

Andrii Portnov

Poland and Ukraine

Entangled Histories, Asymmetric Memories



Essay

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Andrii Portnov, Poland and Ukraine: Entangled Histories,
Asymmetric Memories

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Andrii Portnov

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This essay addresses the routes and disruptions of some basic historical stereotypes in Polish-Ukrainian relations. It argues that in modern times the Polish and Ukrainian national projects represented two competing political legitimacies: one based on historical borders and civilization, and the other based on the ethnographic composition of the population. This essay will analyze the legacy of the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Cossack mythology, the Ukrainian-Polish war over Lviv/Lwów in 1918, the ethnic cleansing of Volhynian Poles in 1943, the activities of Jerzy Giedroyc's "Kultura" and post-Soviet memory wars and reconciliation projects.

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Contents

Introduction	4
The Polish-Lithuanian Res Publica: Strange Empire and/or Prototype for the European Union?	6
Two National Projects in Search of an Ideal Motherland	17
Inter-War Poland and its Ukrainians	28
The Second World War and its Aftermath	36
Searching for a New Model of Polish-Ukrainian Relations: Before and After 1989	41
Constructions of the Past, Imaginations of the Future	53
Selected Bibliography	60

Poland and Ukraine: Entangled Histories, Asymmetric Memories¹

Introduction

My very first trip abroad was to Warsaw. In 1999, I had to board a night train in Dnipropetrovsk (nowadays, Dnipro), change trains in Kyiv and spend almost ten hours to get to the Ukrainian-Polish border. At the border we had to wait for about three hours for the wheels of our train to be changed (in all former Soviet republics the railroad tracks were broader than in Central and Western Europe), and early in the morning the next day we arrived to Warsaw. In my Soviet childhood, growing up in a closed city – Dnipropetrovsk was closed because of the strategic importance of its space rocket and missile industry – I had never seriously dreamt of seeing the world abroad. One of the first impressive buildings I noticed arriving at Warsaw central station was the neo-classical Soviet Palace of Sciences and

1 This essay is based on research findings made possible by my participation in three international projects: “Divided Memories, Shared Memories. Ukraine/Russia/Poland (20th–21st centuries): An Entangled History” (supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation), “Modernisation of Identity? Challenges of ‘Europeanisation’, Nationalism and Post-Sovietism for Memory Cultures” (Nr. MOD-17006, supported by the Research Council of Lithuania), and PRISMA UKRAÏNA – Research Network Eastern Europe (which I initiated and direct at the Forum Transregionale Studien). Some parts of this publication were first presented in a paper submitted to the edited volume *From Reconciliation to De-conciliation: Is There a Way Back? Actors of Poland’s and Ukraine’s Politics of Memory Since 2014–2015*, Joanna Konieczna-Salamatin, Tomasz Stryjek (eds.), London: Routledge, 2020. I am grateful to Elen Budinova, Georges Khalil, Viktoriia Serhienko and Tomasz Stryjek for their helpful comments and corrections. All translations from Polish, Russian and Ukrainian in this essay were made by the author.

Culture – Stalin’s “gift” to postwar satellite Poland.

That trip to Poland – to take part in a two-week student workshop at the Warsaw University – proved to be the beginning of a very long journey. Within two years, I returned to Poland to do my second MA (at the *Studium Europy Wschodniej*) and to properly learn the language. It was also in Warsaw where I collected materials for my PhD thesis on Ukrainian political emigration in interwar Poland, and where I started thinking seriously about the historical, political and cultural paradoxes of the Slavic triangle: Russia, Poland and Ukraine. Entanglements within this triangle, full of mutual influences and mutual misunderstandings, became the main interest of my research. I also realized that minor differences and delicate nuances were of special importance to capture the complex diversity of the legacies and the history of the triangle, its people, societies and cultures.

It was my teacher and PhD supervisor, Yaroslav Isaievych, who introduced Poland and Polish history to me. Thanks to him, as well as a number of my Polish and Ukrainian colleagues, I became a Polonophile. A critical Polonophile, if such a definition has a right to exist. Anyway, my aspiration here is not at all to present a “Ukrainian” view on bilateral history, even though I do belong to a certain academic tradition and, in my conversations with Professor Isaievych, he often mentioned one book that attracted him to history was Łucja Charewiczowa’s “Historiography and the Passion to Lwów” (*Historiografia i miłośnictwo Lwowa*, 1938). This beautifully written work could hardly be described as neutral. But, for me, its lesson was a bit different. It is exactly our passion in history that could tell us to strive – as much as we can – to discuss it dispassionately.

In my essay I would like to show the roots, as well as continuities and disruptions, of some basic historical stereotypes in Polish-Ukrainian relations, without essentializing

them. I will try to describe the most widespread, living historical myths that continue to have an impact on today's constructions of identities, rivalries and polarities. I will try to keep in mind the changing, dynamic and ambivalent nature of the very notions of "Polish-ness" and "Ukraine-ness".

Such an overview is inevitably selective and openly faces a serious risk of making too broad generalizations. Being aware of this, I treat my essay as an exercise in synthesis and as a reminder of the crucial importance of historical contextualization. The rich and controversial footnotes and bibliography at the end of the essay are aimed to serve as an invitation to further reading and reflection. It also reminds us that, as Juliusz Mieroszewski pointed out in his programmatic article on Polish attitudes to its eastern neighbors in 1974, history is so fascinating exactly because "the same" is actually never "the same".²

The Polish-Lithuanian *Res Publica*: Strange Empire and/or Prototype for the European Union?

The history of Polish-Ukrainian encounters could be traced back to the interactions between the medieval Polan principal-ity (baptized under Prince Mieszko I in 966 from Rome) and that of the old Rus' (baptized under Prince Volodimer in 988 from Byzantine). In the first (Polans) case, Christianity came from Rome (or, the "West"), in the second (Rus') case it came from Constantinople (or, the "East"). The baptizer of Rus' (much later started to be called Kyivan Rus' after its main city - Kyiv) prince Volodimer in 981 retook the so-called Cherven towns (nowadays a region on the Polish-Ukrainian border on the left

2 Juliusz Mieroszewski, "Rosyjski 'kompleks polski' i obszar ULB", *Kultura* 9, 1974, 3-15, here 3.



Fig. 1
The territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on a present-day map of Europe.

side of the Buh river) from the Polish rulers.³ After the decline of the Rus' principalities, East Galicia with its main city of Lviv/Lwów was integrated into the Polish state in the late 14th century, making the history of this region's association with Poland almost six centuries long.

Almost all of the future Ukrainian lands came under the Polish crown in 1569 as a result of the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – a huge state (the second largest in early modern Europe after Muscovy) with eight to eleven million people of diverse denominations, speaking many languages. The domain of the *Rzeczpospolita* included the majority of the territories of present-day Poland and Ukraine, as well as the entire territory of present-day Belarus and Lithuania, and parts

3 For more on the etymology of Cherven and the western border of the "Ukrainian ethnic territory", see: Iaroslav Isaievych, *Ukraina davnia i nova: narod, relihiia, kultura*, Lviv: Instytut ukraïnoznavstva im. I. Krypiakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 1996, 63-105.

of present-day western Russia. The southeastern borderlands of the Commonwealth created a contact zone with the nomadic, tribal, and Muslim-ruled territories, the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire. It was exactly these southeastern borderlands, a steppe area at the lower Dnieper River, which became the birthplace of Cossackdom – a particular military phenomenon in this frontier which quickly turned into a great challenge to Polish-Ottoman relations.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had a unique structure of power with a *Sejm* (a diet) as the sovereign and as representative of all nobility (which constituted up to 7-10 percent of the entire population) and the elected king. The state had an unusually high percentage of noble stratum and the largest Jewish population in the early modern world. Historians often speak about *naród szlachecki*, a noble nation forged through a brotherhood of *Rzeczpospolita*'s nobility, irrespective of its members' religious affiliation or ethnic origin.⁴

How did *Rzeczpospolita* deal with the diversity of its lands and people? On the one hand, it remained rather tolerant towards different religions, on the other, it still welcomed the conversion of elites to Catholicism and the establishment of a Uniate (Greek-Catholic) church with Byzantine (Orthodox) rites but subordinated to the Pope in Rome. The Church Union was proclaimed in Berestia/Breść/Brest (a town in present-day

4 Important critical remarks on this issue can be found in: David Althoen, "Nazione Polonus and the Naród Szlachecki. Two Myths of National Identity and Noble Solidarity", *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 52/4, 2003, 475-508. See also: Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, *Świadomość narodowa szlachty ukraińskiej i kozaczyzny od schyłku XVI do połowy XVII w.*, Warsaw: PWN, 1985; Frank Sysyn, "The Problem of Nobilities in the Ukrainian Past: The Polish Period 1569-1648", in: Ivan L. Rudnytsky (ed.), *Rethinking Ukrainian History*, Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1981, 29-102; Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Frühneuzeitliche Nationen im östlichen Europa. Das polnische Geschichtsdenken und die Reichweite einer humanistischen Nationalgeschichte (1500-1700)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006.

Belarus) in 1596.⁵ The Ruthenian Orthodox population was encouraged to convert to the newly created church and, by doing so, to accept the authority of the Roman Pope, the same head of church as the Polish Catholics. The appearance of the Uniate Church gave the Cossacks an important symbolic legitimacy to their social claims. Starting from the early 17th century, they strived to present themselves as the defenders of the endangered Orthodox faith and as principle fighters against the Uniates.⁶

The protection of Orthodoxy and the social privileges for the Cossacks were the main claims of the biggest Cossack uprising under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnytsky.⁷ It began in 1648 und rapidly turned into a bloody war against Polish troops. Hetman Khmelnytsky, who constantly looked for international alliances, finally succeeded in gaining support from Muscovy in 1654. Khmelnytsky explained his choice of alliance referring to their shared “worship of the Greek rite”, but probably underestimated the importance of Moscow’s “Third Rome” concept, as successor to the Byzantine Empire, and the power of the Moscow patriarchate – the biggest and richest Orthodox patriarchate (officially recognized by the Patriarch of Con-

5 A good analysis of the Union of Brest could be found in: Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1998.

6 For details, see: Serhii Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

7 On the various historical images and mythologies of Khmelnytsky, see: Amelia M. Glaser (ed.), *Stories of Khmelnytsky: Competing Literary Legacies of the 1648 Ukrainian Cossack Uprising*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015; Frank Sysyn, “The Changing Image of the Hetman: On the 350th Anniversary of the Khmel’nyts’kyi Uprising”, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 46/4, 1998, 531–545; Frank Sysyn, “Ukrainian-Polish Relations in the Seventeenth Century: The Role of National Consciousness and National Conflict in the Khmelnytsky Movement”, in: Peter J. Potichnyj (ed.), *Poland and Ukraine. Past and Present*, Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980, 58–82. C

Fig. 2
The Ukrainian
Five Hryvnias
Banknote
with Hetman
Bohdan
Khmelnitsky
(from the
collection of
A. Brusnyi).



stantinople in 1589) and very closely related to the Tsar.⁸ Khmelnytsky's pact with Muscovy, known as the Pereiaslav Treaty, initiated an era of the gradual transfer of those parts of present-day Ukraine dominated by Cossacks from Polish rule to Muscovy's sovereignty. From a long-term perspective, it was probably Russia who profited the most from the Khmelnytsky wars.⁹

One of Khmelnytsky's claims – the creation of a Cossack autonomy (with no Jews and Uniates allowed to settle in), including the transformation of the Commonwealth into a three-fold structure of Polish-Lithuanian-Cossack – had never materialized. The last attempt to bring to life such a threefold Res Publica was made in 1658 by Khmelnytsky's successor, Hetman Ivan Vyhovsky, who sought for the establishment of the “Ruthenian Duchy” (Kyiv, Bratslav and Chernihiv palatinates) as

8 A concise analysis could be found in: Serhii Plokhyy, *Lost Kingdom: The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation From 1470 to the Present*, New York: Basic Books, 2017, 22–34.

9 Here I am referring to a point made in: Jaroslaw Pelenski, “Russia, Poland and Ukraine: Historical and Political Perspectives”, in: Peter J. Potichnyj (ed.), *Poland and Ukraine: Past and Present*, 308–327, here 309.

the third part of *Rzeczpospolita*.¹⁰ This project, known as a Union of Hadiach, was ultimately rejected by the Sejm and remained a political fantasy.

How can we summarize the balance of the Commonwealth experience for Ukraine? Polish-born Ukrainian-American Byzantinist and Slavist, Ihor Ševčenko, in his essay *Poland in Ukrainian History* did it this way:

Polish domination gave the Ukrainian elite a chance to participate in the currents of Western civilization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. . . . The Ukrainian and Belarusian lands are the only Orthodox Slavic territories that widely experienced the Renaissance . . . , and, above all, its aftermath – the baroque and the Counter-Reformation. They are also the only Orthodox lands where intense contacts with Protestants took place, although little of that rubbed off from the upper classes onto peasants and rank-and-file Cossacks. For a period ranging between one century and four, depending on region, Ukrainians participated in the life of a non-centralized state in which individual freedom and the privileges of the upper class of society were respected.¹¹

How could we summarize the balance of the Commonwealth experience for Poland? Ihor Ševčenko mentioned a particular type of “eastern” Polish accent, the formation of a class of Polish or Polonized *magnats* who owned enormous *latifundia*, kept

10 Serhii Plokhy, “Hadiach 1658: Tvorennia mitu”, in: Viktor Brekhunenko (ed.), *Hadiatska unii 1658 roku*, Kyiv: Instytut arkhеоhrafii ta dzhereloznavstva im. M. S. Hrushevs'koho NAN Ukraїny, 2008, 281-305.

11 Ihor Ševčenko, “Poland in Ukrainian History”, in: Ihor Ševčenko, *Ukraine between East and West: Essays on Cultural History to the Early Eighteenth Century*, Edmonton – Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1996, 112-130, here 127.

private armies, and opposed any centralized executive, and, by doing so, prevented Poland from transforming into a modern state.¹²

Some Polish thinkers suggested that, by “enlarging itself to the east”, Poland has “created an ulcer on the east side of her body that poisoned her blood”.¹³ After the Second World War, Włodzimierz Bączkowski, one of the most engaged Polish commentators on the Ukrainian question, repeated this point by claiming that, as a result of territorial expansion to the East, Poland “had exposed itself to the decomposing influences (*wpływy rozkładowe*) of East Slavic societies”.¹⁴

One could also say that in the early modern period Poland became a window to the West for Ukraine, and Ukraine became a birthplace of Polish imperial fantasies. The mythology of particular Polish borderlands (*Kresy*) developed later, but this development was inextricably related to notions of the “borders of 1772” (the year of the first Partition of *Rzeczpospolita*). In the late 18th century, three imperial powers – Austria, Prussia and Russia – partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. After then, the nobility’s *Rzeczpospolita* was generally viewed as the worst example of political chaos and backwardness, when compared to the well-ordered enlightened absolutism of Austria, Prussia and Russia.¹⁵

The historiographical rehabilitation of *Rzeczpospolita* came much later, in the context of the post-communist transformation of Eastern and Central Europe. Polish historians began to stress the achievements of the Polish-Lithuanian Com-

12 Ibid, 122.

13 See, for instance: Wilhelm Feldman, *Stronnictwa i programy polityczne w Galicji 1846–1906*, Cracow: Książka, 1907.

14 Włodzimierz Bączkowski, “Sprawa ukraińska”, *Kultura* 7–8, 1952, 64–84, here 80.

15 Marian Serejski, *Europa a rozbiory Polski*, Warsaw: PWN, 2009.

monwealth in parliamentarism, self-government, civil rights and religious tolerance, and criticized its sole association with modern Poland.¹⁶ Some Belarusian and Lithuanian colleagues responded positively, claiming that, thanks to *Rzeczpospolita*, Belarus “had a rich experience of democratic order and deep roots of parliamentarism”.¹⁷

One of the leading Ukrainian historians, Natalia Yakovenko, suggested to reinterpret the role of the Commonwealth in Ukraine’s history, to abandon both the populist and the Soviet claim of the “oppressive offensive of Polish *magnats* into Ukraine”, and to re-think Khmelnytsky’s uprising as a murderous civil war, rather than a national-liberation revolution.¹⁸

The international attention to non-nationalistic forms of political organization and historical alternatives to ethnic nationalism made *Rzeczpospolita* an attractive (and provocative) comparison to the European Union. Timothy Snyder explicitly

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- 16 Probably the best example is: Andrzej Sulima Kamiński, *Historia Rzeczypospolitej wielu narodów. 1505-1795*, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2000. Ukrainian edition: Andrzej Sulima Kamiński, *Istoriia Rechypospolytoï iak istoriia bahatiokh narodiv, 1505-1795*, Kyiv: Nash chas, 2011.
 - 17 Henadz Sahanovich, *Narys gistoryi Belarusi ad starazhytnastsi da kantsa XVIII stagoddzia*, Minsk: Entsyklapedyks, 2001, 350. Polish edition: Henadz Sahanowicz, *Historia Białorusi do końca XVIII wieku*, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2001. On Lithuania, see: Rimvydas Petrauskas, “Der litauische Blick auf der polnisch-litauischen Staatsverband – “Verlust der Staatlichkeit” oder Bewahrung der Parität”, *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 53/3, 2004, 351-362; Igor Kąkolewski, Michał Kopczyński (eds.), *Pod wspólnym niebem: Rzeczpospolita wielu narodów, wyznań, kultur (XVI – XVIII w.)*, Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2012.
 - 18 Natalia Yakovenko, *Ukraïn'ska shliakhta z kintsia XIV do seredyiny XVII stolittia: Volyn' i Tsentraln'na Ukraïna*, Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1993; Natalia Yakovenko, *Narys istoriï seredniovichnoï ta ranniomodernoï Ukraïny*, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2009. Yakovenko’s synthesis, first published in Ukrainian in 1997, was also translated into Polish: *Historia Ukrainy od czasów najdawniejszych do końca XVIII wieku*, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2000, and Russian: *Ocherk istorii Ukrainy v srednie veka i rannee novoe vremia*, Moscow: NLO, 2012.

made such a claim in his influential book “The Reconstruction of Nations”:

Warsaw and Vilnius, as we might say today, pooled their sovereignty at Lublin to establish the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was far greater in territory, ambitions, and European significance than the two small nation-states that today bears its names. Its citizens believed that they had created the best political order in the world. Their republic embodied practices of democracy, civil rights, religious toleration, and constitutional rule now regarded as European par excellence; but also created or sustained languages, religions, and myths now seen as Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian. The appeal of the early modern Commonwealth had more to do with a political ideal than with specific institutions, which is why its attraction outlived its polity by more than a century. Something similar can be said about the postmodern European Union: it is attractive not for its *acquis communautaire*, its body of law and practices, but for its *savoir-faire*, its reputation and civilization.¹⁹

Does such comparison really make sense? And are all of the positive visions of the Commonwealth completely free of Polish imperial fantasies and connotations? Some historians, like Daniel Beauvois, strongly rejected the idealization of the *szlachta* democracy and claims that *Rzeczpospolita* was the first country in Europe to introduce civic liberties.²⁰ He also compared Polish

19 Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999*, New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2003, 293.

20 See: Daniel Beauvois, *Polacy na Ukrainie, 1831–1863: Szlachta polska na Wołyniu, Podolu i Kijowszczyźnie*, Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1987; Daniel

literary perceptions of its eastern borderlands to French discourses about Algeria, and openly suggested to 'put an end' to the *Kresy* mythology.²¹

The comparison to Algeria inevitably implies both an imperial and colonial perspective to Commonwealth history. Could the *Rzeczpospolita* be described as an Empire? Maybe, a very peculiar type of Empire?²² An Empire whose expansion was not based on the classical relation between metropole and colonies? An Empire that was not a "multinational federation", but a polity where all political identifications were socially limited and

Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński: Szlachta, carat i lud na Wołyniu, Podolu i Kijówszczyźnie, 1793-1914*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005; Daniel Beauvois, *Gordiev uzet Rossijskoj imperii: Vlast', shliakhta i narod na Pravoberezhnoj Ukraine (1793-1914)*, Moscow: NLO, 2010. The thoughtful works of Beauvois are still not completely free from elements of essentialization. For instance, in his harsh critique of the Polish nobility's "collaboration" with the Russian Empire and its attitudes towards peasants, he accuses the *szlachta* from a present-day political perspective and prefers to ignore the late Enlightenment and early Romanticism treatment of those issues. More on this, see: Andrei (Andrii) Portnov, "Izobretaia Rech' Pospolituui", *Ab Imperio* 1, 2007, 46-62.

- 21 Daniel Beauvois, "Mit "Kresów wschodnich" czyli jak mu położyć kres", in: Wojciech Wrzesiński (ed.), *Polskie mity polityczne XIX - XX w.*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1994, 93-105. The comparison between Polish politics in Ukraine and French politics in Algeria was also openly made by the Polish-American historian Andrzej Sulima Kamiński in 1984: "U roli moral'noï j polityčnoï slipoty", in: Paweł Kowal, Jan Oldakowski, Monika Zuchniak (eds.), *My ne je ukraińofilamy: Polska polityczna dumka pro Ukraïnu i ukraińsiv: Antolohiia tekstiv*, Kyiv: Kyjevo-Mohylians'ka Akademiia, 2012, 358-371.
- 22 See: Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, "Czy Rzeczpospolita była imperium? Imperial turn w historiografii, strukturę państwowe w Europie Środkowowschodniej i 'imperialna' warstwa pojęciowa w XVI - XVII wieku", in: Bogusław Dybaś, Paweł Hanczewski, Tomasz Kempa (eds.), *Rzeczpospolita w XVI-XVIII wieku: Państwo czy wspólnota?*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2007, 43-57; Andrzej Nowak, "Was the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth an Empire?", in: Andrzej Nowak, *History and Geopolitics: A Contest for Eastern Europe*, Warsaw: Institute of International Affairs, 2008, 37-58.

where there were no “Poles”, “Ukrainians” or “Lithuanians” in the modern sense.²³

After the Partitions of 1772, 1793 and 1795, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceased to exist. As Roman Szporluk once argued:

[Russia] did not want to know that the partitions of the Rzeczpospolita meant Europe's entry into the Russian Empire and Russia's entry into Europe . . . and it was the Polish question that became the fundamental reason for the collapse of imperial Russia.²⁴

The end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries could be described as a time of open possibilities, of the coexistence and competition of territorial- and history-based concepts of nationality versus the ethnic- and language-based. The Polish case is of particular interest in this respect, because here the process of modern nation-state formation started from a political phase: from the definition of the nation as a sovereign community of citizens, not of a people with the same ethnicity.²⁵ This community was limited to the noble stratum, and language or religion did not make a Polish peasant closer to the *szlachcic*.²⁶ The very idea of winning over peasants for the nation's cause only came to the political *Avant scène* later.

23 Andrzej Nowak, Roman Szporluk, “Była li Polsha imperiej?”, *Ab Imperio* 1, 2007, 23–42, here 29. [first published in Polish in: Andrzej Nowak, *Od Imperium do Imperium: Spojrzenia na historie Europy Wschodniej*, Cracow: Arcana, 2004, 337–355].

24 Paweł Kowal, Roman Szporluk, “Co sobie nawzajem zawdzięczamy”, *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 3, 2018, 19–30, here 26.

25 Andrzej Walicki, *Idea narodu w polskiej myśli oświeceniowej*, Warsaw: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 2000.

26 Tomasz Kizwalter, *O nowoczesności narodu. Przypadek Polski*, Warsaw: Semper, 1999, 42–90.

In the late 18th century, the Russian Empire was an estate-dynastic monarchy that paid little attention to the ethnic composition of the population in the “ex-Polish provinces” and had considered members of the *szlachta* stratum first and foremost as landlords and only after them did they consider the Poles. For this reason, it was not easy (and not necessary) for the Russian administration or intellectual elites to recognize the Orthodox peasants in Belarus or Ukraine as their “natives” in the beginning of the 19th century.²⁷

Two National Projects in Search of an Ideal Motherland

The Ukrainian national project in the 19th century adopted an ethnographic principle and claimed a goal of cultural autonomy for all territories with a predominantly Ukrainian peasant population. Its cultural claims, at least at first glance, seemed to be rather harmless for a number of imperial officials in both the Austrian and Russian Empires who were much more preoccupied with the stronger and politically-mature Polish national movement. At the same time, at least under particular circumstances, the “Ukrainian card” was used in both empires to set parties against one another. In the 19th century, Polish political discourse tended to perceive any “Ruthenian/Ukrainian” identity that would not integrate into the Polish nation as Russian or Habsburg intrigue, and Russian discourse gradually portrayed the Ukrainian movement as “Polish intrigue”.²⁸

27 See more in Andrij Portnow (Andrii Portnov), “Jak Rosja poznawała „swoich”. Obrazy ziem „nowo nabytych” wskutek rozbiorów Rzeczypospolitej w świadomości społecznej i polityce władz Cesarstwa Rosyjskiego (koniec XVIII – początek XIX wieku)”, in: Łukasz Adamski (ed.), *O ziemię naszą, nie waszą. Ideowe aspekty procesów narodotwórczych w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej*, Warsaw: Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia, 2017, 153–182.

28 Michael Moser, *Ukrains'kyi P'iemont? Descho pro znachennia Halychyny dlia for-*

All of this created a challenging context for the development of the Ukrainian national movement. As Serhii Plokyh noted,

To survive and extend its influence over the Ukrainian masses, the Ukrainian national movement had to make its way between the two East European cultural giants, who regarded Ukrainians as raw material for their respective nation-building projects . . . without finding the right course between Ukraine's West, represented by Poland, and its East, represented by Russia, the Ukrainian national project would never have come to fruition.²⁹

In the 19th century, literature played a particular role in what local intellectuals tended to call a “national awakening”. The most prominent Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko promoted a mythology of Cossacks that aimed “to reveal the innermost truths about Ukrainian existence and to serve as a touchstone on which to base an ideal future”.³⁰ Shevchenko romanticized the anti-Polish struggle of the Cossacks. At the same time, he was very critical of Khmelnytsky's decision to “bring the Cossacks under the tsar's hand”. In one of his poems, he wrote: “It is true, yes, Poland fell, / But in her fall, she crushed us”.³¹

muвання, розбудови збереження української мови, Kyiv – Lviv: Smoloskyp, 2011, 73.

- 29 Serhii Plokyh, “Between Poland and Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky's Dilemma, 1905–1907”, *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 33–34, 2008–2009, 387–399, here 387–388.
- 30 George G. Grabowicz, “Three Perspectives on the Cossack Past: Gogol', Ševčenko, Kuliš”, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 5/2, 1981, 171–194, here 189.
- 31 On Shevchenko's poetry and its importance to the Ukrainian national movement, see: George G. Grabowicz, *The Poet as Mythmaker: A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Ševčenko*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1982; Jędy Alwart, *Mit Taras Ševčenko Staat machen. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik in der Ukraine vor und nach 1991*, Köln: Böhlau, 2012.



Fig. 3
Taras Shevchenko
on a stamp of the
Ukrainian People's
Republic (from the
collection of A.
Brusnyi).

In the second half of the 19th century, the leaders of Ukrainian movement in Russia eagerly expressed their anti-Polish sentiments while simultaneously stressing their cultural differences and the political inevitability of a joint development of Ukraine and Russia. This point was eloquently made by historian, Mykola/Nikolai Kostomarov, who, in 1861, argued that the Southern Rus' (Ukraine), with its prevailing personal freedoms (in contrast to the Northern Rus', with its traditions of communal life and political autocracy), had historically proved its "incapacity for state life". Therefore, for Kostomarov, the two East Slavic nationalities – Russians and Ukrainians – perfectly complemented each other. At the same time, Kostomarov also highlighted the antagonism between Ukrainians and Poles: "They are like two close branches that developed completely differently: one people is profoundly democratic, the other profoundly aristocratic".³²

32 N. I. Kostomarov, *Dve russkie narodnosti*, Kyiv – Kharkiv: Maidan, 1991, 69.

The next year, in 1862, leading Ukrainian writer, Panteleimon Kulish, developed Kostomarov's point even further:

The Polish and the Ukrainian characters, over the centuries, dispersed to such a distance that a Pole, with all his diligence, cannot enter the Ukrainian nature, and a Ukrainian, with all the bait, does not want to enter the Polish nature. . . . If you [the Poles] are noblemen softened and enlightened by the spirit of the age, then we are Cossacks also breathing new, modern life. . . . You say, you brought European enlightenment into our peasant hut. Thank you for the work, although you brought it to yourself; if you brought it to us, then the hut is still ours and, in it, you are strangers.³³

In 1862, Kulish radically rejected the historical and civilizational arguments of Polish writers. For twenty years, he argued for Ukrainian-Polish reconciliation, praised Polish high culture and criticized the Cossacks – the typical heroes of Ukrainian Romanticism. A man of different moods, Kulish frequently changed sides and his writings were full of contradictions.³⁴

First published in *Osnova*. 1861. No. 3. On Kostomarov's historical views, see Ya. A. Pinchuk, *Mykola Ivanovych Kostomarov*, Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1992; Thomas M. Prymak, *Mykola Kostomarov: A Biography*, Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press, 1996.

33 Panteleimon Kulish, "Poliakam ob ukrainsakh", *Osnova* 2, 1862, 67–86, here 75–76. On the history of this essay, see Viktor Dudko, "Stattia Panteleimona Kulisha "Poliakam od ukrainsakh" (1862): heneza, konteksty, interpretatsii", *Sivrians'kyi litopys* 4, 2006, 167–172.

34 On Kulish's personality, see this brilliant article: Yurii Shevelov, "Kulishevi lysty i Kulish u lystakh", *Suchasnist'* 12, 1983, 7–38. See also: Dmytro Doroshenko, *Panteleimon Kulish*, Kyiv – Leipzig: Ukraïns'ka nakladnia, 1920; Viktor Petrov, *Panteleimon Kulish u piatdesiati roky: zhyttia, ideolohiia, tvorchist'*, Kyiv: Vseukraïns'ka Akademiia Nauk, 1929; Yevhen Nakhlik,

Still, his “pro-Polish” publications proved to be much less influential than his novels and essays that praised the Cossacks and their alliances with Moscow.

In the same year, professor of history at St. Vladimir’s University in Kyiv, Volodymyr Antonovych, published his programmatic essay “My Confession” (*Moia ispoved’*). Being born and raised as a Polish nobleman Antonovych made a conscious choice in favor of Ukrainian identity and insisted that,

those noble Poles who live in the Southern-Russian land, have before the court of their own conscience only two options: to return to the nationality abandoned by their ancestors, or to resettle to the Polish lands inhabited by Polish people.³⁵

Antonovych’s student, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, a principal critic of the Russian imperial historical narrative, became a professor of Eastern European history at the Lviv University in Austria in 1894. While deconstructing the “traditional scheme of Russian history” by separating Ukrainian history from it,³⁶ Hrushevsky

Panteleimon Kulish: osobystist’, pys’mennyk, myslytel’, vol. 1-2, Kyiv: Ukrain’s’kyi pys’mennyk, 2007.

- 35 V. B. Antonovych, *Moia spovid’: Vybrani istorychni ta publitsystychni tvory*, Kyiv: Lybid’, 1995, 88. First published in *Osnova. 1862. No. 1*. On Antonovych’s biography and writings, see this collection: Viktor Korotky, Vasyl’ Ul’ianovs’kyi (eds.), *Syn Ukraïny: Volodymyr Bonifatiiovych Antonovych*, vol. 1-3, Kyiv: Zapovit, 1997.
- 36 Mykhailo Hrushevsky, “The Traditional Scheme of “Russian” History and the Problem of a Rational Organisation of the History of the East Slavs”, *SLAVISTICA: Proceedings of the Institute of Slavistics of the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences* 55, 1966, 7-16. Hrushevsky wrote this essay in 1903, which was first published in Ukrainian in 1904 in a collection of articles, “Statji po slavianovedeniu”, in Saint-Petersburg. A overview of Hrushevsky’s writings provides: Serhii Plokhyy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.

also severely criticized Polish claims to *Rzeczpospolita's* historical borders and Polish paternalistic attitudes to the Ukrainians.³⁷

The Ukrainian national movement developed both in the Russian and the Austrian Empires. The movement in the Austrian Empire, with its less repressive language and religious politics, came to be considered as a Piedmont of the Ukrainian project until the end of the 19th century. This happened largely due to the Greek Catholic Church, who became the patron of Ukrainophile orientations. While the Uniate Church was outlawed in the Russian Empire, it developed freely in the Habsburg Empire. As John-Paul Himka has concluded, it was largely because of the Greek-Catholic Church that the Galician Ruthenians did not simply assimilate to Polish nationality, and “the crucial factor in the victory of Ukrainophilism in Galician Rus’ was the Austrian state”.³⁸

In 1883, leading Ukrainian writer in East Galicia, Ivan Franko, published his essay, “Our View on the Polish Question”, where he made the same points as Ukrainian intellectuals from Russia had made in 1860s. For Franko, the very idea of “historical Poland” was “politically naïve, ethnographically pointless, and pretty harmful for the Polish nationality itself”.³⁹ Franko

37 Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Za ukraïns'kyi maslak (V spravi Kholmshyny)*, Kyiv, 1907. Re-published in: Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Tvory u 50 tomakh*, vol. 1, Lviv: Svit, 2002, 536–544. See also a special publication on Hrushevsky's views on Poland with the claim that he “reduced historical ties [between the two nations] to the point that Ukrainian people were robbed by the Poles”: Łukasz Adamski, *Nacjonalista postępowy: Mychajło Hruszewski i jego poglądy na Polskę i Polaków*, Warsaw: PWN, 2011. For an overview of historiographic debates, see: Stephen Velychenko, *Shaping Identity in Eastern Europe and Russia: Soviet-Russian and Polish Accounts of Ukrainian History 1914–1991*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

38 John-Paul Himka, “The Construction of Nationality in Galician Rus’: Icarian Flights in Almost All Directions”, in: Ronald G. Suny, Michael D. Kennedy (eds.), *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001, 109–169, here 145.

39 Ivan Franko, “Nash pohliad na pol's'ke pytannia”, in: Ivan Franko, *Zibrannia*

rejected the ideas of a Poland-led federation of non-Russian people, stressing that “the Poles never wanted equality, but domination, not a free federation, but enslavement”. For him, the peasant character of the Ukrainian nation and literature was not an obstacle, but an advantage:

Our literature without lords (*bez paniv*) ought to become a people’s literature right away. . . . Precisely the lack of the lords could become a precondition for the quicker and more direct development of our people.⁴⁰

A very different view on the elite issue was presented by another Pole by-birth who made a conscious choice in favor of Ukrainian identity – Viacheslav/Wacław Lypynsky. Unlike Antonovych, Lypynsky was proud of his noble origin and praised the *szlachta* for their “statehood value” (*derzhavotvorchyia vartist*).⁴¹ Still, he was no less convinced in the fundamental importance of “separating Ukraine from Poland”. For this conservative Christian thinker, the main challenge for the Ukrainian movement was “to separate itself from Poland, but in such a way that will not

tvoriv u 50-ty tomakh, vol. 45, Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1986, 204–220, here 204–205. The best intellectual biography of Ivan Franko is: Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Prorok u svoij Vitchyzni: Franko ta joho spil’nota (1856–1886)*, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006. Polish edition: Jarosław Hrycak, *Prorok we własnym kraju: Iwan Franko i jego Ukraina (1856–1886)*, Warsaw: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011.

- 40 Ivan Franko, “Khutorna poeziia Kulisha”, in: Ivan Franko, *Zibrannia tvoriv u 50-ty tomakh*, vol. 26, Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1980, 174–178, here 178.
- 41 On Lypynsky, see the special issue of *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 9/3–4, 1985, and this collection of conference papers: Jarosław Pelenski (ed.), *Viacheslav Lypynskyi. Istoryko-politolohichna spadshyna i suchasna Ukraïna*, Kyiv – Filadelfia: Skhidnoievropejskyi doslidnyi instytut im. V. Lypyns’koho, 1994. See also: Bogdan Gancarz, *My, szlachta ukraińska... Zarys życia i działalności Wacława Lipińskiego 1882–1914*, Krakow: Arcana, 2007. An insightful introduction into Lypynsky’s views on history could be found in Viacheslav Zaïkyn, “Viacheslav Lypynskyi iak istoryk”, *Dzvony* 6/15, 1932, 473–490.

mean drowning in the Russian sea”.⁴²

The main challenge for the modern Polish national project was a bit different. Because of the fact that the area of the Polish *szlachta* settlement significantly outsized the area with predominantly Polish peasants, the acceptance of the ethnic concept of Polish nationhood would automatically mean the dramatic “reduction of Motherland”.⁴³ In other words, Polish patriots had to choose between two radically different conceptions of the Polish nation: the old, historical conception of a multiethnic political nation and the new, narrowly ethnic “peasantist” view.⁴⁴

At the same time, as Roman Szporluk pointed out,

The making of a modern Ukraine was taking place not in “Austria” and “Russia” . . . but in a social world – the social space – where an overwhelming majority of would-be Ukrainians lived under Polish nobles. The modernizers of the Polish nation promised those serfs that they would become free and Polish at the same time.⁴⁵

That was the basic promise and assumption of two Polish uprisings against the Russian Empire in 1830 and 1863.⁴⁶ After

42 Viacheslav Lypyn's'kyi, *Lysty do bratviv-khliborobiv pro ideiu i orhanizatsiiu ukraïns'koho monarkhizmu*, Vienna: Carl Herrmann, 1926, XXV.

43 Walicki, *Idea narodu w polskiej myśli*, 121, 141.

44 Andrzej Walicki, *Poland Between East and West: The Controversies over Self-Definition and Modernization in Partitioned Poland*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1994, 38. See also: Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

45 Roman Szporluk, “Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State”, *Daedalus* 126/3, 1997, 85–149. here 102.

46 For a comprehensive analysis of competing Polish, Russian and Ukrainian Romantic conceptions of nationality, see: Serhiy Bilenky, *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian Political Imaginations*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012.

the first uprising Russia abolished the Kingdom of Poland with its own liberal constitution, parliament and army. After the second uprising the imperial government turned into systematic anti-Polish politics which also included serious attempts to fight for the support of local non-Polish peasants.⁴⁷

Throughout the 19th century, the majority of Polish writers and political thinkers believed in the possibility of preserving the borders of 1772 in a future Poland. They also insisted on cultural differences between the Ukrainians (usually called “Ruthenians”) and the Russians. At the same time, they also tended to convince themselves that, despite some ethnic peculiarities and religious differences, “the Ruthenians and the Liakhs [a pejorative name for the Poles in Ukrainian folk tradition – A. P.] ... always constituted one Polish people”⁴⁸.

In 1897, the leader of the nationalistic political camp *Narodowa Demokracja* (national democrats), Roman Dmowski, expressed his deep conviction that “Ruthenian culture could only become the foundation for a movement with an exclusively cultural character”. His supporter, Ludwik Poplawski, speculated that,

the development of Polish colonization will convince the Ruthenian politicians more effectively that any arguments that the norm of relations between our two nationalities cannot be struggle, but must be peaceful cohabita-

47 Publications on the topic include: Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007; Mikhail Dolbilov, *Russkij kraj, chuzhaja vera: Etnokonfessional'naja politika imperii v Litve i Belorussii pri Aleksandre II*, Moscow: NLO, 2010.

48 Stefan Buszczyński, *Podole, Wołyń i Ukraina*, Lwów: Korner Piller, 1862, 11. For more examples, see: Andrei (Andrii) Portnov, “Naselenie zapadnykh okrain Rossijskoj imperii v polskikh memuarakh pervoj treti XIX veka”, *Slavianovedenie* 5, 2006, 60–67.

tion and cooperation.⁴⁹

Dmowski and his followers rejected the claims of Ukrainians' right for self-determination and believed that Poles have "a right to lead" Ukraine "to progress" as "the only intellectual and economic power" in the region.⁵⁰

Willingly stressing the differences between Ruthenians and Russians, Polish intellectuals would barely question the "cultural inferiority" of Ukrainian peasants and their "natural longing" to the Polish culture. As Brian Porter put it,

This was tolerance of those who felt they could afford to be tolerant because time and history were on their side. . . . It was a model that worked only as long as the younger brothers were willing to accept their designed role. . . . Poles were perhaps unique in that they saw themselves as a European society engaged in a civilizing mission vis-à-vis a set of Eastern peoples, while simultaneously being subjected to imperial domination by one such "Oriental" land (Russia).⁵¹

Similarly telling is how Polish discourse on the non-Polish population of the old eastern borderlands of *Rzeczpospolita* resembled in many ways the German colonial discourse on Poles and

49 Both quotes are taken from Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 225, 226.

50 On Dmowski and his views, see: Roman Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja 1893-1939: Ze studiów nad dziejami myśli nacjonalistycznej*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1980; Władysław Bułhak, *Dmowski - Rosja a kwestia polska*, Warsaw: Neriton, 2000; Krzysztof Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski: biografia*, Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 2006; Andrzej Walicki, "The Troubling Legacy of Roman Dmowski", *East European Politics and Societies* 14, 1, 2000, 12-46.

51 Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 188.

the “wild East”.⁵²

If national democrats believed in the political (if not cultural) assimilation of Ruthenians, their main opponents – Polish socialists, headed by Józef Piłsudski – developed a utopia of a Eastern European federation under Polish leadership and united against Russia.⁵³ In 1911, one of the most prominent supporters of socialist federal plans, Leon Wasilewski, called for the acceptance of the national character of Ukrainians and for the support of their independence aspirations against Russia. He also rightly predicted the Ukrainian-Polish conflict over Lviv/Lwów because “such a conflict is inevitable if two nationalities – the one, socially and politically privileged, and the other, humiliated – populate certain areas together”.⁵⁴

At the same time, Lviv-based Ukrainian geographer, Stepan Rudnytsky, rhetorically asked: “How could the historico-geographical conception of Poland be made to harmonize with

52 A good point of departure is Sebastian Conrad, “Internal Colonialism in Germany: Culture Wars, Germanification of the Soil, and the Global Market Imaginary”, in: Bradley Naranch, Geoff Eley (eds.), *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, Durham – London: Duke University Press, 2014, 246-264. Important theoretical observations can also be found in: Tara Zahra, “Looking East: East Central European “Borderlands” in German History and Historiography”, *History Compass* 3, 2005, 1-23. See also Wolfgang Wippermann, *Der „deutsche Drang nach Osten“. Ideologie und Wirklichkeit eines politischen Schlagwortes*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981; Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to Present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; Kristin Kopp, *Germany's Wild East: Constructing Poland as Colonial Space*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012, and others.

53 More on Piłsudski and his views, see: Marian K. Dziewanowski, *Joseph Piłsudski: A European Federalist, 1918-1922*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1969; Włodzimierz Suleja, *Józef Piłsudski*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2004; Andrzej Nowak, “Józef Piłsudski: A Federalist or an Imperialist?”, in: Nowak, *History and Geopolitics*, 169-186.

54 Leon Wasilewski, *Ukraina i sprawa ukraińska*, Cracow: Książka, 1911, 218. More on Wasilewski see: Barbara Stoczewska, *Litwa, Białoruś, Ukraina w myśli politycznej Leona Wasilewskiego*, Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1998.

the ethnographic conception of Ukraine?”⁵⁵ Rudnytsky proposed no answers to his question. Wasilewski appealed to the people of good will of both nations to do everything to minimize the scale of future violence. His plea proved to be more than relevant within less than ten years.

Inter-War Poland and its Ukrainians

Independent Poland appeared on the political map of Europe after the First World War and the collapse of the Russian and Austrian Empires. It proudly called itself *Druga Rzeczpospolita* (The Second Republic) even though, unlike the early-modern Commonwealth, it considered itself to be a national state of the Poles. Independent Ukraine failed to survive the turmoil of revolutions and wars in 1917–1921. Still, the Soviet Ukrainian republic became one of the founding members of the semi-federal Soviet Union.

In interwar Europe, the territories inhabited predominantly by Ukrainian populations were divided between the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania. Volhynia (which belonged previously to the Romanov Empire) and East Galicia (which belonged previously to the Habsburg Empire) became part of a new Polish state. This happened after the Ukrainian-Polish war over Lviv/Lwów and Galicia.

On October 19, 1918, the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (*Zakhidno-Ukrains'ka Narodna Respublika*, ZUNR) was proclaimed on all ex-Austrian territories with a predominant Ukrainian population. On November 1, 1918, Lviv, the capital

55 Stephen Rudnitsky, *Ukraine: The Land and its People*, New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1918, 152. Rudnytsky's text was first published in Ukrainian in Kyiv in 1910, then translated into German in Vienna in 1915.



Fig. 4
The Polish
Eaglets
Cemetery in Lviv.
Photo by Tetiana
Kabakova.

city of Austrian Galicia (with more than 200,000 inhabitants of whom ca. 62 % were Poles, 28 % Jews and less than 10% Ukrainians) was seized by Ukrainian military units. By November 7, this extended to the whole of East Galicia. The logic of the ZUNR proclamation was based on an ethnographic argument, according to which the territory had been Ukrainian until 1387 and “from an ethnographic standpoint it has remained so up until today”.⁵⁶ In the main city, Lviv/Lwów, though, Ukrainians were the minority. Fighting in the streets between Ukrainian and Polish units (the Jews declared neutrality) involved thousands of participants, hundreds of which were killed. Finally, on November, 22, 1918, the ZUNR forces left Lviv, and their retreat was followed by an anti-Jewish pogrom

56 Christoph Mick, *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914–1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City*, West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2016, 151. This book is a good overview of Lviv's complex history in the first half of the 20th century. See also Michał Klimecki, *Polsko-ukraińska wojna o Lwów i wschodnią Galicję 1918–1919*, Warsaw: Volumen, 2000; Ludwik Mroczka, *Spór o Galicję Wschodnią. 1914–1923*, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1998.

committed mostly by Polish soldiers.

On January, 22, 1919, ZUNR, having de-facto lost its territories, proclaimed a symbolical unification (*Akt Zluky*) with the Ukrainian Peoples Republic (UNR) in Kyiv, whose main enemy at that time were the Bolsheviks. On April 22, 1920, the head of the UNR government Symon Petliura signed an agreement with the chief of the Polish state Józef Piłsudski. In May 1920, Polish troops entered Kyiv, but quickly retreated. The price Petliura had to pay for Polish military assistance was his recognition of East Galicia belonging to Poland. This recognition was severely criticized by almost every Ukrainian political group as a fatal mistake or as an outright crime.⁵⁷ Petliura himself was aware of the situation and apparently told his colleagues:

Don't you know that with the Poles you could be either friends or enemies – there is no way of keeping neutrality with them. I have chosen the first option, because we had nothing for the second one.⁵⁸

The Petliura-Piłsudski agreement, clearly unequal, proved to be short-lived. On March 18, 1921, after an unsuccessful attack by the Red Army on Poland, official Warsaw signed a Riga peace treaty with Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine.⁵⁹ And on March

57 See: Mykhailo Hrushevsky, "Mizh Moskvoju i Warschawoju", *Boritiesia* – poborite 2, 1920, 1–18; Stepan Tomashivskyi, *Pid kolesamy istorii: Narysy i staty*, Berlin: Ukrains'ke slovo, 1922, Ivan Kedryn, *Paraleli v istorii Ukraïny: Z nakhody 50-richchia Ryz'koho Myru*, New York: Chervona Kalyna, 1971, 10–13, and others.

58 Ivan Ohienko, "Urochystyi vjzhd Symona Petliury do Kam'iantsia-Podil's'koho 1-ho travnia 1920 roku: Uryvok spomyniv", *Nasha kultura* 5, 1936, 330.

59 A brilliant analysis of the newly established Polish state politics towards Soviet Ukraine can be found in Jan Jacek Bruski, *Between Prometheus and Realpolitik: Poland and Soviet Ukraine, 1921–1926*, Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2017. Original Polish edition: Jan Jacek Bruski, *Między pro-*

15, 1923, the Allied Council of Ambassadors of Entente Countries recognized Poland's sovereignty over East Galicia. On the one hand, it seemed that the principle of historical borders had triumphed even in the age of nation's right for self-determination. On the other hand, the newly born Polish state faced a very serious challenge in its national politics. Almost 35% of the country's population was non-Polish (the two biggest national groups were Ukrainians and Jews). Furthermore, the Ukrainian minority was actually a majority in Poland's eastern regions, and constituted more than 68% in Volhynia and more than 50% in East Galicia.⁶⁰ As Polish conservative thinker and supporter of a peaceful and pragmatic solution to the Ukrainian problem, Jan Stanisław Łoś, put it,

On the one hand, there are too many Ukrainians within the Polish state, and on the other, too few. Too many to treat them like some insignificant part of something destined to dissolve in the Polish environment. . . . Still, there are too few Ukrainians to think that in a few decades a dualistic state like Austria-Hungary will emerge.⁶¹

Interwar Poland failed to resolve this challenge and to propose any constructive and systematic politics towards its Ukrainian

meteizmem a Realpolitik: II Rzeczpospolita wobec Ukrainy Sowieckiej, 1921–1926, Cracow: Historia Iagellonica, 2010.

- 60 The census of 1931 was designed to reduce the number of non-Poles, among others, by asking respondents about their “native language” and not “nationality”. According to official data in three East Galician voivodships the Poles constituted 47,1 % and Ruthenians (Ukrainians) – 45,3%. Historian Jerzy Tomaszewski has verified and corrected this data, suggesting that in East Galicia there were 52,4 % Ukrainians and 36,8% Poles. See Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Rzeczpospolita wielu narodów*, Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1985, 78. These numbers are generally accepted as well-grounded in Polish historiography. I am grateful to Tomasz Stryjek for his helpful comments on this matter.
- 61 Jan Stanisław Łoś, *Ukrains'ka sprava u spohadakh, lystuvanni i publitsystytsi. Vybrani tvory*, Kyiv: Nika-Tsentr, 2018, 85.

Fig. 5
Map of Poland
in 1933



population. Despite promising it internationally, the Polish government refused to open the Ukrainian university in Lviv and initiated policies aimed at the decrease of Ukrainian language instruction at schools.⁶² At the same time, Poland had to respond to Soviet Ukraine's claims to protect the rights of Ukrainians outside the USSR, and to the radical terrorist politics of the illegal Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) which treated Poland as an "occupying force". On August 29, 1931, the OUN killed the prominent supporter of "Ukrainian anti-Soviet Piedmont in Poland", Tadeusz Hołowko, and on June 15, 1934 assassinated the Minister of Interior, Bronisław Pieracki. In total, during 1920s and 1930s the radical Ukrainian

62 For more details, see: Andrzej Chojnowski, *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej rządów polskich w latach 1921-1939*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1979; Mirosława Papierzyńska-Turek, *Sprawa ukraińska w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1922-1926*, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1979; Ryszard Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska w Polsce w latach 1923-1929*, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989; Werner Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik. Staatsmacht und öffentliche Ordnung in einer Minderheitsregion 1918-1939*, Köln: Böhlau, 1999.

nationalists committed 63 assassinations, the victims of which were 25 Poles, 1 Russian, 1 Jew and 36 Ukrainians.⁶³ So, the OUN considered Ukrainians of moderate views who advocated the peaceful resolution of Polish-Ukrainian problem the main enemy of the “national revolution”.

In interwar Poland, radical nationalists never became the leading political force among Ukrainians, but their violent deeds influenced governmental policies which became inclined to apply repressions against Ukrainian institutions and societal moods.⁶⁴ Still, Polish politics regarding the Ukrainian question were not limited to repressions. In the Volhynian region, the government tried to create a local Polish-friendly Ukrainian project with very limited ties to Galicia – one could define it as a kind of alternative modernity, an attempt to hold back the tide of time, and to prevent the national development of Volhynian Ukrainians in a “Galician way”.⁶⁵ Especially after the Piłsudski coup d'état in May 1926, Poland attempted to promote the politics of *prometeizm* – supporting the anti-Soviet national movement of the USSR's nationalities in order to create a buffer zone between Poland and the USSR made up of independent Belarus

63 Alexander J. Motyl, “Nationalist Political Violence in Inter-War Poland, 1921–1939”, *East European Quarterly* 19/1, 1985, 45–55.

64 On the history of the OUN, see: Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism 1919–1929*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980; Roman Wysocki, *OUN w Polsce w latach 1929–1939: geneza, struktura, program, ideologia*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2003; Oleksandr Zaitsev, *Ukraïnskyi intehral'nyi natsionalizm (1920-ti – 1930-ti roky). Narysy intelektualnoi istorii*, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013. On the Polish policies of “Pacification” of East Galicia, see Roman Wysocki, *Patsyfikatsiia Halychyny 1930 roku: Dokumenty*, vol. 1, Lviv: Vydavnytstvo Ukraïns'koho Katolyts'koho Universytetu, 2019.

65 Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. See also Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Województwo wołyńskie 1921–1939: Elementy przemian cywilizacyjnych, społecznych i politycznych*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988.

Fig. 6
The graves of
Ukrainian
emigrants' at
Warsaw Wola
Orthodox
Cemetery.
Photo by
Viktoria
Serhiienko.



and Ukraine (but, of course, without Eastern Galicia).⁶⁶ Part of this process was the creation and financial support of the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Warsaw (opened in 1930) and the periodical “The Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin” (*Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński*), devoted to discussing Ukrainian-Polish matters.⁶⁷

In general terms, the national politics of interwar Poland was, as Włodzimierz Mędrzecki formulated it, first and foremost, negative – it was an attempt to stop, or at least to slow down, the development of Ukrainian national movement. As a result, the Second Republic’s citizens of non-Polish ethnic origin largely viewed the Polish state as a repressive institution.⁶⁸

66 For more details, see: Marek Kornat (ed.), *Ruch prometejski i walka o przebudowę Europy Wschodniej (1918–1940)*, Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2012.

67 For more details, see: Andrii Portnov, *Nauka u vyhnanni. Naukova i osvithnia dial'nist' ukraïns'koï emihratsiï v mizhvoiennij Polshi (1919–1939)*, Kharkiv: KhIFT, 2008, 58.

68 Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Kresowy kalejdoskop: Wędrówki przez ziemie wschodnie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939*, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2018, 391. See also Ulrich Schmid (ed.), *Schwert, Kreuz und Adler. Die Ästhetik des nationalistischen Diskurses in Polen (1926–1939)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz,

The same point was openly made by a number of Polish intellectuals already in the late 1930s. For instance, in their essay published in 1938, three Polish authors confirmed the numerous mistakes of governmental policy and recognized the fact that, because of such politics, Ukrainians in Galicia “are simply hostile towards the Polish state”.⁶⁹ They proposed to officially recognize the name “Ukrainians” (instead of the widely-used “Ruthenians”), to guarantee the equal rights for Ukrainian language teaching, to create a Ukrainian university and to allow the full cultural autonomy of Ukrainians in Poland.⁷⁰

Such measures were aimed to make Ukrainian citizens of the Second Republic loyal to the Polish state. For the majority of Ukrainian intellectuals, such a positive development seemed unrealistic. In 1923, Vasyl Bidnov, an émigré historian of the Orthodox Church, wrote to his colleague in Soviet Ukraine:

Poles remained the historical Poles. Polish democrats and socialists appeared to be no better than old *szlachta*. The religious repressions against the Orthodox Church and Polonisation are the same as in the 16th-17th centuries. There is nothing new on Polish soil.⁷¹

On December 1, 1936, one of the most prominent Ukrainian émigré poets, Yevhen Malanyuk, wrote in his diary: “With

2014 [Polish edition: Ulrich Schmid (ed.), *Estetyka dyskursu nacjonalistycznego w Polsce 1926-1939*, Warsaw: Scholar, 2014].

69 Aleksander Bocheński, Stanisław Łoś, Włodzimierz Bączkowski, *Problem polsko-ukraiński w Ziemi Czerwieńskiej*, Warsaw: Polityka, 1938, 10. See also Paweł Kowal (ed.), *Nie jesteśmy Ukraińofilami: Polska myśl polityczna wobec Ukraińców i Ukrainy. Antologia tekstów*, Wrocław: Kolegium Europy Wschodniej, 2008.

70 Jerzy Giedroyc (ed.), *Polska idea imperialna*, Warsaw: Polityka, 1938, 40.

71 S. V. Abrosymova (ed.), *Epistoliarna spadshyna akademika D. I. Yavornytskoho*, vol. 1, Dnipropetrovsk: Hamaliia, 1997, 43.

pathological, and perhaps masochistic stubbornness, the Polish nation seeks (objectively) to see a new Khmelnytsky uprising”.⁷² In 1939, Ukrainian émigré historian Dmytro Doroshenko wrote that, starting from the year 1918, “the Poles repeated – step by step – almost the same mistakes that, in the 18th century, caused the decline of the old Commonwealth”, and the worst of them was “the policies of reckless persecution of non-Polish people”.⁷³

The Second World War and its Aftermath

In September 1939, the Polish state was destroyed by aggressions of the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. West Ukraine and West Belarus were declared to be “re-unified” with Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus respectfully. They experienced intensive Sovietization until summer 1941,⁷⁴ when Germany started war against the Soviet Union and quickly occupied the

72 Yevhen Malanyuk, *Notatnyky (1936–1968)*, Kyiv: Tempora, 2008, 36.

73 Dmytro Doroshenko, “Pol’s’ka polityka u vidnosynakh do natsionalnykh men-shostej, golovno do ukraïns’koï”, *Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyschykh orhaniv vlady Ukraïny* [Kyiv]. Fond 4186. Opys 1. Sprava 7. Arkush 1–49. I am grateful to Viktoriia Serhiienko who shared this archival document with me. It should also be noted that Doroshenko prepared this text for publication in German immediately after the Third Reich’s invasion into Poland. Very similar arguments could be found in other publications by the prominent Ukrainian intellectuals of the time: Yuri Kosach, “Vidbudova Kodaka”, *Natsiia v pohodi*, 6, 1939, 3–5; Ivan Brusny [Ivan L. Rudnytsky], “Kinets’ Pol’shi”, *Natsiia v pohodi*, 3–4, 1940, 3–7; Homo politicus [Ivan Kedryn], *Prychyny upadku Pol’shchi*. Cracow: Ukraïns’ke vydavnytstvo, 1940.

74 For more details, see: Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002; Ola Hnatiuk, *Courage and Fear*, Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019 [first published in Ukrainian: *Vidvaha i strakh*, Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2015. The Polish edition: *Odwaga i strach*, Wrocław: Kolegium Europy Wschodniej, 2016].

whole of Ukraine. In the first days of the Nazi occupation, Lviv saw an attempt of Ukrainian nationalists to proclaim an independent Ukrainian state (which was not supported by German command) and an anti-Jewish pogrom.⁷⁵ When the OUN realized that the Third Reich would not support the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state, it started an underground war in which the main enemy was neither the Germans nor Soviets but the Poles.

The main area of that conflict was Volhynia, located in the north-east agricultural region of prewar Poland, with a population of 2.1 million, of whom Ukrainians constituted 67.94%, Poles 16.5%, and Jews 9.78%. In 1939, the region was occupied by the Soviet troops, in 1941 by the German Wehrmacht. Soon afterwards, the Volhynian Jews became victims of the Nazi policy of the “Final Solution”. In the autumn of 1942, the Bandera wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (in 1940, the OUN had split into two sections headed by Bandera and Melnyk) established its armed forces, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Already in 1942, the OUN Bandera (OUN-B) decided to “evict all the Poles”, and after the battle of Stalingrad in 1943, which signaled the Third Reich’s defeat and the reordering of borders in Europe, the “anti-Polish action” in Volhynia was aimed to guarantee that this region was not to remain part of Poland. It seems that the OUN-B leaders followed the experience of the First World War when postwar borders were mostly drawn according to the “national composition of the population”.

In other words, the “anti-Polish action” (a term used by the UPA itself) was based on the nationalistic logic to claim rights to land on the basis of ethnic purity, inspired by anti-Pol-

75 John-Paul Himka, “The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd”, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 53/2-4, 2011, 209-243.

ish sentiments and the experience of discriminatory politics under the interwar Polish state. In order to portray their pre-planned actions of ethnic cleansing as a spontaneous peasant riot, the UPA units killed Polish civilians with axes, rather than machine guns, and tried to mobilize local Ukrainian peasants. The brutality of the killings, which made no exception for women or children, and involved torturing victims and the destruction of Roman Catholic churches, is usually stressed in the stories of survivors.

The German administration in Volhynia never seriously tried to stop the ethnic cleansing against its Polish residents. The underground *Armia Krajowa* (AK), which was subordinate to the Polish government in exile, only later started the so-called “revenge- preventive operations” directed against Ukrainian villagers. Historians estimate the total number of the Polish victims of the UPA at around 100,000 (this number also includes the victims of the “anti-Polish action” in East Galicia which caused fewer mortalities than in Volhynia) and Ukrainian victims at 10,000–15,000.⁷⁶

76 Timothy Snyder, “The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943”, *Past and Present* 179, 2003, 197–234; Grzegorz Motyka, *Od rzezi wołyńskiej do akcji “Wisła”: Konflikt polsko-ukraiński 1943–1947*, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2011; Ihor Il’iushyn, *UPA i AK: Protystoiannia u Zachidnij Ukraïni (1939–1945 rr.)*, Kyiv: Kyievo-Mohylians’ka Akademiia, 2009. See also an earlier publication: Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy. Sprawa ukraińska w czasie II wojny światowej na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw: PWN, 1993, and a number of important articles: Andrii Zayarnyuk, “Vykonavtsi etnichnoi chystky poliakiiv na Volyni jak intelektual’na problema”, *Ukraïna: kul’turna spadshyna, national’na svidomist’, derzhavnist’* 10, 2003, 261–286; Jared McBride, “Peasants into Perpetrators: The OUN-UPA and the Ethnic Cleansing of Volhynia, 1943–1944”, *Slavic Review* 75/3, 2016, 630–654. Historiographic surveys include: Aleksandr Osipian, “Etnicheskie chistki i chistka pamiati: ukrainsko-pol’skoe pogranichie 1939–1947 gg. v sovremennoj politike i istoriografii”, *Ab Imperio* 2, 2004, 297–328; Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Der polnisch-ukrainische Konflikt im Historikerdiskurs: Perspektiven, Interpretationen und Aufarbeitung*, Wien: New Academic Press, 2017; Rafał Wnuk, “Recent

After the Second World War, Volhynia as well as East Galicia became part of Soviet Ukraine. The bitter historical irony is that it was Stalin, a man responsible for the bloody repressions against the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the Great Famine of 1932–33, who “re-unified Ukrainian lands” and brought the century-old dream of “Ukrainian ethnographic lands’ unity” (*sobornist*’) into a political reality. This unification happened under the communist regime, and included the pitiless struggle against the anti-Soviet nationalistic underground⁷⁷ and the ban of the Uniate Church.⁷⁸

The Polish government in exile, as well as its military force, *Armia Krajowa*, fought for the reestablishment of prewar Polish borders, but the Allies accepted Stalin’s territorial requests and decided to compensate them with the Polish People’s Republic (*Polska Republika Ludowa*, PRL), which incorporated the formerly East Prussian territories in the west – the “recovered lands” (*ziemie odzyskane*), as they were used to be called in postwar Poland.

Postwar Eastern Europe was also intended to become as nationally homogeneous as possible. From October 1944 to June 1946, the USSR and Poland organized population exchanges when 482,000 Ukrainians from Poland “returned” to Soviet Ukraine, and about 780,000 Poles and Jews from Ukraine resettled to Poland.⁷⁹ From April 28 until August 28, 1947, the

Polish Historiography on Polish-Ukrainian Relations During World War II and its Aftermath”, <https://ece.columbia.edu/files/ece/images/wnuk-1.pdf> [accessed 28.06.2020].

77 Grzegorz Motyka, Rafał Wnuk, Tomasz Stryjek, Adam F. Baran, *Wojna po wojnie: Antysowieckie podziemie w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w latach 1944–1953*, Gdańsk – Warsaw: Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, 2012.

78 Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939–1950)*, Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1996.

79 For more details, see: Catherine Gouseff, *Échanger Les Peuples: Le déplacement des minorités aux confins polono-soviétiques (1944–1947)*, Paris: Fayard, 2015.

government of socialist Poland conducted the so-called *Operation Vistula* to relocate 140,000 Ukrainians from the border region with the USSR to the western and northern areas taken from Germany.⁸⁰

As a result of all of these developments, including the consequences of the Holocaust and the postwar expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe, the entire region had lost its multicultural character. Postwar Poland did not just geographically move to the West, but, more importantly, for the very first time in its history, it became a de facto mono-national country with a population of more than 90% of Polish-speaking and Roman-Catholic citizens.

Postwar Soviet Ukraine (or, to be more precise, the Soviet Union) was the very first state in the entire history of Ukraine which included Lviv and Donetsk within the same boundaries.

Those boundaries were not easily accepted by Polish society and Polish émigré intellectuals.⁸¹ And it was not just geographical boundaries that were at stake. It is telling that, in 1952, Józef Łobodowski wrote: "It is high time for Poles to understand that Ukraine is a separate nation with the same right to self-determination as any other nation".⁸²

In Soviet-friendly socialist Poland, Ukrainian national-

80 Timothy Snyder, "To Resolve the Ukrainian Question Once and for All": The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943-1947", *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1/2, 1999, 86-120. See also Eugeniusz Misiło, *Akcja "Wiśła" 1947: Dokumenty i materiały*, Warsaw: Archiwum Ukraińskie, 2013.

81 For a comprehensive survey, see: Tomasz Stryjek, "Historiografia a konflikt o Kresy Wschodnie w latach 1939-1953: Radzieckie, rosyjskiej, ukraińskie i polskie prezentacje dziejów ziem wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej jako część „wojny ideologicznej” w okresie lat trzydziestych-pięćdziesiątych XX wieku", in: Krzysztof Jasiewicz (ed.), *Tygiel narodów: Stosunki społeczne i etniczne na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej, 1939-1953*, Warsaw: Rytm, 2002, 429-564.

82 Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości: Myśli o Polsce i Ukrainie*, Lublin: Test, 2015, 272.

ists were portrayed as the worst incarnation of evil, but the topic of the Volhynian massacre (as a historical event that happened outside the borders of the PRL) was silenced.⁸³ In the Soviet Union, the history of early modern Polish-Ukrainian relations was depicted as a glorious struggle of the Cossacks against “Polish invasion” and for the “re-unification with Russia”.⁸⁴

Searching for a New Model of Polish-Ukrainian Relations: Before and After 1989

Reflecting on past Ukrainian-Polish relations, Canadian-Ukrainian historian Ivan L. Rudnytsky, who was born and raised in interwar Poland, concluded that “the party mainly responsible for the past failures in Polish-Ukrainian relations are the Poles” was the stronger and more advanced side.⁸⁵ Rudnytsky attributed Ukraine’s relative weakness in this bilateral relation to its exposure to the steppe frontier and to its proximity to the rising power of Russia. According to him, “the Poles, regrettably, have used their relative advantage over their Ukrainian neighbors with slight display of statesmanship or foresight”.⁸⁶

When Ivan L. Rudnytsky published his text, he already collaborated with the Paris-based Polish journal *Kultura*, edited by Jerzy Giedroyc, but probably did not imagine how successful

83 Grzegorz Motyka, *W kręgu “Łun w Bieszczadach”*, Warsaw: Rytm, 2009; Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, “Obraz Ukrainca w polskim dialogu publicznym po drugiej wojnie światowej”, *Ukraina: kulturna spadshyna, natsionalna svidomist’, derzhavnist’* 10, 2003, 353–367.

84 Natalia Yakovenko, “Pol’shcha i poliaky u shkil’nykh pidruchnykakh istorii, abo vidlunnia dalekoho j blyz’koho mynuloho”, in: Natalia Yakovenko, *Paralel’nyi svit. Doslidzhennia z istorii uiavlen’ ta idei v Ukraïni XVI – XVII st.*, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2002, 366–382.

85 Ivan L. Rudnytsky, “Polish-Ukrainian Relations: The Burden of History”, in: Peter J. Potichnyj (ed.), *Poland and Ukraine: Past and Present*, 3–31, here 4.

86 Ibid, 5.

Kultura's approach to the "Ukrainian problem" would become and how deeply it would change both Polish politics and the sentiments of Polish society.

Already in the 1960s and 70s, *Kultura* clearly postulated that Poles should accept and guarantee Ukrainian rights to Lviv, as well as the rights of Lithuanians to Vilnius and of Belarusians to Hrodna. Only the unconditional support for the full self-determination of the neighboring nations and the open rejection of any form of imperialism could, according to *Kultura's* logic, secure Polish statehood against Russia. As Juliusz Mieroszewski put it:

In Eastern Europe, not just peace but also freedom should be established. There will be no place for any imperialism – neither Russian, nor Polish. We could not ask the Russians to return Kyiv to the Ukrainians while simultaneously demanding Lviv to return to Poland.⁸⁷

Kultura radically rejected the "ethnographic-civilizational" deadlock of thinking about the Polish-Ukrainian question and invited its readers to imagine something very different – a new Polish ULB (Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus) politics, which had strong pragmatic and moral dimensions.⁸⁸

When Giedroyc, Mieroszewski and others first formu-

87 Mieroszewski, Rosyjski "kompleks polski", 7.

88 For more details, see: Bogumiła Berdychowska, "Przeciw upiorom przeszłości ("Kultura" paryska o kwestii ukraińskiej – pierwsze dziesięć lat)", *Warszawskie Zeszyty Ukrainoznawcze* 6–7, 1999, 334–344. See also: Bogumiła Berdychowska (ed.), Jerzy Giedroyc: *Emigracja ukraińska, Listy 1950–1982*, Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2004 [Ukrainian edition: Bogumiła Berdychowska (ed.), *Jerzy Giedroyc ta ukraińska emigratsiia: Lystuvannia 1950–1982 rokiv*, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2008]. See also this collection of important *Kultura* articles: Bogumiła Berdychowska (ed.), *Prostir svobody: Ukraïna na shpal'takh paryz'koï "Kultury"*, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2005.



Fig. 7
The Volhynian
Monument in
Warsaw. Photo
by Miloš
Řezník.

lated their vision of the Polish ULB, there was no political body to take it up. But the situation changed dramatically following the Soviet *perestroika*, the Solidarność movement in Poland, the dissolution of the socialist camp, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In 1991, Poland was the first country to recognize the independence of Ukraine. Leading Polish politicians referred to *Kultura* and acknowledged their approval of Giedroyc's vision. Already in early 1990s, Poland became to be perceived as "Ukraine's advocate in Europe",⁸⁹ and the efforts of Polish elites in promoting dialogue and reconciliation with Ukraine were generally praised.

That does not mean, of course, that all historical controversies were just forgotten. The biggest issue for years was probably the opening of the Polish Eaglets Cemetery (*Cmentarz Orłat Lwowski*) in Lviv. This necropolis of mostly young Poles killed

89 See: Katarzyna Jędraszczyk, *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie: Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2010.

during the Ukrainian-Polish war for Lviv in 1918 served as the main symbolic space of Polish victory in interwar Lwów, and remained a sensitive issue for many Ukrainians. Finally, in 2005, the cemetery was opened by the presidents of the two countries – Alexander Kwaśniewski and Viktor Yushchenko.⁹⁰

A number of other important memorial places were opened soon thereafter. In 2006, Ukrainian President Yushchenko and Polish President Lech Kaczyński opened a memorial in Pawłokoma village, where, in March 1945, the unit of the Polish underground Home Army shot 365 local Ukrainians dead, and in February 2009, the two presidents visited a memorial in Huta Pieniacka (a village where ca. 1,000 Poles were murdered by the Ukrainian police detachment of the Waffen-SS Galizien-Division in late February 1944).⁹¹

Still, no memorial could cure the traumatic historical pain once and for all. The real challenge to Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation proved to be the topic of the Volhynian massacre: *Wołyn-43*. If, in the 1990s, Polish intellectuals and politicians, who clearly played a leading role in initiating and developing a dialogue with the Ukrainian side, tended not to stress too much the issue of the anti-Polish massacres committed by the UPA, in the second decade of the 21st century, *Wołyn-43* moved to the very center of Polish memory discourse.

In 2013, the lower house of the Polish parliament (the

90 A comprehensive analysis of the entire story could be found in: Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "The Border as Pain and Remedy: Commemorating the Polish-Ukrainian Conflict of 1918-1919 in Lviv and Przemyśl", *Nationalities Papers* 42/2, 2014, 242-268. See also: Katarzyna Jędraszczyk, *Cmentarz czy panteon? Konflikt wokół Cmentarza Orląt Lwowskich*, Poznań: Instytut Wschodni UAM, 2004.

91 Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "Memory Wars and Reconciliation in the Ukrainian-Polish Borderlands: Geopolitics of Memory from a Local Perspective", in: Georges Mink, Laure Neumayer (eds.), *History, Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Memory Games*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 173-192.

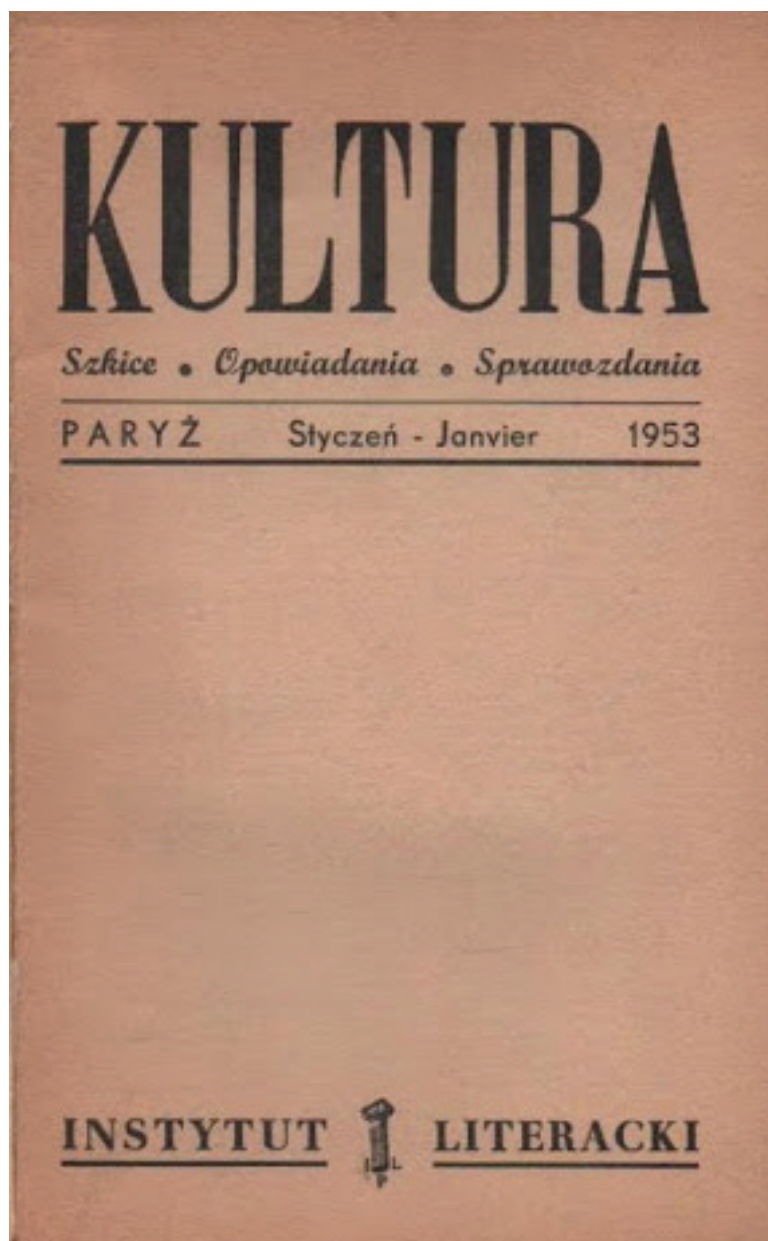


Fig. 8
One of the issues
of the
Paris-based
Kultura journals
edited by Jerzy
Giedroyc (from
the collection of
A. Brusnyi).

Sejm), dominated at the time by the liberal PO (*Platforma Obywatelska*) party, adopted the political declaration on *Wołyn-43* defining the UPA crime as “an ethnic cleansing with signs of genocide”. In July 2016, the newly elected Polish parliament with a constitutional majority of the conservative PiS (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) party adopted a new declaration on the *Wołyn-43* that called it a “genocide” and established a commemoration day for its victims on 11 July, the day of the coordinated UPA attack on tens of Polish villages on Volhynia. The same declaration expressed gratitude to those Ukrainians who rescued their Polish neighbors and aimed for “solidarity with present-day Ukraine, which fights against foreign aggression for its territorial integrity”.⁹² None of the 442 MPs of the *Sejm* voted against the resolution.

In 1993, a monument of a military symbol (a giant sword) was erected in the Polish capital of Warsaw to honor the Polish soldiers of the 27th Volhynian Armia Krajowa Infantry Division. In 2003, this monument was supplemented with new elements, – Volhynian stone candles –, which were meant to symbolize the twelve administrative units of the Volhynian region where the killings happened. In 2013, a new memorial was added: a seven-meter-high cross with an armless Christ. Zuzanna Bogumił argues that the sculpture of the armless Christ clearly places the entire memorial in the tradition of Polish religious messianism and martyrdom.⁹³ Through experiencing Christ-like suffering,

92 “Uchwała Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 22 lipca 2016 r. w sprawie oddania hołdu ofiarom ludobójstwa dokonanego przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na obywatelach II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w latach 1943–1945”, http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/proc8.nsf/uchwaly/625_u.htm [accessed: 28.06.2020].

93 Zuzanna Bogumił, “Pamięć o konfliktach i dialogach Polaków z sąsiadami zapisana w kulturowym krajobrazie stolicy”, in Joanna Kurczewska (ed.), *Przemiany kulturowe we współczesnej Polsce: ramy, właściwości, epizody*, Warsaw: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 2016, 416–440.

the Poles of Volhynia are transformed into innocent martyrs who died in the name of highest national values. Their moral purity and physical suffering are connected to the old Romantic notion of the Poles as “a Christ among nations”.

In such a mythological framework, *Wołyn-43* became much more than just an exceptionally tragic historical event, but a collective experience that bares eternal truth about the Polish nation. Reenactments of the Volhynian massacre (like the one organized in 2013 by some Polish far-right activists in the village of Radymno who proudly claimed that they reject the “outdated and deeply discredited Giedroyc myth”),⁹⁴ the widely-advertised “*Wołyn*” movie (2016) by Wojtek Smarzowski,⁹⁵ and numerous publications helped to promote *Wołyn-43* as a “newly discovered” and “repressed” proof of exceptional Polish martyrdom and sacrifice. For some critics of the ongoing memorial efforts, they also proved “the lack of readiness for a true dialogue with Ukrainians”.⁹⁶

The Volhynian topic also helped to reinstate and support the *Kresy* narrative. The very term *kresy* was invented in 19th-century Polish literature, and gained popularity largely due to Henryk Sienkiewicz’s very influential novel “With Fire and Sword” (1884) set during Khmelnytsky’s uprising. Sienkiewicz romanticized *kresy* and the *szlachta*, and depicted the Cossack

94 For more details, see: Andrii Portnov, “Clash of Victimhoods: The Volhynian Massacre in Polish and Ukrainian Memory”, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/clash-of-victimhood-1943-volhynian-massacre-in-polish-and-ukrainian-culture/> [accessed: 28.06.2020].

95 More on Smarzowski’s movie and its literary primary source, see: Ulrich Schmid, “Polnische Opfergeschichten. Die Filme *Miasto 44*, *Smoleńsk* und *Wołyń*”, *Osteuropa*, 11-12, 2016, 135-148; Ulrich Schmid, “Romantik und Politik. Stanisław Srokowski und das patriotische Narrativ der PiS”, *Osteuropa*, 3-4, 2020, 179-192.

96 Adam Balcer, “‘Wołyń’ to zmarnowana szansa na realne pojednanie z Ukraińcami”, <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/981481,wolyn-wojciecha-smarzowskiego.html> [accessed 28.06.2020].

revolt as a purely destructive war. During interwar Poland, the word *Kresy* started to be written with a capital K. The notion of *Kresy*, like the notion of *Wołyn-43*, was not welcome in the Polish People's Republic (PRL). After 1989, an additional, anti-communist dimension was brought to its promotion. In 19th- and 20th-century Polish literature, *Kresy* was portrayed as both an idyllic and tragic experience, in which the Poles had first "brought civilization" and then were brutally murdered and expelled. Some historians see the entire *Kresy* narrative as built on cultural inequality and the dominant position of the Poles towards other, "less developed" cultures.⁹⁷ Other historians believe that, in Poland, the "*Kresy* tradition" "resulted mainly in positives" and it is not purely about the revindication of borders, but about an "openness towards the East" that helped to orient Polish foreign policy to Ukraine and other eastern neighbors and could even be used to promote the "further unification of Europe".⁹⁸

Literary scholar Bogusław Bakula summarized the main features of Polish publications about *Kresy* after 1989 as the following:

The idealization of multiculturalism with Poland at the centre,

The rejection of languages recognized as "Kresy" or minority ones,

The demonizing, exoticizing, and idealizing of the Other, the non-Pole,

The treatment of the phenomenon of "Borderlands-ness"

97 Daniel Beauvois, "Oni i inni: pamiętnikarze polscy na Kresach Wschodnich w XX wieku", *Przegląd Wschodni* 7/1, 2000, 185-204.

98 Leszek Zasztowt, "Kresy w polskiej pamięci i tradycji – kilka uwag historycznych", in: Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Michał Kopczyński (eds.), *Dialog kultur pamięci w regionie ULB*, Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2014, 109-116.

as a component of the Polish historical and civilizational mission,
 Paternalism,
 The Polonisation of cultural diversity,
 The imposing on Others of one's own perspective, terminology and "Borderlands" culture.⁹⁹

As another author put it, "that is exactly how the Poles hated to be treated by the Germans".¹⁰⁰

And what about Ukraine? The Volhynian topic as well as the entire set of memory issues related to Poland seem to play a much lesser role in Ukrainian public debates when compared to topics related to Russia and the Soviet Union. This asymmetry of interest is often neglected in Polish perceptions of Ukrainian debates. Moreover, post-Soviet Ukraine faced the coexistence, competition and, sometimes, coercion of two narratives of the Second World War: the Soviet and the nationalistic.¹⁰¹ The first

99 Bogusław Bakuła, "Colonial and Postcolonial Aspects of Polish Borderlands Studies: An Outline", *Texty Drugie* 1, 2014, 96-123, here 113. See also Werner Benecke, "Die Kresy – ein Mythos der polnischen Geschichte", in: Heidi Hein-Kircher, Hans H. Hahn (ed.), *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2006, 257-266, and Tomasz Zarycki, "The Kresy (Old Borderlands) Discourse and its Critics", in Tomasz Zarycki, *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe*, London – New York: Routledge, 2014, 115-151.

100 Tomasz Kamusella, "The Russian Okrainy (Окраины) and the Polish Kresy: Objectivity and Historiography", *Global Intellectual History*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23801883.2018.1511186> [accessed: 28.06.2020].

101 For more details and controversies, see: Ola Hnatiuk, *Pożegnanie z Imperium: Ukraińskie dyskusje o tożsamości*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2003 [Ukrainian edition: Ola Hnatiuk, *Proschannia z imperiieiu: Ukraïns'ki dyskusii pro identychnist'*, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2005]; Tomasz Stryjek, *Jakiej przeszłości potrzebuje przyszłość? Interpretacje dziejów narodowych w historiografii i debacie publicznej na Ukrainie 1991-2004*, Warsaw: Rytm, 2007; David R. Marples, *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine*, Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007; Andrii Portnov, *Istoriï dlia domashnioho vzhytku. Esei pro pol's'ko-rosijs'ko-*

one stresses Ukraine's role in the Soviet Union's struggle against fascism and portrays OUN and UPA exclusively as Nazi collaborators. The second one emphasizes the anti-Soviet struggle of the UPA that lasted until the early 1950s and caused serious Soviet repressions in Western Ukraine.

Neither of the two narratives pays special attention to the Volhynian massacre. *Wołyn-43* was not present in Soviet history textbooks, and even though the leader of the OUN-B Stepan Bandera was one of the main anti-Soviet heroes, the biggest crime of the political movement that he was in charge of – the ethnic cleansing of the Polish population of Volhynia – was barely mentioned. As a result, the Volhynian massacre remains rather unknown to a lot of Ukrainians, especially those without family stories from Western Ukraine.

In the Ukrainian nationalistic narrative, the Volhynian massacre was ignored, neglected or at least downplayed. Writers allied with the OUN-B agenda invented the main strategies of neglect during the 1950s and 1960s. They described “anti-Polish actions” as a spontaneous peasant revolution against Polish rule, referring to the “right of the oppressed to protect themselves”. They claimed that violent clashes were provoked by the Germans and/or Soviet partisans. They alleged that the Polish civilians in Volhynia were the victims of the “irresponsible policies of the Polish government in exile which adhered to the prewar borders of Poland”. Additional arguments include the systematic attempt to equate the UPA anti-Polish and the AK anti-Ukrainian operations under the umbrella of “The Volhynian

ukraïns'kyj trykutnyk pamiaty, Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013; Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraina przed koncem historii: Szkice o polityce państw wobec pamięci*, Warsaw: Scholar, 2014; Oleksandr Hrytsenko, *Prezydenty i pamięć. Polityka pamięci prezydentiv Ukraïny (1994–2014): pidhruntia, poslannia, realizatsiia, rezultaty*, Kyiv: K.I.S., 2017; Heorhiy Kasianov, *Past Continuous: Istorychna polityka 1980–kh–2000–kh: Ukraïna ta susidy*, Kyiv: Laurus, 2018.

tragedy”, and to downplay the responsibility of individual OUN-B and UPA commanders.¹⁰² The main goal behind all of these maneuvers was to preserve the UPA as a pure national symbol of Ukraine’s struggle for independence.

School textbooks probably display the best depictions of the rhetorical efforts mentioned above. In a 1994 textbook, the Volhynian massacre was mentioned only euphemistically with no clear definition of the ethnicity of the victims:

The relations of the UPA with Polish armed detachments from different political orientations in Western Ukraine turned out to be tragic. The UPA declared the necessity to liquidate secondary fronts, except for anti-Bolshevik and anti-Nazi fronts. But to reach an agreement with the Polish national forces proved to be impossible. Ukrainians accused the Poles of seeking the restoration of Poland’s prewar borders. Poles saw the reason for their hostility in the Ukrainians’ incomppliance. Unarmed peasants were the victims of this political antagonism.¹⁰³

In the updated version of the same textbook (published in 2011), the “Volhynian Tragedy” was included, but the description of it remained very short and obscure, especially when it came to the issue of perpetrators:

102 All these points are summarized and developed in the publications of (in)famous Ukrainian public historian and director of the Institute for National Remembrance during Petro Poroshenko’s presidency, Volodymyr Viatrovych. See: Volodymyr Viatrovych, *Druha pol’s’ko-ukraïnska vijna 1942–1947*, Kyiv: Kyevo-Mohylians’ka Akademiia, 2011; Volodymyr Viatrovych, *Za lashtunkamy “Volyni-43”: Nevidoma pol’s’ko-ukraïns’ka vijna*, Kharkiv: Klub simejnogo dozvillia, 2016. The last publication could be compared with a popular book by Motyka: Grzegorz Motyka, *Wołyń 43: Ludobójcza czystka – fakty, analogie, polityka historyczna*, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2016.

103 F. H. Turchenko, *Novitnia istoriia Ukraïny: 1917–1945 rr. 10 klas*, Kyiv: Heneza, 1994, 316.

The relations of the UPA with Polish armed detachments from different political orientations in Western Ukraine turned out to be tragic. Ukrainians accused the Poles of seeking the restoration of Poland's prewar borders. Poles saw the reason for their hostility in the Ukrainians' in-compliance. The victims of this political antagonism were mostly peaceful people. The Volhynian Tragedy – the mass killing of the Polish and partly Ukrainian population of the region – cast a shadow on Ukrainian-Polish relations during the Second World War.¹⁰⁴

The lack of adequate self-critical assessment of the war crimes committed by the nationalistic underground in mainstream Ukrainian media and educational publications could be explained by arguments relating to the ongoing and undeclared war with Russia and the need for patriotic symbols, and could be attributed to the lack of knowledge and understanding of the importance of the topic for Polish society, as well as to the ongoing impact of Soviet images of war. In any case, Ukraine's stance on the "Volhynian Tragedy" – both the official position and the one presented by public intellectuals – remained one of reaction to the initiatives of their neighbor Poland. In this respect, Ivan L. Rudnytsky's description of Poland as the "stronger and more advanced side" remains relevant.

104 F. H. Turchenko, *Istoriia Ukraïny. 11 klas*, Kyiv: Heneza, 2011, 52.

Constructions of the Past, Imaginations of the Future

In modern history, the Polish and Ukrainian national projects represented two competing political legitimacies: one based on *historical borders* and *civilization*, and the other based on the *ethnographic composition of the population*. The Polish national project was considered to be “noble” (*szlachecki*) and Ukrainian to be “peasant” (*muzhyts’ky*). The Polish project referred to the territorial boundaries and political achievements of the early-modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (often equated with Poland). The Ukrainian project celebrated the Cossack tradition as an embodiment of personal freedom and anti-Polish resistance. In the era of nationalism, it seemed that all historical attempts of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, like the Union of Hadiach in 1658, were simply unrealistic dreams. In the first half of the 20th century, the unequal and short-lived Petliura-Piłsudski agreement of 1920 appeared to many as a puzzling confirmation of an easy-to-believe “historical truth”: Poles and Ukrainians could never be equal partners and brothers. The violent clashes and ethnic cleansings during the Second World War and the first postwar years were seen as the ultimate proof of such an attitude.

This context is very important to understand the unprecedented intellectual success of Jerzy Giedroyc and his *Kultura* vision of pro-ULB Polish foreign policy and its radical rejection of the “historical borders” discourse. The political triumph of the *Kultura* approach in the 1990s and the image of post-socialist Poland as “Ukraine’s advocate” in the EU were intellectually projected from the past, turning the story of the early-modern *Rzeczpospolita* into a common Polish-Belarusian-Lithuanian-Ukrainian experience of success in democracy and tolerance.

The events of the Second World War and the immediate postwar years dramatically changed the borders and the population structure of both Poland and Ukraine. Poland territorially moved to the West, losing East Galicia and Volhynia, but obtaining a large part of former Eastern Prussia, and, for the first time in its history, it became a nationally and religiously homogeneous country. Postwar Soviet Ukraine, for the first time in Ukrainian history, united practically all “ethnic Ukrainian lands” and fulfilled the old nationalistic dream of “*sobornist*”. Such a unification, made by Stalin’s regime and accompanied by severe repressions, had an unintended historical consequence – it increased the Ukrainian-speaking population in the USSR and turned East Galicia once again into a Piedmont, but this time, a Piedmont of anti-Soviet sentiment.

In 1989, the economic condition of Ukraine could be seen as comparable to Poland or other ex-socialist countries. However, over the next few decades, the gap between them deepened. Unlike privatization in Poland, a country with clear prospects of EU integration, Ukrainian privatization neither welcomed nor interested investors from Western Europe. Instead, it legitimized the transfer of the most attractive segments of the economy into the hands of local and Russian oligarchs. Additionally, the myth, promoted by the national-democrats, of immediate economic prosperity allegedly going hand-in-hand with independence appeared to be one of the principal traps of early post-Soviet Ukrainian development.

It should also be noted that the asymmetries between Poland and Ukraine are not just economic. Ukrainian society is much more diverse than the Polish in its language and religious structure. This diversity in Ukraine is not necessarily regionally defined, and being Russian-speaking, for instance, does not automatically mean that one is ethnically Russian or politically pro-Russian. How can we define this post-Soviet pluralism in

Ukraine and how do we cope with it? Is national homogeneity once again supposed to be a desirable precondition for economic and geopolitical successes?

Furthermore, Russia certainly remains present as a ‘third angle’ in Polish-Ukrainian relations. As Antony Polonsky once put it,

Polish views of the country’s immediate Eastern neighbors – Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and even Belarusians – are conditioned by Polish attitudes to Russia. . . . The relationship between them is conditioned by the Poles’ feeling of inferiority towards the West, which finds some compensation in the fact that Russia is considered even more backward and peripheral than Poland.¹⁰⁵

The point of “inferiority towards the West” is of special interest here. In an interview published by the Polish emigré journal *Zeszyty Historyczne* in 1983, Ukrainian-American historian and founder of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, Omeljan Pritsak, being asked on the responsibility for the past failures in Ukrainian-Polish relations, said that both sides were responsible for it, and that both sides were often guided by their “inferiority complex towards the West”.¹⁰⁶

For many Ukrainians, post-socialist Poland is their closest *part of the West*, for many Poles, their country is – at best – a *window to the West*. This delicate but crucial difference can be observed in many debates over both countries’ place in new Europe.

105 Antony Polonsky, “The Conquest of History? Toward a Usable Past in Poland. Lecture 3: Polish-German and Polish-Ukrainian Historical Controversies”, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 27/1–4, 2004–2005, 271–313, here 287.

106 Bohdan Strumiński, “Rozmowa z prof. O. Pricakiem”, *Zeszyty Historyczne* 65, 1983, 3–19, here 12.

On May 1, 2004, the countries of the former ‘Socialist Bloc’ – Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as the former Soviet republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, joined the European Union. These countries had already become NATO members as well. Right before the Ukrainian Orange Revolution in the autumn of 2004, the EU’s eastern border was redrawn further east. The enlargement of the European Union to the East – sometimes too optimistically called the ‘reunification of Europe’ – left Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine outside of the EU. At the same time, as Tony Judt noted in 1996, the idea of EU expansion on equal terms was promoted during a situation in which the Union was incapable of realistically promising, even to its existing members, a future as secure and as prosperous as its past.¹⁰⁷ This promise would considerably influence the public mood decade later, when the EU faced a series of challenges.

The economic crisis of 2008 and the refugee crisis of 2015 contributed profoundly to an anti-liberal, populist-conservative turn in Central Europe. This phenomenon could be conceptualized as a reaction to their humiliating subordination to the Brussels bureaucracy, as a failure of the collective conversion of Poland to Western liberal “normality”, and was deeply rooted in the outflow of people from the region and the resulting fears of losing cultural identity, manifested in a focus on national tradition and victimhood.¹⁰⁸

All of these tendencies coincided with the rapidly increasing economic asymmetries between Poland and Ukraine, the mass migration of Ukrainians workers to Poland and the decrease in positive attitudes towards Ukraine and Ukrainians in

107 Tony Judt, “Europe: The Grand Illusion”, in: Tony Judt, *When the Facts Change: Essays 1995–2010*, New York: Penguin Press, 2015, 30–46, here 41.

108 For the elaboration of this argument, see: Ivan Krastev, Stephen Holmes, *The Light That Failed: A Reckoning*, London: Allen Lane, 2019.

Polish society.¹⁰⁹ Still, both in 2004 and in 2014, Polish society showed support to the Ukrainian Orange Revolution (probably seen as process of Ukraine catching-up with the peaceful revolutions of 1989) and to the Ukrainian Euromaidan.

If present-day Poland remains one of the pillars of the anti-liberal turn in Central Europe, the presidential and parliamentary elections of Ukraine in 2019 showed an unprecedented success of political forces that were hardly ideologically defined. President Volodymyr Zelensky and his collaborators consciously avoided historical topics and controversial memory issues in their campaign. Still, the newly appointed Director of the Ukrainian Institute for National Remembrance willingly speaks about his devotion to liberal values and to dialogue with Poland (but still rejects the definition of the Volhynian massacre as a genocide).¹¹⁰

Could this bring reconciliation or, at least, cool down the emotional dimension of victimhood clashes? Could it give us hope for an equal and responsible historical dialogue, keeping in mind that Ukraine is still a country at war and Polish ruling elites still rely on national martyrdom tropes for their political purposes? How will bilateral Polish-Ukrainian relations de-

109 For more details, see: Jacek Kucharczyk, Agnieszka Łada, *Polacy a inni Europejczycy: Dystans społeczny na przykładzie Francuzów, Niemców, Ukraińców i Włochów*, Warsaw: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2018; Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, "Kontakty polsko-ukraińskie a zmiany wzajemnego postrzegania Polaków i Ukraińców", *Państwo i społeczeństwo* 1, 2016, 75-96; Piotr Tyma (ed.), *Ukrainian Minority and Migrants from Ukraine in Poland: Discourse Analysis*, Warsaw: Ukrainians' Union in Poland, 2018; Oksana Mikhieieva, Viktor Susak (eds.), *Vykylyky suchasnoï mihratsii: Ukraïns'ka spil'nota v Polschi. Analitychnyj zvit*, Lviv: UKU, 2019.

110 Anton Drobovych, "Instytut natsional'noï pam'iaty ne zajmatymetsia heroïzasiieiu Bandery", <https://glavcom.ua/interviews/anton-drobovich-institut-nacionalnoji-pamyati-ne-zajmatymetsya-gerojizacijeyu-banderi-649454.html> [accessed: 28.06.2020]; Anton Drobovych, "Hovoryty pro henotsyd, vchynenyj ukraïntsiamy proty poliakiv - nekorektno", <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2019/12/30/156805/> [accessed: 28.06.2020].

velop, keeping in mind the context of Russia's ambitions in its "closest neighborhood", and the ongoing contest over the meaning of Europe and its future. What could history teach us in this respect? Hans Kohn once put it this way:

History, if studied properly, can help people to sharpen critical insight into human relationships and the nature of personality; it helps people recognize their limits better and therefore makes them humbler; but it also teaches them to see the future as open, full of new development opportunities.¹¹¹

111 Hans Kohn, *Ist die freie Welt zum Untergang verurteilt?*, Köln - Opladen: Westdeutsche Verlag, 1959, 14.

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Figures

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Fig. 1: The territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the present-day map of Europe. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Polish-Lithuanian_Commonwealth_at_its_maximum_extent.svg

Fig. 2: The Ukrainian Five Hryvnias Banknote with Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky (from A. Brusnyi collection).

Fig. 3: Taras Shevchenko on the Ukrainian People's Republic Stamp (from A. Brusnyi collection).

Fig 4: The Polish Eaglets Cemetery in Lviv. Photo by Tetiana Kabakova.

Fig 5: Map of Poland in 1933. Source: <http://info-poland.icm.edu.pl/classroom/maps/task7.html>

Fig. 6: The Ukrainian emigrants' graves on the Warsaw Wola Orthodox Cemetery. Photo by Viktoriia Serhiienko.

Fig. 7: The Volhynian Monument in Warsaw. Photo by Miloš Řezník.

Fig. 8. One of the issues of the Paris based *Kultura* journals edited by Jerzy Giedroyc (from A. Brusnyi collection).

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