

## Avanza il dialogo polacco-ucraino e ucraino-polacco

Nuovo passo avanti nel dialogo ucraino-polacco e polacco-ucraino. In proposito una nota di Jan Maksymiuk, with contributions from Natalia Tchourikova of RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service. [UKRAINE, POLAND SEEK RECONCILIATION OVER GRISLY HISTORY.](#)

When Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and his Polish counterpart Lech Kaczynski travel together to the Polish village of Pawlokoma on May 13, they will be taking another step toward coming to terms with their nations' common historical legacy. One of the darker stains of that legacy is represented by the village of Pawlokoma, where ethnic Ukrainian inhabitants were killed by a Polish military group in 1945. The Ukrainian and Polish presidents will attempt to rectify that tragedy by unveiling a memorial to the victims during their visit. Today, Pawlokoma is home to about 500 residents in southeastern Poland, 50 kilometers from the Polish-Ukrainian border. But prior to the outbreak of World War II, the Polish village boasted a population of 1,200 -- about 900 Greek Catholic (Uniate) Ukrainians living among Roman Catholic Poles. In March 1945, a detachment of Polish anti-Nazi guerrillas from the Home Army (AK) subordinated to the Polish emigre government in London shot to death hundreds of Ukrainian inhabitants of Pawlokoma. The Ukrainians were herded in a local Greek Catholic church, interrogated and likely tortured, and then taken to a local cemetery where they were executed. President Yushchenko and President Kaczynski will travel on May 13 to Pawlokoma to unveil a memorial dedicated to that tragic event. An inscription on the memorial places the number of victims of the 1945 massacre at 365. However, this figure is questioned by some Polish historians, including Zdzislaw Konieczny. Konieczny -- who lives in the Polish town of Przemysl, some 40 kilometers from Pawlokoma -- is the author of a book on the Pawlokoma massacre. According to him, the AK group killed some 150 Ukrainian men in Pawlokoma -- while women and children were spared and ordered to march to Ukraine. Konieczny argues that the massacre was retaliation for numerous killings of Poles from Pawlokoma and neighboring villages carried out by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The UPA was created by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in Nazi-occupied Ukraine in 1942. The armed force pursued the ideal of an independent Ukraine, which led it to fight Polish, Soviet, and Nazi forces at various times. Konieczny said in an interview with the Polish daily "Nasz Dziennik" on May 10 that the immediate motive behind the massacre was the abduction by the UPA of a dozen Poles from Pawlokoma in January 1945. The then-Polish communist police in the area, according to Konieczny, were too weak to react to the capture, while Soviet troops were not trusted by the local population. "In this situation the Polish pro-independence underground decided to conduct a retaliatory action in Pawlokoma, which had been known for anti-Polish manifestations. The purpose of [this action] was to warn the OUN-UPA that Poles would not tolerate its further attacks against and killings of the Polish population in Pawlokoma and neighboring villages," Konieczny told "Nasz Dziennik." Petro Potichny, a Ukrainian emigre historian and UPA veteran, wrote a book on Pawlokoma in which he traced the history of the village back to the 15th century... Potichny told RFE/RL that the Pawlokoma massacre reflects a wider pattern of the behavior of Poles toward Ukrainians during World War II along the ethnic Ukrainian-Polish borderland on both sides of the Curzon Line... Poland's current eastern border with Ukraine and Belarus lies roughly along the Curzon Line. It originated as a demarcation line proposed in 1919 by the British foreign secretary, Lord Curzon, as a possible armistice line between Poland and Bolshevik Russia during the then-Polish-Soviet war. "It was not an isolated episode. It was, so to say, a [purposeful] policy of the Polish nationalist underground," Potichny said. "But not only that of the nationalistic underground. The communist authorities, too, did similar things. They primarily intended to finally remove Ukrainians from these lands. Therefore, Pawlokoma is just a symbol of all that." But Potichny admits that Ukrainians, too, were responsible for the murderous Ukrainian-Polish war fought by the UPA and the AK during the Nazi occupation and afterward. "If one is to attribute blame, one needs to say that the Ukrainians are mostly to blame for what took place east of the Curzon Line, while the Poles are mostly to blame for what took place west of this line," Potichny said. In July 2003, the then-presidents of Ukraine and Poland -- Leonid Kuchma and Aleksander Kwasniewski, respectively -- met in the village of Pavlivka in the Ukrainian region of Volhynia to commemorate ethnic Poles murdered by the UPA in 1943. Kuchma and Kwasniewski unveiled a memorial to several hundred Poles killed by the UPA in that particular village. According to Poland's National Remembrance Institute, in 1943 the UPA murdered some 60,000 civilian Poles in Volhynia, in anticipation of an independent Ukrainian state after the war and a plebiscite on which country, Poland or Ukraine, should possess the disputed area. The Polish AK subsequently resorted to retaliatory actions. According to Ukrainian estimates, the AK may have killed in retaliation as many as 20,000 Ukrainians in Volhynia. The postwar period only added to the Polish-Ukrainian record of mutual wrongs and prejudices. In 1947, the Polish communist government forcibly resettled some 140,000 Ukrainians from their native areas in southeastern Poland to Poland's newly acquired northern and western territories. The official excuse for that mass expulsion was the desire to undercut the social base of support for the UPA in the area... as Polish historian Bogumila Berdychowska from Warsaw argued to RFE/RL, this task, if completed, could beneficially invigorate the development of Polish-Ukrainian relations, which in other respects are now almost exemplary. "Closing historical accounts is very important for present-day politics," Berdychowska said. "The relations between independent Ukraine and Poland testify to one thing: There are no principal disagreements as regards contemporary politics [between the two countries]; there are no principal disagreements as regards economic relations. Actually, the only source of conflicts lies in history." In 2002, President Kwasniewski officially condemned the forcible resettlement of Polish Ukrainians by the communist authorities in 1947. Poles expected that President Kuchma in 2003 would respond with an official apology for the wartime massacres of Poles in Volhynia. But Kuchma did not fulfill that expectation. One should not expect any official apologies from President Yushchenko or President Kaczynski in Pawlokoma. However, their meeting there seems to be a significant, even if small, step toward Ukrainian-Polish reconciliation May 9, 2006.

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Il dialogo con i vicini presuppone un dialogo interno. In Ukraine, President Viktor Yushchenko called for reconciliation among Ukrainian veterans of the Soviet army and nationalist guerillas from the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), who at various times fought Polish, Soviet, and Nazi forces during World War II... In comments made as Ukraine marked the 61st anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany, Yushchenko said UPA veterans should enjoy the same social benefits as veterans from the Soviet Army... Former UPA soldiers do not possess the official status of war veterans and do not enjoy the same social benefits as veterans from the Soviet Army in Ukraine.

PS - L'incontro e' avvenuto: [UKRAINIAN, POLISH PRESIDENTS CALL FOR RECONCILIATION](#) The presidents of Ukraine and Poland -- Viktor Yushchenko and Lech Kaczynski, respectively -- met in the Polish village of Pawlokoma on May 13 to call for the reconciliation of the Ukrainian and Polish nations over their common past, Polish and Ukrainian media reported. Yushchenko and Kaczynski were attending the unveiling of a memorial to more than 360 ethnic Ukrainian villagers who were slain in Pawlokoma by a Polish military group in 1945. "We must speak openly of our painful and difficult past.... Strong and lasting reconciliation may only be built upon a foundation of truth. We cannot change the past, but we can make sure that it does not determine the future," Kaczynski said in Pawlokoma. In turn, Yushchenko said in his speech at the Pawlokoma memorial: "I can imagine what a difficult road has been traveled by tens of thousands of people to this act of reconciliation to which we are witnesses today. But I am convinced of one thing, that only the strong are capable of forgiving.... I bow my head before you, beloved Ukrainians and Poles who stand before me and who stand on these hills. You are creating a courageous and correct policy."