

**W**e traveled for over two weeks in an open wagon, in the rain and in the drizzle, wrapped in whatever we could, because the cold was terrible. There were seven adults in our wagon, two children, three horses, a cow, a pig, and some chickens in a coop,” one the Polish Borderlands residents recalls. After the Second World War, not only were Polish borders moved to the west, but also millions of people were forced to leave their homes and set off into the unknown.

# The

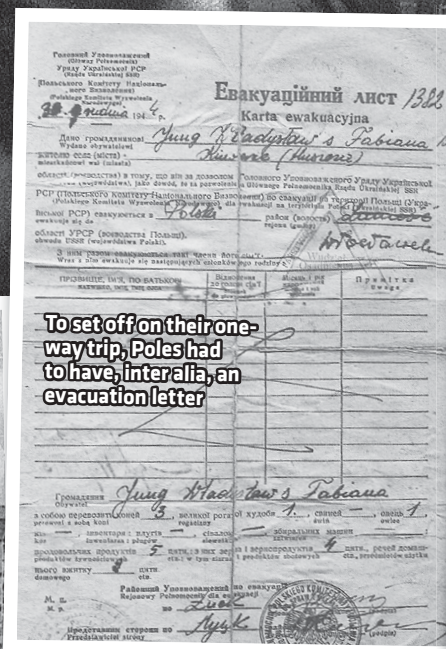


During the transport, the trains stood in the middle of nowhere, even for several weeks

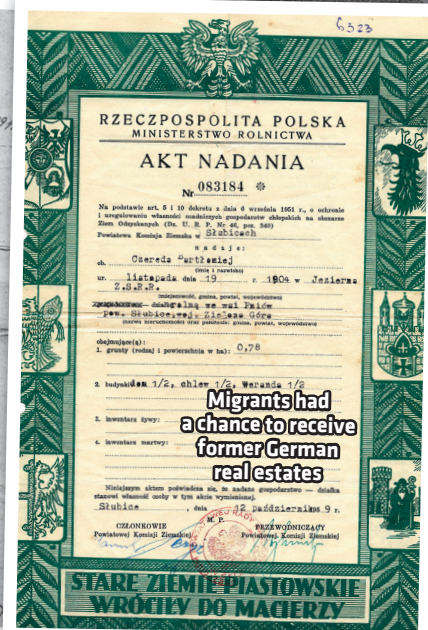
## MINISTRY OF THE RECOVERED TERRITORIES

The ministry was established on November 13, 1945. Its task was to conduct a settlement action in these areas, accelerate integration processes with the rest of the country, and manage former German properties. The authority also dealt with the displacement of about 3 million Germans to the west. Władysław Gomułka was the head of the ministry. New voivodships were soon created from the Recovered Territories. In 1945, Gdańsk was established, and a year later Olsztyn, Szczecin and Wrocław. After more than three years of operation - on January 11, 1949 - the ministry was liquidated.

Wrocław, 1946. Only wreckage welcomed people arriving in the capital of Lower Silesia



To set off on their one-way trip, Poles had to have, inter alia, an evacuation letter



Migrants had a chance to receive former German real estates



Władysław Gomułka became the head of the Ministry of the Recovered Territories

## THE SECOND WAVE OF DISPLACEMENTS 1955-1959

The deportation of Poles from Borderlands to the lands of the People's Republic of Poland began in 1955, during the thaw. After Stalin's death, the new USSR government launched a campaign to return political prisoners to their home countries. However, the government of the Polish People's Republic also meant the inhabitants of the former Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, who were not resettled in the years 1944-1946. For this purpose, on November 15, 1956, Gomułka and Cyrankiewicz traveled to Moscow. Their actions led to the displacement of another 29,000 people. The repatriation agreement was finally concluded on March 25, 1957, and provided for the return of all those who had Polish citizenship before September 17, 1939, their spouses, and children (which had to be proved). The actions were slowed down by the lack of documents and difficulties in reaching out to Poles scattered throughout the USSR. Altogether, in the years 1955-1959, a total of 245,501 people were resettled.