

Memory and Oblivion. Sociocultural post-war change of Jugów (Hausdorf) in the Owl Mountains

The language of demography names the post-war expulsions and escapes as an “exchange of population”. Jugów (Hausdorf), a small village in the Lower Silesia region, is such a place, as the population there changed completely after the Second WW. Its German inhabitants were forced to leave it and the new Jugów inhabitants came mostly from South-West Ukraine, with their Polish and Ukrainian origins, language and traditions. The Germans left the material evidence of their long history there, the newly arrived brought their customs, memories and their not feeling at home in the new place.

Enforced migrations happened many times in the history of Europe and they are still happening (as in ex-Yugoslavia). They have a huge impact both on the individual lives, and on lives of the following generations and on the culture. What is more, that impact can be not easy to recognize, remaining for dozens of years in the form of stereotypes and prejudices.

We are going to rediscover the history of the enforced post-war migrations in the context of the Jugów village community, and especially the history of the female migration and female perspective on the post-war history. We are going to learn about their ways of survival of the “exchange of population”: what was it like to be enforced to leave home, what was it like to take the place of others and even to live together with them, how did the enforced journey take place, how it was possible to survive the lack of basic resources (food, warm clothes, safe and sure transport) during the escape. We do not want to hear official histories and stories about heroes of different armies. We want to hear the voice of women, concerned mostly as “second range” participants of the historical processes, as its passive participants and not their active actors. Our technique is to arrange a situation, in which women will have the opportunity to speak. We are going to ask some families from the village to invite a small Polish-German-Ukrainian group for self made cookies/lunch (sources for material secured in the project budget), to talk about food: the way of its preparation, the knowledge about it and how it is passed on, the difficulties in gaining food and the ways of overcoming them. Every meeting will be filmed and recorded.

The chosen issue of our conversation with women of different generations will be the main motive and we expect also difficult stories, connected with lack of food, with ways of gaining food for oneself and for the children and with lack on safeness on the way to the new place. In the spoken material we can find additional questions and traces to be cleared. Both the films and the impressions of the participants of each meeting in the families will be discussed carefully. All

participants of the project will elaborate questions and they will look for the way of answering them. The international group gives a greater chance to notice important traces in the stories of the inhabitants of the village. Both on the level of the language and on the level of the national traditions and customs, Polish, Ukrainian and German participants of the group will have a chance to make use of their personal sensibility in active listening and in ability to notice historical details. In the frame of the project, we are going to reflect on our intercultural way of collaboration in the project.

The methodic level of work:

General perspective: Jugów as site of memory and its inhabitants as witnesses of history.

The main goal: To understand the post-war history in Central Europe from the female perspective on the example of Jugów/Hausdorf.

Process:

- (1) working team consists of members of three countries / cultures / languages;
- (2) the team is diverse;
- (3) the team works together, all members elaborate the final version of the rules of collaboration;
- (4) small groups (video)record interviews with their leitmotiv: "food", and all team discuss it;
- (5) single members of the team look for traces of the past in the village, in form of old buildings, topography of the village, pictures, single stories or anecdotes etc., and they notice or record it in their way (as picture, as photo, as videotape etc.);
- (6) each day all members of the team present their material of the day and discuss it;
- (7) the effects of the work have to be elaborated by the international team, in the end of the camp in Jugów.

Initial questions:

- What is the culture memory of the village? Do the inhabitants create one common vision of the past or do they have different visions, dependent on nationality?
- In which way the German past of the village (if so) is presented in the memory of the inhabitants?

- Are places of the origin of the inhabitants' ancestors present in their memory?
- When the WW2 finished for the inhabitants?
- What are the media of memory in the village? In which way, when and why is the post-war history of enforced migrations present in the social life of the village and single families?
- What is the role of past in creating the self-identity by youngest generation of inhabitants?

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