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Colonialism in the Polish Eastern Borderlands 1919–1939

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Colonialism is a set of unequal power relations between a dominant centre and its periphery.[1] This unequal relationship is complemented by the unequal legal status of the group dominating the centre and the indigenous population in the colonies. We speak of colonialism when the territories at the periphery of an empire or state are (1) subjected to economic exploitation (or an attempt at exploitation), and (2) ruled directly or indirectly from a distant metropolis dominated by an ethnic group different to the ethnic group or groups living in the peripheral territory. This may or may not be accompanied by the settlement of members of the ethnic group dominating the metropolis. (3) An integral part of colonialism is the existence of a colonial discourse, a 'complex of racial or cultural stereotypes, to legitimate metropolitan subordination'.[2]

It is common practice to differentiate between four types of colonialism: settler colonialism, exploitation colonialism, surrogate colonialism and internal colonialism. In settler colonialism, large numbers of people from the centre emigrate to the colony with the intention of staying and cultivating the land. Exploitation colonialism involves the emigration of far fewer people; the goal here is to extract as many resources as possible from the colony and to transfer them to the centre. Surrogate colonialism is when the colonial centre promotes the emigration and settlement of groups which do not belong to the dominant ethnic group in the centre. Internal colonialism is a relatively new term, first used in the 1950s and 1960s. It refers to the uneven structure of power and uneven development of different regions within a single (nation) state with the centre exploiting the periphery.

The classic period of European colonialism stretched from the beginning of the fifteenth to the mid-twentieth century, but in recent years

the term 'colonialism' has been increasingly applied to certain relations within Europe itself. Nazi policy in Eastern Europe during the Second World War, centre-periphery relations in land empires and even the policy of nation states towards other ethnic groups have all been called 'colonial'.

Historians applying the term colonialism to continental Europe often refer to partitioned Poland as a Russian, Prussian/German and Austrian colony.[3] This chapter touches on this subject but will mainly focus on the question whether the newly independent Second Polish Republic pursued a colonising policy in its eastern provinces. I will argue that Polish actions in the eastern borderlands had some colonialist traits but that these were more the policies of a nationalising state.

Polish politicians did not have to study the overseas colonial policy of Britain, Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal or Spain but could take their own imperial past and their recent experiences with imperial centres as guide when developing a policy for the eastern territories of the new Polish state.[4] It is therefore useful to look at Poland first as a potential coloniser and a potential colony prior to 1914, before turning to the question whether the term 'colonialism' can be applied to the policies pursued by the Second Polish Republic in its eastern provinces.

In the Russian Empire, Poles experienced discrimination, were ruled by a distant metropolis and were the objects of a colonial discourse in the imperial centre. This would speak for a 'colonial' relationship between the Russian Empire and its Polish provinces. But matters were more complicated. By 1900, Warsaw and Łódź had become two of the Empire's economic powerhouses. The centre bought industrial products from the periphery. This does not fit in well with the concept of the economic backwardness of a (primarily agrarian) colony and its exploitation by an industrially developed centre. In this respect, the Austrian acquisitions of Polish territory looked much more like a colony. The Crown land Galicia and Lodomeria was poor, industrially underdeveloped and a key market for commodities produced by Austrian and Bohemian industry. But if economically Galicia resembled a colony more than Russian Poland did, politically the situation was very different. After 1867, there was a transfer of power from the imperial centre, Vienna, to Galicia, which left the Polish elites in charge of the Crown land with its ethnically mixed population. While certain Russian and Austrian policies towards Poland had a colonial dimension, some of these policies do not fit the definition.

Historians of imperial Germany have applied the concept of colonialism to the policy of Prussia and the German Empire towards their Polish

provinces, as discussed in Chapter 7.[5] Even if the discourses and the view of German superiority bear a striking resemblance, the status of Poles in the German Empire was incomparably higher than that of the indigenous population in the colonies, and the level of coercion and violence Poles experienced much lower than that exerted by German colonisers in their overseas colonies. More than anything else Bismarck wanted loyal subjects, the liberals desired a national homogenisation which would include a Germanisation of Poles while the radicals in the *Ostmarkenverein* wanted to establish a German dominance over the Polish population. The policies were contradictory and ultimately unsuccessful, not least because of the resistance and self-organisation of the Polish population.

For the Polish elites, Polish culture was not the problem but the solution for Eastern European 'backwardness'. They viewed Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians similar to the way Poles were perceived in Germany: as culturally inferior, incapable of state building and in need of someone who would lead them towards European civilisation, progress and modernity. While the German elites believed they brought culture and civilisation to Poland, the Polish elites in turn believed that *they* had brought culture and progress to Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus, the former eastern borderlands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The borderlands (in Polish: *kresy*) discourse was a strange combination, in which fascination and longing for the 'wild' and 'natural' in these borderlands was commingled with a belief in the backwardness and inferiority of the East and its peoples.[6] Poland had cultivated its own form of orientalism since the late nineteenth century.[7]

Can the relationship between Ukrainians and Poles in the interwar period be described as a relationship between an indigenous majority and a minority of foreign invaders? Were the fundamental decisions affecting the life of the majority made in the interests of the minority? Before the partitions the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth pursued a colonial policy of sorts. The eastern part of the Commonwealth was dominated by immigrant Polish magnates or indigenous noblemen who had assimilated to Polish culture. The territories in question came under Polish control between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Most of the land was acquired peacefully by Poland as a result of the Polish-Lithuanian Union; only Red Ruthenia, later known as East Galicia, was conquered (in the fourteenth century). Since this time Poles had settled in the eastern borderlands. The indigenous Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Belarusian elites were co-opted into the Polish noble nation. The multi-ethnic Polish nobility developed an ideology, known as Sarmatism,

which traced its origins back to the Sarmatians, an ancient people who had populated the steppe territory in Southern Ukraine and Southern Russia. In this way the nobility not only 'otherised' the Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belarusian but also the Polish peasantry. The peasants were viewed as inferior, irrespective of nationality. This changed after the Polish peasants were 'admitted' to the Polish nation at the end of the nineteenth century. 'Otherisation' was now done along ethnic and religious lines.

The social and economic dominance of the Polish nobility outlasted the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and survived in Prussia/Germany and the Austrian and Russian Empires. In 1914, most landowners were Polish, towns were either Polish, Jewish, Russian or multi-ethnic compositions, while the peasantry was Ukrainian, Belarusian or Lithuanian. After the Polish partitions, some members of the Polish elites became agents of the new centres, but many also participated in uprisings, lost all or part of their property, suffered arrest or exile to Siberia, or emigrated.

It is therefore difficult to sustain the argument for the period between 1795 and 1918 when Poland did not exist as a state but was ruled from Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg. While Polish elites in Austria-Hungary had a sort of semi-autonomy from the 1860s, the Russian government did not act in the interests of the Polish nobility. Did the supposed Polish colonisers believe in their own superiority and their mandate to rule? Polish elites viewed Ruthenians (the Ukrainian-speaking Greek Catholic or Orthodox population in the borderlands) not as a nation but as an ethnic category. They held them to be incapable of building their own nation state or of developing their own high culture and believed that Ukrainians, like the Belarusians and Lithuanians, had to choose between assimilation to the Russian or to the Polish nation and would pick up Polish or Russian culture on the way. But there were early signs that the Ukrainian people would not be absorbed by either Poland or Russia. In 1848, the newly formed Ruthenian (the official Austrian term for the Greek Catholic Ukrainian-speaking population of Austria) Council protested against Polish demands for political and cultural autonomy for the Crown land Galicia and Lodomeria. The Ruthenian Council petitioned for a partition of the Crown land into a Ruthenian (eastern) and a Polish (western) part. Polish politicians were all the more surprised as, 18 years earlier, students of the Greek Catholic seminary in Lviv had supported the Polish November uprising. In previous centuries, Ruthenian noblemen had joined the Polish noble nation and their descendants considered themselves *gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus*, that

is, of Ruthenian origin but of the Polish nation. In the emergence of a Ruthenian movement Polish politicians believed that they could detect the hand of Austrian intrigue. They believed that the Austrian governor of Galicia, Franz Graf Stadion, had 'invented' the Ruthenian nation to fight off Polish national aspirations. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russophile sentiments among the Ruthenian population in East Galicia replaced the Polish option as the most important hindrance to Ukrainian nation building. The Russophile movement was strongest in the 1870s and 1880s but finally – in a step that was as surprising to the Polish as to the Russian elites – a Ukrainophile option won out, with the Ukrainians living in the Russian Empire and the Ruthenians of Austria-Hungary viewed as parts of a single – Ukrainian – nation.

The strength of the Ukrainian national movement in East Galicia did not fundamentally change the perceptions of the Ukrainian population. As in 1848, the Polish population was taken by surprise when, in November 1918 after the collapse of Austria-Hungary, western Ukrainians attempted to create their own state on territory which the Poles claimed for their own, future, Polish state. In autumn 1918, Ukrainian politicians in Lviv proclaimed the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, formed the Ukrainian Galician Army and fought for several months against Polish troops for the control of East Galicia. The Polish press referred to Ukrainian state building as a German-Austrian-Ukrainian conspiracy,[8] a 'Ruthenian-Prussian-Austrian attack'[9] and as an 'action of alien, German inspiration'.[10] The Polish delegation in Paris tried to convince the Allies that the right of self-determination did not apply to the Ruthenians/Ukrainians and that East Galicia belonged to Poland.[11]

Polish authors attempted to differentiate between Ukrainians and Ruthenians. According to their view, the term 'Ukrainian' stood for a mere handful of politicians bribed by the German and Austrian governments, while the Ruthenian peasants remained loyal to Poland.[12] The national democrats who dominated the early Polish governments were especially vehement in denying the existence of a Ruthenian or Ukrainian nation. Their main newspaper *Słowo Polskie* argued that 'people' had used the *divide et impera* strategy of the Austrian government to call themselves a nation and make historical claims: 'On this fiction they base their plan – with an impertinence rarely seen in history – to create their own independent state for a nation which historically does not exist.'[13]

The Ukrainian coup d'état was called an 'assault' (*zamach*), often with the adjunct 'treacherous'.[14] The discourse about the childlike naivety of

the Ruthenian peasants, deceived by German funded Ukrainian agitators, was accompanied by numerous reports on Ukrainian atrocities. These reports aimed to exclude Ukrainians from the group of civilised (European) nations. They also provided an explanation for Polish violence against these 'barbarians' and were an additional argument for allowing Poland to rule over territories ethnographically Ukrainian.[15]

The Ukrainians were the largest national minority in the Second Polish Republic. In Volhynia and the three south-western voivodships, the majority of the population were Ukrainian. It should not be forgotten that Poland was a new state and faced the difficult task of integrating four, highly diverse regions with different historical, political and economic traditions. The Second Polish Republic was neither a nation state nor a federation nor an empire. It had elements of all three. The borders of Poland in the west were confirmed by the Allies early on, but the country's eastern borders were the result of wars and changed considerably between the end of the Great War and the Peace Treaty of Riga on 18 March 1921. Poland was a 'work in progress'. Controlling an independent state was a new experience for Polish politicians. Even in Galicia after 1867 the Polish elites had always to reckon with imperial interference. Now Poles were no longer the object of minority policies; instead the new Polish government had to develop its own minority policy. But the authorities did not have a free hand. Poland was obliged to sign a minority treaty with the League of Nations to have its territorial acquisitions confirmed by the victorious powers.

The Polish-Ukrainian war of 1918–1919 had alienated the western Ukrainians. The Polish government came down heavily on those who had resisted the establishment of Polish power. By 1921 50,000 former soldiers of the Ukrainian Galician Army and 20,000 Ukrainian civilians had passed through Polish internment camps or prisons.[16] After their military defeat, the Ukrainian political leaders placed their hopes on the western Allies, believing that the 'right of self-determination' would also be applied to the western Ukrainian territories. But Poland was too important as a counterweight to Soviet Russia. Provisionally at first and finally in 1924, the Allies recognised East Galicia as part of Poland. As long as the final decision had not been made, Ukrainian civil servants refused to swear an oath of loyalty to the new Polish state, and they lost their jobs in consequence. The majority of East Galician Ukrainians refused to participate in the census, and Ukrainian parties called successfully for a boycott of the elections to the Polish parliament. The Ukrainian-Polish war and the repression and discrimination of Ukrainians in the immediate post-war period strengthened the

animosity against Poland in the Ukrainian population. A militant arm of the Ukrainian national movement organised the armed resistance against integration into Poland, and the first terrorist attacks on Polish politicians and representatives of the Polish state followed.

How could the eastern borderlands be made Polish or at least loyal to Poland? There were three potential ways to 'Polonise' the eastern provinces: by making Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian peasants into Poles (national assimilation); by making them into loyal citizens of Poland (state/civic assimilation); or by changing the ethnic composition of the region by settling ethnic Poles in the borderlands and/or promoting the emigration of the non-Polish population. While the national democrats were either for national assimilation or – where this failed – exclusion from the Polish nation, the Piłsudski camp were, in principle, prepared to recognise the existence of the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian nations and wanted to win over these groups for the Polish state. In theory, the two political sides looked quite dissimilar, but in practice there was often not much difference. Both camps did not want to give up the borderlands, believed in the superiority of Polish culture and the necessity of Polish leadership. Even after the peace treaty with Soviet Russia in Riga on 18 March 1921, Piłsudski entertained hopes that it would be possible to build a federation of the states of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth under Polish leadership, with an independent Ukrainian state on the territory of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic.[17]

The first government of the Second Polish Republic (formed on 11 November 1918) had high hopes that it would be possible to assimilate Ukrainians and Belarusians. They believed in but did not exclusively rely on the attractiveness of Polish culture. Did the 'colonial centre' and the dominant minority reject cultural compromises with the colonised population? The reality was complicated, and there is no straightforward answer to this question. The cultural differences between Poles and Ukrainians were not fundamental; the languages are related, in East Galicia both Poles and Ukrainians were Catholics – but as Greek Catholics, the Ukrainians had their own churches, priests and ritual language. Thus, while emphasising the superior culture and the historical rights of Poles was an element common to colonial discourse, Polish authors perceived Poles and Ruthenians as parts of a single family. Polish newspapers referred to the Ukrainian 'assault' in November 1918 as an attempted fratricide. This was in striking contrast to Polish perceptions of the Jewish population, whose 'otherness' was viewed by influential national democrats as unchangeable and whose integration

in the Polish nation was deemed impossible. Marriages between Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics were quite common. While the towns had a 'Polonising' effect, many Roman Catholics living in Ukrainian villages assimilated to Ukrainian culture.

Even if in the three south-eastern voivodeships the Poles were Catholics like the Ukrainians, the Greek Catholic denomination became a key factor separating Poles and Ukrainians in the region. Greek Catholic priests exercised an enormous influence over the Ukrainian peasantry and were indispensable for communicating the national message to the population.[18] Unsurprisingly, the Polish government attempted to reduce the influence of the Greek Catholic clergy. In 1920, hundreds of Greek Catholic priests were interned in Polish prisons. The religious boundaries between Poles and Ukrainians were clearer in Volhynia, where Poles were Roman Catholic and Ukrainians were Orthodox. Here the Polish government tried to cut the link to the Russian Orthodox Church by creating an Autocephalous Polish Orthodox Church. De-Russification of the Orthodox Church went hand in hand with Polonisation.[19] Religious difference, however, did not always translate into different national affiliation. Hundreds of thousands of people in the borderlands did not identify with any specific nation. In Volynhia and the neighbouring voivodeships about 700,000 answered the question about their nationality in 1931 with 'we are from here' (in Polish, they were referred to as *tutejszi*, i.e., those from here).[20] The national affiliation of groups such as the *Latynniki*, Ukrainian-speaking Roman Catholics (about 100,000) was contested. Were they Ukrainised Poles or Polonised Ukrainians? In 1921, a prominent Polish national democrat recommended using Roman Catholic priests to encourage the conversion of 'Poles of Greek Catholic faith' to the Latin rite. The propaganda should be aimed at school children, persons in mixed marriages, Greek Catholics with Roman Catholic ancestors, those wanting to buy land from Poles or marry a Polish woman, persons who had a Polish godfather or required financial assistance. Mixed marriages should be prevented at all costs.[21] There was pressure on Ukrainians to convert to Roman Catholicism. The Greek Catholic archbishops protested to the League of Nations that public jobs or licenses for trading were linked to Greek Catholics changing their denomination.[22]

The Polish government also tried other ways to strengthen the 'Polish element' in the borderlands. In the immediate post-war period, American relief organisations funded 207 orphanages in Poland, but not a single one was placed under Ukrainian control. The intention was clear; Polish orphanages would bring children up as Poles, Ukrainian

orphanages would make them Ukrainian. To counteract this, Ukrainian organisations founded their own Ukrainian orphanages. But initially they were not very successful. In 1923 only 29 orphanages caring for 1404 children were under Ukrainian control.

The aim of the Polish state was either – as the national democrats wished – to Polonise the Ruthenians or to transform them into loyal citizens of Poland. The Pilsudski camp would have been content with the latter. The education system was key for achieving both goals. Ukrainian schools were subjected to severe pressure. When the Lviv professor Stanisław Grabski became Minister of Education in 1925, he drew up a law, which permitted the transformation of most Ukrainian schools into utraquist – bilingual – schools where most teaching would be in Polish. Everywhere the Ukrainian language came under pressure. Under Austrian rule, Ukrainian had been one of the three languages of administration in Galicia; now every official communication had to be in Polish. In the wake of the *Lex Grabski*, the number of monolingual Ukrainian schools was reduced. In 1912, East Galicia had 2400 Ukrainian primary schools, in 1927 the figure had dropped to 352 and in 1939 it was a mere 144. In Volhynia, there were only eight monolingual Ukrainian schools. The situation was no better for secondary schools. There was one Polish secondary school for every 16,000 Poles. In comparison, there were 230,000 Ukrainians for every Ukrainian secondary school.[23]

The Ukrainian language disappeared from Lviv University. All Ukrainian chairs were abolished and Ukrainian professors lost their jobs as they refused to swear an oath of loyalty to the Polish state before the Allies had confirmed Polish sovereignty over East Galicia.[24] The government broke its promise to establish a Ukrainian university – this would have gone against the tenets of Polonisation. A secret, private Ukrainian university in Lviv was dissolved in 1925. The only way for Ukrainians to acquire higher education was through the medium of Polish or to study abroad. In 1925/26, only 1236 students, that is, a mere 12.2% of the total number of students attending the two Galician universities in Kraków and Lviv were Ukrainian.[25] Many Ukrainians objected to having to study at a Polish-run university, preferring to go to Vienna, Prague, Leipzig or Berlin instead.[26]

The government also promoted the settlement of Poles in the eastern borderlands. The aim of this policy was to secure the borders by strengthening the so-called Polish element in the region. Here, the Polish governments could follow the example set by the German Empire, which had supported the settlement of ethnic Germans in Posen and West Prussia

to change the ethnic composition of the provinces. In 1920, Polish colonists profited from a land reform which distributed state land and parcelled out large estates. Ukrainians received much less land than the Polish colonists, and the average size of Ukrainian peasant holdings was much smaller than that awarded to Polish peasants. Polish colonisation focussed on regions with good soil and increased the Ukrainian land hunger, fuelling the economic pressures arising from an already considerable agrarian overpopulation. In the inter-war period, around 170,000 Ukrainians left Poland. In 1920, the first demobilised soldiers of the Polish Army were settled in East Galicia. They received free land and loans at particularly favourable conditions and were also privileged in other ways.[27] According to Ukrainian estimates, up to 200,000 settlers arrived in Volhynian and East Galician villages between 1920 and 1938, while reports by Polish historians only list around 100,000 settlers (including families). Another 100,000 ethnic Poles moved to the towns and cities. Those who did not become farmers worked for the state or in state enterprises as village policemen, railway workers or in local administration. The Polish government succeeded in increasing the Polish share of the population in the eastern borderlands, but the failure of cultural assimilation meant it did not fundamentally change the ethnic composition of the population. The Ukrainian population hated the settlers and they became a primary target of attacks.[28]

After 1923, moderate Ukrainian parties realised that they would have to compromise to improve the material situation of the Ukrainian population and preserve their system of co-operatives, national organisations and education societies. While they did not give up on the final aim of creating a Ukrainian nation state, they were willing to co-operate with the government. Militant groups, however, rejected all forms of cooperation with Poland. In 1921 they founded a Ukrainian Military Organisation (UVO), which, in 1929, became the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The OUN used terrorist methods to attack the Polish state and Poles living in what the OUN perceived to be Ukrainian lands. One of the main aims of Ukrainian armed resistance was to prevent compromises being made with the Polish government and to prepare the population for a 'Ukrainian revolution'.[29] From 1921 on, the young activists attacked representatives of the Polish state and Polish institutions but also moderate Ukrainian politicians. The young militants did everything they could to prevent the Ukrainian population from accommodating to life in a Polish state. The Polish local and regional authorities were as much opposed to any compromise as the Ukrainian nationalists were. The military were among the fiercest

opponents of Ukrainian autonomy as they viewed the Ukrainian minority as a security risk.

Polish-Ukrainian relations improved somewhat after Piłsudski came to power in 1926. He made Henryk Józefski governor of Volhynia. Józefski used less coercion, preferring to achieve his goals with the help of concessions and material privileges. He tried to make Ukrainians if not into Poles then at least into loyal Polish citizens by offering greater cultural and religious freedoms and letting Ukrainian peasants profit from the parcelling out of large estates. As Timothy Snyder has argued, this was part of a grand scheme aimed at the Ukrainian population in the Soviet Union with the goal of winning them over to Poland and creating an allied Ukrainian 'buffer' state between Russia and Poland.[30]

The credibility and attractiveness of this grand scheme for the Ukrainian population was undermined by the attempts of the Sanacja government to separate the nationally less mobilised Ukrainians in Volhynia from the East Galician Ukrainians. Neither the national democrats nor, at a later date, the Sanacja regime intended to keep the promises given to the Allies and create an autonomous Ukrainian region within Poland, uniting all ethnographically Ukrainian lands. All Polish governments pursued a *divide at impera* policy. In Volhynia, Ukrainian peasants were forced to join Polish co-operatives, although in East Galicia, despite certain administrative restrictions, the Ukrainian co-operative sector was allowed to flourish. The authorities also prevented the spread of Ukrainian reading clubs to Volhynia. The government promoted the ethnic particularity of the Huzuls and the Lemky and tried to draw them closer to Poland.

The world economic crisis hit the Ukrainian peasants harder than the Polish colonists, who received state subsidies. Unsurprisingly, the Ukrainian nationalist movement grew stronger. Between July and November 1930, OUN members and supporters carried out 2000 acts of sabotage and attacks on estate owners, military colonists and Polish officials.[31] In September, the Polish government started a punitive expedition using police and army units to suppress the rebellion. Punitive actions were based on the principle of collective retribution. Entire villages were hit by the so-called 'pacifications' in which Polish police and cavalry destroyed villages and reading halls and confiscated Ukrainian property.[32] More than 2000 Ukrainians, many of them young people, were arrested and more than 600 sentenced to long prison sentences. After the pacifications had ended, the OUN intensified its terrorist attacks on Polish politicians, officials and moderate Ukrainian politicians. Between 1921 and 1939, UVO and OUN killed 25 Poles, one

Russian, one Jew and 36 Ukrainians in 63 attacks. In 1931 and 1934, OUN activists killed two prominent Polish politicians, Tadeusz Hołówko and the Minister of the Interior Bronisław Pieracki, both of whom had supported a Ukrainian-Polish compromise.[33]

The Second Polish Republic was – *cum grano salis* – a country governed by law. This gave the Ukrainian elites legal options to continue their nation building efforts. Ukrainians had all political rights and their representatives sat in the Polish parliament. Educated Ukrainians could not find jobs in the state sector, but they found them in the flourishing Ukrainian co-operative movement. The Ukrainians countered the Polonisation of state schools by founding the education society *Ridna Shkola*. In 1938, the society had 100,000 members and controlled 40 private secondary schools. *Prosvita*, a Ukrainian education society for adults, had more than 360,000 members, a network of reading clubs and published journals, calendars and books.[34] Between 1935 and 1937, the Ukrainian National Democratic Union, the most influential Ukrainian party, stopped its policy of categorical opposition in parliament. Ukrainian schools profited from the détente, but economically the Ukrainian population did not gain much. Autonomy or a land reform benefiting Ukrainians was still out of the question. After two years the UNDO ceased its cooperation.[35] Two years after Piłsudski's death, Józefski was replaced and his more flexible policy in Volhynia was stopped. The Polish state handed over 150 orthodox churches to the Roman Catholic Church. Another 190 orthodox churches were closed or destroyed. In 1939, only 51 orthodox churches still remained open.[36] The government now pursued a more active Polonisation policy to 'win back the souls' of those *tutejszy*, Belarusians and Ukrainians, they deemed to be Polish but who had lost their Polish identity.[37]

When in 1937 some Polish estates were burned down in arson attacks, the government again sent troops into Ukrainian villages where they destroyed Ukrainian public buildings and beat up Ukrainian peasants.[38] In 1938 and 1939, influenced by the Munich agreement, and the temporary independence of Carpatho-Ukraine, a number of bloody excesses occurred. In Lviv, Polish students beat up Ukrainians, and in the countryside Poles were attacked by Ukrainian peasants. The government renewed its 'pacifications'. The principle of collective retribution was again applied. Men and women, young and old Ukrainians were arrested, chained together and driven through the villages. Some Ukrainian farms were destroyed. Ukrainian politicians estimated that at the end of 1938 30,000 Ukrainians were being held in Polish prisons. This strengthened the radical nationalist organisations. In 1939, the

OUN had approximately 20,000 members, but many more Ukrainians sympathised with the organisation.[39]

Are the Polish policies in the Eastern borderlands an example of colonialism? I would hesitate to answer this with a straightforward 'yes'. If Polish colonialism existed in the borderlands, it was neither exploitation colonialism nor surrogate colonialism. The eastern voivodeships were the recipient of subsidies from the centre. The region was not drained of resources; instead subsidies flowed into the area, and there was no Polish expectation of being able to exploit the region in the immediate future. There were also no attempts to settle other groups than Poles in the borderlands. Did the presence of a culturally, politically and socially dominant Polish population in the borderlands make the relationship 'colonial'? Polish settler colonialism was not as straightforward as in the eastern territories of the Russian Empire or in overseas colonies. Red Ruthenia and Volhynia had been part of Poland or Lithuania since the fourteenth century. Some of the so-called 'Polish elements' in the region were Polonised Ruthenians, particularly members of the Ruthenian nobility. A continuous migration of Poles, especially to the towns, had existed even prior to the partitions of Poland, and the settlement policy of the Second Polish Republic did not change much.

The Polish policy towards Ukrainians was contradictory. Piłsudski entertained ideas of a Ukrainian buffer state or of a federation between a future Ukraine and Poland under Polish leadership, while the national democrats pursued a policy of inclusion (of Ukrainians who were willing to assimilate) and exclusion (of Ukrainians who continued to support a separate Ukrainian national identity). However, the attitude of the Polish elites to the Ukrainian population was partly colonial, with Ukrainians perceived as children incapable of ruling themselves. Polish culture was seen as superior to Ukrainian culture and the Polish mission was to civilise the eastern borderlands. In the Polish imagination, the *kresy* – the borderlands – became a sort of Wild East which the Poles had cultivated and were still cultivating, an outpost of European civilisation defended by the Polish nation against the onslaughts of barbarism.

Colonial techniques were applied – like the 'pacifications', the support given to Polish settlers and the promotion of military settlements. The settlement policy, however, was the result of a failure to assimilate the Ukrainian minority or at least convince them that their future would be in Poland and not in a Ukrainian nation state. From a Polish perspective, there was no fundamental ethnic difference, which would have made it impossible for Ukrainians to become Poles. Poland was not

a colonising but a nationalising state, and subsequent Polish governments tried to turn Ukrainian peasants into Poles or at least into loyal Polish citizens. Where French governments in the nineteenth century had succeeded in making peasants, and inhabitants of Provence, Burgundy or Alsace into Frenchmen, the Polish governments failed to turn Ukrainian peasants into Poles. The majority of Ukrainians resisted Polonisation, just as they had refused to become members of the Russian nation. Polish rule in the eastern borderlands was different from Russian colonial rule in Central Asia and Siberia or the overseas colonialism of the western European powers where the colonisers came from an ethnically and culturally diverse centre. In the Polish case, both groups were closely related and there was a long tradition of co-existence. Before 1918, Ruthenian peasants in East Galicia had fared no worse than Polish peasants in West Galicia. If Polish rule between 1920 and 1939 acquired a more and more repressive, one might say, colonial character, then this was the result of the failed policy of Polonisation, of the strength of the Ukrainian national movement, the terror campaigns of the OUN, the weakness of the moderate forces in both societies and consequently the unwillingness of both sides to compromise. It is not clear how Polish policies would have developed, as the German attack on Poland opened a new, far more brutal chapter in which, after genocide, mass murder and ethnic cleansing, Polish dominance in the borderlands ended.

Notes

1. J. Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Markus Weiner Publisher: Princeton, 2005), 16.
2. M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1975), 30.
3. K. Japs and J. Surman, 'Galicja Postkolonialna cz Postkolonialnie? Postocolonial Theory Pomiędzy Prymoiotnikiem a Przysłiwkiem', *Historyka: Studia Metodologiczne* 42 (2012), 7–35; B. Kundrus, 'Kontinuitäten, Parallelen, Rezeptionen. Überlegungen zur "Kolonialisierung" des Nationalsozialismus', *WerkstattGeschichte* 43 (2006), 45–62. J. Zimmerer, 'The Birth of the *Ostland* out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination', *Patterns of Prejudice* 39 (2005) 197–219.
4. For example R. Dmowski, *Myśli nowoczesnego polaka* (Lwów, 1903). See also, W. Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik. Staatsmacht und öffentliche Ordnung in einer Minderheitenregion 1918–1939* (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 1999), 11f.
5. K. Kopp, 'Gray Zones: On the Inclusion of Poland in the Study of German Colonialism', in M. Perraudin and J. Zimmerer (eds), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 33–44.

6. *Kresy* originally denoted only the regions that had belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the twentieth century the term was extended to include all the eastern regions of the Second Polish Republic that had a majority of non-Poles.

7. E. Said, *Orientalism.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); B. Bakuła, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Aspects of Polish Discourse on the Eastern "Borderlands"', in J. Korek, *From Sovietology to Postcoloniality. Poland and Ukraine in the Postcolonial Perspective* (Stockholm: Södertörns Högskola, 2007), 41–59.

8. 'Niech żyje, niepodległa i zjednoczona!' *Gazeta Poranna*, 2/11/1919. Przed listopadową rocznicą (Z kół obywatelskich), *Gazeta Lwowska*, 30/10/1919.

9. W rocznicę listopadową? *Słowo Polskie*, 2/11/1919.

10. *Dziennik Lwowski*, 23/11/1928.

11. The Polish Foreign Ministry to the Polish Embassy in London, 15/10/1921; *AAN (Archiwum Akt Nowych), Ambasada RP w Londynie*, 433, 10–12; P. żurawski vel Grajewski (1995), *Sprawa Ukraińska na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w roku 1919* (Warszawa).

12. *Słowo Polskie*, 23/11/1928.

13. 'Lwowski Listopad', *Słowo Polskie*, 1/11/1920.

14. Recollections of a Polish fighter, 1918; TsDIAL (Tsentral'nyj Derzhavnyj Arkhiv L'vivskoii Oblasti), f. 837, op. 1, spr. 71, ark. 44–45.

15. J. Białyania-Chołodeck, 'Boje o Lwów', in *W obronie Lwowa i kresów wschodnich* (Lwów, 1926), 29.

16. Ukrainian population losses in East Galicia (1921), *TsDIAL*, f. 462, op. 1, spr. 23, ark. 33–36.

17. On the different concepts see W. Paruch, *Od konsolidacji państwowej do konsolicaji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w mysli politycznej obozu piłsudzykowskiego (1926–1939)* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodkowskiej, 1997). Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete*, 10ff.; C. Schenke, *Nationalstaat und nationale Frage: Polen und die Ukrainer 1921–1939* (Hamburg, München: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 2004), 47ff.

18. Report of the police in Skałat (copy), 26/5/1921; *TsDIAL*, f. 146, op. 8, spr. 4909, ark. 49–51.

19. On Volhynia see Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete,* 199ff. Schenke, *Nationalstaat und nationale Frage*, 188ff.

20. The number is probably too high as the Polish officials taking the census tried to artificially reduce the number of Belarusians by registering them as 'tutejszi'.

21. The letter from 11 June 1921 fell into the hands of the Greek Catholic Church and was kept in the archive of the St. George Cathedral in Lviv, *TsDIAL*, f. 462, op, 1, spr. 222.

22. The three uniate archbishops to the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva (probably 1921), TsDIAL, f. 462, op. 1, spr. 222, ark. 126–128.

23. O. Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 2000), 438f.; J. Hrycak (2000), *Historia Ukrainy 1772–1999* (Lublin), p. 190. L'Association de L'Ukraine Occidentale pour la Société des Nations: La situation de la population ukrainienne en Pologne, 27/6/1924; TsDIAL, f. 355, op. 1, spr. 28, ark. 1–20.

24. Hrytsak, *Narys Istoriji Ukrajiny*, p. 190. Subtelny, *Ukraine*, p. 192; M. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Sprawa Ukraińska w drugiej rzeczypospolitej 1922–1926* (Kraków, 1979), 220ff., 257ff.

25. Polish Foreign Ministry to the Embassy in London, 27/1/1926; AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, 1435, 97–98.
26. Police administration Lviv to the Director of the Police, Reinlender, 18/10/1923; DALO (Derzhavnyj Arkhiv Lvivs'kji Oblasti), f. 110, op. 4, spr. 849, ark. 145.
27. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Sprawa Ukraińska*, p. 167. Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete*, 123ff.
28. Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 428f. Hrytsak, *Historia Ukrainy,* p. 188.
29. J. A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (Littleton/Col.) 19ff. Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 443ff. Hrycak, *Historia Ukrainy*, 198ff.
30. T. Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to liberate Ukraine* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2007).
31. W. A. Serczyk, 'Die sowjetische und die ,polnische' Ukraine zwischen den Weltkriegen', in Frank Golczewski (ed), *Geschichte der Ukraine* (Göttingen, 1993), 202–223, here at 221.
32. P. Olijnyk, *Zoshyty (*Kyjiv, 1995), p. 48.
33. Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 428ff, 445f. Hrycak, H*istoria Ukrainy*, 191, 199f.
34. Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 439f. Hrycak, *Historia Ukrainy*, 195. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Sprawa Ukraińska*, 84ff. M. Djadjuk, P*olityzatsija Ukrajinskoho zhinochoho rukhu w Halychyni: 1921–1939 rr. Avtoreferat dysertaciji na zdobuttja naukovoho stupenja kandydata istorychnych nauk* (Lviv, 2002).
35. W. Mędrzecki, 'Ukraińska Reprezentacja Parlamentarna w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej', *Warszawskie Zeszyty Ukrainoznawcze* 3 (1994), 220–34, here 231ff.
36. Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 430ff. Hrycak, *Historia Ukrainy*, 189ff., 200f. Stępień: Ukraińska Reprezentacja Parlamentarna, *S. 226 ff.
37. Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete,* 267ff. Schenke, *Nationalstaat und nationale Frage*, 412ff.
38. Olijnyk, *Zoshyty*, p. 49.
39. The German consulate in Lvviv to the German Foreign Ministry (1939); *PA (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes)*, Konsulat Lemberg, 54.