Poland's 'Wild West': Social Antagonism, Lawless Crimes and Violence, Deportations and 'Repatriations' During the Post-WWII Polonization of the Jelenia Góra Valley, 1945-1947.

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1.) Introduction to Case Study

With the radical reconfiguration of the political schema of Europe at the end of the Second World War, the urban landscape of East-Central Europe was transformed through ethnic, linguistic, and demographic changes to populations. One of the many cities in the region affected in such a way was Jelenia Góra, Poland. Before 1945, Jelenia Góra was German Hirschberg. The town lies in a valley in the foothills of the 'Giant Mountains', a range that has been an important part of Silesian culture, history, and folklore for centuries. Both individual and shared legends and histories of the mountains have been a significant element of life in the region for the three main ethnic groups who have historically inhabited it. Known as the *Riesengebirge* in German, the *Krkonoše* in Czech, and the *Karkonosze* in Polish, the Giant Mountains form part of the Sudeten range. Jelenia Góra is located 110 kilometers southwest of Wrocław, the regional capital of Lower Silesia. Located in the extreme south-west of Poland in close proximity to the Czech border, and about 100 kilometers from the Polish-German border town of Görlitz-Zgorzelec, Jelenia Góra is a classic case of a 'borderland' city. Breslau, the historic capital of German Lower Silesia and a major bastion of National Socialist support, was the last major German city the Red Army fought in before the Battle of Berlin. Hitler issued a personal order of no surrender to defending Wehrmacht soldiers, who turned Breslau into a fortified 'fortress city'. Following three months of siege, bombardment, and urban warfare between German and Soviet forces, much of 'Fortress Breslau' lay in ruins by the time it capitulated on May 6, 1945. Many monuments, apartments, public and private buildings and examples of grand architecture, including ornate medieval-era Gothic cathedrals, were destroyed or heavily damaged, which gave Polish authorities a generally free hand with ideological reconstruction, restoration, and 're-interpretation' of the cityscape. The transformation of German Breslau into Polish Wrocław was the center-piece of the 'de-Germanization' campaigns discussed in this paper.[1]

In contrast, no major battles or sieges occurred in the Hirschberg area.[2] An absence of violent conflict in the town during both World Wars ensured the survival of a centuries old architectural

landscape in Hirschberg, one complete with the stately homes of the Prussian elite, Interwar tenement buildings, and medieval and Baroque churches.[3] Starting in the spring and summer of 1945, Hirschberg's German population was deported en-masse. They were replaced by Poles from territories recently incorporated into the Soviet Union. This essay will analyze this chaotic atmosphere, one that shaped social and political relations in the 'Polish West', by using Jelenia Góra as a localized case study. Through the employment of a microcosm approach, scholars can arrive at a more complete understanding of how urban settlements throughout East-Central Europe were dramatically transformed following years of war, and after the post-Yalta border and population changes. While this paper centers the bulk of its analysis on the immediate post-war years of 1945 to 1947, it also incorporates a selection of illustrative examples through to the early 1950s. By using Jelenia Góra as a case study, I analyze how changes to political regimes and populations in small towns in post-WWII East-Central Europe were reflected in the urban landscape, and how they differed from or followed trends set in regional capitals and larger urban centres.[4]

Following the incorporation of German Hirschberg as a newly minted Polish town in the so-called 'Recovered Territories' (the lands annexed from Germany by post-WWII Poland), government-mandated processes of Polonization and de-Germanization proceeded at a rapid rate. In the timespan of a few short but dramatic years, hundreds of years of German history and presence in the town were expunged. During Jelenia Góra's transition into a Polish city, frequent acts of theft and violent crime accompanied the mass deportation of ethnic Germans, along with the arrival of the Poles who replaced them. Violent crimes occurred regularly in a town on the brink of social disorder. The population 'exchanges' were a traumatic experience for civilians on all sides of the war. In many ways, events that occurred in the Jelenia Góra area were characteristic of similar processes taking place throughout the former German East. However, many individual developments were specific to the unique geography, cityscape, and history of this town lying in the shadow of the Giant Mountains. During the tumultuous days accompanying the end of the Second World War, as national frontiers were being redrawn and population deportations and resettlements were being employed by Polish and Soviet governments, Polish authorities turned their attention to the re-branding of the political, social, and cultural character of the 'Recovered Territories'. Although they were successful in removing many traces of German presence, much of the pre-1945 cityscape of Hirschberg has remained

intact. While the population of the town eventually became almost homogenously Polish, it took several generations before Poles truly felt 'at home' in a Silesian cityscape that was very much foreign to them.

2.) Historical Overview of Hirschberg-Jelenia Góra

a.) The Middle Ages to the late 19th Century

According to several Polish, German and Czech narratives, histories and legends of the town, Jelenia Góra-Hirschberg was founded in the 11th century. The town, whose name means 'deer mountain' in Polish and German, was named after the local geography and wildlife. The city was heavily bombarded and suffered a great deal of damage during the Thirty Years War. Over the centuries it changed administrative hands on several occasions between German, Czech, and Polish dukes, sovereigns, principalities, and empires. It became part of the Prussian State in 1742 following the invasion and annexation of Silesia by the armies of Frederick the Great.[5] Before German Unification in 1871, the *Riesengebirgen* were the highest mountain range in the Kingdom of Prussia, which helped the region become a major tourist destination.[6] Prussian Hirschberg was on the whole a peaceful and picturesque mountain town, which became especially popular as a vacation and retirement retreat for well to do civilians, aristocrats, and government and military figures. Patients had been visiting the therapeutic thermal waters of Bad Warmbrunn, a suburb of Hirschberg renowned for its healing mineral waters, already since the Middle Ages.[7] A railway connection between Berlin and Hirschberg was built in 1866, and the line was extended to Breslau the following year.[8] Hirschberg's location in a highly developed, urbanized and industrialized Silesia, in addition to its strategic geographic position along many Central European trading routes, helped it develop further as an important industrial and manufacturing center. The local weaving industry, in particular, became quite lucrative. Profits from these aforementioned developments led to local magnates building up elaborate homes and villas throughout the town, in addition to grand mausoleums and churches.[9]

b.) Memorial Culture in Hirschberg, c. 1866 - 1945

Until the political and economic maelstrom that engulfed post-Versailles Germany, conflicts in Hirschberg were rare, and on the whole, life in the town remained quiet and peaceful. In addition to Hirschberg's importance as a base for tourism, trade and industry for the newly unified

German Empire, a ‘memorial landscape’ reflective of many historical events and personages common throughout the nation was established. Before the First World War, it commemorated important figures in the national mythos, including Frederick the Great, Otto von Bismarck, and Alfred von Waldersee, the hardline Prussian general who oversaw the use of military violence as part of the shared European imperialist aggression against Chinese rebels during the Boxer Rebellion.[10]

During the German period, plans were drawn up for four major monuments in the town. The Jäger Monument was built in remembrance of Hirschberg’s 5th Battalion of Schützen (a sharpshooting infantry division), members of whom had perished in the First World War. The planning for a monument to the Franco-Prussian War began already in June 1872. Although in development stages for decades, this monument was never realized. Later designs for it drew inspiration from the Empire-wide popular Classically inspired ‘Germania’ model, in addition to similar works from prominent Berlin sculptors.[11] The ‘Kaiser Monument’ was to be a joint memorial to Friedrich III and Wilhelm I, while the Bismarck Tower would commemorate the legendary Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. All of these monuments were influenced by designs from other German cities.[12] The Jäger monument was the only one of the four to have actually been completed. It became symbolic of critical moments of the violent twentieth century in Lower Silesia. While the town was located far from the front-lines of WWI, many sons of the town served in the military and were KIA, particularly as part of the Jäger battalion. At first, the monument represented a local version of the memorial culture of the First World War, following patterns that characterized hundreds of similar monuments installed throughout Germany in the 1920s. The symbolic public space by the statue was used during the Weimar and National Socialist periods for commemorative and propagandistic ceremonies. When it was destroyed by Polish authorities in 1945, all local traces of the memory of this division were eliminated.[13] Also in 1945-1946, Polish authorities destroyed all other German statues in the public spaces of Jelenia Góra. These actions were part of a massive nation-wide campaign of ‘de-Germanization’. This movement was especially significant in Lower Silesia, where authorities removed and replaced many physical and symbolic traces of German history and presence, in the interests of fostering a purported medieval connection centered around the ‘Piast myth’. The Piasts were a Medieval Silesian royal family with Slavic roots, who according to nationalist narratives, had founded many settlements in Lower Silesia. Thus, the ‘return’ of these lands to the Polish

motherland could be rightfully claimed as a victory against German imperialism, despite the fact that in many of these towns, almost all buildings were of a distinctly Silesian style, one that united architectural and urban planning elements from a number of national, regional, and historic influences. Not a single Polish monument could be found in the streets of Hirschberg until they were put there after 1945.[14]

c.) Post-War: The Red Army in Hirschberg, May 1945

Prior to their forced expulsion, the German populace of Hirschberg endured the first days of the Red Army takeover, beginning on May 9, 1945. While other parts of Silesia were subjected to regular aerial bombings, the population of Hirschberg escaped this threat. The front, and along with it the aerial raiding boundary, had been set 20 kilometres away near Goldberg (*Złotoryja*), and Löwenberg (*Lwówek Śląski*). Between May 9 - 12, a Soviet military plane dropped four small bombs in Hirschberg, none of which exploded. Later, the Soviets claimed that they had intentionally spared the city. An entire Red Army occupational apparatus was established in the town. This included district criminal, war, SS, and civilian tribunal and military courts. Frequent arrests, quickly passed sentences and imprisonments took place throughout the day, especially against those individuals perceived to have directly served or somehow otherwise assisted the Nazi war effort.[15]

Some final actions of conflict did take place, as one Latvian SS-Division remained in Hirschberg after the Red Army units arrived. The soldiers of this division had received orders to continue their resistance and to blow up all area bridges, factories and storehouses, which the local populace resisted. The Latvians took up arms and attempted other acts of local sabotage, and they also engaged in isolated firefights with the Red Army. For a short time, locals hid in basements and shelters to escape the violence, but no further conflict or threats occurred. At 1 in the morning on May 10, the end was in sight. Red Army regiments crossed country roads with tanks, and by 9 that morning, Soviet officers and colonels were on the streets of Hirschberg. Soon afterwards, one of the first official orders was given: All German Reichsmarks were to be exchanged into Polish złoty, and during the following days, all manner of military items and vehicles, bicycles, and radios were confiscated.[16] The entire surrounding county had mostly avoided the ravages of war as well. Important sanatoriums and factories in nearby Cieplice (*Bad Warmbrunn)* and Kowary (*Schmiedeberg*) were untouched, allowing for immediate post-war

production to resume there.[17] Soviet soldiers branched out all over the city, where they regularly confiscated items by forcefully entering homes, making demands for food and drink, and stealing and requisitioning whatever took their fancy. They also committed acts of violence against German civilians. These soldiers often worked in concert with Polish military personnel, who also committed violent acts against the German population. During one incident in the office of the Hirschberg lawyer Dr. Walter Roth, a group of Russian soldiers entered the building, making demands for schnapps. When Roth informed them that he had no schnapps and only wine, they proceeded to vandalize the office.[18] Soviet soldiers regularly 'requisitioned' items, and vandalized or destroyed homes and public buildings. On one occasion, they took three bicycles from Roth's neighbours, and during another incident, an officer heavily intoxicated on vodka entered the office, upon which he showed his pistol to Roth and threatened him with it. Roth recalled a variety of nationalities in the occupying and looting army, including lieutenants and soldiers from the Caucasus.[19]

The Soviet commanders soon ordered the registration of all inhabitants of the city. In this fashion, they became acquainted with every street in Hirschberg. Over a lengthy administrative period, 5000 households and 28,000 people were registered and organized according to age, gender, and state of health.[20] Roth describes the arrival of Polish 'repatriates' and administrative officers, and the eventual forced requirement for all Germans to register for resettlement. Polish hotels and restaurants started to open up at a frequent pace. Public and printed announcements were soon being made which argued that the region had always been Slavic, and that from that point onwards, it would be Polish again. Writing his memoirs four years later in 1949, Roth symbolized the German loss of Hirschberg as one that was not only material and physical in nature, but that was also a spiritual and psychological trauma. He argued that only a few years after the end of the war, a unique form of German culture, one specific to the mountains, valleys and cities of Lower Silesia, had been permanently removed and replaced.[21]

3.) 'Repatriates and Expellees': The Deportation of Hirschberg-Jelenia Góra Germans and the Re-Settlement of 'Eastern Poles' after May 1945

As extensive processes of Polonization took place in Breslau in the immediate post-War years, events throughout Lower Silesia mirrored these practices. Hirschberg's German population was almost entirely deported by force. They were replaced by Poles from several regions within

Poland, but particular from the former Polish East - territories of the Second Republic that had been annexed and incorporated into the Soviet Union. The 'de-Germanization' of Hirschberg proceeded at a rapid rate. Monuments were destroyed, street names were changed, Protestant (mainly Lutheran) churches were converted, public and residential buildings were expunged of German text and inscriptions, and museum collections were similarly censored of their German content. In subsequent decades, this 'de-Germanization' was accompanied by the censorship of historical discussions and scholarship related to the matter. Accompanied by the demolition of numerous historic structures and continued processes of in-migration, Jelenia Góra eventually became a mostly homogenously Polish city.[22]

After the Soviet Union took full control of Poland in 1944, Joseph Stalin's policies forcibly 'repatriated' 1.5 million Polish nationals under his control.[23] Following the official re-drawing of the Polish and German borders, the deportation of Hirschberg Germans was organized in a systematic fashion. A special division dedicated to remaining deportation actions was formed in April 1946, at which time four phases of deportation were planned.[24] A report from May 28 of that year demonstrated the detail attended to in the inspection and confiscation of luggage, with dozens of items being appropriated that day alone.[25] The deportation of ethnic Germans from Jelenia Góra was mainly complete by 1947. A small group of specialists, in particular industry-specific workers and engineers, were allowed to remain longer to help re-start essential local industries and factories. Many people resisted this forced departure, as in the case of Johanna Thiel. In October 1948, Thiel resisted a deportation order by hiding out in different places in Jelenia Góra. A special decree was issued to deport her at the first available opportunity, but reprieve was temporarily granted due to an illness.[26] Rosalind Kinder, a Silesian autochthon who also held Polish citizenship, also resisted deportation. In her official letter to request remaining in Poland, she detailed the abuse she suffered at the hands of newly arrived Polish settlers in March 1947.[27] The homes of their now-expelled countrymen and women were being taken over and resettled by ethnic Poles originating from all over the former so-called 'Eastern Borderlands', known in Polish as the *kresy*. During this period the Polish government set a deliberate policy intended to prevent Polish settlers from re-creating their former identities in their new homes. For example, two families from one specific city were sent to one town, while other families from the same community of origin were re-settled in a different town in the 'Recovered Territories'. Therefore, Polish authorities opposed many attempts by the majority of the

population from one specific Galician, Lithuanian or Belarusian city, town or village from settling together in close proximity in the West.[28]

When they were resettled in the formerly most Eastern provinces of the Third Reich, repatriates entered a very different region from which they and their ancestors had lived in for generations: A form of the 'Polish Wild West', with an unstable, divided and miserable population. Amongst them were many Polish citizens in search of better living conditions, who for example had been sent for mandatory forced labor outside the country. All of these 'settlers' had to face these difficult conditions and begin a new community life together. More than seventy years after the fact, there are few of these people remaining, but there remain many material reminders of that fact in Polish museums, particularly of items families had taken right before their departure – usually their most valuable and sentimental objects.[29] Their arrival was also a major cultural shock. The new Polish settlers arriving in Jelenia Góra and cities in the 'Recovered Territories' arrived to highly urbanized, industrialized and developed areas, a complete contrast from conditions in their original communities, such as poor Galician villages. The 'village' was imported into the city - for example, some settlers did not understand the proper workings of sewage systems or of electricity, and they still light candles at night in villas and tenements. There were even documented cases of some families keeping pigs in bathtubs. A similar culture shock awaited the Ukrainian peasants who replaced them in the East, as in the example of one leaving a traditionally constructed wooden house with clay chinking and a traditional Slavic *pech* or hearth, to take over a grandiose and cosmopolitan L'viv apartment.[30]

In order to implement the practicalities of this complex resettlement operation, special government agencies were created to coordinate the diplomatic, bureaucratic, and practical actions necessary for the registration and movement of millions of people. In the Soviet regions, Polish plenipotentiaries were established for this purpose. Their partners were the head representatives for the governments of the Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs). The entirety of the work from the Polish side was coordinated by the Head Plenipotentiary for the Matter of Evacuation, later known as the Temporary Government of National Unity. From 1946 on, these officials also coordinated the removal of German populations in Poland's newly Western regions. 'Recovered Territories' was a term frequently used in official propaganda terminology by the government of the Polish People's Republic

(*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*, PRL), after its formation in 1952.[31] In addition, a corresponding office established for the maintenance of this work in Polish territory was the National Office of Repatriation (*Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny),* or PUR. PUR helped coordinate the practicalities of arriving evacuees into Poland, and it also held a primary duty for the management of internal migration. In the field, bureaus were established on both the Polish and Soviet sides – these were known as Regional Plenipotentiaries for Evacuation. They were based in fourteen cities in Lithuania, twelve in Ukraine, and nine in Belarus.[32]

The baggage allotment for Poles living in the '*Kresy'* was set to two tons per family. In this framework, they were allowed to take items such as food, clothes, and domestic and household items. Professional technicians were allowed to take specific tools necessary for the practice of their trade. Due to the fact that the majority of arriving Poles were villagers, their 'baggage' often consisted of farming tools, livestock, and other farm animals. It was forbidden to transport domestic pets, however. No more than 1000 złoty could be taken across the Polish border by each individual. Difficult and stressful conditions were endured by the resettled, which included the destruction or theft of their valuables on both sides of the border by authorities, soldiers, or petty criminals. At times the conditions for transport were so harsh that people were moved in cattle wagons. Patriotic and overbearingly joyful concepts and slogans touted by the government of the richness of the new life awaiting them in 'The Recovered Territories', 'The West', or 'On the Oder' rarely filled arrivals with a sense of hope and optimism, but rather a mood based more around confusion and fear.[33] One particularly poignant example illustrates the difficulties people encountered during deportation. Between February 16 and 28 of 1946, a train of 26 transports with 7300 people arrived in Kraków station. These people were in a sorrowful state, crying and wearing rags, and they were often without shoes or warm clothing, especially the children, who were in a pitiful state. The wagons had been outfitted with stoves for warmth prior to the journey, but were often without lighting, for which people regularly pleaded for.[34]

4.) Post-1945 Ethnic Conflicts and Examples of 'de-Germanization' in Jelenia Góra

From the spring and summer of 1945 on, every city, town and village in Lower Silesia was 'de-Germanized'. Before the deportation of the German population was complete, many Poles, for whom the brutality of the Nazi occupation was fresh in their minds, had already arrived. At the same time, the installation of a Polish puppet Communist government reliant on Soviet

administrators was taking place. Life in the town took on an 'inter-regnum' character, during which the deportation and replacement of local German populations, accompanied by corruption and criminal acts committed by Red Army soldiers, all made for difficult relations between the three groups. In the absence of a strong and respectable government and police authority, an almost lawless atmosphere came to characterize social interactions. Poles, Germans, and Soviets jousted for influence and better living conditions, leading to a great deal of crime and banditry. This liminal zone of conflict was compounded by state-mandated actions of 'de-Germanization': The forcible removal of all traces of German presence in the public and private sphere. These campaigns centered on an official propagation of the so-called political philosophy of 'Western Thought' (*Myśl Zachodnia).* The central tenet of this concept was that these formerly German-occupied lands had always maintained an integral Polish character, and that which was seen by Polish authorities and recruited scholars for the campaign as being a centuries-long historic aberration of German conquest, had in their minds created a major sense of separation. 'Western Thought' was first formulated during the First World War. It was supported by Roman Dmowski and his National Democratic Party, and eventually, it was embraced by a large cadre of Polish professors, intellectuals, and cultural specialists.[35] The practical application of 'Western Thought' was implemented in different ways – from the physical act of the destruction of monuments and memorials, to highly sophisticated and carefully considered plans for cultural rewriting. The central task of cultural institutions such as museums, for example, was to re-establish this postulated cultural link by rapidly 'de-Germanizing' collections.[36]

During its first years as a Polish city, Wrocław was marked with a strong sense of the lack of a local connection of home, which historian Gregor Thum terms a 'psychosis of impermanence'. This was demonstrated most readily by the mass emptying of the city on religious holidays to visit the graves of loved ones in their original homelands, where and when it was possible.[37] Such a 'psychosis' could also be applied to Jelenia Góra - both for the Polish 'repatriates', as well as for German expellees. In March 1954 *die Bergwacht*, a prominent expellee journal published by expelled Hirschberg Germans living in West Germany, reported that after a recent visit to Jelenia Góra, one reader estimated that about 50 to 60 Germans remained in the town.[38]. Expellees continued to remember their former Silesian mountain town, publishing many reminisces, letters, memoirs, historical descriptions and accounts in such periodicals as

Bergwacht. Such literature is a valuable testimony as to how cities in the former German East were remembered by their previous inhabitants.

6. The Polish appropriation of 'post-German' property, businesses and factories

The evacuation of ethnic Germans was characterized not only by the takeover of homes. The appropriation of factories, businesses, and related properties by arriving Poles was also common. In the nearby town of Bolków (*Bolkenhain*), a German weaving firm was taken over by the United Linen Industry on August 29, 1945. The building was used for the maintenance and installation of factories, and for the running of a small weaving business. As of 20 November that year, there were 68 employees at the weaving factory; 15 of them were Polish, and the rest were German.[39] This is a local example of a nation-wide process of how industries in Lower Silesia continued to rely upon the expertise and experience of German workers in the immediate post-war period. Starting in late October 1945, detailed reports were prepared on the appropriation and transfer of other newly acquired municipal properties in Bolków, located in the Jelenia Góra county. Amongst these were cash holdings from former civil authorities, lists of properties to be requisitioned, including city storehouses, military and residential buildings, and a hospital for infectious diseases. Other transferred properties included local gasworks (for which the civic authorities purchased 50 tons of coal), a sawmill, and a regional museum. Funds were gathered from late November 1945 for the construction of a monument to local fallen soldiers, as well as for work in the town square on the unveiling of a monument to the medieval Piast king, Bolesław Chrobry.[40]

There were regular cases where Poles sought to claim pre-existent property or businesses to which they had not been officially assigned. In cases where the sought-after holdings were owned by non-German nationalities, objections were sometimes made by civil authorities. In March 1946, Wojciech Olejnik attempted to partition and gain possession in part of a tailor shop owned by one Alfred Sabat, who was registered as a citizen of Czechoslovakia. It was officially stated by controlling officers that properties belonging to Czechoslovak citizens were *not* to be treated the same as 'post-German' possessions, and that for this reason, Olejnik's request was denied. However, there was no official objection to his acquisition of a formerly German-owned tailor shop. This case illustrates some of the specific ethnic and nationalist elements that

characterized the 'de-Germanization' campaigns. While most German properties and possessions were fair game for redistribution, citizens of 'Socialist brother nations' were to be left alone.[41] One of the few positive remarks made in *Bergwacht* in response to such actions were reported on December 4, 1954, by Minna Winkler and her family in Munich. By that time, the Jelenia Góra Church of Grace, constructed in the 17th century according to a Stockholm model, had been re-opened as a Roman Catholic parish. Winkler commented that this was good news, in that the church would retain an important position and not fall into decay, as had been the case with many other churches in the 'Heimat'.[42]

7. Crime in 'Poland's Wild West'

a.) Soviet Violence and Looting

On January 12 1946, Colonel Toruńczyk, Director of the Head Bureau for Control and Inspection of the Ministry of Recovered Territories (MZO) in Warsaw, the central government organization responsible for the coordination of many practical actions of Polonization, submitted a report to the colonel representative for the Lower Silesian territories in Wrocław on an armed robbery and attack by Red Army soldiers on Wladysława Olszewska.[43] At six in the evening on November 18 1945, Olszewska, a recently arrived repatriate from L'viv, was walking with a group of friends in the Jelenia Góra district of Sobieszów. The group was confronted by four Red Army soldiers, who warned the Poles that they were armed. They then proceeded to steal each person's money and watch. Olszewska refused to give up her items and began to cry out for help, which resulted in the soldiers attacking her. She was unable to escape as the four men held her down, but she continued to resist until they chocked, beat and kicked her into unconsciousness, after which they stole her watch and 750 złoty. No one came to her assistance, as people was afraid of possibly risking their lives to confront armed and uniformed Red Army occupying soldiers. Olszewska's group went to the local police. There they were assigned only one officer, who although had been issued two rifles, had no ammunition. Sometime later an energetic civilian was found, a man who had been a policeman before the war. After reporting to local security offices, they waited three hours for armed militia to arrive, by which point it was too late to find the culprits. Olszewska borrowed the stolen sum from a friend to send to her family, who were also being evacuated from L'viv; she requested an allowance from the MZO to help cover these lost funds.[44] On April 27 1946, three Polish youths – Adam Walenciak (aged

15), Izabela Rucinska (aged 19), and Helena Zborowska (aged 22), were arrested by authorities. They had been helping Russian soldiers commit robberies and holdups by directing them to places and situations vulnerable to such crimes. The matter was directed to the Borough Law Courts in Jelenia Góra.[45]

b.) <u>Violence, Murder, and Civil Disorder in post-War Jelenia Góra</u>

These robberies were only part of the larger picture of crime in post-war Jelenia Góra. Assaults, thefts, and murders were regularly committed by Poles against Germans, by Germans against Poles, by Soviets against Poles, and by different groups of Poles against each other. Between April 28 and May 8 1946, 49 arrests were made in the Jelenia Góra County. Thirteen people were arrested for having disturbed the public peace, and five were taken in for vagrancy. Three people were arrested for the illegal possession of firearms. Another person was charged with collaborating with wartime German occupants, and one individual was arrested for having applied for official protected status as an ethnic German, instead of applying for Polish citizenship (a case of so-called *volksdeutscherstwo*). In total, 162 people were arrested in this short period of time.[46]

On April 26 1946, Julija Lachowska, a woman of 65 years, was murdered on ul. Osiedle Robotnicze Nr. 14. No weapons were found near her body, and at the time of the filing of the report, neither the motive nor the crime had been solved. The following day at 19.00 hours in the nearby settlement of Berberysowa, the German Julian Karol Mark was plowing a field with his bulls. Four Polish soldiers armed with rifles and pistols approached Mark and stole one of the bulls, escaping with it to a nearby forest.[47] One Polish criminal became infamous for a series of violent crimes, especially directed against Germans. On April 7 1946, one Jedras Leopold committed an armed robbery against two Germans, stealing their gold and diamonds. Later that month on April 19, and on the road to the same district, two German women, Janine Zirkek and Frida Lehr, were assaulted by a group of masked bandits. The attackers stole their money and gold rings. They even stole their victims' undergarments and raped Zirkel. In one of her attackers Zirkel recognized Leopold, who was finally arrested after this. It did not take long for him to cause trouble again: On April 27 and 28, authorities confiscated a pistol from Leopold.[48]

The spring of 1946 saw a great deal of more crime and violence. In April and May, 11 residences were broken into. Other thefts included the stealing of a motorcycle, as well as livestock from area farms. A series of arrests were also made for people smuggling. One German man was charged with escaping from a work camp in Czechoslovakia, and then attempting to cross the border into Poland, and there were several instances of Poles and Germans illegally possessing weapons. In the nearby village of Komorów, several Poles were investigated for destroying the agricultural possessions of local village residents. On April 27 1946, a marital argument broke out between Aleksei Wolny and his wife. During the argument, several people came to their residence. Amongst them was the trouble maker Jedras Leopold. Leopold took out a pistol and threatened Wolny with it. After the incident, Wolny noticed that several cloth items had been stolen from his house. The thieves were caught by local militia, and the stolen items were returned, albeit in a damaged state. On May 3 that same year, authorities noticed that 'anti-state' slogans had been written on the walls of homes, especially on those with commercial signs. The signs included such statements as 'Down with Communism' and 'Down with the P.P.R'. Other types of 'propaganda' (as per the wording of the government report) had not been noticed in the town until that time.[49]

More incidences of violent crimes and incidents continued to be perpetrated throughout Jelenia Góra County in 1946, including additional murders and armed robberies, in addition to a series of suicides. On May 6 in the nearby town of Bobrowic, the body of a man of around 55 years was discovered in a river. Neither his name nor the cause of death could be determined, as according to doctors the body had been in the river for some 22 months and was unrecognizable. That same day at around 6 in the morning, a murder was committed during a robbery on a road close to Rybnica. Soon afterwards, two Germans living in Kamienna Góra, Dr. Haufe Hak and Augusta Krause, were murdered. The suspect was not found when the report was filed, and the matter was forwarded to the Jelenia Góra procurator. On May 7 in Berberysowa, an investigation was held on the theft of chickens at the house of Józefa Srebniaka. The chickens had already been killed, and they were found along with a knife which had been used to commit the deed. Srebniaka was arrested and sent to the Municipal Court. That same day in Karpniki, another county town, Frieda Hamman, a 33-year old German woman, was arrested. She was suspected of having murdered her newborn baby in January that year. Five additional cases of armed robbery were reported on as well that day, with three of these committed against ethnic Germans.[50] An

accidental death occurred on May 9 in the village of Piotrowice, when the driver of a Fire Truck accidentally hit Frieda Matusiak, an ethnic German woman. She was taken to hospital, where she later died from her injuries.[51] Tensions between Germans and Poles remained high. On May 5 1946 in Jelenia Góra, one Zygmunt Bednarczyk was to take over a residence from an 80-year-old German man named Kannbahn. Bednarczyk was intoxicated and stabbed Kannbahn with a knife – the matter was sent to the regional court in the city, and Bednarczyk was arrested.[52]

Over the span of ten days in May 1946, five people committed suicide in the Jelenia Góra district. On May 7 Michał Gorczyca, who was staying at a sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis, hung himself. The following day, Wilhelm Stempe, an elderly German man of 75, also committed suicide by hanging. Three days later in Jelenia Góra, the married couple Sallot, both of whom were around 55 to 60, committed suicide through carbon monoxide poisoning. Before their deaths the couple had written a letter to God, asking Him to punish those who had driven them to this drastic act. The matter was directed to the local procurator.[53] Yet another hanging occurred on May 13, when Reinhold Stirand took his life in the town of Krzyzatce.[54]

May 1946 also witnessed 36 counts of reported thefts, including of domestic animals, home break-ins, and transport vehicles. Several counts of arson were also committed, including against state-owned agricultural possessions. A variety of other crimes and acts of public disturbance were also reported. This included the detention of people intoxicated in public, those involved in a knife fight at a wedding, and the illegal possession of firearms.[55] On May 5, Herbert Friereist was arrested. In July and August 1945, he had collected rent money from fellow Germans living in Jelenia Góra barracks. Of this money he did not deposit 3500 złoty to the city as he was supposed to have done, but kept it for himself by hiding it in his home. On May 15, Arno Frauenchold was arrested for having belonged to the Nazi party, and for having acted in a terrible fashion against Poles during the Nazi-occupation. On May 2 in Kamionka during an inspection of streets and gardens, a Polish patrol discovered 35 pieces of ammunition in the garden belonging to house number 101. It had been buried there by the former owner, a German woman who had since left. Yet another case involving tensions with Germans occurred on the night of May 13-14th in Karpacz. At that time, a patrol stopped a truck belonging to one ‘Bielnik’, who had illegally transported Germans to a nearby border crossing in Kaławsk, from

where they continued west on their own. It was determined that since October 1945, 'Bielnik' had taken several thousand złoty in this way.[56]

8. 'De-Germanization' in the Jelenia Góra Region: Case Studies

a.) Street Names

As multiple processes of deportation and resettlement were underway, government authorities turned their attention to re-branding the political character of the 'Recovered Territories'. This process of historical re-writing saw the past changed in many aspects of the public sphere, most prominently through settlement and street names. Throughout the terrain of the newly annexed Polish lands, some 30,000 place-names, tens of thousands of natural features, and hundreds of thousands of street names and squares were all given Polish names.[57] In Wrocław this was a very intensive process as well, and the 'de-Germanization' of physical places was very thorough. For example, German inscriptions were removed from medieval buildings, and all of the city's German cemeteries were destroyed as well, with tombstones occasionally being used to rebuild structures elsewhere.[58]

The postwar Polish regime soon began its work of establishing a symbolic foothold in the Sudeten Mountains. By July 1945, proposals were being forwarded to change the German names of streets in the town and region. A list of 165 street names was forwarded that month. They included more mundane and direct translations from German into Polish, but also patriotic shifts, including the renaming of streets after Juliusz Słowacki and Fryderyk Chopin. Bismarck was dethroned by Henryk Sienkiewicz, and Emmanuel Kant was replaced by Bolesław Prus. The new regime was not forgotten, as the town's main square was named after President Bolesław Bierut, while another prominent street took on the name of Marshall Stalin.[59] In July 1947, Jelenia Góra city council appealed for permission to remove Prussian eagles from two main buildings in the town square. The request was granted and encouraged.[60] It was decreed that on July 22, 1949, the fifth anniversary of the declaration of the Manifesto of the Communist Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*, PKWN), that fifteen street names would be officially changed. One would carry the name of Feliks Dzierżyński, the infamous leader of the first Soviet secret police, the Cheka.[61] Numerous

protocols were issued in the following years addressing the matter of street name changes. Many of these were of prominent Polish socialists.[62] A June 1949 decree included recommendations of the renaming of streets after Marx and Lenin, and for Polish-Czech and Polish-Soviet Friendship.[63] In March 1952, streets with a religious and national character were targeted by city council. The Street of St. Hedwig (*Jadwiga*) was to be replaced by the Polish-Soviet novelist and communist activist Wanda Wasilewska, while the street of the Lord (*Pańska*) was changed to that of the Paris Commune.[64] One of the most important political actions in the history of street renaming in Lower Silesia during the post-war period was dictated by the Regional National Council in Wrocław, in January and February 1950. It was ordered for a section of the main market square in Jelenia Góra to be changed to the Square of the Heroes of Stalingrad. This order was also applied to the other Lower Silesian cities of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Dzierżoniów, Bielawa, Nowa Ruda, Świdnica and Legnica, to mark the forthcoming seventh anniversary of the Red Army's victory at Stalingrad. In accordance with the intended propagandistic effects of 'Western Thought', the report noted that the victory at Stalingrad helped pave the way for the Red Army's liberation of the 'Recovered Territories', and their reunification with the Polish Motherland.[65]

Just as Polish politicians, kings, artists and other significant historical figures would be commemorated with streets and buildings named after them in the 'Recovered Territories', where they rarely (if ever) had made an appearance, so it was also the case with the memory politics of German expellee associations in the Federal Republic. In the northern city of Hamburg, where many former Silesians had settled, a prominent square in the city centre had been named after the famous Hirschberg poet, Gerhart Hauptmann, in January 1954.[66]

b.) <u>Monuments</u>

It did not take long for Polish authorities to remove and replace German monuments in Jelenia Góra county. By 1946, a Kościuszko mound had been built near the town, and a local mountain had been named after the medieval king Bolesław III. A 1946 newspaper clip lamented the fact that there was a monument in the region dedicated to Frederick the Great, while not far in the nearby town of Staniszów, there stood a monument to Otto von Bismarck.[67] The subject of this troubling Bismarck monument was the topic of correspondence between town representatives in the Łomnica area and the Jelenia Góra city council, who in spring 1947 requested that the

monument should be replaced with one dedicated to the Polish Army.[68] As before, official appeals continued to be made by local city councils to help them remove unwanted reminders of the past. On February 21 1949, the city council of Legnica filed an official request to sell scrap metal from a razed monument to Frederick the Great, with the purpose of raising funds to build a permanent monument to Polish-Soviet friendship in its place.[69] This was a common practice in post-War Polonization campaigns. German monuments in Szczecin suffered a similar fate, including the equestrian 1894 statue of Kaiser Wilhelm I, who was pulled down from his pedestal by a tank on July 31, 1945. By 1946, this symbolic space had been replaced with monuments of a Piast Eagle and a Pomeranian griffin.[70]

c. <u>Museums</u>

The history of museology in Poland, from the end of the war through to 1989, was largely one of the censorship and repression of artistic and creative freedoms in museums. Since that time, there has been a boom in the construction of museums on previously censored subjects. From the mid-1940s on, nation-wide campaigns of 'Polonization' affected cultural institutions, as well as public spaces.[71] Every cultural institution in Communist Poland was required to adhere to the official policies of 'Western Thought'. Museums were often held at the mercy of the state, and they were regularly plundered of their collections by Warsaw, or by other cities in Central Poland. The emptied collections were to be recompensed by objects selected from throughout the country to reinforce a non-regional cultural version of 'Western Thought'.[72]

In the Jelenia Góra area, much of this ideological work proceeded in accordance to dictates received from the center – the Ministry of Recovered Territories (MZO) in Warsaw, in particular. On February 21, 1947, it was reported that in the town of Szklarska Poręba *(Schreiberhau*), some twenty kilometers from Jelenia Góra, there was a 'Wotan Museum'. This was a museum of natural history, with many German inscriptions to be found in its halls and collections. The MZO called for these inscriptions to be removed.[73] By May 16 that year, a further directive called for the temporary closure of the museum, so that additional remaining German inscriptions could be removed.[74] In November 1947, elaborate plans were drawn up to turn what remained of the museum into a new cultural institute for the town. The report decried the inspiration of the Berlin Secession Art School on the museum, under whose artistic influence a painting of Rubezähl, the legendary mountain spirit of the Giant Mountains, could be found.

Significant to these plans was the politically prominent idea of founding the first Polish open-air museum on the newly Western territories – and by doing so in the newly acquired mountain range, authorities hoped it would also help increase Polish tourism to the area in the recovery of Poland from the war.[75] The matter remained unresolved until January 29, 1949, at which time another commission was formed to study the fate of the remaining German collections. Significant parts of the collection had been collected over the years by the poet, writer, and amateur naturalist collector Wilhelm Bölsche, while works of art had been produced by the painter Hermann Hendrich. A full transfer of German items into storage was demanded, but with a compromise: Collections originally prepared by Bölsche would remain open to the public, on the condition that only hand-written cards written by him remained.[76] Other natural history museums in the region were also targeted for their collections. Starting on December 14 1947, the remaining zoological collections in Cieplice Śląskie-Zdrój (*Bad Warmbrunn)*, was to be sent to the University of Wrocław's corresponding department.[77] [78] Individuals conducted spontaneous actions of 'de-Germanization as well', although not always with official approval. In February 1947, one citizen Leszczewicz systematically destroyed a German artifact collection that had been housed in his residential building in Legnica, spitting on, vandalizing, and burning objects in his stove, ruining a valuable collection of ancient weapons, flora, fauna, and preserved butterflies. The local District Office of Liquidation forwarded this matter to the Legnica procurator, demanding that Leszczewicz be held responsible for his actions.[79]

The year 1948 was a significant one for the Polonization of Jelenia Góra's main museum, the *Muzeum Karkonoskie* (The Museum of the Giant Mountains). The museum was built between 1912 and 1913 as a *Heimatmuseum*, an institution dedicated to documenting, collecting and displaying items from the local history, culture and folk life of the Karkonosze region.[80] At the official re-opening of the museum on May 3, 1948, museum director Stefan Górka delivered a speech that heavily promoted the de-Germanization movement. Górka emphasized the Slavic origin of certain artifacts from the area as being proof of the valley's ancient Polish origins. While decrying German influence, he simultaneously emphasized the importance of artifacts of Czech provenance, which were to be preferred as a Slavic influence.[81] Górka's speech, along with accompanying anti-German actions employed at the Museum, are an illustrative microcosm for how regional museums in the 'Recovered Territories' were utilized by the post-War Polish state for propagandistic purposes through the manipulation of material culture.

In October 1948, the Minister of National Defense in Warsaw authorized the Director of the Museum of the Polish Army to take all objects with a military nature from Jelenia Góra.[82] Objects from a former German local history museum in Lower Silesia, which historically had little to no discernable connection to Warsaw, by virtue of being transported to one of the nation's major national collections, were overnight turned into a symbol of Polish culture through a deliberately planned political action. Two months later in December, museum staff reported to the Ministry of Art and Culture in Warsaw that German books, paintings, sculptures, household items and objects of industrial art were still being discovered in local dwellings, opining that the Museum had the obligation to collect, restore and preserve these items, but that a lack of finances and staff prevented it.[83] A local example provided in the report noted that in May of that year, Zygmunt Ostrowski, who had taken up residence in a private dwelling abandoned by a German pastor, donated a large collection of items of theological and cultural value from the 18th century found in the house. These included a Hebrew language copy of the Old Testament from 1863; a leather-bound copy of the Bible from 1720; a hymn book, published in Zittau in 1730, and a short, brown, Neo-Gothic wooden pulpit table.[84]

A significant development in the inculcation of Polish national and patriotic values in the West was the central element of a joint plan formulated between the National Museum in Warsaw and the MZO to display valuable pieces of Polish artwork on a travelling exhibit to important new 'Recovered' cities. The exhibit was first planned to contain some of Jan Matejko's most famous works.[85] Later, the theme was changed to 'Polish Painters of the 19th Century'. The exhibit was displayed in nineteen cities between March 15 and December 15, 1948, including in Szczecin, Wałbrzych, Zielona Góra, and Jelenia Góra. The works of thirty-three painters from the 1840s and the 1850s were planned for the exhibition, including pieces by Cyprian Norwid, Aleksander Kamiński, Juliusz Kossak, and Ignacy Józef Kraszewski [86] The exhibit was displayed in Jelenia Góra between October 15th and 25th. In a report to the director of the National Museum in Warsaw, Górka noted that the exhibit did not have the full patriotic effect that had been originally desired. In summary, 1014 people had visited the exhibit, the majority of them as part of organized groups, and only 48 copies of the exhibit catalogue had been sold. Górka blamed the low attendance figures on poor advertisement by the district trade council. He also remarked on the significance of the museum and its new target audience: Many of the Polish settlers to

Jelenia Góra had come from smaller settlements in central Poland or the former East, and few of them had had the chance to visit a museum exhibit or gallery before in their lives.[87]

A contentious debate on the merits and morale of this policy of 'de-Germanization' occurred in August 1949. The debate involved Stanisław Gorczycza, President of Jelenia Góra, Dr. Jerzy Güttler, head conservator for the Ministry of Art and Culture of the Wrocław Voivodship, Stefan Górka, museum director, and the Warsaw Ministry for Art and Culture.[88] Güttler informed the Warsaw Ministry, that the Jelenia Góra museum had recently withdrawn its intention to follow an ordinance to remove all German paintings from its exhibition halls. Güttler had earlier threatened a recommendation of closure for the museum in the case of non-compliance.[89] Górka counter-argued that the majority of the museum's collection was 'post-German', and that it had important documentary, artistic and historical value. He further claimed that he could not find material expressions of patriotic enthusiasm for Germany, nor contempt towards the Polish State, in a single object. He also emphasized that the painters were of German nationality only, and that they were not representatives of Hitler's regime. Furthermore, works by prominent Polish artists could be found in German and Austrian galleries.[90] Several years later, such 'de-Germanization' actions taken at the museum drew the ire of West German expellee organizations. In July 1953, a war of words over culture and identity between expelled Hirschberg Germans and the new Polish administration of Jelenia Góra erupted. That month, the editors of *Die Bergwacht* reported that the Poles had opened 'in German Hirschberg' a new state museum. The museum would feature a Polish exhibit entitled 'A Rich Collection of Archaeological Finds and Other Monuments'. According to its organizers, the exhibition would illustrate the history of local settlement through the historic, economic and cultural connections of the Jelenia Góra region with Poland over the course of centuries. The *Bergwacht* authors claimed that Hirschberg had been German for centuries. Since it had acquired city rights according to Magdeburg Laws in 1108, they defined Hirschberg as an ancient German settlement. They further claimed that in no historic charters or deeds could the Polish name of the city be found, and that for centuries, no Poles had lived in the city or the district. The article took further issue with Polish claims on the local glassware and weaving industries, by outlining the claim that the local German noble Gottschaft family and other regional founders had never had Poles in their contingents – they only employed Germans from Prussia or Bohemia, and on occasion, Italian artisans. Although they state that during the time of the Piast king Bolesław Chrobry, the Poles claimed the city for themselves, but that

already since the 15th and 16th centuries, the local weaving, linen and other industries had no Polish connection. To the writers of *Bergwacht*, the idea that 'archaeological findings' (quotations from the authors) could prove a Polish link were unfounded, and that they represented a form of propaganda. The article concluded with the question, of what more would Warsaw and its propaganda branch in Hirschberg come up with?[91] This article is significant, as it represents one of the first versions of the counter-arguments expressed by German expellee organizations in an attempt to counter Polish claims to the 'Recovered Territories', and more specifically, against the notion of the Piast mythos often repeated by national government offices in Warsaw and in its regional branches.

Another harsh critique of Polish 'kultura' in Lower Silesia was written in the pages of *Bergwacht* in September 1954. According to various periodicals issued in western and southern FDR periodicals, between 1500 and 2000 Germans remained in the Silesian capital. The report noted that in the western parts of the city, ruins and debris could be regularly seen. The formerly picturesque residential districts of Gandau and Pöpelwitz had disappeared, and in their place only worker apartment blocks could be found in the ruined landscape. Other German periodicals reported that in the city centre, one could see Polish peasants on a daily basis who behaved according to old Polish customs from the borderlands, sitting on sidewalks and eating there. According to their harsh critique of street life, the editors further stated in a condescending way that Wrocław-Breslau had been given an 'Eastern impression', where life was primarily of a 'primitive' nature. The authors concluded their attack by stating that this was a cultural regression.[92]

9. Conclusion

These years of historic and demographic re-writing were only the beginning. While immediate actions of renaming, and the destruction of monuments and other traces of German history in the town were justified by Poles as being necessary in the face of the trauma experienced by the Polish nation during the course of the viscous Nazi occupation, questions of 'de-Germanization' have been contentious in and of themselves. Many such practices of the deliberate erasure of the historic presence of entire ethnic and national groups in Lower Silesia, mirrored those done throughout East-Central Europe and the Soviet Union, and this often occurred during instances where animosities had not always been high between different groups in the area. For example,

the end of the Second World War in what had been the Lwów region did not see the end of violence and loss, nor were people the only targets of warring government, army, and partisan factions from all sides in this volatile region. While hundreds of thousands of people were resettled from both Poland and Ukraine in the post-Yalta redrawing of borders, the cultural heritage of groups that once had had a historic presence in the Eastern Galician lands for centuries was also targeted. Churches, both Polish Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Orthodox, and Jewish synagogues were equally attacked by the new Soviet authorities soon after the end of the War. Documented examples of churches being converted to kolkhoz storage warehouses and candy factories were part of a Soviet-wide targeting of religion. For example, in 1950, the Byzantine-inspired Pokrovskii Cathedral of Sevastopol was restored to its pre-War condition, but it was later converted into a sporting hall and a city archive in 1959.[93] Non-Slavic peoples were also written out of the historical memory of Sevastopol. The Crimean Tatar Settlement (*Tatarskaia slobodka*) became the Green Hillock (*Zelenaia gorka*), while the Kenasa, a Karaite Jewish prayer hall, was turned into the Spartak sports club. One Tatar mosque saw its minarets removed and its façade erased of Koranic inscriptions. It was converted into a naval archive, while others requested for it to become a new social club.[94] In my research on Drohobycz, the entire Polish and Jewish presence of the town, which had been characteristic of life in the town for centuries, was similarly erased. Post-war Jewish heritage in Western Ukraine was abandoned to ruin and neglect, and Jewish communities there were, for the most part, not made up of Holocaust survivors, but rather, Soviet Jewish populations also re-settled to the region. The entire post-WWII decade was one that saw irreversible change, and the erasure of the historical presence of multi-ethnic cities throughout Europe. Polish Jelenia Góra, although geographically located in Lower Silesia, found the focus of its identity not based on the actual history of the city itself, but on the histories, traumas and memories brought to the 'Recovered Territories' by people from the Polish 'borderlands'. An area completely different in its wartime experiences than German Hirschberg. By having examined a number of these processes through these 'microcosm' approach, this research has helped to shed more light on not only erasure, but also reconstruction and renewal. Jelenia Góra in the present day is a city that has become increasingly aware of its historical legacy, reflected through new forms of historic reconciliation with its regional and Silesian neighbors, Germany and the Czech Republic. According to Margrit Kempgen, the director of a Görlitz based foundation for the restoration of German Protestant

Heritage in Silesia, the Polish takeover of places like Jelenia Góra took place through several phases. The first phase was one of aggression and hostility. Over time, this was followed by a gradual acceptance and reluctance by the new Polish inhabitants, for whom it took three or more generations to truly feel at 'home' in what was at first a foreign city, by which point they would finally come to accept it as part of *their* city, neighborhood and home.[95]

The Cathedral of Saints Erasmus and Pancras (founded in the 13th century, and first restored in the 16th), currently features a series of multi-lingual interpretative tablets (in English, Polish, Czech and German), surrounding the building and its grottoes, explaining its history from a regional perspective. The same approach towards interpretation has been taken in many other major historic sites in the town.[96] According to Ms. Kempgen, such a perspective is a significant marker of progress in historical understanding and process. The urban landscape and history of Silesia was one that was completely different from the rest of Poland, having been Habsburg, German and Prussian for extended periods of time. When Poles arrived from places like Eastern Galicia, they encountered urban entities unique and foreign to them; places that had no sense of 'Polish-ness'. Therefore, such restoration works are done partially against how Wrocław authorities had appropriated Piast heritage.[97] Ultimately, the legacy of 1945-47 left a permanent mark in completely re-configuring the history of this scenic mountain town, one fought over by Poles, Germans. and Czechs for centuries. Today, with cross-border restoration works and renewed positive dialogue, a renewed sense of hope and optimism has been created in Jelenia Góra, which again, after more than 70 years, is finally regaining new perspectives and understandings of its *Silesian* and *regional* history – an assessment much more accurate than those promoted by the founders of 'Western Thought'.

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[1] Gregor Thum, *Uprooted: How Breslau became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions*, Princeton [N.J.]: Princeton University Press, 2011.
[2] Adam Zieliński, *Als die Russen nach Hirschberg kamen und andere Geschichten*. Klagenfurt: Wieser, 2008. Interview with Henryk Dumin, Jelenia Góra Karkonosze Museum, October 8th, 2016. *Gabinet Ministra Wydział Sprawozdawczy* [*Sprawozdania z działalności i raporty sytuacyjne Powiatowego Oddziału Informacji i Propagandy 1946-1947*]. Archive of Modern Records (*Archiwum Akt Nowych)*, Warsaw [AAN], Syg. #562.
[3] Interview with Henryk Dumin, October 8th, 2016. Meeting with Margrit Kempgen, Görlitz, Germany, June 10, 2016. Adam Zieliński, *Als die Russen nach Hirschberg kamen und andere Geschichten*; AAN, Syg. #562.
[4] This essay is a draft chapter of my doctoral dissertation. The dissertation is a comparative study of the processes discussed in this essay on a larger scale, in which I compare and contrast Polonization processes in Jelenia Góra with Sovietization processes in Drohobycz, Ukraine. Like Jelenia Góra-Hirschberg, Drohobycz is a borderland city, whose history was defined by relations, and oftentimes conflicts, between Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews.

[5] Kamila Wilk, Dorota Kacprzak, Wojciech Miatkowski, Tomasz Pryll, and Marcin W. Markowicz, *Kotlina Jeleniogórska na starych pocztówkach = Das Hirschberger Tal auf alten Ansichtskarten = The Valley of Jelenia Góra in Old Postcards*. Łódź, Poland: Księży Młyn Dom Wydawniczy, 2006.
Zbigniew Janc, Ivo Łaborewicz, and Marianna Kurowska, *Jelenia Góra na dawnych widokówkach: historia obrazem pisana = Hirschberg auf alten Ansichtskarten: Bilder aus der Vergangenheit*. *Cz. 1* Jelenia Góra: Wydawnictwo Filatelistyka - Kolekcjonerstwo "U Benia" Zbigniew Janc, 2006.
[6] Kamila Wilk et al, *Kotlina Jeleniogórska na starych pocztówkach*, 5-7.
[7] Ibid, 5-7.
[8] Ibid, 5-7.
[9] Hugo Weczerka, *Handbuch der historischen Stätten: Schlesien, 2nd edition*. Stuttgart: Kröner Stuttgart, 2003. Zbigniew Janc et al.
[10] Annika Mombauer, "Wilhelm, Waldersee and the Boxer Rebellion", pp. 91–118, in *The Kaiser: New Research on Wilhelm II's Role in Imperial Germany*, Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. The Waldersee monument in Hirschberg was built along a prominent boulevard, and in the vicinity of the local military barracks.
[11] *Acta des Magistrats zu Hirschberg. Betreffend die Erinnerung ein Denkmal zu der Erinnerung an die Krieg 1870/1. 14.6.1872 – 10.7.1911. R VII*, 22, 55, Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu, Oddział w Jeleniej Górze (State Archives in Wrocław, Jelenia Góra branch), [APJG].
[12] *Acta des Magistrats zu Hirschberg: Acta Betreibung des Kaisers Denkmal*, APJG, Syg. #7617.
[13] Szymon Wrzesiński, Krzysztof Urban, and Paweł Kałafatiuk, *Jelenia Góra w cieniu Hitlera: Lokalne historie o skarbach i tajemnicach z lat 1933-1945*, Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza "Cinderella Books". Andrzej Zasieczny, 2016. Zbigniew Janc, Ivo Łaborewicz. n.d. *Jelenia Góra na dawnych widokówkach: Historia obrazem pisana*. Jelenia Góra: Firma Filatelistyczno-Kolekcjonerska "U Benia" Zbigniew Janc.
Agreement between Jäger monument committee on the Hirschberg Jäger monument, July 4, 1923, in *Akta Miasta Jeleniej Górze,'Betreffend das Jägerdenkmal'* [APJG], Syg. #7617, 3-4. The funding committee included several prominent Hirschberg and Berlin noblemen, amongst them the renowned Berlin chess master, theorist and Prussian diplomat, Tassilo von Heydebrand und der Lasa.
[14] Interview with Henryk Dumin, October 8th, 2016. Mr. Dumin emphasized that due to the factors described above, as well as a lack of strategic interest in the town during both world wars, allowed for the survival of an impressive number and range of late-Prussian style buildings throughout the town, including stately mansions of the elite. In a more peripheral city like Jelenia Góra in the post-1945 period, the maintenance of many of these grand structures was (and continues to be) not well funded, neither by their owners nor the state to improve the look and image of the town, as is done in major touristic centres like Wrocław and Cracow.
[15] Dr. Walter Roth, Hirschberg / Riesengebirge, *Rübezahl Heimatlos*, Hamburg: Hans Schlichting Verla, 1949, 8-9.
[16] Dr. Walter Roth, *Rübezahl Heimatlos*, 9-11.
[17] Syg. #562, AAN.
[18] Dr. Walter Roth, *Rübezahl Heimatlos*, 11-14.
[19] Ibid, 11-14.
[20] Ibid, 14-23.
[21] Dr. Walter Roth, *Rübezahl Heimatlos*, 5-7, 23-61. Roth's memoir is an important first-hand account of the Soviet takeover of Hirschberg, the establishment of a Polish Communist administration in Jelenia Góra, and the organization of German civilians for evacuation.
[22] While most of the population of Jelenia Góra during the PRL period were Roman Catholic Poles, a small minority of Greeks and Macedonians fleeing civil war and political strife, groups of Roma, as well as re-settled Polish Jewish survivors also settled in the town in subsequent decades.
[23] Mark Kramer, 'Introduction', in Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001, 13. According to documents produced by central 'repatriation' offices in Moscow, which were then re-distributed to each regional and local civic plenipotentiary responsible for population movements, people defined as ethnic Poles or Jews sent across the post-Yalta line were often defined as 'repatriates' (*repatriantami*). According to official Polish propaganda of the time, this was an all-encompassing term, one which referred to all people who had formerly lived in the Polish East, and who later arrived in the West. This was regardless of whether or not they had voluntarily and enthusiastically left their homes (oftentimes a rare occurrence), or if they had been forcefully deported or expelled – which was usually the case.

[24] *Sprawy osiedleńcze. Rok 1946-1949 – Protokół, Jelenia Góra, dnia 10.4.1946r*, APJG, fond #47. This protocol noted that the first phase of deportations should focus on the removal of the unemployed and families, although women who were pregnant at the time, or who had recently delivered, were to be temporarily exempted.
[25] *Protokół – Maj 27 & 28, 1946, Narodowy Bank Polski*, fond #47, APJG.
[26] *Repolonizacja i współżycie ludności Ziem Odzyskanych, Thiel Johanna – wysiedlenia*. Nr. S.P. 8/5/48, APJG.
[27] Ibid., *Ob. Rozalia Kinder – Zażalenie*. Nr. S.P. 8/5/48, APJG.
[28] Interview with Henryk Dumin, October 8th, 2016.
[29] G. Włodarska-Koszutowska & Muzeum Pomorza Środkowego (Słupsk), *Przywiezione w kufrach, przechowane w szufladach: Bagaż osadników*. Słupsk: Muzeum Pomorza Środkowego, 2017.
[30] Interview with Henryk Dumin, October 8th, 2016. Mr. Dumin is the head ethnographer at the Jelenia Góra Karkonosze Museum, and he has conducted decades of fieldwork and collection throughout communities in Lower Silesia. Certain items in the museum's collection are particularly exemplary of the unique forms of Polish folk culture that had been transplanted to the west during the population movements. For example, a selection of embroidered shirts on display at the museum in a permanent exhibit of 'repatriates' to the region were made by a Polish woman from Ukraine, who had been resettled in Jelenia Góra. She had wished for seven of these shirts to be burnt when she passed away, but Mr. Dumin convinced the family to donate them to the museum. Other items in the collection included a variety of traditional items from former Polish communities in areas of Bosnia and Romania. Mr. Dumin argues that the idea of a Polish Silesian identity is a weak one – the *true* Silesian identity was permanently removed after 1945, and the current Silesian culture is what was *brought* to the region from the outside – in essence, a form of diaspora culture from the *Kresy* was recreated in the 'Recovered Territories'.
[31] Stanisław Ciesielski and Włodzimierz Borodziej, *Przesiedlenie Ludności Polskiej z Kresów Wschodnich do Polski, 1944-1947*, Warsaw: Wydawn. Neriton, 1999, 1-14.
[32] Ciesielski and Borodziej, *Przesiedlenie Ludności Polskiej*, 14-17. Newspaper announcement co-written by the Head Plenipotentiary for the PKWN and the Main Representative for the Government of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1944, *Rej. Pełń. Rządu R.P. d/s Ewakuacji Ludn. Polskiej z USRR w Drohobyczu', Syg. #2, 'Ogłoszenia [Dla Ludności]',* AAN, 27.
[33] Włodarska-Koszutowska et al, *Przywiezione w kufrach*, 5-7. These general summaries and observations by the authors of 'Przywiezione w kufrach' are based upon a wider range of secondary source material works, several internet oral histories, and National Archives in Szczecin, as well as local PUL archival collections in four near-Baltic area towns: Białogardzie, Koszalin, Lipianach, and Słupsk. The general events that took place, organization of transports, and individual and family experiences and memoirs, are generally consistent with experiences of evacuees that arrived in Lower Silesia as well.
[34] Report by PUR official, 1665/46, 443/46, February 16 to 28, 1946, in *Correspondences relating to transports, 1946-1949, PUR Kp 23, 1115 Państwowy Urząd Powiatowy Oddział w Krakowie, Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie* (National Archives in Kraków) [ANK], 6-7. Similar reports were prepared for many of the transports arriving throughout the main evacuation period of 1944 - 1946, but they did not always specify the specific towns or villages people came from. Oftentimes these reports declared general geographic origins, such as the 'East', or, for example, some declared 'beyond the San and Bug rivers', a general term for the former Polish East as a whole.
[35] Gregor Thum, *Uprooted*, 191 – 212.
[36] Ibid, 200 - 218.
[37] Ibid, 188.
[38] 'Bericht aus der Heimat!' Abschrift. In *Schlesische Bergwacht, 5. Jahrgang, 20. März 1954, Nr. 6.*
[39] T. Gozdek, Director of the Weaving Mill, Branch in Bólkow, the State-Owned Weaving Mill 'Wisła', November 20, 1945. In MZO, Department of Inspection, VII/9, *Akta pow. Jawor. [Sprawozdania z inspekcji i zarządzenia polnstracyjne oraz materiały z dochodzeni.] 1946/47*, 31.
[40] Agreement of transfer between civic authorities in Bólkow: Mayor J. Müller, vice-mayor M. Gołębiowski, and witnesses M. Pieczyński and M. Pisarek, November 29, 1945. In *Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych* (Ministry of Recovered Territories in Warsaw), [MZO], Department of Inspection, VII/9, 'Akta pow. Jawor. [Sprawozdania z inspekcji ...] 1946/47, 32-34.
[41] Summary of Investigation into the case of Citizen Olejnik, Jelenia Góra ul. 3 Maja, by Citizens Wiktor Woydyłło and Wacław Malinowski, inspectors for the Department of Control, MZO, March 12 – 31. 1946. In MZO, Departament Inspekcji, Inst. Akt VII/10. Akta pow. Jelenia Góra [Sprawozdania z inspekcji, raporty sytuacyjne, materiały z dochodzeń, zażalenia na postepowanie władz administracyjnych.] 1946/47, Tom I. Syg. #1292, AAN, 57-59.
[42] Minna Winkler und Familie, München-Allach, 'Von nah und fern!' In *Schlesische Bergwacht, 5. Jahrgang, 4. Dezember 1954, Nr. 23,* 7.

[43] Colonel Toruńczyk, Director of the Main Bureau for Control and Inspection, to the Colonel of the Government of the Polish Republic [R.P.] for Lower Silesia in Wrocław, Warsaw, January 12, 1946; Captain Jan Pawłowski, District Head for the Central PUR Office in Łódź to the PUR office in Wrocław, December 13, 1945. In MZO, Departament Inspekcji, Inst. Akt VII/10. Akta pow. Jelenia Góra, Syg. #1292, AAN.
[44] Władysława Olszewska, duplicate of report prepared at the County Office of PUR for the R.P. in Jelenia Góra, November 26, 1945, L. dz. 816/45. In MZO, Departament Inspekcji, [Sprawozdania z inspekcji ... władz administracyjnych.] 1946/47 Tom I. Syg. #1292, AAN, 17.
[45] Situational Report for Social and Political Matters in Jelenia Góra, May 16, 1946, compiled by W. Tabaka, Plenipotentiary for the Government of the R.P. for District Nr. 29 in MZO, Departament Inspekcji, [Sprawozdania z inspekcji ... władz administracyjnych.] 1946/47 Tom I. Syg. #1292, AAN, 87-88.
[46] Situational report for the period 28.4 to 8.5.46, local plenipotentiary for the R.P. government in Jelenia Góra, social-political division, May 16, 1946, in MZO, Departament Inspekcji, [Sprawozdania z inspekcji ... władz administracyjnych.] 1946/47 Tom I. Syg. #1292, AAN, 87.
[47] Ibid, 87.
[48] Ibid, 88.
[49] Ibid, 88.
[50] Ibid, 90-91.
[51] Ibid, 92.
[52] Ibid, 91.
[53] Ibid, 91.
[54] Ibid, 91.
[55] Ibid, 92.
[56] Ibid, 92.
[57] Gregor Thum, *Uprooted*, 244.
[58] Ibid., 282-287.
[59] Ibid.; *Protokół 27.lipca 1945 r. Referat Kultury i Sztuki na powiat Jelenia Góra, Jelenia Góra, dnia 25.7.1945*, APJG. *Zmiana Nazw Ulic Rok 1945. Zarząd Miejski w Jeleniej Górze*, Nr. #37, APJG.
[60] *Opieka nad Miejscami Historycznymi, Pomnikami i Pamiątkami Martyrologii Polskiej. 1949 r., 3714 / 7/ NDM. 12 Lipca 1947, Urząd Wojewódzki Wrocławski* (UWW), nr. XVII/131, AP we Wr.
[61] *Zmiany Terytorialne Miasta i Ulic. Rok 1949. Miejska Rada Narodowa w Jeleniej Górze, Nr. 53. Uchwała Nr. 519/49*, #47, APJG.
[62] *Miejska Rada Narodowa w Jeleniej Górze, protokół #98/11*, July 8, 1949, APJG.
[63] Ibid., June 15, 1949, APJG.
[64] *Zarząd Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Jeleniej Górze, Referat Organizacyjny Org-I-6*, 'Zmiany nazwy ulic', Syg. #326, APJG.
[65] 'Zmiany Terytorialne Miasta i Ulic, Rok 1950'. *Miejska Rada Narodowa w Jeleniej Górze*, Syg. #1/54, pp. 1-7.
[66] Dr. Walter Roth, 'Die Getreuen von Warmbrunn', in *Schlesische Bergwacht, 5. Jahrgang, 5. Januar 1954, Nr. 1/1*, Hamburg.
[67] 'O Polskie napisy na przekroju Karkonoszy', Nr. 85, 1946, APJG.
[68] 'Zarząd gminy Łomnica w Łomnicy Powiatowe Jelenia Góra, do Ob. Starosty Powiatowego Jeleniogórskiego w Jeleniej Górze', in *Starostwo Powiatowe Jeleniogórskie, 16 Kw. 1948*, APJG.
[69] 'Urząd Miejski w Legnicy', K.S.6/53/49, Legnica, dnia 21 lutego 1949 r., in *Opieka nad Miejscami Historycznymi, Pomnikami i Pamiątkami Martyrologii Polskiej. 1949 r.* UWW, nr. XVII/131, AP we Wr. Zmiana Nazw Ulic Rok 1945. Zarząd Miejski w Jeleniej Górze, Nr. #37, APJG.
[70] Jan Musekamp, *Między Stettinem a Szczecinem: Metamorfozy miasta od 1945 do 2005* [*Zwischen Stettin und Szczecin. Metamorphosen einer Stadt von 1945 bis 2005, 2010]*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Nauka i Innowacje sp. Z o.o., 2013, 202-212.
[71] Gregor Thum, *Uprooted*, 200-218. Museums in the PRL were often held at the mercy of the state, and were regularly plundered of many collections by Warsaw or other cities in Central Poland. The emptied collections were to be recompensed by objects selected from throughout the country to reinforce a non-regional cultural version of 'Western Thought'.
[72] Gregor Thum, *Uprooted*, 200-218.
[73] MZO, Syg. #1491, AAN, 2.
[74] MZO, Syg. #1491, AAN, 7.
[75] *Centralny Instytut Kultury, Dział Metod Upowszechniania Kultury – Dom Górski – Muzeum w Szklarskiej Porębie* [*Korespondencja*], 1947r., AAN.

[76] Ibid, Syg. #1491, 141-148.
[77] MZO, L. dz. VII/4821/3/11/48, Syg. #1491, AAN, pp. 8-10, 53.
[78] MZO, *Centralny Instytut Kultury … Muzeum w Szklarskiej Porębiej [Korespondencja]*, 1947r., Syg. #1491.
[79] The District Office of Liquidation in Legnica (OUL) to the UWW, January 28, 1947; UWW to Legnica City Council, February 12, 1947, 92-94.
[80] Wilhelm Patschovsky, *Führer Durch Hirschberg in Schlesien Und Umgebung*. Hirschberg i. Schl: H. Springer, 1926.
[81] *Korespondencja w sprawach muzealnych, Rok 1948*, Syg. #388, APJG, 117.
[82] MZO, VII/217/3/38/76/48., Syg. #1491, AAN.
[83] Ibid, December 6, 1948, 165.
[84] Ibid, 'Protokół: Ofiarowania dla Muzeum', May 31, 1948, p. 184, AAN.
[85] MZO, VII/217/3/38/76/48. Syg. #1491, pp. 53-66, AAN.
[86] Ibid, pp. 55-65.
[87] 'Korespondencja w sprawach muzealnych', October 26, 1948, Syg. II/388, p.161, APJG.
[88] President of Jelenia Góra to the UWW, August 19, 1949, in '*Muzea i składnicę, archiwalia, zbiory biblioteczne, organizacja, nadzór sprawozdania i różne. 1948 – 1949 r.*' [MIS]. WAP Wrocław, UWW, XVII/118, AP we Wr, 167.
[89] UWW Conservator to the Warsaw Ministry of Culture and Art, August 29, 1949, [MIS], 168.
[90] Stanisław Gorczyca to the Warsaw Ministry of Culture and Art, August 23, 1949, [MIS], 169-170.
[91] 'Polnische Kultur vom deutschen Hirschberg aus!' in *Schlesische Bergwacht, 4. Jahrgang, 22. Juli 1953, Nr.8/11.*
[92] 'Polnische 'Kultura' in Breslau', in *Schlesische Bergwacht, 5. Jahrgang, 5. September 1954, Nr. 17, 6.*
[93] Karl. D. Qualls, *Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009, 148.
[94] Karl D. Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction*, 145-148.
[95] Meeting with Margrit Kempgen, Görlitz, Germany, June 10, 2016.
[96] Personal observations, Jelenia Góra, Poland, July 24, 2015. Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa, http://www.neisse-nisa-nysa.org/ First Accessed November 8, 2015.
[97] Ibid.