

Chapter 19

Kresy, Poland's Eastern Borderland

The Riga Settlement as established by the Treaty of Riga signed on the 18th March 1921, finally had defined a clear border between the two warring nations, Poland even with their upper hand by winning had nearly reached their ancient borders prior to 1776, with the exhausted forces was time to concentrate in the continuing amalgamations of the divided nation into one especially the devastated eastern Poland that had suffered the battling armies of Germany and Austro- Hungary against Russia. The Kresy needed repopulation of Polish speaking nationals to fill the vacuum left by the previous occupier that had concentrated in settling Byelorussians, Ukrainians and Jews in the ancient Polish lands. A large section of eastern Poland during the occupation by Imperial Russia called "the Pale" forcing the Jews to migrate there creating a barrier based on religion so as not to live in ghettos in the major Russian cities. On Poland independence these three million Jews became Polish citizens a move welcomed by this ethnic group, while the Byelorussians and Ukrainians preferred to keep their ethnicity recorded in their new Polish documents and passports while they were allowed to state their religion mainly Russian Orthodox Church. The proposal of granting land to war volunteers and soldiers after the war against the Soviets, was by the premier of Poland Wincenty Witos on 7th August 1920, with this announcement of allocating State land to civilians and soldiers that served in the frontline with a bank loan and soldiers that received medals for bravery would receive free land. The Polish parliament of 17th September 1920 passed the "Act of Naturalization of North-Eastern County of the Republic" and the "Act on Granting the Soldiers of the Polish Army with Land". Easing the Application for demobilized soldiers for land grants. The Parliamentary Acts covered the County of Grodno and Wolozyn of Bialystok Voivodeship and 20 other county in Eastern Poland. The first groups of settlers arrived spring 1921 to the newly established colonies Wolyn. Some of the land was purchased by the State from Polish nobles estates and property of major landowner that had become Polish land state previously owned by the Russian Treasury, Tsar family, monasteries, and land abandoned by the Russians nobility when the Germans reached this location in 1915. An average plot of land allocated was 20 hectares, exemption if a soldier had a university degree could apply for 45 hectares free of charge, conditions was that this plot must be developed to be an "exemplary farm". Soon there was a demand for free land, with more applicants than plot of land available. Even the recipients of the medals Virtuti Militari had to pay for their supposedly free land. As for the settlers expecting to receive help from the government, in the majority of the cases the only help was with the land only. Soldiers that had served in different regiments received help in forage and horses that had been demobilized thus avoiding selling them to abattoirs, with further 5 to 10 years of gainful service on the farms. The payment for the farmland purchased was repaid starting after five years of the contract, with a yearly rent set according to the type of soil that could vary between 30 and 100 kilograms of rye per hectare. From the start there was major opposition to the creation of the soldier settlements in the Kresy by the local landowners that feared that their property would be nationalized and given to the new settlers and the peasantry lacking money couldn't afford to buy any plot of land and having lost the use land that they rented as the previous Russian/ Soviets owners deals were made null and void.

The process of implementing the land grants had been slow, by 1923 of a figure of 99 153 applicants only 7 345 received their plots. With the enthusiasm of progress and development expected this wasn't happening as it was hampered by the shortage of capital and conflicts from the legal angle of ownership, the 100 villages in the Wolyn Voivodeship didn't eventuate, only three were created by 1923. By January 1923 only 5 557 ex-soldiers were settled out of 8 732 plots. To encourage and increase the numbers of settlers some of the State owned parcels were sold to civilians that helped to establish mixed settlements. With the May Coup d'Etat of 1926 the government restarted the allocation by 1929 and 1933 the settlers scheme came to a total halt with the Great Depression affecting Poland economy. The revival of the settlement was put in place in 1935 without any success as by this stage many of the existing settlers were in debt.

The organization "Centralne Zwiasek Osadnikow Wojskowych" (Settler's Union) founded in March 1922 with membership of the military and civilian settlers, aimed to promote self-organizations of Osadnik communities, providing low interest credits, scholarships universities of agriculture and founding of schools. However with the initial trust to begin the settlements with colonists in the real term RE-POPULATING would be more accurate as they were finally controlling their ancient lands and by their own sheer determination and blood spilled by removing the Russians dominion. Even so many problems arose as regulations were not prepared in time, forcing the local committee in place to solve the situation presented in some cases upsetting the illegal squatters on land to be subdivided. This led to disputes with the local peasant population by the ex- servicemen. The Ukrainian and Byelorussian peasants were under the impression that the land controlled by the Soviets once they were removed by the Polish army, these squatters in question were convinced that the land will pass to them, without having questioned before this same demands to the Soviets and before 1917 to the Russian nobility.

In time even the new settlers realized a better approach was needed to allow further participation of the local peasants to distribute land equally to reduce tensions and rancour at grass root level. The Government help to the soldiers minus the land, was scarce horses and carts, limited quantity of timber for building and small bank credit. The initial settlers were mainly young 20- 25 years old, raring to establish themselves and already toughened by the hardships experienced during the war, the majority were single men 16 5 officers, 42 % non- commissioned officers with 70 % of them claimed to have farming experience. In just over one year many of the settlers abandoned their land, isolated in remote locations accessed by dirt tracks that in the rainy seasons became muddy trails and the fierce cold winter blizzards reaching minus 20 degrees centigrade, making it difficult to even walk on the frozen grounds. For accommodation they were forced to use the basic buildings of a local villager if available or resort to excavate a dug out on their property to withstand the heavy snowfalls and torrential rains. The first years created a negative view in the cities with criticism of the scheme not having achieved spectacular success.

The Parliament fully aware of the Treasury shortfall in March 1923 had to suspend the military settlements. Later on reinstated them, by the middle of 1930 there were 9 000 military settlers, Wolyn had 3 800 settlers, 1 100 in Polesie, 2 000 in Nowogrodek, 1 200 in Wilno, and 1 000 Bialystok Voivodeship, spread through 700 military settlements. According to the quality of soil of the land, the average size of parcels could be 10- 15 ha in Wolyn and 25 ha in Polesie. By the late 1920 there was improvement in the settlements, the bachelors that arrived first and stayed on now married with children, was a successful farmer active in the local economy, cultural and social life. There was also further increase of the Osadny

with the arrival of married couples and their children establishing in the settlements many experienced in the farming life, attracted to the potential bonanza of being able to afford to buy farmland, bringing their own farming equipment, horses, and with wife's dowry a small capital to help to develop their own farm.

With the establishment of agricultural associations and cooperatives that encouraged the local peasants to join them. Promoting the use of artificial fertilizers, different cultivation and industrial crops of sugar beet and tobacco, introduction of new variety of fruit growing orchards and their care, introduction of new livestock more suitable for the location, modern style of beekeeping. Education of hygiene at home and farm level to encourage the local farm workers to break away of unhealthy practice of using human waste and animal waste as fertilizer on their gardens and farms with encouragement to introduce healthier practices of disposing human waste separate in septic system away from their water well. Another change noticed that the Byelorussians and Ukrainians had become friendly towards the settlers mainly in the prosperous Osady but in the ones struggling there was animosity towards the newcomers. The input of Osadnicz and their family had a great impact on the local life and community, in particular in the local councils considering that they just made 0.50 percent of the total population in Eastern Poland. In the 1935 election 13 settlers became Members of the Sejm (Parliament) and two senators in the Upper House. From the first osadnyca established a lot of attention was given to the education of the children, with the arrival of families with their children, emphasis was directed to primary schooling to university level. The Osady erected a number of new school buildings, to allow their children education closer to the homestead, as a majority of children went to the schools close by villages and towns this allowed this allowed the socializing with other children.

With further impetus by 1938 the Settler's Union had founded four Gimnazja (grammar schools) in Rowne, Kowel, Lida and Wilno, they also established training centres for future artisans and shopkeepers and to help the parents that lived farther away from towns, the Settler's Union created 12 hostels called Ogniska by 1938 the schools and hostels had an important place for preparing the youth to be more integrated in their homeland, every year at Spring and eastern town was selected for the competition in sport, choral singing and orchestral singing, the last town was Grodno in May 1939 with 1 400 persons present.

Osada Janowka, Gm. Mlynów, Pow. Dubno, Kresy, Poland

Book author father Paweł Borowiec and his parents Franciszek Borowiec and Józefa Borowiec (nee Bomba) arrived to Janowka in 1926, settling in adjoining farm to the brother of Franciszek Borowiec, his name Wawryniec Borowiec his wife Aniela and six children. Soon both farms were in production, the house was built of pine logs in a Canadian log house style, the two brothers had experience in agriculture and farming practices having been brought up in a small farm in Kielnarowa, Poland. In this osada there were two other families related to Józefa Bomba and Kotula and also a good friend the Walczak family. My father after finishing primary schooling in the area, awarded a scholarship for high school in the Jesuit Gimnazjum in Lublin, later continued his agricultural studies.

In 1936 was called for the military services in Lublin. Before the German Invasion was called back serving in 12th battalion of armoured tanks. With arrival of the Soviet invasion 17th September 1939 soon all of eastern Poland was under control of the Soviets and the local informers. My grandfather was warned of the planned deportation of all the settlers families to Siberia, many of the osadnic refused to believe this could happen even his own brother was adamant that no harm would come. My grandparents decided to take the risk

and escape towards Budziwoj or Kielnarowa after numerous near misses and close escapes to the safety of their remaining families in Budziwoj, with the terrible news ahead filtering to Nazi Occupied Germany of the massive deportation in the Kresy. Starting 10th February 1940, eighty per cent of the settlers and family were deported to Siberia and the republics of Central Asia, stopping with German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. The remaining settlers were targeted by the Ukrainians UPA to be massacred in 1943/1944 this genocidal action was approved and encouraged by the Soviets occupying Polish territory. With Soviets negating the very existence of the Polish State prior to 1939. With the Nazi Germans and the Soviets determined to completely destroy any vestige of Poland, their people and culture. By June 1941 the Soviet had arrested and imprisoned 500 000 Polish citizens in the Kresy region, 90 % of the males classified as “enemies of the people” covering civic officials, military personnel (with the most detested anyone involved in the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, clergy and educators.

Figures:

Imprisonment Polish Citizen	500 000
Katyn Massacre Polish Military	20 000
Siberian deported of Poles	320 000
Women raped by Soviet troops	100 000
Polish citizen died	350 000

With the entry of Soviet forces into Eastern Poland they were welcomed in many towns and villages by large contingents of Jews and Ukrainians registered as Polish citizens. Now in the belief that they could participate in the new order and finally be free from the control of Poland. Soon their treacherous behaviour would be penalized with the Soviet repression that would be equally felt by all party as the ideological stance of Moscow was only total power over the beliefs be it religious, racial or political.

In this land grab by the Soviet Union acquiring 52 % of the territory of Poland of an area of 200 000 square km and 13.7 million citizens. With a composition by ethnic claims and religious beliefs:

Polish	38.00 %	5 100 000
Ukrainians	37.00 %	5 069 000
Belarussians	14.50 %	1 986 500
Jews	8.40 %	1 150 800
Russians	0.90 %	123 300
Germans	0.60 %	82 200
Total	99.40 %	13 511 800 approximate

Having escaped from Germany occupied areas 335 000 refugees with a large proportion of them 198 000 Jews. The USSR annexed these territories to be controlled from Moscow minus Wilno that was granted to Lithuania. Soon with the arrival and occupation by the Soviets, a certain amount of citizens not ethnically Polish that had enjoyed freedom and improvement in their daily life in the Second Polish Republic compared across the border their peers were subjected to discrimination and exploitation by the rulers in Moscow. The most vocal group were the Ukrainians believing that they could achieve unification with Ukraine controlled by the Soviets. As they blamed this partition to Poland as their attempt to achieve independence in 1919 was pushed aside and faltered with Polish victories in the Polish- Ukrainian and Polish- Soviet Wars. Also a large segment of Jews with Communists ideals determined with the arrival of the invaders from the east would allow them to continue political agitation. With renew hopes became involved in assisting and executing

Polish ethnic people and helping with the temporary governance of different towns and cities including denouncing potential or imagined enemies of the Soviet State.

As the Soviet Union never officially declared war on Poland, with the aim of Sovietization of the Kresy region (today occupied by Western Ukraine and Western Belarus) any Polish personnel captured was not considered a prisoner of war (POW) but as an enemy of the State. Killing tens of thousands of POW. Any captured officers were killed as it happened in the Katyn massacre and after the Battle of Szack 28th September 1939 with surrender of the Polish forces all officers were executed by the invaders. Estimated that 250 000 POW soldiers died many having been sent to the Soviet Gulags, with very few having survived the ordeal. Soon the government employees, former prime ministers and even several known Polish communists and socialists that the Politburo considered unreliable were imprisoned and 65 000 were executed. The remaining imprisoned in the overcrowded jails, forcing the MKVD to open more temporary prisons in the towns they ruled and controlled.

Initiating a massive forced resettlement of people they classified as Kulaks (land owners), Osadniks (Kresy colonists), civil servants, forests workers, university professors etc. to the Gulag labour concentration camps, and directing many other to be exiled to the remotest corners of the Soviet Union. Between 1940 to the middle of 1941, Moscow gave tacit approval of deporting 1 200 000 Polish nationals from the Soviet occupied Polish territory. This was conducted in four operations which included men, women and children in each operation, starting 10th February 1940 with 225 000 people sent to the far north and east of Russia, covering Siberia and Khabarovsk Krai. Following the next one 13th April 1940 of 320 000 people to reach Kazakhstan. The third group of 240 000 had departed between June/July 1940. With the final one of 300 000 people left Poland in June 1941.

All Polish residents of the forcibly annexed territories by the Soviets acquired Soviet citizenship, if they refused to accept they were reminded the other option available was repatriation to German occupied Poland.

With the Sikorski- Mayski Agreement in 1941, came too late for half of the deported people had died under extreme hunger, weather conditions and lack of essential medicine and warm garments suffering the extreme weather conditions in Siberia and Soviet Central Asia. An estimate figure of the people deported the Polish women accounted for 55 %.

This agreement signed in 1941 by the Polish Government in Exile and the USSR by 1943 was broken off by the Soviets as they had refused an independent study with a thorough examination of the Polish army bodies found at Katyn burial sites and the intense demand that the Western Allies only recognise the puppet government established in Moscow claiming to represent Poland best interest.

The confusion created when the Red Army invaded Poland in 1939, was initially to reassure the first civilians encountered that they had come to offer assistance to beat the Nazi Germany. With further contradictory orders given by the Polish High Command to their own troops to avoid any confrontation, only to defend themselves if attacked by the Soviets. Who once established began confiscating, nationalising and redistribution of all private and State owned Polish property. The invaders had decided to allow their troops to confiscate food and goods not available in their countries. To further strengthen their control initiated a land reform firstly of larger states and distributed in smaller parcels to the poorest of farmworkers and peasants, this communist propaganda soon crashed to the reality when in the next step it was instituted a forced collectivisation erasing the concept of private land with the new agrarian reforms of working in the Kolkhoz (collective) farms and to fulfil the quotas of state imposed governance.

The Stalinist policies became clearer to the subjugated population by the 22nd October 1939 just few weeks after the partition of Poland organized staged elections were arranged by the Soviets, to legitimize their annexation of Eastern Poland to be shared between Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. All educational institutions from primary schools to university closed, with the tutelage of Soviet supervision were re-opened only using the Soviet educational curriculum. With faculty members from Soviet controlled eastern Ukraine from the Kiev University. On the 25th January 1940 the famous Polish Lwow University starting enrolling new students to be only taught according to a Soviet curriculum. Erasing centuries of Polish literature, knowledge and tradition replaced by studies of Russian language and literature, Marxism- Leninism and other subjects to solidify the forced Moscow ideology. All efforts concentrated to remove any traces of Polish history and culture. As the media soon became controlled directly from Moscow successfully implementing a regime as a police state with a principal weapon used of the terror of the masses, allowing only the Communist Party to operate having dismantled and destroyed all Polish political parties and organizations. This allowed a free hand to persecute any organized religion. In the Kresy area the Soviets encouraged malcontents from Belarus and with the particular enjoyment of the cruelty inflicted on the Poles by the Ukrainians. This incitement of the minorities would rectify the wrongs suffered under 20 years of Polish rule. Part of the Soviet propaganda against the Second Polish Republic of ill-treating the non-Poles received. In particular the active participation of the Ukrainians in the killing of Polish nationals and destruction of property itself in a genocidal maniac response to their claims as themselves were survivors of the planned genocidal of their own people by Stalin and acolytes in what was called "Ukraine Holodomor" or the Soviet famine 1932/ 1933 that affected the major grain producing areas of the Soviet Union that covered Eastern Ukraine, Northern Caucasus, Volga Region, Kazakhstan reaching as far as the South Urals and West Siberia. With millions of people dying, with 600 000 in Kazakhstan and three million in Eastern Ukraine. This famine as officially declared non-existent and the news in the international media was classified as "anti-Soviet propaganda".

Concerned in Moscow in the results of the 1937 census were kept as state secret so as not to confirm the reliable reports of the extent of the famine and depopulation of hundreds of villages. The Soviet authorities had to introduce identity cards on 27th December 1932 so to control the massive exodus of peasants and farmhands to the cities this measure was relinquished in 1974. The rural workforce had to apply to the head of the Kolkhoz for this card with a valid reason. Enforcing this situation of staying at their home or village if ignoring this ruling they were promptly sent to a distant gulag concentration camp. Conflicting reasons has been presented as to the weather pattern affecting the successfully yearly crops production in particular in Eastern Ukraine but this argument doesn't explain why in presently occupied Kresy area (Western Ukraine) governed by Warsaw, Poland there was hardly any impact in the population by lack of food. The rain pattern was similar across the border as it was confirmed that the drought was not that severe.

The main reason was caused by human incompetence and interference at a large industrial case by the experienced farmers of large and small holdings were "enemies of the state" also called "Kulaks" that became the target of the state with arrests, deportation and executions. This forced collectivisation implemented of a five year plan with the farming collectives had to enforce production of grain without financial benefits to the farm worker, their task was to follow orders from above in many cases of men lacking the basic knowledge or understanding of grain farming.

The Soviets urgently needed this grain to export for purchasing equipment and machinery of capitalist countries. In 1933 the export of grains reached 1.70 million tons to the West, while millions of people starved to death. As late 1933 the Soviet confiscated Ukrainian grain that had to be under constant vigilance of armed guards, using 112 000 Bolsheviks armed agents to terrorize the farm collectives to increase and deliver their quotas of grain.

The authorities in Moscow understood the power of media barons in the West, making every effort to show any newspapers reporters the best staged location managing to fool several known publications, who themselves knew that silence of the grim reality would affect the profits in the grain market. A popular author Walter Durantz working for "The New York Times" reported under the heading "Russians Hungry, but not starving".

In Kresy the locals were well aware of the devastating situation occurring across the border, reporting regularly to the authorities, helping many starving people by donating food and needed medicine to the desperate ones that crossed the borders.

With the unwelcome arrival of the Soviets in to Poland in 1939, to the ethnic Poles there was sinister development of their Jewish neighbours and Belarusians and Ukrainian welcoming the invaders waving red flags with men rushing to greet the Soviet soldiers and the women and children rushing to kiss the invaders armoured tanks.

With Jews organising communist temporary self-government, taking over public buildings, lowering the Polish flag and ripping them trampling and spitting on the white section and raising the remaining red colour as a communist symbol. Following over the next few days of disarming any Polish soldiers or police officers any resistance they were shot. With formation of militias and self-appointed guards both manned mainly by Jews under the watchful control of their new masters the Soviets establishing revolutionary committees, arresting and shooting at random representatives of the Polish State.

Becoming the Soviet fifth column by attacking any small army units, providing extensive assistance by tracking down even single Polish soldiers. By taking side with the invaders and wholeheartedly collaborating demonstrated their betrayal to a country that welcomed them, while other nations refused to extend such goodwill. This treacherous actions continued till September 1939. By the start of 1940 these willing collaborationists had benefited by seeking revenge on the Polish democratic rule, acquiring substantial amount of stolen goods, living in confiscated houses taken from Poles that had being arrested or killed. Soon the Soviets had set their methods on the Jews themselves their organizations were abolished and any vocal activist of this faith was arrested and investigated for any accumulation of wealth that was supposed to belong to the Soviet State.

To avoid being sent back to the German occupied zone several hundred thousands of Jews eagerly accepted the Soviet citizenship. With the collapse of the Red Army against the Nazi Germans in 1941, the exodus of Soviet Jews into Soviet Union fearing for their lives if captured by the Gestapo, this action allowed 300 000 of this Jews to survive the Holocaust. With Hitler launching his invasion of the Soviet Union in 22nd June 1941 named "Operation Barbarossa" with 150 divisions amounting 3 million men, 3 000 tanks of different strength and use, 7 000 artillery pieces, 2 500 warplanes and also 700 000 horses for different functions of transport. Their allies Finland and Romania supplied 30 divisions. The Italians forces arrived August 1941, with the forces of Croatia, Spain, Bosnia- Hercegovina soon joining in the push to Moscow.

The Soviets had 150 divisions but by August of that year had increased to 210 divisions, surprising the Nazi German intelligence raising concerns the fast replenishment of the losses initially sustained by the Soviets having lost large amount of soldiers killed and taken

prisoners. In war material in tanks and airplanes they had three times more equipment than the Germans but this Soviet aircrafts were in many cases outdated and unreliable with the need of constant repair and shortage of spare parts. The Soviet Red Army had available and using large amount of horses for transport and cavalry use.

With the success of the Germans to push back the Soviets armies beyond Polish territories demarked in 1920. The Nazi German forces with the support of the Mobile Killing Units (Einsatzgruppen) composed of German SS and police personnel all under the control of Reichsfuhrer SS Heinrich Himmler. Who quickly implemented the campaign in earnest of the liquidation of Soviet supporters with their commissars given priority including all the Jews captured that hadn't managed to flee eastwards beyond the borders. For many people that had lived, enjoying personal freedom and security to practice their religion beliefs or political affiliation under the governance of the Polish government now lamented the punishment inflicted on them by the treachery of some of their own co-religionists that had welcomed the Soviet invaders in 1939, managing to escape as common criminals marked forever as ingrates that had supported the Soviet rule to fulfil their devious ambition with a demonic desire to destroy the Polish State.

Kresy, Eastern Borderland of Poland

Wolyn ancient Polish lands fulfilling the path to become an example of the success as the Wolyn Voivodeship between the years 1921 to 1939.

Prior to 1340 this territory was contested by the principality of Moscow using their influence on the Grand Duchy of Kiev backed with missionary enthusiasm of their Orthodox Church.

With the collapse of the Kiev Grand Duchy by their internal weaknesses. The Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. With Poland protecting Western Wolyn and Lithuania of Eastern Wolyn by 1366, three years later after Wolyn was declared a province of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This allowed the freedom to establish Roman and Greek Catholic churches, this encouraged also more Russian Orthodox churches.

With an open policy the Mennonites in 1783 were welcomed to open their agricultural farm colonies. In 1795 following the Third Partition of the Commonwealth, all of the Wolyn became the Volhynian Government of the Russian Empire. The Russians moved swiftly to force the Poles out of their lands by instituting several laws to restrict language, religion and the use only of the Russian language. Even other groups experienced the new rules as the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were banned and all their properties were transferred to the control and ownership of the Russian Orthodox Church including several Roman Catholics Churches suffered the same fate.

To emphasize her power Empress Catherine II gave orders for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Luck was suppressed. By late 1800 the population had increased close to 3 million inhabitants, consisting of 73 % Russian and Ukrainian, 14 % Jews, 6 % Polish, 5.7 German and 1.3 tartars and other races and creeds.

With encouragement of the Russian Tsars, German colonists were granted large tracts of farming land and other benefits not even allowed for the locals born in these territories.

At the start of the World War One they were over 1.6 million Germans living in the Russian Empire, the number of Germans colonists that had migrated from Congress Poland settled in the Russian Wolyn. As the Russians suffered major military defeats further aggravated by the chaotic administration creating economic problems in the war against Germany and Austro- Hungary. The Russian born ethnic Germans became the focus of attention being

accused of being spies and involved in sabotage causing the deteriorating situation, even with 250 000 German colonists volunteering for military services.

The Russian Military High Command to avoid further dissension sent them to the Caucasus to fight the Turkish forces instead of the Western Front to confront the Austrian and German armies. To remove the German colonists from the Wolyn province, the Grand Duke Nicholas the Russian commander in chief in the Western Front in July 1915 implemented the decrees to expropriate all the lands in Wolyn and the German colonists deported to Siberia and Central Asia. In all 150 000 settlers were deported with the mortality death rate reaching 50 % of the total. The plan was the farmland to be given to Russian war veterans at the end of the war. Meanwhile Ukrainian peasants were allowed to stay as caretakers and continue farming, under control and scrutiny of wealthier landowners and the Russian Orthodox Church who received a stipend for their services, the local peasants had to pay an annual fee but never received title deeds or ownership of the confiscated land as they well knew that this land was allocated only Russians war veterans.

With the abdication of Tsar Nicholas in March 1917 and the withdrawal of Russian forces from the frontline. The Provisional Government allowed the return of the Wolynian Germans only half of the survivors managed to return encountering sufferings as the local Ukrainian and Russians had occupied their farms and houses with many other homestead destroyed by fire and vandalism.

With signing of the Treaty Peace of Riga in 1921 to end the Polish- Soviet War, as Lenin was concerned that the push of the Polish forces would undermine the dream of Communist control. This military achievement was successful without any support of the Ukrainians that continued to sit on the fence. As Poland was satisfied that the new demarcation encompassed the original Polish ancient claims that existed before the Russian Principality of Moscow was still under the Mongol yoke. Wolyn was divided with Wolyn Voivodeship under Poland and the Volynian Governorets under the Russian Communist Government. Under the banner of Pan Slavism, the Soviet Union deported between the years 1935 to 1938 many peasants and farmers of Volhynia to Siberia and regions of Central Asia to enforce the suppression of them. With the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and soon the invasion of Poland, this allowed the USSR to occupy the Polish Wolyn that had become a thorn on the side of the Moscow authorities prior to 1939, showing the spectacular success in improvements of farming, living standards, schooling and opportunity across the Polish border while on the Soviet Russian side the peasants and farm workers in their worker "Paradise" had to accept the monotony of struggle and desperation and forced to listen to grandiose promises bestowed only in the Russian language.

Nazi Germany with agreement of the USSR allowed the German minority to be transferred to the German occupied Polish region Wolyn. The Russian NKVD instituted the mass arrest and deportation mainly of Polish citizens and their families to Siberia and Central Asia with one clear mission to remove the entire Polish population.

Wolyn Voivodeship (1921- 1939)

Polish Wojewodztwo Wolonskie with the provincial capital Luck comprising an area 35 754 square km and by 1931 a population of 2 085 600. Following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles 28th June 1919, the new border of the re-born country of Poland emerged to control their destiny. In this treaty they were no representation of Russia as they had chosen to abandon their allies in the in First World War against Germany in a critical moment of warfare. Instead the leading communists headed by Vladimir Lenin had accepted

a large consignment of gold and transport of a train to undermine the Russian Empire and finally destroy them under the banner of protection to the proletariat.

Choosing to ignore the Treaty of Versailles by instigating war on the nascent nation with several military campaigns finally failing in the Polish- Soviet War through the period May-October 1920 when the Soviets in sheer panic streamed back towards Moscow. The capital and cities by 1931 had a substantial population, the capital Luck 35 600 other cities Rowne 42 000, Kowel 29 100, Krzemienec 22 000, Ostrog 13 410 etc.

The geography of the landscape is flat with small hills, in the north there is a distinct flat strip of land named Wolynian Polesie extends 200 km from the Bug River to the Polish-Soviet border in 1939. Further down in the extreme south-east corner were the town of Krzemienec is the landscape is hillier in particular the Gologory mountains. They are three main rivers the Styr, the Horyn and the Slucz. The farmland were the majority of the population lived in poor conditions having suffered decades of Russian Imperial exploitation with farming production in a parlous state, with Poland rebirth the agriculture production increased dramatically creating a vigorous outpouring of energy with introduction of modern farming practices with dramatic increase of wheat production surpassing dozen-fold times of production across the border of the USSR at the same time. There was an increase in employment in the new factories installed, reaching the mining, food production and timer production. Creating confidence in the smaller ethnic communities such as the Czechs and Germans developing further their efficient farms. At a business owner level the ethnic composition was 73 % Jewish, 24 % Ukrainian and 23 % Polish.

Tension increased between the Jewish and Ukrainian shopkeepers as the last group adopted the idea of cooperative stores strongly supported by the local Ukrainians with competitive prices were able to undercut the private enterprises of the Jewish businesses.

With fresh memories of the past when Jewish businessmen, who had a better education level, able to read and write, usually nominated as the village broker for the landed Russian nobility or magnate to collect taxes and fees from the poverty stricken peasants that were also illiterate, further had the right evict the defaulters from the farms.

Not forgetting that this group had the monopoly in any village with selling goods and the liquor license to dispense alcoholic drinks in taverns.

By 1929 with the Ukrainians improving financially via the cooperatives and more relaxed environment to aspire to a domestic political situation. Managing by 1929 to force out Jewish businesses out of 3 000 mainly Ukrainian villages without violence.

The Polish government had inherited a small limited railway network of just 1 211 km, the main railway station was Kowel. To improve further the lives of residents an electrification program was forged ahead for towns and villages, many power plants were not completed by the invasion of Poland in 1939.

Education was a priority set in place as by 1919 illiteracy was at a shocking level. As the pprevious imperial rules only allowed 14 secondary schools in this province. The Polish republic understood the urgency increasing the public schools. Reaching by 1930 to 1 372 schools growing by 1938 to 1 934 schools. Polish national average illiteracy was 23 % while in Wolyn by early 1939 was reduced to 45 %. The education system in Wolyn organized by 1939a fleet of 300 vehicles and 25 000 volumes of books to promote further their campaign in what was called "moving libraries".

The democratic Poland in this province inherited a population composed in 1931of a vast majority of Ukrainians 64 % of the population (1.50 million), the Poles 15.60 % (340 000), Jews 10 % (210 00), Germans 2.30 % (47 000), Czechs 1.10 % (30 000) and the remaining

Tatars, Romani (Gypsy). The biggest hurdles were the Ukrainians lacking basic educational skills 90% in the countryside, 4 % worked in a semi-skilled industry and 1 % were classified as intellectuals having finished secondary schooling or university studies.

Encouraged by Ukrainians in the Soviet controlled area and flexing their new found freedom challenging the restrictions imposed on them by the Polish authorities on restrictions on Ukrainian elementary and secondary education.

With awakening of their loss of liberty having being defeated in the Polish- Ukrainian War and losing Lwow in 1918 defeated by the young Polish students.

Radical Ukrainian organization embraced terrorism as a sanguinary protest. Assassinating the Polish politicians Tadeusz Hlowko in 1931 and in 1934 the Minister of Interior Bronislaw Pieracki. These attacks were planned and carried out by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) founded in 1929, ten years later collaborated as policemen for the German occupiers. Following these terrorists actions the Polish authorities had to control the challenge being forced to send troops in the Ukrainians villages to conduct searches and give support to the local police forces, with complaints lodged by the villagers of being attacked with destruction of property and possessions. With the Polish government allowed by 1935 and Ukrainian representative in the Polish Parliament, introducing partial release of prisoners under an amnesty, easing banking credits in particular to Ukrainian businessmen. With further agitation of communist agents to undermine the goodwill demonstrated by the Polish directives. In the late 1930's the security had to be tightened as protests continued to increase of accusations of forcing all the inhabitants of Wolyn to become Polish above their ethnic background, using the argument of destruction of Orthodox churches by the Catholic Poles. There was action taken by the authorities in some cases as these buildings were used by Ukrainian terrorists and their families with the blessing of the priests to conduct an virulent campaign against the Polish nation.

As other Orthodox churches were abandoned for different reasons, a common one was with the increase of Polish citizens in that locality so the Ukrainians with their priest relocated their followers to the closest church of their faith. So this allowed the Catholics to purchase the abandoned building and be consecrated to their belief.

At the outbreak of World War II, the Polish Army had one million men under arms including 110 000 Ukrainians who in many cases following the surrender of this forces, joining the Germans in the sector they occupied of Poland. Preparing for this invasion and playing the Ukrainian cards the German had organized the Sushko Legion of 600 men under Colonel Roman Sushko, this OUN detachment trained by the Abwehr marched through the south from Czeschlovakia, while in Wolyn when occupied by the Soviets the Ukrainian nationalistic terror exploded in rape, looting and killing, first aiming to the manor houses and large farmhouses. The Soviet occupation of the eastern territories of Poland, they concentrated in their repression mainly against Poles. With arrests or deportations to Siberia with 1 200 000 people mainly Catholics without any distinction of background including escapees that sought refuge from the territories occupied by the Germans.

With the German attack of the USSR in 1941, the NKVD so as not leave any witnesses killed all the prisoners they held for interrogation that included Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish in the cities of Luck, Dubno and Lwow over 8 000 were liquidated.

With renewed hope and fervour of achieving a Ukrainian state with the help and support of the Third Reich, with the Ukrainians in many localities welcomed the German armies erecting triumphant arches decorated with flowers, banners and Ukrainian flags. With the young women in their traditional dresses and costumes greeting the puzzled soldiers with

what was an important display of welcoming consisting of bread and salt given to honoured guests. The Nazi established their command in Lwow, amalgamating Wolyn, areas of Lwow and Polesie naming it the Reichskommissariat Ukraine with Rowne as the capital, with Lwow capital of Distrikt Galizien (District Galicia) establishing in all the territories occupied the function of the Ukrainians was to supply provisions, recruit slave labour for the extensive building program of the Third Reich. Using the newly established Ukrainian police initially 5 000 volunteers under the German service and the dreaded Einsatzkommandos, they all actively participated firstly in the killing of all the Jews in Wolyn, by October 1942, 247 000 Wolynian Jews a 97 % of the local population. The death camps were Belzec and Sobibor with killings conducted in villages, prisons and forested areas. These actions showed the Ukrainians that participated in this terror Holocaust against the local Jews proved beyond any doubt that their next victims on their gun sights were the Poles, could be easily be achieved with impunity and support of their own people.

As the Polish population in the Wolyn was reduced to 10 % of the total population, due to the mass deportation by the NKVD and the German deportation to the Reich as slave labour, detention in camps and mass killing so by the 1943 having lost military men, activists and learned people further aggravated by the isolation in villages surrounded by Ukrainians who had started to become more aggressive towards the Poles now that many Ukrainians were in active service with the Germans. At all cost the Poles did not create disturbances, avoiding conflicts preferring to rely on each other as were possible as they were well informed of the increase of Ukrainians auxiliary police reaching 12 000 members in Wolyn and Podole by early 1943. Desertion soon reached 5 000 from the German services taking with them their weapons and ammunitions. Experienced in the Jewish Holocaust enrolling in the Ukrainiska Povstanska Armia (UPA) (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) taking commander positions now keen to put in practice what they had learnt from the German masters, who conveniently turned a blind eye to this development to allow the next stage of now removing the Polish population by killing them all and if any survived allowed them to spread the stories of horrific events witnessed and occurring in Wolyn. There is no record of the UPA ever attacking the German forces whilst attacking the Polish population.

The massive scale of terror started by the OUN-UPA was in the summer and autumn of 1943. Only concentrating on Poles, starting June 1943 in the counties of Sarny, Kostopol, Rowne, Zdolbun, Dubno and Luck, spreading by July to Kowel, Wlodzimierz, Wolinski and Horochow reaching to Luboml in August.

This was not a random fight between neighbours with some blood being spilled, it was an organized massacre to slaughter Poles encouraged by the Ukrainians church leaders, making sure orders were given orally, no documents to incriminate the murderous underlings. The attacks of July 1943 was particularly vicious were the UPA forces in collusion of the local Ukrainians in a concerted attack destroyed 99 villages by burning them down after ransacking the contents, killing all living souls. As an example of the viciousness on the Sunday 11th July 1943 on this day 8 000 Poles were massacred the majority were women, children and the elderly including the churches with the faithful burnt inside alive.

The killing patterns becoming more gruesome, the OUN-UPA forcing all Ukrainian villagers to participate in the bloodbath, in reward for their despicable crimes were allowed to carry all contents of the houses and the farm animals, all cats and dogs were destroyed. All the men, women and children involved so not to be accused of betrayal to the cause. The attackers of the local villages came armed with axes, pitchforks, knives and sickles, while the armed forces caused the first impact by shooting the Polish men in the houses or working in

the fields and then the locals with their weapons and farming tools proceeded to their ghastly ritual of blood bath of terrified women and children, throats were cut, women raped, the pregnant ones had their unborn child disembowelled and their children frozen in fear were quickly beaten to death or cut in half. While watching this gory and crazed action, the Ukrainian women with their older children waited patiently with horses and carts of their property or stolen from the farm stables rearing to start loading their gruesome booty. In a sadistic display to encourage any Poles to escape, a warning was many times left of bodies beheaded, crucified, or arms or legs sawn or axed off, others with the stomach opened with the intestines hanging out. Another revolting torture was of killing was to wrap a small child or toddler still alive with barbed wire tied onto a tree facing the road.

This bloody thirsty rampage forced the Poles to seek refuge in cities and towns as the OUN-UPA gangs avoided the built up concentrating on the smaller communities and isolated villages as for the Polish escapee had to take their chances to the Lublin District under German control with the risk of being taken as forced labour, if this happened the only consolation was that their immediate family had some protection, whilst in the Wolyn region the German and Hungarian forces stationed there only concentrating in controlling the larger towns and cities, clearly demonstrating the policy in place was for the OUN-UPA giving free hand to remove the Polish communities still remaining. With the first massacres of Poles forced them to start establishing self- defence centres, lacking quantities of weapons and ammunitions and trained military officers soon 100 of these self-defence centres were defeated and destroyed. One located at Przebraze with 28 000 Poles defended themselves successfully against the Banderites thugs and murderers. Was located near the village ten km south of the village of Troscianiec which was at 25 km of Luck capital of Polish Wolyn, in the county of Luck, Wolyn Voivodeship. This location presently is occupied by the Ukraine, who had made every effort to remove any evidence of this dark history.

This settlement consisted of Poles that had lived in this area since the 17th Century that originally came from Mazowsze, consisting of 200 houses and 1 150 residents. With the disturbing news arriving in April 1943, the Poles under the guidance of a former military officer Henryk Cybulski and a veteran of the Polish- Soviet War named Ludwik Malinowski helped to create a self- defence force. Having to cover as extremely large area, Polish patrols would check day and night, sentries were armed with weapons recovered found strewn through the battlefields after the 1941 German invasion of Soviet Russia, further helped by the repairs of the ones damaged in the Przebraze improvised gunsmith workshop. Receiving regular supplies of weapons and money so to be able to purchase weapons from the Hungarian soldiers unit attached to the armies in Wolyn. Successfully dismantled the 45 mm cannon from a disabled Soviet tank in 1941. Initially the Polish guard units in Przebraze started with 500 men that included a mounted unit, by 1943 reached to 1000 men, to patrol the defensive line that included foxholes and 20 km of barbed wire that enclosed the armed encampment. As the number of refugees grew to 28 000 from surrounding villages with the news of savage atrocities committed by the UPA. With many of the new arrivals had to use precarious shelters. Expecting a major attack a field hospital was established, that soon was put to use with the persistent attacks by the Ukrainians determined to test the weaknesses of the defenders.

By June 1943 in the outlining villages the residents that had decided to stay were all killed. On the 5th July 1943 the UPA attacked Przebraze having, having first attacked and burnt nearby villages, by the next day the attackers had encircled completely the armed camp. The Ukrainians failed to break through but instead turned their attention to massacring 550

Poles and burning five villages. The situation in the defensive camp had become critical as in ancient times with the medieval siege the success of the attackers of capturing a castle was due to the lack of food. Now at this moment having 28 000 people to feed there was no other alternative left forcing the defenders to march out and protect the volunteer farm workers to harvest the crops and transport it back many of them were killed by the Ukrainians. In 31st August 1943 the last major attack was launched under the codename "Kublo" with the Ukrainians confident of success now numbering 10 000 men comprised of 4 000 armed with military weapons from Lwow and 6 000 local Ukrainian peasants armed with axes, knives and farming tools. Supported by artillery they attacked the defenders now reinforced with the Home Army units and the Soviet partisans defeated the UPA attack who lost more than 100 men and abandoned large amounts of fire arms.

Now emboldened the Przebraze decided to teach the scum a lesson by counter-attacking the UPA enclave starting 12th July 1943 with further attacks 5th October and the 8th October. The next one was on the 26th November 1943 where the Ukrainian nationalists in Zurawicz held over 1000 head of cattle and a large supply of flour and grain, the Polish quickly dispatched the Ukrainians and seized the needed cattle, flour and grains.

Countering an expected attack on Przebraze, the unit defenders on the 31st December 1943 ambushed a large force of UPA troops marching towards the protected settlement, with many of them killed, the rest fled in fear and confusion.

The Soviet Red Army occupied Wolyn in February 1944, forcing the UPA to restrict their attacks as they had no more use of them as the Soviets by the following year forced the surviving Polish communities to the newly acquired territory from Germany to Poland.

The Wolynian massacres conducted by OUN-UPA against Polish citizens including Eastern Galicia (Lwow, Stanislawow and Tarnopol Voivodeships) and the Lublin region to the middle of 1945 starting 1942/1943 amounted to:

Wolyn: 60 000 victims

Eastern Galicia: 40 000 victims

Lublin: 4 000 victims

The Ukrainian partisans forced by this campaign and terror 480 000 Poles to flee to Central Poland

Wolyn: 125 000, Eastern Galicia: 300 000, Chelm Region: 60 000

Ukrainians killed in Polish self-defence: 13 000

Wolyn: 3 000, Eastern Galicia: 2 000, Chelm: 8 000

The Catholic Polish clergy suffered the same brutality as their parishioners, with the destruction of churches. With the 2 500 flourishing localities in Wolyn, 1500 were burnt down or destroyed. At present only 150 localities have memorial crosses to remember the human tragedy that unfolded perpetrated by so called friends and neighbours against the Polish people of Wolyn.

