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**“To Resolve the Ukrainian Question Once and For All”:  
The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland,  
1943-1947**

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AK</b>	Armia Krajowa (Polish Home Army)
<b>NKVD</b>	Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnuntrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)
<b>OUN</b>	Orhanizatsiia Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists)
<b>UB</b>	Urzad Bezpieczenstwa (security police)
<b>UNDO</b>	Ukrains'ke Natsional'ne Demokratychnе Ob'iednannia (Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance)
<b>UPA</b>	Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia (Ukrainian Insurgency Army)

**“To Resolve the Ukrainian Question Once and For All”:  
The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943-1947**

Timothy Snyder <sup>[1]</sup>

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 the moment when several of Europe's nations were subjected to deportations.<sup>[2]</sup> 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 propaganda 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 mutual claims, and creates the conditions for a convenient dispute in which each side can present itself as innocent defenders 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 Volhynia in the 1940s. It is indisputable that (aside and apart from the Holocaust and casualties of the Second World War) about 50,000-100,000 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 the result of efforts by 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 of both Poles and 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 see the importance of this, it is sufficient to compare the peace between Poland and Ukraine to national conflict 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 Volhynia in 1939 and 1945 was legitimate. Both Ukrainians and Poles assert that the other side cooperated with organs of power of the Nazi and Soviet occupiers in Galicia and Volhynia during and after the Second World War. Both Ukrainians and Poles believe that the other side's partisans killed their civilians. Both Ukrainians and Poles 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, since one accusation is usually met with another, logically speaking 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 Volhynia 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 Volhynia drawn therefrom stand behind varying Polish and Ukrainian selection and interpretation of events. By "Eastern Galicia and Volhynia" I mean the interwar Polish wojewódstwa of Lwów, Stanisławów, and Tarnopol, and Wolyn, which (with the exception of the far west of Lwów wojewódstwo) were incorporated into Soviet Ukraine in 1945, and which now constitute the L'viv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil', Volhynia and Rivne oblasti of independent Ukraine. For Poles today, Eastern Galicia and Volhynia 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 with both ethnic and civic forms of nationalism: one can see the Ukrainian minority as demographic material to be ethnically assimilated, or as citizens of another nationality to be included within the polity. For Ukrainians today, Eastern Galicia and Volhynia 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.<sup>[3]</sup> This majoritarian-ethnographic idea of legitimacy also embraces both ethnic and civic forms of nationalism: one can see Volhynia and Eastern Galicia as Ukrainian because they are inhabited by the "Ukrainian nation," because a majority of the individuals living there would have preferred if asked to live in a Ukrainian state.<sup>[4]</sup>

This disagreement about legitimacy is present in Poles and Ukrainians in the 1940s, when it conditioned actions; as well as at the present time, when it conditions interpretations of past actions. For both political activists at the time and 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 Volhynia (1939-1941), the German occupation of Ukraine (1941-1943), and the second Soviet occupation (1944) activated Polish-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 Volhynia will be

treated in the next section, and will have consequences for the argument in general, but ten factors relating to the experience of the war and its later interpretation must be signaled 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.<sup>[5]</sup> Likewise, the German invasion of 1941 seemed to offer Ukrainian nationalists grouped within the OUN (Orhanizatsiia Ukrains'kykh 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 Polish elites to Siberia and Kazakhstan. This left Polish society a more tempting target for Ukrainian nationalists (1943). The German occupation of Eastern Galicia and Volhynia (1941-1944) offered Ukrainians a chance to persecute Poles as officers of the state (1941-1942), and then later 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 the protection of communities against partisans. However, it was still perceived by both sides as intolerable and inexplicable when pursued by the other group, though 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 Volhynia. This is 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 (Ukrains'ke Natsional'ne Demokratychnе Ob'iednannia, 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 (Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia, Ukrainian Insurgency Army, known as the UPA). In Eastern Galicia and Volhynia during the war, the Polish government (in exile in London) was represented in practice by its Home Army (Armia Krajowa, or Home Army, known as the AK). Seventh, the fog of war denied Poles and Ukrainians who might have 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.<sup>[6]</sup> The OUN was committed to ethnic homogeneity by its own program, but its program gained supporters and coherence in times of war.<sup>[7]</sup> It would be too much to say that its policy of eliminating the Polish presence in Eastern Galicia and Volhynia (1943-44) 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 west 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 its Ukrainians could be fought by soldiers from Volhynia (1945-1946), and its policy of eliminating the Ukrainian presence in Poland (1947) could enjoy popular support.

These ten factors are not sufficient conditions for the events that are used as their illustrations, and this list is not meant 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 1944-47 is its major concern, but in order to create the appropriate context it begins with the cleansing of Poles from western Ukraine in 1943.

#### *One: Ukrainian Partisans Murder Polish Civilians (1943-1944)*

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, as amended in September 1939, brought 85% 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 Ukrainians 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 Khmel'nyts'kyi rebelled in the seventeenth century, the Polish aristocracy that kept political power in Eastern Galicia (under Austrian rule) and economic power in Volhynia (under Russian rule) in the nineteenth century, or the interwar Second Republic which denied the national aspirations of its Ukrainian minority.<sup>[8]</sup> Brutal as it was, the Soviet occupation of Eastern Galicia and Volhynia (1939-1941) seemed at first to offer opportunities to Ukrainian nationalism. The Soviets sent about 200,000 Poles to Siberia, and encouraged revenge against Polish landholders and state officials. Between 1939-1941 tens of thousands of Poles actually fled Soviet West Ukraine for the Nazi General-Government.<sup>[9]</sup> From the point of view of west Ukrainian nationalists, with their program of Ukraine for the Ukrainians, this was a positive step.

Then Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union (1941), 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 the 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 Government and the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, and by the German choice to exploit Ukraine for its resources and Ukrainians as forced labor. Treating the Germans as occupier rather than ally 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).<sup>[10]</sup> 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 every occupier: 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 Volhynia and Eastern Galicia. Most UPA soldiers and nearly all of its 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.<sup>[11]</sup> While the UPA (and west Ukrainians generally) now regarded the interwar Polish state as defunct, Poles in Eastern Galicia and Volhynia took a completely different view. Poles wished to restore their state, and did not believe that German or Soviet aggression justified a change in its eastern frontiers.<sup>[12]</sup> UPA leaders apparently believed 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. On this view, Ukrainians had to strike during the war, before a revived Poland could direct forces and settlers from central Poland.<sup>[13]</sup> The temptation for such a preemptive action was heightened by expectations of a Polish offensive.

As Ukrainians knew or suspected, the Polish government-in-exile and underground considered this chain of events most likely and planned just such an offensive.<sup>[14]</sup> 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 rising against German power would involve a war against Ukrainians for Eastern Galicia and probably Volhynia as well, to be prosecuted if possible as a quick "armed occupation."<sup>[15]</sup> The AK's plans for a rising, as formulated in 1942, anticipated a war with Ukrainians for the ethnographically Ukrainian territories that fell within Poland's prewar boundaries.<sup>[16]</sup> By 1942 the formation of sizable Polish partisan units in 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;<sup>[17]</sup> and as defenders of the pre-war frontiers of Poland, AK leaders had nothing to offer Ukrainians.<sup>[18]</sup> 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 prewar borders.<sup>[19]</sup> 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 of confusion and frustration, and the first reaction of the AK was to attempt to cooperate with Ukrainian nationalists to prevent anarchy.<sup>[20]</sup> The crucial matter, though, is the basic disagreement between Ukrainians and Poles over the legitimate rule of particular territories, sharpened by 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, conceived in ethnic terms, occasion mass murder?<sup>[21]</sup> 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, less frequent in Volhynia and in villages, but present everywhere. In the lands of Volhynia and Eastern Galicia under Polish rule, Poles totaled something over two million in 1939, down to perhaps 1.6 million in 1943.<sup>[22]</sup> In the minds of many patriotic West 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.<sup>[23]</sup> 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; and 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 Volhynian forests in March 1943. Having left German service, Ukrainian partisans threatened to liquidate Polish villages if Poles took their place,<sup>[24]</sup> and eliminated entire villages in April 1943 on grounds of Polish collaboration.<sup>[25]</sup> (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.) Ukrainian nationalist collaboration continued in some forms. While Ukrainian nationalists in Volhynia 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 exclude its sincerity. 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.<sup>[26]</sup> This double standard derived from a basic sense of entitlement to Eastern Galicia and Volhynia, 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 Volhynia, 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.<sup>[27]</sup> 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-starved) Ukrainian peasants in Volhynia.<sup>[28]</sup> 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 instead.<sup>[29]</sup> UPA partisans and Ukrainian peasants nevertheless killed 40,000 Polish civilians in Volhynia in spring and summer 1943.<sup>[30]</sup> On a single day, 11 July 1943, the UPA attacked 167 localities and killed about 10,000 Poles. Ukrainian partisans burned homes, shot or forced back



inside those who tried to flee, and used sickles and pitchforks to kill those they captured outside. In some cases, beheaded, crucified, dismembered, or disemboweled bodies were displayed, in order to encourage remaining Poles to flee. <sup>[31]</sup>

Thousands of Polish men and women escaped to Volhynian marshes and forests in 1943, joining Soviet partisan armies fighting the UPA and the Wehrmacht. <sup>[32]</sup> On the other hand, some Poles took their revenge on Ukrainians as German policemen. The majority of Poles who survived simply fled west, bringing news of the slaughter to Chelm, L'viv, and Przemysl. 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. <sup>[33]</sup> UPA attacks on civilians in winter 1943-44 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 reconfirm the Polish presence in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia. In January 1944 the AK formed the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of Volhynia, 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. <sup>[34]</sup>

Throughout spring 1944, the AK and UPA fought fitful engagements for Eastern Galicia, and its crown jewel L'viv. The UPA attacked Polish civilians, but Polish preparations and Ukrainian warnings limited the deaths to perhaps 5,000-10,000. <sup>[35]</sup> In July 1944, the Red Army (aided by the AK) drove the Germans from L'viv. AK units were then dissolved under pressure from the Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnuntrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for International Affairs, NKVD) and Red Army. Ukrainian partisans had already escaped to the mountains, where they would begin a desperate struggle against Soviet rule. <sup>[36]</sup> From mid-1944, the main enemy of the OUN and the UPA was not the Poles but the Soviets. The Soviet occupation of Volhynia 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 L'viv for Poland; the UPA was wrong to think that Polish civilians stood in the way of L'viv'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 did moot the Polish-Ukrainian struggle for territory. <sup>[37]</sup>

### *Two: Soviet and Polish Communist Regimes Deport Poles and Ukrainians (1944-1946)*

The Soviet-sponsored "Polish Committee of National Liberation" was installed in Lublin that same month, 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. <sup>[38]</sup> However, there was a Polish tradition 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 from Poland. <sup>[39]</sup> 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 San and Bug rivers. This would have meant expelling about five million Ukrainians east of Poland's pre-war borders, beyond the Zbruch river, and taking ethnic Poles in return from the Soviet Union or an independent Ukraine.<sup>[40]</sup> In some versions of this idea, Ukrainians who managed to escape deportation could be dispersed throughout the country.<sup>[41]</sup> As early as 1943-44, Polish communists eerily dropped language about the rights of minorities from their programmatic documents.<sup>[42]</sup>

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 given voice even in the worst hours of the war. However, in summer 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 of 27 July 1944 shifted the Soviet border to the east (once again, as in 1939) thereby removing 85% of Ukrainians from Poland, leaving only about 700,000. Most of interwar Poland's prewar Ukrainian minority thus left Poland without physically moving at all.<sup>[43]</sup>

Within the borders envisioned by the Soviet-Polish agreement, Ukrainians constituted only about 3% of the Polish population. The Soviet policy, articulated a few weeks later, was their removal. The agreement on "evacuation" signed on 9 September 1944 by Nikita Khrushchev, as People's Commissar for Ukraine, and Edward Osóbka-Morawski, head of the "Polish Committee of National Liberation" installed in Lublin, 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.<sup>[44]</sup> 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.<sup>[45]</sup> Roughly 250,000 had already fled Volhynia to escape the UPA, and about 788,000 preferred "repatriation" to life in a Ukrainian Soviet Republic.<sup>[46]</sup> In general they were not forcibly deported, but they were effectively coerced by the prospect of Stalinist rule and the memory of Ukrainian nationalism.

The Soviet-Polish "evacuations" faced 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 "Zakerzons'kyi krai"). 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.<sup>[47]</sup> 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 land, and saw their schools closed.<sup>[48]</sup> Orders went out to arrest all young men who had not registered for repatriation.<sup>[49]</sup> 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.<sup>[50]</sup> UPA forces and spontaneous Ukrainian self-defense groups replied by destroying Polish communities.<sup>[51]</sup>

Afterwards, Polish communist propaganda tended to conflate the cleansing of Volhynia in 1943 with the battles in southeastern Poland of 1945, so as not to remind Poles of eastern lands lost to the Soviet Union.<sup>[52]</sup> The differences are important. Volhynia in 1943 was the center of UPA operations. In 1945 in Poland, UPA units probably never numbered more than 2,000 troops (along with perhaps 3,000 OUN members).<sup>[53]</sup> True, Ukrainians were a demographic majority in many areas of the border strip running from Chelm almost to Kraków, 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 Wewnętrznego), and by July had begun to control its borders (recognized by the Allies at Yalta that month). In Volhynia 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 spring 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 soldiers returning from the German front to enter the village of Wierzchowiny, then killed 197 civilians.<sup>[54]</sup> A local official charged with organizing the expulsions from the Przemyśl 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."<sup>[55]</sup> 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 "Zakerzons'kyi krai" as part of western Ukraine, and "repatriation" as a device to exterminate Ukrainians in Soviet camps and thereby destroy the Ukrainian nation.<sup>[56]</sup> 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.<sup>[57]</sup> 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.<sup>[58]</sup>

During the first half of 1945, Ukrainians and Poles in southeastern Poland still had some margin of maneuver. The consolidation of 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 spring 1945, which reduced attacks on civilians.<sup>[59]</sup> Also by spring 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 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 (panstwo narodowe), and not a state of nationalities (panstwo narodowosciowe). 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 Lublin), "If Poland is to be a national state, there is no alternative to resettling Ukrainians to Ukraine."<sup>[60]</sup>

In late summer 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 3 September 1945 Polish authorities ordered three infantry divisions to forcibly resettle remaining Ukrainians to the Soviet Union.<sup>[61]</sup> These forces were already in the area, tasked since May 1945 to destroy the UPA.<sup>[62]</sup> 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 Volhynia, 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 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.<sup>[63]</sup> 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 "Rzeszów," tasked to complete the expulsion of Ukrainians from Poland. Villages that had earlier resisted expulsion were now violently pacified. Hurried to make 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.

### *Three: The Polish Communist Regime Disperses Ukrainians: Plans (1947)*

After Operation "Rzeszów," 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."<sup>[64]</sup> Since the Soviet Union 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 Recovered Territories" of northern and western Poland.<sup>[65]</sup> Proposals along these lines were considered by the politburo in March 1947. After Deputy Defense Minister Karol Swierczewski was assassinated on 28 March (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."<sup>[66]</sup> Swierczewski'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 Wacław Kossowski, a Red Army officer and Soviet plant in the Polish general staff, was sent to investigate Swierczewski's assassination on the very day it happened, 28 March. Kossowski concluded that the identity of the assailants was impossible to determine, but nevertheless provided a rather definitive policy recommendation on 11 April: "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 of the Ukrainian population in the southeastern border region of Poland."<sup>[67]</sup> The very next day, 12 April, the State Security Commission (Panstwowa Komisja Bezpieczeństwa), the central organ charged with eliminating organized resistance to the communist regime, initiated just such a policy.<sup>[68]</sup> It approved a laconic report delivered by Stanisław 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 Michał Rola-Zymierski, another dependent of Stalin. Zymierski had served in Piłsudski's Legions and earned the rank of general in the interwar period, but had been dismissed on a corruption charge. He joined the Soviet-sponsored Polish Army during the war, and owed his advance to its head 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% of the Polish population).<sup>[69]</sup> 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.

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 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."<sup>[70]</sup> Defenders of what was christened



Operation "Wisla" sometimes contend that the second 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.<sup>[71]</sup> 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 arise again in Poland.

Operation "Wisla" 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.<sup>[72]</sup> 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.<sup>[73]</sup>

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 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 than Polish ones, and finally of Operation "Wisla" in summer 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 16 April 1947, began with the words: "To resolve the Ukrainian question in Poland once and for all."<sup>[74]</sup>

#### *Four: 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.)<sup>[75]</sup> The military operations against the UPA, and the army's role in resettlement, were apparently planned by two Soviet Poles:<sup>[76]</sup> Colonel Michal Chilinski, chief of staff of the operation, and Lieutenant Colonel Wacław Kossowski, the Red Army officer who had reported on the Swierczewski assassination, now detailed to head the staff's operations section.<sup>[77]</sup> "Wisla" joined five infantry divisions with some security forces (of the Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego) 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 Rzeszów 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."<sup>[78]</sup> 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.<sup>[79]</sup> 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 Rzeszów and issued orders for the next round of attacks.<sup>[80]</sup> Their communications were distinguished by quickly increasing knowledge, as well as a thorough familiarity with Soviet protocols of anti-partisan warfare.<sup>[81]</sup> 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.<sup>[82]</sup>

Meanwhile, the dispersion task proceeded smoothly, first in Rzeszów province, then in Lublin and Kraków provinces. Between 28 April and 28 August 1947 Operational Group "Wisla" moved some 140,000 Ukrainians from southeastern to northwestern Poland. "Wisla" 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.<sup>[83]</sup> 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 Lublin 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.<sup>[84]</sup>

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.<sup>[85]</sup> Most of these sentences were carried out the same day. Altogether, 3,936 Ukrainians, including 823 women and children, were taken to the Jaworzno 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.<sup>[86]</sup> Several Ukrainians died in Jaworzno, including two women by 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 1000-2000, 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 17 September 1947, when OUN commander Jaroslav Starukh perished in his bunker.<sup>[87]</sup> UPA commander Miroslav Onyshkevich then

released his soldiers from their oaths.<sup>[88]</sup> The Polish state had already criminalized the Uniate Church, and now set about redistributing the properties it took from resettled Ukrainians in the southeast. So ended one thousand years of continuous Ukrainian settlement, and so—after the Holocaust of the Jews, after the expulsion of the Germans, and given the passivity of remaining Belarusians—the Polish "national state."

*Five: 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."<sup>[89]</sup> He was right that Poland, like west Ukraine, was occupied by an aggressive foreign power, Nazi Germany. He was right that in Poland, as in west 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 Volhynia 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 Volhynia 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 "Wisla" was the single bloodiest action of the Polish communist regime, but this is not its first association in the minds of Poles. To this day, Polish memory links Operation "Wisla" to the slaughter in Volhynia, and to this day Polish public opinion fears Ukraine more than any other neighbor.<sup>[90]</sup>

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 "Wisla" 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.

<sup>[91]</sup> 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 since Stalin no longer wanted to take Ukrainians, and since 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 officer 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.<sup>[92]</sup>

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 winter 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, seems to have formulated plans to resolve the Ukrainian question.<sup>[93]</sup> 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 massive resettlement of Ukrainians, at the highest levels of authority confusion rather than desire for revenge was the dominant reaction.

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: "the activity of the authorities was in harmony with the attitude of the majority of Poles."<sup>[94]</sup> To repeat, this popular desire for revenge did not in fact bring about the dispersions, since 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.<sup>[95]</sup>

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.

*Six: 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 national historians. Yet even as disagreements remain about who owes whom an apology, and local conflicts over property lost after the Second World War continue, relations between the Polish and Ukrainian states are excellent.<sup>[96]</sup> 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.<sup>[97]</sup> The truth is probably the opposite: that improved political relations create the conditions for mutual discussion of diverging memories.<sup>[98]</sup> The priority given to politics over history in the 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 Volhynia 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 the Polish Solidarity and 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 Volhynians 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 to 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 who 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.

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<sup>[2]</sup> 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.



<sup>[13]</sup> 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 Volhynia, 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.

<sup>[14]</sup> The point is not that particular ideas of legitimacy inhere 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, west 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 the great powers of the day.

<sup>[15]</sup> Volodymyr Serhiichyk, *Etnichni Mezhi i Derzhavnyi Kordon Ukrainy*, Ternopil: Vydavnytsvo 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 polska politykę wschodnią," *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 October 1991, p. 9.

<sup>[16]</sup> It should be emphasized that the Ukrainian cause was desperate. The massive scale of west Ukrainian resistance to Soviet rule in particular is only now being appreciated. On Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnuntrennikh 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 correctives 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: Solidarnosc, 1990; Red Shadow: A Physician's Memoir of the Soviet Occupation of Eastern Poland, 1944-1956, Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 1997.

<sup>[17]</sup> "Vid Kongresu Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv," from the first (1929) congress of the OUN in Vienna, includes the contention that "Til'ky povne usunennia vsikh okupantiv z ukrains'kykh zemel' vidkrye mozhlivosti dlia shyrokoho rozvytu Ukrains'koi Natsii v mezhakh vlasnoi derzhavy." Reproduced in Petro Mirchuk, *Narys istorii orhanizatsii ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv*, Munich: Ukrains'ke Vydavnytstvo, 1968, p. 93.

<sup>[18]</sup> 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.

<sup>[19]</sup> 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.

<sup>[10]</sup> 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.

<sup>[11]</sup> See Alexander Motyl, "Ukrainian Nationalist Political Violence in Inter-War Poland, 1921-1939," *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 45-54.

<sup>[12]</sup> 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 Ugropowan Politycznych w Kraju Wobec Sprawy 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.

<sup>[13]</sup> 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,'" *Wież* 473 (March 1998), p. 110; Grzegorz Motyka and Rafał Wnuk, *Pani 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.

<sup>[14]</sup> 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.

<sup>[15]</sup> Meldunek 89, Radiogram No. M.89, L.dz. 78/42, "Meldunek specjalny—Sprawa Ukraińska," Rówecki 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.

<sup>[16]</sup> 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 Rowecki 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.

<sup>[17]</sup> "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.

<sup>[18]</sup> Michael MacQueen, "Notatki z Podziemia: The Polish Home 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*.

<sup>[19]</sup> Torzecki, "Kontakty polsko-ukraińskie," pp. 337-340.

<sup>[20]</sup> 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.

<sup>[21]</sup> 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.

<sup>[22]</sup> 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.

<sup>[23]</sup> For a similar analysis see Wołodymyr Chanas, "Problem genezy polskiej samoobrony w Galicji Wschodniej," *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vol. 3, pp. 90-91.

<sup>[24]</sup> "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.

<sup>[25]</sup> "In the village of Kutu, 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 Serhiichyk, *OUN-UPA v roky viiny: Novi dokumenty i materialy*, Kyiv: Dnipro, 1996, p. 311.

<sup>[26]</sup> Consider the judgement of the congress of the OUN, issued as the Polish presence was being eradicated from Volhynia: "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 sviylypostanov Velykykh Zboriv, Konferentsii ta inshykh dokumentiv z borotby 1929-1955 r.*, OUN, 1955, pp. 117-118.

<sup>[27]</sup> For corroborating evidence see Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust*, Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 1998, pp. 246-247.

<sup>[28]</sup> Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: Sprawa ukraińska w czasie II wojny światowej na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw: PWN, 1993, p. 238.

<sup>[29]</sup> Examples of such courageous generosity drawn from Volhynia 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 a 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.

<sup>[30]</sup> A responsible Polish estimate is 50,700 total civilian deaths in Volhynia 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 several thousand Polish civilians in Volhynia and Galicia could begin with Wspomnienia section of the Archiwum Wschodnie.

<sup>[31]</sup> 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, Zespół A.9.V., tecz. 8B, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego. This tactic was not reserved to Poles. See Burds, "Agentura," p. 108; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust*, pp. 253-255.

<sup>[32]</sup> 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.

<sup>[33]</sup> For examples of such Polish attacks see Michał 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.

<sup>[34]</sup> 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 pytanie*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vol. 3, pp. 154-157.

[135] See for example Wspomnienia II/1758, II/17, II/2199/p, II/1286/2kw, Archiwum Wschodnie.

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

[137] 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.

[138] 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.

[139] "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 Sprawy 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.

[140] "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.

[141] "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.

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

[143] "Porozumienie między Polskim Komitetem Wyzwolenia Narodowego a Rzadem ZSSR o polskiej-radzieckiej granicy państwowej," Archiwum Akt Nowych, PKWN, XIV/17, k. 15-21, as reproduced in Eugeniusz Misilo, ed., *Repatriacja czy deportacja?*, Warsaw: Archiwum Ukraińskie, 1996, pp. 17-18. Ukrainian communists were denied the Chelm (Kholm) 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.

[144] "Układ między PKWN a Rzadem Ukraińskiej SSR w sprawie przesiedlenia ludności ukraińskiej z terytorium Polski do USSR 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.

[145] 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.

[146] 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 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.

[47] 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.

[48] "Zarządzenie ogólne wojewody rzeszowskiego," 22 February 1945, CA MSW, X/15, k. 137, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 83-84.

[49] "Rozkaz komendanta Milicji Obywatelskiej w Przemyslu," 10 March 1945, CA MSW, X/15, k. 133, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, p. 90.

[50] Report of OUN regional leader Włodzimierz Kit, 20 February 1945, CA MSW, X/36, (4393), reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 81-82; Report of Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego battalion commander Szopinski, 24 March 1945, CAW, Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego, 1580/75/147, k. 2, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, p. 94; Report of Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego battalion commander Szopinski, 6 April 1945, CAW, Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego, 1580/75/147, k. 10, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 104-105.

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

[52] 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 Volhynia were not mentioned because of the taboo placed on the territories Poland lost to the Soviet Union.

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

[54] "Telefogram I sekretarza," 10 June 1945, Archiwum Akt Nowych, VI Oddzial, KC PPR, 295/VII-181, k. 148, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 132-133.

[55] "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.

[56] "Do ukraińsk'okoho naselennia zakhidnykh okraiin ukraińsk'okh zemel'," 19 October 1944, Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie, H-12, t. 5, k. 79, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 64-66. See also "Do Ukraińsiv Lemkivshchyny, Posiannia i Kholmshchyny," March 1945, Ts.D.A.H.U, f. 1, op. 23, spr. 1471, ark. 38-39, reprinted in *Deportatsii*, Lviv: Natsional'na Akademiia 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.

[57] For relevant UPA reports from spring 1946 see Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, UPA, sygn. X/40.

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

[59] 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.

<sup>[60]</sup> "Protokól konferencji w Ministerstwie Administracji Publicznej z udziałem delegatów ludności ukraińskiej," Archiwum Akt Nowych, VI Oddział, KC PPR, 295/VII-158, k. 1-7, reproduced in Misilo, *Repatriacja*, pp. 147-154.

<sup>[61]</sup> Eugeniusz Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, Warsaw: Archiwum Ukraińskie, 1993, introduction, p. 15.

<sup>[62]</sup> Kersten, "The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict," p. 145.

<sup>[63]</sup> "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.

<sup>[64]</sup> One Ukrainian scholar attributes this failure to the UPA's resistance. But one suspects that interwar statistics, which undercounted Ukrainians, also played a part in the miscalculation. See Wolodymyr Serhijczuk, "Ukraiński narodowy ruch niepodległościowy na Ukrainie Zachodniej w latach 1939-1945," *Polska-Ukraina: trudne pytania*, Warsaw: Karta, 1998, vols. 1-2, p. 107.

<sup>[65]</sup> "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.

<sup>[66]</sup> "Z protokolu nr 3 posiedzenia Biura Politycznego Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Partii Robotniczej," 29 March 1947, Archiwum Akt Nowych, VI Oddział, KC PPR, 295/V-3, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, p. 24. On Swierczewski's death, see Tadeusz Plaskowski, "Ostatnia inspekcja Gen. broni Karola Swierczewskiego," *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 his 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 Swierczewski," *Polska Zbrojna*, 21 March 1947, p. 1.

<sup>[67]</sup> "Report 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.

<sup>[68]</sup> "Protocol 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.

<sup>[69]</sup> "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.

<sup>[70]</sup> "Zarządzenie Państwowej Komisji Bezpieczeństwa dla Grup Operacyjnej 'Wisła,'" 17 April 1947, CAW, Sztab Generalny WP, IV. 11, t. 512, k. 4-5, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>[71]</sup> Even Piotrowski, in his synthetic study, tends towards 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.

<sup>[72]</sup> "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.

<sup>[73]</sup> Kersten, "The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict," p. 147.

<sup>[74]</sup> "Projekt organizacji specjalnej 'Wschód,'" Archiwum Urzędu Ochrony Państwa, Gabinet Ministra Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego, 17/IX/140, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisła'*, p. 93.

<sup>[75]</sup> 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.

<sup>[176]</sup> 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 "pelniacy obowiazki Polaków", or "popy" for short, which means "those fulfilling the obligations of Poles." All of the organs of the Polish state that carried out Operation "Wisla" were thoroughly penetrated at this point by Soviet agents and plants.

<sup>[177]</sup> 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 - Sluzbowa," 31 March 1948, teckza personalna pplk. Wacława Kossowskiego, Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Rembertów, Poland.

<sup>[178]</sup> "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.

<sup>[179]</sup> "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.

<sup>[180]</sup> "Instrukcja," 29 April 1947, Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, UPA, sygn. X/32; "Terenowym prowadnykom," 1 May 1947, Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, OUN, sygn. IX/41, "Kolego Przewodniczacy," 3 May 1947, Centralne Archiwum MSWiA, UPA, sygn. X/48. All of these documents are Polish translations of Ukrainian originals.

<sup>[181]</sup> 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.

<sup>[182]</sup> "Instrukcja walki z UPA opracowana przez Sztab GO 'Wisla'," 3 May 1947, CAW, 9 Dywizja Piechoty, IV.310.09, t. 79, k. 127-131, reprinted in Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisla'*, pp. 222-225; "Instrukcja walki z UPA w drugiej fazie akcji opracowana przez sztab GO 'Wisla'," 23 May 1947, CAW, 9 Dywizja Piechoty, IV.310.09, t. 82, k. 20-23, *ibid.*, pp. 279-282; "Instrukcja Sztabu GO 'Wisla' 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.

<sup>[183]</sup> 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.

<sup>[184]</sup> 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.

<sup>[185]</sup> According to one calculation, of the 2,810 death sentences carried out in Poland between 1944-1956, 573 were of Ukrainians. Given that Ukrainians comprised less than 1 percent of the population, this proportion is high indeed. Misilo, *Akcja 'Wisla'*, p. 30. Misilo has collected the relevant documents in *UPA v svitli pols'kykh dokumentiv*, Toronto: Litopys UPA, 1992. For accounts of several Ukrainians sentenced to death and executed before 1947, see Maria Turlejska, *Te pokolenia zalobami czarne: Skazani za smierc i ich sedzowie, 1944-1954*, London: Aneks, 1989, pp. 331-337.

<sup>[186]</sup> 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 Jaworzno 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 a UPA soldier from the Red Army: Wspomnienie II/53, Archiwum Wschodnie.



[187] "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.

[188] 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.

[189] "Polacy!" July 1943, CA KC PZPR, zesp. 2201/10, sygn. 202/I - 34, as reproduced in Siwicki, *Dzieje Konfliktów*, Vol. 2, p. 170.

[190] 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 Nowsze*, 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, *Luny 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.

[191] Although documents may yet be found in Soviet archives that force another interpretation.

[192] Manfred Berger, *Jaruzelski*, Düsseldorf: EconVerlag, 1990, pp. 245-248.

[193] 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.

[194] Kersten, "The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict," p. 151.

[195] Since 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.

[196] 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 Przemyśl, see Chris Hann, "Postsocialist Nationalism: Rediscovering the Past in Southeast Poland," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 57, No. 4, (Winter 1998), pp. 840-863. See also Paweł 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-Ukraina: Trudne pytania*, cited above. These volumes are based upon meetings of Ukrainian and Polish historians sponsored jointly by the world organization of Home Army veterans and the Union of Ukrainians in Poland.

[197] 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.

[198] 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 Müller, 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.

