

# NATIONAL MIGRATION

**As a result of World War II, Poland lost the Eastern Borderlands to the Soviet Union and gained territory in the west and north belonging to Germany called the Regained Territories.**

The end of the war in 1945 resulted in border changes and mass migrations of people. The eastern border of Poland was established as early as 1943 at a conference in Tehran by Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill. It was moved to the line of the Bug River, and the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic were incorporated into the union republics of the USSR: Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine. We lost the following voivodeships: Vilnius, Nowogrodzkie, Polesie, Wołyń, Tarnopol, Stanisławów, and Lviv.

### What Poland Regained

As compensation, the eastern and northern parts of Germany returned to the Mother country. These were Silesia, part of Western Pomerania and Brandenburg up to the line of the Odra river and Nysa Łużycka with Szczecin and Wrocław, the southern part of East Prussia without Królewiec, i.e. Warmia and Masuria, and the Free City of Gdańsk. It was one-third of the territory of the Polish country within the new borders. These areas were called by the communist authorities the Regained Territories. The propaganda referred to the fact that the ancient Piast lands, once taken by the Germans, returned to Poland. In the years 1945-1949, their administration was carried out by the Ministry of the Recovered Territories, headed by Władysław Gomułka. New voivodeships were created: in 1945 the Gdańsk voivodship was created, a year later the Olsztyn, Szczecin and Wrocław voivodeships, in 1950 - Koszalin, Opole and Zielona Góra voivodeships.

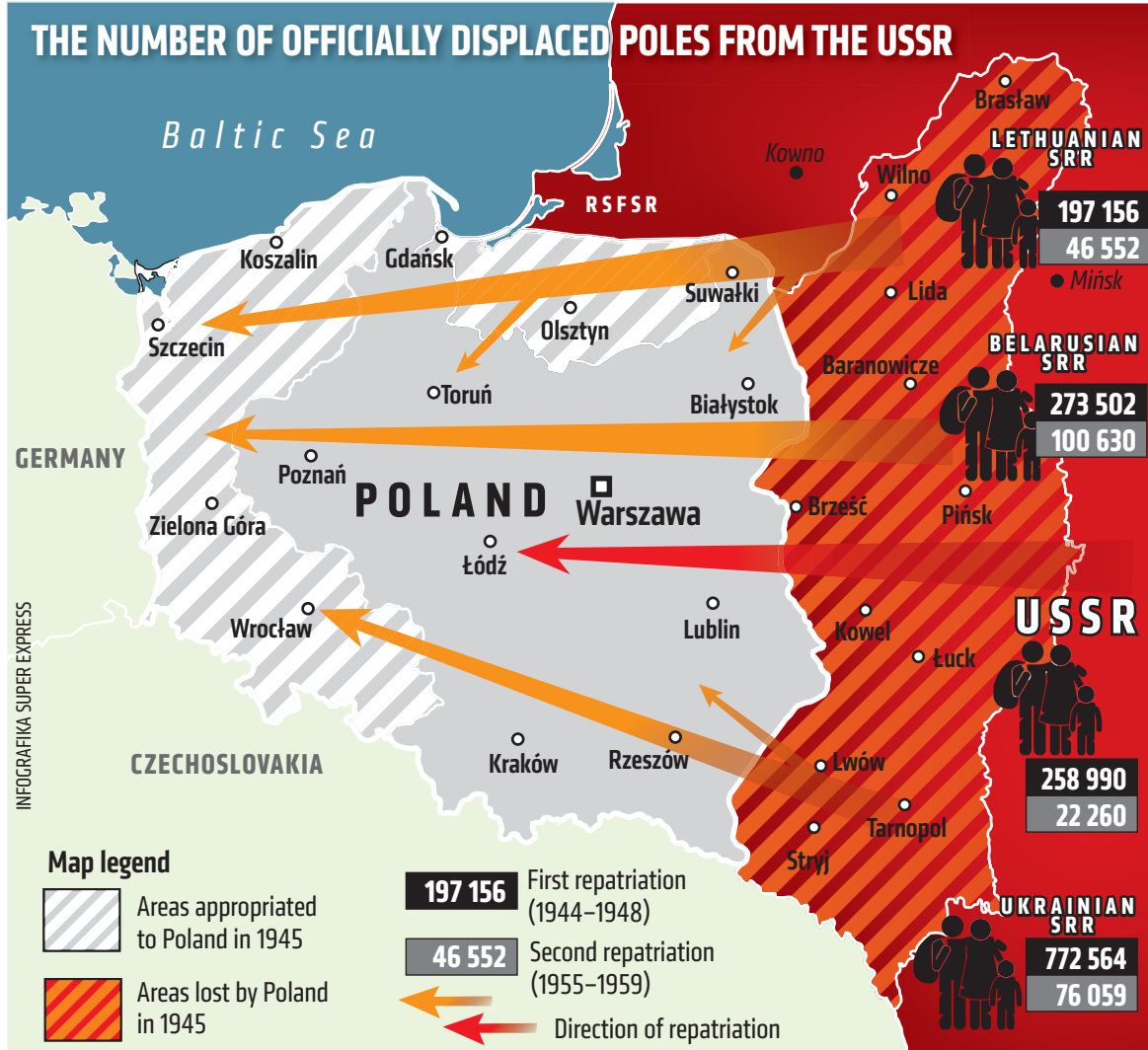
### March west

Due to the change of borders in 1945, mass migrations began. The



The displaced people also took over the agricultural equipment from the Germans. In the photo: work on a post-German thresher.

Germans were relocated to the west, and the lands they abandoned were occupied by Poles displaced from Borderlands, trying to escape from the USSR, and settlers coming voluntarily from central Poland. The largest wave of resettlement took place in the summer and fall of 1945, and in the spring of the following year. In the first post-war years, over 4 million people came to the Recovered Territories. Most of the new inhabitants were newcomers from central voivodeships. There were about 2.5 million of them. The repatriates from the Eastern Borderlands made up the second-largest group, about 1.5 million people. Most of the displaced people from Lithuania settled in the Olsztyn and Gdańsk province. Smaller groups stayed in Wrocław. People from Ukraine settled mainly in the west of the Śląskie and Wrocław Voivodeships. The population of Belarus lived in the Wrocław Voivodeship and the western part of Poznań, as well as in Szczecin and Gdańsk. In June 1945, the migration of Poles from the inland of the USSR, former exiles and labor camps, began. At the same time, deportations were carried out across the eastern border, and whole villages were displaced. As part of this action, about half a million Belarusians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians ended up in the USSR.



Project co-financed by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister

