

# An **Open Dataset** Documenting Migration and Expulsion in the Former Polish Territories in 1939 and 1940.

**1** In 1939 and 1940, following the invasion of Poland and the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the propaganda slogan "Heim ins Reich" (back home to the Reich) called upon numerous German-speaking population groups from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe to resettle in areas within the borders of the German Reich. This resettlement policy was part of a wider NS strategy to consolidate the newly conquered lands with ethnic Germans. From December 1939, as news of the resettlement plans spread throughout the regions, most of the eligible population registered for resettlement, attracted both by the prospect of property within the borders of the German Reich and by the fear of living under Soviet rule. The 'Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle' (Vomi), which was responsible for the resettlement operation, had three offices in Volhynia (Wladimir-Wolynsk, Luck and Kostopol), three in Galicia (Lemberg, Stryi and Stanislaw) and one in the Narew region (Bilsk), from which it organised registration and emigration. On 7<sup>th</sup> February 1940, the process of emigration to the West was completed and the Vomi left what was then Soviet territory. The map shows these migration movements within the former Polish territory. The figures are derived from an publicly available dataset (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13789648>) and represent about one third of the actual emigrated population.

**2** The settlers left their homes either by train or covered wagon. Upon arrival in German territory, they were placed in camps organised by Vomi in and around Łódź for resettlement. Due to overcrowding, most settlers were then transferred to 'observation camps' deeper in the German heartland, where many families were separated. Before a resettlement decision could be made, settlers had to undergo registration by the EWZ (Emigration Central Office), which involved racial profiling. This involved racial profiling. This involved racial profiling. This involved racial profiling. Once the settlers had been allocated a new farm, they were moved to the 'collection camps' on the eastern border of the Old Reich, where the EWZ carried out any outstanding full registrations and reunited separated families. Finally, they were taken to 'preparation camps', from where they were transported to their new homes. The resettlement was highly organized, often with only hours between the expulsion of Polish families and the arrival of new settlers. Polish families were evicted from their farms, gathered at collection points, and transported away in the same wagons that had brought the settlers. Organizers ensured that settlers were not directly confronted with the evictions. The map simplifies this process by omitting transfers between camps and focusing only on the final settlements, with the width of the lines from Łódź to Polish settlements indicating the number of settlers relocated.

**REFERENCES**

David, Stephen, DK. *Unsettling the Polish: The Germanization of the Polish in the German Reich, 1939-1945*. London: Bloomsbury, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108888888>.  
 Kłos, Krzysztof, et al. *Historical dataset of administrative units for Galicia 1857-1910*. <https://doi.org/10.7927/H7V9-P3P3>.  
 On 12.06.1940 Karl Sager, originally from Stanislaw in Volhynia, and his household of 5 people were settled in Bradow. The Polish families Sager and Jurgens, with 8 and 7 persons were expelled.

**LEGEND**

- Grabica
- Kalisch
- Warsaw
- Luck
- Municipality (Gminy) where migration/expulsion occurred
- Transit camp
- City name, 2024
- Luck
- Administrative center of emigration zone

**Scale:** 1 : 1,500,000

[illegible]