Biografistyka Pedagogiczna
Year 8 (2023) No. 2
ISSN 2543-6112; e-ISSN 2543-7399
DOI: 10.36578/BP.2023.08.60.101

Teresa Bojarska-Szot*
Jan Szot**

Children of the Borderlands

The Pre-War Period and World War II until June 1941 in the Memories of the Residents of Łukowiec

Dzieci Kresów

Przedwojnie i druga wojna światowa do czerwca 1941 r. we wspomnieniach mieszkańców Łukowca

Abstract: In the villages of Łukowiec Wiśniowski and Łukowiec Żurowski (the Stanisławów province of the Second Polish Republic), a self-defence and partisan base of the Home Army operated from 1942 to 1945. As a result, these villages became a place of refuge for several thousand people during the genocidal actions carried out by Ukrainian nationalists. The article describes the history of these villages from their inception until June 1941. Accounts of the life of the Łukowiec community are given based on the memories of their residents.

Keywords: Łukowiec Żurowski, Łukowiec Wiśniowski, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, World War II

* Teresa Bojarska-Szot, PhD (ORCID: 0000-0002-0069-4861) – assistant professor, Department of General Pedagogy and Philosophy of Education, Institute of Pedagogy, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Academy of Zamość, contact: teresa.bojarska.szot@akademiazamojska.edu.pl.

** Jan Szot, PhD (ORCID: 0009-0009-6820-1259) – assistant professor, the Department of General Pedagogy and Philosophy of Education, Institute of Pedagogy, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Academy of Zamość, contact: jan.szot@akademiazamojska.edu.pl.

Introduction

The phrase 'children of the Borderlands' used in the title refers to the work by Lucyna Kulińska PhD,[1] containing accounts of the people who experienced the drama of the Ukrainian genocide between 1942 and 1945, and in subsequent years, the conspiracy of silence about this crime imposed by the communist regime. However, in this article, all Poles (regardless of age) are called the children of the Borderlands for whom the then Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic constituted a 'small homeland'. These people – residents of the Lwów, Stanyslaviv, Volhynia and Tarnopol provinces of the Second Polish Republic – are witnesses of extremely difficult histories.

The article serves to show the life of the community of two Polish borderland villages – Łukowiec Żurowski and Łukowiec Wiśniowski – before World War II and during the first stage of the war, that is, during the Soviet occupation. It presents the stories of Poles from Łukowiec based on the memories of these people. The authors of the article refer to texts published in *Zeszyty Łukowieckie* [Łukowieckie Notebooks] and written down by the inhabitants of Łukowiec – Edward Polak (commandant of the self-defence base in Łukowiec) and his brother, Władysław. Polak's private notes and accounts from the book *Los Polaka w 1939–1956* [The Fate of Polak from 1939 to 1956] are also analysed.[2] Reference is also made to information heard in the family home and found on the websites of inhabitants of the Borderlands.

Polak's book contains his accounts of the war and Siberian labour camps, which he wrote after his return from exile. It consists of three parts and the second part concerns the war events in Łukowiec, the self-defence of the village and the partisan base which operated there. Meanwhile, *Zeszyty Łukowieckie* is a series of publications issued from 2003 to 2019 'to preserve the memory of our ancestors,... to show the history of the Borderlands...'.[3] The editor of *Zeszyty*

1 L. Kulińska, *Dzieci Kresów*, vol. 1–4, Kraków 2013.

2 E. Polak, *Los Polaka w latach 1939–1956*, Świdnica 1992.

3 The recorded words of Franciszek Burdzy (son of Marian, a teacher in Łukowiec): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPmDIi09ZoE, *Zeszyty Łukowieckie* was published in small numbers (250–450) and distributed among people associated with Łukowiec. The series includes 19 basic issues and three additional issues, including

Łukowieckie, Franciszek Burdzy, contacted former residents of Łukowiec who told him their histories and provided written accounts of past events, as well as photographs and copies of documents, and even things brought from Łukowiec[4]; some conversations were recorded. In this way, the memories of Łukowiec residents from their childhood and adolescence were collected in *Zeszyty Łukowieckie*.

The struggles of Poles from the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic against the Russian occupier and gangs of Ukrainian nationalists cannot be forgotten. We must not erase from our memory those who were brutally murdered and those whose persistent fight saved others. It is our duty to write down the accounts of living witnesses and pass on to future generations the story about the fate and heroic attitude of our compatriots. This work concerns the pre-war and war memories of people from Łukowiec from the period until June 1941.

Łukowiec before World War II

The beginnings

Łukowiec Wiśniowski and Łukowiec Żurowski are two neighbouring villages, located 80 km southeast of Lwów, in Rohatyn county, part of the Stanisławiv province of the Second Polish Republic.[5] They were created from the division of the estates of Polish heirs – Malicki (1885) and Testanowski (1904). Many Poles settled there in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, coming mainly from

photographs of items brought from Łukowiec. Over time, an electronic version of *Zeszyty* was created, available on a website run by residents of one of the towns where the inhabitants of Łukowiec lived after World War II: „Zeszyty Łukowieckie" dla Kresów Wschodnich, https://burdzyfrancieszek.wixsite.com/zeszyty/zeszyty-lukowieckie, accessed: 30.09.2023.

4 These things – a wooden compass, a writing board, a violin, an accordion, a kerosene lamp, a box iron with a slug, a spindle, a quern, and many others – could be seen in the exhibition 'From Łukowiec' organized by the Regional Museum and the District Office in Środa Śląska. Photographs of museum exhibits are posted on the website: www.waly.brzegdolny.pl/zeszyty1.html, accessed: 30.09.2023.

5 The current names of the villages are Łukowiec Żurawski and Łukowiec Wiszniowski.

the area of the Sandomierz Forest – including from Raniżów, Tarnów, Nisko, Dębica and Mielec.[6] They bought land, cleared it and built houses. In 1889, Błażej Sądej and his wife's brothers arrived from the vicinity of Raniżów, covering the 320 km distance on foot. They found 14 families in Łukowiec – the first settlers of the village. After signing a contract, they returned home, sold their houses, and moved to Łukowiec in early spring with their wives and children. They had to clear the land, sow grain and then build houses. Two years later, in 1892, thanks to the support of the People's School Society (PSS) from Lwów, a church was built in Łukowiec, followed by a school (1897), which PPS provided with a rich collection of Polish books and to which Zofia Hryniewiczówna was sent as its first teacher. She was the daughter of an insurgent from 1863, deported deep into Russia. In 1904, the so-called Stefczyk Savings and Loan Bank was established in Łukowiec.

The names of the towns – Łukowiec Wiśniowski ('old') and Łukowiec Żurowski ('new') – indicate the order in which they were created. Since these two villages constituted one community, a common name of Łukowiec was established.

Village infrastructure

Before the war, Łukowiec had approximately 3,000 inhabitants and stretched for eight kilometres. Farms were 200–300 m apart and separated by hills. The settlement was surrounded by forests and Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Polish villages. In the centre of 'old' Łukowiec, near the pond, was the Church of St Adalbert and a two-storey school, as well as the People's House, called Stefczyk Bank. In the village, there was a dairy, Jewish and Polish shops and the inn of the Jew Szmulko. Behind the pasture, in the neighbouring village, was a mill, powered by an internal combustion engine, owned by Count Kowalewski and in Bakocyn, near Łukowiec Żurowski, an alabaster factory belonging to Prince Czartoryski. Next to the station, there was an impressive forester's lodge and in the middle of the village a 'shed' – a place intended for those who

6 The fact that the first settlers recruited others exclusively from among the Polish population significantly influenced the fate of Poles in the entire area. From 1943 to 1945, these villages were a safe haven for Poles from many towns.

broke the law, from where they were transported elsewhere. Trains departed from the station towards Lwów and Stanisławiv.[7]

In the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, Poles were a minority, constituting only 22% of the population in the Stanisławiv province.[8] Łukowiec was distinguished by the overwhelming majority of Poles (only a few people of Ukrainian origin and four Jewish families lived there) and so the villages were commonly referred to as 'purely Polish'. For comparison, in the village of Okrzesińce, 12 km from Łukowiec, out of 152 households, only 30 were Polish.[9]

Work of the inhabitants of Łukowiec

The material existence of the inhabitants depended on the amount of land and labour. Fertile land, constant work and respect for the moral principles described in the Ten Commandments contributed to a peaceful life. People were engaged in farming, gardening, beekeeping and cattle breeding, as well as crafts, including blacksmithing, weaving, carpentry, shoemaking and wheelwrighting.[10] Poorer people worked for the richer ones and sent their children there to work as servants; they received payment for this in the form of agricultural products or money. They also worked for Count Roztworowski in Hrehorów, Count Kowalewski in Wiszniów and in the mill, the alabaster factory[11] or in state jobs – in the police, forestry and school.

7 J, Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 1 (2003) p. 3. Separating farms from each other at a safe distance helped protect villages from fire and this arrangement of buildings turned out to be a factor during the 'red nights' that made the 'mission' of UPA criminals more difficult.

8 E. Siemaszko, *Wieś na kresach południowo-wschodnich pod dwiema okupacjami*, https://martyrologiawsipolskich.pl/mws/edukacja/baza-wi/53992,Wies-na-kresach-poludniowowschodnich-pod-dwiema-okupacjami.html, accessed: 03.08.2023.

9 F. Burdzy, *Okrzesińce – informacja o wsi*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 2 (2003) pp. 22–23.

10 J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, p. 3.

11 'These men owned several hundred acres of land and beautiful palaces, so the peasants still had guaranteed jobs there. [...] The count did not abuse his farmers and paid them fairly.'; ibidem, p. 4. The local landowners – Counts Roztworowski, Kowalewski and Czartoryski – enjoyed a good reputation in the Łuków community. – przydałyby się imiona.

It was a time when there was no sewage system or electricity in Polish rural areas, no agricultural machines, huts were mostly straw-roofed, and roads unpaved. Grain was harvested with sickles and threshed with flails, linen and clothing were made by hand and baskets were made of wicker.

> People – mostly women – reaped grain with sickles. They tied sheaves of wheat together, each ten pieces and covered them with so-called straw mulches. They made bundles of wheat, each consisting of 15 sheaves. … It was necessary to collect crops from the fields and dig potatoes, beets, turnips, rutabagas. … The threshing was left for the winter and was mostly threshed with flails. … Women scutched flax and hemp, then spun them, rolled the threads into strands on a reel and weavers wove linens from which bags, rags, tablecloths, sheets, shirts and other things were sewn. Peasants made ropes, cords, hobbles and tightropes from coarsely spun threads. … in winter, [they made] beautiful wicker baskets – oval baskets without handles and wickerwork in the shape of two halves of a basket for carts.[12]

Some people emigrated to the United States (US) or Western Europe for work. Sometimes, a father or mother would leave for several years or parents would often send their children there to work. For example, Błażej Sądej sent his children one by one to his wife's family who were living in the US. Earlier, however, to pay the travel costs, after clearing the land he had purchased, he built houses and then sold them.

Łukowiec community

Families living in Łukowiec were large and various tasks were entrusted to children. This was necessary due to the enormity of the responsibilities and activities in which the parents were involved. It was common for children to run barefoot in warmer months and to be hungry in early spring. Childhood was associated with working on the farm, looking after the grazing cattle and taking responsibility for younger siblings. So, it was not carefree in today's sense, yet that does not mean it was not happy.[13] Due to their responsibilities, not all

12 J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, p. 4.

13 'Children met in a vast meadow… where cows were grazing. We played Polish bat-and-ball games, such as kiczka and palant, we went to the forest to pick wild

children attended school, even elementary school.[14] Parents decided about their children's future; sometimes they sent some of them to school and left others on the farm.

The inhabitants of Łukowiec got involved in matters relating to their homeland. Some (e.g., Antoni Faszynkieder and Władysław Polak) fought in the Polish Legions and the Battle of Warsaw in 1920. Attachment to Polishness was also expressed by cultivating Polish traditions including the language, songs and customs related to work and rest. At the same time, respect for the culture of other nations living in the Borderlands was taught.

When writing about the people of Łukowiec, one cannot fail to mention the religion whose principles shaped the system of values and attitudes of these people; their customs and moral conduct were based on these principles. The inhabitants of Łukowiec were Catholics, very attached to their faith. It is no coincidence that after settling on the purchased lands, they first built a church (1892), then a school (1897) and only then the Stefczyk Fund (1904).

> The inhabitants of Łukowiec were very religious, observing the principles of faith with dignity and great piety.[15] People respected each other, ... they went to church from the farthest corners, barefoot, carrying their shoes under their arms, and put them on only when entering the church.[16]

The Łukowiec community was a tight-knit whole – relatives lived nearby, neighbours helped each other with fieldwork, winter evenings were spent

strawberries and nuts. [...] In winter, when the mother was spinning flax, younger children sat on the stove and teenagers... stripped corn from the cobs. [...] We were not allowed to slide on the ice because our shoes would get damaged.'; G. Ziobro, *Wspomnienie*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 16–17 (2015) p. 53.

14 '... many stayed at home because they had to entertain younger siblings, look after grazing cattle or go out to serve others. Only the wealthier could send their children to middle school in Chodorów, Stanislaviv, Żurawno or Lwów. J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, pp. 3–4. The situation was similar throughout Poland at that time:... according to the 1921 census, illiterates constituted 33% of the inhabitants of the lands of the reborn Polish Republic; the largest percentage lived in the Eastern Borderlands. S. Adamkiewicz, *Edukacja w II Rzeczpospolitej*, https://niepodlegla.gov.pl/o-niepodleglej/edukacja-w-ii-rzeczypospolitej/, accessed: 04.08.2023.

15 J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, pp. 2–3.

16 Ibidem, p. 4.

together and celebrations were celebrated. As in every community, sometimes, there were quarrels and disputes (e.g., between a Polish miller, Żurawiecki, and a Jew named Kraushar),[17] as well as rivalry, differences and divisions over issues such as the material situation (the quantity and quality of land owned or the numbers of cows and horses). Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Łukowiec (like the Pawlaks from the film entitled *Sami swoi* [All Friends Here][18]) were united by strong bonds. They also maintained lively relations with their countrymen from the surrounding villages[19] and with the neighbouring Ukrainians and Jews.[20] Despite hardships, life was experienced as safe and joyful but everything changed with the outbreak of the war: 'this joy and idyll immediately turned into terror'.[21]

17 '... a Polish miller, Żurawiecki, and a Jew, Kraushar, lived next to each other. They were always arguing about something – when one of the men's hens got onto the other's land, it disappeared without trace, the same thing happened with ducks, geese and protruding tree branches – in short, they were spiting each other. [...] One day, the Pole saw the shaft of his neighbour's cart sticking out towards his parcel of land – without a second thought, he cut off the part that was protruding into his area. There were no more disputes between them because the miller lost his life and the Jew spent several years in prison for an act committed out of passion.'; F. Burdzy, *Życiorys żołnierza i dwa pamiętniki*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 6–8 (2005) p. 18.

18 The set design for the film *Sami swoi* was created by a resident of Łukowiec, Tadeusz Kosarewicz.

19 Naturally, we are talking about intimate relations between Poles of the same social class. The local landowners, although friendly towards their compatriots, inhabited a separate world: 'It is true that the landowner Kowalewski used to come to the Catholic church in Łukowiec with his family in a Ford every Sunday for Holy Mass and Prince Czartoryski, when hunting, ventured into Turbak's fields – he apologized personally [...] to the host. The landed gentry were not... petty nobility.... They were the elite of the elite.'; F. Burdzy, *Życiorys żołnierza*, pp. 18–19.

20 'Women... came together in the evenings; they plucked feathers – sang songs, told anecdotes and fairy tales. There was no electricity at that time. [...] Weddings sometimes lasted three days. Twelve carriages with a marshal and an orchestra in front went to the church. Horses were beautifully decorated with ribbons, bridesmaids were dressed in elegant robes and children sat on the fence and looked at the wedding party, waving, chasing and jumping to see the bride and groom.'; J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, p. 4.

21 Ibidem, p. 4.

Łukowiec: a little homeland

The 'children of Łukowiec' recall with great emotion their former life and the place where they were rooted: picturesque hills, rich forests, winding streets, a vibrant village and a homely community:

> A beautiful village surrounded by hills and forests near Żurawno. From the east it was adjacent to the Ukrainian village of Wiszniów and further, turning towards the south, Polish houses in Kozary were visible on the hill. From the south, we were surrounded by a beautiful beech and hornbeam forest called 'Szwarc' reaching up to the Dniester near Żurawno.... The village was very beautiful. Houses were 200–300 metres away from each other, cottages were covered with straw, the walls of the houses looked white from a distance, and there were many flowers around. It was most beautiful in spring. You could hear the birds singing – nightingales, swallows, bullfinches and larks. Peasants worked with the so-called 'gravels' (taking stones, sand and gravel), others smoothed out potholes and cleaned ditches. They drove out into the fields in their wagons, which clanged with tin hoops. Life seemed beautiful – joyful and carefree.... There were numerous traditions associated with religious feasts: a Christmas tree, Christmas Eve, hay on the floor, Christmas wafers and carols. Easter, Easter eggs, Whitsunday – the yard was strewn with calamus. The world seemed beautiful and carefree.[22]

Reading Mrs Janina's account, associations with Bullerbyn or Hobbiton in the Shire come to mind – with a place that is the earthly equivalent of Paradise: the forest was 'beautiful', the village was 'very beautiful', spring was 'the most beautiful', 'life seemed beautiful, joyful and carefree', 'the world seemed beautiful and carefree'. The land engraved in Mrs Janina's memory and heart was described in words full of the simplicity typical of a child. The words used in the description, such as beauty, joy and carefreeness resulting from a sense of security are appropriate to describe a beloved mother and prove that the village preserved in the child's memories has remained forever the little homeland of Mrs Janina and (probably) all the inhabitants of Łukowiec.

22 Ibidem, p. 2–4.

It is a simple description, not an invocation of the Polish national epic, but the mood is similar – the dominant longing 'for these forest hills, for these green meadows…'. One could easily continue quoting Adam Mickiewicz's words, replacing the word 'Neman' with 'Dniester', and 'Lithuania' with 'South-Eastern Małopolska'. The words 'Today I see and tell anew your lovely beauty, as I long for you.' express the entire content of Mrs Janina's memories. Let us note that in Mickiewicz's text, longing is accompanied by the hope of returning to the homeland. Contemporary residents of the Borderlands can only long for this and they can only hope for a dignified burial of their loved ones whose bones are scattered in pits, wells and forests in Ukraine.

The war

The inhabitants of Łukowiec participated in the defensive battles of 1939, fighting as soldiers of the Polish Army[23] and Anders' Army.[24] During World War II, the Polish population in the Eastern Borderlands experienced the aggression of three enemies – Soviet and German occupiers and Ukrainian nationalists collaborating with each. Poles had to defend themselves against the Soviet and German occupiers, attacks by the Ukrainian bands of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-UPA) and the inhabitants of nearby villages who were submissive to these organizations.

23 These included: Edward Polak, Stanisław Watras, Ludwik Kędzierski, Józef Kwiecień, Józef Skrybant, Franciszek Martka, Franciszek Drozd, Antoni Gwoździeński, Józef Majdański, Józef Ostrowski, Stanisław Babula, Ludwik Babula, Kazimierz Iwanicki, Marcin Kozioł, Józef Ziemiański, Kazimierz Dudek, Kazimierz Pasek, Józef Popek, Antoni Nitek, Jan Cygan, Emil Cygan, Wiktor Wojtowicz, Edward Marut, Mieczysław Paczkowski, Stanisław Jesionka, Stanisław, Feliks Cuber, Józef Kubala, Władysłw Chudzik, Józef Halicki, Kazimierz Tęcza and Michał Cygan. Five of the people mentioned at the end did not return from the war.

24 These included: Wiktor Chmura, Władysław Kopała, Andrzej Dul, Stanisław Starkiewicz, Antoni Faszynkieder, Stanisław Burdzy and Antoni Cebula.

Ukrainian nationalism

Mykola Mikhnovsky (1873–1924) and Dmytro Dontsov (1883–1973), the creators of the Ukrainian concept of nationalism, developed the theoretical foundations for the ideology later adopted by the OUN. Mikhnovsky postulated the creation of a Ukrainian state in the borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, inhabited by Ukrainians, calling representatives of other nationalities in this area (including Poles) enemies. He is the author of the 'decalogue' of the Ukrainian People's Party. Dontsov (the author of the book *Nationalism*, published in 1926 and inspired by Hitler's *Mein Kampf*) considered the nation to be of the highest value and was a eulogist of social Darwinism. He claimed that nations, like species in nature, fight for living space and in the fight, they are not bound by the rules of ethics as the stronger wins. Violence, war and ruthlessness are, in his opinion, methods that guarantee progress.[25]

The OUN was established in 1929. Its activists set the goal of creating a Ukrainian state in areas that they considered 'ethnographically Ukrainian' (this would include areas in which, according to nationalists, the Ukrainian population lived in the Middle Ages).[26] During the congress in 1929, Ukrainian

25 W. Poliszczuk, *Gorzka prawda. Zbrodniczość OUN-UPA. Cień Bandery nad zbrodnią ludobójstwa*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 67 et al.; s. A. Michna, *Siostry zakonne – ofiary zbrodni nacjonalistów ukraińskich na terenie metropolii lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego w latach 1939–1947*, series: Monografie, vol. 61, Warszawa 2010, pp. 17–18. Dontsov's book, later referred to as the 'Bible of Ukrainian nationalism', became an inspiration for Ukrainian nationalists. In reference to it, the 'Catechism of a Ukrainian Nationalist' was written and distributed in the form of a brochure, in which the main guidelines of the criminal ideology were written down: 'Decalogue of a Ukrainian Nationalist', '44 rules of life', '12 character traits of a Ukrainian nationalist' and poetry inciting people to fight for a free Ukraine. *Ideologia ukraińskiego nacjonalizmu*, https://ank.gov.pl/wolyn/ideologia.htm, accessed: 06.11.2023.

26 'It was… supposed to be a state in areas that were treated as Ukrainian only in the OUN's claims…, it was supposed to be a state without national minorities,… a totalitarian state of the fascist type. […] One of the methods of building such a state was to remove from Ukrainian territories… the non-Ukrainian population, treated as enemies. […] The enemies… also included those Ukrainians who did not agree with the goals formulated by the OUN and especially with their methods of fighting…'; W. Poliszczuk, *Dowody zbrodni OUN i UPA. Integralny nacjonalizm ukraiński jako odmiana faszyzmu*, vol. 2. Toronto 2000, p. 421.

nationalists concluded that Ukraine was under occupation, which should be abolished by conducting a 'national revolution', prepared through propaganda actions among the Ukrainian people, undertaking sabotage and diversion actions aimed at the Polish state, making alliances with forces hostile to Poland and creating Ukrainian armed forces.[27] The criminal nature of the OUN is reflected in the words of one of its activists, Mychajło Kołodzinskyj:

> We need blood, let's give it a sea of blood, we need terror, let's make it hellish. ... With the goal of a free Ukrainian state, let us strive for it by all means and all roads. Let us not be ashamed of murders, looting and arson. There are no ethics in fighting.[28]

This criminal nature of the OUN is also indicated by the guidelines of the 'Decalogue of a Ukrainian Nationalist', developed by Stepan Lenkavski[29] in 1929 based on Mikhnovsky's 'decalogue' and Dontsov's writings, as

27 S. Błażejewska, *Trzeba terroru – uczyńmy go piekielnym! Powstanie Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów*, https://www.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/2252053,Trzeba-terroru-%E2%80%93-uczynmy-go-piekielnym-Powstanie-Organizacji-Ukrainskich-Nacjonalistow, acessed: 03.11.2023.

28 M. Kołodzinski, *Polskie powstanie 1863*, Lwów 1929, p. 13; M. Wojnar, *Myśl polityczna Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów w drugiej połowie lat trzydziestych w świetle nowych dokumentów*, „Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej", 55 (2020) No. 2, p. 105, DOI: 10.12775/SDR.2020.2.05. A few years later, Kołodziński (in the work *Wojenna doktryna ukraińskich nacjonalistów* [War Doctrine of Ukrainian Nationalists], 1938) noted: 'Our uprising is not only aimed at changing the political system. It must cleanse Ukraine of foreign, hostile elements and of its own, domestic, bad elements. Only during the uprising will there be an opportunity to literally wipe out the Polish element from the Western Ukrainian Lands. [...] The Polish element that will actively resist must surrender in the fight, and the rest must be terrorized and forced to flee across the Vistula.' M. Wojnar, *Myśl polityczna*, p. 105.

29 Commandments 7, 8 and 10 reveal the anti-Christian nature of this 'decalogue': 'You will not hesitate to commit the greatest crime if the good of the cause requires it. You will accept the enemies of your nation with hatred and deceit. You will strive to expand the power, glory, wealth and space of the Ukrainian state even through the enslavement of foreigners.' This was noticed by the Greek Catholic bishop, Hryhoriy Khomyszyn, who warned his compatriots that Ukrainian nationalism is pagan or even satanic in nature, and promotes the ethic of hatred towards people of a different nationality.

well as by propaganda texts published in the OUN's magazine 'Development of the Nation'.[30]

After Germany's aggression against Poland, Ukrainian nationalists enthusiastically began cooperating with the German occupier, counting on their support for the idea of an 'independent Ukraine'. The OUN militias existing in Eastern Wielkopolska and Volhynia became part of the German fifth column and the Legion of Ukrainian Nationalists was part of the Wehrmacht.[31] The OUN's cooperation with the German occupier continued after 17 September 1939 because most OUN activists moved to the General Government. At the Great Congress of Nationalists organized in Kraków in April 1941, the borders of the future Ukrainian state were marked from the Volga and Caucasus to Białystok, Biała Podlaska, Lublin and Nowy Targ. Slogans such as 'Whoever is not Ukrainian has no right to exist in this country' were mentioned.[32] In the autumn of 1942, the OUN's armed unit was established and in 1943, it was named the UPA. Despite the name, the unit's task was to exterminate the Polish population. This goal was set out in the OUN's resolution of late 1942: 'The idea is to physically exterminate them – that is, to completely annihilate them on the spot, without regard to anything and without distinction of sex and age.'[33]

The criminal activities of the OUN-UPA lasted from the autumn of 1942 to 1947. The area of the UPA's operations was first Volhynia and from the second half of 1943, the provinces of Eastern Małopolska (Stanisławiv, Lwów and Tarnopol) and later the Lublin and Podlachia regions. 'The period from February

30 'When this new great day comes, we will be without mercy. [...] and the poet will sing: And the father slaughtered his son. [...] Only in a sea of blood, only through ruthlessness... will we win human rights.' These words were published in the issue of November/December 1930; J. Karbarz-Wilińska, *„Tylko w morzu krwi..." – początek zbrodni ukraińskich nacjonalistów na ludności polskiej Wołynia*, https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/historia-z-ipn/137782,Tylko-w-morzu-krwi-poczatek-zbrodni-ukrainskich-nacjonalistow-na-ludnosci-polski.html, accessed: 06.11.2023.

31 J. Turowski, *Pożoga. Walki 27 Wołyńskiej Dywizji AK*, Warszawa 1990, p. 43.

32 Ibidem, p. 44.

33 R. Majewski, *Wojskowe i polityczne aspekty akcji „Wisła"*, „Na Rubieży", 24 (1997) p. 8; A. Michna, *Siostry zakonne*, p. 20.

1943... was characterized by planned, systematic extermination of the Polish population, supervised by Bandera's OUN structures.'[34]

The Volhynia and Małopolska genocide was committed by UPA gangs and numerous Ukrainian villagers – they did it under the influence of anti-Polish propaganda, promises to take over the victims' land and property, encouragement from the Greek Catholic and Orthodox clergy and threats from the OUN's Ukrainian partisan underground intelligence service Sluzhba Bezpeky. The number of Polish victims of Ukrainian nationalists in the Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic is estimated at 100,000 to 200,000 people.[35] The victims of brutal murders were, in addition to Poles, people of other nationalities, including Jews and Armenians, as well as Ukrainians opposing the criminal ideology.

Soviet occupation (1939–1941)

Until June 1941, for nearly two years, the eastern areas of the Second Polish Republic remained under Soviet occupation. The Stanisławiv province was recognized as part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The beginnings

The meeting of two civilizations – the Latin one, based on respect for law, truth, the human person and morality based on the Decalogue and the law of nature, and the Eastern one determined by the law of force, based on violence and

34 W. Poliszczuk, *Dowody zbrodni OUN i UPA*, p. 421. Lucyna Kulińska also draws attention to the fact that the acts of genocide committed by Ukrainian nationalists were planned and prepared: 'members of the Ukrainian Military Organization (UWO)-OUN and then the UPA committed an exceptionally brutal genocide (*genocidum atrox*) of the Polish population from 1943 to 1945 in the south-eastern borderlands. [...] Ukrainian nationalists had been maturing and striving for such a solution for at least several decades. There was nothing spontaneous, nothing unplanned in their actions. This is what their criminal chauvinist ideology told them to do.'; L. Kulińska, *Preludium zbrodni. Nacjonalizm ukraiński na Brzeżańszczyźnie w latach 1922–1941*, in: *Ludobójstwo OUN-UPA na Kresach Południowo-Wschodnich. Dawne Kresy południowo-wschodnie w optyce historycznej i współczesnej*, ed. W. Listowski, Kędzierzyn-Koźle 2012, p. 63.

35 s. A. Michna, *Siostry zakonne*, s. 24–25.

the assumption that the end justifies the means must have been a painful experience, particularly for the youngest. They learned that they were 'pamieshchiks' and oppressors and that Poland did not exist. Leaflets passed secretly in the school environment, containing the simple message that 'Poland has not yet perished', gave strength and restored hope.

> My first contact with the Red Army was a meeting with a soldier on a horse. When he noticed me in a school uniform, he stopped and shouted, 'You are a Pamieshchik.' I somehow explained to him that I was a boy from the village – a secondary school student. The soldiers, many of whom were Ukrainians, had a very bad attitude towards Poles and Polish landowners and saw every person they met as a bloodsucker. He explained to me that Poles did not allow Ukrainians to speak their native language, let alone learn Ukrainian. When I denied it and took out my notebook, saying that I was learning Ukrainian in a purely Polish school, he was very surprised. ... The first days after the entry of the Red Army were relatively calm. A new Soviet administration was being formed and strengthened. People were called to so-called 'meetings' and were convinced that Poland was lost and that once the Red Army entered, it would never leave. ... Interesting events of this period include... a leaflet addressed to Poles... which my friend Franek Cebula showed me about a month after the entry of the Red Army. He brought the leaflet from Żurawno, where he went to school. It was like a short appeal to Poles saying 'that Poland has not yet perished!' This leaflet made us very happy. ... we hoped that not all was lost.[36]

Children's memories of the first stage of the war are based on their direct experience. The enemies that began to take over the home territory were tired and hungry people with sore feet. Someone controlled everything from above. The feeling of fear was dominant:

> The Russians entered our lands. They came from the direction of Stanisławiv through Bukachivtsi, Wandolin and Wiszniów – tired and hungry, with sore legs – they decided to rest right next to our farmsteads. They were setting up their camp with a kitchen and sappers with cannons were coming from the back, from the forests. People were gripped

36 M. Burdzy, *Wspomnienia o Łukowcu*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 2 (2003) p. 6.

> by fear. … you could hear conversations, orders, ringing of mess kits and clattering of pots. … The soldiers washed their hands and dusty faces, carefully wrapped their feet in ankle boots and laced their shoes, and looked for apples in the garden. … When the sun began to set, they moved towards Żurawno, crossing the Dniester. Military patrol planes were racing in the air.[37]

The new order

Immediately after entering these areas, the Soviets began to implement communist ideology.[38] They started by exterminating the elites of Polish society and ousting Poles from leadership positions. These were staffed with their own people and friendly Ukrainians. In schools, the Polish language was replaced by Ukrainian; religion was removed and Polish teachers were replaced by their own uneducated people. Educational institutions became places of communist indoctrination.

> … we started studying in the 2nd grade of the secondary school in Chodorów. Initially, there were almost no lessons at all. The teaching staff changed all the time. Polish teachers were replaced by Ukrainians and Jews, often without any pedagogical training. Moreover, once these lessons began,… they taught us Marxism-Leninism,… 'Stalinism'. My friend and I soon decided that such lessons would probably be of no use to us and we decided to give up school completely.[39]

Village meetings also became a field for implementing the imposed ideology. Attempts were made to build the economy according to new principles; it did

37 J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, p. 4–5.

38 'It seemed that you would not see the Russians but they settled here for good and, what is more, they took care of the economy. They took over the offices and began to build a new system – communism.'; J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, p. 5.

39 M. Burdzy, *Wspomnienia o Łukowcu*, p. 6. Some students, defending themselves against Marxist ideology, dropped out of school; others learned that the school had been turned into a barracks: 'I started going to first grade before the war and the school year had not ended yet, the Russians came and the school was a barracks.' Tadeusz Kalita's recorded statement: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPmDIi09ZoE, accessed: 06.11.2023.

not take long to see the results.[40] Poles were also burdened by the occupier with the obligation to regularly deliver a certain amount of food products – the so-called quotas (milk, meat and so on) and participate in public works.

Exile

The Soviets de-Polonized the occupied territories by exterminating the elites of Polish society. Military men, policemen, teachers, clergy, officials and wealthier farmers ('kulaks') were arrested. The group to be eliminated also included settlers who came to Eastern Małopolska after World War I. Deportations of Polish families to Siberia began. Among those transported were the Ziemiański, Szwedi and Występek families, as well as the family of village head Stanisław Starkiewicz (of the seven people, three returned after many years) and many others.[41] People were also recruited to work in the Donetsk Basin – Andrzej Dul went there but soon afterwards he also experienced the fate of a sybirak, that is, a person resettled to Siberia.[42] Edward Polak, among others, managed to avoid exile thanks to the help of the municipal secretary, Józef Dziuba. Being aware that people who came to the municipality during the war were at risk of exile, Dziuba copied the registration books, modifying them accordingly.[43]

> They had a hostile attitude towards all rich people, called kulaks or kurkuls. Our torment began. Lists of priests, teachers, heirs, families of the Blue Police and those who lived on the plots (land purchased from the heirs) were prepared and all of them were deported to Siberia. ... My father

40 'The village shop lacked basic necessities such as soap, sugar, linen, shoes and clothing. The only shop in the rural areas was supplied from the Bukaszowice region. Every trip to Bukaszowice to buy goods caused queues. People stood from the earliest hours of the morning. The imported articles were distributed, but there were always too few of them relative to the demand. [...] Without comrade Symeneczko, the party's guardian of the village, no meeting was, and could not be, held. In all matters he imposed his or the party's will.'; M. Burdzy, *Wspomnienia o Łukowcu*, p. 7.

41 Ibidem, p. 8.

42 Ibidem. Andrzej Dul (born in 1921) was deported for 'unrighteousness' from the Donetsk Basin to Siberia. He went to Africa with Anders' Army; after the war he lived in Canada. F. Burdzy, *Życiorysy łukowian*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 1 (2003) p. 29.

43 E. Polak, *Los Polaka*, p. 45–46.

> worked in the police in Stanisławiv for 16 years and thus we were also on the deportation list. … we had to hide. We slept at our neighbours' house in our clothes and shoes – in the fields, mounds of hay, sheaves of wheat, barns, attics and shelters. As children, we experienced all this very much. Sometimes we could not find each other at night. … they deported the family of our Ziemiański grandparents. Grandpa and Uncle died of exhaustion near Sverdlovsk and were buried in the forest. Grandma returned after six years of exile.[44]

They arrived at night. They allowed us to take some property with us and took us to the east. … Very few people managed to escape. Those who were escaping were shot at like thieves or bandits. It was said that we were deported because of Ukrainians who wanted to get rid of Poles from these areas.[45]

We did not sleep at night and kept watch, listening to see if the wagons were coming to get us. At home, bread was baked, pasta was dried, more expensive things were buried in the ground…, praying 'Under Your Protection', we waited for the Russian henchmen.[46]

Relations with Ukrainians[47]

The Soviet occupiers gained the support of the local Ukrainian population, who hoped for the consolidation and de-Polonization of the local areas and to take over the land confiscated from landowners by the Soviets. At the same time, Soviet policy promoted Ukrainians and directed the greatest repressions

44 J. Szulc, *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, p. 5.

45 M. Burdzy, *Wspomnienia o Łukowcu*, p. 8.

46 J. Jaskuła, *Pamiętajmy o naszych korzeniach*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie",18–19 (2018) p. 49.

47 Among the studies on Polish-Ukrainian relations in the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic during World War II and the genocide committed there by Ukrainian nationalists, the works of Ewa Siemaszko and her father Władysław, as well as Szczepan Siekierka, Henryk Komański and Eugeniusz Różański deserve special attention. The work of E. and W. Siemaszko concerns the genocide in Volhynia and the work of S. Siekierka, H. Komański and E. Różański the genocide in the provinces of Eastern Małopolska. The work *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie stanisławowskim 1939–1946* concerns the Stanislaviv province.

at Poles. Therefore, Ukrainian-Polish relations became increasingly tense, especially after the assassination of the school principal in a neighbouring village. His wife and orphaned children were the first family to take refuge from the Ukrainians in Łukowiec.

> The anti-Polish attitude of Ukrainians is already evidenced by the events of September 1939. Soldiers were disarmed, and here and there people were killed by their bullets, for example, Mieszczyk – the son of the manager of the Czartoryski estate. A student was killed in Daszawa on his way home to Żurawno. In Oskrzesińce, they killed a Polish officer. ... In the neighbouring Ukrainian village of Novoshyny, the school principal was a Pole, Buczkowski. ... Suddenly, one day in 1940, he was secretly shot from around the corner. The family, consisting of his mother and three children, buried him in Łukowiec... with the participation of almost the entire village population and moved to Łukowiec themselves.[48]

Instead of conclusions

The Soviet occupation was a torment for the inhabitants of Łukowiec – the economy was destroyed, school education was replaced by the ideologization of young people, key figures in social life and their families were sentenced to hard labour in Siberia and everyone else lived in an atmosphere of the fear of sharing this fate. But the worst was yet to come. After the German attack on the Soviet Union, the Polish population of the Borderlands experienced the aggression of two enemies – the Hitlerite occupier and Ukrainian chauvinists, who, with the consent of the Germans, began to consistently carry out the planned genocidal crimes. It is therefore not surprising that a person writing an account of that time years later, aware of what would happen next, notes:

> The period of Russian occupation from September 1939 to June 1941 was not full of special events.[49]

48 M. Burdzy, *Wspomnienia o Łukowcu*, p. 8; E. Polak, *Los Polaka*, p. 48.

49 M. Burdzy, *Wspomnienia o Łukowcu*, s. 8.

Streszczenie: W wioskach Łukowiec Wiśniowski i Łukowiec Żurowski (woj. stanisławowskie II RP) działała w latach 1942–1945 baza samoobrony i baza partyzancka Armii Krajowej. Dzięki temu wioski te stały się miejscem ocalenia dla kilku tysięcy osób w okresie ludobójczych akcji przeprowadzanych przez ukraińskich nacjonalistów. Artykuł prezentuje historię tych wiosek od ich powstania aż do czerwca 1941 r. Relacje o życiu społeczności Łukowców podano na podstawie wspomnień ich mieszkańców.

Słowa kluczowe: Łukowiec Żurowski, Łukowiec Wiśniowski, nacjonalizm ukraiński, OUN, UPA, okupacja sowiecka, II wojna światowa.

Bibliography

Adamkiewicz S., *Edukacja w II Rzeczpospolitej*, https://niepodlegla.gov.pl/o-niepodleglej/edukacja-w-ii-rzeczypospolitej/, accessed: 04.08.2023.

Błażejewska S., *Trzeba terroru – uczyńmy go piekielnym! Powstanie Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów*, https://www.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/2252053,Trzeba-terroru-%E2%80%93-uczynmy-go-piekielnym-Powstanie-Organizacji-Ukrainskich--Nacjonalistow, accessed: 03.11.2023.

Burdzy F., *Okrzesińce – informacja o wsi*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 2 (2003) pp. 22–23.

Burdzy F., *Życiorysy łukowian*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 1 (2003) pp. 29–30.

Burdzy F., *Życiorys żołnierza i dwa pamiętniki*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 6–8 (2005) pp. 3–86.

Burdzy M., *Wspomnienia o Łukowcu*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 2 (2003) pp. 6–10.

Ideologia ukraińskiego nacjonalizmu, https://ank.gov.pl/wolyn/ideologia.htm, accessed: 06.11.2023.

Jaskuła J., *Pamiętajmy o naszych korzeniach*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 18–19 (2018) pp. 48–51.

Karbarz-Wilińska J., *„Tylko w morzu krwi..." – początek zbrodni ukraińskich nacjonalistów na ludności polskiej Wołynia*, https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/historia-z-ipn/137782,Tylko-w-morzu-krwi-poczatek-zbrodni-ukrainskich-nacjonalistow-na-ludnosci-polski.html, accessed: 06.11.2023.

Kulińska L., *Dzieci Kresów*, vol. 1–4, Kraków 2013.

Kulińska L., *Preludium zbrodni. Nacjonalizm ukraiński na Brzeżańszczyźnie w latach 1922–1941*, in: *Ludobójstwo OUN-UPA na Kresach Południowo-Wschodnich. Dawne Kresy południowo-wschodnie w optyce historycznej i współczesnej*. ed. W. Listowski, Kędzierzyn-Koźle 2012, pp. 6–59.

Michna A., *Siostry zakonne – ofiary zbrodni nacjonalistów ukraińskich na terenie metropolii lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego w latach 1939–1947*, series: Monografie, vol. 61, Warszawa 2010.

Polak E., *Los Polaka w latach 1939–1956*, Świdnica 1992.
Poliszczuk W., *Dowody zbrodni OUN i UPA. Integralny nacjonalizm ukraiński jako odmiana faszyzmu*, vol. 2, Toronto 2000.
Poliszczuk W., *Gorzka prawda. Zbrodniczość OUN-UPA. Cień Bandery nad zbrodnią ludobójstwa*, Warszawa 2006.
Rodem z Łukowca, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPmDIi09ZoE, accessed: 06.11.2023.
Siemaszko E., *Wieś na kresach południowo-wschodnich pod dwiema okupacjami*, https://martyrologiawsipolskich.pl/mws/edukacja/baza-wi/53992,Wies-na-kresach-poludniowowschodnich-pod-dwiema-okupacjami.html, dostęp: 03.08.2023.
Szulc J., *Wspomnienie o Łukowcu*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 1 (2003) pp. 2–9.
Turowski J., *Pożoga. Walki 27 Wołyńskiej Dywizji AK*, Warszawa 1990.
Wojnar M., *Myśl polityczna Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów w drugiej połowie lat trzydziestych w świetle nowych dokumentów*, „Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej", 55 (2020) No. 2, pp. 95–115, DOI: 10.12775/SDR.2020.2.05.
Ziobro G., *Wspomnienie*, „Zeszyty Łukowieckie", 16–17 (2015) p. 53–55.