

The nascent field of Memory Studies emerges from contemporary trends that include a shift from concern with historical knowledge of events to that of memory, from 'what we know' to 'how we remember it'; changes in generational memory; the rapid advance of technologies of memory; panics over declining powers of memory, which mirror our fascination with the possibilities of memory enhancement; and the development of trauma narratives in reshaping the past. These factors have contributed to an intensification of public discourses on our past over the last thirty years. Technological, political, interpersonal, social and cultural shifts affect what, how and why people and societies remember and forget. This groundbreaking new series tackles questions such as: What is 'memory' under these conditions? What are its prospects, and also the prospects for its interdisciplinary and systematic study? What are the conceptual, theoretical and methodological tools for its investigation and illumination?

More information about this series at  
<http://www.springer.com/series/14682>

Julie Fedor · Markku Kangaspuro  
Jussi Lassila · Tatiana Zhurzhenko  
Editors

# War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus

Foreword by  
Alexander Etkind

palgrave  
macmillan

## The Holocaust in the Public Discourse of Post-Soviet Ukraine

*Andrii Portnov*

The subject of the Holocaust and the fate of the Jews during World War II in many respects remain on the margins of public discourse in Ukraine. This is in stark contrast to the case of neighboring Poland, where Jan T. Gross's book *Neighbors* (2000), describing a massacre perpetrated by some Poles against their Jewish neighbors in Jedwabne village in July of 1941, resonated widely both in the media and in political circles, sparking lively and often sophisticated debates. Why should this be the case? Why is it that no book on the Holocaust had (or is likely to have in the near future) the same effect in Ukraine? This question provides the starting point for my reflections in this chapter.

The current intellectual tension in Ukraine is often characterized as “the dichotomy between the innocent, sacred nation of traditionalists and the complicated, disturbing narrative of their opponents,” that is liberal intellectuals and historians (Himka 2013b: 635). This binary approach does not take into account an important third category: the numerous supporters of the (post-)Soviet and Russian narratives in Ukraine. Hence adherents of the binary view often overlook the fact

---

A. Portnov (✉)

Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin, Wallotstr. 14, Berlin, Germany 14193  
e-mail: aportunov2001@gmail.com

© The Author(s) 2017

J. Fedor et al. (eds.), *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*,  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-66523-8\_12

that the most visible criticism and even condemnation of the nationalistic view of history in Ukrainian public debate comes not from liberal or leftist groups but from those who continue to subscribe to a particular set of historical views whose origin can be traced to late-Soviet propaganda. In other words, in Ukraine the rather weak liberal position, also described as “critical patriotism,” is torn between two opposite extremes: the Soviet and the nationalistic. Any position that involves decisive criticism of Ukrainian nationalism looks “dangerously close to the soft version of the Russian imperial narrative” (Olszański 2013: 48). This is in strong contrast to the Polish setting, where the Soviet/Russian imperial narrative is almost entirely absent. In the Ukrainian case, the complex interplay between the nationalistic and the Soviet/Russian narratives of the war has been an important factor in shaping the evolution of the historical debate.

This is the context in which I examine the Ukrainian discourse on the Holocaust in this chapter. I begin by sketching out the basic contours of the Ukrainian discourse on this issue and the specificities of the Ukrainian approach to the problem of the Holocaust, and tracing the connections here to the country’s Soviet past and to its present geopolitical position between the European Union and Russia. I then provide an overview of the changing state politics on the issue, and of its treatment in school history textbooks. I pay particular attention to the role played by Jewish international organizations in public representation and commemoration of the Holocaust in Ukraine. Finally, I try to describe the views of Jewish Ukrainian intellectuals on the Ukrainian–Jewish dialogue as well as the existing research centers and museums of the Holocaust.

#### DILEMMAS OF WORLD WAR II AND HOLOCAUST MEMORY IN UKRAINE

Contemporary Ukraine within its political borders and with its ethnic and social makeup is largely a product of World War II. During 1939–1945, parts of contemporary Ukraine were attached to several administrative entities, including those under Romanian and Hungarian control. For East Galicia, which was part of Poland in the interwar period, the war meant two periods of Sovietization: first in 1939–1941, and then for several decades from 1944.

The peculiarities of the “double occupation” in western Ukraine where German troops replaced the Red Army in 1941, as well as the brutality of war on the eastern front that was unprecedented in European history, created the context for the Nazi policy of the “final solution of the Jewish question” (Snyder 2010). Anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda blaming the Jews for Communist atrocities provoked the wave of anti-Jewish pogroms that rolled over the cities and towns in East Galicia in 1941. The Ukrainian auxiliary police took part in these pogroms. In Soviet Ukraine some Jewish families managed to evacuate to the east before the arrival of the German troops, but the majority of the Jewish population stayed under Nazi occupation.

Unlike most European countries, where Jews were transported to the death camps, on the territory of contemporary Ukraine the extermination of the Jewish population was carried out through mass shootings during the first weeks of the Nazi occupation. Usually the Jews were first gathered at some officially announced locations in the cities, towns and villages, and then taken to secluded places, where they were shot and buried (Babi Yar in Kyiv, Drobyts’kyi Yar in Kharkiv, the Botanical Gardens in Dnipropetrovsk). The punishment for local people and their families who tried to save Jews was the death penalty—and it should be noted that this was one important difference from Nazi-occupied Western Europe, where the death penalty was not applied in such cases. The degree of violence, the shifting political contexts and the pre-war experience of occupied Ukraine—all of these factors mean that the “neat categories of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders” (Himka and Michlic 2013: 4) are not sufficient for describing the Holocaust in Ukraine (compare Brandon and Lower 2010 and David-Fox et al. 2014).

The most important feature of Ukrainian war memory today is the competition between two coexisting but rather inflexible narratives: the (post-)Soviet narrative, and the nationalistic narrative. The Soviet narrative of the Great Patriotic War (formed primarily in the mid-1960s) stressed the heroism and the unity of the “Soviet people” in their fight against fascism, the victory of the Red Army and the liberation of Europe. Numerous taboos surrounding that narrative included such topics as the Soviet deportations of several ethnic groups (e.g. the Crimean Tatars) accused of collective collaboration with the Nazis, and the fate of the Soviet prisoners of war, often sent to the Soviet camps after being released from the German ones. The post-Soviet version of this narrative in Ukraine lacks the ideological coherence of its Soviet predecessor,

but remains complementary to the official Russian politics of memory centered on the victory in the Great Patriotic War as the most important achievement of the Soviet era. This narrative has been promoted in contemporary Ukraine by the Communists, the Party of Regions, and pro-Russian organizations.

The Ukrainian nationalistic narrative, on the other hand, features the glorification of the anti-Soviet underground and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which was still active in East Galicia up until the late 1950s (Motyka 2006). This narrative was banned in the Soviet Union but was kept alive by Ukrainian diaspora publications and by family memories in western Ukraine. The nationalistic narrative has its own taboos, which include collaboration with the Nazis and massacres of Polish civilians in Volhynia in summer 1943 organized by the UPA. This narrative has been promoted in Ukraine by the nationalists and partly by national democrats.

Diametrically opposed in other respects, these two narratives are united on one point: both of them marginalize the memory of the Holocaust and the tragic fate of the Jewish population in Ukraine. The Soviet narrative does not single out the Jews from the rest of the Soviet civilian victims of the Nazis (Gitelman 1997). Soviet writer Vasilii Grossman, whose mother was killed by the Nazis in the Ukrainian town of Berdychiv, wrote in 1943 that "the Fascists exterminated the Jews just for being Jews. For them, no Jews have the right to exist in this world. Being a Jew is the greatest crime, and is punishable by death" (Grossman 1985: 339). But these words were ignored in the post-war Soviet narrative that was unwilling to differentiate the victims on the basis of their ethnicity. An important reason for this unwillingness was the anti-Semitic campaign initiated by Stalin in the late 1940s, the repressions against the Jewish intelligentsia and the banning of the "Black Book" prepared by the Jewish Antifascist Committee with the documentation of the Nazi destruction of European Jews. The Soviet narrative "made sense of war" by abandoning the disturbing topic of the Holocaust (Weiner 2001). Consequently, subjects like the anti-Semitism that the Jews encountered in Soviet civilian life and in the Red Army were a de facto taboo in the USSR until the end of the 1980s.

As far as the nationalistic version of war is concerned, the Holocaust theme has been especially unwelcome, because a significant portion of UPA soldiers had previously served in the auxiliary police, and had participated in anti-Jewish pogroms and the implementation of the Nazi

policy of the *Endlösung der Judenfrage*. The dangers that this topic held were realized very early on. As early as October 1943 the leaders of Bandera's wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) issued a truly Orwellian order to prepare a "special collection of documents proving that the anti-Jewish pogroms and liquidation was conducted by the Germans themselves, with no help of the Ukrainian police" (Kurylo and Himka 2008: 265). In addition to falsifying the sources in this way, they also propagated the myth of Jewish voluntary participation in the UPA (see details in Motyka 2006; Rudling 2011). Whenever the issue of collaboration with the Nazi policy of Jewish extermination came up, it was usually resolved by stressing the point that "a subjugated people with no state of its own" cannot bear responsibility for a policy initiated by the occupiers of its territory. In present-day Ukraine many followers of the nationalistic narrative of the war likewise attempt to sidestep the issue by pointing to the example of Andrey Sheptytsky, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, who saved hundreds of Jews. (For the most complete study of the Metropolitan's views on the Jewish question and his behavior during the war, see Himka 2013a.) In fact, Sheptytsky's actions were quite exceptional at the time. The current tendency to invoke his example shows how easy it is to identify, both personally and group-wise, with a position that in retrospect is deemed to be moral and righteous.

In post-Soviet Ukraine the nationalistic narrative remains very strong in East Galicia. Since 1991 it has opposed the Soviet one in the public sphere, and during the official national ceremonies a certain convergence and blending of the two occurred. For instance, President Viktor Yushchenko, searching for the rhetoric of reconciliation of the veterans, spoke about the Great Patriotic War in his address to the UPA veterans, and greeted the Red Army veterans with the nationalistic slogan "Glory to the Heroes!" (for more examples, see Portnov 2010). Such state-sponsored convergence did not reconcile the two narratives, but allowed their supporters to talk about either an "unfinished de-Sovietization," or an "orgy of nationalism." Such claims were especially inflexible in the context of the two challenges post-Soviet Ukraine had to face simultaneously: the ambiguity (often perceived as weakness) of national identity, and the Russian factor, related to fears of a "new Russification" and of dissolving in the "Russian world."

This explains why many Ukrainian intellectuals believe that any discussion about the dark pages in the UPA's history can be appropriate only

after an official recognition of the insurgency by the Ukrainian parliament. Ukrainian essayist Mykola Riabchuk has repeatedly said that the Ukrainians have to choose, not between a nationalist dictatorship and European liberalism, but between “defending national sovereignty, dignity and identity and abandoning them in favor of Russia” (Riabchuk 2012: 165). American political scientist and writer of Ukrainian origin Alexander Motyl has put forward his view that critical works on Stepan Bandera, the leader of the OUN’s radical wing, will inevitably become part of the Ukrainian public forum, but “only after the Ukrainian identity is consolidated and the fears of a neo-imperial Russia disappear” (Motyl 2010).

The Maidan movement, the Russian annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in the Donbas region changed Ukraine dramatically and increased the political desire to draw a symbolic dividing line between post-Maidan Ukraine and Putin’s Russia. On 14 October 2014 the Verkhovna Rada tried to vote for the official recognition of the OUN and UPA as the combatants of World War II, but failed (after seven rounds of voting) even to put this draft bill on the agenda. But the newly elected Ukrainian parliament on 9 April 2015 adopted a set of “historical” laws, one of which recognized members of various Ukrainian political organizations (including UPA partisans) as “fighters for Ukrainian independence.” Although this law proposed a kind of “compromise” by granting UPA veterans the special status of “fighters for Ukrainian independence,” but refusing to give them the same social privileges as Soviet veterans, it significantly contributed to the state-sponsored commemoration of Ukrainian nationalism and supported its tendency to cross the historical boundaries of East Galicia. This tendency resulted from the re-actualization of the Bandera mythology on the Maidan where a significant number of people called themselves “banderivtsi” in order to claim their rejection of the Kremlin propaganda of the “fascist Maidan” and declare their political loyalty to Ukraine. By accepting the pejorative term as positive self-description, and often lacking information on Bandera’s devotion to terrorism and anti-democratic political views, many Maidan supporters were trapped by the same propaganda narrative they wished to oppose (see more in Portnov 2016).

## OFFICIAL DISCOURSES ON THE HOLOCAUST

The lifting of Soviet taboos did not automatically lead to a new politics of memory. Post-Soviet Ukrainian society encountered a number of problems connected to the issue of identity, language and history and these problems made it difficult for society to comprehend why and how it should discuss the Holocaust. From the early 1990s Ukrainian political elites responded to this challenge in two ways—by trying to close the issue or to dilute it at the official level.

Leonid Kravchuk, the first Ukrainian President (1991–1994) who was previously the Ukrainian Communist Party Central Committee’s secretary for ideology, took the first of these two approaches. He apologized for the participation of some Ukrainians in the Nazi policy of the exterminations of the Jews during his visit to Israel in 1993 (Kravchuk 2011), but his apology was probably meant to close the issue of the responsibility of Ukrainians once and for all. Kravchuk’s gesture reflects a static and elitist approach to historical memory, whereby a formal political step seems to exhaust the depth of the problem, especially since his gesture was not meant for the Ukrainian public, but for a foreign audience.

The second approach, aimed at diluting and downplaying the knowledge of the Shoah, was characteristic of the constant attempts by Ukraine’s second President Leonid Kuchma (1994–2004), to avoid the rough edges of historical memory. Not only did Kuchma refrain from mentioning the Holocaust in his official speeches on Victory Day, he even managed to do so in his speech on the 60th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre in Kyiv in 2001. Kuchma relied heavily on the Soviet narrative of Ukrainian history, but he also moved beyond it in certain respects, most notably when he established a Memorial Day for the victims of the Great Famine (Holodomor) of 1932–1933.

Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010) became the first president to use the word “Holocaust” in an official Victory Day speech. He also granted Babi Yar the status of a national memorial in order to stop the conflict over the construction projects on the burial place, as we shall see below. Despite these steps, Yushchenko gained the reputation of a hardened nationalist for his decree granting the title of a “Hero of Ukraine” to Stepan Bandera, signed in the last days of his presidency. His predominant concern with the memorialization of the Great Famine of 1932–1933 and the international recognition of it as “genocide against the Ukrainian nation” reveal, among other aspects, an attempt to apply

the Holocaust paradigm as a model for Holodomor commemoration (Zhurzhenko 2011). It should be noted, however, that Yushchenko's position on this issue was in some respects more moderate than that of the Ukrainian diaspora in North America. In the diaspora the Holodomor has been labeled the "Ukrainian Holocaust." Yushchenko avoided using this manipulative term, though it was taken up by some of his nationalistic allies. At the same time, he proposed to criminalize the denial of both the Holodomor and the Holocaust.

The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance created on Yushchenko's initiative, unlike its Polish model, limited its activities to the history of ethnic Ukrainians. In his efforts to achieve international recognition of the Famine as genocide, Yushchenko steered clear of making anti-Russian and anti-Jewish statements. However, his subordinates sometimes crossed that line. For example, on 24 July 2008 a list of the Soviet and Communist party leaders responsible for the Famine and political repressions appeared on the website of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). The list, led by Stalin, includes 19 names, most of them Jewish and Latvian. The controversial list was criticized by some historians, journalists and politicians, including Oleksandr Feldman, the head of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee. A prominent Kharkiv businessman and a member of parliament, Feldman protested against "almost directly accusing the Jews of organizing the Famine" and pointed out that many Jewish families had also fallen victim to starvation (Feldman 2008). As a result of this criticism an expanded list of 136 "[i]ndividuals involved in organizing and implementing the Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine," grouped by regions, appeared on the SBU website on 17 March 2009 (and was later removed).

The fourth president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych (elected in 2010), tried to bring the nonchalant vagueness, familiar from Kuchma's time, back into symbolic politics, but with a more noticeable bent on the late-Soviet style. Not only did his official message marking the 70th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre not include the words "Holocaust" and "Shoah," it did not even include the word "Jews." Yanukovych spoke instead of the "mass executions of the civilian population" and the fact that "thousands of people of various nationalities died as martyrs" in Babi Yar (Yanukovych 2011).

President Petro Poroshenko (elected after the Maidan events in May 2014), during his visit to Israel in December 2015, delivered a talk at the Knesset in which he apologized for "the crimes of some Ukrainians who

collaborated in the Holocaust," and claimed that "in Ukraine one could observe the formation of a political nation based on patriotism, common past, difficult current challenges and faith in our common European future" (Poroshenko 2015).

Olesya Khromeychuk is right in pointing out that "instead of encouraging an open and critical approach to the collective-national memory, successive Ukrainian governments replace one set of interpretations with another, leaving no room for a neutral discussion of Ukraine's controversial historical pages and thereby complicating further the unresolved conflicts with regard to the national past and the Ukrainian identity" (Khromeychuk 2013: 167). For the purpose of this chapter, the most important point is that all of those "sets of interpretations" have tended to close or dilute the topic of the Holocaust.

### THE HOLOCAUST IN UKRAINIAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

The most consistent implementation of Ukrainian nationalistic narrative has taken place on the pages of school history textbooks. The key components of this narrative as reflected here are a teleological approach to the nation-state as the highest aim and culmination of the historical process in Ukraine; a victimhood complex, whereby Ukrainians are portrayed as the autochthonous peaceful population, constantly forced to beat off the attacks of outside enemies; the description of Ukrainians as an internally monolithic group with developed democratic traditions; and the essentialization of the current political and ethnic boundaries of Ukraine.

In 2001, after the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, the Shoah was made a required topic in the Program of School Education adopted by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education. However, in practice, schoolteachers have a maximum of 20–30 min to spend on this topic out of the entire school year. And the Ukrainian history textbooks used for this subject are vastly inadequate to the cause. Here is a typical example of how the Holocaust is presented, taken from a 2006 textbook: "People of every ethnic group, mostly Jews, were executed in Kyiv's Babi Yar on every Tuesday and Friday of the 103 weeks of the occupation. Every large Ukrainian city had its 'Babi Yar.' Altogether, 850,000 Jews became victims of the Nazis during the first months of the occupation" (Turchenko et al. 2006: 21).

What is missing in this short passage and in the textbook more broadly are the words "Holocaust" and "Shoah," the concept of the "Righteous among the nations," a description of the racist ideology of Nazism and its practical implementation; and there is not a single word about collaboration with the Nazis. According to Johan Dietsch (2006), in Ukrainian history textbooks, "Jews are only portrayed as targets for destruction at the beginning of the occupation" (165), and "there are no distinctions made between the different policies pursued against different ethnic and political groups in Ukraine throughout the war" (167).

It is not easy to say what an average Ukrainian student knows and thinks about the Holocaust. In 2002 one of the research projects aimed at discovering the attitudes towards the Holocaust among pupils from four schools (including a Jewish one) in Kharkiv through analysis of their essays, written on request: "Please write about the Nazi extermination of the Jews." The conclusion was:

[P]ractically all who participated in the study knew of the mass extermination of the Jews, even though not everyone knew the word "Holocaust" itself. The majority expressed an obviously negative attitude toward the Holocaust and voiced the need to remember it and not to allow anything like it to happen again. On the other hand, the number (17% of the students) manifesting anti-Semitic and racist views was quite large, as was the number more generally under the sway of stereotypes and prejudices. (Ivanova 2004: 418)

This shows that the topic of the Holocaust remains under-represented in the history teaching in Ukraine and that its promotion lacks the understanding and support of the Ministry of Education. It seems especially problematic in the context of the complicated family and personal stories of the twentieth century in various parts of Ukraine.

#### UKRAINIAN AND JEWISH MEMORIES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: CLASH AND RECONCILIATION

As Henry Abramson has pointed out, "the centuries-old mutual history of Ukrainians and Jews is unique in that most of the heroes of the former are the villains of the latter" (Abramson 1994: 40). This statement applies to the key figures in this history: Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the

leader of the Cossack uprising in 1648; the leaders of the Koliivshchyna movement in 1768; and Symon Petliura, the head of the Directorate of Ukraine, a provisional Ukrainian government in 1918–1920. All of these important figures are usually associated with anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish violence. A stereotypical "readiness to believe in Ukrainian anti-Semitism" (Gitelman 1990: 455) has deeply influenced a common statement in Jewish memoirs of the Holocaust that "Ukrainians were the worst" of the perpetrators (Himka 2009). A new phase in Ukrainian–Jewish relations, often seen "as a reductive competition of victimization" (Petrovsky-Shtern 2009: 7), was opened by the attempts of some Ukrainians—initially in the American diaspora and later in post-Soviet Ukraine—to categorize the man-made Great Famine of 1932–1933 as a "Ukrainian Holocaust" and to accuse the Jews (indirectly, if not overtly), as a group over-represented in the Communist party and the NKVD, of organizing the starvation of Ukrainian peasants (Dietsch 2006).

The notion of the "Ukrainian Holocaust" as well as all forms of accusations against the Jews have been strongly criticized by leading Ukrainian intellectuals, including the prominent supporters of the genocidal definition of the Great Famine (Kulchyts'kyi 2008). At the same time, the attitude toward the Soviet past remains a bone of contention in Ukraine. As Vitalii Nakhmanovych, a Jewish Ukrainian historian of the Holocaust, has pointed out, at the emotional level there is a sense in which Jewish memory in Ukraine coincides with the Soviet one, because both the October Revolution and the victory in World War II have more positive connotations for Jews than they do for Ukrainians. For Jews, these two emblematic events of Soviet history also meant the repeal of the discriminatory laws and the end of the Shoah (Nakhmanovych 2013a). For the Ukrainian national narrative, by contrast, both events marked the failure of attempts at gaining state independence. Furthermore, in the Ukrainian nationalistic narrative, the Jews are often accused of "siding with the imperial powers" and oppressors of Ukraine (e.g. the Russian empire, Poland, Soviet Russia). Such claims require some qualification. For a Jew to make the anti-imperial (pro-Ukrainian) cultural and political choice may have been exceptional, but was not impossible (Petrovsky-Shtern 2009). One such example is Leonid Pervomais'kyi (Illia Gurevich) (1908–1973), one of the most prominent Ukrainian poets of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, mainstream representations of Jewish history in today's Ukraine (as in Soviet times) ignore the complex ways in which this history is interwoven with

the Ukrainian cultural context. For instance, as Tanya Richardson points out, Jewish narratives of local history in Odessa “implicitly reinforce the idea that Odessa is situated in Russian cultural geographies but not Ukrainian ones” (Richardson 2008: 197).

The traditional conflict of cultural representations remains an important issue. Oleg Rostovtsev, the spokesman of the Dnipropetrovsk Jewish community and the producer of the Jewish TV program “Alef,” has argued for the necessity of facing this challenge, to start an open sincere discussion about the isolation of the two discourses and the “mirror reflection of estrangement” in both of them (Rostovtsev 2012a). Attempts to overcome the mutual stereotypes (“Ukrainians will always remain our enemies” vs. “Jews always side with the stronger non-Ukrainian power”) have also been made by some Ukrainian journalists and intellectuals. For example, the only Ukrainian language weekly, *Ukrains'kyi Tyzhden'*, published a special supplement titled “Anti-Semitism, Ukrainophobia: Two Sides of Political Manipulation” (2012). It stressed the “impossibility of being a Ukrainian patriot and anti-Semite at the same time.” Although the attempt to blame “two totalitarianisms” for all the problems in Ukrainian–Jewish relations and to understate the scale of anti-Semitism in Ukraine raises historical objections, the good intention to free the Ukrainian nation-building project from anti-Jewish references could be seen as an important step forward. This trend developed further during the “Euromaidan” (October 2013–March 2014) when several important writers, artists, and businessmen of Jewish origin openly supported the pro-European movement and condemned Russian intervention in Ukraine.

Thinking along the same lines, the Director of the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies in Kyiv Anatolii Podol's'kyi has stressed the importance of understanding that the Holocaust “is an integral part of the common history of Ukraine” (Podol's'kyi 2009: 57). In other words, Podol's'kyi tried to formulate an idea similar to that put forward in the works of Jan T. Gross, that the murdered Jews were as much Polish (or Ukrainian) as they were Jewish (Connelly 2012). The next step in this direction could be a broader understanding of Ukrainian culture, which could absorb, but not appropriate, figures such as one of the founders of modern literature in Yiddish who spent more than forty years of his life in Ukraine, Sholem Aleichem (1859–1916); the

Polish writer of Jewish origin Bruno Schulz (1892–1942), who was born and killed in his native eastern Galician town of Drohobych not far from Lviv; or Kyiv-born human rights activist and writer Lev Kopelev (1912–1997).

### MEMORIAL SITES AND SITES OF FORGETTING

It is only since the late 1980s that it has become possible to identify “Soviet civilians” as Jews on memorial signs in places where massacres were committed. While many memorials to the victims of the Shoah were indeed built throughout Ukraine, unfortunately, no catalog of these exists as yet. As a rule, it was local or international Jewish organizations that initiated these commemorations. The authorities have not impeded this activity but have not, for their part, come up with their own initiatives. At the same time, representatives of the local authorities have usually been present at the openings of these memorials.

Since Holocaust remembrance in Ukraine has been a product of private rather than state-sponsored initiatives, regional differences have immediately become obvious. In eastern Galicia, where practically no Jewish communities remained after the war, Jewish historical sites, with rare exceptions, are in a neglected and paltry state (Bartov 2007). In contrast, the city of Dnipropetrovsk, which has been dubbed the Jewish capital of Ukraine due to its thriving and very influential Jewish community, saw the construction of the huge Menorah-community center in 2012. It consists of seven towers shaped like a menorah, and includes a synagogue, kosher restaurants and hotels, a hospital, meeting halls, and so on. It is the largest of its kind in Europe (Portnov and Portnova 2012).

In some cases, the inscriptions on Soviet memorials to civilian victims of World War II have been corrected and information about Jewish victims added. In other cases, a new memorial sign has been erected next to the Soviet one. This happened, for example, in Dnipropetrovsk, where more than 10,000 Jews were executed by the Nazis in the Botanical Gardens in October 1941. A modest gray obelisk was erected at the site (now known as Gagarin Park) in the 1970s. Its inscription in Russian said “To Civilians, Victims of Fascism.” The first authorized meeting to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust explicitly was held in Gagarin Park in May 1989. On 14 April 2001, a new monument built with money raised by the local Jewish community was erected next to



the Soviet one. The new inscription in Hebrew and in Ukrainian reads: "Here lie the remains of 10,000 Jews, Dnipropetrovsk's civilians, brutally murdered on October 13–14, 1941, as well as those of our numerous venerable brothers and sisters, tortured and executed by Fascists in 1941–1943" (Portnov and Portnova 2012: 35).

On the surface, the juxtaposition of the two obelisks, describing the same historical event differently, is uncontroversial. There have been no surveys on the attitude of the city residents, or in particular of local students towards the two memorials. (Both memorials are located on the Dnipropetrovsk University campus built after the war, near the university stadium, library and dormitories.) One may assume that not too many visitors to the Gagarin Park notice the juxtaposition of the two obelisks, and an even smaller number of them might ponder their link to the same historical event. This illustrates again the weakness of the knowledge of the Holocaust in many ordinary Ukrainians' perception of history.

The lack of a coherent government policy regarding Holocaust remembrance is most clearly manifested at Babi Yar, which is the main symbol of the mass executions of the Jewish population in the occupied Soviet territories. The Soviet memorial there was built as late as 1976; plaques with inscriptions in Hebrew and Russian explicitly referring to Jewish victims were added in 1989. Many monuments dedicated to various groups of victims have been erected here since Ukraine gained independence. One of them honors members of Melnyk's wing of the OUN who were executed at this spot. The famous line from Evgeni Evtushenko's poem—"No monument stands over Babi Yar"—sounds like bitter irony in today's Kyiv as various communities of memory compete for ownership of this site. At present, there are 29 monuments in the grounds of the National Memorial Park "Babi Yar." The park also serves as a recreation zone and hosts children's playgrounds, retail booths, and so on. Despite President Yushchenko's decision to turn Babi Yar into a National Memorial Park, the Ukrainian government has no vision for the future of this site of memory. An international academic conference held in Kyiv on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre was funded by the French embassy and not by the Ukrainian government (Tiaglyi et al. 2012).

Rather exceptional against the background of the Ukrainian authorities' usual indifference to the issue of the Holocaust is an initiative by the Lviv City Council, in cooperation with the Center for Urban History, to issue an international call for projects aimed at increasing the visibility

of the Jewish sites of memory in Lviv. These include the former Jewish cemetery, the old Jewish quarter and the site of the Janowski concentration camp (Birman 2013). Such direct engagement with local Jewish history and the memory of the Holocaust could help to transform Lviv's commemorative landscape, currently strongly dominated by exclusive Ukrainian nationalism (Amar 2011: 394).

Most often, commemoration of the Holocaust victims in Ukraine is a result of the activities of international Jewish organizations and the embassies of Western European countries, sometimes supported by local Ukrainian businessmen of Jewish origin. For instance, the American Jewish Committee together with the German government has sponsored projects on building memorials in Bakhiv, Prokhyd and Kyslyyn (all in the Volhynia region), Ostrozhets (Rivne region) and Rava-Ruska (Lviv region). The Ukrainian documentary on the Holocaust *Spell Your Name* (dir. Serhii Bukovsky 2006) was produced by Steven Spielberg in cooperation with the Ukrainian philanthropist Viktor Pinchuk. The latter also participated in bringing to Ukraine the exhibition "The Holocaust by Bullets" prepared by the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris on the basis of fieldwork (both archeological and oral history) conducted in Ukraine by the Roman Catholic Priest Patrick Desbois.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the large number of memorial signs, however modest, the lack of museums devoted to the Holocaust and Jewish history in Ukraine is noticeable. One infamous story in this regard took place at Babi Yar, where a Jewish community center with an attached museum funded by the American Joint Distribution Committee was supposed to be built in 2002. However, local protests against an ill-conceived construction on the mass burial ground disrupted this project. The Public Committee for Perpetuating the Memory of the Babi Yar Victims<sup>2</sup> was created to prevent the construction and to develop alternative projects of memorialization. On several occasions the Committee called attention to the imperative that the memory of Babi Yar be open to all groups of victims, and proclaimed its commitment to "the fundamental principle of an inclusive, rather than exclusive, approach" (Nakhmanovych 2013b). The Head of the Committee Vitalii Nakhmanovych approached the Holocaust as a "generalizing symbol for all tragedies experienced by various peoples in the twentieth century":

Are we ("we" in a broader sense) ready to recognize that various peoples have suffered just as much from horrifying genocides and mass

persecutions here and now, before us and after us? Hence, our goal is not just cultivating Holocaust memory as such, but using it for integrating the memory and knowledge of the causes and meaning of such events in general. (Gluzman and Nakhmanovych 2013)

At present, the only major museum devoted to the Holocaust in Ukraine is the Dnipropetrovsk Museum of Jewish History and the Holocaust opened in 2012 in the Menorah-community center mentioned above. The creators of the museum proudly call it “one of the largest” in the post-Soviet space. Work on the exhibition documenting the post-war Jewish history in Ukraine continues. The Holocaust is presented as the Rubicon of Jewish history in Ukraine. The exhibition makes extensive use of multimedia technology, undoubtedly inspired by the Holocaust Museum in Washington and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Original exhibits on the diverse and contradictory history of the Dnipropetrovsk Jews are especially interesting. For example, the authors of the exhibition made a somewhat controversial attempt to merge the Holocaust narrative with the nationalistic narrative of the UPA. The exhibition “The Ukrainians and the ‘Jewish Question’ in World War Two” consists of three parts: first, anti-Jewish pogroms in 1941; second, the phenomenon of bystanders<sup>3</sup>; and third, the theme of Jews’ voluntary participation in the UPA. Essentially, and symptomatically for Ukrainian Holocaust discourse, the last part uncritically reproduces certain elements of the UPA’s propaganda.

The development of the commemorative activities and museums devoted to the places of Jewish history in Ukraine reflects the current state of the historical research and is closely related to the existing research programs and initiatives on, broadly speaking, Jewish studies.

#### CENTERS FOR HOLOCAUST AND JEWISH STUDIES IN UKRAINE

After the Soviet authorities closed the Cabinet for Jewish Language, Literature and Folklore at the Academy of Sciences in Kyiv in 1949, there were no institutionalized Jewish studies in Soviet Ukraine (Borovoi 1993). It would also have been impossible to defend a dissertation on the Holocaust and the Jewish experience of World War II in Ukraine during the Soviet period. It was only from the 1990s that Jewish studies started to be re-established in Ukraine, however, mostly outside of the existing state-sponsored academic institutions. Several new centers

for Holocaust studies in Ukraine were created by younger generations of historians with the support of international foundations and foreign embassies. Some of them deserve to be described in detail here.

The Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies (UCHS) in Kyiv<sup>4</sup> is known for its numerous publications (including the best Ukrainian journal in the field, *Holocaust and the Present [Holokost i suchasnist’]* that has published 13 volumes from 2005 to 2015), seminars for history teachers, school competitions and oral history projects (collecting the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and people who helped the Jews during the Nazi occupation) and translations from English.

The Tkuma<sup>5</sup> Ukrainian Institute for Holocaust Studies is affiliated with the Jewish Community of Dnipropetrovsk. It publishes the series *Problems of Holocaust History* (7 volumes so far), organizes academic conferences and seminars, and takes care of the Dnipropetrovsk Museum of Jewish History.

Both centers strive to cooperate with Ukrainian academia and to promote international Holocaust studies in Ukraine. At the same time, their activities are not limited to academic research, but tend to adopt the broader agenda of civic education. In recent years, the Kyiv-based UCHS has organized a number of seminars and exhibitions on “teaching tolerance on the basis of the Holocaust” and developed guidelines for school teachers on how to teach the local history of the Shoah under the motto *Protect the Memory* (Schupak 2005; Podol’s’kyi 2007). Such publications strive to compensate for the omissions and limitations of Ukrainian textbooks. They put the Shoah into the broader context of ethnic discrimination, genocide and the need of tolerance; depict the human dimension of the tragedy of Ukrainian Jews through the stories of real people; and present the variety of behavior of the non-Jewish population under the occupation, from participating in the Nazi crimes to rescuing their Jewish neighbors.

The third research institution, the Center for Studies of the History and Culture of Eastern-European Jews is affiliated with the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. It publishes the cultural and academic journal *Yehupets* (23 volumes so far) as well as books on Jewish studies and Ukrainian–Jewish relations. The Center also develops the curricula of the Jewish Studies for the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (a similar program was also announced at the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv in 2012). Both UCU and the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy were created after 1991 and are usually considered to be the main Western-oriented higher education institutions in Ukraine.

Several important academic conferences and research projects on Holocaust history have been held by the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe in Lviv. This Center is a unique private research institution that conducts an annual summer school on Judaica. In addition, significant publications on Ukrainian–Jewish relations regularly appear in such journals as *Krytyka*, *I, Ukraina Moderna*, and on the intellectual web-portal [historians.in.ua](http://historians.in.ua). Some of these publications are critical of the Ukrainian nationalistic narrative and the misrepresentations of the Jewish memory, but one should not overemphasize their influence on public discourse in the country. Despite several enthusiastic initiatives mentioned above, academic degrees in Jewish studies are not offered in Ukraine, although several Ph.D. dissertations on the local aspects of the Holocaust have been defended in the recent years. In general, it is too early to talk about a mature institutional environment for Holocaust and Jewish studies in Ukraine, but important preconditions for its formation and development do exist.

#### REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE UKRAINIAN PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON THE HOLOCAUST

The difficult nature of the public discussion of the Holocaust in post-Soviet Ukraine is a rather obvious fact. Both the absence of desire and the absence of skills to touch on this theme in the official discourse of the Ukrainian state indicate a serious problem due to the lack of an adequate language and the experience necessary for discussing this topic in the Ukrainian public sphere. Countries of Eastern and Central Europe—from Lithuania and Poland to Romania—have had geopolitical incentives to hold such discussions because they have had real prospects of joining the European Union, which had made the remembrance of the murdered Jews a cornerstone and a major symbol of humanitarian values (Judt 2010). In the case of Ukraine, these incentives have been weak (compare Stryjek 2013). The Ukrainian government has steered away from an active position on the Holocaust, and has made practically no efforts towards the integration of the history of the Shoah into a national narrative of World War II and Victory Day.

A national consensus on the issues surrounding World War II remembrance is a prerequisite for a broad public discussion of the Holocaust and the collaboration of Ukrainians that would be comparable to the

debate about Jedwabne in Poland. Such a consensus, which, of course, does not mean total unanimity, is necessary in order to foster a critical attitude toward the past as an issue concerning the whole society, rather than only the “Banderites in Galicia” or “post-Soviet Creoles.” In the current socio-political situation, any attempt to discuss, for example, the issue of collaboration openly and publicly, immediately becomes a bone of contention, as previously observed, between two competing positions: the nationalistic and the Soviet. The latter position considers the collaboration issue as a problem concerning only the nationalistic underground, and does not take into account the real complexity of the issue. As Timothy Snyder has noted, in central and eastern Ukraine during World War II, Ukrainian nationalism was of “no significance as a political movement,” yet “here, as in the rest of the occupied Soviet Union, the Germans had no trouble finding local assistance and the murder rates of Jews were as high, or higher, than in western Ukraine” (Snyder 2013). In other words, the problem of collaboration and participation in the Holocaust is not limited to a single region or a single movement. And the coexistence of two competing images of the war in Ukraine is not equivalent to a pluralistic situation.

In view of the environment surrounding the Holocaust remembrance issue in Ukraine, producing special publications and conducting summer schools and seminars are left to private initiatives, mainly to international and local Jewish organizations. A very important multifaceted question comes up within the framework of the foreign-funded projects, regarding whether it is possible—and if so, how—to transfer the normative standards of commemorating the Holocaust, formed mainly in the USA and Germany, to the fundamentally different post-Soviet social and cultural sphere.

Jewish activities in the country are fragmented rather than consolidated at the national level and they occur not “in Ukraine,” but in specific locations where local Jewish organizations are active (Rostovtsev 2012b). Thus, there are obvious regional discrepancies regarding Holocaust remembrance. While some pieces of local Jewish history are only just beginning to enter the public sphere in Lviv, where pro-European sentiments somewhat oddly go along with a glorification of integral nationalism, in Dnipropetrovsk, where the Jewish community is active and influential, Jewish memory has largely smooth relations with the Soviet narrative of war which prevails in eastern and southern Ukraine.

David Marples' claim that "Ukrainians are probably no better and no worse than other peoples in offering a conception of the Second World War that contains more distortions than corroborated facts" (Marples 2007: 312) leads to an important question: Why is the Holocaust important for the Ukrainian national narrative? The discussion of this question in Ukraine has taken just the first steps, and these steps remain quite inconspicuous in mass consciousness. It seems that inclusion of the Holocaust in public debate and school textbooks would not only challenge the national direction of Ukrainian history (Dietsch 2006: 170), but problematize the still influential Soviet narrative of war as well. The major point of this chapter is that a reflective discussion of the Holocaust could productively relativize both nationalistic and Soviet self-righteous narratives of World War II and open new creative possibilities for post-Soviet Ukraine's state politics of memory.

**Acknowledgements** I would like to thank Uilleam Blacker, Julie Fedor, Evgeni Veklerov, Froma Zeitlin, Tatiana Zhurzhenko, and my sister Tetiana Portnova for their insightful and helpful critical remarks on previous versions of this chapter.

## NOTES

1. Father Patrick Desbois conducted thousands of interviews with local witnesses of the Holocaust trying to identify sites of mass extermination and burial of the Jewish population in the Ukrainian province. "Holocaust by Bullets" exhibition, based on the results of this unique research project, travelled throughout Ukraine and Europe. See also his book (Desbois 2009).
2. <http://www.kby.kiev.ua/komitet/>.
3. Interestingly, the English word *bystander* that is part of the triad victims-bystanders-perpetrators is not translated into Ukrainian, just transliterated into Cyrillic.
4. UCHS is located in the building of the Ivan Kurash Institute for Political and Ethnic Studies, but independent of it. The UCHS website with full texts of the publications is <http://www.holocaust.kiev.ua/eng/index.html>.
5. *Tkuma* is a Hebrew word that means "revival" or "rebirth." For *Tkuma*'s website with full texts of publications, see: <http://tkuma.dp.ua/index.php/en/>.

## REFERENCES

- Abramson, H. 1994. "The Scattering of Amalek: A Model for Understanding the Ukrainian-Jewish Conflict." *Eastern European Jewish Affairs* 24 (1): 39-47.

- Amar, T.C. 2011. "Different but the Same or the Same but Different? Public Memory of the Second World War in Post-Soviet Lviv." *Journal of Modern European History* 9 (3): 73-396.
- Bartov, O. 2007. *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine*. Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Birman, Sh. 2013. "Lvov: yevreiskii uzel." *Den'*, 21 May. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://www.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/mirovye-diskussii/lvov-evreyskiy-uzel>.
- Borovoi, S. 1993. *Vospominaniia*. Moscow: Yevreiskii universitet v Moskve.
- Brandon, R., and W. Lower, (eds.). 2010. *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Connelly, J. 2012. "The Noble and the Base: Poland and the Holocaust." *The Nation*, 14 Nov.
- David-Fox, M., P. Holquist, and A. Martin (eds.). 2014. *The Holocaust in the East: Local Perpetrators and Soviet Responses*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Desbois, P. 2009. *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dietsch, J. 2006. *Making Sense of Suffering: Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*. Lund: Media Tryck, Lund University.
- Fel'dman, A. 2008. "Yevreiskie stranitsy ukrainskogo Golodomora." *Ukrainska Prayda*, 29 Sep. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2008/09/29/4451521/>.
- Gitelman, Z. 1990. "Contemporary Soviet Jewish Perspectives of Ukrainians: Some Empirical Observations." In *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, eds. H. Aster, and P.J. Potichnyj, 2nd ed., 437-457. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.
- Gitelman, Z. (ed.). 1997. *Bitter Legacy. Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Gluzman, S. and V. Nakhmanovych. 2013. "My i segodnia perezhivaem istoriu Babiego Yara." *Forum Natsii* 5-6, May-June, <http://www.forum.kiev.ua/news-paper/archive/131/my-y-schodnya-perezhivaem-ystoryyu-babeho-yara.html>.
- Grossman, V. 1985. "Ukraina bez yevreev." In *Na yevreiskie temy*, ed. V. Grossman, vol. 2, 333-340. Jerusalem: Biblioteka-Aliia.
- Gross, J.T. 2000. *Sqiesdzi. Historia zaglady zydowskiego miasteczka*. Sejny: Pogranicze.
- Himka, J.-P. 2009. *Ukrainians, Jews and the Holocaust. Divergent Memories*. Saskatoon: Heritage Press.
- Himka, J.-P. 2013a. "Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and the Holocaust." *Polin* 26: 337-359.
- Himka, J.-P. 2013b. "The Reception of the Holocaust in the Post-Communist Ukraine." In *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust*

- in *Postcommunist Europe*, eds. J.-P. Himka and J.B. Michlic, 626–662. Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Himka J.-P. and J.B. Michlic. 2013. "Introduction." In *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, eds. J.-P. Himka and J.B. Michlic. Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Ivanova, E. 2004. "Ukrainian High School Students' Understanding of the Holocaust." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 18 (3): 402–420.
- Judt, T. 2010. "From the House of the Dead. An Essay on Modern European Memory." In *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, ed. T. Judt, 803–831. London: Vintage.
- Khromeychuk, O. 2013. "Undetermined" Ukrainians: Post-war Narratives of the Waffen SS "Galicia" Division. New York and Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Kravchuk, L. 2011. "Kogda kvaziliberal'nost' prevrashchaetsia v total'niui sovkovost'." *Den'*. 210–11. 18–19 November.
- Kulchyts'kyi, S. 2008. "Holodomor v Ukraïni i ukrains'kyi Holocaust." *Holocaust i suchasnist'* 3: 88–98.
- Kurylo, T. and J.-P. Himka. 2008. "Yak OUN stavlasia do yevreiv? Rozdumy nad knyzhkoïu Volodymyra Viatrovycha." *Ukraina Moderna* 2 (13): 252–265.
- Marples, D.R. 2007. *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine*. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press.
- Motyl, A. 2010. "Difficult Task Defining Bandera's Historical Role." *Moscow Times*, 11 March. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/moscow-times-opinion-difficult-task-defining-bande-61429.html>.
- Motyka, G. 2006. *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942–1960. Działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej Powstańczej Armii*. Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN.
- Nakhmanovych, V. 2013a. "Do osnovania. A zatem? Razmyshlenia o yevreiskoi i nevereiskoi obshchestvennoi zhizni na fone Babiego Yara." *Hadashot*, 5 May. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://hadashot.kiev.ua/content/do-osnovaniya-zatem>.
- Nakhmanovych, V. 2013b. "Ukrains'ko-evreiske porozuminnia potrebuie svitohliadnykh zmin." *historians.in.ua*, 27 Sept. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://historians.in.ua/index.php/zabuti-zertvy-viyny/866-vitalii-nakhmanovych-ukrainsko-ievreiske-porozuminnia-potrebuie-svitohliadnykh-zmin>.
- Olszański, T.A. 2013. *Miejsce UPA w Wielkiej Wojnie Ojczyźnianej. Dylematy polityki historycznej Ukrainy*. Warszawa: Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich.
- Petrovsky-Shtern, Y. 2009. *The Anti-Imperial Choice: The Making of the Ukrainian Jew*. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press.
- Podol's'kyi, A. 2007. *Uroky mynuloho. Istoriia Holocaustu v Ukraïni. Navchal'nyi posibnyk*. Kyiv: Sfera.

- Podol's'kyi, A. 2009. "Ukrains'ke suspil'stvo i pamiat' pro Holocaust. Sproba analizu deyakykh aspektiv." *Holocaust i suchasnist'* 5: 47–59.
- Poroshenko, P. 2015. "Vystup Prezydenta Ukraïny u Kneseti Derzhavy Izrail." *President of Ukraine* website, 23 Dec. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-u-kneseti-derzhavi-izrayil-36552#>.
- Portnov, A. 2010. *Uprazhneniia s istoriei po-ukrainski*. Moscow: O. G. I., Memorial.
- Portnov, A. 2016. "Bandera Mythologies and their Traps for Ukraine." *Open Democracy*, 22 June. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/andrii-portnov/bandera-mythologies-and-their-traps-for-ukraine>.
- Portnov, A. and T. Portnova. 2012. "Die 'jüdische Hauptstadt der Ukraine'. Erinnerung und Gegenwart in Dnipropetrovsk." *Osteuropa* 10: 25–40.
- Riabchuk, M. 2012. "Bandera's Controversy and Beyond." In *Gleichschaltung. Authoritarian Consolidation in Ukraine, 2010–2012*, ed. M. Riabchuk, 154–168. Kyiv: K.I.S.
- Richardson, T. 2008. *Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press.
- Rostovtsev, O. 2012a. "O yevreïakh libo khorosho, libo nichego, ili Pochemu ukrainskie SMI izbegaiut yevreiskoi temy." *historians.in.ua*, 11 Dec. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://historians.in.ua/index.php/dyskusiya/504-oleh-rostovtsev-o-evreyakh-lybo-khorosho-lybo-nycheho-lyl-pochemu-ukrayn-skye-smy-yzbehaiut-evreiskoi-temy>.
- Rostovtsev, O. 2012b. "Patsient skoree zhiv, chem mertv." *Vaad.ua*, Jan. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://jewukr.org/content/index.php/jewish-news/942-2012-02-05-15-01-10>.
- Rudling, P.A. 2011. "The OUN, the UPA, and the Holocaust: A Study in the Manufacturing of Historical Myths." *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* 2107.
- Schupak, I. 2005. *Holokost v Ukraïni: poshuky vidpovidei na pytannia istorii*. Dnipropetrovsk: Tkuma.
- Snyder, T. 2010. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books.
- Snyder, T. 2013. "Commemorative Causality." *Eurozine*, 6 June. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://www.eurozine.com/commemorative-causality/>.
- Stryjek, T. 2013. "Ukraina wobec Zagłady. Państwo, społeczeństwo i wyzwanie pamięci." In *Ukraina przed końcem historii*, ed. T. Stryjek, 201–224. Warszawa: Scholara.
- Tiaglyi, M., et al. (eds.). 2012. *Babyn Yar: masove ubyvstvo i pam'iat' pro niho, Materialy mizhnarodnoi naukovoï konferencii 24–25 zhovtnia 2011 roku*. Kyiv: Ukrains'kyi tsentr vyvchennia istorii Holokostu.

- Turchenko, F.G., P.P. Panchenko, and S. M. Tymchenko. 2006. *Novitnia istoriia Ukrainy. 11 grade*. Kyiv: Lybid'.
- Ukrains'kyi tyzhden'. 2012. "Antysemityzm. Ukrainofobia. Dva vyjavy politychnoi manipuliatsii." *Ukrains'kyi tyzhden'* 14 (April): 6–12.
- Weiner, A. 2001. *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Yanukovych, V. 2011. "Zvernennia Prezydenta Ukrainy u zviazku z 70-my rok-ovynamy trahedii Babynoho Yaru." *President of Ukraine*, 29 Sep. Retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://ukurier.gov.ua/uk/articles/zvernennya-prezidenta-ukrayini-u-zvyazku-z-70-mi-r/>.
- Zhurzhenko, T. 2011. "Capital of Despair": Holodomor Memory and Political Conflicts in Kharkiv after the Orange Revolution." *East European Politics and Societies* 25 (3): 597–639.

## CHAPTER 13

## The "Partisan Republic": Colonial Myths and Memory Wars in Belarus

Simon Lewis

A short story by Belarusian prose writer Vasil Bykau, entitled *Ruzhovy Tuman* ("The Rosy Fog," 1997), opens as follows. Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a deaf-and-dumb old man approaches a Lenin monument on a national day of remembrance in a Belarusian village. Another veteran notes how little he has changed since World War II: "Look, it's Barsuk! ... Still alive, would you believe ... And, it seems, he's still the same" (Bykau 1997: 126). The narrator comments on the strangeness of Barsuk being "the same," and asks: "is life or nature the cause of this?" He then tentatively answers his own question: "Or perhaps, it's the rosy fog of deceit, which circumstances won't allow to dissipate" (ibid.: 127). It soon becomes clear that Barsuk's uncanny lack of change is the result of the silencing of memory in Belarus during the

This chapter has been made available through Open Access thanks to funding from the Dahlem Research School (DRS) POINT Fellowship Program, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. The DRS POINT Program is funded by the German Research Foundation and the European Commission.

S. Lewis (✉)  
Institute for East European Studies, Freie Universität, Berlin,  
Garystr. 55, 14195 Berlin, Germany  
e-mail: [Simon.lewis@fu-berlin.de](mailto:Simon.lewis@fu-berlin.de)