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*Making Borders Stick:
Population Transfer
and Resettlement in the
Trans-Curzon Territories
1944-1949*

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RESEARCH NOTE

Making Borders Stick: Population Transfer and Resettlement in the Trans-Curzon Territories, 1944–1949¹

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In the final stages of World War II, when the shape of the postwar European order was being discussed and negotiated, there was the underlying but unspoken belief that its future success depended on resolving the difficulties of the past. The polyethnic nature of East European states and territorial incongruity in the region, where frontiers failed to conform to the natural boundaries of ethnolinguistic communities, were considered particularly troublesome. Both had invited irredentist claims and/or provided the grounds for intervention, opening the door to the conflict that lay ahead. If nothing else, the lessons of the interwar period had convinced key postwar planners to believe, if not in the necessity of bringing some logic to the map of Europe, then certainly the political importance of introducing a balance in European affairs without the offending complications which earlier had such disastrous results.

The legacy of the interwar years, in effect, had highlighted the importance of securing frontiers on the basis of practical considerations, if not indisputable claims. It was to become a central point of discussion and bargaining at Teheran, Yalta, and later Potsdam. Although there were obvious tensions regarding specifics and even a few moments of doubt during the process of diplomatic negotiation, all the representatives of the Grand Alliance implicitly understood what was at stake. Indeed, there was little fundamental disagreement on this point, just as there was no real alarm or protest voiced over the implications of the proposals being raised, which taken together amounted to nothing less than the virtual demographic makeover of East Central Europe.

The result was that, in the concluding years of the war and its aftermath, boundaries in East Central Europe were adjusted to coincide with ethnolinguistic communities while populations were realigned to conform with the new frontiers. This would translate into no less than 18.3 million people in the

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region being uprooted and moved from their ancestral homes as part of organized population transfers and resettlement (Magocsi, 1993:164–168). The most important of such transfers was the expulsion of 3 million Germans from the Sudetenland and another 3.3 million from the territories along the Oder-Neisse Rivers and in East Prussia, territories which had been separated from Germany after the war as part of the postwar reparations. But perhaps more significant still, at least from the perspective of the Soviet Union, was the formal acceptance of the historical Curzon Line as the boundary demarcating the new frontier between Poland and the U.S.S.R. which would lead as well to a massive population exchange between the two countries.

Designed in 1919–20 by the British mediator Lord Curzon as an armistice proposal between the then warring powers Poland and Soviet Russia, the Curzon Line served to identify the maximum territorial reach of Soviet political influence in Europe (U.S. Department of State, 1944). In the years to follow, it had become a convention of sorts (U.S. Department of State, 1945) and in the politics of postwar Europe would find once again a purpose, providing both a reference in the discussion on state boundaries in Eastern Europe and a political rationale for the new Soviet boundary in Europe. It also, however, offered a diplomatic solution to a number of political problems. It satisfied Soviet geostrategic interests without damaging the essential European balance of power and resolved once and for all the vexing Polish Question which for so long had threatened to bring down the Grand Alliance but now further promised to complicate Allied postwar relations. In the spirit of Allied solidarity and in the expectation of postwar cooperation, the Curzon Line, first proposed at Teheran and then adopted at Yalta, was imposed on Poland and Eastern Europe. Any further formal discussion of the matter ended when Winston Churchill declared shortly after the Crimean conference that the Soviet claim to Poland's eastern territories was both "just and right."

Territorial compensation – the German lands in Pomerania and Silesia as well as East Prussia – was offered to the new pro-Soviet Polish government in Warsaw in order to make the changes in the east more palatable. From the perspective of the Soviet leadership, however, for the new Polish-Soviet border to be enduring and binding, certain complicating political features had to be dealt with. There was, of course, the problem of the large Polish population now located in the U.S.S.R., but there was also a frontier that still did not coincide with Ukrainian contiguous ethnographic territory. The solution was to be found in a program of resettlement which would target communities on both sides of the new border, a policy eventually affecting some 1.4 million individuals, including 810,000 Polish inhabitants of former East Galicia and Volhynia and 630,000 individuals identified with the Ukrainian ethnolinguistic community nestled primarily in the borderlands of Podlachia, Chelm, Jaroslaw, and the Lemko region (Map 1).



TRANS-CURZON TERRITORIES

The process of population exchange began almost immediately with the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement of September 1944 which had set the new frontiers. In the Soviet Union, the resettlement policy was represented as part of the normal postwar repatriation process whereby those ethnic Poles and Jews who were citizens of Poland prior to September 17, 1939, and had expressed a desire to migrate to Poland could do so. In this regard, a declaration of intent, either written or verbal, was sufficient. Under the terms of the agreement, those eligible could also take members of their immediate families with them, but only if they too expressed a willingness to leave. Adolescents over the age of fourteen were given the independent right to choose whether to remain. Families were permitted to take with them livestock and the equivalent of two tons of household possessions, while incen-

tives were used as a means to induce outmigration. For purposes of start-up, a sum of 5,000 rubles was to be credited to each family that would leave, the full amount to be paid back within five years (Shchyrba, 1975:167). In the end, some 885,302 individuals would register for patriation and, of this number, 810,415 (92%) were eventually resettled (see Bilinsky, 1964:59). These were primarily ethnic Poles, urban dwellers from several important historical centers of Polish settlement and activity in East Galicia, notably L'viv, Ternopil', Stanyslaviv (later Ivano-Frankivs'k) and Drohobych as well as Rivne in Volhynia.

Responding to the resettlement campaign, the anti-communist Polish underground, *Armija Krajowa* (Home Army), appealed to the indigenous Polish population in Ukraine to reject the offer and resist if possible. The reaction was mixed. The historical connection to the region made the decision to resettle a difficult proposition, but the repressive nature of the Soviet regime and at times brutal ethnic conflict between Poles and Ukrainians during the war convinced many of the necessity to leave and to see in this an opportunity finally to quit the U.S.S.R. However reluctantly, a majority would accept the offer and migrate. The resistance that did materialize was sporadic and largely localized, with some 5,616 farms being destroyed either at the hands of their respective owners or as a result of local skirmishes with security troops (Shchyrba, 1975:168), the operation being conducted under the administrative authority of the internal security arm of the U.S.S.R., the Ministry of Interior (*Ministerstwo Wnucennyykh Del* or MVD).

Parallel developments took place simultaneously in Poland. Between October 1944 and September 1946, 497,682 Ukrainians were registered for patriation. Of this number, 482,880 individuals or 97 percent were eventually relocated to the Ukrainian Republic, settling primarily in the Ternopil', Ivano-Frankivs'k, and L'viv oblasts, in the southern and south-central oblasts of Mykolaiv and Dnipropetrovs'k, and to a lesser extent in the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine. Population losses (Map 2) were heaviest in the border counties of Hrubieszów – 68,658, Przemyśl – 64,831, and Sanok – 60,878, followed secondarily by the counties of Lubaczów – 43,172, Tomaszów – 40,742, Lesko – 39,505, Jarosław – 36,666, and Chełm – 33,195. Even areas with but a few Ukrainian inhabitants were also affected, such as the counties of Lubartów – 811 and Radzyń – 274 (Evseev, 1962:124–125).

Officially, Ukrainian resettlement from Poland commenced November 15, 1944, but efforts at repatriation had begun a week prior to the agreement coming into effect. Indeed, by the official start of the campaign, the process was already well underway with 3,500 having been resettled; the plan called for the transfer of the entire population by December 31, 1945. During the campaign, all eligible individuals were required to register with local district commissions administered from the key centers of Jarosław, Gorlice, Krasnystaw, Chełm, Lublin, Biłgoraj, Jasło, Zamość, and Nowy Sącz (Hvat',

Map 2
UKRAINIAN POPULATION TRANSFER TO USSR
TRANS-CURZON TERRITORY, 1944-1946



1988:243). The commissions were staffed with both Soviet and Polish personnel whose primary function was registration, but who were also charged with the task of coordinating and facilitating the transport and relocation of families as well as conducting propaganda work among the target population. Initially, some successes were had, especially in the counties of Jasło, Gorlice, and Krosno where wartime devastation made the offer of relocation attractive. By August 1, 1945, there were no further applications for resettlement (Kwilecki, 1967:279). As a result, the operation of relocating the population entered into a new phase, the push to resettle beginning in earnest with the summer of 1945 (Table 1).

TABLE 1
POPULATION TRANSFER AND RESETTLEMENT,
TRANS-CURZON TERRITORIES: 1944-1949

	Time Period	U.S.S.R.	Poland (<i>Ziemie Odzyskane</i>)	Total
1944 Polish-Soviet Agreement	15. I-14. XI 1944	3,505		222,509
	15. XI-1. I 1945	36,341		81,323
	2. I-1. III 1945	41,477		39,846
	2. III-15.VIII 1945	141,186		3,505
	16.VIII-1.IV 1946	122,524		345,033
	2. IV-1. IX 1946	137,629		482,662
	2. IX-1. XI 1946	5,950		488,612
Operation Wisła	29.IV-31.VII 1947		139,467	628,097
Postoperation Resettlement	VIII 1947-XII 1949		2,695	630,774
Total		488,612	142,162	630,774

Source: Szczęśniak and Szota, 1973; Hvat', 1988; Misilo, 1993.

To achieve the political objective of resettling the ethnic Ukrainian population from Poland, the relatively passive character of the policy was abandoned in favor of more aggressive means. In this regard, special Polish and Soviet security forces – the *Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego* (KBW) and MVD respectively – were engaged to play a more active role. Mass arrests of local elites as well as various other coercive measures were applied to pressure families and individuals to register and relocate. As force became routine, the voluntary became compulsory. Families and entire communities, under considerable duress, were compelled to embark on transports bound for the Soviet Union. Within the course of a single year (July 1945 – July 1946), some 400,000 were uprooted and deported. The operation tapered off only in September of 1946 (see Table 1) when, for all intents and purposes, the population base that was the foundation of a territorially compact ethnic Ukrainian community in Poland was destroyed.

Popular resistance to the expulsions was widespread, providing ready recruits for the organized Ukrainian nationalist insurgency, *Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armia* (UPA) which had been operating in the area since 1943 against both German occupation and Soviet power (see Szczęśniak and Szota,

1973:255–258). To combat the insurgency, regular units of the Polish military were formally brought into active service against the UPA in September 1945 and deployed alongside detachments of the civilian militia – the *Milicja Obywatelska* (MO) – as well as the security units of the KPW and Soviet MVD. Although the insurgents proved both stubborn and resourceful against the combined Polish and Soviet efforts to extirpate them from the countryside, this only served to accelerate and intensify the process of resettlement as a means of undermining their resistance (Szczęśniak and Szota, 1973). This escalation led invariably to a substantial increase in the tempo of violence, the effect of which was to deepen the conflict and create a climate where a more drastic solution to the crisis could not be ruled out. When the legendary Polish military figure and deputy defense minister General Karol Świerczewski was ambushed by UPA on March 28, 1947, the necessary pretext for a final and more decisive action was provided: the displacement of the entire ethnic Ukrainian population west of the Curzon Line.

OPERATION WISŁA

Conducted as a military operation, the action was assigned the code name “Wisła.” In this, the cooperation of the three regional powers – Poland, the U.S.S.R., and Czechoslovakia – was required with both regular infantry and internal security formations pressed into service for the dual task of crushing the resistance and relocating the entire remaining population. Polish forces – totaling some 18,000 – included an air squadron, six regular infantry divisions, a special security division of the KBW (consisting of three brigades of infantry), and auxiliary units from the MO and border patrols (Miśko, 1993:27). In Czechoslovakia, the 7th Army was deployed along the frontier, primarily to cut off population flight across the Carpathians and to capture UPA raiding units, while an indeterminate but large number of Soviet MVD and border patrols were also involved in the action.

The military operation was carried out between April 29 and July 31, 1947. In a number of planned phases, villages throughout the Trans-Curzon territories were systematically encircled and the population in each given but a few hours to prepare for departure (Miśko, 1993; Jaworsky, 1988; Truhan, 1990). The inhabitants were herded together and force-marched to gathering stations and rail terminals such as at Zagórz, Komańcza, Szczawne-Kulaszne, Chotyłów, Bełzec, Przeworsk, and Chełm, where they were transported on boxcars and convoys to processing centers in Warsaw, Lublin and Oświęcim (Auschwitz), among others. A population of 139,467 was deported in the two-month period (Map 3) and dispersed primarily throughout the newly acquired German territories – the so-called “regained territories” (*Ziemie Odzyskane*) – of East Prussia (Olsztyn) and along the Polish-German frontier (Szczecin and Koszalin). A significant number of individuals were also relocated to the voivodeship (*województwo*) of Wrocław (15,491).

Map 3
OPERATION 'WISLA'
April - July, 1947
Pattern of Resettlement from
Trans-Carpath Territory

The Olsztyn voivodeship or province received the majority of deportees, serving as the final destination for 40.6 percent (or 56,625) of the total deported during the military action. The voivodeship of Koszalin followed with 22.4 percent (*see* Map 3). By and large, however, Ukrainians were not allowed to concentrate. The result was that, in terms of geographic distribution, small groups of uprooted Ukrainians could be found in any one county within the nine provinces targeted to receive the deportees. Ultimately, Ukrainians were resettled across 70 counties and, of these, only 24 became the destination for 2,000 individuals or more (*see* Table 2). The county of Giżycko in the province of Olsztyn would receive the largest share, absorbing 11,462 of the new arrivals, but still only accounting for 8.2 percent of the total number deported during the military action (Table 2). Of the 70 counties, 56 would each receive a fraction of 2 percent or less of the total number expelled. The rationale behind the variegated distribution pattern was that the widest possible dispersal would lead to their assimilation. To facilitate the process, deportees were selectively mixed by county for resettlement in the receiving provinces (Map 3). The large numbers expelled from the areas of Sanok (28,133), Lesko (19,610) and Przeworsk (17,882) meant, however, that individuals from these counties would still be disproportionately represented in the receiving areas.

TABLE 2
COUNTIES RECEIVING IN EXCESS OF 2,000 DEPORTEES
BY RANK ORDER, PROVINCE, AND AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DEPORTEES*

<i>Powiat/County</i>	No. of Deportees	<i>Województwo/Province</i>	Total Deportees (%)
Giżycko	11,462	Olsztyn	8.2
Koszalin	7,006	Koszalin	5.0
Działdowo	6,624	Olsztyn	4.7
Pasiek	6,256	Olsztyn	4.5
Braniewo	6,240	Olsztyn	4.5
Morąg	5,397	Olsztyn	3.9
Człuchów	5,175	Koszalin	3.7
Kętrzyn	5,056	Olsztyn	3.6
Stargrad	4,934	Szczecin	3.5
Bartoszyce	4,347	Olsztyn	3.1
Szczecinek	3,551	Koszalin	2.5
Susz	3,202	Olsztyn	2.3
Wolow	2,887	Wrocław	2.1
Reszel	2,856	Olsztyn	2.0
Walcz	2,734	Koszalin	2.0
Kołobrzeg	2,547	Koszalin	1.8
Miastko	2,520	Koszalin	1.8
Sławno	2,321	Koszalin	1.6
Lobez	2,255	Szczecin	1.6
Sulęcín	2,219	Zielonogórski	1.6
Legnica	2,149	Wrocław	1.5
Ostróda	2,111	Olsztyn	1.5
Choszczno	2,059	Szczecin	1.5
Oleśnica	2,012	Wrocław	1.4

Source: Miśko, 1993.

*The total number of deportees during Operation Wisła was 139,467.

At a policy level, no effort was made during Operation Wisła to distinguish between supporters of the regime, neutrals, and sympathizers of the Ukrainian partisan movement. The military action was to apply equally to all those of non-Polish origin, irrespective of political allegiances, highlighting the doctrine of collective responsibility. Appeals from activists, old communists, and veterans of the antifascist struggle, requesting that they be allowed to remain on their ancestral lands, were ignored (Truhan, 1990:22), while those suspected of aiding or abetting the armed resistance were arrested and sent to the Jaworzno concentration camp. In excess of 3,800 were interned at the camp and, although the majority were released after 6–12 months, an estimated 15 percent of the inmates are thought to have perished there (Truhan, 1990:26).

In the end, the outcome of the military action was decisive. Of the nearly 1,800 armed combatants and 740 civilian operatives who were still active in the Trans-Curzon territories at the time of Operation Wisła, the Ukrainian resistance would lose nearly half of its personnel: 543 were killed in action and 792 captured, of which 173 were summarily executed (Misiło, 1993:460). But the determining factor was the expulsion of the entire ethnic Ukrainian population from the region, which made further armed struggle untenable. It was within this context that the remaining UPA units abandoned the Trans-Curzon lands, either breaking through to the west or crossing the Soviet frontier to continue operations in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Significantly, by defeating the insurgency, Operation Wisła would also more fundamentally resolve the difficult question of Poland's ethnic and territorial integrity. In the process of cleansing the area of its Ukrainian ethnic minority as a means of eliminating the armed resistance, an undisputed border identifying the political geography of the postwar Polish state was finally and clearly demarcated.

Although Operation Wisła was conclusive in that it met the primary military and political objectives, individual families continued to be forced from their homes in the border counties. From August 1947 through to December 1949, an additional 2,695 individuals were relocated to Poland's northwest, mostly from mixed Ukrainian/Polish families considered politically unreliable. With these expulsions, the drama of resettlement came to a close: 630,774 ethnic Ukrainians being the final number relocated from the Trans-Curzon territories during the years 1944–1949, of which 77 percent were sent to the Soviet Union as part of the original Polish-Soviet population exchange agreement and the remaining 23 percent being those expelled during the course of Operation Wisła and its aftermath (*see* Table 1).

As a consequence of the resettlement process, the border counties became virtually barren of population. It was left to the postwar regime to take steps to consolidate political authority over the territory by encouraging ethnic

Polish migration to the region. However, the still fresh memories of the struggle which had exacted 3,685 Polish lives, including several hundred civilians (Szczęśniak and Szota, 1973:422–423), made recruitment to the area difficult. Polish authorities consequently would have to look elsewhere for new settlers, primarily to the some 14,392 Polish families, uprooted from the U.S.S.R., who would eventually assume the still-standing homes of the former Ukrainian inhabitants of the region.

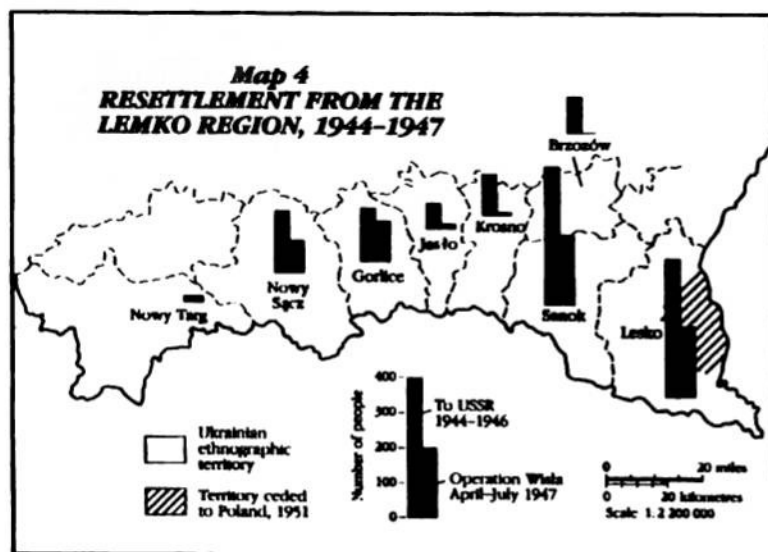
LEMKO REGION

The terms of the Polish-Soviet concord on population exchange identified those to be resettled to the Soviet Union from the Trans-Curzon territories as Ukrainians and/or Ruthenians. Faced with the prospect of deportation, the highlanders of the Subcarpathian region, known as Lemkos, argued that on the basis of ethnic origin the agreement did not apply to them (Truhan, 1990:17). It was not a convincing argument. As elsewhere in the Trans-Curzon territories, the push was on to repatriate all non-ethnic Poles.

Although there had been some voluntary migration among the Lemkos in the Krosno and Gorlice counties, the general disposition of the local population was overwhelmingly negative – a not unexpected development for a people whose customs and traditions were closely linked to the highland geography. Moreover, information regarding conditions in Soviet Ukraine had circulated widely in the region, the source of which were those Lemkos who, as part of an earlier 1940 German-Soviet population exchange, had experienced Soviet rule first hand and returned disillusioned to their mountain homes during the war. Consequently, private as well as community initiatives were undertaken to convince Polish authorities of their civic loyalty, including formal acceptance of the Latin rite by some 5,000 Uniate Lemkos of the county of Nowy Sącz who had hoped through this symbolic gesture to avoid the deportations (Kwilecki, 1974:94, 1967:280). Individual exceptions were made, but the terms of the Polish-Soviet agreement were explicit. Indeed, given the Soviet postwar preoccupation with finally gathering all the East Slav peoples under Soviet rule, no general allowance could be made. The decision to force the deportations of the Lemkos had a resonating effect, lending credence to the activity of UPA as well as to the Ukrainophile tendency in the region generally. It also bolstered the armed insurgency and the civilian underground network with willing recruits especially in the eastern reaches of Lemko territory – the counties of Lesko and Sanok (Golash, 1988; Potichnyj, 1996).

The UPA in the Trans-Curzon was organized into a hierarchy of military and tactical districts as well as tactical sectors. The Trans-Curzon territory, or the "Sian" military district as it was called, was divided into three tactical dis-

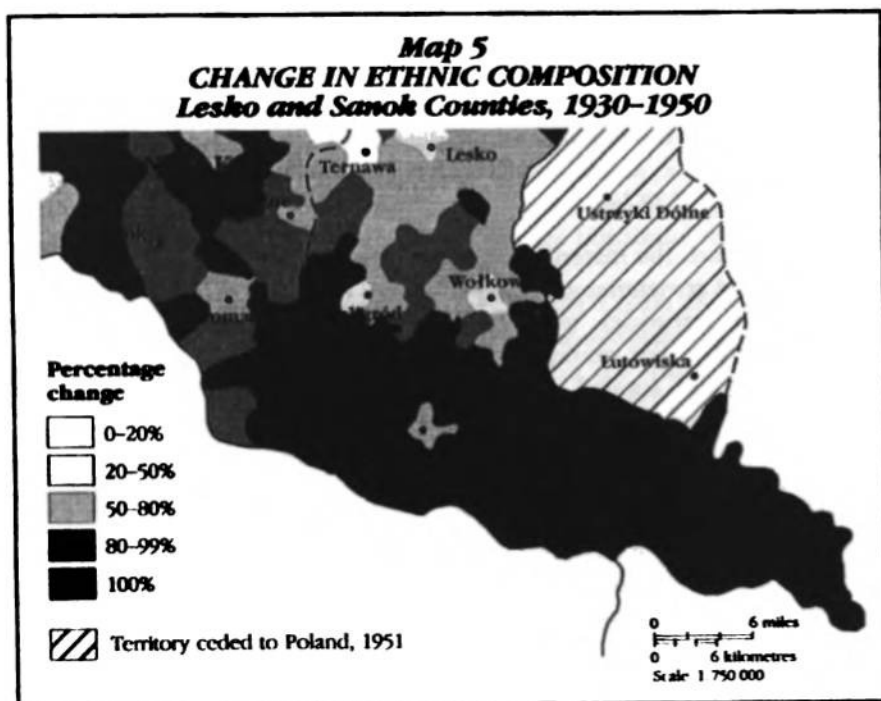
tricts coinciding roughly with the Chelm, Jarosław and Lemko regions. The Lemko tactical district (identified by the code name "Beskyd") was comprised of eight tactical sectors; the majority (six) being located in the administrative counties of Lesko and Sanok where the local Lemko population was both more concentrated and organized and the UPA was particularly active, especially after October 1945 when the official drive to resettle began with resolve. The UPA in the Lemko region, as elsewhere in the Trans-Curzon, primarily fought a rearguard action, attempting to disrupt the work of the resettlement commissions while engaging security patrols and garrisoned troops. The intent was to prolong the struggle, at least until the East-West conflict erupted into a new war, which, they believed, would offer the promise of liberation (Potichnyj, 1987). The outcome, however, was a foregone conclusion. Between October 1944 and September 1946, the Lemko region, like much of the Trans-Curzon territory, was stripped of its indigenous population, with a total of 145,533 relocated to the U.S.S.R. The Sanok and Lesko counties alone accounted for 81,305 of those resettled, while the remaining 64,228 individuals were inhabitants of the six counties of Krosno, Brzozów, Jasło, Gorlice, Nowy Sącz, and Nowy Targ (Map 4).



Despite the organized and systematic nature of the expulsions carried out in the Lemko region during the years 1944-1946, significant numbers of Lemko Ukrainians managed to evade the initial efforts at resettlement by retreating to the forests, returning to their homes when the opportunity pre-

sented itself. However, the character of Operation Wisła, with its substantial resources, made retreat or escape no longer possible. Consequently, a total of 71,000 inhabitants, or virtually the entire non-Polish population, were forcibly expelled during the military operation from the Lemko region. These were largely dispersed throughout the former German territories in Poland's north and northwest, although in the case of the Nowy Sącz and Gorlice counties a large number (9,529) were also sent to the Wrocław voivodeship (Map 4). The majority of the deportees originated from the Sanok and Lesko counties – 28,133 and 19,610, respectively – and secondarily from Gorlice (11,518) and Nowy Sącz (9,251). Resettlement efforts in the Sanok and Lesko counties remained consistently high during both the 1944–1946 expulsions and Operation Wisła because resistance was especially entrenched in this area and civilian support needed to be broken as a means of defeating the insurgents locally.

Although interethnic conflict had resulted in certain population losses for the local Polish inhabitants in the Lemko region, Polish settlements remained relatively unaffected. Based on the 1930 and 1950 censuses, Maryański's comparative study (1961) on the relative disposition of the ethnic Ukrainian and Polish settlements would show a marked shift in ethnic population densities throughout the Lemko territory with few exceptions. An 80–100 per-



cent change, for example, occurred in the ethnic composition of the population for much of the Lesko and Sanok counties where Ukrainians predominated (Map 5). Lesko, Baligród, Wołkowyja, and Cisna – centers of mixed ethnic composition but with significant numbers of Polish inhabitants – witnessed only a 20–50 percent change, primarily the result of the cleansing of their Lemko Ukrainian minority. In contrast, the Polish enclave that encompassed the village of Ternawa and nearby Zagórz would remain relatively intact.

As with much of the Trans-Curzon territory, new settlers were actively encouraged to migrate to the region to bolster the remaining Polish community (Biernacka, 1974). Notwithstanding state assistance and the promise of land, migration to the area was weak. The primary source for new settlers, therefore, in the immediate postwar period would be ethnic Poles expelled from the Soviet Union and, interestingly, several hundred Greek families, political refugees who had fled Greece in 1948 after pro-communist forces were effectively defeated there during the 1946–1949 civil conflict (Biernacka, 1973).

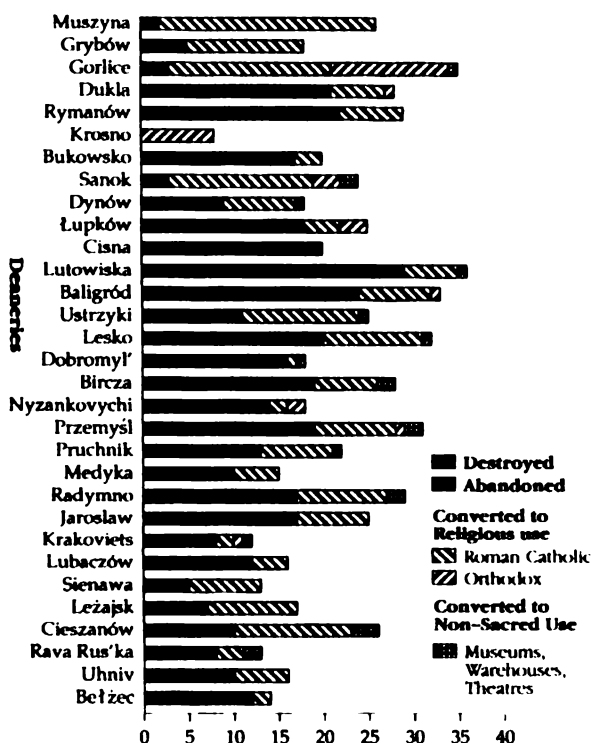
In keeping with the political thaw that swept throughout the region following Khrushchev's revelations of Stalin's crimes at the twentieth Congress of the CPSU, the Polish United Worker's Party in 1956 would eventually condemn Operation Wisła, acknowledging that Polish authorities had erred in assigning collective responsibility to the Lemkos for the activity of UPA. Little effort, however, was made to redress or reverse the consequences of the policy. Of the 10,000 Lemkos who had expressed a desire to return to their ancestral lands, only 4,000, whose homesteads were not occupied by Polish settlers were permitted to do so. All others were prohibited from returning, ostensibly to avoid a renewal of ethnic conflict in the region (Sław, 1958:57).

MATERIAL CULTURE

For the most part, the material symbols of Ukrainian ethnic settlement such as churches and cemeteries were also destroyed or altered during and after the Trans-Curzon territories were cleansed of their Ukrainian inhabitants (Iwanusiw, 1987). For example, of the 690 Eastern Rite Uniate or Greco Catholic churches located within the autochthonous Lemko Apostolic Administration and the joined Eparchies of Przemyśl, Sambir, and Sanok – churches whose distinctive architectural forms represented a visual challenge and symbolic reminder of the cultural legacy of the indigenous population – 351 were destroyed (*see* Figure 1), notably in the Sanok and Lesko counties where resistance was unyielding and entire villages razed. Another 243 came under the jurisdiction of the local Roman Catholic ordinaries when transferred for use to the local Polish population after the Uniate Church ceased

Figure 1.

POST - 1945 STATUS OF THE UNIATE OR GRECO-CATHOLIC CHURCH
Lemko Apostolic Administration
and the Eparchies of Przemyśl, Sambir and Sanok



to exist both *de jure* in 1946 with its liquidation and *de facto* after the deportations. Seventy-one of the churches were abandoned and remained in various states of disrepair or were turned over for nonsacred use (warehouses, museums, theaters).

In the Lemko region, the appropriation of the Uniate churches and their conversion to Polish use occurred mostly on the periphery of those counties – Nowy Sącz, Gorlice, Krosno, Brzozów – where the ethnic Ukrainian population was relatively less established numerically and Polish settlement and territorial reclamation proved less problematic. The destruction of the sacred material culture of these local mountain peoples, however, was not an end in itself but rather symptomatic of the larger process which aimed at securing the frontiers while dealing with the problem of ethnic heterogeneity, long viewed as a source of Poland's domestic political troubles during the interwar years.

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