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THE CAUSES OF UKRAINIAN–POLISH ETHNIC CLEANSING 1943*

Ethnic cleansing hides in the shadow of the Holocaust. Even as horror of Hitler's Final Solution motivates the study of other mass atrocities, the totality of its exterminatory intention limits the value of the comparisons it elicits. Other policies of mass national violence — the Turkish 'massacre' of Armenians beginning in 1915, the Greco-Turkish 'exchanges' of 1923, Stalin's deportation of nine Soviet nations beginning in 1935, Hitler's expulsion of Poles and Jews from his enlarged Reich after 1939, and the forced flight of Germans from eastern Europe in 1945 — have been retrieved from the margins of military and diplomatic history. When compared to the Final Solution, each falls below the horrible threshold of intention to exterminate. Yet, when taken together, they constitute one of the central trends of the social and political history of the European twentieth century: the violent removal of populations in the pursuit of nationally pure space.

The lexicon of the Final Solution has its proper limits. 'Holocaust' and 'Shoah' are specific terms of lament, and 'genocide' refers to the legally ascertainable intention to destroy a group. Another term is needed for violent policies aiming to clear territories of national enemies, though not to kill every man, woman and child. This is the meaning of 'ethnic cleansing', which reached English from Serbian through television and newspapers in 1992. Serbian practices in Bosnia, at first deemed shockingly exotic, quickly inspired fruitful comparisons with other events of the European twentieth century. The perpetrator's perspective, so compactly contained, stimulated painful attempts at understanding. 'Ethnic cleansing' became a term of art not only of the cleansers but of their chroniclers, and thus provided the basis for fresh investigations of central

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events of twentieth-century European history.[1] It has also brought into focus national atrocities that had hitherto escaped scholarly attention.

One such episode is the removal of Poles from Volhynia by Ukrainian nationalists in 1943. It is a story of multiple occupations, and of cleansing within cleansings. Volhynia, like the rest of the eastern half of interwar Poland, was subject to triple occupation during the Second World War. These territories, from Vilnius to L'viv, home to about thirteen million people in 1939, were occupied first by Stalin's Soviet Union (1939–41), then by Hitler's Germany (1941–4), and then again by Stalin's Soviet Union (from 1944).[2] In the three years before Ukrainian nationalists began to cleanse Poles, Volhynia was the site of a stunning display of politically motivated population movements. During the first Soviet occupation, the Nazis imported ethnic Germans from newly Soviet Volhynia. (This was part of Hitler's fearfully ambitious project to build a nationally pure Greater Germany, which entailed the deportation of Poles and Jews from the enlarged Reich.) The Soviets, having enlarged Soviet Ukraine to the west, deported tens of thousands of the

[1] Important examples are Christopher Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge, 2000), ch. 1, entitled 'From "Ethnic Cleansing" to Genocide to the "Final Solution": The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, 1939–1941'; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, 2000), ch. 8 on 'Ethnic Cleansing and Enemy Nations'; Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000); Phillip Ther and Ana Siljak (eds.), *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944–1948* (Lanham, 2001); see also Mark Mazower, 'Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century', *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, cvii (2002).

[2] Although the literature on the Second World War is almost imponderably vast, the particular predicament of triple occupation escapes notice. The relative weakness of the historiography was underscored by two recent controversies: the British and North American reaction to the English translation of Jan T. Gross's valuable study of the mass murder of Jews at Jedwabne, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne* (Princeton, 2001), and the disputes over Julian Hendy's 'documentary' on the Waffen-SS division 'Galizien'. The murder of Jews at Jedwabne took place at the juncture between the first and second occupations; the formation of the Waffen-SS 'Galizien' was a result of the weakening of the second occupation and the anticipation of the third. On the first occupation, the starting point is an earlier work: Jan T. Gross: *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, 1988). On the second, the literature is larger, though oriented towards German sources: consult Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien* (Munich, 1996). On the third, recent work based on Soviet sources includes two articles by Jeffrey Burds, 'Agentura: Soviet Informants' Networks and the Ukrainian Underground in Galicia, 1944–1948', *East European Politics and Societies*, xi, 1 (1997), and 'Gender and Policing in Soviet West Ukraine', *Cahiers du monde russe*, xlii (2001).

MAP 1

INTERWAR EASTERN EUROPE, *c.*1938



Volhynian elites, mostly Poles, to Siberia and Kazakhstan. These actions ceased only when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. In 1941 and 1942, the Germans organized a brutally intimate genocide of the Volhynian Jews, which trained many of the perpetrators of the 1943 cleansings of Poles. The 1943 decision of Ukrainian nationalists to cleanse was, among other things, a strategic calculation based upon news of the Soviet victory at Stalingrad in February 1943, and the judgement that German occupation was both unbearable and temporary. As Eastern Europe was balanced between two totalitarian regimes, and west Ukraine between a second and third wartime occupation, an organization that wished to build a Ukrainian state took matters into its own hands.

In Germany, the ethnic cleansing of Jews was followed by their extermination. Yet ethnic cleansers may take Hitler

seriously without sharing his commitment to total elimination. Ethnic cleansing is far easier than the murder of an entire group, and serves most nationalist programmes just as well. Nationalists who wish to build a nationally homogenous state need not kill all members of a minority population: killing many to remove most is sufficient. Of course, in Volhynia as in other lands that had been eastern Poland, Hitler was not the only model. By 1943, Poles and Ukrainians alike understood that Stalin and Hitler forcibly removed and destroyed groups in the name of national politics. They not only saw ethnic cleansing, they were also subject to it and complicit in it. By 1943 something like one-quarter of the Volhynian population had experienced national violence in one form or another, as victim, accomplice or both. For many survivors, personal experience took on political significance. Triple occupation not only exposed these lands to both Nazi and Soviet occupation policies, it made them the site of intense competition between the two systems. Because alien rule could be seen as both intolerable and transitory, the triple occupation also gave rise to desperately strong hopes for liberation and feverishly conceived plans for collaboration.

The triple occupation here provides the overarching institutional framework for a causal explanation of one episode of ethnic cleansing. Naturally, the ideal-type 'ethnic cleansing' must animate the evidence, and the evidence must be available. Research on ethnic cleansing is generally bedevilled by contemporary secrecy and propaganda, subsequent partisanship and bias, and general paucity of sources. Thanks in part to the development of Polish and Ukrainian scholarship, and the good political relations now prevailing between these states, many of the evidentiary problems are now surmountable in this case. Although not all relevant archival materials are available, the end of communism has created an unusual opportunity for the review and collection of documents in Warsaw, Kyiv and (to a much lesser extent) Moscow. Also important are the recollections of Volhynian Jews, Poles and Ukrainians, and records of the wartime Polish government-in-exile in London.[3]

[3] Polish and Ukrainian historians collaborated in a series of remarkable conferences devoted to these events. See *Polska–Ukraina: trudne pytania* [Poland–Ukraine: Difficult Questions], 8 vols. (Warsaw, 1997–2001). Very important recent

(cont. on p. 201)

MAP 2

WARTIME EASTERN EUROPE, *c.*1942



'Volhynia' is the English name for the ancient Orthodox land today known, in Ukrainian, as 'Volyn' (Polish 'Wołyń', Yiddish 'Volin', Russian 'Volyn'). Volhynia constitutes the extreme north-west of today's Ukraine, sharing the Pripet marshes with Belarus to the north, divided from Poland by the Bug River to

(n. 3 cont.)
contributions are Grzegorz Motyka, *Tak było w Bieszczadach: walki polsko-ukraińskie, 1943–1948* [How It Was in the Bieszczady Mountains: Polish–Ukrainian Conflicts, 1943–1948] (Warsaw, 1999) and I. I. Il'iushyn, *OUN-UPA i ukrains'ke pytannia v roky druhoi svitovoi viiny v svitli pol's'kykh dokumentiv* [OUN-UPA and the Ukrainian Question during the Second World War in the Light of Polish Documents] (Kyiv, 2000). A pioneering work based upon German archival materials is Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: sprawa ukraińska w czasie II wojny światowej na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej* [Poles and Ukrainians: The Ukrainian Question during the Second World War on the Lands of the Second Polish Republic] (Warsaw, 1993). Polish, Ukrainian and Russian archival sources and Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian memoirs are cited below.

the west. Galicia, which together with Volhynia constitutes the bulk of western Ukraine, lies to the south (see maps). Volhynia was a province of the Grand Duchies of Rus' and Lithuania, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Russian Empire. Whereas Galicia retained its Greek Catholic religion under Austrian imperial rule, Volhynia was reconverted to Orthodoxy by Russia in 1839. Most of historical Volhynia was joined to independent Poland after the First World War, and the events discussed here took place within the confines of what had been, until September 1939, Poland's Volhynia palatinate (*województwo wołyńskie*). Polish Volhynia was home to an Orthodox Ukrainian majority (68 per cent) and significant Roman Catholic Polish (17 per cent) and Jewish (10 per cent) minorities.[4] From 1928 to 1938, it was the site of one of eastern Europe's most ambitious policies of toleration, Henryk Józewski's 'Volhynian experiment' of cultural and religious autonomy for Ukrainians. This policy was intended to limit the popularity of communism; by its end, Galician nationalists had established a foothold in Volhynia. Nevertheless, survivors of the wartime cleansings often recall a climate of accord in pre-war Volhynia.

Yet by April 1943, after three and a half years of war, the Ukrainian nationalist Mykola Lebed' proposed 'to cleanse the entire revolutionary territory of the Polish population'.[5] The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia, UPA) then cleansed the Polish population from Volhynia. Ukrainian partisans killed about fifty thousand Volhynian Poles and forced tens of thousands more to flee in 1943.[6] Why, in the middle of the Second World War, would Ukrainian partisans

[4] A provincial report of June 1937 found 348,079 Poles (16.7 per cent), 205,615 Jews (9.9 per cent) and 1,420,074 Ukrainians (68.1 per cent). The remaining 5.5 per cent were mainly Germans, Czechs and Russians. [Henryk Józewski], 'Wołyń': Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Dział rękopisów [University of Warsaw Library, Manuscripts Department] (hereafter BUW, DR), syg. 1549, p. 1.

[5] Petro Balei, *Fronda Stepana Bandery v OUN 1940 roku* [The Fronde of Stepan Bandera in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, 1940] (Kyiv, 1996), 141; for paraphrases, see Mykola Lebed', *Ukrains'ka povstans'ka armiia* [Ukrainian Insurgent Army] (Drohobych, 1987), 53; Taras Bul'ba-Borovets', *Armiia bez derzhavy* [An Army without a State] (L'viv, 1993), 272; Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *OUN-UPA v roky viiny* [The OUN-UPA during the War] (Kyiv, 1996), 289. The UPA's chronicles now acknowledge such a plan. Oleksandr Vovk, 'Preface', *Litopys UPA* [The UPA Chronicle], 2nd ser., ii (1999), pp. xxxix–xl.

[6] About thirty-five thousand victims have been identified. A published list is Władysław and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich*

(cont. on p. 203)

attack Polish civilians? To understand how Lebed's wish came true, we must pose three questions: about legitimate authority, about social action, and about revolutionary ideology.

I

CAUSES 1939–1943: (1) LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

Ukraine was stateless. Self-determination was not universally observed after the First World War, as Ukraine was partitioned between Bolshevik Russia and Poland at Riga in 1921. By the 1930s, the main current of Volhynian political life was co-operation with the Polish state. The governor of Poland's Volhynia palatinate, Henryk Józewski, believed that 'a Ukrainian–Polish settlement is the fundament of the existence of Poland and Ukraine'.[7] In his 'Volhynian experiment', Józewski encouraged Ukrainian politicians to make their case in Warsaw through a non-party reform bloc. The major centrist party in Poland's Ukrainian territories overall, the Ukrainian National-Democratic Union, adopted a similar line in 1935: loyalty to the Polish state in exchange for local reforms. Reconciliation to the reality of Polish statehood made good sense once Poland had signed non-aggression declarations with the Soviet Union (1932) and Germany (1934). When the Polish state was destroyed by these very two powers in 1939, such strategies lost their *raison d'être*. As Poland's Ukrainian territories fell to the Soviet Union, the legal parties of the interwar period dissolved themselves to avoid repression. In any event, henceforth no

(n. 6 cont.)
na ludności polskiej Wołynia, 1939–1945 [The Genocide of the Polish Population of Volhynia by Ukrainian Nationalists, 1939–1945] (Warsaw, 2000); *Genocide and Rescue in Wołyn: Recollections of the Ukrainian Nationalist Ethnic Cleansing Campaign against the Poles during World War II*, ed. Tadeusz Piotrowski (Jefferson, 2000) also provides English translations of pertinent memoirs (and documents). The glosses in both collections should be treated with care. See especially Grzegorz Hryciuk, 'Straty ludności na Wołyniu w latach 1941–1944' ['Population Losses in Volhynia in 1941–1944'], *Polska–Ukraina: trudne pytania*, v, 278. As in other cases of ethnic cleansing, higher figures circulate.

[7] Henryk Józewski, 'Opowieść o istnieniu' ['A Tale of Existence']: BUW, DR, syg. 3189, 'Sprawa ukraińska' ['The Ukrainian Question'], 36. See generally Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Województwo wołyńskie, 1921–1939: elementy przemian cywilizacyjnych, społecznych i politycznych* [The Volhynian Palatinate, 1921–1939: Elements of Civilizational, Social and Political Transformations] (Wrocław, 1988); Jan Kęsik, 'Województwo wołyńskie 1921–1939 w świetle liczb i faktów' ['The Volhynian Palatinate 1921–1939 in the Light of Facts and Figures'], *Przegląd Wschodni*, v, 1 (1997).

west-Ukrainian politician of any orientation would have argued for its reconstitution in lands where Ukrainians could be reckoned a majority: Volhynia and Galicia.[8] The destruction of Poland revealed the consensus in favour of *sobornist'*: the creation of an independent Ukraine including all Ukrainian lands.

War destroyed the centre and gave the far left its great chance (or so it seemed). Before Józewski's consolidation in 1928, crypto-communists had won the most votes in Volhynia and enjoyed the greatest public presence.[9] Even in 1938, after the terror-famine and during the purges in Soviet Ukraine, Józewski complained that his citizens listened to hour after hour of Soviet radio in their own language.[10] Before 1939, the West Ukrainian Communist Party had advocated the destruction of Poland and the absorption of its south-eastern territories by Soviet Ukraine.[11] In 1939, the Red Army and the NKVD realized this programme. During twenty-one months of Soviet rule, revolution meant the destruction of the upper classes. About half a million Polish citizens were imprisoned or deported from Poland's former eastern territories to Central Asia and Siberia, among them seventy thousand Volhynian Poles — 20 per cent of the entire Polish population of the region.[12] As

[8] Unlike Soviet censuses, the 1931 Polish census had no category for nationality. People were categorized by religion and mother tongue. The palatinates were also gerrymandered to inflate the Polish presence in, for example, Lwów palatinate. Yet no one doubted that Ukrainians outnumbered Poles not only in Volhynia but in the three palatinates known in Polish as 'Małopolska Wschodnia' (Eastern Little Poland) and in Ukrainian as 'Halychyna' (Galicia).

[9] On public presence, see Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Wydział Narodowościowy [Ministry of Internal Affairs, Nationalities Department], 'Sprawozdanie z życia mniejszości narodowych za miesiące wrzesień–październik 1928' ['Report on the Life of National Minorities for the Months September–October 1928']: BUW, DR, syg. 1550. On votes (including those not counted), see Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Wydział Bezpieczeństwa [Security Department], 'Udział ugrupowań wywrotowych w wyborach do ciał ustawodawczych w Polsce w roku 1928' ['The Participation of Revolutionary Groups in the Elections to Legislative Bodies in Poland in the Year 1928']: Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archive of New Files], Warsaw (hereafter AAN), MSW, syg. 1186.

[10] Henryk Józewski, 'Memoriał w sprawie kierunku polskiej polityki państwowej na Wołyniu' ['A Memorial on the Question of the Direction of Polish State Policy in Volhynia'], 1938: BUW, DR, syg. 1549, akt 6.

[11] The basic works are Janusz Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919–1929*, trans. Alan Rutkowski (Edmonton, 1983); George D. Jackson, *Comintern and Peasant in East Europe, 1919–1930* (New York, 1966).

[12] The Volhynian estimate is from Wincenty Romanowski, *ZWZ-AK na Wołyniu, 1939–1944* [The ZWZ-AK (Union of Armed Struggle/Home Army) in Volhynia,

(cont. on p. 205)

a Ukrainian historian describes their predicament: 'A Polish colonist, officer, or policemen could not hide from the organs of the NKVD, especially since in every village there were Ukrainian activists who delivered such people to the Soviet administration'.[13] Educated Ukrainians, though fewer in number, were also vulnerable. A Ukrainian woman could be made a schoolteacher as the Soviets reorganized Volhynian schools, then deported straight from her classroom.[14] Deportations ceased only with the sudden arrival of the Wehrmacht in June 1941. After the German invasion, Volhynian communists either fled with the Red Army, or risked execution by the SS or lynchings by their countrymen at home.[15]

The end of the Polish state in 1939 crippled the Ukrainian centre, and the German invasion of 1941 scattered the Ukrainian left. The nationalist Ukrainian right then emerged from the shadows. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), founded in 1929 by veterans of the Polish–West Ukrainian War, had spent a decade underground before the Nazis invaded Poland.[16] Years of duelling with Polish intelligence also prepared a generation for life underground.[17] In a gesture that seems a touchstone of a lost age, Poland freed its political prisoners, including Ukrainian terrorists such as Mykola Lebed' and Stepan Bandera, in early September 1939. The

(n. 12 cont.)
1939–1944] (Lublin, 1993), 104. For conservative reckonings of the 1939–41 deportations, followed here, see O. A. Gorlanov and A. B. Roginskii, 'Ob arestakh v zapadnykh oblastiakh Belorussii i Ukrainy v 1939–1941 gg.' ['On the Arrests in the Western Districts of Belarus and Ukraine in 1939–1941'], in A. E. Gur'ianov (ed.), *Repressii protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan* [Repressions of Poles and Polish Citizens] (Moscow, 1997), 96 and *passim*; Piotr Eberhardt, *Między Rosją a Niemcami: przemiany narodowościowe w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w XX w.* [Between Russia and Germany: Nationality Transformations in East-Central Europe in the Twentieth Century] (Warsaw, 1996), 180. See also Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 197 ff.

[13] Il'iushyn, *OUN-UPA i ukrains'ke pytannia*, 17.

[14] Bogumiła Berdychowska and Ola Hnatiuk, *Bunt pokolenia: rozmowy z intelektualistami ukraińskimi* [The Revolt of a Generation: Conversations with Ukrainian Intellectuals] (Lublin, 2000), 32.

[15] Karel Cornelius Berkhoff, 'Hitler's Clean Slate: Everyday Life in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, 1941–1944' (Univ. of Toronto Ph.D. thesis, 1998), 87–8.

[16] The basic works are Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (Boulder, 1980); John Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 3rd edn (Englewood, 1990); see also Petro Mirchuk, *Narys istorii Orhanizatsii ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv* [A Sketch of the History of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists] (Munich, 1968).

[17] For a sense of the extent of Polish penetration of the OUN, consult AAN, MSW, syg. 1038–41, 1252.

intention was to spare prisoners the trials of German captivity, but these particular prisoners awaited the Germans with hope. Since Germany was the only possible ally in the Ukrainian nationalists' quest to build a new independent state out of Soviet and Polish territories, such men had convinced themselves that Hitler's rise was a good omen.[18] In 1939, Nazi Germany favoured Ukrainians in the Generalgouvernement carved from occupied Poland.[19]

Yet the war did not present the sort of opportunity that the OUN had expected. The secret annexe to the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union left Poland's Ukrainian lands on the Soviet side, where they were joined to Soviet Ukraine. Opportunities for fruitful careers in the Nazi Generalgouvernement failed to satisfy nationalists who hoped for statehood for all Ukraine.[20] Attempts to undermine Soviet rule in Galicia and Volhynia came to nothing, and the Soviet NKVD liquidated dozens of valuable OUN leaders. Meanwhile, the consequences of an earlier NKVD special operation made themselves felt. The NKVD murder of respected OUN leader Ievhen Konovalets' in 1938 set in motion a competition for power between a younger generation with good connections in Polish Ukraine and an older generation of emigrants.[21] In February 1940, the OUN divided into two fractions, the former led by Stepan Bandera and the latter by Andrii Mel'nyk. The two fractions, conventionally referred to as the OUN-B and OUN-M, were at war for a year before their formal division in April 1941. The younger OUN-B was far more influenced by the integral nationalist Dmytro Dontsov, and more inclined to think that great efforts of will suffice to change

[18] The OUN had contacts with Hitler before his rise to power, and co-operated with German intelligence. Komunikat Informacyjny, 3 June 1932, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Wydział Bezpieczeństwa: AAN, MSW, syg. 1040, pp. 50–7. As the agent noted en passant, not all the émigré OUN leaders were anti-Semites, and some had Jewish girlfriends.

[19] Volodymyr Kubiiovych, *Ukraintsi v Heneral'nii Hubernii, 1939–1941: istoriia Ukrains'koho tsentral'noho komitetu* [Ukrainians in the Generalgouvernement: A History of the Ukrainian Central Committee] (Chicago, 1975), 49, 197, 280 and *passim*; Il'iushyn, *OUN-UPA i ukrains'ke pytannia*, 35; Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939–1944* (Princeton, 1979), 141.

[20] Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy*, 48–51.

[21] Konovalets' was killed in Rotterdam by a bomb disguised as a box of chocolates. His assassin's account is in Pavel and Anatoli Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness — a Soviet Spymaster* (Boston, 1995), 7–29.

history for the better.[22] Their civil war was, however, nothing more than a struggle for power, and as such was not easily concluded. Indeed, the stakes were only raised when Germany invaded the Soviet Union and brought all of Ukraine under its control in summer 1941.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union also proved a disappointment. In 1941, Germany sent Ukrainian nationalists to establish local administration in Volhynia and other Ukrainian lands conquered by the Wehrmacht. Yet nationalists' political hopes were dashed when Germany declined to form a single administrative unit from its occupied Ukrainian territories. Soviet Ukraine was alien and hostile, but had at least embraced almost all of the Ukrainian lands. In this respect, the German invasion of the Soviet Union was a step back. Galicia was joined to the Generalgouvernement ruled by Hans Frank from Cracow, Volhynia and most of Soviet Ukraine to the Reichskommissariat Ukraine ruled by Erich Koch in Rivne. Nazi authorities showed little patience for Ukrainian national aspirations. The OUN-B, trying as always to create faits accomplis, declared the existence of a Ukrainian state in L'viv in June 1941; over the next two years the Germans imprisoned (or killed) about 80 per cent of the OUN-B leadership.[23] Stepan Bandera found himself at Sachsenhausen; two of his brothers were later beaten to death in Auschwitz by Polish (Volksdeutsch) kapos.[24] Bandera's arrest left Mykola Lebed' the leader of

[22] On Dontsov, see Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego* [The Ukrainian National Idea of the Interwar Era] (Wrocław, 2000), 110–90; Vasyl' Rudko, 'Dontsov i Lypyns'kyi' [Dontsov and Lypyns'kyi'], *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, ix (1985); John A. Armstrong, 'Collaborationism in World War II: The Integral Nationalist Variant in Eastern Europe', *JL Mod. Hist.*, xl (1968), 400; cf. Anatolii Rusnachenko, *Rozumom i sertsem: ukrains'ka suspil'no-politychna dumka 1940–1980-kh rokiv* [With Reason and Passion: Ukrainian Socio-Political Thought, 1940s–1980s] (Kyiv, 1999), ch. 1.

[23] Ryszard Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska w polityce Trzeciej Rzeszy* [The Ukrainian Question in the Politics of the Third Reich] (Warsaw, 1972), 247. German records of some of the more important arrests are reproduced in *Litopys neskorenoi Ukrainy: dokumenty, materialy, spohady* [Chronicle of the Enduring Ukrainian Nation: Documents, Materials, Reminiscences], ed. Ia. S. Lial'ka and Iu. Iu. Slyvka, 2 vols. (L'viv, 1993–7), ii, 79–97.

[24] Borys Vitoshyns'kyi, 'Ukrains'ko-pol's'ki vzaiemyny v nimets'kykh tiurmakh i kontstaborakh' ['Ukrainian–Polish Relations in German Prisons and Concentration Camps'], in Mykhailo Marunchak (ed.), *V borot'bi za ukrains'ku derzhavu* [In the Struggle for a Ukrainian State] (Winnipeg, 1990), 160–2; Oleksa Vintoniak, 'Pro Avshvits i iak zhynuv Vasyl' Bandera' [About Auschwitz, and how Vasyl' Bandera Perished'], *ibid.*, 301, 305–6.

the OUN-B. Lebed' concentrated his considerable energies on the formation of an OUN-B security service, whose members were to be characterized by 'fanatical nationalism and intransigence to the enemies of the nation'.[25]

The Ukrainian centre had dissolved, the left had fled, and the right had emerged. Yet the right was divided by a Soviet provocation, decapitated by its own civil war and German reprisals, and radicalized by hopes raised and dashed. In this way, after three years of war, Ukrainian politics in Volhynia was represented by the more extreme fraction of a nationalist terrorist organization, led by immature and angry men. Lebed' was thirty-three years of age when the ethnic cleansing of Poles began.

II

CAUSES 1939–1943: (2) CAPABLE CLEANSERS

It is one thing to propose ethnic cleansing; it is quite another to find people able to implement such a policy. Yet the Volhynian OUN-B was able to raise a Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) within a few days in late March 1943, and begin the cleansing of Poles from Volhynia that same month. By the end of April 1943 the UPA had perhaps ten thousand soldiers under its command, and had reduced much of Volhynia to mutual slaughter. By July 1943 it had swollen to twenty thousand soldiers, and was capable of co-ordinated actions across hundreds of miles of Volhynian territory. How did such operations become possible?

The answer begins with the rending of the fabric of traditional society in Volhynia. The destruction of the Polish state in September 1939 led to the looting of prosperous houses and stores, the murder of Jews and landlords, and the settling of personal scores. This social self-destruction was encouraged by Soviet occupation policy, designed to identify and remove potential sources of resistance.[26] By summer 1941, the Volhynian educated classes had been deported to Siberia or Central Asia. These deportations were Soviet NKVD operations, but manpower was provided by the local militia, which in the Volhynian

[25] In the words of Lebed's biographer: Oleksandr Panchenko, *Mykola Lebed': zhyttia, diial'nist', derzhavno-pravovi pohliady* [Mykola Lebed': Life, Activity, and Views on the State and Law] (Poltava, 2001), 67.

[26] Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 35–44 and *passim*.

countryside was preponderantly Ukrainian (and infiltrated by the OUN). The OUN had operated a separate section in Volhynia since 1934, and by 1939 commanded a small network of university students and recent graduates.[27] Since the OUN had rarely tried terrorism in interwar Volhynia, many of its men got their first taste of violence during the Soviet deportation of Poles. For Ukrainian peasants, Soviet deportation policy was an early lesson in the unity of class and national politics, and the possibility for radical solutions. This was perhaps less ironic than it seems: communists and nationalists in Volhynia both linked the land question with the Polish question in the 1920s and 1930s.[28]

The Soviet collectivization of agriculture in 1939, though incomplete, privileged corruption and theft; in 1941 Nazis placed their own colonists in charge of state farms. Koch's administration of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine did away with secondary schooling for Ukrainians; Ukrainian teenagers drank vodka to pass the time.[29] He saw Volhynia as a source of foodstuffs, raw materials and forced labour. Having secured total control over policy by summer 1942, he explained his policy line: 'This people must be governed by iron force, so as to help us win the war now. We have not liberated it to bring blessings on the Ukraine, but to secure for Germany the necessary living space and a source of food'.[30] The Ukrainians in

[27] Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Wydział Bezpieczeństwa, Komunikat Informacyjny, 30 May 1932: AAN, MSW, syg. 1040, p. 47; Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Wydział Bezpieczeństwa, 'O.U.N. — sprawozdanie Nr. 1 z 27.10.1934': AAN, MSW, syg. 1252, pp. 13, 29; Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Wydział Bezpieczeństwa, 'O.U.N. — sprawozdanie Nr. 4 z 6.1.1935': AAN, MSW, syg. 1252, p. 53.

[28] Nationalist propaganda by communists in Volhynia would bear future research. Secret reports from Volhynian authorities to Warsaw describe low-level national violence organized by the Communist Party of Western Ukraine in the second half of the 1930s, especially in the run-up to May Day. See the reports for 1935, 1936, 1937 and 1938, collected in the Akta sprawy Henryka Józewskiego, Wojskowy Sąd Regionalny, 1954 [Record of the Proceedings in the Case of Henryk Józewski, Regional Military Court, 1954], syg. 275/54, tom 2, Archiwum Państwowe miasta stołecznego Warszawy [State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw], temporarily held at the Sąd Okręgowy w Warszawie, VIII Wydział Karny, Sekcja Unieważnień [Warsaw District Court, 8th Criminal Division, Revocations Section].

[29] Berkhoff, 'Hitler's Clean Slate', 334. See also Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 45–50.

[30] Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941–1945: A Study of Occupation Policies* (London, 1957), 142; see also Rolf Dieter Müller (ed.), *Die deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik in den besetzten sowjetischen Gebieten, 1941–1943* (Boppard am Rhein, 1991), 626.

charge of local administration in the villages and countryside were able to send Poles to the Reich as forced labour for a time, but soon were forced to send Ukrainians as well.[31] Employment in the police was one of the few ways that young Ukrainians could draw a local salary and avoid deportation to the Reich.

German occupation policy confronted Volhynian Ukrainians with violent death on a tremendous scale. From the moment Erich Koch established his offices in Rivne, he rejoiced in continual public murder: of Jews in *Aktionen* in autumn 1941, of Ukrainian and Polish villagers pacified for real or imagined resistance, of Soviet prisoners of war starved to death in a camp a few hundred metres from his offices.[32] Koch's attitude to Ukrainians was most famously expressed thus: 'If I find a Ukrainian who is worthy to sit with me at the table, I must have him shot'.[33] During the first wave of Jewish killings by the mobile *Einsatzgruppen* in summer and autumn 1941, the SS intentionally exposed the Ukrainian militia (or auxiliary police) to the shooting of Jews.[34] During the second and final wave, in summer and autumn 1942, the Germans used a much-augmented Ukrainian police force in a labour-intensive version of the Final Solution. The Holocaust in the Reichskommissariat was not a matter of railways and gas chambers, as in the Generalgouvernement, but of short marches and shooting. While many Jews in Galicia, just to the south, were gassed in camps, the Jews of Volhynia were shot in pits close to home. As a survivor recalled: 'in our area there were no camps. They just took people out and shot them immediately'.[35] The liquidation of the ghettos in 1942 was an SS operation, but it was implemented by about 1,400 German and about 12,000 Ukrainian policemen.

[31] In towns the civilian administration was largely Polish, but the police were under no illusions as to their loyalty: 'the Polish population is basically hostile to the Germans'. Meldung der Einsatzgruppen und -kommandos, 'Lage und Stimmung in der West-Ukraine', 10 Apr. 1942, repr. in *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., xxi (1991), 119.

[32] Local women who brought food to the starving prisoners were often beaten, or even shot: Karel C. Berkhoff, 'The "Russian" Prisoners of War in Nazi-Ruled Ukraine as Victims of Genocidal Massacre', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, xv, 1 (2001), 12.

[33] Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 167. On his racial attitudes towards Ukrainians, see Gerald Reitlinger, *The House Built on Sand: The Conflicts of German Policy in Russia, 1939–1945* (New York, 1960), 174–82.

[34] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York, 1978), 202, 247, 250.

[35] Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University (hereafter FVA), Memoir T3237.

The Ukrainian policemen did little of the shooting, but they provided the manpower for the operations that led 150,000 Volhynian Jews to the killing fields. In the countryside, the police took a more direct role and killed the Jews themselves.[36] The few Jewish survivors found shelter with Ukrainian or Polish families, or fled to the forest.[37]

Ukrainians in the German auxiliary police in Volhynia collaborated in the Final Solution throughout November 1942. In March and April 1943, they provided the bulk of the recruits for the OUN-B's new partisan army, the UPA. The OUN-B had directed its men to the police in 1941, as its task forces followed the Wehrmacht through Ukraine. In 1942, as the numbers of auxiliary police increased to meet the demands of the Final Solution, the OUN-B agitated among them: 'When there are five Germans and fifty [Ukrainian] militiamen, who has power?'[38] In 1943, the OUN-B was able to extract its men, and bring many of the police along with them. They had been taught how to kill. Former policemen brought not only their SS training and their weapons, but the irreplaceable experience of co-ordinated murder of designated populations.[39] The OUN-B appealed directly to this experience, and to the widely held idea that the Ukrainians were next: 'The Germans use every method to beat us down, and then later do with us what they did with the Jews. We are not Jews and we will not die a Jewish death'.[40] The people who became UPA soldiers knew about Jewish

[36] Archiwum Wschodnie [Eastern Archive], Ośrodek 'Karta', Warsaw (hereafter AW), Memoirs II/2451/6, II/2451/7; Żydowski Instytut Historyczny [Jewish Historical Institute], Warsaw (hereafter ŻIH), Memoirs 301/5980/B, 301/3178, 301/2890, 301/2879; FVA, Memoir T903; Shmuel Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941–1944* (Jerusalem, 1990), 172–83; Douglas Huneke, *The Moses of Rovno: The Stirring Story of Fritz Graebe, a German Christian who Risked his Life to Lead Hundreds of Jews to Safety during the Holocaust* (New York, 1985), 64–93. Ukrainian auxiliary police from Volhynia also collaborated in the murder of Jews in neighbouring regions.

[37] Ukrainian rescues of Jews in Volhynia: FVA, Memoirs T1413, T1645, T2484.

[38] Meldung der Einsatzgruppen und -kommandos, 'Lage und Stimmung in der West-Ukraine', 123.

[39] Martin Dean, 'The German Gendarmerie, the Ukrainian Schutzmannschaft, and the "Second Wave" of Jewish Killings in Occupied Ukraine', *German Hist.*, xiv, 2 (1996), 179.

[40] Okruzhnyi Provid OUN, 'U spravi ostannikh podii na nashykh zemliakh' [OUN Regional Command, 'In the Matter of the Most Recent Events on our Lands'], Apr. 1943, Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia Ukrainy [Central State Archive of the Higher Organs of Power and Administration of Ukraine], Kyiv (hereafter TsDAVO), 3833/1/87/1.

death, as they had brought it about as German policemen. The lessons learned were applied to Poles.

III

CAUSES 1939–1943: (3) IDEOLOGY AND CIRCUMSTANCE

Having established how a man such as Lebed' could rise to authority in Ukrainian politics, and how a class of people capable of executing his programme could emerge, we may inquire more closely about the response of Ukrainian nationalists to the circumstances of war. Identifying some constants should allow us to distinguish the variables.

One constant from the pre-war period was an ideology of ethnic homogeneity. The OUN was founded, in 1929, as an organization committed to removing all occupiers from Ukrainian soil.[41] It arose from the disappointment of the destruction of the West Ukrainian Republic by Poland in 1919; its members were typically Polish citizens from Galicia. A wartime constant, from 1939, was the preoccupation with the future restoration of the Polish state. Both fractions of the OUN understood that Poland would not voluntarily relinquish Volhynia and Galicia after the war.[42] As proponents of an independent Ukraine including these territories, Ukrainian nationalists knew they had little to gain from wartime discussions with Poles. Both the OUN-B and the OUN-M believed that the situation would resolve itself if populations were moved in both directions. Emboldened by Hitler's cleansings, in December 1941 the OUN-M even proposed bilateral 'voluntary' resettlements 'on the model of the German experiment' to the Polish anti-Nazi resistance, the Home Army.[43] The proposal was

[41] Mirchuk, *Narys istorii OUN*, 93.

[42] The Polish government in London knew that an 'armed occupation' of Volhynia would be necessary to keep it after the war. 'Meldunek specjalny — Sprawa Ukraińska' ['Special Report — The Ukrainian Question'], Rówecki to Sikorski, 15 Nov. 1941, in Studium Polski Podziemnej [Polish Underground Movement Study Trust], London, VI/3.1.1.1.1. See also 'Przynależność ziem wschodnich do Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej' ['The Eastern Lands as Belonging to the Polish Republic'], zesz. A.9.V., tecz. 39; and 'Tajne' ['Secret'], 3 Aug. 1943, zesz. A.9.V., tecz. 34, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Archiwum Muzeum Polskiego [Archive of the Polish Museum], London.

[43] Volodymyr Kubiiovych was the author of this proposal: see Il'iushyn, *OUN-UPA i ukrains'ke pytannia*, 48. Individual Poles who knew Ukrainian politics were

(cont. on p. 213)

rejected: that it could be made at all suggests the importance of the German precedent.

The OUN-B, true as ever to its radicalism, interpreted the party programme in a more decisive fashion than the OUN-M, and followed a more ruthless strategy. It meant to pre-empt the return of Polish statehood by expelling the Poles from west Ukraine before the war was over. A guideline for OUN-B task forces composed just before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, in May 1941, indicates the desirability of the removal of 'Poles in the western Ukrainian regions, who have not abandoned their dreams of rebuilding a Greater Poland at the expense of Ukrainian lands'.[44] By 1941, having experienced Soviet occupation, the OUN-B no longer saw Poles as the main enemy: but they were still to be removed, as potential allies of Soviet power. The OUN-B was also more willing than the OUN-M to kill Ukrainians in pursuit of its goals, and by this means and others it had monopolized political life in Volhynia by 1943.[45]

Another pertinent strategic difference between the OUN-B and the OUN-M concerned collaboration. In 1939, the still-united OUN collaborated with Germany in order to advance its own political goals. By 1943, after the German defeat at Stalingrad, its two fractions disagreed over the political value of such collaboration. The OUN-M followed a more patient line in Galicia, collaborating with Germany despite early disappointments. In spring 1943, the OUN-M endorsed the formation

(n. 43 cont.)
considering similar steps. See, for example, 'Zagadnienie ukraińskie' ['The Ukrainian Question']: BUW, DR, syg. 155. Here someone who was apparently an official of the Sanacja governments of the 1930s proposes the deportation of five hundred thousand Ukrainians from a post-war Poland with pre-war frontiers: 'during the present war the Germans themselves have shown how these things can be done. Not to mention similar Soviet practices. If we live in an epoch when the Gordian knot is cut with a knife, then there is no option but to apply the same salutary measure here'. The model here is not the total extermination of the Jews, but German (and Soviet) ethnic cleansing.

[44] 'Borot'ba i diial'nist' OUN pidchas viiny' ['The Struggle and the Activity of the OUN during the War'], May 1941: TsDAVO, 3833/3/1/60, translated and discussed in Karel C. Berkhoff and Marco Carynnyk, 'The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and its Attitude toward Germans and Jews: Iaroslav Stets'ko's 1941 Zhyttiepys [Biography]', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, xxiii, 3/4 (1999), quotation at p. 153.

[45] UPA murder of Ukrainians is a topic that awaits its historian. For a sense of its scope, see *Litopys UPA*, 2nd ser., ii (1999), 312. For tactics towards the OUN-M, see TsDAVO, 3833/1/94/1–2; TsDAVO, 3833/1/225/6–13. See also Berdychowska and Hnatiuk (eds.), *Bunt pokolenia*, 37.

of a Galician Waffen-SS division.[46] The OUN-B, meanwhile, knew that the calculus of collaboration in Volhynia was very different. Whereas Generalgouverneur Frank accepted the formation of a Waffen-SS division in Galicia, Reichskommissar Koch interpreted the defeat at Stalingrad as a reason to press harder on the Ukrainian population in Volhynia.[47] Just as the methods of the OUN-M worked best in Galicia, so the OUN-B's approach was best suited to Volhynia.

The shadow of the third occupation fell first upon Volhynia, as Soviet partisans began raids as early as June 1942. By autumn 1942, at least six separate partisan detachments from Belarus or eastern Ukraine had appeared in Volhynia. The Soviet partisans called themselves a 'movement', but they were controlled by a 'central staff': their actions constituted a closely controlled propaganda of the deed. Colonel Anton Bryns'kyi, Red Army intelligence officer and later a Hero of the Soviet Union, was 'Old Uncle Pete' as a partisan leader in Ukraine. The OUN-B understood the propaganda effects of Soviet partisan successes, and feared that Ukrainians would be drawn to fight under Soviet partisan command.[48] Moreover, German reprisals to Soviet partisan attacks targeted the civilian Ukrainian population in Volhynia, especially educated people. These German reprisals removed potential Ukrainian opposition to the OUN-B, radicalized Ukrainian society, and forced survivors of pacifications to seek shelter in the forest.[49] Without alternatives, both survivors and policemen disgusted by such actions might join the Soviet partisans. In 1942, two nationalist groups also took advantage of Volhynia's favourable terrain: the

[46] Taras Hunczak, *On the Horns of a Dilemma: The Story of the Ukrainian Division Halychyna* (Lanham, 2000), 5–9; Wolodymyr Kosyk, *L'Allemagne national-socialiste et l'Ukraine* (Paris, 1986), 369. Established in April 1943, Waffen-SS 'Galizien' was one of the twenty or so Waffen-SS formations composed of non-German Europeans: Georg Tessin, *Verbände und Truppen der deutschen Wehrmacht und Waffen SS im Zweiten Weltkrieg, 1939–1944*, 17 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), i, 387–93.

[47] Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 156.

[48] For an example of Soviet partisan agitation, see A. P. Bryns'kyi, *Po toi bik frontu* [On the Other Side of the Front], 2 vols. (Kyiv, 1976–8), i, 326. For OUN-B intelligence on Soviet partisans, see TsDAVO, 3833/1/87/2–33. Volhynian Poles noted these new concerns of local Ukrainian nationalists: AW, Memoirs II/1321/2k and II/1328/2k.

[49] A summary of predicaments is Ihor Kamenetsky, *Hitler's Occupation of Ukraine, 1941–1944: A Study of Totalitarian Imperialism* (Milwaukee, 1956), 35–50.

'original UPA' of Taras Bul'ba-Borovets' and the OUN-M. Local OUN-B activists were left behind, and resented it.

Then Stalingrad raised the stakes. After the Soviet victory of 2 February 1943, more communist partisans moved into Volhynia. On 10 February 1943 the Central Staff of the (Soviet) Ukrainian Partisan Movement ordered new operations in Volhynia.[50] The OUN-B, meeting on 17–21 February, responded by calling for the creation of a nationalist partisan army.[51] The OUN-B had hoped to delay the formation of this army for as long as possible, keeping its men in the relative safety of the German police or underground, and allowing the Red Army and Wehrmacht to exhaust each other in battle.[52] Soviet recruitment of local manpower after Stalingrad forced the issue. The OUN-B sought to provide an alternative to 'elements of the Ukrainian nation who might otherwise seek shelter from German imperialism from Moscow'.[53] Lebed', who had been planning for such a contingency in 1942, began preparations. Galicians with military experience, such as Roman Shukhevych, made their way to Volhynia. For Shukhevych, who was thirty-five years of age, the logic of collaboration had just come to an end. Shukhevych escaped as the Germans dissolved his police battalion (Schutzmannschaftbataillon 201)

[50] 'Soderzhanie: "O vykhode v novyi raion deistvii Volynskogo partizanskogo otriada"' ['Report: "On the Entry of the Volhynian Partisan Detachment into a New Region of Activity"'], No. 0013, 10 Feb. 1943; 'Soderzhanie: "O vykhode v novyi raion deistvii Rovenskogo partizanskogo otriada"' ['Report: "On the Entry of the Rovno Partisan Detachment . . ."'], No. 0012, 10 Feb. 1943, in Ivan Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema v Ukraini, 1917–1953* [The System of Repression and Punishment in Ukraine, 1917–1953] (Kyiv, 1994), 367–9.

[51] 'Postanovy III. Konferentsii Orhanizatsii Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv Samostiinykiv Derzhavnykiv, 17–21 liutoho 1943 r.' ['The Resolutions of the Third Conference of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists — Advocates of Independence and Statehood, 17–21 February 1943'], in *OUN v svitli postanov Velykykh Zboriv* [The OUN in the Light of the Great Congresses] (n.p., 1955), 81–3, 88. This publication is often unreliable: but here it provides evidence that contradicts later OUN myth-making, and confirms other sources.

[52] Kraievyi Provid OUN [Regional OUN Command (Bandera)], 'Provokatsii' ['Provocations'], Nov. 1942: TsDAVO, 3833/1/86/6a; 'Partyzantka i nashe stanovyshche do nei' ['Partisan War and our Position towards It'], June 1942: TsDAVO 3833/1/87/1. See also I. I. Il'iushyn, *Protystoiannia UPA i AK v roky Druhoi Svitovoi Viiny* [The Confrontation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Home Army during the Second World War] (Kyiv, 2001), 128.

[53] 'Postanovy III. Konferentsii Orhanizatsii Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv Samostiinykiv Derzhavnykiv, 17–21 liutoho 1943 r.', in *OUN v svitli postanov Velykykh Zboriv*, 82. The concern was for Volhynia: see Panchenko, *Mykola Lebed'*, 75.

and arrested its officers in January 1943, and now sought a post befitting his rank and experience.[54]

The German defeat at Stalingrad had immediate local consequences in western Ukraine. Anticipating the third occupation, and prompted by changes in the local military balance, the OUN-B altered its national strategy. A strategy it was, for even the most devoted nationalists understood that the creation of an army required far more than ideological conviction. Any good partisan leader must be alert to the political malleability of prospective soldiers. Although one might assume that someone who joined a communist army would not have joined a nationalist army, the events of 1943 belie the expectation that ideology governs the initial choices of men and women who become partisans. (Consider the Ukrainian policeman who saved a Jewish girl from the death pits by carrying her off to join the Soviet partisans.)[55] Both the OUN-B and Soviet partisan commanders were right to think that Ukrainian policemen in the German service could be drawn into their ranks. In early 1943, partisan commanders wished to corner the available manpower of fighting age before someone else did.

They knew that the experience of directed killing combined with political indoctrination could make loyal and even committed fighters out of apolitical peasants. Even when Volhynians joined the various partisan armies for reasons of life and death, their experience in the forest and in combat created or consolidated a political loyalty — even if it was of the most existentially desperate and intellectually impoverished sort. Escalation has its own rules and its own logic, one sort of commitment can lead to another, as we shall see as we turn to the events of 1943 in Volhynia.

[54] For the recollections of such officers, see Volodymyr Makar, 'Pivnichno-zakhidni ukrains'ki zemli' ['North-Western Ukrainian Lands'], Apr. 1943, repr. in *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., v (1985), 15; V. Hrabenko, 'V riadakh UPA na Kostopil'shchyni' ['In the Ranks of the UPA in the Kostopil' Region'], *ibid.*, 68; V. Novak, 'Pivnichno-zakhidnia okruha "Turiv"' ['The North-West District "Turiv" '], *ibid.*, 96; Stepan Soroka, 'Pidhaiets'ka sotnia UPA na Volyni 1943 rik' ['The Pidhaiets'ka Company in Volhynia, 1943'], *ibid.*, 138; Roman Petrenko, 'Pershi boiovi viddily UPA' ['The First Combat Units of the UPA'], *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., xxvii (1997), 75–6. On Shukhevych, see *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, 5 vols. (Toronto, 1993), v, 680–1.

[55] ŻIH, Memoir 301/2879.

IV

NATIONAL UPRISING, MARCH 1943

Red Army Colonel Anton Bryns'kyi, alias Old Uncle Pete, had a few tricks up his sleeve. Having established his Soviet partisan unit in Volhynia in 1942, he recruited Ukrainian agents within Koch's German administration in Rivne. In March 1943, he turned to the central weapon of the Soviet partisan arsenal: provocation. He allowed his contacts with Ukrainian policemen to become known to the Germans. His hope was that the Germans would shoot some policemen, and that the rest would flee to the forest and join his units. The effort was well timed: the German quota for forced labour in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine had just been increased, and Ukrainian policemen were disgusted with the hunt for forced labour. Bryns'kyi was half successful. In mid March 1943, German reprisals began and Ukrainian policemen began to leave their posts. But the OUN-B, better organized than Bryns'kyi knew, rolled with the punch.[56] OUN-B members inside the police organized rebellions at police stations, and then led the policemen to the forest.[57] Rather than joining the Soviet partisans, former policemen were led to the new UPA, proclaimed on the spot. Bryns'kyi's provocation gave the UPA its first large body of recruits.

[56] This Bryns'kyi provocation thesis was first advanced, on the basis of Belarusian archival documents, by Grzegorz Motyka, 'Lachów usunąć' ['To Expel the Polaks'], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 Apr. 2002 (p. 3 of Internet version), and then in his 'Sowieci a konflikt polsko-ukraiński' ['The Soviets and the Polish–Ukrainian Conflict'], in Krzysztof Jasiewicz (ed.), *Tygiel narodów* (Warsaw, forthcoming). I am grateful to Motyka for allowing me to see manuscript copies of his two articles for this volume, cited here and at n. 67 below. See also Il'iushyn, *Protystoiannia UPA i AK*, 127. Readers unconvinced that Soviet partisans would be capable of such sophisticated trickery should consult the two articles by Burds cited above (n. 2), and John Armstrong, *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison, 1964).

[57] Later, the belief arose that the OUN-B planned to create the UPA at exactly this time, and that its men simply answered the call, emptying German police detachments all at once. Contemporary OUN-B documents better fit the preparation-then-provocation thesis. Okruzhnyi Provid OUN, 'U spravi ostannikh podii na nashykh zemliakh', Apr. 1943: TsDAVO, 3834/1/1/1; S. Novyts'kyi, 'U zmahanniakh za voliu volyns'koi zemli' ['In the Struggle for the Freedom of the Volhynian Land'], *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., v (1985), 169; see also Herasym Khvylia, 'V lavakh UPA na Volyni' ['In the Ranks of the UPA in Volhynia'], in Petro Mirchuk and V. Davydenko (eds.), *V riadakh UPA* [In the Ranks of the UPA] (New York, 1957), 30–2. A large memoir and quasi-memoir literature discusses the origins of the UPA: for example, Volodymyr Zavedniuk, *Na pivnochi, na Volyni stvorylas' armiia UPA* [In the North, in Volhynia, Was Formed the UPA Army] (Ternopil', 1996).

This was an accident, but one for which Ukrainian nationalists had prepared. By 20 March UPA Supreme Commander Roman Shukhevych was ready with broadsides proclaiming the creation and mission of the UPA: to fight German and Russian imperialism.[58] The quick recruitment of late March whetted the nationalists' appetite for the rest of the policemen. On 4 April the OUN-B promised death ('revolutionary tribunals') to Ukrainians who remained in the German service.[59] One UPA officer reckoned that 'about 50 per cent' of those who joined the UPA in these early days were forced to do so.[60] Hundreds (or perhaps a few thousand) more policemen joined the UPA in early April, as the head of the German police complained that he was losing unit after unit.[61] As these policemen had provided the backbone of German authority, their departure weakened German power in the Volhynian countryside. The UPA also attacked German police outposts, restricting German power in the towns.[62] Guns provided by Germans were turned against Germans. The German police were bogged down in marshes to the north; the Wehrmacht was far to the east (Kharkiv was recaptured in March); Koch's entire civilian administration in Rivne numbered only 252 people. However else one may evaluate the actions of the UPA, here was a rare example of rebels calling the bluff of numerically small German occupation forces.

The OUN-B had no wish to fight a full-scale war against the Germans, since its leaders believed, after Stalingrad, that the Germans would be driven out of Ukraine by the Red Army. Ukrainian nationalists saw anti-German actions as preparation for the harder Soviet occupation to come.[63] In Volhynia, local commanders saw the field opened for the removal of the Poles.

[58] Polovna komanda Ukrains'koi Povstanchoi Armii [Field Command of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army], 'Ukraintsi' ['Ukrainians'], 20 Mar. 1943: TsDAVO, 3833/1/86/17.

[59] A. V. Kentii, 'Stratehiia i taktyka ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv' ['Strategy and Tactics of Ukrainian Nationalists'], in S. V. Kul'chyts'kyi (ed.), *Problema OUN-UPA* [The Problem of the OUN-UPA] (Kyiv, 2000), 56.

[60] Makar, 'Pivnichno-zakhidni ukrains'ki zemli', 23.

[61] 'Bandentätigkeit im Bereich des Befehlshabers d. SP u. d. SD Ukraine', 9 Apr. 1943, repr. in *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., xxi (1991), 169. Polish and Ukrainian primary and secondary sources speak of five thousand desertions in March, and another five thousand in April. These figures are perhaps exaggerated. Forthcoming work by Ray Brandon on the German sources should cast some light on this murky issue.

[62] Kosyk, *L'Allemagne national-socialiste et l'Ukraine*, 331–9, 358–62.

[63] 'Postanovy III. Konferentsii Orhanizatsii Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv Samostiinykiv Derzhavnykiv, 17–21 liutoho 1943 r.', in *OUN v svitli postanov Velykykh Zboriv*, 82;

(cont. on p. 219)

Establishing an army meant securing control of Volhynia from the Germans; Ukrainian interests, they decided, required removing the Poles.[64] With the Red Army still hundreds of miles away and the local Germans quickly humbled, there was plenty of time. Indeed, UPA commanders, like all partisan leaders, had to do something with their troops if they were to avoid losing them. With the Red Army on the way, Poles could be seen as future allies of the next occupiers, and treated as the largest of the groups of 'undesirable elements' to be removed from Ukraine in the meantime. Yet the local motives of OUN-B commanders cannot be reduced to strategy or even tactics. They found themselves in a new situation, both demanding and promising.

Shukhevych likely saw his chance to improve his position within the OUN-B. A war brings military men to the fore, and Shukhevych and his allies replaced Lebed' at a hastily called summit of the OUN-B in late April 1943.[65] Likewise, the Volhynian uprising elevated the role of local activists. Before the war, Rostyslav Voloshyn was a humble university student in charge of the OUN's modest Volhynian network. In spring 1943, he became Shukhevych's deputy at the start of the Volhynian cleansing, supervising local units of the UPA's security services. By summer, after his units had largely cleared the Poles from Volhynia, Voloshyn reached the summit of the political leadership of the OUN-B.[66] These OUN-B leaders in

(n. 63 cont.)
also 'Chernetka postanovy zasidannia provodu OUN pro vidnoshennia OUN do rosiis'koho narodu i natsmenshistiv' ['A Draft Resolution of the Meeting of the OUN Leadership on the Relation of the OUN to the Russian Nation and to National Minorities']: TsDAVO, 3833/1/38/2.

[64] M. Omeliusik, 'UPA na Volyni v 1943 rotsi' ['The UPA in Volhynia in 1943'], *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., i (1976), 23–6; Rostyslav Voloshyn, 'Na shliakhakh zbroinoi borot'by' ['On the Paths of the Armed Struggle'], *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., ii (1977), 19–24; Volodymyr Makar, 'Pivnichno-zakhidni ukrains'ki zemli', May 1943, *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., v (1984), 15; see also 'Niemcy a UPA: dokumenty' ['Germans and the UPA: Documents'], *Karta*, xxiii (1997). Later Soviet interrogations of UPA partisans seem to confirm the existence of an order to kill Poles. For example, Protokol Doprosa [Interrogation Protocol] for I. I. Iavorskii, 14 Apr. 1944, in Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [State Archive of the Russian Federation], Moscow (hereafter GARF), fond R-9478, opis' 1, delo 398. Jeffrey Burds provided me with copies of files from this fond.

[65] Motyka, 'Lachów usunąć' (p. 2 of Internet version); Panchenko, *Mykola Lebed'*, 69.

[66] For his interwar role, see Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Udział Bezpieczeństwa [Security Section], 'O.U.N. — Sprawozdanie doraźne Nr. 2' [OUN — Emergency Report No. 2], 16 Nov. 1934: AAN, MSW, syg. 1152, p. 43. For his wartime role, see Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy*, 238, 240; Panchenko, *Mykola Lebed'*, 78.

Volhynia began the cleansing of Poles on their own initiative, apparently without an order from the organization's leadership. The decision to form a partisan army came from the OUN-B leadership in February; the first soldiers came from a Soviet provocation in March; the decision to use the new UPA against Poles came, it seems, from below.[67] The OUN-B had made a speciality of faits accomplis directed to the outside world; the rapid cleansing of the Poles was a fait accompli by activists in Volhynia directed towards the rest of the organization.

Volhynian Poles were vulnerable to the point of defencelessness. Ukrainians outnumbered Poles by perhaps 5 : 1 in Volhynia when the cleansings began. No one was prepared for the sudden onset of organized violence led by men trained in Lebed's security services, by the German police, or by both. The UPA killed about seven thousand unarmed men, women and children in the first days of the attacks in late March and early April 1943. All witnesses were in accord as to the basic shape of these events. Confused and withdrawing Soviet partisans reported that the UPA had undertaken 'a complete annihilation of the Poles of Ukraine'.[68] The head of the German police noted the withdrawal of Soviet partisans, and ascribed ongoing attacks on Polish localities to the UPA.[69] The earliest available UPA report discussed the conquest of a Polish village: 'two-thirds of the buildings were burned down. The battle lasted a few hours. The Poles give the number of their dead as 500'.[70]

[67] Grzegorz Motyka, 'Ukraińcy a konflikt polsko-ukraiński' ['Ukrainians and the Polish–Ukrainian Conflict'], in Jasiewicz (ed.), *Tygiel narodów*, forthcoming (see n. 56 above). The UPA uprising in Volhynia supplemented, rather than replaced, other OUN-B tactics. In 1943 activists in Volhynia (of whom Shukhevych was the most important) had to make the case that the time had already come to leave the service of the Germans in order to attack national enemies openly and in the name of the Ukrainian nation.

[68] Strokach and Martinov to Khrushchev, 'Spetssoobshchenie o deiatel'nosti ukrainskikh natsionalistov' ['Special Report on the Activity of Ukrainian Nationalists'], 21 Apr. 1943, in Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema v Ukraini*, 383. Other reports are in the same spirit. 'Vypiska iz razvedsvodki shtaba partizanskikh otriadov Zhitomirskoi obl.' ['Extract from Intelligence Report of the Staff of the Partisan Detachments of Zhitomir Region'], 27 Apr. 1943, in Serhiichuk, *OUN-UPA v roky viiny*, 31; 'Vypiska iz razvedsvodki No. 6 shtaba partizanskikh otriadov Zhitomirskoi oblasti', 25 May 1943, *ibid.*, 55.

[69] 'Bandentätigkeit im Bereich des Bfh. d. SPudSD Ukraine', 7 May 1943, in *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., xxi (1991), 170.

[70] Volodymyr Makar, 'Pivnichno-zakhidni ukrains'ki zemli', Apr. 1943, *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., v (1985), 20. Ukrainian losses are 'small': a sign that this was an operation of ethnic cleansing that met some resistance, not a battle between armed units.

Throughout April and throughout Volhynia, UPA soldiers surrounded colonies and villages, burned houses, shot or forced back inside those who tried to escape.[71] In mixed settlements, the UPA's security service warned Ukrainians to flee by night, then killed everyone remaining at dawn.[72] This was a co-ordinated attack by armed men upon a leaderless and disorganized minority population. Poles had lost their lay elites and Roman Catholic priests to Soviet deportations, and their young men to German forced labour. Nevertheless, Poles who survived these first attacks found ways to defend themselves and take revenge. A Ukrainian writer recalls their dilemma: 'the Poles were looking for something neutral, but there was no such thing'.[73]

V

VENGEFUL COLLABORATION, APRIL–JULY 1943

Poles now joined the Soviet partisans. The taboo created by the experience of Soviet rule in 1939–41 was broken, as present need trumped past grievance. The OUN-B had kept some of its own people from joining the Soviet partisans by forming the UPA, but the UPA's actions drove Polish men and women into these very communist formations. As many as 5,000–7,000 Poles joined the Soviet partisans in Volhynia in 1943. They joined 900–1,500 Jewish fighters, survivors of the Final Solution. As one Jewish survivor recalled of the spring of 1943, '15 Poles joined us. Their homes had been burned and they barely escaped alive. They stayed with us for 4–5 months, and we fought the Banderites [the UPA] four times. Each time Jews and Poles were killed, as were Banderites'. Not far away was another small group of partisans, this one predominantly Polish but including Jewish women.[74] Soviet commanders brought such groups under their control, leaving Poles and Jews, it appears, the numerical majority in Soviet partisan units in Volhynia. One nominally Polish unit of Soviet partisans ('Poland is not Yet Lost' Battalion) had a Jewish husband and wife as

[71] For Polish recollections of these first attacks, see AW, Memoirs II/36, II/2667, II/594, II/1328/2k.
[72] GARF, R-9478/1/398, Protokol Doprosa for V. E. Stupak, 30 Sept. 1944.
[73] Berdychowska and Hnatiuk (eds.), *Bunt pokolenia*, 36.
[74] ŻIH, Memoir 301/5980/B.

commander and chief political officer.[75] One must not imagine that most simple soldiers joined the Soviet partisans out of ideological commitment. Local Jews were in the forest 'to go and fight the Germans', needed weapons, and usually had little choice but to join the Soviet units.[76] The Soviet partisans offered Poles the opportunity to pacify Ukrainian villages deemed to shelter nationalists.[77] This made the UPA's task in Volhynia harder, but also simpler: harder, since the UPA had brought about the Soviet–Polish co-operation it had intended to pre-empt; simpler, because the cleansing of Poles now had both operational and propaganda significance in the UPA's more important struggle with the Soviets.[78]

Poles also retreated from the countryside to the towns, and established self-defence units under German protection. By attacking German power and Polish populations at the same time, the UPA drove them into each other's arms. The UPA's cleansing of the countryside also killed Jews who had survived the ghetto clearings with Polish villagers, and drove Jewish survivors back to areas of German control.[79] (About 98.5 per cent of Volhynia's Jews perished.[80] This proportion is unusually high for two reasons: first, relatively few Volhynian Jews had

[75] Ster Elisavetskii, *Polveka zabveniia: evrei v dvizhenii soprotivleniia i partizanskoi bor'be v Ukraine, 1941–1944* [A Half Century of Oblivion: Jews in the Resistance Movement and in the Partisan Struggle in Ukraine, 1941–1944] (Kyiv, 1998), 86, 392; Spector, *Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, 323, 325; Grzegorz Motyka and Rafał Wnuk, *Pany i rezuny: współpraca AK-WiN i UPA, 1945–1947* [Milords and Butchers: Co-operation between the AK-WiN (Home Army: Freedom and Independence) and the UPA, 1945–1947] (Warsaw, 1997), 58.

[76] FVA, Memoir T0927. Consult also the recollections of Misha Gildenman in *They Fought Back: The Story of the Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe*, ed. and trans. Yuri Suhl (New York, 1967), 261–74.

[77] AW, Memoirs II/1350/2k, II/1328/2k. Of course, everyone who joined the Soviet partisans was subjected to indoctrination. Poles were taught, for example, that the Soviet massacre of Polish officers at Katyn' (revealed in April 1943) was carried out by the Germans.

[78] The Soviet partisans recovered quickly from their surprise at the emergence of the UPA. By summer 1943, they knew that the UPA saw them (not the Germans) as the pertinent enemy, and had prepared sophisticated counter-intelligence. M. Novikov, 'Razveddannye o natsionalistakh' ['Reconnaissance on the Nationalists'], after 10 Sept. 1943, in Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *Radians'ki partyzany proty OUN-UPA* [Soviet Partisans against the OUN-UPA] (Kyiv, 2000), 28.

[79] FVA, Memoirs T640, T1117. In at least one case, a Polish peasant who had sheltered a Jew was caught by the Germans as he fled to a town: AW, Memoir of Weronyka Maszewska, uncatalogued. Jews and Poles sometimes fled together to the forest: ŻIH, Memoir 301/3178.

[80] Spector, *Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, 358.

been deported by the Soviets in 1939–41 to the comparative safety of Siberia and Kazakhstan; and second, the UPA's 1943 attacks on Polish villages removed most remaining local shelter.) Yet some Jews survived in the German-controlled towns in 1943, and even fought with the Polish self-defence units.[81] These units ventured outside the towns, and took revenge on Ukrainian nationalists and Ukrainian villages. On occasion Polish self-defence units co-operated with the German police or Soviet partisans in attacks on Ukrainian villages.[82] Colonel Bryns'kyi, the Soviet partisan leader, fondly recalled fighting side by side with a young Polish priest, Father Marian, of the Huta Stepańska self-defence unit.[83] Poles who had survived the first round of attacks were unsparing in their revenge. They had seen their houses burned and their families killed, often in the most horrifying ways. As a Polish historian summarized their mood: 'Murder was reckoned a virtue. Young men who had lost their entire families notched their rifles to record the number of their victims'. He continued: 'In the struggle with the UPA, the principle was not to take prisoners. Nor were unarmed men spared'.[84]

Matters were much worse than this. The Germans recruited about 1,200 fresh Polish policemen in April 1943 to replace the Ukrainian deserters. Polish motives were local and personal: to defend themselves or take revenge.[85] Once they joined, Poles could not easily change their mind: sixty who tried to resign on 10 April 1943 were summarily shot. Yet regardless of individual motivations, this response to UPA attacks accelerated a fateful escalation. Poles now aided German policemen as they pacified Ukrainian villages. By July 1943 a battalion of Polish policemen had been dispatched to rural Volhynia to pacify Ukrainian villages. This was Schutzmannschaftbataillon 202, the only such Polish unit, recruited from Galician Poles but serving in Belarus before the transfer to Volhynia. This added

[81] On self-defence, see AW, Memoirs II/1356/2kw, II/1350/2k, II/1363, II/737. On Jews in Pańska Dolina in summer 1943, see AW, Memoir of Olgierd Kowalski, uncatalogued; on Jews in Przebraże in summer 1943, see Spector, *Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, 260.

[82] For examples of both, see AW, Memoirs II/1350/2k and II/737. For a list, see Il'iushyn, *Protystoiannia UPA i AK*, 156–7.

[83] Bryns'kyi, *Po toi bik frontu*, ii, 136–7.

[84] Romanowski, *ZWZ-AK na Wołyniu*, 181–2, 183. See also *Litopys UPA*, 1st ser., ii (1977) 192–4.

[85] See AW, Memoirs II/737, II/996, II/1371/2k.

to the powerful impression among Ukrainians that Poles were collaborating with murderous German policies in Volhynia.[86] That said, the auxiliary police remained heavily Ukrainian despite the desertions of March and April, and Ukrainian policemen in the German service continued the pacification of villages (often Polish) suspected of sheltering Soviet partisans. Ukrainians in the German police pacified Polish villages; Poles in the German police pacified Ukrainian villages. All served the German policies of maintaining local order and resisting Soviet incursions; few could resist interpreting their experience in national terms.

Within a month after the UPA began to slaughter Poles in April 1943, Poles were responding in kind in self-defence units, as Soviet partisans, and as German policemen. Over the course of 1943, perhaps ten thousand Ukrainian civilians were killed by Polish self-defence units, Soviet partisans and German policemen: only a fifth of the number of Polish victims, and not killed in the name of the Polish nation, but enough to create the image of massive and senseless suffering and violence.[87] The UPA found itself with new recruits: 'I was in the woods', as one Volhynian Ukrainian woman later recalled before her death at Auschwitz, 'to avenge my family'.[88] Personal loss created the opportunity for political propaganda. OUN-B and UPA pamphlets, broadsides and newspapers associated the Poles with both the Nazi and Soviet occupations. From a perspective distant in time and space, this association appears very strange. Poland had been partitioned by these two powers in 1939, and in 1943 the Polish resistance was fighting the Germans while fearing the consequences of a Soviet victory. Yet from the perspective of a Ukrainian peasant in Volhynia, little experienced in international diplomacy, and witness to attacks by Poles in the service of Germany or the Soviet Union, the link between the Polish nation and German and Soviet imperialism made sense.[89]

[86] Motyka, *Tak było w Bieszczadach*, 118–23; Il'iushyn, *OUN-UPA i ukrains'ke pytannia*, 67–9.

[87] Consult Hryciuk, 'Straty ludności na Wołyniu', 272.

[88] Ol'ha Froliak-Eliiashevs'ka, 'Hanna z volyns'kykh lisiv' ['Hanna of the Volhynian Forests'], in Marunchak (ed.), *V borot'bi za ukrains'ku derzhavu*, 772.

[89] Local propaganda: Holovna Komanda UPA, 'Ukraintsi', June 1943: TsDAVO, 3833/1/86/19–20; *Litopys UPA*, 2nd ser., ii (1999), 283–9, 296–9. General propaganda: Political Resolution 13, Third Extraordinary Congress of the OUN, 21–25 August 1943, in *OUN v svitli postanov Velykykh Zboriv*, 117–18. See also Roman Ilnytzkyj, *Deutschland und die Ukraine, 1934–1945*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1958), ii, 400–6; Berdychowska and Hnatiuk (eds.), *Bunt pokolenia*, 36.

For the critical months of April to June 1943 in Volhynia, both the German police and the Soviet partisans were in significant measure composed of Polish recruits, and both committed unforgettable atrocities. In this war of all against all, the UPA's nationalist message brought intellectual order to an otherwise incomprehensible situation. The particular conditions of wartime Volhynia allowed dedicated Ukrainian nationalists to provoke, explain and win an ethnic war.

VI

ETHNIC WAR, JULY–DECEMBER 1943

By July 1943 the UPA had swollen to twenty thousand soldiers, and controlled all but the largest Volhynian settlements. It had forcibly assimilated other nationalist partisan groups in Volhynia, and organized recruitment drives and intelligence cells in villages across the region.[90] It was in a position to make good its promise of 'shameful death' to all Poles who remained in Ukraine.[91] The springtime attacks had broken taboos, brought down revenge from Polish survivors and created the basis for effective propaganda. The removal of German power was a genuine service to the peasants: as a Jew who fled the Ukrainian police in 1942 and the UPA in 1943 recalled, 'the Ukrainians were also persecuted by the Germans'.[92] As of March 1943, the Germans were trying to seize three thousand people from Reichskommissariat Ukraine daily for forced labour in the Reich.[93] The UPA used this to their advantage, proclaiming that death for one's country was better than slavery abroad.[94] The UPA slowed the hunt for forced labour in most of Volhynia, sometimes by such direct measures as stopping trains.[95] Another Jewish survivor, a partisan who fought the UPA, noted

[90] The UPA kidnapped and then murdered the (Czech) wife of Taras Bul'ba-Borovets' in an unsuccessful attempt to gain his co-operation. On local presence, see the respectful Soviet partisan reports collected in Serhiichuk, *Radians'ki partyzany proty OUN-UPA*, for example M. Novikov, 'Razveddannye o natsionalisticheskikh formirovaniiakh' ['Reconnaissance on Nationalist Formations'], after 10 Aug. 1943, 22–4.

[91] 'Za shcho boret'sia UPA' ['What the UPA Is Fighting For'], *Do zbroi*, July 1943, in *Litopys UPA*, 2nd ser., i (1995), 7–8.

[92] FVA, Memoir T640.

[93] Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska,* 306

[94] Holovna Komanda UPA, 'Ukraintsi', June 1943: TsDAVO, 3833/1/86/21. See also Memoir 286, in *Litopys neskorenoi Ukrainy*, ii, 455.

[95] Memoir 288, in *Litopys neskorenoi Ukrainy*, ii, 457.

a similar cause of the UPA's popularity: the Germans 'took all the cows, everything, they beat them up, they killed a lot of them, and that's why they [Ukrainians] went to the woods'.[96] The UPA slowed German requisitions and exposed Ukrainian peasants to new temptations. It was in a position to offer peasants German state farms — and Polish land.[97] These categories overlapped, since Poles still managed some of the more important properties seized by the Nazis. In June 1943 the Reichskommissariat announced the reprivatization of land. Peasants understood this as a signal of a coming German defeat, and began to consider the final post-war allocation of property.[98] UPA commander Shukhevych issued an order distributing all lands of 'former Polish colonists' to 'Ukrainian peasants'.[99]

As a Polish historian notes, 'the idea of robbery was nothing new, as they [Ukrainians] were robbed daily'.[100] Moral degradation accompanied economic collapse, and Volhynian Ukrainians probably believed that land was what they needed. They were not the poorest Ukrainians under German rule, but they had lost the most during the war. To the east, in the famine-plagued formerly Soviet parts of the Reichskommissariat, 1941 and 1942 were the best harvests in memory.[101] As recently as 1933, Zhytomyr *oblast'* (region), just east of Polish Volhynia, had lost 15–20 per cent of its population to famine.[102] Although Volhynia was one of the most underdeveloped regions of Poland, it was wealthy in comparison to Soviet Ukraine. Volhynian Ukrainians who travelled to other districts of the Reichskommissariat were mistaken for Germans, since they wore full suits of clothes and good shoes.[103] Expectations were therefore much higher in Volhynia than elsewhere in the Reichskommissariat. For Volhynian Ukrainians, the collectivization policies of 1939–41 were an aberration which no one wished to continue. German attempts to preserve this system were resented in 1941, as were the increased requisitions of 1942.

[96] FVA, Memoir T1801.
[97] Makar, 'Pivnichno-zakhidni ukrains'ki zemli', 23.
[98] Berkhoff, 'Hitler's Clean Slate', 138.
[99] 'Rozporiadzhennia v zemel'nii spravi' ['An Order Regarding the Land Question'], 15 Aug. 1943: TsDAVO, 3833/1/48/2b.
[100] Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska*, 291.
[101] Berkhoff, 'Hitler's Clean Slate', 93–143, 315.
[102] Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivisation and the Terror-Famine* (New York, 1986), 250.
[103] Berkhoff, 'Hitler's Clean Slate', 327–8.

For all Ukrainians in the Reichskommissariat, 1943 promised to be a lean year. For Volhynian Ukrainians, it promised to be the worst of their lives.

Volhynia, unlike the rest of the Reichskommissariat, had had a private economy before the war. The genocide of Volhynia's Jews ruined what remained of this. Before the war, the occupational structures of Ukrainians and Jews in Volhynia had been complementary: the Jews were the majority in the towns, the Ukrainians the majority in the countryside. Although there were some Jewish farmers and some Ukrainian traders, most farmers were Ukrainian and most traders were Jewish. Towns in Volhynia had been Jewish, with Poles settling in newly built districts in the 1920s and 1930s. The Final Solution (and Soviet deportations) reduced the population of Volhynia's two largest towns, Rivne and Luts'k, by more than 50 per cent. Rivne's fell from perhaps 41,900 (a Soviet count) to perhaps 17,531 (a German count), Luts'k's from 35,600 to 16,495.[104] Before the Final Solution in Volhynia, 'every Jew had a friendly Ukrainian farmer'.[105] Trade continued from the ghetto.[106] When the Jews were murdered, the Ukrainian farmers lost their means of trade. By 1942 Volhynia's economy was one of barter. Germans traded vodka for food. The SS paid for runaway Jews in salt.[107] By 1943 even barter was a barren proposition. In the absence of the division of labour, accumulation of land must have appeared to Ukrainian peasants as the safest strategy for the future.

In July 1943 Ukrainian peasants must have been tempted by wheat that was ripening for harvest, golden and heavy in the fields. The present outlook was bleak, the future was uncertain, but a means of rescue seemed to be at hand. The Volhynian tradition of seizing lands from Poles in hard times was two centuries old: but now Polish property-owners had no state to protect them, and Ukrainian peasants were organized by those who wished to build a state themselves.[108] The UPA offered

[104] Population figures compiled by Berkhoff, 'Hitler's Clean Slate', 511.
[105] FVA, Memoir T1740.
[106] FVA, Memoir T3283.
[107] Romanowski, *ZWZ-AK na Wołyniu*, 71–3; also Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, ch. 5.
[108] Between 1905 and 1907 there were 703 recorded cases of peasants violently asserting claims to land, usually against Polish landlords, in what was then the Volhynia *gubernia* of the Russian Empire: Daniel Beauvois, *La Bataille de la terre en Ukraine, 1863–1914: les Polonais et les conflits socio-ethniques* (Lille, 1993), 137.

Volhynian Ukrainians an ideology of liberation and protection from Polish revenge; its officers had guns in hand and moral justifications on their lips. By July 1943 'all the young people had joined the UPA'.[109] That month thousands of Ukrainian peasants joined in UPA attacks. Peasant scythes killed Poles, then reaped wheat from their fields. As a Ukrainian historian has delicately put it: 'the support of the civilian Ukrainian population, armed with scythes, pitchforks, knives and hatchets, imparted to the Volhynian events an especially bloody character'.[110] Yet the new peasant manpower served an organization capable of precise and detailed planning. On the night of 11–12 July 1943, the UPA attacked 167 localities and killed perhaps ten thousand Poles. Co-ordinated attacks continued through the summer, as UPA commanders called for the destruction of Poles, 'servants of German and Russian imperialism', in their 'nests'.[111] Officers reported to headquarters that the 'Polish action' was nearing its close, or that 'the Polish problem is basically resolved'.[112] The final wave of attacks fell on 25 December 1943, when Roman Catholic Poles, reckoning Christmas by the Gregorian calendar, were concentrated in flammable wooden churches.

VII

CONCLUSIONS

The Volhynian cleansings of 1943 brought general civil war to the Ukrainian–Polish borderlands. Reports of ethnic violence, along with general considerations of Soviet security, prompted Stalin to separate Poles from Ukrainians once and for all. Shortly after the Red Army began the third occupation of Volhynia, the NKVD set about finishing the UPA's task, deporting remaining Poles westward to Poland. Then, as the Red Army secured Poland, Ukrainians were sent eastward to Soviet Ukraine. These 'repatriations' of 1944–6 were arranged by 'legal' agreements between Polish communists and Soviet

[109] Berdychowska and Hnatiuk (eds.), *Bunt pokolenia*, 36.

[110] Il'iushyn, *Protystoiannia UPA i AK*, 129.

[111] 'Visti z Volyni' ['News from Volhynia'], August 1943: TsDAVO, 3833/1/87/7. For UPA reports on the murder of Poles in August and September, see TsDAVO, 3833/1/87/18.

[112] TsDAVO, 3833/1/120/18; TsDAVO, 3833/1/131/13–14.

Ukraine (now once again extended west to include Volhynia and Galicia). In 1947, the new Polish communist regime forcibly dispersed most of its remaining Ukrainians from the south-east to the north-west of the country. Between April 1943 and August 1947, some 94 per cent of the Polish population was removed from lands that became the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and some 95 per cent of the Ukrainian population was forcibly resettled from lands that became communist Poland. About 106,000 Polish and Ukrainian civilians lost their lives, and 1.4 million survivors their homes.[113]

This final resettlement of 1947 destroyed the UPA in Poland, which for the OUN-B was a minor theatre in any case. The UPA fought on with courage, tenacity and brutality in Soviet Ukraine for another five years. The UPA's war against the Soviet Union, the main task for which it had been created in spring 1943, was the most impressive example of popular resistance to communist power in wartime and post-war Europe. Roman Shukhevych, the UPA's commander, died fighting in Soviet Ukraine in 1950. Mykola Lebed', the UPA's founder, was recruited by US intelligence.[114] As world war shifted to cold war, ethnic cleansing was forgotten. Neither the American nor the British governments evinced an excessive interest in the past of Ukrainians recruited for difficult and risky anti-Soviet operations. The Soviets killed or exiled UPA soldiers (and their families) for the crime of opposing Soviet rule.[115] The OUN-B and UPA presented themselves as anti-communist organizations: the truth, though not the whole truth. The Polish communist regime legitimized itself by its defeat of the UPA and its creation of ethnic homogeneity. Communist pedagogy and scholarship in Poland and the Soviet

[113] Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven, 2003), chs. 7–9.

[114] Noted by Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effect on the Cold War* (New York, 1988), 163–71. Documents reproduced in Jeffrey Burds, 'The Early Cold War in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944–1948' (Carl Beck Paper 1505, Pittsburgh, 2001). The cold war naturally influenced the way the Ukrainian nationalists described their wartime activities. See, for example, United American Ukrainian Organisations Committee of New York, *The Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Fight for Freedom* (New York, 1954); Zynovii Knysh, *S'ohodni i zavtra: dumky natsionalista* [Today and Tomorrow: The Thoughts of a Nationalist] (Winnipeg, 1950).

[115] Memoirs of Ukrainians returning from Siberian exile after Stalin's death are collected in *Litopys neskorenoi Ukrainy*, i, 423–640; ii, 420–559.

Union alike insisted that ethnic groups had always been where they now were, and that present borders reflected ancient history. This, as we see, is manifestly false. The orthodoxy was not believed, but it did stifle historical investigation of the causes of population movements.

Yet even historians who attend seriously to the *longue durée* will find little that foreshadows the immediate causes of ethnic cleansing in Volhynia. Naturally, one would wish to appreciate the origins of the social lines dividing Ukrainians from Poles. The Polish Reformation and Renaissance created, and then Russian imperial policies solidified, a durable Volhynian social world in which the rich and powerful were Polish-speaking Catholics, and the peasants were Ukrainian-speaking Orthodox. The last gasp of the native Orthodox nobility in Volhynia was resistance to the imposition of the Gregorian calendar in 1582.[116] It is ironic that differences in church calendars allowed eastern-rite Ukrainians to plan attacks on western-rite Poles in 1943, but religion merely provided a foundation for the organized nationalism that emerged in Volhynia in the 1930s, and little more than such practical guides for ethnic cleansers in 1943. In Volhynia, as perhaps elsewhere in Europe, the intellectual dominance of traditional religion was broken by the nationalism attendant upon ethnic cleansing. Something similar might be said about social structure. Under Russian rule in the nineteenth century, bloody peasant uprisings were the order of the day. Yet these were never defined in national terms, and independent Poland did much to reorder this traditional Volhynian social world in the 1920s and 1930s. Land was redistributed (if imperfectly), Ukrainian culture was encouraged (if channelled) and a Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church was established.[117] Soviet and

[116] Even here, one would wish to note certain striking features of early modern Volhynia: where the lawyers knew Latin, Polish and Ukrainian in the early seventeenth century; where the town of Ostrih boasted an Orthodox academy, a Unitarian Church and a yeshiva in the late sixteenth. Consult Nataliia Iakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit: doslidzhennia z istorii uiavlen' ta idei v Ukraini XVI–XVII st.* [A Parallel World: Investigations of the History of Concepts and Ideas in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ukraine] (Kyiv, 2002), ch. 1; Borys Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), ch. 8.

[117] This is a characterization of interwar Polish policy in Volhynia, not Galicia. The historiography of interwar west Ukraine focuses on Galicia, with little on the

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Nazi occupation destroyed whatever remained of Volhynia's social hierarchy before 1943, not least by killing or deporting traditional elites. The Polish peasants cleansed from Volhynia were, as a rule, as poor as the Ukrainians who cleansed them. Social history provided some components of the ethnic definition of Poles used by ethnic cleansers, but was not itself a sufficient cause of wartime ethnic cleansing.

At all events, the example of the Belarusian regions just north of Volhynia, where the traditional social order was much the same, shows that older cleavages need not manifest themselves in wartime ethnic cleansing. Wartime Belarus witnessed much the same chain of events: the destruction of Polish state authority; Soviet deportations; an intimate Holocaust; and multisided partisan warfare.[118] Yet there was no ethnic cleansing of Poles from Belarus. The difference, of course, is nationalism. Whereas Belarusian nationalism had little political salience in interwar Poland, Ukrainian nationalism was an organized underground movement before 1939. It favoured war; war favoured it. All the same, the presence of nationalism in the explanation does not mean ethnic cleansing is the consummation of previous national conflict over a particular territory. For nearly a century before the Second World War, the centre of Polish–Ukrainian strife had been Galicia, not Volhynia.[119] All

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separate strategy pursued by Warsaw in Volhynia. A recent work contains needed characterizations of Polish administrative practices: Werner Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik: Staatsmacht und öffentliche Ordnung in einer Minderheitenregion, 1918–1939* (Cologne, 1999). Although students of these problems sometimes imagine that the situation in Volhynia was essentially similar to that in Galicia, at the time everyone who ruled or wished to rule Volhynia — Polish state officials, Soviet communists, Ukrainian nationalists, legal Ukrainian political parties — knew that different conditions prevailed and different strategies were needed.

[118] There was much more looting and murder of Poles by Belarusians than had been previously recognized, but no one organized these property interests or social energies along national lines. Marek Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Białorusini w zaborze sowieckim: stosunki polsko-białoruskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej pod okupacją sowiecką, 1939–1941* [Poles and Belarusians in the Soviet Sector: Polish–Belarusian Relations on the North-Eastern Lands of the Second Republic under Soviet Occupation, 1939–1941] (Warsaw, 2000); also Krzysztof Jasiewicz, *Zagłada polskich kresów: ziemiaństwo polskie na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej pod okupacją sowiecką, 1939–1941* [The Annihilation of the Polish Eastern Borderlands: Polish Landowners in the North-Eastern Borderlands under Soviet Occupation, 1939–1941] (Warsaw, 1998).

[119] Between Józewski's departure in 1938 and the Soviet occupation in 1939 the Polish military converted about 6,225 Volhynian Orthodox believers to Roman

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observers of Polish politics, if asked in September 1939 to name the site of future Ukrainian–Polish clashes, would have chosen Galicia.

If we ask why ethnic cleansing took place in western Ukraine rather than in western Belarus, the answer must be pre-war nationalism. Ukrainian nationalists believed that Poles, as a national group, were a hindrance to the project of building a Ukrainian state. The Poles were defined not as a racial but as a political collectivity, expected to behave according to a predictably anti-Ukrainian political logic, therefore to be removed to achieve the political end of Ukrainian statehood. This kind of nationalism was openly declared in peacetime, when there was no chance of political success; in conditions of war, ethnic cleansing was national politics by other means. Yet if we ask why ethnic cleansing began in one part of west Ukraine rather than another, in Volhynia rather than Galicia, the answer must be sought in the local particularities of the triple occupation. Volhynia was less favourable terrain for nationalist conspiracy than Galicia before 1939, but more favourable afterwards. Volhynia was part of the Reichskommissariat, and therefore faced a harsher German occupation regime; it was further north, and therefore was overrun sooner by Soviet partisans. It was the scene of a confrontation between Soviet and German forces from autumn 1942, almost two years before the Red Army reached Galicia. In Volhynia rather than Galicia the economy was reduced to barter by 1942 and then to chaos in 1943. In Volhynia the OUN-B had on hand thousands of policemen with usefully murderous experience. Because the Final Solution was implemented locally in Volhynia, it taught policemen skills that could be turned to other uses. The Volhynian Holocaust

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Catholicism. In some way, these actions may have prepared Volhynian Ukrainians for revenge, though their scale was very small in comparison to the wartime experiences that followed. The programme of forced conversions was directed mainly at the Chełm region, in Lublin palatinate, just to the west of Volhynia. The figure above is my count of quarterly tabulations submitted by local authorities to the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs for 1938 and the first half of 1939, in AAN, MSW, syg. 1746, pp. 1–318. On reconversion, see Andrzej Chojnowski, *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej rządów polskich w latach 1921–1939* [The Conceptions of Nationality Policy of Polish Governments, 1921–1939] (Wrocław, 1979), 226–34. Some hundreds of Orthodox Ukrainians in Volhynia responded to the 1938–9 campaign by converting to Protestantism; during the war, Ukrainian Protestants were prominent among those who sheltered Jews in 1942 and opposed the murder of Poles in 1943.

of 1941–2 is naturally seen as an ending. Yet the Final Solution was not only an effect but a cause, not only the end of Jewish history in Volhynia but also a link in a fateful chain of events that destroyed historical Volhynia as such.

The emergence of an ethnically homogenous 'western Ukraine' and 'south-eastern Poland', without Jews, and with Poles and Ukrainians separated by a state boundary, was one episode in the general European movement towards national homogeneity. Its effects classify it with the other violent movements of populations, which we may refer to as ethnic cleansing. But what of the causes? This article has stressed the immediate, the local and the particular. Yet perhaps the particular mechanics of one case may reveal those of others, and the comparison thus made may provide the beginning of a generality. Events of the 1940s may, for example, cast light on events of the 1990s. The Volhynian cleansings of 1943 do share seven features with the Yugoslav cleansings of the 1990s: (1) the previous collapse of state authority; (2) the cover of a larger war; (3) the anticipation of future states to be created; (4) dedicated cleansers, with military or police training, at work far from home; (5) historical propaganda that both requires cleansing to be plausible and justifies cleansing already under way; (6) a conscious escalatory push by dedicated elites and propagandists, allowing individual experiences to be understood as a national war; and (7) a property motive that implicates society after the cleansing has begun. Like Yugoslavia, Volhynia was the subject of an experiment in national politics that today we would call multicultural, which ended just a few years before cleansing began. Like Yugoslavia, Volhynia was home to countless mixed marriages — and wartime national reidentifications. As in Volhynia, so in Yugoslavia the vast majority of the population was surprised and disoriented when ethnic cleansings began. The terms 'Volhynia' and 'Yugoslavia' left common usage in much the same way, as topography came to match demography in the European twentieth century.

Ethnic cleansing supplies painful or triumphant personal experiences that link biography to nationality. It can easily be seen as the culmination of ancient hatreds or the final stage in old political conflicts. In its aftermath, personal suffering and national memory blend into an irresistible harmony, a siren's call to a false historical past where all that is certain is the

death. Those who plan ethnic cleansing mean to obliterate rival nations and complex pasts; those who carry it out find themselves in need of purposeful denial once war has passed. The comparison between Volhynia and Yugoslavia, even presented in these very preliminary terms, suggests that the causes of ethnic cleansing are neither as unique to cases nor as ancient in origins as might be assumed. Uniqueness and age are major features in coherent nationalist narratives of historical development. Their seeming plausibility suggests rather nationalism's mastery of history than the reverse.

Ethnic cleansing brings about the modern overlap of language and land, not only by removing people from territory, but by altering people's views of the world. Its intellectual power springs not so much from the violence of national commitment as from the committing of national violence. Ernest Renan identified forgetfulness as crucial to the making of nations, and it was precisely the scholarly consequences of determined violence that he had in mind. Events can be forgotten in their totality and in their details; the present article has sought to explain the origins of an obscure but important totality — the ethnic cleansing of Volhynia — by bringing to light some forgotten but crucial details about war and occupation. Yet Renan's reminder has a broader European implication. To have forgotten the particulars of ethnic cleansing may be necessary for the creation of particular national histories. To have forgotten the prevalence of ethnic cleansing may have been necessary for the creation of European histories in which borders and nations are unproblematic categories. Throughout the twentieth century, ethnic cleansers knew that borders and nations were for the making.

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