

Assoc. Prof. Leszek F. Korzeniowski, Ph.D.
European Association for Security

**European security
in the perspective of historical and contemporary threats
to Poland and Ukraine**

Ukraine is going through the worst period of its history being plunged in a bloody, cruel war, which leaves the country in ruins. It has never been a prosperous country, but it will be even worse. Thousands of Ukrainians shed blood and give their lives fighting fiercely for independence, but unfortunately without any guarantee of success or prospects for a better future.

The turn of the twenty-first century was a period of history, which brought many changes and new challenges for a generation of Poles, Ukrainians, and many other nations. Apart from that, it marked a significant development in shaping new opportunities for re-education of adults in Ukraine, so that they can assimilate better in a new European society. However, in Poland and Ukraine, we have seen completely different organizational and programme conceptions of such processes, but on the other hand if they mutually influence each other, this may bring a new outlook to our awareness and knowledge of post-communist and post-modernist society. At the same time, we should bear in mind about our common heritage, dangers and hopes, which brought Poland, and later Ukraine the opportunity to regain independence, identity and national pride.

On 17 March 2014, Russia proclaimed Crimea¹ to be a part of the Russian Federation, however, it meant nothing else but the occupation of Ukraine. International community regarded this fact as a violation of international law, which treats *status quo* of present borders in Europe as the most important issue after experiencing all the atrocities of the Second World War.

¹ Crimea is inhabited by about 2,4 million people, including 60% of a Russian population, 24% of Ukrainian population, and 10% of Crimean Tatar population. In XVIII century, the population of Crimea was 467 000, including 95% of Crimean Tatars, 2% of Greek population, 2% of Ormian population, and below one per cent the population of Crimeans and Caraimi.

In fact, if we take a close look at the history, this seems to be only an episode throughout centuries of war between East and West.

In the XIII century, the territory of contemporary Ukraine was under the regime of Mongols, and later it was ruled by the Great Kingdom of Lithuania, and subsequently, it was under the rule of the Republic of the Two Nations (Augustyniak, 2008, p. 31-31).

As a consequence of Zaporozhe Uprisings against the Crown (among those the Uprising under the command of Bohdan Chmielnicki, led in the years of 1648-1655, was in fact, the most significant). The Cossacks yielded the rule of a Russian tsar (under the Perejesslavka Agreement²). In 1686, the Republic of Poland acknowledged the rule of the Russian Empire over the part of Ukraine being behind the Dniepr River. Numerous, bloody and cruel wars between the Republic of Poland and Russia, as well as between the Republic of Poland and Turkey brought destruction, turned the countries into ruins and rubble, brought about depopulation and colonisation of the territories of so called *New Russia*.

The fall of the Russian Empire caused by the Crimea War in 1856, in fact, provided a strong impulse in order to fight for Ukrainian national identity and independence, despite total Russification of this territory. In 1876, a Russian tsar Alexander II forbade using the name "Ukraine", as well as printing in the Ukrainian language (called in the document a small Russian dialect), and above all using this language in schools, theatres and public institutions. Russian was an official language, and Ukrainian teachers were dismissed from schools (Serczyk, 2001, p. 207, p. 232). Such total Russification, actually lasted for over 200 years, and in fact, takes place these days on the occupied territories of Ukraine, or those being under the rule of the Russian president V. Putin.

The Crown, later called the Republic of Poland, actually shared the fate of its eastern neighbouring "country". "Ukraine is all the land on the edge, which means on the border of each country" (Gloger, 1903). In the second half of the XVIII century, Poland experienced its three partitions³. After 123 years of bondage, Poland finally regained independence in 1918, but unfortunately this did not last for a long time.

The 1920s, in fact, marked a decade of great changes and challenges in countries like the Poland, Ukraine, as well as in many other European countries. It was also a period in

² The Perejesslavka Agreement signed on 18 January 1654 in Perejesslav between a Cossack hetman Bohdan Chmielnicki and Wasyl Buturlin, the Tsar's Alexy I plenipotentiary. In accordance with the agreement, the territory of Nadnieprz Ukraine was annexed by Moscow, Russian troops entered Kiev, and it actually gave rise to systematical Russification of this part of annexed Ukraine, which was still shaping its national identity. Bohdan Chmielnicki was proclaimed to be the national hero of Ukraine, as this satisfied Russian interests.

³ Partitioning of Poland between Austria, Prussia and Russia 1772, 1793 and 1795.

the history, which brought new life experiences so different from those already existing in such societies. After the period of feudal backwardness and hampering development by the hostile superpowers like Russia in the case of Ukraine or Austria, Germany and Russia in the case of Poland, it brought many new opportunities for rebuilding a national identity, culture, innovations and economic development.

On 21 April 1920, the Republic of Poland and the People's Republic of Ukraine signed a secret agreement in Warsaw, which acknowledged Polish – Ukrainian border on the Zbrucz River (while leaving Rowne and Krzemieniec on the Polish territory), as well as these two countries committed themselves not to sign any international agreements against each other, and apart from that guaranteed respecting all the laws of Ukrainian minorities in Poland, and Polish minorities in Ukraine (“Polish Monitor” number 97 from 28 April 1920).

In accordance with the secret military convention, signed three days later, Polish and Ukrainian troops should carry out military operations together as allied forces. Jozef Pilsudski, the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, made a speech to the people of Ukraine on 26 April 1920, in which he declared that all the people of Ukraine are guaranteed safety and protection from the Polish army, regardless of their nationality, social background, religion or beliefs.

After a year, Poland signed a peace agreement with Bolshevik Russia in Riga, but in this way breaching the agreement with the government of pro-west People's Republic of Ukraine. Ukrainian soldiers were interned in Poland. While visiting an internment camp in Szczypiorno on 15 May 1921, the marshal Pilsudski made a famous statement to the Ukrainian officers, in which he apologised them in such words: “I apologise. I do apologise”. However, the idea of free Ukraine was buried for 90 years.

The Treaty of Riga, in fact, divided the territory inhabited by the Ukrainian population between Poland and Russia, which eventually put an end to Ukrainian dreams of having their own state, and caused a bone of contention between Poles and Ukrainians. The capital city of Warsaw, a former ally of Kiev, actually regarded national aspirations of Ukrainians as political dangers and fully condemned them. In addition, an interesting thing to note is the fact that even the use of an adjective “Ukrainian” was forbidden in the Republic of Poland in the 1920s, and the expression “Russian” was used instead.

Moscow encouraged the people of Ukraine to be hostile towards the Poles, by glorifying fascist, nationalist Ukrainians, and finally brought about the purposeful extermination of Ukrainian population, as in the years of 1921-1947 about 10 million people died of starvation⁴.

In 1939, Poland experienced its fourth partition, this time between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union⁵.

On 1 September 1939, without declaring war, Nazi Germany invaded Poland from the west and the north, crossing the southern border of Slovakia, and on 17 September 1939 the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east. This is how the Second World War broke out. The crimes of genocide were committed mainly on Poles and Jews, but all the other minorities inhabiting the territory of occupied Poland were also exterminated, displaced, robbed of their belongings, and were Germanized or Russianized.

However, a year before, on 30 September 1938 during a conference held in Munich, the Prime Minister of Great Britain Neville Chamberlain, Edouard Daladier of France, the dictators Adolf Hitler of Germany and Italian “Duce” Benito Mussolini, signed the pact about annexing from a free state of Czechoslovakia the area of 29 000 km² of the borderland with the Third Reich⁶, and incorporating this territory to Germany. In fact, they decided about the fate of Czechoslovakia without any of its participation. In Paris and London people celebrated prevention of war. Poland took advantage of the opportunity, and on 2 October 1938, Polish troops annexed a part of Silesian Cieszyn (*Zaolzie*).

“Destruction of Poland is our priority. Our aim is not to reach any marked line, but extermination of people. Even if the war is about to break out in the west, destruction of Poland must be our priority. Decision must be taken immediately for the sake of the season of the year. I can provide you with a good reason for starting war for propaganda purposes. It does not actually matter if it is credible or not. Nobody asks the winner if he told the truth or not. In the issues regarding starting and making war, the decisive factor is not the law, but who wins it. Be merciless, be cruel” – such words were said by

⁴ Appeal Court in Kiev, after considering the case on 13 January 2010, found guilty of genocide the following mass murderers: Joseph Stalin, Viaczeslav Molotow, Lazar Kaganowicz, Pawel Postyszew, Stanislaw Kosior, Wlas Czubar and Mendl Chatajewicz under the Article 44.1 of penal code of Ukraine. The court dismissed the case regarding the penal proceedings due to the deaths of the accused. The decision of the Appeal Court in Kiev of the Criminal Department with regard to causes of their deaths out of starvation in Ukraine in the years 1932-1933.

⁵ A secret record of the pact Ribbentrop–Molotow from 23 August 1939 concerning the partition of Poland between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union.

⁶ The Third Reich (in German *Das Dritte Reich*) unofficial name of the German state in the years 1933-1945. It was officially named The German Reich (in German *Deutsches Reich*).

Adolf Hitler during a conference of commanders on the eve of signing the pact Ribbentrop–Molotov. Surely, we could put such words in Putin’s mouth these days, as we would only need to replace Poland with Ukraine.

Central-Eastern Europe after many decades of stagnation, finally rose at the end of the twentieth century, and again cultivated European values and national pride (in Poland the talks of “the round table”, partly free elections held and Balcerowicz’s plan in 1989; in the Czechoslovakia “velvet revolution” also in 1989, which led to the division of the country into two independent states like the Czech Republic and Slovakia on 1 January 1993; “the fall of the Berlin Wall” in 1989, and reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990).

Ukraine, ruled by a “Big Brother” from the east, eventually awoke at the beginning of the XXI century, and reminded itself as well as the rest of the world that the Ukrainian nation is a part of European society and civilisation (“The Orange Revolution”⁷ from 2004 and “Euro-Majdan”⁸ from 2014).

In response to that, a “Big Brother” took similar steps as Hitler in relation to the Poles in 1939, and they were as follows: annex the territory, stamp out any signs of Ukrainian culture and corrupt the Ukrainian nation. During the meeting held at the NATO summit in 2008 in Bulgaria, Russian President Putin stated that Ukraine is “an artificial state”, and most of its territory from the historic perspective belongs to Russia (Gądek, 2014) Vladimir Zyrinowski from Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia, Vice-President of Russian “Duma” (the Lower Chamber of the Russian Federation) celebrated the annexation of Crimea by Russia by proclaiming in public the necessity to annex eastern and southern territories of Ukraine to Russia, and western to Poland (JM;żg), 2014).

This time, however, Poland did not accept the proposal of partitioning of Ukraine, but the disturbing past images of the final yield to Hitler’s demands in 1938 in Munich still remain in our memory, and some politicians in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, France, Italy and Hungary are even ready to bury the Ukrainian national identity.

⁷ The Orange Revolution – events which shaped the situation in Ukraine since proclaiming on 21 November 2004 Victor Yanukowycz as the winner of the presidency election, which in turn led to his winning in the repeated, second round of election on 26 December 2004. The name “orange revolution” derives from the colour, which symbolised a campaign team of Victor Yuszczenko.

⁸ Euromajdan – the name derives from “square”, which is the name from The Independence Square in Kiev, where manifestations began from 21 November 2013 (protest started due to President Victor Yanukowycz’s decision about postponing the act of signing an association agreement with the European Union), which in fact, led to the outbreak of the revolution. As a result of that, on 21 February 2014 Victor Yanukowycz escaped from Kiev.

On 5 September 2014 in Minsk, Belarus, a former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuczma, the Ambassador of Russia in Kiev Michail Zurabow, a representative of OSCE⁹ on stabilising the situation in Ukraine Heidi Tagliavini, as well as the prime ministers of so called Republics in Ukraine like People's Republic of Donetsk-Oleksandr Zacharczenko or People's Republic of Lugansk-Igor Plotnicki, initially signed a declaration of capitulation of Ukraine. Russia recognised only what regarded as necessary. France will make profits on the sale of its warships to Russia, the Nato troops will rather engage in the Middle East than in Europe.

All these conditions provide us with some final conclusions regarding purposes and methods from 1876, 1939 and 2014, which in turn, remained unchanged, except for the names of the main architects. If this is the case, then the results of that will also be tragic, and the fight for the national identity and pride of the Ukrainian nation being similar to the previous fight of Polish nation, will also be tragic and last for a long time. Finally, in 2014, it became clear that *first* of all, Poland is a neighbour and ally of Ukrainian nation, and *secondly* that the Russians are in fact, a false "brother nation", and pose a threat to the peace in Europe; and *thirdly* the only true sovereign of Ukraine is Ukrainian nation, which is aware of its identity and subjectivity.

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⁹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE – regional, international organization, which was established on 1 January 1995. Its aim is to prevent arising conflicts in Europe.

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Abstract

The article is delivered in Ukrainian at the conference of the European Association of Science on Security and International Socio-State Programme of UNESCO “ADULT EDUCATION OF UKRAINE” September 14, 2014 in the press center of the Ukrainian News Agency “Capital” in Kiev (Ukraine).

This sketch does not aspire to any attempts to analyze international relations in Europe. It is only an attempt to assess the present situation from the perspective of the experience of the European association of science safety, whose members include representatives from 23 countries of Europe, including Poles, Russians and Ukrainians.

Key words: *safety, danger, russification, the crime of genocide, the Orange Revolution, Euromaidan, the Ukrainian people*

E-mail contact to the Author: lfk@eas.info.pl