

Representation of Memory of Forced Displacement in Central and Eastern Europe after World War II in Polish and German Cinemas

Ilona Copik

Abstract—The aim of this study is to analyze the representation of memories of the forced displacement of Poles and Germans from the eastern territories in 1945 as depicted by Polish and German feature films between the years 1945-1960. The aftermath of World War II and the Allied agreements concluded at Yalta and Potsdam (1945) resulted in changes in national borders in Central and Eastern Europe and the large-scale transfer of civilians. The westward migration became a symbol of the new post-war division of Europe, new spheres of influence separated by the Iron Curtain. For years it was a controversial topic in both Poland and Germany due to the geopolitical alignment (the socialist East and capitalist West of Europe), as well as the unfinished debate between the victims and perpetrators of the war. The research premise is to take a comparative view of the conflicted cultures of Polish and German memory, to reflect on the possibility of an international dialogue about the past recorded in film images, and to discover the potential of film as a narrative warning against totalitarian inclinations. Until now, films made between 1945 and 1960 in Poland and the German occupation zones have been analyzed mainly in the context of artistic strategies subordinated to ideology and historical politics. In this study, the intention is to take a critical approach leading to the recognition of how films work as collective memory media, how they reveal the mechanisms of memory/forgetting, and what settlement topoi and migration myths they contain. The main hypothesis is that feature films about forced displacement, in addition to the politics of history - separate in each country - reveal comparable transnational individual experiences: the chaos of migration, the trauma of losing one's home, the conflicts accompanying the familiar/foreign, the difficulty of cultural adaptation, the problem of lost identity, etc.

Keywords—Forced displacement, Polish and German cinema, war victims, World War II.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this study is to analyze films made between 1945 and 1960 in Poland and the two German states, the subject of which was the forced migration from the East that took place in Central and Eastern Europe after World War II. Such a research area makes it possible to focus on works that were produced during the first 15 years after the war, and thus under conditions of still fresh communicative memory of the trauma of the war. Until now, film works from this time have been analyzed mainly in terms of the artistic strategies employed by the directors and in the context of ideology and historical politics. Only in recent years has the subject of the iconography of flight and expulsion in post-war films in

Germany with a cultural focus been taken up by Tiewis [1]. An attempt at a comparative treatment of this subject in the context of Polish and German media messages after 1989 is a book by Röger [2]. In Poland, there has not yet been a monograph on Polish and German memory cultures contained in films, but there are scattered texts addressing this issue. Among the most important are publications by Saryusz-Wolska [3], Szydłowska [4] and Gwóźdź [5].

The research questions posed in this article concern how films shape the collective memory of post-war migration, i.e. how they select events (1), what, according to the directors, should have been preserved in the collective memory and what should have been kept silent (2), what characteristic motifs/images captured on screen became icons of migration memory in later cinema (3).

II. BACKGROUND

One of the consequences of World War II in Central and Eastern Europe was the mass forced migration of the population. This was decided at the conferences of the anti-Hitler coalition leaders in Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July-August 1945), where peace treaties were drafted and the new shape of Europe was determined. At the time, the Allies accepted the shift of the countries' borders westward (this mainly involved Poland, Germany and the USSR). The geopolitical project itself, however, was an earlier creation; Stalin had already imposed on the "Big Three" the eastern border of Poland on the so-called "Curzon line" (the line of the Bug and Niemen rivers) and the western border on the line of the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers during the Tehran conference (November-December 1943). The leader of the USSR was the author and proponent of the new division of Europe into a communist east and a capitalist west separated from each other by the "Iron Curtain." The course of the new borders was accepted by the Polish Communists, who signed the PKWN Manifesto (July 22, 1944) on Stalin's orders. The document stated that the only legal source of power in Poland was the Communist National Council. In matters of borders, it called for a struggle for the return to the motherland of the geographical lands: Pomerania, Silesia and East Prussia, using the argument that these territories belonged to Poland centuries ago. In the east, the border was to be settled according to the principle: Polish lands belong to Poland, Ukrainian, Belarusian

I. Copik is with the Institute of Cultural Studies at the University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland (corresponding author; e-mail: ilona.copik@us.edu.pl).

and Lithuanian lands - to the Soviet republics [6].

The plan to create a new Europe after World War II actually meant ethnic cleansing. Reams of people of Polish, Jewish and Ukrainian descent were forced to abandon their small homelands in the east and head west, but above all the plan was to remove Germans from Central and Eastern Europe. According to Thum's findings, the new borders were not only the result of Stalin's expansionist policy, but resulted from the Allies' desire to organize Europe on an ethnic basis, shifting settlement boundaries in order to "clean up" regions that had been characterized by the coexistence of different national groups over the centuries [7]. The decisions taken internationally, which resulted in mass migrations, were guided by the assumption of the formation of nationally homogeneous states. Their mono-ethnicity was to be a guarantee of peace in the future and prevent any conflicts. The necessity of resettlement was recognized not only by Stalin's supporters, but, for example, by the Polish government-in-exile, which opposed the Communists, pointing out the impossibility of Poles and Germans coexisting on one territory after the war.

The mass displacement of the population after World War II totaled nearly 6 million Poles and some 14 million Germans. Both the former and the latter, in areas that changed nationality as a result of the war, were to leave the lands they had inhabited for centuries, with which they were bound by strong emotional ties [7]. Although the authorities of both countries referred to the whole process as a necessary evacuation, repatriation (i.e., return to the homeland), in reality it was an expulsion, causing severe experiences and psychological trauma, which have only recently been the subject of in-depth study [8]. In the background of the political arrangements took place the silent drama of individuals. To be precise, these people were not so much "displaced" as internally displaced. As a term, internally displaced person "combines the concept of people who flee for a number of reasons similar to refugees, with the fact that they have not crossed an international border" [9]. The post-war exiles were not leaving their country. It was the homeland that was moving westward, and they were losing their homes, family heirlooms, social ties and identities.

The largest wave of migration took place after the Potsdam Conference in the period from 1945 to the end of 1950. At that time there was a regular *exodus* of Poles from the so-called "Eastern Borderlands" and Germans from Silesia, Pomerania and East Prussia. The civilian population was forced to leave their homes, abandon their possessions, take their essentials and travel in inhumane conditions, often in unheated freight cars. Earlier, more or less since 1944, there had been regular escapes from the advancing Red Army. As the winter offensive began in 1944 and the front moved westward, they covered more territory captured by the Soviets. The greatest tragedy befell the civilian German population in January 1945, when the Red Army captured almost all of the territory east of the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers. Women with children, the elderly, and the disabled had to flee in 30-degree cold in panic from the oncoming enemy, which was done in conditions of panic and chaos, as the Nazi authorities did not announce a regular evacuation until the end. The situation of the German expellees

was made all the more difficult by the fact that all Germans as perpetrators, collectively blamed for causing the war, were considered "outlaws" and deprived of protection [10].

III. METHODOLOGY

The research approach used can be described as inspired by a new film history, that is, a history that focuses on the study of side, lesser-known themes and contexts of film production and reception, as defined by the authors of the book *The New Film History*, James Hapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper [11]. The new history of film (cinema) breaks with the tendency to classify strands, to develop a historical canon, focusing, among other things, on the collective communicative experiences and socio-cultural practices mediated by film. Other methodological inspirations include visual history, which analyzes the role of film in the creation of collective visual memory and imagination by Kansteiner [12], and memory studies - studies of communicative and cultural memory by Assmann [13]. The relationship between history, memory and film is examined in terms of how film is ideologically involved in reconstructing historical narratives, interpreting the past, creating myths, and shaping and reflecting the collective historical imagination. The research assumption is both the constructive nature of the memories themselves and the creative nature of the image and film narrative, which always deform the past, for film is necessarily an abbreviation, a fragment of events, and offers viewers a selective vision of the past. The study takes into account Jan Assmann's distinction between communicative memory (1), which concerns memories of the past closest in time, transmitted in intergenerational transmission, and cultural memory (2), which consists in the technological mediation of memory in symbols and media.

IV. EAST GERMANY FILMS

Films made in the Soviet occupation zone and later in the GDR were influenced by communist ideology and slogans proclaiming the construction of a new socialist state. The point of view of the postwar world was dominated here by the perspective of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). Escape and expulsion disappeared from the filmmakers' view in favor of the implementation of the ideas of settlement, new labor relations, and collectivization of the countryside. The 4 million expellees, representing $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population, who found themselves in the Soviet occupation zone were quickly advised to forget what they had experienced when the Red Army entered the eastern territories. Discussions about the victims of the expulsion were completely forbidden, and the subject of the loss of property in the east was passed over in silence. Since the socialist states headed by the USSR did not consider themselves guilty of expelling Germans, forced migrants in the GDR were denied victim status. They simply became ordinary displaced persons who had to be assimilated into the rest of society. As Kossert writes: "The entire integration policy of the Soviet zone was based on a lie" [10], what mattered in it was not people, but the preservation of the political stability of the socialist system.

One of earliest films dealing with this theme is *Free Land*

(*Freies Land*, 1946, dir. Milo Harbich). Its plot is set in 1945 in the border town of Lubusz on the Oder River. The work combines the convention of feature film with reportage, in which it somewhat resembles the paintings of Italian Neorealism. In the credits, the viewer is informed that "the film is based on facts," moreover, in addition to professional actors, it features authentic German resettlers and settlers. The director's attention is focused on the processes of settlement, accompanied by agrarian reform, the idea of collectivization of the countryside and the division of junk estates, nevertheless, it is in this film that the characteristic iconographic motif of the column of refugees on the road (*Flüchtlingstreck*) appears for the first time, using images from the Nazi newsreels and combining them with staged scenes. This is the most evocative and significant symbol of the experience of expulsion, in which the suffering of ordinary people is revealed: the hardships of the journey, the lack of a destination, the tragedy of losing loved ones (the child of one of the characters died and was buried on the road), the anonymity of the victims.

Free Land is an example of almost unreflective optimism about the construction of a new regime in Germany and the belief that through the implementation of the ideas of peace and socialism it is possible, firstly, to forget the crimes of war, and secondly, to quickly integrate society. The story is somewhat different in Arthur Pohl's *The Bridge* (*Die Brücke*, 1949), a film three years later. In this film all the problems of assimilation in the "cold homeland" [10] about which Kossert writes resound. On the screen we see the paradox of the displaced people, who are not accepted in the community to which they arrive. Identified as members of the nations that expelled them, they are referred to as "strangers," "gypsies," "vermin," and are met with aggression and hatred. As Gwóźdz noted: "The conflict between one's own and the stranger here acquires an unequivocally class character: the proletarian anti-fascists are contrasted with yesterday's Wehrmacht soldiers, unequivocally defined as guilty of the war and responsible for the exodus of Germans from the East" [5]. Despite the obvious narrative simplifications, such as the depiction of how the displaced people are transformed into modern and committed socialist citizens in rapid succession, one can agree with Gwóźdz, who classifies Pohl's film as an example of "an exhaustive cinematic representation of the migrant's *world on the move*" [5], deeming it prescient in inaugurating a serious discourse of memory on displacement.

On October 7, 1949, the GDR was established; a year later, Communist Germany ratified the border on the Oder and Lusatian Neisse, calling it an "inviolable border of peace and friendship," proclaiming that it united brotherly nations building socialism (the Zgorzelec Agreement of July 6, 1950). Thus, a new resettlement policy was proclaimed, according to which the memory of the loss of homes and trauma had to be erased from the collective consciousness, since there was no longer any possibility of returning to the old homeland. Western fascists were blamed for what had happened, and it was stated that the GDR was the homeland of the true peaceful Germans, liberated by the Red Army from the yoke of imperialism. The instrumentalization of the past resulted in a radical cleavage of

memory into official memory (in this case, oblivion) and private memory, which was henceforth concealed and passed on in the conditions of the home and within the circle of friends. In the GDR, film, like all mass media, was centrally politically controlled, as Tiews [1] writes in detail. It was therefore forbidden to show a column of expellees on the road, cattle cars, let alone scenes of people leaving their homeland. East German resettlement propaganda mandated a focus on the problems of assimilation and integration and the building of a new society. These phenomena are powerfully portrayed in the two-part film *Palaces and Cottages* (*Schlösser und Katen*, part 1: *Hunchbacked Anton/ Der krumme Anton*, part 2: *Return of Annegret/ Annegrets Heimkehr*, 1957) by Kurt Maetzig. The newcomers from the east forcefully support the land reform here, becoming its beneficiaries. A resettler from East Prussia is elected chairman of the farmers' organization, and his daughter-in-law becomes a role model of a socialist woman. The film is the apotheosis of a new society in which the old social arrangements do not apply, in which all citizens are equal. Whether they are autochthons or displaced persons, the socialist homeland provides them with equal opportunities for a better life.

V. WEST GERMANY FILMS

Policies on displaced persons and the culture of memory in East and West Germany were very different. In the GDR, collective memory was subordinated to the top-down imposition of the need to come to terms with loss and admit that forced migration was the price of fascism. There was a total ban on cherishing memories of the German East. The situation was different in West Germany, where, in accordance with the freedoms of assembly, association and expression enshrined in the Basic Law, a pluralistic culture of remembrance developed and where the "right to a homeland" was proclaimed. Although the first post-war years were marked by denazification and collective reckoning with the perpetrators of the war, there was no avoidance of statements that there were also victims of Nazism among Germans. The Western Allies accepted the focus on the suffering of civilians, the experiences of Eastern Front soldiers, bombings, etc. All in all, however, the very subject of resettlement from the East proved as unpopular in West Germany as in the GDR, albeit for different reasons. "The German East was not a taboo subject in West Germany, but a subject avoided like a contagious disease" [10], Kossert states. The wave of refugees that flooded the western occupation zones (some 10 million displaced persons) proved to be a huge social problem for the autochthons. The otherness of wartime fates, mental and linguistic differences, and material inequalities caused communication problems and social conflicts.

Although the subject of forced migration from the East was sidelined from public discourse amid the post-war problems of reconstruction, shortages of provisions and destitution, the characters of displaced persons already appeared in the first post-war West German films. One of them is Helmut Käutner's *In Those Days* (*In jenen Tagen*, 1946), made in the British occupation zone. The film represents the convention of the so-called "ruin film" (*Trümmerfilme*) [14], but unlike most works

of the genre (including the most famous of them, *Murderers are Among Us/ Die Mörder sind unter uns*, dir. Wolfgang Staudte, 1946) it tells the fate not of the perpetrators, but of the victims of National Socialism. Interestingly, the resettlement narrative does not just focus on showing that Germans were people too, but goes a step further. The situation of a young widow who fled Silesia on foot with her newborn child and is heading to a town north of Hamburg, whose fate is intertwined with a soldier returning from the war, is here directly compared to that of a holy family at Christmas. The innocence of the film characters and their status as victims is emphasized by their names (Mary and Joseph), as well as the circumstances of their meeting: a dark night, a stable, a child sleeping on hay. Käutner's film also marks the first time that the image of the column of displaced persons, already familiar from the film *Free Country*, appears on screen, albeit in an abbreviated form. According to Röger, *Flüchtlingstreck* has since become a central motif of flight and expulsion, a key visual iconography of memory, and has established a specific discourse of victimization and repression [2].

The theme of victims of the war was developed by another of the "ruin films," Wolfgang Liebeneiner's work *Love 47 (Liebe 47)*, 1949). As Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska writes, in films belonging to this genre, ruin was treated more broadly than just in terms of material destruction, it was a symbol of "the ruined mental condition of Germans" [3]. In the film under discussion, the spiritually destructed character is a woman, Anna. The director's adoption of her point of view makes us deal with the construction of a counter-history written from the perspective of women [3]. The war memories of the protagonist include such motifs as the idyll of East Prussia, interrupted by the war, the loss of her husband at the front, the chaos of evacuation, during which a child dies under the wheels of a train, the drama of bombing raids. War is portrayed in this film as the domain of men, with the telling words: "The world is ruled by men and this is how it is." Anna's fate symbolizes the fate of millions of German women, but especially epitomizes the plight of the female emigrant, who, as a result of resettlement, is socially degraded, has to start all over again in a foreign environment and earn a living on her own.

The problem of war and its victims was approached even differently by Eugen York in his original film *Morituri* (1948). The concentration camp, occupation, wartime migration are shown here as universal problems affecting people of different nationalities (there is a Pole, a Russian, an Italian, a Canadian, a Dane) and religions (Jews, Christians). A feature of war is that anyone can become a victim of persecution and repression, and in extreme conditions cruelty and goodness are also most revealed. In *Morituri* the persecutors are not called by name, the perpetrators remain anonymous, faceless, the viewer hears only their voices, shouted orders, sees their uniforms and boots. The victims, on the other hand, are a multitude of individualized, concrete and unfortunate people. The point of view used resembles the perspective of the "common man", who feels powerless in the face of the ongoing events. It is worth adding that the film's action takes place in a fictional, unspecified locality, somewhere in occupied Poland, which is shown on the

screen as a civilizationally backward periphery. It can be said that the east in the geo-cultural sense is clearly oriented by the director according to the meaning given to the term by Edward Said. Its landscape is made up of dark forests, wild swamps, impassable moors. The East with its untamed nature, irrationality and passivity is clearly contrasted with the West.

Although, according to Kossert's findings, the primary problem of displaced persons in West Germany was the resentment and humiliation they faced from the autochthons, which was especially true of stable rural communities [10], the opposite view could be formed by viewers watching so-called "heimatfilms". In them, the story of expulsion was reduced to a tale of successful assimilation and rooting in the new homeland. The typical plot scheme used by directors, the confrontation between newcomers and locals, always had a happy ending and brought a solution in the form of reconciliation and adaptation of socio-cultural practices to local conditions. "Heimatfilms" made it clear that the traumatic history of forced migration does not fit into the politics of the economic miracle and the process of modernization, so there is no rationale for nurturing it. The memory of the victims of flight and expulsion in Germany, Kossert writes not without amazement, has moreover disappeared in a single generation. "The former German cultural landscapes in the east have been removed from the German horizon of perception" [10]. They have been replaced by spaces of cinematic Heimats offering consumer kitsch as a substitute for the lost homeland. A typical example of this psychosocial strategy was Hans Deppe's blockbuster *Green is the Heath (Grün ist die Heide)*, 1951). Shot in Technicolor and using well-known songs by Hermann Löns, the film attracted an audience of more than 16 million. The outdoor shots were taken on the picturesque Lüneburg Heath in the village of Bleckede, which was a typical place where displaced people and locals had to integrate with each other. In the end, the viewer watched a conventional celebration of the Silesian expellees' association, at which former Silesians dressed in folk costumes full of longing for the old days sang the homeland anthem the famous *Riesengebirgles Heimatlied*, confirming that the problem of lost cultural identity and the disintegration of social communities is not their problem.

Wanting to identify the film that was most significant for the resettlement discourse in West Germany, which critics considered a credible depiction of the events [15], although it was not necessarily popular with audiences, one must mention Frank Wisbar's work *The Night Has Fallen Over Gotenhafen (Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen)*, 1959). The images contained in this war drama represent the sum total of iconographic motifs relevant to the theme of flight and expulsion and were repeatedly used in later films and media coverage. The plot wrapped around the true story of the sinking of the "Wilhelm Gustloff" has been described as an allegory of German history *per se* [15]. The sunken ship symbolizing the end of the Third Reich at the same time became a memorial to the biggest disaster in the Baltic Sea, which claimed 7,000 lives (including 3,000 children). "Gustloff" was solemnly christened in 1937 as a passenger ship intended for the Nazi organization "Kraft durch Freude". As a luxurious and grandiose object, it

symbolized all the promises and temptations of the Nazi era, making its sinking particularly significant [2]. In addition, Wisbar's film features an elaborate motif of a "trek" across the Bay of Vistula. The poignant image of the trek through the icy and frozen landscape was depicted on screen from the perspective of the victims, which must have evoked an emotional reception from viewers. Photos that show people fleeing on foot or in ladder carts and wagons, in smoky snow and 30-degree frost with no plan or destination, or images showing the bodies of children adrift in the cold sea waves still evoke deep impressions today. Another important iconic and meaningful motif, showing the whole drama of the situation, is the scene in which the mother, sitting on the cart, cuddles the child to sleep and sings him a lullaby: "Father is at war, mother is in Pomerania, Pomerania is burned, sleep child, sleep...". The film *Night fell over Gotenhafen*, despite the fact that it did not explain the causes of the catastrophe, nor did it delve into the circumstances of the unfolding drama, remains a document of memory of the drama of individuals, the tragedy of the victims that the war consumed.

VI. POLISH FILMS

In post-war Poland (called the Polish People's Republic since 1952) under the political domination of the USSR, the memory of forced migration from the East, as in the GDR, was subject to strict control and taboo. The tradition of the Eastern Borderlands, fully integrated into Poland in the national consciousness and a source of national mythology, could not officially be mentioned. Instead, the communist authorities nurtured the memory of the settlement of the Western Territories, making this event the founding myth of the Polish People's Republic. The Ministry of Recovered Territories was established to integrate the new territories with the rest of the country. Seeking to justify the Polish affiliation of lands that had belonged to Germans for centuries, the institution proclaimed a "return to the motherland," invoking the history of the medieval affiliation of these territories to Poland (the Piast myth). The centrally controlled film, like other cultural media, had the primary task of justifying Polish rights to the new territories. From the point of view of the authorities, this was important because there was uncertainty about the permanence of the new border. It ceased only in 1970 after the signing of the Polish-German agreement between the People's Republic of Poland and West Germany on the ratification of the borders. The fact that the country's borders were shifted 200 kilometers to the west radically changed the territory of Poland, there was an almost complete exchange of population in the newly annexed territories, so an atmosphere of a mythical mission was created around the settlements. The resettlers in the Western Territories were tasked - just as in communist Germany - with laying the foundations of a new, socialist society; additionally, they were to nurture Polish national identity in the post-German territories [16].

One of the first films to deal with the subject of settlement in the western lands was Jerzy Rybkowski's *The Hours of Hope* (*Godziny nadziei*, 1955). The film showed the situation in 1945 from the perspective of Poles who were resettled in German

territories by the Nazis during the war, at the same time explaining to the viewer that post-war migrations in Europe were natural and involved many nationalities. The film's collective protagonist was a multilingual, international crowd forming a veritable mosaic of cultures and traditions. There were Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Roma, Italians and French depicted as emigrants looking for a new purpose in life. This collective, as seen by the director, was united by a common desire for the end of the war and the element of life (in which similarities to Italian neorealism were seen). At the same time, Rybkowski's film was a reminder that the first settlers in the western lands were forced laborers, prisoners of war and prisoners of evacuated Nazi camps. The feature idea was inspired by the autobiographical experiences of the director, who himself survived the end of the war in a post-German town [17]. Thanks to this, he managed to convey on the screen the unique mood that accompanied the border state between war and peace, in which the joy of the approaching end of the war was disturbed by the ever-present wartime danger. However, this is where the experiential qualities of the film end. The director did not mention a word about the circumstances of the resettlement from the East, which are alive in people's memories, did not take up the theme of the loss of 1/3 of Polish territory to the USSR, and concentrated, in accordance with the party's demands, on the settlement of the lands seized from the Germans. Propaganda made it clear that the western lands undisputedly belonged to Poland, and that the recent laborers working for the German owners were now their landlords.

A film that was entirely about resettlement and organizing a new home in the west from the perspective of single women was Stanisław Różewicz's drama *Three Women* (*Trzy kobiety*, 1956). Its protagonists, three female prisoners released from a concentration camp who had lost their homes and loved ones in Nazi-ruined Warsaw, decided to leave for the western lands. The resettlement narrative here was accompanied by the motif of uprooting, the disintegration of the world and a crisis of values, common in Polish cinema of the period. The journey took place in a freight railroad car and was shown as suffering and inhumane hardship for people already victimized by the war. The characters survived the Nazi occupation, the underground, arrests and camps, and the death of loved ones. Using the example of the fictional town of Skołyszyn, the film showed the difficult circumstances of the settlement of the western lands and the first dramas of immediate postwar life. For the first time it showed, for example, scenes of the allocation of housing by the State Repatriation Office and the circumstances of the distribution of post-German property. The description of the Western Territories as the Polish "Wild West" [16] seems exceptionally appropriate in the context of the images shown in it. For the settlement action was accompanied by a desire to conquer and appropriate. The message of the film was not optimistic. The Western Lands were shown as a difficult space in which it is not easy for the resettlers to take root.

Directors of Polish films, as was the case with East German filmmakers, were not interested in keeping the memory of the details of forced migration alive, and did not show on screen

scenes of leaving homes, traveling under difficult conditions. Instead, the film plots usually focused on the settlement action. This was the case with Kazimierz Kutz's films *Cross of Valor* (*Krzyż walecznych*, 1958) and *No one is calling* (*Nikt nie wola*, 1960), which were set in 1945 in Lower Silesia. Like Różewicz, Kutz did not explain the circumstances of the *exodus* of German residents in his film. He showed that the resettlers entered empty villages and towns, settling houses and apartments abandoned by the Germans. There were no strangers in his films at all, which could not be true, since a large number of local Germans remained in the areas occupied by the Russians after the end of hostilities. However, as Thum writes: "the German population did not take to the streets for fear of being attacked or arrested. Most (...) hid in cellars" [7]. The fact of the expulsion of former residents was an iconographic taboo in Polish cinema throughout the communist period. All Germans were treated as perpetrators, held collectively responsible for causing the war, denying the right to grant victim status to displaced persons. The impossibility of comparing their fate to that of the Polish settlers was pointed out, using the argument that the Poles were the victims and the Germans the perpetrators of the war. Communist propaganda encouraged not only displaced persons from areas incorporated into the USSR, but also those from central Poland to settle in the West, spreading optimistic visions of the recovered lands as *terra repromissionis* [4]. Kutz's films disagreed with the party's vision in that they showed the western lands as difficult, unfriendly, and described the time of settlement as a period of existential uncertainty and moral dilemmas.

The political approach represented by the authorities to the change of borders, and at the same time the colonization mission that the People's Republic of Poland wanted to carry out in the territories, was best shown in war films. The most notable among them is *The Road to the West* (*Droga na Zachód*, 1961) by Bohdan Poreba, maintained in the convention of a road movie. Its plot is set at the end of the war, in the spring of 1945, when the question of future Polish borders is already settled. The film shows how this information was gradually made public. The Polish communist administration, acting in close consultation with the Soviet authorities, launches a campaign to encourage citizens to go west, settle there and start a new life. Convinced of this idea, an assistant engine driver is recruited to board a train carrying ammunition to the front. The train's itinerary traces the entire symbolic map of the western lands from Upper Silesia to the area around the Sudeten Foothills. Stretching along the route of the speeding locomotive, the landscape is shown as harsh and ominous, made up of snowy fields and empty train stations. Apart from individual German troops, there are no people, nor do we see scenes of evacuation of local civilians. There are only Soviet soldiers and refugees - former prisoners of German POW and labor camps. The engine driver and his helper are forced, accompanied by artillery fire and the roar of bombs, to travel an endless road, going on and on, trying to catch up with the moving front line. The scene of arrival in a German town resembles scenes later replicated in many films with reclaimed lands in the background. Emptiness, strangeness, equipment

abandoned in a hurry. In an abandoned, post-German house, a machinist's helper tries to live in and settle down. The message conveyed by Poręba's film must have been clear to the viewer: the Western Territories is a territory won, conquered by Polish soldiers, justly due to Poland. Admittedly, it was a great unknown, a dangerous place, but under Polish jurisdiction a new life was born there.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The most interesting outcomes are the film representations depicting the memories associated with exile in the cinema of what was commonly referred to, the Western occupation zones and later, in West German cinema. It is here that the typical motifs of forced migration appear and at the same time visual codes that would be used in other media messages in later years: columns of displaced persons on the road, the road through the frozen Gulf of Vistula, a lone woman with a child, a sunken ship. In West German cinema, from the beginning, the perspective of women and children is used to describe events in addition to the point of view of a soldier returning from war, and there is a consensus that forced migrants are victims of Nazism. West German cinema is open to different cultures of memory, including those in which nostalgia meets the politics of assimilation ("heimatfilms"). The situation is different in the cinema of countries under Soviet jurisdiction. Both in the cinema of the Soviet occupation zone (later in the GDR) and in Polish cinema, images of migration are censored and ideologically determined by Communist Party policy. The problem of migration is tabooed, and instead the themes of settlement and the construction of a new society are proposed. The collective drama of individuals that took place after World War II in this part of Europe found neither after the war nor later a full screen reflection. Moreover, it remains a subject that is little known even in Poland and Germany. The communicative memory of these events has been blocked, only fragments of the story have penetrated into cultural memory. It can be summarized that post-war films, therefore, do not so much represent the memory of forced migration as they preserve its traces. In this sense, we can speak of them as media of cultural memory.

REFERENCES

- [1] A. L. Tiews, *Fluchtpunkt Film Integrationen von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen durch den deutschen Nachkriegsfilm 1945–1990*, Verlag, Berlin, 2017, pp. 35.
- [2] M. Röger *Flucht, Vertreibung und Umsiedlung. Mediale Erinnerungen und Debatten in Deutschland und Polen seit 1989*, Verlag, Marburg/Lahn, 2011, pp. 250, 256.
- [3] M. Saryusz-Wolska, *Ikony normalizacji kultury wizualne Niemiec 1945–1949*, PWN, Warszawa, 2015, pp. 193, 253.
- [4] J. Szydłowska, *Od Kutza do Smarzowskiego: film fabularny jako medium wiedzy o Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, „Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie” 2011, vol. 273, nr 3, pp. 519 – 535.
- [5] A. Gwóźdź, *W drodze do domu. Kultury pamięci przymusowej migracji Niemców po 1945 roku w kinematografiach niemieckich*, „Kwartalnik Historyczny” 2021, vol. 128, pp. 959-989.
- [6] H. Mordawski, *Ziemie Odzyskane 1945-1956*, Poligraf, Brzezia Łąka 2015, pp. 17-33.
- [7] G. Thum, *Obce miasto. Wrocław 1945 i potem*, Via Nova, Wrocław, 2006, pp. 93, 117, 151.
- [8] „Ziemie Odzyskane”. W poszukiwaniu nowych narracji, E. Kledzik, M.

- Michalski, M. Praczyk (eds.), UAM, Poznań, 2018.
- [9] S. Cheung, Internal Displacement, UNHCR and the International Community, Reference Paper for the 70th Anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, 2020, s. 1. https://www.unhcr.org/people-forced-to-flee-book/wp-content/uploads/sites/137/2021/10/Samuel-Cheung_Internal-Displacement-UNHCR-and-the-International-Community.pdf (12.06.2023).
- [10] A. Kossert, Kalte Heimat. Die Geschichte der deutsch Vertriebenen nach 1945, Verlag, München, 2008, pp. 18, 37, 49, 212, 314.
- [11] James Hapman, Mark Glancy, Sue Harper, Introduction, in: The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches, James Hapman, Mark Glancy, Sue Harper (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York, 2007, pp. 1-10.
- [12] W. Kansteiner, History, memory, and film: A love/hate triangle, Memory Studies 2018, 11(2), pp. 131-136.
- [13] J. Assmann, Communicative and Cultural Memory, Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook, A. Erl, A. Nünning (eds.), De Gruyter, Berlin, New York 2010, pp. 109-118.
- [14] Robert R. Shandley, Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2001.
- [15] G. Tuch, Nacht fiel über Gothenhafen, in: Handbuch Nachkriegs-Kultur. Literatur, Sachbuch und Film in Deutschland (1945-1962), E. Agazzi, E. Schütz (eds.), De Gruyter, Berlin 2016, pp. 269-270.
- [16] B. Halicka, Polski Dziki Zachód. Przymusowe migracje i kulturowe osvajanie Nadodrza 1945-1948, Universitas, Kraków, 2015, pp. 51-59, 154-197.
- [17] J. Lemann-Zajicek, Jan Rybkowski – baron polskiej kinematografii, w: Autorzy kina polskiego, tom 3, G. Stachówna, B. Zmudziński (eds.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków, 2007, pp. 18.