

## A summary of the doctoral dissertation

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### The Regional Branch of the State Agency for Repatriation in the period of 1945-1950

Population movements were one of the consequences of World War II. They touched almost twenty million people. It is estimated that ten million citizens of the Second Polish Republic found themselves beyond the newly established borders. The new communist authorities faced the highly difficult task: to resettle and to repatriate over one million people from the depths of the USSR, former territory of the Second Polish Republic, annexed by Kremlin (the Western Belarus and the Western Ukraine), Lithuania and Western Europe. It wasn't easy because the country (destroyed by the war) heavily lacked the means of transport and the people who would be able to cope with the task. The decree from 7<sup>th</sup> October 1944 established the State Agency for Repatriation. It was the institution which faced (among others) the task of organizing the repatriation of the people from the territories of other states to the Polish territory and of resettling the people inside the country. In 1951 this institution was abolished. In the period of 1945 – 1948 there came one and a half million people to Poland from the East.

The Regional Branch in Białystok was the first outpost of this institution which dealt with the repatriation. It was established on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1945 and functioned till September 1959. Resettling the Belarusian people was the most difficult problem facing the Białystok branch of the institution. Their attachment to the land was complicating the resettlement action from Poland. The reluctance to leave was also intensified by the fear of the Soviet reality. Almost three hundred thousand people came through the stage points in the region of Białystok. The capitol of the region became the stage point mainly for the Vilnius residents who after a short stay here were heading for Pomerania and Kujawy Region. Over seventy thousand people were settled on the territory of Białystok region, mainly in Elk, Gołdap and Olecko districts.

A hundred and two thousand people were settled into the north and western regions of Poland. The social structure of Białystok changed as the consequence of World War II in general and specifically as the effect of forced migrations and the influx of incomers. As a result instead of the town pulsating with the Jewish speech Białystok became the hostile place for Jews.

Except strictly statistic research the problem was also shown in the social frame through evoking over a dozen of Siberians' memories, describing their coming back to the homeland.

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