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VOLYN TRAGEDY IN 1943-1944: REASONS, PASSING, CONSEQUENCES

There was the 70th anniversary of Volyn Tragedy in Poland and Ukraine in 2013. Nowadays the cause and effect of this tragedy are debated. Problems of Ukrainian-Polish relations during World War II in 1943 always attracted the attention of both Ukrainian and Polish historians. They are S. Makarchuk, L. Zashkilnyak, V. Trofimovich, V. Serhiychuk, I. Ilyushin, J. Wojciechowski, J. Myschaka, J. Isaievych, O. Lysenko, O. Marushchenko, Ivan Shishkin, R. Tozhetskyy, M. Syvitskyy, C. Partach, H. Motyka [4, c. 2; 6, c. 301; 5, c. 48].

The aim of our research is the systematization of scientific works of historians, who were studying these events. During World War II Polish population represented 16.6% of all inhabitants of the Volyn region. When the Soviet Red Army entered into the Western Ukrainian ethnic territories, the Polish local administration, policemen, public figures and intellectuals, priests, private entrepreneurs, colonists, settlers were killed by the NKVD. In 1940-1941 tens of thousands of families were deported to the Northern Kazakhstan and the Western Siberia [1, c. 24–25].

The reason for the intransigence of both nations was the intention of Polish government to include Volyn, where Polish people were a minority into Poland. There were 80% of Polish officials among general commissariats, 60% of Polish among hebit-commissariats, 60% among central institutions of East Trade, 30% of Polish among commercial banks employees in Lutsk [2, c. 57-66].

The historian J. Dashkevych thought, that the situation in Volyn worsened due to the actions of Polish government in exile, which categorically refused to negotiate until the Ukrainian side would not accept the Polish state in the pre-war borders. The researcher said that it was a national liberation war in Volyn. The war had gone out of UPA control and became an extremely brutal fight [3, c. 140–141].

Incorporating of Ukrainian lands into Poland was made by decision of Entente ambassadors in March 1923. The next step was liberalization of Polish policy towards the Ukrainian population. It became so-called “Volyn experiment”, which was made by the governor G. Yuzevskyy in 1928-1938[5, c. 57]. In April 1938 G. Yuzevskyy was recalled from Volyn and received a new appointment in Lodz. The Nazis often created Ukrainian national police departments (around 5000 people). They left police departments and joined the Ukrainian nationalist movement on 19th of March – 14th of April 1943 [2, c.145]. There is no consensus among researchers of Volyn tragedy about the course of events during 1943-1944 years. According to historian Josef Turovsky: there were killed about 2 000 Ukrainians. Polish partisans exclusively destroyed UPA detachments. 202-nd schutzmannschaft battalion, which was consisted of Polish people, often was involved in punitive actions [5, c.51].

So, opening of Ukrainian front against Poland, mass casualties on both sides, considerable material and moral damages are consequences, that characterize Volyn events. Ethnic clashes in the country had weakened foreign policy positions of Poland, undermined the power of Polish Army against the backdrop of World War II. Volyn armed conflict had affected to the redistribution of influence spheres in Europe.

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