

ZAKERZONNIA

Ethnic Cleansing of
the Ukrainian Minority
in Poland

1944–1947

Д-р Олександр В. Богуславському
зі щирою повагою.

Микола С. Дудляк

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Compiled and Edited by

TARAS HUNCZAK

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Tamara Cornelison

Consultant:
Marie Duplak

Translators:
Evhen Ladna
Volodymyr Hrycyk
Dr. Taras V. Shmiher

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*Dedicated to
the 65th Anniversary of the Deportation
through
Operation "Wisla"*

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PREFACE

The purpose of this publication is to present the reader with a brief history of those Ukrainian people who found themselves living within the Polish state after WWII, occupying an ethnographic area that stretched for some 90 miles along the border with Ukraine. This territory, only 15–30 miles deep, is often referred to as Zakerzonnia, a name derived from what used to be the Curzon Line, which was established in December 1919 along the Sian and Western Buh rivers as a borderland between opposing powers.

And Zakerzonnia was, indeed, a borderland with a multitude of unique characteristics—cultural, social and linguistic—which the ethnic Ukrainians, living in virtual isolation, cultivated and preserved despite steadily deteriorating Polish-Ukrainian relations. Their daily lives were difficult. With the onset of World War II, the difficulties exacerbated longstanding Polish-Ukrainian problems and brought chaos and bloodshed to the area.

As our authors document, the situation did not improve after the war. On the contrary, the Ukrainian inhabitants of Zakerzonnia became victims of a pact between the Soviet Union and Communist Poland, an agreement that led to the resettlement of Poles westward and Ukrainians eastward, thus bringing all Ukrainians under direct Soviet territorial control.

The low point of this tragic drama was the decision of the Polish government to eject Ukrainians of Zakerzonnia from their ancestral homes and forcefully resettle them. This forced repatriation and its devastating consequences for Poland's Ukrainian minority, a chapter in history that historians have dubbed Operation "Wisla," is the subject of *Zakerzonnia*.

As editor of this book I wish to thank the people whom I consulted on numerous issues. I am particularly indebted to Marie Duplak and Mykola Darmochwal who solved all my computer problems in preparing the manuscript and to translators Evhen Ladna, Volodymyr Hrytsyk, and Taras Shmiher, whose dedicated work made the publication of this book possible.

Taras Hunczak,
Editor

Ukrainian and Polish Names of Counties, Cities and Towns

| Ukrainian | Polish |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Balyhorod | Baligród |
| Bila Pidliaska | Biała Podlaska |
| Beskydy | Beskydy/Bieszczady |
| Bilhorai | Bilgoraj |
| Buh | Bug |
| Kholm | Chełm |
| Halychyna | Galicja (Galicja) |
| Horlytsi | Gorlice |
| Hrubeshiv | Hrubieszów |
| Yaroslav | Jarosław |
| Yaviryia | Jaworzno |
| Komancha | Komańcza |
| Krynytsia | Krynica |
| Kyiv | Kijów |
| Lisko | Lesko |
| Liubachiv | Lubaczów |
| Lublyn | Lublin |
| Lviv | Lwów |
| Lemkivshchyna; <i>also</i> Lemko land | Łemkowszczyzna |
| Novyi Sanch | Nowy Sącz |
| Pavlokoma | Pawłokoma |
| Pidliashia | Podlasie |
| Polissia | Polesie |
| Peremyshl | Przemysł |
| Riashiv | Rzeszów |
| Sian | San |
| Sianik | Sanok |
| Stanislaviv | Stanisławów |
| Shchavne | Szczawne |
| Tarnopil | Tarnopol |
| Tomashiv | Tomaszów |
| Ternohorod | Tarnogród |
| Ustryki Dolishni | Ustrzyki Dolne |
| Warsaw (<i>Eng.</i>) | Warszawa |
| Volyn | Wołyń |
| Zahirya | Zagórz |
| Zavadka Morokhivska | Zawadka Morochowska |



A MAP OF POLAND UNDER THE GERMAN OCCUPATION
KNOWN AS GENERAL GOVERNMENT IN 1939–1941

- 1 Borders of countries
- 2 Borders of the General Government
- 3-5 Borders of counties, districts and regions between Galicia and Kholmshchyna
- 6 Territory inhabited by Ukrainian and Polish population
- 7 Territory inhabited predominantly by Ukrainians

Volodymyr Kubijovych: *Ukrainians in the General Government, 1939–1941*

ZAKERZONNIA WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINIAN HISTORY

TARAS HUNCZAK

In order to understand the destiny of the Ukrainian people living west of Curzon Line (an area known by Ukrainians as *Zakerzonnia*), we must view them within the context of the entire Ukrainian nation, which has for centuries experienced foreign domination, oppression, exploitation, and genocide. The most devastating of these experiences for the people of Lemkivshchyna (land of the Lemkos), the Sian, Kholm, and Pidlashia regions, as well as parts of Peremyshl, Liubachiv, and Rava Ruska, occurred during the 20th century—a time that ironically promised to be the most progressive era in human history.

The Enlightenment and the Era of Romanticism had sparked the emergence of national identity and national state building. But each of these seemingly progressive constructs also exacerbated relations among people of different ethnic origins and different cultures, as each claimed its own special position and status within the new nation states. Ukraine and Poland are a case in point. I am convinced, however, that the confrontations of World War II (WWII) were a product of the political leadership and political ideologies of the late-19th and 20th centuries.

For Ukrainians it was the beginning of political Renaissance. In 1891, the Taras Brotherhood was founded; its program *Profession De Foi of Young Ukrainians* was made public in Kharkiv in 1893. In 1899, two political parties were established in Western Ukraine: the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party and the National Democratic Party. The first Ukrainian political party in Ukraine under tsarist Russian occupation, the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party (RUP), was founded a year later.¹

¹ For details see Taras Hunczak, Editor-in-Chief, *Tysiacha rokov ukraïnskoi suspilno-politychnoi dumky*, Kyiv, 2001, vol. VI, pp. 11-78.

A close reading of the documented programs and platforms of these parties reveals that their leaders endeavored to promote the political ideals and identity of Ukraine's historical past and, in this manner, encourage and promote the ideal of an independent Ukraine in the future. That ideal was realized for a brief time during the Revolution of 1917–1921. But even during this short-lived independence, the Ukrainian government attempted to extend its stance on equality to Ukraine's national minorities.

This was best manifested when the Ukrainian government adopted (on January 22, 1918) a law on National Personal Autonomy. The commitment to this principle was also reflected in the Proclamation of Independence (4th Universal), which was published in Ukrainian, Polish, Yiddish and Russian. These four languages also appeared on the Ukrainian currency later issued by the Centralna Rada.

In a parallel and strikingly similar movement, the Poles were inspired by the cosmic romantic vision of Adam Mickiewicz. In his work *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego*, Mickiewicz exalted his country above all others as the embodiment of freedom and Polish activists wanted to reestablish a Polish state that reflected (both in size and power) Poland's historical past.

Indeed, Poland's chief radical ideologist Roman Dmowski (whose radical ideas prevailed in the National Democratic Party before and during WWII)² strongly opposed the concept of Ukraine as a separate state and negotiated with Russia in the hopes of partitioning Ukrainian territory between Russia and Poland.

As noted by Polish historian Jędrzej Giertych, Dmowski felt that an “undivided Russia is a lesser evil for Poland than an independent Ukraine.”³ Poland did obtain a portion of the territories it coveted under

² Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland 1921-1939: The Crisis of Constitutional Government*. Oxford University Press 1972, pp. 54-60. The radicalization in the Polish-Ukrainian relations in the beginning of the 20th century was reflected particularly in the behavior of the Polish administrators of the Austrian Empire who persecuted the members of the youth organizations “Sich” and “Sokil” in whose defense the Ukrainian members of the Parliament in Vienna issued an “Interpellation” at the 24th session on March 2, 1910. The “Interpellation” was signed by Władysław Budzynowski, Petruszewycz, Lewickij, Baczyński and others.

³ Vasyl Kuchabsky, *Western Ukraine in Conflict with Poland and Bolshevism, 1918-1923*. Canada, 2009, pp. xii-xix, et al. See also Jędrzej Giertych, *Pół wieku polskiej polityki*. West Germany, 1947, p. 55. Also Henryk Wereszycki: *Historia polityczna Polski 1864-1918*. Paris, 1979, pp. 139-143, 254-257, 279, 320-321.

the terms of the Treaty of Riga of 1921—a treaty that reinstated a border corresponding to the one established after the Second Partition of Poland in 1793. But this was merely a prologue to a long period of Ukrainian–Polish confrontation, which needs to be examined in whole if the tragic events of WWII are to be fully understood.

The National Democratic Party, spearheaded by Dmowski and his close associate Stanislaw Grabski, wanted not only to regain as much as possible of the territory that had historically been part of Poland but also aspired to turn the Polish multiethnic state into a uniethnic entity in which Polish language, culture, and society would hold preeminence. Affecting this change meant implementing a policy of forced linguistic, cultural, and social assimilation, even to the point of denying the existence of the Ukrainian language.⁴ The program also called for liquidation “of Ukrainian and Belorussian schools, support of Polish economic, social and cultural institutions, [and] for the development of Polish military and civilian settlements in the Eastern principalities . . . to create on that territory strong organs of governments.”⁵

Followers of Jozef Pilsudski maintained a decidedly opposite attitude toward the national minorities of Poland. Pilsudski saw the future of Poland within a federation of free countries, which would separate Poland from Russia.⁶ But although Pilsudski won the political contest for power against Dmowski and was elected head of the Polish state, it was Dmowski’s ideology that triumphed and, according to Giertych, became dominant in Poland.⁷

The radical assimilation policy launched by the Polish government against the national minorities was most evident in the field of education. Between 1922 and 1926, for example, the number of Ukrainian public schools in Western Ukraine plummeted:

| Counties | 1922–1923 | 1926–1927 ⁸ |
|-------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Lviv | 974 | 353 |
| Stanislaviv | 823 | 365 |
| Ternopil | 653 | 146 |
| Volyn | 442 | 2 |
| Polissia | 22 | 1 |

⁴ Mirosława Papierzynska-Turek, *Sprawa ukraińska w Drugiej Rzeczpospolitej 1922-1926*. Kraków, 1979, pp. 7, 45.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶ Jozef Pilsudski, *Year 1920 and its climax Battle of Warsaw*. London–New York, 1972, p. 5.

⁷ Giertych, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁸ M. Papierzynska-Turek, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

This policy led to the radicalization of Ukrainian society, which resulted in numerous strikes, acts of sabotage, attacks against Polish estates, and the emergence of a partisan movement in the early 1920s—particularly in the region of Volyn.⁹ The partisans' destruction of railroad tracks and railroad buildings as well as attacks on military settlers (colonists) created a sense of urgency among Polish politicians, some of whom called for a declaration of martial law in Volyn.¹⁰ This was only a prologue to the events that followed.

Similar acts of resistance to Polish extremist policy were taking place in Galicia, particularly since 1921 when former officers of the Ukrainian Army established the UVO—Ukrainian Military Organization.¹¹ The resistance gradually became more radical, acquiring the characteristics and tactics of terrorism, including assassinations, the burning of estates (particularly of Polish colonists), and destruction of state property. The activities of the Ukrainian underground, as well as the Polish reaction to them, led to the establishment of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in 1929—an organization with the dual goal of resisting Polish rule and establishing an independent Ukrainian state.¹²

These antagonistic relations continued until the beginning of WWII, when Poland was partitioned by Moscow and Berlin and was ultimately destroyed as a state in 1939. The new geopolitical situation did not, however, change Polish–Ukrainian relations. The Poles, while fighting the Nazis and even after losing that struggle, continued to hold the position that they wanted to rebuild Poland within the borders that Poland had before the war, as envisioned by Dmowski. Their objective was *status quo ante bellum*.¹³ It was a point from which the Polish government in exile, as well as the Polish resistance movement, never diverged. Indeed, for the duration of the war, it was a central issue in their dealings with various representatives of the Allied governments.¹⁴ Hence, the Polish–Ukrainian war continued under different conditions—a war with-

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.195.

¹⁰ For details see *ibid.*, pp. 236–243.

¹¹ W. Martynec, *Ukrainske pidpillia: Vid UVO do OUN (1920–1929)*. Published in 1949.

¹² Petro Mirchuk, *Narys istorii OUN*, vol. I. Munich, 1968.

¹³ Ryszard Torzecki provides a rather comprehensive documentation on Polish attitude in this matter. See his “Kontakty polsko-ukraińskie na tle problemu ukraińskiego w polityce polskiego rządu emigracyjnego i podziemia (1939–1944)” in *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 1981, nr 1–2, pp. 319–327. See also *Militär und Abwehr Archiv*, Freiburg. H3/1524. “National-Polnische Bewegung”, pp. 193–196.

¹⁴ For details see *Documents on the Polish-Soviet Relations 1939–1945*. London, 1961, vol. I, pp. 260–261, 266, 269–270, 275–276, 593, 596.

in the war between Hitler and Stalin, each of whom exploited the Polish–Ukrainian conflict for their own ends. For Ukrainians and Poles it was a war for the same territory. For the German Reich and the Soviet Union, it was an opportunity to undermine one another’s positions on the Eastern Front and ultimately to lay claim to the contested territory.

Within the context of this new political reality, Ukrainian leaders were looking for Ukraine’s own national solution, hoping for some support from the Germans. But Berlin opposed Yaroslav Stetsko’s June 30, 1941, proclamation of an independent Ukrainian state, a decision that left the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (the only viable Ukrainian political force at that time) with only one option—to continue fighting against the Germans and against the Soviets.¹⁵ Having reached this decision, Ukrainians hoped to forge a mutually beneficial alliance with the Polish resistance movement, thereby enabling a unified resistance against the Nazis and the Communists. Unfortunately, overtures to the Polish leadership on this matter led nowhere.¹⁶

Hence, the two sides remained at war with each other, resorting to methods that can be characterized as ethnic cleansing. In connection with this, the political leadership of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) ordered the Polish population to leave the Ukrainian territory and move West beyond the River Buh.¹⁷ In response, the Poles issued a leaflet ordering Ukrainians to move to the East beyond the River Zbruch.¹⁸ In their reports to the London-based Polish government in exile, the Polish underground referred to Ukrainians with the pejorative term “Rusyny.”¹⁹

The relations between Poles and Ukrainians were further exacerbated, when the Germans organized Polish police units, which included recruits from the local population and from *Volksdeutsche* from the region of Poznan, who replaced the Ukrainians previously serving in these units. Having joined the Germans in their punitive expeditions against the Ukrainian population, members of these police units walked the

¹⁵ Taras Hunczak, “OUN – Between Collaboration and Confrontation with Nazi Germany” in *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, Vol. LXII, No. 2, Summer 2006.

¹⁶ For details see Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: Sprawa ukraińska w czasie II wojny światowej na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa, 1993.

¹⁷ See Studium Polski Podziemnej w Londynie (henceforth SPPL) AK 7332/43. Also Mykola Lebed, *UPA*, Suchasnist, New York, 1987, p. 53.

¹⁸ See SPPL, 162/58. Also “*Wyciągamy rękę i ostrzegamy*” HIS, A 11.851 b/8.

¹⁹ See *Sprawozdania delegata Rządu*, Instytut Historyczny im. Gen. Sikorskiego, A. 9.III, 1/10, 265. Also *Stosunek do Ukraińców i Rusinów* in SPPW, AK 2698/41.

streets of the towns and cities of Volyn, speaking and singing in Polish and provoking further resentment from the Ukrainians.²⁰ Those Ukrainians who had served in the indigenous (i.e., Ukrainian) German police units left their respective police stations (March–April 1943) and joined the Ukrainian Resistance Movement.²¹

As might have been expected, the Soviets also exploited the situation. A Polish report from April 1943 suggests that the Soviets were also involved in some of the bloody actions that had taken place in Volyn.²² A few months later, during the summer of 1943, an AK unit of 600 fighters under the command of Capitan Wladyslaw Kochanski actively collaborated with a Soviet partisan unit under the command of I. Shytov against UPA units operating in the region of Ludvipol.²³

The Soviet–Polish collaboration against the Ukrainian underground movement in Volyn was a clear reflection of the attitude of Gen. Wladyslaw Sikorski, the Prime Minister of the Polish government in exile. In a secret memorandum dated November 19, 1942, which was sent only to the highest Polish officials, Sikorski explained that the Polish–Soviet Agreement of July 30, 1941, should not be a temporary understanding, but that it should become “a turning point in the lives of both states and [in the lives of] the populations that inhabit them.” Sikorski further noted that the short-lived cooperation between Petliura and Pilsudski had been a fiasco, stating: “Returning to whatever variation of experiments of this kind would be madness.”²⁴

Sikorski firmly supported the goal of reinstating the pre-war borders of Poland, a view shared by many other Poles. The strongest statement on the subject was made by General Wladyslaw Anders, who, in a secret dispatch dated February 27, 1944, wrote that “the government has no right to conduct negotiations concerning changing our eastern borders. Each Pole and each Polish government who dares to make concessions will be considered by us a National Traitor.”²⁵ These were, un-

²⁰ *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie w kraju* in Instytut Historyczny im. Gen. Sikorskiego (henceforth HIS), A. 11. 851b/8, 3. Also SPPW, AK 6307/43 and AK 6744/43.

²¹ *Litopys UPA*, vol. 2, p. 20. Also vol. 5, p. 19. Also Yuriy Kyrychuk, *Ukrainskyi natsionalnyi rukh 40-50 rokov XX stolittia: ideolohiya ta praktyka*. Lviv, 2003, p. 117. Józef Czerwinski, *Z wołyńskich lasów na berliński trakt*. Warszawa, 1972, p. 35.

²² See *Sprawozdania sytuacyjne z kraju* in SPPW, vol. IV, p. 82.

²³ Józef Czerwinski, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-10. For other aspects of Polish-Soviet cooperation in Volyn see also pp. 88-96.

²⁴ See HIS, A. 11. 851 b/26.

²⁵ “Depesza-szyfr Nr. 326/P”, Depesza od Generała Andersa. Archiwum Generała Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego in Pilsudski Institut, N.Y.

fortunately, not only the views of Polish political and military leaders—they were views strongly supported by the Polish underground as well as the local Polish population, all rejecting any concession in favor of the local Ukrainian people.²⁶ Even the OUN's suggestion to postpone a decision regarding the Polish–Ukrainian border question to a later date was rebuffed by Polish authorities.²⁷ Instead, the Poles issued a warning to Ukrainians, urging them to come to their senses or face punishment for their criminal behavior once the war ended.²⁸

Very similar in content was an appeal to the Ukrainian nation from the Polish State Political Representative. Issued on July 30, 1943, the document explicitly stated that Poland would not give up her Eastern territories. Furthermore, it instructed the Ukrainians that they should not look for Ukraine in Galicia or in Volyn “but on the River Dnipro, in Kyiv, and in Kharkiv.”²⁹

As far as agreements with other countries or significant institutions are concerned, the only accord UPA reached was with the high command of the Hungarian Army. After preliminary discussions, a delegation of the Ukrainian resistance movement was flown by the Hungarians to Budapest, where a formal agreement was signed.³⁰

The non-negotiable territorial principles of Poles and Ukrainians led to the tragic consequences for both nations. While Poland was being devastated by the Nazis and Polish officers were being murdered by the Soviets in Katyn, Ukrainians and Poles continued murdering each other in defense of frontier that was as uncertain as the post-World War II future of both countries.

When we study the tragic pages of Ukrainian–Polish confrontation during WWII, we discover that some historians trace its genesis to Volyn, as it was in Volyn that the UPA was born. But Volyn was also the birthplace of the T. Kosciuszko partisan unit, which, in May 1943, joined

²⁶ Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy, op. cit.* pp. 184-185.

²⁷ See SPPL, Oddział VI,teczka: Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie, 1943. The document was published in *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach 1939-1945*. London 1973, vol. II, documents 399, 474.

²⁸ See “*Wyciągamy rękę i ostrzegamy*”, HIS, a. 11. 851 b/8.

²⁹ See SPPL. Oddział VI,teczka: Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie, 1943.

³⁰ András Schweitzer, “Strange Alliance in World War II” (Fegyver, Bártság in MVG 2010, Januar 23) *Weekly World Economy*, Jan. 23, 2010. For details see the memoirs of Ivan Hryniokh, a member of the delegation, in “Sorok rokiv tomu v Budapeshti”, *Suchasnist*, no. 6 (June 1985), pp. 96-107 and nos. 7-8 (July-August 1985), pp. 188-196. For a concrete implementation of the agreement between the Hungarian army and the UPA see Ivan Dmytryk, *V lisakh Lemkivshchyny*, Suchasnist, 1982, p. 45.

the communist partisans under the command of Gen. Begme.³¹ This unit rarely fought against the Germans—their principal enemies were the Ukrainians, and their hostility toward Ukrainians included burning down the Ukrainian villages of Liubiazh and Lachwicze.³² Also in the Volyn area were nine partisan AK units, which not only defended the Polish population but also attacked Ukrainians, answering violence with violence.³³ “Both Polish and Ukrainian resistance forces,” wrote Polish authors, “characterized terror against opponents as *response* or *self-defense* and accused the other side for the consequences.”³⁴

Unfortunately there is no exact documentation about these acts of terrorism. Grzegorz Motyka tries to explain the Ukrainian rationale for acts of terrorism, not only in Volyn but also in Galicia. But in wrapping up his explanations, which include phrases such as “most likely” and other ambiguities, he concludes that his analysis of the problem is only a “hypothesis” which demands a further research.³⁵ These problems have been treated in a variety of ways by different authors. Some have a pre-determined attitude and do not need any real evidence to prove their points of view, whereas others try to present the past on the basis of hard evidence. The latter approach is a more difficult process, but a considerable progress has been made.³⁶ Some of the evidence may explain the actions of Ukrainians, and it is evidence that supports the argument that what occurred went beyond historical animosity and was sparked by vengeance. One thing that generated a desire for revenge against the Poles was the fact that with the coming of the Red Army, many Poles joined paramilitary formations whose main task was “to fight the Ukrainian underground independence movement.”³⁷ These battalions, which were created in the Volyn, Ternopil, Lviv, and Stanislaviv regions under the command of the NKVD, included members of AK and did not merely defend the Polish population from UPA attacks. Instead, they were al-

³¹ Grzegorz Motyka, *Tak było w Bieszczadach: Walki polsko-ukraińskie 1943-1948*. Warszawa, 1999, p. 116.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-114.

³⁴ Antoni B. Szczęśniak and Wiesław Z. Szota, *Droga do nikąd – działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i jej likwidacja w Polsce*. Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny, Warszawa, 1973, p. 347.

³⁵ Motyka, *op. cit.*, p. 110-111.

³⁶ For a very interesting analysis of the writings of various historians see Rafal Wnuk “Recent Polish Historiography on Polish-Ukrainian Relations during World War II and its Aftermath.”

³⁷ For details see *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*. No. 6 (16) June 2002, p.71.

so “pacifying villages inhabited by Ukrainians, participating in battles against Ukrainian partisans, and collaborating with the Soviet Security Services.”³⁸

Volyn for many Poles became a symbol of a Polish tragedy, but in reality, acts of terror were perpetrated by both sides—in Eastern Galicia and in the territory west of the Curzon Line, referred to by Ukrainians as Zakerzonnia. There is considerably more literature on those provinces inhabited by Ukrainians, which were devastated by the internal struggle between the Poles and Ukrainians with the assistance of Berlin and Moscow during WWII.

A document of the Ukrainian Central Committee, whose central office was located in Krakow, reported on March 31, 1943, that beginning with January 11, 1941, bandits murdered 99 leading Ukrainians in the county of Lublyn—teachers and civic leaders.³⁹ In Hrubeshiv “Polish bands” murder 203 people between April 2, 1942, and November 3, 1943.⁴⁰ The situation in Hrubeshiv county became even worse in 1944, when Polish terrorists killed 1,280 Ukrainians—frequently entire families were liquidated.⁴¹

The overarching question here is “Who were these bandits who committed these criminal acts?” Were they the product of the territories that had become victims of anarchy,⁴² a by-product of war, or did they represent political organizations with political objectives? Wsiewolod Wolczew sees the confrontation in the area west of Curzon Line territories as a by-product of war and, on the part of the Poles, the policy of the Polish government in exile represented by the AK. Wolczew, in fact, documents the anti-Ukrainian operations of the AK, frequently against

³⁸ *Ibid.* p.72.

³⁹ UCC Archive, copies in my personal collection.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Ryszard Torzecki, “Niektóre aspekty hitlerowskiej polityki wobec ukraińców (1940-1944)” in *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-radzieckich*. Warszawa, 1969, vol. V, p. 159. The question of bandits is more complex than we may think. Jeffrey Burds, an outstanding researcher of WWII and after, documents that bandits were not only in the Western regions of the USSR, but that 1/3 of the bandits were in central regions of Russia concentrating in Moscow. Furthermore, quoting a leader of the AK who in July 1945 said that there are numerous irresponsible people in the Polish society who even exploit the authority of AK to commit acts of banditry. The author also documents “Facts of crude violation of Soviet law in the operations of the special units [spetsgrupy] of MGB”. For details see Jeffrey Burds, *Sovietskaya agentura – ocherki istorii SSSR v poslevoennye gody (1944-1948)*, pp. 19-20, 30-33, 285-288.

peaceful Ukrainian populations.⁴³

Two destroyed villages west of the Curzon Line territory deserve special attention: Pavlokoma and Zavadka Morokhivska. Pavlokoma was a historical village, which was established in 1441 and survived until March 2 and 3 of 1945, when Armia Krajowa, under the command of Józef Biss (“Wacław”), massacred 365 people – men, women, and children.⁴⁴ A tragedy of arguably lesser proportions occurred at Zavadka Morokhivska – what happened here was an event, which Walter Dushnyk called the “Ukrainian Lidice” of 1946. In a five-stage terrorist operation beginning in January 1946, the Polish Army led by a Soviet commander annihilated the Ukrainian village. When the fifth assault (April 30, 1946) forced the remnants of the Ukrainian population out of their homes with the goal of deporting them to Soviet Ukraine, there were only 73 survivors and among these, only three men.⁴⁵

Of course, it was not a one-sided war—the Ukrainian Insurgent Army conducted its own assaults against Polish villages. Thus, for example, on April 25, 1945, an UPA commander held a briefing during which he explained that the UPA would begin to retaliate against the Poles for terrorizing the Ukrainian population. Commander “Zalizniak” explained that Viazivnytsi was a village of bandits. There were, in this village, police units, two companies of Polish “shturmoviky” (storm troopers), and a company of Moscow communists. The next day, the UPA attacked the village, but because of strong resistance they were forced to withdraw, having lost 13 fighters.⁴⁶

Polish-Ukrainian hostilities continued even after WWII ended. It was, however the Ukrainian people, whose ancestors had lived for centuries to the west of the Curzon Line, who ultimately paid the price for the historical conflict, a bitter price that was called “Akcja Wisła.”

⁴³ Wsiewołod Wolczew, “Przyczynek do stanowiska ugrupowań obozu londyńskiego na Lubelszczyźnie wobec kwestii ukraińskiej” in *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-radzieckich*. Warsaw, 1969, vol. V, pp.161-169. For interesting details of the Polish operations against the UPA in Zakarzonnia see *Z lat wojny i okupacji – 1939-1945*. Editors, Edward Barszcz and Leszek Grot. Warsaw, 1971, pp. 384-399.

⁴⁴ For details see Petro J. Potichnyj, *Pavlokoma 1441-1945: Istoriya sela*. Toronto-Lviv, 2001.

⁴⁵ See Walter Dushnyk, *Death and Devastation on the Curzon Line: The story of the Deportations from Ukraine*. New York, 1948, pp. 14-20. See also *Litopys UPA*, Toronto, Canada, vol. 17, pp. 17-30.

⁴⁶ Petro J. Potichnyj and Volodymyr Viatrovych, Eds., *Memoirs of the UPA Soldiers and Members of the Armed Underground in Lviv and Liubachiv Regions*. Toronto-Lviv, 2003, vol. 4, pp. 287-289.

THE ETHNIC POLICY OF THE POLISH COMMUNIST REGIME WITH REGARDS TO THE UKRAINIAN POPULATION IN POLAND 1944 – 1989

ROMAN DROZD

When the Red Army marched into Poland in 1944, it presaged the coming Soviet control over Poland and the creation of a new border between the two countries. Pursuant to the terms of a secret agreement concluded between Moscow and the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) on July 27, 1944, it was decided to accept the Curzon Line (with minor changes favoring Poland) as the border demarcation between the two countries.

This decision was not well received by the Polish émigré government in London or by Polish political groups associated with this government. It was also unsatisfactory to most Poles living in Poland, who maintained that the pre-1939 eastern border of Poland should remain inviolate.

This shift in the Polish–Soviet border was also disliked by ethnic Ukrainians living West of the border and by some Soviet communists who were in favor of annexing the Pidliashia, Kholm, and Lemkivshchyna regions¹ into the Soviet Union. The ultimate decision maker in these negotiations, however, was the Kremlin, which was not interested in

¹ R. Drozd, *Polityka władz wobec ludności ukraińskiej w Polsce w latach 1944-1989*, Warszawa, 2001, pp. 30-31. In this publication, there is also more detailed information on all the raised topics. See also R. Drozd, B. Halczak, *Dzieje Ukraińców w Polsce w latach 1921-1989*, Zielona Góra – Słupsk 2010.

Polish–Ukrainian relations or in either side’s ethnic or national interests. The Kremlin, in fact, had already determined that all problems related to this region were to be solved by the exchange of population between the two countries. Poles and Jews living east of the border were to be resettled to Poland; Byelorussians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians living west of the border were to be resettled to the Soviet Union.

This transfer of population would have a lasting impact on the ethnographic character of the border regions. It would also have national and international implications. The Soviets pressed Great Britain and the United States to agree to the new demarcation and the proposed resettlement plan. At the same time, the plan suited Polish communists who saw the shift in border and the concomitant shift in population as a perfect opportunity to accomplish a long-held objective—to transform Poland into a single-nationality country. (This continued to be an important objective for subsequent Polish communist regimes.) It is therefore no exaggeration to state that the communists, whose global ideology favored internationalism, were (at least in their ethnic policy) all driven by nationalism.

In 1944, the Ukrainian question was one of the most important ethnic issues of concern to the Polish authorities. Despite the shifting of the border, some 700,000 Ukrainians were still living within the boundaries of the Polish state. Relations between ethnic Ukrainians and Poles were erratic—sometimes cordial, sometimes hostile, and mostly uneasy.

One reason for this was that the ethnic Ukrainians living in Poland aspired to build their own state—one, which would be situated within the current border and would include lands that the Poles regarded as their own. The inability of either side to compromise on this issue led to bloody conflict (especially in the Volyn region), which was fueled both by Berlin and Moscow.

Polish communist authorities did little to stop the hostilities. In fact, the mutual aversion between Poles and Ukrainians was quite useful to them. They began to view resettlement as an attractive option for solving “the Ukrainian question” while at the same time pleasing a Polish society that was hostile toward Ukrainians. As a prelude to implementation of this policy, the authorities began opposing all attempts to revive traditional Ukrainian life on the territories of the Polish state. Ukrainian education was (for a time) an exception to this, and Ukrainian schools continued to function until August or September of 1944. However, with the start of the resettlement operation and the formal adoption of the single nationality state concept as the state’s official ethnic policy, these Ukrainian schools were closed.

On September 9, 1944, the Polish Committee of National Libera-

tion and the “government” of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR) signed an agreement on resettlement. There is no doubt that Moscow was the party initiating the agreement. It was, after all, Moscow that was making decisions about the composition of the PKWN as well as the composition of the Soviet authorities and Soviet policies. Indeed, Moscow wanted to create an ethnographic border between Poland and the Soviet Union and present Western democratic states with a *fait accompli*, and in this manner, get their consent for such a border.

The conference of the Big Three in Yalta was scheduled for February 1945, and those attending were planning to address the course of the new Polish–Soviet border. It was already known that Great Britain’s Prime Minister Winston Churchill would be pressing for Lviv [Polish Lwow] to belong to Poland. And it was no coincidence that the “governments” of Poles and Ukrainians were also entering into an agreement favoring the resettlement plan. At the core of the entire issue was a concerted effort to create the appearance that resettlement and the resulting territorial demarcations were a sovereign decision agreed upon by both groups. Despite the fact that the agreement guaranteed a “voluntary” transfer, neither side had any intention of abiding by this principle.

The resettlement of the Ukrainian population of Poland began on October 15, 1944. In the beginning, the resettlement was somewhat voluntary as only those Ukrainians who had lost loved ones and property (either as a result of Polish–Ukrainian warfare or because they were in the path of the front line) were leaving. According to some estimates, some twenty thousand people left Poland at that time.² But the majority of Ukrainians living in Poland, even the ones who had previously expressed a willingness to leave, wanted to remain on their patrimonial lands.

Many ethnic Ukrainians also remembered the Soviet repressions of the late 1930s and early 1940s, memories not at all conducive to moving to Soviet-ruled lands. It was a position from which many Ukrainians did not waver during the entire period of population transfer. These Ukrainians (as well as others) resisted resettlement anyway they could: from escaping to the woods or to the Czechoslovakian side of the border to changing their religious affiliation [to Roman Catholicism] and declaring loyalty to Poland. This resistance only strengthened the resolve of Polish authorities in Warsaw to actively support the resettlement plan, a policy that went hand in hand with the wishes of the local Polish popula-

² J. Pisuliński, “Przesiedlenia Ukraińców do ZSRR w latach 1944-1946”, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 2001, No. 8, p. 38.

tion and of local authorities.³

It is unlikely that all official government representatives or all of Polish society were in favor of this solution, but the decision makers were the central authorities, whose interests lay in getting rid of the Ukrainian population. Because the resettlement agreement prohibited forcible resettlement, the authorities had to find a reasonable way to justify the use of force. They ultimately circumvented the prohibition by accusing Ukrainians of nationalism and of collaboration with Nazi Germany.

Thus, after initially encouraging Ukrainians to leave by annulling their existing debts, taxes, and insurance premiums, authorities began to focus on stronger administrative and economic measures that would force the Ukrainians to leave. On February 13, 1945, the Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland, created by the reformation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, unanimously accepted a proposal issued by the Polish Repatriation Office (PUR). Among other things, this proposal included a demand that all Ukrainians who had not registered to leave Polish territory as part of the peaceful resettlement plan could now be ruthlessly coerced into leaving. The coercive methods outlined in the proposal included repayment of all monies owed to the state, conscription into the Polish army, the eradication of the armed underground, and a ban on various activities of the Ukrainian committees in Yaroslav and Peremyshl counties, which were, at the time, striving to normalize the life of Ukrainians caught up in the resettlement plan.⁴

In retrospect, the repressive and coercive measures were a mistake that was compounded by an even greater error in judgment, a fact that was later underscored by Colonel Juliusz Hübner, a member of the top command of the Operational Group "Wisła." In 1956, at a secret meeting of the Council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW), Hübner commented: "When assessing Operation 'Wisła,' we made a huge mistake with regard to the Ukrainian population by applying harsh repressions against it. Operation 'Wisła' was the ultimate result of this mis-

³ Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (AMSWiA), PKWN, cat. No. 6. Letter of Lublyn governor Kazimierz Sidor to the Presidium of the State National Council (KRN) and the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) dated November 2, 1944 and pertaining to the resettlement of Ukrainians.

⁴ Archives of Newer Documents (AAN), GPR d/s ELU, cat. no. 397/164. Proposal of the State Repatriation Office (PUR) accepted by the Council of Ministers on February 13, 1945; R. Drozd, I. Hałagida, *Ukraińcy w Polsce 1944-1989. Walka o tożsamość (Dokumenty i materiały)*, Warszawa 1999, doc. no. 2. Proposal of the State Repatriation Office (PUR) concerning speeding up the resettlement of Ukrainian population dated February 13, 1945, pp. 33-34.

take. We are judging our position in these matters as erroneous and unjust and incompatible with our ideology, but the judgment itself does not excuse our horrendous mistakes. A full rehabilitation and accounting for what happened are necessary. I regard the motion to critically evaluate Operation 'W[isła]' as justified."⁵

In 1945, however, the authorities were convinced that harsh measures were a justifiable means to a most desirable end. For authorities engaged in security, the PUR proposals opened the way to initiate military operations against the Ukrainian population in the name of fighting "the Ukrainian bands." From that moment, the number of attacks against Ukrainian villages (with the principle aim of terrorizing inhabitants and forcing them to leave) increased substantially. A few examples illustrate the nature of such attacks.

On March 21, 1945, the 2nd Special Operational Battalion of the Internal Security Corps (KBW) carried out a pacification of the village of Lublyniec Stary as a result of which at least 58 villagers were murdered.⁶ On April 5, this same battalion carried out an attack on the village of Gorajec (Liubachiv county) and murdered at least 155 people, including women and children. The village was looted and burned.⁷ In addition to these assaults, were the incessant armed conflicts between the Polish and Ukrainian undergrounds, the victims of which were civilian populations, both Polish and Ukrainian. On March 3, 1945, a post-AK (National Army) unit under the command of Lieutenant Jozef Biss (alias "Waclaw"), together with Polish residents of nearby villages, attacked the village of Pavlokoma, killing 365 people, including women and children.⁸

⁵ AMSWiA, MSW-I, cat. No. 9. Minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) that took place on June 5, 1956.

⁶ 1947. *Propamiatna knyha*. Ed. B. Huk. Warszawa 1997, p. 393. The figure of 540 is also given as the number of casualties. (*Repatriacja czy deportacja. Przesiedlenie Ukraińców z Polski do ZSRR 1944-1946*, vol. I, "Dokumenty 1944-1945", ed. by E. Misiło, Warszawa, 1996, doc. No. 30. Operational report No. 1 of the commander of the 2nd Special Operational Battalion of the Internal Security Corps (KBW) concerning the pacification of the village of Lublyniec Stary dated March 24, 1945, pp. 94-95).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160. The figure of 260 is also given as the number of casualties. (*Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. I, doc. No. 36. Operational report no. 6 of the of the commander of the 2nd Special Operational Battalion of the Internal Security Corps (KBW) concerning the pacification of the village of Gorajec dated April 6, 1945, pp. 104-105; M. Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów polsko-ukraińskich*, vol. 3, Warszawa, 1994, p. 206).

⁸ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. I, doc. No. 26. Letter of the government district representative in charge of evacuation of the Ukrainian population

On April 15, a unit of the Polish Peasants' Battalions killed 116 villagers in Malkow, including women and children.⁹ On April 17, joint units of the National Military Organization (NOW) under the command of "Mewa" and "Wolyniak" murdered (according to the Ukrainian sources) 358 residents of the village of Piskorowice.¹⁰ On June 6, units of the National Armed Forces (NSZ) under the command of "Szary," "Sokol," "Zemsta," "Roman," and "Jacek" attacked the village of Wierzchowiny, murdering—within the span of two hours—194 people, including 65 children aged 11 or younger.¹¹

These atrocities were answered in kind. On March 27, 1945, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) units from the "Zalizniak" company conducted an attack on police stations in Liubachiv and Yaroslav counties. Thirty police officers and 43 civilians were killed.¹² On April 17, a unit under the command of "Zalizniak" killed 65 people in Wiazownica.¹³ On April 21, 1945 the village of Borownica was burnt by Ukrainian self-defense units in retaliation for the participation of village residents in the attack on Pavlokoma. At least 27 people were killed.¹⁴ On October 3, for the same reason, the UPA companies of "Hromenko" and "Burlaka" burned Dylagowa, Bartkowka, Laczki, Sielnica and Pavlokoma, villages settled by Poles after the Ukrainians living in them had been murdered.¹⁵ On May 18, UPA units attacked the villages of Radkow, Lachowce, Rzeplin, and Posadow; burning most of the buildings

in Peremyshl to the provincial representative in charge of evacuation in Yaroslav concerning resettlement operation in Brzozow county dated March 7, 1945, pp. 86-88.

⁹ G. Motyka, *Tak było w Bieszczadach. Walki polsko-ukraińskie 1943-1948*, Warszawa, 1999, p. 260.

¹⁰ M. Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów...*, pp. 215-219.

¹¹ AMSWiA, MAP, cat. No. 72. Minutes of the findings of the Commission investigating the crime committed in the village of Wierzchowiny dated June 15, 1945; H. Pająk, *Za samostijną Ukrainę*, Lublin, 1992, pp. 88-90; M. Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów...*, pp. 151-154.

¹² A. B. Szczęśniak, W. Z. Szota, *Droga do nikąd. Działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i jej likwidacja w Polsce*, Warszawa, 1973, p. 281.

¹³ G. Motyka, *Tak było w Bieszczadach...*, p. 262.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 255.

¹⁵ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. I, doc. No. 26. Letter of the government district representative in charge of evacuation of the Ukrainian population in Peremyshl to the provincial representative in charge of evacuation in Yaroslav concerning resettlement operation in Brzozow county dated March 7, 1945, pp. 86-87.

and killing approximately 60 people.¹⁶ It should be emphasized that these are only a few examples and that there were only a few similar actions were perpetrated by both sides.

The conflict was exacerbated by the communist regime. A top secret directive issued by the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) from 1945 ordered: "Ignore all incidents between Ukrainians and Poles along the borderland. You are also authorized to provoke such incidents, because our cause will not suffer as the result of this. The weapons of the Ukrainians are aimed exclusively at the AK fascists. In consultation with the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), we have determined that you shall not permit military or police intervention in this regard. Do act very CAREFULLY when carrying out this directive."¹⁷

Apart from that, there is evidence of an attack on the village of Dynow on March 17, 1945, an assault conducted by a secret NKVD unit disguised as an UPA unit. On the following day, the outskirts of Dyniw were cordoned off, and 500 people were arrested. On March 24, the village of Futoma was also "pacified" in this manner. These operations were all conducted by the NKVD and staged to appear to be attacks by Banderites. With respect to these incidents, the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party gave secret instructions to authorities, ordering them to "spread a version that this was a retaliation of the Banderites against the AK and that the AK attacked Soviet security units and that is why the arrests and sanctions took place."¹⁸

In discussing the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, one cannot forget true instances of common banditry, which were enabled by wartime and postwar conditions. This issue has not yet been researched, but one can expect that such banditry further destabilized the situation and exacerbated Polish-Ukrainian relations to a considerable extent. Banditry was taken up by Poles or Ukrainians, who disguised their true objectives while acting under the pretext of fighting against the national enemy. And because banditry does not recognize ethnic boundaries, one cannot

¹⁶ A. L. Sowa, *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie 1939-1947*, Kraków, 1998, p. 289.

¹⁷ A. Chmielarz, *Ukraińskie tropy. Dokumenty*, "Karta" 1991, No. 4, doc. No. 1. Instruction of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party No. 1/26/45-Z [no date], pp. 132-133.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, doc. No. 3. Annex no. 3 to situation report No. 32 dated April 5, 1945, pp. 134-135; doc. No. 4. Instruction of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) No. 3/28/III/45-ZK [no date], pp. 134-135; see also: M. Korcuć, "Prowokacyjna działalność UB i KBW", [in:] *Dzieje Podkarpacia*, vol. I, Krosno, 1996, pp. 207-235.

exclude the existence of mixed Polish–Ukrainian bands. This author is familiar with one Ukrainian band, which both the Polish security authorities and the Ukrainian underground were trying to capture. In the end, the latter accomplished this. Writing in his parish chronicle, a Roman Catholic priest from Oleszyce cites examples of banditry among Poles. “It is difficult,” he wrote, “to comprehend that the same person, who in church shows absolute piety and religious zealotry, is outside the church devoid of any principles. Of course, there are rare exceptions. One can state with certainty that our peasant is still controlled by unbridled greed.”¹⁹

A letter from Jozef Bednarz, a county representative of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, to the heads of the Lancut, Yaroslav, and Przeworsk county administrations proves that civilian populations and even police officers were engaged in banditry. In the letter Bednarz wrote: “Countless robberies are occurring every day, not only conducted by the local population, but also by people from distant areas and also, which I regret to admit, by units of local police and elements impersonating police.” The letter includes an appeal to the village leaders to crack down on such activities.²⁰

But we must add that not everyone gave in to mass fear and hatred. There were instances when a Pole gave refuge to a Ukrainian neighbour and, vice versa, when Ukrainians gave refuge to their Polish neighbors. In addition, there were Poles who offered to help Ukrainians escape resettlement, and some Polish priests willingly issued certificates to Ukrainians, attesting to their affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church, which in this region was equivalent to Polish ethnicity. It is true that such certificates were generally issued for a fee, but one must place this in the context of a time and place when such transactions were the norm.

In time, the need to stop further warfare and even to enter into joint talks was recognized by members of the Polish underground, which came into existence after the dissolution of the National Army (AK), and by members of the Ukrainian underground. In the spring of 1945, a local agreement was reached concerning the area of southeastern Lublyn region. A similar agreement was reached in Pidliashia region. As a result of these agreements, areas of influence were delimited with both sides agreeing to cooperate in fighting the Office of Security (UB), the Internal Security Corps, and the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

¹⁹ *Oleszyce parish chronicle*, “Karta” 1997, No. 22, pp. 54–55.

²⁰ AAN, GPRd/s ELU, cat. No. 397/165. Letter of Jozef Bednarz, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) district representative in charge of evacuation, to the administration heads of Lancut, Yaroslav and Przeworsk counties concerning countering assaults and robberies dated November 13, 1944.

Moreover, there was a mutual commitment to stop retaliatory attacks on Polish and Ukrainian villages. Both sides also agreed to fight together against banditry. In December 1945, the Polish side also promised help to the Ukrainian population evade deportation by the Polish Army.²¹ Generally speaking, the agreements were adhered to until UPA activities in that region ended.²² One significant example of this pact was a joint attack on the Werbkowice railway station on April 6, 1946 and on Hrubeshiv during the night between May 27 and 28, 1946 from which forcibly resettled Ukrainians were being transported.²³

But these local agreements did little to shield the Ukrainian population as a whole from resettlement. The decision had already been made by the communists and their objective was to remove Ukrainians from Poland. And this objective, already reinforced by terror tactics as well as by administrative and economic pressure, was further advanced by the end of winter when improved weather conditions contributed to the pace of resettlement.

In mid-1945, however, there was an unanticipated breakdown in the resettlement operation. According to Jozef Bednarz, the Chief Evacuation Representative of the Government of the Republic of Poland, only 184,937 people were resettled by July 1, 1945—a number that constituted only 38 percent of the Ukrainians registered to leave.²⁴ Several factors influence this turn of events. The first was massive resistance by Ukrainians unwilling to leave homes they considered to be in their motherland. The second was the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which ordered Ukrainian villagers to stay where they were. Moreover, information about the reality of Soviet life was filtering across the border from Soviet Ukraine, a further disincentive to leave. And the final important factor was the loose but workable pact that had been forged between the Polish underground and the Ukrainian underground.

Notwithstanding this slowdown, the authorities decided to let the Ukrainian population know that resettlement was inevitable. On July 24, 1945, a conference on the Ukrainian issue took place at the Ministry of Public Administration. Government representatives and delegates of the

²¹ G. Motyka, "Od Wołynia do akcji "Wisła"", *Więź*, 1998, No. 3, pp. 125-126.

²² G. Motyka, R. Wnuk, *Pani i rezuny. Współpraca AK-WiN i UPA 1945-1947*, Warszawa, 1997, pp. 85-121.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-171; Motyka G., "Atak na Hrubieszów", *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN*, 1996, No. 8, pp. 87-96; H. Pająk, *Za samostijną...*, pp. 51-72.

²⁴ AAN, GPRd/s ELU, cat. no. 397/164. Report on the activities of the Chief Evacuation Representative and plans for the future, with enclosures dated July 10, 1945.

Ukrainian population from Krakow, Lublyn, and Riashiv provinces, chosen by the authorities, took part in the conference. The conference ended in failure, with each side refusing to budge from its own position.²⁵ Facing this situation, the authorities decided there was only one solution—deportation—as this seemed to be the only way to rid Poland of a Ukrainian population. This, after all, was Poland’s ethnic policy of the time, with authorities striving to get rid of all ethnic minorities living in Poland. As the Director of the Presidium Office of the Council of Ministers in Warsaw had stated, “We have the opportunity to become a national state and not an ethnic one. We do not want to harm anyone, but we would like to remove the issue of ethnic minorities . . . the place for a Ukrainian is in Ukraine.”²⁶

The failure of previous coercive actions against the Ukrainian population forced the authorities to undertake more radical steps. Early in August, preparations to use directly regular military units in the resettlement operation began, a decision that was fully in accord with the demands of the Evacuation Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Ukrainian SSR. On September 3, 1945, three divisions of the Polish Army were sent to the southeastern part of Poland, with the aim of relocating Ukrainians. Confirmation of this was the decision of the Provincial Security Committee in Riashiv, which ordered allocation of two-thirds of the head count of the regiments for this operation.²⁷ The Office of Public Security in Riashiv further ordered that families of mixed ethnicity be relocated if the father was not Polish.²⁸ The military was rounding up entire villages for deportation, giving residents about two hours to get themselves ready to leave. The process was marked by many instances of military brutality. One example of this was what occurred in the village of Zavadka Morokhivska where the 34th Polish Infantry Regiment murdered more than 96 people during the course of three attacks,²⁹ and in the village of Terka, where a unit of the 36th Command of the Border Protection Troops from Wolkowyja murdered 33 Ukrain-

²⁵ R. Drozd, *Polityka władz...*, pp. 42-43.

²⁶ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. No. 295/VII-158, Minutes of the conference at the Ministry of Public Administration with the participation of Ukrainian population representatives dated July 24, 1945.

²⁷ Central Military Archives (CAW), General Staff of the Polish Army, cat. No. IV.111.608. Report on the inspection of the course of anti-banditry campaign and resettlement of Ukrainian population in Riashiv and Lublyn provinces conducted by the 8th and 9th Infantry Divisions dated February 1946.

²⁸ AMSWiA, MAP, cat. No. 134. Situation report of Riashiv province governor for the month of February 1946 dated March 15, 1946.

²⁹ M. Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów...*, pp. 315-319.

ians.³⁰

Regrettably, such treatment of Ukrainians had its proponents even among high-ranking officers, including some generals. On March 24, 1946, Brigadier General Adam Daszkiewicz, the Chief of Staff of the 5th Military District, ordered "that the military consider all Ukrainian males as bandits, take them into custody, and shoot a certain number of them."³¹ Even though some officers did not share this view, fatalities among Ukrainian civilians were not rare occurrences, particularly as individual soldiers perpetrated lawless acts upon these civilians with impunity.

Such acts were witnessed by the commander of the 8th Infantry Division, who demanded that his superiors "speed up the administration of justice and provide the means of applying severe sanctions [against the perpetrators], such as those that took place during the war operations."³² This moral stance was echoed by the commander of the 5th Military District, General Mikołaj Wieckowski, who directed his officers to "immediately put an end to all this heinousness and battering of innocent civilian population of the Riashiv province."³³ Official documents show, however, that such attempts failed to prevent further excesses and abuses committed by soldiers.³⁴

This brutality resulted in counteractions by the UPA, which expanded in size and activity in Poland; in April 1945, the 6th UPA Military District "Sian" was formed, covering the area of southeastern Poland. Yaroslaw Staruch ("Stiah") headed the civilian network (the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists), and Miroslaw Onyszkiewicz ("Orest") became the commander of the UPA. Four to five units were under his command. The situation changed in the fall of 1945, when the

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 332-347.

³¹ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, Vol. 2, doc. No. 40. Special report of the Chief of the Main Directorate of Information of the Polish Army for the Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army dated April 6, 1946, pp. 93-95.

³² CAW, General Staff of the Polish Army, cat. No. IV.111.458. Letter of the commander of the 8th Infantry Division, Colonel Habowski, to the General Staff of the Polish Army dated April 4, 1946.

³³ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 2, doc. No. 146. Letter of the 5th Warsaw Military District commander to the commanders and deputy commanders of Operational Group "Rzeszow," the 8th and 9th Infantry Divisions, and the 8th and 9th Units of the Border Protection Troops concerning the abuses committed by the military dated August 8, 1946, p. 289.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, doc. No. 168. Letter of the Head of the Information Department of the Ministry of Information and Propaganda to the undersecretary of state at the Presidium of the Council of Ministers concerning the resettlement of the village of Rabe dated November 16, 1946, pp. 333-334.

Polish Army took up the deportation operation.³⁵ In a short period of time, the UPA armed forces grew fourfold; by May of 1946, there were 16 or 17 UPA units (numbering approximately 2,000 people).³⁶ On September 9, 1945, the UPA command in Poland issued the following mandate: "In areas where our military units have an opportunity to conduct combat operations against those who are carrying out the deportation operation, immediately execute this order. Destroy all resettlement commissions and all those who are using force to resettle . . . burn resettled, desolated villages so that no buildings or building materials are left. Before burning, if possible, secure any property left behind in the villages that might be useful to us."³⁷

For the UPA, the departure of Ukrainian population constituted a real threat of losing logistic support and contact channels with the West, calling further activities in this area into question. And it was with the goal of enabling further activities in the area that the UPA protected the civilian population against Polish attacks, preventing resettlement by any means possible. Communication routes were paralyzed as UPA units blew up bridges and railway tracks; ambushes were organized; Polish military units, resettlement offices, and deportation stations were attacked.³⁸

The UPA also conducted mass propaganda and agitation campaigns, targeting not only the Ukrainian but also the Polish population. There were also appeals to the Polish army to stop the resettlement and join the UPA in the fight against "Bolshevik imperialism."³⁹ In October 1945, an open letter entitled "To the Whole Civilized World" was issued. Translated into several languages, the letter informed the international community about the tragic situation of Ukrainians in Poland.⁴⁰ The actions mentioned in the letter raised awareness in the Ukrainian civilian population, and considerable segments of this population began to regard the UPA units as defenders of their life and property. Unfortunately, the

³⁵ R. Drozd, *Ukraińska Powstańcza Armia. Dokumenty-struktury*, Warszawa, 1998, pp. 209-257.

³⁶ G. Motyka, "Od Wołynia do akcji "Wisła"..."..., pp.123 -126.

³⁷ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. No. 84. Order of the command of the 6th Military District of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army concerning resettlement of Ukrainians conducted by the Polish Army dated September 9, 1945, pp. 200-202.

³⁸ AMSWiA, UPA, cat. No. X/40. Notification of the UPA unit about operations against the resettlement of Ukrainian population dated March 9, 1946.

³⁹ R. Drozd, *Ukraińska Powstańcza Armia...*, pp. 158-206.

⁴⁰ AMSWiA, OUN, cat. No. IX/4. "Do całego świata cywilizowanego!" (To the Whole Civilized World) – Open letter of the Ukrainians living behind the Curzon Line dated October 1945. For a complete document see pp. 274.

actions of the Ukrainian underground included brutality against the Polish army, a situation that escalated brutality against the Ukrainian civilians at the hands of the Poles.

Conflicts between the UPA and the Polish army made the resettlement process more difficult, but many organizational difficulties also slowed and impeded the resettlement operation. One of the fundamental difficulties was the lack of adequate transportation, a problem that plagued the authorities to the end of the operation. Local administrators were unable to deliver a sufficient number of wagons, partly because the local population refused to comply.⁴¹ Railway transportation was also inadequate, resulting in people waiting at railroad stations from several days to even several dozen days. Under these circumstances, some of those waiting to be loaded for transport escaped and returned to their homes.

The problem of resettling the Lemkos was distinctly unique. Members of this Ukrainian regional group, hoping to remain on their ancestral lands, were attempting to use the September 9, 1944, agreement between Poland and the Soviet Union to their advantage. Pointing that the Lemkos (as well as the lands they inhabited) were not mentioned in this agreement, led to numerous and divergent interpretations. On September 15, 1945, the inhabitants of Komancha commune, together with their Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy, submitted a petition to the Ministry of Public Security with a request not to be resettled. The petition was supported by the Council and the Administration of Komancha commune,⁴² but subsequently rejected at the request of the Riashiv provincial governor. Additional petitions were submitted on September 28 and 29 to the Ministry of Public Security,⁴³ on February 16, 1946 to the Minister of Minister of Public Security,⁴⁴ and on February 18 to the Prime Minister, the Ministers of National Defense and Justice, and to the head of Sianik county.⁴⁵ The actions of Lemkos gained the support of the County Interparty Liaison Committee in Sianik, which submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Public Administration demanding (among other

⁴¹ State Archives in Krakow (APKr), Provincial Office (UW), cat. No. 1070. Letter of the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP) to the Krakow Governor regarding carriage provisions dated March 27, 1945.

⁴² AMSWiA, MAP, cat. No. 304. Petition of the residents of Komancha commune to the Ministry of Public Security dated September 15, 1945.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Petition of the Ruthenian-Ukrainian population from Sanok county to the Ministry of Public Security dated September 28, 1945.

⁴⁴ AAN, GPRd/sELU, cat. No. 397/164. Petition of the rural council heads from Komancha commune dated February 16, 1946.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Petition of the residents of Komancha commune dated February 18, 1946.

things): “discontinuation of the resettlement operation in the county, immediate removal of the military from the charge of the operation and handing all the initiative over to the general administrative authorities.”⁴⁶

On April 19, 1947, in his letter to W. Wolski, the Deputy Minister of Public Administration, W. Gomulka asked to issue immediate orders to the appropriate institutions “sternly forbidding application of any duress when resettling Lemkos.”⁴⁷ On April 24, the Ministry of Public Administration ordered that resettlement be carried out, consenting at the same time to leave behind “the element loyal to the State” and mixed [Polish–Ukrainian] couples.⁴⁸ However, documentary evidence shows that the provincial and resettlement authorities did not comply with the above orders, a fact that is not surprising when one remembers J. Bednarz’s assertion that “all Polish citizens had the issue of getting rid of ethnic minorities at heart, and that is why even local communities should contribute to the elimination of this problem.”⁴⁹

The aforementioned difficulties were considerably delaying the resettlement operation. At the same time, the final deadline for its completion (June 15, 1946) was approaching. To speed the operation up, Operational Group “Rzeszow” [Riashiv], under the command of General Jan Rotkiewicz, was formed. Its task was to resettle the Ukrainian population, fully and quickly. General Stefan Mossor, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Polish Army, ordered resettlement of some 14,000 families by June 15. At the same time, commanders of the 8th and 9th Infantry Divisions were ordered to increase the number of resettled families from 100 to 500 daily per each division.⁵⁰

Also responding to this order was the 34th Infantry Regiment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Jan Gerhard, who later authored “Luny w Bieszczadach”, a novel that became required reading in

⁴⁶ AMSWiA, MAP, cat. No. 304. Memorandum of the County Inter-party Liaison Committee in Sanok to the Ministry of Public Administration with regards to the resettlement of the Ukrainian population dated October 6, 1945.

⁴⁷ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 2, doc. No. 45. Letter from W. Gomulka to W. Wolski requesting ceasing of forcible resettlement of Lemkos dated April 19, 1946, pp.103-104.

⁴⁸ APKr, UW, cat. No. 1082. Letter of the Provincial Office in Krakow to the administration head of Nowy Sacz county concerning resettlement of Lemkos dated May 7, 1946.

⁴⁹ APKr, UW, cat. No. 1070, Letter of J. Bednarz, the Chief Representative of the Government of Poland in charge of Evacuation, to the Provincial Office concerning carriage provisions dated January 4, 1946.

⁵⁰ *Akcja “Wisła”*. *Dokumenty*, compiled by E. Misiło, Warszawa, 1993, p. 16 (wstęp).

schools in Poland, which distorted the picture of the Polish–Ukrainian conflict in the Beskydy Mountains. During the first two weeks of July 1946, Gerhard deported 1,848 families, that is, 10,578 people, from the mountainous county of Lisko.⁵¹

It is important to note that 1,722 families (9,617 people) from among those deported from the villages that bordered the Soviet Union were forced to cross the border with no time to prepare. They were forbidden to take anything with them to the other side, including any resettlement documents.⁵² The 34th Infantry Regiment did not stop the operation despite General S. Mossor's intervention with General J. Rotkiewicz, the commander of Operational Group "Rzeszow."⁵³ Altogether, by the end of June 1946, Polish army units had resettled 236,799 people. Added to those who had been resettled from October 15, 1944, this raised the total to 121,521 families (478,486 people).⁵⁴ Dissolution of resettlement commissions started, but resettlement of individual families continued. By the end of December 1946, this continued resettlement affected an additional 9,571 people.⁵⁵ All in all, between 1944 to 1946, 488,057 Ukrainians were resettled to the Ukrainian SSR. For comparison, during the same period of time, 787,674 people arrived in Poland,

⁵¹ CAW, General Staff of the Polish Army, cat. No. IV.111.480. Report of Gen. Rotkiewicz, the "Rzeszow" Operational Group commander, prepared for the General Staff of the Polish Army regarding the entire resettlement operation in Rzeszow province dated July 12, 1946.

⁵² *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 2. doc. No. 106. Letter of the chief government representative in charge of evacuation of Ukrainian population to the command of the 5th Military District and the deputy minister of the Public Administration regarding resettlement of Ukrainians from Lisko county dated June 11, 1946, pp. 205-206; doc. No. 112. Letter of the Chief Plenipotentiary of the Government of the USSR responsible for evacuation of Ukrainians from Poland to J. Bednarz regarding continuation of the resettlement of Ukrainians from Lisko county dated June 15, 1946, p. 213.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, doc. no. 105. Cryptograms nos. 122 and 127 of the deputy chief of General Staff of the Polish Army to the commander of Operational Group "Rzeszow" dated June 9, 1946, pp. 203-204.

⁵⁴ *Deportatsii. Zakhidni zemli Ukrainy kintsia 30-kh – pochatku 50-kh rokov. Dokumenty, materialy, spohady*, vol. 2. 1946-1947 roky, Lviv, 1998, doc. No. 43. Final report of the chief plenipotentiary of the government of the USSR responsible for evacuation of the Ukrainians from Poland dated February 14, 1947, p. 173.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, doc. No. 43. Final report of the chief plenipotentiary of the government of the USSR responsible for evacuation of the Ukrainians from Poland dated February 14, 1947, p. 173.

including 742,453 Poles and 33,105 Jews.⁵⁶

The authorities also targeted Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Orthodox clergy for resettlement, certain that the clergy of both denominations were against the operation and that they were urging the population to resist. Another motivating factor was the belief that resettling the Ukrainian clergy would lead to the demise of both Ukrainian rites. This was quite in line with the ethnic and religious policy of the time. In the case of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, liquidation began soon after the Soviet Union had applied its own repressive measures against the Church. On September 21, 1945, Bishop Josafat Kotsylovskiyi of the Peremyshl diocese, was arrested and imprisoned in a castle in Riashiv. On January 18, 1946, he was transported together with Fr. Bazyli Hrynyk to Mostyska, where he was to be handed over to the Soviet authorities. For some unknown reason, both men were released and returned to Peremyshl. The most likely explanation is that Polish authorities executed the arrest without the Soviet approval and that the Soviets were not yet prepared for an influx of Ukrainian clergy from Poland.⁵⁷ Apart from that, the arrest of a single bishop would not solve Poland's problem; the diocese, which could have been headed by Bishop Hryhorij Lakota in the absence of Bishop Kotsylovskiyi, was still operating.

On April 11, 1946, a meeting was held in Peremyshl. In attendance were the deputy governor of Riashiv province, a director of one of the departments at the Ministry of Public Administration and commanders of security, police, and military units, including Colonel M. Novikov, an NKVD security advisor. During the meeting, a decision was made to resettle Ukrainians living in Peremyshl, including Bishop J. Kotsylovskiyi. In addition, Colonel Novikov took upon himself all the matters involving the arrest of the bishop and 15 representatives of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic diocese⁵⁸

On June 26, 1946, the bishop and 13 Catholic priests were arrested and subsequently handed over to the Soviet authorities. They died as a result of physical and psychological torture and from conditions at the camps in which they were being held. Only three members of the Peremyshl monastery (Fathers Bazyli Hrynyk, Mykola Denko, Bazyli Pynylo) were able to evade arrest; afterwards, in the absence of the bish-

⁵⁶ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, p. 14.

⁵⁷ Such an eventuality is also accepted by I. Biłas, "Likwidacja Greckokatolickiej Diecezji Przemyskiej oraz tragiczne losy jej ordynariusza biskupa Jozafata Kocyłowskiego w kontekście polityki wyznaniowej ZSRR", [in:] *Polska-Ukraina 1000 lat sąsiedztwa*, vol. 3, edited by S. Stepień, Przemysł, 1999, p. 287.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 287-288.

ops, these three attempted to take care of diocesan matters. Their efforts failed due to Operation “Wisła.” Researchers estimate that between 1944 and 1946, at least 23 Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests perished and around 300 were resettled. Almost all convents, monasteries, and other religious institutions and organizations were liquidated.⁵⁹ Following the example of the Soviets, the authorities did not pursue any particular legal measures in this undertaking. The goal was liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland, and they considered that the resettlement of the faithful and the clergy met this goal admirably.

The case of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was somewhat different. The authorities wanted to gain control over the Church and use it in their fight against the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason, a decision was made to resettle only those members of the Orthodox clergy who lived and worked in areas inhabited by Ukrainian populations. During the deportation between ten and twenty priests lost their lives. In spite of Lublyn’s Orthodox Bishop Tymotej’s protest, a number of the Orthodox clergy⁶⁰ and the members of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church Consistory in Kholm⁶¹ were resettled. The latter were resettled at the direction of the head of the Kholm administration, despite orders to the contrary from higher authorities, which had directed the action be stopped. According to these authorities, the number of Orthodox parishes in Lublyn province declined significantly after the resettlement. Where there had once been 12 parishes and 32 churches, which had been served by 16 clergymen, resettlement had decreased the church presence to 7 parishes and one monastery.⁶² In Lemkivshchyna, prior to resettlement, there had been 9 active parishes and 19 churches serviced by 6 Orthodox priests.⁶³ In 1946, the Kholm and Pidliashia, Krakow and Lemkivshchy-

⁵⁹ Y. Misylo, “Hreko-Katolytska Tserkva u Polshchi (1944-1947)”, [in:] *Ukraina i Polshcha mizh mynulym i maybutnim*, Lviv, 1991, pp. 104-106; I. Harasym, “Hreko-Katolytska Tserkva naperedodni ta pislya aktsii «Wisła»”, [in:] *U poshukah pravdy pro aktsiu «Wisła»*. Edited by M. Kozak, Peremyshl, 1998, p. 21.

⁶⁰ AAN, MAP, cat. No. 1051. Letter of the Department of Religious Denominations of the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP) to the Provincial Office (UW) in Lublyn regarding Orthodox clergy dated December 15, 1945.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* Letter of the Department of Religious Denominations of the MAP to the governor of Lublyn province regarding the Orthodox clergy dated September 15, 1945.

⁶² *Ibid.* Letter of the Warsaw Orthodox Consistory to the Department of Religious Denominations of the MAP dated October 30, 1946.

⁶³ G. Kuprianowicz, “Akcja “Wisła” a Kościół prawosławny”, [in:] *Akcja “Wisła”*, ed. by J. Pisuliński, Warszawa, 2003, p. 159.

na Orthodox dioceses were officially liquidated.⁶⁴

The resettlement (or more accurately, deportation) of the Ukrainian population from Poland to the Soviet Union was completed on June 15, 1946. The final protocol was signed in Warsaw by both sides on May 6, 1947, that is during the first days of Operation “Wisla.” Approximately 500,000 people had been resettled, proving that the authorities had not fully achieved their goal—some 200,000 Ukrainians remained in Poland. What this meant was that the resettlement operation, which was to have created a uni-ethnic Polish state, was incomplete. For Polish authorities to allow Ukrainians to stay in Poland would mean failure, and those in power were already pondering how to resolve this problem.

Two solutions were considered, the first of which was to continue the resettlement of Ukrainians to the Soviet Union. The Soviets, however, were opposed to this, for reasons that are still unclear—perhaps economic reasons and perhaps political reasons, and most specifically, a desire not to strengthen the anticommunist opposition in Soviet Ukraine. The second solution was assimilation. There were two ways of achieving this goal. The first was a long-term approach—that is, through administrative Polonization that was similar to that used by Polish authorities during the interwar period. The second was a short-term plan and focused on resettling and scattering the Ukrainian population in Poland itself. For the communist authorities of the time, the latter approach seemed feasible. Moreover, they saw it as a way of showing Polish society that the new regime, in contrast to the Second Polish Republic, was able to solve the Ukrainian problem. In addition, resettlement was viewed as a means to dismantle the Ukrainian underground.

Official documents reveal that the idea of resettling Ukrainians to the western and northern parts of Poland had already surfaced in 1945 but had not been implemented because the resettlement to the Soviet Union was in progress at that time.⁶⁵ The idea was reconsidered in 1946, after the resettlement to the Soviet Union was completed,⁶⁶ and was set in motion at the beginning of the following year.

In February 1947, in a report written after inspection of the provincial security committees in Katowice, Krakow, and Lublyn, Deputy

⁶⁴ These dioceses were established in 1940 with a goal to conduct Ukrainization of the Orthodox Church. Bishop I. Ohijenko headed Kholm and Pidliashia diocese, and Bishop P. Wydybid-Rudenko – Krakow and Lemkivshchyna diocese.

⁶⁵ AAN, Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR), cat. No. 295/VII-158. Minutes of the conference at the Ministry of Public Administration with the participation of the Ukrainian population representatives dated July 24, 1945.

⁶⁶ R. Drozd, *Polityka wladz...*, p. 62.

Chief of Staff of the Polish Army Brigadier General S. Mossor noted: "Many [Ukrainian] individuals and even Ukrainian families hid in the forests or in areas on the Czechoslovakian side of the border and later returned to their dwellings, which became bases for the UPA bands that posed the risk of future independence movements. As the Soviet Union will no longer accept these families, it seems necessary to carry out a vigorous resettlement plan in the spring and disperse individual families throughout the Regained Territories, where they will quickly assimilate."

According to Mossor's report, the number of Ukrainians was estimated to be 4,876 families, 20,306 persons in total.⁶⁷ Similar proposals for the expulsion of the Ukrainian population, including the Lemkos, were put forward by Leon Leja, the head (*starosta*) of the Nowy Targ county administration,⁶⁸ and by the commander of the 5th Military District, Gen. Mikolaj Wieckowski.⁶⁹

Existing documents reveal that a meeting of the National Security Commission (Panstwowa Komisja Bezpieczenstwa) was held on March 27, 1947, focusing on the expulsion of the Ukrainian population. At that time, Stanislaw Radkiewicz, the Minister of Public Security, was entrusted with a task of "raising with the relevant authorities" the issue of resettlement of the Ukrainians.⁷⁰ Everything suggests that those "relevant authorities" were Soviet authorities. That same day, the Operational Department of the 3rd Department of the General Staff of the Polish Army called for an "execution of an energetic resettlement operation by dispersing individual families throughout the Regained Territories, where they can quickly be assimilated."⁷¹ A day later, in an ambush at Yablonka, the Deputy Minister of Defense Gen. Karol Swierczewski was killed under

⁶⁷ *Akcja "Wisła". Dokumenty*, ed. by E. Misilo, Warszawa, 1993, doc. No. 8. Report of the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Polish Army from the inspections of the provincial security committees in Katowice, Krakow, and Lublyn dated February 20, 1947.

⁶⁸ APKr, UW, cat. No.1081. Letter of the head of the Nowy Targ county Leon Leja to the Provincial Office in Krakow regarding resettlement of Lemkos dated February 14, 1947.

⁶⁹ CAW, General Staff of the Polish Army, cat. No. IV.111.470. Situation report of the 5th Military District Command for the month of February 1947 r. dated March 6, 1947.

⁷⁰ *Akcja "Wisła"...*, doc. No. 15. Minutes no. 19 from the meeting of the State Security Committee date March 27, 1947, pp. 59-61.

⁷¹ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, cat. No. IV.111.471. Characteristics of the security situation in the country from March 1 to March 25, 1947, prepared by the Operational Department of the 3rd Department of the General Staff of the Polish Army dated March 27, 1947.

circumstances that have gone unexplained to this day. Although there was no evidence that he was killed by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, his death became a convenient pretext, expertly used by the authorities to justify the inhumane operation against the Ukrainian population.

Almost immediately, a large-scale anti-Ukrainian propaganda campaign was unleashed, depicting Ukrainians as the most dangerous enemy of Poles and Poland. Specially fabricated films and photos were produced and released, some depicting alleged members of the UPA or their sympathizers. Often, those appearing in the films and photographs were Polish soldiers dressed in UPA uniforms or as local civilians.⁷² Murders of Poles attributed to the UPA were particularly loudly publicized, and rumors linking the UPA to the unexplained death of Gen. K. Swierczewski spread. Unfortunately, this propaganda was well received and believed, particularly among Poles who had suffered at the hands of the UPA—Poles who were only too happy to step forward as eyewitnesses to corroborate and give credence to the anti-Ukrainian propaganda and directly implicate Ukrainians in the death of the Polish general.

On March 29, 1947, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) reached a decision to deport the Ukrainian population to the western and northern parts of Poland.⁷³ From that moment, intensive preparations for the implementation of this decision began. Specific plans and instructions as well as protocols regarding settlement of the lands of western and northern Poland were prepared.⁷⁴ The resettlement operation was given the codename "Wisła," and its implementation was entrusted to a specially created force called Operational Group "Wisła," which consisted of more than 21,000 soldiers and police officers of the Office of Security and of the Citizens' Militia. At the head of the Operational Group "Wisła" was Gen. S. Mossor.

While preparing directives regarding the resettlement, the officers in command of Operational Group "Wisła" subjected their subordinates to an intense barrage of propaganda, a concerted effort to present and underscore reasons why the Ukrainians were to be deported and why

⁷² L. Wołoskiuk, "Historia jednej fotografii", [in:] *Problemy Ukraińców w Polsce po wysiedleńczej akcji "Wisła" 1947 roku*. Edited by W. Mokry. Krakow, 1997, pp. 403-414.

⁷³ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. No. 295/V-3. Minutes No. 3 from the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) dated March 29, 1947.

⁷⁴ R. Drozd, *Droga na zachód. Osadnictwo ludności ukraińskiej na ziemiach zachodnich i północnych Polski w ramach akcji "Wisła"*, Warszawa, 1997, pp. 36-52.

the UPA units were to be liquidated. Of particular interest are two propaganda lectures titled “The Heirs of Hitler” and “The Fight Against the Bands Is Our Soldierly Duty,” both of which consistently referred to members of the UPA as “bandits,” “fascists,” and “murderers of the Polish people.”⁷⁵ Another propaganda tool was “The Field Guidelines for Soldiers,” which informed soldiers that “a bandit does not generally differ in any respect from anyone else” they might encounter.⁷⁶ The objective here was to instill a picture that equated “Ukrainian” with “outlaw” in the minds of soldiers and thus justify any inhumane treatment. Also serving this aim were the image of Ukrainians in the photographs and films mentioned above, which showed dirty and unshaven men who were armed “to the teeth.”

Those in charge of Operational Group “Wisła” also attempted to use propaganda intended to demoralize and subvert UPA units and the Ukrainian population at large. They issued leaflets “To the Deceived Members of the UPA Bands” and “To the Local Population,” dropping them from aircraft during the entire resettlement operation. Those directed at UPA units called UPA commanders “the servants of bloody Hitler, former members of the SS, and policemen” and urged rank-and-file soldiers to surrender. Those directed at the general population blamed the UPA and the Ukrainian people themselves for resettlement, because “Ukrainian villages are havens for the bandits who sow death and conflagration.”⁷⁷

On April 24, 1947, having completed the groundwork for the deportation of the Ukrainian population, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers passed a resolution regarding Operation “Wisła.” Based on the powers granted by this resolution, Gen. S. Mossor (who had already been appointed as commander of Operational Group “Wisła”) was given an additional title by the Minister of National Defense M. Zymierski—“Plenipotentiary of the Government in Charge of the Resettlement of the Ukrainian Population and Combating the UPA.” On that same day, Gen. Mossor apprised unit commanders under his command that on April 24-25, they would be participating in a joint action with police officers of

⁷⁵ CAW, Główny Zarząd Polityczno-Wychowawczy WP, cat. No. IV.112.290. Outline of the talk “Spadkobiercy Hitlera” dated April 1947; *ibid.*: Outline of the talk “Walka z bandami naszym żołnierskim obowiązkiem” dated April 1947.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* “Poradnik terenowy żołnierza” dated April 25, 1947.

⁷⁷ AAN, MAP, cat. No. 781. Leaflet of the Operational Group “Wisła” (GO “Wisła”) – “Do obałamuczonych członków band UPA” dated April 1947; *ibid.*, Leaflet of the GO “Wisła” – “Do miejscowej ludności” dated April 1947.

the Office or Security with orders to arrest members of the Ukrainian population named on prepared lists.⁷⁸ At the same time, all the military units of the Operational Group “Wisła” received instructions concerning the organization of population resettlement. On the basis of those instructions, the commanders of each division then issued resettlement orders to subordinate military units.⁷⁹

On April 28, 1947, Operational Group “Wisła” began deportation of Ukrainians to the western and northern lands of Poland. The main thrust of the effort was concentrated on resettlement of the population and not, despite the urging of civilian and military authorities, on the liquidation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) units. This situation persisted, and even Minister M. Zymierski’s directive no. 7, which instructed Gen. Mossor not to “let the resettlement of population come to the fore,”⁸⁰ was more or less ignored.

The resettlement targeted all Ukrainians and Polish-Ukrainian families, regardless of their loyalty to the Polish state. Those caught within its wide net included former anti-Nazi partisans and fighters as well as demobilized Red Army and Polish Army soldiers. Operation “Wisła’s” other victims included members of the communist apparatus, members of the Polish United Workers’ Party, and inhabitants of the villages where the UPA units had never once appeared. There is evidence that this relentless and indiscriminate policy was supported by some local officials. The Provincial Headquarters of the Polish United Workers’ Party in Lublyn, for example, demanded that even officers of the County Public Security Office (specifically those who were Ukrainian) be resettled.⁸¹

The Central Concentration Camp [forced-labor camp] in Yaviryia [Jaworzno], modeled after the SS-Lager Dachshgrube Nazi concentration camp, which was a branch of the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II, became a symbol of Operation “Wisła” repressions. Ger-

⁷⁸ *Akcja "Wisła"...*, doc. No. 79. Order of the commander of the GO “Wisła” issued to the commander of the 8th Infantry Division regarding the execution of arrests among the Ukrainian population dated April 24, 1947, p. 171.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, doc. No. 91. Order no. 003 of the Staff of the 7th Infantry Division dated April 25, 1947, pp. 184-186.

⁸⁰ CAW, General Staff of the Polish Army, cat No. IV.111.512. Directive no. 7 of the Marshal of Poland M. Zymierski to the commander of the Operational Group “Wisła” Gen. S. Mossor dated May 5, 1947.

⁸¹ Lublyn State Archives (APL), KW PZPR, cat. No. 1/V/35. Report of the Provincial Headquarters of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KW PZPR) for the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR) for the period from May 15 to June 15, 1947 [no date].

mans, Poles, and—pursuant to the decision of the Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party dated April 23, 1947⁸²—all Ukrainians suspected of collaboration with the UPA, the Ukrainian intelligentsia, and Ukrainian clergy were detained there. Altogether, 3,873 individuals were imprisoned at the camp, including 700 women and children, 22 Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests and 5 Orthodox priests.⁸³ The detainees were subjected to psychological and physical torture and suffered from malnutrition and disease. At least 161 individuals lost their lives,⁸⁴ among them Julian Krynyckyj, a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest.⁸⁵ Those individuals known to have collaborated with the UPA were handed over to the Military Court of Operational Group "Wisła." Of these, 173 were sentenced to death, 58 to life in prison, 40 to 15 years of imprisonment, and 38 to up to 15 years of imprisonment. Five were acquitted.⁸⁶ The show trials were widely publicized.⁸⁷

Military units did not obey the majority of the orders contained in the resettlement instructions, and resettlement was generally conducted as individual unit commanders decided. At dawn, the military would surround a village in an impenetrable circle and would order villagers to get ready to leave, giving them about two hours to pack themselves and to take the most needed things and stock. On such short notice, people were seldom able to make rational decisions even about the most important things they should take. In addition, there was an acute shortage of transport vehicles. In some cases, there was one horse carriage for 2 or 3 families; at other times deportees carried their possessions on their backs or the military would limit the amount they could

⁸² AAN, KC PZPR, cat. No. 295/V-3. Minutes no. 7 from the meeting of the Politburo of the KC PZPR dated April 23, 1947.

⁸³ *Akcja "Wisła"...*, p. 30 (Introduction); o. mitrat S. Dziubyna, *I stverdy dilo ruk nashykh. Spohady*, Warszawa, 1995, p. 94; K. Urban, "Prześladowania duchowieństwa prawosławnego w Polsce po 1945 r." (przyczynek do losu uwięzionych w Centralnym Obozie Pracy w Jaworznie), *Cerkownyj Visnyk*, 1992, No. 4, pp. 28-42.

⁸⁴ M. Truchan, "Aksia «Wisła»", [in:] *Ukraina i Polshcha mizh mynulym i maybutnim*, Lviv, 1991, pp. 59-60.

⁸⁵ I. Hałagida, "Kościół greckokatolicki i jego wierni narodowości ukraińskiej na Zachodnich i Północnych Ziemiach Polski w latach 1947-1957", [in:] *Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne Polski w okresie stalinowskim*. Edited by Cz. Osękowski, Zielona Góra, 1999, p. 158.

⁸⁶ *Litopys UPA*, vol. 22. "UPA v svitli polskykh dokumentiv. Knyha persha: Viyskovyi Sud Operatyvnoyi Hrupy «Wisła»". Edited by Y. Misylo, Toronto-Lviv, 1992.

⁸⁷ *Akcja "Wisła"...*, p. 31 (Introduction).

take with them to 25 kilograms per person.⁸⁸ The people were directed to an assembly point from which they were taken (or walked) to a railway station where they separated into groups and transported by train to various locations in the western and northern parts of Poland.

One striking example concerns what happened to inhabitants of Florynka village who were resettled in 30 villages in 6 counties.⁸⁹ From the loading stations, the transports were directed through Katowice–Oswiecim or Lublyn and then through the distribution stations (Szczecinek, Olsztyn, Poznan, Olesnica) to the destination stations. From these destination stations, Ukrainian families were taken to a nearby county and resettled. Extreme overloading of railroad trains with people and stock; journeys that could last from several to a dozen or more days under the military escort and in shockingly unsanitary conditions; and unmitigated stress resulted in at least 27 deaths during the journey itself.⁹⁰ To this number one should also add the individuals who died in the first days and weeks after their resettlement.

These systematic transportations of Ukrainian people to the western and northern parts of Poland continued until August 15, 1947. By that time, 33,154 families had been resettled, 140,662 people in total. The greatest number of these, in descending order, were resettled in Olsztyn province (55,089 people), Szczecin province (48,465), Wrocław province (21,237), Poznan province (8,042), Gdansk province (6,838), and Bialystok province (991).⁹¹ After August 15, there were a few additional, random transports for which statistical information is less certain. It is known, however, that in September and in October there were 4 transports of 919 people taken from Hrubeshiv and Tomashiv Lubelski counties.⁹²

But forced resettlements of Ukrainians also continued in subsequent years. These were initiated and carried out by local authorities, who wanted to get rid of unwanted Ukrainians, especially the ones who were returning from the western parts of Poland. In 1950, several families that had returned to Lublyn province, as well as 34 families that had

⁸⁸ I. Hrywna, "Ukraińcy w województwie Olsztyńskim", *Inicjatywy Warmińskie*, 1989, No. 4, p. 37.

⁸⁹ I. Hrywna, "Powojenne losy Ukraińców w Polsce", *Dziś*, 1992, No. 8, pp. 38-39.

⁹⁰ G. Motyka, "Od Wołynia do akcji "Wisła".", pp. 130-131.

⁹¹ R. Drozd, "Rozmishchennia ukraintsiv na zakhidnykh i pivnichnykh zemlyakh Polshchi u 1947 r." *Ukrainskyi Almanakh 1997*, Warszawa, 1997, pp. 84-89.

⁹² APL, WO PUR, cat. No. 176. List of the Operation "Wisła" transports for the months of September and October 1947 [no date].

not been included in the previous resettlement were taken from Lublyn and resettled elsewhere. In 1952, the Ukrainian families from the county of Bila Pidliaska who had been previously rounded up and transported from their homes during Operation "Wisla" were arbitrarily resettled again. That same year, in Lublyn province, authorities were preparing to resettle 20,686 Ukrainians; to date no documentary evidence has confirmed that this plan was ever executed.⁹³

It is known, however, that in 1951, as part of the border correction (exchange of land) agreement with the Soviet Union, there were plans to resettle some 14,000 people to the Ustryki Dolishni area. It is not known how many people were actually resettled, but the resettlement included all persons living in the area that had been ceded to the Soviet Union. It must be noted that this particular resettlement was not associated with Operation "Wisla." But based on the statistic presented above, including those related to the number of people incarcerated in Yaviryia, we can assume the number of people who were deported and resettled as a result of Operation "Wisla" was close to 150,000.

Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Orthodox clergy were also deported and resettled. On the eve of the Operation "Wisla," there were about 120 Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy in Poland. Their fates varied. Sixty-two priests were deported (together with their faithful) to the western and northern parts of Poland. Seven priests were arrested and handed over to the Soviet authorities, 22 priests were incarcerated in the Yaviryia concentration camp. Seven other priests were sentenced to prison, and one was sentenced to death. At least three priests escaped deportation. The rest left Poland, died during military operations, converted to Roman Catholicism, or left the priesthood. All Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes ceased to exist. The deportation of the Ukrainian population and the clergy brought about the collapse of the Peremyshl Diocese and the Lemko Apostolic Administration, and the authorities considered the troublesome matter of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland fully resolved.

Orthodox priests met a similar fate. More than half of the 20 or so Orthodox priests in Poland were deported together with their faithful. Five were arrested and incarcerated in Yaviryia. The others remained where they were, and a few parishes continued to function. But the resettlement of the faithful made the parishes and the priests who remained in them almost moot. But even in this fragmented state, the Orthodox Church continued to be legal in Poland and was thus able to provide some assistance to resettled Ukrainians. The Orthodox Metropolitan

⁹³ APL, PWRN (USW-I), cat. No. 35. List of Ukrainian families designated for resettlement, 1952.

Committee of Bringing Help to the Resettled in the Regained Territories was created for this purpose and provided spiritual as well as financial support to Ukrainians whose lives had been overturned by resettlement. In the political conditions of the time, not all decisions of the committee were successfully implemented; nonetheless, its activities buoyed the spirits of the deported population.

The resettlement of the population also severely curtailed the activities of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which was unable to effectively oppose the resettlement process. This, along with a sense of futility within the general population, had eroded resistance and had forced leaders of the Ukrainian underground to begin dissolving local guerrilla units. Unverified military records suggest that 663 members of the UPA were killed or sentenced to death. An additional 675 UPA fighters were captured and arrested. In contrast, losses suffered by the Polish military were much lower—61 killed and 91 wounded.⁹⁴

It should be noted that there were a considerable number of civilian casualties at this time—Ukrainian people who were not associated with the UPA but were designated as guerrillas in official reports because including them among members of the Ukrainian underground did not require an accounting before superiors. Those Ukrainian partisans who were not killed or captured made their way to Ukraine and to Western occupation zones in Austria and Germany; others rejoined their families, now living in the western and northern parts of Poland.

The leadership of the Ukrainian underground in Poland was also destroyed. Yaroslav Staruch, the head of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), took his own life when (in October 1947) units of the Internal Security Corps surrounded his bunker; UPA commander Myron Onyszkiewicz was captured in March 1948 and was sentenced to death.

Other losses followed. After the resettlement operation, central authorities realized that the Ukrainians had been resettled in a manner that was inconsistent with the plan specified by the Ministry of Public Security (MBP). That plan had ordered that the Ukrainians be scattered, specifically to prevent dense groupings of Ukrainians on Polish lands and the number of Ukrainians in any given location was not to exceed 10 percent of the existing population. Moreover, the authorities expressly prohibited resettlement of Ukrainians in any of the following zones: less than 50 km from the country's land borders, less than 30 km from the sea borders or provincial cities, and less than 10 km from the 1939 western border of Poland.

⁹⁴ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, syg. IV.111.511. Report of the activities of the Operational Group "Wisła" for the period from April 20 to July 31, 1947.

The Ministry of Public Security had also ordered that only one family from group "A" (appearing on the list of the Office of Security) or from group "B" (appearing on the military lists), and up to 5 families from group "C" (in reality all the remaining families) could be settled in one village. Families from categories "A" and "B" could not be settled together or with families from category "C." Identical rules were in force for Ukrainians settled on state-owned farms or on parcelled land.⁹⁵ This precisely planned scattering of Ukrainian families among the Polish majority was to create favorable conditions for their quick assimilation, and that, after all, was the intentions of the central authorities.

But those directly involved in the resettlement operation and in the immediate aftermath of resettlement did not always act in accordance with the directives of the central authorities. When settling the deportees in their counties, the local authorities were primarily guided by the absorption capacity of each individual community. The Ukrainian families were most often settled in such a way that a representative of the lowest-level authority would be given a certain number of Ukrainian families to be settled at his own discretion and also given *carte blanche* to move them from one village to another.⁹⁶ In Szczecin province, the main criterion for settling the Ukrainian families was their ownership of livestock. Families that owned livestock were directed to individual farms, and families without livestock were directed to the farms of the State Property Office (PNZ). As a result, the rules set forth by the central authorities were broken. Under the local re-interpretation of these rules, it was little wonder that families classified as groups "A," "B," and "C" were living in the same village.

Moreover, settling families from groups "A" and "B" separately was practically impossible because the number of such families exceeded the number of villages in which they could have been settled. For example, in Slupsk county there were 533 category "A" or "B" families for 190 villages; in Człuchow county there were 333 category "A" or "B" families for 88 villages. And there were similar logistics problems related to the prohibition of settling Ukrainian families less than 50 km from the land borders, 30 km from the sea borders and from provincial

⁹⁵ State Archives in Wrocław (APW), UW, cat. No. IX/270. Ministry of Regained Territories' instruction manual pertaining to the principles of settling settlers from Operation "Wisła" dated July 31, 1947.

⁹⁶ AAN, MZO, cat. No. 784. Inspection report of the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Regained Territories concerning the course of Operation "Wisła" in Wrocław, Poznań, Szczecin and Gdansk provinces dated October 21, 1947.

cities, and 10 km from the 1939 western border of Poland, so this directive was also not adhered to. The allowed percentage of Ukrainians settled in a village as well as in some counties was also exceeded.⁹⁷

Of course, the lack of adherence to the settlement rules by the local authorities, stemming mainly from the number of Ukrainians involved, worked out best for the Ukrainians who settled in rather larger groups, which gave them an opportunity to preserve their own national identity, a situation that was entirely contrary to the Polish government's goal of assimilation.

Therefore, on July 31, 1947, the Ministry of Regained Territories ordered all provincial offices to conform to the requirements set by the Ministry of Public Security. Not long after, 24 families were resettled from Zielona Gora county to Krosno county,⁹⁸ and in Gdansk province, Ukrainian families were relocated without crossing the borders of the counties in which they had been settled before the intervention of the Ministry of Regained Territories.⁹⁹

But this order was not executed in the majority of counties where Ukrainians had been brought for resettlement, primarily because there were not enough vacant farms in the areas involved. During the initial resettlement, it was common practice to settle 2 to 3 families in one building or settle them together with already settled in Polish settlers. Among those who believed that conforming to the newly re-issued requirements was impossible was the Olsztyn provincial governor. If the plan were implemented here, only-two fifths of the province (the southern part) could be included in the settlement of Ukrainians. Besides, this would mean resettling about 44,250 people.¹⁰⁰ Presented with this and similar evidence, the authorities again modified the rules. Pursuant to a new directive issued on November 10, 1947, it was prohibited to settle Ukrainians within the 30 km of the land border strip, within the 10 km of the sea border strip, and within 20 km of any provincial city zone. At the same time, the number of Ukrainians to be settled in one village was raised to 40 percent of the total number of inhabitants. The division of

⁹⁷ R. Drozd, *Droga na zachód.*, pp. 91, 96, 108 and 116-118.

⁹⁸ AAN, MZO, cat. No. 784. Report of the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Regained Territories concerning the course of Operation "Wisła" in Wrocław, Poznań, Szczecin and Gdansk provinces dated October 21, 1947.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* Memorandum of M. Swiatycki, a representative of the Settlement Department, concerning relocation of the Ukrainian population dated July 28, 1947.

¹⁰⁰ AAN, MZO, cat. No. 784. Letter of the Olsztyn provincial governor to the Settlement Department of the Ministry of Regained Territories concerning relocations of the Ukrainian population dated August 21, 1947.

Ukrainians into categories was also abandoned. However, the percentage of Ukrainians in any given county was not to exceed 10 percent of the entire population in that county.¹⁰¹

These new settlement norms were sent to all provincial offices concerned with orders for implementation. There was, however, a stipulation stating that “carrying out internal relocations of Operation “Wisla” settlers should be executed only to the extent that is necessary, in cases where it is justified, and only after taking into consideration the entirety of the situation.”¹⁰² Despite the ambiguities and implicit exceptions in the new policy, this still meant that several thousand families would have to be relocated. In Szczecin province alone, this would mean relocating 1,859 families,¹⁰³ and in the Wroclaw province, 600 families.¹⁰⁴

The new rules also applied in the province of Olsztyn. However, because of the great number of Ukrainian families involved, provincial authorities in Olsztyn decided to relocate Ukrainians only if their number exceeded 40 percent of a community’s inhabitants, and to relocate those families settled within the 15 km belt from the boundaries of the city of Olsztyn. At the same time, the county administrators were instructed to relocate Ukrainians in their communities if their numbers exceeded the allowed limits.¹⁰⁵

The relocation operation was conducted during 1948; however, not all families initially slated for relocation were moved—the ongoing problem with limited farming areas where they could be moved once again derailed full compliance with relocation plans. In spite of this, however, the number of counties in which Ukrainians were resettled increased from 66 to at least 74.

Aside from scattering the Ukrainian population, the authorities limited its mobility to a considerable extent. Specifically, the November 10, 1947 directive included a clause ordering that “freedom of movement of the Operation ‘W[isla]’ settlers is to be limited. Leaving the Regained

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* Ministry of Regained Territories’ instruction concerning the settlement of the Operation “Wisla” settlers dated November 10, 1947.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ AAN, MZO, cat. No. 787. Relocation scheme of the Operation “Wisla” settlers in the province of Szczecin dated December 10, 1947.

¹⁰⁴ APW, UW, cat. No. VI/743. Letter of the Department of Settlement of the Provincial Office (UW) in Wroclaw to the Department of Settlement of the Ministry of Regained Territories (MZO) regarding relocation of the Ukrainian population dated December 12, 1947.

¹⁰⁵ Olsztyn State Archives (APO), Provincial Office (UW), cat. No. 90. Operation “Wisla” report for the month of February 1948 prepared by the Olsztyn Provincial Office [no date].

Territories and returning to previous places of residence are particularly unacceptable. Attention to this matter should be left to the appropriate public security authorities, and all petitions and requests concerning the aforementioned issues must be submitted to them. . . . appeals from Operation 'W[isla]' settlers pertaining to any issues stemming from the operation, and particularly about relocation outside a county or leaving a county, must be submitted to the County Office of Public Security. Furthermore, the County Office of Public Security must be informed about each request submitted by an Operation 'W[isla]' settler to the general administration authorities. Contacts with the County Office of Public Security must be regularly maintained, preferably in person."¹⁰⁶

The deportees were under constant surveillance. They were forbidden to organize cultural and educational activities. They were also forbidden to restore Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes or establish Orthodox parishes. These restrictions were simply another manifestation of the overarching goal that was expressly stated in the relocation directives: "The fundamental goal of resettling of the Operation 'W[isla]' settlers is their assimilation in the new Polish environment. All efforts should be made to achieve this goal. Do not use the term 'Ukrainian' when referring to these settlers. In cases, where the intellectual element have been brought with other settlers to the Regained Territories, it is absolutely imperative to resettle them separately and far away from the communities where the Operation 'W[isla]' settlers reside."¹⁰⁷

Because most of the resettled Ukrainians were farmers, Polish authorities tried to settle them in villages. Based on existing albeit fragmentary data, we can assume that only 10 percent of the resettled Ukrainians were taken to cities, and these went mostly to small towns. Thus, 90 percent of the Ukrainians were settled in villages, and of this percentage, approximately 80 percent were settled on individual farms, 10 percent were settled on state farms as farm workers, 5 percent on parcelled farms, and the remainder assigned to work in forestry, as craftsmen, and in other miscellaneous trades.

In villages, the deportees were mostly settled on individual farms. But the infrastructure of villages and farms was less than ideal—most of the farms were poor and most farm buildings (if they existed at all) were dilapidated and in disrepair. The better farms and buildings had been allotted to people who had come to these areas during the first resettlement wave. But this state of affairs was exacerbated by some

¹⁰⁶ AAN, MZO, cat. No. 784. Instructions concerning the principles of settlement of the Ukrainian population dated November 10, 1947.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

county administrators who ordered that buildings in the worst state of disrepair to be given to Ukrainian families and also exacerbated by the fact that the resettled Ukrainians had been forced to leave behind most of their horses, cows, farming equipment, and even food supplies. The plight of the deported families in these new places of settlement was tragic. The local authorities were forced to provide them with help, but the help they received was inadequate and the people soon realized that survival meant depending on themselves rather than on others. But this realization was complicated by physical and psychological realities.

Most of these people had been taken from the mountainous terrain of their homeland and resettled in lowland areas. All aspects of social life were deteriorating and disintegrating. Everything, in fact, had become different as the deportees were forced by circumstances beyond their control to reshape their lives in conditions completely different from those were accustomed to. They had to overcome many barriers—financial, material, and psychological. The deportation, being scattered in the alien Polish environment, surveillance by security authorities, limited mobility, a new climate and new farming conditions all contributed to a surreal sense of “temporariness”—the strongest desire was to return to the places they had come from.

And this feeling had peripheral consequences. The resettled Ukrainian had no interest in establishing closer ties with Poles, and mutual dislike contributed to this attitude, ultimately causing social isolation of both groups. Thus, Ukrainians and Poles lived beside each other, but not together. Living in such conditions, most of the Ukrainians felt unwanted and insecure and continuously dreamed of going back home. This desire was so strong that some Ukrainians did not even bother fixing up the buildings they were living in and engaged in farmwork and animal husbandry only haphazardly and reluctantly. Every step of the way, they felt their own foreignness.

For all these reasons, Ukrainians maintained contacts mainly amongst themselves. Social isolation entailed internal integration. They helped one another in various types of work, celebrated holidays together, and invited each other to various family celebrations. They spoke and prayed in their own language and celebrated their holidays according to the Julian calendar. For weddings and other important events, they adhered to their own customs ceremonies. And this everyday culture became the mainstay of being Ukrainian and a way of survival. This was clearly easier to accomplish in areas where large groups of Ukrainians were living. It should be noted, however, that this comforting behaviour, with its emphasis on maintaining cultural distinctiveness, was deepening Polish–Ukrainian antagonism.

After coming to the realization that staying in this new place was to be prolonged, the Ukrainian population began striving to improve living conditions. Help from the state, but particularly their own work, resulted in improvement of the standard of living. And as conditions improved, they did not have to seek work for food with Polish settlers and could enter into more favorable employment contracts with them. Apart from that, some families were able to get possession of better farms that had been abandoned by Poles; some of those who had been placed in state farms applied to the authorities for permission to be relocated and allotted individual farms. The Ukrainian people began showing an interest in animal breeding, with the aim of increasing their small herds. They also started showing an interest in acquiring new and more efficient methods of running their farms. Some Ukrainian farmers began to exceed the achievements of their Polish neighbors. In 1949, for example, at a livestock exhibition organized by the County Office in Slupsk, the main prizes for efficient breeding of mares and stallions were given to Ukrainian farmers.¹⁰⁸ But this interest in farming and animal husbandry did not extend to improvements in living conditions.¹⁰⁹ Still directed by a sense of temporariness, they were not interested in investing in buildings. Animals and crops could be sold or taken with them and give them a good start when they returned to their homeland. Buildings, which would be left behind, received little attention.

The continuing sense of temporariness did not mean abandoning cultural and religious activities. On the contrary, the deportees needed psychological support in their misery, and this was provided by shared celebrations, singing, and prayers. Various meetings and ceremonies were organized. They corresponded with relatives and acquaintances living in and outside the country, particularly in Canada and the United States. Apart from that, they wrote letters to the authorities, requesting that they be given churches and permission to worship in their own rite. When such request were refused, they gathered in private homes for prayers.¹¹⁰ In Banie Mazurskie, Goldap county, Ukrainian Greek Catho-

¹⁰⁸ Koszalin State Archives (APK), Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (PWRN), cat. No. 4579. Report of the Presidium of the County People's Council (PPRN) in Slupsk concerning work with the resettled population from Riashiv province dated August 16, 1952.

¹⁰⁹ Olsztyn State Archives (APO), PWRN, cat. No. 444/WSW/754. Report concerning the situation of the Ukrainian population in Olsztyn province dated 1952.

¹¹⁰ APK, PWRN, cat. No. 4625. Letter of the Social and Administration Department of the Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (PWRN) in Koszalin to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC

lic would gather in the local church during major religious holidays and sing Ukrainian religious songs.¹¹¹ Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests who lived in the western parts of Poland were instrumental in assisting this religious revival.

But the priests themselves were suffering from the effects of resettlement. Some of them stopped ministering to the faithful. Others converted to the Roman Catholic rite. And others, such as Father Orest Seredynski in Bytow, celebrated services “behind closed doors.” One exception was Father Michal Ripecki who organized a chapel in one of the rooms of the closed school that had been allotted to him as an apartment where, on July 2, 1947, he celebrated his first mass. Chrzanowo in Elk county quickly gained importance as a religious center for Ukrainian Greek Catholics, especially during the more important holidays when the faithful came not only from the region of Warmia and Mazury, but also from outlying regions.¹¹² Others followed in Father Ripecki’s footsteps. In April 1948, with the permission of the Curia in Gdansk, which wanted to prevent Ukrainian Greek Catholics from converting to the Orthodox faith, Father Bazyli Hrynyk¹¹³ began celebrating biweekly masses in Nowy Dwor Gdanski. Over time, he was given a church with a presbytery in nearby Cyganek, which allowed him to celebrate liturgy every Sunday. From 1950, after Father Seredynski’s death, Ripecki received permission from the Curia in Gorzow Wielkopolski to celebrate church services in Bytow and Kwasow near Slawno. In 1949, after being released from the Yaviryia concentration camp, Father Emilian Kameluk started celebrating liturgy in Komancha.¹¹⁴

The activities of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy were met with opposition from authorities and some segments of the Roman Catholic clergy. The attitude of the authorities was grounded in their assimilation policies. Judging from memoirs and other documents, the attitude of local priests and apostolic diocesan administrators of the Roman

PZPR), to the attention of Comrade Zawadzki, concerning the Ukrainian population dated February 12, 1952.

¹¹¹ I. Hrywna, *Życie społeczno-kulturalne...*, p. 110.

¹¹² I. Hałagida, “Sytuacja wyznaniowa Ukraińców na zachodnich i północnych ziemiach Polski w latach 1947-1957”, [in:] *Ukraińcy w najnowszych dziejach Polski (1918-1989)*, edited by R. Drozd, Słupsk-Warszawa 2000, pp. 159-180; V. Sava, *Udoma i na chuzhyni*, Warszawa, 1995, p. 54.

¹¹³ I. Hałagida wrote about Father B. Hrynyk’s activities: I. Hałagida, “*Szpieg Watykanu*”. *Kapłan greckokatolicki ks. Bazyli Hrynyk (1896-1977)*, Warszawa, 2008.

¹¹⁴ o. mitrat S. Dziubyna, *I stverdy dilo ruk nashykh. Spohady*, Warszawa, 1995, pp. 107-109.

Catholic Church toward those attempting to celebrate Ukrainian Greek Catholic liturgies was also hostile but somewhat inconsistent, partly because the Roman Catholic Episcopate did not have a clearly formulated policy on this matter. Primate A. Hlond, and after his death Archbishop Stefan Wyszynski, who became the Eastern Rites Delegate of the Holy See in Poland, forbade the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy to celebrate liturgies in their own rite, insisting on Roman Catholic rite masses.¹¹⁵ It is likely that they feared a renewal of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's activities as condoning this might become one more irritant in the deepening conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the authorities who were strictly opposed to such a renewal.

Also significant was the animosity of Polish population harboured toward the Ukrainian population, a fact that the Roman Catholic clergy had to take into consideration. But there were other things that had to be considered, including pressure from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy and the risk that Ukrainian Greek Catholics might convert to the Orthodox rite. In 1952, after assessing these factors, Primate S. Wyszynski gave Father B. Hrynyk permission to celebrate Ukrainian Greek Catholic liturgies in Bytow and Nowy Dwor. On his orders, in April 1952, the ordinary of the Warmia diocese officially established a Ukrainian Greek Catholic chapel in Chrzanow and appointed Father M. Ripecki to served as its dean.¹¹⁶

The authorities' stance on the issue, however, was geared toward a complete liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite. At the same time, they realized that administrative action would not bring the desired results in this matter. One example of where such an approach had failed was Soviet Union where despite being officially banned, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had continued its activities as an underground movement. Thus, another idea to liquidate the Ukrainian Greek Catholic was conceived—one that promoted the conversion of Ukrainian Greek Catholics to the Orthodox rite. The authorities considered the Orthodox Church less threatening in the framework of assimilation policies because the Orthodox Church was not as strongly identified with Ukrainian national consciousness. Moreover, in their eyes, the Orthodox Church was not something associated only with Ukrainians. Besides, Orthodox clergy acted legally, and the church had its own hierarchs and internal structure.

¹¹⁵ "Dokumenty do istorii Ukrainskoyi Hreko-Katolytskoyi Tserkvy u Polshchi u 1947-1960 rokakh" (Z arkhivu o. mitrata Myroslava Ripetskoho), edited by V. Laba, Lviv, 1996, pp. 6-8 and 31.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

In 1946, the Orthodox Church initiated organized activities in the western and northern parts of Poland, a move that would enable it to begin including the deported Ukrainian population in its pastoral work. The Orthodox Consistory began delegating clergy with a mission to establish Orthodox parishes to the western parts of Poland, and their arrival there enabled formation of such ecclesiastical units. It should be mentioned that many parishes were appearing spontaneously, without permission of the authorities. As early as the beginning of August 1947, in Lower Silesia, and over time in other parts of Poland, the first parishes started to come into existence, embracing the Operation "Wisła" deportees of the Orthodox faith. At the end of 1951, the Office for Religious Denominations (U d/s W), which had been established in 1950, approved the formation of 27 Orthodox parishes in the western and northern parts of Poland.¹¹⁷ This was authorized by the authorities, which proceeded with the execution of the planned take over of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics by the Orthodox Church. Both the Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Orthodox liturgies had always played a tremendous role in the lives of the scattered Ukrainian population. They sustained them, and brought comfort and faith in a better tomorrow. This was practically the only place outside the home where Ukrainians could speak their own language, pray and sing religious songs.¹¹⁸ As was aptly stated by Volodymyr Mokryi: "The Church was in the centre and it created this axis around which the spiritual life of the homeland taken away from the Ukrainians could continue, the homeland which even though it did not always have precisely defined borders had been the centre of life in the form of its own parish church with an iconostasis depicting those patrons and saints to whom they brought their daily prayers and whom they implored for help at the most important times of their lives and at the time of death."¹¹⁹

And it was strong connection to the church that made every bit of news about the demolition of their homeland churches or news of the conversion of these churches into warehouses or that they had been taken over by the Roman Catholic Church, often with a related change of the interior décor, so sorrowful. In addition, the obstacles created by the authorities and by some members of the Roman Catholic clergy to celebrate their own liturgies rather than the liturgy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite, strengthened the conviction of Ukrainians "about a plot of

¹¹⁷ K. Urban, *Kościół prawosławny w Polsce 1945-1970*, Kraków, 1970, pp. 162-163.

¹¹⁸ I. Hałagida, *Kościół greckokatolicki...*, p. 161.

¹¹⁹ W. Mokry, "Problem ojczyzny dla ukraińskiej mniejszości narodowej wysiedlonej w 1947 roku", [in:] *Problemy Ukraińców...*, p. 420.

all the Polish forces aiming at the destruction of the Ukrainian minority in Poland.”¹²⁰

At the beginning of the 1950s, the central authorities in Poland became interested in the Ukrainian issue once again. The primary reason for this was a realization that the changes in ethnic policy had done little to stabilize things and that the feeling of temporariness among the resettled Ukrainian population was now manifesting itself in the desire to return to their home places. Tangible proof of this was an increasing number of applications for permission to return to former homes, as well as the illegal departure of many Ukrainians who had tired of the hostility of their Polish neighbors and had also tired of poor living conditions. Two telling examples of this stance concern Stefan Michaluk from Lechowo community, who returned to his former place of living by wagon,¹²¹ and that of renown painter Epifaniy Drowniak (Nykyfor Krynycky), who in spite of being resettled three times to the western parts of Poland, kept returning to his native Krynytsia.

According to Communist Party records, 3,000 people had returned to their former homes by 1952.¹²² Unfortunately, the authorities did not want, at least officially, to acknowledge the real reason prompting Ukrainians to return to their former homes. In accordance with the tradition of the times, the blame for everything was ascribed to “enemy work,” in this case, to Ukrainian nationalists.¹²³ Thus, for as long as the communist regime ruled in Poland, the Ukrainian population was under the surveillance of the Office of Security or (in later years) the Security Service. Prominent activists who promoted the concept of preserving national identity were summoned for warnings; in other case, the authorities initiated legal proceedings, which led to prison sentences.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ o. M. Skórka, “Wspólne sąsiedztwo czy niechciani intruzi?”, *Więź*, 1998, No. 3, p. 74.

¹²¹ AMSWiA, PRM, cat. No. 98/351. Information regarding the situation of the Operation “W[isła]” population residing in Paslek and Braniewo counties dated 1952.

¹²² Szczecin State Archives (APS), KW PZPR, cat. No. 36/XV/100. Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR) with regards to the means aimed at improving the economic condition of the Ukrainian population and intensifying political work among the Ukrainians dated April 1952.

¹²³ AMSWiA, MBP, cat. No. 1194. The 3rd Department annual report for the year 1951 dated February 14, 1952.

¹²⁴ See: A. Stabig, “Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec mniejszości narodowych na Pomorzu Zachodnim w latach 1945-1989”, Szczecin 2009; I. Hałagida, “Prowokacja ‘Zenona’.” Geneza, przebieg i skutki operacji MBP o kryptonimie

On the April 4, 1952, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) passed a resolution on proposals aimed at improving the economic condition of the Ukrainian population and intensifying political work among the Ukrainians. The decisions came down to the stabilization of the Ukrainian people who had been relocated by permitting them to engage in cultural and educational work, including the Ukrainian language instructions in schools. At the same time, the resolution reaffirmed the ban on any attempts to revive the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.¹²⁵

The Politburo's resolution was sent to the provincial headquarters of the Polish United Workers' Party and to the leadership of provincial people's councils in the provinces where Ukrainians were residing. However, the local authorities were in no hurry to implement the terms of the resolution. There were two overarching reasons for this. The first was a lack of understanding about why the central authorities (who until this time had been adamantly opposed to allowing the Ukrainian population to engage in such activities) had reversed its policies. The second was the continued animosity of most Poles toward the Ukrainians who were now living among them. The Ukrainians themselves were suspicious of this unexpected decision.

In the end, the authorities were able to implement the decisions of the resolution, but only to a limited extent. According to the official data, there were 487 students being taught the Ukrainian language in 24 schools in 1952. Some scholars maintain that these numbers are inflated and estimate that a more accurate count was closer to 14 schools and 347 students.¹²⁶ On the other hand, there is a consensus that during the 1953–1954 school year, there were 19 learning centres attended by 330 students and that there was an increase in the number of students (but not in the number of schools) in the following year: 19 schools with 424 stu-

“C-1” przeciwko banderowskiej frakcji OUN i wywiadowi brytyjskiemu (1950-1954)”, Warszawa 2005; J. Syrnyk, “Ludność ukraińska na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1989”, Warszawa, 2008; “Służby bezpieczeństwa Polski i Czechosłowacji wobec Ukraińców (1945-1989)”, ed. by G. Motyka, Warszawa, 2005.

¹²⁵ APS, KW PZPR, cat. No. 36/XV/100. Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) with regards to the means aimed at improving the economic condition of the Ukrainian population and intensifying political work among the Ukrainians dated April 1952.

¹²⁶ J. Hryckowian, “O sytuacji edukacyjnej mniejszości ukraińskiej na Pomorzu Środkowym (1956-1996)”, [in:] *Pomerania ethnica. Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne na Pomorzu Zachodnim*. Edited by M. Giedrojć and J. Mieczkowski, Szczecin, 1998, p. 164.

dents.¹²⁷ There were, however, significant difficulties with the entire process, most caused by a lack of qualified teachers and a dearth of textbooks and suitable curricula, all of which contributed to a rather low level of educational initiatives.

As far as cultural activities are concerned, there were other difficulties. Most endeavors in this arena were limited to amateur club movements, with few professional instructors and little access to quality literature. Moreover, there was very little money to fund cultural activities. Here again, the open dislike of the Polish population toward any expression of the Ukrainian artistic life was a deterrent.

The implementation of those parts of the resolution that dealt with the matter of religion was somewhat more successful. Here the main aim was the liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, and the authorities clearly intended to achieve this by converting the Ukrainian Greek Catholics to the Orthodox rite and by toughening repressions against the more and more active Uniate clergy. This plan was conceived after the establishment of the Office for Religious Denominations in March of 1950, and it included a rather specific agenda. In 1951, the office (at the request and with the blessing of the authorities) was involved in the election of Archbishop Makary as superior of the Orthodox Church in Poland. Makary had come from the Soviet Union and was one of the Orthodox archbishops who, at the behest of Soviet authorities and the Moscow Patriarch, were carrying out the work of liquidating the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the Soviet Union in 1945–1946.¹²⁸

Furthermore, the authorities decided to appoint to the Wrocław and Szczecin diocese a bishop knowledgeable about the Ukrainian Greek Catholic matters. Their choice was Archimandrite Stefan Rudyk.¹²⁹ A Ukrainian with his roots in Galicia, Rudyk's sympathies lay with the Polish authorities. In 1956, he called for relocation of all the Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests from the western and northern parts of Poland to the central part of Poland and began to liquidate all active Uniate institutions. He also prohibited Roman Catholic clergy from encouraging the Ukrainian faithful to sing Ukrainian Greek Catholic religious songs dur-

¹²⁷ M. Truchan, *Ukrainci v Polshchi pislya Druhoii svitovoi viyny 1944-1984*, New-York–Toronto, 1990, p. 127.

¹²⁸ K. Urban, *Kościół prawosławny...*, pp. 77-78. He was not elected by the Council of Electors, in accordance with the law in force, but by the Council of Bishops since the authorities were rightly afraid that the candidacy of Archbishop Makary might have been rejected.

¹²⁹ AAN, Urząd do Spraw Wyznań (U d/s W), cat. No. 25/730. Ukrainian Greek Catholic issue in the Polish People's Republic, 1956.

ing liturgies.¹³⁰ In this work, Rudyk was support both by the authorities and by Archbishop Makary.

After his election to the post of the Metropolitan of Warsaw and All Poland, Archbishop Makary set about implementing the conversion of all Ukrainian Greek Catholics by the Orthodox Church. On February 18, 1952, without acquainting the hierarchy with his plans for this mission, Archbishop Makary authorized Father Jan Lewiarz, a parish priest in Zimna Woda (Lubin Legnicki county), to form a network of Orthodox posts among the Ukrainian Greek Catholics within the entire western and northern part of Poland.¹³¹ The task for the local authorities was to transfer churches, in consultation with the Office for Religious Denominations, to the Orthodox Church; simultaneously, the Orthodox Church hierarchs were instructed to fill these churches with Orthodox rite clergy. This decision was opposed by local authorities, who in most cases, were against establishment of any new institutions in their jurisdictions. Responding to such opposition, the Office for Religious Denominations issued "convincing or even categorical orders."¹³²

In the end, the joint actions of the authorities, Metropolitan Makary, and of a segment of the clergy led to an increase in the numbers of Orthodox parishes and their churches. In Wroclaw and Zielona Gora provinces alone, 28 such establishments were organized by the middle of 1952.¹³³ An additional 5 Orthodox parishes were established in Koszalin province by the end of the same year, and there were plans in place to establish more in counties with the biggest concentration of Ukrainians, specifically in Kolobrzeg, Koszalin, Miastko, and Slawno.¹³⁴ Similar events were recorded in other provinces of the western and northern parts of Poland. In contrast, local authorities in the provinces of Lublyn and

¹³⁰ AAN, U d/s W, cat. No. 25/730. Bishop Stefan's stand on the issue of taking over Ukrainian Greek Catholics by the Orthodox Church dated August 18, 1956.

¹³¹ K. Urban, *Kościół prawosławny...*, pp. 163-164.

¹³² AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 25/730. Ukrainian Greek Catholic issue in the Polish People's Republic, 1956.

¹³³ AMSWiA, Presidium of the Council of Ministers, cat. No. 98/350. Report of the Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (PWRN) in Wroclaw concerning the implementation of the April resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) dated May 19, 1952; K. Urban, *Kościół prawosławny...*, p. 170.

¹³⁴ APK, PWRN, cat. No. 4577. Report of the Department of Religious Denominations of the Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (PWRN) in Koszalin concerning the activities among the Ukrainian population dated December 13, 1952.

Riashiv continued to resist establishment of Orthodox institutions, claiming that doing so would revive “Ukrainian nationalism.” The Office for Religious Denominations did not press advancement of the Orthodox Church in these two provinces, apprehensive that doing so might encourage the Ukrainians settled in these regions to return to their homeland.¹³⁵

Plans for forcing Ukrainian Greek Catholics to convert to the Orthodox rite encountered other difficulties, namely an insufficient number of Orthodox clergy. For this reason, liturgies were celebrated irregularly and infrequently, sometimes with intervals of several weeks. The plan was also resisted by some Ukrainian Greek Catholics, who were not interested to attend Orthodox liturgies. In consultation with Archbishop Makary, the Office for Religious Denominations decided to address this problem by instructing the Orthodox clergy serving the Ukrainian Catholic population to keep the external forms of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite (e.g., Ukrainian pronunciation) in their liturgical practices, to deliver homilies in the Ukrainian language, and to conduct religious education of children according to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic customs. The Orthodox clergy were also encouraged to wear vestments that were closer in design to those worn by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy.¹³⁶

Adherence to these directives proved difficult in practice. One reason (as noted above) was that there were simply not enough Ukrainian Orthodox priests, and certainly not enough priests who knew the Ukrainian language, a problem caused (at least in part) by a 1951 decision by the central authorities, which ordered Archbishop Makary to abolish Ukrainian-language classes at the Orthodox Seminary.¹³⁷ According to church records of the time, by 1956, there were only 23 Orthodox priests of Ukrainian nationality.

The authorities, nevertheless, persisted in their conversion plans, position on converting Ukrainian Catholics to Orthodoxy, and implemented the missionary action of the Orthodox Church among the Ukrainian Greek Catholics with repressive measures against the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy. This was in line with the resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party of April 1952, in which the local authorities were instructed to support the Orthodox clergy and “strongly combat the Ukrainian Greek Catholic un-

¹³⁵ AMSWiA, Office of the Council of Ministers, cat. No. 99/242. Report of the PWRN in Riashiv concerning the implementation of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party’s (KC PZPR) resolution dated July 9, 1953.

¹³⁶ K. Urban, *Kościół prawosławny...*, p. 315.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

derground organized by the Ukrainian nationalist subversive groups.”¹³⁸

In 1952, under pressure from the authorities, the Curia in Gorzow Wielkopolski prohibited Fr. B. Hrynyk from conducting church services in Bytow; in 1953 he was also prohibited to conduct services in Kwasow. In addition, the authorities set about breaking the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy.¹³⁹ Fr. Paul Puzkarski, the superior of the Basilian Order, and Fr. Dr. Mykola Denko were arrested at the end of 1952; Fr. B. Hrynyk was arrested in April 1954. All three priests were sentenced to several years in prison. Church services in Cyganek ceased to exist,¹⁴⁰ and the only parishes where Ukrainian Greek Catholic services were still celebrated were in Chrzanow and Komancha. The Office for Religious Denominations petitioned to have these two Ukrainian Greek Catholic outposts closed; however, the Office of Security¹⁴¹ opposed this request as it used these establishments for the purpose of monitoring the mood of the Ukrainian population. The Office for Religious Denominations persisted, demanding the elimination not only of the facility in Chrzanow, but also demanding that all Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests be deported from the western and northern parts of Poland inhabited by Ukrainians.

Demands from the central office were reflected in a communiqué issued by the Office for Religious Denominations of the Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (PWRN) in Olsztyn, which stated: “Orthodox Ukrainians relocated from Lublyn province are to be added to the settlement operation as their influence may bind former Ukrainian Greek Catholics who practice religion with the loyal Orthodox Church.”¹⁴² From a practical standpoint, however, such demands were not executable.

The lack of satisfactory results in the implementation of the April 1952 resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party brought on another intervention of the central party authorities. In June 1955, the Secretariat of the KC PZPR circulated instructions to designated provincial party headquarters to mobilize local authorities in follow-up activities supporting the Politburo's April

¹³⁸ R. Drozd, I. Hałagida, *Ukraińcy w Polsce ...*, pp. 65-68.

¹³⁹ AAN, U d/s W, cat. No. 19/535. Charakterystyki księży greckokatolickich.

¹⁴⁰ o. mitrat S. Dziubyna, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-121; o. I. Harasym, “Narys vybranykh aspektiv istorii Hreko-Katolytskoyi Tserkvy v Polshchi (1945-1985)”, *Zustrichi*, 1990, No. 5-6, p. 23.

¹⁴¹ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 19/282. Memorandum of the U d/s W concerning the activities of Fr. Miroslaw Ripecki, a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest, dated 1953.

¹⁴² R. Drozd, I. Hałagida, *Ukraińcy w Polsce...*, pp. 68-69.

1952 resolution.¹⁴³

Such instructions, as well as the adoption by some of the leadership of provincial people's councils of their own resolutions, yielded visible results. This became apparent in the matter of Ukrainian education. In the 1955–1956 school year, 1,625 students in 82 centers were being taught the Ukrainian language.¹⁴⁴

A new factor was at play here, namely meetings between local authorities and Ukrainians. These mobilized the Ukrainian population, particularly because introductory lectures and talks at these meetings were delivered in the Ukrainian language.¹⁴⁵ In addition, such meetings allowed for a better understanding of the problems the Ukrainians were facing, and even got some of the Ukrainians involved in community work. Moreover, elections of cultural and educational committees took place during the meetings. Documents from the time confirm that such a committee was formed in Człuchow county, in Banie Mazurskie and Kutry, as well as in Gdansk.¹⁴⁶ The latter was named the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Committee and had the aim of organizing a choir, a dramatic club, and a library, as well as to prepare a series of lectures on Ukrainian issues in schools in the city of Gdansk. One of the first events was organizing (on June 2, 1956) an evening event dedicated to Ivan Franko,¹⁴⁷ one of Ukraine's greatest writers.

The most active of these committees, however, was the Wrocław Cultural and Educational Committee of the Ukrainian Population. It was formed in November of 1955 at the initiative of Ukrainian students and working youth of the city of Wrocław and with the consent of the authorities. Thanks to the support of the Presidium of the Provincial Peo-

¹⁴³ APS, PWRN, cat. No. 13716. Instructions of the Secretariat of the KC PZPR titled "O zadaniach KW i KP w sprawie poprawy sytuacji gospodarczej i wzmoczeniu pracy politycznej wśród ludności ukraińskiej" dated June 1955. The instructions are also known as a letter of the Secretariat of the KC PZPR.

¹⁴⁴ M. Truchan, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁵ APK, PWRN, cat. No. 4584. Report dated January 4, 1956 of the Presidium of the County People's Council (PPRN) in Kolobrzeg pertaining to the scope of implementation of the issues concerning the Ukrainian population for the second half of 1955.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Post inspection report from the inspection of the PPRN in Człuchow dated November 25 1955.

¹⁴⁷ I. Hałagida, "Społeczna, kulturalna i oświatowa działalność Ukraińców w województwie gdańskim po 1945 roku", [in:] *W starej i nowej ojczyźnie. Mniejszości narodowe w Gdańsku po drugiej wojnie światowej*, Gdańsk, 1997, p. 71.

ple's Council in Wroclaw, and in particular, to the support of its Deputy Chairman Bronislaw Ostapczuk, the committee received furnished headquarters—an office with a phone, a library and a clubroom. The committee was also granted three full-time positions with the PWRN, filled by Ukrainians, and two positions to deal with the matters of the Ukrainian population. In April 1956, a branch committee was created in Zielona Gora.

At all the meetings organized by the committee, Ukrainians were putting forward identical demands. They demanded, among other things, financial assistance from the authorities, permission to have Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church services, appropriate conditions to conduct cultural and educational activities, and permission to return to their homeland.

In 1956, representatives of the Wroclaw committee wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party with a proposal to establish a nationwide Ukrainian society based in Wroclaw. The proposal was somewhat moot; during the summer of 1955 the authorities had already begun planning to set up a Ukrainian organization during the summer of 1955 the authorities had already begun planning to set up a Ukrainian organization which would be headquartered in Warsaw and would serve as a centralized committee for all Ukrainian organizations on Polish territory, and thus under Polish communist control.

The first congress of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (USKT) took place in Warsaw from June 16 to June 18, 1956. Besides delegates from the Ukrainian community, the Poland's Minister of Education and a member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party Witold Jarosinski also participated in the congress. In his speech, Jarosinski promised that the state would help in the development of Ukrainian cultural and educational activities, especially in the Ukrainian-language instruction and amateur artistic activities. However, he strongly encouraged the Ukrainians to abandon their desire to return to their native land, an indication that the authorities were not interested in reversing the effects of the resettlement operation. Moreover, in his assessment of the Operation "Wisla," Jarosinski adhered to the prescriptive interpretation that the operation had taken place as a response to the activities of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. One new element in this interpretation was the statement "that these reasons [the fight against the UPA – RD] by no means can justify the methods and forms used in the resettlement. The wrongs done to the innocent population in the course of this

operation by no means can be justified.”¹⁴⁸

Nonetheless, the congress became a platform for the demands of Ukrainians. The most comprehensive 12-point set of demands was introduced by the delegations from Zielona Gora and Wroclaw provinces. This platform can be considered representative of the desires most of Ukrainians living in Poland at this time. It included the following demands: 1) permit voluntary returns to the homeland; 2) provide government financial assistance to returning individuals and families for rebuilding of their farms and in settling in; 3) introduce compulsory Ukrainian-language study in schools in which there are children of Ukrainian origin; 4) establish secondary schools in which Ukrainian would be the language of instruction; 5) restore the rights and the freedom to exercise religious practices in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite in accordance with Article 70 of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic; 6) in the shortest possible time, start publication of a daily newspaper in the Ukrainian language; 7) once a week broadcast Ukrainian-language programs on Polish Radio; 8) enable Ukrainians to be sent to study in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and organize summer camps for the Ukrainian children from Poland there; 9) take an interest in and care for students studying Ukrainian philology at the University of Warsaw; 10) ensure that there will be sufficient number of parliamentary seats in proportion to the number of Ukrainians in Poland in the coming elections to the parliament (the Sejm) of the Polish People's Republic; 11) develop systematic work in the mass media for the purpose of positively shaping the image of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society and its work within the Polish society. In point no. 12, the Executive Council of the USKT was authorized to represent and defend the interests of the Ukrainian population in Poland.¹⁴⁹ This last demand applied more to the congress than to the authorities and revealed a significant vision insofar as the future role of the USKT was concerned. Ukrainians wanted to see the USKT function as a defender of their interests in Poland, not as a passive executor of orders from party authorities.

The congress also elected the governing organs of the USKT, among them a 39-person Executive Council. Stefan Makuch became the Chairman of the Council and Grzegorz Bojarski its Secretary General. From that moment, the establishment of the USKT's field structures be-

¹⁴⁸ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. No. 237/XIV-97. W. Jarosinski's speech delivered at the 1st Congress of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (USKT) dated June 16, 1956.

¹⁴⁹ R. Drozd, I. Hałagida, *Ukraińcy w Polsce...*, doc. No. 24. Motions to the 1st Congress of the USKT dated June 18, 1956, pp. 79-81.

gan. By the end of 1956, there were 8 provincial councils, 63 county councils, and 119 local branches embracing around 3,000 members; by the end of 1958, there were 74 county and 270 local councils with a membership of approximately 7,000.¹⁵⁰

The formation and development of the USKT coincided with political changes occurring in Poland and elsewhere. These included a secret paper condemning the cult of Joseph Stalin written by N. Khrushchev and delivered at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the June uprising in Poznan, and the resolutions of the 7th and 8th plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, which led to the return to power of Wladyslaw Gomulka. Each of these events was conducive to the mobilization of both the Polish and the Ukrainian populations. A large number of demands was put forward, including demands for autonomy, which were issued by societies of ethnic minorities, and these led to the establishment of a body tasked with coordinating the efforts of the authorities in relation to ethnic minorities and providing them with assistance.

In January 1957, the Ethnic Affairs Commission of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (Komisja KC PZPR do Spraw Narodowosciowych) was created. It was composed of the representatives of the Central Committee of the PZPR, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the societies of ethnic minorities. Similar commissions were created at the provincial party headquarters in Bialystok, Lublyn, Riashev, Olsztyn, Gdansk, Koszalin, Szczecin, Zielona Gora, Wroclaw, and Krakow.¹⁵¹ Over time, however, the role of the Commission confined itself to the imposition of the party line in ethnic policy on the ethnic societies. Any grass-root initiatives of the minorities, especially when they were not proposed by the societies' executive councils, were in fact blocked.

An urgent matter to be resolved was the issue of Ukrainians returning to their former places of residence. The authorities were against this as would mean creating compact clusters of Ukrainian settlement, and this in turn would hinder the process of assimilation. Therefore, in April 1957, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PZPR adopted a

¹⁵⁰ S. Zabrowarny, "Geneza i początki działalności Ukraińskiego Towarzystwa Społeczno-Kulturalnego", *Zeszyty Naukowe INP*, 1989, No. 16, pp.137-138. On the topic of the activities of the USKT see: J. Syrnyk, *Ukraińskie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne (1956-1990)*, Wrocław, 2008.

¹⁵¹ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. No. 237/XIV-137. Letter of the Office of the Secretariat of the KC PZPR concerning establishment of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of the KC PZPR dated February 2, 1957.

resolution whose provisions were geared toward keeping the Ukrainian population in the western and northern parts of Poland. The authorities intended to reduce the number of people returning to their former homes, and had decided that one way this could be done was to provide extensive financial support that would help those people who had been resettled meet their cultural and educational needs.¹⁵² Ukrainians opposed this plan, especially because of the work of a special commission set up on April 30, 1957, by Prime Minister J. Cyrankiewicz—a commission with the aim of examining the possibility of allowing Ukrainians to their homeland. The deliberations on this matter were promising, with some discussion on a limited resettlement. On March 30, 1957, in a confidential letter to the Ethnic Affairs Commission of the Central Committee, the Ministry of State Audit opined: “The local authorities explain the need for stopping the returns through distribution of formerly Ukrainian farms and lands. An analysis of the situation in these provinces shows that the possibility of Ukrainians returning to their former places of residence has not been exhausted. In fact, there are a significant number of free farms and plentiful land lying fallow; the possibility of transferring a certain number of farms through voluntary exchange has not been taken into account; there hasn’t been concern shown with respect to the farms of some individual settlers who are in possession of two farms, etc.”

Therefore, assuming that the feelings of temporariness among the Ukrainian population could not be changed using the economic and administrative means, the Ministry of State Audit proposed the following: “examine whether it would be more justified to make a decision allowing for gradual return of the Ukrainians to their former places of residence. The financial aid intended for the Ukrainian farms in the Regained Territories (ZO) could be used with greater benefit in the Lublyn and Riashiv provinces. The possibility of Ukrainians returning from the Regained Territories would thus be facilitated by, among other things, the settlement of the repatriates from the Soviet Union on these lands.”¹⁵³

The final solution to this matter came on March 12, 1958, when the Polish parliament (the Sejm) passed a bill to sell state-owned agricultural land and sort out some issues related to carrying out land reform

¹⁵² APS, KW PZPR, cat. No. 1245. Resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PZPR regarding the Ukrainian national minority in the Polish People's Republic dated April 1957.

¹⁵³ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. No. 237/XIV-146. Confidential letter of the Ministry of State Audit to the Ethnic Affairs Commission of the KC PZPR on the use of financial assistance for the Ukrainian population dated the 30th March 1957.

and agricultural settlement. Under the bill, any person whose farm had been taken over by the state, could get this farm back, but only by purchasing it. This also applied to former farm owners who had receive no compensation for abandoned farms. The Executive Council of the USKT made efforts to advocate for these individuals in the Sejm and the Central Committee of the PZPR, but these endeavors were unsuccessful. Thus, from April 1 1957, to July 1 1958, according to the commission headed by Tkaczow, a total of 4,949 families returned to their former places of residence (about 20,000 people).¹⁵⁴

The thaw of 1956 allowed the Ukrainians to raise again the issue of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. In November, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy issued two memoranda to Cardinal Wyszynski, in which they demanded reactivation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, return of church property and permission for the church to conduct its activities among the resettled faithful, and also allowing the church to raise these issues with governmental bodies.¹⁵⁵ The authorities, however, were far from accepting the reactivation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland. They justified their opposition to this plan by citing political and economic reasons. Poland was the only socialist country that had not abolished this rite, either officially or in practice. In the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had been liquidated in 1946; the same had happened in Romania in 1949 and in Czechoslovakia in 1950. Polish authorities argued that “possibly allowing the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite to conduct its activities in Poland will mean establishing the only organized and legal center of Ukrainian Greek Catholicism in Europe [i.e., in Central and Eastern Europe – RD], which will provide support for the Vatican, and the Holy See will find its headquarters in this center. This would have a major impact on the religious situation and would promote like feelings in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic population in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.”¹⁵⁶

It was also feared that the reactivation of the church would entail not only the return of church property that had been seized, but also to pay the equivalent for the buildings that had been demolished or used by other institutions. However, even as they recognized the necessity of liquidating “the religious underground,” the authorities agreed to limited

¹⁵⁴ *Nashe Slovo* No. 29, July 20, 1958.

¹⁵⁵ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 30/613. Petition submitted to the Primate by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy of November 29, 1956.

¹⁵⁶ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 131/284. Information on the Ukrainian Greek Catholic issue of January 3, 1957.

concessions.¹⁵⁷

On March 14, 1957, the Primate informed Fr. Bazyli Hrynyk and Fr. Mikolaj Denko that the government had agreed to open a small number of Ukrainian Greek Catholic institutions in western and northern Poland, but continued to oppose the restitution of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in general. Taking advantage of this opportunity, particularly in areas where there was an availability of Roman Catholic churches, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy began to create Ukrainian Greek Catholic institutions not only in the “new” lands, but also in the “old.” In 1957, 17 parishes were established; by 1958, there were 15 more. However, their further growth in subsequent years was considerably less prolific. In 1959, the authorities agreed to the creation of 5 additional parishes, In 1960, this dwindled to 2. There was only 1 new parish opened in 1961, 2 in 1962, 1 in 1963, and 4 in 1964.¹⁵⁸

The decline in the number of parishes being opened was connected to a departure from the idea of democratization of the state, the resistance on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy, and the lack of an adequate number of Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests. Some of these priests, especially the ones who had a stable financial situation, who had positions as Roman Catholic parish priests, and who were all too aware of the negative attitude toward Ukrainians, refused to return to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite. In their case, a return to the previous rite meant a significant deterioration in conditions related to pastoral work and a reduction in income. As had previously been the case, Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests would not have all the prerogatives parish priests of other rites were entitled to. Without the consent of the local Polish parish priest, they could not, among other things, baptize, solemnize marriages, or bury the dead. The situation changed on October 17, 1958, when Cardinal S. Wyszyński granted 16 Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergymen the rights of pastors.¹⁵⁹

The creation of Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes contributed to the fall of some Orthodox parishes that had been created in the localities inhabited by the Ukrainian Greek Catholics. Nevertheless, the authorities allowed the establishment of other Orthodox institutions in Riashiv prov-

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ o. I. Harasym, *Narys vybranykh aspektiv...*, p. 26; the same author, *Hrekokatolytska tserkva...*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁹ AAN, U d/s W, cat. No. 30/613. Circular of the Office for Religious Denominations (U d/s W) to the concerned Presidia of Provincial People's Councils (PWRN) regarding the Primate's decree on extending the powers of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests of February 1959.

ince. It was believed that this would discourage Ukrainian Greek Catholics to press for a return to their former homes; it would also weaken the position of the Roman Catholic Church in the Riashiv area.

It should be emphasized that, with respect to cultural and education, the Ukrainian population used the political thaw of 1956 to the greatest extent was possible, and the existence of the USKT created a favorable conditions for this. In the 1957–1958 school year, there were three primary schools (83 pupils), including one boarding school. The following year, there were six schools (218 students), including two boarding schools. In the 1959–1960 school year, the enrolment in these schools had grown to 236 students. In the 1956–1957 school year, the first class of students (53) was admitted to the Secondary School of Pedagogy in Bartoszyce. By the following year, there were four secondary schools (290 students), including the Teacher's Training College in Szczecin. In the 1959–1960 school year, the number of students attending these schools shot up to 298.

Changes in higher education were not as dramatic. In the 1959–1960 academic year, there were six students studying Ukrainian philology at the University of Kyiv and 18 Ukrainian students pursuing this course of study at the University of Warsaw. However, the vast majority of Ukrainian children studied their mother tongue in the Ukrainian language instruction centres. Their numbers increased steadily. In the 1956–1957 school year, there were 117 study centers attended by 1,308 students. The following year, there were 151 study centers (2,359 students); in 1958–1959, there were 183 centres (2,781 students); and in the 1959–1960 school year, there were 210 centres with 2,958 students.¹⁶⁰

There were also changes with respect to arts and culture. In 1959, the Ukrainian population in Poland had 26 choirs, 15 drama troupes, 15 bands, and 6 dance companies.¹⁶¹ It must be added that an important role in the cultural and educational life of the Ukrainian population was played by a weekly magazine entitled *Nashe Slovo (Our Word)*, and that Ukrainian radio broadcasts were aired twice a week by radio stations in Koszalin, Olsztyn, Riashiv, and Lublyn.¹⁶²

But as the Polish state moved from democratic ideals and practices, there was also a tightening of the policies directed at ethnic minori-

¹⁶⁰ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Report of the Executive Council of the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Society (USKT) on education for the years 1956–1960, [no date].

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* Organizational status of the USKT between the years 1959–1966, [no date].

¹⁶² S. Zabrowarny, “Geneza i początki...”, pp. 153–154.

ties, including the Ukrainian minority. The authorities set about suppressing the cultural and educational life of the Ukrainian population. There was even talk of liquidating the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society. Any demands for returning to former homes, for greater freedom, for the development of cultural and educational activities were now viewed as manifestations of "Ukrainian nationalism." Most significant within this context are the words spoken by Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Zygfryd Sznek at the 2nd congress of the USKT in 1960. Sznek not only attacked the speakers who had pointed manifestations of Polish nationalism, but also showed the USKT what the future would portend: "Why, comrades?" he asked the delegates from the podium. "Why is there within your membership some strange indifference concerning the problem of Ukrainian nationalism? Are the Polish nationalists your only enemy? . . . In the Ukrainian nationalists, you, comrade delegates, should see the damned, consumed with hatred enemies of the Ukrainian nation . . . one must face the truth and speak not only about your achievements and complain about the manifestations of Polish nationalism. Your important task is to discern the enemy in your own backyard and clean this yard of debris with an iron broom. This is an inherent condition of the successful and responsible work of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society and in the best interests of the Ukrainian minority in Poland."¹⁶³

The character of the demands discussed at the congress was different from those submitted earlier, coming down almost exclusively to the cultural and educational matters. And they were directed at the Executive Council of the USKT and the editorial board of the weekly *Nashe Slovo*—not at the authorities.

After the congress, the USKT became a typical cultural and educational organization, a "transmission belt" of the party's ideology and party-sanctioned agenda to the Ukrainian population, and membership began to dwindle rather quickly. The number of members dropped from more than 7,000 to about 3,000. At the same time, it must be emphasized that the ideological line of the USKT leadership had not always found support and appreciation among the society's local activists. Thus the leadership was well aware of the moods and views of local Ukrainians and did not want to play the role of the party's "transmission belt." For the activists, the overriding aim was to preserve their national identity, and they acted in this direction within the USKT. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic and the Orthodox Churches were unable to secure even the minimum of support for the cultural and educational needs of the Ukrainians. This could only be done through the USKT, which did have

¹⁶³ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 5, dated January 31, 1960.

some success in promoting amateur artistic endeavors and groups as well as in education. Not having any alternative, the USKT activists decided to continue their work within the society, something they did by adopting a two-faced attitude toward the authorities and effectively boycotting the top-down commands ordering the development of ideological work. The Presidium of the Executive Council of the USKT turned a blind eye because the organization had very few full-time employees and very little money to use for implementation of party-line demands anyway. The local activists used this state of affairs to their advantage, thereby maintaining a certain freedom of work. This situation did not change very much until the USKT was dissolved.

The authorities were fully aware that making the USKT serve as executor of the top-down commands was only the first step in gaining control over the Ukrainian population. The second step was to weaken the will of the Ukrainians to preserve their own national identity and thus reduce them to nothing more than a folk group. Some thought this might be achieved by imposing an internationalist world view on them, but the obstacle here was a strong sense of national identity, which the authorities had begun to define as the manifestation of nationalism. But the preservation of a distinct Ukrainian national identity was not something prompted by external forces; it was something intrinsic, something internalized. This was understood by some of the local officials. One of them wrote: "The Ukrainian nationalism is not essentially a conscious nationalism, not a worldview. It has a very emotional and romantic character, which is associated with an infinite longing for space, horses, orchards, and the Ukrainian song and dance. Overall, this is a longing for their own national culture. It has a group-integrating nature through a strong emotional bond, similar to the messianism Poland once had. Hatred of Poles is not a necessary condition for the existence of this nationalism."¹⁶⁴

It is important to note that the dispersion of the Ukrainians over a wide geographic area and the threat of assimilation strengthened in many of them a sense of national identity and the need to maintain their own culture. This in turn was interpreted by some in the Polish community as the manifestation of nationalism with an anti-Polish hue. As far as the authorities were concerned, such nationalistic tendencies could only be anti-Polish, rooted in the war years, and this justified anti-Ukrainian actions. And this attitude was not simply to intimidate Ukrainians and quell

¹⁶⁴APK, PWRN, cat. No. 4594. Audit report concerning ethnic issues in the county of Slawno prepared by W. Berezanski, an employee of the Office of Internal Affairs (USW) in Koszalin of the Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (PWRN) dated May 5, 1965.

their nationalist sentiments—its was aimed at achieving the long-held goal of assimilation.

The stereotype of the Ukrainian living in a Polish society suited this purpose. The authorities used it perfectly, and even reinforced it with anti-Ukrainian propaganda. It must be emphasized here that anti-Ukrainian propaganda continued to be a tactic used by Polish communist authorities up until the demise of communist rule in Poland (i.e., till 1989). One of the goals, as noted above, was to justify anti-Ukrainian brutality; another was to strengthen the stereotypic perception of the Ukrainian nationalist as bandit.

This negative view of Ukrainians was even popularized in Polish literature. Discounting articles and essays, there were 58 semi-academic works, 50 memoirs, 10 slim volumes of a series of popular books under catch-all name of “Zolty Tygrys” (Yellow Tiger), and more than 60 novels devoted to this theme that were published in the Polish People’s Republic.¹⁶⁵ The most popular novel was “Luny w Bieszczadach” by Jan Gerhard, which was not only obligatory school reading but was even made into a motion picture under the title “Ogniomistrz Kalen” (Artillery Sergeant Kalen). Such one-sided presentations of Polish–Ukrainian affairs impeded normalization of the relations between the two nationalities and exacerbated mistrust and hostility. The stereotyping was also used as an intimidation tool and ultimately forced many Ukrainians to conceal their origins. Over time, this accelerated their Polonization, especially Polonization of their children.

In cases where adherence to a distinct Ukrainian national identity persisted, the authorities generally blamed the Ukrainian émigré centers. They systematically monitored all contact with the centres, as well as any contact with relatives and friends from the West. The authorities feared that such contacts would spread nationalist ideology. These fears were somewhat justified, and confirmation came in the form of banned literature being sent to home the addresses of some Ukrainians and even to some branches of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society.

Some Ukrainians were wary of receiving such mail as provocation by the security services could not be ruled out. Fearing the repercussions of this tactic, some recipients chose to hand over to the authorities any letters and parcels coming from the West; this was especially true of

¹⁶⁵ G. Motyka, *W kręgu “Luny w Bieszczadach”*. *Szkice z najnowszej historii polskich Bieszczad*, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 39–40.

any letters or parcels mailed to the address of the USKT.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the authorities were gathering information about relatives and friends coming from the West as tourists or visitors and also interrogated anyone returning from a temporary visit to a capitalist country. Local correspondence [i.e., as opposed to letters coming from the West] was also scrutinized. Any suspect material collected by the security services was used for further security operations or for prosecution.

Initially, the authorities restricted themselves to preventive interviews with suspected people. With time, especially after the international situation had deteriorated (the Berlin crisis, the Cuban conflict), the methods used were much more severe. In the Ukrainian community, the harbinger of this severity was the lawsuit against one of the leaders of the UPA in Poland, Ivan Shpontak alias "Zalizniak." The trial took place in Peremyshl (from April 6 to June 24 1960) and was highly publicized. Three consecutive issues of the weekly *Nashe Slovo* included articles about the trial.¹⁶⁷ In addition, and with the same goal, two other items (reprinted from Soviet press organs) were published in the newspaper. The first of these was an open letter by Wasyl Kuk, the last commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which had been sent to the leaders of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The second, was written by a former member of the OUN leadership, Myron Matvievko. Both were written under pressure, and both authors exposed the OUN leaders' anti-Soviet activities and their ties to "American imperialism."¹⁶⁸ The Executive Council of the USKT and the editorial board of the *Nashe Slovo* adopted a passive attitude toward the "fight with the Ukrainian nationalists." On the one hand, they were afraid of provoking the authorities by sympathizing with the "nationalists"; on the other hand, they were afraid of alienating USKT membership by actively endorsing the efforts of the authorities. But taking a neutral stance, which allowed them to survive, did not protect them from being criticized by both sides.

One reason for such lawsuits was to prove the existence of Ukrainian nationalists. It was enough to have several books published in the West to be accused of contacts and cooperation with organizations hostile to Poland. The authorities struck at the individuals who were ac-

¹⁶⁶ APS, PWRN, cat. No. 13735. Descriptive report of the Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (PWRN) in Szczecin concerning ethnic issues in the province of Szczecin for the year 1964, [no date].

¹⁶⁷ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 25, dated June 19, 1960; No. 26, dated June 26, 1960; No. 27, dated July 3, 1960.

¹⁶⁸ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 42, dated October 16, 1960; No. 20, dated May 14, 1961.

tive leaders among the Ukrainian people. In autumn 1962, the Regional Court in Zielona Gora sentenced Michal Kowalski, an USKT activist, to 6 years in prison. His conviction was based on fabricated charges of collaboration with Ukrainian nationalist centers in the West. Based on the same charges, the authorities imprisoned Bogdan Struminski, a linguist from Warsaw, and Olga Lebedowycz from Peremyshl. Also imprisoned were Aleksander Kudlak, sentenced to three years for possession of literature published in the West, and Michael Truchan from Szczecin, who was sentenced to more than a year in prison for “nationalist” activity. In 1964, Lewko Horak, the chairman of the Elblag branch of the USKT, and Stefan Pavlyshche, who had just graduated from the University of Kyiv with the major in Ukrainian philology, were arrested and sentenced for spreading anti-Soviet propaganda.¹⁶⁹

Fighting “Ukrainian nationalism” also meant fighting the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. On February 23, 1960, the Office for Religious Denominations held a meeting on the activities of non-Roman Catholic denominations. On the question of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics, meeting participants supported continuing the policy of a take over by the Orthodox Church. Those attending expressed concern about Cardinal S. Wyszynski having granted to 16 Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests all powers generally allowed parish priests. The Cardinal’s actions were also criticized by provincial and county managers of departments for religious denominations, who argued that the priests operated in the “Ukrainian fascist communities living on the Polish territory (sic!).” The Office for Religious Denominations ordered that provincial and county managers should “not allow any attempts to legalize a separate activity of the Church and in cases where such attempts were discovered, the response should be an interview with the priest of the parish in which such evidence was found or with the bishop should be conducted and liquidation demanded. There should also be an interest taken in the activities of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests, and especially in the 16 appointed parish priests.”¹⁷⁰

It appeared that the authorities had the power to intimidate the clergy and thus limit their activities, an event of international significance foiled their intentions. On February 9, 1963, after 18 years of exile in Siberia, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Metropoli-

¹⁶⁹ M. Truchan, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.

¹⁷⁰ State Archives in Gdansk (APG), KW PZPR, cat. No. 1859. Minutes from the meeting of the Department for Religious Denominations of the Presidium of the County People’s Council (PPRN) in Gdansk regarding non-Roman Catholic denominations of February 25, 1960.

tan Archbishop Josyf Slipyi, arrived at the Vatican. Despite continuing persecution by the authorities, hopes for the reactivation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were revived among the Uniates in Poland. Associated with this hope was another—the ordination of a bishop. The Ukrainians undertook many efforts to promote both causes, including sending letters to Polish church and state authorities. All of their requests, especially those directed to the authorities, were refused. On September 8, 1967, the Primate appointed Fr. B. Hrynyk his vicar general for the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite. Unfortunately, the Orthodox Church was still being used to restrict the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite in Poland.

Even prior to these events, the authorities had become more assertive in their attempts to destroy the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite. This was especially true in the province of Riashiv, where they began working to eliminate all vestiges of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. On July 5, 1961, officers of the Security Service (SB) resorted to deception to close the church in Komancha. In 1962, after numerous protests by Ukrainian Greek Catholics and by Cardinal S. Wyszynski, the church was reopened, but as an Orthodox church. Fearing that their people might massively convert to the Orthodox rite, Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests began to celebrate their liturgies in local the Roman Catholic Church. But conditions did not improve. On July 4, 1962, the church in Krempna was also closed. The authorities also intended to close the church in Szczawne and hand it over to the Orthodox Church. The Office for Religious Denominations had exactly the same plans for the garrison church in Peremyshl, in which Ukrainian Greek Catholic church services took place.¹⁷¹

The activities of the authorities, specifically those aimed at the assimilation of Ukrainians, provoked a crisis in Ukrainian education. During the 1960–1961 school year, there were nine schools (583 pupils) and 143 Ukrainian language learning centres (2,559 pupils).¹⁷² In the 1969–1970 school year, there were only 3 primary schools (Bialy Bor, Banie Mazurskie, Jaroszowka) and High School no. 4 in Legnica. A few Ukrainian classes were being taught in Polish high schools in Bartoszyce (the last grade of the former Secondary School of Pedagogy) and in Gorowo Ilawieckie. The number of learning centers had dropped to 96—there were 60 in the province of Olsztyn, 7 in Bialystok province, 8 in

¹⁷¹ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 127/56. J. Ochab's report from his business trip to the province of Riashiv dated March 10, 1962.

¹⁷² Archives of the Association of Ukrainians in Poland (AZUwP), ZG USKT. State of the Ukrainian education in the 1962-1963 school year [no date].

Riashiv province, 4 in Wroclaw province, 4 in Szczecin province, 10 in Koszalin province, and 5 in Gdansk province. In the province of Zielona Gora, all Ukrainian learning centers ceased to exist. Overall, the Ukrainian language was taught to 2,341 pupils, of whom 221 were in primary schools, 214 in secondary schools, and 1,906 in learning centres.¹⁷³ In 1962, Ukrainian philology at the Teacher's Training College in Szczecin was eliminated.¹⁷⁴ After the liquidation of the Ukrainian-language Secondary School of Pedagogy in Bartoszyce, the only venue where Ukrainian teacher training was offered was in the department of Ukrainian philology at the University of Warsaw.

There were many reasons for the closure of Ukrainian schools and learning centers. Arguably, the main reason was the anti-Ukrainian policy of the Polish state. Other reasons included a hostile Polish environment, harassment at work, and ethnic discrimination that caused some parents to keep their children from attending the Ukrainian language lessons. For much the same reasons, teachers gave up or never took up teaching the mother tongue. Another significant factor was that local education authorities were almost universally averse to Ukrainian education. The board of education in Riashiv, for example, refused to include Ukrainian children from Komancha and Mokre in Ukrainian language classes.¹⁷⁵ The board of education in Olsztyn sent Ukrainian teachers to work in areas where there was no need to open Ukrainian language learning centers.¹⁷⁶ Under this progressive assimilation Ukrainian children began to lose interest in learning their native language.

All of these events were to the liking of the authorities, which, after reducing the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society to the role of "the party's transmission belt," focused on the process of assimilation, which they implemented in accordance with the previous recommendations. The authorities wanted the process to proceed without major disturbances and therefore, sought to weaken any factors supporting the national identity of Ukrainians. It is for this reason that attempts to increase the number of Ukrainian language learning centers failed. The ultimate confirmation of the government's efforts to assimilate Ukrainians was a meeting on the issue of the Ukrainian national minority and German re-

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* Information about the Ukrainian language education as of the end of the 1969-1970 school year [no date].

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Report of the Executive Council of the USKT for decade-long activities of the USKT dated June 18, 1966.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* State of the Ukrainian education between the 2nd and 3rd congresses of the USKT, 1963 [no date].

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Information about the Ukrainian language education as of the end of the 1969-1970 school year [no date].

visionism in the province of Koszalin. At this meeting, which took place in Koszalin on April 20, 1966, the assimilation of the Ukrainian population was regarded as the most important issue. The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs expressed his satisfaction that the “process of integration and assimilation is increasing rapidly and clearly.” At the same time, he noted that the “USKT was established in order to centralize and streamline the nationalist forces and channel the national activities in a manner consistent with the policy of the Polish United Workers’ Party.”¹⁷⁷

The situation of the Ukrainian population in Poland was also influenced by the “March 1968 events” in Poland, anti-Semitic demonstrations and riots that also fuelled animosity toward Ukrainians. Increasingly, the authorities began to promote social integration of Ukrainians, interpreting this as strategy for denationalization. They ordered the appropriate presidia of provincial people’s councils to step up surveillance of the Ukrainian population and work toward its full integration.¹⁷⁸ In turn, anti-Ukrainian attacks intensified. It should be emphasized, however, that these attacks were not as widespread as those, which had occurred in the second half of the 1950s. In some regions, however, they were so strong that they provoked an equally strong desire among local Ukrainians to move to Ukraine. There were instances when the local Polish population opposed the celebration of the Orthodox and Ukrainian Greek Catholic church services. These incidents were particularly evident in the province of Riashiv and were sometimes coupled with a takeover of churches by the Orthodox Church.¹⁷⁹

Some segments of the Ukrainian population itself began to show a change in attitude toward the political situation in Poland, especially after the anti-Semitic events of March. On March 16, 1968, the staff of the Executive Council of the USKT and the staff of the weekly *Nashe Slovo* adopted a resolution which read: “We harshly condemn the instiga-

¹⁷⁷ APK, PWRN, cat. No. 4595. Minutes from a meeting of managers of Departments of Internal Affairs (WSW), representatives of Provincial Departments of Citizens’ Militia (KW MO) and representatives of the Social and Administrative Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) on the issue of the Ukrainian national minority and the German revisionism in the province of Koszalin dated April 20, 1966.

¹⁷⁸ APG, KW PZPR, cat. No. 1871. Resolution no. 146/1177/68 of the Presidium of the Provincial People’s Council (PWRN) in Gdansk of September 30, 1968; APK, PWRN, cat. No. 708. Resolution no. 108/1582/68 of the PWRN in Koszalin dated December 30, 1968.

¹⁷⁹ APR, PWRN, cat. No. 10188. Report of the PWRN in Riashiv for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) for the year 1968.

tors, leaders, and organizers of the harmful and deplorable incidents, connected with the University of Warsaw, which upset the normal course of life in higher education institutions, on the city streets, and in the institutions, and led to clashes of groups of young people with the militia. . . . We believe that the fight against Zionism, anti-Semitism, and nationalism of all stripes, and also against all other manifestations of foreign reactionary anti-socialist ideology and propaganda, emanating from foreign sabotage centers, should be stepped up.”¹⁸⁰

But the vast majority of Ukrainians and the local branches of the USKT exercised a passive restraint in response to the March events, seeing them as an internal affair concerning Poles and Jews, a restraint that resulted from the phenomenon of social isolation. Nevertheless, discussions on the “Theses of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party for the 5th Party Congress,” organized by the USKT on the orders of the authorities, became an opportunity for local activists to present their demands, as well as an opportunity to express their views on the current ethnic policy of the authorities. The farthest reaching demands, which the authorities considered to be nationalist, were submitted to the Resolutions Committee of the 5th Congress of the Polish United Workers’ Party on November 2, 1968. Compiled by the Ukrainian delegates—former guerrilla fighters of the People’s Guard, the People’s Army and the volunteers of the Red Army and the Polish Army from Lemkivshchyna (Mykhailo Donsky, Teodor Gocz, Konstany Ceklyniak, Stefan Wanca), the list of demands included compensation for the moral and financial harm resulting from the application of collective responsibility during Operation “W[isla],” representation in the parliament and in people’s councils, and provisions for cultural and educational development as well as ensuring mandatory Ukrainian language instructions in schools.¹⁸¹

This renewed assertiveness by the Ukrainians about their own status proved that at least some still felt allegiance to a separate national identity, were reluctant to submit themselves to the process of national identity loss, and were using their membership in the USKT to register their demands. For this reason, the authorities decided to further strengthen their control over the local branches of the USKT, thus ensuring that the executive councils were filled with people convenient to the

¹⁸⁰ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 13, dated March 31, 1968.

¹⁸¹ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Petition of the delegation of veterans from Lemkivshchyna to the Resolutions Committee of the 5th Congress of the PZPR dated November 2, 1968.

authorities.¹⁸²

The actions of the authorities against ethnic minorities, including Ukrainians, were disrupted for a short time by the events of December 1970. A change of the leadership team and the first speech of First Secretary Edward Gierek confirmed that state and party policies on various matters, including ethnic issues, were to be reviewed and updated. Hopeful that this signified a change that would better their lot, the Ukrainian community again attempted to have its demands fulfilled. On January 15, 1971, Konstanty Ceklyniak of Kunkowa, Andrzej Koltko of Wapienne, and Stefan Wanca of Rozdziela (all from the county of Horlytsi); Teodor Gocz of Zydranowa (from the county of Krosno); and Stefan Halko from Wroclaw wrote a letter to all the members of the Politburo and all the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. In the letter, they drew attention to needed changes in the policy of the authorities toward Ukrainians, requesting that proposals raised in the past be readdress and implemented.¹⁸³ The letter was accompanied by copies of petitions from 1956 and 1968, with a request for their consideration.¹⁸⁴ The signatories received no reply to this letter, a clear indication that the authorities were not interested in changing the policy toward the Ukrainian population. Confirming this was the regime's unwavering position with regard to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholics, encouraged by the parliamentary statement of Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz, who on December 23, 1970, announced a desire for full normalization of relations between the state and the Church, began collecting signatures on a petition. They demanded the reactivation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland and the return of 23 church properties, including the cathedral in Peremyshl. By February 25, 1971, the petition, had been signed by 3,692 people from 53 areas in the country and was sent to the attention of Piotr

¹⁸² APK, PWRN, cat. No. 4565. Letter of the Office of Internal Affairs of the Presidium of the Provincial People's Council (USW PWRN) in Koszalin to the Social and Administrative Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) concerning the activities of the USKT dated January 6, 1969.

¹⁸³ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Letter of the Ukrainian population representatives to the Politburo and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PZPR regarding the situation of the Ukrainian minority in Poland dated January 15, 1971.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Letter of the Ukrainian population representatives to the Politburo and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PZPR regarding the situation of the Ukrainian minority in Poland dated January 15, 1971.

Jaroszewicz.¹⁸⁵ After having analyzed the problem, the authorities came to the conclusion that it was not possible to reactivate the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.¹⁸⁶

In November 1971, the Horlytsi County Executive Council of the USKT and its subordinate branch executive councils, as well as the Sianik County Executive Council of the USKT and its subordinate branch boards, sent a letter to the Resolutions Committee of the 6th Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party and to the supreme party and state authorities. The letter stated, that "among all the minorities, the Ukrainians in the Polish People's Republic are the most disadvantaged in terms of the use and development of their native culture, especially in the sphere of the mother tongue and treasured folk traditions." The signatories also demanded that returns to previous places of residence be allowed.¹⁸⁷

The reaction from the authorities and full-time staff of the Executive Council of the USKT, directed against the signatories of the letter, including warnings and the expulsion of three of the signatories from the USKT. The Horlytsi Executive Council of the USKT was dissolved and its affiliated branches were directly subordinated to the Provincial Executive Council of the USKT in Riashiv.

The year 1976 brought further adverse changes for Ukrainians population and other minorities in Poland. On February 20, a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Worker's Party was held to discuss the "tasks of the party in deepening patriotic unity of the nation, in strengthening the state and in the development of socialist democracy." During the session, the 1st Secretary of the Central Committee of the PZPR E. Gierek, spoke of the might of Poland, stating that the "main factor and the foundation of all activities aimed at firming up her strength, is the moral and political unity of the Polish nation, the unity of her citizens' attitudes about the key issues of the homeland. Strengthening of this unity is a fundamental task in party politics." He added that the "state is a body created by the nation for its good and the

¹⁸⁵ AAN, U d/s W, cat. No. 131/285. Petition of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics to P. Jaroszewicz dated February 25, 1971.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, cat. No. 131/287. Letter of Undersecretary Aleksander Skarzynski to Deputy Prime Minister Wincenty Krasko regarding the petition of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics dated May 25, 1971.

¹⁸⁷ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Letter of the local executive councils of the USKT to the Resolutions Committee of the 6th Congress of the PZPR with regards to the situation of the Ukrainian population in the Polish People's Republic and the lack of implementation of the directives of the PZPR by the officials of people's councils at various levels and by the Executive Council of the USKT in the area of ethnic policy dated November 1971.

fulfillment of its present and future interests, and that the nation, homeland, and the state are inseparable concepts.”¹⁸⁸ For the minorities, this “moral and political unity of the nation” could only mean the intensification of assimilation efforts.

A few months later, from June 12 to June 13, 1976, the 6th congress of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society took place in Warsaw. The selection of June was not accidental—it was in this month that the USKT was to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its founding. The congress had a purely formal character, and the speeches were marked by pompous and socialist verbosity. The agenda omitted the most important issues influencing the activities of the USKT, those that concerned the Ukrainian population, and the issues that were addressed were not relevant to the problems faced by the Ukrainian minority in Poland. The resolution adopted at this congress promoted further development of ideological and instructional as well as cultural and educational work among the members of the USKT, and the promotion of all forms of activities in the Ukrainian community.¹⁸⁹

After the congress, the USKT found itself in a most precarious situation. Forced liquidation by the authorities of the county and provincial USKT executive councils called into question the entire spectrum of cultural and educational activities, because it was these councils that initiated and organized such activities. Most of the rural branches, which served a small number of people, were chronically short of funds and therefore unable to organize any meaningful activities. The entire executive council of the USKT was aware of this and was doing what it could to prevent the collapse of county and provincial activities; failure could result in the collapse of the entire USKT. Salvation came from unofficial groups of activists that took over former provincial boards and from local instructors whose services were retained by the Executive Council. Thanks to these individuals and to the increasing numbers of involved youth, the USKT did not collapse. The times that were coming did not instill optimism. The economic situation in Poland was deteriorating; the standard of living of most families, including Ukrainian families, was declining. Moreover, events in Radom and Ursus in June 1976 had provoked an increased interest within the secret service to monitor the opposition’s activities and in keeping ethnic minorities under surveillance.

The 7th Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the PZPR devoted to the “tasks of the party in deepening of socialist awareness and patriotic unity of the nation” was held on April 14, 1977. Speaking at the

¹⁸⁸ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 9, dated February 29, 1976.

¹⁸⁹ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 25, dated June 20, 1976.

session, E. Gierek observed: "The main source of our strength, of all our achievements is the unity of the Polish nation in the most important matters of national development. . . . Strengthening of this unity is the main task of the ideological and educational work done by the workers' party."¹⁹⁰

For ethnic minorities, this meant no changes in the existing policy affecting them. Indeed, the authorities' adherence to "moral and political unity of the nation" had already revealed itself during the expulsion of Ukrainians from areas where they had been a presence for many centuries. In August 1977, the authorities renamed some 120 formerly Ukrainian villages. This was met with opposition not only from the Ukrainian community and the USKT, but also from the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Writers' Union. The Ukrainian population interpreted the actions of the authorities as a new manifestation of the intent to eradicate all the traces of a "Ukrainian presence in the southeastern parts of Poland." The decision to change the names of the villages was compared to what occurred during the German occupation of Poland, when the occupying German authorities changed Polish street names to German names. Over the next few years, the voices of opposition were ignored. It was not until January 1981 that a decision was made to restore the original names.¹⁹¹

The 1970s, however, were not entirely a time of loss. One positive note was a rise Ukrainian youth activism, which would determine the activity of the Ukrainian community in the coming years. One significant aspect of this was an increase in the number of Ukrainian young graduating from Ukrainian schools and from the Ukrainian language learning centres. Many of them had a high degree of national consciousness; they were full of enthusiasm and preoccupied with the idea of work for the Ukrainian community. These were people born in the western and northern territories. They were unencumbered by historical burdens and understood the reality of the environment in which they lived. They joined the ranks of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society mostly because there were no other opportunities or alternatives for activities they found of interest outside the USKT. At the end of 1969, the membership of the USKT was 4,753; in 1976, this number reached approximately 5,400 members, organized in 177 branches. Membership grew in the urban branches. Youth membership in the USKT was approximately 20

¹⁹⁰ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 17, dated April 24, 1977.

¹⁹¹ T. Kuzio, "Między młotem a kowadłem – ukraińska mniejszość narodowa w Polsce, *Kontakt*, 1985, No. 1, p. 69.

percent; 67 percent of these were below the age of 25.¹⁹² There was also a significant increase in the number of young people who were not directly affiliated with the USKT through membership but who were active within the USKT. This was enabled by local activists of the organization, who readily supported the young people's activities and protected them under the aegis of the organization.

The increase in the activity of Ukrainian youth also resulted from changes occurring within the Ukrainian community. During this time, the Ukrainian farmers engaged in agricultural activities in the western parts of Poland did not differ much from their Polish neighbours; at times, they were more successful than their Polish neighbors. Their achievements in farming raised their standard of living—they had the means to educate their children in secondary schools and at universities. We know from personal accounts, that parents often instilled in their children the need for education. Young people were admonished: "Study so that you have an easier life than we have had."

After finishing school, young people usually settled in cities. Abandoning the villages was easier for them than for their parents—who were not connected to them by strong emotional ties. Their parents, whose hearts were still in the "old lands," were not able to instil love for the "new lands" in the children. The migration from village to city life was not limited to Ukrainian young people—it was a phenomenon that was becoming prevalent throughout Polish society.

For Ukrainians, however, the transition from village to city brought about important changes. The first of these was that the Ukrainian population began to lose more and more of its rural character. The second was that not all Ukrainians who settled in cities or towns continued to be active in the Ukrainian community. Many of them found that the anonymity offered by city life provided access to an easier life, especially for those who chose to identify themselves as Polish rather than as members of an ethnic minority.

The direction of the authorities' policy toward Ukrainians at this time manifested itself particularly in the sphere of education, and specifically with respect to the Ukrainian language. During the 1970s, there was a further decline in the number of students enrolled in the Ukrainian language learning centres, a decline that was fostered at least in part by progressive Polonization. In the 1971–1972 school year, there was a Ukrainian secondary school in Legnica, and secondary school classes were offered in Gorowo Ilawieckie. There were also two elementary schools (in

¹⁹²AZUwP, ZG USKT. Report of the Executive Council of the USKT prepared for the 6th congress of the USKT dated June 12, 1976.

Bialy Bor and in Banie Mazurskie) and 78 Ukrainian language learning centres. In total, 1,972 students studied the Ukrainian language.

In the 1980–1981 school year, there were 112 secondary students in Legnica, 77 secondary students in Gorowo, 78 in Bialy Bor, and 42 in Banie Mazurskie. In 28 Ukrainian language learning centres there were 551 children receiving Ukrainian-language instruction. Altogether, 860 students were being taught the Ukrainian language.¹⁹³

The situation with Ukrainian cultural activities was somewhat better. In 1971, there were 61 amateur ensembles. Five years later, in 1976, there were only 43 amateur ensembles: 8 choirs, 8 bands, 2 song and dance groups, 3 dance ensembles, 5 musical groups, 2 folk bands, 1 drama troupe, 1 puppet troupe and 13 children's ensembles. Between 1972 and 1975, these groups held approximately 360 concerts. Particularly popular were the USKT choirs "Zhuravli" and "Duma," and performances of high school youth from the schools in Legnica and Gorowo Ilawieckie.¹⁹⁴ It should be noted, however, that the principal role in the amateur cultural movement was played by Ukrainian university students and high-school youth. These young people, most of whom worked in cities, helped stem the slow but steady decline that was eroding the Ukrainian community's cultural life. Their involvement in the cultural ensemble movement also contributed to raising the artistic achievements of some of these groups to an almost professional level.

It was, in fact, owing to Ukrainian students and youth that a number of theaters began to appear and the number of bands increased. According to the data from the USKT executive council archives, there were 67 different Ukrainian cultural ensembles in 1980. Between 1976 and 1980, Ukrainian ensembles had performed 570 times, with more than half of these performances staged at events attended by large audiences. In contrast, only 100 or so artistic performances were held in rural areas.¹⁹⁵

The regime's attempts to curtail Ukrainian-language studies and Ukrainian cultural activities thus met with mixed results. But the idea of single-nation state also meant tightening measures against the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland. The clergy were still under the special surveillance of the 4th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and were prevented from communicating with their hierarchs in Rome. The

¹⁹³ AZUwP, ZG USKT. State of the Ukrainian language education in the school years 1976-1977 to 1980-1981.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. Report of the Executive Council of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (ZG USKT) for the 6th congress of the USKT of June 12, 1976.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. Report of the Executive Council of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (ZG USKT) for the 7th congress of the USKT of June 29, 1980.

authorities continuously attempted to limit their activities among the Ukrainian Greek Catholic faithful, even impeding them from conducting catechism classes.

It is no wonder that that a new attempts to legalize the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was as futile as previous attempts had been. The request submitted on February 5, 1974, by the faithful from Peremyshl was denied.¹⁹⁶ Authorities also denied requests by Ukrainian Greek Catholics to be excused from work on high holy days celebrated by their church.¹⁹⁷ A petition from Ukrainian Greek Catholics from Komancha, who asked to have their church returned to them, was denied.¹⁹⁸

In 1977 the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland suffered an even more severe blow. Mitrata Fr. Bazyli Hrynyk died on May 31. On June 14, Primate S. Wyszynski appointed Fr. S. Dziubyna Vicar General. Although Dziubyna continued his predecessor's efforts to legalize the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland, his attempts also resulted in failure.

Archival documents reveal that Polish authorities of the early 1970s abandoned their support of the Orthodox Church and its missionary activities among the Ukrainian Greek Catholics. They had discovered that in most of the parishes where this had been attempted, the Ukrainian character of worship had persisted and had thus remained a mainstay for ethnic Ukrainians, contrary to the intentions of the authorities and the Orthodox clergy. The Ukrainian faithful had simply who refused to renounce their nationality. Fearing the wrath of their parishioners, even those priests who had no interest in strengthening the Ukrainian national consciousness made considerable concessions to them. This did not suit the authorities, who were determined to blur the distinctions between the two nationalities. In September 1972, the Office for Religious Denominations applied to the Central Committee of the PZPR to stop allocating any more churches to the Orthodox Church in southeastern Poland.¹⁹⁹ More or less at the same time, an unrelated attempt by Orthodox faithful

¹⁹⁶ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 131/283. Petition of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics from Peremyshl to Prime Minister P. Jaroszewicz regarding legalization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland of February 5, 1974.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* Letter to the Executive Council of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (ZG USKT) signed by the "Ukrainian minority" regarding days off from work during Ukrainian Greek Catholic holidays of July 1973.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Petition of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics from Komancha demanding return of the church of January 16, 1973. It was repeated on February 4, 1974.

¹⁹⁹ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 131/283. Memorandum on the church facilities located in the southeastern provinces dated September 15, 1972.

to take over a Ukrainian Greek Catholic church in Gladyszow failed.²⁰⁰ Another fact underscoring this shift in policy was that Ukrainian was dropped as a language of instruction at the Orthodox seminary in Warsaw.

But the policy changes could not reverse another unfortunate trend. By the 1970s, many of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic churches had deteriorated significantly, especially those that had been abandoned and were left untended or those that had been used for storage purposes. The best rescue for these churches was to be taken over by the Orthodox Church, but this was resisted both by the local authorities and by the Roman Catholic Church. Another way to save these churches was to convert them into open-air museums or enclosed museum facilities. A dozen or so churches were saved this way. A third option was to turn such churches over to the Roman Catholic Church, although this would mean changing their appearance to conform to the religious characteristics of an entirely different rite. Even external alteration usually meant replacing the Eastern elements with the Western ones.

In 1972, the authorities came up with their own solution to the problem. On the orders of the Central Committee of the PZPR, the Office for Religious Denominations developed a "Memorandum on the church facilities located in the southeastern provinces." Incomplete data contained in this memo reveals that in the province of Riashiv the Roman Catholic Church took over 206 churches, and the Orthodox Church took over 31. Thirty-nine were turned over to state institutions and cooperatives, and 65 were simply abandoned. In the province of Krakow, of the 35 existing Ukrainian Greek Catholic churches, 32 (including one in Krakow) were given to the Roman Catholic Church; the other three were deemed unsuitable for use and were abandoned. In the province of Lublyn, the Roman Catholic Church was already using 35 Orthodox churches; four churches formerly used as warehouses of the State Agricultural Farms (PGR) and the Communal Cooperatives (GS) were deemed beyond repair. The Office for Religious Denominations submitted an application asking that the provincial authorities be allowed to immediately demolish devastated churches that were not classified as "historic" and to delete these from the register of Class 3 and Class 4 historic buildings. The remaining churches that were considered usable, were slated for distribution. The most valuable ones were to be moved to open-air museums; 10 of these were to be given the Roman Catholic

²⁰⁰ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 131/400. Letter of the Office for Religious Denominations (U d/s W) to Metropolitan Bazyli with regards to the refusal of transfer of the church in Gladyszow of January 1973.

Church.²⁰¹ The implementation of this plan over the course of the following several years led to the disappearance of even more Ukrainian Greek Catholic churches from the landscape of southeastern Poland. As recently as 1980, the churches in Rajske and Klimkowka were blown up. Of course, the news of the destruction of churches was reaching the Ukrainians, strengthening among them the belief that Poles were striving to erase all traces of Ukrainian material culture in the region.

A breakthrough in the life of the Ukrainian community in Poland, as well as in the Polish community, came in the 1980s. With the rise of Solidarity, came open criticism of the existing socioeconomic policy of the authorities. The opposition did not spare the authorities' approach towards ethnic minorities. It should be noted, however, that most of the leaders of Solidarity were not especially knowledgeable about the life and needs of the ethnic minorities. Many of them, as time would show, were hostile toward ethnic minorities and were in favor of Polonization. At that time, the Solidarity Trade Union was somewhat more tolerant of these minorities. The first articles showing a new perspective on the issue of ethnic minorities, including the Ukrainians, began to appear in newspapers. The climax of this trend was the adoption of a resolution on ethnic minorities at the 1st congress of Solidarity.

The emergence of Solidarity and the general political revival of Polish society also affected the attitudes of Ukrainians. Some accepted the renewal of political life in Poland, hoping that the changes would improve their own situation. But this position was not universal. Some Ukrainians, especially the young and the intelligentsia, joined in the activities of the Solidarity Trade Union, others saw an opportunity to improve their situation by supporting the PZPR's program, and others adopted a wait and see attitude. The division into conservatives (who supported the Communist Party) and radicals (who supported more resolute action in the fight for Ukrainian rights) was also visible within the ranks of the USKT. It should be emphasized that this distinction was closely paired with membership in the Communist Party—most of the "comrades" leaned toward the conservative camp. The views of the latter were represented mainly by the Presidium of the executive council of the USKT, which was still supporting the party line.

It is apparent, from the available material, that the radical trend was represented by the vast majority of the members of the USKT branches. At their meetings, they formulated demands, which were then sent to the authorities or to the executive council of the USKT for im-

²⁰¹ AAN, Ud/sW, cat. No. 131/283. Memorandum on the church facilities located in the southeastern provinces dated September 15, 1972.

plementation. Information published in *Nashe Slovo* confirms that the USKT branches issued demands that were almost identical in content, which they addressed to the authorities and to the USKT leadership.²⁰² These communiqués demanded the following: recognition of the USKT as an independent organization representing the interests of the Ukrainian population in Poland; granting the USKT the right to operate autonomously; representation of Ukrainians in the parliament (the Sejm); and reestablishment of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

The new political situation and the grassroots pressure affected the attitudes of the USKT leadership. A November 14, 1980, meeting between USKT leaders and representatives of the party and the government focused on to the demands raised by the by the USKT branches. The representatives of the executive council of the USKT received permission to initiate talks with appropriate institutions about the implementation of the cultural and educational demands.²⁰³ Subsequent meetings were conducted with representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Radio and Television Committee, and the Society of Polish-Soviet Friendship.²⁰⁴ Unfortunately, these meetings did not produce the anticipated results.

During this time, the Ukrainian students for whom the USKT was not a representative organization also became more active. On May 1, 1981, the establishment of the Ukrainian Students Association in Poland was proclaimed. With the help of lawyers from the Solidarity movement, the association's constitution was drafted, and a request for registration was submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education. The charter stated that the association operated in accordance with the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, had the right to establish contacts with Ukrainian organizations in Poland and abroad, and was independent of academic authorities, state institutions, and political and social organizations. The request was denied. The Ministry believed that the Ukrainian students could realize their aspirations within the already existing student organizations and social and cultural societies.²⁰⁵

The mobilization of the Ukrainian community, including joining and actively participating in Solidarity and in independent activities of

²⁰² *Nashe Slovo*, No. 51, dated December 21, 1980.

²⁰³ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 47, dated November 23, 1980.

²⁰⁴ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 51, dated December 21, 1980; No. 5 of February 1, 1981; No. 8 of February 22, 1981; No. 15 of April 12, 1981.

²⁰⁵ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Letter No. DM - 420/42/81 of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology regarding the refusal to register the Ukrainian student organization dated July 29, 1981.

the USKT were met with sharp criticism from the authorities. Again, the heaviest guns were brought out—accusations of nationalism. In November 1980, during his speech in the Sejm, Gen. Włodzimierz Oliwa stated that anti-Polish “leaflets under the mark of the Ukrainian nationalist trident”²⁰⁶ were being circulated, a position which the Ukrainian community perceived as a provocation by the authorities, a perception that was sharpened by the 1981 arrest of an American sociologist of Ukrainian origin, Roman Laba, who was collecting information for scholarly work on Polish workers. In the press and television, Laba, who was presented as a U.S. spy, was released and returned to the United States the day after his arrest. However, the general public was not informed about this turn of events.

More trouble followed. In August 1981, the leadership of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society, without the knowledge of the Polish authorities, met with the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, who had promised the USKT help with realization of certain goals.²⁰⁷ Hearing of this meeting, Albin Siwak, a member of the Politburo, referred to the actions of ethnic minorities as the creation of a “fifth column.”²⁰⁸ This comment, made during the 2nd plenary session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party, evoked a response even from some party activists of the USKT, who sent an open letter to A. Siwak as well as to the weekly publications *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, protesting these statements.²⁰⁹

During this time, the hopes of the faithful for the legalization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were rekindled. On September 25, 1980, church faithful, who were also members of the USKT in Pere-myshl, sent a petition to the authorities calling for the granting of legal status to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the return of the Pere-myshl cathedral, and the broadcasting of Ukrainian Greek Catholic liturgies on major religious holidays in the nationwide programs of Polish Radio and Television.²¹⁰ The authorities were far from inclined to fulfilling these demands, but there was a change in their overall position on this matter. One aspect of this change was that they agreed to open new

²⁰⁶ *Trybuna Ludu* dated November 23, 1980; M. Truchan, *Ukrainci v Polshchi...*, p. 206.

²⁰⁷ V. Drobnyk, “Ukrainska menshist u pislyavoyenniy Polshchi”, *Suchasnist*, 1986, No. 10, p. 77.

²⁰⁸ *Trybuna Ludu* dated August 12, 1980.

²⁰⁹ *Tygodnik Solidarność* dated September 11, 1981; V. Drobnyk, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

²¹⁰ M. Rusakiewicz, “Przyczyny i skutki procesu reemigracji Ukraińców na tereny południowo-wschodniej Polski”, *Obóz*, 1990, No. 17, p. 52.

Ukrainian Greek Catholic institutions subject to the consent of the Roman Catholic Church authorities.²¹¹ As a result, Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy and faithful now began to direct their requests primarily to Roman Catholic hierarchs. On November 18, Fr. S. Dziubyna asked the Roman Catholic Primate to consider the needs of Ukrainian Greek Catholics on a par with the needs of Roman Catholics at the meetings of the Joint Commission of Representatives of the Government and the Episcopate. On January 19, 1981, the Primate assured Fr. Dziubyna that matters of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic rite were the subject of talks with the government.²¹² In the same month, the Primate supported the efforts of the Basilian Fathers to recover the monastic buildings and the church in Peremyshl, which the Roman Catholic Church had occupied.²¹³ The Primate did not agree, however, to return to the Ukrainian Greek Catholics the cathedral occupied by the Carmelite Fathers.²¹⁴

At that time, the church authorities were not willing to fulfill most of the demands of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics, but it is difficult to determine whether the Primate himself held this view. He certainly had to reckon with the position of the authorities and the bishops, most of whom opposed the appointment of a separate Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishop.²¹⁵ In addition, some Roman Catholic hierarchs adamantly opposed the creation of new Ukrainian Greek Catholic institutions. This was the case in Liubachiv, Miastko, Rozdziele, and especially in Krynytsia. Because of this, Cardinal Glemp opted for small steps. He split up the Ukrainian Greek institutions into two vicariates. On December 22, he appointed Father Jozafat Romanyk Vicar General for the northern vicariate and Fr. Jan Martyniak for the southern vicariate.

Nevertheless, the position of the Roman Catholic Episcopate was changing, with much of the change attributable to the election of Pope John Paul II and the amicable stance of the Holy See toward the aspirations of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.²¹⁶

The efforts of Ukrainians to improve their position were briefly interrupted by the imposition of martial law. Once this was suspended, how-

²¹¹ o. mitrat S. Dziubyna, *I stverdzy dilo...*, pp. 428-430.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 464-465.

²¹³ AAN, U d/s W, cat. No. 131/288. Letter of Cardinal S. Wyszyński to Minister of Education Jerzy Kuberski supporting the attempts of the Basilian Fathers to re-possess their properties in Peremyshl of January 10, 1981.

²¹⁴ o. mitrat S. Dziubyna, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-435.

²¹⁵ B. Pushkar, "Ukrainska Katolytska Tserkva v Polshchi ta yiyi perspektyvy", *Suchasnist*, 1985, No. 3, p. 92.

²¹⁶ I. Hwat, "Ukraiński Kościół Katolicki, Watykan i Związek Radziecki w czasie pontyfikatu Jana Pawła II", *Spotkania*, 1987, nos. 33-34, pp. 79-92.

ever, these efforts were renewed and expanded as new organizations, independent from the USKT, were created. In July 1983, an organization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic laity was founded—the Eastern Rite Brotherhood of St. Volodymyr. In December 1983, the first issue of a in “samizdat” [self-published] newspaper *Lystok Myrjan* (Laity’s Newsletter) appeared, focusing on the religious life of Ukrainians in Poland. The nationwide Student Cultural Council of Ethnic Minorities, with a strong Ukrainian Culture Section, was created within the Polish Students’ Association. This section issued its own magazine entitled *Zustriczi* (Meetings). Through the efforts of Ukrainian students at the Teacher’s Training University in Olsztyn an optional course in the Ukrainian language, taught by Professor Mykhailo Lesiw, was introduced.²¹⁷

Hopes of improving the situation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were also revived. On March 6, 1984, a group of Ukrainian Greek Catholic lay activists sent a letter to the Polish Bishops’ Conference. The letter opened with a brief introduction about the post-war history of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland and then called for, among other things, appointments of Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishops, the return of churches and other property, and the establishment of Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes with their own diocese in the areas inhabited by Ukrainians. The activists also called for the publication of prayer books, catechism books, and a monthly magazine dedicated to the affairs of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.²¹⁸

These demands went unanswered, but there were signs that the Episcopate’s position was changing. The first reflection of this was the arrival (in 1984) of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archbishop Myroslav Marusyn from the Vatican. The Archbishop was also the secretary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches and visited Poland four times. During these visits, he ordained new priests and visited Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes. For the faithful and the clergy, these meetings were psychologically uplifting, a testimony to the care of the Apostolic See and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic hierarchy. They also helped to bring the issue of Ukrainian Greek Catholics to the attention of appropriate state level authorities, removing the seal of silence and ignorance surrounding this rite, which in 1983 consisted of 70 churches operated by 47 priests.²¹⁹

Oddly enough, these visits took place with the consent of the au-

²¹⁷ I. Hrywna, *Życie społeczno-kulturalne...*, p. 115.

²¹⁸ *O tożsamość grekokatolików. Zbiór dokumentów z historii Cerkwi grekokatolickiej w Polsce*, edited by M. Czech, Warszawa, 1992, pp. 37-44.

²¹⁹ *O tożsamość grekokatolików...*, p. 11; o. I. Harasym, *Hrekokatolytska tserkva...*, p. 27.

thorities, who had not yet adopted a clear and official stance on the matter of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. On one hand, the authorities raised no major obstacles to the creation of new church institutions. They allowed clergy to travel abroad and have contacts with their hierarchs and even agreed to organized trips of Ukrainian Greek Catholics to Rome (most of those who participated in such trips did not return to Poland). On the other hand, they opposed the legalization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the building of parishes and other ecclesiastical structures, kept the clergy under surveillance, and again began to support the Orthodox Church.²²⁰ In connection with this, they consented to the creation of an Orthodox parish in Peremyshl and to the construction of an Orthodox church in Krynysia. In September 1983, the Orthodox Diocese of Peremyshl-Novyi Sanch based in Sianik was established.

The mobilization of the Ukrainian community also influenced the attitudes of the USKT activists. The 8th congress of the society was held in Warsaw in 1984. As the weekly *Nashe Slovo* reported, delegates spoke "about all areas of our organization's life," eagerly discussing issues related to education, cultural and educational activities of the organization, about publishing initiatives, and, of course, about *Nashe Slovo*. Some of the speeches were delivered in "a slightly aggressive tone, but spoken, it seems, in good faith."²²¹ But the most important decision made at this congress was to adopt a new constitution of the USKT, which outlined the three-level structure of the organization. In place of informal provincial councils, the congress established official branches, whose work was to be headed by the presidium elected by branch executive council. The omission in the constitution of the old provision concerning the "promotion of Ukrainian culture, national in form and socialist in content" was a manifestation of some progress.

On December 19, 1984, the leadership of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society met with Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski. They familiarized the government with the USKT's work and raised issues related to securing regular publishing of the weekly *Nashe Slovo*, training instructors for the artistic movement, providing assistance to the existing ensembles, protecting historic buildings associated with the Ukrainian culture, establishing a museum and a professional Ukrainian theater. During the talks, the USKT representatives drew attention of

²²⁰ APK, UW, spis 2, No. 19. Letter of the Office for Religious Denominations (U d/s W) in Warsaw to the Department for Religious Denomination of the Provincial Office (UW) in Koszalin regarding the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church dated August 31, 1985.

²²¹ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 21, dated July 29, 1984.

the Deputy Prime Minister to the harmful effects of biased press publications, books, and films on the normalization of Polish–Ukrainian relations. The USKT representatives present at the meeting were able to see immediately that the authorities were not willing to implement their proposals. It is true that M. Rakowski approached the issues that had been raised with polite concern, even promising to look into them, but he limited himself mainly to characterizing the situation and its development trends as typical of those faced by every citizen in the country.²²²

This meeting was one of the most important ever attended by the USKT leadership, particularly as it had reached authorities at the highest state level. But it was a meeting that clarified for the leadership that the rejection of their proposals was not simply the result of reluctance on the part of local authorities but also of the central government. The authorities were not interested in elevating the level of cultural and educational activities among the Ukrainian population or in changing their policy towards the Ukrainians. Confirmation of this came with the election of representatives to the Polish Sejm in 1985. The executive council of the USKT had planned to put forward a candidate for the central election list, but withdrew from this plan when rumors began circulating within the Ukrainian community that any attempt to place a “Ukrainian” on the list would be opposed, because such placement all but guaranteed a seat in the parliament.

Some branch executive councils put forward their own candidates. In Koszalin, two USKT representatives (Jan Batruch and Włodzimierz Serkiz) were proposed for the provincial list. The Provincial Election Council accepted the nominations, but refused to put the candidates on the list of proposed candidates for deputies.²²³ A USKT candidate (Antoni Staruch) was placed on the candidate list in the province of Olsztyn, but was omitted from the final list of candidates for deputies.²²⁴ In addition, there was a significant decline in the number of talks conducted with representatives of the government; with nothing to offer, the authorities refused to meet with the leadership of the organization.

Outside the political arena, the authorities continued to exhibit their reluctance to reach out to the Ukrainian community to help resolve the problems they had created. Their continued lack of attention to critical problems prompted a radicalization within the Ukrainian population at large as well as among USKT activists. These newly radicalized Ukrainians now began to demand changes in the authorities’ ethnic policy and

²²² *Nashe Slovo*, No. 1, dated January 6, 1985.

²²³ R. Drozd, *Polityka władz wobec...*, p. 315.

²²⁴ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 34, dated September 22, 1985.

specifically a cancellation of the resolution of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of April 24, 1947, ordering the deportation of the Ukrainian population. They also called for the authorities to reform the USKT. This became evident during the election campaign, and especially during the 9th congress of the USKT, which took place in Jachranka near Warsaw in 1988. In addition to raising the issues related to cultural and educational activities, some delegates proposed changes in the constitution—changes that would have extended the existing goals of the USKT as a “representative of social and national interests of the Ukrainian population” and enabled economic activity and contacts with organizations in socialist and capitalist countries. It was also suggested that the executive council of the USKT base its work on the activities of appointed committees (organizational, economic, educational, cultural, historical, etc.) The delegates also called for the authorities to provide the USKT with equipped facilities for branches, community centres, and schools by way of compensation for the property of Ukrainian institutions that had been confiscated by the Polish state. They also demanded representation of the Ukrainian population in the Polish parliament (the Sejm).²²⁵

In accordance with customary practice, the congress passed a resolution outlining the directions of future USKT work. The resolution noted the need to develop a broader cultural and educational work, but also proposed that the organization establish its own businesses, create a historical commission that would refute publications that falsely represented Polish–Ukrainian relations, expand cooperation with associations of other ethnic minorities in Poland, conduct solemn jubilee celebrations of the millennial anniversary of the baptism of Kyivan Rus, renew efforts at the Ministry of Education for publication of the Ukrainian primer titled “Bukvar,” develop a vision for a Ukrainian high school in Legnica, initiate efforts to open a Ukrainian high school in Peremyshl, and organize camps for children in Poland and in Ukraine, etc. One additional demand was aimed at changing Polish policies underscored the need to “develop a report on the status and the needs of the Ukrainian population, including their religious needs, in order to present them to the Sejm for a debate with the aim of determining the status of the Ukrainian population as an ethnic group in the Polish People’s Republic, including provisions for the group’s representation in the parliament.”²²⁶

This report, which characterized and defined the position of the

²²⁵ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Minutes from the 9th congress of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (USKT) dated June 12, 1988.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, Resolution of the 9th congress of the USKT dated June 12, 1988.

Ukrainian population in Poland and identified its needs, was sent to the Sejm, the State Council, the government, the Central Committee of the PZPR, and to the participants of the "round table." The authors of the report proposed that the Sejm or the State Council adopt a relevant resolution condemning Operation "Wisla."²²⁷ The Sejm, however, arguing that all the needs of Ukrainians had been met, rejected the report.²²⁸

At that time, direct contacts between representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and representatives of the Polish opposition were established. Opposition leaders had issued statements supportive of Poland's ethnic minorities and samizdat presentations of ethnic issues were promoting a climate conducive to cooperation between these groups. It was not surprising therefore that some Ukrainians, particularly the intelligentsia, actively joined the whirl of political events in Poland. In October 1988, a group of intellectuals representing ethnic minorities sent a letter to Lech Walesa, asking him to introduce the issues of ethnic minorities at a "round table" discussion. The signatories were Prof. Mykhailo Lesiw, Dr. Volodymyr Mokryi, Prof. Stefan Kozak (representing Ukrainians); Dr. Jerzy Turonek (representing Belarusians); and Dr. Bronislaw Makowski (representing Lithuanians).

After successive meetings of the Solidarity Civic Committee, the representatives of national minorities began to appear on the lists of candidates for the Polish parliament. In the elections of June 1989, a representative of the Ukrainian side, Dr. Volodymyr Mokryi, became a member of parliament.

Within this new, democratized political reality, the Ukrainian community could set about achieving its goals and even take an active part in the changes taking place in Poland. The first step, in February 1990, was the conversion of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society into the Union of Ukrainians in Poland (ZUwP). The new organization became the main advocate for the interests of the Ukrainian population in Poland. At the same time, contacts were established with the Ukrainian diaspora and with Ukrainians in Ukraine. At the beginning of its operations, the Union of Ukrainians in Poland had 7,771 members in 181 branches. It operated 47 ensembles, including 15 folk groups (4 song and dance groups), 5 choirs, 4 dance groups, 18 instrumental and vocal ensembles, 1 dramatic troupe, and 3 groups that sang or recited poetic works. Overall, the ensembles had 780 members. They performed at a

²²⁷ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Report of the USKT entitled "Ukrainians in the Polish People's Republic" dated February 26, 1989.

²²⁸ *Ukraińcy w Polsce 1989-1993. Kalendarium. Dokumenty. Informacje*. Edited by M. Czech, Warszawa, 1993, pp. 83-84.

very high artistic level, and some of them eventually toured in the United States and Canada (the male choir “Zhuravli” in 1986, the folk group “Lemkovyna” in 1987, and “Oslawiany” in 1989).

There were also a number of festivals taking place during this time: the Ukrainian Culture Festivals, the Youth Fairs in Gdansk, children's festivals in Koszalin, qualifying children's festivals in Elblag, and many other smaller artistic events.

Changes in the educational sphere were also evident. There were 56 Ukrainian language learning centres, one primary school in Bialy Bor, and one high school in Legnica. Ukrainian classes were also offered in the primary school in Banie Mazurskie and the high school in Gorowo Ilawieckie. Together, these institutions taught Ukrainian language to a total of 1,432 students.²²⁹

CONCLUSION

Polish communist authorities failed to attend to the needs and demands of the Ukrainian population in Poland. They were guided by a desire to assimilate the Ukrainian population, and the nature of these demands contradicted their objectives. On the other hand, they could not completely ignore such demands and thus agreed to implement certain cultural and educational concessions, making sure however, that these were limited in scope. They completely rejected any demands pertaining to Operation “Wisla” and the demands of a political nature. The authorities also resisted reactivation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, limiting its operations only within the structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Significant changes occurred only after 1989.

²²⁹ AZUwP, ZG USKT. Report of the Executive Council of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (ZG USKT) prepared for the 9th congress of the USKT dated 11-12 June 1988.

“TO RESOLVE THE UKRAINIAN QUESTION ONCE AND FOR ALL”

THE ETHNIC CLEANSING OF UKRAINIANS IN POLAND 1943–1947*

TIMOTHY SNYDER

The end of the cold war has brought a new approach to the historical study of the early postwar period. So long as the cold war lasted, the actors of its histories were states: the superpowers in the first instance, and allies and satellites on the margins. Earlier debates concerning the immediate postwar years have thus concerned the responsibility of the major powers for the origins of the cold war. The revolutions of 1989, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the Yugoslav conflicts since have returned attention to national questions. From this perspective, the years immediately following the Second World War are important not only as the time when Europe's states were divided into two blocs, but also as a time when several of Europe's nations were subjected to deportations.¹ The mass forced deportations, as a result of the way in which they were carried out and as a result of their place in state propa-

* The article originally appeared in the *Journal of Cold War Studies* in 1999, vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 86-120.

¹ Thomas W. Simons, Jr., was quick to emphasize this point in his textbook. *Eastern Europe in the Postwar World*, New York: St. Martin's, 1991, p. 42. As Jan Gross has argued, the experience of deportation is a continuity between the Second World War and the first years of the postwar period, and thus a good reason to challenge previous periodizations. See "War as Revolution," in Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii, eds., *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1997, pp. 17-40.

ganda since, did much to consolidate Polish and West Ukrainian nationalism. The approach in this report thus concerns not only the choices of states, but the fate of social groups as they became nations.

The shift of attention to the histories of nations raises problems of method. If the aerie of geopolitics is too distant from events, the rough ground of each nation's historiography is too close. Territory and nationality are among the most powerful sources of bias, and the match of political and ethnic frontiers is such a defining event that people are apt to forget just how it was achieved. In addition, ethnic cleansing always involves claims and counterclaims, creating conditions for a convenient dispute in which each side can present itself as an innocent defender of legitimate interests, its opponents as savage nationalists, and the noise of the quarrel as support for these contentions.

An important example is the ethnic cleansing of Galicia and Volyn in the 1940s. It is indisputable that (aside and apart from the Holocaust and casualties of the Second World War) about 50,000 to 100,000 Poles and Ukrainians were murdered and about 1.5 million Ukrainians and Poles forced to leave their homes between 1943 and 1947. It is incontestable that the territories now constituting Western Ukraine were cleansed of their large Polish minority, and the territories now constituting southeastern Poland cleansed of their large Ukrainian minority. Behind these general statements, however, stand two apparently contradictory accounts of what happened and why.

Among several other approaches, I used my MIT-Mellon grant to ascertain both how these instances of forced migration are remembered, and how they in fact took place. This involved interviews, the use of private and state archives, and the exploitation of published material available in Poland and Ukraine (see footnotes). The private archives, both Polish and Ukrainian, were compiled thanks to the efforts of NGOs within Poland, both before and after 1989. Although the Eastern Archive and the Ukrainian Archive have distinct agendas, each of them has allowed for the memories both of Poles and of Ukrainians to be preserved in a form that is now available to the individual researcher. In this sense, the work of NGOs in Poland has allowed for the recreation of the history of a moment of massive forced migration: a history that often contrasts with and serves as a check upon one-sided accounts based upon more limited archival resources.

In other words, the work of NGOs is contributing to the emergence of a more balanced image of the ethnic cleansings of the 1940s. To understand the significance of this contribution, one needs only to compare the peace between Poland and Ukraine to national conflict seen elsewhere in Eastern Europe. It is also important to see that these ethnic

cleansings are important within both national societies, Polish and Ukrainian, and that in this sense, the efforts of NGOs have indirectly served to prevent what might have been divisive conflicts between states or between majorities and minorities. Today, both Ukrainians and Poles believe that their claim to Eastern Galicia and Volyn in 1939 and 1945 was legitimate. Both assert that the other side cooperated with organs of power of the Nazi and Soviet occupiers in Galicia and Volyn during and after the Second World War. Both believe that the other side's partisans killed their civilians. And both believe that hundreds of thousands of their own were expelled or dispersed by an ethnically cleansing state after the war. Although in practice these beliefs are often held to be mutually contradictory, as one accusation is usually met with another, when approached from a logical perspective, they are not. Indeed, all of these beliefs, in various measures and with various qualifications, are true.

The first three sets of propositions are factual, and one of the tasks of this report will be to propose an empirical account of the ethnic cleansings perpetrated by Ukrainians upon Poles and by Poles upon Ukrainians in the 1940s. It will mainly attend to the homogenizing policy of the Polish communist regime in 1944–1947, but it will begin from the premise that some understanding of the cleansing of Poles by Ukrainians in 1943–1944 and the Second World War in Galicia and Volyn is necessary for an explanation (and an evaluation) of that Polish policy. The final set of propositions, concerning legitimacy, is of an ethical nature, and its adjudication will depend upon the application of prior ethical beliefs to the facts. Although this report will not be chiefly concerned with ethical debates, its presentation of the facts will bear upon all ethical conclusions, provided of course that the method of ethical reasoning accounts in some way for the facts.

As a matter of historical method, it is also useful to point out that varying concept of legitimacy and the conclusions about rightful rule in Eastern Galicia and Volyn drawn there from stand behind varying Polish and Ukrainian selection and interpretation of events. By “Eastern Galicia and Volyn” I mean the interwar Polish province of Lwow, Stanislawow, and Tarnopol, and Volyn, which (with the exception of the far west of Lwow province) were incorporated into Soviet Ukraine in 1945, and which now constitute the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Volyn, and Rivne regions of independent Ukraine. For Poles today, Eastern Galicia and Volyn in 1939 and 1945 were legitimate parts of a Polish state. They were included in Poland by international treaty after the First World War, and had been governed legally by the Polish state for thirty years. This political–legal idea of legitimacy is consistent both with ethnic and civic forms of nationalism: One can see the Ukrainian minority as demograph-

ic material to be ethnically assimilated, or as citizens of another nationality to be included within the polity. For Ukrainians today, Eastern Galicia and Volyn in 1939 and 1945 were territories subject to a legitimate Ukrainian claim. This claim was based upon the simple ethnographic fact that Ukrainians outnumbered Poles in these lands two to one (about five million to just over two million) during the interwar period.² This majoritarian-ethnographic idea of legitimacy also embraces both ethnic and civic forms of nationalism: One can see Volyn and Eastern Galicia as Ukrainian because they are inhabited by the “Ukrainian nation,” because a majority of the individuals living there would have preferred (had they been asked) to live in a Ukrainian state.³

This disagreement about legitimacy divided Poles and Ukrainians in the 1940s when it conditioned actions; it continues to do so at the present time, when it conditions interpretations of past actions. For political activists at the time as well as for historians today, the idea of legitimate rule powerfully influences conclusions drawn about the reasonability of the aspirations of minorities and the justice of the policies of the state. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the partition of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union (1939), the Soviet occupation of Eastern Galicia and Volyn (1939–1941), the German occupation of Ukraine (1941–1943), and the second Soviet occupation (1944) activated Polish–

² The proportions on the basis of 1939 Polish statistics by wojewódstwa: Wołyn 68.4 percent Ukrainian and 16.2 percent Polish, Stanisławów 68.9 percent Ukrainian and 22.4 percent Polish, Lwów 34.1 percent Ukrainian and 57.7 percent Polish, Tarnopol 45.5 percent Ukrainian and 49.3 percent Polish. These figures inflate the Polish presence. But they do convey the important difference between Volyn, which was predominantly Ukrainian, and Eastern Galicia, which was more of a classical ethnographic borderland. The other large minority were the Jews, who dominated small towns. The Jewish population was all but eliminated by the Holocaust.

³ The point is not that particular ideas of legitimacy are inherent in nations. There is nothing inherently Ukrainian about a majoritarian-ethnographic notion of legitimacy, nor anything particularly Polish about a political-legal conception of legitimacy. Rather, ideas of legitimacy are largely situational. Between the world wars, Western Ukrainian patriots lacked a state and were confronted with Polish political and cultural power, and thus predictably embraced the ethnographic idea. Between the world wars, the Polish state included Western Ukraine, and so not surprisingly, Poles inclined to a political idea of legitimacy. But in other situations other ideas of legitimate rule of territory will prevail. Today’s independent Ukraine relies upon a political notion of legitimacy in its treatment of the Crimean peninsula, where Russians are a majority. In 1831, 1863, and 1905 Poles sought to change borders, which had been recognized by treaty and by the great powers of the day.

Ukrainian conflicts rooted in these differing notions of legitimacy, and thereby created deeper problems of interpretation for later scholars. The Second World War in Eastern Galicia and Volyn will be treated in the next section, and will affect the argument in general, but ten factors relating to the experience of the war and its later interpretation must be highlighted here.

First, invasion and occupation seemed to open historical possibilities (for Ukrainians) or threaten the closing of historical eras (for Poles). The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (1939) was the height of treason for Poles, whereas for Ukrainians it was and is (among other things) the moment when Western Ukraine joined a Ukrainian state organism.⁴ Likewise, the German invasion of 1941 seemed to offer Ukrainian nationalists grouped within the OUN (Orhanizatsia Ukrainskykh Natsionalistiv, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) a chance to establish an independent Ukraine. For Poles, this (failed) attempt to exploit the cover of German power to establish Ukrainian institutions smacked of panfascism. Second, these opposing ideas of legitimate rule made it all the easier for both occupiers, and especially the Germans, to pursue a policy of divide and rule in areas of mixed Ukrainian and Polish settlement. Third, occupations offered horrible temptations. The first Soviet occupation (1939–1941) decapitated Polish society by deporting the Polish elite to Siberia and Kazakhstan. This left Polish society a more tempting target for Ukrainian nationalists (1943). The German occupation of Eastern Galicia and Volyn (1941–1944) offered Ukrainians a chance to persecute Poles as officers of the state (1941–1942), and later offered Poles a chance to do the reverse (1943–1944). Fourth, occupations set precedents for (and offered training in) attacks on civilians for reasons of national identity. The German occupation in particular was genocidal, and the Holocaust of the Jews set a precedent for the elimination of an entire nation. Fifth, collaboration was rendered all but inevitable by the factors already mentioned (historical possibility, divide and rule, political temptation), as well as by the overwhelming power of the occupiers and by local conditions, which required that communities be protected from partisans. Thus, collaboration was practiced by both sides and was per-

⁴ Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *Etnichni mezhi i derzhavnyi kordon Ukrainy*, Ternopil: Vydavnytstvo Ternopil, 1996, p. 143, gives the historical teleology. But this view is general and uncontroversial in Ukraine, which is not surprising. It is comparable to the Polish idea that a reborn Poland was a natural result of the First World War. Part of the Polish effort to gain a consensus in favor of a new eastern policy, discussed in the epilogue, involved explaining this analogy to the Polish public. See Zdzisław Najder, “Spór o polską politykę wschodnią,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 October 1991, p. 9.

ceived by both sides as intolerable and inexplicable when pursued by the other but natural and forgivable when pursued by one's own. Evaluations (then and now) of what is unforgivable collaboration and what is necessary compromise, of what is aggression and what is self-defense, depend upon one's own point of view and one's idea of legitimacy.

Over the course of the war, new actors emerged and spread modified versions of Polish and Ukrainian ideas of legitimate rule in Eastern Galicia and Volyn. This gave rise to the sixth factor: The legitimate bearers of authority on both sides were no longer political institutions such as parties or governments but partisan armies. In interwar Poland, the Ukrainian nationalist OUN was a far smaller party than the moderate UNDO (Ukrainske Natsionalne Demokratyчне Obyednannia, Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance); when Poland was partitioned in 1939, the UNDO's policy of compromise lost its interlocutor and the party was quickly muscled aside by the OUN. In 1943 the OUN-Bandera formed the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrainska Povstanska Armia, known as the UPA). In Eastern Galicia and Volyn, during the war, the Polish government (in exile in London) was represented in practice by its National Army (Armia Krajowa, also known as the AK). Seventh, the fog of war denied Poles and Ukrainians who might have been inclined to do so the time to understand each other's positions, and provided Poles and Ukrainians willing to escalate conflict with plenty of pretexts and opportunities. In particular, war made it much easier to conflate the actions of particular groups with the intentions of entire nations. Eighth, and related to the previous two (armed groups, fog of war), ethnic ideas of national identity were supported by conditions in which behavior of individuals was evaluated in terms of loyalty or treason.⁵ The OUN was committed to ethnic homogeneity by its own program, but its program gained sup-

⁵ It should be emphasized that the Ukrainian cause was desperate. The massive scale of Western Ukrainian resistance to Soviet rule in particular is only now being appreciated. On Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) tactics against the UPA, see Grzegorz Motyka, "Kombinacje NKVD: UPA," *Karta*, No. 26 (1998), pp. 130-145, and Jeffrey Burds, "Agentura: Soviet Informers' Networks in the Ukrainian Underground in Galicia, 1944-48," *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 11, No. 1, (1997), pp. 89-130. This builds on the massive documentary edifice of the Litopys UPA, edited by Peter Potichnyj. For useful corrective data to some Polish myths about the AK and the end of the war, see Zygmunt Klukowski, *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993; "Dziennik 1944-45," Lublin: Solidarność, 1990; Red Shadow: "A Physician's Memoir of the Soviet Occupation of Eastern Poland, 1944-1956," Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 1997.

porters and coherence in times of war.⁶ It would be too much to say that its policy of eliminating the Polish presence in Eastern Galicia and Volyn (1943–1944) enjoyed general support, but without wide support from local Ukrainians it would have been impossible. Ninth, the enormous suffering of war and occupation seemed to further justify (for western Ukrainians) or further delegitimize (for eastern Poles) the westward shift of the Polish state border in the wake of the Red Army's advance through Ukraine and Poland (1944–1945). Tenth, for western Ukrainians and especially for Poles, the experience of total war delineated clearly who was the enemy and who was not, and this clarity was used by communist regimes as the implemented policies of ethnic cleansing. Thus, the new Polish communist regime's war against Ukrainians living in Poland, could be fought by soldiers from Volyn (1945–1946), and its policy of eliminating the Ukrainian presence in Poland (1947) could enjoy popular support.

These ten factors are not sufficient to explain all the events that are used to illustrate them, nor is this list of ten meant to serve as a summary of these events. Rather, the presentation of opposing ideas of legitimate rule and the ten ways they were exacerbated by war is meant to serve both an explanatory and a methodological purpose. In the narrative description of events that follows, they should cast some light on what might otherwise seem to be the obscure motivations of ethnic cleansers. At the same time, they should offer clues as to how (not) to interpret Ukrainian and Polish sources and memories. National historiographies and personal recollections offer the starting points, the opportunities for comparison and revision, and the foundation for a description of the ethnic cleansing as a crucial episode in postwar European history. At the same time, an adequate historical account of ethnic cleansing would, in its turn, serve as a basis for comparison with national memories of the events in question. This report relies upon such materials, and aims to provide such an account. The cleansing of Ukrainians from southeastern Poland in 1944–1947 is its major concern, but in order to create the appropriate context it begins with the cleansing of Poles from Western Ukraine in 1943.

⁶ “Vid Kongresu Ukrainykykh Natsionalistiv,” from the first (1929) congress of the OUN in Vienna, includes the contention that “Tilky povne usunnennia vsikh okupantiv z ukrainskykh zemel’ vidkrye mozhlivosti dlia shyroko-ho rozvytu Ukrainskoi Natsii v mezhakh vlasnoi derzhavy.” Reproduced in Petro Mirchuk, *Narys istorii orhanizatsii ukrainskykh natsionalistiv*, Munich: Ukrainske Vydavnytstvo, 1968, p. 93.

UKRAINIAN PARTISANS MURDER POLISH CIVILIANS (1943–1944)

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, as amended in September 1939, brought 85 percent of Ukrainians from pre-war Poland under Soviet rule. Although Soviet power was not generally desired in and of itself, for west Ukrainians the major results of the division of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union were the unification of Ukrainian lands within one state organism and the end of the Polish state. For patriotic Ukrainians, this signified the end of centuries of subordination to Polish power—be it the First Republic against which Khmelnytskyi rebelled in the seventeenth century, the Polish aristocracy that kept political power in Eastern Galicia (under Austrian rule) and economic power in Volyn (under Russian rule) in the nineteenth century, or the interwar Second Republic which denied the national aspirations of its Ukrainian minority.⁷ Brutal as it was, the Soviet occupation of Eastern Galicia and Volyn (1939–1941) seemed at first to offer opportunities for Ukrainian nationalism. The Soviets sent about 200,000 Poles to Siberia and encouraged revenge against Polish landholders and state officials. Between 1939 and 1941 tens of thousands of Poles actually fled Soviet West Ukraine, preferring to live under the Nazi General-Government.⁸ From the point of view of west Ukrainian nationalists, whose agenda was Ukraine for Ukrainians, this was a positive step.

Then came Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union (1941), which seemed to present Ukrainian nationalists with a far greater opportunity. The OUN had been founded in 1929 with the goal of forming an independent Ukraine from Polish, Soviet, Romanian, and Czechoslovak territories: In such an endeavor, Germany was the only plausible ally. As the Germans quickly occupied Ukraine in summer 1941, the OUN-Bandera sought to use the umbrella of German power to create institutions of autonomous statehood. Although the Germans would use Ukrainians as soldiers, policemen, bureaucrats, and finally SS troops, this aspiration to independent action was intolerable and rapidly suppressed. Ukrainian nationalists were also disappointed by the German decision to split Ukrainian lands between the General Govern-

⁷ For a brief and balanced introduction to the Ukrainian policy of interwar Poland, see Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994, pp. 583–598.

⁸ This first Soviet occupation of Poland's former eastern territories cannot be treated at any length here. It is the subject of Jan Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

ment and the Reichskommissariat Ukraine; they were also disappointed by the German choice to exploit Ukraine for its resources and Ukrainians as forced labor. Treating the Germans as occupiers rather than allies was a difficult process for the OUN, but from about mid-1942 it is proper to characterize the OUN as anti-German (although the Germans were never its most important enemy).⁹ In early 1943, just as the tide of war was turning against the Germans at Stalingrad, the strongest movement of Ukrainian nationalists, the OUN-Bandera, united and strengthened partisan groups, henceforth called the UPA, to defend the country from all occupiers: Polish, Soviet, and German.

Why did the UPA choose to direct its attacks upon Poles in 1943? Why, in other words, did the national goal of winning independence from powerful occupiers appear to Ukrainian nationalists as an ethnic problem concerning Poles? Even as German and Soviet armies battled each other in Russia, west Ukrainians remembered that Poles and Ukrainians were the historical claimants to Volyn and Eastern Galicia. Most UPA soldiers and nearly all UPA leaders were west Ukrainians. Some were veterans of organized terrorist attacks against Polish colonizers and landholders in the east; a few had taken part in assassination attempts on Polish officials.¹⁰ While the UPA (and west Ukrainians generally) now regarded the interwar Polish state as defunct, Poles in Eastern Galicia and Volyn took a completely different view. These Poles wished to restore their state and did not believe that German or Soviet aggression justified a change in its eastern frontiers.¹¹ UPA leaders apparently be-

⁹ As one Ukrainian scholar put it, the OUN “took the difficult path of struggle against the Germans.” Wolodymyr Trofymowicz, discussion, *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vols. 1-2, p. 126. Here as elsewhere I will reproduce authors’ names as they appear in the cited source.

¹⁰ See Alexander Motyl, “Ukrainian Nationalist Political Violence in Inter-War Poland, 1921-1939,” *East European Quarterly*, vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 45-54.

¹¹ There were minor exceptions, but this was the consensus in the field and in London. See for example Sosnkowski to Rowecki, 3 November 1940, “Instrukcja Nr. 6,” *Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach*, London: Studium Polski Podziemnej, London 1970, vol. 1, p. 318; “Przynależność ziem wschodnich do Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,” zesp. A.9.V., tecz. 39, MSW, Dział Narodowosciowy, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego, London; “Tajne,” 3 August 1943, zesp. A.9.V., tecz. 34, MSW, Dział Narodowosciowy, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego. For some representative opinions from the Polish left in Galicia, see “Postawa polityczna społeczeństwa polskiego,” [December 1942], CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2400/5. sygn. 203/XV-27, s. 53-54, as reproduced in Mikołaj Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów polsko-ukraińskich*, Warsaw 1992, vol. 2, pp. 231-232. A more general review ordered by the AK is “Stanowisko ugrupowań politycznych w kraju

lieved that the Second World War would end with the exhaustion of both Germany and Russia, and that Ukraine's final enemy would be a resurrected Poland unwilling to abandon its eastern lands. From this perspective, Ukrainians had to strike during the war, before a revived Poland could direct forces and settlers from central Poland.¹² The temptation for such preemptive action was heightened by expectations of a Polish offensive.

As Ukrainians knew or suspected, the Polish government-in-exile and the Polish underground considered this chain of events most likely and planned just such an offensive.¹³ From a Polish point of view, the defeat of both Germany and Russia would open the field in the east. As early as 1941, it was understood that a future uprising against German power would involve a war against Ukrainians for Eastern Galicia and probably Volyn as well, a war that had to be prosecuted if possible as a quick "armed occupation."¹⁴ The AK's plans for an anti-German uprising, as formulated in 1942, anticipated a war with Ukrainians for the ethnographically Ukrainian territories that fell within Poland's pre-war boundaries.¹⁵ By 1942 the formation of sizable Polish partisan units in

wobec spraw ukraińskich," 27 May 1943, CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2266/3, sygn. 202/III-10, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, pp. 233-240. Beware: Siwicki's summaries of his documents are often erroneous, and usually tendentious.

¹² The Ukrainian attitude that "the Germans might leave, but the Poles will stay," was well known to the AK leadership, though it did not expect the radical conclusions that would be drawn in 1943. See also Grzegorz Motyka, "Od Wołynia do akcji 'Wisła'," *Więź* 473 (March 1998), p. 110; Grzegorz Motyka and Rafał Wnuk, *Pany i rezuny: Współpraca AK-WiN i UPA 1945-1947*, Warsaw: Volumen, 1997, p. 53; John Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, Englewood: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1990, p. 158. For other examples of strategic justifications for ethnic cleansing, see Norman Naimark, *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe*, Seattle: Jackson School of International Studies, 1998, pp. 24-29.

¹³ See for example Sikorski and Kot to Ratajski, 23 June 1941, "Instrukcja dla Kraju No. 2," *Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach*, vol. II, p. 8; Sikorski to Rowecki, 8 March 1942, "Instrukcja osobista i tajna dla dowódcy krajowego," *ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

¹⁴ Meldunek 89, Radiogram No. M.89, L.dz. 78/42, "Meldunek specjalny – Sprawa Ukraińska," Rowecki to Sikorski, 15 November 1941, Oddział VI, sygn. 3.1.1.1.1, Studium Polskiej Podziemnej, London. The version in volume two of *Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach* is missing some important lines on p. 142.

¹⁵ Rowecki to Central, 22 June 1942, "Meldunek Nr. 132 Postawa wobec Rosji i nasze możliwości na Ziemiach Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej," *Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach*, vol. II, pp. 277-278; and most importantly Ro-

the east could not but remind Ukrainians of Polish territorial claims.

Ukrainian cooperation with Nazi Germany had discredited Ukrainian partisans as potential allies to Poles;¹⁶ and as defenders of the pre-war frontiers of Poland, AK leaders had nothing to offer Ukrainians.¹⁷ The government-in-exile and the AK prosecuted the war in order to restore the Polish Republic, an aim taken for granted by Polish soldiers and supported by promises from the other Western allies. Cooler heads in London discussed ways to cooperate with Ukrainians. However, even at its most generous (in spring 1943), the Polish government-in-exile could offer no more than autonomy within pre-war borders.¹⁸ The advent of the UPA and its attacks on Polish civilians (1943–1944) killed any spirit of compromise on the Polish side, although it should be said that the main reaction in London was confusion and frustration, and the first reaction of the AK was to attempt to cooperate with Ukrainian nationalists to prevent anarchy.¹⁹ The crucial matter, though, is the basic disagreement between Ukrainians and Poles over the legitimate rule of particular territories, sharpened by the Poles' uncompromising belief in their continuing right to lands populated by Ukrainians and fear of making concessions in time of war.

Why Polish civilians? Why did the UPA's strategic problem,

wecki to Sikorski, "Plan Powstania," 8 September 1942, *Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach*, *ibid.*, pp. 328-330, 337-338. Documents such as these are cited as examples of the true attitudes of the AK leadership in their communications with one another. The UPA was not privy to these discussions. But lower-level conversations between Polish and Ukrainian partisans were frequent, with neither side hiding its general convictions about these matters.

¹⁶ "Postawa polityczna społeczeństwa polskiego," CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2400/5. sygn. 203/XV-27, s. 53-54, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, pp. 229-230.

¹⁷ Michael MacQueen, "Notatki z podziemia: The Polish National Army and the National Minorities, 1939-1943," Master's Thesis, University of Michigan, 1983, pp. 56, 60ff; Ryszard Torzecki, "Kontakty polsko-ukraińskie w polityce polskiego rządu emigracyjnego i podziemia (1939-1944)," *Dzieje najnowsze*, vol. 13, Nos. 1-2, 1981, p. 332 and *passim*.

¹⁸ Torzecki, "Kontakty polsko-ukraińskie," pp. 337-340.

¹⁹ Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, Biuro Ministra-Wydział Polityczny, L.dz. 1900/WPol/44, London, 8 January 1944, Oddział VI, sygn. 3.3.3.13.2 (36); Sztab Naczelnego Wodza, Oddział Specjalny, L.dz.719/Tjn.44, London, 28 January 1944, Oddział VI, sygn. 3.3.3.13.2 (37); Sztab Naczelnego Wodza, Oddział Specjalny, L.dz.2366/tjn.43, 17 May 1943, Oddział VI, sygn. 3.1.3.3.2 (34); Sztab Naczelnego Wodza, Oddział Specjalny, L.dz.108/Tjn.44, London, 8 January 1944, Oddział VI, sygn. 3.1.1.13.2 (22), all in *Studium Polskiej Podziemnej*, London.

conceived in ethnic terms, occasion mass murder?²⁰ Unlike the German and Russian enemies, the Polish enemy was represented by very large numbers of civilians—dominating Lwów and other cities (the Jews were most highly represented in small towns), more than a third of the population of Eastern Galicia, somewhat fewer in Volyn and in villages, but present everywhere. In the lands of Volyn and Eastern Galicia under Polish rule, Poles totaled something over two million in 1939, down to perhaps 1.6 million in 1943.²¹ In the minds of many patriotic Western Ukrainians, this Polish presence was an illegitimate occupation, symbolized most powerfully by the colonies (this was the official term) of Polish settlers established in the 1920s and 1930s. The OUN (and thus the UPA) accepted a totalistic form of integral nationalism, according to which Ukrainian freedom required ethnic homogeneity. The Polish enemy could therefore only be defeated by the removal of Poles from Ukrainians lands.²² Soviets and Germans had begun the task, the Soviets by deporting Poles between 1939 and 1941, the Germans by providing examples of and training in genocide since. Many of the UPA's soldiers were former Wehrmacht soldiers, policemen, or Waffen-SS troops; more generally the example of German nationality policy must have demoralized the Ukrainian population (as it did civilian populations elsewhere, for example in Poland.)

One way to mark the beginning of large-scale UPA operations is the defection of 5,000 Ukrainian policemen, who took their weapons to Volynn forests in March 1943. Having left German service, Ukrainian partisans threatened to liquidate Polish villages if Poles took their place,²³ and eliminated entire villages in April 1943 on grounds of Polish

²⁰ Ukrainian sources emphasize the hundreds of Ukrainians killed as a result of actions by ethnic Poles in the German police, and Polish retaliations against Ukrainians who appeared to benefit from German rule. These events, though important in their own right, were probably not important to the initial strategic calculations of the UPA, nor to the decision to cleanse Poles. See W. Kosyk, "La tragédie polono-ukrainienne (1942-1945)," *L'Ukraine*, 277-278, (July-December 1997), pp. 51-53.

²¹ Peter Eberhardt, who has devoted the most attention to such demographic estimates, proposes the figure 2,065,000 for 1939. See "Przemiany narodowościowe na Ukrainie XX Wieku," Warsaw: *Obóz*, 1994, p. 150.

²² For a similar analysis see Wolodymyr Chanas, "Problem genezy polskiej samoobrony w Galicji Wschodniej," *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vol. 3, pp. 90-91.

²³ "Obywatele polscy!" 18 May 1943, CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2400/1, sygn. 203/XV, t. 5, s. 224, reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, pp. 166-167.

collaboration.²⁴ This forced Poles to form self-defense units, and thus to ask the Germans for arms, which to Ukrainians looked like collaboration, and so prompted further attacks. But while Ukrainian nationalists in Volyn were threatening Poles with death for collaboration, in May 1943, Ukrainian nationalists in Eastern Galicia were joining (despite official OUN-Bandera opposition) the new Waffen-SS Division “Galizien.” The hypocrisy of all this does not preempt the sincerity of this move. Ukrainian nationalists saw their own cooperation with the Nazis as a justified means to the legitimate end of creating a Ukrainian state, but perceived Polish cooperation with occupiers as simple perfidy.²⁵ This double standard derived from a basic sense of entitlement to Eastern Galicia and Volyn, and a complete denial of the Poles’ rights in these lands. In other words, it was rooted in the same basic disagreement about legitimate rule over territory, sharpened perhaps by the demoralizing effects of occupation, probably by the German policy of divide and rule, and certainly by the OUN’s integral nationalism.

By February 1943 the OUN appears to have initiated a policy of murdering Polish civilians as a means of resolving the Polish question in Ukraine. The attacks began in Volyn, where the Polish presence was weakest. It is as yet unproven, but certainly plausible, that the murderous violence unleashed against Poles was meant to be general.²⁶ It is clear that from its beginnings in March 1943, the policy of liquidating Poles proved popular within the UPA and found support among (often land-

²⁴ “In the village of Kutyl, in the Szumski region, was burned an entire Polish colony (86 farms), and the population was liquidated for cooperation with the Gestapo and the German authorities.” “In the Werbski region the Polish colony Nowa Nowica (40 farms) was burned for cooperation with the German authorities. The population was liquidated.” “Zvit pro boiovi dii UPA na Volyni,” [April 1943], reproduced in Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *OUN-UPA v roky viiny: Novi dokumenty i materialy*, Kyiv: Dnipro, 1996, p. 311.

²⁵ Consider the judgement of the congress of the OUN, issued as the Polish presence was being eradicated from Volyn: “The Polish imperialist leadership is the lackey (vysluzhnyk) of foreign imperialisms and the enemy of the freedom of nations. It is trying to yoke Polish minorities on Ukrainian lands and the Polish national masses to a struggle with Ukrainian nationalism, and is helping German and Soviet imperialism to eradicate the Ukrainian nation.” Political Resolution 13, Third Extraordinary Congress of the OUN, 21-25 August 1943, reproduced in *OUN v svitli postanov Velykykh Zboriv, Konferentsii ta inshykh dokumentiv z borotby 1929-1955 r.*, OUN, 1955, pp. 117-118.

²⁶ For corroborating evidence see Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland’s Holocaust*, Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 1998, pp. 246-247.

starved) Ukrainian peasants in Volyn.²⁷ Ukrainians in ethnically mixed villages and towns were offered material inducements to join in the slaughter of their neighbors—although Polish recollections prove that a large number of Ukrainians risked (and sometimes lost) their own lives by warning or sheltering Poles.²⁸ UPA partisans and Ukrainian peasants nevertheless killed 40,000 Polish civilians in Volyn in spring and summer 1943.²⁹ On a single day, July 11, 1943, the UPA attacked 167 localities and killed about 10,000 Poles. Ukrainian partisans burned homes, shot, or forced those who tried to flee back inside; they used sickles and pitchforks to kill those they captured outside. In some cases, beheaded, crucified, dismembered, or disemboweled bodies were displayed to encourage remaining Poles to flee.³⁰

²⁷ Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: sprawa ukraińska w czasie II wojny światowej na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw: PWN, 1993, p. 238.

²⁸ Examples of such courageous generosity drawn from Volyn in 1943 and Galicia in 1944: *Wspomnienia* II/17 (older Ukrainians hid Poles while younger ones destroyed their houses), II/63t (a Ukrainian priest tries to protect Poles and is killed himself; UPA soldiers give arms to Poles for self-defense), II/1914 (local Ukrainian man shelters a mother and children from an UPA attack), II/1250/kw (Ukrainian neighbors warn a Polish family to flee), II/2110 (Ukrainian family shelters Polish family afraid to sleep at home; later, the survivor told by Ukrainian to flee after family is caught at home and killed), II/106t (Ukrainian neighbors warn of UPA attacks), II/1286/2kw (parents saved by wife of UPA officer, though father later caught and killed). These individual recollections serve as reminders of the limits of inevitable generalizations about the behavior of national groups. It is of course also worth repeating that the UPA was always a regional organization whose membership was at its peak 0.1 percent of the Ukrainian population. One Polish woman (II/1265/2v), a courier for a partisan group, was aided at various points by Ukrainian relatives of a friend (indirect warnings of coming attacks), a German (who felt betrayed by Ukrainians), and a Czech. The theme of courageous Czechs, interestingly enough, appears repeatedly, for example in II/1914. All records in the Archiwum Wschodnie, Osrodek Karta, Warsaw.

²⁹ A responsible Polish estimate is 50,700 total civilian deaths in Volyn and Galicia, of which 34,647 have been documented. See “Komunikat polsko-ukraiński,” from the conference “Polacy i Ukraińcy 1918-1948: trudne pytania,” held at Podkowa Lesna, 7-9 June 1994. The individual researcher who wished to learn the names and fates of several thousand Polish civilians in Volyn and Galicia could begin with *Wspomnienia* section of the Archiwum Wschodnie.

³⁰ For a sample of eyewitness accounts, see “*Wspomnienia*” II/36, II/2110, II/1142, II/594, II/1146, II/1172, II/2353, II/2660, II/2667, II/2506, II/2451, II/2451/3-8, II/2373, II/1914, Archiwum Wschodnie, Osrodek Karta, Warsaw. See also “Poselstwo RP to MSZ in London,” 24 February 1944, *Zespol A.9.V.*, tecz. 8B, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego. This tactic was not re-

Thousands of Polish men and women escaped to Volyn marshes and forests in 1943, joining Soviet partisan armies fighting the UPA and the Wehrmacht.³¹ On the other hand, some Poles took their revenge on Ukrainians while serving as German policemen. The majority of Poles who survived simply fled west, bringing news of the slaughter to Kholm, Lviv, and Peremyshl. For the Polish government-in-exile in London, the tragedy was both incomprehensible and a distraction from its own war planning. (Although local Polish units would take matters into their own hands, there is no evidence that the Polish government contemplated a policy of general revenge against Ukrainian civilians.) Polish partisans of all political stripes attacked the UPA, assassinated prominent Ukrainian civilians, and burned Ukrainian villages.³² UPA attacks on civilians in the winter of 1943–1944 were frustrated by Polish self-defense. By this time, the AK had initiated a national armed rising known as Operation “Burza,” which was understood locally as an attempt to affirm the Polish presence in Volyn and Eastern Galicia. In January 1944, the AK formed the 27th Infantry Division of Volyn, 6,558 strong, tasked to engage the UPA and then the Wehrmacht. That spring, the division fought its way through German lines and UPA attacks to join the Red Army, only to be dissolved for its pains by the Soviets.³³

Throughout the spring of 1944, the AK and the UPA fought fitful engagements for Eastern Galicia, and its crown jewel Lviv. The UPA attacked Polish civilians, but Polish preparedness and Ukrainian warnings limited the deaths to perhaps 5,000–10,000.³⁴ In July 1944, the Red

served to Poles. See Burds, “Agentura,” p. 108; Piotrowski, *Poland’s Holocaust*, pp. 253–255.

³¹ This episode is forgotten in Poland and was denied by Khrushchev to Stalin. It is proven by personal recollections of Poles in the Archiwum Wschodnie, documented in AK reports in Studium Polskiej Podziemnej in London, and will be discussed on the basis of Soviet sources by Jeffrey Burds in his forthcoming book.

³² For examples of such Polish attacks see Michal Klimacki, “Geneza i organizacja polskiej samoobrony na Wołyniu i w Małopolsce Wschodniej podczas II wojny światowej,” in *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vol. 1, p. 70, and Roman Strilka, “Geneza polskiej samoobrony na Wołyniu i jej roli w obronie ludności polskiej,” in *ibid.*, p. 82.

³³ For a list of engagements with the UPA and the Wehrmacht, see Ihor Iliuszyn, “Geneza i działania bojowe 27 Wołyńskiej Dywizji Piechoty Armii Krajowej,” in *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vol. 3, pp. 154–157.

³⁴ See for example “Wspomnienia” II/1758, II/17, II/2199/p, II/1286/2kw, Archiwum Wschodnie.

Army (aided by the AK) drove the Germans from Lviv. AK units were then dissolved under pressure from the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), and the Red Army. Ukrainian partisans had already escaped to the mountains, where they would begin a desperate struggle against Soviet rule.³⁵ From mid-1944, the main enemy of the OUN and the UPA was not the Poles but the Soviets. The Soviet occupation of Volyn and Eastern Galicia in July 1944 places the ethnic cleansings and the Ukrainian–Polish war in depressing perspective. The AK was wrong to think that Operation “Burza” could save Lviv for Poland; the UPA was wrong to think that Polish civilians stood in the way of Lviv’s incorporation into Ukraine. To be sure, an extended Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was not what the UPA had in mind, but Stalin’s plans made moot the Polish–Ukrainian struggle for territory.³⁶

SOVIET AND POLISH COMMUNIST REGIMES DEPORT POLES AND UKRAINIANS (1944–1946)

The Soviet-sponsored “Polish Committee of National Liberation” was installed in Lublyn in July 1944. As Ukrainian and Polish partisans fought desperately and separately to preserve influence over territory, Stalin and his chosen Poles moved quickly to alter political and demographic frontiers. Their idea, the exchange of Polish and Ukrainian populations, was not a new one. Stalin had of course been deporting huge populations within the Soviet Union in the 1930s and during the war.³⁷

Deportation, however, was a part of Polish history as well. Even before the mass killings of Poles by Ukrainians in 1943, indeed even before the war, Polish nationalists in the tradition of Roman Dmowski’s National Democrats (Endecja) had dreamed of expelling every Ukrainian

³⁵ Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: Sprawa ukraińska w czasie II wojny światowej na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw: PWN, 1993, p. 294.

³⁶ It is easier to make these judgements in retrospect and in abstraction from the very human hopes that what followed would have to be better, and the very human failings when this turned out not to be the case. For useful sources of this kind see the Klukowski diaries, cited above.

³⁷ The standard account is now Terry Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 70 (December 1998), pp. 813–861. Martin estimates that victims of ethnic cleansings were about one-third of the victims of the Great Terror.

from Poland.³⁸ After July 1943, some political thinkers of other orientations also concluded that expulsions were the only alternative to granting the Ukrainians all the territory east of the Sian and Buh rivers. This would have meant expelling about five million Ukrainians east of Poland's pre-war borders, beyond the Zbruch River, and in return taking ethnic Poles from the Soviet Union or an independent Ukraine.³⁹ In some versions of this idea, Ukrainians who managed to escape deportation could be dispersed throughout the country.⁴⁰ As early as 1943–1944, Polish communists eerily dropped language about the rights of minorities from their programmatic documents.⁴¹

The removal of Ukrainians was one of several examples of Polish communism's appropriation of Polish ethnic nationalism and wartime suffering—as well as its betrayal of more tolerant traditions of the Polish left voiced even in the worst hours of the war. However, in the summer of 1944 it was Stalin's preferences, rather than Polish traditions of any kind, that counted. The population exchanges were preceded by, and based upon, a Soviet–Polish border accord that no Polish nationalist (and few Polish communists) found acceptable. A secret agreement dated July 27, 1944, shifted the Soviet border to the east (once again, as in 1939) thereby removing 85 percent of Ukrainians from Poland, leaving only about 700,000. Most of interwar Poland's pre-war Ukrainian minority thus left Poland without physically moving at all.⁴²

³⁸ "Postawa polityczna społeczeństwa polskiego," December 1942, CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2400/5, sygn. 203/XV-27, s. 53-54, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, pp. 229-230; "Stanowisko ugrupowań politycznych w kraju wobec spraw ukraińskich," CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2266/3, sygn. 202/III-10, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, p. 234. See also Torzecki, "Kontakty polsko-ukraińskie," pp. 335-336.

³⁹ "Omówienie pracy Beta," CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2400/1, sygn. 203/XV, t. 6 s. 18-20, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, pp. 251-252; "Maksymalny oraz racjonalny program rozwiązania problemu ukraińskiego i białoruskiego w Polsce," CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2225/10, sygn. 202/II-51, s. 170-194, *ibid.*, p. 279; "Wytyczne dyskusji nad zagadnieniem mniejszości narodowych," CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2400/8, sygn. 203/XV-46, s. 124-130, *ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

⁴⁰ "Zagadnienie ukraińskie i projekt jego rozwiązania," CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2271/4, sygn. 202/III/203, s. 126-143, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, p. 262.

⁴¹ See Krystyna Kersten, "The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict Under Communist Rule," *Acta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 73, (1996), p. 139.

⁴² "Porozumienie między Polskim Komitetem Wyzwolenia Narodowego a Rządem ZSSR o polsko-radzieckiej granicy państwowej," Archiwum Akt Nowych, PKWN, XIV/17, k. 15-21, as reproduced in Eugeniusz Misilo, ed., *Re-*

Within the borders envisioned by the Soviet–Polish agreement, Ukrainians constituted only about 3 percent of the Polish population. The Soviet policy, articulated a few weeks later, was to remove them. The agreement on “evacuation” signed on September 9, 1944, by Nikita Khrushchev, as People’s Commissar for Ukraine, and Edward Osobka-Morawski, head of the “Polish Committee of National Liberation” installed in Lublyn, was part of a general Stalinist (and Allied) policy of the relocation of peoples. It mandated that Poland evacuate “all citizens” of Ukrainian background who wished to resettle in Soviet Ukraine, and that Soviet Ukraine do the same for Poles and Jews.⁴³ The fiercest Polish advocates of the total expulsion of Ukrainians from Poland to the Soviet Union, Poles in Eastern Galicia, now found themselves in the Soviet Union, among the perhaps 1.3 million Poles left in the enlarged Soviet Ukraine. Most of them left the USSR for Poland within its new borders, thereby effectively ending hundreds of years of Polish settlement in Western Ukraine.⁴⁴ Roughly 250,000 had already fled Volyn to escape the UPA, and about 788,000 preferred “repatriation” to life in a Ukrainian Soviet Republic.⁴⁵ In general they were not forcibly deported, but

patriacja czy deportacja?, Warsaw: Archiwum Ukrainkie, 1996, pp. 17-18. Ukrainian communists were denied the Kholm (Chelm) region, which they had pressed for as the front advanced. A week before the secret agreement, Khrushchev wrote to Stalin asking that these territories be added to the Ukrainian SSR. This would have brought Khrushchev’s wife’s birthplace into the Soviet Union. See “Chelmska SSR,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 February 1998; “Sentymenty Chruszczowowej,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23 February 1998, p. 2. Given the unbelievable brutality of Khrushchev’s pacification of the Western Ukraine, it is hard to evaluate these sentiments.

⁴³ “Układ między PKWN a Rządem Ukraińskiej SSR w sprawie przesiedlenia ludności ukraińskiej z terytorium Polski do USRR i obywateli polskich z terytorium USRR do Polski,” Archiwum Akt Nowych, VI Oddział, PKWN, 233/12. k. 77-78, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 30-41.

⁴⁴ For a sense of the mood, see “Obszar Lwów to Centrala,” 11 September 1944, “Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach,” London: Studium Polski Podziemnej, 1989, vol. VI, p. 419. Among other consequences, this severely weakened NKVD operations against Ukrainian partisans, as most informers had been Poles. See Burds, “Agentura,” pp. 118-119.

⁴⁵ A far higher proportion of Poles in Ukraine were willing to be “repatriated” than Poles in Lithuania and Belarus. Also, Poles in Western Ukraine, the site of UPA attacks, were more likely to leave than Poles in central Ukraine. These are reasons to believe that the acceptance of “repatriation” was a result of wartime experience, and in this sense a result of the UPA’s ethnic cleansing. Polish recollections support this interpretation. See “Wspomnienia” II/2266/p, II/1914, II/2373, II/1286/2kw, Archiwum Wschodnie. It is telling that even the

they were effectively coerced by the prospect of Stalinist rule and the memory of Ukrainian nationalism.

The Soviet–Polish “evacuations” posed greater problems on the Polish side of the new border. Ukrainians were less willing to leave their ancestral lands in southeastern Poland (or, from the Ukrainian point of view, the “territory beyond the Curzon line,” or “Zakerzonnia”). True, villages of Lemkos (some of them russophiles who identified with Great Russian rather than with Ukrainian or Ruthenian nationality) chose resettlement in early 1945.⁴⁶ However, generally speaking, only those Ukrainians who departed during the first few months of the operation, in late 1944, truly did so of their own volition. In early 1945, the Polish state began to exert pressure. Ukrainians were denied the right to own land and saw their schools closed.⁴⁷ Orders went out to arrest all young men who had not registered for repatriation.⁴⁸ Most decisively, the Polish regime's internal security forces and new army began to attack Ukrainian villages, killing civilians in a new round of atrocities.⁴⁹ UPA forces and

émigré organizations lobbying for a revision of the border with Ukraine did not counsel Poles to return to their former homesteads in western Ukraine. See “Biuletyny – No. 62,” Związki Ziemi Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej, 15 September 1947, zesp. A.9.V., tecz. 10, MSW, Dział Narodowosciowy, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego.

⁴⁶ Some Lemkos were disappointed that their lands were not simply absorbed by the Soviet Union. Said one, “We thought that we, together with our Russian [rus'kyi] land, would find ourselves in the boundaries of the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Union would turn our Lemko region into a beautiful Switzerland . . .” Cited in Serhiichyk, *Etnichni mezhi i derzhavnyi kordon Ukrainy*, p. 143; see also “Informacja z prasy ukraińskiej nr. 2,” zesp. A.9.V., tecz. 9, MSW, Dział Narodowosciowy, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego. Some Lemko villagers were apparently convinced by NKVD officers that a far worse fate awaited them in postwar Poland. Wspomnienie II/2196/p, Archiwum Wschodnie.

⁴⁷ “Zarządzenie ogólne wojewody rzeszowskiego,” 22 February 1945, CA MSW, X/15, k. 137, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 83–84.

⁴⁸ “Rozkaz komendanta Milicji Obywatelskiej w Przemyślu,” 10 March 1945, CA MSW, X/15, k. 133, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, p. 90.

⁴⁹ Report of OUN regional leader Volodymyr Kit, 20 February 1945, CA MSW, X/36, (4393), reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 81–82; Report of Korpus Bezpieczenstwa Wewnetrznego battalion commander Szopinski, 24 March 1945, CAW, Korpus Bezpieczenstwa Wewnetrznego, 1580/75/147, k. 2, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, p. 94; Report of Korpus Bezpieczenstwa Wewnetrznego battalion commander Szopinski, 6 April 1945, CAW, Korpus Bezpieczenstwa Wewnetrznego, 1580/75/147, k. 10, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 104–105.

spontaneous Ukrainian self-defense groups replied by destroying Polish communities.⁵⁰

Afterwards, Polish communist propaganda tended to conflate the cleansing of Volyn in 1943 with the battles of 1945 in southeastern Poland, so as not to remind Poles of eastern lands lost to the Soviet Union.⁵¹ The differences are important. Volyn in 1943 was the centre of UPA operations. In 1945 in Poland, UPA units probably never numbered more than 2,000 troops (along with perhaps 3,000 OUN members).⁵² True, Ukrainians were a demographic majority in many areas of the border strip running from Kholm almost to Krakow, and UPA soldiers were at first better organized than the Polish soldiers they confronted. True, the UPA did continue to kill Polish civilians and destroy Polish property. However, this was now usually part of a more or less proportional response to attacks by Poles: Polish soldiers, Polish security forces, Polish right-wing nationalist partisans (groups that had remained outside the AK command), or Polish security forces dressed as partisans, or indeed Polish partisans disguised as soldiers. In Poland in 1945, it is likely that more Ukrainians were killed by Poles than Poles were killed by Ukrainians. In both cases a rough estimate would be in the low thousands. The crucial difference between 1943 and 1945 was that of state power. In May 1945 the Polish state founded its internal security troops (Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnetrznego), and by July had begun to control its borders (recognized by the Allies at Yalta that month). In Volyn in 1943, Ukrainians and Poles had used (weakening) German authorities against each other; in southeastern Poland in 1945 the (strengthening) state was, if not exactly on the side of the ethnic Poles, certainly set decisively against the ethnic Ukrainians.

In the spring of 1945, the inexorable shift of power forced Ukrainians to leave. When Polish soldiers burned their villages, many Ukrainians saw no recourse but to accept "repatriation." Continued attacks by nationalist partisans had the same effect. In one particularly horrific case, Polish nationalist partisans (Narodowe Sily Zbrojne) posed as

⁵⁰ See the announcements of revenge for particular attacks in Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, OUN, sygn. IX/63.

⁵¹ Postwar Polish communist propaganda is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to note here that it satisfied neither Ukrainians nor Poles from Ukraine: Ukrainians were portrayed as fascist collaborators linked to the Nazis by mindless brutality, but at the same time the brutalities against the Poles of Volyn were not mentioned because of the taboo placed on the territories Poland lost to the Soviet Union.

⁵² This is the figure for UPA troops accepted by Orest Subtelny. See his *Ukraine: A History*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, p. 490.

soldiers returning from the German front to enter the village of Wierzchowiny, then killed 197 civilians.⁵³ A local official charged with organizing the expulsions from the Peremyshl area complained that Ukrainians fleeing Polish attacks were overwhelming his office. "There are cases," he wrote, "of Ukrainian populations abandoning whole villages, escaping as they are, and reporting en masse to the Soviet plenipotentiary, demanding immediate evacuation."⁵⁴ Although this extreme intimidation was less direct than means that would be pursued in the months to come, it clearly affected the calculations of many of the 208,000 Ukrainians who left Poland during the first eight months of 1945.

From the beginning, Ukrainian partisans of the OUN and UPA had urged Ukrainians to remain at home, regarding the "Zakerzonskyi krai" as part of Western Ukraine, and "repatriation" as a device to exterminate Ukrainians in Soviet camps and thereby destroy the Ukrainian nation.⁵⁵ UPA soldiers set to work blowing up train tracks and locomotives, destroying bridges, assassinating officials charged with "repatriation," and setting traps for Polish Army units tasked to assist the process.⁵⁶ They also fatefully decided to burn depopulated Ukrainian villages, to prevent them from being resettled by Poles. This created a sense of general chaos and desperation that Polish communists exploited.⁵⁷

During the first half of 1945, Ukrainians and Poles in southeastern Poland still had some margin to maneuver. The consolidation of

⁵³ "Telefonogram I sekretarza," 10 June 1945, Archiwum Akt Nowych, VI Oddzial, KC PZPR, 295/VII-181, k. 148, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 132-133.

⁵⁴ "Pismo przedstawiciela rejonowego Rządu Tymczasowego RP do spraw ewakuacji ludności ukraińskiej," 6 March 1945, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, p. 85; see also "Pismo przedstawiciela rejonowego Rządu Tymczasowego RP do spraw ewakuacji ludności ukraińskiej," 7 March 1945, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 86-87.

⁵⁵ "Do ukrains'koho naselennia zakhidnykh okraiin ukraiiins'kykh zemel'," 19 October 1944, Archiwum Panstwowe w Rzeszowie, H-12, t. 5, k. 79, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 64-66. See also "Do ukraintsiv Lemkivshchyny, Posiannia i Kholmshchyny," March 1945, Ts.D.A.H.U, f. 1, op. 23, spr. 1471, ark. 38-39, reprinted in *Deportatsii*, Lviv: Natsionalna Akademia Nauk Ukrainy, 1996, vol. 1, pp. 471-473. For an interesting OUN propaganda document see "Instruktsiia ch. 2/45 v spravi posylennia propahandyvnoii roboty v tereni," 20 April 1945, AP Rzeszów, H-11, t. 3, k. 78-80, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 110-114.

⁵⁶ For relevant UPA reports from spring 1946 see "Centralne Archiwum MSWiA," UPA, sygn. X/40.

⁵⁷ For the UPA's attempt to explain the policy of burning, see "Polacy przesiedlency," December 1945, Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, UPA, X/81.

communist rule encouraged the UPA to cooperate with the anti-communist descendants of the AK (dissolved in January 1945), Polish partisans known from September 1945 as Wolność i Niezawisłość (Freedom and Independence, or AK-WiN). The UPA and Polish partisans reached a truce in the spring of 1945, which reduced attacks on civilians.⁵⁸ Also by the spring of 1945, “repatriated” Ukrainians were returning to Poland (often by claiming to be ethnic Poles and thus re-“repatriating”), bringing with them horrifying accounts of Soviet Ukraine. Ukrainian civilians now organized for the right to remain in Poland. In July 1945, a delegation of Ukrainians defended their constitutional rights in Warsaw at a meeting at the Ministry of Public Administration. A sample of the replies they received suggested that worse was to come. “Although the Citizens are unanimous in wishing to remain here, I think that this will be impossible,” said the delegate from the Council of Ministers. “After the understanding reached with the Soviet Union to establish an ethnographic frontier, we have a tendency to be a national state (państwo narodowe), and not a state of nationalities (państwo narodowościowe). We do not want to do anyone harm, but we do wish to remove the problem of national minorities.” As the west Ukrainian communist Mykola Korolko concluded (as, incongruously, a representative of Lublyn), “If Poland is to be a national state, there is no alternative to resettling Ukrainians to Ukraine.”⁵⁹

In late summer of 1945, Polish authorities officially renounced the legal fiction of the “voluntary” character of “repatriation.” After the Soviet plenipotentiary for repatriation affairs requested the use of force, on September 3, 1945, Polish authorities ordered three infantry divisions to forcibly resettle remaining Ukrainians to the Soviet Union.⁶⁰ These forces were already in the area, tasked since May 1945 to destroy the UPA.⁶¹ They had enjoyed no great success in military operations, but their use against civilians proved effective—and brutal. The ranks of two of the three divisions were filled by ethnic Poles from Volyn, some of whom now exploited their positions as soldiers of the state to extract personal revenge. Polish soldiers killed hundreds of Ukrainian civilians as they forced

⁵⁸ There was even some, very limited, cooperation. See Grzegorz Motyka and Rafał Wnuk, *Pani i rezuny: Współpraca AK-WiN i UPA 1945-1947*, Warsaw: Volumen, 1997, pp. 76-193.

⁵⁹ “Protokół konferencji w Ministerstwie Administracji Publicznej z udziałem delegatów ludności ukraińskiej,” Archiwum Akt Nowych, VI Oddział, KC PZPR, 295/VII-158, k. 1-7, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 147-154.

⁶⁰ Eugeniusz Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, Warsaw: Archiwum Ukraińskie, 1993, introduction, p. 15.

⁶¹ Kersten, “The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict,” p. 145.

about 23,000 to evacuate the country in late 1945.

Just as the Polish state was harnessing the desire of some of its ethnically Polish citizens for revenge against the UPA, its policies were driving its ethnically Ukrainian citizens into the UPA's arms. At this point, the UPA accepted the mantle of defender of Ukrainians' right to remain in Poland. However, despite increasing public support, its overall position was very grim. The UPA in Poland could resist direct attacks for only a limited time, and public support meant little if the Polish state could disassemble the public. In this mood, troops were ordered to execute stoically their final duty to their homeland.⁶² The UPA pressed on, preparing comprehensive resistance to expulsions. Measures ranged now from agitation of Polish soldiers to assassination of Polish "repatriation" committees to the burning of abandoned villages, but excluded (in principle) attacks on Polish civilians.

In April 1946 Polish authorities organized the three infantry divisions already engaged and other army formations, border troops, and security forces into Operational Group "Rzeszow," tasked to complete the expulsion of Ukrainians from Poland. Villages that had earlier resisted expulsion were now violently pacified. Hurried to fulfill a quota, the operational subgroups moved from village to village, forcing inhabitants into convoys bound for Soviet Ukraine; 252,000 more Ukrainians were deported between April and June 1946. During the entire period of "repatriations," between October 1944 and June 1946, 482,000 Ukrainians departed for the Soviet Union. In rough terms, 300,000 were forced to do so, 100,000 were effectively coerced by nearby violence or homelessness, and the rest chose to leave.

THE POLISH COMMUNIST REGIME DISPERSES UKRAINIANS: PLANS (1947)

After Operation "Rzeszow," in late 1946, the Polish politburo and general staff thought that the Ukrainian problem had been resolved. By early 1947, the Polish general staff recognized that more Ukrainians had escaped deportation than they had expected, and asked the politburo for authorization to eliminate the "remnants."⁶³ Because the Soviet Un-

⁶² "Nakaz usim komandyram viddiliv i pidviddiliv UPA, boiivok ta inshykh zbroinykh chastyn na tereni VO 6," 9 September 1945, CA MSW, X/66, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 200-201.

⁶³ One Ukrainian scholar attributes this failure to the UPA's resistance. But one suspects that interwar statistics, which undercounted Ukrainians, also

ion was no longer interested in population exchanges, Deputy Chief of Staff General Stefan Mossor recommended “resettling these people by individual family in dispersion throughout the entire area of the Regained Territories” of northern and western Poland.⁶⁴ Proposals along these lines were considered by the politburo in March 1947. After Deputy Defense Minister Karol Świerczewski was assassinated on March 28 (probably by the UPA), the politburo decided at once to “resettle Ukrainians and mixed families in the regained territories (especially in southern Prussia), not forming any tight groups and no closer than 100 kilometers to the border.”⁶⁵ Świerczewski’s death was probably a pretext. Even though military and intelligence reports detailed the decay of the UPA and confirmed that UPA was no longer attacking Polish units, in late March the politburo began a propaganda campaign treating Ukrainian partisans as Nazi units, whose threat to the security of the state justified extraordinary measures.

There is no reason to doubt that the Polish plan had Soviet approval. In an unusually quick reaction, Lieutenant Colonel Waclaw Kossowski, a Red Army officer and Soviet plant in the Polish general staff, was sent to investigate Świerczewski’s assassination on the very day it happened, March 28. Kossowski concluded that the identity of the assailants was impossible to determine, but nevertheless provided a rather definitive policy recommendation on April 11: “As soon as possible, an Operational Group should be organized, which would elaborate a plan to include among other matters the complete extermination of the remnants

played a part in the miscalculation. See Wołodymyr Serhijczuk, “Ukraiński narodowy ruch niepodległościowy na Ukrainie Zachodniej w latach 1939-1945,” *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vols. 1-2, p. 107.

⁶⁴ “Ze sprawozdania zastępcy szefa Sztabu Generalnego WP gen. bryg. S. Mossora,” CAW, Gabinet Ministra Obrony Narodowej, IV.110, t. 135, k. 50-56, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, pp. 53-54. The same proposition is to be found in several later reports from the General Staff.

⁶⁵ “Z protokołu nr 3 posiedzenia Biura Politycznego Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Partii Robotniczej,” 29 March 1947, Archiwum Akt Nowych, VI Oddział, KC PZPR, 295/V-3, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, p. 24. On Świerczewski’s death, see Tadeusz Płaskowski, “Ostatnia inspekcja Gen. broni Karola Świerczewskiego,” *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny*, nr. 4 (1983), pp. 96-112. This source, programmatically sympathetic to the general and hostile to the UPA, nevertheless raises several interesting questions about the circumstances of Świerczewski’s death. Among other things it makes quite clear that the general was apt to take foolish risks for no particular reason. For the official account see “Jak zginął gen. broni Karol Świerczewski,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 21 March 1947, p. 1.

of the Ukrainian population in the southeastern border region of Poland.”⁶⁶

The very next day, April 12, the State Security Commission (Panstwowa Komisja Bezpieczenstwa), the central organ charged with eliminating organized resistance to the communist regime, initiated just such a policy.⁶⁷ It approved a laconic report delivered by Stanislaw Radkiewicz, minister for public security. Radkiewicz was an interwar Polish communist who had spent the war in the Soviet Union and fought in the Red Army. He was charged with internal security the moment the Red Army crossed into Poland, and remained head of the secret police through 1954. Also present was Defense Minister and Marshall Michal Rola-Zymierski, another dependent of Stalin. Zymierski had served in Pilsudski's Legions and had earned the rank of general in the interwar period, but had later been dismissed on a corruption charge. He joined the Soviet-sponsored Polish Army during the war, and owed his appointment as Defense Minister to Stalin. He had led the Polish divisions originally tasked to engage the UPA in May 1945.

Polish military planners thought that the “remnants of the Ukrainian population” amounted to 74,000 Ukrainians; in fact there were still some 200,000 Ukrainians in Poland (about 0.8 percent of the Polish population).⁶⁸ The absolute numbers are high enough to suggest the scale of suffering that forced relocation would bring; the relative numbers are low enough to call into question the idea that Ukrainians, no matter what they did, could threaten the Polish state. It is true that many of these Polish citizens of Ukrainian nationality supported the UPA, and that this support became widespread as Ukrainians were deported from their ancestral lands in 1945 and 1946. It is also true that the main goal of the UPA was to establish an independent Ukrainian state, and that its soldiers were willing to fight on against overwhelming odds to resist Polish communist power. Although OUN and UPA leaders now concealed their final goals and limited their attacks on Polish troops, there can be no doubt about the basic conflict of interest between the UPA and the Polish state rooted in opposing ideas about legitimate rule of territory.

⁶⁶ “Raport szefa Wydziału Operacyjnego Oddziału II (Operacyjnego) Sztabu Generalnego,” 11 April 1947, CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, t. 613, k. 1-3, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, pp. 82-83.

⁶⁷ “Protokół nr 20 posiedzenia Państwowej Komisji Bezpieczeństwa,” 12 April 1947, CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, t. 643, k. 49, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, pp. 84-85.

⁶⁸ “Meldunek szefa Oddziału IV Sztabu Generalnego WP,” 16 April 1947, CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, t. 615, k. 12, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, p. 43.

Yet the idea of “complete extermination” cannot be understood simply as an attack on the UPA, or even on its civilian base as such. Resettlement was considered a good idea in its own right, above and apart from the destruction of the UPA. One of the army’s two main operational tasks, as defined by the formal order of the State Security Commission, was to “destroy the UPA bands.” The second task was to carry out “an evacuation of all persons of Ukrainian nationality from the region to the northwestern territories, resettling them with the widest possible dispersion.”⁶⁹ Defenders of what was christened Operation “Wisła” sometimes contend that the second task was merely a means to the first, that the dispersion of the entire Ukrainian population was simply a part of military operations against the UPA, indeed a necessary part.⁷⁰ This is not how Polish commanders (including those reporting to Moscow) understood the Operation. Resettlement was to continue to the last Ukrainian even if the UPA was quickly neutralized. Resettlement was designed to ensure that Ukrainian communities could never again arise in Poland.

Operation “Wisła” was a policy of ethnic “cleansing” (the word appears again and again) designed to redraw the ethnic geography of the new Polish state. Polish authorities decided to resettle “every person of Ukrainian nationality.” Even communities that had not supported the UPA, even mixed families, even Lemkos returning from Red Army service, even loyal party members trained in the Soviet Union, even communists who had helped “repatriate” Ukrainians in the previous wave, were forcibly resettled—although it must be said that communist dignitaries were helped to transport their property.⁷¹ Nationality, here as during the “repatriations,” was decided not by individual choice but by blood, religion, and most frequently by the letter “U” in the Kennkarte Polish citizens received from the Nazi occupation regime during the war.⁷²

The Polish communist regime stood to gain in popularity by identifying itself with the Polish nation, by combating “Ukrainian nationality.” The attempt at hegemony over the idea of the nation had been the

⁶⁹ “Zarządzenie Państwowej Komisji Bezpieczeństwa dla Grupy Operacyjnej ‘Wisła’,” 17 April 1947, CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV. 11, t. 512, k. 4-5, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja ‘Wisła’*, pp. 98-99.

⁷⁰ Even Piotrowski, in his synthetic study, tends toward this mistake. See *Poland’s Holocaust*, pp. 244, 379. A far more blatant example is Wiktor Poliszczuk, *Akcja Wisła: próba oceny*, Toronto, 1997. The propagandistic publications of Edward Prus are indefensible in this regard.

⁷¹ “Instrukcja Państwowej Komisji Bezpieczeństwa nr. 0340/III,” CAW, Gabinet Ministra Obrony Narodowej, IV.110, t. 135, k. 212-213, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja ‘Wisła’*, pp. 382-383.

⁷² Kersten, “The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict,” p. 147.

major goal of communist propaganda from 1943; the genius of excluding the UPA from the national amnesty of February 1947, of prosecuting Ukrainian partisans under different laws from those applied to Polish partisans, and finally of Operation “Wisla” in the summer of 1947, was that such actions defined that national community starkly and plainly. The totalizing aspirations of the policy (to be applied to “every person”) confirm that Polish leaders desired a clean break with the multinational past, that the “national state” was the endpoint of the proletarian revolution. The initial plan for Operation “Wisla,” drafted by Mossor and presented to the Polish politburo by Minister of Defense Zymierski and Minister of Public Security Radkiewicz on April 16, 1947, began with the words: “To resolve the Ukrainian question in Poland once and for all.”⁷³

THE POLISH COMMUNIST REGIME DISPERSES UKRAINIANS: PRACTICE (1947)

Leadership of Operation “Wisla” was entrusted to General Stefan Mossor, who joined the communist party only in 1945. Mossor had been a soldier in Pilsudski’s legions, a military planner in interwar Poland (he correctly foresaw defeat in two weeks if the Germans attacked in 1939), and a German prisoner of war (arrested after 11 days of battle). He had joined the Soviet-sponsored Polish Army in 1945, and by the end of the year had risen from lieutenant colonel to brigadier general. In early 1947, Mossor had pushed for dispersion of Ukrainians in reports from the field in southeastern Poland. (His bluff confidence must have hidden a good deal of fear: he had, in 1941, written that Soviet defeat in the Second World War was inevitable, and in 1943 led the Polish officers within the Red Cross commission that investigated Katyn at the invitation of Germany.)⁷⁴ The military operations against the UPA, and the army’s role in resettlement, were apparently planned by two Soviet Poles:⁷⁵ Colonel Michal Chilinski, chief of staff of the operation, and

⁷³ “Projekt organizacji specjalnej ‘Wschód,’” Archiwum Urzedu Ochrony Panstwa, Gabinet Ministra Bezpieczenstwa Publicznego, 17/IX/140, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja ‘Wisla’*, p. 93.

⁷⁴ The politburo learned of this in July 1947. Mossor was imprisoned in 1950 and released in 1956. He died of a heart attack the following year.

⁷⁵ By Soviet Poles I mean an individual of Polish descent who spent the interwar period in the Soviet Union serving the Soviet state. The Polish term is “pełniący obowiązki Polaków”, or “popy” for short, which means “those fulfilling the obligations of Poles.” All of the organs of the Polish state that carried

Lieutenant Colonel Waclaw Kossowski, the Red Army officer who had reported on the Swierczewski assassination, now detailed to head the staff's operations section.⁷⁶ "Wisla" joined five infantry divisions with some security forces (of the Korpus Bezpieczenstwa Wewnetrznego) into a force of about 17,940 men.

Mossor, Kossowski, and Chilinski were concerned in the first instance with the destruction of the UPA. When operations began in late April in the Riashiv area, Mossor was most unimpressed by the performance of his soldiers in battle: "All unit leaders seem to be hypnotized by the evacuation action, and have forgotten the first and main task, which is the struggle with UPA bands."⁷⁷ However, as Mossor, Kossowski, and Chilinski came to understand, although the UPA remained difficult to destroy in direct combat, resettlement meant that its days were numbered.⁷⁸ As calls to die for history's sake and desperate dreams of Anglo-American air support took the place of clear plans and informed courage in UPA reports, Kossowski and Chilinski calmly drew the operational lessons from "Rzeszow" and issued orders for the next round of attacks.⁷⁹ Their communications were distinguished by quickly increasing knowledge, as well as a thorough familiarity with Soviet pro-

out Operation "Wisla" were thoroughly penetrated at this point by Soviet agents and plants.

⁷⁶ Kossowski returned to the Soviet Union in October 1948. According to the final (and Russian-language) report on his service as an officer in the Polish Army, he was reassigned to the Red Army because of his dealings with "loose women" and his contacts with people who had relatives sentenced to death for contacts with England and America. These behaviors apparently came to light (or were fabricated) in summer or fall 1948. See his "Sluzhebnaia kharakteristika," 15 October 1948, but also his "Charakterystyka – Służbowa," 31 March 1948,teczka personalna pplk. Waclawa Kossowskiego, Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Rembertów, Poland.

⁷⁷ "Rozkaz operacyjny nr 004 Sztabu GO 'Wisla'," 2 May 1947, CAW, Sztab Generaly WP, IV.111, t. 512, k. 185-189, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisla'*, p. 210.

⁷⁸ "Projekt ostatecznego uporządkowania strefy przygranicznej i wschodniej," report from General Stefan Mossor to Minister of Defense Michal Zymierski, 28 May 1947, CAW, DOW nr. V, IV.204, t. 139, k. 248-255, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisla'*, p. 288.

⁷⁹ "Instrukcja," 29 April 1947, Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, UPA, sygn. X/32; "Terenowym prowadnikom," 1 May 1947, Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, OUN, sygn. IX/41, "Kolego Przewodniczący," 3 May 1947, Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, UPA, sygn. X/48. All of these documents are Polish translations of Ukrainian originals.

protocols of antipartisan warfare.⁸⁰ They carefully explained how to destroy the reinforced bunkers where UPA soldiers took shelter, how to use police dogs to trace retreating partisans through the forest, and the like.⁸¹

Meanwhile, the dispersion task proceeded smoothly, first in Riaziv province, then in Lublyn and Kraków provinces. Between April 28 and August 28, 1947, Operational Group “Wisła” moved some 140,000 Ukrainians from southeastern to northwestern Poland. “Wisła” perfected tactics used in “Rzeszów”: First a settlement was enclosed and protected from UPA intervention, then a list of names of those to be resettled was read. These people were given a few hours to pack, and relocated to intermediary sites.⁸² It also repeated “Rzeszów”’s abuses: needlessly pacified villages, brutal beatings, occasional killings. It was distinguished from its predecessor by the more complicated role played by the security services. At intermediary sites, as Ukrainians waited without shelter to board trains, the Urząd Bezpieczeństwa (security police, or UB) would select individuals for their particular attention, and pass a general judgment about the final destination of the group. Ukrainians were packed into trains for Lublyn or (most often) Oswiecim (Auschwitz), where they were rerouted to their new places of settlement. The final destination and degree of dispersal of groups was determined by the judgment of the intelligence officers, whose colleagues were waiting to receive their instructions in sealed envelopes at the end of the line.⁸³

⁸⁰ On the training of Polish security services, see John Micgiel, “Bandits and Reactionaries,” in Naimark and Gibianskii, eds., *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, pp. 63-111.

⁸¹ “Instrukcja walki z UPA opracowana przez Sztab GO ‘Wisła,’” 3 May 1947, CAW, 9 Dywizja Piechoty, IV.310.09, t. 79, k. 127-131, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja ‘Wisła’*, pp. 222-225; “Instrukcja walki z UPA w drugiej fazie akcji opracowana przez sztab GO ‘Wisła,’” 23 May 1947, CAW, 9 Dywizja Piechoty, IV.310.09, t. 82, k. 20-23, *ibid.*, pp. 279-282; “Instrukcja Sztabu GO ‘Wisła’ w sprawie wykorzystania psów policyjnych do walki z oddziałami UPA,” 26 May 1947, CAW, 9 Dywizja Piechoty, IV.310.09, t. 78, k. 41-42, *ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

⁸² For Ukrainian recollections, “Horaiets: 1-5 chervnia 1947 roku,” *Nashe Slovo*, 26 January 1996, p. 3; “Trahediia Kholmshchyny (1) Chernychyn: 16-20 lypnia 1947 roku,” *Nashe Slovo*, 3 March 1996, p. 3; “Trahediia Kholmshchyny (2) Chernychyn: 16-20 lypnia 1947 roku,” *Nashe Slovo*, 10 March 1996, p. 3. There is also a collection of personal memoirs in the Archiwum Ukrainkie, Warsaw.

⁸³ Their unhappy fate in postwar Poland is beyond the scope of this report. They found themselves surrounded by Poles, some of whom were “repatriates” from the east who spoke worse Polish than they. See *Wspomnienie II/2196/p*, Archiwum Wschodnie.

Individuals singled out could be judicially murdered or sent to a concentration camp. Military courts, empowered to judge civilians, sentenced at the very least 173 Ukrainians to death on the spot for collaborating with the UPA.⁸⁴ Most of these sentences were carried out the same day. Altogether, 3,936 Ukrainians, including 823 women and children, were taken to the Yaviryia concentration camp, a wartime affiliate of the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex. There, routine torture was accompanied by typhus epidemics and extreme shortages of food and clothing.⁸⁵ Several Ukrainians died in Yaviryia, including two women who committed suicide.

The success of the resettlement mission prepared the way for the final military defeat of the UPA in Poland. Soviet NKVD and Czechoslovak regular army troops had sealed the frontiers, leaving the Ukrainian partisans trapped in their confrontation with the Polish state. From exaggerated Polish reports it is difficult to say how many UPA and OUN partisans were killed in the engagements of 1945–1947: on the order of 4000 to 2000, compared to 3100 Polish soldiers and functionaries. Some Ukrainian partisans fought their way across the sealed borders; some allowed themselves to be resettled in northwestern Poland. The end of UPA activity in Poland is dated from September 17, 1947, when OUN commander Jaroslav Starukh perished in his bunker.⁸⁶ UPA commander Miroslav Onyshkevich then released his soldiers from their oaths.⁸⁷ The Polish state had already criminalized the Uniate Church and now set

⁸⁴ According to one calculation, of the 2,810 death sentences carried out in Poland between 1944 and 1956, 573 were of Ukrainians. Given that Ukrainians comprised less than 1 percent of the population, this proportion is high indeed. Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, p. 30. Misilo has collected the relevant documents in *UPA v sviatli pols'kykh dokumentiv*, Toronto: Litopys UPA, 1992. For accounts of several Ukrainians sentenced to death and executed before 1947, see Maria Turlejska, *Te pokolenia żałobami czarne: skazani na śmierć i ich sądzowie, 1944-1954*, London, Aneks, 1989, pp. 331-337.

⁸⁵ This is the conclusion of the investigation of the Polish procurator in 1997. See Leszek Golowski, "Dokumenty Javozhna" (excerpts from procurator's report of treatment of Ukrainian prisoners in Yaviryia concentration camp, 1947), *Nashe Slovo*, 28 January 1996, pp. 1, 3. For further details of the camps' conditions see the memoir of a Polish woman, a returnee from Siberia, who was held on the accusation of sheltering an UPA soldier from the Red Army: *Wspomnienie II/53*, Archiwum Wschodnie.

⁸⁶ "Ze sprawozdania dowódcy 20 samodzielnego batalionu saperów 9 DP," 22 September 1947, CAW, 9 Dywizja Piechoty, IV.310.09, t. 73, k. 217-218, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, pp. 402-403.

⁸⁷ In late 1947, three more small Operational Groups had to be formed to rout partisans who continued to fight; and over the next few years the army continued to resettle Ukrainians who had somehow escaped or been passed over.

about redistributing the properties it took from resettled Ukrainians in the southeast. So ended one thousand years of continuous Ukrainian settlement, and so began—after the Holocaust of the Jews, after the expulsion of the Germans, and given the passivity of remaining Belarusians—the Polish “national state.”

THE ISSUE OF POLISH RESPONSIBILITY (1939–1999)

It is hard to disagree with the Ukrainian author of a July 1943 UPA appeal to Poles. “It is a strange and incomprehensible fact,” he wrote, “that today, when the Polish nation groans under the yoke of the German aggressor, and when Russia too plans a new occupation of Poland, Poland’s imperialist leaders once again declare war on the Ukrainian nation, denying it the right to its own independent existence.”⁸⁸ He was right that Poland, like Western Ukraine, was occupied by an aggressive foreign power, Nazi Germany. He was right that in Poland, as in Western Ukraine, German power would be supplanted by an even more stubborn occupier, the Soviet Union. And he was right that the attitudes of Poland’s government-in-exile and especially its underground military leaders were imperialistic, at least in the precise sense that few of them understood that Ukrainians were a nation just as Poles were, deserving of the same right to independence.

However, the “fact” of Polish hostility to Ukrainians was not as “strange and incomprehensible” as this suggests. At the very moment when this appeal was issued, its author’s comrades in arms were carrying out one of the most terrible acts of the Second World War. Precisely in July 1943, the UPA’s fearsome campaign of comprehensive atrocity designed to end the Polish presence in Volyn reached its zenith. At the moment the author was guaranteeing their right to remain in a future free Ukraine as equal citizens under the law, terrified Poles were fleeing Volyn in the hundreds of thousands. The stories they brought west, and the humiliation they brought to the ranks of the AK, assured that Polish-Ukrainian armed cooperation was all but impossible throughout the rest of the war. The experience also guaranteed that there would be minimal sympathy for the hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians who, one to three years later, would themselves be forced to leave their homes. Operation “Wisła” was the single bloodiest action of the Polish communist regime, but this is

⁸⁸ “Polacy!” July 1943, CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2201/10, sygn. 202/I - 34, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje konfliktów*, vol. 2, p. 170.

not its first association in the minds of Poles. To this day, Polish memory links Operation “Wisła” with the slaughter in Volyn, and to this day Polish public opinion fears Ukraine more than any other neighbor.⁸⁹

The author of the 1943 UPA appeal began a Ukrainian tradition of asking for Polish sympathy without reference to the causes for its absence. The main focus of Ukrainian attention on Operation “Wisła” has been the question of Polish responsibility. It is clearly unsatisfactory for Ukrainians to draw attention to the dispersions of Ukrainians by the Polish state in 1947 without attending to the murder of Polish civilians by Ukrainian nationalists in 1943. At the same time, it is mistaken to claim, as the main Polish defense asserts, that state policy in 1947 was a simple result of UPA actions in 1943.

The preceding sections allow us to make four relevant distinctions. In the first place, it is true that the Polish regime had more influence over the course of events in 1947, when Ukrainians were dispersed in Poland, than in 1945 and 1946, when they were expelled to the Soviet Union. It was apparently the Polish regime, not the Soviet regime, that perceived the need for another resettlement.⁹⁰ If Stalin had agreed that Ukrainians posed a grave threat to the security of his most important new satellite, he presumably would have agreed to take them into Soviet Ukraine. In particular, it was General Mossor, the interwar Polish officer, who in early 1947 first advocated resettling the Ukrainians who had escaped the “repatriations.” His reasoning was precisely that because Stalin no longer wanted to take Ukrainians, and because the Soviet NKVD was withdrawing from Poland in spring 1947, the Polish state must finish the job for itself. At the time he wrote, about forty percent of the Polish of-

⁸⁹ This is confirmed by opinion polls throughout the 1990s. On the spread of national memory and fear of Ukrainians after the war, see Andrzej Zieba, “Ukraińcy w oczach Polaków (wiek XX),” *Dzieje Najnowsze*, vol. 27, No. 2, (1995), pp. 95-104. The necessary supplement, explaining the role of propaganda, is Józef Lewandowski, “Polish Historical Writing on Polish-Ukrainian Relations During World War Two,” in Peter Potichnyj, ed., *Poland and Ukraine: Past and Present*, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980, 231-246. For three books published by the Polish Ministry of Defense, see Feliks Sikorski, *Kabewiacy w Akcji Wisła*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1989; and Jan Gerhard, *Łuny w Bieszczadach*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony, 1974; Ignacy Blum, *Z dziejów wojska polskiego w latach 1945-1948*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1960. The first was published in the regime’s last year; the second was authorized for use as a textbook; the last set the line early on.

⁹⁰ Although documents may yet be found in Soviet archives that force another interpretation.

ficer corps was staffed by Soviet officers, and Soviet officers dominated Polish security forces. However Mossor's opinion was shared by other indisputably Polish officers who took part in the forced resettlement of Ukrainians, such as the young Captain Wojciech Jaruzelski.⁹¹

Yet an increasing margin for maneuver on the part of the communist regime is a far cry from the sovereignty of Poland, and the presence of Poles such as Mossor is a far cry from the legitimacy of the Polish government. A second distinction must therefore be made between "Poland" and the Polish communist regime. The Polish communist party could not have won free elections in postwar Poland. (Indeed, the Polish army's attacks on the UPA slowed in the winter of 1947 because soldiers were busy falsifying the results of parliamentary elections.) Even if the Polish regime enjoyed some margin of freedom on Ukrainian policy, it does not follow that policy was "Polish" in the sense of reflecting the expressed wishes of a majority of Polish citizens.

However, a third distinction must be introduced, this time one between kinds of reasoning. The fact that Poles did not choose their regime does not render the ethical question of Polish responsibility incoherent. Not everything undemocratic governments do is unpopular, and the Czechoslovak example demonstrates that democratic regimes can be enthusiastic cleansers. Recall that Eduard Benes, president of democratic Czechoslovakia, in 1945 used language very similar to that of the Mossor in 1947: "We have decided to liquidate the German problem in our republic once and for all." But whereas Benes returned from London after the war to govern Czechoslovakia for more than two years, there was no such period of democratic rule in Poland, and so there is no way of knowing what a Polish democratic regime would have done. Although there was general agreement among Polish democrats (and communists) to expel the Germans, neither Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, Benes's Polish analogue, nor the ministries of the Polish government-in-exile seem to have formulated plans to resolve the Ukrainian question.⁹² The main dispute between Mikolajczyk and his rivals was over whether to accept Poland's new boundaries, a question which in point of law and from distant London seemed more pressing than that of minorities. Although Polish political thinkers and local political activists formulated plans for mas-

⁹¹ Manfred Berger, *Jaruzelski*, Düsseldorf: EconVerlag, 1990, pp. 245-248.

⁹² For the flavor of debates see "Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie w kraju," 12 January 1944, zesp. A.9.V., tecz. 8B, MSW, Dział Narodowosciowy, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego; "Ukraińskie organizacje polityczne i wojskowe w czasie wojny—Raport Krajowy 1943," zesp. A.9.V., tecz. 31, MSW, Dział Narodowosciowy, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego.

sive resettlement of Ukrainians, at the highest levels of authority, it was confusion rather than desire for revenge that was dominant.

This requires a fourth and final distinction. A democratic regime in Poland after the war would have been far more sensitive to public opinion than a government-in-exile in distant London trying to prosecute a war. In the context of 1947 the dispersal of Ukrainians was certainly popular policy: “[T]he activity of the authorities was in harmony with the attitude of the majority of Poles.”⁹³ To repeat, this popular desire for revenge did not in fact bring about the dispersions, because Poles could not choose their leaders. But it did mean that Polish communists, acting on motives of their own, had a strong current of opinion to exploit. It was their goal to create an ethnically pure “national state,” but so long as this goal continues to resonate with broad sectors of Polish opinion, the question of Polish responsibility will have a solid foundation.⁹⁴

If the best argument for not dismissing the question of Polish responsibility is that Poles might well have approved ethnic cleansing in 1947 if asked, then it is quite right to ask why this was the case, and impossible not to refer to 1943 in the answer. Of course, a Ukrainian would not be wrong to then point to Polish colonialism during the interwar period, the history of Polish domination of ethnically Ukrainian territories, and so on. There are further arguments and counterarguments. The distinctions presented here provide some contours to the dispute, but they cannot, in the nature of things, prevent it from going full circle, and then round and round again.

MEMORY, HISTORY, AND NGOs (1989 to the present)

Good policy can have a much greater immediate effect on such disputes than good historiography. The genius of Polish and Ukrainian policy since the two states regained their sovereignty has been to treat these matters within the categories of international politics, rather than in the categories of personal memories. Polish and Ukrainian national memories are not in accord, nor indeed are the accounts of leading na-

⁹³ Kersten, “The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict,” p. 151.

⁹⁴ As this report mainly concerns the cleansing of Ukrainians by Poles, the conclusion does not consider the question of Ukrainian responsibility. Such a consideration would proceed along similar lines. Although it is absurd to identify the UPA with the Ukrainian nation as a whole, insofar as Ukrainians identify with the UPA as part of the national tradition, the question of Ukrainian responsibility is well founded.

tional historians. Yet even as disagreements remain about who owes whom an apology and as local conflicts over property lost after the Second World War continue, relations between the Polish and Ukrainian states are excellent.⁹⁵ Poland was the first state to recognize Ukraine in 1991, and the two states quickly agreed to a treaty on good relations in 1992. Although Polish eastern policy has sometimes disappointed Ukrainians, it has consistently recognized Ukraine as an equal sovereign state with the pertinent rights and responsibilities. Ukraine has come to treat Poland as a dependable partner, especially insofar as its foreign policy remains oriented to the West.

If agreement about events of 1943–1947 had been thought a necessary condition for rapprochement, Polish–Ukrainian relations would be in a far worse state.⁹⁶ The truth is probably the opposite: that improved political relations create the conditions for mutual discussion of diverging memories.⁹⁷ The priority given to politics over history in the

⁹⁵ For the disagreements about history, follow the polemics in August and September 1996 issues of *Tygodnik Powszechny*. See also “Komunikat polsko-ukraiński,” from the conference “Polacy i Ukraińcy 1918-1948: trudne pytania,” held at Podkowa Lesna, 7-9 June 1994; and “Konferencja Polsko-Ukraińska,” *Kultura* 562-563 (July-August 1994), 69-74. On the major local disagreement, over a cathedral in Peremyshl, see Chris Hann, “Postsocialist Nationalism: Rediscovering the Past in Southeast Poland,” *Slavic Review*, vol. 57, No. 4, (Winter 1998), pp. 840-863. See also Pawel Smolenski, “Cichaj, Dionizy,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1 March 1998, pp. 10, 12-13. Evidence of fruitful discussion in the late 1990s can be found in the four volumes of *Polska-Ukraine: trudne pytania*, cited above. These volumes are based upon meetings of Ukrainian and Polish historians sponsored jointly by the world organization of National Army veterans and the Union of Ukrainians in Poland.

⁹⁶ Awareness of the political preconditions of historical reconciliation is evident in the statements of both Polish and Ukrainian presidents. Interview with President Aleksander Kwasniewski, Warsaw, 16 May 1999; Leonid Kuchma, “Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the West Ukrainian Republic,” Lviv, 1 November 1998. For numerous examples of other policy makers see the sources cited in the next footnote.

⁹⁷ For a longer treatment of the effects of policy on memory in this context, see Timothy Snyder, “Memory of Sovereignty and Sovereignty Over Memory: Polish Policy to Ukraine and Lithuania,” in Jan Muller, ed., *Memory and Power in Postwar Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. On Polish eastern policy, see also Timothy Snyder, “The Poles: Western Aspirations, Eastern Minorities,” in Charles King and Neil Melvin, eds., *Nations Abroad: Diasporas and National Identity in the Former Soviet Union*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1998. For another account of the origins see Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 86-107.

early 1990s, then the achievement of political reconciliation in the mid-1990s, cast disagreements about memory in an entirely different light by the late 1990s. Local politicians who recall old grievances have little hope that their gestures will force the hands of national authorities, while those national leaders find the way open to grand gestures. Among other achievements, the presidents of sovereign Ukraine and Poland have signed a declaration of mutual reconciliation which mentions both the cleansings of Volyn and Operation “Wisla.”

These successes of state policy were rooted in cooperation among non-governmental organizations before the arrival of fully sovereign Polish and Ukrainian states. Links between Polish Solidarity and the Ukrainian Rukh movement assured that historical issues were discussed in private before they could become diplomatic problems. The revision of traditional Polish goals in the east was largely the work of the Polish Literary Institute in Paris and its monthly journal *Kultura* (Culture). Polish and Ukrainian non-governmental organizations collected the primary source material that made this report possible, and have generally done so in the name of reconciliation. Perhaps most striking in this regard is the series of conferences on Polish–Ukrainian relations in the 1940s, which began in 1997 and are cited as “Trudne pytania” (“Hard questions”) throughout this report. These conferences are sponsored by two NGOs, each of which represents people who were ethnically cleansed: a Polish one representing Volynians who were forced to migrate in 1943, and a Ukrainian one representing Ukrainians from southeastern Poland who were forced to migrate in 1947. Although they represent quite different views of history, their cooperation reveals a common belief that the full historical record is desirable for all concerned.

This contemporary record is in stark contrast with the almost complete absence of NGOs during the actual events. Neither the partisans nor the states, which implemented policies of ethnic cleansing, had any interest in NGOs monitoring their activities, or in giving aid to their victims. It is quite striking that refugees who did happen across the Red Cross or were aided by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) packets remembered these events very clearly fifty years on. The absence of the NGO sector was perhaps most painfully felt in the creation of a world in which no one was neutral. The experience of ethnic cleansing, and its representation by communist regimes, was such as to create the impression of a world of opposing national forces, rather than a world of civil societies in which various interests can be legitimately pursued. One of the accomplishments of NGOs in this area in the 1990s has been to return national questions to the spheres of social interests, public policy, and academic history.

SOLUTION TO THE UKRAINIAN QUESTION IN POLAND THROUGH DEPORTATIONS TO THE UKRAINIAN SSR AND OPERATION "WISLA"

YEWHEN MISYLO

"We, the Poles, have committed a crime. Our army did not fight fascist bandits under a banner of the UPA, but it did fight the Ukrainian nation. Our authorities were not able to separate the necessity of fighting the UPA from fighting Ukrainians. Instead of rallying impoverished Ukrainians and impoverished Poles to fight fascism together, we engaged in a nationalistic war, using Nazi methods of collective responsibility, an example of which was a mass deportation of the Ukrainian people. We were doing the same things, which were happening in the USSR at that time, blindly applying methods used by Stalin's regime."

[Jacek Kuron at a meeting with Polish scouts at a scouts' camp in Vetlyna village (Beskydy) in January 1962, a dozen or so kilometers away from the location where Gen. Karol Swierczewski was killed on March 28, 1947, giving Polish communists an excuse for deportation of the Ukrainians under the codename "Operation Wisla"].¹

On April 16, 1947, the Political Bureau (Politburo) of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR), a political body, which unofficially was a higher authority than the government and the parliament in a communist Poland, gathered for a special meeting. The Political Bureau was co-chaired by Władysław Gomułka, Secretary

¹ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie (henceforth: IPN), 0330/327, vol. 21, k. 132.

General of the party, and Boleslaw Bierut, President of the Polish Republic, who by virtue of his position, which required him to be unofficially non-political, was a secret member of the Political Bureau.

The agenda of the Politburo meeting included only one point, i.e., presentation of a document entitled *Plan of Special Operation "Wschod."* The codename "Wschod" was not derived from the first meaning of the word [Dawn] heralding the beginning of a new day, giving hope for a new, better life. If this codename could be associated with anything at all, it would be associated with the secondary meaning [East], which historically and invariably evoked feelings of fear and dread, both for Poles and Ukrainians.

The document began with the following words: "*Resolve the Ukrainian question in Poland once and for all.*"² These words were borrowed by Polish communists from the Nazi terminology of the Holocaust, an event leading to the destruction of entire nations only because they were insufficiently pure, both racially and nationally, and allegedly prayed to a different God. Repeated in 1947, these words blatantly evoked bad associations and certainly did not herald anything good for Ukrainians.

The wording of the minutes from the Political Bureau meetings was exceptionally vague and concise, but almost palpably deadly. The concise style, in fact, was strikingly powerful and decisive. The Politburo's decisions, expressed in just a few sentences, sounded like a death sentence pronounced at a court martial. But no criminals were on trial here. Those convicted were Ukrainians "*of all shades . . . including the Lemko people.*" Their sentence was to be deported from the Ukrainian Lemko, Bojko, Nadsiania, and Kholm lands, where they had lived for centuries. Now they were to be relocated to foreign, former German lands—to Prussia, as the document stated—"*preferably with maximum dispersement.*"³

Less than two years after World War II had ended, when the crematories of the Nazi death camps were still warm, Polish communists in Warsaw, which had gone through a horrible ordeal under Nazi occupation, were preparing a plan of a new "Endlösung"—"*the ultimate solution of the Ukrainian question.*"⁴

² IPN, 743, k. 255-257. For details see: Eugeniusz Misilo, ed., *Akcja "Wisła"*. Archiwum Ukraińskie, Warszawa, 1993, pp. 93-95. (henceforth: *Akcja "Wisła"*).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Endlösung – the German "Final Solution" of the Jewish question which was dealt with at the Wannsee Conference on 20.I.1942.

The new shape of the postwar Eastern border and a takeover of power by communists were the two most important factors determining the nature of the Ukrainian issue in Poland, as well as the national policy of the Polish state toward Poland's Ukrainian minority. From July 1944, all previous concepts of national policy endorsed by the Polish government in exile and its representatives in Poland were replaced by a program promoted by Polish left-wing communists. Everything that existed earlier became moot. Everything that had happened in the first few postwar years was to determine both the fate of Ukrainian population in Poland and Polish-Ukrainian relations for years to come.

Communists envisioned Poland as a nationally uniform state. This idea was particularly emphasized by Polish communists, who had spent the war years in the USSR. "*The renewed Polish state will be a single nation state,*" wrote Alfred Lampe in one of the program texts addressed to Poles at home and abroad.⁵ Several years later, those words became the core theme of Polish national policy.

The communists operating in an occupied Poland while drafting a vision of the postwar Poland, initially did not envision this single-nation construct. On the contrary, using old Bolshevik phraseology, they emphasized that in Poland, which they were fighting for, "*there will be equality and a brotherly co-existence of nations.*"⁶ Equally vague was the April 1943 declaration titled "*O co walczymy?*" [*What are we fighting for?*] Although it did confirm the right of nations to self-determination, nobody knew what this was actually supposed to mean for the Ukrainians. This idea, which was expanded further in the second (November 1943) declaration of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), can be interpreted as the first announcement of a shift in direction by the communists regarding the national issue and advocacy of a policy of deportations.

As stated in the declaration "*Recognizing the principal right of nations to self-determination, the brotherly Ukrainian and Byelorussian nations cannot be denied a right to determine their national status according to the will of the people.*" At the same time, it declared that "*Citizens are treated equally, regardless of their nationality. Polish national status cannot be treated as a privilege in reference to those national mi-*

⁵ Lampe A., "Miejsce Polski w Europie," *Wolna Polska*, 16.IV.1943, No. 7.

⁶ *Polska Partia Robotnicza. Dokumenty programowe 1942-1948*, Warszawa, 1984, p. 54.

norities that are located within borders of the Polish state.”⁷

Given the communist rhetoric of those days, there is no doubt that “the will of the people” in this and in any other case meant nothing but “the will of the party.” Later, the right to self-determination came to be identified exclusively as a function of a voluntary or enforced option for the Ukrainians—to leave Poland and resettle in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (Ukrainian SSR). Moreover, the concept of ethnic equality of all citizens in the Polish state disappeared entirely from the program documents of the Polish communists at the beginning of 1944.

We don’t always realize how quickly and deeply the new approach regarding national issues by the Polish communists was accepted. The concept of a nation, which was barely evident in documents and pre-war publications of the Polish Communist Party, became the focus of the most prevalent rhetoric. The communists began advancing it as a superior value, as a reference point. One might argue that Polish communists adopted the idea of building of a national state from the National Democratic Party. By evoking sentiment, the communists were searching for a common ground with the people, hoping to gain their support. Utilizing systematic and deliberate propaganda politics, communists attempted, and to a great extent succeeded, in making the Ukrainian issue (like the German issue of earlier times) a unique bond that served to unite communist authorities with Poles who were already averse to or overtly hostile to Ukrainians.

The attempt by the communists to legitimize their power by reaching back to programs of the Polish national parties as a means to resolve the issues of national minorities had another purpose—to compensate Poles for the loss of the eastern borderlands (Kresy), a loss incurred as a result of the new shape of Poland’s eastern border.

The events that took place in Zakerzonnia after July 1944, thus reflected the political conditions of those days—both in terms of resolving the Ukrainian national minority issue in Poland through a bilaterally accepted determination of a state border that would now overlap the ethnographic border, and also through completion of a fully voluntary exchange of the entire population. In practice, however, this was unrealistic and untenable.

The new border satisfied neither the Poles nor the Ukrainians. The efforts by the Polish side to keep at least Lviv and the region’s oil fields within the borders of Poland failed. The Ukrainian communists, who made no secret of their hope of annexing to Ukraine parts of Kholm, Peremyshl, and Lemko lands occupied by Ukrainian populations, also

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121 and 148.

met with failure. At the start of the summer 1944 offensive during which Lviv, Kholm, Yaroslav, and Peremyshl were liberated, a whole series of articles was published in *Pravda Ukrainy*, the official press organ of the Central Committee of Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Ukraine, underscoring the centuries' long historic connections of Kholm and Nadsiaunia lands with Ukraine and leaving no doubts as to where, according to Ukrainian communists, the western border of Ukraine should be.⁸ The authors of these articles were in agreement that Ukraine, which had suffered huge losses during the war, had full moral authority to regain all historic lands previously lost to Poland.

Despite ideological differences between Ukrainian and Polish communists, there was an astonishing convergence on the issue of borders. In 1945, on the occasion of the official signing of the border agreement between Poland and the Ukrainian SSR, a short article entitled "Stalin is equalizing"⁹ appeared in the Ukrainian underground satirical magazine "Perets" [Transl: "Pepper"]. Edited by Yaroslav Staruch "Stiah," who was soon to assume leadership of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) for the territories west of Curzon line, the article displayed a picture of Stalin standing on a map of Poland and the Ukrainian SSR, cutting off with a saw Kholm, Nadsiaunia, and Lemko lands—all of which were located along the new Polish–Soviet border and all of which, in the opinion of Ukrainians, were ethnic Ukrainian lands. The map also showed the names of Ukrainian towns remaining on the Polish side of this border: Bila Pidliaska, Kholm, Hrubeshiv, Tomashiv, Belz, Bilhorai, Yaroslav, Peremyshl, Sianik, and Krynytsia.

And it was Stalin who decided the shape of the Polish–Ukrainian border. Using the territorial demands of Poles and Ukrainians as bargaining chips with both sides, Stalin achieved his intended goal, and Polish and Ukrainian communists both forfeited any say about the border's final shape. Soon, they would see this for themselves. On February 15, 1951, the Soviets forced the Polish government to sign an agreement to "exchange" mountainous territory in the Ustryki Dolishni area for the borderlands on the Polish side of the border in the Krystynopol area (currently Chervonohrad)—shortly after geologists discovered rich deposits of coal in this region.

The new eastern border of Poland, following the so-called "Cur-

⁸ Petrovskiy N.N., *Iskonnye ukrainskiye zemli*, "Pravda Ukrainy", No. 133, 9.VII.1944, p. 2. Documents on the same subject were published in Nos. 138, 140, 143, 148 and others.

⁹ "Ukrainskyi Perets", No. 3, dated March 1945, p. 3. See IPN, MBP, IX/134, k. 3.

zon line,” had cut off from Poland lands which had been acquired by the country six centuries ago and which, in the historic consciousness of the Poles, constituted an integral part of Poland’s territory. At the same time, it cut from Ukraine the westernmost part of Ukrainian ethnic lands. The ethnographically based Polish–Ukrainian border was demarcated by several hundred villages inhabited for the most part by Ukrainians, stretching in a dense line along 22 borderland counties in the Krakow, Riasliv, Lublyn, and Bialystok provinces. The border, once marked by border posts harking back to the days of Kyivan-Rus, was now marked by Ukrainian churches.

Ukrainians maintained that their lands reached as far as the three-arm crosses that could be seen on the domes of Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic churches. It therefore came as no surprise that, shortly after all remaining Ukrainians were deported from Poland in 1947, wooden artifacts from Ukrainian religious structures, seemingly simple but artistically priceless, became the next target of “ethnic cleansing.” Between 1945 and 1980, with the full blessing of communist authorities, 267 historic Ukrainian churches were destroyed; the rest were transformed into Roman Catholic churches.¹⁰

In this respect, Polish communist authorities became shameful imitators of authorities of the Second Polish Republic, who during the summer of 1938 had implemented a policy aimed at destroying Ukrainian churches in the Kholm and Pidliashia regions. Here, in less than two months, lawless bands protected by the bayonets of Polish soldiers and by police whips had leveled 127 Ukrainian Orthodox churches, including a historic church in Shchebreshyn, which dated back to 1185.¹¹

The presence of a Ukrainian population in those regions was not a recent phenomenon. Kholm, Nadsania, Beskydy, and the Lemko lands, the western borderlands called Zakerzonnia were historic, cultural, linguistic, and religious Ukrainian enclaves. At the same time, a natural characteristic of these borderlands was the intermingling of Ukrainian culture with Polish culture competing with a strong motivation for each culture to preserve its own national identity.

Because they lived in areas that were geographically remote from the traditional centres of Western Ukraine, Ukrainians in this region differed from other Ukrainians, both with respect to religion and with respect

¹⁰ Brykowski R., *Ochrona i konserwacja architektury cerkiewnej na południowo-wschodnim obszarze Polski*, [in:] *Ochrona wspólnego dziedzictwa kulturowego*, Warszawa, 1993, pp. 241-268.

¹¹ Kuprianowicz G., *Akcja burzenia cerkwi prawosławnych na Chełmszczyźnie i południowym Podlasiu*, Chełm, 2008.

to politics, and specifically in terms of a national consciousness. Understanding this differentiation makes it easier to understand Ukrainian attitudes after 1944. But it also contributes to an understanding of the policies of the Polish state, which seemed indifferent to all of these factors and, as a result, viewed all Ukrainians as a homogeneous mass with a distinct nationalistic, anti-Polish and anticommunist tendency. From this perspective came a natural inclination to treat all Ukrainians in the same manner.

As a result of changes in the Polish–Soviet border, Ukrainians living in Krakow, Riashiv and Lublyn provinces, having been a minor borderland concern during the years of the Second Polish Republic, suddenly found themselves at the centre of events, propelled into the limelight of Polish politics. This shift in focus was particularly painful for the Lemkos, who had managed to keep a low profile that might even be considered somewhat politically cordial during the interwar years. Suddenly thrust into the general Ukrainian mix, they became victims of the brutality directed against all Ukrainians.

One core issue here was how the border change was perceived. Unlike the Poles living in the Eastern lands that were now part of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainians in Zakerzonnia did not see the border change as a change in statehood and did not see resettlement as a return to the Motherland. For them, the real Motherland was the land that had been occupied by their ancestors for many generations—land, that they considered Ukrainian land.

And it is this combination of factors that was soon to become the main obstacle to any potential collective decision between Poles and Ukrainians on another matter—the agreement signed by Poland and Soviet Ukraine on the matter of a population exchange for the purpose of repatriation.

REPATRIATION OR DEPORTATION?

On September 9, 1944, in the town of Lublyn, Edward Osobka-Morawski, premier of the Polish government, i.e. Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) and Nikita Serhievykh Khrushchev Secretary of the Council of Commissars of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, signed an agreement on the resettlement of Ukrainians from Poland to the Ukrainian SSR and the resettlement of Polish citizens from the Ukrainian SSR to Poland.¹² On the same day, the PKWN signed a similar

¹² *Repatriacja czy deportacja. Przesiedlenie Ukraińców z Polski do USRR 1944-1946*, vol. 1, *Dokumenty 1944-1945*, Warszawa, 1996; vol. 2, *Do-*

agreement with the government of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. On September 22, 1944, a third agreement was signed with the government of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The agreements regarding exchange of population were among the first that clearly reflected the decisions of Polish communists, but they were foreshadowed by other events. Some time earlier, PKWN had issued a “Manifesto” to the Polish nation. Written in Moscow, this document advised that the Ukrainian Orthodox cathedral in Kholm should be taken away from Ukrainians. The idea of handing over to Catholic Poles a historic Ukrainian structure, beneath which were buried the remains of King Danylo Romanowycz Halyckyj (1201–1264), was in itself shocking. But even more critical was the fact that the manifesto dissipated any illusions about the intent and methods that Polish communists would be directing at Ukrainians in the name of national policy. Exactly the same thing had been done by the authorities of the Second Polish Republic, which after regaining its independence in 1918, had ignited a bloody Polish–Ukrainian conflict in the Kholm region.

Soon after, the communists targeted another sacred structure, which was also of tremendous symbolic importance to Ukrainians—the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Cathedral in Peremyshl. In June 1946, it was officially handed over to the Roman Catholic convent of the Carmelite Order by the vice premier of the communist government, Stanislaw Grabski, a fanatic former member of the National Democratic Party. Just prior to this, the Ukrainian bishops and members of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic rite were arrested by Polish security officials and Polish army troops and taken forcibly from Peremyshl to Siberian camps, where many of them perished.

The agreement regarding population exchange was written and signed very quickly. The basic text of the agreement was prepared in the Russian language in Moscow and then submitted for translation into Polish and Ukrainian. Shortly before the agreement was signed (September 1–2), Nikita Khrushchev, Secretary of the Council of Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, visited Lublyn. As reported by the press, the purpose of this visit was “*negotiations regarding bilateral repatriation, which are proceeding with total mutual understanding.*”¹³ It is widely known, however, that there were no negotiations. Neither was there any mutual understanding. And like their Byelorussian and Li-

kumenty 1946, Warszawa, 1999, ed. E. Misilo. Henceforth: *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 8, pp. 30-39.

¹³ “Gazeta Lubelska”, No. 30, dated 5.IX.1944. Also *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 5.

thuanian counterparts, whose aspirations and demands regarding the shape of their common borders had been summarily ignored, Ukrainians and Poles were presented by Moscow with a *fait accompli*. The only thing left to their discretion was coordination of organizational and technical aspects of implementation of the agreement, and above all, accepting full responsibility for this implementation.

The question remains, however, why this agreement, which was crafted by Moscow, was to be signed and executed by the Ukrainian government? Neither Ukraine nor any other Soviet republic had the right to sign any international agreements of this kind. Hindsight indicates that making the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic a signatory to this agreement was not a random decision and that the intention of its creator was all too obvious. Stalin was removing himself from any responsibility for political, legal, and financial consequences related to implementation of the agreement. And above all, he was shifting moral responsibility for the deportation of more than one million people on both sides of the border, against their will, to the governments of Ukraine and Poland. And this redirection of moral responsibility would soon become a very important matter for Ukrainian–Polish relations, both in the near future and for many years to come.¹⁴

Dated September 9, 1944, the full text of the agreement on resettlement of the Ukrainian population from Poland to the Ukrainian SSR and of Polish citizens from the Ukrainian SSR to Poland did not become public either during the resettlement operation or after its completion. Moreover, the agreement was illegal as it had not been ratified either by the Polish or the Ukrainian parliament. Many years later, this decision was to have major repercussions, specifically in the case of people applying for compensation for property and possessions lost as a result of resettlement.

What is most striking about the agreement, which was written while a terrible war was still raging, is its almost humane character. This was oddly at variance with the desired outcome. If both sides complied with provisions of the agreement and if neither side applied undue pressure, there was a great probability that only a small percentage of either population would resettle. Nonetheless, the provisions specified that resettlement of Ukrainians from Poland and Poles from Ukraine was to be fully voluntary. An introductory section, Article 1 of the agreement,

¹⁴ See *Deportatsii polakiv ta ukraintsev: kinets 1939 – pochatok 50-tykh rokiv. Do 50-tychchii operatsii "Wisla"*, Ed. J. Slywka, Lviv, 1998. Also *Polska i Ukraina w latach trzydziestych-czterdziestych XX wieku*, vol. 2, *Przesiedlenia Polaków i Ukraińców 1944-1946*, Warszawa–Kijów, 2000, p. 41.

stated that “*evacuation is to be done on a voluntary basis and therefore no pressure can be applied, neither directly nor indirectly.*” The remaining articles of the agreement, as well as instructions attached to it, were articulated in a similar spirit. They are filled with propaganda and include phrases like “*The resettlement relates only those persons who express their desire to resettle*” and “*Those resettling to Ukraine are to be relocated as per their wishes,*” with the same applying to “*Those who express their wish to settle in collective farms.*”¹⁵

The myth of voluntary resettlement was in force for many years in official Polish and Soviet historiography. The resettlement of Ukrainians from Poland to the Ukrainian SSR was presented as a longed for repatriation to the Motherland—Soviet Ukraine. Today, as relevant documents are being examined and as memoirs of resettled people are being published, the repatriation begins to appear as a semi-legal pattern of forced resettlement, essentially a brutal deportation conducted with the participation of the army.

Resettlement was voluntary only during the first several months, that is, until the beginning of 1945. At that time, only those families whose farms had been destroyed during wartime were leaving, those who were left alone and had no farms. This group also included people from several dozen Ukrainian villages in the Kholm and Hrubeshiv regions, which had been burned down and pacified by detachments of the National Army (AK) and the Peasants’ Battalions in the spring and summer of 1944. But were those people truly leaving voluntarily? In their case, leaving was most likely an escape from inevitable death at the hands of the Poles. During this time, 19,899 Ukrainians (5,035 families) were resettled from Poland, mostly from Kholm county (4,025), Hrubeshiv county (3,902), Tomashiv county (3,380), and Zamosc county (1,862).

But as the resettlement operation progressed, Polish authorities began applying overt pressure to increase the number of resettlement applications to the Ukrainian SSR. One of the first moves of authorities of the reborn Polish state was a decision to dissolve Ukrainian schools in Lublyn province, a decision made several days before the start of the first school year in the newly liberated regions. The Ukrainian schools in Riashiv province, except for those schools that had existed before September 1, 1939, survived only one year longer. On September 20, 1945, the Ministry of Public Administration issued a statement indicating the existence of schools “*with Ukrainian as a language of instruction as entirely re-*

¹⁵ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 8 and 13, pp. 45-59.

dundant and from a political point of view, entirely inadvisable."¹⁶

What was even more painful for Ukrainians was being deprived of land, which was being parceled out under provisions of the farm reform decree issued on September 6, 1944, by the Polish Committee of National Liberation. Special instructions, prepared for the secretaries and activists of county committees of Polish United Workers' Party recommended the following: "*Our goal should be that Ukrainian and Byelorussian populations make choices in favor of resettlement in their own republics and as a rule, they should not be placed on the lists allocating land.*"¹⁷ In contrast, Ukrainians who were applying for resettlement in the Ukrainian SSR were promised that they would receive farms there, up to 15 hectares in size, a groundless promise when considered in the light of the massive collectivisation of farmland in Soviet Ukraine.

Bitterly cold temperatures in the winter of 1944–1945, followed by the January offensive of the Red Army, halted the resettlement operation for some time. In the spring of 1945, after Lemko lands were liberated, some Ukrainians left regions that had been destroyed during intense battles between the Red Army and the German army in the Lupkivska and Dukielska mountain pass area, but this was actually the last group of people who resettled to the Ukrainian SSR of their own free will. If the principles of "voluntary resettlement" had indeed been observed, this was the time that the resettlement operation should have ended.

Following the January collapse of the resettlement operation, the Polish side, for the first time, was faced with the question of what to do next with Ukrainians who did not want to resettle to the USSR as per the provisions of the September 9, 1944 agreement. Leave them in Poland in accordance with the principle of voluntary resettlement? Force them to leave the country? And if this was the option selected, how was it to be accomplished?

The first official actions, which were intended to strongly discourage Ukrainians who were inclined toward staying in Poland, were taken by the Polish government on February 13, 1945. A decree was issued, imposing mandatory levies of agricultural products for the 1944–1945 period on all Ukrainians who refused to resettle to the Ukrainian SSR.¹⁸ It further ordered all Ukrainians of military age who had not yet

¹⁶ AAN, Ministerstwo Administracji Publicznej (henceforth: MAP), 780, k. 2.

¹⁷ *Archiwum Ruchu Robotniczego*, vol. I, 1973, p. 382.

¹⁸ AAN, Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów, 1945, vol. 1, k. 58-61, 71; Also *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 21, pp. 78-81.

registered for resettlement to enroll into battalions of the Polish army. In the opinion of the chief provincial administration officer of Riashiv province, this was intended to “*urge Ukrainians or Carpatho-Rusyns, particularly those hostile to the Poles, to resettle to the East.*”¹⁹

The reaction of Ukrainians was quite surprising. Local authorities were reporting that the “*Ukrainian population is willingly committing to execute the imposed grain and meat quotas, provided that the issue of resettlement to the East is not strictly enforced,*” meaning that the quotas would be met if resettlement was not compulsory.²⁰

The activities of all Ukrainian organizations were also forbidden, including those conducted by the Ukrainian Civic Committee (UKO) in the town of Peremyshl, an association of Ukrainian intelligentsia, workers, and farmers of the Nadsiania region. This committee, which was established in July 1944, actively advocated for equal civic rights for Ukrainians as well as for reactivation of Ukrainian schools and Ukrainian churches. In an appeal to Polish authorities, dated September 7, 1944, the UKO expressed the hope that “*The Ukrainians, not only by the letter of the law, but also by its spirit, will have equal civic responsibilities and equal civic rights, not only in theory, but also in everyday real life, and will regard themselves to be citizens with equal rights.*”²¹

The committee was initially recognized by local authorities - its members were invited to official celebrations, something that contributed to creating a favorable image of Polish-Ukrainian relations for a short time. But when the committee rose in defense of Ukrainian schools in Peremyshl that were being dissolved and rose in defense of a Ukrainian intelligentsia that was being victimized, the authorities declared it to be “nationalistic” and illegal.

The number of factors, which would influence a “voluntary” resettlement of Ukrainians to the Ukrainian SSR, began to multiply as the resettlement operation progressed. In February, March, and April 1945, anti-Ukrainian armed operations of the Polish anticommunist underground movement intensified. On March 6, 1945, a regional representative of the Polish government in the town of Peremyshl reported the following on evacuation of Ukrainian population from Poland to Ukrainian SSR: “*There have been some incidents of terror perpetrated by Polish*

¹⁹ Centralne Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych (henceforth: CA MSW), X/15, k. 137, Zarządzenie wojewody, dated 22.II.1945.

²⁰ AAN, KC PZPR, 295/IX-290, k. 74, Sprawozdanie KW PZPR w Rzeszowie za okres 15.VII – 15.VIII.1945.

²¹ AAN, KC PZPR, PKWN, 233/8, k. 7; *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 7, pp. 26-27.

bandits that took place in our area, as a result of which, within the last 2 weeks, a total of more than 10,000 people applied for a resettlement, including 787 families from Krosno district and 820 families from Brzozow district! There are cases where Ukrainian people are abandoning entire villages, leaving their dwellings behind and applying en masse, demanding immediate resettlement abroad. Our office is literally under siege."²²

In several dozen villages in the Lublyn and Riashiv provinces, Ukrainians were being murdered, a fact that decidedly increased the number of applicants desiring resettlement from Poland. Although the data is incomplete, it is estimated that between January and April 1945, 113,633 people (30,145 families) were resettled from Poland. Almost half of them were from Kholm county (21,652 people), Hrubeshiv county (20,936 people), and Tomashiv county (10,973 people). From May until the end of August 1945, an additional 96,153 people (24,464 families) were resettled. In total, 229,685 people (59,644 families) were resettled from the time the operation commenced.

At least 3,000 Ukrainians were murdered by the National Armed Forces (NSZ) and the National Military Organization (NOW) in the period from March to June 1945. A dozen or so operations of the Polish underground were well-planned pacification strikes during which all people of Ukrainian descent were murdered. In Pavlokoma of Brzozow county, for example, 365 people were murdered on March 3, 1945. In Piskorowce of Yaroslav county, more than 400 people were murdered on April 17, 1945; an additional 194 people were murdered in Wierzchowiny, Krasnystaw county, on June 6, 1945.²³

The murder of Ukrainians was not solely confined to members of the Polish underground. Others involved in such activity were soldiers of a special military formation called Internal Security Corps (KBW), which was modeled after Soviet military formations of the NKWD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs). Particularly brutal murders were committed in the villages of Staryi Lublyniec (March 23, 1945) and Gorajec (April 6, 1945), where almost 1,000 Ukrainians were murdered.²⁴ Before execution-style shootings, baptismal certificates or identity cards ("Kennkartes") issued during the German Nazi occupation and indicating a person's religion were verified. On these cards, Ukrainians

²² AAN, Przedstawiciel Główny Rządu RP ds Ewakuacji (henceforth: GPR), 162; "Sprawozdanie przedstawiciela rejonowego d/s ewakuacji w Przemysłu", dated 6.III.1945.

²³ Miśło E., *Pawłokoma 3.III.1945*, Warszawa, 2006.

²⁴ *Repatriacja czy deportacja*, vol. 1, doc. 30 and 36, pp. 94-95, 104-105.

were identified with the letter “U” and Poles with the letter “P.”

In addition to the dozen or so villages in which all Ukrainians—including elderly people and babies in the cribs—were murdered, there were hundreds of villages where the killing was selective, targeting teachers, cultural and educational activists, and the more educated and industrious peasants. During this time in particular, the physical extermination of Greek-Catholic and Orthodox clergy intensified. Between 1944 and 1946, at least 30 Ukrainian priests died at the hands of the Polish underground.²⁵

The attacks on Ukrainian villages, which were conducted by the Polish underground under the rallying cry of “Ukrainians beyond the Sian River,” undoubtedly had one specific goal—to force Ukrainians to leave Poland. These attacks supported the policies of communist authorities and, for obvious reasons, met with no opposition from that source. On the contrary, communist authorities saw this as an opportunity, a way to increase the number of Ukrainians applying for resettlement to the Ukrainian SSR. None of those who murdered Ukrainian civilians was ever tried and convicted by the communist authorities. Even in a post-1990 democratic Poland, all investigations of similar cases were discontinued due to lack of evidence and the inability to detect those who had committed such murders.

Despite the opinion (which was common at the time and persists among some people to date) that the people leaving for the Ukrainian SSR were left-wing radicals, only a relatively small percentage of Ukrainians fit this description. Ukrainians from Lublyn and Lemko regions in particular attempted to organize their respective Ukrainian communities with an eye to staying in Poland rather than on resettlement to the Ukrainian SSR. Common characteristics of these community circles was a demand for official recognition of Ukrainian people in Poland—in political, cultural and educational, economic, and even religious spheres. A natural corollary to this position was reluctance or outright resistance toward resettlement, attitudes resulting both from psychological reasons (attachment to the land and fear of the unknown) and political reasons (fear of collectivisation and a repressive Stalinist regime).

The latter factor was particularly critical for members and sympathizers of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and former members of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine (KPZU). Their fear of repressions was well justified. The KPZU was still illegal and the most intensive repressions in Western Ukraine were at their

²⁵ Kozak M., *Pomiany, Hospody, dushi sluh Tvoyikh*, Peremyshl–Lviv, 2002.

height precisely in 1944 and 1945. Resistance to resettlement was also deepened by the tragic experiences of Western Ukrainians who, after September 17, 1939, ended up in the areas occupied by the Red Army and, like the Poles, were subjected to collectivisation and deportation to Siberia.

It is under such circumstances, that Polish authorities became familiar with the activities and clearly articulated programs of Ukrainian organizations as well as of leftwing and democratic circles already in existence, and this was long before the Ukrainian political and armed underground movement emerged. This issue, which remains shrouded in silence, is a unique key to the understanding of events that took place after July 1945—events that engendered significant changes both in the Ukrainian community in Poland and in the official policies relevant to that community.

The Lemko land was a classic example of these changes. In January and February 1945, the pro-communist Lemko community, former members of the People's Guard, established an organization called the Peasants' and Workers' Committee of Lemko Land (WRKL), which focused its activity on organizing Ukrainian schools and co-operatives. In February 1945, the WRKL was granted permission to organize schools in Lemko land, with Ukrainian as a language of instruction. By the end of April 1945, there were 48 such schools in operation. At the same time, there was a concerted effort to reactivate the Teacher Training College in Krynysia, which had been established during the war by the Ukrainian Assistance Committee. By July 1945, this committee already had more than 2,000 members.²⁶

Many years later, it was discovered that Mykhailo Donsky, who served as vice chairman of the committee, had signed a collective petition addressed to N.S. Khrushchev requesting that the areas where the Ukrainians lived on both sides of Polish–Slovak border be annexed to the Ukrainian SSR.²⁷ This occurred on March 1, 1945, while Donsky was participating in a Ukrainian conference in Pryashiv, Slovakia.

In mid-1945, the resettlement operation collapsed. Voluntary resettlement applications stopped. All forms of administrative pressure had failed. In the spring of 1945, after a series of revenge operations against the Polish population by detachments of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), discussions between representatives of the Ukrainian and Polish

²⁶ *Repatriacja czy deportacja*, vol. 1, doc. 32, pp. 97-101.

²⁷ *Deportatsii. Zakhidni zemli Ukrainy kintsia 30-kh – pochatku 50-kh rr. Dokumenty, materialy, spohady u triokh tomakh*, vol. 1, 1939-1945, Lviv, 1996, doc. 153, pp. 463-466.

underground took place, resulting in an agreement that attacks by either side on civilians would stop.²⁸ At the same time, Ukrainians, who had previously been resettled to the Ukrainian SSR in 1944, began returning to Poland, illegally and for the most part, arriving on transports carrying Poles being resettled in Poland. These Ukrainians were bringing back a bleak picture of a Ukraine destroyed by war and overcome by a new wave of hunger and repressions. This information, skillfully disseminated by the OUN, deepened the reluctance among Ukrainians to leave Poland.

Under these circumstances and on instruction of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Public Administration organized a conference in Warsaw on July 24, 1945, inviting carefully selected representatives of the Ukrainian population from Krakow, Riashiv, and Lublyn provinces. Included were activists of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, representatives of the Peasants' and Workers' Committee of Lemko Land, and members of the Ukrainian Civic Committee, people with distinct leftwing and democratic views. An invitation to participate in the conference was also sent to members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army command.²⁹ The Polish government had decided to approach all of these groups with a request for help in continuing resettlement operation.

The ten delegates, who were brought to Warsaw by special planes and were isolated one from another until the conference started, surprised the government by preparing almost identical agendas in favor of staying in Poland. Amongst all the proposals submitted by the delegates, only one contained a demand to respect the principle of voluntary resettlement. The remaining proposals concerned reactivation of Ukrainian schools, land reform, and amnesty for members of the Ukrainian underground. Each of them also expressed a wish to tie their future with the Polish state, and more specifically with the lands of their ancestors.³⁰ Authors of the proposals were of the opinion that all Ukrainians who had expressed a desire to resettle in Ukraine had already left Poland. The remaining Ukrainians wanted to stay in Poland and were prepared to make

²⁸ Motyka G., Wnuk R., *Pany i rezuny. Współpraca AK-WiN i UPA 1946-1947*, Warszawa, 1997; Sztendera J., *W poszukiwaniu porozumienia (Podziemie ukraińskie i polskie w latach 1945-1947. Współpraca między UPA i WiN)*. "Zeszyty Historyczne" 1985, z. 71, pp. 155-158.

²⁹ Sztendera J., *W poszukiwaniu porozumienia, op. cit.*, p. 163.

³⁰ AAN, KC PZPR, 295/VII-158, k. 1-7, Protokół konferencji, dated 24.VII.1945; Also Sprawozdanie delegacji woj. krakowskiego z konferencji, [in:] "Annaly Svitovoyi Federatsii Lemkiv", Camillus (USA), 1975, No. 2, pp. 177-179.

any sacrifices in building a democratic Poland, equal to sacrifices by the Polish people. Fundamental civic rights should be secured for those people, beginning with those rights which had until then been denied to them.

During a discussion period that followed submission of these proposals, A. Grabowski, a representative of the Polish government declared that *"The present Poland is different from the Poland of 1939 and will not tolerate national oppression. The Rusyn and Ukrainian people may live equally with the Polish people and enjoy the same rights as the Polish people."*³¹ The Polish government representative promised an amnesty, which would make it possible for members of the Ukrainian underground to return to normal life. At the same time, Grabowski declared that the proposals submitted by the delegates would be fulfilled only after the resettlement operation was completed. He then asserted that if a considerable number of Ukrainians remained in Poland, likely for economic reasons, it would be necessary to resettle some of them to western and northern provinces, where they would be treated as equals of the Polish people. He added, however, that people who cooperated with the UPA would be resettled forcibly.

The delegates were tasked with initiating, in cooperation with the heads of county administrators, meetings of representatives of the Ukrainian people in every village where they lived to discuss the position of the Polish government regarding the submitted proposals. During those meetings, many people learned for the first time about the voluntary nature of the resettlement operation, which was to exclude use of force. The people were informed about the proposals submitted by each individual delegation during the conference in Warsaw. These proposals were met with full support, but they were also supplemented with many additional demands addressed to the authorities, mostly related to abuses by the army, police, and local administration toward Ukrainians. It came as no surprise that the resettlement operation of the Ukrainian people soon came to a complete halt.

The end of July and the beginning of August 1945 was a decisive turning point in the shaping of national policy toward Ukrainians for decades to come. The Polish government faced a critical decision: either to recognize the right Ukrainians to stay in Poland if they wanted to do so or to circumvent that option by breaking the principle of voluntary resettlement, provided for by an international agreement, through a forceful and complete deportation.

³¹ *Repatriacja czy deportacja*, vol. 1, doc. 60, pp. 147-158, Protokół konferencji, dated 24.VII.1945.

On August 22, 1945, Wladyslaw Kiernik, Minister of Public Administration, called a special meeting, following a directive from Wladyslaw Gomulka, vice premier of the Polish government who was also serving as the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. Invited to this meeting were Lt. Gen. Wladyslaw Korczyc, Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army; commanders of 3rd, 8th, and 9th Infantry Divisions; and the chiefs of Provincial Public Security Offices in Lublyn and Riashiv provinces. Countering the determinations agreed upon at the Warsaw conference, a decision was made to dispatch the 3rd, 8th, and 9th Infantry Divisions to the Peremyshl, Lisko, and Liubachiv regions with the task of conducting forcible deportation of Ukrainians to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.³²

To justify the need to use the army for the resettlement of civilians, it was necessary to create the impression that the Ukrainians were not leaving Poland because the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) was preventing them from doing so. Thus, to ensure security for the people wishing to resettle to Ukraine, the Polish government had been forced to dispatch several divisions of the army. An important role in the authentication of this version of events was assigned to the press, which, based on untrue and deliberately exaggerated information regarding activities of the Ukrainian underground, was to create an impression that Polish society in general supported government policies toward Ukrainians.

On September 3, 1945, three infantry divisions of the Polish Armed Forces, which had just returned from the front, began the forced resettlement of Ukrainians from Lisko, Liubachiv, Peremyshl, and Sianik counties to the Ukrainian SSR. As the resettlement operation progressed, activities of the army shifted to the remaining counties with Ukrainian communities: Riashiv and Lublyn provinces. The deportation methods used by the Polish Army and state security bodies were brutal, even more brutal than what would transpire under Operation "Wisla." The inhumane nature of these operations can be partially explained by the fact the divisions involved had deliberately been formed of Poles coming from Western Ukraine, particularly from Volyn.

On September 19, 1945, Bishop Josafat Kotsylovskiy, a Greek-Catholic Ordinary of the Peremyshl Diocese was arrested and imprisoned in Riashiv jail, an attempt to persuade him to publish a pastoral letter appealing to the faithful and clergy to leave for Ukraine.³³ After several weeks of intense pressure, Bishop Kotsylovskiy steadfastly refused to

³² *Akcja "Wisla"...*, p. 15.

³³ Misylo Y., *Hreko-Katolytska Tserkva u Polshchi (1944-1947)*, "Varshavski ukrainoznavchi zapysky", 1989, vol. 1, pp. 207-220.

agree to publish such a letter. Public Security (UB) officials then transported Bishop Kotsylovskiy by police car to a border crossing with the USSR in Medyka and transferred him to officials of the Soviet NKVD.

At beginning of October, under the threat of arrest, Father Mitred Prelate Aleksander Milinowski, apostolic administrator for the Lemko land, left Poland, illegally crossing the Slovak border. At the same time, several dozen of the most prominent representatives of Ukrainian intelligentsia from Peremyshl, Sianik, Yaroslav, and other towns of Zakerzonia were also arrested. They were released only after signing an agreement that they would leave for the Ukrainian SSR. On September 1, 1945, classes were suspended at the Ukrainian high school for boys and the high school for girls in Peremyshl. The schools were then shut down, like all other Ukrainian schools in Riashiv province.

Such repressions were not directed solely at the clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Rite. Orthodox clergy shared a similar fate. Polish authorities dissolved two Orthodox dioceses, the Kholm-Pidliashia Diocese and the Krakow-Lemko Diocese, which were established during the war. The priests who did not manage to find shelter in Slovakia and then get through to the West, to the American zone of occupation in Germany, were forcibly deported to the Ukrainian SSR.³⁴ Kholm county leaders, shortly after the resettlements were completed, reported with great satisfaction to leadership in Lublyn that "*Orthodox clergy in Kholm, in consideration of their hostile agitation against the Polish and Soviet governments as well as to prevent them from organizing 'Bulba' bases [Transl: Taras Borovets, nickname "Bulba," was a Ukrainian nationalist politician and activist] and other hostile elements, have been removed beyond the Buh river.*"³⁵

The proposal of the Ministry of Public Administration to exempt Ukrainian people who had changed their religion from Greek Catholic or Orthodox to Roman Catholic from compulsory deportation to the Ukrainian SSR and resettle them instead to the Regained Territories (i.e., former eastern territories of Germany that had been returned to Poland), was decisively objected to by the head of Riashiv province, who insisted that "*the smallest breach on that issue will destroy the entire operation of resettlement of Ukrainian people.*"³⁶

³⁴ Kuprianowicz G., *Akcja "Wisła" a Kościół prawosławny*, [w:] *Akcja "Wisła"*. Materiały z konferencji IPN w Krasiczynie, 18-19.IV.2002, Warszawa, 2003, pp. 153-173.

³⁵ AAN, MAP, 1051, k. 27, Pismo starosty S. Flisa, dated 10.I.1946.

³⁶ AAN, MAP, 685, k. 8-9, Pisma Urzędu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie do MAP, dated 28.II and 13.III.1946.

Ukrainian leftwing and democratic circles, which were represented at the Warsaw conference, also became victims of repressions. A great majority of the delegates was arrested and then deported from Poland. "*The biggest problem has been resolved with the arrest of Jaslo county representatives,*" reported a local representative of the Polish government on evacuation of Ukrainian population, "*and the issue will be brought to the end.*"³⁷ The "issue" being the deportation of Lemko people from those areas. A few days after delegates returned from Warsaw, the Peasants' and Workers' Committee of Lemko land (WRKL) was also dissolved. Hoping for a reprieve, the committee leadership requested that Wladyslaw Gomulka, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, intercede on their behalf. The Lemko people, after all, had hidden Gomulka from the Gestapo during the German occupation. Their request, however, produced only one thing—a choice between resettlement to Ukraine or resettlement to former German lands recovered by Poland. Clearly there was no longer room on Lemko land, even for Lemko communists.

There is no doubt that the elimination of even such limited legal Ukrainian representation, which the Polish government has been obliged to accept due to its left-wing, outright communist image, had now become a factor in achieving the goals of Polish national policy. For one thing, it facilitated a total renunciation of inconvenient approaches to a political resolution of the Ukrainian issue and, at the same time, presented a rationale for the use of military and repressive methods. From that moment on (at least from the Ukrainian perspective), their last resort was reliance on the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which were now forced to take upon themselves the function of defending civilians against forcible deportation, army brutality, and abuse of power by resettlement committees.

On September 9, 1945, in response to compulsory deportations by the Polish Army, the command of the 6th Military Region "Sian" of the UPA issued an order to attack resettlement committees and Polish Army detachments supporting them, and to burn down all the resettled villages. Equally drastic actions were ordered by Yaroslav Staruch "Stiah," the leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in Poland (OUN). Soon after, similar orders were issued by leaders of regional OUN branches. The order of the UPA command, ending with a call to

³⁷ AAN, GPR, 166, np. Pismo przedstawiciela rejonowego w Krośnie, dated 5.XI.1945.

"Let the flames burn in our wake," was executed.³⁸

But burning several dozen villages in the fall 1945, which were deserted by Ukrainians and were designated for Poles resettling from the Ukrainian SSR, and increased reprisals against Polish villages, particularly in October and November 1945, proved counterproductive. Besides irreversible destruction of villages, a majority of which never recovered, such actions simply reinforced the impression that Ukrainians posed a clear and present threat to Polish society. Communist authorities thus gained an additional argument that justified using the Polish army for the purpose of forcibly deporting Ukrainians, and the army gained an excuse for repressions against civilians accused of helping the UPA.

* * *

By September 1945, forcible deportation of the Ukrainian population from Lemko land had also begun. However, the Polish government did not have the courage to send troops against the Lemko people, because in this case, they could not fall back on the excuse of UPA troops defending Ukrainian peasants from being driven out of their home villages. In the summer of 1945, this region was dominated by the pro-communist structures of the WRKL. Many WRKL members were also members of the Polish United Workers' Party, and Vice Chairman Mykhailo Donsky served as an official of the Public Security Office in Horlytsi. The first UPA unit, under the command of Roman Hrobelsky "Brodyecz," appeared in the western Lemko land only in late fall of 1946, after the command of Region I of the OUN decided to establish a new OUN Supreme Region called "Verkhovyna," which included the two most westerly regions of the Supreme Region "Beskyd," where Krosno, Jaslo, Horlytsi, and Novyi Sanch counties were located.³⁹

The situation in Lemko land at that time was very well described in the minutes of the Horlytsi county council meeting dated August 3, 1945: *"Due to the fact that Lemko people still remaining on the Polish territory in no way want to abandon their places of residents and use all available means to stay in their homes, and in consideration of the officially prohibited forced resettlement, the question arises as to what procedures and actions should be taken, without using force and pressure, to induce the Lemko people to leave their dwellings voluntarily*

³⁸ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 84, pp. 200-201; also, doc. 79, 82, 85, 86.

³⁹ Kaminska I., *Moya odyseya*, Warszawa, 2005, pp. 143-150; also, Harysmyv I. ("Paliy"), *Z yunatskykh mriy – u ryady UPA (Spohady royovoho UPA)*, "Litopys UPA", vol. 29, Lviv-Toronto, 1999.

and emigrate to their native land—Ukraine. After a long debate and heated discussions . . . the following ruling was agreed upon: 1) Impose levies on Lemko people, 2) Determine quotas (of agricultural products) and collect them without exception, and 3) Collect overdue taxes."⁴⁰

The actions outlined here, however, turned out to be ineffective. The head of the Novyi Sanch county leadership, who initially also tried using the same methods in his own county, admitted that "those people would commit to any levies, even at 200 percent, so as not to be resettled."⁴¹ Under these circumstances, it was decided that pre-WWII regulations regarding the Polish state borderland be applied to the Lemko people, a decision that facilitated expelling them from borderland territories on the grounds that they were a potential threat to state security. Documentary evidence related to this indicates that Jozef Labus, who was head of Novyi Sanch county leadership, set a precedent in this area. On September 25, 1945, in all villages of Novyi Sanch county where Lemko people lived, the following notice, authored by Labus was posted:

*"Pursuant to paragraph 7, point 5.2 of Regulations of the Minister of the Interior dated January 22, 1937 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland, No 12, item 84), I hereby order as follows: All people of Ukrainian and Rusyn nationality living in Nowy Sacz county are to leave the borderland territory within 14 days, counting from the day following this notice, for reasons of safety and border security. If those citizens do not leave the borderland area in the above indicated period of time, they will be removed by force."*⁴² The words "by force" were underscored with a thick bold line.

Shortly after, Novyi Sanch county leadership notified the governing authority of Krakow province that "he has been issuing personal orders to hostile Ukrainian people to leave the borderland area within 24 hours, which is causing others, both those who already received or expect such an order, to apply for resettlement to the Ukrainian SSR."⁴³ In order to expedite resettlement of the Lemko people even more efficiently, J. Labus issued the following statement: "A convoy of Ukrainian people already subject to enforced evacuation is to be escorted to Nowy Sacz or Grybow railway station through a number of villages where Ukrainians live so that they can be influenced in making their decision more quickly and apply for voluntary resettlement to the

⁴⁰ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 68, pp. 172-173.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, doc. 117, p. 274.

⁴² *Ibid.*, doc. 96, pp. 231-232.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, doc. 118, p. 275.

The order of Novyi Sanch county leadership on the deportation of the Lemko people from the entire county area, which was issued on the basis of the Regulation of the Minister of the Interior from 1937, was illegal but this was not even a consideration until years later. Technically, this regulation was to be used only in individual cases against people sentenced by a court of law for actions that threatened state security, not against people of entire villages located in borderland area. However, in the fall of 1945, nobody treated such legal intricacies seriously, quite rightfully assuming that Lemko peasants did not have copies of the pre-war law journals, and even if they had them, they would have been afraid to admit it. In 1945, everything (and everyone) connected to the pre-war "sanacja" regime [Transl. literally "reform" regime of Pilsudski followers after 1926] was persecuted or eliminated. With the exception, of course, of the aforementioned 1937 regulation.

On October 20, 1945, Jozef Bednarz, who was chief representative of the government of the Polish Republic on evacuation of Ukrainian people from Poland and was impressed by the creativity and effectiveness employed by Jozef Labus in the expulsion of the Lemko people, requested that the authorities of Krakow, Riashiv, and Lublyn provinces "*issue orders to their subordinate counties that they utilize point 5.2 of the Regulation of the Minister of the Interior dated January 22, 1937, and order that Ukrainian and Rusyn people living in the borderland area leave that area in a specified period of time for border security reasons.*"⁴⁵ At the same time, Bednarz emphasized that the idea of applying the regulation had already been approved by Wladyslaw Wolski, Vice Minister of Public Administration, who also served as Polish Republic government plenipotentiary for repatriation.

Forced deportations of Lemko people from the borderland region was conducted in Horlytsi and Novyi Targ counties.⁴⁶ The pre-war laws, in addition to being applied to Lemko land, were also applied in June 1946 in Peremyshl to legalize the second deportation from Poland of Josafat Kotsylovskiy, Greek-Catholic Bishop of the Peremyshl Diocese, and other members of the church.⁴⁷ The Lemko model of deportation was now in effect. If the available statistics can be trusted, the results of implementation of the 1937 Regulation of the Minister of the Interior were

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, doc. 119, p. 277.

⁴⁵ Archiwum Akt Nowych (henceforth: AAN), GPRZ ds Ewak. w Lublinie, 166.

⁴⁶ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...* vol. 2, doc. 20, p. 50.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, doc. 122-123, pp. 228-230.

terrifying. If as few as 2,967 Lemko people (634 families) were deported from Novyi Sanch and Novyi Targ counties from the beginning of the operation until September 1945, a six-fold sudden increase in the number of deported people, up to 18,157 (3,988 families) was recorded in September. By the end of deportations in July 1946, the total number of people deported exceeded 20,000.⁴⁸

* * *

Twisting the pre-war Polish legislation to post-war reality was quite a common procedure and not limited to this single act. Particularly disturbing is a history of actions taken by the Polish authorities to deport those Lemko people from Poland who had previously been mobilized into the Red Army in 1944 and 1945 and those Lemko people who, after being deported to the Ukrainian SSR, had undertaken a dramatic and desperate attempt to escape the "Soviet paradise," an attempt which in only a few cases ended with a happy return to Poland, to their Lemko lands. These are two fascinating examples illustrating how communist authorities, to get rid of 300 or 400 Lemkos, were prepared to resurrect laws, which were used in pre-war Poland to persecute Polish communists and Jews.

It must be noted here that shortly after the liberation of Lemko land from Nazi occupation, the Lemko people were not being mobilized into the Polish Army, but like Ukrainians in general, into the Red Army. By no means was this a result of any particular sympathy toward the Soviet uniform. Neither was this regulated by any legal act. Polish authorities simply assumed that as a result of signing of the September 9, 1944, agreement on resettlement of Ukrainian and Rusyn populations from Poland, all Lemko people would leave for the Soviet Union and automatically become Soviet citizens.

As a result of certain historic events, and also as a result of pro-Soviet propaganda by the WRKL, some of the Lemko people joined the Red Army voluntarily. These were the so-called "volunteers" or "dobrovoltsi." On March 27, 1945, the WRKL even issued an appeal (in the Russian language) titled "Russian patriots," which proclaimed that "Prestige and love toward the Red Army were the reason for mass voluntary joining of the ranks of patriots, both Russian and Ukrainian, currently living in Poland."⁴⁹ The reality, however, was a bit more complex. Only a small number of Lemko people actually joined the Red Army voluntar-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 357-360, additions: No. 6 and 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, doc. 32, pp. 97-100.

ily. Most were forcibly mobilized, quite often as a result of round-up raids conducted by the Polish militia and the NKVD. The Red Army needed cannon fodder, and the Lemko people, who, after a brief, two-week military training, were being sent the front, fulfilled just that role.

It is estimated that between 1944 and 1945 at least 3,000 Lemko people were mobilized into the Red Army. Based on the statistics found in Polish archives and those compiled by former soldiers of the Red Army within the Lemko community itself, it has been determined that 760 people from Sianik county, over 300 people from Novyi Sanch county, and at least 350 people from Horlytsi county were mobilized. Losses were significant. They were particularly high, reaching 60 percent, amongst the Lemko people from eastern Lemko lands, with the majority of them perishing during the Dukla mountain pass battle. Specific examples underscore these losses: 11 out of 16 people from Komancha village, Sianik county, mobilized into the Red Army perished; from Shchavne village, 14 out of 18; and from Smolnyk village (near Komancha village), 16 out of 30 people.⁵⁰

Blood spilled by Lemko people in the struggle to liberate Poland was very quickly forgotten by the Poles. After the war, Lemko people demobilized from the Red Army began returning home to their native villages. According to a detailed list compiled by the Novyi Sanch county, we know that in November 1945, there were 179 such people in that county and 112 people in Novyi Targ county.⁵¹ Even so small a group of demobilized Lemko people was irritating to local authorities. On October 31, 1945, Josef Labuz, the head of Novyi Sanch county leadership, informed the governing authorities of Krakow province of the following: *“Those soldiers spread rumours that when they were demobilized they were assured of receiving a piece of land in this area and while they do not reveal their intentions as to voluntary resettlement, their conduct makes the evacuation difficult.”*⁵²

Several days later (November 7, 1945), Labuz raised an alarm that the demobilized soldiers were conducting hostile agitation against deportation to the Ukrainian SSR by spreading false rumours regarding bad conditions of living and bad treatment of Lemko people being resettled to the Ukrainian SSR. *“For now, they appear to be beyond reach, constantly changing their addresses or hiding out in the forests. Public Security and Militia have been instructed to liquidate such*

⁵⁰ Archiwum Ukraińskie w Warszawie, zespół: “Dobrovoltsi”.

⁵¹ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 1, doc. 123, p. 123.

⁵² *Ibid.*, doc. 110, p. 258.

agitators.”⁵³

The correspondence on the issue of the “dobrovolsi” is exceptionally extensive and one-sided. It paints a picture of an imaginary and absurd immediate threat to Poland’s security by a small group of Lemko people, former soldiers of the Red Army, who just a few months ago had risked their lives in a struggle to liberate Poland from Nazi occupation.

Nonetheless, the issue of demobilized Lemkos was slowly becoming ripe for “the ultimate solution.” In November (1945), the governing authority of Krakow province notified the Ministry of Public Administration of the situation and at the same time instructed his subordinate county leadership to determine the precise number and place of residence of former soldiers of the Red Army. On December 31, 1945, the Director of the Department of the Ministry of Public Administration instructed the Krakow province authorities as follows: “*In consideration of the great number of demobilized soldiers of the Red Army returning and obstructing the resettlement operation, in consultation with public security authorities, you are to order the detention and expulsion from the territory of the Polish Republic, pursuant to the regulation of the President of the Polish Republic, Article 10, dated August 13, 1926, regarding foreigners, which is to be preceded by stripping them of Polish citizenship pursuant to the regulations dated January 20, 1920, and March 31, 1938*”—that is, regulations regarding citizenship.⁵⁴

The creativity of legal experts of those days was incredible. Somehow they came to the conclusion that Lemko people who lived in Poland, by the virtue of joining the Red Army, which even though foreign was the army of an allied country, met all the criteria needed to strip them of Polish citizenship. According to provisions of the Citizenship Act dated March 31, 1938, some of the people who could be deprived of Polish citizenship were people staying abroad and serving in a foreign army “*without the consent of a competent government official.*” Before 1939, this act was applied strictly to those Polish citizens who had fought abroad in the ranks of the army of a republican Spain and to political refugees, mostly Jews who were Polish citizens living on the territory of Germany and who, after the so-called “Kristallnacht,” were deported to Poland by the Nazis. After the war, this act was used against the Lemko people. The Citizenship Act provisions sanctioned stripping the Lemkos of Polish citizenship as a result of military service in the Red Army. It also facilitated their automatic detention and expulsion from the territory of the Polish Republic, by way of the regulation of the President

⁵³ *Ibid.*, doc. 117, p. 274.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, doc. 144, pp. 305-306.

of the Polish Republic, Article 10, dated August 13, 1926, regarding foreigners (Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland, No 83, item. 65), which sanctioned arrest and transfer to Soviet authorities any persons who had deserted the Soviet Union.

When the above-mentioned regulations started to be enforced, the reactions from the Lemkos, especially the former soldiers who had fought in defense of Poland, were understandably bitter and disdainful. Simple people, severely tried by the war many times over, were now confronted with a new drama. Today, letters and petitions remain the only silent witnesses of these tragedies. Let me quote two sentences from a letter, dated February 19, 1946, which was signed by 25 disabled former soldiers of the Red Army and by 45 widows of Lemko people who died during the war, all from Szczawne commune. Addressed to Edward Osobka-Morawski, Premier of the Polish government, and Boleslaw Bierut, President of Poland and Minister of National Defense, the letter pleaded: *"In the recent war, in 1939–1945, the sons of this land gave their lives—the most precious treasure one can have—in its defense and in defense of the Republic of Poland. Others became crippled for the rest of their lives. The surviving parents and orphans of these war victims, in great numbers, want to stay on this land for which their sons and fathers spilled their blood. History teaches us that the land for which defenders give their lives belongs to them."*⁵⁵

Unfortunately, such petitions remained unanswered and ended up in forgotten files. After receiving copies of similar petitions, Jozef Bednarz, chief representative of the government of the Polish Republic on evacuation of Ukrainian people from Poland, commented in an April 1, 1946, letter to the Vice Minister of Public Administration: *"I have no positive evidence as to whether the undersigned Lemko people fought for the freedom of the Polish nation and as to whether they are currently loyal to the Provisional Government of National Unity."*⁵⁶

Bednarz did approach the Polish Academy of Arts in Krakow with a request for clarification of the "complexities of thje Lemko soul," but the expert's report, dated April 16, 1946, and prepared by Prof. Tadeusz Kowalski, secretary general of the academy, was of such a poor and embarrassing academic quality, that it is better to leave it unmentioned, to prevent insulting either the Lemko people or the prestigious Academy.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, doc. 21, pp. 52-53.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, doc. 38, pp. 90-91.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, doc. 44, pp. 102-103.

On December 14, 1945, an additional protocol to the agreement on resettlement was signed in Warsaw, extending the final date of resettlement registration to January 15, 1946. For the third time, the date of completion of the resettlement operation was moved, this time to June 15, 1946. Polish authorities were given to understand by the Soviets that there would be no further concessions regarding the extension of resettlement of Ukrainians from Poland to the Ukrainian SSR. Disregarding a winter season and extremely cold temperatures, the resettlement operation was resumed with the utmost severity. In January, February, and March, troops of the Polish army completed pacification of a dozen or so Ukrainian villages, whose inhabitants resisted deportation to the Ukrainian SSR. The most infamous assault occurred on January 25, 1946, in the village of Zavadka Morokhivska village in Sianik county, where soldiers of the 2nd battalion of the 34th Infantry Regiment of the Polish Army murdered at least 56 people. OUN propaganda of those days compared this event to the massacre conducted by the Nazis in the Czech village of Lidice during the war.⁵⁸

As the deadline for the population exchange was quickly approaching, both the brutality of army operations and the speed of resettlement intensified. On April 5, 1946, Operational Group (GO) Rzeszow, under the command of Brig. Gen. Jan Rotkiewicz, was formed, outranking and superseding all the units that had already been operating in that area: the 3rd, 8th, and 9th Infantry Divisions, 14th and 18th Infantry Regiments, and all units of the Border Defense Army (WOP), Internal Security Corps (KBW), Citizens' Militia (MO), and Office of Public Security (UBP). The Operational Group was assigned the task of providing all necessary assistance to resettlement committees to ensure that by July 1, 1946, the entire Ukrainian population of Liubachiv, Yaroslav, Peremyshl, Lisko, and Sianik counties was completely deported. At 5 o'clock on the morning of April 24, a special operational subgroup of GO Rzeszow was formed from units of the 14th, 26th, and 30th Infantry Regiments and started deportation of Ukrainians from Yaroslav and Liubachiv counties. On the same day, at 4 a.m., armed with prepared proscription lists, soldiers of 28th Infantry Regiment and officers of the National Office of Public Safety (PUBP) started deportation of Ukrainians from Peremyshl.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Krwawym szlakiem stalinowskiej demokracji – Nowe Lidice*, Wyd. OUN 1946. See IPN, MBP, IX/4, k. 30-40v.

⁵⁹ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 733, Szyfrogram No. 160, dated 23.IV.1946 dowódcy 9 DP płk. W. Popki.

On April 26, 1946, Brig. Gen. Stefan Mossor, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army, ordered commanders of the Lublyn and Krakow Military Districts as well as GO Riashiv to deport 14,045 Ukrainian families, more than 60,000 people, by June 15, 1946.⁶⁰ According to statistics compiled by the resettlement committees, this was the precise number of Ukrainians remaining in the Krakow, Riashiv, and Lublyn provinces. To achieve the stated objective, commanders of the 8th and 9th Infantry Divisions were ordered to increase the number of families being deported from 100 to at least 500 daily per division.

"We have set quite a record," Col. Jan Gerhard, commander of 34 Infantry Regiment, later bragged. *"In 14 days, we have marched through 200 km of mountains and forests, taking 10,000 resettled people and over 200,000 cattle with us."*⁶¹

Regional representatives of the Polish government reported with great satisfaction, that *"the areas where the army was operating have almost been cleansed of the Ukrainian population. Those people, attempting to avoid resettlement, ran into the forests and after crossing the Czechoslovakian border, they hid there, but eventually they were returned by the Czechoslovakian authorities into the hands of the Polish army. In all, 12 transports, including 1,287 families, 6,057 people, have been dispatched. . . . Currently, the army is inspecting the area one more time and dispatching the remaining people, either those left behind or caught in the roundups, to the loading stations. The villages are almost empty."*⁶²

Because some Ukrainians were hiding out in the forests, Brig. Gen. J. Rotkiewicz, GO Rzeszow commander, personally requested additional reconnaissance planes from Lt. Gen. Wl. Korczyc, Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army to ferret out more effectively those who had attempted to escape in this manner.⁶³

On June 26, 1946, after the resettlement deadline had expired, the Polish army forcibly removed Bishop Josafat Kotsylovskiy, Ordinary of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Peremyshl-Sianik Diocese, from the Bishop's Palace. A description of the bishop, who was considered the main

⁶⁰ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 733, Szyfrogram No. 1507, dated 26.IV.1946 gen. S. Mossora.

⁶¹ CAW, 1562/100, k. 68. Teczka personalna ppłk. J. Gerharda; also CAW, IV.111, vol. 733, k. 107.

⁶² AAN, GPRz ds Ewakuacji w Lublinie, 172, k. 84, Sprawozdanie przedstawiciela rejonowego rządu RP do spraw ewakuacji ludności ukraińskiej z Polski w Sanoku T. Wiśniewskiego, dated 1.VI.1946.

⁶³ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 732, Szyfrogram No. 166, dated 26.V.1946.

proponent of Ukrainians remaining on their ancestral land, was penned by the Chief of Provincial Public Security Office in Riashiv: *"I don't know by what right, this beast, previously deported to the Soviet Union, has returned to Poland. He's been walking down the streets with his beard streaming in the wind and inciting Ukrainians that, as per the resettlement agreement stipulations, resettlement is voluntary and only those who sign up should go."*⁶⁴

The bishop was arrested again and handed over to the Soviet authorities at the border crossing in Medyka. He was then transferred to the NKVD prison in Kyiv where he died.⁶⁵ On the following day, Suffragan Bishop Hryhorii Lakota and almost all other members of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Peremyshl Diocese were loaded into freight cars at Bakonczyce railway station. Most were sentenced to many years of imprisonment and sent to Soviet concentration camps. Bishop Lakota died of starvation on November 12, 1950, in Abiez concentration camp near Vorkuta.

At this stage of the resettlement operation, the Polish army was evacuating Ukrainians exactly as planned. *"The resettlement squad first secures the locality against any attacks by bandits, then the officer reads aloud the names of people who are subject to repatriation and announces the time necessary to complete preparation (3 to 5 hours)."*⁶⁶

The experiences compiled by GO Rzeszow during the resettlement of Ukrainians were the subject of careful studies by the Third Operating Division of the General Staff of the Polish Army. These reports were utilized in formulating the deportation operation plans of 1947, and in recognition of his contributions, their chief architect, Brig. Gen. S. Mossor, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army, was nominated a commander of the Operating Group "Wisla."

Today, there is absolutely no doubt that Polish authorities managed to deport over 260,000 Ukrainians (47,192 families) from Zakerzonia to the Ukrainian SSR in the period spanning September 1945 to June 1946. There is also no doubt that this was accomplished only as a

⁶⁴ Archiwum IPN Rzeszów, 04/35, k. 83, Raport dekadowy szefa WUBP w Rzeszowie za okres 31.III – 10.IV.1946. See Iwaneczko D., *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa w Przemyślu 1944-1956. Studia i materiały IPN*, vol. 7, Przemyśl, 2004, p. 75.

⁶⁵ Bishop Josafat Kotsylovsky was arrested by the Polish authorities on June 26, 1946 and sent to the Soviet camp in Chapaiv, near Kyiv, where he died on November 17, 1947.

⁶⁶ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 480, k. 24-26, Pismo d-cy GO "Rzeszów" gen. J. Rotkiewicza do głównego pełnomocnika rządu USRR do spraw ewakuacji M. Romaszczunki, dated 15.VI.1946.

result of breaching the principle of voluntary resettlement and through the application of brute force. Altogether, from October 15, 1944, until the end of July 1946, approximately 480,000 people (122,450 families) were deported, including 21,776 people from Krakow province, 267,790 people from Riashiv province, and 190,734 people from Lublyn province. At the same time, 788,000 people were resettled from the Ukrainian SSR to Poland, including 742,000 Poles and 33,000 Jews.⁶⁷

* * *

Resettlement of the Ukrainian population to the Ukrainian SSR was reaching completion with the perception that, at most, only 14,325 Ukrainians (3,239 families) were left in Poland, dispersed over the territory of three provinces. Of these, some 2,061 were in Krakow province, 4,709 in Riashiv province, and 7,555 in Lublyn province. In addition, there were an indeterminate number of mixed Polish-Ukrainian families. Nobody was concerned about Ukrainians living in Bialystok province (Bielsk Podlaski county). According to statistics compiled by the resettlement committees, this amounted to only about 5 percent of the general Ukrainian population living in Poland after the war and subject to deportation to the Ukrainian SSR. But this was an optimistic perspective; in reality, the number of Ukrainians remaining in Poland was about ten times greater. A year later, during Operation "Wisla," it was discovered that there were at least 150,000 Ukrainians still living in Poland. There was a reason for this inconsistency. The problem was that in the summer of 1946, Polish authorities did not know that the statistics compiled by the Polish resettlement committee were purposely inflated and falsified.

Nonetheless, even the inaccurate "official" statistics of those days were troubling. The idea that a 14,000-strong Ukrainian national minority still remained in Poland and could not be deported to the Ukrainian SSR because the international agreements on exchange of population had expired, only increased the desire to get rid of that minority. Only the direction and form of deportation remained to be determined. And there was not much of choice about this—there were only two viable options. The first was to resume deportations to Ukrainian SSR; the second was internal deportation within Poland, which would entail military pacification of territories where Ukrainians lived and

⁶⁷ *Repatriacja czy deportacja...*, vol. 2, attachments No. 6-7, pp. 357-360. "Teczka specjalna J. W. Stalina". *Raporty NKWD z Polski 1944-1946*. Wybór i opracowanie: Cariewskaja T., Chmielarz A., Paczkowski A., Rosowska E., Rudnicki S., Warszawa, 1998, pp. 296-297.

forceful relocation of Ukrainians to other territories in Poland, mostly to territories newly recovered from Germany. Both options meant abandoning any political resolution of the issue.

A third option was barely considered. It was an option that would have required a reevaluation of the goals of current policies regarding national minorities and, above all, an across the board reversal of earlier mistakes. For Ukrainians, one much-desired change would have been amnesty for members of the Ukrainian underground, setting them on a par with the Polish underground. The political dismantling of the Polish armed underground had brought positive results in the case of the Polish underground. Amnesty in the Ukrainian SSR had also included the UPA.

An indispensable component of this third option was fostering within Polish society an understanding that a change in its past attitudes toward Ukrainians was necessary, coupled with suitable propaganda targeting the remaining Ukrainian population, with the aim of showing that the possibility of peaceful co-existence between Ukrainians and Poles existed, and thus counteracting the influences of OUN ideology. No doubt this would have been a difficult undertaking, particularly as there were strong-minded opponents on both sides.

Past bad experiences under the Second Polish Republic during the years of German occupation had exacerbated the fratricidal struggles between Poles and Ukrainians, and these struggles continued as a result of the ridiculous model of (communist) propaganda. A further concern related to this option was that it would mean conferring upon Ukrainians all civil rights they had thus far been deprived of, and this would have to include land reform, the reactivation of Ukrainian schools (Jewish, Byelorussian, and Slovak schools already existed), and a guarantee of religious freedom. Implementation of this idea would also allow for the dismantling of the Ukrainian underground without resorting to the inhumane deportations of civilians. Although implementation of this agenda would have required at least 2 to 3 years, it would have been less painful and, as a result, would have not have incurred huge economic and political losses.

But the national policy of the Polish government toward minorities between 1944 and 1947 precluded consideration of any political resolution of the Ukrainian issue. The first objectionable point was the question of amnesty for the UPA. An amnesty bill was passed by the Polish Sejm on February 22, 1947, but specifically excluded members of the OUN, UPA, German underground (the so-called "Werewolf"), spies, and Nazi war criminals.

It seems strange and difficult to understand why Polish authori-

ties of those days so stubbornly continued efforts to deport to the Ukrainian SSR those Ukrainians who remained in the borderland counties of Krakow, Riashiv, and Lublyn provinces, despite the fact that the agreements between Poland and the Ukrainian SSR on the exchange of population had already expired. Today, however, from the perspective of events that later unfolded as a result of Operation "Wisla," the position taken by the Poles does not leave any doubt as to their true intentions. It was clear that the Polish side wanted to get rid of Ukrainians, just as they had had gotten rid of the Germans. They would later do the same with Jews (in 1968). And all of this was done regardless of potential economic losses, destruction, and civilian sacrifices. Polish authorities were hoping to continue resettlements to the Ukrainian SSR as long as the final protocol to the Polish-Ukrainian agreement on exchange of population dated September 9, 1944, remained unsigned. At a minimum, they wanted an excuse to resettle those Ukrainians who had allegedly signed their resettlement declarations earlier but had not yet left for Ukraine, allegedly because this had been prevented by the UPA. It did not matter at all, at least since the middle of 1945, that Ukrainians were simply refusing to leave, running away and hiding out in the forests, and that only by means of the so-called "burned village" policy was the Polish army able to drive desperate Ukrainian people from their villages and load them into railway cars under armed escort.

On July 17, 1946, the co-chairs of the National Security Commission (PKB), the Minister of Public Security and the Minister of National Defense, issued instructions to provincial security committees for the period preceding parliamentary elections, which were scheduled for January 1947. In the PKB's assessment, deportation of Ukrainian population that still remained in Poland was of paramount importance and had to be addressed before the elections. The issue was presented clearly and with no ambiguities: "*State security bodies and militia must get busy evacuating remainders of Ukrainian populations, and chairmen of Security Committees must at the same time coordinate this operation with Representative of the Ukrainian Republic, manage the entire process, and ensure transportation.*"⁶⁸ This time, preparations for resuming deportations lasted until late fall. The simple reason for this was that Ukrainians had to be given enough time to harvest the crops.

In the meantime, on August 14, 1946, the command of the Border Defense Army (WOP) issued a top-secret order, which required commanders of 8th and 9th Infantry Divisions of the Polish army; chiefs of county offices of public security in Brzozow, Lisko, Liubachiv, Pere-

⁶⁸ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 490, k. 742-753.

myszl, and Sianik; as well as all section headquarters of the WOP, stretching from Peremyshl to Krynytsia in the Lemko homeland, to compile lists of names of people living within the 30 km-wide borderland belt whose presence in these territories was deemed “*undesirable from a border security standpoint.*”

These were indeed unique proscription lists. They included primarily members of Ukrainian intelligentsia, clergy, teachers—that is, the most conscientious and thus, in the opinion of Polish authorities, the most dangerous people. On October 18, 1946, a top-secret communiqué responding to this directive was sent to a commander of Section 39 of the WOP in Horlytsi: “*Uście Ruskie commune board is hereby reporting that according to information received from Mrs. Jozefa Gurbiszowa—principal of Uscie Ruskie primary school—Rev. Michal Popiel, rector of the Orthodox parish, is teaching children religion lessons in the Ukrainian language. The attitudes amongst the Rusyn people towards the Polish State have deteriorated significantly.*” Dated October 18, 1946, it was signed by Karol Wezyk, mayor of Uscie Ruskie commune.⁶⁹

Teaching Ukrainian children (or Lemko children, if you will) the non-Roman-Catholic religion, in the Ukrainian language, was obviously a very serious offence in those days. Anyway, it was sufficient to place the offender, the Orthodox priest mentioned in the communiqué, on a strictly confidential proscription list of people who potentially threatened the security of the Polish state. The proscription lists soon became an important component of preparations to move Ukrainians out of the borderlands and settle them in the Polish mainland. Most importantly, these lists were a core instrument utilized during Operation “Wisla.”

An attempt to resume deportations to the Ukrainian SSR was also made in the Lemko homeland. The leadership of the OUN Supreme Region “Verkhovyna” reported that between November 8 and November 10 of 1946, public information notices issued by the Peremyshl resettlement committee were posted in Horlytsi county and Novyi Sanch county, advising of a voluntary resettlement to the Ukrainian SSR of all Ukrainians who were left behind after the first resettlement operation. There was no further action on this matter, attesting to the fact that not even a single Lemko volunteered for resettlement.⁷⁰

Resistance by the Ukrainian population prompted the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Public Security to issue a joint decree on November 23, 1946, ordering that all people who had already signed the resettlement forms but had not yet left or the people who were

⁶⁹ AUOP, 17/IX/140, k. 171.

⁷⁰ AUOP, 2721, vol. XIV, k. 158-160.

previously deported but had since returned illegally from the Ukrainian SSR with the Polish repatriates (something quite common in case of Lemko people) were to be deported from Poland to the Ukrainian SSR administratively, that is by force, by December 31, 1946.

However, despite deployment of a considerable number of armed troops and militia for the brutal pacification of Ukrainian villages, this operation also turned into a total fiasco. It is estimated that from the moment when resettlements officially ended (in December 1946) only slightly more than 2,000 people had been deported from Poland to the Ukrainian SSR.

* * *

Failure to implement the new cycle of resettlements to the Ukrainian SSR in the summer of 1946 caused those in governmental and military circles to refocus on resettling Ukrainians in Poland. This idea slowly ripened, even without a clear threat from the UPA, although the potential of UPA activity in the region did appear in the military documents as an argument that would justify implementation of this plan. To date, no document has been found suggesting that the decision on this matter was made under pressure from Moscow.

On September 10, 1946, Brig. Gen. Jan Rotkiewicz, commander of Operational Group Rzeszow, reported to the General Staff of the Polish Army: *"It is a matter of urgency that the remaining Ukrainian population from the territory of Riashiv province, particularly from Lisko, Peremyshl, and Liubachiv counties, be deported without delay. If there are any difficulties with repatriation of this element to the Ukrainian SSR, then it should be resettled to the western parts of the country."*⁷¹

That Rotkiewicz was expressing concern was somewhat ironic considering that under his command, the Operational Group created by the Polish government at the beginning of 1946 with the goal of completing a total deportation of Ukrainians from Poland to the Ukrainian SSR within a period of two months had managed to drive 60,779 Ukrainian families (i.e. 249,781 people) from their homes. Given the brief length of time during which this was accomplished, the results were twice as high as those achieved by Operational Group "Wisla" exactly one year later. However, some Ukrainians, hiding out in the forests, crossing the Slovak border, had managed to avoid deportation to "Soviet paradise," and in the general's opinion, the presence of these "remainders" was making fighting the UPA very difficult.

⁷¹ CAW, IV.111, vol. 466, k. 569-578.

Even more ironic was that the commander of Polish army units fighting the Ukrainian underground was outright blaming the civilians for their unsuccessful military operations. According to General Rotkiewicz, it was not poor equipment, poor training, the low morale of Polish army soldiers under the command of Soviet officers, or the absence of intelligence about the Ukrainian underground that were creating difficulties. The real problem was Ukrainian peasants who saw to it that several divisions of the Polish army were unable to handle 1,500 partisans. This seemingly absurd statement had die-hard followers back then, both in military and political circles. With time, it was metamorphosed into a myth, one that became deeply embedded in the consciousness of Polish society and Polish post-war historiography for decades to come. What was not a myth, however, was that fighting against well-trained UPA units undoubtedly required more effort than removing defenseless Ukrainian women and children from their homes.

Gen. Rotkiewicz was not alone in his views. The intention to conduct a deportation of Ukrainians to other territories of Poland as part of a military operation was most certainly already being considered in the Ministry of National Defense by the fall of 1946. One document that attests to this is a report from Brig. Gen. Ostap Steca, Chief of the Operational Division Section III of the General Staff of the Polish Army, which was submitted in November 1946 to Wladyslaw Gomulka, Secretary General of Central Committee of Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR), who was also a vice premier and Minister of Regained Territories at the time. In his report, copies of which were also received by other members of the Political Bureau of the KC PZPR and the government, Gen. Steca proposed a resolution of the Ukrainian issue *"first of all by way of a forceful resettlement to the Regained Territories, to one specific locality under strict control of state security bodies."* To substantiate his suggestion, he added: *"In the future, we cannot count on loyalty of those people toward the state."*⁷²

In and of itself, this statement may not be particularly noteworthy. What makes it significant is that it was written by Gen. Steca, whose authorship of documents written several months later as part of the preparation from Operation "Wisla" was surpassed only by that of his immediate superior—Brig. Gen. Stefan Mossor.

The idea of resettling Ukrainians onto the former German territories annexed to Poland after the World War II was not new, but Polish authorities considered it only as a last resort. The Regained Territories, as they were called, were described in communist propaganda as former

⁷² AAN, IV Oddział, PZPR, 295/VII-184, k. 155.

Piast lands, returned to Poland after centuries of German rule, a veritable bulwark of Polish character or "Polishness." By way of the Potsdam Conference stipulations, the Germans driven out of those territories were to be replaced by Poles. This was supposed to be the most reliable element, not only from a political but also from a national point of view. It ensured that these territories would be "racially clean." It was from this position that some ridiculous ideas were spawned, among them a suggestion to create military settlements of demobilized soldiers from Polish Army 1 and Polish Army 2 in the Odra River and Nysa Luzycka River borderlands, a degermanization campaign, and a so called national verification campaign, whereby thousands of Warmians, Mazurians, Kashubians, and Silesians were to be classified "deficient" Poles, placed behind the barbed wires of Polish concentration camps, and finally forced to re-settle to Germany.

Within the new Polish society being reborn against the backdrop of such ideas there was no place for Ukrainians. Contaminated by their anti-Soviet and anti-Polish attitudes and portrayed as German collaborators by the Polish media, they were deemed a totally undesirable and outright dangerous element, which could destroy the re-Polonization campaign that was to restore the "Regained Territories" to the Polish motherland.

If was for just this reasons that Polish authorities, just prior to the forced deportations that began in April 1947, were conducting last minute secret negotiations. Mediated by the ambassador of the Soviet Union in Warsaw, these negotiations were to lead to an agreement regarding deportation of Ukrainians to the Ukrainian SSR. When the Soviet side finally rejected the proposal of the Polish side, quickly sending its own delegation to sign the final protocol of the September 9, 1944, agreement on exchange of population, the only option left was deporting the Ukrainians to provinces in western and northern Poland. However, under pressure from the Ministry of Public Security, there were so many absurd limitations placed on that option that implementing it became totally unrealistic. There is absolutely no doubt that until the day Gen. Swierczewski died, there was no good solution to the deportation issue.

Here we should make a somewhat gloomy digression and briefly return to the final protocol appended to the September 9, 1944 agreement on May 6, 1947, an event which took place on the ninth day of deportation of Ukrainians to former German territories under the codename Operation "Wisla." Ironically, just as members of the Ukrainian SSR government delegation, led by Vice Premier Wasyl Starczenko, were touring Krakow and a salt mine in Wieliczka on May 9, the first group of Ukrainians arrived at the Polish concentration camp of Yaviryia, after being previously detained in Oswiecim.

Appropriate organizational preparations for the resettlement of Ukrainians began in January 1947. Commanders of the Polish Army regiments stationed in Riashiv province were required to submit (by February 5) the most up-to-date data regarding the number of Ukrainians still residing in areas of individual military districts after the deportation operation to the Ukrainian SSR was completed.

Col. Ignacy Wieliczko, Chief of Provincial Security Committee provided the following explanation: *“The deportation operation of the Ukrainian population from Rzeszow province territory in spring 1946 did not bring 100 percent results. Some Ukrainian people, fearing deportation, hid in the forests; others acquired false IDs and posed as Polish citizens. Finally, some fled—even across the border and even after being loaded onto transports—and then returned to their dwellings and provide shelter for all kinds of UPA bandits.”*⁷³

Allegations that Ukrainian people were resisting deportation not for the love of their native land, a land cultivated by their forefathers, or even because they feared deportation to the Soviet Union, (to Siberia), but solely from a sense of duty to cooperate with “the UPA bands,” was typical, not simply the opinion of the author of the above statement. The Ukrainians, regardless of where they lived, whether in the Beskyd Mountains, in the Lemko homeland, or in the Pidliashia region, were perceived as a homogeneous mass of fanatically devoted UPA collaborators.

The communiqué from Col. Wieliczko is an important document for several reasons. First of all, it provides concrete evidence that it was at the end of January 1947 that Polish authorities began to engage in activities focused on deporting all Ukrainians still remaining on the territory of southeastern Poland after deportations to the Ukrainian SSR had ended. A headcount of those Ukrainians remaining was to be the very first action related to this. Several days later, at the beginning of February 1947, Brig. Gen. Stefan Mossor, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army, personally travelled to collect these lists of Ukrainians. Using this opportunity, he conducted an inspection of the provincial security committees in Krakow, Riashiv, and Lublyn. Upon his return to Warsaw on February 20, 1947, Gen. Mossor submitted a top-secret report to Marshal Zymierski, Minister of National Defense and Chairman of the State Security Committee:

“While considering this situation, the issue of Ukrainian remnants in the Krakow District came up. Many individuals, even entire Ukrainian families went into hiding, either in the forests or crossing to

⁷³ CAW, 9 Dywizja Piechoty, IV.310.09, vol. 73, k. 35. See *Akcja “Wisła”*..., pp. 42-43, doc. 3.

the Czechoslovakian side of the border, and then returned to their dwellings, thus creating bases for the bandits of the UPA and endangering any attempts to eradicate UPA control of the area in the future. Because the Soviet Union is no longer accepting these people, it seems absolutely necessary to conduct an energetic operation in the spring, to resettle them on a family-by-family basis, scattering them throughout the Regained Territories, where they will quickly become assimilated."

Gen. Mossor also noted that an accurate list of the "Ukrainian remnants" was attached to the report, a list totaling 20,306 people (4,876 families), which included approx. 2,011 Ukrainians from Liubachiv county, 16,00 from Yaroslav county, 2,800 from Peremyshl county, 509 from Brzozow county, 3,063 from Sianik county, 7,735 from Lisko county, 124 from Yaslo county, 9 from Krosno county, 2,258 from Horlytsi county, 11 from Riashiv county, 139 from Lancut county, and 47 from Przeworsk county.

The report by Gen Mossor is important for two reasons. It was submitted by one of the highest ranking officers of the General Staff of the Polish Army and was prepared for the State Security Commission. Furthermore, it was the first time that the intent to resettle Ukrainians—not to the Ukrainian SSR but to the so-called Regained Territories—was so explicitly articulated. The report clearly specified the time of resettlement (i.e., spring of 1947), the method of resettlement (i.e., on a family-by-family basis and with maximum dispersal), and the direction of resettlement (i.e., dispersing Ukrainians across the Regained Territories). Above all, it described directly and in simple terms the purpose of resettlement—the swift assimilation or Polonization of Ukrainians. It can indeed be said with no exaggeration that the report was the quintessence of everything later transcribed in detail in hundreds of orders, instructions, and similar documents as Operation "Wisla" commenced. And literally everything said in Gen. Mossor's report came true: the timing, the method, the direction, and the purpose of the resettlements. The author of the report, as if in recognition of his prophecy, was named commander-in-chief of a special military operational group, which was created specifically to conduct the deportation of Ukrainians.

Gen. Mossor's report is significant for another reason. In the section of the report devoted to the issue of state security and the results of skirmishes against the underground in Krakow province, Riashiv province, and Lublyn province, there is no mention of any activity of the UPA. The report includes many references to the Polish underground "bandits," listing them by name and providing their numbers, but there is not a single mention, not even a single sentence, relating to any activity or even to the existence of the UPA.

Is it possible that the provincial security committees, which coordinated their combat against the armed underground in Poland and which were usually chaired by the commanders of military districts or the commanders of divisions stationed in a particular province, could have deliberately overlooked UPA activity in Krakow, Riashiv, and Lublyn province area, mentioning only the Polish underground? It seems very unlikely. To begin with, the involvement of Gen. Mossor himself precludes this possibility. Given his precision and his attention to detail in preparing his reports, there is no doubt that the omission of any mention of the UPA in a report that emphasized the activities of the Polish underground was no accident. Gen. Mossor, who was specifically responsible for the operational planning of combat against the anticommunist underground in Poland, could not have overlooked any UPA activity at that time.

Therefore, there could have been only one reason for such an omission. The main objective of Gen. Mossor's inspection and subsequent report was focused on Ukrainian civilians, their numbers, and any information regarding participation of the army in their pending deportation. The UPA issue was secondary, particularly because UPA activity following the already completed resettlement operation to the Ukrainian SSR had become minimal, even downright unnoticeable, compared to the activity of the Polish underground.

The most recently disclosed secret reports of Department III of the Ministry of Public Security (MBP), which was responsible for dismantling and fighting the political and armed underground in Poland, are telling. These documents show that on the eve of deciding to deport Ukrainians—a decision that was being justified by the need to liquidate the UPA—top officials of the department knew neither the actual organizational and territorial structure of the UPA and OUN, nor their numbers or staff.⁷⁴

The first stage of preparations to deport the Ukrainian people was completed on March 27, 1947. On that day, as recorded in the minutes of a meeting of the State Security Committee (PKB), Gen. Stefan Mossor presented an agenda for "*resettlement of Ukrainians from Rzeszow province.*"⁷⁵ In point four of the plan discussed at the PKB

⁷⁴ IPN, 850/380, k. 3: Military Intelligence Department Analysis for MBP on the subject of OUN and UPA structure, dated 1.IV.1947. See the report of department chief Col. Jewczenko "*Cywilna administracja krajowa OUN dzie- li się na 3 okręgi, które dotychczas nie są rozpracowane*"; Also IPN Kraków, 075/133, vol. 8, k. 63-64.

⁷⁵ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 643, k. 46-48: Also *Akcja "Wisła"*..., doc. 15, pp. 59-61.

meeting, it was decided that Brig. Gen. Stanislaw Radkiewicz, Minister of Public Security, “will take up with the appropriate bodies the issues regarding resettlement of Ukrainians from Rzeszow province.”⁷⁶

In this case, the “appropriate body” for the chairman of the State Security Committee could be nothing other than the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR). There was no other alternative.

Documents available from the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) indicate that, according to Gen. Mossor’s program, the resettlement of Ukrainians was supposed to be conducted under the codename *Operation “R”* (i.e., “*Operation Rzeszow*”). The initial draft of the operation was approved on March 21, 1947,⁷⁷ one week before the meeting of the State Security Committee. This operation was supposed to cover a 30 to 50 km wide belt along the southeastern border of Poland, stretching from Hrubeshiv, Lublyn province to Novyi Sanch, Krakow province. Its execution was entrusted to three brigades of Internal Security Corps (KBW), a military formation then subordinate to the Ministry of Public Security and created primarily to fight the Polish armed underground. As part of the operation, cooperation with the authorities of the USSR and Czechoslovakia as well as the appointment of summary courts martial was anticipated.

The fundamental task assigned to KBW troops, in addition to fighting the UPA troops, was the deportation of Ukrainians from the areas where they lived. A special department, subordinate to the operational staff, was responsible for the execution of resettlement. The department was supposed to include political and education officers, security offices (UB) officers, citizens’ militia officers, and officials of local administrative authorities. This department would be empowered to execute deportation of Ukrainians and to settle Poles in the dwellings from which Ukrainian were to be evicted. It was anticipated that the existing regulations regarding the borderland belt were to be used as a legal basis for the resettlement. The administrative authority of Riashiv province was supposed to submit an appropriate application to the central authorities regarding that issue.

Still unresolved was the direction of settlements. In a draft of the Operation “R” plan prepared by Col. Hanski, Chief of Staff of KBW, this issue was literally left in brackets: “[USSR or Regained Territories].” One month later, in his report for the month of April 1947, in which he discussed (among other things) preparations for *Operation*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, k. 61.

⁷⁷ IPN, 578/1725, k. 1-5.

"R," Col. Hanski confirmed that *"the Ukrainian people living in that area are to be resettled to the Soviet Union."*⁷⁸ However, it is uncertain whether this statement related to the planning stage of Operation "R" or to the first stage of preparations for Operation "Wisla." But considering that the resettlement of Ukrainians was to be completed in an extremely short period of time (by May 6, 1947), one can only presume that this comment applied to *Operation "R."*

The death of Gen. Swierczewski prevent Operation "R" from being executed as planned. However, the operation's general stipulations were utilized and, in some cases, outrightly copied by the authors of Operation "Wisla." Also fully utilized were the KBW troops, which had been previously formed to meet the needs of the Operation "R" and were now re-formed as 1st KBW Division comprising three KBW brigades. The division was assigned one of the most difficult areas—the mountainous area of Beskydy where the borders of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia crossed.

* * *

On March 28, 1947, just one day after the meeting of the State Security Committee, Lt. Gen. Karol Swierczewski, Vice Minister of National Defense, was killed by the UPA in an ambush near Jablonka village in Lisko county. A dozen or so hours later, on March 29, 1947, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers' Party gathered for a special meeting, a "Memorial for Comrade Swierczewski." The following was noted:

... The following has been decided as part of repressions against the Ukrainian population:

- 1. Quickly resettle Ukrainians and mixed families to the Regained Territories (primarily Northern Prussia), with care not to create dense groups and not closer than 100 km from the border.*
- 2. Resettlement operation to be coordinated with the governments of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia*
- 3. Compiling data on the Ukrainian population in Poland and preparation of a draft of the resettlement plan is being delegated to Comrade Spsychalski [Editor: Minister of Defense] and Comrade Radkiewicz [Editor: Minister of Security].*

*Due date: 1 week.*⁷⁹

⁷⁸ IPN, 0231/92, vol. 2, k. 110-111, Sprawozdanie szefa Sztabu KBW ppłk. Hańskiego z działalności wojsk KBW za miesiąc kwiecień 1947 r.

⁷⁹ AAN, IV Oddział, PZPR, 295/V-3, k. 16.

Clearly, the decision of the Political Bureau referred exclusively to Ukrainian civilians. As part of the repressive action, they were to be immediately deported to opposite sides of Poland and settled with maximum dispersal. And yet one cannot help but wonder why there was no mention of punishing those directly responsible for the death of the legendary "General Walter"—the UPA. Was it possible that neither the Political Bureau nor anybody else in Poland knew who had organized and executed General Swierczewski's assassination? And if so, was this simply being used as an excuse to resettle of Ukrainians?

A day-by-day calendar of events has created an intriguing impression, with the preparations to resettle Ukrainians falling into a certain logical pattern in which Gen. Swierczewski's death was an important—and perhaps the most important—component.

As the decision regarding the resettlement of Ukrainians was being made, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers' Party had only one piece of information in their hands—a brief telegraph message informing them of Gen. Swierczewski's ambush and death, which was sent on the afternoon of March 28, 1947, by Gen. Mikołaj Wieckowski, commander of the Krakow Military Region, to Lt. Gen. Władysław Korczyński, Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army. That message decided the fate of 150,000 Ukrainians. For all practical purposes, it was evidence of their guilt in the death of Gen. Swierczewski's death. And for that reason alone, examining its content is worthwhile.

What is most striking in the text of this message is the statement that Gen. Swierczewski fell "into the trap of a band." These were the exact words used by an eyewitness of the event, Gen. Wieckowski, a very experienced former officer of the czar's army, who had fought in the front lines of WWI and WWII. For some inexplicable reason, Gen. Wieckowski did not use the terms "UPA bands" or "Ukrainian bands" in his message—notoriously popular terms in Polish military parlance and in the press used to describe the Ukrainian underground—and thus did not implicate Ukrainians as actual or even alleged perpetrators in the ambush and death of Gen. Swierczewski. He did not even suggest this to his superior, Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army. To his knowledge, this was a deed perpetrated by some unidentified band, which begs the question as to whether this might just as well have been a "Polish band" or any other band.

An analysis of this and other documents, compiled later by two investigative commissions, suggests that the term used by Gen. Wieckowski in his message was not accidental. Thus, neither the author of the telegram sent on March 28 nor the members of the Political Bureau of

the KC PZPR who read it on March 29, knew with any certainty who had organized the ambush during which Gen. Swierczewski was assassinated.

Furthermore, there was no certainty even a full month later when the deportation of 150,000 Ukrainians began. None of the perpetrators had been caught or killed during the ambush. None had even been seen. They had been masked and hiding in the nearby hills, within a distance of at least 200 m, before the ambush. Under these circumstances no positive identification was possible.

In a communiqué dated April 11, 1947, the investigative commission of the General Staff of the Polish Army reported:

*"The organizational affiliation of the band, which committed the ambush, cannot be determined, because none of the perpetrators have been caught. Their number cannot be determined either. It cannot be excluded that the General was followed throughout his trip by some subversive elements amongst the reactionary groups of Central Poland and that an assassination was purposely planned in a location that would make suspicion fall on the Ukrainians. I consider it my duty to mention this possibility to prevent investigative bodies from being influenced by allegations that the crime was committed exclusively by the Ukrainian fascists and that the perpetrators should be sought only amongst them."*⁸⁰

An investigation conducted by a special commission appointed by the Ministry of Public Security and by the Information Board of the Supreme Command of the Polish Army (military counterintelligence) yielded little additional information. The final findings of this commission were presented in a report dated April 22, 1947:

*"As a result of the operations conducted thus far, none of the perpetrators of the attack, which was conducted on March 28, 1947, have been captured as yet. In consideration of the above, and due to a complete absence of intelligence within the underground, in the current state of affairs, it is inconceivable that the identity of the offenders, the motives of the crime, or the identity of the instigators and organizers of Gen. Swierczewski's murder can be precisely determined."*⁸¹

In the opinion of commission members, investigators could only "assume" that Gen. Swierczewski's murder was conducted by the UPA, an assumption based on the grounds that Polish soldiers had overheard

⁸⁰ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 613, k. 1-3, Raport komisji, dated 11.IV.1947. Also *Akcja "Wisła"...*, doc. 33, pp. 82-84.

⁸¹ CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV.111, vol. 613, k. 8-18, Protokół komisji, dated 22.IV.1947. Also *Akcja "Wisła"...*, doc. 49, pp. 108-117.

“Urra” [Hurrah]. Unfortunately, this last argument complicated the matter even more as the battle cry “Urra” was not Ukrainian but Russian. And whereas Poles used the term “Hurra!” as their battle cry, the Ukrainians, members of the UPA and others, used “Slava!” [a term meaning “glory”].

In recent years, some Polish historians and members of the media have promulgated the idea that Gen. Swierczewski died as a result of an assassination planned or inspired by Moscow. This conspiracy theory, with the NKVD as the behind-the-scenes mastermind, has many die-hard followers, as does the still unresolved mystery of the death of Gen. Władysław Sikorski, Supreme Commander of the Polish Armed Forces in the West, in Gibraltar.

In reality, this is just one more weak attempt to shift political, legal, and moral responsibility for the deportation of Ukrainians to Soviet authorities and Stalin. If this were indeed the case, Polish authorities, the army, and Poles in general would have been dupes of Soviet provocation, making any current claims by Ukrainians against the Polish state for compensation for lost properties and possessions, as well as vindication of those people unjustly repressed during Operation “Wisła,” unjustifiable.

But why would Moscow have a vested interest in killing Gen. Swierczewski? Getting rid of a second rank vice minister of defense, who was responsible for third-rate military contingents of the Polish army would not have required Russians to follow him to Beskydy and murder him. They could simply have recalled him to Moscow, as they did with many other high-ranking Soviet officers of Polish descent who were delegated to serve in the Polish army during the war. The legend of the general “*who did not bow to bullets*” was created only after his death, for the benefit of communist authorities who were creating their pantheon of revolutionary heroes. Before his death, Gen. Swierczewski was an insignificant personality and a mediocre commander. The Polish army divisions under his command during the last phase of the war were decimated during the battles in the Budziszyn region—as a result of tactical errors. If anyone had any interest in eliminating Gen. Swierczewski, it would have been Polish authorities. But in the end, it was they who used his death to their advantage, making it an excuse for deporting Ukrainians and a justification for Operation “Wisła.”

* * *

What truly caused the decision to deport the entire Ukrainian population? Undoubtedly, the most important factor was that Polish

communists had adopted Stalin's model of national policy, which included using forced deportations and the principle of collective responsibility as means to resolve the problem of rebellious national groups. However, in the specific case of the Ukrainian issue, some additional factors came to light, and it was these which soon began to exert an even stronger incentive to adopt a repressive model of national policy.

Today, a consensus about various aspects of such a decision is difficult. To what degree, for examples, was the decision influenced by memories of tragic Polish-Ukrainian hostilities during World War II, which were compounded by Poland's loss of the eastern borderlands, and particularly the loss of Lviv? And how strongly did these things influence extremist attitudes within Polish society and among the political elite of those days?

Over time, anti-Ukrainian attitudes stopped being the exclusive province of traditional "endec" circles [Transl: i.e., the pre-WWII circles of National Democratic Party supporters]. All too soon, any real opinions about the new territorial order in the East were removed from official documents and publications. But suppressing any public mention of this omnipresent concern caused frustration, which in turn fomented the radicalization of attitudes on the Ukrainian issue, both in right-wing and left-wing circles. Moreover, there was no doubt how Poles in general felt and which policy model related to the Ukrainian issue they would support. Even in the western Lemko land, where UPA activity was minimal and where the Polish-Ukrainian conflict was practically non-existent, local authorities were making no secret of their belief that "*society was in favor of resettlement of all Lemko people*" and that "*not only Novyi Sanch county communities like the resettlement operation, but also the communities in other counties, and the government is now more popular.*"⁸²

Resolution of the Ukrainian issue once and for all, within the then current ethnic and territorial landscape, thus became a question of fundamental importance in a hierarchy of political goals. The implementation of these goals was to take place through forcible deportation of the remaining Ukrainian population and, simultaneously, the liquidation of the UPA.

In spite of general and stereotypic knowledge on the matter, which was disseminated by military historiographers over the years, the decision to use this approach had nothing to do with the death of Gen. Swierczewski or with any real threat to state security from the Ukrainian

⁸² AAN, KC PZPR, 295/IX-173, k. 94, Sprawozdanie Komitetu Wojewódzkiego PZPR w Krakowie za lipiec 1947 r.

underground. The Ukrainian underground, as compared to the Ukrainian question as a whole, was a peripheral issue. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), on one hand, was making deportation difficult; on the other hand, by exaggerating the results of the UPA activity, authorities found an ideal way to justify, in the eyes of Polish society, the use of even the most inhumane methods against Ukrainians.

The chance of rescinding political and territorial reality in the very heart of the communist bloc by a Ukrainian underground that was less than 1,500 strong was completely unrealistic. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army command and the Polish Army command were both aware of this. But the existence of the Ukrainian underground in Poland after the WWII was a reaction not just to territorial and political changes within in the Polish state; it was above all, a reaction to the brutal policies of the communist authorities toward Ukrainian civilians. As the repressive nature of these policies intensified—through forced resettlement to the Ukrainian SSR and ruthless pacification of rebellious villages—the support given by civilians to the Ukrainian underground increased as well, resulting in an increase of underground supply channels.

Ironically, the call for radicalism and ruthlessness against Ukrainians was at odds with the way the Ukrainian population itself perceived the Polish state, as well as with the status of the Ukrainian underground at the time. It is particularly telling that the decision regarding the final resolution of the Ukrainian question was made at a time when military reports of the Polish army units engaged in fighting the UPA had started to note a clearly visible decline in UPA activity. It was, in fact, a period characterized by a progressive disintegration in morale and an increase in desertions from the Ukrainian underground. This was a phenomenon that clearly underscored that the problems of the Ukrainian underground had grown during the year and that their difficulties were not abating. *“Those bandits are going through a crisis,”* reported a commander of one the divisions fighting the UPA, *“in light of the clear hopelessness of their 2-year long struggle.”*⁸³

A similar commentary on this phenomenon came from a special representative of the Ministry of Public Security (MBP) who was sent to Riashiv province in February 1947. Following his meeting with chiefs of District Offices of Public Security (PUBP) and Provincial Offices of Public Security (WUBP), this representative submitted a very interesting report, which concluded the following: *“It must be pointed out that there*

⁸³ CAW, 9 DP, IV.310.09, vol. 43, k. 11-12, Plan działania nr 001 Wydziału Operacyjnego Sztabu 9 DP na okres 1-14.II.1947 r.; Also *Akcja “Wisła”*..., doc. 1, p. 39.

is a growing tendency among the ranks of the UPA bandits to come out of hiding. . . . A great number of bandits have frost-bite and some units are running out of ammunition. Others are collecting their families and, using false IDs, are trying to escape to the West. All this, together with a centralization of resources on our part, will undoubtedly contribute to giving the Ukrainian bandits a crushing blow."⁸⁴

The authorities no doubt needed to follow up with a propaganda success. The victorious elections and the universal amnesty, which caused several thousand people to come out of hiding and led to the virtual self-liquidation of the Polish underground, also gave the communist authorities ample reason to feel much more confident. A decline in UPA activities, which was perceived as the result of progressively worsening morale and numerous desertions, was viewed as a positive prognosis for a quick and effective resolution of the Ukrainian question.

The death of Gen. Swierczewski was an excellent excuse for justifying even the most inhumane response, and communist propaganda had incited Polish society so strongly that the number of actual losses incurred by the UPA was of a secondary importance. It was the UPA's role as perpetrator that was now most important—symbolically and collectively, it had become the target to which all crimes could be attributed and upon whom all punishment could be meted out.

* * *

During the initial phase of preparations to deport Ukrainians, it was the Political Bureau of Central Committee of Polish United Workers' Party that was making all fundamental decisions. This included decisions regarding staffing of the operational group command, as well as key dates and criteria of deportations. On April 11, 1947, the operational group staff was set up, a group that was later assigned the codename "Wisla." Brig. Gen. Stefan Mossor, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army, an experienced pre-WWII officer, was appointed commander of the operational group. On April 16, 1947, at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the KC PZPR, a special document prepared by the State Security Committee and titled *Plan of Special Operation "Wschod" ["East"]* was presented and approved. The document, which opened with words "*Resolve the Ukrainian question in Poland once and for all,*" described in a great detail the objectives of the operational group, the organizational structure of command, calculation of forces,

⁸⁴ IPN, 00231/92, vol. 52, k. 72-73, Raport kpt. Feliksa Szpana, dated 25.II.1947.

and methods of supply and communication. Upon the request of the Vice Minister of Defense, the codename Operational Group “Wschod” was changed to the Operational Group “Wisla” (GO “Wisla”). April 23, 1947, was chosen as a start date of the operation. Later, this was changed to April 28. Also on April 16, 1947, the governments of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia were notified via diplomatic channels of the intent and the date of the operation and were requested to block Poland’s eastern and southern borders to prevent Ukrainians from evading resettlement.

On April 24, 1947, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers passed a resolution on carrying out a military operation, the goal of which was to deport the Ukrainian people and to liquidate the UPA. The Presidium granted Gen. Stefan Mossor all necessary powers. It is clear that the Polish government was passing a resolution on an issue already decided a month ago by another body—the Political Bureau of the KC PZPR. For this reason alone, the resolution was clearly a formality, if not outright fiction, but it was needed to make the operation look legal because it involved major expenditures from the state budget and would entail engaging a considerable portion of the armed forces. Within the political reality of the Polish state under communist rule, this sequence in the decision-making process was nothing extraordinary. In all important matters, it was the rule rather than the exception.

Official statistics show that Operational Group “Wisla” forces were 17,350 strong and consisted of the Polish Army and KBW soldiers of six infantry divisions, one aviation squadron, and approximately 3,000 officers of civil militia, public security (UBP), and soldiers of the Border Defense Army (WOP). Thus, over 20,000 soldiers and police were amassed in the area of Sianik, Lisko, and Peremyshl counties, where deportation was to begin and where, according to the records of the General Staff of the Polish Army, approximately 14,000 Ukrainian people lived and 8 UPA units, smaller than 800 strong, operated. The operational group forces were supported by several thousands Soviet and Czechoslovakian soldiers distributed along the southeastern border of Poland, giving them an overwhelming advantage.

* * *

April 27 fell on a Sunday. On this day, at 8 a.m., all soldiers partook in a holy mass. On the next day, April 28, 1947, exactly one month to the day of Gen. Swierczewski’s death, 17,000 soldiers of the Polish Army, members of Operational Group “Wisla,” surrounded over 300 villages where Ukrainians lived in Lisko, Sianik, and Peremyshl counties.

At the same time, Soviet NKVD troops and Czechoslovakian army troops blocked the eastern and southern borders of Poland, which stretch from Brest on the Buh River to Novyi Sanch. Pursuant to instructions prepared by the Operational Group “Wisla” command, the army would surround villages destined for deportation in a tight ring at night, so that no one could escape. Heavy machine guns were placed at strategic points in case of an UPA attack or any resistance from the local population.

At 4 a.m., people were awakened by the sound of machine guns firing and rounded up in a central place in the village. They were notified of the impending deportation and given 2 to 3 hours to pack their most essential personal belongings and vacate their homes. Then, the deportees were formed into a convoy and escorted to a regimental assembly point under a strong cohort of Polish soldiers.

“We knelt and started praying. My mother said, ‘Let’s bow to the Lord and to the icons.’ Then we took one of the icons down and put it into a bundle. The soldiers moved away from the threshold, but one of them finally said, ‘Please come out, because 2 hours have already passed.’ We crossed ourselves three times and left this already alien home forever.”⁸⁵

On the same day, military planes scattered tens of thousands of flyers over the Ukrainian villages and forested areas, some directed at members of the Ukrainian underground and others at Ukrainian civilians. One set of flyers began with the salutation “To the misled members of the UPA bands” and advised: *“Today, you are hungry and ragged. As a result of continuously being on the run, you are living like wild animals, dirty and cold. Lice are devouring you. You cannot rest or wash yourselves, because you don’t even have soap. You are longing for your relatives and your dear ones, and they are longing for you.”*

This was the language targeting Ukrainian partisans and proposing they return to “a normal and peaceful life.”⁸⁶ The most important sentence in this text—*“He who gives himself and his arms up voluntarily, this one shall live”*—was printed in big bold letters. For several hundred UPA soldiers who believed in such assurances and surrendered, this promised “normal life” ended with a death sentence issued by the military court of Operational Group “Wisla” and a shot to the back of the head in the basements of Public Security (UB) torture chambers in Sianik, Riashiv, Peremyshl, Lublyn, and Krakow.

⁸⁵ *Nashe Slovo*, 1997, No. 14, “Spohady Marii Hawryluk iz sela Cisna pow. Lisko”.

⁸⁶ IPN, 00231/92, vol. 56, k. 13, Ulotka “Do obałamuczonych członków band UPA”.

The second set of flyers, with the salutation "To local civilians," informed villagers that the government of the Polish Republic, "*in order to finally liquidate centres of banditry in the southeastern regions,*" had decided to resettle Ukrainian people to other regions. Blame for the deportation was cast on the UPA. At a time when there was already peace in the rest of the country, where people were prospering, the flyers advised, small villages and towns in the southeastern regions of Poland were still burning and a defenseless Polish population was being plundered, murdered, and terrorized. Under such circumstances, the decision regarding deportation, although painful, was deemed necessary. It was supposed to secure the Ukrainian people a "*peaceful life in new locations prepared by the Government.*" As to where this was to be, the flyers did not say.⁸⁷

The substance of the message left no illusions that this time, as opposed to earlier resettlements to the Ukrainian SSR, the operation would not be of a voluntary nature. Here, the most important sentence was also in a big bold letters: "*Those who do not comply with the regulation and who remain in areas covered by the resettlement operation will be treated as UPA bandits.*"⁸⁸ It soon became manifest that the warning was not exaggerated. Ukrainians, who, despite the warning, fled from deportation or who were returning to their home villages after being deported were arrested and taken to the concentration camp in Yaviryia. And this was the best case scenario.

Military reports from the first hours of the first day of deportation appear to be dry and concise. The reactions from the Ukrainian peasants to the unfolding eviction drama, desperate gestures of kissing the thresholds of their houses and home soil, were described in those reports, but were treated as a classic sign of Ukrainian chauvinism and hostility toward Poland.

*"Ukrainians in Bereska village have raised two mounds, one of them representing persecutions of Ukrainians and the other one representing Poland being buried. There were also other cases when the people were leaving their villages—they were kissing the soil saying 'farewell Ukrainian soil.'"*⁸⁹

In the recollections of Ukrainian people, particularly with respect to the first phase of Operation "Wisla," the deportation was a brutal pacification, marked by the deliberate burning of dwellings, often churches;

⁸⁷ IPN, 00231/92, vol. 56, k. 29, Ulotka "Do miejscowej ludności".

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ CAW, Główny Zarząd Polityczno-Wychowawczy WP, IV.112, vol. 290, k. 127-129, Sprawozdanie z-cy d-cy 7 DP ds polit.-wych. mjr. Piszczka.

the destruction of community centres; the reading rooms of “Prosvita”; brutal persecution of families of members of the underground; mass arrests of people suspected of cooperation with the UPA and placing them in a concentration camp; and summary courts martial for UPA members.

Was the Operation “Wisla” ethnic cleansing? Yes, it was. It was a final solution, deliberately planned and executed to perfection. All instructions and decrees issued in 1947 by the political and administrative authorities as well as by the army and security secret police (MBP) had one principal goal in mind—to remove Ukrainians from their native lands, disperse them amongst a Polish majority, subject them to a total police surveillance, and prohibit them from returning to their native villages under threat of being sent to a concentration camp. And then, by severing local social and family ties and depriving them of their fundamental civic rights (teaching children their native language, practicing religion in their own rite), enforce their quick denationalization through Polonization.

The official view, one promoted by Polish historiography over the years, claimed that the main goal of the Operation “Wisla” was liquidation of the UPA and resettlement of the Ukrainian population for its own safety to safer regions of Poland. It is a view contradicted by the methods used against these people, and an analysis of these methods leaves no illusions about this. Starting from the resolution of the Political Bureau of KC PZPR dated March 28, 1947, and ending with the bylaws issued by local county authorities, Ukrainian civilians, no matter where they were resettled, were subject to repression.

We can begin by looking at the timing, the season of the year when the deportation took place. The worst possible season was chosen. Considering the temperature, it might have been winter, but it was early spring and the Ukrainians who were driven from their villages had left fields already plowed and seeded. Their crops, exceptionally rich that year, were harvested by Polish settlers. In their new places of settlement, the former German territories, Ukrainians found the farms in ruins, devastated by war operations. The soil, which had been left uncultivated since the end of the war, was overgrown with weeds. It was already too late to seed. Considering that the army had allowed people no more than two hours to vacate their homes and farms, and that transportation was for the most part unavailable, people generally took only what they could carry. During the first year of settlement, they faced the prospect of starvation and begged to be hired by Polish farmers in exchange for food.

After being evicted from their villages, Ukrainians were first rounded up into so-called regimental assembly points. Usually, this was a piece of communal grazing field, which was fenced with a barbed wire that was brought by special transports from Warsaw and guarded by the

army. As new deportees kept arriving, the assembly points began to resemble temporary camps, housing several thousand people. Packed together with their livestock for several days under the open sky, people were exposed to rain and frost, which still prevailed in the mountains at this time of the year. At the assembly points, the public security (UB) officers, who as a rule were assigned to each military detachment conducting deportation, prepared detailed lists of deportees, carefully checking the ID of each person with the aim of detecting any potential members and supporters of the UPA.

In the words of a special order prepared by the Operation “Wisła” command, *“Here, the first selection of deportees takes place. The selection is meant to catch any hostile and unreliable elements. Those people are to be directed to other places of settlement.”*⁹⁰ In reality, all suspects were subjected to brutal interrogation after which they were separated from their families, transported to confinement in the county public security offices, and then taken by collective transports to a concentration camp in Yaviryia. Here, other lists were being prepared, lists comprising people considered intelligentsia, who were to be isolated from the general Ukrainian public and scattered amongst the Polish people. In this first stage of selection, nationality and religion were used as the sole deciding criteria of deportation.

From the regimental assembly points, deportees were taken in groups to the nearest railway stations. Here, personal IDs were checked one more time, personal resettlement cards were issued, modest food supplies were provided, and people were loaded into freight cars. On May 5, 1947, a transport labeled “R-40” left Sianik railway station with 897 Lemko people, residents of surrounding villages, 120 cows, 24 horses, 45 goats, and 7 calves loaded into 31 cattle cars. As many as 95 mothers and their children were packed into one of the freight cars. Two children died even before the train left the station.⁹¹ This must have been a shocking sight indeed—shocking enough to move the conscience of Col. Groger, the Chief of Military Health Service of Operational Group “Wisła,” who wanted to stop the train’s departure but was prevented from doing so by Col. Chilinski, Chief of Staff of Operational Group “Wisła.”⁹²

⁹⁰ IPN, 00231/92, vol. 55, k. 87-89, Instrukcja dla komendanta pułkowego punktu załadowczego, dated 24.IV.1947.

⁹¹ CAW, 9 DP, IV.310.09, vol. 79, k. 220, Pismo gen. S. Mossora, dated 5.V.1947.

⁹² IPN 00231/92, vol. 27, k. 8-13, Sprawozdanie z inspekcji punktów załadowczych w czasie 28.IV – 3.V.1947.

The arrival of Polish settlers in the former German territories was captured on film—old photographs and documentary films show decorated train cars, smiling people, representatives of local authorities welcoming settlers at railway stations, and a brass band playing patriotic songs. How very different the arrival of the freight cars loaded with Ukrainian deportees was! Pursuant to the orders of the Operational Group “Wisła” command, every transport train was escorted by a dozen or so soldiers—the first and last cars were guarded by soldiers armed with machine guns. Leaving the train during stops was prohibited. Anyone attempting this could be shot. At night, soldiers locked train car doors.

On the way to their final destinations, all transports with deportees passed through the town of Oswiecim. The town was not directly on the route that led to the final destinations, but it was a major communication route leading from the East to western and northern regions of the country. For those directing Operation “Wisła,” it also served as a main distribution hub for transports with deported Ukrainian people, a hub that was shamefully cloaked in official documents under a name “Repatriation Nourishing-Sanitary Point.”⁹³

There were several factors that made Oswiecim a practical choice for serving as a distribution center for the deportees. Side tracks at the Oswiecim railway station, expanded during the war, made it possible for the station to accommodate several transports at the same time and facilitated inspection and selection of deportees. Oswiecim was also situated no far from the concentration camp in Yaviryia.

At Oswiecim, commanders of troops escorting the deportees opened envelopes containing encrypted names of destination stations. Per secret instructions of the General Staff of the Polish Army and the Ministry of Public Security, the people from one village were to be deported via several different transports from Oswiecim to various remote points of settlements in northern and western Poland, often several hundred kilometres apart.⁹⁴

Once these orders were read, soldiers guarding the deportees opened the train car doors. Instead of being greeted by a local brass band, the deportees were “welcomed” by a group of officers of a special operational group of the Ministry of Public Security. Under the pretext of conducting a sanitary inspection, these officers combed through each car of the train, searching for (as was officially dictated by the propaganda),

⁹³ AAN, MZO, 784, k. 19-27, Plan wysiedlenia ludności ukraińskiej opracowany przez Ministerstwo Ziemi Odzyskanych 18.IV.1947.

⁹⁴ *Akcja “Wisła”*..., doc. 53 i 54, 65 i 66.

“the Ukrainian bandits” who were allegedly trying to escape to the West and hiding among civilians. Ukrainians were subjected to a classic selection pattern in Oswiecim. But unlike the Jews sent to gas chambers, Ukrainians were sent behind the barbed wire fences of Yaviryia concentration camp, destined to die a slow death by starvation or to be moved to former German territories for “assimilation.”

From almost every transport train, a few to several dozen Ukrainians were selected for transport to the Yaviryia concentration camp. And it was from Oswiecim that the first group of 17 Ukrainians were brought to Yaviryia on May 9, 1947.

After arriving at their destination stations, other Ukrainians were distributed and settled as per guidelines from a special order issued by the Ministry of Public Security and dated April 25, 1947, which required local authorities to “*ensure that people from each arriving transport were distributed in such way that families be taken to different villages, so that ultimately a maximum of 3 to 5 resettled Ukrainian families are to be located in the same village.*”⁹⁵ Ukrainians were not to be settled in towns, in the proximity of railway stations, or at a distance closer than 100 km from the border or 50 km from the sea. When it turned out that in many counties where Ukrainians were being settled there were no vacant farms available, the Ministry of Public Security (MBP) agreed to a new resettlement formula—10 percent Ukrainians and 90 percent Poles per village. Luckily for the Ukrainians, the order of the MBP was classified top secret and was, for this reason, somewhat delayed in reaching local authorities.

The people being resettled were forbidden to return to their previous places of residence and also forbidden to move to another village, even if a vacant house or a farm in a better condition was available. In the rare instances that relocation to another village was considered, a permit from the Public Security authorities was required. There were also safeguards that prevented Ukrainians from attempting to blend in with Polish settlers: Ukrainians were issued pink resettlement cards, whereas Poles were issued blue resettlement cards. For Ukrainians, these resettlement cards were more constraining than the old personal ID cards. The idea was simple but extremely effective. “Show me your resettlement card and I will tell you who you are!” The emphasis was clearly on preventing Ukrainians from concealing their national identity, and above all, preventing any attempt to change their place of residence without permission from Public Security authorities. Orders issued by the Ministry of Public Security on April 25, 1947, and was sent to all Provincial Of-

⁹⁵ IPN, 0296/6, vol. 6, k. 15.

files of Public Security specified, "*Authorities need to be warned and advised that Ukrainians are hiding their national identity and posing as Poles.*"⁹⁶

On April 30, 1947, on the second day of the Operation "Wisła," the leadership of Olsztyn province issued an order stating that "*The resettlers who are in possession of color resettlement cards and who are arriving individually, cannot under any circumstances be directed to settlement but should first be handed over to public security authorities who are to examine the reasons why they arrived individually. Moving to other farms, after they have been occupied by the settlers, is not permitted during Operation "Wisła."*"⁹⁷

And these were orders affecting only those Ukrainians who were in possession of officially sanctioned documents. Ukrainians who came to western Polish territories without valid resettlement cards were to be arrested immediately as suspected members of the UPA.

Two years later, Polish authorities decided that the color resettlement cards were no longer adequate means of continuing surveillance over the Ukrainians. The cards were replaced by special personal dossiers, prepared by public security authorities for each Ukrainian who was 14 or older at the time of resettlement. On March 12, 1949, Department III of the Ministry of Public Security instructed all appropriate security offices that "*Registration should include all people resettled by Operation "Wisła," regardless of gender, excluding only those children who were born in 1933 or earlier.*"⁹⁸

One copy of the personal dossier was to be filed with the Regional Office of Public Security (PUBP) and another copy with the Provincial Office of Public Security (WUBP) in the jurisdiction where each Ukrainian had lived until resettlement in 1947. Two additional copies were to be forwarded to the PUBP and WUBP of the new place of residence, and a fifth copy was to be archived in Department III of the Ministry of Public Security (MBP). This form of surveillance over Ukrainians lasted until the end of the communist regime in Poland. It has not yet been determined what happened to these dossiers afterwards, but it is likely they were destroyed.

⁹⁶ IPN, 0296/6, vol. 6, k. 17-18. Instrukcja MBP w sprawie zwalczania działalności OUN, dated 25.IV.1947.

⁹⁷ AAN, MZO, 786, k. 1-2.

⁹⁸ IPN, 0326/32, k. 21. Pismo dyrektora Departamentu II MBP płk. Jana Tataja do naczelników Wydziałów II WUBP, dated 12.III.1949.

* * *

“Not far from the barely cooled crematoria of Oswiecim and Brzezinka, the perpetrators, who had usurped the right to act on behalf of the Polish state, were creating a new concentration camp.”

[Excerpt from the speech of Jerzy Buzek, then premier of the government of Poland and later the chairman of the Council of Europe, during opening ceremonies of a monument serving as the symbolic burial site of Germans, Ukrainians, and Poles—victims of Yaviryia concentration camp, 1998.]

The most horrific evidence of the criminal nature of Operation “Wisla” was the imprisonment of Ukrainian civilians in Yaviryia concentration camp, which was situated in a small mining town in what was then Krakow province. The decision on this matter was made on May 3, 1947, by the the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR).⁹⁹ During the WWII, the Yaviryia camp was a branch of Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. The choice of Yaviryia as a place to imprison Ukrainians was dictated mainly by its direct proximity to Oswiecim, through which all transports of deported Ukrainians passed and from which new groups of prisoners were selected every day.

On the other hand, Yaviryia was also a site selected by default. From the perspective of logistics, Ukrainians should have ended up in the Polish concentration camp at Oswiecim, established in February 1945 on the grounds of the Nazi Konzentrationslager Auschwitz I. But on April 17, 1946, Polish authorities precluded this with an official decision to liquidate the communist camp in Oswiecim. This decision was not dictated by a dearth of prisoners (these were coming incessantly) but by a plan to establish a museum on the grounds of the former Konzentrationslager (KL) Auschwitz.¹⁰⁰ Ironically, on July 2, 1947, at the very moment when the first Ukrainian prisoners in the concentration camp of Yaviryia were dying from starvation or as a result of torture, the Polish parliament (Sejm) was passing another special law—“to commemorate the martyrdom of the Polish Nation and other Nations in Oswiecim” who

⁹⁹ AAN, KC PZPR, 295/V-3, k. 55-56. Protokół nr. 8 posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR, dated 3.V.1947.

¹⁰⁰ Kopka B., *Obozy pracy w Polsce 1944-1959. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, Warszawa, 2002, pp. 147-148.

were murdered during the Nazi occupation.¹⁰¹

The name of the camp was Central Labour Camp Yaviryia, but the Ukrainians were not placed there to be punished by hard work for crimes committed against the Polish state. Amongst the nearly 4,000 Ukrainians imprisoned in Yaviryia, only a small percentage were actually employed in the camp workshops. The remaining prisoners spent most of the time locked in barracks, forbidden to lie on their wooden bunks, tensely waiting to be called to the next interrogation, and torture. Almost every day, they were subjected to lengthy and exhausting physical exercises and to an elaborate system of punishment for any reason or for no reason whatsoever. The work Ukrainians were most often forced to do was aimlessly moving of piles of sand or heavy stones from one place to another. This quickly exhausted prisoners, often to the point of death. In the recollections of former prisoners, this punitive work was assigned to them with full premeditation, with the aim of destroying them physically and emotionally, and to frighten them.

The Yaviryia concentration camp was the place on Polish soil where Nazi models and experiences crossed with Stalinist models and experiences. Polish communists, without scruples, utilized all the concentration camp facilities left behind by the Germans, including the wooden barracks, baths, guard towers equipped with machine guns, and double rows of barbed wire connected to 500-volt electrical wires. A post-Nazi command structure was reactivated in the concentration camp—a commandant, section guards, and block guards. Those most hated by the inmates were the “kapos.” [Transl: prisoners promoted to foremen.]

The number of deaths at the Yaviryia camp was horrific. Approximately 2,000 prisoners were murdered in the Nazi concentration camp of Yaviryia during the entire war, in the Stalin-era Central Labor Camp Yaviryia, 7,000 prisoners, mostly Germans and Silesians as well as Ukrainians, perished.¹⁰²

During the first phase of Operation “Wisła” 22 Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy, 5 Orthodox priests, 21 teachers, 2 doctors, and 2 engineers were imprisoned in the concentration camp as a result of groundless accusations, widespread denunciations. Particularly tragic was the fate of the Ukrainian Lemkos in the camp, and specifically, the demobilized soldiers of the Red Army, the so-called “volunteers” who

¹⁰¹ Dziennik Ustaw R.P. nr. 52, poz. 265.

¹⁰² *Lista osób zmarłych w więzieniach polskich w latach 1944-1956, część II. Obozy pracy*, in Centralny Zarząd Zakładów Karnych Ministerstwa Sprawiedliwości, mps., Warszawa, 1993.

had fought for the Soviets. But the overwhelming majority of those in the camp were Ukrainian peasants. There were villages where the infamous principal of collective responsibility resulted in the round-up of a few dozen people who were taken to the camp together, often entire families, including women and children. As an example of this, over 130 people from two Lemko villages (Dobra Szlachecka and Bortne) ended up behind the concentration camp's barbed wires.¹⁰³

In July 1947, a new wave of Ukrainians started arriving at the camp—those Ukrainians who had already been deported to the western territories of Poland and who had attempted to return to their native lands to get possessions they had left behind or to harvest the grain crops. During Operation “Wisla,” most Ukrainian families were unable to take with them sufficient food supplies to allow them to survive until the next year's harvest, a situation symptomatic of the brutal nature of the deportations, which accorded deportees only 2 to 3 hours time to pack up the possessions of entire life and prohibited them from taking farm equipment and tools as well as substantial amounts of grains. There were, moreover, long distances to travel to the loading railway stations, and above all, a lack of transportation. Ukrainians were resettled on devastated and looted former German farms, where the soil had not been plowed since the end of the war. Under these circumstances, many Ukrainian families faced the real prospect of starvation. The Operational Group (GO) “Wisla” command knew that desperate Ukrainians were returning to their native lands to harvest their grain crops, which they had sowed just before deportation, and decided to prohibit them from doing so. On July 16, 1947, Gen. S. Mossor, the commander of Operational Group “Wisla,” issued a top secret order, advising commanders of army units serving under him that the deported Ukrainians who were returning to their former homes without public security (UB) consent were to be arrested and sent to the concentration camp at Yavirya.¹⁰⁴

It is quite astonishing that in a country like Poland, where the confinement and death of several million of Poles and Jews in Nazi concentration camps was rightfully recognized as a crime against humanity, how quickly and readily Polish communists began using concentration camps for the purpose of exterminating non-Polish national groups. Even more shocking is the fact that the next consecutive wave of authorities, who were the leaders of a democratic Poland and who, after

¹⁰³ Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach, “Księga główna więźniów śledczych (Ukraińców)”, vol. I – 1947; vol. II – 1947-1948.

¹⁰⁴ *Akcja “Wisła”...*, doc. 213, pp. 343-344, Rozkaz nr. 0010, dated 16.VII.1947.

1898, condemned both Nazi and Stalinist crimes, continued to oppose recognition of the imprisonment of Ukrainians in the concentration camp Yaviryia as a crime against humanity and refused to treat Ukrainians as victims of repressions.

Imprisonment of Ukrainian civilians in this former Nazi concentration camp, the harassment and torture used against them, the death of over 160 people as a result of exhaustion, disease, and murder committed by members of a special interrogation group of the Ministry of Public Security and by the camp guards, made Yaviryia one of the most tragic symbols of the Polish post-WWII national policy.

* * *

Operation “Wisla,” which began on April 28, took exactly three months to complete—the time it required to deport 140,000 people, including 10,510 people from Krakow province, 85,339 people from Riasliv province, and 44,726 people from Lublyn province. These people were resettled with a pattern of dispersal—no more than a few families in any designated location, on the territories of 9 provinces, in 71 counties. There were 995 people in Bialystok province, 5,280 in Gdansk province, 31,169 in Koszalin province, 56,625 in Olsztyn province, 2,545 in Opole province, 1,437 in Poznan province, 15,058 in Szczecin province, 15,491 in Wroclaw province, and 10,870 people in Zielona Gora province.

According to statistics compiled by Polish authorities on this issue, 543 soldiers of the UPA and members of the civilian network OUN died fighting troops participating in Operational Group “Wisla.” Among the fallen were 10 commanders of UPA units and Yaroslav Staruch „Stiah,” the leader of the OUN’s “Zakerzonnia.” These statistics also cite that 564 members of Ukrainian underground became POWs or were arrested. Over 300 of them were sentenced to death by special court martial. Almost all of them were executed, some on the same day, several hours after sentencing. Nearly 4,000 Ukrainians, including more than 800 women and a dozen or so children, were sent behind the barbed wires of the concentration camp at Yaviryia. In the post-WWII history of Poland, there was no precedent for repressions on such a large scale in such a short period of time.

Operation “Wisla” was a political decision and a military operation, similar in nature to the deportation of Ukrainians to the Ukrainian SSR. It was different only in the sense that it meant relocating 150,000 people within the same country. It was, of course, conducted against the will of the Ukrainian people and in a brutal way. Theoretically, those people could return to their previous place of residence, demand the re-

turn of their properties from the new owners, and demand that their lands be returned. Not long after the end of Operation “Wisła,” Polish authorities, noting the attempts of resettled people to return to their former homes, began to realize that physical deportation of the Ukrainian people was not going to resolve the Ukrainian question in Poland once and for all. The whole point of the operation had been to resolve the Ukrainian question efficiently. But in spite of propaganda that continuously presented Ukrainians as murderers and the UPA as Nazi allies, Ukrainians remained citizens of the Polish state. They were never deprived of Polish citizenship, which in light of the prevailing rule of the law gave them (at least theoretically) equal rights with the rest of Polish society. There was, therefore, a serious risk years later, that dispossessed Ukrainians themselves, or if not them than their children, would use this point of citizenship as a vehicle for reclaiming the rights to land they have been deprived of.

In spite of regime changes, the pre-WWII legislation was still in force in Poland and treated the matter of private property quite strictly, and in particular, the matter of land. Although an illegal decision to deport 150,000 people could be justified as necessary for the liquidation of the UPA, which was deemed responsible for killing the legendary Gen. Karol Swierczewski, the return of Ukrainians to their previous places of residence, and consequently a rebirth of the Ukrainian minority in southeastern Poland, could not be prevented solely by means of military strategy. A legal approach was needed, one which would guarantee that the Ukrainian issue within in the new territorial boundaries of Poland could never be revived. And decisions about just such an approach were made in 1949.

A decree dated July 27, 1949, and titled “Nationalization of farm land properties currently not in actual possession by the rightful owners, located in certain counties of Białystok, Lublyn, Riashiv, and Krakow provinces,”¹⁰⁵ determined that Ukrainians had been deprived of the right to their land and farms, of which they had been rightful owners until Operation “Wisła.” But a second decree, dated September 28, 1948, and serving as an addendum to the decree of September 5, 1947, specified that former farmlands of the Ukrainian people who were deported to the Ukrainian SSR in years 1944–1946 had been nationalized by the Polish

¹⁰⁵ “O przejęciu na własność Państwa niepozostających w faktycznym władaniu właścicieli nieruchomości ziemskich, położonych w niektórych powiatach województwa białostockiego, lubelskiego, rzeszowskiego i krakowskiego.” Dz.U.R.P., dated 1949, No. 46, poz. 339.

state.¹⁰⁶ The state treasury also confiscated properties of legal entities, including those of Ukrainian secular and religious organizations and institutions, the activities of which were deemed of no purpose as a result of deportation of their members. This change was introduced as a means of delegating the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Poland.

Only after the introduction of these decrees was the chapter of the Polish policy of the years spanning 1944 to 1947—a chapter that was meant to resolve the Ukrainian question in Poland once and for all—finally closed.

¹⁰⁶ Dz.U.R.P., dated 1949, No. 53, poz. 404.

MEMORIES OF OPERATION “WISLA”

*First-Hand Accounts of the 1947
Forced Relocation of the Ukrainian Minority in Poland*

DIANA HOWANSKA REILLY

On April 28, 1947, Polish Army division surrounded the first of the target Ukrainian villages. Within a few hours, the Ukrainian inhabitants were taken from their homes to train stations, where they were loaded into cattle cars and shipped across the country. Three months later, when the last transport of Ukrainians arrived in the *Ziemie Odzyskane* (Regained Territories) the number of people forcibly relocated through Operation “Wisla” had reached a total of approximately 140,000.¹ The southeastern portion of the country (covering the Lemko, San River, Chelm, and Podlasie regions) was left practically devoid of Ukrainians.²

* * *

Among the 140,000 Ukrainians relocated in 1947 were this author’s parents, grandparents, and dozens of other family members. My paternal and maternal grandparents lived in the villages of Zdynia and Smerekowiec, respectively, in the Lemko region in southeastern Poland. After being resettled through Operation “Wisla,” each of the families,

¹ Magosci, Paul Robert, *A History of Ukraine*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), p. 649; Piotrowski, “Akcja ‘Wisła’ – Operation ‘Wisla,’ 1947” p. 233.

² For the sake of consistency, I have chosen to use the Polish names of regions and cities that are located within the borders of present-day Poland and the Ukrainian names of regions and cities that are located within present-day Ukraine. For the purposes of this article, I will also refer to the people of the Lemko, San River, Chelm, and Pidlissia regions, collectively, as “Ukrainians,” because this is how they were grouped by the Polish authorities in 1947, despite debates over self-identity that have existed among the people of the Lemko region.

separately, made the decision to immigrate to the United States in the 1960s. As an American child who had never experienced war or serious dislocation in her country, I found it shocking that my immediate family, while living in Poland, had been forced to pack up their belongings within a few hours and leave behind their homes and land. Although my paternal grandparents passed away before I was old enough to discuss their past with them, my maternal grandparents described the details of Operation “Wisla” to me in depth. They explained how they left behind fields that they had just worked hard to sow, how they rode across the country by train in a cramped and unsanitary cattle car alongside their farm animals, and how they were assigned decrepit houses next to those of hostile Polish neighbors when they first arrived in the Regained Territories.

Listening to my grandparents’ descriptions over time, I began to realize that the people who had experienced Operation “Wisla” as adults and could best recall the events of 1947 were dying one by one, and that not many more years remained before all of the first-hand sources completely disappeared. I felt a strong need to document the stories of the remaining survivors, particularly considering that many of them wished to make their tragic experiences known but had no way of doing so. My grandparents, for example, had only a grammar school education and were too old to write their memoirs by themselves. I, therefore, applied for a Fulbright grant to Poland with the intent to travel around the country, to seek out and interview victims of Operation “Wisla” and to learn more about the 1947 relocation operation from them directly. This article records only a portion of what I encountered and heard during my search from 1998 to 2000.³ Nonetheless, it is an attempt to give those who were victims of Operation “Wisla” a voice and to preserve their memories of an event that violated their basic human rights and forever altered their way of life.

REGAINED TERRITORIES

I began my search in western Poland, considering that only a small percentage of the people who had been relocated under Operation

³ The two years that I spent in Poland, 1998 to 2000, were financed through the J. William Fulbright Scholarship. I thank the Polish-U.S. Fulbright Commission and particularly its Executive Director, Mr. Andrzej Dakowski, for all of the assistance that was provided to me during my time as a Fulbright grantee. Research that I have conducted about *Akcja “Wisła”* since 2000 will be forthcoming in a book that is under contract to be published by the University of Wisconsin Press.

“Wisla” eventually moved back East to their original lands once they were allowed to do so. The majority simply remained and rebuilt their lives in the Regained Territories. Poland’s acquisition of the Regained Territories after World War II meant that its borders changed radically. The entire country essentially shifted in 1945 when the Allies allowed Stalin to take Poland within the Soviet sphere of influence and to push the border between the Soviet Union and Poland further westward. Then, in order to compensate the Polish state for the loss of its eastern regions, including such cities as Lviv and Vilnius, the Allies granted Poland parts of eastern Germany. These areas, having been part of Poland in the 10th century under the Piast dynasty, were named the Regained Territories. Yet, to say that Poland “regained” its northern and western territories only served to patch a sore wound, given that Poland had practically no say in or means of objecting to this post-war arrangement. More than half a century later, many Poles still possess a strong nostalgic sentiment for the “*kresy*,” as they refer to the present-day areas of western Ukraine and western Belarus that had once belonged to Poland.

The first city that I traveled to in the Regained Territories was Legnica, located in the region of Lower Silesia in southwestern Poland. Before the territory had changed hands in 1945 and the Germans had been resettled, Legnica had been named Liegnitz. Now, except for a church used by remaining Protestants, little trace remains of the German culture that existed in the city before the war. Through the Ukrainian community in Legnica, I arranged to meet Mr. Ivan Koczansky at his home, to talk about how he had been resettled in 1947.

“In 1928, I was born in the village of Muszynka in western Lemkivshchyna,” Mr. Koczansky began.⁴ “Because Muszynka sits in a little enclave near Poland’s border with Slovakia, it is fenced in on three sides by Slovak villages, and the only way to travel to other Polish territory is to go west toward the village of Tylicz. Throughout the entire war, things were rather quiet because there were border guards stationed in our village. But, then, on July 1, 1947, a division of the Polish Army came, gathered us into a group at 8:00 in the morning on the square by the church and said that we had two hours to pack whatever we owned into whatever we had. They said that, at 10:00 a.m., we would be departing in the direction of Tylicz.”

⁴ Because the interview was conducted in Ukrainian, the Ukrainian word for the Lemko land, “Lemkivshchyna,” will be used. I conducted all of the interviews included in this article in Ukrainian, and subjects responded either in Ukrainian or in the Lemko dialect. I am responsible for the translations and interpretations of the interviews, which were all taped.

“But, didn’t they prepare you in any way beforehand?” I interrupted Mr. Koczansky. “Didn’t you, in some way, hear that you were going to be relocated? Without any warning, they just gave you two hours to pack up your life, and that was it?”

“Officially, nothing was said,” he answered. “There were only rumors being whispered. But nobody believed the rumors. Nobody thought that we would actually be removed. Yet that is exactly what happened. . . . All of the Ukrainians had to leave. The Polish Army took the parish register and looked at the *metryky*, the birth certificates. If you were baptized in a *tserkva*, go! Baptized in a *kostel*? Stay.”

The Ukrainian words that Mr. Koczansky used distinguished the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches to which Ukrainians belonged, from the Roman Catholic churches of the Poles. *Tserkva* (like the Polish word “*cerkiew*”) clearly referred to the former, while *kostel* (“*kosciol*,” in Polish) referred to the latter. Mr. Koczansky further explained that only two Polish families lived in his village, meaning that only two families had been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church.

“But they didn’t speak any Polish at all. . . . Everyone in Muszynka spoke the Lemko dialect, you know. Well, one of those families had a lot of problems when they Army came around and asked them why they weren’t getting ready to leave. They had a tough time convincing the Polish soldiers that they were Poles when they didn’t know how to speak the language!” laughed Mr. Koczansky.

In the end, that Polish family stayed, but the Ukrainians in the village, with the exception of a rare few, were forced to depart regardless of political orientation or any form of loyalty to the government, Mr. Koczansky explained. One young Lemko man from Muszynka, having just finished his service in the Polish Army, was shocked when told that he and his family had to leave. He showed the Polish officers his discharge papers, but the answer he received was, “Fine. You can stay, but your family must go!” Nationality took precedence in most cases. “Your *metryka* was what determined whether or not you were relocated,” said Mr. Koczansky.

“My family had a cow and a wagon, so we took as much from the house as we could possibly fit into the wagon,” he continued, describing his family’s removal from Muszynka. “Then, from Tylicz, the Polish officers led us through the villages of Mochnaczka, Berest, Polany, and Florynka, all the way to Grybow. Thirty-eight kilometers, they led us. On the way there, there was one moment when my cow couldn’t pull the wagon up the hill. So, what did one of the corporals from the Polish army do? He beat me with his cane! Just because my cow didn’t want to pull anymore!

“When we finally reached Grybow, we waited for a few days as the Polish Army loaded everyone into cattle cars, so that they could transport us across the country by train. That’s when they began to separate us as much as possible. They didn’t load one village, in its entirety, into one transport, but instead separated each village into two or three transports. And, in one transport, they mixed up people from different villages. So, for example, people from Muszynka, Tylicz, and Mochnaczka would all be mixed together in one transport, so that they would not know one another.

“My family was loaded onto a transport that left Grybow on July 5. And we arrived in western Poland on July 12. From the time that we were forced to leave Muszynka to the time that we arrived in the west, it took twelve days. Twelve days, we had to survive.”

Mr. Koczansky, then, paused and leaned back in his chair, as if to indicate that this was the end of his story.

“But, what happened during those twelve days?” I asked. “How exactly did people survive from day to day? Do you remember specific details about the journey across the country?”

“We were all transported in boxcars . . . freight cars or cattle cars or whatever they are called. And in our boxcar, there were four families, plus all of our cattle, plus all of our belongings!” Mr. Koczansky said.

“Actually,” he noted, “all of our wagons were in a different boxcar. Before we were loaded onto the train, our wagons were disassembled and packed into two separate boxcars. When the train finally left the station, it moved in the direction of Novyi Sanch. Well, as you ride to Novyi Sanch, there’s a very steep slope and, as the train ascended the slope slowly, the local people had time to get on board and to throw pieces of the wagons off the train. Whatever they could throw down, they threw down . . . wheels and anything else. Later, they gathered up the pieces to keep for themselves. So, by the time that the train reached Novyi Sanch, half of the boxcars with these wagons had been looted, meaning that many people had only half of their wagon when we finally reached the west.”

“As I was saying, though,” Mr. Koczansky continued, “there were about fifteen people in our boxcar, plus all of our cattle. Half of the boxcar was for us and half of the boxcar was for the cattle. It was not comfortable, but it was good that the cows were nearby so that we could get milk from them at any time.”

“How did you feed yourselves?” I inquired.

“There are some publications today which say that they gave us food, that they conveyed us humanely,” Mr. Koczansky said. “But, during the entire trip west, only once did they give our transport some kind

of porridge. We got one portion of porridge and that was the so-called “feeding” that we got. So, each person had to make do with what he had. We had some bread and some dried provisions with us, and we ate that in order to survive The biggest problem was with the cattle because there wasn’t any feed for them.”

Laughing to himself, he added, “I remember one time when the train drove past a big meadow where a lot of haystacks were standing. At that moment, someone apparently pulled a brake to stop the train. By the time that the conductors figured out where the brake had been pulled, the people in the boxcars were able to run out into the field and gather hay for their livestock!”

“And there was another episode where, when the train stopped, one woman got out of her boxcar with a bucket so she could get water from some kind of hydrant. By the time she returned, the transport had left! She walked about a kilometer or two down the tracks before a railroad worker found her. ‘Where are you going?’ he asked her, and this poor woman who didn’t know any Polish told him what had happened. ‘Well, you won’t catch the train like this,’ he said, and brought her to the station personally. He repeated her story to the conductor and they took her in another train, escorting her all the way back to her boxcar.”

“How did you know that all this had happened?” I asked Mr. Koczansky. “Was this simply a story that had grown from rumors over the years?”

“I know because this woman was part of my family,” he answered.

Mr. Koczansky then turned to the subject of his arrival in western Poland. He explained how his transport was unloaded in the town of Chojnow, where they were met by a “*soltys*” (a village leader) and were told to which village and to which house each of the resettled families had been assigned.

“The propaganda against us when we arrived in the west was horrible,” he said. “We found out later that, for those first few nights, our new Polish neighbors slept with axes under their pillows because they thought that we were ‘UPA bandits.’ There was propaganda spread around that the UPA was a bunch of bandits and that these bandits were being brought to their village. Not until we had lived there for a while did our neighbors realize that we were peaceful and that the propaganda they had heard was not true.⁵ How could we have been ‘UPA bandits’

⁵ The tension and hostility between the Poles and the Ukrainians in the *Ziemie Odzyskane* was heightened because the Ukrainians being resettled under *Akcja “Wisła”* were often mixed with Poles who had been resettled westward

when the people of Muszynka never had any contact with the UPA? Do you remember how I told you that Muszynka sits on the border and that there was a branch of the army, of border guards, there? Well, Muszynka was surrounded by Czechoslovakia and, at that time, Czechoslovakia was antagonistic towards the UPA, so how could we have been involved with the Ukrainian partisans when they were not even able to come through our village?"

"So, if you had nothing to do with the UPA, why do you think the Polish Army relocated you?" I said.

"The real reason that we were brought to live in the west was simply to remove us from our land. They removed us so as not to have a problem with the national minorities in southeastern Poland anymore. From the border belt, people were relocated and spread out. They scattered us, with two to three families per village, so that we would assimilate as soon as possible. They moved us to the Regained Territories in order to Polonize us and that was it," said Mr. Koczansky, leaning back in his chair once again.

* * *

In Legnica, the Greek Catholic church had a strong following. On the first Sunday that I could, I went to liturgy at the church and saw that it was packed. Before the service began, I approached the priest and asked him whether he knew if any of any elder members of his parish had been resettled in 1947. He pointed out a few people that he thought might be able to help me, and I waited until after the service to speak to them. As I sat through the liturgy the congregation sang so powerfully that the sound resonated throughout the room. I knew that, during Operation "Wisla" a few thousand people were scattered throughout Legnica and other Lower Silesian cities like Lubin and Wolów, but such a high level of participation from the resettled Ukrainian community gave the impression that the Polish government's goal of forcing the Ukrainian minority to assimilate had not been achieved after all.

Through certain members of the Greek Catholic parish that day,

during the 1944–1946 population exchanges between Poland and the U.S.S.R. (These Poles were often referred to as "*za Buga*," or "from beyond the Buh River.") Many of the Poles "*za Buga*" were from the Volyn region, where, in 1943–1944, the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) is claimed to have killed 60,000 to 80,000 Polish men, women, and children. See Subtelny, *Ukraine*. University of Toronto Press, 2000, p. 475. Poles, who were already fearful of Ukrainian nationalists, therefore more readily believed the rumors and propaganda that was being spread about their new Ukrainian neighbors.

I came into contact with Mrs. Olga Kitzak, who gave me her address and told me that, in two days, she would have some time to speak with me. Mrs. Kitzak lived in a small village named Wilczyce, which was located a few miles outside of Legnica. I took a bus there but then proceeded to get lost as I walked around searching for her house. I wandered around the dirt roads of Wilczyce, walking past fields with grazing cows, until a local man helped me to locate the proper street. Mrs. Kitzak was already outside, holding a bucket and some farm tools.

“Oh, I was beginning to think that you weren’t going to come. I was going to go outside and do some work,” she said to me as I approached. Seeming a bit nervous, she then stated, “I’ve been thinking about this interview for two days. I’m an old woman and I don’t know if I can remember everything. Would it be alright if another woman who was resettled with us was also present at the interview? You could talk to both of us at the same time. I’ve asked her already and she is willing.”

“Of course,” I answered, and we walked down the road to the neighbor’s house. Inside, I was introduced to Mrs. Maria Czuk. A talkative woman, she told me right away that she and Mrs. Kitzak had known each other for a very long time. Until they were relocated in 1947, they had both lived in the village of Wielka Wierzbica in the Chełm region. They were taken in the same transport to western Poland, and they lived in the same house once they arrived.

The two women began to talk about Operation “Wisła” and how they were removed from Wielka Wierzbica in June 1947. They explained that the neighboring village of Wierzbica had only a few hours to pack, causing many of its inhabitants to be relocated “naked and barefoot,” whereas Wielka Wierzbica was given roughly a week to get ready. “People still had time to go to the mill for flour,” Mrs. Czuk stated.

“But did they tell you why you were being relocated?” I interrupted. “Were you given any reason?”

“They told us that they were resettling us because there were Ukrainian partisans on our territory. They said that as long as we were there, we would support them. We would give them food and other things. And they said that if we were removed, then they would be able to liquidate the partisans. They could not liquidate them as long as we were there,” Mrs. Czuk explained.

“And was the UPA actually active in your village?” I asked.

“Yes, the boys were always there,” Mrs. Kitzak answered.

“And the people of Wielka Wierzbica helped them?”

“Yes,” she stated.

“We helped. We helped,” Mrs. Czuk chimed in, “We gave them grain. I gave them a cow. More than once, my mother told me that I had

to go bring them grain.”

She paused for a second and continued, “I don’t know if I should be telling you these things or not . . . but let them arrest me! If I go to jail or to the grave, it’s all the same to me!

“We helped our partisans They had a hiding place in our area and during the day they sat there, when they weren’t on patrol. They were free at night, but during the day they had to hide. They slept, because what else did the poor boys have to do there in the dark. They were so young! So, I went to the young men, and I brought food. I trembled so badly when I took food to that hiding place. The entrance was behind a stable. When the Polish Army raided the area, they searched for these hiding places, but somehow God watched over the partisans and they were not found.”

Returning to the topic of relocation, I asked what else the women were able to take with them besides flour from the mill.

“What was there to take?!” Mrs. Czuk exclaimed. “We took our bed because it could be taken apart to fit into the wagon, but we didn’t take any other furniture. In addition to the flour, we took some potatoes and some grain. And we also had a small calf, which we slaughtered so that we would have some food later. We took the cow, and a pair of horses, and our two small children, and that was everything!”

She noted, however, that she and her husband did get a second chance to retrieve pots, firewood, and other useful items. When the villagers of Wielka Wierzbica departed, they were first led four kilometers east to the town of Uhnów before spending the night there and then returning in the opposite direction, back through their village, and on to the distant town of Belzec. She and her husband were able to run back to their house, but because Mr. Czuk took too long to bring hay back to their wagon, one of the soldiers assaulted him. “The soldier beat my husband because we were taking these things,” Mrs. Czuk said. “It was all supposed to be left for [the Poles]! I just wanted to take some firewood, but this is how they made us leave . . . by force!

“Not all of soldiers were the same though,” Mrs. Kitzak remarked. “Some of them were nice, while others treated the Ukrainians cruelly. The Polish Army was all around us and watched us, but the behavior of the soldiers differed.”

In the same way that Mr. Koczansky was loaded into a boxcar in Grybów, the women, along with the rest of their village, were loaded onto the train once they reached Belzec. They waited there for a day before departing. Mrs. Czuk explained, “There wasn’t any room in our boxcar because they had shoved about five or six families from our village and from the village of Poddubno into it. We prayed that they would

just take us somewhere already. We didn't know where they were taking us.

"When we finally left, we traveled for days before we arrived here in Lower Silesia. They brought us to Legnica, where there were already cars waiting for anyone who didn't have a horse. People who had a horse rode in their own wagon. Then they led us here to this village, to Wilczyce, and dumped us into an area outside. That's where we spent the night." Mrs. Czuk then motioned to Mrs. Kitzcak and said, "They dumped her family, and our family, and some four or five other families. There were only a few Ukrainian families because they didn't put more than that together in one village."

The village mayor arrived the next morning, but only to say that there were no available houses in Wilczyce for the newly resettled Ukrainians. He advised them to walk down the main road until they reached another village on the right-hand side, named Lubiadow, and to inquire whether any houses were available there.

"They brought us and dumped us there, saying 'Do whatever you want!'" Mrs. Czuk said with disgust. "So, some of us went to find houses ourselves. We walked down the main road, farmers and old women and all! Luckily, a man riding in a wagon stopped us on the way and asked us where we were going. We told him in our broken Polish—because none of us knew how to speak Polish well, even though we had learned how to read and write it in school—that we had just been relocated there and that we were going to Lubiadow. He drove us in his wagon the rest of the way and showed us where the village was."

Mrs. Czuk, Mrs. Kitzcak, and the rest of their party were able to find housing in Lubiadow, but they were only allowed to stay there for a short period of time. They lived in Lubiadow for the rest of the summer, doing fieldwork for their Polish neighbors in return for grain, potatoes, and other products, until one of the local government offices in Legnica finally became aware of their situation. As Mrs. Czuk explained, some of the Ukrainian men from their group went to Legnica to the Polish Repatriation Office, known as "PUR," which was responsible for matters involving the resettlement process. The men went to complain that they did not have any land on which to graze their own horses and cattle, but PUR informed them that they were living in an undesignated area and would have to move.

Switching from Ukrainian to Polish, Mrs. Czuk imitated the voice of the government worker. '*A gdzie jesteście?* Where are you located?' the man at PUR asked our men.

They answered, 'Lubiadow.'

'Lubiadow! *Wy nie macie tam byc!*' You are not supposed to be

there! That's a different 'powiat,' a different district! Other people are supposed to be resettled there!"

Thus, soon thereafter, Mrs. Czuk, Mrs. Kitzak, and the rest of the Ukrainians were forced to move again, back to their originally designated village of Wilczyce. They had unknowingly disrupted the plan of the Polish authorities, which assigned a specific number of relocated families to specific areas. Official instructions from the government stated that resettled groups of Ukrainians should not constitute more than ten percent of a total district population.⁶ They were in the "wrong" *powiat*.

Yet, back in the "correct" district, Mrs. Czuk and Mrs. Kitzak continued to encounter problems trying to find housing that was acceptable to them. The first building that they were allotted in Wilczyce was crowded with two other families, not including the family of rats that ran around during the one and only night they spent there. The two women pointed out this building to me through the window. The structure had a cross on top of the roof and looked more like an abandoned church than a place of residence.

"We didn't unload anything from the wagons when we went there to sleep that night because we knew that we didn't want that house," Mrs. Czuk said. "In the morning, we woke up and said that we were not going to stay there, so they took us to some small workers' houses owned by a widow. They were dirty on the outside and there weren't any windows or anything, but that's where they planted us. Our family was placed downstairs and theirs," she said, pointing to Mrs. Kitzak, "was placed upstairs. But, once again, before they let us in, the brother of the widow came, and called us bad names, and said that he didn't want us to stay there. The local city mayor had to come and he only barely-barely convinced the widow's brother that he had to . . ."

"It was all a big to-do!" interjected Mrs. Kitzak. "One said that they didn't have any houses and the other said that they didn't want us!"

Pausing for a moment, Mrs. Kitzak then turned toward Mrs. Czuk and said, "Well, at least you already had a husband and children. It was worse for me because I only had one brother here. I remember that I cried for nights and couldn't sleep."

Mrs. Kitzak explained that her family, consisting of her father, mother, and married sister, had been among the ones in neighboring Wierzbica to be quickly loaded up and relocated. They were taken right away to Belzec, a week or so earlier than the people from Wielka Wierzbica, and they were placed in trains which went to Mazuria, the northern

⁶ Struk, *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, p. 700. University of Toronto Press.

part of the Regained Territories. “They didn’t know anything about us and we didn’t know anything about them,” she stated. “They were sent to Mazuria, and we were sent to Legnica. And no one knew anything about them. There was no address or anything. No one knew. I even heard that my family had been executed in Belzec. Various things were said.”

Only in late 1947 did Mrs. Kitzak find out from a man who had also been relocated to Mazuria that her relations were alive and living in northern Poland. She immediately traveled there and was reunited with them.

Mrs. Kitzak recalled, “When I rode into their village in Mazuria, the other people from Wierzbica who had also been resettled there began asking me, ‘Is my family in the west too? Perhaps mine were relocated near you?!’” They were desperate for information, whether about their loved ones or about their old neighbors. Only by word of mouth, perhaps by running into a familiar face at the local market, were those who were relocated under Operation “Wisla” able to piece together their old world.

Mrs. Kitzak, who brought her family back with her to Lower Silesia, and Mrs. Czuk also began to slowly rebuild their community. “A lot of Ukrainians were brought here and were spread all around Legnica,” stated Mrs. Kitzak. “But, now, all of these people come to our church, so everyone sees one another.”

I was reminded of the mass, crowded with people, which I had attended a few days earlier. The church served not only as a place of worship for the Ukrainians in western Poland, but as an important way of holding onto their past, preserving their culture, and maintaining their ties with family and community members.

JAWORZNO

In Legnica, one of the people I met at the Greek Catholic Church told me, “You should speak with the Tkaczyks. They met in Jaworzno and got married afterwards.” By Jaworzno, the person meant the “Central Work Camp in Jaworzno,” the official name of the concentration camp where, in 1947, the Polish government imprisoned Ukrainians accused of aiding the UPA. I knew of this camp because, from June 1947 until January 1948, my paternal grandfather, Damian Howansky, had been imprisoned there.

Originally, Jaworzno had been an annex of Hitler’s concentration camps in Auschwitz. In 1943, the Nazis established the subsidiary camp in Jaworzno under the name of *Neu-Dachs*, and male prisoners

were brought there to work in the nearby coalmines, until the camp was liberated in January 1945.⁷ Near the end of the war, the Polish government decided to preserve the site and to form the Central Work Camp on its territory.

Starting in May 1947, as Operation “Wisla” was being carried out, the Polish government used Jaworzno primarily as a concentration camp for Ukrainians suspected of conducting subversive activities. Ukrainian clergymen, the Ukrainian intelligentsia, and anyone believed to have helped the UPA in some way were imprisoned and punished there. The Polish Army, under the supervision of the Department of People’s Security, carried out the arrests of Ukrainians living in southeastern Poland according to lists of names that had been secretly prepared by local authorities months earlier. People considered suspicious were categorized as “hostile elements,” to be immediately removed to Jaworzno.

However, the criteria for arrest were vague, and the lists from which the Polish Army worked were often unreliable. Because the lists were based in large part on private denunciations, a simple statement that a fellow villager worked as the head of the local Ukrainian school, or that one’s neighbor was the town priest who taught religion in the Ukrainian language, could lead to an accusation that this person was “spreading Ukrainian nationalist propaganda” or was an “UPA sympathizer.” Innocent people could easily be labeled “threats to the Polish state and the Polish people,” and the result was that many Ukrainians were sent to the concentration camp without just cause.

Jaworzno constituted one piece of the Polish government’s plan to destroy the Ukrainian underground army and pacify what it saw as a “troublesome” Ukrainian population. Ukrainians were arrested and taken to Jaworzno directly from their homes. They were arrested while they sat at gathering points, awaiting relocation under Operation “Wisla.” They were arrested as the trains (in which they were traveling westward against their will) stopped at various stations along the way. Sometimes family members simply did not return to their boxcars after they were summoned at these stations. Usually they were interrogated in a brutal manner before being sent to the concentration camp.

From books, I knew that my grandfather was just one among 3,936 Ukrainians interned in Jaworzno during the period spanning May 1947 to March 1949. I had read that this number included 823 women,

⁷ “Historia obozu w Jaworznie,” *Między Sąsiadami: Almanach Fundacji Świętego Włodzimierza Chrzyciela Rusi Kijowskiej*, (Krakow: Sz wajpolt Fiol, 1998), vol. 8, pp. 222-223.

dozens of children, 27 Greek Catholic and Orthodox priests, and practically the entire Ukrainian intelligentsia. I was also aware that of this number, 162 inmates at Jaworzno died as a result of torture, hunger, disease, and even suicide.⁸

But regardless of the statistics and other information I had collected over the years, I still knew nothing about my grandfather's personal experiences in Jaworzno, because I was only four years old when he passed away. My father also had never discussed Jaworzno with my grandfather because after they immigrated to the United States, they both always felt they had more pressing things to think about as they attempted to build a new life for themselves. Therefore, although I would likely never know why my grandfather had been imprisoned, I hoped that people like the Tkaczyks, who had been detained in Jaworzno, could offer me details about their time in the camp.

* * *

"How did it happen that you met in a concentration camp?" I asked Mr. and Mrs. Tkaczyk when I met them in their apartment. "Do you remember exactly where in Jaworzno you met each other for the first time?"

"Well, we actually saw each other for the first time in a town named Tomaszow [Tomashiv], not Jaworzno," said Mrs. Tkaczyk.

"Let me explain," Mr. Tkaczyk interrupted, describing the day he was arrested by Polish officers in his village of Poturzyn in the Chelm region. "I remember that it was June 15, 1947, a Sunday. We had already heard that they were going to resettle us. It was such a pretty Sunday, and the air practically hummed from the buzzing of insects. Then, around nine or ten in the morning, soldiers drove up. I remember it as if it were today. I saw one of them coming directly toward us with some list and, right away, he asked, 'Name?' I answered, 'Tkaczyk,' and he said, 'Get ready. We're going.' They took me and my brother. My mother was crying. My father was crying. How were these old people going to stay by themselves? This was right before they had to evacuate! The horse-drawn wagons were coming for them. In two hours, it would be time to depart! So, one officer said to another, 'Aaah, why are you going to take two? Let one go.' He saw that these old people were going to be left all alone, so they let my brother go and took me away."

⁸ *Ibid.*, Mokry, Włodzimierz, "Ukraińcy w Jaworznie," *Problemy Ukraińców w Polsce po wysiedleńczej akcji "Wisła" 1947 roku*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo "Szwajpolt Fiol," 1997), p. 83.

Mr. Tkaczyk explained that they made overnight stops in various towns and, each time he arrived in a new place, he was locked in the basement of some building. He was only called out for interrogations, during which the Polish officers beat him badly. The Polish officers, for example, forced him to stretch out on a bench and then whipped him with a stack of branches “as straight and hard as iron.”

“I still have marks if you don’t believe me. I had cuts down to the bone,” he said.

“But, why did the Polish authorities arrest you and beat you so severely? What was their reason?” I asked Mr. Tkaczyk.

“Because of the partisan army and what I did. But, it was all an accusation. A false accusation,” he responded.

He continued, saying that as soon as the authorities brought him to Tomaszów, he was called into the interrogation room. When he entered, the general and two soldiers who were already sitting there began to ask him, “So, what did you do, ‘banderivets?’ Tell us how it was in the woods.”⁹

“I said that I hadn’t been anywhere, that I was a student, and that I didn’t think about anything else except my studies,” Mr. Tkaczyk explained. “But then the general said, ‘Well, we’ll give you proof!’ and he pulled out an identification card. He looked at me and then at the card, and demanded, ‘Then, who is this?!’ I saw that the picture somewhat resembled me. The person was wearing glasses just like I did. But I never took passport pictures with my glasses on, so I knew that something was not right! Then, the general showed me another picture. It was the same man, sitting on a horse, dressed in a uniform, with a machine-gun hanging from his shoulder. ‘And who is this?!,’ the general demanded again. ‘That’s the same man, but that’s not me,’ I answered. ‘General, Sir,’ I said, ‘they beat me so badly that, please believe me, I would tell on my own mother right now.’”

This was the point, Mr. Tkaczyk stated, at which his luck changed. The general, apparently taking an interest in him, asked, “Who beat you?” When Mr. Tkaczyk answered that Polish soldiers had assaulted him during questioning, the general made a note in a folder and told him that he would not be harmed anymore. “I remember this as if it were today,” Mr. Tkaczyk recounted. “He told me two times, ‘You, Sir, will spend some time in the camp, but no one will hit you anymore.’ And

⁹ The term “banderivets” (pl. banderivtsi) refers to a member or supporter of the faction of the OUN led by Stepan Bandera. The name was used pejoratively in communist propagand during and after World War II when discussing the Ukrainian underground or Ukrainian nationalists.

this proved very useful to me. It was about two days later when they called me again, and again that bench was there. But when I pleaded with the soldiers that I had been questioned by the general himself and that no one was supposed to hit me anymore, they stopped and didn't know what to do. Finally, grumbling, they said, 'Go back to your room!' And they didn't call me back, you see?"

Mrs. Tkaczyk spoke up next, explaining how she had been taken to the same basement in Tomaszów as Mr. Tkaczyk, except that she had been held in the cell reserved for women, whereas Mr. Tkaczyk had been held in the cell reserved for men. There was a hole in the wall between these two cells, she said, and, at one point, when a young man was brought back from interrogation covered in blood and bruises, the women peered through the hole to find out what had happened to him. As they did so, they saw a fight break out. For some reason, one of Mrs. Tkaczyk's neighbors, who was also being held in Tomaszów at the time, began yelling at and roughing up the already battered young man. Mrs. Tkaczyk's reaction to the situation was to shout at her neighbor through the hole, telling him to stop hurting the boy.

"And that's when I noticed her," interrupted Mr. Tkaczyk, with a soft smile on his face. "I liked her as soon as I saw how strongly she reacted. She defended that boy when she herself was being unjustly imprisoned there."

When I asked what he meant by this, his wife explained to me that she had never done anything to justify being taken away to Jaworzno. Mrs. Tkaczyk and her family had simply been waiting at one of the gathering points to be loaded into boxcars and relocated to the west as part of Operation "Wisla," when the Polish officers arrested her. "I remember that I was worried about my father and brother," she recalled, "I thought that the officers wouldn't do anything to me. But they came for me."

As had been the case with her husband, the Polish officers beat Mrs. Tkaczyk during questioning and seemed to know a lot of personal details about her family. They accused her of aiding the UPA and claimed, "You brought food and clothing to the forest." But, Mrs. Tkaczyk maintained that this was all false. She told me, "I didn't do that at all because I didn't belong to the UPA! To be completely honest, I didn't belong to anything!"

When I asked why they had arrested her if she was really innocent, her response was, "Just because I was Ukrainian."

"So, neither of you had ever been associated with the UPA, but the Polish authorities imprisoned you anyway?" I asked the couple.

"Well," Mr. Tkaczyk answered, "not exactly." He explained that

the Polish authorities did indeed arrest him and his wife without any real proof or reason, but that he himself could not claim to have never helped the UPA. He had assisted the UPA, but the authorities did not, in fact, know this, Mr. Tkaczyk admitted. "I studied medicine, and you know that those sorts of people are always needed," he said, "So, when someone was wounded, they called me and I dressed the wounds. I even helped one doctor, who was later sent to Siberia, with operations in the hospital. But they didn't arrest me for this because nobody knew. Not even my family knew. I was taken to Jaworzno because, guilty or not guilty, if you were young or someone who even slightly caught their eye, they took you."

The Polish government's attempt to weed out members of the Ukrainian underground army and the local population who supported it was an imprecise process that resulted in the unjust imprisonment of many innocent people, the couple explained. For example, many of the Ukrainians who were relocated under Operation "Wisla," but then tried to return to their houses and native land were imprisoned. "There were girls from Lemkivshchyna who had been resettled to Szczecin already, but they returned home to get something and they were sent to Jaworzno right away," said Mrs. Tkaczyk.

According to Order No. 0010, a secret document with orders that were put into motion on July 16, 1947, "Ukrainians and mixed families" who "illegally" returned to their former places of residence, "explaining that their only wish was to gather the crops they had sown," were to be taken to Jaworzno. "Tolerating such behavior makes the potential organization of secret services, the reestablishment of networks, and even the formulation of new bands possible for the Ukrainians," the document stated.¹⁰ Any Ukrainians who returned to southeastern Poland after being relocated, regardless of whether they truly belonged to UPA's network or whether they were simply coming back for the crops or any other necessary item which had been left behind during the rush, soon found themselves in the Jaworzno concentration camp.

When Mr. Tkaczyk finally began to talk about Jaworzno itself, he began with the statement, "My first impression was that it was as if I had been sent to hell." He described the barbed-wire fence that surrounded the camp and the long barracks that stood inside. His wife then recounted how they were transferred from Tomaszów to Jaworzno in boxcars and were forced to walk the five or so kilometers from the train station to the concentration camp in the middle of the night. "They sent us in freight cars for cattle, like the Jews were sent to Auschwitz," Mrs.

¹⁰ As quoted in Misilo, *op.cit.*, p. 369.

Tkaczyk stated. "About 80 people were in our boxcar and they didn't let us out, so let's just say that we had to take care of all our 'biological issues' in there. I don't know how many hours we walked from the train station to the camp, but it was the whole night. People were tired and whoever fell needed to be picked up because the soldiers would come and hit them. So we all kept walking. We reached the front gate and on it was written 'Central Work Camp.'"

The elderly couple confirmed much of the information that I had already heard and read about Jaworzno. They slept in cramped three-story bunk beds, they were given hardly any food, and they also survived largely because of the packages they eventually received. Laughing, Mrs. Tkaczyk noted, "We slept in pairs on one bed. When we needed to turn over, we had to do it at the same time because it wouldn't work any other way. By the end of my time at Jaworzno, I was completely skin and bones. But, maybe, it was good that I was the thin one because the woman I shared the bed with 'had a lot to go around,'" she joked.

The Tkaczyks also confirmed that people were made to work at Jaworzno. Describing her experience in the sewing workshop, Mrs. Tkaczyk stated, "It was actually better to have some kind of work instead of just sitting there."

Her husband had benefited from his post at the "German hospital" within the camp grounds. German POW's and *Volksdeutsche* were imprisoned in Jaworzno along with the Ukrainians, but lived in a different section of the camp and had a separate hospital. In Mr. Tkaczyk's opinion, "The Germans had it better." Hence, Mr. Tkaczyk's work at the hospital put him in a much more advantageous position than most of his fellow Ukrainian inmates. "The *Volksdeutsche* took pity on me and gave me food. I was able to gain ten pounds in a month," he told me.

Otherwise, Mr. and Mrs. Tkaczyk underwent the same cruel treatment that others had described. "We were forced to do 'zhabky' (a physical exercise that resembles frog-jumps) for any reason at all," Mr. Tkaczyk noted. "For example, we were each given an iron bowl to eat from, and if you allowed that iron bowl to form even the slightest bit of rust on it, you did *zhabky* later on as punishment. They exhausted us physically and mentally. To make everyone nervous, rumors were spread that people were being sent to Siberia. One woman even threw herself against the electric fence because the commander kept telling her various things about her family back home to drive her crazy. . . ."

Mrs. Tkaczyk interjected, saying that inmates did what they could to maintain their sanity, as well as their dignity. Explaining how the women who were taken to Jaworzno with her were given uniforms to

wear within the camp, she noted that one group, "some artists," tried to make themselves look different or fashionable in some way. They saw this as an act of defiance and declared, "We're going to show them that we are people. They can not destroy us."

"Various theatrics took place there," Mr. Tkaczyk continued. "The officers would conduct a roll-call in the rain for no reason and make everyone stand in line for hours and hours before telling us to fall out and go back to the barracks. Then there was one night when they came and the 150 people in the barrack all had to have their shoes placed, military style, in rows. Well, they went and threw all the shoes outside! 'Now, go and find yours,' they told us!"

Both the Tkaczyks were finally released from Jaworzno sometime around January 1948. They signed the necessary documents and each were driven by car to the train station in Jaworzno, as well as from the train station at their place of arrival directly to their families' homes in western Poland. Mr. Tkaczyk was taken to his family in the city of Lubin, while Mrs. Tkaczyk was taken to hers in Legnica.

"Afterwards, when they let us go, we exchanged addresses and started to write," Mrs. Tkaczyk said.

She explained that, after a tear-filled reunion with her mother and a period of adjusting to living in western Poland ("At least, in the camp, I was among my own people, but, in the west, I was among foreigners!"), she was arrested again on July 12, 1950 ("... for the same thing!"). The authorities continued to watch and follow many Ukrainians in western Poland, Mrs. Tkaczyk commented, still not knowing why she had been persecuted. Without any trial or explanation, they had finally released her one night the following December. ("Because everything was done at night," she said.)

"And when did you finally get married?" I asked.

"After I came back from jail, I wrote to him that I had returned to Legnica," Mrs. Tkaczyk answered. With a laugh, she said, "And in my letter, I also told him, 'Let's get married already, because who knows when they will arrest me again!' So, he came and that was it."

LEMKIVSHCHYNA

In 1956, with Wladyslaw Gomulka's rise to power as First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, a period of political liberalization began in Poland. Various restrictions were removed and the repression of national minorities was relaxed. The Ukrainian population in Poland was designated as an official minority and was allowed by the

Polish government to promote its culture under the auspices of the newly formed Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (USKT). Furthermore, for the first time in almost ten years since they had been evicted, those who had undergone Operation “Wisla” were given a chance to move back to southeastern Poland.

This did not mean, however, that the return of the Ukrainians to their native territories was simple. Some villages had been destroyed and no longer existed, whereas others were occupied by new Polish inhabitants from whom the Ukrainians had no choice but to buy back their former homesteads. Ukrainians continued to face legal and administrative barriers, and requests for permission to return were often rejected. Both sets of my own grandparents, feeling that they had endured enough discrimination in Poland, decided to try to make a better life for their families in the United States instead of returning to Lemkivshchyna. In total, only approximately 2,000 Lemkos managed to move back to their native land between 1956 and 1958.¹¹ Wishing to find out what some of these people had encountered upon their return, I traveled from the Regained Territories to Lemkivshchyna, the area my ancestors had lived for centuries before being relocated.

I met Mr. Michael Boldys by chance. The Lemko region, located in the lowest part of the Carpathian Mountains in what is specifically the Beskid mountain range, lies on Poland’s southern border with Slovakia. I had wanted to cross the border into Slovakia, but was told that I needed particular documentation and would first have to go to the *soltys* in the village of Konieczna to take care of such administrative matters. Konieczna was the last village before the border station and, walking toward the mayor’s house, I was surrounded by nothing more than miles of low rolling hills that are characteristic of the Lemko region. The name of the village, derived from the Polish word “*koniec*,” or “the end,” fit quite appropriately. My detour to this remote Lemko village was quite fruitful, however, considering that the *soltys* of Konieczna, Mr. Michael Boldys, turned out to be a Lemko who had returned to his village years after being relocated in 1947.

During our meeting, Mr. Boldys introduced another debate into

¹¹ Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*, p. 239. P.R. Magosci writes that by the late 1950s, about 3,000 Lemkos were able to return to their homeland. Regardless, this is still a small number when compared to Magosci’s statistics citing 178,000 people living in the Lemko region on the eve of World War II, or 35,000 Lemkos remaining in their native villages in 1946 after the Polish-Soviet population exchanges. See Magosci, P.R., “The Lemko Rusyns: Their Past and Present,” *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, vol. 10, No. 1, 1987.

the discussion of Operation “Wisła,” namely the debate over who was ultimately responsible for the decision to relocate Poland’s Ukrainian population in 1947. Mr. Boldys believed that the relocation plan originated in Moscow and that the communist government in Poland, headed by President Boleslaw Bierut, was simply Moscow’s puppet. Sitting in his living room, Mr. Boldys told me, “Operation ‘Wisła’ was the politics of the communist government. President Bierut was simply the person who carried out what Moscow told him to do. Moscow’s politics were to remove people from their own land and to move them around so that they would not feel *u sebe* (at home.) They did this in Ukraine, they did this in Russia, and they did this in Poland too. We ended up being the victims in all of this. Today, they tell us that the communist system has ended, but they should still compensate us for the wrong that was committed against us in our country.”

While there continues to be disagreement over this issue, certain scholars hold that Moscow is ultimately accountable and that Operation “Wisła” was actually part of Stalin’s nationalities policy.¹² Some argue that Stalin wanted to ensure that the Ukrainian independence movement, which was causing problems for him in Galicia, was destroyed. To this end, the argument continues, he summoned Bierut to Moscow in October 1944 to discuss the battle against all forms of “counterrevolution.”¹³ This argument further claims that the plan of operation for Operation “Wisła” was actually prepared by the chief of the ministry of security in the Ukrainian SSR with authorization of such Soviet higher-ups as NKVD head Lavrenti Beria. Hence, an argument exists that the relocation of the Ukrainians in 1947 was yet another of Stalin’s attempts to weaken the

¹² The counterargument to the statement that the Moscow communists were responsible for *Akcja “Wisła”* maintains that, regardless of the relationship between the heads of state of the U.S.S.R. and Poland, the Polish government actively supported the relocation of the Ukrainian population. Misilo writes that no document exists showing that *Akcja “Wisła”* was adopted under Moscow’s pressure and that it is still unknown as to who first proposed the variant of relocating the Ukrainians to the *Ziemie Odzyskane*. Misilo also provides evidence that only on April 16, 1947, was the Soviet (and Czech) government informed, through diplomatic channels, of Poland’s decision to undertake the resettlement campaign. Thus, because the Politburo resolved (during a March 29, 1947 meeting) to relocate the Ukrainian population before discussing the issue with the Soviet Union, an argument can be made that Poland’s treatment of its Ukrainian minority was not actually dictated by the Moscow. Misilo, *Akcja “Wisła,”* pp. 19, 25.

¹³ Ryszard Torzecki, “Wisła zaczęła się w Moskwie,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, pp. 22-23.

national minorities within his sphere of influence.

Referring to how the Soviet Union and Poland had agreed to exchange the Polish population in the USSR for the Ukrainian population in Poland in the years immediately preceding Operation “Wisla,” Mr. Boldys described how a Russian-speaking delegation came from Ukraine to Konieczna at the end of 1945 and told the people that there would be a “repatriation” to Ukraine.¹⁴ “For about half a year, they agitated and forcefully told us that we had to sign up to move east,” he explained. “But, later, they said, ‘If you don’t sign up and go to Ukraine, you will not stay here anyway. If you don’t go east, then you’ll go west! But, either way, you won’t be here.’”

“You mean, as early as 1945, you were informed that the people of your region would be sent westward?” I asked Mr. Boldys.

“Yes,” he said. “Those were their instructions.”

Albeit a minor detail, Mr. Boldys’ comment showed that Operation “Wisla” was not just a sudden reaction to General Świerczewski’s assassination, something that made no sense if the authorities had been hinting to the Ukrainian people as early as 1945 that they had no chance of remaining in southeastern Poland. This detail in fact confirmed that the plan to relocate the Ukrainian minority to the Regained Territories had been coordinated long before the general’s death and that Operation “Wisla” was a preconceived attempt to uproot and destabilize the Ukrainian population. Also, if the threat to relocate the people of Konieczna westward was made by the “Russian-speaking delegation from Ukraine,” perhaps the communist government of the USSR had indeed played a significant role in the preparation for Operation “Wisla.”

“Then, at the end of March, a plane flew over Konieczna, dumping out flyers,” said Mr. Boldys. “It was Sunday, and at that moment, and people were at liturgy service that was taking place. There was a ton of flyers and the people went outside to pick them up. The message written on them was ‘because the Polish General Swierczewski was murdered by UPA bands, the local people must be resettled . . . and because it is necessary to liquidate the UPA, relocation is the only way to prevent anyone from feeding or helping these bands’ . . . and there is no other way.’”

“They officially informed you that you would be relocated by tossing flyers out of an airplane?” I asked, since most people with whom I had spoken had only heard about their upcoming resettlement by word of mouth.

“Yes. But the people didn’t believe it. They walked around thinking that maybe this or that village would be able to stay, because

¹⁴ See footnote 5.

there was propaganda being spread that maybe they wouldn't relocate us and that maybe they would leave us alone. But, on June 12, at 8:00 in the morning, a group of soldiers came to the village. They went from house to house, leaving a soldier in each one. The commander came on his horse and said, '*Przygotowujcie sie do wyjazdu.*' Get ready to depart. In an hour, everyone has to be on the road, ready to be relocated."

"And how did the people react?" I asked. "How did the people react when the Polish Army suddenly came and told them that they had less than two hours to leave their homes?"

"It was sorrowful for everyone. Everyone cried, but there was no way out. Earlier, some people had even gone to the Roman Catholic priests in the village of Sekowa, wanting to change their religion to Roman Catholicism in an attempt to stay. But the priests said, 'Absolutely not. You are not Roman Catholics. You are Greek Catholics and Orthodox, and we can not accept you now.' There was no way out. It wasn't more than an hour and a half before all of the farmers had their horses hitched to their wagons, took their families and their cattle, and left their sowed fields and everything else behind.

"In our village," continued Mr. Boldys, "there was an old man named Yurko Mlynaryk who tried to stay in his house. He said, 'You all go, but I'm staying.' His eyesight was bad, and he said, 'I'm an old invalid and no one is going to make me go anywhere.'"

"And did they make him leave?" I asked.

"Well, two hours after our entire village was led to Gladyszow, this old man appeared on foot. After the army drove the people from their houses, a group of soldiers came and checked all of the houses to see if someone was hiding. This old man didn't even try to hide, because what for? So, they found him. Everyone was supposed to be relocated and that was that. No one had the right to stay. From our village, the only people left behind were one family of road-workers and some Lemko women who were married to Polish men. There were two Poles who were border guards, and they married Lemko girls, so they stayed in Konieczna when they finished their tour of duty."

"So, mixed families from Konieczna were allowed to remain during Operation 'Wisla'?" I said.

"Yes. Those people stayed because they were married to Poles. The rest of us were taken to Gladyszow, where we stayed for a week."

"Where did you live during that time?" I asked.

"The people of Gladyszow had already been relocated, so we stayed in their empty houses. The weather was horrible. It rained terribly all week long. Then, one evening before dinner . . . I don't remember what day exactly . . . the soldiers came and told everyone to load up be-

cause we were going to Zagorzany. Right before dinner they drove us all out. It was raining unbelievably hard and our horses were weak, so when we had to climb up Magura, the highest mountain pass in Lemkivshchyna, it was very difficult.

“I was with one of my neighbors leading our cattle and sheep. We led them past Magura to the village of Malastow, and we got there faster than the others because we were on foot. Well, we decided to spend the night in a little house because it was already dark. We were going to go to sleep and continue in the morning. We were tired, so we made a fire in the oven, baked some potatoes, boiled some milk from the cows, and went to bed. The clothes we had on were all wet, so we put them on the oven to dry. By the time our families and the rest of the group reached Malastow, it was around midnight. You see, it was difficult to travel because just before Malastow, at the base of Magura, the bridge had been blown up. People said that the partisans blew it up to prevent the Poles from relocating us.”

“The Ukrainian partisans?” I interrupted.

“Yes. So, the road was destroyed and the brook was really hard to cross. The brook was so deep that you couldn’t pull your things through it. Well, what could the people do? They had to help one another to carry their things, those cages and everything, from wagon to wagon. And it was midnight before they reached Malastow.”

“In any case, the soldiers found us in the house where we were sleeping, broke the windows with their rifles, ran into the house, and began to hit us,” said Mr. Boldys, describing how the soldiers forced them to keep moving. “We grabbed our clothes and whatever else we could, and we quickly led the cows out of the barn. The sheep didn’t want to go out into the rain, but we forced them to.

“Well, when we came to the village of Ropica, the second bridge was destroyed and the water level was high because it had rained the whole week. We had to cross that water, but it was hard because there were also so many rocks. So, again, one person helped the other pull things through the overflowing river. Finally, before dinner, we arrived in Zagorzany. It took us from before dinner one day to before dinner the following day to get to Zagorzany. There is this big enclosed park by the station in Zagorzany, and they led all of us there. Unfortunately, it continued to rain . . . We lay down in the wagon, but it rained so much that we got completely wet. There wasn’t anything to cover ourselves with, but somehow we made do.”

“Oh, and in Zagorzany,” Mr. Boldys suddenly remembered, “there was a big building where they made soup for the people. When we arrived, the soldiers took me and my neighbor to carry water from the

river to the building. The river was not very deep, but it was very dirty. The water was not fit for people to use because of the clay and everything that it had in it. But, we had to take the water and bring it to the building, where they made soup out of it. I could have been hungry for a month and I would never have eaten that soup!”

Mr. Boldys and his family waited in Zagorzany for three days and three nights before being loaded onto the train. “We were lucky because we had a covered boxcar,” he noted. “There were uncovered boxcars called ‘coal-carriers,’ and they also loaded people into these. We were lucky that it didn’t rain on us.”

The villagers from Konieczna were separated and placed into two different transports. Mr. Boldys shared his transport with villagers from Zhdynia. They rode for approximately four days, surviving on whatever potatoes, bread, or other things they had brought with themselves.

Mr. Boldys’ transport arrived in the western Polish city of Szprotawa at night. The next day, he and his family were sent to a farmstead approximately four kilometers from Szprotawa. However, they asked to be moved because of the non-stop noise created by the Russian military airport nearby, and, three days later, they were taken to live on a communal farm, called a “PGR” (*Panstwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne*).

Mr. Boldys explained, “The majority of our people were taken to a PGR to work on government property. They had no money. They had no food. But, then, after they worked for the PGR for a month or two, they had money with which to go to town to buy something to eat. Some people also went around the village looking for work. You see, there were already Poles who had lived there for two or three years, so some people went and helped them in the fields or during the harvest, and they were either paid or received food. At first, our Polish neighbors thought that we were very dangerous people because they were told that ‘UPA bandits’ were coming, but after they began talking to us and got to know us, we got along and lived well with them.”

He explained that, after 1956, he and his parents returned to Lemkivshchyna for a visit. During this time, the Pole who had moved into their old house told them that he was willing to sell their property back to them. The family decided to accept the Pole’s offer, paying him for what had belonged to them before 1947. “Our house in the west was good,” said Mr. Boldys, “except that we didn’t have a barn and there was nowhere to keep the cattle. If we had had a place to keep the cattle, I don’t know if we would have returned to Konieczna.”

“It was easier to live in the west,” he continued, “Here, the land is not as fertile. Also, the people here in Lemkivshchyna used to have

more opportunities. They had forest land. They could get wood if they wanted to build a house or something. Even though we were allowed to return to our homeland, the government would not return any of our forest land back to us, you see.”

Forest land had always been as valuable as gold to the Lemkos. Because the Lemko region had been one of the most remote and poor regions in Poland before World War II, with most villages lacking running water and electricity, wood from the forest was an important form of capital that could always be used for building or be sold to pay for necessary items. After the Ukrainian population was removed from southeastern Poland, however, a decree was passed in 1949 stating that all of the land and property of the region that was not in private use would henceforth be transferred into state hands. The Ukrainians, having been relocated, thereby lost all rights to their former possessions. Upon their return after 1956, not only were many Lemkos denied restoration of their confiscated properties, but repurchasing forest land that the state had acquired from them was prohibited. The face and make-up of Lemkivshchyna had been changed forever; the Lemkos had no legal claim to the territory (and this included even cemeteries and churches, which had once been theirs), and only a fraction of the original inhabitants who had been scattered throughout Poland were able to move back.

“Are you saying that you regret coming back to Lemkivshchyna?” I finally said to Mr. Boldys.

“No, I don’t regret coming back,” he stated. “I am not sorry that I left the west because the climate there is not suited to the people of the mountains. Here, there is good water and a good climate.” Turning his head toward the window and looking out at the rolling hills, Mr. Boldys said, “I’m happy that I am home again.”

* * *

I asked Mr. Boldys if there was anyone else in Konieczna who had lived through Operation “Wisla” and was old enough to remember it. He thought for a moment and then said, “There’s Suchowacky, who lives not far down the road. He is ten years older than I am. He was born in 1922. I can take you to him, if you would like me to.”

We headed down the one and only road that ran through Konieczna and, when we got to Mr. Suchowacky’s house, Mr. Boldys let himself in and hollered, “*Pane Suchowacky*, I have a guest who would like to speak with you.”

Mr. Suchowacky walked out of an adjoining room and grumbled a hello to us. Mr. Boldys explained to him that I was an American with

Lemko roots who was writing about Operation “Wisla,” and that I was looking for people who could tell me about their experiences.

Mr. Suchowacky examined me for a second and then, with a gruff laugh, said, “Is it so bad in America that you have to come back here?” He was not particularly interested in talking to me about having been relocated or about his return to Lemkivshchyna, but he grudgingly agreed and took a seat at the table by the window. “I don’t know what good it is going to do to talk about this. It happened, we lived through it, and that’s that,” he said.

“But, what can you tell me about the day that you were forced to leave your house? What happened?” I began.

“You want to know what happened?” he said. “The Polish Army came to our house, told us to leave, and that was that.”

“What did you take with you?” I tried again.

He sighed and said, “We packed everything into one wagon and had two or three cows. We only had one horse because the Germans had taken the rest of them. Besides that, we took some grain to make bread, the icons which you see here, some blankets People couldn’t fit anymore than that.”

“Did you have any idea where you were going?”

“Not at all! We didn’t know anything.”

I then tried to ask Mr. Suchowacky more about the journey from Konieczna to the Regained Territories. Like Mr. Boldys, he mentioned the bridges that were destroyed and having to wade through the high water before finally reaching Zagorzany. “But, I don’t remember much more than that,” he finally said and then sat silent.

“What about the condition of your boxcar? When they loaded you all onto the train in Zagorzany, how many people were in your boxcar and what was it like?” I asked.

“In our wagon, there weren’t many people because . . .” began Mr. Suchowacky before suddenly stopping. He then looked at Mr. Boldys, who had been sitting on one of the couches in the corner listening, and said, “I don’t know if I should tell her this or not.”

Mr. Boldys interjected, explaining that Mr. Suchowacky had had a sister who was crippled by the Polish Army.

“You see,” said Mr. Suchowacky, “the Polish troops stationed here after the war hired young girls. My sister was seventeen years old and she was one of ten girls who worked at the army base. They cleaned, washed the floors, peeled potatoes for the army, and so on. Well, one day, she was cleaning and . . . what the Polish officer wanted from her, I don’t know. I wasn’t there, so I don’t know. Whether he wanted to rape her or what, I don’t know. But she told me that he said that if she didn’t

go with him, he'd shoot her. And that was what happened. He shot her in the hand and through her stomach, into her spine. We went to the doctor with her and he said that she would live, but that she would never stand again. We went with her to Slovakia to another doctor and he said the same thing—that she would live, but that she would never stand again. And, then, we went to Krakow with her and they said the same thing, that she would live, but that she would never stand again. So there weren't a lot of people in our boxcar because she needed room to lie down. Our cows were in a different boxcar, my sister was lying down, and our family was in the boxcar by ourselves. She never walked again. She eventually died in western Poland."

Mr. Suchowacky continued to speak to me about how, once they arrived in western Poland, his family was sent to work on a PGR in the village of Witkow, near Szprotawa. He told me how they worked there for two years, along with about ten other Lemko families. Then Mr. Suchowacky again became tired of talking and explaining everything to me.

"Oh, it's a waste of breath to talk about all of this," he stated, laughing sardonically to himself once again and shaking his head. "It's as good as spitting. It won't get me anywhere. You will go to the United States, but I will still be left here. True?" He rose from his chair by the table and walked over to the couch by Mr. Boldys.

There was silence, and after a moment I asked, "But don't you want more people to know about what you lived through? You don't think that it's important for the younger generation to know?"

Mr. Suchowacky did not answer my questions. He simply looked at me. Then, with a serious expression on his face, he said, "They wronged us, but why haven't they given us our forest land back? I came back here and I had to buy everything. I should have stayed in the west, where everything grew easily. But, I came back and I had to buy my house and my land. What kind of justice is that? And how are you going to help me? You can't. Will you give me back my forest? No. If you came to Poland and could get me the money that I paid for my field, that would be one thing. But you can't help me at all, so this is all trouble for nothing."

Sensing that my talk with Mr. Suchowacky had reached its end, I thanked him for his time and began to leave with Mr. Boldys.

"There is no need to thank me," he said, once again laughing. "This won't help anything. Who is interested in this? Who will help me? No one."

CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF OPERATION “WISLA” FOR THE DEPORTED UKRAINIANS

MYKOLA DUPLAK

The deportation of Ukrainians from their native land, known as Zakerzonnia, had particularly significant consequences on their culture, habits, folk culture, traditions, ideas, and spiritual and material values, which they had cultivated throughout history and transmitted as a social heritage from generation to generation. A culture makes a nation unique among other nations and provides that nation with a sense of identity. Language is the chief agent of cultural transmission and also provides a sense of unity and harmony for the people who create and practice their own way of life on their own territory.

In the spring of 1947, the Polish government challenged the unique way of life of the Ukrainian population of Zakerzonnia when it launched the third and final stage of deporting them to territories Poland had recovered from Germany following WWII. The Polish military command referred to this action by the code name “Wisla.”

Most Polish researchers, along with some Ukrainian authors, blame the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) for this third stage of the deportation process. The UPA was, in fact, the protector of Ukrainians on their native territories and defended the Ukrainian population against atrocities committed by Polish bands, chauvinistic civilians, the police, and the army. The UPA offered physical assistance as well as moral support, defending their ancestors’ lands while risking their own lives. The number of victims of the Ukrainian civilian population would have been much greater without the intervention of the UPA. Although it is possible to understand the trilateral treaty among the USSR, Poland, and Czecho-

slovakia against the UPA, it is not possible to view the activities of the UPA and the assassination of General Karol Swierczewski as justification for Operation “Wisla”—the total and brutal deportation of Ukrainians from Zakerzonnia.

Documents from the proceedings of the Academic Session of the Polish Academy of Sciences testify that in the spring of 1947, the UPA, according to Polish statistics, had 2,500 combatants, against which the Polish government mobilized thirteen infantry divisions, twelve combined regiments, the combined division of the Internal Security Service, divisions of the citizen’s militia, an armoured engineer squadron, a motorized regiment, and a flying squadron. In addition, the operation involved divisions local to the area: the entire 9th Infantry Division, the 36th Infantry Regiment, and the 8th Infantry Division, along with a number of operational brigades and battalions of the Internal Security Service.¹ The enemy had enough force to defeat the much smaller units of the UPA without ejecting the remnants of the Ukrainian population from their ancestral homes. Poland was also supported by the communist regimes of the USSR and Czechoslovakia.

The deportation or ethnic cleansing to the ex-German territories began on April 28, 1947. The army encircled villages and ordered residents to be ready in two hours to depart to an unknown destination. Village carts went to railway stations under armed guard. People tearfully bid farewell to their homes and to their hard-earned property, most of which could not be loaded onto the carts. Treated as criminals who did not want to leave their homeland, they were crammed onto open cargo trains with their belongings and domestic animals. Later, many found themselves in the notorious concentration camp of Jaworzno and other prisons. The prime candidates for internment at the concentration camp were Ukrainian intellectuals and anyone suspected of cooperating with the UPA.

I was a little boy at the time, a child of one of the deported families. I remember very well the two-week voyage from Komancha to the city of Koszalin near the Baltic Sea. At the railway stations in the deportation area, Ukrainians were given orders to move to the farthest villages and colonies, far from each other and from the city. They were under constant police surveillance.

Before our arrival in Koszalin, the Polish press had spread propaganda that we were criminals, bandits, and Bandera supporters. The locals treated us very warily and sometimes with hostility. Some Polish

¹ Bohdan Czajkowskyj, “U dvadtsiatlittia trahedii Zakerzonnia”, *Annaly Svitovoyi Federatsii Lemkiv*, vol. 2, New York, 1975, p. 116.

neighbors told us later that our arrival made them afraid of sleeping in their own homes. We had to live in this hostile environment without a native school system, native books, native newspapers, native churches, without any civil rights, and without knowledge of the Polish language. Total discrimination became our reality.

In assessing this government-sponsored policy against Ukrainians, one clearly sees the absence of any conditions that might have supported Ukrainian culture. Our material and cultural values were taken away from us and numerous obstacles were created to prevent Ukrainians from creating new values and from transmitting their ancestor's legacy to the next generation.

The "problem" of the Ukrainian minority in post-war Poland was solved with fire and sword, after which the Polish press happily announced that there was no longer any Ukrainian problem in Poland.² And Operation "Wisla" became an unfathomable ethnocide against the autochthonous Ukrainian population of the entire Zakerzonnia region. The army-led brutal deportation, imprisonment, and death sentences imposed by military tribunals without any court proceedings, as well as the physical extermination of the Ukrainian leadership and elite all engrained themselves deep in the memory of the Ukrainian population. This criminal operation obliterated the Ukrainian presence from their native territories and destroyed their material and spiritual culture.³

Operation "Wisla" was a shameful act of deportation of innocent people. Hopefully history will recognize it as such. At the 20th Congress of the USSR's Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev denounced the cult of Stalin and condemned the concept of collective responsibility by stating that "Any Marxist-Leninist, like any other ordinary reasonable person, cannot understand how it was possible to render the responsibility for hostile attitudes toward whole nations, including women, children and the elderly, communists and komsomol members, and to make them suffer in misery because of hostile acts of individuals and groups."⁴ Neither Soviet and Polish political leaders nor Polish religious and public leadership voiced a similar condemnation. And despite the efforts to excuse Operation "Wisla" as a response to the Ukrainians' cooperation with the UPA, the deportation was, in fact, punishment for being Ukrainian.

² Mykola Duplak, "Ukrainska pisnia v narodniy Polshchi 1945-1980", *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 3, New York, 1982, p. 28.

³ Mykhailo Kozak, *Pomiany, Hospody, dushi sluh Tvoyikh*, Peremyshl-Lviv, 2002, p. 17.

⁴ Mykola Duplak, "U 35-tu richnytsiu trahedii Lemkivshchyny", *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 4, New York, 1984, p. 24.

THE UKRAINIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

During the Nazi occupation, Ukrainian schools in the territory of Zakerzonnia were functioning. When the Red Army invaded the region and the Ukrainian territories west of the river Sian were transferred to communist Poland, teaching Ukrainian was stopped and teachers were frequently arrested simply because they were Ukrainians. Under conditions of terror and insecurity, schools could not function in a normal way, nor could Ukrainian serve as a language of instruction. Unaware of Polish plans against Ukrainians, the local Ukrainian community created a joint "Ruthenian-Ukrainian" delegation to appeal for changes.

The delegation, headed by Mykhailo Donsky, included partisans Ivan Andrash and Petro Dudka, who had fought in Polish military units against the Nazis and were well known in Poland and among other combatants in the Red Army. The delegation was met by the representatives of the Council of Ministers to whom they presented thirteen demands concerning the needs of the Ruthenian-Ukrainian school system, including high schools, teacher-training institutes, and vocational schools. The delegation also demanded Ukrainian teachers for these schools.⁵ The Lemkos presented most of the demands because they had contributed most to the new government through their active participation in the communist underground. But in response to these demands, councillor Bielecki advised everyone to emigrate to Ukraine.

It was a response that unraveled a hard-won and carefully nurtured cause that even the Nazis had not destroyed and which had survived, albeit briefly, the post-war confusion. After the Red Army marched into the Lemko land in January 1945, the Lemko Committee of Workers and Peasants was organized in Horlytsi. It contacted the Polish authorities and was granted permission to maintain a Ukrainian school system in the Lemko region. The Ministry of Education tasked Mykhailo Donsky with organizing Ukrainian schools in Lemkivshchyna.⁶

The results of organizing a Ukrainian school system were immediate; as early as April 1945, there were 110 schools—sixty-two Polish and forty-eight 'Lemko'—in the district of Horlytsi.⁷ However, Polish extremists used all manner of clandestine means and direct prohibitions

⁵ M. Hryhor, "Nerozvyazana ukrainska problema v Polshchi", *Annaly Svitovoyi Federatsii Lemkiv*, vol. 2, New York, 1975, p. 135.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁷ Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, "Wieś Dolnośląska", Wrocław, 1970 (K. Pudło, "Lemkivske naselennia na Dolishnomu Shlezku v rokakh 1947-1969", p. 95).

to shut down the Ukrainian schools. By the academic year of 1945–1946, Ukrainian schools were liquidated. The sole language of instruction was Polish, and Ukrainian was relegated to just one subject among others. In the academic year of 1946–1947, Ukrainian as a language of instruction was totally removed from the curriculum.⁸

Operation “Wisla” shattered all hopes of the Ukrainian population for continuing their cultural activities. Moral humiliation and discrimination against Ukrainians living in exile in Poland lasted nearly a decade. The situation was partially changed by the 7th Congress of the Polish United Workers’ Party in 1956, which started the “Thaw” in Poland.

The First Organizational Congress of Ukrainians was held on June 16–18, 1956, in Warsaw, where the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (USKT) was established. This was a significant event for Ukrainians in Poland. The Ukrainian-language newspaper *Nashe Slovo* (Our Word) was founded soon after, and there was hope that the government would improve the life of its citizens of Ukrainian origin. But the creation of USKT turned out to be a tactical move of the Polish government, a way to stabilize the Ukrainian population in Poland. As a delegate and participant of the Congress, I can confirm that what the delegates wanted most from the government representatives was permission to return to their native lands along the shimmering Sian and Buh rivers and for those same authorities to condemn the onus and the outcomes of collective responsibility, which had been levied against Ukrainians. Not waiting for the promised permission, some Ukrainians returned to their home villages at this time.

It is this author’s opinion that the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which governed Ukrainians then as it does now, did not expect such an insistent attitude from the delegates regarding the matter of returning home.⁹ The Ministry, in fact, preferred to avoid this issue entirely. What the authorities were prepared to offer was certain concession concerning Ukrainian cultural life in exile and economic stabilization in the western territories. Minister P. Jarosinski, representative of the PZPR’s Central Committee and of the government, declared in his speech to the delegates of the Congress, “The Government and the Party understand the Ukrainian problem and will do everything necessary to gradually create the most favorable conditions for the economic and cultural growth of

⁸ M. Hryhor, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁹ Mykola Duplak, “U 35-tu richnytsiu trahedii Lemkivshchyny”, *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, Vol. 4, New York, 1984, p. 22.

citizens of Ukrainian ethnicity . . . ”¹⁰

At the 6th Congress of the Polish Communist Party it was decided that among Poland’s national minorities, the Ukrainian minority was the most neglected with respect to conditions that supported the possibility of cultivating its culture. The Congress admitted that Ukrainians had no opportunity to maintain their language and traditions or to engage in any civic, political, social, and cultural activities.¹¹ At that time, Ukrainian children were growing up under the constant specter of terror and intimidation. After learning Polish and moving to another location, these children began concealing their national origin. Polish schools and media had raised their own youth to hate Ukrainians and Ukraine in general. The magazine *Spotkania* (No. 12/13, p. 138) observed: “The psychic and social atmosphere in which Polish Ukrainians live is created above all not by the government, but by Polish society and by the Polish church.”¹²

Ukrainian schools and Ukrainian books were unrealistic dreams before the “Thaw.” Not a single Polish bookshop sold Ukrainian books. But a stimulus to develop educational activities was provided in a secret decree of the Politburo of the PZPR’s Central Committee of April 1952. As a result of the change of attitude toward Ukrainians, its task was to stabilize the Ukrainian population in new territories and to integrate Ukrainians into their new environment. The organization of the Ukrainian school system was then under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, but the decree directed subordinate party units and administrations to begin introducing Ukrainian as an additional subject in some schools. The main condition was to be the wishes or the consent of interested parents. Pursuant to the decree, teachers would be obliged to speak Ukrainian well and teach the Ukrainian language according to the ideological principles and educational standards of the Polish school system. Teaching Ukrainian was supposed to start in the second grade for three hours per week. And teachers would be allowed to use books and periodicals imported from the USSR.¹³

¹⁰ Mizh dvoma zyzdamy USKT, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1961, p. 173.

¹¹ Ivan Hvozda, “Suchasna sytuatsia lemktiv na tli kilkokh istorychnykh prykladiv vidnoshennia polakiv do ukraintsiv”, *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 3, New York, 1982, p. 20.

¹² Włodzimierz Mokry, “Dzisiejsza droga Rusina do Polski”, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Krakow, 15 XI 1981, #46 (1712), s. 15; *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 4, New York, 1984, p. 125.

¹³ Stefan Zabrowarny, “Vidrodzhennia ukrainskoho shkilnytstva (1952-1958)”, *Ukrainskyi almanakh*, Warszawa, 1997, pp. 256-259.

However, the decision of the April decree did not significantly improve the life of Ukrainians. The only specific achievement was that they now had permission to set up centres for teaching Ukrainian and to create amateur cultural ensembles. Moreover, some party organs ignored the decree; it was “official” only on paper.

On surface, this decree was admirable, but it had no effect in cases of children whose parents had been deported. Moreover, what good was it if there were only two or three Ukrainian families in a Polish community? How could they have a Ukrainian school system with proper facilities and Ukrainian teachers if there were only four or five children? What we have here is a situation in which children of forcibly resettled people were deprived of their inalienable right to learn their native tongue, to learn about their Ukrainian heritage, history, culture, and national aspirations for a free and independent Ukraine. These children were deprived of that right and thus denationalized; learning nothing about their Ukrainian heritage they were Polonized. And this, after all, was the aim and purpose of the Polish government and its forced resettlement policy.¹⁴

A Ukrainian school system had a slightly better chance of succeeding in areas where Ukrainians were more densely settled. The first attempts to teach Ukrainian children the Ukrainian language occurred in such areas. According to statistics of the Ministry of Education, fourteen centres for teaching Ukrainian (CTU) were opened in 1952–1953, sixteen CTUs were functioning in 1953–1954, and there were nineteen CTUs in 1954–1955. Conditions improved somewhat in 1955, and there was significant progress in 1956–1957, thanks to the selfless labour of Ukrainian intellectuals working for the USKT and to new decrees issued by the Ministry of Education. A significant contribution was made by Olha Wasyliw the Secretary General of USKT. In 1956 and 1957 the number of CTUs increased to 141, two schools with Ukrainian as a language of instruction (SULI) were inaugurated in Yaroshivka and Banie Mazurskie, and two Ukrainian divisions of the first grade were opened in the Bartoszyce Pedagogical Lyceum. And there were other success. A syllabus for teaching Ukrainian in CTU grades 1 through 4 and 5 through 7 was prepared and distributed; a syllabus for teaching Ukrainian in SULI grades 1 through 11 was enhanced; fourteen diverse textbooks (15,952 copies) and 137 other books (23,417 copies) were imported from Ukraine; and subscriptions to seven Ukrainian periodicals (1,100 copies) were ordered for the schools.

¹⁴ Memorandum to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations from the Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna, Brooklyn, NY, October, 1961; *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 5, New York, 1993, p. 199.

The next academic year (1957–1958) brought new achievements, such as the inauguration of two Ukrainian lyceums (in Peremyshl and Legnica) and three Ukrainian primary schools (in Trzensacz, in Labun Wielki, later transferred to Czachowo, and in Sagnity). To provide schools with teachers of Ukrainian, the Pedagogical Institute in Szczecin launched a department of Ukrainian language and literature. In 1958–1959 the number of SULIs increased to nine (a primary school was opened in Bialy Bor), and the number of CTUs rose to 152. Since the revival of the Ukrainian school system in 1952, this was the highest number of Ukrainian schools ever recorded.¹⁵

The beginnings were very difficult. The main obstacles to organizing a native language school system included the absence of qualified teachers, appropriate textbooks, and an effective organizational framework. In addition to these problems, the Ukrainian people were dispersed throughout large areas, intimidated and afraid. To overcome fear, suspicion, and mistrust, teachers and other courageous individuals went from house to house, convincing parents that they should not be afraid and that it was their sacred duty to teach their children their native tongue. In some cases, they had to convince parents to petition authorities to have this right. But these people had reasons to be fear and distrust the authorities—they knew they could be punished and persecuted even for showing initiative.

Without going into an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the Party representatives' official declarations and the USKT's resolutions concerning a Ukrainian school system, it is imperative to cite certain relevant facts. On September 1, 1956, Ukrainian classes were opened in the Pedagogical Lyceum No. 2 in Bartoszyce (Olsztyn region); on June 25, 1957, six Ukrainian students left Poland to study in Kyiv; fourteen students graduated a five-year program of Ukrainian language and literature studies; in September 1957, the first Lyceum of General Education with Ukrainian as a language of instruction was inaugurated in Peremyshl; and a Ukrainian department was launched at the Pedagogical Institute in Szczecin.

Ukrainian studies in Szczecin lasted for six years and produced five graduating classes (in total, 99 future teachers). The official rationale given for closing the institute was that there were not enough students. The extramural division for Ukrainian studies at the Pedagogical Institute in Olsztyn, in operation from 1966 to 1969, produced thirty teachers of Ukrainian. It was also closed because of a purported lack of students.

By a decree issued in the autumn of 1953, the Ministry of Educa-

¹⁵ Stefan Zabrowarny, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

tion launched the department of Ukrainian studies at Warsaw University, and the department was headed by the well-known Polish Slavist Przemysław Zwolinski. Beginning with 1972, a Ukrainian curriculum (under the supervision of Volodymyr Mokryi) was offered at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Between 1972 and 1977, 121 students (in nine groups) studied Ukrainian there. In 1984–1985 a lectureship in Ukrainian studies was introduced at the Higher Pedagogical School in Olsztyn and was headed by linguist Mykhailo Lesiw.¹⁶

The development of the Ukrainian school system, however, was short lived. In the early 1960s, the Party started persecuting Ukrainian nationalists. School authorities interpreted the fight against Ukrainian nationalism in their own way and took any opportunity to dissolve CTUs. For example, in 1959–1960, as though on command, teaching Ukrainian was stopped at all pedagogical lyceums in the Olsztyn region. The malice of school district management and education inspectors was transparent.¹⁷

In a memorandum to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, accusing the government of the Polish People's Republic (PPR) of conducting a deliberate policy of genocide against the Ukrainian minority in Poland, renowned Ukrainian journalist Mykola Syvitskyi wrote, "Ukrainian Schools were the first target of denationalization of Ukrainians. In 1958–1959 there were in Poland nine Ukrainian High Schools with 441 students; in 1979–1980 only four were left [no number of students provided]. Of the 152 schools that taught the Ukrainian language in 1958–1959 with an enrolment of 2,602 students, only twenty-nine were left in 1979–1980, attended by only 545 students."

Further clarification of the plight of Ukrainian schools in Poland was included in a letter written by Mykola Syvitskyi to the United Nations Human Rights Commission: "Such a quick demise of the school system has been occurring not only through natural assimilation of the younger generation, but also because of the policy of the state apparatus, which has attempted to accelerate this process by creating obstacles that impede both the development of school system and the maintenance of the status quo. One popular method of undermining CTUs has been the refusal to compensate teachers commuting from one place to another, prompting many teachers to refuse to continue teaching Ukrainian. A general reorganization of the school system has had negative consequences as well. On the pretext of expansion, the school management

¹⁶ Myroslaw Truchan, *Ukrainci v Polshchi pislya Druhoyi svitovoyi viyny*, New-York – Paris – Sydney – Toronto, 1990, pp. 136-139.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

has shut down a number of CTUs, and the liquidation of the only Ukrainian Pedagogical Lyceum in Poland has put an end to teacher preparation. The Ministry of Education has forgotten its promises, given on behalf of the Party and the government by Minister W. Jarosinski. The latest news is that the rector of Warsaw University has signalled an intent to eliminate the only Polish department of Ukrainian studies that enrolls ten students annually. As you see, the elimination of the Ukrainian problem in Poland has been proceeding in a well-planned and systematic manner.”¹⁸

In 2007–2008, interschool groups for learning Ukrainian existed in 140 areas of Poland and provided Ukrainian-language instruction to 2,342 pupils. The Ukrainian Embassy in Warsaw contributed much effort to the revival of teaching Ukrainian in Poland’s capital. Thanks to the persistence of parents, the city of Poznan was added to the map of towns and cities with Ukrainian schools. Needless to say, the largest number of CTUs was located in the regions of Warmia and Mazury: three divisions of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland teaching 921 pupils. The school system in the Pomorze division also grew, as did the school system in the Sianik division, which had 115 pupils.

In contrast, the situation in the Koszalin and Szczecin divisions was less sanguine. In comparison with the previous year, the drop in the number of pupils was 23 percent, but compared with enrolment two to three years earlier, the drop was a catastrophic 35 percent. The Szczecin division had two exceptionally successful groups working with children—in Stargard Szczecinski and in Trzebiatow. Historically, the city of Szczecin satisfied very few demands from Ukrainians. The crisis lasted for years, and despite the great potential of the city and community, major positive changes were not anticipated. The number of pupils in Ukrainian schools eventually stabilized, showing little fluctuation. In 2007–2009, Poland had five Ukrainian schools with 758 students (24.5 percent) and 140 CTUs with 2,342 students (75.5 percent), a total of 3,100 students. The educational level in these Ukrainian schools (especially for high schools) was one of the highest in Poland.¹⁹

As of this writing, Ukrainian students are still concealing their national identity because of the negative stereotype of Ukrainians in Poland. They do so in an attempt to avoid humiliation, intimidation, persecutions, and discrimination. A key example of policy that discriminates

¹⁸ Mykola Syvytskyi, “Iz lysta do Komisii Zakhystu Prav Liudyny v Orhanizatsii Obyednanykh Natsiy u Zhenevi z 2 liutoho 1980 roku”, *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 5, New York, 1993, p. 250.

¹⁹ Myron Syrnyk, “Stan ukrainskoho shkilnytstva u Polshchi – 2007/2008”, *Ukrainskyi almanakh*, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 244-245.

against Ukrainians is the refusal of the Ministry of Education to register the Union of Ukrainian Students in Poland. If it were registered, the Union could contribute to the cultural and national self-manifestation of Ukrainian students and support their endeavours to study their ancestors' history and culture.

UKRAINIAN MASS MEDIA

Before the deportation of Ukrainians from Zakerzonnia to the former German territories, Polish mass media spread false anti-Ukrainian propaganda that Operation "Wisla" was aimed at Ukrainian criminals and bandits. The purpose of such labelling was to create hatred toward Ukrainians among the local Polish population. Radio broadcasts and press coverage of this kind were typical before and during Operation "Wisla." The Polish media similarly "welcomed" Ukrainians in exile in Poland. Though the attitude of the Polish press about the Ukrainian issue was negative and biased, some periodicals did make an effort to inform readers in a more temperate manner. Among these were the academic quarterly *Slavia Orientalis*, the Lublyn-based *Kamena*, the Krakow-based weekly *Zycie Literackie*, and the weekly *Przyjazn*. The journal of young Polish intellectuals, *Po Prostu*, encouraged Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, but it was shut down when Gomulka came to power. A number of topical articles were published in the weeklies *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Solidarnosc* as well as in the Catholic monthlies *Wiesz* and *Znak*.²⁰

After two major events in the life of Poland's Ukrainians—the First Organizational Congress of Ukrainians on June 16 to 18, 1956, in Warsaw and the establishment of the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society (USKT)—the Polish government made some concessions in the cultural sphere. In January 1958, radio stations in Riashiv, Olsztyn, Koszalin, and Lublyn began broadcasting 15- to 20-minute long, weekly transmissions in Ukrainian. These presented information about the life of Ukrainians in Poland and the activities of the USKT, cultural enterprises in Poland and in Ukraine, historical events, Ukrainian music and songs, and performances of the USKT's amateur ensembles. The material for all radio broadcasts, except those in Riashiv, was prepared by local USKT activists.²¹

The 20-minute transmission in Riashiv covered the whole region

²⁰ Myroslaw Truchan, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

²¹ Hryhoriy Boyarskyi, "15 rokiv USKT", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1971, p. 54.

of Riashiv, and the station employed a full-time Ukrainian staff worker, Yaroslav Chornobay. After a one-year break caused by the turbulent period of the Solidarnosc (Solidarity) movement and martial law, the broadcasts were renewed at the beginning of 1983.

In March 1958, the Szczecin radio station started broadcasting a 15-minute monthly transmission in Polish, informing listeners about the life of the Ukrainian population and Ukraine's cultural events. From 1958 to 1976, the program editors were Stefan Zabrowarny and Myroslav Trukhan; in 1976, Stefan Zabrowarny became editor. Ukrainian radio programmers invited guest speakers from Ukraine, including M. Rylskyi, Ye. Kyryliuk, H. Verves, P. Kalenychenko, V. Korotych, among others.²²

For many years the radio broadcast in Koszalin was directed by poet Yakiv Mushynskyi and his wife Kateryna. The first Ukrainian-language program on Koszalin radio waves was broadcast on March 9, 1956. It was dedicated to Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko. In fact, the station transmitted the performance of the Ukrainian Chorus, which had just recently been organized at the Regional Cultural Centre and was directed by Volodymyr Serkiz. As was their custom at other events, the chorus sang Shevchenko's "Testament." In August 1980, during the early days of the Solidarity movement, the broadcast was stopped; the official explanation offered for this decision was that the programming was of low quality. It was resumed two years later (after a series of appeals to the government) with twice-monthly transmissions. Ukrainian songs were the major component of each broadcast—a way of boosting morale and encouraging people to work for the Ukrainian movement.

At first, no musical recordings were transmitted—there simply were no Ukrainian recordings available in Poland's music market. The Polish administration exerted maximum efforts to deprive Ukrainians of native-language media, music, and identity, and for this reason, the radio station settled for transmitting the recordings of the local Koszalin choir and the choir directed by Ivan Sydor in Miastko. Listeners welcomed each Ukrainian song. There was a similar situation in other regions. Later some gramophone records became available from radio stations in Kyiv, Rivne, and Poltava, and others were sent by Ukrainians in Priashiv.²³

The most popular songs aired on the radio broadcast were "Pis-

²² Mykola Korolko, "XX-richchia USKT – 1956-1976", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1976, p. 54.

²³ Mykola Duplak, "Ukrainska pisnia v narodniy Polshchi 1945-1980", *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, Vol. 3, New York, 1982, p. 51.

nia pro Rushnychok” (a song about a ritual embroidered cloth given by a mother to her son), “Cheremshyna,” “Marichka,” “Dva Koliory” (a song referring to the traditional red and black motif of Ukrainian embroidery of some regions of Ukraine), “Karpaty” (a song about the Carpathian Mountains), “Kvity Romena,” “Ivanku, Ivanku,” “Vziav by Ia Banduru” (a song about a traditional musical instrument), “Chuiesh Braty Miy” (Do You Hear, My Brother?—a nostalgic and melancholy song about the flight of cranes, symbolizing and lamenting life lived far from the native land), “Dumy Moii, Dumy Moii” (My Thoughts, My Thoughts, based on a poem by Ukraine’s bard Shevchenko), “Verkhovyna, My Mother” (referring to a highland region inhabited by Ukrainians), “Hutsulka Ksenia,” “Oi Vershe Mii Vershe” (another nostalgic song about life in the Ukrainian highlands), “Na Dolyni Tumany” (Fog in the Lowlands), and “Hey na Vysoki Polonyni,” and others that evoked deep sentiment for Ukrainian cultural traditions and life in the Ukrainian homeland. The most beloved songs always mentioned or evoked memories of Kyiv and the Dnipro River, the Carpathian Mountains, and the Hutsul and Lemko regions.²⁴ Unfortunately, the quality of transmission was not very high and the broadcast range covered only part some parts of Poland where Ukrainians now lived.

The Ukrainian broadcast service in Olsztyn worked most efficiently. Its first 30-minute program was broadcast on April 29, 1958. At different times, its staff workers included Petro Bodnar, Yuriy Kviatkovskyy, Bohdan Radvanetskyi, and Oleksander Kolianchuk. When staffing was cut, the broadcast was overtaken by local USKT activists under the supervision of Stefan Demchuk. Due to their efforts, the transmissions was never disrupted, and on August 4, 1981, they aired the 1,000th Ukrainian-language broadcast. The transmission range did not exceed 40 to 50 kilometers.²⁵ Radio service in Lublyn covered mainly the district of Tomashiv and Hrubeshiv. Between 1957 and 1960, a 20-minute program (prepared by Illia Matviychyna and Ivan Ihnatiuk) was broadcast twice a month. Useful experience and expertise was shared during the first meeting of Ukrainian-language Radio Workers, which was held on February 24, 1984, in Warsaw and facilitated an exchange of ideas among the directors of separate radio programs.

For many long years Ukrainians endeavoured to establish a single program that could be transmitted throughout all of Poland. The issue of central broadcasting was discussed at the 6th Congress of the USKT, which adopted the following decision: “The Congress obliges the Gen-

²⁴ Yakiv Hudemchuk, “Na koshalinskykh radiokhvylyakh”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1981, p. 70.

²⁵ Myroslaw Truchan, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

eral Board to address the matter of central TV and radio transmissions about the cultural and educational activities of USKT groups.”

Following the policy of its predecessors, the 7th Congress of the USKT demanded that the newly elected board of the USKT “address a proposal to the Committee of Radio and TV Broadcasting about the possibility of disseminating information about the activities of the USKT through regularly scheduled, centralized transmissions.”²⁶ Many years have passed since that time; the authorities are different and the USKT no longer exists, but even now, Ukrainians in Poland have not been granted permission for a central Ukrainian-language broadcast, and the decisions of the 6th and 7th congresses have not yet been implemented. On certain key issues, the attitude of the Polish government toward the Ukrainian minority has not changed.

From the beginning, the adjective “Ukrainian” had negative connotations within Polish mass media and Polish society in general. Polish settlers in the so-called “regained territories” waged psychological warfare against the very concept of “Ukrainian.” It was for this reason that many Lemkos preferred to use the term “Rusyn” rather than “Ukrainian” in designating their ethnic identity. The government used the media to encourage conformity within the broader society, with the intent that this would gradually turn into complete Polonization.²⁷

Despite the Polish government’s cordial policy toward independent Ukraine, Polish television and press still contain vestiges of the anti-Ukrainian smear tactics used against Ukrainian freedom fighters and tarnishing Ukraine’s good name. In recent years, Rev. T. Isakowicz-Zaleski, a cassocked extremist notorious for his hatred of Ukraine, has fueled animosity via street demonstrations against the so-called ‘kresowiaks’ (borderers). He agitates against spiritual cooperation between Catholics of Latin and Eastern Rites, against the independent Ukrainian State. As the Polish press reports, the reverend receives all information about Ukrainian matters from the “Officers’ Union of the USSR,” an extreme anti-Ukrainian organization that works for destroying our Independence and restoring the colonial Empire of Evil.²⁸ It seems that the evil deeds of some propagate themselves, destroying in the process friendly relations among individuals and nations.

Between 1965 and 1969, a novel type of mass media for the bene-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

²⁷ Mychajlo Dzwinka, “Spisani na straty”, *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, New York, 1984, vol. 4, p. 88.

²⁸ Lvivske oblasne viddilennia Vseukrainskoho Obyednannia Vetera-niv, Maydan, 26 chervnia 2009.

fit of Ukrainians was a mobile cinema. Under the management of Teodor Walus, it was created by order of the USKT. During its four-year existence, the cinema visited 600 villages and had 1,060 screenings for approximately 90,000 spectators. The traveling cinema showed 116 movies, including 36 Soviet films produced at the Kyiv and Odesa film studios. The films were transported in a minibus with the sign "USKT Cinema."

The most popular documentaries were *Ukraine is Singing*, *Holiday on Taras's Hill*, *Dances of the Ukrainian People*, and *Dnipro Etudes*. The most popular fiction films were *Taras Shevchenko*, featuring Serhiy Bondarchuk as a lead actor; *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, and a comedy called *Youthful Days*, inspired by the song "My Dear Mother," which became very popular in Poland and was translated into Polish.²⁹

Special attention should be accorded to Ukrainian printed media. Although in high demand by those living in exile, it was all but impossible to find or purchase any Ukrainian book or newspaper; there were no Ukrainian magazines in Poland, except those shipped from Ukraine. If someone had brought a book from Zakerzonnia, it was kept in secret. Anyone owning such a book was afraid of incurring the unwanted interest of the Security Service. Sometimes a newspaper came in a parcel from the Free World. It was read in secret and then secretly passed along to other, trusted readers.

When the department of Ukrainian studies was launched in Szczecin, students did not have Ukrainian books. Professors experienced similar hardships. Later, Polish bookshops started receiving books from Ukraine, which were especially popular among students. Some admirers of native literature volunteered to distribute Ukrainian books, hoping to bring a Ukrainian book to each Ukrainian family in the area. One striking example was Oleksa Kutynskyi, a teacher from Bialy Bor who sold 15,00 zlotys-worth of Ukrainian books between 1958 and 1966, twice as much as was sold at the bookshop in the nearby town of Miastko.

Cooperating with a local bookshop of imported editions of Swiatowid (Svitovyd) in Szczecin, between 1957 and 1969, Osyp Bak sold 25,000 zlotys-worth of books. This enterprise was later taken over by Olha Laska, and due to their combined efforts, the Szczecin bookshop sold the greatest number of Ukrainian books in Poland, bowing only to the bookstore in Olsztyn. In the Olsztyn region, Ivan Pavlyk earned high repute as a distributor of Ukrainian books; driving them to nearby villages in 1964, his book sales exceeded 12,000 zlotys. During fifteen years as a press and book distributor, Pavlyk sold 10,000 books. During twenty-three years of cooperation with the local USKT (1958 to 1981),

²⁹ Myroslaw Truchan, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

the Olsztyn bookshop sold 500,000 Ukrainian books, tens of thousands of Polish books on Ukrainian topics, and over 3,000 recordings featuring Ukrainian songs. Ukrainian books became available in the bookstores of Warsaw, Wrocław, Gorzów, Szczecinek and Legnica.³⁰

The inauguration of the USKT coincided with the launching of the Ukrainian-language weekly *Nashe Slovo* (Our Word), which began publication in 1956. The significance of the first Ukrainian newspaper in post-war Poland cannot be overestimated. It encouraged, inspired, and resurrected a sleeping and intimidated Ukrainian national persona. At the peak of the fight against Ukrainian nationalism, however, Polish authorities were strongly in favor of mixed marriages, and the newspaper stopped publishing matrimonial announcements of Ukrainian couples.

Many Poles were hostile toward the Ukrainian newspaper. Post offices and postmen did not want to accept money for subscriptions to the paper as, in their words, “the post does not know anything about this periodical”; they often refused to deliver it to subscribers. The Ukrainian community submitted numerous protests and appeals to the Postal Administration and the Ministry of Communications in Warsaw.³¹

Because Ukrainian émigré publications were illegal in Poland, anti-nationalist articles by Mykola Shcherba, a communist of the Soviet school, were often the only source of information about the history of Ukrainian nationalism and about the Ukrainian emigration. Contrary to the author’s intent and expectations, they stimulated youth interest in the Ukrainian movement for liberation.

In June 1957, *Nashe Slovo* launched a page dedicated to Lemko issues. Entitled “Lemko Word,” it provided a venue for authors to write in the Lemko vernacular. Published on this page were interesting ethnographic and folkloric materials, as well as numerous articles about the life of Lemko settlers in Ukraine. It is worth noting that many more Lemkos started subscribing to *Nashe Slovo* after this page was introduced.

On December 16 1956, “Word for Children” (edited by Zoya Verbova (Vira Chayka) was published for the first time in *Nashe Slovo*. Two years later, this children’s section became an independent eight-page magazine titled *Dawn*. In May 1958, *Nashe Slovo* also started publishing a monthly supplement, a literary magazine entitled *Our Culture*. The last page of this supplement was reserved for the “Cultural Chronicle,” an important and informative source for researchers of Ukrainian culture. The magazine provided a venue for Ukrainian authors in Poland to publish their writings.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

As an organ of the USKT, *Nashe Slovo* precisely noted everything happening in Ukrainian communities. It became a real chronicle of Ukrainian life in Poland. In 1984, the newspaper found itself under the threat of being shut down. It resumed activity after numerous appeals of the USKT to the highest Party and government organs.

On April 19, 1959, the Literary Association was founded at the General Secretariat of the USKT. The association soon attracted artists and others engaged in various cultural activities and thus transformed itself into a literary and artistic association. Its membership never exceeded forty to fifty persons. During the first four years, its president was Yevhen Samokhvalenko, who was later succeeded by Antin Serednytskyi. The central authorities were not much in favor of the association or its activities. Among the latter was a literary almanac called *Sound of Voices* ("Homin") edited by K. Kuzyk in 1964. This collection contains the work of forty-three authors, including twenty-two poets. However, during its twenty-year existence, the association published only a few poetic works by Ye. Samokhvalenko, Ya. Hudemchuk, I. Zlatokudr, S. Pavlyshche. Such paltry offerings over a span of two decades highlights just how weak the association was. Among its merits, however, we cannot fail to mention its involvement in arranging several popular and academic soirees, dedicated to famous figures in Ukrainian culture. And needless to say, the association contributed to and promoted the use of the Ukrainian language in Poland.

One interesting and ubiquitous creative manifestation of the association was the Ukrainian Calendar," which played a major role in shaping national consciousness among Ukrainians in Poland. The calendar's beginnings were rather humble—the first two issued (for the years 1957 and 1958) consisted only of a date register. The 1959 calendar was larger but not very different from its predecessors. But the calendar issued in 1960 was different; laced with literary and academic content, it became the precursor of the literary and academic almanac we now know. In 1963 Antin Serednytskyi became the calendar's editor. Under his guidance, the calendar eventually published articles by 500 authors (including seventy Polish writers) over the course of twenty years. Unfortunately, Polish authorities knew that the popularity of the USKT calendar was not well regarded by high officials in the USSR, and this became one of the reasons the calendar's circulation was eventually reduced from 10,000 to 6,500 copies; its content and size were also pared down.³²

Before the USKT was founded, there had been some attempts at organizing clubs of young intellectuals and students in Warsaw, Krakow,

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

Szczecin, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Olsztyn, Lodz, and Lublyn. The spontaneous student movement in fact started without any official authorization. According to the calculations of Mykola Syvitskyi, editor of *Nashe Slovo*, there were 300 Ukrainian students in Polish colleges and universities in 1956, mainly in Krakow (45), Olsztyn (25), Wroclaw (30), Gdansk (42), and Szczecin (60). It was these students who launched the movement that was later to include all nationally conscious Ukrainian students in Warsaw, Lodz, Lublyn, Poznan, and other cities. Among the movement's initial activities was searching for Ukrainian-language books or any books about Ukraine; students began scouring rare book stores—sometimes successfully.

To stop the catastrophic momentum of assimilation, Ukrainian students and young intellectuals began to gather in groups—they read native literature (including assorted forbidden writings), recited poetry and sang songs, encouraged others to learn and improve their Ukrainian-language skills, and organized private soirees. The key task was to prepare an organizational and creative platform that would attract and recruit all Ukrainian students on Polish soil.³³

The group of young Ukrainians in Krakow and small groups in other cities constituted the so-called “cultural underground.” In the words of Myroslav Trukhan, the leader and creator of the new intellectual resistance, the movement was “to be organized without establishing any organization.” The student movement acted cautiously and moderately, but the secret security services had already begun a repressive system of political surveillance—one that was, in fact, already in place even before the creation of a student organization had been conceived. Moreover, the movement had an anti-assimilation mission that threatened the governmental policy toward the Ukrainian population. For Polish authorities, the Ukrainian student movement was troublesome; for Ukrainians living in Poland during the 1950s and 1960s, however, it was a major and unprecedented social breakthrough.³⁴

THE UKRAINIAN CHURCH AFTER OPERATION “WISLA”

The church was an inseparable part of Ukrainian spiritual and cultural life, which helped to unite Ukrainians, who were struggling for their self-preservation. One group supported the Orthodox Church, another supported the Catholic Church of Eastern Rite. History did not fa-

³³ Yaroslav Hryckowian, *Bez vyny vynuhati*, Koszalin, 2010, p. 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

vor our spiritual life, so we inherited two churches. Differing in dogma, they still belong to one nation, and their roots stretch back to the cultural treasure of Kyivan Rus.³⁵

The Ukrainian churches of the Zakerzonnia, Orthodox or Greek Catholic, were victims of persecution even before the last act of the Zakerzonnia tragedy began. While burning and massacring Orthodox villages in the district of Hrubeshiv in 1944, the Poles showed extreme violence, killing everyone. The Orthodox priests were murdered in particularly brutal ways. In the town of Hrabovnia, the Poles assaulted the wife an Orthodox priest. As he watched, they broke her arms and legs and cut her belly with knives. Then they shot them both.³⁶ This type of ruthless brutality toward Ukrainian priests was also displayed by Soviet soldiers and guerrillas. We know of thirty-five priests who were murdered during the deportation, often with their families.³⁷

The perpetrators of “Wisla” had good role models as discrimination against Ukrainians by the Polish government had precedents throughout history. “When Metropolitan Mykhailo Levytskyi appealed to the Austrian government in 1815 for permission to introduce Ukrainian in Ukrainian schools under the auspices of Polish consistories, the official answer was that the language of instruction could be only Polish, as Ukrainian . . . is just a dialect of the Russian language.”³⁸

Polish policy against Ukrainians resembled that of the Soviets who arrested and exiled Yosyp Slipyi, the Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite to Siberia, along with many bishops and priests, transferring all Catholic churches to the Russian Orthodox Church. Poles, for their part, evicted the elderly bishop Josafat Kotsylovskyi from the Bishop’s Residence in Peremyshl (June 27, 1946), assistant bishops Hryhoriy Lakota and Fr. Ivan Kuzych, canon Fr. Roman Reshetylo, and chancellor Fr. Mykola Hrytseliak with his wife who were robbed and then transported to the railway station in Peremyshl and delivered to Moscow’s agents. The ancient cathedral, a well-known monument of Ukrainian art, was looted; its interior was demolished.³⁹ This sanctuary still belongs to the Polish Roman Catholic Church. After the deportation of Ukrainians from Zakerzonnia, the Polish authorities de-

³⁵ Mykhailo Kozak, “De tserkva – tam nasha dusha”, *Hreko-Katolytskyi Tserkovnyi Kalendar*, Warszawa, 1988, p. 126.

³⁶ B. Czajkowskyj, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

³⁷ Stefan Zabrowarny, “Aktisia «Wisla» – etnotsyd ukrainskoyi menshyny”, *Ukrainskyi almanakh*, Warszawa, 1997, p. 75.

³⁸ Ivan Hvozda, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

³⁹ Mykola Duplak, “U 35-tu richnytsiu trahedii Lemkivshchyny”, *Analny Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 4, New York, 1984, p. 20.

stroyed hundreds of other Ukrainian churches, chapels, bell towers, and cemeteries.

In the western part of the Peremyshl eparchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the 1940s alone, sixty priests were murdered and more than seventy were prosecuted. Forty-one priests were murdered by Polish troops, police, guerrillas, or gangs from neighbouring Polish villages. Three priests died in Polish prisons; nine perished in Siberian death camps; ten died in prisons of the Soviet security service; and one died in a German camp. Others were incarcerated in various Polish prisons and in the Jaworzno concentration camp where twenty-two Catholic priests and five Orthodox priests were detained. These are unprecedented figures in the history of Europe following WWII.⁴⁰

Living in Polish exile, the terrorized Ukrainian population of Zakarzonnia found itself without churches or spiritual care, with few opportunities to practice and to preserve their native culture. Dispersed across all the northern and western territories of Poland, Ukrainians were enticed into Polish churches. Wishing to be part of any church, many Ukrainians gradually started attending these churches, all the while hoping to return to the native church. Others completely ignored the Polish churches, preferring no worship to worship in alien shrines.

On August 27, 1949, the government issued a decree depriving Ukrainians of the property they had been forced to leave behind as a result of the Operation “Wisla” deportation.⁴¹ This decree is still valid today. A second decree, issued on September 28, 1949, transferred all the property of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Eastern Rite and other Ukrainian institutions to the Polish state. This, and the active resettlement of once-Ukrainian territories by Polish population, as Krakow’s governor averred, was the attempt of the authorities to “re-Polonize southeastern territories.”⁴²

The outcome is clear. The government deprived Ukrainians of all civil rights, robbed them and appropriated their possession, including their ancient and priceless churches. During the first decade following Wisla, the Ukrainian problem did not exist in Poland. The Party, government, and mass media remained silent while the state apparatus worked on implementing integration and assimilation policies, divesting Ukrainians of elementary manifestations of their national identity.

⁴⁰ Mykhailo Kozak, *Pomiany, Hospody, dushi sluh Tvoyikh*, Pere-myshl–Lviv, 2002, p. 242.

⁴¹ Dziennik Ustaw RP, dated 1947, No. 46, poz. 339.

⁴² AAN, Ministerstwo Administracji Publicznej (MAP), 69, k. 10, Sprawozdanie wojewody krakowskiego, dated July 1947.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian life was flowing in an “underground stream.” The Ukrainian people prayed in secrecy and sang in Ukrainian; grandparents told their grandchildren about our tragic history. Within the family circle, everyone spoke Ukrainian.⁴³ I remember very well that after we children had learned Polish, the principle language we spoke was still Ukrainian. Along with Roman Catholic holidays, we also celebrated Ukrainian holidays, preserving Ukrainian religious traditions. All these deeds created the foundations of native culture, spirituality, and identity. Ukrainian believers had no chance to listen to a Ukrainian-language liturgy, either from Poland or from Ukraine, but they were happy when they could secretly listen to Ukrainian-language transmissions of Vatican Radio.

Ukrainians wanted to have their own churches where they could pray in their own language. In areas with larger groups of deportees, especially in Eastern Prussia, they undertook efforts to resurrect their Church. Ukrainian priests returning from prisons and from the Jaworzno concentration camp focused on restoring the church structures of their homeland and building new ones in the new settlements. Fr. Vasyl Hrynyk, Fr. Dr. M. Denko, Fr. Myroslav Ripetskyi, and Fr. Stefan Dziubyna were highly respected and motivated individuals who took responsibility for the Ukrainian Church in Poland. On behalf of Ukrainian believers, they proclaimed their demands to the central government and the Polish Primate in Warsaw.

Ukrainian Catholic priests endeavored to obtain permission to serve Catholic Ukrainians; the same was true of Orthodox priests committed to serving Orthodox believers. The Polish church administration impeded the activities of Ukrainian Catholic priests who then had to address various state and church institutions and request permits to conduct church liturgies. Separately, they had to obtain permits for performing marriages, funerals, and baptisms. As the deported Ukrainians were dispersed across vast territories, priests traveled long distances to tend to their flocks.

Many priests petitioned the Polish church hierarchy for permission to pray in Polish Catholic churches and chapels. Afterwards, Ukrainian priests had to report about these activities to the Polish church administration. Pastoral licenses were granted for short periods (one to three years), at which time priests had to ask for permission to renew them. The Roman Catholic Curia satisfied some claims and allowed the continuation of licenses, the jurisdiction over confession and sermons,

⁴³ Mykhailo Kozak, *Nevtomnyi dushpastyr*, Peremyshl–Szczecin–Lviv, 2007, p. 207.

religious services and other needs. It also demanded reports about priests' activities.⁴⁴

In 1967, the well-known and much respected Fr. Vasyl Hrynyk was appointed the Sincler and Main Vicar for Ukrainians in Poland. When Fr. Volodymyr Borovets (one of the priests convicted by the Soviets and sent to a camp in Siberia) attempted to find shelter in Szczecin churches after being released and encountered only obstacles, Fr. Hrynyk wrote to him: "I overcame similar hurdles last year. I was kicked out from and not let into churches, and the Curia did not want to help me, saying that I should turn to the priests. And I wandered from one to another, cuffed here and there."⁴⁵

During this time, the Confessor of the Faith Yosyp Slipyi had just returned from Siberian imprisonment and was working to consolidate the structures of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Eastern Rite in the Free World. The 1969 Synod of Ukrainian bishops in Rome outlined the development of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and demanded that a Patriarchate be established in accordance with historic precedent. It should be noted that the Polish Primate forbade Fr. V. Hrynyk to appeal officially to the Vatican concerning the question of a Patriarchate for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. However, an appeal signed by several priests attending the synod was sent to Rome.

Before 1956, several Ukrainian Catholic churches started to function on the ex-German territories in Elk (Bialystok region, Fr. M. Ripetskyi), Cyganek (Gdansk region, Fr. V. Hrynyk), Bialy Bor (Koszalin region, Fr. S. Dziubyna), and Krakow (Fr. M. Denko).⁴⁶ I remember traveling from Koszalin to Bytow for the first Ukrainian Catholic liturgy in exile. The train was so overcrowded that only standing room was left for new passengers. Ukrainians, coming from various places in Poland, were happy to be attending this event and did not complain about the conditions.

On October 22, 1958, sixteen Ukrainian Catholic priests received a decree from Polish Primate S. Wyszynski granting them pastoral jurisdiction. The Primate's subsequent decree, dated May 14, 1959, named twenty-five Ukrainian Catholic priests who were to serve fifty Ukrainian Catholic congregations in seven dioceses. Over thirty of fifty parishes were already functioning. Forty-two new Ukrainian Catholic parishes were established in the northern and western dioceses and eight congregations were created in the southeastern dioceses. Polish priests resisted their Primate's decree, especially in the Olsztyn region, and the press

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

published articles and letters condemning the Ukrainian Church. Ukrainian priests were forbidden to display the name of the rite on their seals, because the official title of the church, as defined by Poland's Ministry of Religions, was "Roman Catholics serving in Greek Rite in certain churches and hours."

Despite numerous prohibitions and obstacles, the year 1956 brought new changes and new expectations for better cultural life and for a spiritual revitalization of Ukrainians in Polish exile. Church and clergy joined their people, struggling for national renaissance.

After Ukraine proclaimed its independence in 1991, the attitude of Polish authorities toward the Ukrainian Church improved. It is worth mentioning that Polish Catholic leadership knew about the outrages against the Ukrainians but did not voice a word of protest. Although the power of Poland's Roman Catholic Church was immense, it was not used to defend the basic Christian value of love or to encourage justice between Polish and Ukrainian citizens.⁴⁷ On May 9, 1945, the Roman Catholic Curia in Peremyshl issued an order for its priests to take over abandoned Ukrainian churches for their own needs. On July 7, 1947, Tarnow's Roman Catholic Bishop Stefan appealed to Krakow's governor with a suggestion that property owned by the Ukrainian Church be transferred to the Polish Catholic Church. On July 19, 1947, Lemko Orthodox churches in Bincharova, Bohusha, Florynka, Koroleva Ruska, and Vavrka were closed and sealed, their keys given to Roman Catholic priests. On August 11, 1947, the Ministry of Public Management agreed to transfer the sacral buildings, including equipment, clothing, and administrative property of the Ukrainian Church, to the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁸

In a November 2, 1968, memorandum by Lemko insurgents from the Polish and Soviet armed forces, as well as in the January 15, 1971 memorandum entitled "State of the Ukrainian Minority in Poland," signed by the Horlytsi and Sianik chapters of the USKT and their rural branches, the signatories lamented the tragically poor state of the monuments of Lemko culture in Zakerzonnia. In the Riashiv district, for example, there were 529 churches—374 wooden churches and 155 brick churches. By 1956, 175 of these churches had been demolished. Though the active demolition of churches was stopped in 1956, abandoned churches were falling apart. Both memoranda, sent to the Central Com-

⁴⁷ Mykola Duplak, "U 35-tu richnytsiu trahedii Lemkivshchyny", *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, Vol. 4, New York, 1984, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Yewhen Mislyo, "Lemkivska khronolohiya", *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 5, New York, 1993, p. 171.

mittee of the PZPR, stated that these conditions applied to ancient chapels and road crosses as well. Also affected were cemeteries and Cyrillic inscriptions on tombstones.

Today, sixty-nine wooden churches exemplifying Lemko architecture remain in the Lemko region. These churches serve as memorials for the next generations and as points of interest for tourists. Some were restored, such as those in the villages of Kotan (built in 1841), Kviaton (1811), Povoroznyk (1604–1606), Krampna (1782), and Sviatkova Mala (1762).⁴⁹

The Roman Catholic Church participated directly in discriminatory practices against the Ukrainian population. In the Peremyshl region, for example, Roman Catholics appropriated over one hundred churches and other sacral buildings. Occasionally, Polish priests also illegally seized Orthodox churches. Polish Catholics often encouraged Ukrainian Catholics to threat Orthodox believers and their shrines with disdain, under the slogan “Down with schism”! Such taunts were heard even in the era of ecumenism.⁵⁰

What we know about the attitude of the dominant national culture and society toward the Ukrainian minority reveals just how difficult conditions for the deported Ukrainians of Zakerzonnia were. It also shows the great strength of our nation, which somehow managed to preserved its cultural heritage under such conditions. The popular Krakow magazine *Tygodnik Powszechny* had reasons to write: “The psychosocial atmosphere Poland’s Ukrainians live in is constructed not by the policies of the authorities, but by the attitude of Polish society and Polish Church.”⁵¹ Commenting on his visit to the cemetery in Liubachiv, Volodymyr Mokryi noted: “I will always remember the appearance of the Liubachiv cemetery where dozens of tombstones with inscriptions of Ukrainian names in Cyrillic letters were overturned some thirty years ago. There is also a crypt where Ukrainian priests are buried. A new cross has been placed here several times and is immediately removed.”⁵²

The destruction of all traces of Ukrainian religious and secular culture in the Lemko region was described by Mychajlo Dzwinka, the former editor of the “Lemko Page” in the Warsaw-based *Nashe Slovo*. Dzwinka wrote: “. . . It also pains us that after the war, the Polish population destroyed all traces of the Ukrainian religious and secular traditions

⁴⁹ Bogdan Horbal, *Lemko Studies: A Handbook*, New York, 2010, p. 226.

⁵⁰ M. Hryhor, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁵¹ *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Krakow, 15.XI.1981, vol. 46 (1712), p. 15.

⁵² Wlodzimierz Mokry, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

that once existed here. The churches, already robbed of the most precious icons and carvings, were burnt and demolished. Cyrillic books and manuscripts, kept in the choirs for centuries, were thrown into rivers or burnt. Items people regarded as the essence of their existence, of history and cultural development, have been irrevocably lost. Chapels, road crosses, non-Polish inscriptions were destroyed as well. In Kozuchow (the Zielona Gora region), young Polish sportsmen levelled new Orthodox graves, destroying tombstones, because they needed this site for their sporting aims.”⁵³

Visiting the Lemko region and his home village of Yaselko near Sianik in 1990, Mykhailo Slutiak, then a resident of Ukraine, wrote to me: “Everything in our villages was overgrown with forest, especially your village of Rudawka Yaslyska and Volia Nyzhnia. Forest growth has overrun the place where your house and Uncle Vasyl Duplak’s house once stood, but there are still some apple, pear, and cherry trees there. One can guess that people used to live here. In the village one can still find a narrow road, a small river, and a cemetery with turned down crosses; periwinkle creeps under the pines. Weeds cover common graves near the church; the names of those who liberated our home villages are lost. Only one slogan remains: ‘*You died for your cause and for our cause.*’” This was a sign erected in honour of the unknown Red Army soldiers who died in the course of battle. Taken together this evidence shows that neither in Polish exile nor on their native lands did Ukrainians live under conditions amenable to a normal life and cultural development.

The letter continued, “Sadly, the Krakow church, where believers of the Eastern Rite prayed since the baptism of Rus-Ukraine, no longer exists. Some of these believers were connected with the Royal Court, with government, with Jagellonian University, where Ukrainians studied from the 15th century, starting with Yuriy Kotermak, a native of Drohobych and later rector of Bologna University; and to the eminent Ukrainian writer Vasyl Stefanyk, a friend of W. Moraczewski, Przyby-szewski, Orkan, and Wyspianski; or to the poet and professor of Jagellonian University, Bohdan Lepkyi. The churches where Ukrainians prayed no longer exist, but there is a substitute—the St. Dorota Chapel in St. Catherine Church, where Ukrainians can stand in front of a tiny iconostasis, painted by the mystic and artist Yuriy Novosilskyi, and sing their ‘Christ is Risen’ loudly, without fear that someone is listening, and, deeply believing in this, say ‘Truly, He is Risen.’”⁵⁴

⁵³ Mychajlo Dzwinka, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁵⁴ Wlodzimierz Mokry, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

At times Ukrainian churches were blown up with dynamite. According to a story in the June 25, 1980, issue of *Foreign Report*, Polish authorities dynamited a 19th century church in the village of Rajskie in southeastern Poland. Ignoring numerous appeals from Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk of Peremyshl who sought permission from local officials to reopen the once active Ukrainian Catholic Church, Zbigniew Liczmanski, the district commissioner for religious affairs, had ordered local police and explosive experts to demolish the structure.⁵⁵

In the mid-1960s, the Vatican planned to appoint a Ukrainian Catholic bishop in Poland and restore the Church by reopening an eparchy in Peremyshl. However, Cardinal S. Wyszynski objected to the Vatican's decision, explaining that recognition of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Poland was impossible because of the Lviv Synod of 1946, which had eliminated the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, an act supported by the USSR. In the opinion of the Polish episcopate, Ukrainians should be grateful to Poles for quasi-legal existence of the Ukrainian Church.

It should be noted that the Polish episcopate and the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) were in full agreement concerning this issue. National ties between Polish Catholics and Polish Communists were stronger than the tenuous solidarity between Polish and Ukrainian Catholics. Ukrainians, preparing for the solemn celebration of the Millennium of Christianity in Ukraine, were pained and offended by Cardinal Glemp's words that "the most important date of contemporary era will be the year 1988—the Millennium of Christianity in Russia." It was clear to them that the word "Russia" had been used deliberately.⁵⁶

This hostile stance toward Ukrainian Eastern Rite Catholics was fostered by Polish Primate Stefan Wyszynski, who cast a heavy shadow on the relationships between Ukrainian and Polish Catholics for thirty years. Upon returning to their native villages after their deportation, Lemkos in the Sianik district could not get permission to open Ukrainian Catholic parishes. A Lemko delegation to the Polish Primate also failed to secure permission to open Ukrainian Catholic churches in Sianik and Hlomcza.

It is worth noting the Polish Primate's influence in Rome. On December 17, 1958, after a private audience between Pope John XXIII and Primate Stefan Wyszynski, the pope declared: "Due to severe national conflicts, he (the Polish Primate) considers the beginning of the beatification of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky to be untimely." Sev-

⁵⁵ The Way, Philadelphia, PA, 31.VII.1980.

⁵⁶ Мирослав Трухан, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

eral years later, on the Jasna Gora in Czestochowa (August 26, 1975) and in the cathedral of St. John in Warsaw (October 31, 1975), the Pope personally consecrated plaques dedicated to Polish soldiers who had perished in the struggle against Ukrainians for control of Lviv in 1918.⁵⁷

Having no permission to open Ukrainian Catholic parishes, the Lemkos invited Orthodox priests into their midst, a decision that increased the number of Orthodox parishes in the Riashiv district and caused some conflict among Ukrainians. The Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church provided them with priests who spoke Ukrainian. In September 1983 the central authorities permitted the restoration of the Ukrainian Orthodox Peremyshl eparchy, which had been liquidated 300 years before. The new eparchy of Peremyshl and now Novyi Sanch was headed by Bishop Adam O. Dubets and consisted of two deaneries and thirty-three parishes.⁵⁸

Elsewhere, the renewal of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was very complicated after Operation “Wisla,” requiring much effort and dedication from our priests. Conditions in Orthodox parishes were not much better. Their only publication was “The Church Calendar.”

Poland’s Ukrainians continue to believe that the deportation of civilians because of their national origin was an unjustified crime against humanity, a crime that destroyed human spirituality, tradition, family continuity. All of these had been preserved by the Church, in cemeteries and monuments of a historic past.⁵⁹

The Peremyshl eparchy was one of the oldest bishoprics in the Greek Catholic Church. Before 1945, the Eparchy presided over forty-five bishops who left a significant cultural and spiritual heritage for new generations. They initiated the construction of majestic buildings for religious and secular purposes—schools, orphanages, and hospitals. An eparchy museum was the repository of priceless works of art; its library was filled with rare old books. Twenty-six churches were built in Peremyshl at this time, four of which still survive today. Two of the churches were transferred to the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church after WWII; in 1946, the St. John the Baptist Cathedral of Ukrainian Catholic bishops was appropriated by the Order of Barefoot Carmelites and still remains in their possession. The monastery of the Basilian Fathers, which included a badly damaged church, was returned to its owners in 1996.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁵⁹ Mykhailo Kozak, *Hrebenne v Druhiy svitoviy viyni*, Peremyshl, 2010, p. 101.

Ukrainian artisans repaired and painted the Roman Catholic Church of the Jesuits, with alterations appropriate for the Eastern Rite, and Pope John Paul II designated it as the cathedral for the newly appointed bishop for Ukrainians in Poland, Archbishop Ivan Martyniuk, who became the 46th bishop of the Peremyshl eparchy. When the church properties were appropriated by the state in 1949, Ukrainians had been deprived of their right to pray in their own churches. This state of affairs did not change until the decree of May 17, 1989, along with the amendment of October 11, 1991, which presented a limited opportunity for shrines and church property to be returned to Ukrainians.

In the Peremyshl eparchy alone, the Roman Catholic Church appropriated 245 Ukrainian Catholic churches, along with adjacent buildings, land, and cemeteries. Once in possession of these churches, Roman Catholic priests removed iconostases and ancient icons, adjusting the church interiors to suit the Roman Catholic Rite.

Operation “Wisla” and the deportation of Ukrainians to the ex-German territories had disastrous consequences on the Ukrainian Church and on Ukrainian Catholics. After fifty-five years of dispersion, 260,000 to 270,000 Ukrainian Catholics were assimilated by or converted to Roman Catholicism. Today, the number of practising Ukrainian Catholics in Poland is about 30,000 to 35,000. The demographics are dismal, and the impact is most obvious in a generational imbalance—Ukrainian Catholics in Poland worship mostly in small parishes that serve mostly members of older generations.⁶⁰

Unfortunately, all of this has changed the face of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Zakerzonnia. Under normal conditions, the church might have developed and blossomed; instead, it is a martyred entity which has progressively withered in post-war Poland, losing the cultural, spiritual, and material achievements of the past. Without their churches, religious rites, and priests, Ukrainians became easy prey for conversion to Roman Catholicism. Most Ukrainians in this region, victims of Operation “Wisla,” became Polonized and assimilated, precisely as planned by the Polish government and clergy. Understandably, a revival of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was supported neither by the state nor by the Roman Catholic Church.

⁶⁰ Marian Bilyj, *Naslidky aktsii «Wisla» u Peremyskiy eparkhii UHKC // Mykhailo Kozak, Pomiany, Hospody, dushi sluh Tvoyikh, Peremyshl–Lviv, 2002, p. 248.*

CULTURAL LIFE OF ZAKERZONNIA UKRAINIANS IN POLISH EXILE

The most meaningful treasures of our culture are our popular songs. These songs reflect the life of the Ukrainian people: their happiness and woes, intimate feelings. During WWII and immediately afterward, a new wave of Ukrainian songs came from Ukraine to Poland's Ukrainian territories, bringing a fresh and enchanting array of Ukrainian tunes and lyrics, which in turn brought joy to the local people and expectations for a better future. Members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army were very instrumental in spreading these new songs among the people; needless to say, the repertoire of popular songs about war, particularly those about UPA warriors, increased. After Operation "Wisla" and the deportation of Ukrainians to the ex-German territories, Ukrainian music died out in Ukrainian home territories in Poland. It shared the destiny of thousands of Zakerzonnia residents, moving to Polish exile as a smouldering ember.

In Poland, songs became the most popular expression of Ukrainian culture. This was particularly reflected during the First Congress of the USKT in 1956 in Warsaw, where Lithuanian and Belarussian choruses along with two hastily organized Ukrainian choirs from Warsaw (directed by Yosyp Kurochko) and from Koszalin (directed by Volodymyr Serkiz) performed a variety of songs and compositions.

During the month-long cultural campaign of Polish-Soviet friendship, ten days of Ukrainian culture were exhibited from October 1 to October 9. It featured soloists from Ukraine and the Ukrainian Transcarpathian Chorus under the guidance of M. Krechko.⁶¹ These performances, usually in cities with larger Ukrainian populations, were tremendously important for local Ukrainians who responded with tears of joy. Having received permission for additional cultural and educational activities, Ukrainians started organizing choirs and amateur ensembles. They were numerous but lacked professional directors. It was a difficult beginning, as many people lived discreetly, trying not to call attention to their Ukrainian origins.

Nonetheless, by the end of 1961, the USKT had registered sixty-two amateur ensembles, including twenty-seven choirs, nine dance clubs, and five music ensembles. In 1958, the USKT had only thirty amateur groups. Every year the number of amateur ensembles increased significantly, though many were short-lived. By the end of 1964, there were

⁶¹ Mizh dvoma zyzdamy USKT, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1961, p. 173.

over eighty ensembles.⁶²

A number of amateur ensembles from the Riashiv district were based on Lemko folklore. They were organized in Bortne, Vysova, Zyn-dranova, Komancha and performed at many events.⁶³ Their organizers were Lemkos who had illegally returned to their native lands during the first two years of the "Thaw." The USKT's cultural and educational activities were concentrated in eighteen halls, five of which can be considered cultural centres, located in Peremyshl, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Szczecin, and Warsaw. According to archival statistics, by the end of 1960, there were sixty amateur ensembles in Poland, comprising 900 amateur entertainers under the guidance of thirty-five conductors, most of whom were professionals.⁶⁴

Between 1961 and 1971, the number of ensembles remained relatively stable, but their profiles were changing. In 1971, there were forty-eight musical and singing groups and thirteen theatrical ensembles, involving 1,500 people. During the period spanning 1970 and 1971, the musical and singing groups performed at 185 concerts before 50,000 people, and the theatrical ensembles staged 55 plays for 14,000 spectators.⁶⁵ The geographical backgrounds of these ensembles varied by region and district: 10 from Olsztyn, 8 from Riashiv, 8 from Szczecin, 4 from Gdansk, 4 from Koszalin, 4 from Bialystok, and 3 from Wroclaw. There were two ensembles in Krakow and two in Warsaw; Katowice, Lublyn, and Zielona Gora were each home to one ensemble.⁶⁶

The cultural activities of Goldap's four ensembles reached their peak between 1957 and 1961. Almost each community had a theatrical ensemble or a choir.⁶⁷ These activities were possible because there were more Ukrainians in this region than anywhere else in Poland. The Olsztyn region had accepted 70,000 deported Ukrainians. During its five year work, the USKT organized ten amateur ensembles. The best ensemble was based at Pedagogic Lyceum No. 2 in Bartoszyce, where Ukrainian was a language of instruction. Under the guidance of teacher Olek-

⁶² I. Zynych, "Ukrainci v Polshchi", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1965, p. 55.

⁶³ H. Boyarskyi, "Piatyrichchia USKT", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1962, p. 53.

⁶⁴ Hryhoriy Boyarskyi, "15 rokiv USKT", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1971, p. 54.

⁶⁵ Mykola Korolko, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁶⁶ Y. Polansky, "Vid spivanok do spivu", *Nasha kultura*, vol. 2, Warszawa, 1972, p. 1.

⁶⁷ S. Kontrolevych, "U Holdapskomu poviti", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1966, p. 93.

sandra Senkiv, this ensemble featured singing, dancing, and dramatic components.⁶⁸ The choir consisted of forty singers, all of them lyceum students. Anna Nazarovicz, a former student, remembers: “When we were performing a war songs on the stage, we heard a mother’s loud crying in the hall We were singing and crying together—spectators and performers.”⁶⁹

In the Olsztyn region in 1958, the most popular groups were the Gorovo Ilawieckie choir “Dumka” under the direction of Mykola Ratskyi and the Ostruda theatrical ensemble under the direction of Yevhen Mohyla. The music and vocal ensemble “Chervona Ruta” (The Red Rue), under the direction of Yosyp Terletskyi, was part of the Dumka chorus. The mixed choir “Kalyna” and the vocal and instrumental group “Kanny” (Cannes) under the direction of Ya. Bakaliar were famous for Ukrainian songs and were based in Gizycko.⁷⁰ During the 1970s, a musical group calling itself “Sokoly-76” (Falcons-76) was popular among the youth in the Olsztyn region. By 1966, the Olsztyn region boasted twenty-five artistic ensembles: twenty theatrical ensembles, two choirs, two music ensembles, and one dancing group.⁷¹

In the Koszalin region, a forty-person mixed choir at the Regional House of Culture has existed since the establishment of the USKT. It functioned under the guidance of the great Ukrainian songs enthusiast Volodymyr Serkiz, and was later directed by Jan Kowalczyk. The choir became active at a time when the price of expressions of Ukrainian identity was unemployment and demotion.

The choir of the Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian School functioned continually in Bialy Bor under the direction of Oleksa Kutynskyi, Bohdan Fitsak, and other conductors. Besides this school ensemble, there was a mixed folk chorus of the USKT, which performed during the 1970s under the direction of Bohdan Fitsak. In the late 1970s, Ukrainian songs were popularized by “Halychanky” (“Halychyna Girls”) in Koszalin and by “2 x 2” in Bialy Bor.⁷²

The main centres for the USKT’s cultural and educational activities in the Szczecin region were the cities of Szczecin and Trzebiatow.

⁶⁸ S. Demczuk, “Ukraintsi na Olshtynshchyni”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1963, p. 226.

⁶⁹ Anna Nazarowycz, “Bartoshytskyi spohad”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1974, p. 105.

⁷⁰ B. Maciewycz, “Khudozhni kolektyvy v diyalnosti USKT”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1981, p. 35.

⁷¹ M. Zaporozhets, “Z istorii Olshtynskoho VP USKT”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1966, p. 52.

⁷² B. Maciewycz, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

The USKT chorus in Szczecin was founded in 1956, but its existence was erratic because of a lack of conductors. One of its first members was the young popular singer Olena Maydanets, well known in Poland. The chorus was especially successful while under the direction of Ivan Sviatoyanskyi, Prof. Volodymyr Posatskyi, and Myroslaw Krawczuk.⁷³ Later, a group of bandura players was organized by Petro Lakhtiuk in Szczecin. A children's ensemble named "Malvy" (Hollyhocks) was founded in 1969; its repertoire included singing, dancing, reciting, and puppet shows. Szczecin was also the proud home of the "Chumaky" (Oxcart Drivers) under the direction of B. Biletskyi.

In the late 1960s, Trzebiatow had a Ukrainian children's ensemble of mandolin players, a men's choir, an amateur ensemble, and a ten-person ensemble of bandura players.⁷⁴ In the Wroclaw region, the Ukrainian cultural and educational movement had begun even before the USKT was founded. Ukrainian songs in Wroclaw were popularized by a choir under the direction of Dariya Bazarnyk, who also conducted village choruses in Kemblow and Orzeszkow. In 1966, the amateur ensemble "Trembita" (named after a long horn-like instrument common to Western Ukraine's mountain regions) was founded by Yaroslav Tomyń in Wroclaw. The music group "Romen" (Chamomile), headed by R. Ladna, was active in Wroclaw during the 1970s. The sixty-person chorus of the Ukrainian Lyceum in Legnica (conducted by Mykhailo Duda) along with an orchestra of mandolin players and other music ensembles participated in the Soiree of Ukrainian Folklore in Wroclaw in 1967.⁷⁵

Ukrainian songs in the Wroclaw region were promoted by displaced Lemkos in the village of Lisiec, the Lubin district. Yaroslav Trokhanovskyi conducted an eighteen-person choir and a five-person musical ensemble. The repertoire of each of these groups was based on Lemko folklore.⁷⁶

After ten years in exile, some Lemkos managed to return to the Carpathians, bringing their Lemko songs with them. In the late 1950s, singing groups existed in several villages of the Lemko region (Komancha, Zydranowa, Poliany, Hrab, Bortne, Losie, and Bilianka). These amateur village groups functioned reasonably well despite problems such as a lack of suitable conductors and discrimination. Later the fifty-person

⁷³ J. Bak, "Ukrainci v Shchetsinskomu", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1966, p. 100.

⁷⁴ *Nashe Slovo*, Warszawa, April 19, 1967.

⁷⁵ B. Maciewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁷⁶ V. Pidhirny, "V Lublinskomu poviti", *Nashe Slovo*, Warszawa, January 1, 1967.

joint ensemble “Lemkovyna,” which featured aspects of Lemko folklore, was organized under the direction of Yaroslav Trokhanovskiy. The ensemble performed songs, dances, and plays; its repertoire included Lemko songs.

In the summer of 1972, the “Oslaviany” chorus began performing the village of Mokre, Sianik district. Its artistic director was Yevhen Mohyla, and Mokre soon became known to all Ukrainians in Poland because of its chorus. In 1968, a USKT chorus was launched in Katowice under the guidance of Merited Conductor and Composer, Mykola Hladylovych who spent his professional life in Silesia, a region populated by Ukrainian deportees. The development and activities of this chorus were interrupted by the conductor’s untimely death in 1967. Katowice became silent.⁷⁷

The foundation of the USKT influenced the establishment of a Ukrainian choir in Krakow. Under the direction of Prof. K. Zabolotna, the choir staged the opera “Zaporozhets za Dunayem” (Kozak Beyond the Danube) and performed several concerts. Its work was soon curtailed but the choir was resurrected in 1966 when K. Zabolotna organized a new five-person group. Rehearsals took place in a private apartment—the USKT did not have an office in Krakow.⁷⁸ Another Ukrainian chorus was founded in Peremyshl in 1956. It was conducted by B. Chrusciel and later by Prof. Yaroslava Popovska with the number of singers ranging between eighteen and fifty. The Peremyshl chorus staged plays, including the Ukrainian fairy tale “Koza-Dereza.” Its repertoire consisted mostly of folk songs and songs based on the poems of Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko. The ensemble of young mandolin players was also successful. The young musicians learned the music for the operetta “In Foreign Feathers” and the opera “Natalka Poltavka.” The group was conducted by a very dedicated Volodymyr Paitash.⁷⁹

In 1965, the USKT chorus in Peremyshl grew to include the music ensemble “The Beskids” directed by Ya. Popovska. In 1969, Popovska also organized and directed the children’s ensemble “Synya Lentochka” (The Blue Stripe). Approximately 500 Ukrainians lived in Lublyn, but the USKT’s activities covered only about 5 percent of this

⁷⁷ V. Pohorecky, “Spohady pro Liudvyka Mykolu Hladylovycha”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1975, p. 117.

⁷⁸ D. Czerep, “Pro hurtok USKT v Krakovi”, *Nashe Slovo*, Warszawa, June 11, 1967.

⁷⁹ V. Pajtasz, “Korotkyi balans”, *Nashe Slovo*, Warszawa, March 19, 1967.

region.⁸⁰ Here a dance and song ensemble was established in 1956 under the guidance of Lobachevskyi and Dzik, but it soon folded. The “Tro-yanda” (Rose) choir was organized in 1970 and was conducted by Tadey Czub and later by Jan Fus.

The chorus of Warsaw Ukrainians started before the USKT was founded. It was a small group, originally called Volia, that quickly grew into a central representative chorus in Warsaw and performed at the First Congress of the USKT in 1956. The Ukrainian songs the chorus performed impressed all the participants of the Congress, breaking the wall of intimidation and blackmail and flowing into Ukrainian hearts with a new positive wave. The first (Volia chorus) conductor was Mishchuk, who was succeeded by Ya. Polianskyi. The General Secretariat of the USKT also supported an ensemble of mandolin players created by Mykola Syvitskyi. The group’s artistic director was Ya. Polianskyi.

In the early 1970s, the singers of the Warsaw chorus joined efforts with the Gdansk choir, creating the fifty-person mixed chorus “Dumka,” which featured famous Ukrainian soloists such as M. Kravchuk and O. Tabachnyk from Szczecin, A. Matsihanovska from Gdansk, V. Denysenko and B. Ladysh from Warsaw, and M. Shchustka from Lodz. Unfortunately, this choir no longer exists.⁸¹

Poland’s Ukrainians longed for a representative choir such as Dumka, just as they longed for Ukrainian theatre, a central radio program, and the right to enjoy their native culture. Over the decades, however, such things were decided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which even dictated which costumes could be used by choir during its performances.⁸²

The 1960s brought some hardships to USKT-affiliated music groups. Their number decreased and some choirs stopped performing altogether. This was the case with the fifty-person choir in Nowy Dwor directed by Aya Matsihanovska, the forty-five-person choir in Osiecko directed by Ya. Polianskyi, the Slupsk choir directed by M. Kozyra, the sixty-person choir directed by F. Lobachevskyi, the Peremyshl “Beskids,” the Wroclaw “Trembita,” “Lemkovyna,” and others.⁸³ New choirs did not replace the old ones, and along with the decline of a

⁸⁰ O. and A. Liublynski, “Ukrainska problema na Lublynshchyni”, *Nashe Slovo*, Warszawa, January 1, 1967.

⁸¹ B. Maciewycz, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁸² Mykola Duplak, “Ukrainska pisnia v narodniy Polshchi 1945-1980”, *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, Vol. 3, New York, 1982, p. 51.

⁸³ Hryhoriy Boyarskyi, “15 rokiv USKT”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1971, p. 56.

Ukrainian school system, Ukrainian life after Operation “Wisla” became even gloomier.

In February 1972, the USKT General Secretariat organized a twenty-day camp for Ukrainian choristers from all over Poland in Srod-borowo near Otwock. In July 1972, a similar camp was held in Gizycko for the mixed chorus “Dumka”; in 1973, for the “Zhuravli” choir and part of “Duma” in Mielno. The first camp in Srodborowo gathered thirty-three singers.⁸⁴ These camps gave birth to the mixed chorus “Duma” and strengthened the “Zhuravli.” The love for Ukrainian songs helped fifty singers from twenty-seven Polish Regions to overcome various hurdles and gather together once every three months for two-day rehearsals that gave the conductor an opportunity to make a well-structured ensemble. The permanent location of “Zhuravli” was Warsaw. This choir became the custodian of Ukrainian singing culture in Poland.

The test for “Zhuravli” was a concert held on February 27, 1972, in the Musical Academy of Warsaw, dedicated to the 130th anniversary of Mykola Lysenko. The choir’s fame had increased as a result of its collaborative work with such famous soloists as Mariya Shchutka, Bernard Ladysh, Volodymyr Denysenko, Lesia Lemishko-Yurchak, and Andriy Dudych.

In 1976, musicologist Prof. Edward Jozajtis concluded the following about the “Zhuravli”: “The chorus is one of the best men’s choirs in Poland and can perform all over the world on its best stages.” Unfortunately, the chorus, conducted at that time by Yaroslav Polianskyi, was not given permission to go to Slovakia and participate in the annual festival of Ukrainian singing and dancing in Svydnyk. In 1966, amateur ensembles receive much support from a publication entitled “Estrada” (Variety Arts).

The tradition of organizing festivals of Ukrainian songs and music began in 1967. The first such festival was held on July 22 and 23 in Sianik and was one of the largest events ever sponsored by the USKT. This festival followed the regional competitions of amateur ensembles. Its program included some traditional songs, but much of the focus was on serendipity, with participants selecting songs at will.⁸⁵ The festival was attended by fifteen ensembles (172 persons), fascinating spectators with beautiful Ukrainian songs, youthful dances, and beautiful traditional outfits.

This initial festival also included the Ukrainian singing and

⁸⁴ M. Verbovyi, “Na krylakh zhuravlynoyi pisni”, *Nasha kulura*, vol. 2, Warszawa, 1977.

⁸⁵ “Pytannia, yaki vymahayut pozasnennia”, *Nashe Slovo*, Warszawa, February 19, 1967.

dancing ensemble from Priashiv, Slovakia, led by L. Dovhovykh.⁸⁶ Guests from Ukraine did not come—the Sianik festival coincided with the 20th anniversary of the deportation of Ukrainians from Zakerzonnia. Nonetheless, the festival was very successful. People were enthusiastically commenting that a native song sounds best on its native soil. Perhaps this is what made the festival so successful.⁸⁷ Permission for a new festival in Sianik was refused.

The Second Festival of Ukrainian songs and music took place in Kentszyn in 1968. It was better prepared and became a high-class training session for conductors, artistic directors, teachers, choreographers and cultural activists. It showed that the Ukrainian song was alive; it also showed that Ukrainians needed it.⁸⁸ The festival was attended by eighteen groups (300 performers, including children) and followed local inter-regional competitions in Bytow, Sianik, and Banie Mazurskie, which had brought together thirty-five amateur ensembles of 700 performers.

The Third Festival of Ukrainian songs and music took place in Koszalin in 1969. It was well organized, and its program was characterized by a great variety of songs and outstanding performers. The bandura and bandura players proved to be very popular. They subsequently performed very successfully in Trzebiatow, Szczecin, and Legnica. The leaders of dancing groups were the youth enrolled in Ukrainian classes in Legnica and Bartoszyce. All concerts were recorded by a Polish Radio Company, and some Ukrainian songs and music were later performed even at Polish festivals.⁸⁹

These festivals stimulated the qualitative and quantitative growth of singing and music groups of the USKT. Fourteen ensembles participated in the First Festival, and forty amateur groups attended the Third Festival, with fourteen of them performing on the Koszalin stage before 5,000 spectators.

The Fourth Festival of Ukrainian songs and music was dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the USKT and was held in Warsaw in 1971. It was said that the event eclipsed all previous celebrations. Youth and children contributed to the celebration with rhythm, movement, passionate dancing, smiles, and hope. These were the children from Bialy Bor,

⁸⁶ M. Dzwinka, "Pisnia, molodist, krasa", *Nashe Slovo*, Warszawa, August 6, 1967.

⁸⁷ Mykola Duplak, "Ukrainska pisnia v narodniy Polshchi 1945-1980", *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, vol. 3, New York, 1982, p. 55

⁸⁸ Y. Polansky, "Pro Druhyi Festyval USKT", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1970, p. 60.

⁸⁹ Antin Verba, "Pidtverdzhennia shyrokoho rostu", *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1970, p. 60.

the youth from Legnica and Gorovo Ilawieckie. The festival revealed the richness of the Ukrainian song created by a talented nation. The participants of the Fourth Festival also included professional Polish soloists and amateurs; guests at the event included representatives of ministries, key public figures from Ukraine, and delegates from the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers in Czechoslovakia.⁹⁰

The Fifth Festival of Ukrainian songs and music took place in Warsaw in 1973, with 419 members of twenty-two ensembles performing. Spectators were impressed by the high artistic level of the performers, by expanded repertoire, bright costumes, and mature organizational skills. Critics extolled the performances of the “Duma” and “Zhuravli” choruses. At the end, a joint chorus of all participants performed the powerful song “Reve ta stohne Dnibr shyrokyi” (The Wide Dnipro Roars and Groans).⁹¹

The Sixth Festival was held in Koszalin in 1977. Exceptionally successful, the festival featured 800 performers from the twelve best-known ensembles; the number of spectators reached 20,000. The Sixth Festival was the product of tremendous efforts on the part of many talented directors, including Polianskyi, Duda, Fitsak, Bohun, Oliynyk, and Matsihanovska. It testified to the strong needs of the Ukrainian community, with its roots still deep in native culture, and insurmountable wish to preserve the beauty and treasure of its heritage.⁹²

If the first decade of Polish exile was the period of total oppression of Ukrainians as a national minority, the second decade was the time of Thaw, self-organization, and self-expression in the new territories. The third and fourth decades brought new limitations to Ukrainian cultural life, although the fourth decade was marked with a new attitude toward the Ukrainian issue, influenced by the Solidarnosc (Solidarity) movement and the thaw in Polish social and political life.⁹³

Despite these successful endeavors, the USKT had one great weakness—it lacked a permanent home. Over 90 percent of USKT-affiliated organizations had no place to meet. To hold a meeting or rehearsal, Ukrainians had to request local authorities for permission, and the authorities were not always willing or able to grant it. This was one

⁹⁰ Antin Verba, “Varshavskiy festyval”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1972, p. 97.

⁹¹ Antin Verba, “Na pyatomu yuvileynomu festyvali”, *Ukrainskyi kalendar*, Warszawa, 1974, p. 130.

⁹² M. Verbovyi, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁹³ Mykola Duplak, “U 35-tu richnytsiu trahedii Lemkivshchyny”, *Analny Lemkivshchyny*, Vol. 4, New York, 1984, pp. 22-23.

of the reasons that amateur ensembles curtailed their activities.

Success in other fields of cultural life was possible due to the dedicated efforts of USKT members, intellectuals, and civic leaders who sacrificed their work and health to preserve the national dignity of deported Ukrainians. The Polish government had no interest in the development of Ukrainian culture; in contrast, it strived to eliminate the Ukrainian problem according to a prepared, systematic, and pragmatic plan. In his appeal to the United Nations (UN), editor and journalist Mykola Syvitskyi noted that the entire world's culture was under the auspices of ministries of culture. A similar situation, he pointed out, exists in Poland for the Poles, while Ukrainians stay under the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Thus, the government has divided its citizens and humiliated Ukrainians, though it was prohibited from doing so by Articles 81 and 82 of the PZPR's Constitution. The subordination of culture under the security services meant that all USKT members worked for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The police organized the activities of the USKT in the way that permitted it to officially exist but to do very little. The Ministry provided funding for the USKT and appointed its leadership through elections that were little short of farcical. As a result, the staff nominally represented the interests of the Ukrainian population, but its activities were limited by the Ministry's decrees. The USKT leadership found itself between the devil and the deep blue sea, a situation that turned people into unmotivated tools. It often happened that local activists worked better than the General Secretariat, and the leadership had to slow the pace of their work in order to keep their own positions.

The development of Ukrainian culture was limited in many ways:

1. The USKT founded the enterprise 'Ferroteks' to have its own profits under the law. This enterprise created opportunities for developing Ukrainian culture, earned millions of zlotys and enriched the market. The government ordered that the enterprise be shut down, arguing that a cultural institution should deal with cultural matters, supported only by the Ministry's funding. In reality, the Ministry blocked all initiatives, citing a lack of money. When the only car of the USKT, sponsored by 'Ferroteks' broke down, it took five years before a new one could be purchased.
2. During the administrative reform, all regional and district branches of the USKT were liquidated, and all amateur ensembles (around 200) were placed under the General Secretariat in Warsaw. Under these conditions, possibilities for cultural activities diminished.

3. At meetings and in the press, amateur ensembles in training asked for assistance (and funding), but all requests remained unanswered. The Warsaw training personnel was reduced to one person who had to deal with all administrative issues.
4. The Ministry did not support the Festival of Ukrainian song and music, which was planned for 1977, again citing a lack of funds. Ukrainian activists decided to solve this problem by themselves and sold tickets throughout the country in advance. They collected half a million zlotys. The Festival took place and a new project for the next festival was presented, but the Ministry decided that it was enough to organize the Festival once every four years.
5. Regardless of all conditions, several thousands of deported Ukrainians came back to their native lands in the Riashiv region where they organized artistic ensembles and taught Ukrainian for children. The terror tactics of local authorities and the silence of the central authorities destroyed all cultural endeavours and centres for teaching Ukrainian.
6. Attempts to invite cultural enterprises from other regions were unsuccessful because local authorities always found excuses for refusing such proposals.
7. The circulation of the single but popular calendar-almanac grew to 10,000, but the authorities reduced production to 6,500.
8. The members of the Presidium of the USKT General Secretariat tried several times to meet with the officials responsible for the PZPR's internal policies, but nobody wanted to talk to them. When the head of the Presidium asked for an audience with a secretary of the PZPR Central Committee, he received no answer—a slight showing an offhand disrespect not only toward a single individual but toward a duly appointed representative of a national minority that had been deported from its native land. This state of affairs of Zakerzonnia Ukrainians in Polish exile forced their leaders to ask for foreign intervention. This intervention came from Ukrainian Americans, who wrote a letter to the UN Commission on Human Rights:

“The Ukrainian minority in the Polish People’s Republic faces extermination as a national and religious group. Therefore, we, the citizens of the United States of America, who by birth or descent are from that particular Ukrainian area which is now under Poland, hereby petition you to make the proper intercessions with the Polish Government to have it

halt its genocidal practices and policies aimed against our kinsmen in Poland."⁹⁴

Due to the joint efforts of the Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna and the World Lemko Federation, the issue of the deported Ukrainians was presented in the resolutions of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America and discussed by high-level representatives of the U.S. and Canadian governments. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Lemkos' tragedy, relevant information was introduced into the *Congressional Record* (vol. 123, pt. 27). The delegation of the World Lemko Federation also organized a protest at the Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C., against the oppression of Ukrainians in Poland.

CONCLUSION

The deportation of Zakerzonnian Ukrainians to the former German territories of Poland during the Operation "Wisla" and its dispersion among the Polish population aimed at forced and quick Polonization and was a planned and implemented ethnocide of the Polish government against the Ukrainian national minority in Poland. The Polish authorities targeted the rich Ukrainian history and culture native to the land they appropriated, destroying all traces of the presence of a Ukrainian cultural, religious, and secular heritage.

On these historically Ukrainian territories, the Polish population burned and damaged Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox shrines, stealing icons, carvings, and other valuable items. Even today, one can easily buy Ukrainian sacral objects in Polish antiquity shops—and these objects are represented as Polish on the international market. Many Ukrainian churches in Zakerzonnia are now marked as buildings of the Roman Catholic Church. All non-Polish inscriptions and traces have been erased. Tourists are told various invented myths with no mention that a particular church was built by Byzantine Rite Ukrainians.

Upon returning from exile to their home village of Poliany in the Lemko region, Ukrainians rebuilt their Orthodox church with the assistance of Ukrainian Americans. However, a Polish priest from a neighbouring village, along with his supporters, took control of the church, forbidding its Ukrainian owners to use it. The local and central authori-

⁹⁴ Iz lysta Ivana Hvozdy i Mykoly Duplaka do Komisii Prav Liudyny OON vid 27 lystopada 1970 roku, *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, New York, vol. 5, 1993, p. 204.

ties kept silent. Defending their national shrines on their native land, Ukrainians feel they must constantly struggle against the Polish establishment; in doing so, they become an obstacle for the authorities.⁹⁵

Much time has passed since 1956, but even today Ukrainians do not have proper representation in Poland to defend their interests. The only organized form of life of the Ukrainian minority, besides religion, was the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society known as the Union of Ukrainians in Poland. According to the organization's statute, the USKT represented the interests of its members; in reality, it was forced to represent the interests of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. But even with the limitations imposed on them by the government, Ukrainians reached success in some spheres, as the evidence above proves.

Looking back, we can assert that brief revivals of Ukrainian life in Poland were made possible by the government sanctioned activities of the USKT, by the Ukrainian Church, and by conscientious and diligent efforts of Ukrainian patriots. The islands of Ukrainian identity that bring to light native language and native culture would not otherwise be possible. May they burn bright forever!

Deported victims of Operation "Wisla," their children, and grandchildren, see their Ukrainian identity through different eyes. Some of them are ashamed of their origin and language and have lost their entire Ukrainian heritage. Others remember their Ukrainian roots, particularly during traditional holidays. Those who never abandoned their national identity, continue cherishing their language, traditions, and religious rite—they thus preserve the cultural treasure of the Ukrainian nation.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Mychajlo Dzwinka, "Spisani na straty", *Annaly Lemkivshchyny*, New York, 1984, vol. 4, p. 91.

⁹⁶ Mykhailo Kozak, *Nevtomnyi dushpastyr*, Peremyshl–Szczecin–Lviv, 2007, p. 151.

DOCUMENTS

Document 2

January 28, 1947 [Warsaw] – Report of F. Stolinski, the Instructor of the Organizational Department of the Central Committee of the Polish People’s Party, for F. Mazur, the Organizational Department Head, regarding the election campaign in the Rzeszow province.

There are some signs of disintegration within the OUN. We have seen quite a few bands fleeing from soldiers. On January 18 [1947], the army dispersed 2 bands—mowing down 13 fighters in the first instance, and in the second, killing 7 and taking 3 alive. The increased self-confidence among the Polish population and the lack of courage among the UPA members has had an effect on the Ukrainian population, which took part in the elections in large numbers, voting openly for the three parties.

The elections raised enthusiasm and has prompted an influx of new Party members. This has raised serious concerns about how to harness this influx, all the more because fighting the UPA has simultaneously raised strong nationalistic tendencies among the Polish population, and these tendencies also permeate the Party. This is symptomatic of comrades coming from those counties still threatened by the UPA bands, e.g., Pe-remyshl, but I assume it is the same in other eastern provinces.

I do not know the results of the resettlement of Ukrainians in other provinces. In the Rzeszow province, the results were not significant, but on balance the result was negative. Only a part of the population left, the so-called “Old Rus’ people” (Russophiles from the time of the Austro-Hungarian regime). Those people did not consider themselves Ukrainians, did not succumb to Vienna’s intrigues, and did not yield to the Nazi plague or the UPA. They constituted the main base for the Communist Party of Western Ukraine (Sianik and Lisko) and the Communist Party of Poland in the western parts of the Rzeszow province. This was a higher cultural element among Ukrainians. Those people influenced by

the UPA fled to the mountains and forests to escape resettlement and later returned and lived in their own villages.

The end result is that we got rid of the Polish United Workers' Party members and the Party's supporters, and the most backward element has been left behind, people we have no access to. I repeat, I do not know the numbers of remaining Ukrainians—loosely gathered information suggests they are considerable. The problem of Ukrainian minority has not been resolved—it still exists, but we have no access to this minority because we no longer have our previous contacts; the only state representatives who deal with the Ukrainian issue locally are the commanders of the units fighting the bands; the political standards and the methodology applied out of necessity by these people will not contribute to the solution of the Ukrainian problem. There is a danger that the Ukrainian abscence will be permanent and might cause us great damages some day.

(Stolinski Feliks)

Original, typescript.

Central Archives of Modern Records (Archiwum Akt Nowych), 6th Department, The Archives of the Polish Left (in subsequent references: AAN, 6th Department), KC PZPR, 295/LX-42, k. 42-43.

Source: Eugeniusz Misilo. *Akcja "Wisla". Dokumenty.* Warsaw: Archiwum Ukrainskie, 1993, pp. 41-42.

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Jaworzno, dnia 20.X. 1947 r.

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Co chce zobaczyć w tym celu
Koleżanki i koleżanki z siedziby

Dyrektora Departamentu III-go
płk. Czaplickiego

w Warszawie

DS-1305/47
87

W odpowiedzi na pismo z dnia 13.X. 1947 r. DS 1305/47 zawiadamiam iż w C.O.P. Jaworzno przebywają zatrzymani Kesybylak Antoni s. Michała i Kebełak Antoni s. Bazylego obaj wysiedleni ze wsi Krepna pow. Jasło. Aresztowani zostali w Oświęcimiu w czasie przejazdu transportem na zachód. W/w są naradzewosol Żemkowskiej wyzn. grek-kat. na liście "inteligencji" nie figurują, dotychczas przeciw nim materiałów eboiążających nie zebrane.

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Document 8

February 20, 1947, Warsaw – Excerpts from the report of the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Polish Army, Major General S. Mossor following his inspection of the Provincial Security Committees in Katowice, Krakow and Lublyn prepared for the Chairman of the State Security Commission, the Minister of Defense and the Marshal of Poland, M. Zymierski.

A proposal to resettle Ukrainians.

Top Secret

– ^aAfter considering the situation in the Krakow District, the problem of the remaining Ukrainians has become evident. Many individuals and even entire Ukrainian families hid themselves in the woods or border villages in Czechoslovakia and later returned to their homes, creating bases for the UPA and the danger of future irredentism. Because the Soviet Union is no longer accepting these people, it seems absolutely necessary that an energetic resettlement action be conducted in the spring, one that would scatter these people by individual families in the area of the Regained Territories where they will be quickly assimilated.

Enclosed I am providing a detailed list of these remnants, which constitute approximately 4,876 families (20,306 people). I suggest that Minister Wolski, the Head of the Repatriation Office, [be contacted] in this matter.

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Polish Army
Major General Mossor

Appendix 1

Additional resettlement of Ukrainians – the approximate numbers are:

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Lubaczów county | approx. 500 families | approx. 2,011 people |
| Jaroslaw county | approx. 400 families | approx. 1,600 people |
| Przemysl county | approx. 700 families | approx. 2,800 people |
| Brzozów county | approx. 130 families | approx. 509 people |
| Sanok county | approx. 770 families | approx. 3,063 people |
| Lisko county | approx. 1930 families | approx. 7,735 people |
| Jaslo county | approx. 31 families | approx. 124 people |
| Krosno county | approx. 2 families | approx. 9 people |
| Gorlice county | approx. 367 families | approx. 2,258 people |
| Rzeszów county | approx. 3 families | approx. 11 people |
| Lancut county | approx. 30 families | approx. 139 people |
| Przeworsk county | approx. 13 families | approx. 47 people |

In total: approx. 4,876 families approx. 20,306 people

In addition, there were also the so-called "mixed" families.

There is a need:

- to resettle these remnants; to check the documents of the "mixed" families.
- to introduce compulsory passports and control of population movement.

Original, typescript

Central Military Archives (Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe), the Office of the Minister of National Defense, IV.110, t. 135, k. 50-56

Source: Eugeniusz Misilo. *Akcja "Wisla". Dokumenty*. Warsaw: Archiwum Ukrainskie, 1993, pp. 53-54.

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PAŃSTWOWY URZĄD REPATRIACYJNY POW. ODDZIAŁ N. Łącz

Grybów dnia 4 VII 1947

Karta przesiedleńcza Nr. 30910

Ob. Kowalczyk Piotr ^{Michał} urodz. w roku 1903

mieszkaniec miasta _____ w Buszynie d. 81

gmina Tylicz powiat N. Łącz przesiedla się na

inne miejsce zamieszkania. Wraz z nim przesiedlają się następujący członkowie jego rodziny.

| Lp. | Imię i nazwisko | Rok ur. | Stosunek pokr. do głowy rodziny | Uwaga |
|-----|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | <u>Paraska</u> | <u>1909</u> | <u>żona</u> | |
| 2. | <u>Aleksandra</u> | <u>1932</u> | <u>córeczka</u> | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |
| 7. | | | | |
| 8. | | | | |

Przesiedlający się:

a) zabiera ze sobą: koni _____, krów 3 ^{niele}, trzody chlewniej _____, kóz 1, owiec _____, oraz następujący inwentarz martwy broń, sprzęt, i materia do 12/11/47

b) pozostawił: ziemi ogólną _____ ha, 1900/1900

w tym użytków rolnych _____ ha,

dom mieszkalny (jeśli) chcąc post. 1217 m

stodołę chcąc post. 1402 m 1900/1900

2 szopy chcąc post. 1424 m 1900/1900 chlewnię chcąc post. 1024 m

Wzrost na przetrz.

Podpis przesiedleńcy: _____ Podpis organu państwowego: _____

* Niepotrzebne skreślić.

Document 11

March 6, 1947, Krakow – Excerpts from the situation report for the month of February 1947 prepared for the State Security Commission by the Krakow District Command Headquarters.

A Proposal to resettle Lemkos from the Nowy Sacz county

Secret

– Until now only members of underground organizations and Polish bands are surrendering to the authorities in Krakow province. As far as the Ukrainian UPA bands operating in the Nowy Sacz county are concerned, there have been no similar cases nor can we count on any surrenders in the future. This can be attributed primarily to one fact—the 2,000 of so Lemkos remaining in the southern part of Nowy Sacz county, who in all respects constitute a supply base for the Ukrainian bands prowling in this county. It would be prudent to appeal to the government with a proposal urging that all remaining Nowy Sacz county “Lemkos” be resettled to the Regained Territories.

Chief of Staff
p.p. Colonel Chilinski

Commander of the 5th Military
District
Lieutenant General Wieckowski

Original, typescript.

CAW, the General Staff of the Polish Army. IV. 111, t. 470, k. 1062-1065.

Source: Eugeniusz Misilo. *Akcja "Wisla". Dokumenty*. Warsaw: Archiwum Ukraińskie, 1993, pp. 56-57.

Document 16

March 27, 1947, Warsaw – Excerpts from the overview of the security situation in the country from March 1 to March 25, 1947, prepared by the Operations Department of the 3rd Unit (Operational) of the Polish Army General Staff. Proposal to deport Ukrainians

Secret

– ^aIrrespective of the fact that members of the Polish underground have come out of hiding, the UPA bands still constitute a significant danger on the territory of the Rzeszów province and parts of Lublin province bordering the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, these bands are currently undergoing an ideological and organizational crisis, which weakens their political and terrorist activity to a considerable extent. They are discouraged by difficult living conditions, the need for constant vigilance, and the lack of ideological support from the political and educational apparatus in the UPA bands, all of which create circumstances leading to desertions among the lower ranks, which can be controlled only by terror tactics applied by individual commanders. The banderites captured by operational groups are usually physically exhausted and louse infested. According to the WBW's [*Internal Security Corps*] reconnaissance reports covering the first 10 days of March, "Hryn's"^b unit (the Lisko and Sanok counties) began recruiting Ukrainian youth. The recruitment was compulsory, with the youth attempting to hide in the Polish villages.

Currently the UPA is conducting frequent attacks on area villages with the goal of obtaining food, clothes, and footwear. Continuous operations of the Polish Army and the Internal Security Corps against the UPA bands have resulted in considerable successes in March, namely 135 banderites killed, 55 captured, 43 arrested, 289 weapons seized. Along the way, more than 90 bunkers and storehouses have been destroyed, etc. The attitude of the local Polish population toward the UPA has already become staunchly hostile. These people are forced under terror to cooperate with them and, in case of resistance, risk being subjected to group repressions. The mixed population (Polish-Ukrainian) also avoids expressing its own pro-Ukrainian sentiments; fearing punitive action from the security authorities, this population has presently become a passive mass. Solving the Ukrainian problem that extends to the area of the Rzeszow and Lublin provinces, as well as parts of Krakow province, is of exceptional importance as it will determine the outcome of future actions combating the UPA bands (for example, the number of mixed Polish-Ukrainian families in the Rzeszów province is 4,876, which consti-

tutes 20,306 people). Because the Soviet Union is not accepting these people into its territory anymore, it appears to necessitate carrying out an energetic resettlement operation of these people by scattering individual families throughout the Regained Territories, where they can quickly assimilate.

Assistant to the Chief
of the Operation Department of the Operation Unit
of the General Staff Maj. Skibinski

Original, typescript

*CAW [The Central Military Archives], The General Staff of the Polish Army,
W. III, t. 471, k. 1310-1311.*

a. A fragment of the text which pertains to the activities of the Polish underground and to the results of the amnesty has been omitted. The following provinces were considered to be the most endangered in terms of safety: Bialystok (52 attacks), Warsaw (33), Lublyn [Lublin] (33) Riashiv [Rzeszow] (32), Krakow (31). The report lacks any information about attacks carried out by the Ukrainian underground.

b. *Should be: Chrin's [Khrin's] tactical unit*

Eugeniusz Misilo. *Akcja "Wisla". Dokumenty.* Warsaw: Archiwum Ukrainkie, 1993, pages 62-63.

**Centralny Oboz Pracy
w JAWORZNI**

Potwierdzenie

Niniejszym potwierdzam odbior i doprowadzonych w dniu dzisiejszym do
tut. Obozu Pracy z polecenia W.U.B.P. Krakow ze stacji Oswiecim, nize
wymienionych wieszniow:

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------------|-------------|
| Potoczniak Stefan | ur.1900 r. | Kobylak Antoni | ur.26. 3.06 |
| Suchorsepka Aleksander | 21.11.21 | Popowozak Antoni | 16. 4.98 |
| Suchorsepka Jan | 7. 9.27 | Kobylak Michal | 1. 6.03 |
| Miedzybrodzki Jan | 6.28 | Luciszyn Bazyl | 3. 6.23 |
| Nisiewicz Michal | 27. 2.26 | Deniko bazyl | 6. 4.19 |
| Demkowicz Michal | 18.11.98 | Kobylak Michal | 13. 4.19 |
| Adaraki Andrzej | 17.10.00 | Lekowicz Zofia | 6. 9.13 |
| Penkowiez Wladzimierz | 20.10.21 | Katydzak Emilia | 6.10.26 |
| Demkowicz Stanislaw | 4.12.20 | Nisiewicz Anna | 14. 6.28 |
| Podolski Michal | 18.11.23 | Demkowicz Marja | 13.10.02 |
| Kobylak Antoni | 27. 3.29 | Demkowicz Helena | 29.10.30 |
| Klemenko Filip | 3. 1.20 | Hrecniak Anna | 20. 1.08 |
| Konstantynowicz Michal | 9. 3.10 | Pelak Zofia | 27. 3.19 |

Kierownik Obozu Pracy
/s/ Swieszek M.

Jaworzno dnia 30 maja 1947 r.

Document 17

March 28, 1947 [Sanok] [*Sianik*] – Radiotelegraph from the Krakow District Command to the Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army, Lieutenant General W. Korczyk informing him about the death of the Deputy Minister of National Defense Lieutenant General K. Swierczewski

After finishing the inspection in the 34th infantry regiment in Baligrod [*Balyhorod*], at 9:35 AM General Swierczewski together with General Wieckowski, Colonel Bielecki, the commander of the 8th Infantry Division, and Colonel Gerhard, the commander of the 34th Infantry Regiment, went to the town of Cisna [*Tisna*] in order to inspect the 37th Sector Command of the Border Defense Force. On their way to the town of Cisna, the group, with General Swierczewski at the head, was ambushed by a band comprising 150 people. The skirmish lasted 2½ hours. During the skirmish General Swierczewski was killed by a burst from an automatic rifle; another officer, Second Lieutenant Krysinski, and 2 soldiers were also killed and three soldiers were wounded. General Swierczewski was riding in a Dodge; with him were General Wieckowski, Colonel Bielecki, the commander of the 34th Infantry Division, the chief of the political and training department of the 8th Infantry Division, and 5 non-commissioned officers. In addition, there was an escort from the 34th Infantry Division, composed of 3 officers, 4 non-commissioned officers, and 48 soldiers. The escort was travelling in three vehicles. The sequential order of the column: 1 truck with an escort, a Dodge with General Swierczewski and the above-mentioned officers, and 2 trucks with an escort.

The band was armed with 2 mortars, automatic rifles, and sub-machine guns. The pursuit after the band was organized by the 34th Infantry Division and the units of the Internal Security Corps from Rzeszów [*Riashiv*].

General Swierczewski's body is in the town of Sanok (as are all the general's documents). General Zawadzki together with a group of officers are also in Sanok. He will be flying out of Krosno [*Korosno*] tomorrow (i.e., on March 29, 1947), probably around 12:00 PM. The general's body will be on General Zawadzki's plane.

Colonel Wozniesiński, who is in Sanok at the moment, is requesting that General Swierczewski's family in Moscow be notified and that a plane be sent to Moscow for them, to enable them to attend the funeral (3 persons).

On the back of the radiotelegraph is a handwritten notation by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff Brigadier General S. Mossor:

Please ask through Maslow to have visa issuance facilitated for the family. Gerhard was injured by a landmine blast.

There is his additional handwritten note in the margin of the radiotelegraph:

March 30, 1947, ad acta, the report is inaccurate.

Original, typescript.

CAW [Central Military Archives], General Staff of the Polish Army, IV.III, vol. 471, p. 1465.

Document 19

March 29, 1947, Warsaw – Excerpts from Minutes, no. 3 of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party.

Present: Comrades Wieslaw, Tomasz, Zambrowski, Berman, Minc, Radkiewicz, Spychalski, Zawadzki.

Comrades present at point no. 2: Sokorski, Witaszewski, Szyr, Dolinski, Kratko, Kola, Kofman, Gede.

1. Funeral of Comrade Swierczewski.
2. Professional matters.
3. Miscellaneous

In relation to point no. 1 of the agenda the following has been decided:

1. To posthumously award Comrade Swierczewski the Order of Virtuti Militari First Class.
2. To publish in the media that the cost of the funeral has been assumed by the state and that a pension for the family has been established.
3. Acting through the Government, to pass a resolution regarding erection of a monument commemorating General Swierczewski.

4. To rename Kacza Street and the Gerlach factory after General Swierczewski (through the Warsaw City Council).
5. To establish at the Military Academy a scholarship in honour of General Swierczewski.

As part of the repressive operation directed at the Ukrainian population, it was decided:

1. To quickly resettle the Ukrainian^a population and mixed families to the Regained Territories (mainly to northern Prussia), making certain not to create dense groups and resettling the population no closer than 100 km from the border.
2. To coordinate the resettlement operation with the governments of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.
3. To entrust Comrades Spsychalski and Radkiewicz with the preparation of data on the Ukrainian population in Poland as well as with drawing up of the project of resettlement.

Deadline: Within 1 week. –^b

Minutes by (Rutkiewicz)

Original, typescript

AAN [Archives of New Records], 6th Department, Central Committee of the Polish Worker's Party, 295/V-3, k.16.

a. Not capitalized in the original.

b. Points no. 2 and 3 of the Minutes have been omitted.

**TO THE WHOLE CIVILIZED WORLD:
AN OPEN LETTER FROM UKRAINIANS LIVING BEHIND
THE CURZON LINE**

(Summary)

This letter is a cry of protest and despair voiced by Ukrainians living on Polish territory. These people were subjected to various acts of brutal violence by the Polish communist government and were being deported by force from their native soil. The protest makes reference to the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to various international agreements and declarations from statesmen and other social activists on the subject of human rights. It is addressed to the governments of democratic countries, and in particular, to President Truman of the United States, Prime Minister Attlee of Great Britain, the heads of the Christian churches, international political and social organizations, and political and social activists of the Western world. The letter asks them to speak out against the lawlessness and violence committed against Ukrainians and to come to their defense. This document was written in October 1945, at the time of forced deportations of Ukrainians from Poland. It provides information about Ukrainians living in Poland and details about their persecution.

After the Yalta Conference, about one million Ukrainians found themselves living in the Polish state. These people had always lived on the territory inhabited exclusively by Ukrainians, a territory which stretched along the Polish-Ukrainian border, through the Carpathian Mountains, along the River Sian, in the Kholm and Pidliashia (Podlashia) regions. They should have enjoyed full citizenship rights within the Polish state. Instead, the Polish communist government chose to deport them to the USSR. For understandable reasons, most of the Ukrainians did not want to leave. They had deep ties to their places of settlement, the land where their ancestors were buried. They also feared the misery of life on Soviet collective farms. Under pressure from Moscow, the Polish government began to institute brutal repression and terror, with the intent of inducing Ukrainians to leave, at the same time calling the decision to resettle "voluntary."

During the first stage of the deportation action, before the spring of 1945, the government terror was at least partly covered up by the actions of plundering gangs. These gangs were secretly organized by the Polish communist administration and the police, which often took part in their activities. The gangs attacked Ukrainian villages, robbed people's homes and set them on fire, and committed mass acts of violence and

murder. In 1945 scores of Ukrainian villages were burnt and even more were robbed in attacks of this type. In some cases, up to two hundred villagers were killed during these actions. Driven to despair, the people began to organize their own self-defense. As a result, Polish army and Soviet border NKVD troops came to the assistance of the gangs. Soviet deportation commissions were also active at this time.

Fortunately, more humane Poles and the Polish underground began to oppose these barbaric acts, and most of the gangs halted their activities by the spring of 1945. In most places along the border, life returned to normal and the Polish and Ukrainian inhabitants began to co-exist in peace. This worried the Polish communist government, which in September, 1945 sent a large contingent of troops against the Ukrainian population. It was at this time that an overt campaign of government terror began, including forced deportation of all Ukrainians. The first to be targeted were the better educated Ukrainians and priests (among them, Bishop Kotsylovskiy of Peremyshl), who were arrested and deported or thrown into prison. The Polish army itself now began to rob and plunder villages. Many people tried to avoid deportation; anyone who was caught was escorted by the Polish army to the USSR, while their goods were either confiscated or stolen. At the time the letter was written, these actions were still going on.

The letter was signed as follows: "Representatives of all strata of the Ukrainian population living behind the Curzon Line." It is not known who wrote this document. We know only that the Ukrainian underground circulated it both in Poland and abroad. The letter had seven underground editions in Ukrainian, five in Polish, two in Slovak and French, and one in Czech and English.*

* The Ukrainian version of this letter is in *Litopys UPA*, vol 9, pp.126-132.

MEMORANDUM TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

From the Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna
October 1961, Brooklyn, New York

I. The Ukrainian Minority in Poland

At the close of World War II, the Soviet Union and its satellite Poland, agreed upon certain national boundary lines, which in no sense are in accordance with basic principles of ethnography. The boundary line, well known as the Curzon Line, which separates Poland from the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, was drawn up in a fashion whereby a part of Ukrainian ethnographic territory, namely Lemkivschyna, Kholmschyna, and Pidlasya, found themselves as part of the Polish state. According to pre-World War II statistics, these three areas are inhabited by some one million and five hundred thousand Ukrainians. As a result of agreements concerning the exchange of population, that is between the Soviet Union and Germany in 1939 and between the Soviet Union and Poland in 1945, and, in accordance with Soviet census statistics, some 490,000 Ukrainians were resettled in Soviet Ukraine. Thus, some one million Ukrainians were left under Polish domination.

II. Forced Resettlement of Ukrainians in Poland

All of the Ukrainian populace in these Ukrainian areas (the one million of them or so) were *forced by the Polish Government to leave their native territories* and settle in Polish-ruled regions. This definitely savage act on the part of the Polish authorities in forcibly resettling the Ukrainians was conducted purposely by these authorities on account of the fact that during World War II, the Ukrainians had created the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrainska Povstanska Armiiia) the well-known UPA, which fought for the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state. . . . During the time when the Hitler-led German armies occupied Ukraine, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army fought these forces; later, when the Soviet forces occupied Ukraine, this heroic army conducted military operations against them. And finally, when the Soviet Union assigned the above mentioned territories to its satellite Poland, the UPA fought also against the Polish occupants of native Ukrainian land.

The Polish communist authorities, unable to cope with the Ukrainian Insurgent Army forces and desiring to avenge themselves upon the Ukrainian populace in Poland, took active measures during 1946 and 1947 to evacuate from the Ukrainian areas all of their Ukrainian inhabitants and settle them in Polish areas.

By punishing all of the Ukrainian populace for the military activities of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the Polish government became *prima facie* responsible for the infringement of rights and liberties of the Ukrainian people, which rights and liberties are presumed to be controlled and safeguarded by international law. What the Polish government should have done was to fight the Ukrainian armed forces, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, with Polish armed forces on fields of battle, rather than fighting innocent civilians. The Polish government certainly did not have even the slightest moral right to take punitive actions against all of the Ukrainian populace because of the military actions of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

We know from history that when the Polish nation was destroyed during the 18th century and partitioned among Russia, Prussia, and Austria, Polish patriots rose in rebellion on several occasions to resurrect Polish national independence. After these rebellions were suppressed, the powers then occupying Poland took no punitive action against the Polish people as a whole by resettling this or that portion of them. Why then, in this case, did the Polish authorities perpetrate such atrocities against the Ukrainians?

As became clear later, the Polish government, by forcing out Ukrainian people from their native territories to the Polish regions, did not act according to military dictates but according to imperialist ambitions and desires. What the Polish government actually had as its purpose in this resettlement was to have the Ukrainians mix in with Poles in the territory occupied by the latter, become intermingled with them, gradually absorbed, assimilated, and denationalized, so that in time they would be regarded as Poles. This is an old and much-practiced tactic in such matters, well known in history. Actually, this business of resettlement is a form of genocide.

III. Discrimination Against Resettled Ukrainians

The fact that the Polish Government deliberately planned to destroy the Ukrainian minority in Poland as a national entity can be easily shown by the way Poles treated the forcibly resettled Ukrainians. After having resettled the Ukrainians, the Polish authorities did not allow them to live together in one or more compact groups, that is Ukrainian, in the Polish territories were scattered about, two or three families, or so, in one Polish village, and dispersed all over the nine Polish administrative districts.

This was obviously for the purpose of preventing the resettled Ukrainians from living together as a national group. All that the Polish authorities had in mind was to denationalize these unfortunate people and to exterminate their national identity. It is a well-known fact that people

of a certain race or nationality who live together and commune with one another cannot become assimilated or denationalized and cannot lose their identity. If that right is denied to them, however, gradually they will become denationalized.

IV. Ukrainians in Poland Cannot Worship According to Their Rite and Liturgy

According to their faith, Ukrainians within Polish borders are of two different categories: Greek Catholic and Orthodox. The Catholics and the Orthodox differ very much from the Poles who are of the Roman Catholic faith. That is why Ukrainian Greek Catholics and Ukrainian Orthodox have always had their own churches and church organizations in their native land.

After having evacuated the Ukrainian people from their native habitat and resettled them in Polish ethnographic territories, the Polish authorities purposely deprived the Ukrainians of their right to worship in the accordance with their faith. Ukrainians do not attend the Polish Roman Catholic churches because these are not their churches, and the services are alien to them. They are unable to establish their own Ukrainian Catholic or Orthodox churches and church organizations, because the Polish government has decreed they be widely scattered about, two or three families in this village or town and two or three families elsewhere. It must be born in mind that even ten families cannot, by any means whatsoever, set up a parish and church of their own; financially, this is impossible.

That is why about a million Ukrainians in Poland (outside of the few churches which have been permitted to remain in the Ukrainian ethnographic territories) have been deprived of their right to worship in accordance with their faith and liturgy. The Ukrainian people are a very religious people and to forbid them to pray is the harshest punishment that can be imposed upon them.

V. Ukrainians in Poland Are Not Allowed to Teach Ukrainian to Their Children

Today, Ukrainians in Poland are so widely scattered because of government decree that they are unable to have their children taught Ukrainian in schools. In all Polish schools, which the children of the forcibly resettled Ukrainians attend, education is conducted only in the Polish language. Polish authorities are not in the least concerned that the children of the new settlers want to learn to speak, read, and write in their native tongue.

To be sure, the Polish government passed a parliamentary measure to the effect that all non-Polish minorities in Poland do have the right

to have their children taught in the Polish schools their own native tongue. This law is admirable, but it cannot be effective in case of children whose parents have been resettled. How, as previously noted, is it possible for two or three Ukrainian families in a Polish community to accomplish this? How can anyone have a Ukrainian school system with proper facilities and Ukrainian teachers where there are only four or five children? Before us is a situation in which children of these forcibly resettled people are deprived of their inalienable right to learn their native tongue, and also—in that tongue—to learn about their Ukrainian background, history, culture, and national aspirations for a free and independent Ukraine. These children are being deprived of that right, and, naturally, denationalized; learning nothing of their Ukrainian heritage they become Polonized. That was the aim and purpose of the Polish government and of its forced resettlement policy.

VI. Ukrainians in Poland Are Being Deprived of Their National Life

Being scattered to the extent that they are, Ukrainians in Poland are deprived of all right of normal life, of a national identity. They have no means of organizing their religious groups, they cannot gather in civil societies of their own making, they are unable to establish their own cultural associations, or by extension to arrange for Ukrainian theatrical enterprises: concerts, plays, dramas, and exhibits.

VII. Ukrainians Under Polish Domination Have No Rights in Law-Making Bodies

Because of this dispersal and resettlement, Ukrainians, while numbering some one million persons, do not have any voice at all in the Polish government, that is the Parliament (Sejm) and the Senate. It is the duty of these supposedly august bodies to protect the interests of the Ukrainians—a duty they have failed to perform.

VIII. They Do Not Want Ukrainians to Return to Their Native Habitat

In excusing the resettling the Ukrainian people from their native land, the Polish authorities alleged that they were doing this to stop the activities of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the purpose of which was the establishment of an independent Ukraine. They told Ukrainians that if they were resettled and evacuated out of these mountainous areas, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army would be deprived of any help in form of food and materials, and thereby these insurgents would end their military action against Poland. Therefore, it would appear that once action on the part of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army ceased, all of these Ukrainians resettled by the Polish regime would be able to return to their homes.

Since the end of the last war 16 years ago, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army is no longer in operation, yet the Polish government still does not allow the resettled Ukrainians to return home.

IX. Ukrainian Areas Are Being Settled by Poles

That the Polish government ordered the resettlement of Ukrainians from their native habitat for the purpose of killing their national consciousness and unity is well attested to by the fact that the regime does not allow these resettled persons to go home. What is even worse is that the Polish government is settling these areas from which it evacuated Ukrainians—with Poles! Thus, what the Polish government has planned for the Ukrainian minority in Poland is quite clear:

1. By resettling the Ukrainians and transferring them to non-Ukrainian areas in the Polish ethnographic territories it seeks to denationalize and Polishize them.
2. By settling Polish colonists in Ukrainian areas left barren after the evacuation, the Polish government very cleverly wants to make these areas Polish.

X. A Plea to Investigate the Ukrainian Situation Under the Polish Rule

All of the above-cited facts prove that the Ukrainian minority under Polish domination is being faced with extermination as a national group. We, Ukrainians of the United States of America and Canada, organized in the ranks of the Organization for the Defense of Lemkivshchyna, and who by birth or descent are from that particular Ukrainian area which is now under Polish misrule, appeal to you to make the proper intercessions with the Polish government to have it halt its genocidal practices and policies aimed against our kinsmen in Poland. We demand of the Polish Government that it:

1. Allow the Ukrainian people in Poland to return to their native territory out of which they were forcibly and unlawfully removed.
2. Give back to them their inalienable right to worship God according to their rite and liturgy.
3. Allow them a similar right to have their children taught in Ukrainian in the schools they must attend.
4. Grant all of the rights and privileges to which the Ukrainian people under Polish rule, as citizens, are entitled, so that they may be able to live their national life as Ukrainians, and as part of the whole Ukrainian nation.

Organization for the Defense of Lemkivschyna,

Iwan Skwirniansky, President

Wasył Skomsky, Secretary

Glossary
of commonly used words and abbreviations

- UPA – *Ukrainska Povstanska Armia* – Ukrainian Insurgent Army
- OUN – *Orhanizatsia Ukrainskykh Natsionalistiv* – Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
- KBW – *Komitet Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego* – Internal Security Corps
- KC PZPR – *Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej* – Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party
- PZPR – *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza* – Polish United Workers' Party. Also Poland's Communist Party
- AK – *Armia Krajowa* – National Army
- NKVD – *Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del* – People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs
- PKWN – *Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego* – Polish Committee of National Liberation
- UB – *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa* – Office of Security
- MSW – *Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych* – Council of the Internal Ministry
- PUR – *Polski Urząd Repatriacyjny* – Polish Repatriation Office
- Akcja "Wisła" – Operation "Wisła"
- USKT – *Ukrainske Suspilno-Kulturne Tovarystvo* – Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society
- RUP – *Revolutsiyna Ukrainska Partia* – Ukrainian Revolutionary Party
- UVO – *Ukrainska Viyskova Orhanizatsia* – Ukrainian Military Organization
- CAW – *Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe* – Central Military Archives
- ZO – *Ziemie Odzyskane* – Regained Territories (former German territories)
- SB – *Służba Bezpieczeństwa* – Security Service
- ZUwP – *Związek Ukraińców w Polsce*. Also OUP – *Obyednannia Ukrainstiv v Polshchi* – Union of Ukrainians in Poland
- UKO – Ukrainian Civic Committee
- NOW – *Narodowa Organizacja Wojskowa* – National Military Organization
- NSZ – *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne* – National Armed Forces
- USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- Ukrainian SSR – Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

REMNANTS OF THE UKRAINIAN CHURCHES

(All photos from archives of Lemko Reaserch Foundation)



Wooden church in Kretsiv, build 1784.



*St. Paraskeviya wooden church
(top) and chapel in Lubycha
Kameralna, build 1806.*





St. Paraskeviya church (build 1840) in Karlykiv, Sianik region.



St. Semeon wooden church in Hyrynka, build 1865.



Pokrova church in Serednytsia, build 1785.



St. Dmytrii church in Ulaziv, build 1838.



Blessed Virgin Mary church in Rudenka, Lisko region, build 1843.



St. Stepan church in Nehrybka, Peremyshl region, build 1885.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

TARAS HUNCZAK is Professor Emeritus of Rutgers University. His principal research interest has been the 20th century Eastern Europe, with an emphasis on the history of Ukraine. He has authored and edited numerous books on the subject, including *Ukraina 20-ho stolittia, Moyi spohady – stezhky zhyttia, V mundyrakh voroha, Petliura and the Jews, Ukraine 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution, Russian Imperialism*. He has also authored numerous articles, which have been published in various professional journals.

ROMAN DROZD is an associate professor of history whose main scholarly research interests are national minorities in Poland with a particular emphasis on the Ukrainian population. He is the author and co-author of nine books, including *Droga na zachód and Polityka władz wobec ludności ukraińskiej w Polsce w latach 1944-1989*. Currently Professor Drozd is Rector of the Pomeranian University at Słupsk and head of the Ukrainian Historical Society in Poland.

TIMOTHY SNYDER is Professor of History at Yale University and has received various awards for several books that he authored. Among these are *Sketches from a Secret War; The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999; and The Red Prince*. His most recent opus is *Bloodlands—Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. Professor Snyder has also held fellowships in Paris, Vienna, Warsaw, and Harvard.

YEWHEN MISYLO, the Director of the Ukrainian Archive in Warsaw, Poland, is a historian whose research focuses on the history of the Ukrainian underground as well as the policies of the Polish Government toward Ukrainians. He has been collecting archival information particularly about the deportation and resettlement of the Ukrainians of Zakerzonnia in the period spanning 1944 to 1947. His published work on this subject includes *Akcja "Wisła." Dokumenty (1993): Repatriacja czy deportacja. Przesiedlenia Ukraińców z Polski do USRR (1944-1946); and Pawłokoma 3.III.1945 (2006)*.

DIANA HOWANSKA REILLY holds an MA in international affairs, with a specialization in Russian-area and Eastern European studies, from the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, as well as an MS in journalism from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. She also worked as a staff associate at the Ukrainian Studies Program of Columbia University, and communications as a press officer at the United Nations. She also served as a contributing writer to Freedom House's *Freedom of the Press* books from 2005–2007, providing analysis of press freedom in post-Soviet countries.

MYKOLA DUPLAK is an editor, scholar, journalist, and author of numerous publications, including book reviews published in the United States and abroad. He is the editor and compiler of the commemorative book of the Taras Shevchenko monument unveiling in Syracuse, New York, *Battle On and Win!* Mr. Duplak held the position of editor-in-chief of *Narodna Volya* weekly for twenty years and continues to serve as editor and co-editor of other publications. As a community and cultural activist, he founded and was curator of the Ukrainian Lemko Museum in Stamford, Connecticut.