

ARTICLES

Joanna Szkolnicka, Everyday Life of the Germans in the Kaliningrad Oblast

The first months after the capitulation of Königsberg (Kaliningrad) were marked by the brutality of the Red Army, famine and epidemics. It was women and children who suffered most. An indication of a certain normalization of the situation of the Germans was the establishment of cultural institutions at the beginning of 1946, which served the purpose of re-education. Relations with the new settlers at their shared workplaces remained very tense because the Russians were always privileged. But also acts of humanity on the part of the Russians are testified, often they gave more trust to the Germans employed by them than to their own Russian neighbours. In a first wave from April to June 1947, German residents who were unable to work – particularly orphans and invalids – were allowed to leave the Oblast. A second wave of emigration was the result of a secret decision made in Moscow on 11th October 1947 to encourage the influx of immigration from the central areas of the Soviet Union. As a result, the numbers of those grew who competed with the Germans for jobs.

Soon after the conquest of Kaliningrad, Pastor Hugo Linck became an informal spokesman for the whole German population, for the Protestants in particular. A similar role is attributed to the Catholic priest Paul Hoppe. After the war, Bishop Maximilian Kaller appointed him Vicar General for the Soviet-occupied northern part of the Diocese Warmia. He was called Metropolitan by the Russians. From the notes of the representative of the occupying power, Glazkich, it can be inferred that Hoppe spoke to him as with his peers at the weekly obligatory meetings with the representatives of the German religious communities. Both Hoppe and Linck succeeded in communicating with Glazkich and in establishing a certain relationship of trust with him, which proved highly advantageous, because Glazkich was prepared to ignore some violations of Soviet law by the churches and their representatives.

Uta Bretschneider, Forcing the Future. Resettlers in the collapse and upheaval society of the Soviet occupation zone and the GDR

At the end of World War II German refugees and displaced persons made up about a quarter of the population in the Soviet occupation zone (SBZ). In the phase of collapse and awakening it was necessary to provide 4.3 million people with what they needed: food, housing, work and, last but not least, with prospects for the future. They should find a “new home” in the socialist society that was forming. The resettlement policy was a strict assimilation policy, which was intended to turn the resettled people into people without a past, who concentrated entirely on building the new society. The special status as a distinct group thus only lasted for a short time. Already at the beginning of the fifties the former resettlers were regarded as successfully integrated. In the GDR public a far-reaching taboo of flight and expulsion set in, for example in connection with the prohibition to form associations of “Landsmannschaften (expellee organizations). A culture of remembrance related to the forced migrations around 1945 could therefore only arise in the Eastern part of the country after the end of the GDR. Using qualitative interviews, archival material and contemporary publications, the text provides insights into the complex problem

and possibility spaces that arose in the coexistence of old residents and resettled people in the upheaval society of the SBZ/GDR

Georg Jäschke, The Catholic Youth Associations of Expellees in the Federal Republic of Germany. Gemeinschaft Junges Ermland and Danziger Katholische Jugend

A first meeting of young adults who had been committed to the Warmian youth work during the interwar period took place in Lippstadt in August 1947. The founding date of the Community of Young Warmia was the Easter meeting at Vinsebeck Castle (Westphalia) in 1948. In Schüren (Sauerland), at Easter 1950, the organization gave itself a programme which – in addition to the integration into the new homeland – included the preservation of Warmian traditions, contacts with brothers and sisters of the GDR and the reshaping of relations with Poland. The study conference in the spring of 1959 explicitly advocated an understanding with Poland in a new Europe. The organizational expansion of the Community is reflected in the increasing number of participants at the Easter meetings in Helle (Sauerland) for older people, and in Freckenhorst (Münsterland) for younger ones, as well as in the large number of regional meetings throughout Western Germany.

The foundation of the Community of Gdansk Catholic Youth in August 1947 at the youth castle Gemen (diocese Münster) was connected with a message to the Catholic Youth of the Polish People in the area of the Free City of Gdansk. The consolidation of the community showed itself in the growing number of members as well as the annual youth meetings at Gemen Castle at the end of August with lectures and discussions on topics from church and society. The Community Order – passed in 1956 – was committed to the democratic form of government, to the reunification of Germany, to the lost Eastern territories, to the creation of the European federation in freedom and to the effort to meet Polish youth in order to find a future attitude that would make hatred, revenge and nationalism impossible.