The Polish-Ukrainian War:
A Historical and Political Context

By Taras Kuzio, PhD

The translation of Volodymyr Viatrovych's (2012) book fills an important gap in the relatively small amount of available English-language literature about 1940s Polish-Ukrainian relations. The author, who has spent many years diligently working in Soviet, Ukrainian, American, and Polish archives, has published many academic articles, books, and document collections. As head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance in 2014–2019, Viatrovych is one of the leading authorities on Ukrainian nationalism and Ukraine during World War II.

In this volume, Viatrovych's major thesis states that the tragic events between the Poles and Ukrainians during the 1940s should be regarded as "The Second Ukrainian-Polish War." Two main factors can explain this war. First, he defines the first war as the 1918 battle for control of Lviv and Galicia, in which Ukrainian forces were defeated at about the same time as the Polish defeat of Lithuanian forces in Vilnius. Second, unlike most Polish and Western scholars and researchers, Viatrovych does not focus exclusively on one event, namely Volhynia in 1943. Instead, he places it within a broader war that began in 1942 in the Kholm-Pidlashia regions and ended in 1947 in the Trans-Curzon Region (in Ukrainian – *Zakerzonnia*). His broader historical context of a second Polish-Ukrainian war is similar to the approaches of

Timothy Snyder (2003a) and Stephen Rapawy (2016), who both describe the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in the 1940s as a "civil war."

In theory, Poland's academic research into its history should be more advanced than Ukraine's, which existed in the totalitarian USSR. However, Viatrovych's (2012) book shows that this is not the case when it comes to its victimization complex in Ukraine. Communist Poland was always a more "liberal" country than other Soviet-ruled or Soviet-satellite countries. It allowed some academic scholarship and semi-independent thinking, both of which were clearly not the case in the USSR. In addition, in post-communist Poland, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance employs over 2,000 people, while the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance employs less than 100.

Despite these differences, Ukrainian scholarship is not as driven by a "tabloidization" of history, and scholars are less afraid to publish archives. For example, there is no Polish equivalent to the two-volume, almost 1,400-page collection of 478 documents on Ukrainian-Polish relations edited by Viatrovych (2011). The Polish Institute of National Remembrance, established in 1998 nearly a decade before its Ukrainian equivalent, has not published any analogous collection of Polish underground documents on the Ukrainian-Polish relationship in the 1940s. Perhaps this is because such a publication would deny Polish myths and stereotypes, thereby undermining their victimization complex. As Viatrovych (2017) points out: "Interestingly, the majority of Polish historians who reacted to the publication of my book never cite this massive collection of new documents" (p. 268).

Considering the personal attacks launched against Viatrovych, which have led to an unwillingness by some Western historians of Ukraine and Poland to cite his work, one would assume that his scholarship is far worse than what is found in Poland. Harvard University Professor Serhiy Plokhy suggested in a letter to this author that my essay "should mention the field's unfamiliarity with

Viatrovych's book, or what may be more appropriate, its unwilling-
ness to use his findings." But, as Viatrovych's (2012) book shows,
he does not paint Ukrainian nationalists as innocent, and he is
critical of crimes committed by *both* Ukrainians *and* Poles against
one another. He does, however, insist that the actions of Polish
and Ukrainian nationalists be judged in an equal manner without
the customary "Othering" of Ukrainians. Viatrovych (2012) writes
that "At a minimum, Poles also showed they took the initiative in
launching conflict actions against Ukrainians" (p. 36).

Ukrainian Nationalism

Nationalism does not work in a vacuum but always in relation
to "Others," whether these are neighbours or representatives of
occupying states. Most nations and countries also find it excruciat-
ingly difficult to come to terms with their difficult past and often
portray themselves as victims of history.

Germany is the only country in Europe which has fully
dealt with its Nazi past. No other European country—including
Germany until recently—has fully dealt with its colonial and impe-
rialist past. For example, as a Visiting Fellow at Hokkaido Univer-
sity in Japan a few years ago, I was made to understand that on no
occasion could we talk about World War II.

Ukrainians are routinely labelled "Nazi collaborators,"
even though millions of Ukrainians fought in the Soviet, Polish,
Canadian, and US armies against the Nazis. Indeed, far more Ukrai-
nians died fighting against the Nazis than fighting on their own
side (Snyder, 2003a). There were more French, Dutch, Italian, and
other founders of the Council of Europe and European Union (EU)
fighting for the Nazis than for the allies. More Ukrainians fought
and died on the Allied side than the French, British, and Ameri-
cans put together. Of the over 50 Waffen SS divisions, brigades,
and regiments recruited from non-Germans to fight on the Eastern

Front against the Soviet army, the Belgians and Dutch had six divisions or brigades each, the French, Italians, and Hungarians had four each. There were also over 1.5 million Russians fighting on the Nazi's side during World War II. Ukrainians had only one division, the creation of which was opposed by the Stepan Bandera wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN).

As stated by Yale Professor Timothy Snyder (2017) in an address to the German *Bundestag* (Parliament),

> more Ukrainian communists collaborated with the Germans than did Ukrainian nationalists. This does not seem to make sense to us, and so no one ever says it, but it is precisely the case. Vastly more members of the Communist Party collaborated with the German occupation than did Ukrainian nationalists.

Although these facts are inconvenient for many scholars and publicists to acknowledge, they should be considered when discussing Polish-Ukrainian relations during World War II.

Polish Nationalism and its Victimization Complex

Poles and some other nations in East-Central Europe have long possessed a victimization complex; namely that only they suffered and only they were innocent of any crimes. Poland's victimization complex has grown with the Law and Justice Party being in power leading to "nostalgia for Polish dominance in the region in the 1920s and 1930s" (Iwaniuk, 2017). This more recent revival of stereotypes and myths about Ukrainians draws upon four decades of Ukrainophobia in Communist Poland and pre-war Polish nationalism.

This leads to two differences between Poland and Ukraine. The first is that stereotypes and antipathy towards Poles have never been fanned by independent Ukraine. There is no tabloidization of Ukrainian-Polish history and crimes in Ukraine.

The second is that Poland is a far more nationalistic country than Ukraine, although Polish political and intellectual elites do not see this as such. Ethnic nationalism in Poland was strengthened by the creation of a mono-ethnic state after World War II and has remained dominant in a country where identity is grounded in the Polish language and adherence to the Catholic Church. The authoritarian nature of Polish nationalism is visible in the policies of the Law and Justice Party, with opinion polls showing that only 31% of Poles are committed to democracy, while 58% are less, or not, committed. A quarter of Poles would support a military or strong leader, while half would support rule by experts (Pew Associates, 2017).

A Ukrainian identity based on ethnicity and language is only found in the western regions of Ukraine; elsewhere, most Ukrainians have a civic identity. The dominance of civic identity in Ukraine is seen in two ways. The first is that there is not the electorally popular equivalent of the nationalist Law and Justice Party. Only in one instance has a nationalist party been elected to parliament, with (*Svoboda* [Freedom]) garnering 10% of the vote in 2012. This is far less than the popularity of Poland's Law and Justice Party. Second, Ukrainian attitudes to the Russian-Ukrainian war demonstrate that a significant majority of Ukrainians have negative views of Russian leaders, while a far lower number hold negative views of Russian citizens. If ethnic nationalism were more prevalent in Ukraine, there would be similarly higher levels of dislike of the Russian people.

The rhetoric of the Law and Justice Party "toward Ukraine has radically changed from friendly and supportive to the tough language of ultimatums" (Iwaniuk, 2017). Ukrainian monuments in Poland have been vandalized. In 2016, the provocative film *Wołyn (Volhynia)* contributed to the tabloidization of the very sensitive and difficult subject of Ukrainian-Polish relations in World War II. No analogous propaganda film was made in Ukraine.

After the Law and Justice Party came to power, a resolution on "genocide" was unanimously adopted in July 2016 by the Polish *Sejm* with 432 votes and only one abstention. The declaration alleged that what had taken place against Poles in Volhynia and Galicia during 1943 and 1944 was 'genocide'. However, no serious or impartial scholar believes that the term 'genocide' applies to what took place. The politicization of this term is evident from the fact that 'genocide' is only applied to Polish and never Ukrainian casualties. If one, for example, uses Professor Paul R. Magocsi's (2010, pp. 681–682) estimates of 50,000 Polish and 20,000 Ukrainian civilians killed, does one, therefore, assume that the former constitutes an act of 'genocide' while the latter does not? How many civilians should be killed before such an act is classified as a 'genocide'?

No doubt exists that both Polish *and* Ukrainian partisan groups committed crimes against humanity within the context of an overall brutal war on the eastern front during World War II. While Viatrovych (2012) believes that crimes against humanity were committed by Ukrainian *and* Polish nationalists, most Polish historians and academics claim that only Ukrainians were at fault. Poles are unable to comprehend that Ukrainians look negatively at AK (Home Army) and other Polish partisan groups in the same manner as they look at UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army). In this volume, Viatrovych (2012) repeatedly states that both sides committed criminal acts", which could be qualified as war crimes" and that these actions could never be justified (p. 7).

Poland's victimization complex is compounded by Western scholars, such as Jared McBride (2016) who continues the tradition of "Othering" Ukrainians by only focusing on Volhynia in 1943 (rather than the longer historical period), by only noting Polish casualties, only blaming Ukrainian (but not Polish) nationalists for violence, and only writing about Ukrainians (but not Poles) serving in the German auxiliary police force. His approach cannot be viewed as an objective historical account of this tragic war.

Magocsi (2010) believes that: "The question of who started this cycle of violence and retribution remains a subject of often emotional debate among historians and eye-witness survivors" (pp. 681–682). Snyder (1999) encapsulates these mutual claims and misunderstandings by Poles and Ukrainians:

> Today, both Ukrainians and Poles believe that their claim to Eastern Galicia and Volhynia in 1939 and 1945 was legitimate. Both assert that the other side collaborated with organs of the Nazi and Soviet occupiers in Galicia and Volhynia during and after the Second World War. Both believe that the other side's partisans killed their civilians and that hundreds of thousands of their own were expelled or dispersed through ethnic cleansing after the war. Although in practice these beliefs are often held to be mutually contradictory—because one accusation is usually met with another—logically speaking, they are not. Indeed, all these beliefs, in various measures and with various qualifications, have their basis in fact. (p. 86)

Snyder (1999) continues:

> But each side regarded collaboration by the other side to be intolerable and inexplicable, whereas it saw its own collaboration as unavoidable and forgivable. Evaluations, then and now, of what makes up a necessary compromise and what constitutes unforgivable collaboration—and of the difference between aggression and self-defence—depend on differing conceptions of legitimacy. (p. 91)

The tabloidization of history and the Polish-victimization complex prevents an objective discussion of this period of Polish-Ukrainian history. Between 2003–2009, the number of Poles who believed that their people were the only victims of Volhynia in 1943 grew from 61 to 89%, while those who believed Poles and Ukrainians both died declined from 38 to only 9%. Tabloidization has led to the growth of a Polish-victimization complex where Poles believe only they suffered during the Polish-Ukrainian war. Following this trajectory of public opinion, nearly two-thirds of Poles believe Ukrainians were their main enemy during World War II, a higher figure than Polish views of Nazi Germans (62%) and Russians (57%).

This Polish victimization complex is critically surveyed by Viatrovych (2012, 2017) on many occasions, in this volume and elsewhere.

Casualty Figures*

The numbers of Polish and Ukrainian civilians killed in the 1940s has proven impossible to calculate with any degree of certainty. This is reflected in the wide range of estimates of civilian casualties in Volhynia by prominent historians in Ukrainian studies, such as Professors Orest Subtelny (2000), Magocsi (2010), Plokhy (2015), Myroslaw Shkandrij (2015), and George O. Liber (2016). Plokhy (2015) provides no footnotes for his estimates and told the author that "I looked at Magocsi among other sources. My goal was to see what there is in the literature and give a general idea where the estimates are" (Plokhy, 2015). Rapawy (2016) points out that all Western historians of Ukraine and Polish-Ukrainian relations do not give sources for their data on estimates and, "it is likely that unverifiable anecdotal information was used extensively" (p. 160).

Subtelny (2000, p. 475) is the only Western historian of Ukraine to rely on a source from Communist Poland (Szcześniak & Szota, 1973, p. 170) for casualty figures of 60,000–80,000 Poles. Although he refers to Ukrainian casualties, he does not provide estimates for them. Subtelny (2000) repeats the common Polish refrain of only citing estimates of Polish casualties while ignoring Ukrainian ones which adds to the Polish victimization complex that only Poles suffered in World War II during the Polish-Ukrainian war.

Magocsi (2010) provides some of the most balanced and researched casualty figures of 50,000 Poles and 20,000 Ukrainians "as among the more reasonable estimates" (Magocsi, 2010, pp. 681–682). Similarly, Rapawy (2016) estimates that 20,000–25,000 Ukrainians were murdered (Rapawy, 2016, p. 305). Magocsi's (2010) "reasonable estimates" (pp. 681–682) are similar to Snyder's (1999)

"responsible Polish estimate" of 50,700 combined Polish and Ukrainian deaths in Volhynia and Galicia (Snyder, 1999, footnote 32).

Magocsi's (2010) and Rapaway's (2016) estimates are both lower than Shkandrij's (2015) "conservative" estimates of 40,000–70,000 Poles and 15,000–20,000 Ukrainians (Shkandrij, 2015, p. 68). Similarly to Viatrovych (2012) and Snyder (2003a), Shkandrij (2015) writes that the killings of Ukrainian and Polish civilians in an atmosphere of Nazi and Soviet ethnic cleansing and mass murder "contributed to the population's brutalisation" (p. 68). Liber (2016, pp. 231–239) and Shkandrij (2015, p. 68)—similar to Viatrovych— provide broader coverage of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict beginning in the Kholm-Pidlashia region and spreading to Volhynia, Galicia, and Zakerzonnia. Liber (2016) provides casualty figures of 50,000–100,000 Poles and 8,000–20,000 Ukrainians (Liber, 2016, p. 237).

Snyder has published three ranges of total estimates of 50,000– 100,000 Poles and Ukrainians (Snyder, 1999, pp. 97–98), a similar estimate of 70,000 Poles and 20,000 Ukrainians (Snyder, 2003a, p. 205), and lower estimates of 50,000 Poles and 10,000 Ukrainians (Snyder, 2003b, pp. 202, 224). Snyder (1999) cites a "responsible Polish estimate of 50,700 Poles and Ukrainians killed in Volhynia and Galicia of who 34,647 are "documented" (Snyder, 1999, footnote 32). Based on his estimate of 40,000 Polish casualties, the number of Ukrainians would be 10,700 (Snyder, 1999, p. 86). In addition to these killings, Soviet and Polish communist governments organized mass exchanges of 1.5 million Ukrainians and Poles who were deported from western Ukraine and Poland (Snyder, 1999, pp. 97–98).

Ivan Patryliak (2012), who has written some of the best scholarships on Ukrainian nationalist groups, provides estimates of 38,000–39,000 Poles and 13,000–16,000 Ukrainians killed between the end of 1942 and the end of 1944 in Kholm-Pidlashia, Brest, Hrubeshiv, Polissia, Volhynia, and Galicia regions (Patryliak, 2012,

pp. 425–426). Therefore, his estimates do not include Ukrainian civilians who were killed in the Kholm-Pidlashia regions and Zakerzonnia later in 1945–1947 and if these were added Patryliak's (2012) estimates are close to those of Magocsi (2010), Rapaway (2016), and Snyder (1999, 2003).

Research based on a portion of the archives temporarily stored at the SBU (Security Service of Ukraine) documents 30,327 Polish and 16,523 Ukrainian deaths and 240 Polish and 115 Ukrainian population centres that were destroyed [these numbers do not include victims on the territory, which became a part of afterwar Poland] (Viatrovych, 2012, pp. 241–242). Yet again, these archives correlate with estimates of approximate numbers of casualties (50,000 Poles and 20, 000 Ukrainians) made by Magocsi (2010), Rapaway (2016), Snyder (1999, 2003) and Patryliak (2016).

Viatrovych (2012) prefers not to provide his own estimates, although he agrees with the ratio of 2:1 (Polish: Ukrainian) civilian casualties and destroyed population centres; showing how wrong are those Polish and Western scholars who accuse him of "white-washing Ukrainian nationalist crimes". Viatrovych's (2012) estimates are similar to those found in Magocsi (2010, pp. 681–682), Rapaway (2016), Patryliak (2012, pp. 425–426), and the SBU archives which are most likely the closest estimates of what in reality happened. The Polish claim that the disproportion in the number of casualties is a product of a pre-planned "genocide" by Ukrainians and Polish attacks upon Ukrainians as "defensive operations" (a highly dubious term) has no basis in fact. With a much larger Ukrainian population in Volhynia, it is not surprising that there were higher Polish casualties, although not of the magnitude that is being claimed in contemporary Poland.

Higher casualties were found in the Polish-Ukrainian Zakerzonnia where the Polish population was larger than Ukrainian. Canadian-Ukrainian Andrew Fesiak (2019, 2020) recounts how his father witnessed Ukrainian civilians in his village in the

Zakerzonnia murdered in waves of brutal attacks in 1945–1946 by nationalist *Narodowa Organizacja Wojskowa* (National Military Organization, [NOW]) forces led by Józef Zadzierski (pseudonym "Wołyniak"). The age group of civilians who were killed ranged from children as young as 2 to old age pensioners. Despite abundant evidence of crimes committed by them, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance published three editions of a highly propagandistic book in honour of the NOW commander entitled *Wołyniak, the True Legend* (Garbacz, 2008). The NOW partisan formation was created by the extreme right Polish National Party and had as its main ideologist Roman Dmowski who did not recognise Ukrainians to be a separate nation. NOW merged with AK in 1943 and therefore the massacres committed by them were the responsibility of the Polish government-in-exile.

If we add casualty figures from other regions, the total number of Ukrainians who were killed increases. For example, in Zakerzonnia, there were an estimated 6,000–7,000 Ukrainians and 1,000 Polish civilian deaths (Viatrovych, 2012, pp. 240–241, 301). While Snyder (1999, p.105) agrees that there were more Ukrainians than Poles who died in Zakerzonnia, he gives lower casualty figures than those of Viatrovych (2012). A similar ratio of far higher Ukrainian than Polish casualties is found in the Kholm-Pidlashia regions. If we add Ukrainian civilian casualties in Kholm-Pidlashia (4,000) and Zakerzonnia (6,000–7,000) to the Ukrainian civilians killed in Volhynia, Galicia and elsewhere the ratio of civilians who were killed would be in the ratio of 2:1 (Poles:Ukrainians). If we add these additional Ukrainians who were killed by Polish groups to the estimates given by Patryliak (2012), the number of Ukrainian casualties grows to 19,000–23,000, which accords with Snyder (1999, 2003), Magocsi (2010), Patryliak (2012), and Rapaway (2016).

Three conclusions can be drawn from this discussion of estimates of Polish and Ukrainian civilian deaths in the second Polish-Ukrainian war.

First, it is surprising that some Western historians of Ukraine and Poland provide widely different estimates of civilian casualties in Volhynia in 1943 and the broader Polish-Ukrainian war. Some either have no footnotes (Magocsi, 2010, Plokhy, 2015) or footnote a Polish Communist source (Subtelny, 2000). Even more surprisingly, many Polish sources cite large numbers of Polish casualty figures up to 100,000 or in the hundreds of thousands without any sources quoted whatsoever which are not based on archives and cannot be considered as objective scholarship.

There is no consensus on the actual casualty numbers except to say that more Poles died than Ukrainians which is upheld by all historians in Ukraine. The wide ranges of Polish and Ukrainian civilian casualty figures confirm that these are merely estimates rather than historical facts. Greater Ukrainian research is likely to confirm that the actual proportion of Polish and Ukrainian civilians who were killed is most likely to be in the 2:1 (Polish:Ukrainian) range. Magocsi (2010) wrote to this author:

> The reason why the estimates vary is that: first, we do not really know, and perhaps will never know the actual figures; and second, it is quite natural that each side, Polish and Ukrainian, would like to have the largest possible number, which ostensibly justifies their respective victimisation needs. Who knows, perhaps Viatrovych's figures, based on available archival data, will become the new 'more reasonable estimates.'

Secondly, no respected Western historian agrees with the inflated Polish estimates of hundreds of thousands of killed Polish civilians, which is often published alongside the marginalization of the number of Ukrainian civilians who were killed.

Third, no respected Western historians, including Snyder (2003a, 2003b), describe the killings as genocide. This term is politicized by the fact that it is only applied to the Polish casualties.

The Myth of Genocide

The use of the term "genocide" is problematic for four major reasons.

First, the term has never been applied to the killings of colonists in anti-colonial wars fought in China (Boxer Rebellion), Kenya, Namibia, Vietnam, Algeria, and elsewhere. Allied bombings of civilian centres in Germany and the dropping of nuclear bombs on Japan are never portrayed as acts of genocide.

Second, ethnic cleansing and genocide are not the same legally, as they are often portrayed in Poland. The term genocide has never been applied to the ethnic cleansing of Azeris and Armenians in the late 1980s and early 1990s, or of Georgians from South Ossetia and Abkhazia during the same period and Russia's 2008 invasion. Ethnic cleansing and genocide were defined as legally different in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo.

Third, discrepancies exist in the numbers needed to consider a massacre as genocide. The Polish use of "genocide" is only applied selectively to the Polish casualties. In Polish accounts, Ukrainians were killed in "pre-emptive retaliatory actions" (*akcje prewencyj-no-odwetowe*) and therefore, they believe they were not crimes. As Andriy Kozytsky (2017, pp.144–145) points out, "pre-emptive retaliatory actions" are an oxymoron. The term "genocide" is not applied objectively to the crimes committed by both sides against civilians. Ukrainian and Western scholars do not use the term genocide for the 1947 ethnic cleansing of Ukrainians in *Akcja Wisła.*

Additionally, the term genocide is further misleading because it is only applied to mass killings by states. However, no Ukrainian state existed in Volhynia during World War II. The term genocide also requires one side to be defenceless. Although it is often claimed that Polish civilians in Volhynia were defenceless, this was not the case because Polish self-defence groups received weapons from the Nazis. Poles were found in the German police and did not

desert them until 1944, a year after the Ukrainian police fled. Poles were members of the AK, *Bataliony Chłopskie* (Peasant Battalions), NSZ (National Armed Forces) and Soviet and Polish Communist partisans. Rapawy (2016) writes that Polish colonists had weapons from the security forces of interwar Poland, and they had a large number of military veterans (Rapawy, 2016, p. 145).

Fourth, genocide is defined by the greater preponderance of one side's forces over the other. This cannot be applied to Volhynia since Poles had their own Volhynian AK division and were members of other partisan forces loyal to the government-in-exile and Communists. The UPA did not, therefore, have a monopoly of violence in Volhynia.

Finally, for genocide to be successful, it requires years of dehumanizing propaganda to indoctrinate the population. However, the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) or UPA never conducted such an ideological campaign against Poles. Instead, they viewed the USSR and Russian chauvinism and imperialism as their main enemies. There are no OUN documents that would provide ideological preparation for such a large genocide as that allegedly carried out against the Poles in 1943. In fact, Rapawy (2016, p.143) cites two OUN documents, including one from July 1943, that reach out to Poles and seek mutual understanding. Additionally, many Ukrainian peasants in Volhynia were probably illiterate and were therefore unable to read any OUN literature.

Viatrovych's Contribution to Our Understanding of Polish-Ukrainian History

This translation of Viatrovych (2012) offers English readers an original view regarding Polish-Ukrainian conflict in the 1940s which provides a broader perspective to the traditional narrow perspective of focusing on only one area (Volhynia) and one year (1943). He believes that the terrible conflict emerged from

Ukrainian experiences in interwar Poland where Ukrainians often felt disenfranchised and their identity repressed. As Ted Gurr (2000) has stressed, the salience of ethnocultural identities and their capacity to mobilize ethnic groups are dependent upon the levels of grievances felt by them and the availability of opposing political parties. Grievances became acute from contestation over economic, identity, religious, and ethnic factors, which all existed in interwar Poland where Ukrainians were the largest national minority. Snyder (2003a, p.149) writes: "Although the OUN was not a mass movement while the Polish state lasted, the Polish state created conditions under which its attractiveness as an outlet for the frustration of young and educated Ukrainians grew and grew". In terms of Albert O. Hirschman's (1972) choices available to national minorities are exit, voice, or loyalty but the latter two were denied to Ukrainians in inter-war Poland. Ukrainians opted for an exit when Poland was destroyed by the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939. Ukrainian resentment and anger did not arise out of the blue in 1943 but rather grew after their 1918 defeat, growing during two decades of repression, educational and cultural discrimination, policies of forced assimilation, destruction of Orthodox churches, and the refusal to recognize the existence of a Ukrainian nation.

Viatrovych's book makes clear that crimes were committed by both Poles and Ukrainians in Kholm-Pidlashia, Volhynia, Galicia, and Zakerzonnia regions. He believes that historians should produce impartial work about this conflict. Finally, the tragic events and war in Volhynia should not be treated in isolation, as is often the case, but as part of a Polish-Ukrainian war, beginning with the first killings of Ukrainian civilians in the Kholm-Pidlashia regions in 1942 and culminating in the ethnic cleansing of Ukrainians in 1947. Both Ukrainian and Polish nationalists wanted to build national states, and the war was an important aspect of the reconfiguration of borders and states, and the development of nation-building in the 1940s in central-eastern Europe.

Note

* I contacted each Western historian of Ukraine with questions regarding the sources for their published estimates and why they believed Western historians had differing estimates. Unfortunately, only Magocsi and Plokhy replied. Regrettably, Subtelny had passed away in 2016.

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