

**Anna Wylegała. *Przesiedlenia a pamięć. Studium (nie)pamięci społecznej na przykładzie ukraińskiej Galicji i polskich "Ziem Odzyskanych."*** Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2014. 509 pp. Illustrations. Postscript. Summary. Bibliography. Appendices. English summary. Index.

**O**ral history has its advantages and disadvantages, and the book under review is a convincing illustration of this well-known fact. The author, a sociologist and translator of Ukrainian literature into Polish, was educated in Warsaw and Lviv and held scholarships at the University of Toronto, Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena (Germany), and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC). Between 2008 and 2011, she (or her assistants) interviewed over 100 individuals in the town of Krzyż (German Kreuz prior to 1945) and over 90 others in the western Ukrainian town of Zhovkva (Polish Żółkiew prior to 1939).

Both of these towns were transferred from one state to another (Krzyż from Germany to Poland; Zhovkva from Poland to Ukraine), lost most or all of their prewar inhabitants, and were populated by new people. Krzyż was completely emptied of its homogenously German residents, who were replaced by Poles from neighbouring Greater Poland (*Wielkopolska*) and central Poland and, to a large extent, by repatriates from the prewar Polish eastern provinces (*Kresy*) taken over by Soviet Ukraine. Zhovkva lost its entire large Jewish population and almost all of its Polish inhabitants and was repopulated by Russians (the new ruling establishment) and three kinds of Ukrainians: from the town's suburbs and surrounding area; from eastern Ukraine; and from regions that remained in Poland but originally had been inhabited by a sizable Ukrainian minority. Wylegała carefully analyzed 82 testimonies from Krzyż and 75 from Zhovkva to describe memories of the resettlement and the postwar era in both towns.

The book, originally Wylegała's PhD thesis, can serve as a model for scholarly work. Published by the prestigious Foundation for Polish Science as part of its monograph series, it is based on meticulous analysis of the interviews, supported by impressive research on the phenomenon of collective and individual historical memory, and supplemented with an exemplary scholarly apparatus. In the first part of the book, "Contexts" (chapters 1-3), the author introduces short histories of Krzyż and Zhovkva and presents the theoretical framework of her study and her research methods.

The second part ("Studies. The Experienced Worlds") analyzes the respondents' recollections and divides them into those that are private, public, or semipublic and of primary or secondary importance. The author compares the memories of members of particular generations and different

groups coming from various territories. Chapter 4, “The Resettlement and Initial Adaptation Period,” describes the traumatic trip from original place to destination; post-arrival fear, violence, and poverty; and homesickness and alienation in the new milieu. Chapters 5 (“The Establishment of a New Community”) and 6 (“Resettlement and Identity”) deal with the assimilation of the repatriated into their new environments. The titles of chapters 7, 8, and 9 all include the phrase “Remembrance of the Absent Ones” then, respectively, “Germans and German Heritage in Krzyż,” “Jews and Jewish Heritage in Żółkiew,” and “Poles and Polish Heritage in Żółkiew.”

Chapter 10, “Heroes and Antiheroes,” shows how the residents of Zhovkva disagree about the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Soviet transformation of their town. Surprisingly—and the author explains the difference—Krzyż does not have its local heroes and villains. The additional “Postscript. Symbolic Space” describes how the inhabitants of both towns reshaped their town environments, replacing old street names, monuments, and cemeteries with new ones. The book closes with a conclusion that summarizes the most important arguments of all of the chapters.

This study offers interesting portraits of the two communities as seen through the prism of their collective memories. Those who are interested in the history of Polish and Ukrainian migrations after the Second World War should study it carefully. Zhovkva can be seen as a rather typical town of the former Polish borderlands transformed by the Soviets. Krzyż does not differ substantially from dozens of towns in the Polish “Recovered Territories” populated by new inhabitants. Also, those interested in the phenomenon of collective memory will find much attractive material in the reviewed publication. Its author shows how memories change, fluctuate, absorb political pressure, divide or integrate communities, conflict or “negotiate” with each other and how they die. It is interesting to see and compare how memories operated in the less oppressive homogenous Polish society of Krzyż and under the brutal regime in Zhovkva.

The conclusions of the book can be used as an argument in a discussion about oral history. Between 2007 and 2012, Wylegała worked as a research fellow of the Oral History (*Historia Mówiona*) program at the KARTA Center Foundation in Warsaw, a non-governmental organization documenting and popularizing the recent history of Poland. It appears that KARTA’s emphasis on gathering documents strongly influenced the author’s approach. Many historians believe that oral history must be supplemented with other elements of historical research, such as analysis of archival sources, memoirs, press articles, church documents, and police reports. Oral history unsupported by these methods can be misleading. It is obvious that some of Wylegała’s respondents were not sincere; some lied or kept most of their thoughts to themselves. This is not a complete and credible picture of the

respondent's memories; this is what they decided to tell the author and her assistants. Their testimonies about the Holocaust constitute the best proof of this. Perhaps, talking to someone else at a different time and place, they would tell different stories.

Wylegała was born and raised in Krzyż, and her mother helped her with her research. One might ask: How did the family history of the Wylegałas affect the author's perception? Also, remembering and forgetting is an important subfield of psychology; would some additional study on post-traumatic stress and suppressed memories help to better understand the testimonies? And, finally, how effective is collective memory in researching the past?

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