

Original research paperReceived: 3.11.2018
Accepted: 23.01.2019**Roman Drozd**Akademia Pomorska
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roman.drozd@apsl.edu.pl**UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN POLAND
IN THE CONTEXT OF POLISH-UKRAINIAN DIALOGUE**Key words: *Polacy, Ukraińcy, dialog*

The “Vistula” action carried out in 1947 by Polish communist authorities had two purposes. First one, ad hoc: elimination of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) functioning in south-eastern Poland, and the second: perspective – assimilation of the Ukrainians in Poland, what at that time was coherent with national politics of the communist authorities which considered Poland to be country without national minorities. To achieve the above mentioned objectives, armed actions against the Ukrainian underground were conducted. Primarily, drastic deportation of Ukrainians, their scattered settlement among western and northern Poland, the Polonisation. The army entered the villages unexpectedly, forcing people to prepare for marching in a short period of time, often in two hours only. Then, under the convoy, they were escorted to the loading station and sent to the western and northern territories of Poland. The actions were frequently accompanied by interrogations connected with physical violence and mental abuse. The people were living in anxiety and a fear of the unknown, as the army did not provide any information containing the reasons of deportation and place of a new settlement. The Ukrainians did not trust the soldiers and felt coming death.

Such an example of humiliation and indignity is the camp in Jaworzno where ca. 3,800 people were placed without a court judgement. Among the prisoners there were women (ca. 800, while around eight were pregnant), men, several children, over a hundred elderly and disabled people, 27 divines (22 Greek Catholic and 5 Orthodox). Consequently, at least 161 people lost their lives because of the tortures (investigated by Institute of National Remembrance and acknowledged as crimes against humanity)¹.

¹ See: Roman Drozd, *Ukraińcy w Polsce wobec swojej przeszłości (1947-2005)* (Słupsk – Warszawa: Tyrsa, 2013), 152-187; Igor Hałagida, ed., *Duchowni greckokatoliccy i prawosławni w Centralnym Obozie Pracy w Jaworznie (1947-1949). Dokumenty i materiały* (Warszawa: IPN, 2012); Богдан Гук, Мирослав Іваник, eds. *Явужно. Спогади в'язнів польського концентраційного табору*, (Пере-

It was important for the army to obey the order and displace the inhabitants. The population perceived this as undeserved harm and injustice. They were deprived of their small homeland where they left material and spiritual achievements. Furthermore, the way of their settlement deprived them of family relations and contacts with their former neighbours. They lost everything. In addition, in the most cases, the ruthlessness of the army completed the feeling of misery and hopelessness. Not surprisingly, for displaced Ukrainians, the “Vistula” action is associated with a very traumatic experience. In the new place of settlement the disrespectful and often aggressive attitude of Poles evoked lower self-esteem of Ukrainians. Among some of them such experience provoked resistance expressed by manifestation of their nationality, for example: speaking in Ukrainian public places, cultivating their own traditions and transmitting their national identity to children. The others tried to hide their origin. The phenomenon of social isolation was widespread.

Such an isolation did not foster a Polish-Ukrainian dialogue. First of all, the lack of mutual contacts did not allow to exchange views. Therefore, each party remained at its own interpretation of the actions, what was even strengthened by passing the own version to the young generations. It was very common that each side idealized own actions, exaggerating the crimes of the other. As a result, for many years mutual reluctance was increasing what hindered the stabilization of mutual relations. Secondly, being isolated made internal integration of Ukrainians very difficult². Hospitality, mutual support, celebrating of feasts according to Ukrainian customs, singing and speaking in Ukrainian could give the impression of organizing. The authorities considered those actions to be “the national-cultural underground”. Nevertheless, the dispersal of Ukrainian people and the urge to provide the minimum standard of living forced them to contact a Polish environment what evoked misunderstandings or minor conflicts. Being employed and receiving salary from a Polish neighbour as well as participating in Roman Catholic services and meetings fostered mutual understanding and rapprochement. Obviously, it depended on people’s personality, their character, resentment, or an attitude towards the stereotypes. Simply speaking, it can be said that the biggest possibility to get closer appeared between Ukrainians and Poles who were not victims of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict³.

In the period of the People’s Republic of Poland, the dialogue, and the process of rapprochement between Poles and Ukrainians was very slow. The reason was not only mutual blame for the harm, but also the politics of authorities of that time. It was rare to speak about Poles’ pain in the area of former borderlands. Ukrainians were depicted as manslayers and their harm was not mentioned. Historical memory was built on a mistruth while the inconvenient facts for the communist authorities were concealed. At that time one thing was said, another done. It was a common custom of ethnic minority policy of contemporary authorities. On the one side, the image of a upstanding, tolerant

мишль – Торонто – Львів: Об’єднання Українців Закарпаття, 2007); Kazimierz Miroszewski, *Centralny Obóz Pracy Jaworzno. Podobóz ukraiński (1947-1949)* (Katowice: Śląsk, 2001).

² Barbara Beba, “Kierunek przemian tożsamości kulturowej Ukraińców na Warmii i Mazurach”, in *Tożsamość kulturowa społeczeństwa Warmii i Mazur*, eds. Barbara Domagała, and Andrzej Sakson (Olsztyn: Ośrodek Badań Naukowych, 1998), 101.

³ Archiwum Państwowe w Koszalinie (APK), PWRN, 4579. Sprawozdanie PPRN w Słupsku z pracy wśród ludności przesiedlonej z województwa rzeszowskiego, 16.08.1952.

Pole was fostered, and on the other, the Polonisation of national minorities was pursued. No specific policy of dialogue between majority and minority was planned. Therefore, in the period of political breakthroughs in Poland, wrong attitudes like aversion and even hostility is strongly manifested among Polish-Ukrainian relations⁴.

Information about hostility of Poles towards Ukrainians quickly spread among the latter and was often exaggerated. Their conviction about the conspiracy of the entire Polish society against them was increasing. Some Ukrainians were stimulated by Poles' behaviour. They have become stronger and felt own identity more intensively, while others were hiding their nationality to find peace and quiet started adopting Polish national identity⁵. It was not noticed that in many cases this was the result of their behaviour. The hermetical attitude of Ukrainians and an overt manifestation of their national identity was offensive to some Poles. Acts of kindness were treated as something natural, but lack of them was exposed in their own environment.

It is important to mention that acts of reluctance and hostility had their consequences. On the one hand, they strengthened negative attitudes, what shaped the background for subsequent fights, and on the other hand, paradoxically, the acts softened the moods and aroused pity. It was not necessary to be smart to notice their pointlessness. Obviously, the desire to pray according to the own rite, or to speak and sing in Ukrainian, was not a threat and was not a manifestation of nationalism. The main factor of achieving the better relations was getting to know each other, noticing positive features and realizing that "they" are the same as "us". Then stereotypes lost their meaning. It was a kind of dialogue that took place not "at the table", but in everyday life including various ups and downs. The tangible evidence was observed among the mixed marriages (primarily in few cases, later more frequent, and now numerous).

Life stabilization of Ukrainian population, the ability to satisfy basic needs connected with Ukrainian culture and language organized by Ukrainian Social and Cultural Association (1956), and the permission of the authorities to celebrate Greek Catholic services resulted in larger openness⁶. Ukrainians established contacts with Poles and more often the Poles began to see familiar people in Ukrainians – they were not just "individuals with a black palate". The artistic activity was no longer viewed as something negative. Moreover, it was tolerated and Polish people started to notice

⁴ See: Roman Drozd, *Polityka władz wobec ludności ukraińskiej w Polsce w latach 1944-1989* (Warszawa: Tyrsa, 2001).

⁵ Kazimierz Pudło, "Etniczne, społeczne i kulturowe skutki akcji 'Wisła'", in *Akcja "Wisła" na tle stosunków polsko-ukraińskich w XX w.*, eds. Janusz Faryś, and Jacek Jekiel (Szczecin: Uniwersytet Szczeciński, 1994), 145-151.

⁶ Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, KW PZPR, 1871. Informacja o działalności narodowosocjalistycznych towarzystw społeczno-kulturalnych w województwie gdańskim z 1962 r.; Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu, PWRN, XVIII/287. Poufna informacja PWRN we Wrocławiu dla MSW o środowisku ukraińskim na terenie województwa wrocławskiego, 10.09.1963; APK, PWRN, 4592. Poufna informacja PWRN w Koszalinie o środowisku ukraińskim na terenie województwa koszalińskiego, 24.08.1963; Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie, PWRN, 642. Poufna informacja PWRN w Lublinie o środowisku ukraińskim na terenie województwa lubelskiego, 4.09.1963; Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie, PWRN, 10014. Tajna informacja PWRN w Rzeszowie o środowisku ukraińskim na terenie województwa rzeszowskiego, 6.09.1963; Archiwum Państwowe w Olsztynie, PWRN, 444/WSW/763. Poufna informacja PWRN w Olsztynie o środowisku ukraińskim na terenie województwa olsztyńskiego, 30.08.1963.

its charm. An important factor was the formation of Polish-Ukrainian relations by new generations. They were more open-minded towards the other community than their fathers. Also part of older generation slowly was changing its attitude, as “time healed wounds”. The emerging Ukrainian intelligentsia began to seek agreement with Poland. Of course it was the part that identified with the views of Jerzy Giedroyc and acknowledged the principle “no free Ukraine without free Poland”.

At that time the process of Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement was hampered by propaganda addressed to Polish society. It intensified after the death of the deputy minister of national defence, gen. Karol Świerczewski. The authorities immediately assigned the death to the Ukrainian’s underground, however they did not have any evidence. The death was mysterious and the offenders were not detected even when special commissions were established. Nevertheless, it has become a perfect excuse to justify the “Vistula” action.



Jeden z sympatyków UPA ze swoim arsenałem

Photo 1. Propaganda photo

Source: *Siedem rozmów z generałem dywizji Władysławem Pożogą, I zastępcą ministra spraw wewnętrznych, szefem wywiadu i kontrwywiadu. Rozmawiał H. Piecuch* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1987), 189

The specially directed films were created and pictures of allegedly depicted underground members were taken. Polish murders done by Ukrainian Insurgent Army were publicized. Numerous mass meetings and assemblies were organized in factories, villages, offices, universities and schools where people demanded the “liquidation of bands”⁷. All the meetings were inspired by the authorities.

⁷ Stanisław Łach, “Osadnictwo ludności ukraińskiej na ziemiach odzyskanych po II wojnie światowej”, in *Akcja “Wisła” na tle stosunków polsko-ukraińskich w XX w.*, 158.



Photo 2. Propaganda photo

Source: Artur Bata, *Bieszczady w ogniu* (Rzeszów: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1987), 142

In fact, the Ukrainian underground was not a real threat to Poland and the communist authorities. The contemporary forces of Ukrainian Insurgent Army numbered about 1,500 partisans⁸ and about 500 armed civilian people⁹. The military personnel noticed that. Hence, the communist authorities did not treat UIA as a serious threat, they were focused on combating the Polish independence underground and strengthening own authority. Moreover, the support of the Ukrainian population for the underground weakened significantly. The UIA headquarters in Poland assessed that the population wanted “peace above all as they were plundered, ruined, wanted to return to normal principles of organization”¹⁰. During the deportation people did not resist because they were tired of the current position. Their behaviour differed from the situation of Soviet Ukraine displacement.



Rzeszowszczyzna, 1947. Pacyfikacja wsi podczas Akcji „Wisła”.
Fot. Jan Gerhard, archiwum Jerzego Tomaszewskiego

Photo 3. Original photo published by the monthly *Karta* 49 (2006), 39.

⁸ Grzegorz Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942-1960* (Warszawa: 2015), 588.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Quoted according to: Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, 583.



Wieś podpalona przez banderowców

Photo 4. Picture No. 3 after retouching

Source: Antoni B. Szcześniak, Wiesław Z. Szota, *Droga do nikąd. Działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i jej likwidacja w Polsce* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo MON, 1973), 362

Naturally, the authorities could not reveal the real purpose of the “Vistula” action, because it denied the slogans proclaimed by the communists – about democracy, friendship of nations, and brotherhood of people working in towns and villages. This is why it was presented as the result of the liquidation of the Ukrainian underground, indicating Ukrainians as the only responsible ones. It was a planned way to hide the crime. Communist propaganda has been working during the whole period of Polish People’s Republic. In total, at least 58 scientific and popular science papers, 50 memories, 10 volumes from the popular series “Żółty tygrys” and over 60 novels of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict were published. Among them there were significant, most popular novels fabricating the image of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in Bieszczady Mountains: *Luny w Bieszczadach* by Jan Gerhard and *Ślady rysich pazurów* by Wanda Żółkiewska. Both were obligatory school books. Moreover, there were books written in the same canon by Edward Prus and Artur Bata that appeared at the end of the 1980s, near the People’s Republic of Poland. In the above mentioned literature, not only the inconvenient facts were omitted, but also the comfortable details were exposed- often exaggerating their meaning. Some facts were falsified to adjust them to the convenient purport. Such an example is presented in Gerhard’s book. There is a completely made-up “dance on a minefield” or the scene of chopping off captive Polish soldiers’ heads with a carpenter’s axe¹¹. The facts concerning the murders of the Ukrainian population committed by soldiers, militiamen and Secret Police officers were completely unnoticed – even by the Polish underground. This issue was presented in a similar way in countless press, popular science and scientific articles as well as in radio and TV programs. What is more, at least three fiction films were produced whereas one of the most-famous

¹¹ See more: Grzegorz Motyka, *W kręgu „Lun w Bieszczadach”*. *Szkice z najnowszej historii polskich Bieszczad* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2009); Мiрослав Трухан, *Негативний стереотип українця в польській післявоєнній літературі* (Мюнхен – Львів: Троян, 1992).

Ogniomistrz Kaleń directed by Petelscy was an adaptation of mentioned piece *Łuny w Bieszczadach*. It was intentionally presented for several times during the “Ukrainian” Christmas season¹². This view was also preserved on monuments and memorial plaques dedicated to people and places fighting against UIA. The most important was the monument of gen. K. Świerczewski “Walter” in Jabłonki. Only few pieces were typically scientific, they were intended for a small audience¹³.

Communist propaganda hit a fertile ground. It was the result of the permanent reluctance to Ukrainians which maintained in a Polish community. Some of them could not get rid of stereotypes, the others still felt resentment of pain. In particular, the people with such resentment were living witnesses of the crimes committed by Ukrainians, what at the same time made anti-Ukrainian propaganda credible. What is more, the tendentious picture of Polish-Ukrainian relations presented by the propaganda was accepted by this group as a true, because it fitted to their personal experiences. They did not know, like the vast majority of the Polish community, about the harm done to the Ukrainians. Information about this were wisely hidden by the authorities, the media were silent and comprehensive scientific research was not conducted. This is why the facts presented by the Ukrainian population were rejected and claimed to be untrue. Officially the Ukrainians were presented as “executioners” and Poles as “victims”.

The noticeable change for the better in the Polish-Ukrainian dialogue came in 1980s when “Solidarity” was founded. The open criticism regarded not only on the current social and economic policy of the authorities, but also on the behaviour towards national minorities. Thus, the interest of national minorities increased, and for many Poles it was a complete surprise that there are national minorities in Poland. They were raised on the Gierek’s idea of “moral-political unity of the nation”. The first articles showing a new look at the issue of national minorities, including Ukrainians, began to appear¹⁴.

Ministry of Education was asked to write new school textbooks, including issues related to national minorities. The culminating moment of these actions took place on the first “Solidarity” congress when resolution concerning national minorities was accepted. It stated: “Caring for the development of Polish culture which is open for achievements of other nations, we express the will to show no lesser concern for Polish citizens of other nations and ethnic groups: Belarusians, Gypsies, Greeks, Lithuanians, Lemkos, Germans, Ukrainians, Tatars, Jews and other nationalities – to find conditions for unrestricted growth of their culture, possibility to pass it to the next generations”¹⁵ and work in Eastern Europe. The oppositional publishing houses printed the texts in the spirit of reconciliation with Ukrainians, trying to draw readers’ attention to their discriminatory situation in People’s Republic of Poland. The aim was also to show, as

¹² Tadeusz Andrzej Olszański, “Na drodze do pojednania”, *Res Publica* 11 (1988): 64.

¹³ Ryszard Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska w polityce III Rzeszy 1933-1945* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1972); Andrzej Kwilecki, *Lemkowie. Zagadnienie migracji i asymilacji* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974); Szcześniak, Szota, *Droga do nikąd*.

¹⁴ See: Tygodnik Solidarność, June 12, 1981; August 14, 1981; September, 11 and 23, 1981; Tygodnik Powszechny, July 23, 1981; November 15 and 22, 1981.

¹⁵ Taras Kuzio, “Między młotem a kowadłem – ukraińska mniejszość narodowa w Polsce”, *Kontakt* 1 (1985): 71.

intensively as possible, the objective reasons of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict¹⁶. Significant contributions were among magazines as follows: *Spotkania, Obóz, Nowa Koalicja, ABC, Międzymorze* and legal Catholic magazines: *Tygodnik Powszechny, Znak, Więź* and valuable Parisian *Kultura*¹⁷. The book written by Bohdan Skaradziński (Kazimierz Podlaski) *Belarusians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, our enemies – or brothers?* was also very significant (first edition 1983). Owing to it, the Poles started to be aware of the necessity to change the approach towards national minorities. The response of the authorities to these publications was a book of E. Prus and A. Bata¹⁸. The Ukrainian Social and Cultural Association tried to reply to such propaganda and organized scientific conference which took place in 1985 in Lublin. The topic of the event was: “The participation of Ukrainians in the fight against Hitlerian fascism and their contribution to strengthening People’s power”. The presented papers showed the participation of Ukrainians in the fight against Germany on various fronts of World War II, involvement in the resistance movement and a huge contribution in defeating the German invaders. Unfortunately, the materials from this conference were published in 1987 in the form of a low-circulation brochure¹⁹. Nevertheless, academic centres were increasingly interested in Ukrainian issues. Cultural events and scientific sessions were organized, especially in Gdańsk, Kraków and Lublin²⁰.

Ukrainian intelligentsia and students became involved in the transformation. In July 1983, the organization of the Greek Catholic laity was established: the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church named after saint Włodzimierz. In December 1983, the first issue of the *Lystok Myrjan* magazine appeared in a “second circulation”. It described the religious life of the Ukrainians in Poland. Next to the Association of Polish Students, the National Culture Council of National Minorities Students (pol. ORKSMN) was created. It had a strong Section of Ukrainian Culture, publishing its own magazine *Zustriczi* which raised the most important problems concerning the life of Ukrainian students and their relations with Polish peers. Besides, cultural events were organized, especially students reviews of national minorities creativity, popular science sessions and artistic workshops. Therefore, the mood for cooperation was hospitable. It was not surprising that some Ukrainians, especially the intelligentsia, actively joined the political events in Poland.

Rapprochement between Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic churches was also at the good point. During the pilgrims and meetings with Greek Catholics the Pope John

¹⁶ More: Taras Kuzio, “Opozycja polska a kwestia ukraińska (1982-1987)”, *Suczastnist’* 3-4 (1989): 265-302.

¹⁷ Микола Генік, “Політичні аспекти польсько-українського примирення (1945-1991 рр.)”, in *З історії польсько-українських відносин другої половини ХІХ - початку ХХІ ст.*, ed. Петро Степанович Федорчак (Івано-Франківськ: Видавництво Прикарпатського національного університету імені Василя Стефаника, 2011), 203-209.

¹⁸ Piotr Lewicki, “Wychodzenie Ukraińców z getta PRL”, in *Problemy Ukraińców w Polsce po wysiedleńczej akcji “Wisła” 1947 roku*, ed. Włodzimierz Mokry (Kraków: Fundacja św. Włodzimierza, 1997), 228-229.

¹⁹ Mikołaj Roszczenko, ed., *Udział Ukraińców w walce z hitlerowskim faszyzmem i ich wkład w utrwalenie władzy ludowej* (Lublin: Ukraińskie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne w Polsce, 1987).

²⁰ See: Piotr Tyma, “‘Nowa’ kultura ukraińska w Polsce w latach osiemdziesiątych i dziewięćdziesiątych”, in *Polska – Ukraina, spotkanie kultur*, ed. Tadeusz Stegner (Ostaszewo Gdańskie: Stephan Design, 1997), 126-135.

Paul II always showed his favour. Moreover, the rapprochement was a result of changes in Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) expressed in moderating the policy towards the Greek Catholic Church that was illegally operating there what influenced the attitude of the Polish authorities. An equally important role was played by the progressive favour of Greek Catholics among Polish bishops, other clergy and congregation. It was observed in 1982 when yearly pilgrimages of the Greek Catholics to Jasna Góra took place. Moreover, the mass of reconciliation with the participation of the clergy and the congregation of both rites (June 3, 1984 in Podkowa Leśna) was very significant. On October 8 and 17, 1987, Roman meetings of Polish and Ukrainian bishops took place, during which the head of Greek Catholics, card. Myrośław Iwan Lubacziwski and Primate Józef Glemp said the following words: “we forgive and ask for forgiveness”²¹. A real breakthrough in this context was the celebration of the Millennium of the Baptism of Rus-Ukraine in 1988 in Jasna Góra with the participation of the Greek Catholic hierarchy from the West and Ukraine, headed by Cardinal Mirosław Lubacziwski and the Polish Episcopate under the leadership of Primate Jozef Glemp. Most Greek Catholics thought that it was an occasion to appoint a bishop by Pope. However, only the changes that took place in Poland in 1989 made it possible to meet their expectations.

In October 1988, a group of intellectuals representing national minorities: prof. Michał Łesiów, PhD Włodzimierz Mokry, doc. Stefan Kozak (Ukrainian side), PhD Jerzy Turonek (Belarusian side) and PhD. Bronisław Makowski (Lithuanian side), sent a letter to Lech Wałęsa asking to introduce the issue of national minorities to the discussion during “round table”²². On 18 December, 1988 independent intellectuals and “Solidarity” activists invited by L. Wałęsa met in Warsaw in the Church of the Divine Mercy. At that time, the Citizens’ Committee was established at the Chair of NSZZ “Solidarity” within which 15 commissions were created, including the Commission for Cooperation with National Minorities, under the chairmanship of PhD Marek Edelman²³. On 27 January, the Committee developed a programme of the Citizens’ Committee entitled “About the needs of national minorities in Poland”, in which broad rights for national minorities were presented and the new curriculum including cultural knowledge and history of Belarusians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Jews was postulated. Furthermore, Committee supported action where mass media provide a wide campaign acquainting Poles with the culture of above mentioned nations. The Commission also suggested that the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic should consider the unlawful displacement of the Ukrainian population as part of the “Vistula” action, and recommended to “do not put obstacles to persons and their families if they want to return to the former native land or bring material claims on general principles”²⁴.

²¹ See: *Znak*, 4 (1988): 29-37.

²² Mirosław Czech, ed., *Ukraińcy w Polsce 1989-1993. Kalendarium. Dokumenty. Informacje* (Warszawa: Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, 1993), dok. 1. List grupy intelektualistów reprezentujących mniejszości narodowe do Lecha Wałęsy z października 1988 r., 73-74.

²³ *Ibidem*, 8-9 (introduction).

²⁴ *Ibidem*, dok. 2. Projekt stanowiska Komitetu Obywatelskiego przy Przewodniczącym NSZZ “Solidarność” pt. “O potrzebach mniejszości narodowych w Polsce” opracowany przez Komisję do Spraw Mniejszości Narodowych z 27 stycznia 1989 r., 75-76.

On 27 April, 1989, the chairman of NSZZ “Solidarity” Lech Wałęsa sent to voters a letter regarding national and religious minorities. He asked the electorate to respect the rights of national minorities and pointed out that they live among Poles “mostly from the grandfather’s grandfather, they bear the same burdens. They have similar fears and hopes. The difference concerns their specific worries about the preservation of their own religious and national identity in the Polish environment, about their culture, schools and temples. They were worried about dignity without ‘dressing up’ for the Poles, about raising for own nation, children and churches”. He also appealed: “There were many conflicts and mutual insults in our common history. Unfortunately, they are still alive. We cannot allow these feelings and ‘reasons’ prevail over reconciliation during such an important moment. Let’s not allow anyone play on it!”²⁵. On May 21, *Tygodnik Powszechny* published an article written by K. Kozłowski, in which the “Vistula” action was critically assessed and claimed to be “deeply and multi-layered mendacious”²⁶ fact in the recent history of Poland. The article, as well as the activities of the democratic opposition, was positively received by the Ukrainian community. They believed in the possibility of improving their position and making amends.

The victory of the “Solidarity” Citizens’ Committee (June 1989) met with hope of the Ukrainian community. They believed that democratic changes allow an equal treatment, reparations, broad development, and will boost Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement. This conviction was supported by earlier contacts of the Ukrainian intelligentsia with the opposition and its declarations towards national minorities.

The tangible evidence of the implementation of declarations was the victory of the representative of the Ukrainian community in the elections to the Sejm, PhD W. Mokry. He was a candidate from the Solidarity Citizens’ Committee. For the first time since 1939, the Ukrainian minority had its representative in the Polish parliament. The following months had confirmed the Ukrainian population in this belief. On 11 September, the Provincial Citizens’ Committee in Krosno issued a “Statement on Polish-Ukrainian relations”. The matter of historical evaluation was left to “factual and truthful experts of history” and it was pointed out that “Our goal is to establish a broad dialogue with all those who want it and understand the need to reinvigorate it. We deeply believe that the language of understanding is the language of Christian love, the tradition of European freedom. Therefore, speaking to our Brothers-Ukrainians, we repeat loudly after our bishops: **we forgive and ask for forgiveness** [in the original]”. The people were called to “overcome indifferences of mutual acquaintance including the national identity and the rich cultural heritage. Then we will be able to understand ourselves and get to know each other. Our nations were living in the close neighbourhood for ages and now we have to get to know each other again. Numerous actions from both sides must be taken – for a comprehensive understanding the national aspirations of freedom. It is a huge challenge that should be undertaken with

²⁵ Ibidem, dok. 3. List przewodniczącego NSZZ “Solidarność” L. Wałęsy do wyborców w sprawie mniejszości narodowych i wyznaniowych z 27 kwietnia 1989 r., 76-77.

²⁶ Ibidem, dok. 3. List przewodniczącego NSZZ “Solidarność” L. Wałęsy do wyborców w sprawie mniejszości narodowych i wyznaniowych z 27 kwietnia 1989 r., 76-77.

a great responsibility”²⁷. On 29 December, 1989, the Commission for National Minorities at the WKO “Solidarity” in Przemyśl called on the “Polish nation and Ukrainian society in Poland” to reconciliation and cooperation, and appealed for “condemnation of fratricidal murders committed by some Ukrainian and Polish armed underground” during and after the war. The appeal was approved by the members of the Committee headed by its chairman Stanisław Stępień and the chairman of the WKO “Solidarity” in Przemyśl – Zbigniew Bartnik²⁸. In response to this appeal, representatives of the Ukrainian community in Przemyśl sent the letter to the Polish society and asked Poles for reconciliation on behalf of the Ukrainian community living in Poland. Furthermore, they quoted the words said in 1987 by the head of Greek Catholics, cardinal M. Lubacziwski to Primate J. Glemp, “we forgive and ask for forgiveness”²⁹. The constructive aspect pertained to the nether initiatives as well as the fact that the representatives of both nations appealed for reconciliation. Also in regional and national press (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, or *Tygodnik Powszechny*)³⁰ information and articles concerning national minorities appeared³¹.

In the spirit of cooperation and reconciliation, the message “To Polish society” was also accepted by the First Congress of the Union of Ukrainians in Poland. It expressed support for the ongoing changes in Poland and the hope to comply with the requirement of the Ukrainian population. Also, a reference to the common history was brought up:

Our history is interlaced with thousands threads of common destinies, partly we inherit the same cultural content. For several centuries, Poles and Ukrainians were citizens of the one country. In our past, there were many incoherent conflicts, statements and harms. The Polish-Ukrainian war (1918-1919), the interwar period and the period of the Second World War, laid a dramatic shadow on our relations. Therefore, on behalf of our hardly experienced community, we advocate a full explanation of the causes and the process of these events. We stand for a truth from both sides. This is the only way to normalise Polish-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Polish relations³².

The new situation could bring the benefit to both nations because “it would be a tragedy if prejudices, distrust, resentments or misapprehension of self-interest precedence over mutual relations”³³.

²⁷ Ibidem, dok. 12. Oświadczenie WKO “Solidarność” w Krośnie o stosunkach polsko-ukraińskich z 11 września 1989 r., 101-102.

²⁸ Ibidem, dok. 15. Apel Komisji ds. Mniejszości Narodowych przy WKO “Solidarność” w Przemyślu □Do narodu polskiego i społeczeństwa ukraińskiego w Polsce o pojednanie i współpracę” z 29 grudnia 1989 r., 105-106.

²⁹ Ibidem, dok. 16. List grupy Ukraińców z Przemyśla do społeczeństwa polskiego w sprawie pojednania z 14 stycznia 1990 r., 107.

³⁰ Andrzej Skibniewski, “Problematyka ukraińoznawcza na łamach “Tygodnika Powszechnego” w latach 1990-1991”, *Biuletyn Ukrainoznawczy* 6 (2000): 133-140.

³¹ Robert Kuźbida, “Problematyka ukraińoznawcza na łamach regionalnego dziennika “Nowiny” w latach 1989 – 1990”, *Biuletyn Ukrainoznawczy* 8 (2002): 10-12.

³² Roman Drozd, ed., *Związek Ukraińców w Polsce w dokumentach z lat 1990-2005* (Warszawa: Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, 2010), dok. 2. Poślanie I Zjazdu ZUwP “Do społeczeństwa polskiego” z 25 lutego 1990 r., 14-15.

³³ Ibidem.

On May 4-5, 1990 in Jabłona near Warsaw a meeting of Polish MPs from the “Solidarity” and opposition camp from Ukraine was held. On 7 May the Board of Association of Ukrainians in Poland (pol. ZG ZUwP) asked the Polish minority in Ukraine to establish contact³⁴. The meeting took place on 26-27 June, 1990 in Warsaw and was attended by representatives of the ZUwP: Jerzy Rejt and the Polish Cultural Society of the Lviv Land headed by prof. Leszek Mazepa. They expressed the will to reach the rapprochement and reconciliation of both nations. Furthermore, they underlined the need for subjective – not- instrumental treatment of national minorities by the authorities. Both sides issued the separate appeals to their countrymen, calling them to remove all barriers that are on the way of reconciliation³⁵.

On 3 August 1990, in the atmosphere of reconciliation and making the amends the democratically elected Senate of the Republic of Poland, he condemned the “Vistula” Action:

The fate of both nations was various. The resolution pointed out that Poles and Ukrainians not only were working and living next to each other, but also were part in the same families. However, there were many mutual harms and aversions, hatred and even bloodshed. The above mentioned past has a negative influence on our relationship. We should overcome the past. Wishing for reconciliation, we endeavour to show our difficult history in the light of the truth. It requires revealing painful events that happened in the post-war period in our common homeland. One of them was the military “Vistula” action, [...] the Senate of the Republic of Poland condemns the “Vistula” action in which the principle of collective responsibility related to totalitarian systems was applied³⁶.

In response, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, which on 16 July adopted the “Declaration of Ukrainian sovereignty” condemned the “cruel crimes of the Stalinist regime on Poles” and expressed its conviction that “thanks to mutual effort, Ukrainians and Poles will overcome the tragic past and start a new stage in relations between our nations and countries”³⁷.

The process of Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement, however, did not arouse enthusiasm among all. Post-communist forces in Poland supported integrity of the USSR and tried to maintain the image of Polish-Ukrainian relations promoted in the period of the People’s Republic of Poland. The Polish Borderlands officially supported close relations with the Ukrainians, but on the terms set by them. They wanted Ukraine to acknowledge Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army as criminal organizations and to consider the Poles to commit genocide. Undoubtedly, the Kremlin which tried to maintain the integrity of the USSR, did not advocate the whole process. The Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement was a threat. Besides, a significant part of the Polish society raised on the *Luny w Bieszczadach* found it difficult to implement the different perception of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Unfortunately, it was a vulnerable ground. Local press created information about

³⁴ Ibidem, dok. 4, List otwarty ZG ZUwP “Do społeczności polskiej na Ukrainie” z 7 maja 1990 r., 18.

³⁵ Nasze Słowo, July 29, 1990.

³⁶ Drozd, *Związek Ukraińców w Polsce*, dok. 6. Uchwała Senatu RP potępiająca akcję “Wisła” z 3 sierpnia 1990 r., 21.

³⁷ Ibidem, dok. 8. Oświadczenie Rady Najwyższej USRR w sprawie potępienia przez Senat RP akcji “Wisła” z 9 października 1990 r., 23.

Polish-Ukrainian history written in the “old spirit” or printed articles written by E. Prus very often. However, since the end of 1990 there has been a visible increase in the number of such publications. *Nasze Słowo* placed this type of view in a special column called “Ukrainika in the Polish press”, called it “the rebirth of Ukrainophobes” and even stated that this is the result of the “forces of the neighbouring empire”³⁸.

The Ukrainian community accused Polish mass media and politicians of silence about the brotherhood between Poles and Ukrainians. The media wrote about the mutual fight and harm, but the facts fraternizing the two nations were omitted. As an example, in 1920 during anniversary celebrations of the Battle of Warsaw and the war with Bolshevik Russia, the Piłsudski-Petlura alliance was quoted. Then heroism, commitment of Ukrainian army, and defense of Zamość were not even mentioned. The same situation took place during the celebration of the next anniversary of the Monte Cassino conquest. When information about the participation of Ukrainians in the Anders Army and the Battle of Monte Casino appeared in the Ukrainian emigratory press, the Polish nationalist associations, as well as E. Prus, denied this information. They considered it to be untrue. Moreover, the Ukrainians were accused of undeserved glory. The truth was that the Ukrainians did not attribute this victory to themselves, it would be a nonsense. They wanted to show that the Ukrainians were part of the Polish Army and like Poles, they also shed blood against Germans. It was the 50th anniversary of this battle when the mass media placed the information about the participation of Polish soldiers with Ukrainian ethnicity. That was the result of the ecumenical service at the Polish war cemetery of Monte Casino with the participation of the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic priest as well as the speech of President L. Wałęsa, who included information that II Polish Corpus incorporated people of different faiths. Correspondingly, the Pope John Paul II in a special message to the participants of the ceremony stated that at the cemetery are soldiers not only with Polish surnames, but also Ukrainian, Belarusian and Jewish – there were 52 buried Polish soldiers of Ukrainian nationality³⁹. It can be observed in three-armed crosses on graves at the Polish war cemetery of Monte Casino.

Different views of Poles and Ukrainians on the common history have led to the direct dialogue between Polish and Ukrainian historians. The idea was commenced by the Association of Ukrainians in Poland and the World Association of Home Army Soldiers. On 25 March 1996, a proper agreement was signed. The document formally created the ground for further activities in this area⁴⁰. This initiative was upheld by the authorities of two countries. The first meeting of Polish and Ukrainian historians took place on 27-30 March, 1996 in Lutsk.

At the time, the participants agreed on the subject of the next meetings and decided that they will be held twice a year: once in Warsaw and once in Lutsk. Despite the clear differences in the approaches to the interpretation of the causes of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, both sides have shown that they can talk to each other in a friendly atmosphere. It began to be a hope of an agreement. The forerunner was the handshake of the last commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army – Vasyl Kuk and the chairman

³⁸ *Nasze Słowo*, January 20, 1991.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, June 5, 1994. The list of fallen Ukrainians was made by Władysław Janiw, participant in the Battle of Monte Casino.

⁴⁰ Archiwum Związku Ukraińców w Polsce (AZUwP), ZG ZUwP. Porozumienie pomiędzy ŚZŻAK a ZUwP w sprawie wspólnych działań dla opracowania najnowszej historii stosunków polsko-ukraińskich z 25 marca 1996 r.

of the Environment of the 27th Home Army Infantry Division – Andrzej Żupański. They seated next to each other at the presidium table⁴¹. From that moment on, regular meetings were held. During them Polish and Ukrainian authors presented the speech on a pre-determined topic and after the discussion, a protocol of arrangements and discrepancies was prepared. All materials, protocols and discussion voices were then published in the Polish and Ukrainian language versions under the common title *Poland-Ukraine: difficult questions*. A total of 9 volumes of materials from 10 meetings were published. The last two meetings took place on 6-10 November, 2001 in Warsaw, but without the participation of the representatives of Association of Ukrainians in Poland which on 28 December, 2000 suspended its further participation in the project. There were several reasons of suspension. In the opinion of Association of Ukrainians in Poland, the direction of the seminars indicated that the 27th Volhynian Infantry Division of the Home Army and the environment are not concerned about the explaining the tragic course of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict during the Second World War. The only reason is to show the “Polish harm” and burden Ukrainian underground with the guilt. Proof of this probably was the combatants’ interference in Polish historians papers as well as the intransigent position on the assessment of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in today’s Poland, including the justification of the “Vistula” action as evidenced by the 8th seminar devoted to these issues⁴².

The Congress of Ukrainians in Poland, organized in Warsaw on the 50th anniversary of the “Vistula” action, became the next important step on the way to rapprochement and reconciliation. The Congress accepted the “Message to the Polish Nation”, which included the words: “The Ukrainians in Poland who are hardly experienced by history understand the suffer and pain of innocent victims of the last war and the post-war period. In an indescribable way we feel for Poles, who have suffered from Ukrainian hands. We honour the memory of the fallen. For the families of those, who have suffered injustice, we humbly express our deepest compassion and human solidarity. We join the Ukrainian voices that say: We forgive and ask for forgiveness”. It is important to add that these words were preceded by the “Appeal concerning the Vistula action” signed by 199 well-known Polish intellectuals, in which the deportation of Ukrainians was condemned. However, the gesture from the Ukrainian side was not appreciated by most veteran, borderland and nationalists’ groups. They came out of the belief that Ukrainians have nothing to forgive to Poles, because they did not suffer any harm from them. On 29 April, 2012, the Second Congress of Ukrainians in Poland passed a resolution regarding the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, in which the slogan “We forgive and ask for forgiveness” was repeated. Although, it was also left unanswered by the borderlands, veterans and nationalists’ groups, thankfully the dialogue was not ceased. To vivid examples we can include: “Lviv Declaration” concerning the Polish-Ukrainian forgiveness and reconciliation” adopted on July 7, 2012 by Poles and Ukrainians – participants who attended the unveiling of a plaque in honor of Jacek Kuroń which took place in Lviv as well as an appeal for forgiveness and reconciliation adopted in July 2013 in Lutsk in the 70th anniversary of the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia by representatives of the Polish and Ukrainian intel-

⁴¹ Nasze Słowo, April 14, 1996.

⁴² AZUwP, ZG ZUwP. Pismo SZŻAK do ZUwP w sprawie zawieszenia współpracy z 8 stycznia 2001 r.

ligentsia. The signatures under these documents were also submitted by the representatives of the Ukrainian community in Poland.

From the text above, we can grasp that the Ukrainian minority in Poland actively participated in the process of Polish-Ukrainian dialogue and reconciliation. With an enormous contentment minority welcomed the gestures of reconciliation made by the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches, as well as the steps taken in this regard by the presidents of Poland and Ukraine. The minorities participated in all accompanying ceremonies, especially religious ones. Obviously, this does not mean, that all the activities undertaken by the Ukrainian minority in Poland facilitated the dialogue. It was hindered by the assessment that differed from the Polish community's one, especially nationalists, veterans and borderlands' groups had something different in mind. Significantly, this process was hindered by the steps of the Ukrainian community to commemorate the Ukrainian victims of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict.

The deportation of Ukrainian families from Poland and as part of the "Vistula" action caused that the graves of their relatives and friends were condemned to conscious and unconscious devastation. They could not take care of them for obvious reasons in the period of the Polish People's Republic. Only the change of political system in Poland enabled the Ukrainian population to take steps to commemorate their relatives. For the Ukrainian community, the obvious need was to tidy the overgrown and often destroyed graves, as well as setting crosses on them. It was a spontaneous action coming out of the heart. Initially, few people realized that it might trigger somebody's objection. That is why some of the commemorations were held without the current procedures. The lack of clear legal regulations created a lot of space for interpretation. Unfortunately, Poles' feelings were not taken into account by the Ukrainian community. Putting a gravestone or monument on the grave of murdered Ukrainians, especially the fallen Ukrainian Insurgent Army members, was not accepted by some of the local Polish community – what only heated the conflict. Often, relatives of this community lost their lives by the hands of the UIA, and the renovation of a grave of the murdered Ukrainians showed the Ukrainian's side in terms of a victim and not an executioner. This contradicted the Polish assessment of the conflict, which was looked upon through their own experiences or local transmissions. The retaliation was most often chosen excuse in order to execute an attack, whereas participation of friends and family was passed over in silence. It should also be emphasized that, apart from the reluctance, passive attitudes and even support for the initiators of commemoration were presented.

The first commemorations appeared already in 1990. In addition to renovating the cemeteries, tombstones of Ukrainian civilians murdered by Poles and fallen UIA members were also restored. Such commemorations appeared in Wierzbica, Liski, Małkowiec, Piskorowice, Żurawce. However, the most known commemoration, which caused a media and political storm, was the unveiling of a monument on the cemetery in Hruszowice (area of Przemyśl) on 10 October, 1994. The monument depicts a high gate connected at the top with a trident. The inscription on the plate is in Ukrainian: "Glory to the heroes of Ukrainian Insurgent Army – to fighters for the freedom of Ukraine" and four names of UIA commanders were given: "Prirwa-Berkut", "Konyk-Bajda", "Zalizniak" and "Ren". In the underground crypt, under the monument, the ground was laid from burial places of UIA members. Such commemoration evoked strong indignation from the Polish side. Until that very moment, tombstones and monuments commemorated the people buried there, and then the monument was built,

without the knowledge of the cemetery owner, who also paid homage to the entire UIA formation in Poland, however there was no permission for that. As a result, this worsened Polish-Ukrainian relations, especially in this part of Poland. A harsh reaction from the Polish side was only a matter of time. The monument was placed without consulting the local authorities and the Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites, what only added fuel to the fire. As a consequence, the monument was devastated several times and finally in 2017, with the consent of the local authorities, dismantled. The material was used to pave the road. It happened in the actions to eradicate Ukrainian commemorations in Poland. In 2015-2017, 15 commemorations were destroyed, while at that time in Ukraine 5 Polish ones were devastated. The latter ones were quickly restored or rebuilt by local authorities.

The steps towards the legal regulation of Ukrainian commemorations were undertaken by the Association of Ukrainians in Poland. In 1995, contacts with Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites were established. The three-year cooperation resulted in the signing of several agreements that regulated the matters of inscriptions on the monuments and the establishment of new commemorations. In 1999, the Ukrainian authorities appointed the Interdepartmental Commission for Commemoration, with which the Council established cooperation. As a consequence, the Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites stopped discussions with the Ukrainian community, recognizing that the Ukrainian authorities would be a better party in resolving the contentious issues. The Polish side was really engaged in the whole process of creating Polish commemorations in Ukraine, and the issue of Ukrainian commemorations in Poland could become a bargaining chip in talks with Kiev. Unfortunately, the issue of Ukrainian commemoration in Poland and Polish in Ukraine has not been internationally resolved, yet.

In summary, it can be stated that the Ukrainian community in Poland has actively participated in the process of Polish-Ukrainian dialogue and reconciliation. The tragic experiences were result of the conflict between Poland and Ukraine war and post-war period. Afterwards, it was chosen to be displaced to Soviet Ukraine in 1944-1946 and by deportation "Vistula" action in 1947, it was understood in the majority that there is no other way to achieve peace with Polish neighbours. Hence our own initiatives and gestures of reconciliation, supporting the actions of the Polish and Ukrainian authorities in this direction and the hierarchy of churches in Poland and Ukraine. An important role in this area is played by the cultural activity of the Ukrainian minority in Poland, but this has to be further elaborated.

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Summary

UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN POLAND IN THE CONTEXT OF POLISH-UKRAINIAN DIALOGUE

The Ukrainian community in Poland has actively participated in the process of Polish-Ukrainian dialogue and reconciliation. Tragically experienced due to the Polish-Ukrainian conflict during the Second World War and displacement to the Soviet Ukraine and within the “Vistula” Action, the majority of the community’s members understood that if they want to live in harmony with Polish neighbours, they should join the Polish-Ukrainian historical dialogue. Hence the initiatives and gestures of reconciliation, supporting the actions of the Polish and Ukrainian authorities in this direction and the hierarchies of churches in Poland and Ukraine. This dialogue, however, encountered resistance from Polish and Ukrainian nationalist circles, who blame the other side for the harm they suffered.

Key words: *Poles, Ukrainians, dialogue*