, it is evident not only in P3908 that the eastern territories and even deportation feature in the published memoirs, avoiding what Koszalin TPP activist Maria Hudymowa critiqued as ‘the dominant martyrological trope in representations of Polish wartime experiences.’ She considered memoirs an opportunity to consider ‘non-heroic’ histories, rather than ‘textbook histories’ ‘spectacular deeds’ and heroic victimhood.\textsuperscript{967}

Censors were particularly troubled by the text ‘Dobrze nam tu w PRGze’ (P5189),\textsuperscript{968} which was included in MPWPL vol. 5, which appeared in 1968 and was subsequently re-reviewed by GUK colleagues. Given political shifts in Poland, GUK employees considered whether recent publications, but particularly those approved in 1956-1960, did not present overly

\textsuperscript{966} Krystyna Tyszkowska, ‘Przedsłowie od redakcji’, in Skąd my tu, pp.21-24 (p.21).
\textsuperscript{968} P5189, ‘Dobrze nam tu, w PGR-ze’, in MPWPL, vol. 5, pp.343-98.
There was particular concern that some Soviet authors’ works were too open in discussing stalinism and even the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. P5189 was deemed problematic in a censor’s review, as ‘the author dedicated much attention to his wartime experiences in the USSR. The editors considered this memoir to share values with Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.* Solzhenitsyn – and the critical discourse he represented – was falling increasingly out of favour in the USSR, thus *MPWPL* vol. 5 omitted the editors’ direct literary reference. However, the post-publication censorship review highlights what was included in print.

Essentially, in the memoir we read of the hell the author experienced during and after the war in the USSR, while presenting a problematic image [drażliwy obraz] of relations between the Polish population and Soviet authorities around Grodno. Our Office was forced to remove many of the most problematic [drażliwy] moments in the memoir.

It is evident that many problematic moments remained, as censors expressed more general concern that there had been a culture of passing too much in texts ‘treating in a bilious and unfriendly manner the German-Soviet pact of August 1939’, Soviet presence in 1939-41, deportations of Poles to the USSR, ‘the fate of many Poles beyond the Arctic Circle, the reprehensible behaviour of soldier-marauders towards the Polish population after the Red Army’s entry into Polish territory.’ Typically, the censors accepted the authenticity of such experiences, and they even added their own assessment that Soviet troops’ behaviour was ‘reprehensible’ causing the author of P5189 ‘hellish’ experiences. The censors nevertheless stated simply the political necessity of removal following lapses in editorial and publishing policy. ‘The cause of this abnormal situation is, in our view, insufficient political acumen at some publishers and prioritising purely editorial concerns over political realities.’

*MPWPL* vol. 5 was thus implicated in the tendency to neglect political duties in publishing, even though Jakubczak, as editor, noted that some entries were cut owing to ‘going beyond matters concerned with Poland’s internal affairs and thus not falling within the framework of the system of values qualified for dissemination by our cultural politics.’ It seems that editors’ cuts to *MPWPL* vol. 5 were insufficient regarding Poland’s Soviet partner, yet the

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970 AAN/KC PZPR/LVI/859, p.10.
971 AAN/KC PZPR/LVI/859, p.13.
973 AAN/KC PZPR/LVI/859, p.9.
movement still acquired political favour. While offending against Russia at the time of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, it proved useful domestically at a time of growing official nationalism and antisemitism.

It is impossible, for reasons of space, to explore in-depth the various memoirs, including the particularly controversial P5189, covering the eastern borderlands and deportation included in the MPWPL series. P5189 describes the fate of a man born in 1927 whose fifty-five page published text covered his childhood in Plebanka near Grodno (today’s Belarus) through remaining in his village as it became Soviet in 1945 and deportation to labour camps before moving to Olsztyn region in 1958 with his family. There are ellipses indicating where there were cuts, such as when a pogrom against Jews in Grodno in 1939 was signalled. There were rumours ‘that Jews are rising en masse against the Polish army and civilians.’ The Jews are reported to have shot at Polish military before ‘a battle was organised in Grodno’ with students and inhabitants summoned, ‘and even those from neighbouring villages joined this battle [...]’. The narrative resumes with Polish soldiers fleeing the area. Without further research, what the ellipses omit is unclear. It seems they cover a pogrom. ‘Another pogrom occurred in 1939, just before the Red Army entered Grodno.’ While the editors and censors were prepared to retain rumoured anti-Polish Jewish actions, the historical facts of a pogrom are removed at a time of Polish-Jewish tensions and state-sanctioned antisemitism. However, there are indications of Soviet deportations of Poles, as well as locals’ collaboration as they volunteered to join the ranks of the local police, and knowing people and their past pointed out suspicious or dangerous people from the surrounding area who might harm the building of a new socialist order.

Mass arrests began, not only of landowners and landlords, but of the intelligentsia, patriots and national activists. Our fireman was arrested who had organised the milk cooperative and lately ran his own shop. A kolkhoz was formed, whose only benefit was ‘being able to drink as much moonshine as possible.’ There is even association of Soviet rule with tsarist partition and domination of Poland, while the German arrival in 1941 is even framed as a ‘liberation from wheat

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975 P5189, ‘Dobrze nam tu, w PGR-że’, MPWPL, vol. 5, pp.343-98 (p.360-1).
978 Ibid., pp.365-6.
979 Ibid., p.365.
quotas a taxes’. However, things indeed did get worse under fascist rule, although another benefit was that ‘some people started returning from the army or prison, where they had been taken by the Bolsheviks [...]’. With the author’s brother having been conscripted to the Red Army, the ellipsis possibly covers his experience, although it is not certain. However, retaining the term “Bolsheviks” seems quite surprising. He indicates problems faced by patriotic AK soldiers once the Soviet military re-entered the area, bringing ‘many misunderstandings, tragedies and disasters’.

There was also joy among locals, but this quickly subsided as liberation brought concern over the community’s future, particularly once the Polish-Belarusian SSR treaty was confirmed. His narrative is unusual in that he comments not only on mixed emotions in his village but ‘among all Poles in the kresy’ as they heard rumours of a Polish government and state forming.

There is no indication here of the fragmentation that was encouraged by censorship as he makes a generalising claim. Many people in his community were convinced the border would eventually incorporate their village, hence the failure to migrate. Even with the border confirmed on 16 August 1945, his father continued to invest in the family farm and ultimately they remained as they could no longer depart after 1947, meaning the memoir becomes a reflection on Soviet life – and a hardly positive one at that, hence the editors’ and censors’ Solzhenitsyn reference. The author was arrested for willingly abandoning his workplace and wasting social property having quit his job in a dairy. He subsequently found himself in labour camps 60km from Moscow, before returning to his village ‘following the amnesty after Stalin’s death in 1953.’

He finds some positive aspects in his experience, namely that ‘I saw the world of other people I met there. I learned to value freedom and liberty. I learned of collective life, where thousands ate from the same pot’. He also trained as a bricklayer and painter. While Solzhenitsyn provided editors’ and censors’ literary precedent, the author’s text, by referring to ‘świat innych ludzi’ (‘the world of others’), by chance evokes a Polish émigré publication, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński’s A World Apart: The Journal of a Gulag Survivor (London: 1951), published in Polish in Britain as Inny świat: Zapiski sowieckich (1953). This experience meant he overcame ‘the chauvinistic views I was raised in’ and learned that he ‘felt no animosity to the Russian people’ who

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980 Ibid., p.368.
981 Ibid., p.372.
982 Ibid., p.372.
983 Ibid., p.374.
984 Ibid., p.374.
985 Ibid., p.377.
986 Ibid., p.378.
shared with him their last piece of bread when necessary. ‘They became brothers to me.’ 988

This declaration of solidarity avoids the state-sanctioned modes of such declarations and
becomes a fully personal discovery. Once back in his home village, he was soon accused of
robbing the local post office. He protested that he had been framed but was sent to ‘the wild
Vorkuta country. There were no plants in sight, just temperatures of minus 50 or 60.’ 989

Details of his experience are again limited, beyond noting that from 1954 until 1957 he
worked in a mine, and began arranging his repatriation from 1956 via the Polish embassy in
Moscow. He and his family ultimately departed in January 1958. 990

Rather than simply beginning with his arrival in Poland, as *Skąd my tu* suggested communist-
-era publications universally did, here the author’s long-term experiences not only in the
eastern borderlands but also under Soviet rule are presented. Crossing the border into Poland,
he describes how he felt ‘like a weight had fallen from my shoulders. My dreams had been
realised. We are again among our own people after so many years of wandering and
misfortune. I simply could not believe my eyes when I saw farmers working in their own
fields. A well-fed horse in a harness was simply something new for us, we had grown so
unaccustomed to the sight.’ 991 The joy experienced upon entering Poland is expressed
predominantly not in patriotic terms – although there is evident happiness at being among
Poles – but is expressed in reference to agricultural matters. Peasants have their own land;
horses appear strangely well-fed and well-equipped. In his home village, just one horse,
barely alive, remained in 1953 – and not because there had been mechanisation. 992 The
author moved to Wejsuny in Olsztyn voivodeship where his brother had already settled,
taking up homes freed by autochthon departures, as another memoirist from the village,
Hejda Stank noted. 993 His first comments on his new home region, however, take hubristic
form, commenting on the historical justice of Poland acquiring the lands. ‘And so now we,
Poles, own these lands. I felt a delight inside when I considered how not so long ago German
fascists trampled these lands’ but now Germany ‘had to surrender these lands, occupied for
centuries’. 994 This, though, is an exceptional incursion into appropriated state-sanctioned
history as he soon frames Wejsuny in terms of local familiarity and memory of the lost
homeland. ‘The hilly terrain reminded me of our family homeland in Podlasie.’ 995 Rather

988 Ibid., p.378.
989 Ibid., p.379.
990 Ibid., p.380.
991 Ibid., pp.383-4.
992 Ibid., p.378.
995 Ibid., p.386.
than a site of national victory, the village becomes principally a site of family reunion, offering relief from Soviet rule. ‘After so many years apart, we all met again in our free homeland where we could speak freely, express our views, find the kind of work we like, in a word, start life anew so that we feel like fully-valued citizens of our people’s homeland.’

The benefits are defined in relation to Soviet limitations on freedom of speech and labour, and indeed human rights. He opted to work on the local PGR having initially sought to move away to local towns and industry because he compared the PGR to Soviet kolkhoz and sovkhoz. He ultimately returned to the PGR to work was a bricklayer having learned ‘there was more order and better quality of life than in sovkhozes.’ The PGR had ‘rational and wise management of farming, high output and achievements and also developed collective farming quickly.’ Again, it was different to everything he had experienced in the USSR itself. His happiness in the PGR – an emotion that provided the title of the piece but was hardly the centre of the narrative – was because he ‘could finally breath with the free air of Poland after years of suffering and misfortune, feeling calm in my conscience that I was a fully-valued human, and could finally look forward to the future.’

His wife was somewhat less pleased, hoping that they would move to a town where childcare would be more accessible, suggesting that the “we” of the published title is somewhat misleading. His wife’s struggle to adapt is compounded by the fact she can barely read Polish, so his Przyjaciółka subscription for her is wasted. However, they enjoy superior conditions to his elderly parents who ‘remained on their own farm’ and now ‘live in poverty and receive no assistance’.

It seems that it is his experiences of Soviet state- and collective farming, as well as the Polish state’s satisfaction of his ‘longing from foreign lands for the fatherland’, that secures his legitimation of the postwar state and its agricultural policy.

Although GUK was ‘forced to remove’ many episodes, this autobiographical narrative nevertheless presents suffering, deportation, patriotism and criticism of communist authorities, even combined with some elements of national martyrology – all things perceived today as having been taboo in communist-era public memory. This memoir was not the only text included in MPWPL to depict deportation, Soviet occupation or suffering during the period. It has been used here as an example demonstrating how edited and

\[996\text{ Ibid., p.384.}\]
\[997\text{ Ibid., p.384.}\]
\[998\text{ Ibid., p.389.}\]
\[999\text{ Ibid., p.390.}\]
\[1000\text{ Ibid., pp.391-93.}\]
\[1001\text{ Ibid., p.395.}\]
\[1002\text{ Ibid., p.396-7.}\]
censored texts continued to dispute the limits set on public memory under communism. Other notable memoirs in this respect, although limited space here means they cannot be discussed in any detail include memoir P4543 from MPWPL vol. 8. That author recalls escaping ethnic violence in Tarnopol voivodeship before enduring a journey involving robberies, sickness, hunger and death. P4876 from the same volume was queried by the censor for depicting strong emotional attachments to the eastern homeland in Nowogród voivodeship. P709 in MPWPL vol. 8 differs from today’s dominant memory of the Soviet occupation as 1939-41 is a time of development for the author’s home village. There is also depiction in P4697 of Soviet occupation of the Bielsk Podlaski region, which remained in postwar Poland. The author even notes that ‘in our village a collective farm was not established [after 1948]. Perhaps it was because there was a kolkhoz here in Soviet times’. MPWPL vol. 8, which faced censors’ queries in late 1968, was evidently willing to explore the question of Soviet occupation and Polish suffering.

In the second volume, P3264 shows his emotional bonds to Polesie while also expressing fears that surrounded the deportation of Poles in 1941, including ‘that they will murder us, put us in prison and starve us’. Many from his community were taken to the Archangelsk region with his narrative subsequently appearing to match the contributions edited by Gross and Grudzińska Gross in War Through Children’s Eyes. That book, though, was framed in terms of ‘Russian’ rather than ‘Soviet’ crimes, with Russia presented as an ‘inferior civilisation’. The author of P3264 travelled from Archangelsk to Kharkiv then Poland in 1945. P1559 was also deported with his ‘colonist’ family from Tarnopol voivodeship in 1940 to central Asia, before being barred from entry to Iran. They spent time in Kazakhstan before leaving for Poland in April 1945. The entire period of deportation in described in great detail, and again from a perspective matching narratives in War Through Children’s Eyes though not those editors’ anti-Russian framing of the texts. P3264 reveals fellow Poles’ lack of sympathy for Sybiracy – today a badge of honour in national memory – as they settled near Lubań. Other volumes, including MPWPL vol. 6 included repatriant narratives, and the authors’ attachment to local homelands. P3782 describes departing in June 1946 his

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1010 P1559, ‘Ważne było żeby w Polsce’, MPWPL, vol. 2, pp.231-244 (pp.223-240).
home in the Vilnius region. ‘I cried when I took a final look at the thatched roofs, I cried, I cried a lot. It was a shame to leave, although there was a great appeal in leaving, too.’

His emotional bonds coexist with a sense of teenage excitement. He even makes explicit the extent of local IPD which queried official claims, as rather than ‘Stalin is the friend of the young, Poland’s closest ally. We were more convinced by illegal words: Russia is taking away coal, Stalin took our oil, Stalin rules Poland.’ There was tension between what ‘school’ said and what ‘our surroundings’ told us. Ultimately, this author came to identify with ZMP and also his “we” group of Poles from beyond the Bug River.

In contrast to both the falsification/truth or unofficial/official binary that Orla-Bukowska presented and to claims that only aligned memoirs were published, the competition memoirs in fact reveal a variety of experiences and attitudes, including some narratives that would not be out of place in today’s dominant memory. The memoirs showed competing claims, rather than simply reproduce authoritative discourse or what today is imagined as resistance or opposition. Certainly there is much more research that could be done on the memoirs regarding the Soviet Union and eastern Poles. However, it is evident on the basis of brief investigation here that the lands were not completely absented from the communist-era field of public representations of the past. Likewise, the subalternisation of the borderlands’ residents did not mean their wartime and Soviet-era memories were discounted or simply exploited for legitimising official memory and politics. Equally, where the Recovered Territories feature in *MPWPL*, they do not match fully some memoir sociologists’ own totalising models of advance. Chałasiński’s claims, with central concepts of urbanisation, autonomisation, emancipation, nationification and historification is a classic model of modernisation. It seems to reflect very much Eugen Weber’s attitude in *Peasants into Frenchmen*, namely than an internal colonisation of inhabitants of a state is justifiable if it appears to bring progress and improved conditions generally.

However, if this was his desired objective – centred on the creation of a uniform national community – the memoirs show the peasant remained very much alive, with processes of settlement and adaptation clearly disrupting ideal type narratives of social transformation in the initial postwar period. Social practices, meanwhile, showed that the future representative models particularly evident in aspects of Jakubczak’s sociology were unlikely to be fulfilled soon. He believed ‘views and attitudes rare at a given moment can be indicative of mass phenomena in the near

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future. However, such framing narratives did allow more critical and centrifugal memoirs to appear in relation to state-sanctioned memory politics.

As regards the Recovered Territories specifically, some of Jakubczak’s analytical memoir-based sociological research revealed that by the 1970s the Recovered Territories ceased to fulfil the grand narrative role imagined for them as a site of speedier social advance and enhanced modernisation. If there was to be evidence of the full integration of the lands into postwar political, social and economic structures, then it was somewhat paradoxically an indication that the project of modernisation, urbanisation and advance was struggling. Chałasiński’s approach in memoir sociology to the Recovered Territories, meanwhile, focused largely on moulding his leading concepts to a framework of social integration developed by IZ sociologists, albeit by foregrounding the significance of the formation of a national community in the new lands and their role in creating national unity. It becomes evident, however, that most IZ sociology avoided such totalising claims for analysing society around the time the MPWPL memoirs were written and indeed later, preferring instead to explore social processes in progress, with social integration deferred.

The memoir sociology at IZ, to which I now turn, emerges as social history, showing the troubled foundations of postwar Poland as national solidarity seemed distant in the early days, while settlement was far from the smooth narrative depicted by in official history. Equally, works such as Kazimierz Żygulski’s on repatriants, turned to eastern Poles’ memories, revealing more effectively than in-depth exploration of MPWPL memoirs could, the social and historical role of memory of the east under communism.

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Chapter 5: Instytut Zachodni: The Sociology of the Western Territories

This chapter explores sociological studies produced by scholars at Poznań’s Instytut Zachodni which formed a field known as the sociology of the Western Territories. Intensive research on the region developed in the Gomułka period, continuing work begun in pre-stalinist Poland. The first Instytut Zachodni memoir competition, POZO, launched in December 1956, was the first indication of the revival of sociology at Poznań, which – like the memoir movement – had its roots in Znaniecki-inspired humanistic sociology, with Zygmunt Dulczewski having been his student in prewar Poznań. The works were concerned with the longer-term processes of adaptation and integration, as Dulczewski’s model noted in the previous chapter showed. Memoirs provided additional resources for what IZ termed sociography, which crossed disciplinary boundaries between ethnographic or anthropological fieldwork and sociological analysis. Fieldwork was an essential part of this work, with conclusions highlighting the broad variety of experiences and social structures in the Recovered Territories across different communities. Rather than attempt full generalisations across all the new lands, case studies of particular communities noted the variety of factors affecting social processes past and present. Today much of the work would be classed as migration studies or even memory studies, particularly in Żygulski’s case. The flourishing research began to fade in the later 1960s, as official policy gradually shifted towards declaring the Recovered Territories fully-integrated with Poland. This was illustrated in political terms with Willy Brandt’s visit to Warsaw in December 1970, while in institutional terms the closure of TRZZ showed that specific research or political concern for the Recovered Territories was no longer necessary. The end of TRZZ had an impact on IZ’s memoir sociology, as TRZZ sponsored its final memoir competition, meaning that both funding and the impetus for large-scale publication were lost, likewise the opportunity for collaboration across academic memoir sociology institutions. The 1970 competition was an IZ, TRZZ and TPP joint effort.

The focus of my reading of IZ’s work largely concentrates on the 1956-1965 period, when the sociology of the Western Territories was at its peak before the focus became affirming the lands’ full integration into Poland, which meant research was more difficult and also ended the successful collaboration with TRZZ, which popularised the work of IZ, although this caused tensions between the academic and public-popularising expectations placed on the Institute. Here I read the in-depth sociological studies to provide context for the framing of memoir publications, focusing on POZO in the following chapter.
5.1 Instytut Zachodni: Dulczewski

The previous chapter introduced Zygmunt Dulczewski’s basic framework first outlined in 1961, and his principal concepts as adopted in some mainstream memoir movement works. By 1961, Dulczewski was frustrated by shortcomings in the memoir method which ‘employs the economic principle of achieving maximum results through minimal effort.’\(^{1016}\) He turned to fieldwork inspired by American ‘action research’ with a focus on one village,\(^{1017}\) seeking qualitative data offering insight into actual social relations in practice. Dulczewski’s initial research explored Pszczew, in Międzyrzecz district of the Lubusz lands, where there was a small autochthonous population. However, he stressed that autochthonisation could occur in communities comprising only settlers.\(^{1018}\) *Swojskość* or homeliness was to emerge equal to that of long-standing populations, thus autochthons illustrated a ‘sociological function’, namely ‘bearing witness to Poland’s right to the Western Territories and strengthening the perceived homeliness of the lands’ in settlers’ minds and more broadly among Poles perceiving the lands.\(^{1019}\) The sociological focus was localised and everyday aspects of identification, not the nation. ‘Local patriotism’ was the ‘symbol of strong bonds developing with the new territories’ and full autochthonisation culminated in historical knowledge of the local region, ideally centred on the Polish-Slav past. The route to autochthonisation usually began with ‘spontaneous’ or ‘emotional bonds’ generated in the course of everyday life, before the ‘rational bonds’ of historical consciousness developed.\(^{1020}\) This gradual process was typical of IZ sociology’s incremental view of social change which required time and, effectively, passive forgetting, as new emotional bonds developed that coexisted with or supplanted older attachments to family homelands (*strony rodzinne*) located in the eastern borderlands or central Poland. Although Dulczewski indicated how the historically-conscious ideal autochthonised settler could be foregrounded, as an expression of ontological rational bonds, much sociology of the Recovered Territories explored the complex stages of developing everyday bonds, thus ‘social history, i.e. history alive in the memories and narratives of inhabitants and reproduced in easily-accessible documents, in public spaces, on memorials and landmarks’.\(^{1021}\) His focus then is communicative memory as it becomes collective memory, transmitted among a community, or public memory – fixed

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\(^{1016}\) Dulczewski, ‘Wstęp’, *Tworzenie się*, pp.7-12 (p.10).


\(^{1018}\) Dulczewski, *Pamiętniki mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska*, p.12.


\(^{1021}\) Dulczewski, ‘Autochtonizacja’, in *Tworzenie się*, p.29.
in monuments. In a sense, Dulczewski recognised the competition memoirs had become something of a problematic public memory, creating a pioneer narrative construct, which became evident in the follow-up to POZO, focused on the young generation. That generation’s apparent local patriotism was also greeted, for the purposes of the memoir publication, as a success. Ultimately, however, more detailed investigation was sought into actual social practices hence the fieldwork-based approach.

Among the young generation, verbalisations of attachment were deemed evident in references to “my town” or village, with these pronouns’ significance stressed in popularising studies. He finds “My town grew together with me” was ‘a stereotypical phrase’ but it demonstrates ‘the truth about the family homelands of almost all the autobiographers.’ This “truth” is generated through spreading knowledge of pioneer predecessors’ achievements in ‘rebuilding towns and workplaces’ and ‘their dynamic contribution to the Western Territories’ with these memories developing ‘local and regional patriotism’. A generation of new autochthons was forged, partly through processes of public and family memory, which communicated the founding myths of pioneering dedication, becoming a collective memory, fixed in public monuments such as the unitary readings of POZO. However, it is evident that much of this collective memory was an organic development, taking place outside the state-sanctioned ‘collective memory initiatives’.

Writing in 1978, however, Dulczewski revised his model of memory somewhat, suggesting that while the “second generation” were autochthons who experience ‘unification with the whole country’ they expressed ‘not the slightest trace of those romantic attitudes [regarding pioneers - PV].’ The focus, he suggests, are local towns and villages, rather than the region’s broader history. There is recognition that very few achieve the full rational bonds, as everyday practice and emotional bonds become the focus of investigation. If there is ‘unification with the whole country’ then it is in the sense that mnemonic and everyday practices have become similar to the rest of Poland. Consequently, specific pioneer

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1022 Dulczewski, in Młode pokolenie Ziem Zachodnich, pp.7-35 (p.10).
1023 Ibid., p.23.
1024 Wulf Kansteiner notes ‘the abundance of failed collective memory initiatives on the one hand and the few cases of successful collective memory construction on the other.’ Kansteiner, ‘Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies’, History and Theory, 2 (May 2002), 179-197 (p.179).
1026 Ibid., p.13.
1027 Ibid., p.13.
memory was less significant for those born later in the new lands, while the same frustrations and hopes were experienced. There was thus passive forgetting of pioneer memory under communism. Although it featured in the series of publications based on IZ’s 1970 competition where the first-wave settlers were again represented, it lost its sociological and social function to some degree among younger generations.1028

Zenon Romanow’s more recent return to communist-era IZ memoirs overlooks the specificity of the forms of ‘historical memory’ expressed in them. He declares ‘the memoirs published in the 1960s and 1970s strike the reader with the lack of reflection on the history of the towns, villages or the region where the settlers came to live. If there was any historical reflection then it was impoverished, superficial and tainted by the state-building propaganda of the authorities’.1029 As Dulczewski showed, the lack of reflection could be positive as it indicated the stabilisation and normalisation of social relations in the new lands among younger generations of inhabitants. Likewise, Dulczewski showed that the expectation for historical reflection was an elite norm, whereas for ordinary people it was communicative memory and emotional bonds that functioned typically as history-in-action. Romanow’s perspective is perhaps rooted not only in elite-centred norms, but also twenty-first-century models which indicated a boom in cultural, academic and public representations of the territories’ multi-national and multicultural past. Certainly, some memoirs indicate contact with the ‘state-building propaganda’ of the authorities, based in ‘exaggeration of Polish traces’1030 or ‘a simplified, Polonocentric vision of the past’.1031 Jurkowa is a good example of this, although she also illustrated that her everyday passive forgetting of the German past and acquisition of emotional bonds with the new lands were most significant in ensuring her adaptation to the new lands. Dulczewski, meanwhile, showed also the development of a regional, pioneer-centred narrative which showed ordinary people’s role in constructing the postwar social order. I refer to the pioneer period largely in its vernacular or popular understanding as the period of multiple groups’ presence in the new lands, so Poles, Germans and Soviets, and before there was significant stabilisation of state structures. This varied between communities but could be as late as 1947, once large-scale migration and deportation ended, and the PPR’s control grew. Dulczewski’s formal definition of it from

1030 Romanow, p.205.
1031 Ibid., p.217.
1964 declared the pioneer period all settlement occurring before 2 August 1945, when the Potsdam Treaty established which areas would be under Polish administration. This was a period of uncertainty with often ‘improvised’\textsuperscript{1032} settlement, rarely guided by state authorities or proceeding according to plan.

It is evident so far that memoir-based studies, attached to memoir publications from IZ, tended to offer unitary readings of social processes, either completed or destined for completion. In in-depth sociological studies of the Western territories, however, sociologists could present the complexities of social processes, although these studies were also bound to public demands made on academic work. Dulczewski’s 1964 study \textit{Społeczne aspekty migracji} was based on his \textit{habilitation} paper and indicates how IZ sociology was expected to answer West German revisionist claims, as imagined in Poland, to the Recovered Territories. This meant offering a suitable historical narrative, as well as acceptable conclusions, but the evidence presented could be more ambiguous. His historical narrative highlights \textit{Ostflucht}, or the long-term decline in population and economic significance of Germany’s eastern lands which are central to Poland’s economy.\textsuperscript{1033} This outlines the economic legitimacy of Poland’s takeover. In social and human terms, the acquisition is declared just, since the new lands have become ‘private homelands’, equivalent to the German \textit{Heimat}. He uses German claims to a ‘\textit{Recht auf die Heimat}’, a right to a homeland, to argue the same for Poles.\textsuperscript{1034} Competition memoir publications served similar objective, demonstrating the young generation, the central subject of the claims to a homeland, had strong views ‘on West German revisionism’, were conscious of the perceived threat to their ‘family home, town, region’ but in expressing ‘family bonds with the Western Territories’ demonstrated their refusal of ‘extended, plundering German hands reaching for their homes, villages and hometowns.’\textsuperscript{1035} There is a clear allusion to the ‘extended hands’ of the bishops’ reconciliatory message, indicating how IZ’s memoir sociology could be incorporated into international disputes over the lands. Like Dulczewski’s sociology, memoirs could be framed in such a way to provide the evidence required for affirming political objectives.

However, Dulczewski’s studies also provide evidence on the history of settlement, including moments which slipped out of a politically usable narrative of Polish-German relations.

\textsuperscript{1035} Dulczewski, ‘Wstęp’, \textit{Młode pokolenie Ziem Zachodnich}, pp.7-35 (p.20).
While less insightful on the details of Polish-Soviet ‘dual rule’, in print at least, the memoirs show forms of Polish-German interaction and cohabitation during the pioneer period, including ‘a change in social positions and roles’, as Poles made significant use of German labour to the extent that some were unwilling to permit “their” Germans to leave once ‘deportation’ began. One example he draws on concerns a migrant who travelled to Szczecin with a PPR group and established a canteen, making extensive use of German labour.

For Dulczewski, behaviour in the early days signalled evidence of “the disintegration of the cultural personality” in migration conditions, something he drew from ‘the fundamental sociological work on migration’, Znaniecki and Thomas’ *Polish Peasant*. This perspective, potentially troubling if a German revisionist were to read it, also evidently contrasts with the image of pioneer settlers as ‘ready for sacrifice, selfless and not seeking material gain.’ He even suggests some of his own memoir publications were responsible for constructing this memory, indicating the tension between IZ’s popular and academic sociology, as well as the academic and political objectives of research. These ideal pioneers possessed ‘dynamism, energy, zeal, good health and youth’– their male gender is an unspoken assumption. Such pioneers could arrive within organisations but often ‘with the goal of penetrating the terrain for their own private interests.’ Subtly deconstructing the pioneer myth, and notions of state-led settlement, Dulczewski notes the above-mentioned attributes were ‘not always beneficial’, as youth could mean insufficient organisational ability, while some came with intentions resembling spontaneous settlers’, whose actions were not necessarily negative for long-term Polish rule. Contrasting with Curp’s deterministic institutional labels, Dulczewski recognises that someone migrating with, say, PZZ could easily have had no ideals, but simply sought official papers sanctioning migration. ‘Such conditions meant that the term pioneer was sometimes used ironically to signify looters.’ Effectively, any totalising categorisations of settler groups as to their practice or

1037 Ibid., p.58.
1038 Ibid., p.60.
1039 Ibid., p.62.
1040 Ibid., p.67.
1041 Ibid., p.69. He includes *Mój dom nad Odrą* (1961), to which POZO memoirs were incorporated, as well as ‘numerous publications about PPR activists in the Western Territories published in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of the PPR’ on his list of myth-creating memoir publications.’
1042 Dulczewski, *Społeczne aspekty*, p.70.
1043 Ibid., p.70.
character traits are questioned by Dulczewski, as pragmatic material motives subtly come to the fore of his study.

However, Dulczewski’s treatment of repatriants contrasts somewhat with his decentred typology for other settler groups. Eastern Poles’ ‘developed national consciousness and patriotism were the primary motives shaping the decision to migrate to Poland.’ An ‘ethnically homogeneous state’ and ‘purely Polish surroundings’ appealed most. Other IZ studies, explored repatriants’ contingency strategies but Dulczewski believes ‘taking possessions from old homes was equivalent to burning bridges and abandoning forever thoughts of a return.’ Dulczewski’s conclusion, however, notes that motives for migration did not necessarily shape subsequent social processes as he finds stabilisation and adaptation depended upon particular conditions in communities, including ‘the settler’s resourcefulness in adaptation in the new locality.’ While believing that in the end everyone will become ‘native’ (tubylcy) owing to ‘revolutionary transformations in People’s Poland’, his model shows that ultimately different social conceptions of what ‘native’ means emerged, as popular agency over identity and social change remained significant. Reflecting his roots in Znaniecki’s humanistic sociology, Dulczewski showed that change depended upon individual, group, social and political factors intersecting in particular ways in particular communities. He also proved himself of adapting this approach to fit within politically and methodologically acceptable frames.

I will later consider how Dulczewski applied his sociological models to framing POZO, but I now explore other IZ works to provide a broader academic context for the memoir research, beginning with Żygulski’s study of repatriants’ adaptation processes.

5.2 The sociology of the Western Territories: Fieldwork and memoirs

5.2.1 Kazimierz Żygulski

Before developing an academic and political career in People’s Poland – including serving as a non-Party Minister of Culture between 1982 and 1986 – Kazimierz Żygulski (1919-2012) returned to Poland in 1956, having been in a Gulag in Komi Republic following his

1044 Ibid., p.114.
1045 Ibid., p.113.
1046 Ibid., p.114.
1047 Ibid., p.162.
1048 Ibid., p.162.
arrest in 1944 in Lviv (Lwów) for underground activities. Żygulski was a law graduate, but from 1957 was employed at IFiS PAN, becoming professor in 1973. One of Żygulski’s first research projects in postwar Poland involved fieldwork in the Opole and Zielona Góra regions between 1957 and 1959 to explore first- and second-wave repatriants from the Soviet Union. This research resulted in the 1962 book Repatrianci na Ziemiach Zachodnich, which appeared in IZ’s series of sociological studies with a print run of 1200. Żygulski used direct observation, interviews (conducting 455, supplementing 250 with questionnaires), local and regional administration archives including registry office and court documents, plus fifteen memoirs submitted to POZO. His study crossed disciplinary boundaries between sociology, ethnography and history, while today it would be classed among migration studies and memory studies.

My reading concentrates principally on the social function of memories of the eastern borderlands among repatriants. Żygulski’s subject matter was controversial not only because it depicts experiences in the USSR and occupied eastern borderlands, but also because it featured German populations’ removal and autochthonous populations’ often ambivalent attitudes towards the new Polish state. Unsurprisingly, Poznań WUK was cautious and recommended that GUK colleagues review the book and the proposed cuts. Despite reservations over certain sections, the Poznań censor found ‘a highly valuable sociological work’ that is ‘academically accomplished’ and ‘satisfies social demand [zamówienie społeczne] for such publications.’ Despite such ‘demand’ – generated presumably by the dearth of works on repatriants – he stressed the book’s unsuitability for mass readership, hence certain restrictions were deemed politically justified. ‘We are concerned by fragments depicting temporariness in the Western Territories, attachment to property left behind in the East, longing for return, anti-collectivisation sentiment, matters related to the Roman Catholic Church, religious practice among repatriants and fragments with anti-Soviet overtones.’ These concerns brought not necessarily full effacement of these themes, but redrafting of sections ‘discussing too broadly questions of repatriants’ attachment to farms left in the East, disgruntlement with current farms in the Western Territories and the desire

1049 [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,11229151,Kazimierz_Zygulski_nie_zyje.html] [accessed 24 February 2012].
1051 Żygulski, Repatrianci, p.9-10.
1052 AP Poznań/WUKPPIW/243, Recenzje książek 1962, pp. 11-14 (p. 14). The Poznań censor was Tadeusz Szwejkowski.
1053 AP Poznań/WUKPPIW/243, p.12.
to return which, in the context of a publication, would have a politically harmful resonance.\textsuperscript{1055} The publication shows ‘anti-Soviet’ statements were most muted, although attachment to the east and religion remains evident.\textsuperscript{1056} The publication also proved politically useful, however, as it ‘knocked down German revanchists’ claims to our Piast lands using sociological argument’ and revealing Polish settlement’s irreversibility.\textsuperscript{1057} Expressions of temporariness could thus undermine this value, although temporariness remains evident in the volume as it is used to underscore the first-wave repatriants’ adaptation to their new surroundings as they become guides for second-wave arrivals. This process could only be demonstrated by depicting attitudes, emotions and practical difficulties which had been overcome.

Rather than a historical monograph on repatriation, Żygulski considers the book’s goal to be ‘to present what are, in the author’s opinion, the general characteristics of the collectivities [zbiorowości] studied.’\textsuperscript{1058} The generalisations on experiences of adaptation, integration and ‘homeland’ (ojczyzna) apply only to the localities researched.\textsuperscript{1059} Żygulski’s use of ‘adaptation’ draws on Nowakowski’s definition of it as involving “growing interrelations between various groups, equalising cultural models and the processes leading to the formation of a single community.”\textsuperscript{1060} Żygulski extends the definition to include the initial formation of a home, which involves ‘adapting to the landscape and equipment in the new territories, particularly technical-agricultural devices which new arrivals find in situ and had not encountered previously in their everyday lives.’\textsuperscript{1061} Żygulski thus considers Nowakowski’s definition of community-based processes to be ‘integration’, while those associated with the home and landscape are ‘adaptation’.\textsuperscript{1062} Żygulski’s third stage is development of a sense that new surroundings are a homeland (ojczyzna) understood as a local then later regional site producing and storing emotional bonds.

A local homeland, usually connected to childhood and adolescence – the land of childhood years – can only be replaced by another local homeland with difficulty; the same applies to a regional homeland. Experience shows, however, that a long-

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item AP Poznań/WUKP\Pi W/243, p.13.
\item Indeed, an A. Sobkowiak who commented on Szwejkowski’s review, suggests that the original censor had been excessive in cutting references to religion and some cuts could be reinstated. AP Poznań/WUKP\Pi W/243, p.14.
\item AP Poznań/WUKP\Pi W/243, p.14.
\item Żygulski, p. 8.
\item See p. 67, for example, for one of numerous occasions where he makes claims about the ‘typicality’ of a statement, without reference to a specific locality and instead refers to the Recovered Territories more broadly.
\item Stefan Nowakowski, Adapta\c cj\a ludno\c si na \c Sil\a\c sku Opolskim (1957), p. 3. Cited in: Żygulski, p.23.
\item Żygulski, p.23.
\item Ibid., p.24.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
term stay, emotional bonds, personal experiences, memories, graves of loved ones at a local cemetery, all lead to the acquisition of a new bond, recognition of the new place as a local homeland and weakening the sense of connection with the original one.1063

His research shows that parallel homelands are possible, particularly among older generations. If there is ‘replacement’ of homelands, then largely it is due to processes of passive forgetting, although some memoirs indicate deliberate personal efforts to suppress memories.1064 A key factor is Żygiuls’ki’s model is quite evidently time, with the development of homeland bonds, whether local or regional, taking place through private-sphere, family and community-level events with relatively little direct involvement of external institutions. Dulczewski’s framework ended with ‘autochthonisation’, a similar concept to ‘homeland’, although Żygiuls’ki’s model does not require ‘rational bonds’, based in historical knowledge or public narratives on the past. It is noticeable in Żygiuls’ki’s study that the nation is absent from the ‘homeland’ concept as applied to the Recovered Territories, although in his model the national homeland featured within repatriants’ decisions over whether to move westwards. With borders shifted, eastern Poles faced a dilemma: to choose the regional or local homeland and remain as a minority within another community, or to follow the state [iść za państwem] which incorporated the fundamental mass of the nation and moved its borders westwards, reclaiming the historical lands on the Oder and Nysa.

When we recreate today, on the basis of memoirs, statements and interviews, the motives which at the time convinced huge masses of people to repatriate, we must conclude that it was a victory of a peculiar interpretation of national patriotism over local and regional patriotism. “I departed because I wanted to be in Poland, while the territories where I was born and raised went to the USSR”, this is a typical statement of a repatriant from 1945-48.1065

Żygiuls’ki’s language is cautious, as it indicates that ‘national patriotism’ was not of the typical variety, but based in a peculiar or specific interpretation shaped by particular conditions. Although the above passage appears to suggest a choice, Żygiuls’ki effectively reveals the structural coercion whereby eastern Poles were effectively pushed to leave. As his model of adaptation and integration for the new territories shows, for ordinary people

1063 Ibid., p.51.
1064 See: Iwanowski, discussed below.
1065 Żygiuls’ki, p.54.
local and regional homelands were more significant for everyday practice. This remained the case in the Recovered Territories, hence the significance of regional identities, as Kenney noted, in Wroclaw. Żygulski also realises intra-group relations were more complex, as regional attachments remained in the new lands, meaning that – contrary to Curp – ‘national solidarity’ and common identity could not simply compensate lost homelands and bring quick integration. ‘Following the state’ was often a choice of a lesser evil, particularly where during wartime ethnic or national tensions had destroyed community relations, and the sense of homesickness, in local or regional homelands. Poland may have been a pull factor, but certainly being a Soviet citizen – as Żygulski highlights – would push Poles towards the new lands. The fact the Oder-Nysa lands had once been Polish is effectively irrelevant in making the choice to leave in these peculiar conditions. Żygulski argues that attachment grew in the new lands not to the entire region with its national and political symbolism, but to local and regional sites over which settlers felt ‘a sense of ownership’.¹⁰⁶⁶ These could include rebuilt areas, workplaces, revived landscapes or private farms. It was important for settlers to be able to exert a sense of agency over the new territories, generating initial bonds through transformative actions. The term ‘sense of ownership’ may signal that stalinist-era agricultural policy disrupted settlers’ stabilisation and adaptation processes.

While experiences from that era may have evoked the ‘anti-collectivisation’ sentiment which concerned the censor, Żygulski notes how news of Soviet collectivisation of old homelands had a positive effect on repatriants’ adaptation in the Recovered Territories. Visits were permitted from 1955, as the post-stalinist thaw took hold, and seeing the transformed landscape disrupted idealised images of the eastern homeland for some. Likewise, second-wave repatriants brought similar news to those who had visited the USSR. ‘Collectivisation changed completely the cultural landscape, villages were inhabited by different collectivities speaking a different language’.¹⁰⁶⁷ Anything that had made the space homely – kinship bonds, private farms, multiculturalism – had been altered. Contrary to studies such as Ewa Thomson’s and Orla-Bukowska’s, discussed in the second chapter here, which declared the eastern borderlands physically and often even mentally out-of-bounds, Żygulski shows the visits were possible, contacts remained and memory of the old homelands were maintained and indeed influenced actively long-term, incremental adaptation processes, which took different forms in particular Recovered Territories localities depending on settlers’ origins and local conditions.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid., p.56.
¹⁰⁶⁷ Ibid., p.57.
One case study explored the village of N. in the Opole region where repatriants, all from one village seven kilometres from Lviv, formed two-thirds of the population. Each repatriant family had relatives remaining in the old village and 90% maintained contact. The repatriants there, Żygulski found, ‘talk a lot and willingly about their old village. For twelve years they have maintained lively correspondence, sending and receiving letters and photographs.’ The settlers travelled eastwards in the thaw, not only for emotional reasons, but also to trade informally. Instead of the visits making the eastern homeland alien, however, a strengthened ‘emotional bond with the family village, landscape and farms emerged. The repatriants are bonded to them by memories, thousands of them from childhood, youth and sometimes even adulthood.’ This was the case principally for the older generation who ‘see in the past nothing but golden, happy days in a friendly, fertile country.’ These idealised memories are revived in the course of everyday exchanges among that generation, while the middle generation – whose youth and early adulthood coincided with wartime – developed more critical, conflicted and largely nostalgia-free memory of the eastern homeland. Żygulski finds that mass settlement from the east ensured existing social bonds were reproduced, thus N. repatriants retained strong memories of attachment to the eastern homeland. He argues that although ‘a familiar collectivity’ granted ‘basic certainty, material help and moral support’, it also ‘facilitated conservative attitudes towards farming methods and technology, maintain old models which were unsuited to the new conditions and harmed relations with other regional groups.’ The established bonds produced ‘group solidarity’ which aided stabilisation but not adaptation and integration with other groups, with tensions most evident with autochthons as the repatriants spoke ‘a Lwów dialect very distant from Silesian.’

However, the two groups bonded – most certainly to the censor’s chagrin – through Roman Catholic faith, with only three non-Catholic Silesian families in N. ‘The repatriants see in the Silesians’ Catholicism a proof of their bond with Poland, often noting that they are not Germans “because they go to church”.’ Although Catholicism might mean repatriants consider the autochthonous population less alien, religious rites proved divisive in practice as each group sought to maintain its regional customs. Nevertheless, it is evident that Roman

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1068 Ibid., p.77.
1069 Ibid., p.89.
1070 Ibid., p.89.
1071 Ibid., p.90.
1072 Ibid., p.83.
1073 Ibid., p.102.
1074 Ibid., p.108.
Catholicism provided the initial inspiration towards social integration in N. which in turn enabled greater adaptation to local conditions, showing that the adaptation-integration-nation framework was not linear. After several years, economically-active repatriants began adopting the Silesians’ timing for planting wheat, rather than maintaining the unsuitable eastern timetable. They also began shifting to crops more suited to local conditions, using new potato planting methods and also learned to use fertilisers and, for repatriants at least, advanced machinery. Adaptation was quicker and more widespread among younger generations, particularly schoolchildren, who even acquired some of the local dialect and this encouraged integration among the parents’ generation, too.

Schools are crucial in Żygulski’s model of integration because they mixed regional groups, but they also disrupted adaptation as they encouraged aspirations to escape villages for towns. ‘Yet to lay roots in Silesian villages, young repatriants are already thinking of towns’, with Opole and Wrocław the most popular destinations for gaining professional qualifications and work. ‘Their ageing parents, seeing no successors for their farms, become discouraged and this makes the older generation’s acclimatisation to new conditions even more difficult.’

Schools aid community integration, yet by promoting sanctioned models of urban-centred advance, disrupt older generations’ adaptation, as well as the rural economy. Repatrianci thus offers significant insight into the paradoxes and tensions inherent to actual experiences of social change, absent from progress grand narratives.

In the case study of X. in the Zielona Góra (Lubusz) region, the village population was significantly more mixed as regards regional origins. 60% were repatriants, split between settlers from Galicia and Vilnius region, while 40% were settlers from the Kielce area and the nearby Poznań region. This diversity meant spontaneous social integration, as the younger generation entered willingly into regionally-mixed marriages, while Poznań settlers’ farming methods were adopted by many families after an initial period of resistance. In S., meanwhile, located on the Polish-East German border, the population comprised a handful of military settlers and their families, with the majority repatriants from Tarnopol and Vilnius regions. The respective Ukrainian- and Belarusian-speaking groups remained significantly conflicted. The first mixed marriage was not until 1949 but even this celebration was largely boycotted. However, children contributed notably to social integration.

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1075 Ibid., pp.97-98.
1076 Ibid., p.106.
1077 Ibid., p.99.
1078 Ibid., p.100.
1079 Ibid., pp.113-114.
1080 Ibid., p.121.
integration, most evidently by adopting Polish as their first language.\textsuperscript{1081} ‘Repatriants’ clearly cannot be homogenised into a single category for sociological purposes. Attempted collectivisation, meanwhile, had a paradoxical effect, as it damaged the agricultural economy but ‘cemented the village into a single collectivity which felt threatened.’\textsuperscript{1082} Rather than accept Curp’s ‘national solidarity’ theory, this episode could indicate a case of being ‘condemned to community’,\textsuperscript{1083} to use Siekierski’s term. The threat was perceived as particularly affecting peasants, thus local and possibly class solidarity were likely to emerge before national solidarity, especially since urban areas were perceived as economically and politically privileged.

Economic adaptation improved after 1956 as private agriculture revived, with increasing numbers of older repatriants convinced their stay would be permanent. S. villagers retained contact with eastern homelands, with some villagers visiting and/or receiving guests from the USSR. Here, exchanges did convince repatriants of the limited likelihood of return, recognising ‘the old places had changed; the collectivities living there were alien.’\textsuperscript{1084} The arrival of second-wave repatriants also had ‘a positive impact on ending adaptation processes among the old wave.’\textsuperscript{1085} Memory ceased to provide hope of a return, as the new repatriants were physical proof of the loss of Polish communities in the east. Meanwhile, serving as guides for the new arrivals, the first-wave repatriants could reflect upon changes in themselves, including the extent of new knowledge and practices they had acquired.

\textit{Repatrianci} is exceptional, and not only for communist-era scholarship, as it comments on and investigates the social function of memory under communism, and does so using the controversial case of repatriants. It outlines the various means for maintaining actual contact and emotional bonds with eastern homelands. It shows that the family and also interanimating exchanges in local communities reproduced recollection, while these same sites of recollection and means of contact aided forgetting or replacement of idealised images of the east, particularly among the middle generation, while resistance among older repatriants may have been stronger. Indeed, Żygulski’s fieldwork suggests permitting encounters with the eastern borderlands would, in most cases, have disrupted nostalgic attachment and thus aided adaptation to new communities with the will to and hope of return weakened. Żygulski’s book also reveals something quite surprising, from today’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1081}Ibid., p.120.
\item \textsuperscript{1082}Ibid., p.121.
\item \textsuperscript{1083}Siekierski, \textit{Etos}, p.98.
\item \textsuperscript{1084}Żygulski, p.122.
\item \textsuperscript{1085}Ibid., p.210.
\end{itemize}
perspective, regarding repatriants, their relations to public and private memory of the eastern borderlands, and the formation of a communist-era communicative and collective repatriant memory. ‘Contact with repatriants living outside N., particularly in Silesian cities, Opole and Wroclaw, strengthen memories. The press in those cities, particularly Wroclaw, often includes recollections concerning Lwów and the surrounding area, and the repatriants are very sensitive to such matters. Meeting an intelligentsia-repatriant, possessing a certain degree of authority in eyes of the inhabitants of N., strengthens and inspires recollections.’

Like villagers from S., older N. repatriants travel to the Recovered Territories’ larger cities to meet people from their home regions, with whom they not only share but also seem to construct collective memories and indeed a regional identity in exile. It is perhaps surprising that the communist-era press played such an important role in constructing this collective memory and identity. It also seems that Żygulski here reflects upon his own role identity as a Lwów-native and researcher, meaning that subjects of his study, particularly in N., developed a bond with him and felt that not only his experience but also his class status meant that their own memories had achieved a degree of recognition. Żygulski is not appropriating the right to remember as a scholar, but is noting how subaltern memories required authoritative mediation in order to become part of the field of public representations.

It seems, however, that regardless of the older generation forming a collective identity, the bonds to the eastern homelands weakened over generations, and emotional bonds ‘almost disappear among the youngest.’ Of course, each community, indeed each family, was an individual case. However, the case studies show that in N., for example, the younger generations’ lost connections to relatives both in the Recovered Territories and in the eastern borderlands by not speaking Ukrainian. It could be argued that parents and grandparents failed to maintain something resembling a diasporic memory, or younger generations were simply not interested in the community of memory that the older generations formed, particularly as their own emotional bonds and significant life events were attached to the Recovered Territories. Today’s eastern borderlands memory might therefore be something of a postmemory construct, developed by the middle and younger generations who might frame their forgetting as forced, but perhaps in fact underwent processes of passive

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1086 Ibid., p.91.
1087 Ibid., p.110.
1088 Ibid., p.92.
forgetting, losing or abandoning connections to old homelands as new emotional bonds supplanted old bonds.

Żygulski’s study was also innovative in its approach to competition memoirs, reading them as mnemonic constructs reflecting, to some degree, private-sphere recollection and public narratives’ intersection. Of course, popular autobiographies show individuals were prepared to communicate to potentially public memoir competitions their private-sphere memories. Żygulski only used them as supplementary sources, although he was interested in them as sources showing ‘the history of postwar settlement in the form that it has been remembered and how this experience is transmitted to the younger generation as a narrative of the arrival of forefather pioneers to their new homes.’ Memoirs are effectively sources on mnemohistory, to use Jan Assmann’s term, and some of the content of communicative memory. Whether Żygulski intentionally suggested migration narratives were male-centric, stories of ‘forefather-pioneers’, cannot be established, although Dulczewski did indicate how public pioneer narratives were male-dominated.

Publishing and censorship conditions, as well as academic conventions, dictated that Żygulski should declare his case-study-based approach incapable of providing generalisations. However, this fragmentation of the Recovered Territories, highlighting communities’ specific mnemonic practices and also adaptation and integration processes, could in itself provide the basis for a generalisation which recognises that there can be no single model for analysing repatriants or the Recovered Territories as incremental, long-term changes took specific forms depending on local conditions and individual attitudes, with these shaped by memory and experience. What is evident in all repatriant communities, however, is that memories of eastern homelands were maintained.

5.2.2 Bożenna Chmielewska

Other studies in the sociology of the Western Territories were perhaps more explicit in recognising local specificities, including individual attitudes, shaping social change, a fact which generated tensions with grand narratives of Party-state-led progress. Żygulski’s colleague Bożenna Chmielewska was recruited to IZ’s new Sociology Section together with Andrzej Kwilecki. The Section was linked with Chałasiński through PAN’s Centre for the

1090 Żygulski, p.72.
History and Sociology of Culture with his influence on Chmielewska’s work evident. Here I concentrate on her 1965 study *Społeczne przeobrażenia środowisk wiejskich na Ziemiach Zachodnich* owing to its rural focus. IZ head Władysław Markiewicz provided her study’s foreword, framing it as an anniversary publication marking twenty years of the Recovered Territories’ ‘return’ to Poland. However, he considered such moments times to reflect critically upon ‘claims by politicians, social activists, columnists and journalists’, as these tend to become ‘common opinion’. Markiewicz’s stance insists academic research should be differentiated from propaganda work, perhaps indicating tensions IZ experienced in balancing popularising and research roles, particularly during the intensive period of various 20th anniversaries and the Polish Millennium. Usually, he finds, academic research is expected to provide ‘a sceptical attitude’ to common opinion and he stresses that Chmielewska’s work is just that, ‘avoiding commonplace sentiments’ in her ‘analysis of adaptation and social integration in economic and cultural spheres.’ While highlighting the Recovered Territories’ political instrumentalisation, Markiewicz stakes a position for IZ as developing in-depth research, regardless of problems uncovered and the demands of ‘common opinion’.

Chmielewska’s work uses field research conducted in various Recovered Territories villages in 1960/61 involving participant observation followed by interviews with 267 individuals. The five Lubusz area villages she studies are differentiated by the regional make-up of settlers, the level of work outside agriculture, access to urban areas and infrastructure, and distance to prewar borders. In each village, more than one variable alters, meaning any generalisations are tentative. Competition memoirs also provide supplementary evidence to her fieldwork, and generally confirm her findings. Her surveys across the five villages found the main reason for choosing a locality was the presence of friends and family, with children and women subordinated to their fathers’ or husbands’ choice (with the exception of one man). Few settlers were directed by local authorities or employers to a particular place, while access to transport or towns was the least common motivation. The populations of rural Lubusz lands appear largely a consequence of spontaneous settlement, i.e. not state-led, as

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new arrivals often made rational choices, heading where existing bonds could be re-formed. Repatriants, too, conducted reconnaissance from where transport left them, signalling spontaneous settlement.

Chmielewska stresses communities’ structural diversity, citing Kosiński’s research which found that in 1950 only 21 of 116 Recovered Territories districts had ‘fairly uniform’ migrant populations, i.e. with settlers from a single region. She also differentiates particular settler groups, noting, for example, that it is methodologically problematic to suggest all repatriants possess uniform characteristics, since ‘territories ceded to the USSR’ presented significant differences between, say, Polesie and Podole Poles, while some repatriants experienced extended periods deep inside the USSR. These factors influenced integration and adaptation processes differently in each community. Even the 59/116 districts with a dominant group could prove diversified, as Żygulski’s example of Belarusian and Ukrainian-speakers’ tensions showed.

Chmielewska’s study also explores three primary phases of long-term settlement, but provides her own conceptual framework: stabilisation, adaptation and integration. She defines stabilisation as a developing an individual feeling of attachment to a place, a willingness to stay and ceasing disorganised abandonment of localities while increasing levels of cultivated farmland. Adaptation is becoming accustomed to new surroundings, transforming them by altering them according to individual needs, something particularly evident in rural areas. The social and cultural integration of ‘new arrivals’ requires acceptance of other groups and ‘cultural homogenisation’ (‘upodobnienie się kulturowe.’) She suggests this could be more evident in villages than urban areas since the smaller number of inhabitants forces interaction between different groups. Her three-stage model adds an earlier phase to Żygulski and Dulczewski’s models, with stabilisation particularly important for rural communities in the Recovered Territories while spontaneous migration remained possible or while migrants felt no hope or expectation of long-term settlement. She is less concerned with the question of ‘homeland’ either as an object of national or regional and local patriotism. The focus remains on socio-economic practice and social relations which exist in the present and in material conditions, while any questions of ‘homeland’ could be classed under ‘integration’. Perhaps this methodological aspect is indicative of its departure

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1099 Ibid., p.13.
1101 Ibid., p.18.
1102 Ibid., p.19.
1103 Ibid., p.20.
from popularising-propagandistic demands? The conclusion to the processes outlined in Chmielewska’s framework was ‘formation of new local communities’ with homogeneous socio-economic and cultural practices. Whether these were replicated across the nation or indeed the region is of no concern to Chmielewska, thus contrasting Chalasiński’s nation-centred sociology.

Chmielewska’s interviews with settlers included repatriants willing to discuss ‘the situation preceding departure from family homelands.’ Even people from Stanisławów voivodeship who escaped murderous ethnic violence revealed feelings of temporariness and convictions that they would return ‘to their homes’. Most families deliberately left behind relatives, thus hedging their bets. This example indicates the value of her model’s ‘stabilisation’ phase, which passed – to use Zaremba’s term – once ‘the spectres of temporariness’ faded. The stabilisation period could indeed overlap with adaptation, as repatriants developed their new farms in case they remained. As well as mediating repatriant memories for entry into the published sphere, contrasting with today’s claims of total suppression, Chmielewska’s work had also left an archive of primary research, including transcripts, stored in uncatalogued IS UAM archives.

The published study, meanwhile, reveals alongside temporariness, nostalgia for homelands in the east – themes Żygulski’s censor found questionable. One woman who arrived in Łęgowo from Stanisławów voivodeship in 1956 joined her husband after they consciously chose to hedge their bets. “We’d just finished building our house, so it was a shame to leave the farm behind.” Her husband was convinced “things wouldn’t last long like this”, so she was to tend to the family farm and spent twelve years raising their children alone before deciding “we had to go to Poland. My man won’t come here anyway, and things were no longer ours [wszystko już nie nasze] anyway.” Her experience suggests she witnessed first-hand the process of her local homeland becoming alien, meaning that the peculiar mode of patriotism noted by Żygulski took hold. Where Dulczewski, meanwhile, saw migration as burning bridges, the IZ fieldwork-based studies show how bridges were deliberately maintained and families could be torn by local patriotism and emotional bonds to the family home, the site of investment of capital and labour.

Chmielewska argues that if there were cases where repatriants departed fully convinced of

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1104 Ibid., p.251.
1105 Ibid., pp.72-74.
1106 See IS UAM folder: B. Chmielewska, Materiały z badań socjologicznych we wsi Łęgowo, pow. Sulechowski, woj. ZG. This archive was not, at the time of research there in June 2010, fully catalogued thus her materials, which included transcripts of interviews, statistical data and analysis, were on shelves among other documents based on field work and Master’s research. Owing to time constraints examining fully Chmielewska’s materials was not possible.
1107 Chmielewska, Społeczne przeobrażenia, p.75.
their permanent exile, then these were more likely among Poles from the Vilnius area where ethnic violence was less frequent and there was thus greater ‘voluntariness’ and ‘an element of patriotism’ to their decisions.\textsuperscript{1108} As she reveals later into her study, ‘they left because of the political situation which emerged after the border treaties were signed changing Poland’s eastern borders.’\textsuperscript{1109} The voluntariness of departure emerges in fact as another push factor.

The arrangement by the couple from Stanisławów voivodeship in Galicia was somewhat exceptional, with spouses living apart rather than more distant family members maintaining connections across newly-defined borders. Arriving in Łęgowo, she learned her husband had spent money earned by trading in the new lands on “women and booze.”\textsuperscript{1110} This narrative emerged from Chmielewska’s interest in why inhabitants live where they do. Other respondents simply chose their village because it was the first satisfactory place encountered. A military settler, who had been in Berlin, settled Głuchów because “it was pointless returning eastwards” and the farm he claimed was there superior to his wife’s family’s farm in Wrocław voivodeship.\textsuperscript{1111} It seems he had little reason to settle in Głuchów beyond perceived improved economic opportunities. In Łęgowo, settlers arrived from the same village in Stanisławów voivodeship and that village shows more evidence of maintaining memories of home. One man recalls how he misses the river and skiing and how “everyone stuck together more.” There appear to be integration problems in the village, as in Głuchów where one man feels “everyone lives for themselves, there is no community like in Wasylkowice.” There numerous cultural groups were active.\textsuperscript{1112} Since Chmielewska suggested such narratives were indicative of idealisation of the past, she seems to have reduced the danger of censors cutting these memories which reveal problems with integration as well as with developing rural cultural life in postwar Poland.

Rather than declare repatriants a homogeneous group characterised by backwardness which maintained attachments to old homelands, she differentiates the group by regional origins and generation, while stressing the multiplicity of local social, economic and cultural factors in the Recovered Territories affecting stabilisation, adaptation and integration. Often infrastructural factors outside villagers’ control, such as access to electricity, transport, fertilisers, land or education proved more important than regional origins. Administrative failings are also considered factors compounding problems in communities’ stabilisation and

\textsuperscript{1108} Ibid., p.77.
\textsuperscript{1109} Ibid., p.92.
\textsuperscript{1110} Ibid., p.75.
\textsuperscript{1111} Ibid., pp.76-77.
\textsuperscript{1112} Ibid., p.96.
adaptation processes. In Łęgowo low standards of living resulted from administrative problems in agriculture ensuring repatriants had little chance of developing improved farming methods. Any settler, even one possessing advanced agricultural techniques, would struggle to withstand administrative pressures to collectivise, which again proves a destabilising factor troubling adaptation. In some villages, autochthons recall, repatriants did refuse to use more advanced machinery, at least initially. Elsewhere, though, GOM confiscated machinery. In this academic study, then, even at the time of twentieth-anniversary celebrations, it was possible to stress earlier administrative failings under stalinism and in the initial postwar period. These destabilising factors could reinforce uncertainty and thus longing to return. In Łęgowo, ‘land allocation’ occurred only in 1949, meaning the local authorities themselves gave an impression of temporary arrangements. Prior to this only an alcohol-based barter economy existed involving “the military”. Settlers provided moonshine, while soldiers offered goods. Aside from implying their presence by noting failings and briefly mentioning GOM, social organisations and political parties are largely absent from Chmielewska’s depiction of rural life. Her thematic approach leaves them to the book’s final five pages, where they receive cursory attention. It was unlikely that interviewees avoided the subject outright, but most likely had few good things to report. Consequently, an image emerges reflecting the censor’s reading of MMŻ, where everyday life proceeded separately from local level Party-state organisations, or was negotiated around difficulties posed.

Like the other sociological studies considered here, Chmielewska’s book provides useful insight for assessing what the memoir archive contained, so whether it reflected what fieldwork found in selected communities representing a cross-section of Recovered Territories society and whether memoir publications and sociological works faced similar restrictions on content. The studies explored here also provide additional information on social processes and attitudes using in-depth interviews and anthropological-type approaches, which the memoir method could not evoke given researchers’ distanced role.

1113 Ibid., p.84.
1114 Ibid., pp.144-45.
1115 Ibid., pp.149-50.
1116 A more in-depth comparison of Głuchowo and Łęgowo villages is published in another volume. Here conclusions are more specifically drawn regarding economic conditions, for example, the distance to transport influencing mass departures from Głuchowo in the post-October period, although it also therefore becomes a site for new repatriants arriving in the second wave. What neither Żygulski nor Chmielewska reveal is whether there was consequently a repetition of the same problems in such relatively isolated villages as a result of the lack of economic development as there was during the first wave. (Bożenna Chmielewska, ‘Kształtowanie się struktury społeczno-demograficznej na wsi na ZZ w latach 1945-1959 na przykładzie wsi Łęgowo i Głuchowo’, in Tworzenie się, Dulczewski, ed. pp. 68-129 (pp.109-10).
Further pioneering research in the sociology of the Western Territories which the memoir method alone could not replicate was Andrzej Kwilecki’s study of the Lemko community.

5.2.3 Andrzej Kwilecki

The Lemko population was dispersed around the new territories by “Akcja W” or Wisła, which sought to remove populations classed as Ukrainians from Poland or at least from their traditional local homelands in south-eastern Poland, with deportations most intense in mid-1947. A significant essay based on the research appeared in a 1961 compilation edited by Dulczewski, which featured extracts of the major sociological (sociographical) works on the Recovered Territories produced at IZ to that point. In 1964, however, a book version of Kwilecki’s study was banned by censors, apparently on Ministry of Internal Affairs orders. KC PZPR documents state the reason for the ban was that ‘publishing the book could hamper the integration process of Lemkos in their current localities.’ The argument suggests that even a fairly minor academic publication, in terms of print run, could trigger ethnic tensions. This nominally humanitarian argument certainly hides concerns over the ethics of the early postwar authorities’ ethnic cleansing. The book was eventually published in 1974, in a print run of fewer than 1000.

Appearing in a compilation with a print run of 1300, Kwilecki’s 1961 essay explored the stabilisation, adaptation and integration of this rather exceptional ethnic group. He outlines the temporariness affecting all settler groups, noting that ‘stabilisation need not necessarily accompany adaptation or integration processes.’ His study shows that the main processes outlined in IZ sociological research could occur in different sequences and stages could be omitted. Indeed, it was quite possible to become part of a stable population while longing for a return to a homeland, with this involving resisting adaptation and integration. This was a consequence of ‘forced resettlement’ which ‘had a generally negative influence on the attitudes of groups of those resettled and their attitude to the new lands, with this weakening

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1118 The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) ‘opposed the publication of Dr Kwilecki’s study, therefore the Institute’s directorate agreed to purchase from the author his manuscript in order to offer at least part compensation.’ AP Poznań/Zespół POP – Instytut Zachodni/875, Protokół z zebrania POP PZPR przy IZ z dnia 20 XII 1965 r., p.2.
1120 Andrzej Kwilecki, Łemkowie: zagadnienia migracji i asymilacji (Warsaw: PWN, 1974).
1122 Kwilecki, Łemkowie, p.240.
their social and economic activities. No communist-era study exploring repatriants framed their experience explicitly as ‘forced resettlement’ but similar psycho-social consequences were evident in some cases. The Lekmos’ situation was more complex as they remained under the direct jurisdiction of the state that carried out forced resettlement and continued to discriminate the group by, for example, restricting its freedom to travel. This led to a situation where social tensions appeared to have state sanction as other groups considered Lemkos ‘a dangerous social element.’ Kwilecki notes the younger generation demonstrated some integrative tendencies, while among the older generations referred to their original villages as home, while their bonds weakened – as repatriants’ did – when learning of changes to their family homelands. Kwilecki includes a token claim that ‘Lemkos encountered significant economic and cultural advance’ as he compares old and new villages. While this appears insensitive, particularly as regards cultural advance having lost a local homeland, Kwilecki does not deem this a justification as he concentrates on the group’s victim status and difficulties in adapting to everyday life.

Exploring Dulczewski, Chmielewska, Kwilecki and Żygulski’s work shows the emergence of a group of scholars at IZ employing similar methods to produce sociographic (sociological-ethnographic) studies of postmigration societies’ experiences of social change, extending an initial phase of postwar fieldwork by Nowakowski and others. These studies read today as social histories outlining the complex processes accompanying settlement of the Recovered Territories and the formation of functioning society there, with the stress on differentiation according to specific individual, group and socio-economic factors. These studies also prove useful for contextualising memoir-based studies produced at the same centre.

Kwilecki produced one of the earliest studies using the POZO materials, focusing on teachers’ memoirs. Dulczewski believed schoolteachers’ memoirs ‘comprise the most valuable materials’ among the entries owing to teachers’ contact with broad sections of society across all generations. ‘Many teachers are critical observers, noting errors and harm done in cultural politics, in politicising education, in relations between authorities and

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1124 Ibid, p.263.
1126 Ibid, p.281.
1127 Andrzej Kwilecki, Rola społeczna nauczyciela na Ziemiach Zachodnich w świetle pamiętników nauczycieli-osadników (Poznań: IZ, 1960). The book had a print run of 5000, was submitted for censorship on 22 January 1960 and was ready in March 1960.
autochthons. He argues memoirs can trace longer-term social change, ‘recreating the lives and difficulties of settlers, recognising and perceiving the changes in their opinions, attitudes and aspirations.’ I believe that this quality depends on the type of narrative submitted, with diaries often more insightful in this respect than typical competition entries written as narratives leading from initial difficulty to relative success. Methodologically Kwilecki’s own attempts at generalising social processes regarding settlement on the basis of just 27 memoirs could be problematic. Kwilecki recognises that competition participants ‘largely represent the pioneering portion of teachers, the most ideologically and socially sophisticated part’. This is an inherent imbalance of the memoir archive, as narratives foreground those who appear dedicated to the ideal model of settlement, rather than the everyday aspects. So, teachers not fitting the dedicated pioneer model were not omitted, but simply failed to enter the competition.

Kwilecki recognises that such pioneer narratives might be constructed subsequently as ‘conscious or unconscious selection of memories, exaggeration of particular facts and omitting others’ occurs. Still his focus remains promoting teachers’ pioneering achievements during the ‘initial uncertainty and chaos’ when they formed ‘dynamic bonds’ with other early settlers when ‘society was able to perceive values common to all groups and to undertake and fulfil collective tasks.’ In this pioneer period, to use Dulczewski’s definition, the primary concern was – for pioneers – to lay foundations for future mass settlement, thus there was little recognition of regional or other divides initially. Kwilecki attributes this to patriotism, although he admits ‘ideological and patriotic urges do not exhaust the full range of motives influencing settler-teachers.’ Again, he indicates caution when his work might appear to affirm a simple public memory of teachers’ motives, even if this is drawn out of competition entries by teachers who outlined their desire to ‘work for Poland where the country needed most assistance’ or return to ‘ancient, Piast territories’. While Kwilecki’s study might have assisted the mythologisation of pioneers, his narrative also highlights how the pioneer narrative could be framed as countering the state-sanctioned grand narrative of Party-state-led and organised settlement. Pioneers

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1129 Ibid., p.12.
1130 Ibid., pp.13-14.
1131 Ibid., p.18.
1132 Ibid., p.24-25.
1133 Ibid., p.120.
1134 Ibid., p.45.
1135 Ibid., p.34.
1136 Ibid., p.30-31.
operated on the basis of dynamic bonds, spontaneously, albeit with patriotic and sometimes ideological motives in mind. Still, Kwilecki notes that ‘the memoirs’ value is in their ability to highlight the social character of the foundation of schools in the Western Territories.’\textsuperscript{1137} Schools were incorporated into the state system and then subject to ideological control, but the initial foundation could be often a social initiative for the good of the community, something Wieslaw Sauter’s POZO memoir, published as a standalone volume, indicated.\textsuperscript{1138} Kwilecki finds the foundation of schools, as well as commune authorities and the church increased stabilisation and hopes for permanent settlement while ‘normalising social relations’ during a time of ‘immense fluidity.’\textsuperscript{1139} Party-state institutions are notably absent from his list; commune authorities could also be established spontaneously and without Party involvement initially.

Kwilecki’s study was a semi-popular/semi-academic work, promoting an alternative to state-centred histories, even if its vision of diligent, dedicated, patriotic teachers was something of construct failing to reflect the full realities of the period of spontaneous settlement and dynamic bonds. Kwilecki also showed in his Lemko study a willingness to critique state authorities. However, Kwilecki and Dulczewski also produced a memoir-based history of settlement intended for schools which – on the surface at least – appeared to satisfy the demands of an official history, similarly to Gołębiowski and Jakubczak’s Russian-language compilation using MPWPL.\textsuperscript{1140}

5.3 Memoirs as textbook history

\textit{Z życia osadników na Ziemiach Zachodnich}\textsuperscript{1141} had a print run of 6,240 (double that of \textit{POZO}) issued by the State School Publications Company. It features short excerpts from 35 of the 205 POZO entries, interspersed with the editor-compilers’ historical narrative, to construct a history of the early years of settlement. Its opening paragraph states, ‘our book shows how the return of the Polish population to the Western Territories occurred. We let the actual settlers speak: peasants, workers and intelligentsia who worked diligently towards

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1137] Ibid, p.44.
\item[1139] Kwilecki, \textit{Role społeczna nauczyciela}, p.58.
\end{footnotes}
restoring these lands’ Polish character.⁵¹¹⁴² The narrative is presented as a definitive history, albeit from the perspective of ordinary people. However, their ‘speaking’ is subordinated to predetermined grand narratives of national destiny in the editor’s ‘opracowanie’ – an essayistic study with an explicit ‘pedagogical aim’. They admit that this ‘of course shaped the selection of fragments in terms of content and form. We attached less importance to the general documenting of the questions at hand, and more to the writers’ attitudes, since these can provide good examples for work in schools.’¹¹⁴⁴ This somewhat undermines the claim regarding telling the history of settlement ‘as it was’, revealing instead the goal of inspiring appropriate activist and patriotic attitudes among schoolchildren, raising awareness of heroic pioneers’ achievements. It is evident why Dulczewski may have been critical later of memoir-based works overstating the pioneer narrative, although he himself contributed to the construction of this collective memory trope.

Z życia osadników presents a straightforward narrative of the Polish takeover of ancient Polish territories recovered thanks to Soviet-led military victory, which secured what the Allies agreed at Teheran and Yalta, and confirmed at Potsdam. This fulfilled the PPR’s patriotic programme expressed in the PKWN Manifesto.¹¹⁴⁵ The historical introduction also declares autochthonous populations crucial in justifying Poland recovering the lands from which the German population was legally and necessarily removed.¹¹⁴⁶

The first autobiographical extract follows this summary of state-sanctioned history, seemingly confirming it, particularly the belief that the July 1944 Manifesto expressed the will of Poland’s working masses. Czesław Karmel – a peasant originally from the Biała Podlaska region on Poland’s current eastern border and thus one of the first areas liberated within Poland’s postwar borders – recalls returning from forced labour in Germany in July 1944 ‘when the PKWN Manifesto’s declarations were being realised.’¹¹⁴⁷ Agrarian reform granted him two additional hectares of land, thus doubling his farm’s size. The study does not note, however, that although the Manifesto promised ‘upełnorolnienie’ – making farms of economically viable size – Karmel’s four-hectares remained under the threshold. Perhaps this insufficient farm size, despite agrarian reform, inspired Karmel to migrate to the Recovered Territories? Karmel, though, states he was inspired by the Manifesto’s slogan:

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¹¹⁴² Dulczewski and Kwilecki, Z życia osadników, p.5.
¹¹⁴³ Ibid., p.6.
¹¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.5-6.
¹¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.9.
¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.10.
¹¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.11.
“Head West! To the Recovered Territories!” He travelled in April 1945, benefitting from official organisations which provided nothing but help and assistance. Karmel’s opening extract seemingly affirms dominant narratives stating that the socialist state authorities inspired migration and its institutions facilitated it.

An extract from Karmel also concludes the publication, as if to bookend a volume that indicates the social advance the Party-state brought peasants through enabling migration. The concluding fragment reveals that Karmel’s sister completed advanced secondary education (matura) at a Gdańsk school, while his brother completed it by correspondence. His sister’s achievement appears particularly significant because a peasant girl acquired qualifications once reserved for “intelligentsia”. Peasant farmer Karmel himself attempted the correspondence course but opted for technical-vocational education instead, which he completed in 1954, deeming it more useful. Z życia osadników would suggest a straightforward advance narrative, symbolising Poland’s declared class equality. However, evidence emerges in the selected fragments of difficulties accompanying social transformation. Karmel recalls falling asleep “[w]ith a course book in my pocket as I went to the mill, the sugar mill or local administration offices – all places where I waited in queues to be served.” Those long waits offered opportunities to contemplate bureaucrats’ generally unhelpful attitudes, their eight-hour working days and working patterns enabling them to improve education even during working hours. The revolution in class relations appears incomplete as increased qualifications nevertheless leave the social hierarchy untouched, with peasants perceiving lasting discrimination. Karmel’s life story also reveals, as he recognises himself, that he is effectively self-taught and considers his own determination the most important factor enabling him to overcome lasting barriers to equality. He offers no indication of gratitude to the postwar Polish state – despite his enthusiasm for the PKWN Manifesto. If Karmel’s education is considered a continuation of pioneering diligence, then it leaves schoolchildren readers with an intriguing model for state-society relations.

Between Karmel’s extracts, numerous fragments stress spontaneous settlement based on ordinary people’s dynamism with little indication of state institutions’ involvement. Tadeusz Pokrop, for example, recalls how he and young classmates searched abandoned buildings for exercise books, with this necessary looting founding lifelong friendships. Some
narratives, meanwhile, which apparently resound with official history, could inspire critical readings. Halina Będkowska, a teacher born in 1904, in one published extract praises the local Soviet commandant still stationed in the town of Złoczów. He helped equip the local school with everything it and its staff needed, including a cow, some benches, a telephone and three pianos. Some readers might logically question how Poland’s apparently generous Soviet liberators came to possess such an array of goods in the Recovered Territories. The number of pianos seems particularly suspect. Another question could concern the fate of the school’s original furniture and equipment. Perhaps this was all innocent, although Chmielewska showed alcohol facilitating trade with Soviet troops.

Even this apparently innocent textbook offers insight into the problematic dual rule period, which censorship and editing policy generally obscured. Wiesław Sauter, an IZ memoirist featured in Duleczewski and Kwilecki’s study, recalled in his submission that two pioneer women teachers struggled to run their school ‘because Soviet troops had occupied the school buildings’. His published work simply notes ‘a lack of buildings’. However, despite controls applied this school textbook history, tensions emerged between the grand narratives of Party-led settlement of Poland’s Recovered Territories and the selected fragments, even those referring to the Red Army and Soviet-Polish relations.

One memoir that proved effectively unpublishable for POZO was by Adolf Kamiński, whose text fascinated Dulczewski and they entered into correspondence, which is filed at IZ alongside the memoir. A fragment did, however, appear in Z życia osadników. Kamiński was born in Tarnopol region but moved to Vinnitsa, making him an interwar Soviet citizen. His parents were killed by Soviet authorities in 1937 as ‘enemies of the nation’, although a postwar Soviet court cleared their name. Kamiński attended the hearing, and thus includes with his memoir a series of photographs from the trip, including one outside the Kremlin with his son who was born in Gdańsk in 1947. Other photographs depict the Kashubia and Żuławy regions, the latter deliberately flooded in 1944 and drained by Poles in 1947 to make it farmable. This region inspired the selected fragment, where he recalls spending evenings talking to farmers about the past and future. ‘When I went out into the yard, the canes rustled, while the sound of wild ducks and boar resounded. It reminded me of the forests of Ussuri

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1153 Ibid., 143-4.
1154 Chmielewska, Społeczne przeobrażenia, pp.149-50.
1155 Sauter, IZ P-177 (1957), part two, p.8.
1156 Sauter, Powrót, p. 67.
1157 Adolf Kamiński, IZ P-203.
and the rich fauna of Siberia.¹¹⁵⁸ It seems unusual to include a memory of Siberia in a school textbook, given awkward questions it might raise. Kamiński was deported along to Siberia following his parents’ punishment by the Soviet authorities.

I consider now whether Dulczewski and Kwilecki’s editing of the POZO compilation, appearing in 1963, followed a similar pattern of offering a grand narrative interpretative framework while generating tensions with apparently aligned analysis through the content included. Despite a modest print run (3250), POZO received significant media and critical attention at the time, perhaps because it satisfied some of the ‘social demand’ for publications on the Recovered Territories that Żygulski’s censor noted.

Chapter 6: Pamiętniki osadników Ziem Odzyskanych - Pioneers, editors and censors

This chapter explores the first of three memoir competitions organised by Instytut Zachodni in Poznań, POZO. It was launched in late 1956, before IZ launched in 1966 a competition for the young generation of Recovered Territories inhabitants\footnote{Nurt, 8 (1967) – special edition on Młode pokolenie Ziem Zachodnich; see the eponymous compilation (Poznań: IZ, 1968).} and one in 1970 open to all inhabitants of the new lands. I focus on the POZO memoirs now, although the section on Curp included some 1970 texts, too, while Jurkowa’s memoir was from that competition. POZO provides the focus here because they were used most extensively in the sociology of the Western territories, thus enabling comparison with those studies. POZO was also the volume on which censorship archives produced the most extensive details. I consider how it was constructed for publication in 1963 (and for a revised 1970 edition) with particular difficulties posed for censors by the fact that the entries were composed in the aftermath of the Polish October of 1956, while the time of publication saw greater restrictions on destalinisation discourse.

6.1 Framing POZO

_Pamiętniki osadników Ziem Odzyskanych_ appeared at a time when some IZ publications had been banned by censors. Kwilecki’s Lemko study was one case, while the proposed standalone volume by POZO competition winner Stanisław Dulewicz (discussed below) was also rejected. POZO was passed, though, and opens with a foreword from Instytut Zachodni’s then director Władysław Markiewicz,\footnote{Markiewicz, ‘Przedmowa’, POZO (1963), pp.1-3.} with his text’s primary purpose being to assure readers of the validity of the selection, assuaging fears of extensive censorship, although he also noted that the original plan had been to print all 205 successful entries.\footnote{Ibid., p.1.} He admits there was editing and censorship but this should not detract from the book’s value for research, since ‘quite exceptional cases aside, even the most meticulous researchers can use this publication’. The use of ellipses possibly highlights these exceptional cases. He hopes readers will trust the editors’ judgment that the selection is ‘representative of the whole collection.’\footnote{Ibid., p.2. See also: Drugie pokolenie, p.9.} Markiewicz’s assurances regarding representativeness seem
misplaced on a formal level, as none of the numerous very short entries submitted feature. Meanwhile, the editors’ own introduction states: ‘We tried to include valuable [wartościowe] memoirs illustrating as fully as possible phenomena typical of the Western Territories. […] We excluded descriptions of various facts and events which were not most characteristic of settling and developing the Territories.’ The editors’ approach suggests they present a representative sample not of the archive generated but a sample representing what they have established to be the model of typical settlement and social change in Recovered Territories communities. The memoirs selected, and the selection of fragments within them, were to illustrate not the past as it was remembered, so mnemohistory – as Żygulski suggested was possible, but a sociological model.

Markiewicz also stressed POZO’s political value, considering it a contribution to challenging ‘German chauvinists’ accusation, occasionally repeated by our own people, that “nature” deprived the Polish nation of organisational capabilities.’ POZO illustrates, on the contrary, that no other country could have achieved as much in difficult circumstances, thus bolstering a domestic audience’s national pride and linking this to legitimising claims for the postwar social order. It was hoped that foreign readers, principally ‘revisionist circles ruling in the German Federal Republic’ would read the volume to learn that ‘the population settled in the Recovered Territories is emotionally bound to its regional homeland and to a degree stronger than inhabitants of other Polish regions.’ This argument draws evidently on Dulczewski’s sociological model where the human and political significance of developing new homelands was stressed. However, no IZ research provides empirical foundations for the claims regarding greater local patriotism than in central Poland, so Markiewicz’s declaration is purely rhetorical and may raise suspicions about his declarations of POZO’s representativeness. However, this foreword may have been an essential strategy in ensuring POZO was passed for publication with a suitable frame indicating official use value.

Dulczewski and Kwilecki’s brief editorial introduction offers some indication of the memoirs’ apparent relation to state-sanctioned historical narratives, although they focus principally on outlining their sociological model. So, they indicate that migration brought historical justice in relation to Germany and national homogenisation. They also suggest the Party’s leading role, at least in chronological terms, as ‘pioneer teams’ of experts were
joined ‘very early on by PPR teams heading westward. The Party aimed at securing for itself a decisive share of influence in forming organs of power in the Recovered Territories, while also constructing its own effective political apparatus.’ There is a strong allusion here that the PPR was largely interested in securing power and political influence, whereas the ‘pioneer’ experts and, more tellingly, those generating ‘the spontaneity of the resettlement action’ were at the core of rebuilding Poland, as ‘the population took the initiative alongside various social organisations and institutions.’

Ordinary people rather than the PPR become the main thrust of settlement. Dulczewski and Kwilecki put ordinary people centre stage in their sociological model, since ‘counting on “spontaneity”, or social initiative, was to some degree a necessity and the central element of the state authorities’ settlement policy. [...] The nascent state apparatus was insufficient to control and plan such mass population movements. The state apparatus is not central to the social processes occurring, even if those authorities’ acceptance of the necessity of spontaneity is framed as being part of a plan to ensure ‘de iure recognition of a territory which de facto was under Polish control.’ Ultimately, even if there were clear geopolitical benefits to this spontaneous process, the state authorities could do little to control movements, although controls gradually grew with PUR coordinating some journeys, while MZO emerged in November 1945 and PZZ already performed an important ‘educational-propaganda’ role. Imagined West German revisionist readers would, however, be unlikely to ignore the admission of a rather cynical policy of permitting wild settlement, potentially to drive out German populations. The editors, though, see spontaneous actions as evidence of ordinary Poles’ role in events of national historical importance.

Spontaneous settlement, or ‘unregistered settlement, taking place outside organisational norms’ left a legacy for the structure of social relations and communities in the Recovered Territories, since it created “migratory paths” as ‘initial settlers performed reconnaissance functions’ before bringing family and neighbours westwards a given locality, with this particularly common in prewar Polish-German borderland regions. Communities often formed owing to kinship bonds, with the mass of migrants joining initial settlers who may have been patriotically or ideologically inspired, but these pioneers’ motives were effectively insignificant for later arrivals. Even if it is true that national solidarity bonded the

1167 ibid., p.7.
1168 ibid., p.8.
1169 ibid., p.8.
1171 ibid., pp.8-9.
1172 ibid., p.9.
initial settlers, as one POZO reviewer suggests, because ‘Poles were initially outnumbered by Germans’ and this ‘integrated the collection of people from all over the country and world’, then this national identification would fade once increasing numbers of familiar persons, including friends and family, replaced Germans. Dulczewski and Kwilecki suggest that this mass wave of settlement was largely informed by informal knowledge, rather than ‘social techniques’, a term they use from Znaniecki and Thomas. They find ‘private propaganda in conversations with Poles returning from Germany, in settlers’ letters or reports from individuals delegated by families to investigate the area’ were more persuasive than formal propaganda. Private propaganda could both encourage and hamper settlement, at least for those in central Poland.

Beyond repatriants, who are ascribed a singular motive for migration – namely ‘a patriotic-national motive, so the will to remain within the Polish state’ – the introduction stresses the variety of frames settlers applied to their migration experience. For some it was ‘a turning point in their personal lives, for others it was linked to awareness of participating in a historically significant moment by fulfilling something of a social-national mission in the Western Territories.’ No proportions are outlined, but the former appears more common, even among memoirists, who are typically presented as particularly conscious activists. There is no attempt in POZO to present a Góra-type sanitised narrative focused on the organised, directed nature settlement; instead settlers’ creative spontaneity and the dangers faced during journeys and then in the early days are presented. During journeys settlers needed to ‘organise night watches’ or ‘organise spontaneous collections for railwaymen’, so bribes. During journeys and once in the new lands, ‘there were dangers at every step’ including ‘attacks by wandering marauders and gangs.’ Some of these references are evident euphemisms for difficulties caused by Soviet troops. Their presence together with remaining German populations caused ‘complicated situations’ but ‘the Polish authorities taking over civil and economic administration in the Recovered Territories and the evacuation of Germans were one of the fundamental factors which brought stabilisation.’ Perhaps this brought stabilisation in the sense of settlers believing Polish presence would be long-term, but in everyday terms stabilisation could be disrupted, it seems, by ‘unqualified

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1175 Ibid., pp.18-19.
1176 Ibid., p.11.
1177 Ibid., p.21.
1178 Ibid., p.19.
1179 Ibid., p.21.
1180 Ibid., p.23.
and immoral careerists’, among others, becoming Polish administrative staff. The grand narrative of Party- and institution-led settlement would appear to be particularly difficult to uphold on the basis of the editors’ historical outline as the focus shifts to ordinary people’s dedication and struggle to get by in starting new lives in the Recovered Territories, thus contributing to rebuilding Poland.

Of course, not all settlers were pioneers and some Polish arrivals contributed to ‘the true social catastrophe of the early period – looting. Wandering “prospectors” hampered further settlement and made life difficult for those already settled.’ The editors present POZO as an opportunity to correct what they feel has become a negative collective memory of settlement. Where popular imagination sees ‘freeloaders’, the ‘fragments of memoirs correct the lasting opinion that settlers travelling to the Western Territories made no material contributions and instead received everything on a plate.’ POZO thus shares with Z życia osadników something of its ‘pedagogical’ objective, as it provided positive images of early settlers’ ‘enthusiasm for settling and rebuilding the Recovered Territories’, taking responsibility for ‘organising collective life’ by demonstrating ‘social and organisational activism.’ If, as Mróz suggested in his reading of MPWPL, the Party-state had monopolised organised activism and the organisation of collective life by the early 1960s, then POZO’s model pioneers could appear particularly unusual in suggesting an alternative, popular site of historical and social agency.

The introduction follows a pattern that becomes evident in reading published memoirs, as it focuses largely on the pioneer period, before skipping most of the postwar period to 1957 and reflection upon the longer-term impact outcome of social processes. The editors find that ‘many inhabitants of the Western Territories share a common trait of emotional bonds to their new surroundings. This bond appears in the form of local and regional patriotism, so interest in the affairs of the new region, town or village and a willingness to contributed to the development of the locality.’ With the introduction focusing on pioneer settlers in the early period, involved in establishing public institutions – rather than homes and farms, this is reflected in the subsequent analysis of inhabitants’ attitudes. Żygulski and Chmielewska both showed, however, that the most significant bonds for the mass of settlers, at least in rural areas, were to their particular family homes and farms, so emotional bonds

1181 Ibid., p.22.
1182 Ibid., p.22.
1183 Ibid., p.20.
1184 Ibid., p.22.
1185 Ibid., p.25.
generated through private-sphere experience. Dulczewski’s idea of autochthonisation as necessarily requiring public action and historical knowledge is the privileged model here.

Skipping to 1957 after the pioneer period might enable the construction of a clearer narrative of progress towards adaptation, integration and autochthonisation thus omitting potential destabilisation and regression under stalinism. However, this form might also be shaped by publishing and censorship restrictions. The entries were written ‘immediately after October [1956] when far-reaching freedom of expression took hold. The competition was treated in many cases as an opportunity to speak out, satisfying a need to declare individual thoughts and opinions.’

Given Markiewicz’s recognition that censorship was a points necessary, the editors here give clear indication that by the time of publication a need to curtail ‘freedom of expression’ had emerged, particularly as far as destalinisation is concerned. The archived texts document the burst of post-October optimism, while *POZO* reflects the need to sculpt this recent past to suit new publishing conditions.

A further reconfiguration of the volume was required for the 1970 reissue. Some changes, such as removing five younger memoirists’ texts, made *POZO* a unified volume on ‘pioneers of settlement’ and a precursor to *MPZZ*. This methodological change was accompanied by a more radical reworking, whereby the autobiographies were ordered by occupation rather than voivodeship. This shift could reflect how the western and northern lands were expected to appear as a fully-integrated part of Poland, with identical social and economic concerns, rather than a site of regional specificities. However, reordering also indicates an attempt to construct a narrative of more ordered settlement. Starting with ‘Organisers of local authorities and administration’ (9 texts) creates such an impression even if it was ordinary people acting spontaneously who were ultimately responsible for this work.

Comparison of the 1963 and 1970 volumes suggests no changes were made to the volume’s content, beyond removing five memoirs and Markiewicz’s preface while simplifying the introduction. Although the book was now arranged, like *Drugie pokolenie* (1978), ‘according to a Marxist methodological directive, thus on the basis of the contents of the autobiographies and the type of work carried out by the authors’, readings were unlikely to change significantly, even if the introduction presented a new framework for reading. ‘The memoirs provide an overall image of communities of advancing individuals.’

1187 The missing texts are: Miśko (P156 ‘Uroczca Zielona Góra’, pp.246-55); Bronisława Piotrowska (P152 ‘Najmłodsza osadniczka’, pp. 277-280); Czerwińska-Machińska (P161 ‘Nowe życie’, pp.649-665); Morus (P67, pp.670-678); Alicja Czwarnóg (P159, pp.681-685).
1188 Dulczewski, *Drugie pokolenie*, p.15.
of ‘impoverished peasants’ is appropriated to indicate how they could acquire private farms or move to towns, which become privileged sites of advance and regional integration. All inhabitants benefit from ‘civilisational achievements and contemporary technological advance.’¹¹⁸⁹ Rather than a reading necessarily based on the evidence in the volume, the editors demonstrate their ability to frame the memoirs according to present-day concerns, with the achievements of the pioneer period becoming the foundation for the successful development and advance of the new lands and their inhabitants. IZ’s 1970 competition was to provide the documentary evidence for this, depicting fully integrated ‘Inhabitants of the Western Territories’ who developed from ‘Settlers of the Recovered Territories’ and now enjoyed the full benefits of People’s Poland. In the end, the publications largely focused on the pioneer period again where the older generation contributed entries. If the mainstream memoir movement’s sociology of social advance had spread to other memoir centres, then it is certainly evident in the reworked frame given to POZO (1970) and in the work on the final competition, not explored here, which was co-organised with TPP, and the second competition, ‘The Young Generation of the Western Territories’ (1966), which Chalasiński was involved with alongside IZ.

Returning to the original POZO, which restricted representations of certain historical events in the early months, while largely omitting stalinist-era experiences, it seems that despite these controls, including censorship and editorial cuts, and despite the preface and introduction providing suggested readings, actual readers could use the volume – with its fragmented, multiple authors – to suggest, in fact, that POZO represented an alternative to official history. The intellectual Catholic weekly Tygodnik Powszechny read Pamiętniki osadników this way, stating in its review: ‘The personal notes of eye witnesses convince us more than theoretical generalisations written as a matter of course in accordance with pre-established hypotheses and theses. We prefer to draw our own conclusions.’¹¹⁹⁰ POZO was deemed a historical work, against the sociologists’ expressed intentions, at a time when contemporary history was limited. I turn now to consider how the volume was produced, followed by responses to it among censors, officials and reviewers.

6.2 *POZO*: Publishing, reviews and censorship

*Tygodnik Powszechny* considered *POZO* a historical work exceeding the usual limits in representing the recent past. The book’s publishers Wydawnictwo Poznańskie also deemed it ‘an unusually valuable historical document’, so they wrote on 30 January 1965 to the Department of Press and Information of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ) suggesting that because settling the Recovered Territories was one of Poland’s greatest ever achievements, the Ministry might fund translations of *POZO*. Other IZ works had enjoyed foreign-language translations, while the Institution also published English-language journal *Polish Western Affairs*. The publishers argued, similarly to Markiewicz’s preface, that the book ‘has obvious significance in relation to many questions great political importance.’

It could contribute to the Polish-West German struggle over the territories, while highlighting People’s Poland’s socio-economic successes. The publishers noted Party approval for the book alongside its popular resonance, aspects coinciding when ‘Dr Janusz Gołębiowski of the KC PZPR Centre for the History of the Party discussed the book in-depth’ on television. *POZO* featured on radio, too, while attracting significant press coverage. The publishers concluded that significant ‘political arguments’ make English- and German-language publications valid.

Previous translated works from IZ in collaboration with MSZ had been positioned as countering the Bonn Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims publishing in English translation extracts from the *Dokumentation* collection on the experiences of Germans removed from territories around Europe. The first volume on ‘lands east of the Oder-Neisse line’ appeared in English in 1960.

The censor’s review of *Polish Western Territories* deemed it countered ‘West German revisionist circles’ dynamic publishing activities’ with Poland having neglected this front. Its censors were concerned, though, that that publication featured excessive details of the stalinist period, which could be

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1194 Ibid.
interpreted abroad as depicting ‘our failings’. Eventually, only two major cuts were suggested, both criticisms of stalinist-era economic policy.\textsuperscript{1197} Despite the publishers’ expert pitch for translating \textit{POZO}, improvable perhaps only if it had made for publication to coincide with various twentieth-anniversary events, on 22 February 1965 MSZ head of publications praised the book’s value but found ‘it does not fully accord with the demands of propaganda for use abroad and therefore the Ministry cannot approve foreign-language publication.’\textsuperscript{1198}

The praise from \textit{Tygodnik Powszechny} indicated the volume’s ambiguous contents, unsuitable for full political instrumentalisation. Meanwhile, the publishers’ popularisation efforts (until the 1970 reissue) suffered a setback when, despite a signed contract and listing among titles for 1964, an abridged version in the popular Biblioteka Powszechchna series with a 10,000 print run never materialised.\textsuperscript{1199} The agreement, signed on 25 April 1963, indicates \textit{POZO} was an instant success,\textsuperscript{1200} which the publishers’ archives reveal almost never came to be. IZ’s in-house publishers rejected a work whose original draft from 1960/61 exceeded its publication limits and technical capabilities. That version was reviewed by Poznań-based sociologist Janusz Ziółkowski in March 1961.\textsuperscript{1201} He had been a competition jury member, finding in the contributions a ‘unique record of memories which are being lost’ because ‘people are dying and the impulses are being lost which inspired the first settlers to write in 1956/1957.’ These impulses include ‘the eruption of post-October openness’.\textsuperscript{1202} This openness proved troubling in the early 1960s, thus Ziółkowski proposed various options for publication, indicating the compromises and negotiations shaping construction of People’s Pola’nd’s published sphere. Options included a sociological analysis using around seventy memoirs; a version with ‘controlled publication and distribution’ of around 300 copies; or publishing just 100 copies enabling less strict control. However, the preferred option was to generate ‘a publishing event’ with the book acquiring ‘a social role’ through mass readership.

\textsuperscript{1197} AP Poznań/WUKKiP/241, p.142.
\textsuperscript{1198} Biblioteka Raczyńskich, Poznań, Archiwum Wydawnictwa Poznańskiego, teczka: Pamiętniki, POZO 1963.
\textsuperscript{1199} AP Poznań/Wydawnictwo Poznańskie/104: Tytułowy plan wydawniczy na roky 1964, p.17. The summary opinion of the volumes was that with a 10,000 print run ‘the book will reach the broadest masses of readers and will become valuable material for sociologists and historians’.
\textsuperscript{1200} Biblioteka Raczyńskich, Poznań, Archiwum Wydawnictwa Poznańskiego, teczka: Pamiętniki, POZO 1963. ‘Wniosek o zawarcie umowy na tytuł’.
\textsuperscript{1202} \textit{Ibid.}
POZO certainly became a ‘publishing event’ as it enjoyed commercial success and significant media coverage. However, its already modest print run was smaller than expected not because of censorship but because of commercial concerns as Składnica Księgarska (the wholesale booksellers) market research based on a test – or jaskółka – version generated 1,970 pre-orders, equating to a print run of 3,000.\(^{1203}\) lower than the publishers’ technical order of 5,220.\(^{1204}\) The censor also mentioned the print run, noting that ‘the print run of over 5000 is not disconcerting but does suggest that the readership will be diverse and wide-ranging.’\(^{1205}\) One reviewer, though, complained that ‘owing to the size, prize and low print run, this volume will not reach a broader readership. What a shame!’ He hoped writers and filmmakers would compensate the limited print run,\(^{1206}\) extending POZO’s popular reach.

The print run was lower than planned but higher than a limited academic volume, meaning high editorial standards were required, with Ziółkowski praising existing work for demonstrating ‘exemplary internal self-control.’\(^{1207}\) Ziółkowski shows how editors and their sociologist colleagues were responsible for judging publishing and censorship conditions, with the censor’s role as co-editor and thus co-creator of the published sphere evident.

Markiewicz made further cuts, removing questionable content, repetitions and digressions, as well as one entire entry, while also making some ‘stylistic interventions’ where they left ‘authenticity’ or ‘comprehension’ unaffected.\(^{1208}\) Comparison with archived entries will explore how editing and censorship affected the works in practice.

Poznań WUK received the book on 15 June 1962. The censors’ report was completed on 29 October, having been referred to a head of section for further inspection. By 17 November the publishers were requested ‘to implement the censor’s comments’ but also remove some initial editorial interventions.\(^{1209}\) The request indicates that consultation with GUK could show that the censor was imagined as overly-strict, with the initial censor’s review\(^{1210}\) revealing that he accepted the need to depict problematic events alongside the ‘deep truth’


\(^{1210}\) AP Poznań/WUKPiW/243, pp.59-66.
of the period, which he conceives as ‘the great majority of settlers’ great patriotism, sincere dedication and true heroism’. These factors mean problems ‘caused by the objective conditions of settlement’, including looting, alcohol as currency and ‘moral degradation’, can be treated ‘with a large degree of understanding.’ The censor shows that his reading will be lenient as he has created a framework justifying passing questionable material. His role appears defensive, to justify why something should appear rather find reason to bar publication. He trusts readers to recognise this ‘deep truth’ rather than focus on troubling details, which were evidently more problematic if Soviet troops were involved. His reading therefore stresses the volume’s multiple authorship, which means it is not read as ‘a history’ even if the narratives provide ‘a completely new, unprecedented source and contribution to exploring the most recent history of our Western Territories.’ The sources depict the past but not a complete narrative, meaning that he finds it necessary to individualise assessment of particular memoirs. Considered in isolation as a separate historical source, and hoping readers would do the same, the censor avoids the problem of judging the impression the volume makes as a whole when details accumulate. The censor concentrated on particular details which might be unpublishable, finding ‘an undoubted need for intervention’ in some ‘overly explicit depictions of repatriants’ poverty’ or discrepancies in wealth between settler groups and fragments ‘showing that repatriants treated their new localities as alien.’

Each case referred to a specific example and page, but not all were ultimately cut. Examples of repatriant poverty remained. ‘They arrived tired, completely destroyed. They dragged their meagre belongings behind them.’ The censor suggested cuts which were reinstated or not implemented, and it is clear that each moment referred to a particular case rather than removing a general theme. He notes that there were also problems with ‘religious, national, regional, political, repatriation, military and economy-based’ matters but these were also dealt with as specific moments, although there was a call to reduce the ‘frequency of religious themes’ in the volume as fragments depict ‘the intensification of religious life in the Western Territories and the unifying role of the Church in the society that forms

1211 Ibid., p.60.
1212 He queried representations of ‘not always correct morals – trading with vodka or spirits/ s.427, 443-4, 538, 566/, disturbing the population/ s.295-6/.’ AP Poznań/WUKP/W/243/p.66.
1213 Ibid., p.61.
1214 Ibid., p.61.
1215 Ibid., pp.65-66.
there.¹²¹⁷ Thirteen examples of the Church’s unifying role in new communities in eleven different memoirs hardly seems excessive, but they were evidently problematic enough in a historical narrative where Party and state organisations were largely absent in any positive sense. Still, as in Żygulski’s study, some elements of religious life remained evident. Another problem was ‘obrachunkowy’,¹²¹⁸ or attempts to come to terms with the past, specifically the stalinist era and its legacy in memory and also the economy. The censor was concerned by critiques of ‘growing taxes’ and ‘undesirable administrative practices of the previous era’, ‘the false interpretation of social and economic laws in the period of the cult of personality’, ‘poor stock levels in shops and the unfairness of representatives of the authorities’ and ‘the disappointment that a farmer encountered upon joining a collective farm.’ Given changing principles regarding destalinisation discourse, the censor recommended moderating memoirists’ ‘uncompromising stance towards these sensitive matters’.¹²¹⁹ In the volume, the stalinist period appears largely absent as a rather obvious lacuna in many narratives which end before 1948 or skip to the post-October period. He does not argue with reference to the potential West German revisionist readers for cutting reference to stalinism, as was the case with the Poland’s Western Territories publication. By 1962 it was policy to avoid returning to discourses seeking to come to terms with the past.

Some depictions of German experiences, meanwhile, were considered harmful to POZO’s political value,¹²²⁰ although he also presented a compelling argument for allowing memoirs to continue to use the contentious term “deportation” rather than the approved “resettlement” in their memoirs by referring to Article 13 of the Potsdam Agreement as a precedent.¹²²¹ Indeed, the memoirists’ preferred term remained, even if their use of it was not necessarily inspired by the Potsdam Agreement. The censor justifies his apparent leniency by noting the memoirs’ value in challenging ‘West German revisionists’, with the publication ‘appearing at the most politically auspicious moment. Nobody can now doubt the Polishness of these lands’, particularly with three of eight million Poles in them being born there.¹²²² Effectively, if Polish authorities feel the territories are secure, then there should be no reason to restrict depictions of troubling moments. He also stresses in concluding his report that POZO presents ‘source material’ and as such demand ‘quite significant censorial tolerance’.¹²²³

¹²¹⁷ APP/WUKPΠIW/243, p.63. The report highlights pages: 124, 134, 142, 154, 190/1, 228, 311, 415, 427/8, 498, 504, 634, 668.
¹²¹⁸ APP/WUKPΠIW/243, p.63.
¹²¹⁹ Ibid., pp.63-4.
¹²²⁰ He lists pages 34, 85, 122, 218, 288, 470, 504, 570.
¹²²¹ APP/WUKPΠIW/243, p.62.
¹²²² APP/WUKPΠIW/243, p.62.
¹²²³ APP/WUKPΠIW/243, p.66.
Although others read the texts as complete narratives, he was quite clear that he was reading historical sources which should not be interfered with. His WUK departmental director commented on the nature of ‘materials which are relatively troubling for censorial work given the multiplicity of themes and the fact that the perspective on particular issues has shifted to a greater or lesser extent’. However, PRL censors did not seek an Orwellian eternal present, constantly adapting sources on the past to present day truths – even if scholars (and censors) proved capable of framing historical sources according to such demands, including combating German revisionism or declaring social advance.

Censor Szymil’s comments also reveal that the novelty of POZO significantly affected censorship procedures, as ordinary people’s testimonies became historical sources on contemporary history in a publication blurring the popular/academic divide. Only Mój dom nad Odrą offered any precedent as a memoir compilation on the Recovered Territories. Even though it included some POZO materials alongside texts from another competition, it had largely local interest and none of the academic framing of POZO, where association with IZ meant particular caution was required. Szymil’s report was evidently intended for higher ranks as GUK was contacted over the work, but since cuts beyond the censors’ suggestions are not evident, Warsaw probably had little complaint with the Poznań censors’ work. Szymil outlined the WUK approach, whereby the problematic themes demanded ‘adopting in our assessment a method of relatively detailed and fastidious censorial insight, signalling a greater need for intervention than strictly necessary.’ This report praised the original censor’s caution and accepted fully the fragmentation method. POZO’s treatment by censors reveals that the final stage of review at WUK or GUK was not necessarily to seek opportunities to bar a publication, but to find justifications for passing material, as well as checking that broader mechanisms of preventative censorship carried out by authors, editors and publishers, and indeed academic colleagues, were functioning.

The censors’ fragmenting reading strategy was not necessarily adopted by readers, likewise Markiewicz or the editors’ suggested framing narratives. POZO was reviewed nationally.

1226 The first page of the original review features a red pencil note ‘Reply see telex no. 32-Po-DPN-10/62 (folder: corresp. with GUK)’. APP WUKPPiW/243, p.59.
1227 APP WUKPPiW/243, p.67.
1228 APP WUKPPiW/243, p.67.
receiving almost unanimously positive reviews, becoming a ‘bestseller’\textsuperscript{1230} and winning the prestigious \textit{Odra} prize, awarded by the Wroclaw-based cultural monthly.\textsuperscript{1231} Typically for postwar Polish academia and memoir sociology, the sociologists reaped financial and prestige-related benefits, with the \textit{Odra} prize bringing Dulczewski and Kwilecki 10,000 zlotys in December 1963 (equivalent to the cost of 133 copies of \textit{POZO}, or double the amount the competition’s first-prize winner Stanisław Dulewicz collected from IZ).\textsuperscript{1232} Dulczewski and Kwilecki also attended a gathering at Wroclaw Journalists’ Club, where actors from the city’s Teatr Polski read extracts of the memoirs.\textsuperscript{1233} Silesian literary critic and literary historian Zdzisław Hierowski, commenting as a member of the prize jury, noted that although Dulczewski and Kwilecki completed the tough editorial work, the book has forty five joint authors whom the prize also honours.\textsuperscript{1234} However, nothing indicates that they shared in the rewards or festivities.

Hierowski contrasts the publication with prewar \textit{Pamiętniki bezrobotnych} and \textit{Pamiętniki chłopów} which ‘showed the deep-rooted sicknesses and weaknesses of the Polish state resurrected in 1918, whereas \textit{POZO} show the sources and elements of strength upon which the Polish state, working towards socialism, founded its existence.’\textsuperscript{1235} He also compares it to other ‘collective memoir’ publications in People’s Poland, contrasting it with the ‘biased and obsequious selection of materials’ which had discredited the genre.\textsuperscript{1236} This is a reference likely referring to the growing strand of PPR/PZPR-associated memoirs, often drawing on wartime, heroic tropes, stressing the role of the Party. The comparison to Krzywicki’s prewar work demonstrates People’s Poland’s declared legitimacy, but also shows ordinary individuals as active contributors to historical processes. His analysis is also more complex than a simple declaration that settlers ‘fought for a new social order’. Instead, he shows how settlement and the new order developed ‘in parallel’.\textsuperscript{1237} Not all migrants consciously constructed socialism given the ‘whole spectrum of motives affecting people who came to these lands’, with more often than not everyday matters of survival taking

\textsuperscript{1231} ‘Dalszy rozwój Wydawnictwa Poznańskiego – Tegoroczny plon 67 tytułów’, \textit{Głos Wielkopolski}, 14 December 1963. This article also stated that the Biblioteka Powszechna edition was forthcoming.
\textsuperscript{1233} \textit{Gazeta Robotnicza}, 2 December 1963 and \textit{Słowo Polskie}, 1-2 December 1963.
\textsuperscript{1234} Zdzisław Hierowski, ‘książka, którą stworzyła historia’, \textit{Odra}, 12 (1963), pp.3-5 (p.3 and p.5).
\textsuperscript{1235} Hierowski, \textit{Odra}, p.4.
\textsuperscript{1236} Hierowski ‘Pamiętniki pionierów’, \textit{Trybuna Robotnicza}, 30 November – 1 December 1963.
\textsuperscript{1237} Hierowski, \textit{Odra}, p.4.
precedent, so ‘searching for a roof over their heads, for work and means to exist.’ The prevalent ‘struggle for survival and a new life’ inspired the ‘formation of all those elements which influence individual and collective life’, so schools, transport, administration, workplaces and agriculture. Hierowski outlines a vision of rebuilding Poland largely distant from the Party and state, but rooted in spontaneous actions, some driven by ‘a heroic pose’ but largely rooted in the everyday. He also uses his comments on *POZO* to outline concerns that the post-stalinist thaw itself is becoming a memory, with the IZ memoirs a rare indicator of the ‘atmosphere of general relief which we experienced and remember so well’, a time when ‘lips and pens were unbound, inspiring writing the truth or even settling scores with what was bad and oppressive in those years.’ Hierowski calls for a more open contemporary history, where ‘looting, lawlessness, corruption and abuses’ can be recalled because the ‘pride of the great deed’ of settlement overcomes any ‘stains’ from the past. Similar logic guided the censor, as well as the sociologists and editors, who accepted troubling details into print. If Poland feels secure in its control of the lands today, and secure in its socialism today, then there ought to be no fear of returning to the troubling foundations because this can only reveal the size of postwar Poland’s achievements. Hierowski therefore recommends *POZO* for ‘sceptics and pessimists’ – ostensibly those who doubt socialist Poland’s achievements, but perhaps also those who doubt public history’s grand narratives.

Literary critic and Pomerania-based writer Feliks Fornalczyk also framed *POZO* in relation to Krzywicki’s prewar *Pamiętniki bezrobotnych* and *Pamiętniki chłopów*, but from the perspective of literary, rather than historical-political, value. He argues *POZO* ‘constitutes one of the greatest achievements in publishing, unique and empirically inimitable’. He recommends the book for the school curriculum not only for its value in ‘patriotic education’ but also as a work ‘equal to the most outstanding works of literary fiction, social science and journalism.’ He hopes the narratives by ‘heroes of our present day’ will inspire future literary works. This is not simply a recognition of the propaganda value of the memoirs, as Fornalczyk stresses that the works show ‘the contemporary history of Poland’s western borderlands’ as constructed by ordinary people, who break official moulds, particularly in their depiction of Polish-German relations in ‘a humanistic manner’. The

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1239 Hierowski, *Trybuna Robotnicza*.
1240 Hierowski, *Odra*, p.4.
1241 Hierowski, *Trybuna Robotnicza*.
1242 *Ibid*.
1243 Feliks Fornalczyk, ‘*Dokument czasów pionierskich*’, *Pomorze* 31.5.63 [emphasis as in the original].
conclusion to his review declares that ‘Party activists appear at the forefront of settlement and development.’ However, given their absence from his review which foregrounds everyday heroes, this final impression seems something of an appendix.

Andrzej Kijowski in *Twórczość* commented on how ‘contemporary Poles’ everyday lives’ had become a common theme in the press, but *POZO* ‘are particularly significant’, noting their ground-breaking importance for publications like *MMŻ* and their ambiguous representations of postwar experience. *Twórczość* also published one of the rare critical reviews a year before Kijowski’s comments, with Jan Wyka – poet, writer and Party official – making largely relevant comments which appear to defend subaltern memory against privileged elite narratives. Featuring too many teachers, *POZO* overlooks peasants who cannot match ‘teachers’ and headteachers’ levels of education and written fluency. He suggests teachers’ entries are less authentic than peasants who speak ‘without the burden of propaganda, commonplace moralising or perfected stylisation’, presenting instead ‘pure experience of sociological changes and conflicts.’ Somewhat unrealistically, he considers peasants isolated from public discourses’ influence, although given Kwilecki’s observations in his study of teachers, caution in approaching teachers’ memoirs is justified in the sense that public discourses speak through them more regularly. Wyka’s attempted defence of subaltern contributions is, however, weakened by the fact that he assumes peasants speak from a position outside historical processes. He also criticises *POZO* for depicting ‘a neat and ordered revolution’, rather than the ‘disturbances and complications’ inherent to mass migrations. There are too many ‘empty phrases and superficial patriotic slogans’, he finds. While Wyka’s critiques are certainly valid as a critique of the editors’ reading and framework, Wyka’s reading seems an unfair generalisation of the entire volume. Other reviewers believed that the everyday ‘banalities’ which seem to dominate might only be appreciated fully by ‘thinking readers’. Krzyżagórski focused on a different aspect of the publication to Wyka, finding the everyday depictions could query event-centred, politicised histories. Another reviewer thought the book featured largely ‘awkwardly-written texts’ which nevertheless depict the role of ‘co-creators of a great historical transformation.’

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1244 Fornalczyk.
1247 Wyka, p.77.
1248 Ibid., p.78.
1249 Ibid., p.78.
1250 Klemens Krzyżagórski, “Życiorysy własne” i nasze wspólne’, *Odra*, 5 May 1965, 81-83.
The revolution and the texts appears less smooth than Wyka suggested. Wyka may perhaps have had overly ambitious expectations as to what was publishable at the time either in the sphere of historiography or memory-based writing regarding contemporary history as he called for a more critical representation of the past.

When some reviewers appropriated particular extracts to affirm their unitary readings of history, this was less a consequence of the compilations’ production or the content of the memoirs themselves, but a result of a willingness to take sources out of context. Żołnierz Polski took around 100 words Aleksander Pietraszko’s contribution to outline military settlers’ role in settlement and generating support for the new authorities, while two other memoirs illustrate Red Army assistance in an article declaring that in settlement ‘the Party had great significance, nothing could happen without it. The PSL did not have a voice in villages.’ Here the PPR had immediate control, denying settlers influence over even local affairs, let alone socio-historical processes, all for the sake of denouncing the PSL.

The variety of readings of POZO by reviewers, including those at WUK, affirms Skwarnicki’s assessment in Tygodnik Powszechny, that totalising accounts are undermined, enabling instead ‘our own generalisations.’ This was enabled by the fragmentary form, where analysis did not interfere with readings. Of course, where Skwarnicki saw POZO as an opportunity to avoid state-sanctioned official histories, others typically exploited the publication for its most apt fragments, ignoring contradictory evidence, in producing generalisations. Skwarnicki – himself a repatriant – recognised, however, that large-scale historical investigation of ‘the ambiguous and contentious moments’ of the recent past, which would include explicit analysis, would be possible only in many years’ time. But POZO is one of the few books offering a glimpse of that future. This was possible, in part, because of the censor’s leniency in permitting POZO to appear as a collection of sources, with all the multiplicity that involved. Tomasz Szarota commented on POZO’s merits for historical research, expressing concern that the selection and editing process of the 45 memoirs might undermine their value as sources, hence his suggestion ‘reaching for unpublished entries is essential.’ Szarota dampened some of the overenthusiastic reviews

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1252 Wiktor Ryski, ‘Renesans polskiego pamiętnika’, Gazeta Poznańska, 28 July 1963. He called for more memoirs since ‘we do not yet have exhaustive accounts of history between 1939-1945, nor of our contemporary eighteen year history. We need specific materials and documents about facts that until recently were still hidden, often deformed, but necessary in communicating the atmosphere of those days.’

1253 ‘Z pamiętników osadników na Ziemiach Zachodnich’, Żołnierz Polski, 7 June 1964.

1254 Skwarnicki, Tygodnik Powszechny.

1255 Skwarnicki, Tygodnik Powszechny.

declaring a breakthrough for contemporary history. IH PAN’s struggles reveal much work was to be done on ensuring published sources’ representativeness and access to original archives. Sadly for researchers, POZO co-editor Kwilecki had already noted that the competition materials were ‘in practice, for the majority of readers, not accessible.’\textsuperscript{1257} However, IZ scholars used the materials and even borrowed original texts. IZ staff explained that failure to return files was the most common reason for missing autobiographies.\textsuperscript{1258}

In his study of Recovered Territories teachers, Kwilecki sought to mitigate the methodological problem of using selected edited extracts as the basis for analysis by summarising the contents of each memoir cited, a method Kersten and Szarota subsequently developed further in \textit{Wieś polska 1939-1948}.\textsuperscript{1259} The principal for editing POZO seemed to be highlighting a perceived dominant sociological process, namely one leading towards integration and adaptation. The evident omission of the stalinist era, when some regression may be evident, suggests Szarota’s justified wariness as to potentially lost historical value.

My reading of the volume explores the impact of editing and censorship on the autobiographies, considering what tensions emerge between the memoirs and public history, sociological frameworks and IZ’s academic and popularising roles.

\subsection*{6.3 POZO memoirs}

As the volume’s first memoir, Leon Pajdak’s text acquires particular significance. Born in 1914, he moved to Katowice from Częstochowa district as a child effectively by chance, with his family prevented from entering Germany having intended to seek work in France.\textsuperscript{1260} Advertisements subsequently convinced Pajdak to migrate to the Recovered Territories, leaving an industrialised area to become a first-time farmer on a 7½-hectare farm in Ligota, near Kluczbork, in Opole voivodeship. A PPR member from April 1945, Pajdak served on Ligota GRN between 1945 and 1955, including a year on a PRN in 1950. Opening with this PPR migrant might be an attempt to frame POZO within the Party-led settlement narrative. However, his experience indicates an intriguing reversal of urbanisation and advance-centred tropes associated with the Recovered Territories, as this activist-pioneer seeks to establish himself as a farmer.

\textsuperscript{1257} Kwilecki, \textit{Rola społeczna}, p.97.
\textsuperscript{1258} 18 of 227 entries to the 1956/57 competition were missing from the archive, so almost 8%.
\textsuperscript{1259} Discussed in the following chapter.
\textsuperscript{1260} Leon Pajdak, P185, ‘Osiedliłem się w powiecie kluczborskim’, POZO, pp.31-34 (p.31).
Exceptionally, Pajdak arrived with little knowledge of agriculture, but like most migrants also had few resources, a problem compounded by Soviet practices. ‘Livestock was a priority – I needed to get a horse, a cow, because the Russians had got hold of everything here; cattle was dropping dead from starvation and illness but they didn’t give anything to us Poles, you needed a miracle to get everything.’ The editors’ cut (marked in the manuscript) protects the Red Army’s reputation, signalling that Party membership did not prevent criticism of Poland’s ally. His memoir might also serve official memory politics by signalling aspects of the ‘humanist’ treatment of Germans noted by Fornalczyk. Pajdak writes how among the ‘disasters’ he faced was the ‘return of the farm’s owner who had fled the Red Army’s advance. ‘We ran the farm together but he broke his leg the first time we carted harvested grain. He needed treating, this was in 1947. He cost me a small fortune’. He offers assistance begrudgingly but toxicity is lacking towards this German (or possibly autochthon whom Pajdak perceived as German).

Pajdak remained on the farm until 1950, when Kluczbork PRN ordered his family to move to Wierzbica Górna’s collective farm, 20km away. An ellipsis removes most details revealing negative consequences of activism under stalinism when Party members were expected to lead by example, sacrificing family life for the political good. ‘I joined the collective farm thinking that work would be easier through cooperation [...] but it turned out that there was no collective work leading to a better future, just farmers’ living standards declining day by day and with this the standards of our People’s State. Currently everyone is farming individually, the collective was disbanded.’ The cut was not marked on the archived manuscript, the first indication of the pattern in POZO where ellipses signal non-editorial interventions. His critique of collective farming in principle, not just in Wierzbica, would fall under the censor’s category of ‘settling scores’ with the past, unwelcome by 1962. Pajdak’s text reveals, though, his ability to reappropriate official claims, comparing them to reality as experienced. Pajdak’s memoir ends on a declaration of optimism, as he hopes his work on an 8.2-hectare farm will fulfil his ‘dream of increasing levels of cattle and pigs in order to give our state more meat and bread.’ Evidently this PPR/PZPR member’s faith had been restored after collectivisation, believing that ‘thanks to the state’s assistance and people’s rule all difficulties can be overcome, including the lack of agricultural equipment I am experiencing.’ The legacies of collectivisation, and postwar Soviet presence, remain

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1261 Pajdak, POZO, p. 32; IZ P185, p.4.  
1262 Pajdak, POZO, p.34.  
1263 Pajdak, POZO, p.34; IZ P185, p.6.  
1264 Pajdak, POZO, p.34.
evident in post-October Poland, but the pioneering spirit that served him in 1945 revives again. Pajdak’s memoir provides a safe and symbolic opening, indicating Party settlers’ and indeed Party-state propaganda’s role in encouraging migration, with the state’s message seemingly still effective in 1957. Pajdak also appears patriotic in his determination to succeed in Poland’s new lands. He also features first following the logic of the publication, since he arrived earliest of all published memoirists to the Opole voivodeship, which was selected to open POZO. Wyka may have critiqued teachers’ memoirs for apparent reproduction of propaganda, but this farmer appears capable of similar aligned claims.

“Anka” – who requested anonymity – presented another memoir concerning Kluczbork district. Born in 1923 in a Łódź voivodeship village, she moved initially to Krzywiczyny (8km from Wierzbić) in late 1945 before settling 70 km away in Syców district of Wrocław voivodeship. She expressed ‘sadness at leaving the family homeland’ as she was unsure when she might return. In Krzywiczyny she immediately perceived cultural differences with eastern Poles and autochthons. The former adapting new homes to make them more familiar, ‘throwing out “English-type” stoves, replacing them with huge stoves where the whole family could lay down, especially in winter.’ The English-type stoves were perceived as technologically alien rather than advanced, thus apparent technological regression in fact benefitted adaptation as they constructed ‘stoves like they had in the east.’ Looting was widespread, occurring almost, daily although the editors removed her already euphemistic indication that “various authorities” were responsible. She was ashamed of fellow Poles’ treatment of autochthons. ‘The front has long since passed, but these people are still harmed’, she notes before adding, ‘I lost my own father in the occupation, my family home, but I would never consider myself capable anything like that.

Here autochthons are clearly victims of anti-Germanism also involving state authorities. Various ‘agitators come to our commune and are supposed to raise the autochthons’ consciousness.’ However, ‘this often ends in beatings.’ Fleming suggests such violence was deliberately permitted by the state as part of a planned direction of regimes of hatred towards acquiring legitimacy. It seems that this violence was not generally accepted, thus failed as a legitimation strategy, as hatred of Germans was not universal.

1266 Anka, POZO, p.115. A similar scene appears in the film Sami swoi, whose creators were familiar with these materials.
1267 Anka, POZO, p.115.
1268 Anka, POZO, p.115; IZ P157, p.6.
1269 Anka, POZO, p.115.
1270 Anka, IZ P157, p.8.
As well as highlighting the early days in Opole voivodeship, “Anka’s” memoir also depicts economic structures’ continued discrimination if women. She moved to Twardogóra in Wrocław voivodeship, joining her mother, having left her post in state administration in Krzywiczyny following conflict with the new village mayor. She had to resign from similar work in Twardogóra after having a second child in 1951. ‘So much is written about crèches, preschools, loads of them are being established everywhere, while here the town’s elders [ojcowie miasta] have only just decided to renovate the building which will house the crèche and medical centre.’ Her critique of ‘town elders’, using the telling term ojcowie miasta in Polish, underscores gender inequalities affecting women’s chances of social advance, although she limits her critique to a local problem, seemingly accepting claims of nationwide progress. She ends optimistically, although her reasons are largely unpublishable: ‘the local demigods have been thrown off their pedestals’ after exploiting Party privileges under stalinism. Her conclusion also shows, however, adaptation by establishing emotional bonds to the new lands through personally-significant events. ‘We’ve laid down roots here. I got married here, had children, aged and the Recovered Territories seem as dear to me as my family homelands.’ Her memoir has a neat structure, beginning with fears of abandoning a homeland before finding that, over time, she had acquired a second family homeland providing roots for emotional bonds. There is little evidence of social or cultural integration, but she and her family have clearly adapted. Her memoir includes elements of thick description as she describes neighbours’ and colleagues’ practices, giving an indication of inter-group social relations at various times, although the most problematic aspects of relations with autochthons were cut.

Maria Balińska, a repatriant whose memoir features second in POZO, indicates more successful Polonisation of autochthon communities. She worked as a teacher in Strzelce district (Opole voivodeship), having arrived on 30 April 1945. She stressed autochthon children’s innate Polishness, despite initial animosity faced as an outsider. She accepted their dialect and mixed identity in a long-term approach to their Polonisation. Difficulties were evident, however, in establishing stable relations between adult autochthons and settlers, with material and cultural differences ‘providing the seeds of discord’, as many

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1271 Anka, POZO, p.117.
1272 Anka, IZ P157, pp.13-14, 16.
1273 Anka, POZO, p.118-119.
1274 Maria Balińska, P106, ‘Nauczycielka-repatriantka na wsi opolskiej’, pp.35-42. She was born in Lwów and was aged 50 at the time of writing when she worked as a primary school teacher, having taught in three villages of Strzelce district of Opole voivodeship.
settlers failed to care for their homes.\textsuperscript{1276} They were overcome, effectively, by trwoga, which featured despite censors’ concerns over representing temporariness. ‘Some kind of psychosis overcame them, “maybe we won’t be here long”.\textsuperscript{1277} Furthermore, neither side recognised the other as Polish, with Silesians calling repatriants ‘Ukrainians or Chadziaje’, while they deemed Silesians ‘Germans’ and worse. In 1948 she moved to Żędowice middle school where she found stabilised autochthon-repatriant relations, with once-derogatory terms becoming acceptable through everyday use.\textsuperscript{1278} Balińska, evidently passionate about her Polonising role, was willing to critique failings in policy, reflecting Kwilecki’s vision of the critical value of teachers’ autobiographies. She noted conflict between, effectively, the national and social revolutions embedded in the school literary curriculum. Maria Konopnicka’s \textit{Antek} or Bolesław Prus’s \textit{Placówka} condemned pre-socialist Poland as an impoverished capitalist land, supporting official propaganda claims, but local children saw in the novels reaffirmation of Poland’s inferiority. Only a 1947 trip to Krakow changed some pupils’ perceptions.\textsuperscript{1279} As well as indicating dedicated work in the Polonisation project, Balińska also appears a model of national integration as a repatriant overcoming local tensions to lay foundations of national unity.

Franciszek Iwanowski’s memoir served a similar role with regard to autochthon children. His text concluded both editions of \textit{POZO}, despite the reordering in 1970, suggesting the editors wanted his work specifically to close the study.\textsuperscript{1280} Born in Vilnius in 1908, Iwanowski lived in the small town of Barczewo in Olsztyn district from 1946. He began developing emotional bonds with the Recovered Territories after marrying there, with his first child born in 1948. Press cuttings submitted with his memoir show his involvement in the town’s cultural life and support for autochthon children.\textsuperscript{1281} His competition entry, partly based on diaries, comprises an eleven-paged typed outline of his professional career, plus 167 handwritten pages. His career ranged from running a library, establishing a cultural centre, organising film showings and being stripped of his posts after complaining in 1950 about insufficient official support. This at least enabled him to become a part-time student in Krakow, qualifying as a secondary school teacher in November 1953. In 1957 he was

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\textsuperscript{1276} \textit{Balińska, POZO}, p.40.  
\textsuperscript{1277} \textit{Ibid.}, p.40.  
\textsuperscript{1278} \textit{Ibid.}, p.42.  
\textsuperscript{1279} \textit{Ibid.}, p.41.  
\textsuperscript{1281} IZ P117, letter dated 4 May 1957.
again working at the library and hoped to complete a Master’s degree.\(^{1282}\)

Iwanowski framed his migration from Vilnius as a conscious colonising mission ‘to return the new lands’ original Polish character.’\(^{1283}\) However, the editors cut his honest patriotic critique of ‘multitudes of Polish looters seeking these lands and those “pioneers” desiring positions of authority, living it up in power and seeking easy material gain.’\(^{1284}\) Relations between settlers and autochthons, meanwhile, were particularly troubled among adults, but education served an integrative function for younger inhabitants.\(^{1285}\) Again, however, only a 1947 trip to central Poland overcame accumulated negative impressions of Poland caused not only by initial settlers but also by the authorities. He admits that ‘in the most difficult initial postwar years, the fatherland had appeared to them only in its worst guises’, with these including looters or even ‘representatives of state administration, the police who were not always in order.’ He says that ‘the only crime of these people was that they struggled to speak Polish correctly and looked sceptically upon the actions of people who morally and intellectually failed to meet the demands placed upon them people’s rule.’ He accuses the authorities of ‘turning a blind eye to looting and robberies which accompanied beatings and murders of people defending their property.’ These criminal elements ‘failed to differentiate between the immigrant [napływowy] German population and the eternal autochthonic population.’\(^{1286}\) The sense of what was cut above does feature here, and to a quite surprising extent given concerns over depicting troubling Polish-autochthon relations. Iwanowski implies, however, that even if German populations inhabited an area for centuries, they were nevertheless temporary migrants, destined to be expelled, while declaring his full acceptance of autochthons as core Polish populations. From today’s perspective this imposition of Polishness appears questionable as it denies the Warmian population their regional identity, while indicating something of a paradox whereby settlers were expected to develop regional attachments in the process of ‘autochthonisation’, yet regional populations were expected to abandon their identification to prove their Polishness.

The depiction of the trip proves problematic, however, as the editors remove the pupils’ first impressions of central Poland after crossing the old border and they noticed how comparatively impoverished it appears.\(^{1287}\) Meanwhile, what brought the pupils’ most thrilled response, despite also visiting Krakow, Warsaw and Łódź, was Jasnągôrâ: ‘the

\(^{1282}\) Iwanowski, IZ P117, p. 11.
\(^{1283}\) Iwanowski, POZO, p. 686.
\(^{1284}\) Iwanowski IZ P117, p. 1.
\(^{1285}\) Iwanowski, POZO, p. 698.
\(^{1286}\) Ibid., p. 712.
\(^{1287}\) Iwanowski, IZ P117, p. 60.
ancient centre of religious worship which made a huge, indeed stirring impression on the Warmian girls’. They even asked to remain two extra days in Częstochowa.\footnote{Iwanowski, IZ P117, p.62.} Here the demands to restrict representations of religion take effect, as the Warmian youths’ identification with Poland through religious bonds is omitted. The published version suggests the itinerary led only to Warsaw and Krakow, missing Łódź and Częstochowa.\footnote{Iwanowski, IZ P117, p.65.} Iwanowski praises the impact of the trip, but the book omits his complaint that ‘had trips been organised sooner then repolonisation would have proceeded more quickly and better, while German would be used less often than it is today.’\footnote{As Iwanowski noted in his diary and reproduced in an unpublished section of his competition entry, dated 15 April 1956. Iwanowski, IZ P117, p.160.} The published narrative consequently constructs a successful image of Polonisation, largely led by state initiatives in accordance with pioneers, rather than drawing attention to ongoing problems with integration, as large numbers of autochthons left for Germany.\footnote{Iwanowski, IZ P117, p.65.} Following a long description of the trip, the published memoir ends with Iwanowski reflecting upon his achievements as he celebrates New Year’s Eve 1956/57. He believes he contributed ‘modestly to the foundations of a new life’, leading to ‘a system of social justice, building socialism. For ten years we took a difficult path […]. Often doing wrong we acted in good faith that we were doing right. The expected renewal did, however come, and we took the right path which is to lead us to socialism.’\footnote{Iwanowski, POZO, p.723.} The ellipsis omits his strongest critique, however: ‘Along the road there are plenty of rifts and distortions and harm done to the local population.’\footnote{Iwanowski, IZ P117, p.166.} This would disrupt somewhat the optimistic narrative of his integration and the local population’s Polonisation.

Iwanowski’s memoir was possibly chosen to conclude the volume not particularly because of his work with autochthons but because his concluding statements reveals something of an acceptable attitude towards stalinism, one based in constructive criticism and the optimism engendered by the transformations of 1956. Of course, by the time of the second edition in 1970, or even perhaps in 1963, his optimism could be read as an illustration of deflated hopes and the distance that remained to the fulfilment of the promises of socialism. Still, in ideal terms, concluding with Iwanowski gives POZO (1963) a useful form as it shows the apparent legitimacy PPR had in the early days, with Pajdak’s settlement as a peasant activist working on the economic base through to the superstructural legitimation of the Gomułka government.
declared by an intellectual who achieved qualifications in People’s Poland, as well as contributing to the nation-building project through integrating as a repatriant in the Recovered Territories.

His family homeland does emerge in the published text, however, and contributes to the history of memory under communism as he notes Vilnius appears involuntarily, often at troubling times in Barczewo.

> Sometimes I dreamed of my beloved home city of Wilno in its full springtime beauty and of my youthful years, now irretrievably passed...

I could not, however, allow myself to dream for long. Reality demanded a matter-of-fact perspective. So I quickly shook off my dreams and tried to look soberly upon my life.\footnote{Iwanowski, POZO, p.708.}

The bracketless ellipsis seems stylistic, as if signalling Iwanowski’s drift into dream, while the paragraph break marks an abrupt return to reality. However, the manuscript reveals no marked cut, meaning censorial intervention is hidden in the ellipsis as pain associated with longing is omitted. Flying over recognisable landmarks in his dreams, he ‘felt so light and divine that when I awoke I felt in my heart such pain that I will most probably never again see the beloved city of my youth.’\footnote{Iwanowski, IZ P117, p.52.}

He yearns of course for his home city to which significant emotional bonds are attached, but he also longs for a return to his youthful years. Both versions demonstrate, however, his active suppression of memories to better enable adaptation to his new community. Engaging in public life and the postwar authorities became easier if melancholy recollections of the eastern borderlands were avoided in active memory. The opening declaration of patriotic dedication and historical justification of migration was insufficient. He forces his own forgetting, recognising geopolitical realities’ permanence and the need for everyday adaptation, rather than because he felt recollection may be dangerous. After all, the memoir competition provides an opportunity to narrativise and release the involuntary memories.

Izabela Grdeń’s memoir reveals similar aspects of repatriant autobiographical memory. Born in 1927 near Skole in prewar Stanisławów voivodeship, she moved to a farm in Mojęcice village (Wrocław voivodeship) then to Szprotawa, a town 100km away in Zielona Góra voivodeship. Grdeń’s covering letter to IZ, dated 30 March 1957, indicates how she imagined her competition entry’s readers’ expectations: ‘there are no impressions on political changes, no events on a world scale, the sort of things you are perhaps
expecting.' 1296 She imagines, incorrectly, that IZ sought standard event-focused autobiographies, perhaps reproducing public narratives. Importantly, however, she was prepared to deliberately challenge imagined expectations. She is not, though, aware of the significance of her role in contributing to historically and politically significant processes, namely the settlement of the Recovered Territories.

Her memoir, as it appears in *POZO*, began by describing eastern borderlands experiences during the ‘last days of German occupation’ when there was ‘permanent fear of Ukrainian nationalists [*banderowcy]*’. The entry of Soviet troops ‘brought relief. An offer was made, meaning anyone who wanted to could leave for Poland. Everyone was stunned by the quick turn of events.’ Following bombing in 1939, nationalist attacks, murdered children and women, ‘[n]ow it was possible to leave. Everyone was tired with it all. They wanted to flee and forget.’ 1297 Here her description is compacted but the loss of a familiar homeland to ethnic nationalism, proves a spur to departure and forgetting. Her IZ biographical questionnaire highlights that she maintains emotional bonds with her childhood homeland and that she is happy in Szprotawa ‘but if it were possible then I would return to where I spent my childhood.’ 1298 Nothing indicates hope or that her memory of home prevents adaptation, with resignation to geopolitical realities prevalent.

Reference to her original entry reveals that the opening published section began the second part of her two-part memoir, titled ‘Departure’. The first was titled ‘Before departure’ and its fifteen pages covered life in her village of Myrtyuky, beginning with reflections upon Soviet rule as transforming Polish-Ukrainian relations. ‘You find out suddenly that where you’re living isn’t Poland any more but Ukraine.’ Friends and neighbours start telling Poles that ‘you’re not needed here, you’re intruders.’ Social relations had been spoiled as the groups separated, likewise in schools. She stresses that only under German occupation ‘did nationalists began mass slaughters of entire Polish villages.’ 1299 The unpublished text provides necessary context to the destruction of a Polish-Ukrainian community, showing how wartime groundwork for fatal ethnic tensions was laid under initial Soviet occupation. The earliest confirmation of departure came from commissars in January 1945 which led Grdeń’s father to draw upon memories of the 1939-41 occupation and he thus feared deportation to Siberia. 1300 The final five pages of this first part depict her love for a local

1296 IZ P150, Grdeń covering letter, 30 March 1957.
1298 IZ P150, Biographical questionnaire.
1299 Grdeń, IZ P150, part one, p.11.
1300 Grdeń, IZ P150, part one, p.5 and p.10.
hero who killed some NKVD officers and Ukrainian partisans before he was killed the day before they departed in April 1945.

The archived second part reveals that the published opening was censored, lending some legitimacy to the claims in, for example, Skąd my tu, where departure becomes framed as a willing escape Ukrainian violence. The published version suggests passive acceptance of departure which, in fact, was met with opposition. ‘When [A]n offer was made, meaning anyone who wanted to could leave “for Poland” there was outrage.’ The only change marked on the manuscript was a shift from sowieckie to radzieckie, meaning that the seemingly humanitarian transfer constructed by the published version took place at later stages, either following censorial intervention or as a result of editorial consultation. The community rejects the new delimitation of Poland, while fearing “Poland” was in fact Siberia. ‘We had no certainty where we were going. Some people said we’d been cheated, that it isn’t true that we are going to Poland, only to Siberia instead or somewhere completely different.’ The fear of Siberia influenced preparations for departure, with her parents arguing over whether to pack domestic goods and practical items, as her mother suggests, or to take personal mementoes and school books, as her father wished. Their approaches indicate differing attitudes to resettlement; perhaps her mother was ready to immediately restart life anywhere, while her father would probably immerse himself in nostalgia. Alternatively, his sentiment might be interpreted as recognition that no return was possible, hence any artefacts needed to be saved while possible, while her mother’s practical concerns could indicate a desire to survive until return was feasible.

While the published background to departure suggested alignment to publicly acceptable claims, confirming today’s fears regarding communist-era publications, there is clear evidence that emotional bonds and tragic loss featured in the communist-era published sphere. Grđen recalls her final glimpse of the family home. She also shows memories returning involuntarily in the course of everyday life. ‘I’ve been here so many years. In the kaleidoscope of unbidden [nieproszone] memories a happy childhood, sadness and the home come and go. Trundling behind the cart in springtime mud to this day I cannot expunge the

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1301 Grđen, IZ P150, part two, p.1.
1303 Grđen, POZO, p.196.
1304 Having already published Grđen’s emotional bonds to her family home (p.197), POZO features her family’s tearful farewell to the local homeland as her parents departed ‘with their heads bowed, filled with regret at leaving behind their home and garden which they had built with their hard work over many years.’ Grđen, POZO, p.199.
vision of my home from beneath my tear-filled eyelids.' Seasonal weather combining with everyday actions also conducted in the east triggered memories of the family home, departure and tears. Whereas the editors maintained this peasant woman’s unbidden memories and emotional bonds, revealing the impossibility of ‘fleeing and forgetting’ or completely suppressing memories, they edited Iwanowski’s memoir – by a male member of the intelligentsia – to appear as if he had largely suppressed his emotional bonds in the course of the demands of everyday life and towards patriotic adaptation.

Grdeń’s *POZO* settler memoir also presents details of a torturous journey westwards, although some details are cut, including the *Russkie* identity of the railwaymen who required something (vodka) to acquire better conditions during the transport. Any potential for negative stereotyping of Soviet citizens is effaced, while ellipses – suggesting censorial intervention – also protect Polish national dignity. During a stop in Krakow voivodeship the family scoured fields for feed for their cattle, begging local farmers who chased them away, beating them with sticks. ‘They refused to listen [...] They called us Ukrainians, even though we spoke Polish. When we tried persuading them and explaining, they spat back in our faces: “If you were Poles you wouldn’t have abandoned your lands. Dejected by this, we returned to the wagons, damning their heartlessness and stinginess.’ The editors deemed this all publishable as they even corrected grammatical errors in the cut line. The farmers’ failure to recognise their fellow Poles as Poles indicates not only problems with theories of national solidarity, but might evoke readers’ associations of the loss of the eastern borderlands with national betrayal, albeit committed not by those departing but by Poland’s Soviet ally. Grdeń is particularly upset by this lack of understanding and recognition as it denigrates her community’s wartime suffering. She recalls how ‘Polish families fled murders in Volhynia and we took them in, fed them, as best as we could. Our house was full of strangers who could not even speak Polish. Yet her we met cold-hearted aloofness.’

She manages some wry humour, lost in the published version, at the lack of compassion in ‘the home country’ (*kraj*). ‘It was a good thing that people believed some of the rumours that we were heading to Siberia and everyone took a bit more food, otherwise things would have been really bad.’

Having left Ukraine on 9 May, the train travelled around Poland for six weeks with the

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1306 Grdeń, *POZO*, p.199; Grdeń, *IZ P150*, part two, p.3
1308 Grdeń, *POZO*, p.201.
settlers told there was no room to settle wherever they stopped. At another stop, near Pila in the Recovered Territories, Grdeń and another young woman sought animal feed. ‘There was no clover nearby. Father returned only in the evening.’ He had been seeking information at the town’s repatriation office. The published version reads rather unremarkably, giving no indication that the sociologists cut a horrific episode of attempted rape by Red Army soldiers, which the women resisted before the transportees assisted. They then hid the women when the soldiers returned to the train, supposedly to check on the women’s wellbeing. While there, the soldiers stole a suitcase and some documents. Such incidents influenced settlers’ decisions as to where to settle, although the published version mentions only the danger posed by ‘the mass of various marauders and looters’. Having reached Wroclaw voivodeship, the family ‘sat in the corner at the German’s farm waiting for who knows what.’ Any urge to permanent settlement is lost as they are surrounded again by a national other, seemingly defeating the purpose of transfer.

However,

we lived most amicably with our German. He often visited us and lent his horse, advising us and assisting. He spoke a bit of Polish. Speaking to father he was surprised how tidy and clean we keep the house and farmyard, and that we don’t go looting [“na szaber”]. We had genuinely looted nothing. A few essentials were already here while the rest was ours.

The German evidently assists the family’s stabilisation and indeed adaptation to agriculture, enabling them to improve their farm while familiarising them with local conditions. His reflection upon the family’s tidiness is not necessarily based in national stereotypes but reflects perceptions of the earliest wave of incoming Poles. The family becomes independent of the German once it acquires its own horse, thanks to the author’s brother in the military, creating a sense that ‘we had, in a word, settled down [zadomowiliśmy się].’ This could be translated literally as ‘we made ourselves at home’. Some published memoirs in POZO would end at this optimistic moment, marking apparently completed stabilisation as repatriant peasants increasingly adapted to new social and economic surroundings. However, the published version continues into stalinism, revealing how agricultural policy subsequently destabilised settler families. Agitation for collective farms started and there

[1314] Ibid., p.203.
[1315] Ibid., p.208.
were ‘higher compulsory deliveries, which had already started ruining us anyway.’ Livestock levels declined with feed shortages but ‘Taxes were the real bane of our lives.’ The family relied on her brother to send cash from the town ‘to scrape together to make ends meet.’ 1316 The trope of ‘settling scores’, at the censor termed it, is removed, although only the first cut was marked. It seems that the problems that might still affect farmers were particularly sensitive. Censors, rather than editors, intervened when Grdeń explained the horse ‘had to be sold. Taxes were so high after all. Father’s health and his age didn’t allow him to work on the land.’ 1317 The horse, in providing the published text’s title, clearly had particular significance for the editors as a symbol of adaptation which was disrupted by stalinist agricultural policy. The published version, though, makes the horse a symbol of adaptation that fades in importance as if revealing the unfeasibility of peasant farming and unattractiveness to a younger generation. This was a problem that Chmielewska highlighted, as older farmers lost motivation to farm.

Grdeń and her parents moved to Szprotawa, although this urbanisation experience is hardly celebrated as advance, because, according to the published text, they felt pushed out of the village by health problems. However, her manuscript reveals that after ‘vegetating’ for some time they were refused permission to return part of their land to the state. ‘The land went fallow. But the final straw was locating upstairs a family of so-called Lemkos who ultimately put my parents off [obrzydzili] life on their “own” farm.’ 1318 So ultimately tax policy, agricultural policy and nationality policy all combined with personal circumstances to make her parents feel that any homeliness gained in the Recovered Territories had been destroyed. They had begun to stabilise and adapt, thus another – albeit nascent – family homeland was lost. The arrival of Lemkos, whom she implies were Ukrainian, would certainly prove emotionally challenging given her family’s wartime experiences. Despite censorship, editing and cutting, these experiences provided the core of Grdeń’s published memoir, with particular focus on the journey westwards. Life in Szprotawa is hardly elaborated, revealing little of her personal life or work in administration. She ends expressing a desire for a return to agriculture and there is no compensatory post-October hope. Even in its published form it becomes a fascinating illustration of how stabilisation, adaptation and integration were not linear processes on a line of inevitable progress, but could suffer various setbacks. Certainly a valuable sociological source, Grdeń’s memoir does very little to support the framework of

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1316 Grdeń, POZO, p.209; Grdeń, IZ P150, part two, p.10.
1317 Grdeń, POZO, p.21; Grdeń, IZ P150, part two, p.11.
1318 Grdeń, IZ P150, part two, p.11.
POZO’s official objectives, including aiding the campaign against German revisionism.

Franciszek Kubiszyn was another repatriant memoirist published in POZO. Born in 1897 in Kozowa village in Brzeżany district of Tarnopol voivodeship, he arrived in the Lubusz village of Przemyslaw in 1945 and was widowed in 1947.\textsuperscript{1319} His narrative also focuses on the journey, noting how bribes were commonplace, demanded from Soviet and Polish authorities.\textsuperscript{1320} Soviet authorities’ reputation was protected, but corruption on the Polish side was noted, likewise PUR officials in Katowice appear unsympathetic, telling transportees ‘they should have brought feed for animals. We were told that we’d be travelling 3-4 days, but we’ve been on the move for two weeks.’\textsuperscript{1321} There are parallels with Grdeń’s family’s experience in terms of bribes and robberies. Kubiszyn expresses his disappointment with conditions encountered in “the West”, which did not resemble the promised ‘Canada’ but was full of smashed houses with Soviet troops close by,\textsuperscript{1322} intimating their responsibility for much of the damage. Kubiszyn also outlines the ineptitude of new local authorities, with the cooperative (GS) giving him turnip seeds (rzepa) instead of rapeseed (rzepak), while also confusing winter and spring barley for sowing, thus wasting much of his time and effort. There are also huge problems with mice and thistles, which provide the memoir’s title. Notable in the editing of Kubiszyn’s memoir is that it cuts his message of hope stemming from an end to collectivisation, meaning that his published text ends on a note damning postwar Poland’s economy. ‘The battle for trade’ meant the local electricity installation company was closed down and was not reconnected to the supply.\textsuperscript{1323} This village hardly appears to satisfy the narrative that Recovered Territories village guaranteed repatriants’ material and cultural advance. Here many of the problematic issues listed by the censor nevertheless feature in the published text, including a particularly strong critique of postwar authorities with little hope counterbalancing the failed earlier era.

In official accounts the authorities were, of course, to appear as pioneers of settlement, leading the Polish nation to the new territories. The Moczarite-partisan nationalist strand of Polish media and politics stressed the significance of military settlers to the new lands, as evident in the Żołnierz Polski review, mentioned above. There a single fragment of some 70-

\textsuperscript{1319} Franciszek Kubiszyn, P219, ‘Myszy i oset’, POZO, pp.262-265. Additional biographical information from IZ P219 biographical questionnaire.
\textsuperscript{1320} Kubiszyn, POZO, p.262 and p.263; Kubiszyn, IZ P219, p.2 and p.4.
\textsuperscript{1321} Kubiszyn, POZO, pp.263-4.
\textsuperscript{1322} Kubiszyn, POZO, p.264; IZ P219, p.9.
\textsuperscript{1323} Kubiszyn, POZO, p.265. Kubiszyn comments on modes of collective blackmail employed to encourage collectivisation after the ‘battle for trade’ closed the local electricity installation company and that ‘only the Polish October improved our conditions in the western territories.’ Kubiszyn, IZ P219, p.12.
100 words was selected to generalise the entire community of military settlers, yet reference to the *POZO* version would thwart such totalising readings. Aleksander Pietraszko’s memoir, which is missing from the archive, was cited in that review. Born in 1921 in Wilejka in the former Vilnius voivodeship, he was demobilised in 1946, with his wife and young son returning from the USSR that year. He initially settled alone in Zatonie in Zgorzelec district before moving to Legnica where, at the time of writing, he was a teacher with secondary pedagogical education. His memoir concentrates on his time as a farmer on a well-equipped twenty-hectare farm, he took on before acquiring a horse from UNRRA then a cow, although he had to struggle for that as one farmer refused to relinquish his seven cattle. Pietraszko was angered this as he felt as someone who fought for these lands ought to be rewarded. Instead, he struggled to get by, travelling to Rzeszów voivodeship to buy chickens and cheaper pigs. While he was certainly a dedicated settler, there is little indication of the privileged treatment that *Żołnierz Polski* suggested military settlers received in reward for their dedication. He received a farm, but also struggled as many pioneer settlers did.

His memoir is most notable for his depiction of Polish-German relations, as the permeable border barely one kilometre away, meant Germans often returned to visit old homes and trade with Poles, or even establish relationships. German women ‘spent whole months in Poland hidden by their lovers.’ Military settlers ‘lived largely without their wives, alone, since their families remained beyond the Bug.’ The German women, often widowed, were – he claims – ‘happy to sweeten their loneliness with some flirting with a Pole.’ Censorship documents suggest things were not always so sweet. ‘Authors mention also unpleasant consequences of maintaining sexual relations with German women / p. 192 – rape.’ This moment was evidently removed from print. Pietraszko’s text does note, however, some settlers’ heartbreak, once ‘later on, when deporting Germans began’. Some men who had fought Germans found that what were initially dismissed as ‘little romances’ or acts of economic necessity brought ‘personal tragedy.’ Initially ‘there was a certain necessity to keeping Germans to work in fields and farmyards because otherwise a farm faced ruin.’ He notes that some Polish and Russian women ex-forced labourers also became attractive catches as ‘they managed to acquire a decent amount of property as the

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1326 Ibid., p.192.
1327 AP Poznań/WUKPiW/243, p.64.
1329 Ibid., p.191.
front was passing and not wanting to lose it they also took on farms which they ran with settlers. This usually led to cohabitation and some people began to gradually forget their families, wives and children and formally started new families.’ Later some ‘cases of bigamy’ were uncovered.\textsuperscript{1330}

Pietraszko’s memoir indicates memoirs’ potential to reveal social phenomena barely registered elsewhere beyond personal testimonies as he reveals an everyday microhistorical perspective on postwar history and Polish-German relations. Emotional turmoil, sexual relations, gender relations and disrupted families become the focus, revealing how these matters intersected in postwar Poland’s economic and social reconstruction, rather than simply questions of nationality, nationalism, hatred and toxicity, or indeed the heroism and dedication of military settlers. Gomułka’s closing MZO report also noted this ‘serious problem’ of Polish-German sexual relations, as some 800 applications were received by early 1949 seeking permission for Polish-German marriage, the report noting it was almost always Polish men marrying German women. ‘The ministry was generally negatively minded, seeking to avoid permeation of alien elements into Polish society. Life, however, at times created specific de facto conditions as bonds linking particular citizens with foreign women (children) emerged.’\textsuperscript{1331} Despite the depersonalised language, the state evidently adopted a more pragmatic position, although strict conditions were imposed on permitting mixed marriage and settlement, with assessment including the number of children, the length of time spent together, class origins, political views and attitudes towards postwar reality. It is unclear how many applications were accepted or indeed what innovative circumventions were developed. There is, though, clear foundation for further investigation of the intimate and personal relations shaping postwar migration and (re)settlement. Pietraszko reflects upon his writing, and is justified in finding that although neither a writer nor journalist, ‘I have presented in simple words the facts I have encountered and which could provide the basis for a historical study.’\textsuperscript{1332} The mode encouraged by popular autobiography would not be in the grand historiographical tradition, but a social history with focus on women’s experiences rather than the militaristic appropriation of his life story that occurred in \textit{Żołnierz Polski}. Nearby Platerówka, settled by female soldiers, could be an interesting site further disrupting male-centred heroic military settler narratives. Pietraszko also happened to document life in a village which has largely ceased to exist owing to the expansion of Turów.

\textsuperscript{1330} Ibid., p.192.
\textsuperscript{1332} Pietraszko, POZO, p.194.
power station and mining near Bogatynia. In the time his published narrative covered, there were only faint indicators of stabilisation, such as declining drinking levels and the swimming pool’ being refurbished.\footnote{Ibid., p.193.} Again, there is little optimism in the conclusion to the published memoir.

Numerous forced labourers in Zatonie remained, becoming permanent settlers. Stanisław Bania, a prewar peasant farmer born in 1901 in the USA, was also a forced labourer who remained in place. He spent a year in a German camp near Neustettin/Szczecinek before being moved to Neuhof (Wierzchowno) to work as a blacksmith.\footnote{Stanisław Bania, P93, ‘Sołtys z Będlina’, POZO, pp.445-455.} He became mayor of neighbouring village Będlino (Drawsko district, Pomeranian voivodeship) making him – using the classification in the 1970 volume – an ‘Organiser of local authorities and administration’. He states news of the PKNW Manifesto reached Poles in the area ‘shortly after it was announced’ meaning ‘we Poles started to stand up to Germans who had already begun treating us differently.’\footnote{Bania, POZO, p.446.} The announcement and establishment of Polish state authorities is attributed revolutionary significance, suggesting that Bania aligns his own consciousness and memory to the history of the Party-state. The most significant transformation in relations in Pomerania occurred in early 1945, once the Red Army advance was inevitable. Soviet troops entered the area on 10 February, with Bania and some forty non-Germans remaining. Others had fled to avoid military service. Polish troops appeared later and Bania, as the oldest remaining Pole, organised a meeting involving ‘the officer for political affairs’ who ‘informed us of the situation in our reborn Poland: there was no end to shouts in honour of Stalin and Polish President Bierut +Soviet and Polish authorities+.’\footnote{Bania, POZO, pp.446-7; IZ P93, p.2.}

Despite his PPR membership,\footnote{Bania, POZO, p.454.} he remained critical of Soviet domination of power structures, although in print his strongest critiques were cut. Złocieniec was the commune centre for 33 villages, ‘the mayor was a Pole (Lipiński), although he was really only +he was also+ responsible for translating Russian.’\footnote{Bania, POZO, p.448; IZ P93, p.4.} Some of the instructions issued by the Military Command were, however, simply ignored by local village mayors who found imposed agricultural demands impossible, even if a Major illustrated them with Soviet citizens’ wartime achievements. A typical response was, Bania notes, ‘if they want, they can sow it themselves, I don’t need to as I’ll leave here later anyway.’\footnote{Bania, POZO, p.449; IZ P93, p.4.} Censors removed evidence
of an attitude that seems to be more commonplace than Bania’s apparent pioneering dedication, with evidence of widespread temporariness or unwilling local administrators undermining the model attitude \textit{POZO} sought to illustrate.

The censor’s approach to Bania’s memoir is somewhat odd, as the published details make clear the Polish population is limited, yet by and large explicit details that he is running the village initially for a German population are reworked. The next permanent Polish settler arrived in Będlinio on 15 May, a forester and policeman, who was joined by MO colleagues shortly afterwards.\textsuperscript{1340} Civilian settlement intensified in July 1945, when the author’s wife and family arrived. ‘Polish language and Polish songs could be heard on the streets. All those arriving thought that things had always been like they were today in the past, although – after five years’ bondage and knowing the village as it was in the past – my heart felt a different joy at these songs and language.’\textsuperscript{1341} Bania feels his emotional bonds to the area are stronger than any new settlers’ because of his suffering endured in the area, while he also oversaw the transition to a Polish village. However, the editors alter his duties in the past, so that they included ‘acquiring grain for the \textit{Germans} + population+’,\textsuperscript{1342} while his adaptation to local agricultural methods meant he learned ‘planting potatoes in April was not practiced by the \textit{Germans} + in the past+’. He learned this from ‘\textit{Germans}, the older local farmers.’\textsuperscript{1343} There is no indication on the archived text that these details were to be removed, suggesting that censors sought to efface the legacy of German agricultural practices in the Polish Recovered Territories, as well as Bania’s recognition that Germans were locals, inhabiting a local homeland. There might also be wariness of presenting evidence of Polish-Soviet rule over a largely German population.

An important aspect of Bania’s initial role is omitted by the editors, meanwhile, namely how he negotiated not only central Poles’ looting but also ‘fairly regular, particularly in late May, incidents when Soviet soldiers passing through the village stopped here and looted houses. Lots also came from the airfield 7km away.’ While central Poles took ‘cartloads’ of goods, the Soviet soldiers developed a form of trade as ‘they looted in one village before selling on the goods in another for vodka or moonshine.’\textsuperscript{1344} This might explain why the initial arrivals were Polish police who were to combat Polish looters and problems with Soviet troops, who together created conditions that made permanent settlement impossible. Complaints to the

\textsuperscript{1340} Bania, \textit{POZO}, p.452
\textsuperscript{1341} \textit{Ibid.}, p.452.
\textsuperscript{1342} Bania, \textit{POZO}, p.450; IZ P93, p.5.
\textsuperscript{1343} Bania, \textit{POZO}, p.451; IZ P93, p.6.
\textsuperscript{1344} Bania, IZ P93, p.6.
Military Command proved ineffective, even when Poles defending ‘not their own property but that which would be for future settlers were beaten with truncheons mainly by drunken soldiers who said the same thing over and over, “we liberated Poland but you won’t give us German things?”’.\textsuperscript{1345} Despite the Soviet threat demanding the greatest bravery and pioneering dedication in establishing Polish rule, Bania’s experiences could not be published. Again, as in \textit{Z życia osadników}, elements could occasionally slip into the narrative where it was evident that ‘Soviet or Polish soldiers’ were an integral part of the local conditions as ‘bartering was required to get string for use during the first harvest in exchange for flour, butter, spirits’.\textsuperscript{1346} The authorities clearly acknowledged the significance of alcohol in the new economy that emerged as they rewarded the successful harvest in Będlino with ‘several litres of spirits.’\textsuperscript{1347} It seems there is an editorial attempt to construct the experiences in Będlino as positive microcosm of rural transformation in the Recovered Territories since they omit his observation that ‘in September in other villages I saw grain in the fields, causing a pain in my heart that so much bread is going to waste while workers in central Poland are waiting for it. Work was badly organised.’\textsuperscript{1348} While the published text creates an impression of a typical pioneer organiser, Bania’s own typescript demonstrates that this was hardly the case as he reappropriates official discourse critically, indicating that the spontaneous organisation of PPR and other organisations meant workers’ interests could be overlooked, particularly as few other village mayors appeared as dedicated.

The narrative continues with Bania depicting the formation of various other institutions, such as the school and fire brigade, as well as political parties. ‘Peasants did not really want to join PPR, they preferred SL. My job was to get every peasant organised and involved in work for the community.’\textsuperscript{1349} Bania does not appear ideologically driven as he avoids pushing PPR membership, realising that transforming the community is more significant than political revolution. Bania’s memoir to this point depicted largely progress towards stabilisation and offered indications of adaptation. However, somewhat surprisingly, the editors ended the published version suddenly on a note of uncertainty, fear and destabilisation.

Some settlers took away property they had found on their farms to central Poland, saying “maybe there will be war, we don’t know what will happen.” It took a lot of convincing at meetings and individually that the Potsdam agreement is sacrosanct

\textsuperscript{1345} Bania, IZ P93, p.7
\textsuperscript{1346} Bania, \textit{POZO}, p.453; IZ P93, p.8.
\textsuperscript{1347} Bania, \textit{POZO}, p.453.
\textsuperscript{1348} Bania, IZ P93, p.9.
\textsuperscript{1349} Bania, \textit{POZO}, p.454; IZ P93, p.9.
and we Poles will remain here for centuries, while we chased out various
gossipmongers from the village sometimes even using police assistance.\textsuperscript{1350}

Something even odder than the choice to end the published memoir with this passage is that it was edited so that fear of war was \textit{added} to the original. ‘A lot of settled Poles took away what they could to their family and friends, saying “we don’t know what will happen.”’\textsuperscript{1351}

Perhaps the fear of war was added in order to give peasants a concrete source of fear, rather than see them overcome by general trepidation or allow their uncertainty to be associated with the rise of political organisations in the area. Ending here does, however, indicate Bania’s successful activism as he ensures damaging claims are countered and those responsible removed from the village, thus permitting an extrapolating reading that suggests full stabilisation would eventually ensue.

Reading the remaining 6½ pages of Bania’s memoir indicates, meanwhile, that very little publishable material remained, as he shifts to a year-by-year account to 1952 having used monthly entries to cover the period to early 1946. He refers to the falsification of 1946 referendum results, which he witnessed as a member of the constituency electoral commission. He condemns class war as benefitting ‘those who didn’t work at all’ as “\textit{Kulaks}” were driven to buy grain from speculators to fill state obligations.\textsuperscript{1352} Things got ‘even worse after the unification of PPR and PPS’, as the state punished wealthier farmers, which he considered ‘unfair in the Recovered Territories’ because the state created the ‘socialist economy’ in which everyone started from scratch, while he finds there was no reason for farmers to be “poor” in the new territories given the surplus of available farmland.\textsuperscript{1353} Bania was a ZSL member at this point and the PRN called on him to cooperate with PZPR on pushing through collectivisation, otherwise membership would be withdrawn. After one incident where all members in one village were held inside a meeting for two days, Bania asked to be relieved of his duties. This meant he was denounced at a ZSL meeting as ‘an enemy of the current order’, was removed from the Party and allowed to return to his ten-hectare farm.\textsuperscript{1354} His peace did not last long, as in early July 1950 the PZPR commune-level secretary, accompanied by police, searched his property and accused him of hiding former-German property, after which he was held in Drawsko before a judge ordered his release.\textsuperscript{1355} Bania considers these incidents ‘chicanery’ with the UB trying to secure

\textsuperscript{1350} Bania, \textit{POZO}, p.455.
\textsuperscript{1351} Bania, \textit{IZ P93}, p.10.
\textsuperscript{1352} \textit{Ibid.}, p.11.
\textsuperscript{1353} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.11-12.
\textsuperscript{1354} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.12-13.
\textsuperscript{1355} \textit{Ibid.}, p.13.
cooperation through instilling fear. He was asked to become ‘a secret informant’ but ‘refused politely, thanking them for such an honour. I was told to go home and think over carefully my decision.’ Despite the threat, he still refused.\footnote{Ibid., p.14.} Meanwhile, the visits from police and UB remained regular to Bania’s farm as he was deemed one of four kulaks in the village, so a farmer with over ten hectares of land.\footnote{Ibid., p.15.} In 1952 he was accused of having 500 zlotys of unpaid taxes, which resulted in the police confiscated 3000 zlotys of property, including furniture. He was cleared of the debts but the property was never returned. Faith that the Gryfice trial would bring benefits dissipates and Bania finally abandons private farming, his activism long-since stifled. Some peasant families survived scraping taxes together, often sending younger family members into towns or industry, whereas Bania opted to join a PGR in Koszalin voivodeship because he could remain in farming but have few responsibilities. ‘I had lost the urge to work, I couldn’t go on in those conditions. My land was classed at levels 5 and 6 [very low], I had just one horse left and one cow.’ His children had moved away from home, so ‘I surrendered the farm.’\footnote{Ibid., p.16.} He was still in Koszalin voivodeship at the time of writing and declared himself happy in the Recovered Territories.\footnote{IZ P93, biographical questionnaire.} It is evident, however, that Bania had built emotional bonds with the new homeland in Będlino owing to both wartime experiences and postwar investment of energy, capital and dedication, while he had also begun to integrated in the local community. His migration to Koszalin was thus especially painful.

The published version concluded at an evidently pivotal moment in Bania’s life, leaving no indication of what was to follow. While suggesting that his dedicated activism would continue in POZO, his full autobiography reveals in fact how his efforts were spoiled under Polish stalinism. There is little indication in his full text that he would be willing in post-October Poland to re-engage in public activism. Certainly his social relations were spoiled, and he lost his new home and any social bonds established in Będlino, but unlike Gross’ totalising theory from \textit{Revolution from Abroad}, it seems in this case that political engagement and the refusal to participate further led to his being targeted. He participated in various organisations pushing through postwar Poland’s political domination, including electoral commissions and collectivisation bodies, until they made it impossible for him to remain a peasant farmer, loyal to his fellow peasants. Curp did not use Bania’s memoir, perhaps because it would be difficult to incorporate it into his vision of new communities.
bound my national solidarity opposing collectivisation through informal but unified resistance to Party-state policy. There was little evident national solidarity, as different farmers sought different methods to get by. The editing of Bania’s memoir, meanwhile, indicates that the sociologist-editors’ own selection processed contributed to construction of a pioneer narrative which became a collective memory they later attempted to critique. 

*POZO* celebrates only Bania’s achievements in Polonising Będlino but gives no indication of the subsequent fate of such activists.

POZO’s first-prize-winning memoir was also by a mayor who, like Bania, remained in place after forced labour. Stanisław Dulewicz’s memoir was, however, planned for standalone publication but was banned by censors. I argue that this was the principle reason, alongside critical content, for its banning as it was deprived of the benefits of compilations’ fragmented narratives, although fragments of his memoir were published in *Przegląd Zachodni* while a longer selection later featured in *POZO*. The five-volume selection of edited POZO entries held at IS UAM features the most extensive surviving version of Dulewicz’s autobiography, while the censors’ report reveals some additional details of what the original included. Much of it concerned his time in the small Pomeranian town of Darłowo where he had been a forced labourer before becoming involved in nascent Polish authorities during dual rule with Soviet military and political authorities, while a significant German population remained. Dulewicz (1893-1963), originally from Miechów district (Krakow voivodeship), subsequently worked as a teacher and completed higher education.

Instytut Zachodni submitted his standalone memoir for censorship with the title *Pamiętnik osadnika Ziem Odzyskanych*. Zawistowska reviewed it in September 1958, finding the author’s style ‘extremely subjective and tendentious in illustrating facts and events.’ This took the form of ‘explicit anti-Soviet and anti-Party tones, bigotry, extremely negative views of economic activities of Polish authorities in the Recovered Territories, subjective assessments of activists at various levels – creating a whole unfit for publication.’ GUK’s rejection suggests serious editorial misjudgement regarding the limits of publication as they attempted their first full-scale presentation of POZO materials. It seems that the post-October thaw was passing. The censor was most concerned by anti-Soviet sentiment and outlines

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1360 ‘Burmistrz z Darłowa: Fragmenty wspomnień Stanisława Dulewicza, laureata I nagrody w konkursie na POZO, zorganizowanym przez IZ w 1957 roku’, *Przegląd Zachodni*, 3-4 (1958), 82-94.  
occurrences thoroughly, with these ranging from: \(^{1364}\)

highlighting the sense of threat accompanying the entry of the Red Army into these territories [four cases] through to an exquisitely negative characterisation of Soviet soldiers and officers [23 cases between pages 67-417], as well as representatives of military authorities and their subordinates; the author outlines the gulf between the Russians and the Polish people, growing conflicts caused – according to the author – by the wasteful and inept Soviet economy solved only thanks to central Polish authorities exerting pressure [11 cases, 141-375]. A clear illustration of the author’s negative attitudes towards the USSR are evident in fragments on [5 pages]. On pages 78-81 there is a description of the visit of a delegation of German inhabitants of Darłowo to general Czubieszow who sought interventions into rapes committed in Szczecin by Red Army soldiers on German women. There are certain accents in the general’s response which justify the soldiers’ “wantonness” [\textit{swawola}] despite giving an order to cease their escapades [\textit{wybryki}]. On pages 82-85 and 110 the author includes a description of the expulsion of Darlowo’s German population and the deportation of Germans to the USSR. The brutal methods of Soviet rule arouse readers’ hatred towards that rule.\(^{1365}\)

This final line shows the censor does not doubt the veracity of the events Dulewicz described. This contrasts with the censor assessing Żygulski’s study who deemed the respondents’ declarations of temporariness ‘fundamentally false’.\(^{1366}\) What makes Dulewicz ‘anti-Soviet’ is not that he has offered an opinion but that he considered it necessary to include such events, whose truth is accepted. Presumably the editors’ and publishers motives are questionable, too. Zawistowska’s approach contrasts with that of \textit{POZO}’s censor who trusted readers to draw generalising conclusions as to social processes rather than focus on particular details. Zawistowska, though, imagines readers as inassimilable to the state’s approved image of the USSR and in fact characterised by anti-Soviet hatred, which the censor seems to imply is justified on the basis of these events. The censor, not Dulewicz, assessed Soviet methods as ‘brutal’. Zawistowska’s approach recalls that of censors reviewing a historical investigation presenting similar events,\(^{1367}\) where ‘the censor stated brutally honestly that proven facts cannot be expressed in print because society has not yet matured enough to learn the truth.’ Consequently, the cuts were “for a higher social

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\(^{1364}\) She includes specific page numbers; I note only the number of examples.

\(^{1365}\) AAN/KC PZPR/XVIII/250, p.2. Other apparently anti-Soviet claims include noting that Soviet officers attended secret Masses; Soviet troops murdering Poles passing through Darłowo; or the Red Army removing Polish flags from Darlowo lighthouse on 1 May 1946.

\(^{1366}\) AP Poznań/WUKPIW/243, p. 12.

Romek considers such approaches a development since stalinism, where contentious claims were dismissed as untruths. Zawistowska’s approach recognises readers as critically-minded, potentially subversive, but ultimately the political and national interest takes priority. ‘Given the memoir’s political harmfulness WUK Poznań refused permission to publish the volume.’ Zawistowska supported her colleagues’ opinion while adding that IZ was developing a troubling habit of submitting unpublishable texts as two other volumes were rejected around that time. Dulewicz’s memoir could not be salvaged for book-length publication, particularly as it was aimed at popular and academic audiences, despite its evident value in demonstrating the pioneering achievements of a dedicated pioneering Pole at the foundations of the postwar state.

Inspired by the experiences of forced labourers like Dulewicz and Bania, Dulczewski proposed at a 1965 TRZZ gathering that the fate of 0.5m (of 1.375m) Polish forced labourers located in the Recovered Territories be added to the legal, economic, demographic and historical legitimation of Poland’s acquisition of the lands. Dulczewski notes from a practical perspective that many such forced labourers ‘were ready in a technical-civilisational sense to take over workplaces and administration in the lands (because they did not need to undergo adaptation to the environmental and technical-cultural surroundings, unlike postwar settlers).’ Certainly forced labourers would be familiar with aspects of the territories’ mode of production, although administration was almost certainly learned on the job, as Bania showed. Still, given their immediate presence and pre-existing adaptation, forced labourers could appear as a crucial pioneer presence, while those who returned home were important in encouraging subsequent settlement.

Dulewicz’s text cannot be explored in-depth, owing to reasons of space, but it should be noted that both the PZ and POZO versions included his experience after Soviet soldiers entered Darłowo in early March 1945 when he worked as a translator for the Military Command. He communicated to the general the ‘brutal’ behaviour of Soviet troops when the German population complained, with part of this episode reproduced. The general replied, “and what about your merciless soldiers? How many times did they rape Soviet women, how many horrific crimes did they inflict upon the body of my nation, how many

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1369 AAN/KC PZPR /XVIII/250 – Notatki, informacje, recenzje i inne. GUKPiW (1958-59), pp.2-3 (p.3).
1370 Słowińska wieś Kluki: Pamiętnik nauczyciela w Słupsku and Pogranicze grupy narodowej by Danuta Malewska; AAN/KC PZPR /XVIII/250, p.3.
villages and towns did they burn down – how many cultural works did they deface, how much did they loot and plunder, filling the coffers of the German Reich?” The general concludes that “historical justice has been done” as the sons, brothers and husbands of those complaining committed the crimes he outlined in the USSR.1372 There is also an evident contrast between the German civilians’ experience and the 8 May 1945 celebrations of Stalin and Soviet troops who were deemed ‘simple, dedicated in their work, heroic in battle.’1373

Given the strength of the censor’s concern about this and other fragments, it might appear strange that it is included in PZ, but its limited audience may have enabled this, while the fragmentation afforded by POZO with its multiple authors may have enabled Dulewicz to appear as one of many competing claims over the past. However, this is also strange considering that there were fears regarding PZ’s popularity among West German revisionists.

The censor was also concerned by depictions of Polish-German relations, yet the POZO version shows how settlers seemed loath to lose German labourers as Poles adapted to cohabitation. Settlers’ economic life was often founded on using German farm labour while dedicating energies to more profitable looting and trade. He notes that almost every Polish settler family ‘had on their allocated farm some German family who did the work, while the new owner supervised the Germans’ work instead of participating in it.’ Although Dulewicz blames those settlers ‘who took the line of least resistance’1374 for such behaviour, it seems that he benefitted in a similar manner, as the Janke family carried out physical labour on his 3½-hectare farm while he pursued his career. The German presence was necessary for Polish adaptation to agricultural conditions on unfamiliar terrain, as Poles observed the locals’ practices. Unlike Bania’s memoir, Dulewicz’s was not edited to avoid direct references to remaining Germans. Indeed, Dulewicz declares that he sought to implement ‘a small revolution’ by removing Germans and forcing settlers to adapt although it was evident that for economic reasons they did not desire full national revolution. He decided to set an example as mayor by putting “his” Germans at the top of the deportation list.1375

The published text ends on a personal note, stating that health problems forced his resignation as mayor 28 December 1946, but he continued working in education until when he was pushed under train at Warsaw East station in late 1953. This incident triggered his asthma and regular trips to sanatoria, including Szczawno Zdrój where he wrote his memoir

1372 Dulewicz, Przegląd Zachodni, p.88.
1373 Dulewicz, Przegląd Zachodni, p.89.
1374 Dulewicz, POZO, p.518.
1375 Dulewicz, POZO, pp.519-20.
between 8 March and 14 May 1957. All available versions of Dulewicz’s narrative omit his experience of stalinist Poland or indeed post-October Poland as the selection – probably only one third of his full entry, if two typescript pages, of 450 the censor read, make one published page – typically for POZO memoirs stresses his pioneer period achievements, laying the foundations for full-scale Polish settlement. His memoir, however, offers unusually detailed insight into Polish-German interaction and indeed Polish-Soviet dual rule. Indeed, significant elements of what the censor Zawistowska believed made Dulewicz’s memoir unpublishable as a standalone volume appear in the POZO text, including the rapes of German women by Red Army soldiers. Perhaps as one text among many in a compilation, it was possible to include Dulewicz’s narrative as it had to compete for authority against other texts and indeed the editors’ framing. However, as a standalone volume it would have greater authority as a history in itself. Still, the seventy pages featured in POZO reveal how postwar Polish power and social structures were established in a fragmentary way, with chance people incorporated into authority as part of the initial spontaneous settlement leading to national revolution. Aside from Sławno representatives insisting Dulewicz remained, much in the first months was achieved by spontaneous negotiation with local actors: Soviet troops, German civilians and chance Poles passing through. This experience thus queries some top-down narratives of Party-led and Party-inspired settlement.

Although Dulewicz’s full competition memoir has been lost, unless it appears in an obscure or family archive, with no standalone volume to compensate at least in part, POZO did produce one such volume. Wiesław Sauter – another male teacher – produced an almost ethnographic account of the foundation of schools in the Lubusz region, while also describing his prewar activism in the Babimost region among autochthons. Such is the thickness of Sauter’s description, rarely of his own achievements, but of those of other settlers to the region, it is impossible to explore it fully here. While the title, Powrót na Ziemie Piastowskie might indicate alignment to dominant memory, it emerges as one of the most thorough published autobiographical descriptions of the problems of settlement. It also praises settlers’ pioneering dedication, while disrupting some of the pioneer narrative’s assumptions. In a Sulechów district village, for example, he encountered two women he deems ‘worthy of the name of true pioneers’ as they teach children in a field even as October frosts set in ‘due to the lack of school buildings’, with the state authorities not even aware of their school’s existence. Whereas the public pioneer narrative centred on state

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1376 Dulewicz, POZO, pp.522-23.
1378 Sauter, p.67.
institutions and Party organisations, and thus inevitably men, Sauter’s memoir reveals those
he considers ‘true’ pioneers, ordinary people acting autonomously without official sanction
or reward, but for the good of their communities’ children, overcoming difficult conditions
spontaneously and often with the support of neighbours. Sauter’s memoir becomes an
illustration, in many moments, of what Tomczak found is overwritten by today’s repatriant-
victim hegemonic memory. ‘Active pioneers from the east, conscious of their social role,
transformed into victims, passive pawns moved from space to space.’

The Wydawnictwo Poznańskie archive reveals that the publication of Sauter’s memoir was
negotiated at many levels, requiring significant personal involvement from Władysław
Markiewicz. Sauter’s volume’s production also reveals the role of multifaceted negotiations
between authors, scholars, editors, publishers and censorship bodies in ensuring publication,
as WUK was consulted for advice. Archival research has been unable to establish whether
Dulewicz’s text had the same level of support as Sauter’s from publishers and authoritative
academics, but Sauter’s volume features similar content to what was given as grounds for
banning Dulewicz’s. The editing and censorship of Sauter’s autobiography provides an
intriguing contribution to my investigation thanks to his depiction of fires in Recovered
Territories towns after the passing of the front in 1945. Chapter eight sees him visit
Skwierzyna on 15 September 1945. ‘The town turned was at least 50% burned out after
being taken by the Soviet army during military action.’ The alteration to his original
claim appears particularly ironic given that he subsequently added that

under stalinism it was customary to state that towns like Skwierzyna, Gorzów, Krosno, Sulechów were burned down during military action— but today we can state openly the truth that they were burned by Soviet troops a significant time after the passing of the front, mainly in April–July 1945, when the authorities were too weak to control the unbridled, drunken ruffians who made firework displays of entire streets or even districts of towns.

As Hierowski’s review of POZO noted, hopes regarding free speech expressed during the
competition were increasingly fading. And here the editors or censors adopted the ‘stalinist’
explanation taken from Sauter’s condemnation of that era’s falsifications. His words are
used, but taken out of context. In Nowy Kramsk, too, he witnessed ‘fires raging long after

1380 Sauter, Powrót, p.76; IZ P117, part two, p.15.
1381 Sauter, IZ P117, part two, p.15.
the capitulation of Germany’, with Sauter considering this ‘an organised action which was to harm our future existence in the recovered territories’.1382 Describing Skwierzyna, something exceptional for competition-based memoir publications occurs, going beyond even the falsifying “correction” of Sauter’s memory. A footnote is added to provide support for arguments contradicting his original claims. It references a historical study that notes Albert Speer’s outline of Germany’s scorched earth policy at the Nuremberg Trials,1383 which substantiates the published version, where Sauter wonders ‘in whose interest was it to force Poland into expensive reconstruction to delay its general economic revival? Probably the Nazis.’1384 The original, of course, made clear that Soviet troops were responsible for the fires and suggesting a deliberate Soviet ploy to hinder Poland’s reconstruction.1385 Why the editors and publishers went to such lengths to validate a refutation of Sauter’s unpublished claims is unclear.

Tomasz Szarota’s historical study Osadnictwo miejskie na Dolnym Śląsku features a more euphemistic description of fires, to which his attention was drawn by memoir materials. He attributes responsibility principally to Germans, including civilians returning after flight, which was also how Sauter’s experience of Nowy Kramsk was corrected. However, Szarota also notes ‘cases where fires broke out as a result of marauders’ carelessness, or sometimes when the populations of German camps, who spoke many languages, were released, as was the case in Żagań and Bolesławiec.’1386 Using a recognised euphemism for Soviet troops, as the following chapter discusses, he draws attention to exceptions which were more common than could be suggested.

In POZO evident moments of direct falsification were rare. In one memoirs, clumsy rewriting made Soviet officers appear helpful rather than robbers. They ‘helped me transfer all the water heaters’. However, the manuscript reveals no help from the officers; instead, some Germans were recruited to assist the move across the street.1387 There were also cuts and edits which altered the general balance of memoirs from a critique so images of advance or pioneering dedication prevailed, as was the case in Banja’s memoir most evidently. However, there were also clear attempts to present evidence contrasting with official totalising histories of Party-led settlement or patriotic dedication, as well as the unitary

1382 Sauter, IZ P117, part two, pp.15-16.
1383 Sauter, Powrót, pp.77-78. Tadeusz Cyprian and Jerzy Sawicki, Sprawy polskie w procesie norymberskim (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1956).
1384 Sauter, Powrót, p.77.
1385 Sauter, IZ P117, part two, pp.15-16.
1386 Tomasz Szarota, Osadnictwo miejskie, p.33.
reading applied in the editors’ own introduction. *POZO*, with its popular success and media coverage, and thanks to the editors’ work, contributed to the formation of a communicative and popular collective memory of the early period, centred on pioneers. However, these entered ‘the field of public representations of history,’ without reproducing the pioneers of state-sanctioned memory – settlers coming with the Party or its associated institutions – but often ordinary people working autonomously and spontaneously, despite the presence of nascent organisations or Soviet military which, according to numerous narratives, did more harm than good for Polish settlement.

Comparison with IH PAN’s memoir work in the following chapter will reveal that there were certainly superior ways to edit memoir collections as historical sources, but it was not the case that edited settler memoirs showed ‘[a]uthors could rarely write the full truth about why they were really forced to leave the old Polish Eastern Borderlands [...], they were not allowed to recall their longing for the “little homeland” in the borderlands or their long-lasting sense of temporariness in the Western Territories.’ Longing was evident in IZ sociological studies and in published memoir compilations. Why repatriants had to leave the eastern borderlands was evident, although it could not be framed in explicit anti-Russian or anti-Soviet terms unlike, for example, *War Through Children’s Eyes*. However, it was evident that memoirists felt forced to depart even if this was framed in euphemistic terms as a pull of the national homeland.

IH PAN historians attempted to use memoirs, and traditional archival sources, to breach some of the strongest censorship restrictions, namely those concerning representations of the USSR and the Red Army. Sauter’s memoir and the others considered here from POZO show how complex it could be to negotiate the restrictions. The explicit historiographical objectives, rather than popularising-sociological of *POZO*, meant censors’ and editors’ approaches were different in *Wieś polska 1939-1948*.

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1388 PMG, p.207.
Chapter 7: Historians, Censors and Wieś polska 1939-1948

This chapter considers approaches to autobiographical materials as historical sources that scholars associated with Pracownia Dziejów Polski Ludowej (Centre for the History of People’s Poland) at IH PAN developed during the 1960s. Historians at the Centre pursued some of the first overt contemporary and social history in People’s Poland outside Party historiographical institutions and popularising works. The Polska Ludowa series of publications presented numerous studies in contemporary history, as well as some primary sources drawn from some previously restricted archives.1391 There were notable works which employed memoir materials by historians including Henryk Słabek, Krystyna Kersten and Tomasz Szarota, among others.1392 They and others at IH PAN developed innovative methodologies for using autobiographical sources in historical research, with a notable discussion held in 1979.1393 The objective of much IH PAN research was to return to explore postwar foundations and highlight contingencies against official history’s perspective of state control. This tension became notable in Kersten’s exchange with Góra over whether the spontaneous, uncontrolled foundations of Polish rule in the Recovered Territories should be noted in the published sphere. The objective was to demonstrate ordinary Poles’ agency and influence on historical processes.

This perspective shaped the rationale of publishing the four-volume series Wieś polska 1939-1948 (1967-1971), which was presented consciously as a set of historical source materials. The original texts can be consulted at IH PAN in Warsaw.1394 The editors considered them ‘a simply irreplaceable historical source on many processes and the history of the first postwar years.’1395 Szarota had argued for the necessity, in People’s Poland, of exploring the archives owing to questions over editing practices. He and Kersten attempted to recreate as closely as possible the archive experience using a unique series of system of summaries, termed regesty, where the entire set featured although many texts were fully-summarised, ...
and some featured part-summaries. Since autobiographies from this series have already featured in this study in discussions of Zaremba and Gross’ works, I will not explore in depth the sources which are highly insightful for investigating rural Poles’ wartime experiences, the foundations of communist rule in Poland – particularly agrarian reform – and the settlement of the Recovered Territories. I focus instead on editing and censorship that the volumes faced, but first I consider the milieu of IH PAN contemporary history and its approach to autobiographical materials.

7.1 IH PAN: Historiography and autobiography

Stefan Kieniewicz’s 1989 article outlines four types of historians and their strategies for getting by in their professional work. First, a small group rarely or never publishing works; second, a larger group never producing “useful” works but seeking to circumvent restrictions as the state ignored or tolerated their publications; a third group affirming state-sanctioned history; the fourth and largest group compromised with the Party-state, ensuring publication although this meant giving their works elements of official use value.\(^{1396}\) So, although some compromise was involved, it did ensure some multiplicity of voices and perspectives in communist-era historiography which, even with its role ‘leading the “ideological front”’,\(^{1397}\) never became a unitary discourse. Although not strictly historiography, memoir sociology can be considered in similar terms, as compromising with aligned readings of popular autobiography did not preclude readers’ alternative readings. Equally, IH PAN scholars were keen to stress the value of sociological research as potential contemporary history, particularly because such sources could explore experiences which were not necessarily archived owing, for example, to the spontaneity of settlement. Or, the memoirs covered events and periods which had been archived in traditional stores which were unavailable for research or citation. Writing in Polska Ludowa in 1966, Hanna Jędruszczak noted that ‘it is unnecessary to explain that owing to current political interests a significant portion of archives cannot yet be put at historians’ disposal.’\(^{1398}\) She thus suggests applying alternative sources, with memoirs providing one source of inspiration. She cites Kwilecki’s study of teacher-settlers as an innovative, interdisciplinary approach to the recent past.\(^{1399}\)

\(^{1397}\) Stobiecki, p.10.
Henryk Słabek used the *Wieś polska* memoirs in his 1972 study *Dzieje polskiej reformy rolnej*\(^{1400}\) to illustrate differences between agrarian reform in central Poland and the processes in the Recovered Territories. Slabek suggested then two methodological justifications for using mass autobiographies: firstly, illustrating historical, political and economic processes’ and events’ influence on everyday life in order to validate findings based on traditional archives; secondly, highlighting processes, patterns of behaviour and attitudes not necessarily evident in traditional or official archives. He used the memoirs to depict the various attitudes to the land reform and various responses to it, which did not necessarily conform to state plans. His use of the memoirs was somewhat selective – as with Zaremba and Curp – with certain autobiographies contradicting his use of them when explored in their full thickness.\(^{1401}\) However, their presence in the study nevertheless questioned totalising narratives of state control which he negotiated through his study which returned to the founding of People’s Poland and core events which provided legitimising claims in official narratives for the postwar authorities. Słabek’s monumental study *O społecznej historii Polski* was largely a product of his communist-era research at PAN as it was completed in 1988 but received no funding for publication, and consequently Słabek resigned his post as head of the Institute’s section on People’s Poland.\(^{1402}\) Finally released in 2009, it contributed to an expanding bibliography of social historical studies on postwar Poland but it should have been a founding and groundbreaking history-from-below. In that work, Słabek was critical, on the one hand, of the use of memoirs by historians who used them to illustrate a preferred interpretation of reality. In part, he was critiquing his own approach in 1972. On the other hand, however, he recognised that memoirs could, in their diversity illustrate his conviction that ‘contrary to appearances, the course of history is determined primarily not by extraordinary events, but everyday practices of millions of people, the masses.’\(^{1403}\) This is the fundamental principle of social history, which is commonplace today, and has been adopted, as Kenney showed, for investigating communist societies. The significance of adopting such approaches *under* communism, however, is evident as it suggests that there were clear tensions between state and society, in terms of how change was imagined and how it was experienced.


\(^{1402}\) Słabek, *O społecznej historii Polski*, p.25, n.1.

\(^{1403}\) Ibid., p.14.
In a 1974 study, Kersten appeared to justify standard historiography, by claiming that it is necessary to use ‘above all sources created in the historical process.’ In her study this means providing ‘an outline of the activities of institutions directing migration processes’. However, it is also evident that she accepts that in fact, the historical process is co-created by ordinary people’s social practice and thus autobiographical sources prove valuable, particularly since ‘in some matters, such as the attitudes of migrants and motives for their decisions, historical sources in the strict sense is insufficient for creating generalisations; there is always a fear of generalising on the basis of singular phenomena.’ If historians are, as she believes, charged with the duty of producing generalisations, then they must be based not only on partial or biased archives, but also include the experiences of ordinary people who contribute to the historical process. Of course, as Jakubczak and other showed, the memoir method was not immune to teleological assumptions and drawing wide-ranging conclusions on the basis of selected evidence. However, the sources were not necessarily defective but their application.

Wieś polska co-editor Tomasz Szarota also highlighted memoirs’ value where no traditional archive is available, demonstrating this in his 1969 study of settlement of urban Lower Silesia. Mass autobiographies proved, for example, the best available source on when Soviet command groups left different towns and cities, allowing Polish administration to take over. Archival files on Soviet military command groups were not accessible then. As Dulczewski recognised, memoirs provided rare insight into ‘dual rule [dwuwładza] in the initial period when Polish administration and Soviet military command were both in place.’ Szarota offered one of the bluntest assessments of the time regarding the significance of Soviet troops’ departure, something that also POZO intimated. Szarota states that a ‘factor undoubtedly influencing the poor security conditions in the Recovered Territories in 1945 was the return to their home country of victorious Soviet troops.’ There was ‘loose discipline and this must necessarily have unavoidable negative consequences. This was expertly exploited at the time by reactionary propaganda.’ Far from affirming the glorious victory of the Soviet troops or the reactionary nature of the immediate postwar opposition to communist rule, Szarota uses obviously clichéd phrases with subversive intent.

1405 Ibid., 14.  
1407 Szarota, Osadnictwo, pp.72-74.  
1409 Szarota, Osadnictwo, pp.133-134.
The contrast of victorious troops with their criminal behaviour is intensified, while the fact that ‘reactionary propaganda’ drew on this is an indication of the extent of misdeeds. Memoirs could inspire research into, or at least mention of, matters usually out of bounds, as was evident in the reference to Szarota’s study in the context of Sauter’s effaced recollection of Soviet troops starting fires.

Szarota advises methodological caution over texts ‘tendentiousness and the large gap between events and writing, but nevertheless they are of significant value.’\footnote{Ibid., p.14.} Szarota conducted a comparative study involving German materials, including \textit{Dokumentation der Vertreibung}, oft-condemned in People’s Poland with IZ having dedicating significant resources to counter it, to outline the period preceding ‘organised settlement’. German materials provide ‘source material on factual matters’ but were also ‘confronted with Polish materials and show the perspective of the German population in Lower Silesia.’\footnote{Ibid., p.15.} This is certainly a unique approach for communist-era studies, especially for a time of heightened Polish-West German tensions over the region. Still, representations of Soviet presence were most controversial from the censor’s perspective, particularly because he sought to include information about problems ‘in the period of Soviet command’s administration as a result of removal and confiscation of assets for battles on the front.’\footnote{Ibid., p 213.} Effectively, they were stripping industrial plant and other infrastructure but censorship ensured it was framed as a military necessity. There were some alterations and restrictions on his study, but Szarota’s work offered a breakthrough in indicating problems with Soviet presence in post-liberation Lower Silesia, even if more cautious formulations were required and the print-run subsequently reduced to 570.\footnote{Ibid., p 213.}

Szarota’s interview with Romek indicates the arduous censorship process, albeit one which Szarota realised upon meeting the censor – it was rare for authors to attend Mysia Street – that compromise rather than suppression was the objective.\footnote{Tomasz Szarota, ‘Moja rozmowa na ul. Mysiej’, in \textit{Cenzura w PRL: Relacje historyków}, Romek ed. (Warsaw: Neriton/IH PAN, 2000), pp.205-214.} Szarota and Kersten also discussed the editing of \textit{Wieś polska} with Romek, and I turn now to the construction of those volumes, particularly the first, which featured Recovered Territories voivodeships.

\footnote{Szarota, in Romek (2000), p.206.}
7.2 *Wieś polska*: publishing strategy and censorship

The competition ‘Opis mojej wsi’ was launched in March 1948 by Instytut Prasy Czytelnik within the massive press and publishing cooperative Czytelnik led by Jerzy Borejsza, who inspired the competition.\(^{1415}\) It was launched as wariness of Czytelnik’s influence brought increasing restrictions.\(^{1417}\) Borejsza was removed from Czytelnik in November 1948,\(^{1418}\) a time when the competition was revived having been initially completed on 1 July. Later that month, the PPR announced a new agricultural policy that incorporated collectivisation. In November, some 300 selected participants were asked to submit *uzupełnienia*, or supplementary texts which ‘were to describe rural responses to the July and August PPR plenary sessions; to changes over the past six months; and to illustrate rural exploitation. The questions already suggested the answer to some degree.’ Only 300 respondents were specially selected to supplement their original entries, with organisers appealing to “those allied in a class sense”.\(^{1419}\) Clearly the original sources could not be adapted sufficiently to present-day requirements to produce a viable publication in new conditions. Original plans for a two-volume publication – one presenting the ‘best’ memoirs and the other thematic – were abandoned.\(^{1420}\) The trends of historical inevitability could not evidently be weaned from pre-plenum sources.

These 300 “friendly” individuals returned hundreds of additional pages which, Kersten and Szarota argue, ‘are principally useful material for researchers of the history of propaganda of this period and the dissemination of certain schema through it.’ These materials reveal the beginnings of ‘falsity, double language, one for private circles, and another for public forums. But a final meaning of the supplementary entries is: they indicate the credibility and sincerity of the original submissions.’\(^{1421}\) Methodologically it might be more accurate to note that autobiographical representations for public presentation will be written in a language different to a private diary in most cases anyway, while written language will deviate from that used in social interaction in any sphere. However, Kersten and Szarota note a valid function of most supplementary texts, as they reveal greater reproduction of public history, rather than social construction of memory, during political turbulence and transformation.

\(^{1415}\) Kersten and Szarota, ‘Wstęp’, *Wieś polska 1939-148*, vol. 1, pp.5-34 (p.5).

\(^{1416}\) Ibid., p.12.


\(^{1418}\) Krasucki, *Borejsza*, p.220.


\(^{1420}\) Ibid., pp.16-17.

\(^{1421}\) Ibid., p.18.
The 1955/56 Nowe pamiętniki chłopów competition revealed many critical memoirs and descriptive everyday histories, which suggests the reproduction of public discourse in late 1948 was largely a consequence of the selected constituency rather than an indication of stalinism’s ability to impose and enforce a monolithic language and collective memory.

Despite such attempts to instrumentalise the submissions, the competition organisers retained a social role under stalinism, as well into 1949 the organising committee continued to act upon complaints and requests for assistance from entrants who believed the competition was an opportunity to ‘complain to Warsaw’.\(^{1422}\) Although these additional materials are absent, most memoir materials were recovered in 1958 from the basement of PAN Institute of Social Sciences, which shared a building with Czytelnik, with the collection completed by materials then held by KC PZPR Party History Institute.\(^{1423}\) Editing began in 1963, ultimately producing four volumes divided regionally, with each volume divided alphabetically by voivodeship, then alphabetically by district, and within those alphabetically again by village, with anonymised entries last. The series therefore begins with Elbląg district in Gdańsk voivodeship and ends Ząbkowice district (Wrocław voivodeship). ‘Opis’ received 1697 entries (plus 21 not qualified). Of 1551 memoirists whose location was noted, 146 were in the Recovered Territories,\(^{1424}\) somewhat below the proportion of the national population. Although it referenced the title of the competition that produced Chałasiński’s *Młode pokolenie chłopów* – ‘Opis mego życia, prac, przemysłeni idążení’ (A description of my life, work, thoughts and aspirations)\(^{1425}\) – it did not follow the standard competition form as it combined a questionnaire with a call for life stories.\(^{1426}\) This generated the entries’ great detail on communal life rather than personal matters.\(^{1427}\)

In order to secure the published material’s value as primary sources, Kersten and Szarota sought to publish as fully as possible the entire set. Consequently, they developed a system of summaries (*regesty*). They wanted to avoid selection for publication which tended to imply editorial interpretation, as such publications ‘are perhaps a good depiction of an era,

\(^{1426}\) The full competition announcement is reproduced in *‘Wstęp’, Wieś polska*, vol. 1, pp.13-15. It reveals the competition’s objective was to find suggestions for improving rural life, while setting out the themes to be covered, including ‘the fate of villages during the war and German occupation, postwar changes in villages, migration to the Recovered Territories, agrarian reform of 1944/45, destruction and reconstruction.’ Additional themes were cultural life in villages, the role of organisations and authors’ future aspirations.
\(^{1427}\) *‘Wstęp’, Wieś polska*, vol. 1, p.19.
but much worse sources for studies of an era. Presenting the materials as a set would allow readers to develop their own interpretations or perhaps even contribute to further research. This is reflected in their introduction to *Wieś polska I*, which outlines only what findings other memoir-based postwar studies have found, with the editors concentrating on methodological matters. Their comments are situated in the context of – strongly implied – concerns about censorship, recognising that readers might judge even apparently innocuous cutting or editing suspicious.

Beyond concerns stemming from a certain “cult of the source”, meaning any kind of intervention into the source text is unacceptable, since this would be almost tantamount to falsification, there are also rational reasons for avoiding intervention in the context of contemporary history. These reasons stem from a certain climate of mistrust and uncertainty over whether, in fact, these “cuts” concern only the least essential fragments and whether the only criteria which influence publishers’ work are academic factors.

These comments follow on from considering the Dulczewski-Kwilecki approach in *POZO*, which was impressive but for Szarota raised too many suspicions of selection guided by an interpretative framework or implied non-academic, thus political, factors. In *Wieś polska IV*, the editors openly state unavoidable political influence on editing, particularly regarding the Bialystok region in 1939-1941, when it was the only area still in postwar Poland to experience initial Soviet occupation. ‘Passages on this period, often quite interesting and characteristic regarding the formation of the rural population’s attitudes, could not be taken into full consideration, we have therefore indicated them only with summaries.’ This outlines the editorial process’ guiding principle, stressed in each volume’s introduction, that the texts should be considered indicators of Poles’ changing social consciousness and attitudes. For Bialystok, experiences of 1939-41 would likely resonate in the postwar period as communicative memory of occupation, deportation and opposition to collectivisation, which was becoming an increasing threat in 1948. Kersten and Szarota suggest further investigation through comparative studies of prewar memoirs. None of those competitions’ sources were edited in the same manner as *Wieś polska*, something the

1428 Ibid., p.22.
1429 Ibid., pp.22-23.
1431 *Wieś polska*, vol. 1, p.8; vol. 2, p.10; vol. 3, p.5; vol. 4, p.5.
editors overlook. Researchers would be reliant upon prewar sociologists’ interpretative analyses (Chałasiński) or substantial selections (Krzywicki).

Kersten and Szarota insisted upon the summaries to maintain a complete set of sources, reflecting that ‘in historical resources, sets of mass testimonies, reflections, memoirs etc. are generally used analogously to “traditional” sources. Each memoir is used as a separate, individual statement.’\(^{1433}\) It was thus possible to treat the materials as indicators of a particular person’s experience, a fragmenting strategy that proved useful in having memoir compilations passed. However, the implication of providing an entire set was that readers could generate their own historical generalisations based on sources offering as full as possible an image of postwar rural life. The editors did not offer their own interpretations of the reality, but stressed their hope was that their construction of “semi-finished product” (półfabrykat) readers would complete the construction of an image of postwar Poland.

Although \textit{Wieś polska I} published just 3\% of its entries in their entirety, while 60\% were ‘complete summaries’, the editors believe the summary method allowed a more-or-less complete representation of the entire surviving collection.\(^{1434}\) The \textit{regest} approach received high praise and proposed as the standard for future memoir publications, but no editors subsequently adopted it.\(^{1435}\) Kersten and Szarota recognise that their own process is a selection, outlining that it was shaped by a focus on ‘social consciousness over factual data.’ With better sources available for the latter, they treat the materials as indicators of how the past was remembered and narrated, thus recalling mnemohistory, and what the source reveals about ‘moods views and stereotypes common within a particular milieu or subgroup.’\(^{1436}\) This reflects the goals of IH PAN historiography, where experience of events, rather than only the events, great men and institutions involved, was considered an important part of both the events and also subsequent socio-historical change.

Kersten and Szarota recognise that autobiographical memories of events are socially (and politically) constructed, therefore reflecting present-day concerns. They give an example of this based on a claim from a girl around 13 at the time of the event, who said that an AK group murdered AL partisans in her locality. The editors use this as an indication of the materials’ questionable value as factual data, but demonstrate their value in studies of memory’s constructedness. This is also an opportunity for Kersten and Szarota to outline a

\(^{1433}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p.23.
\(^{1434}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p.24.
reading strategy. The girl’s description was not verifiable through traditional archives, and indeed ‘there may be doubts about the completeness and exactitude of then information. Her statement appears in a different light, however, when considered from the perspective of the views of her milieu, which the author represents, as she is a young employee of a PPR District Committee. Readers’ sceptical readings are encouraged to consider how and why particularly memories emerge, rather than accept the data at face-value or simply dismiss it as propaganda. The value of their approach is significant for a memory studies which considers the functioning of memory under communism.

Szarota and Kersten are concerned that readers’ sceptical readings might be applied to their own summary method, deeming it evidence of censorship. *Wieś polska* broaches these suspicions, with the editors employing their own euphemistic terms regarding ‘matters on which sources are in short supply’. Any cut over ½ page meant content was noted in a summary, while dashes mark shorter cuts. They stress that in cases referring to issues with partisans, or ‘enemy propaganda’, then ‘we can be absolutely certain that in such cases the omitted text contained nothing but general statements’. However, the implication of the reassurance seems to be that in other ‘matters in scarce supply in sources’ there might be less innocent cuts. Volume four, commenting on Białystok voivodeship, highlighted that crucial information on the principal research objective – exploring factors shaping social attitudes and perceptions of reality – was removed. Consequently, this passage could be read as indicating that on the subjects specifically mentioned there is little suspicious afoot, but on other matters readers’ wariness would be advisable.

Even without specific knowledge of censorship practices, readers would suspect the representation of Soviet troops would be problematic. Szarota recalls how editing and censorship led to developing ‘something of a call signal, where we gave information in the summaries about omissions regarding “marauders’ antics”. We assumed that it would be decipherable for readers.’ This term indicated ‘rapes and robberies committed by the Red Army’ and any other crimes. This means the details might largely be omitted but the frequency should at least be decipherable. Tracing the use of this term in summaries indicates that it did not necessarily need to function even euphemistically. Certainly, exact details of
how Soviet troops committed robberies or worse were removed, but the type of crime and the identity of culprits remained. One summary within a part-summarised memoir states: ‘Description of a robbery carried out by marauders from the Red Army.’ The introduction avoids the kind of explanation offered, for example, in Szarota’s Lower Silesia study, which declared loosening of discipline an inevitable consequence of war. Here readers even have the code word deciphered. A fully-summarised memoir, meanwhile, included in print features an extract from the original. ‘Experiences of villagers during the occupation. Postwar economic reconstruction and problems faced. Soviet soldiers lawlessly [samowolnie] took horses, carts, harnesses to chase the Germans. Of course, even in the world’s most cultured armies similar things happen.’ Here an autobiographer provides the type of justifying explanation Szarota’s earlier book featured. However, the fragment included also apparently judges the Red Army less than highly cultured, with the censor perhaps neglecting the duty to protect the Red Army’s image. While indicating Soviet robberies, and partially mitigating circumstances (‘chasing the Germans’), the original typescript reveals details were lost that would serve the volume’s primary aim of outlining experiences’ consequences for social consciousness and everyday practice. ‘Many people in the village imagined the Soviet army differently and after these marauders’ various deeds they became disheartened and bitter, and so they started to imagine the Soviet army as common criminals, uncultured and uneducated. All the women when they saw Soviet troops in the village went to hide in the furthest hole.’ Even if this memoir expressed ‘dislike of the prewar sanacja regime’, this could not guarantee a positive attitude towards People’s Poland, particularly following such experiences with Soviet soldiers. This text also reveals that ‘marauders’ was used in everyday exchanges and thus its euphemistic significance would most likely be comprehensible to ordinary readers.

Despite the use of summaries, Wieś polska I faced ‘serious interventions’ in 1966 at GUK, concerning ‘texts describing, among other things, marauding Red Army soldiers, removal and destruction of assets in the Recovered Territories, difficult conditions faced by German populations in the resettlement action to German and so forth.’ These were the same things for which Szarota was called up regarding his study of Lower Silesia. A more detailed

1441 No. 20 (511), Wieś polska, vol. 1, pp. 58-61 (p. 60). As in the actual book, italics indicate the regest while the standard format is used for the actual text.
1444 No. 230 (997), Wieś polska, p.355.
report by R. Korsak from 14 May 1966 indicates the extent of unpublishable material submitted on 25 September 1965 and finally approved on 7 December 1966, with a 1280 print run. Subsequent volumes were submitted separately and edited in different ways. GUK archives yielded no reports on those volumes. In interviews with Zbigniew Romek, Kersten and Szarota presented their recollections of censorship, and made clear that most redaction took place before reaching GUK, but of course with GUK in mind as it became co-editor. Szarota notes interventions were conducted in cooperation with colleagues and some Party-state institutions. A draft was reviewed by Wydział Nauki KC PZPR and IH PAN historians Czesław Madajczyk and Witold Stankiewicz where ‘drastic fragments were eliminated, primarily concerning anti-Soviet and anticommmunist content.’ The subsequent Wieś polska volumes faced only editorial control before GUK. Kersten recalled those preparing the first volume presented ‘a “united front” against censorship, including the [publishers’] editorial board’ by working ‘realistically’, using the summaries effectively in ‘seeking to maintain the maximum level of what we thought publishable.’ She believes changes in censorship practices affected the potential to present a “united front” after 1968 and thus the rest of the series, as editors faced more severe consequences for failings. Kersten believes this turned the editor against authors, rather than being an ally. ‘Repression shifted down to lower rungs.’

My study so far has also largely considered the attempts to control publication and shape censorship through strengthening institutional mechanisms. However, Kersten indicates here how affecting editors’ everyday realities, targeting their pockets, could have improved the controls taking place at ‘lower rungs’. Editors had always worked with censorship controls in mind, but Kersten believes the changes after 1968 made cooperation with publishers more repressive. Still, reading Wieś polska IV indicates that despite strong controls on depicting Białystok region, significant details avoided summaries and remained in the text.

As for the first volume, the censor outlines in his report his reading strategy, referring to the introduction and noting that the volume was intended as a presentation of primary sources. He accepts this and subsequently outlines the variety of experiences represented, but stresses memories of prewar estates, landlessness, poverty and peasants’ exclusion from culture and

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1447 Imprint, Kersten and Szarota, Wieś polska, vol. 1.
1450 Ibid., pp.121-22.
politics.\textsuperscript{1451} Censors were perhaps expected to consider the relation of publications to class politics first, but this opening section nonetheless indicates that \textit{Wieś polska} could present an officially acceptable vision of class relations and indeed peasant advance since prewar Poland. He also considers the following theme of ethnic and national tensions in western Poland and the Recovered Territories in class terms, noting how economic differences exacerbated national tensions, while Polish wartime suffering at German hands is evident, particularly with deportation from Greater Poland.\textsuperscript{1452} The censor also detects significant patriotic enthusiasm in the post-liberation and postwar periods. Kersten and Szarota noted this enthusiasm, too, in their introduction, finding its root both in relief at war ending and in agrarian reform.\textsuperscript{1453} However, the censor contrasts this period with the social realities emerging as migration increased, revealing a reading that resounds with some of the findings of the sociology of the Western Territories. Patriotic feeling appeared to dissipate as intra-Polish tensions grew in the new lands owing to competition over former German farms, as Słabe noted. But tensions were also rooted in identity claims and competing memories, as both eastern borderland Poles and central Poles believed their wartime suffering was greater.

The censor notes how some peasants were disappointed by the end of the war during which they ‘prospered quite nicely’ through trade and conditions under German rule. They were then despondent that their situation ‘changed for the worse.’ There were cultural differences between different settler groups evident in settling former German property in central Poland and the Recovered Territories. There, he notes, conditions were worse because ‘the removal of livestock from these lands was widespread, buildings were often destroyed, while agricultural practices left much to be desired.’ He notes that in the new lands, by 1948 ‘conflicts based on regional differences were beginning to fade and the population adapted to new conditions, understanding the need to improve agricultural practice.’\textsuperscript{1454}

A more impressive and insightful summary of the impression generated by the memoirs from western Poland and the Recovered Territories would be difficult to produce, while his conclusion subtly indicates that what followed after the plenum did not meet people’s expectations or indeed the general needs of agriculture. He presents the events which provide the basis for the foundation myths of postwar Poland: agrarian reform, including historical justice alongside social justice and material advance by claiming German farms, and national unity. However, he then stresses how the everyday realities of post-liberation Poland were

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\item \textsuperscript{1451} AAN/GUK/819, p.57.
\item \textsuperscript{1452} AAN/GUK/819, p.58.
\item \textsuperscript{1453} Wstęp, \textit{Wieś polska}, vol. 1, p.11.
\item \textsuperscript{1454} AAN/GUK/819, p.58.
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difficult, demanding individual sacrifice to overcome not only wartime damage but also some problematic policies, including high taxes. The censor also uses the materials to differentiate between different villages’ experiences, stressing that local conditions produced vastly varying experiences of settlement whether in material or cultural terms. National unity evidently dissipated when various Poles who had been capable of imagining a national community were faced with the reality of neighbours from all parts of the country, whose cultural practices proved significantly different. Perhaps mindful that all these details of problems and tensions could suggest an overall negative impression of *Wieś polska*, he concludes that by 1948 there were evident tendencies towards stabilisation among conflicted communities and adaptation to new conditions which proved alienating for some. The censor’s reading importantly differentiates different conditions in the prewar Polish lands and the Recovered Territories, something that Curp’s study, for example, did not make sufficiently explicit as he homogenised “western Poland”. The censor shows that the critical narrative that can be derived from *Wieś polska* is nevertheless publishable, even with ‘political parties mentioned rarely’, peasants seeming ‘unaware of their programmes, hence their lack of interest in them.’ If there is mention of authorities, then ‘Warsaw’ is held responsible for high taxes, while local authorities feature most often.\textsuperscript{1455} They seem to be suffering from the spontaneous recruitment that characterised early postwar administration and local political party cells.

While the editors did not offer their own interpretation of the volume they introduced and indeed constructed, the censor – as is often the case – offered one of the most insightful readings of the volume at hand, summarising the content and indeed the general impression. It is evident that there is little to counterbalance the accumulation of negative details which seem to contest the grand narratives of Party-led successes and the foundation myths of People’s Poland. It seems that in this case, the ultimate outcome of social processes is considered, at the time of publication, a success, hence permission to print. ‘There are no overall reservations about the work’, only calls to make changes to particular details particularly regarding ‘military, economic and political matters’.\textsuperscript{1456} Everyday life seemed not to be a concern as its rules and ways were revealed, with the conclusion similar to that of the GUK review of *MMŻ*, where although the absence of the Party in everyday life was troubling, it was accepted as realistic.

\textsuperscript{1455} AAN/GUK/819, p.59.
\textsuperscript{1456} AAN/GUK/819, p.59.
Zbigniew Romek comments that the censor’s approach to *Wieś polska* was to ‘give an impression of the reality which the authors of the testimonies presented and considered whether it meets the authorities’ accepted vision of the past.’ Differences were noted, but ultimately the ‘censor was not concerned by these critical remarks in peasant testimonies. On the one hand this was because they concerned localised situations and did not negate the new, postwar reality.’ Indeed, the editors underscored this in their introduction by stressing that the competition took place ‘at a time of increasing internal stabilisation, which was particularly evident following the [1947] elections and Mikołajczyk’s defeat, while the competition also took place ahead of those political changes which occurred from mid-1948.’ So, the memoirs are framed as an illustration of a time of increasing stabilisation, with the trends only disrupted by stalinism. Of course, the censor found otherwise in terms of evidence of stabilisation but he stressed that the depictions focused on ‘the nascent Polish state and thus were not a critique of the new socialist order.’ Romek believes the censor’s reading ‘followed the introduction’s lead’ in terms of method and stressing that despite difficult beginnings People’s Poland ‘overcame the harm done in feudal and bourgeois Poland’ to bring about ‘social justice’. This, for Romek, secured the publication as the ‘ideological message’ was deemed acceptable. This would suggest another case where editors and publishers imagined the censor as the most important reader of an introduction. The editors provided a unifying framework, and the censor was to test whether it proved feasible on the basis of evidence in the volume. It was not the censor’s task to deconstruct the unifying reading on the basis of evidence in the volumes. Romek deemed the censor’s work an assessment of whether the volume ‘meets the authorities’ accepted vision of the past’.

I suggest that much censorship was largely concerned with ensuring the authorities’ accepted vision of the present was not undermined. *Wieś polska* evidently contrasts with the official vision of the past where Party-inspired and organised Party-led settlement feature ahead of ordinary Poles’ (or indeed, as Wolski noted, authorities’) spontaneous, improvised actions, contributing to the historical process in unexpected ways.

Szarota saw settlement as conducted by ‘pioneers’ but not the type necessarily foregrounded in IZ memoir sociology. He defined pioneers as ‘everyone who came to the Recovered Territories and contributed to establishing any aspect of economic, social, political or

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1457 Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna*, p.320.
1459 *Wstęp, Wieś polska*, vol. 1, p.9.
cultural life, as well as members of his family and those living with him. The pioneer is explicitly male, but the domestic sphere is included in contributions to the rebuilding of Poland. This was what memoirs could offer – insight into the multiple sites of agency within People’s Poland which influenced the historical process.

Overall, the interventions into Wieś polska I are fairly typical of the problems GUK controlled strictly regarding images of the past, so Polish-Soviet relations, Polish-German relations and ‘the political and economic situation in our country.’ However, it also benefitted from a degree of leniency owing to its form as a volume which sought to present historical sources rather than a narrative. Kersten and Szarota’s experiences with Wieś polska reveal that rather than dismissing historians’ negotiation as simply contributing to ‘the crime’ of censorship, as Romek claimed, negotiation and compromise emerge as part of a strategy of getting by as an academic. They sought to secure the least damaging conditions for publication by developing innovative strategies for circumventing some restrictions. These strategies were assisted by a degree of leniency among censors who appear to interpret their role as finding a justification for passing rather than restricting publication. Did Wieś polska present “the objective truth”? Certainly not; the editing was driven by consideration of what was publishable within limits of time but censors’ reports, and subsequent use in studies like Jan Gross’ on Polish-Jewish relations, suggest limits were pushed and, ultimately, the published sphere, academic and popular knowledge would have been poorer without these volumes appearing between 1967 and 1971.

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1463 Szarota, Osadnictwo miejskie, p.120.
Conclusion

The lines drawn by the powerful restrict the powerless, but they also inform and instruct them. They present the drama of power to the people. They state the official version of events, procedures, and rules. They tell the powerless what they are up against. The powerless use this knowledge of power to negotiate their own recipes for survival. [...] They encourage the powerless to think for themselves.\footnote{Sue Curry Jansen, \textit{Censorship: The Knot That Binds Power and Knowledge} (Oxford/ New York: OUP, 1991), p.7.}

While censorship, official and academic discourse set out hegemonic versions of the past, present and future, ordinary people – as the memoirs show – used this knowledge to critique these claims or to find ways to get by within the system. Palska argued that the memoir movement became incorporated into official politics as it institutionalised, and thus the published sources lost value as competitions were organised with ideological matters foremost. Of course, the competitions aimed to explore the ‘mega-concepts’ important to the authorities, but as she herself admitted, memoirists remained discursive in relation to competition announcements. Strong official claims regarding progress, emancipation or equality were questioned both in archived entries and in print through the tensions generated by the compilation form. The requirement for compilations to include introductions and prefaces that aligned the works to publicly acceptable narratives meant there was direct juxtaposition of claims of emancipation, urbanisation or the rise of all-national culture accessible to all Poles, regardless of class or gender, with evidence presented that slipped out of these frameworks.

As regards the Recovered Territories and settlement, the starkest contrast was between official declarations of an organised, directed Party-inspired and Party-led settlement, and the historical and social agency of ordinary people in rebuilding Poland through spontaneous, unplanned and uncontrolled actions. There was also competition between the claim that historical justice motivated mass migration to the “Piast lands” and the recognition by many settlers that quotidian matters of securing housing, work and material wellbeing were the primary impetus. Something of a tension emerged between these basic needs and the collective memory of dedicated, patriotic heroic pioneer settlers – constructed in part
through IZ memoir publications and its popularising work. However, even in the IZ memoir publications designated for schools, it was evident that the pioneer narrative was largely presented as an alternative to official claims of Party-state inspired, led and organised settlement, as the agency of ordinary people was foregrounded. Although the domestic and everyday aspects of settlement were omitted from pioneer-centred framing narratives applied to memoir publications, these could emerge within the memoirs – as Jurkowa’s showed – and also within the impressive body of scholarship in the field of the sociology of the Western Territories. The key processes of stabilisation, adaptation and integration (or formation of a homeland) were studied through personal, family and local interactions, rather than in relation to abstract bonds of imagined national community.

The work of the mainstream memoir movement produced fewer public studies that were overtly critical of the generalising frameworks applied to published memoirs. However, Jakubczak’s *Ludzie i miedź* and his unpublished doctoral thesis indicated the critical potential of those scholars’ sociology, as the mega-concepts of modernisation, urbanisation and nation-formation, including the formation of all-national culture, were tested against memoirists’ experiences of reality and found that the teleologically inevitable processes were far from completion. His own work indicated the tension between satisfying academic rigour and the popularising and propaganda demands placed upon an institution closely intertwined with Party-state power. He could prove selective in his use of memoirs, using single sources to outline future trends, yet also critique the patriarchal logic of social advance narratives or highlight the failings of industrialisation in bringing advance. In these cases, the memoirs provided the foundation for bottom-up investigation. Although the way in which the movement institutionalised was troubling, taking advantage of the rise of state-sanctioned antisemitism, it could be argued that these close links to central power meant the *MPWPL* publications could push limits on memory, as was evident in the inclusion of narratives depicting deportation to the USSR. It is somewhat saddening that the scholars involved in memoir sociology themselves, after 1989, contributed to the passive forgetting of the communist-era achievements in memoir sociology, preferring to align the movement with dominant postcommunist tropes of national memory and victimhood. Rather than celebrate the memoir boom, the significant archive generated and important publications, there were attempts to present the method as maintaining national memory in the sense of canonical events, like Katyn.1466

While the memoir method inspired mass participation, generating a substantial archive of which, sadly, the vast part has been lost or destroyed, it is questionable whether the volumes acquired mass readership. After all, the largest print run for any volume considered here was 20,000 – the first MPWPL volume. 20,000 copies would make the book available to the general reader, although whether the originating community of rural Poles could access it might be unlikely given distribution issues. There were complaints that POZO’s low print run made it largely inaccessible, while Wieś polska was predominantly for academic audiences with 1,280 copies produced of the first volume. The memoirs did inspire subsequent cultural production, depicting the Recovered Territories in particular, and it is perhaps in this way that mass memoirs acquired public attention, albeit unconsciously, rather than as publications. A memoir from Awans pokolenia became a play also broadcast on television. Sylwester Chęciński’s films Agnieszka 46 and Sami swoi, scripted by Wilhelm Mach and Zdzisław Skowroński, and Andrzej Mularczyk respectively, took inspiration from competition memoirs in depicting repatriant settlement and military settlers. As the case of Pietraszko the military settler showed, the use of memoirs in the popular press was problematic and this led to a certain dismissal of the sources as propaganda, showcasing the worst of the exemplification mode of the sources. Press-based competitions and those associated with the Moczarite movement were the most common competitions, thus my research cannot be taken as a general study of autobiography or even competition autobiographies under communism. The focus here has been on the intersection of Party-state organisations, academic institutions and their workers, and ordinary people. The press-based competitions would provide an alternative source of investigation. Indeed, worthwhile future research could compare Wieś polska 1939-1948 with another four-volume series which appeared around the same time. Wspomnienia chłopów 1939-1948 was produced through the Moczarite “partisan” faction, where the focus was largely on heroic wartime achievements and subsequent dedication to the Party but, first and foremost, the nation.

It is evident that in the case of memoir publications editors but above all contributors were responsible for the extent to which published sources were heteroglot, endowed with centrifugal force in relation to the unitary readings of past and present exhibited in state-sanctioned discourses and in some academic approaches. The compilation form certainly...
proved beneficial in passing more controversial texts, since the adopted reading strategy among censors was to fragment the volume as if reading source materials rather than a continuous historical narrative. Some reviewers indicated, however, what were likely to be ordinary readers’ strategies for consuming the volumes, namely generalising across the various texts and potentially finding an alternative to public history and memory. Censors were largely responsible for checking that their presence as imagined co-authors, or indeed co-editors, was functioning successfully. Evidence explored here suggests that Party bodies were concerned that even censorship mechanisms were failing. Krzysztof Dmitruk, in an early postcommunist contribution to censorship studies, critiqued ideal-type models which declared readings could be controlled and undesirable thoughts ‘blocked even before they were thought by the author’. Instead, he approaches Polish communist-era censorship as ‘typical bureaucratised communicative apparatus deprived of its demonic aura.’

In censorship studies it is generally accepted, as John Bates argues, that even with state control of publishing, paper supplies, issuing of publishing licences, imposition of socialist realism, and control of the Polish Writers’ Union (ZLP), ‘the communists’ totalist aspirations never quite achieved fruition even at the height of Stalinism (1949-1953).’ The situation could only become less ideal, from the authorities’ perspective, later on. Indeed, a 1972 Party report on censorship and publishing depicts a ‘typical, bureaucratised’ organ. The Publishing Commission report complained that ‘it is difficult to imagine a more muddled and less integrated model for political control over publishing than that which we have here. In all our fraternal socialist countries there are departments and sections within ideological sections dealing with the totality [calokształt] of publishing.’ Insufficient cooperation between Party-state institutions meant Poland fell behind other socialist bloc countries, The Secretariat of the Central Committee had arranged just one joint session regarding publishing involving the legal-administrative and academic (WPiA and WNiO) sections of the Party in ten years, taking place in 1970. The Commission also found GUK’s work ‘lacked

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1471 Ibid., p.31.
1474 Ibid., p.39. [Underlined in original].
1475 Ibid., p.49.
uniform criteria for judging written production’, indicating a monolithic published sphere was a distant ideal. The Central Committee created WPPiW to better supervise publishing and suggest themes for publications, meaning authors and editors had been creating works which, ideally, would be blocked but instead were passed by censors finding arguments for – rather than against – publication. Censors proved lenient towards or supportive of particular memoir volumes, largely aiming to find a way to pass a volume, rather than ban it or substantially alter it beyond recognition. Of course, this negotiation involved authors’ and editors’ active consent, but it seems overstated to declare this co-responsibility for criminality, as Romek suggests.

The success of the censorship system was evident in bringing editorial boards and authors into the game of mutual compromises. When this succeeded authors and editors no longer thought about the fact that they were participating in the procedure of breaking the word, but simply focused on finding what could be salvaged. The debate was over the extent of intervention, while the existence of censorship was never questioned. Each minor success became a source of joy. The fundamental fact disappeared from view that establishing a common censor and author meant agreeing to participate in the crime against freedom of speech in the PRL era.

Romek’s reading indicates something of an ideal position, sculpted in postcommunism, rather than reflecting the realities of incremental pushes, testing limits and appealing to thinking readers’ critical reception. Equally, historians, authors and publishers had to get by in their everyday life, in their work, with euphemism, Aesopic language and negotiation becoming necessary strategies. Would Polish scholarship and Polish readers have benefitted from having no work published at all on Lower Silesian urban settlement, for example, with historians simply ‘writing for the drawer’ or presenting to closed academic circles, thus allowing official memory and works aligned to it to monopolise the published sphere? Szarota’s work demonstrated an impressive methodology in using memoirs, particularly comparatively with German materials and in replacing unavailable materials, thus pushing some limits on Soviet-Polish interactions. If the published sphere had been fully ceded to aligned works in stout refusal to permit any cuts or editing, postwar Poland’s bibliography would undoubtedly be poorer. There would today be no trace of the MPWPL sources, lost to accidental destruction. No studies today could produce the insight into migration and settlement that IZ studies found using memoirs, interviews and fieldwork. The studies and

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1476 Ibid., p.49.
1477 Romek, Cenzura a nauka historyczna, p.71.
1478 For example: Szarota, Osadnictwo.
publications are unique because the people providing testimonies who belonged to the first generation are largely dead. It would be almost inconceivable to establish on the basis of current memory studies that eastern Poles had been able to establish a vibrant communicative and communal memory, developing an identity as repatriants in People’s Poland, which is what Żygulski discovered. Not only in reference to repatriants, the memoirs are insightful indicators of interanimating exchanges in local communities over past and present, as different claims competed to become internally persuasive. They indicate also what was transmitted between family members, something that is evident in memoirists who were younger children during the war. Of course, the testimonies produced at the time were influenced by public discourses but, as Mark and others have shown, today’s recollection of the state-socialist period and wartime are also constructs influenced by hegemonic discourses. Reaching for the published sources, and the archive, reveals not only unique academic investigations but also unique materials on the history of memory, or mnemohistory – so the past as it was remembered, not as it was experienced, as Jan Assmann defined it.

Today’s memory of memory under communism suggests near total suppression and even absolute silencing of particular themes, with forced forgetting imposed through fear. There was also structurally-induced forgetting by restricting public discourse on certain themes. However, today’s claims – which can go as far as suggesting that under communism there was an ‘amputation of memory’ with false memories or ‘prostheses’ imposed on individuals1479 – overlook the heteroglot reality of the published sphere, with competing memories most evident in the juxtaposition of various experiences in memoir compilations. However, there were also competing schools of historiography and sociology offering different views on past and present. Academic, popular and official discourse did not form a monolith. If today’s dominant memories – of deportation, exile, forced migration, suffering under communism and heroic resistance – were not prevalent in the communist-era published sphere, this does not mean, as Orla-Bukowska and others suggested, that there was ‘falsification’. This assumes, as she did, that today’s memory is the “truth”, rather than a construct. Certainly histories of repatriation and deportation were less prevalent in all the volumes considered than they would be if they appeared today, but there are no grounds to argue along the lines of Skąd my tu regarding suppression or even a loss of communicative memory. As Tomczak noted, meanwhile, there are particular absences and silences in

1479 Zaremba, Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm, pp.211-2.
today’s public memory, as the work of early settlers in rebuilding Poland and local communities is overlooked.

If the readership of the memoir volumes covered in-depth here remained largely the intelligentsia and academic community, rather than the popular mass reader, then does that mean that this study contributes censorship studies’ typical approach? As Sue Curry Jansen argued, ‘[a]ll histories of censorship are histories of elites. That is, they are histories of celebrated or notorious individuals.’ If the readership were predominantly elites, then it might be the case that the exploration of censorship practices reaffirms this typical focus. However, because the sources were produced by ordinary people largely unfamiliar with the publishing industry or mechanisms of censorship, this alters the focus. It was evident that for censors the situation was quite novel, too, as they encountered critical remarks not masked by euphemism. They were confronted, as the MMŻ censors’ review in particular showed, with an image of the present or – for the IZ works – of the past, which was acknowledged as true and realistic, but contrasted with official claims. However, censors more often than not passed these claims as they were mediated through academic introductions which offered sufficiently safe frames for reading.

Since the competition entries were mediated for print by editors and censors, and subjected to academic readings framing the volumes, did the subaltern contributors speak through the volumes? It is evident that few essays accompanying the published compilations explicitly acknowledged the centrifugal potential of the memoirs. Aside from the introduction to MMŻ which acknowledge the critical histories of the present that that competition produced, this was usually intimated by juxtaposing grand narrative claims and selected more ambivalent extracts, something Chałasiński did in MPWPL on occasion. However, the general trend of essays in that series was to present sociological analyses of concerns pressing at the time of publication, with the memoirs highlighting rural forerunners of inevitable historical outcomes. In the memoir-based analyses in the volumes themselves, or in public representation of the sources through official organisations, subalterns largely became ‘ventriloquists’ for the scholarly theories of social advance, modernisation and nation-building, and testimony to the future triumph of socialism. In that sense, there would seem to be no subaltern speaking as the words failed to catch in the introductions, as scholars simply reproduce existing models regardless of what is contributed. However, there were

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1480 Curry Jansen, p.28.
other studies, beyond memoir sociology, that used the sources and subaltern experience to critique the dominant models of inevitable change or achieved emancipation and equality. With some of these studies inspired by the initial contributions to memoir competitions, then it can be assumed that there was a completed speech act, as academics were inspired to investigate further experiences of women’s lasting subordination, failed urbanisation, the persistence of peasant farming or, in the Recovered Territories, lasting senses of temporariness and longing for old family homelands. These themes were also evident in the published memoir compilations, even if accompanying essays rarely acknowledged them. However, there was evidence of experiences of people inhabiting ‘the space that is cut off from the lines of mobility’, \(^{1482}\) or those who ‘survive actively, even joyously’ outside state domination.\(^{1483}\) Consequently, ‘a transaction between the speaker and the listener’ \(^{1484}\) could occur if the reader recognised the significance of such statements in relation to official memory and identity projects. However, most such transactions will be unrecorded, beyond reviews, which themselves encountered the restrictions of the published sphere.

Memoir sociology from the mainstream school tended to foreground those contributors who became indicators of the grand narratives of advance or social becoming conceived as acquiring ‘subjecthood’ and undergoing historification, thus losing their subaltern status. However, it was evident that there remained in print those who failed to match the ideal forms or indicate their future success. Yet, those memoirists still contributed to the construction of the field of public representations of past and present in People’s Poland. This reflects another aspect of memoir sociology’s claims regarding the significance of the form the competitions – they showed ordinary people are writers which meant matching elite forms though not necessarily contents. As William Andrews showed in a different context, subaltern writers required academic or authoritative mediation in order to achieve initial acceptance from readers unfamiliar with their experiences and lives, beyond archetypal models. Although Polish readers had prewar familiarity with peasant and subaltern (unemployed, migrant) biography, it was not comparable to the mass phenomenon of the 1960s. Indeed, the popular success of the method perhaps made academic mediation and approval all the more significant as a marker of the quality of sources and that they would not be propaganda or a contribution to state-sanctioned memory politics under Moczar.


\(^{1483}\) Chakrabarty, Habitations, p. 36.

Even with academic mediation and problematic readings of the memoirs under communism, it is evident that the memoir publications challenge some elite-centred and nation-centred perceptions of memory under communism. Richard S. Esbenshade’s 1995 essay on literary dissidents and collective memory shows how the development of a ‘Kundera paradigm’, whereby there emerges ‘the central role of the writer as keeper of records, custodian of memory, and truth-teller for the nation in the postwar period. [...] In the face of official manipulation and distortion of history (forced forgetting), the writer’s individual memory became the source for, and representation of, national history, its advantages and pitfalls.\(^{1485}\) The writer is imagined as preserving ‘the “true” past rescued by memory from state forgetting.’\(^{1486}\) It becomes a unitary narrative associated with the nation, with the intellectual claiming to speak – or framed by others that way – for all the people. However, as Esbenshade notes, this ‘myth’ of the writer as resisting ‘state forgetting’ has ‘become highly problematic. The celebration of counter-memory or counter-history begs the question of who is doing the remembering and the rewriting of history. The answer, especially in the East-Central European context, is invariably the intelligentsia.’\(^{1487}\) Consequently, ‘versions of remembering otherwise’\(^{1488}\) privilege authors and elites, regardless of evidence of popular memory under communism. Elite authors appropriate the sphere of ‘counter-memory’, suggesting that there were only official and oppositional histories and history, while notions that there were subaltern, private-sphere discourses struggling for influence against elite and official narratives are overlooked, where the concern is not the nation or abstract mega-concepts but the quotidian. Indeed, Orla-Bukowska and Ewa Thompson demonstrate how notions of oppositional memory can appropriate the private sphere for the national cause, with the former outlining a bifurcation of public-official/private-unofficial. The home becomes a microcosm of dominant postcommunist memory under communism, with Mark suggesting that this was generally a narrative established in the aftermath of communism’s collapse.

Henryk Słabek, who used memoirs in his social history, considered attempts to denounce communism in terms of deviation from imagined cultural memory a fairly futile endeavour. Marcin Zaremba believed the ‘essentially totalitarian’ communist regime successfully ‘manipulated social imagination’ by creating ‘historical myth’ based on ‘selecting and


\(^{1486}\) Esbenshade, ‘Remembering to Forget’, p.73.

\(^{1487}\) Ibid., p.77.

\(^{1488}\) Ibid., p.87.
connecting historical threads in order to compile a completely new narrative. Słabek, though rejected today’s view that there was substantial deformation of cultural memory through imagined anti-national, anti-Polish ‘Russification’ or ‘Sovietisation’ of Polish identity and culture. Instead, he saw the communist period as a relatively successful nation-building project incorporating previously-excluded groups, with the dominant tropes of identity being ‘ewangeliczność, solidarność i patriotyzm’.

It is unnecessary for Słabek to make explicit to Polish-language readers that triumvirate of ‘evangelism, solidarity and patriotism’ are analogous with the classical trinity of Polish cultural identity, God, honour and fatherland. Perhaps Słabek’s triumvirate is more secular and less exclusivist. It demonstrates Słabek’s view that far from destroying the Polish nation or destroying its cultural memory, the communist period was characterised by an official memory reliant on established tropes, albeit rephrased somewhat. To use James Wertsch’s term, the national ‘schematic narrative template’ remained unchanged, with the nation’s past and identity communicated in familiar ways in official discourses. As Słabek’s study of the history of society showed, however, this was not the principal concern for the millions of people who comprised society and shaped historical processes.

The memoirs indicate the greater import of quotidian matters, seeking means to get by, although this conclusion may be a bias caused by periods covered in the memoir competitions in this study. Even the settlement of the Recovered Territories was perceived by the masses of, according to Wieś polska and even POZO, in terms of how to get by and survive in difficult conditions, with patriotic or even ‘colonial enthusiasm’ rare among the majority of contributors, although the ultimate outcome of settlement was of national revolutionary significance. MPWPL and MMŻ, meanwhile, in as far as they document the early 1960s present, focus on getting by in conditions of the ‘little stabilisation’ under Gomułka. Perhaps exploration of later memoirs would reveal greater explicit references to the question of the nation and national identity in a dialogic relation to official claims.

Materials produced in 1980-82 through IS UAM, focusing on workers in Poznań, could offer

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1489 Zaremba, Komunizm, pp.211-2.
1490 Słabek, O społecznej, pp.621-2.
1491 Wertsch, Voices, pp.60-62.
1492 As Wertsch argued elsewhere, ‘Schematic narrative templates function to exert a conservative, yet often unrecognized force on collective memory, making it quite resistant to change. This reflects the fact that they are deeply embedded, both in the sense of being transparent and nonconscious and in the sense of being part of deeply held identity commitments.’ James V. Wertsch, ‘Collective Memory’ in Memory in Mind and Culture, Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, eds (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), pp.117-37 (p.130).
1493 Curp, p.5.
useful comparison.\textsuperscript{1494} Of course, \textit{MPWPL} concluded that by 1979 incorporation of peasants into the nation and the formation of national unity and all-national culture within a classless, region-free, fully-homogenised nation was complete. The scholars indicated the death of the peasant in cultural terms, even if peasant economy remained real. Readings of the rise of Solidarity as a national revolution would suggest that the memoir movement scholars, like Chalasiński and Gołębiowski, were right. However, this might overlook realities of peasant-worker relations and the place of the peasant cause within the trade union movement.

It appears that a reason why the competition memoirs have ‘fall[en] out of the frames of attention, valuation, and use’\textsuperscript{1495} in research today is because they largely fail to satisfy the nation-centred, resistance-focused narratives of suffering and subjugation that are dominant at least in recalling the period. The rise of oral history in Eastern Europe allowed for the representation of narratives suitable for the postcommunist field of representations of the past. That would account for memory studies. But why are the sources underutilised for social historical work? It could be a practical matter of accessing the obscure archives, with only IH PAN housing substantial competition materials in Warsaw.\textsuperscript{1496} Even these \textit{Wieś polska} materials required asking personally for permission to use them from the historians’ whose seminar room the cupboard storing the materials is located. Poznań’s IZ is accessible enough, with a fully catalogued archive, but then the 1955/56 \textit{Nowe pamiętniki chłopów} materials are stored an hour’s bus ride from the nearest intercity railway station. Other practical reasons why the materials might be passively forgotten, beyond the struggle to access or locate them, is that there are – despite the loss and destruction at Rudno – so many sources available that it becomes difficult to make an adequate judgment as to which should be selected for study. The IZ catalogue notes for part of the collections the themes covered, while existing publications – particularly \textit{Wieś polska}, which summaries all entries – might guide the researcher seeking to select manuscripts for consultation. A regionally-focused study makes selection easier among nationwide competitions, however.

Krzysztof Kosiński, in his investigation of communist-era schooling, indicates that there might be refusal to engage with pre-1989 sources fearing that they were inauthentic or tainted by the time of production. He bemoans ‘the dearth of sources depicting the private lives of young Poles under communism, so what was going on beyond the school, in family

\textsuperscript{1494} The materials are stored in the basement as ‘Życiorysy robotników’ and were prepared for publication by Jacek Leoński and Andrezej Kwilecki.

\textsuperscript{1495} Aleida Assmann, ‘Canon and Archive’, in \textit{A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies}, pp.97-98.

\textsuperscript{1496} The Peasant Party (ZSL) has maintained some selected materials, but largely removed competition autobiographies from its central Warsaw archive.
homes, in peer groups. In other words, it is a question of finding sources not bearing the hallmarks of the official. The memoirs would provide something of a solution, although Kosiński believes that for historians the problem is that ‘generally sources were generated by or inspired by state institutions.’ The memoirs would be tainted by their association with state-backed institutions based in the media, academia or Party-state apparatus, such as ZMW. There is in Kosiński’s no apparent space for producing writing outside the state. Of course, competitions were organised by state-backed institutions but they could not dictate the content of submissions, unless of course we assume a complete loss of agency under communism and the disappearance of everyday life. Kosiński believes the ‘ruling communists were the directors of everyday life in People’s Poland. They provided the “script” which was to regulate everyday life.’

Of course, other scholars have managed to explore social history of People’s Poland, and have also found the memoirs useful. Aside from the thematic explorations by Szpak, looking at PGR life, and Fidelis, who used some memoirs to consider stalinist-era female workers, it seems that the problems noted by Słabek, whereby it became possible to prove any pre-determined theory based on picking and choosing appropriate extracts, affected works like Curp’s and Zaremba’s. Assuming ordinary people capable of manipulation by appealing to base nationalism, they found examples where this was apparently proven. Or, in Domańska’s case, she selected from nine MPWPL volumes extracts affirming peasants’ “essential” traits.

I have tried to suggest in this thesis that an alternative approach to using the memoirs could be to use them as thick descriptions illustrating in practice models of social change. Jurkowa’s memoir, for example, becomes an indication of the adequacy of the long-term model of stabilisation, adaptation and integration (formation of homeland, or ‘autochthonisation’), as outlined in the sociology of the Western Territories. Although she arrives later than pioneers, she indicates initial trepidation and an inability to stabilise, before emotional bonds developed in the course of everyday life initially to her home space, gradually develop into bonds based in historical knowledge of the local region. At the same time, her memoir critiques Chalasiński’s models – particularly evident in his post-1968 works – of urbanisation and emancipation as she, like numerous female memoirists, remains outside the lines of mobility in urban spaces. An ideal approach in terms of considering the

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1498 Kosiński, p.67.
1499 Ibid., p.49.
memoirs in terms of thick descriptions and illustrations of the dynamic construction of autobiographical memory under Polish state socialism would be to compare not simply across competitions, but across multiple memoirs submitted to different competitions by the same person. This would be possible, for example, in the case of Marcin Dziubek, a peasant settler from Rzeszów voivodeship to the Lubusz lands, who claims he entered at least twelve competitions. I have found seven of his texts, written between 1948 and 1972. Indeed, preliminary research on his autobiographies reveals shifting content in part influenced by self-censorship stemming not necessarily from his awareness of censorship restrictions but owing to concerns stemming from his multiple social roles, as peasant farmer, father, husband and for some time PPR/PZPR member, local activist, including half-heartedly pushing stalinist-era collectivisation, before joining ZBoWiD in 1970. His multiple social roles indicate hybridisation of discourses, while using his knowledge of power to question the principals not only of agricultural policy but the planned economy generally. A microhistorical investigation would accompany the exploration of his narratives by considering state archives documenting his community, while seeking further autobiographical sources, potentially from family archives. Memoirs by settlers inhabiting nearby villages would offer comparison of experiences, attitudes and actions, while also offering further insight into the adequacy or otherwise of communist-era and postcommunist models of social change and theories of memory under communism.

For reasons of space, fully developing the thick description approach to memoirs was not possible. It is evident why simply selecting ‘emphatic statements’ is a preferred approach to memoirs. They can be terribly unwieldy and require lengthy citation or indeed full reproduction to do justice to them in analysis. It is hoped, however, that the approach to the

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1501 Dulczewski in Pół wieku pamiętnikarstwa, p.57.
memoirs in this thesis indicates the diversity of experiences, memories and contributors to competitions. This demonstrates that there was under communism not a monolithic discourse but competing, contrasting memories appeared in the published sphere, reflecting just part of the heteroglossia of usually unrecorded histories from people who, through their everyday practice, contributed to the construction of the social reality of People’s Poland. Equally, my study indicates the variety of scholarly approaches, not simply between sociology and historiography, but within each discipline and their approach to the recent past. The case is made for considering some communist-era sociological studies, particularly those of IZ, as contemporary histories. My study has hopefully laid the groundwork justifying not only the validity of using communist-era competition memoirs for studies not only of the history of memory but also for considering what ordinary people were doing, thinking, feeling under communism, often in obscure contexts, so outside the focus of today’s nation-centred and victim-centred narratives based in memories of communism.

Social history, in Poland and abroad, has contributed substantially to overcoming the ‘totalitarian school of historical study’, refuting claims of the ‘confiscation of the private realm’ or the state directing social life. Exploring the competition memoirs in-depth should achieve something similar for the totalitarian school of memory studies which is evident current scholarship approaching post-communist Europe. Alon Confino suggests memory studies suffers from a familiar and routine formula, as yet another event, its memory, and appropriation is investigated. Memories are described, following the interpretative zeitgeist of the humanities, as “contested”, “multiple”, and “negotiated”. It is correct, of course, but it also sounds trite by now. The details of the plot are different in each case, but the formula is the same.

However, in the context of exploring popular memory under communism it seems that stressing these fundamental aspects of memory studies could be original and necessary.

A document from the KC PZPR archive reveals that *Wieś polska* was classed among recent historical works considered highly problematic because of the intention to publish ‘detailed descriptions of the behaviour of Soviet military authorities in the Western Territories, of the destruction of valuable assets there, and of marauding Soviet soldiers and Red Army

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1502 Geertz, p.21.
1503 Kenney, p.2.
1504 Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, p.117.
The problem was similar to the revision regarding *MPWPL* vol. 5 and the memoir recalling Solzhenitsyn. Editors were pushing limits too far. *Wieś polska* and the other historiographical studies ‘assume that most important is giving readers the so-called “objective truth”, but they overlook the political repercussions of the particular information, opinions and research findings.’ Editors and authors are accused of seeking “novelty” rather than supporting ‘the good cause.’ This fragment of the report could be used to affirm the claims of the totalitarian school of memory studies, as political objectives explicitly override “the objective truth”. Equally, the report might be used to argue that there was subordination to the USSR in politics and in publishing policy. The logic of protecting the national interest meant Poland needed the USSR’s support, thus troubling moments from the past should be omitted. Certainly for high-ranking censorship officials producing such reports, the Soviet partner was an imagined reader. However, my research shows that this culture had not spread through the entire institution. The censorship of publications considered here, ranging from popular compilations for mass readership through to specialist academic works, shows that censors at GUK and Poznań WUK were concerned with finding readings that would permit passing as much as possible.

This apparent leniency created a situation where interventions were required to remove representations of ‘Polish-Soviet relations in 1936-1939, the situation of Poland following the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, the situation of Poles in the USSR after the war.’ Working on the basis of precedent, including using Soviet publications as gauges, limits were pushed so far as to contest the geopolitical alliance in which state socialist rule was grounded in Poland. Evidently some censors also negotiated the knowledge-power bind by ensuring Soviet publications could justify potentially disruptive domestic publications. The report warns that not all Soviet publications ‘containing criticisms of stalinist deformations should be published in our country because in our conditions they can be interpreted not only against stalinism but against the USSR and communism in general.’ It seems censors had worked in exactly this way. The report declares that ‘there are no taboos’ regarding even ‘the most sensitive matters in relations between Poland and other socialist countries, their nations and parties. It all depends on how the problem is outlined and with what purpose.’ There were apparently no taboos – as long as the interpretation and intention was correct.

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1507 AAN/KC PZPR/237/XVIII/285, p.133.
1508 Ibid., p.129.
1509 Ibid., p.132.
1510 Ibid., p.133.
As a result of perceived excessive leniency, GUK faced criticism as an institution but largely deferred responsibility for problems to editors and authors, suggesting that they had abused a degree of trust in cooperation. The censor was a co-author and co-editor but not necessarily one who always inhibited thought and production, as Fik had stated.\footnote{Marta Fik, ‘Cenzor jako współautor’, in \textit{Literatura i władza}, Wojnowska, ed. (Warsaw: IBL PAN, 1996), pp.131-47 (pp.134-5).} As an imagined and real reader, the censor was considered someone who had set precedents with lenient readings, thus a further push could be attempted with new submissions to the extent that materials were being submitted that questioned the grand legitimising narrative of Polish-Soviet alliance.

Full freedom of speech was certainly restricted in state socialist Poland, and editors, publishers, authors and indeed censors involved in the historical and publishing apparatus by agreeing to compromise and negotiate were part of these restrictions. However, these actors also negotiated the ‘the knot that binds power and knowledge’, finding ways to loosen the binds imposed by the powerful, in order to find ‘gaps in the official version’ that enable influence from below on ‘architecture of arguments’, ‘the logic of assertion’ and ‘rules of evidence’.\footnote{Curry Jansen, p.7.} In relation to censors, academics, publishers and editors were the groups attempting to exert influence from below in direct exchanges with central organs of Party-state power. However, in being mediated through academic scholarship and prestigious publishers, competition memoirs produced by rural Poles (or Poles of rural origin) contributed to the contestation of the official architecture of arguments by creating evidence which played by different rules than what elite discourse typically produced. Some scholarship – both under communism and today, produced in Poland and abroad – approached the memoirs as mere illustration of pre-established theories, and indeed some competition entries were written in a manner enabling this. However, when popular autobiographies were treated as historical sources they were presented for publication with recognition of their inherent centrifugal force. Censorship may have weakened some aspects as they entered the field of public representations, but the historical and publishing apparatus emphasised and amplified the heteroglot, disunifying resonance of the memoirs, as they acquired a degree of authority and recognition once accompanied by the name of a particular editor, publisher or academic journal. All these elements of the historical apparatus were sponsored and sanctioned by the Polish communist state, like the institutions that organised the competitions. To resonate critically beyond localised, interanimating exchanges, the memoir materials required mediation by intelligentsia and academic elites. However, the
inspiration for the original submissions endowed with centrifugal force were not national elites, or the canon of cultural memory, as is associated with what is deemed oppositional memory, dissident memory, counter memory, but these very interanimating exchanges, as ordinary people gave an insight into their the dialogic relations between authoritative claims and their everyday existence revealing what was internally persuasive to them.

Not all entries were critical; some were genuinely enthusiastic representations of success, so the stress in this conclusion on the disruptive potential of memoirs as counter-memories is not to incorporate them into the canon of oppositional memory. Stressing the communist-era memoirs’ disruptive, centrifugal force – even in published versions – is to question the assumption that only elites remembered under communism on behalf of the people and the nation, that only elites and dissidents circumvented in the public and published sphere the limits on knowledge imposed by those in power.

As PMG noted, the history produced by ordinary people struggles to access the ‘public “theatre” of history’ or enter the ‘public stage’, as the historical apparatus ‘construct[s] this public historical sphere and control[s] access to the means of publication’. Under communism the historical apparatus, beyond some permeation by imported publications and later the underground ‘second circulation’, was under state control – from publishers to academia and censorship offices. However, this study suggests there remained ‘competing constructions of the past’ and even with a state-sanctioned “dominant memory” it was not the case ‘that conceptions of the past that acquire a dominance in the field of public representations are either monolithically installed or everywhere believed in.’ PMG sought to stress the agency of ordinary people over their mnemonic practices, even if they struggled to enter the field of public representations of the past. As Halbwachs argued ‘it is individuals as group members who remember’ meaning that ‘everyone does not draw on the same part of this common instrument’, namely collective memory.

This applies equally under Polish state socialism.

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1513 PMG, pp.207-8.
1514 Maurice Halbwachs, From The Collective Memory, in Collective Memory Reader, pp.139-149 (p.142).
Glossary

*Gmina:* commune – until 1954 and again from 1973, the smallest administrative division. GRN refers to the National Council at commune level.

*Gromada:* commune – replaced *gminy* between 1954 and 1972; rendered here using the same translation as for *gmina*, although *gromady* usually had lower populations. For the 1954-1972 period GRN refers to National Councils at this level.

*Kresy, kresy wschodnie:* eastern borderlands – lands of the interwar II Republic which are now part of Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine, having been occupied by the USSR, in part, from 1939-41 and then again from 1944.

*Polska centralna:* Central Poland – the areas of the interwar II Republic remaining in postwar Poland.

*Powiat:* district – a largest subdivision of a voivodeship, rendered elsewhere as ‘county’ or ‘prefecture’. PRN refers to the National Council at district level.

*Repatrianci:* repatriants – a contentious term for Poles from the eastern borderlands derived from official discourse which designated all migrants from outside Poland’s 1945 borders repatriants. Krystyna Kersten critiqued the validity of the term, although I use it here, alongside ‘eastern Poles’, since it was the term used in communist-era scholarship. A colloquial alternative was *Zabużanie*, ‘those from beyond the Bug River’, although this was not geographically representative of all eastern Poles, unlike another alternative, *Kresowiacy*, ‘those from the *Kresy*’.

*Województwo:* voivodeship – the largest administrative division of Poland, rendered in some other works as ‘province’. WRN refers to the National Council at voivodeship level.

*Ziemie Lubuskie:* the Lubusz Lands – the territories comprising the first Zielona Góra voivodeship formed in 1950, which in the initial postwar period were mostly in the Poznań voivodeship, with a few districts in Wrocław voivodeship.

*Ziemie Odzyskane:* the Recovered Territories – the initial official name for the lands acquired by Poland at Potsdam, evident in use for describing the post of General Plenipotentiary for the Recovered Territories from 12 March 1945 and then the Ministry of the Recovered Territories [Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych (1945-1949)].\(^{1515}\) Subsequently, the official

name was rendered as Western Territories or Western and Northern Territories, as TRZZ – established in May 1957 – indicates. In the 1970s the capital letters were lost, indicating the territories’ integration into Poland. Jasiński maintains that Recovered Territories remained prevalent in colloquial use, although Western and Northern Lands gained popular currency in the 1960s. The advantage of the term Recovered Territories, he argues, is that it reflects exactly the designated territories, whereas geographical designators could prove confusing regarding some areas around Gdańsk or Białystok. Following Jasiński, I use the term Recovered Territories, even when referring to the 1957-1970 period, while remaining aware of the politicisation of the term under communism.

1516 Jasiński, p.22.
1517 Ibid., p.19.
1518 Ibid., p.22.
1519 Ibid., p.23 and p.25.
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