

The Gordian Knot of Past and Present: Memory of Stalinist Purges in Modern Ukraine

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Abstract

The thesis examines the social memory of Soviet period in Ukraine on the national and regional levels drawing on the conceptual framework of social memory as shared, normative and formative knowledge of the past, subject to contentious interpretations of various groups and reflecting the power structure of the society. The analysis of the law on the rehabilitation of victims of political repressions in Ukraine, the law on the Holodomor as genocide against Ukrainian nation, and the decommunization laws shows that on the official level Ukraine moved from an ambivalent attitude towards the Soviet legacy, in which Stalinism was repudiated, to the condemnation of Soviet power as a whole.

On the regional level, the study reveals the divisive memory of the Soviet past. The analysis of the activities of the Memorial Society, of monuments to the prisoners executed in Lviv by retreating Soviets in June of 1941, of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky street and other museums and monuments shows that in Lviv, as in the Baltic States, the Soviet power is viewed as an alien regime, imposed on freedom-loving Ukrainians by Soviet Russia tyranny.

On the opposite side of Lviv is Donetsk. The analysis of the memorial landscape of the city shows that the Donbas memory of the 1930s, as in Soviet times and in Russia, is based on an official forgetting of the repressions. The general assessment of the Soviet past is positive is incorporated into the collective identity of Donetsk as its integral part.

After the Euromaidan events of late 2013-early 2014 the opposite memories of the Soviet past became even more apparent.

Soviet past in Ukraine is a complex historical period. Examples of post-second world war Western Europe shows that a society, which wants to rebuild itself after a traumatic, divisive past, has to work through this past critically and honestly through an extremely difficult, but necessary open public debate. Only free exchange of opinions, where diversity of perspectives and interpretations of the Soviet experience would be heard, will allow Ukrainian society to grasp the complexity of the Soviet past and to build an inclusive, pluralist democracy.

Preface

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”

Søren Kierkegaard

“Your memory is a monster; you forget—it doesn't. It simply files things away. It keeps things for you, or hides things from you—and summons them to your recall with will of its own. You think you have a memory; but it has you!”

John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*

This dissertation is the product of an ongoing, years-long personal reflection of an insider-turned-outsider towards post-Soviet Ukraine, a reflection that grew out of the gradual realization of a discrepancy between my own experience of living in the Soviet Union and the assessment of Soviet experience in Western political discourse and academic research. My country, the Soviet Union, which I then believed to be an egalitarian, progressive society with outstanding achievements in industry and science, with free access to health care and free education, was perceived in the West as an oppressive, authoritarian regime, in which the party nomenklatura enriched itself and defrauded the population by feeding it a false ideology and providing a standard of living seen as low. Everybody was equal in this relative poverty, but there were some who were more equal than others. The fall of the Soviet system, which imploded by the end of the 1980s, was celebrated by many inside and outside as the end of a regime of secrecy, of tight social control, of non-freedom, of totalitarianism. A new era of democratization promised economic prosperity, freedom of expression, an inclusive and open political system in which everybody's voice would be heard. The old socialist/communist system was declared inefficient, worthless, even criminal, and relegated to history by the new post-socialist political elites.

One of the powerful factors that contributed to the fall of the Soviet system was the *glasnost* campaign, started by Mikhail Gorbachev. The lifting of censorship of the press and freedom of speech triggered a stream of articles, memoirs, essays, movies on the tragedy of millions of human lives sacrificed by the Stalin regime in the name of building the Communist Utopia. The memory of these victims proved to be stronger than the official silencing of it. It resurged as soon as the lid was lifted and it exposed the ugly side of Soviet socialism. The liberal intelligentsia and political elites in the Soviet Union and abroad expected that the truth about Stalin crimes would be enough to discredit the Soviet system completely and unreservedly. But these expectations did not come true. The memory of the late Brezhnev “stagnation” era with its economic stability and egalitarianism and the pride in the victory over Nazism, for which the Soviet people paid such an enormous price, eclipsed the remembrance of Stalin’s crimes. This remembrance did not disappear, but moved to the background in the general assessment of the Soviet past in Russia and Ukraine over the years, following the dismantlement of the Soviet Union. Nostalgia for the Soviet system grew as the wild capitalism of the “dashing 1990s” brought the impoverishment of masses, the prodigious enrichment of a few, and a sharp increase of criminality. It was nostalgia for a Soviet lifestyle, where there were order and predictability; for a Soviet type of society in which, in spite of the privileges of the Soviet elite, there was a sense of social justice, especially compared to the post-Soviet glaring inequality between pauperized middle and working classes and the newly rich who made fortunes plundering socialist property. It was nostalgia for the multinational community of Soviet people, in which many believed that the equality of various nations was not only declared, but put into practice, and manifestations of ethnic nationalism were prevented. It was nostalgia for the USSR as a great superpower that decided destinies of the world. It was nostalgia for the USSR as an ideocracy, the state built on the monistic ideology of Communism, which was oriented towards the future and provided a global alternative to Western imperialism and financial capitalism (Fedorov 2016). And although by the 1970s Soviet citizens and the elite stopped taking seriously the Communist promises of radiant future, they still believed in Soviet welfare.

This nostalgia was based on the living memory of millions of ordinary Soviet citizens and contradicted the standard (American) political discourse on the late Soviet system as authoritarian and repressive, with a rigid and inefficient central economy and ruled by a Pharisee party nomenklatura. Ukrainian émigré's interpretation of the Soviet experience was very negative. I saw this with vivid clarity when upon immigrating to Canada I became actively involved in the Ukrainian Canadian Diaspora. From discussions with my colleagues, I realized to what extent some of them hated Soviet Ukraine. This hatred came from the experience of their parents and grandparents who fled from Western Ukraine during or after World War II. Many of these Western Ukrainians fought against the Soviet forces in the ranks of Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), the armed units of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Many fled fearing deportations and repressions by the Soviets, which they witnessed after the annexation of Western Ukraine by the Soviet Union in 1939. They also were well aware of the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Western Ukrainians, which followed the Soviet reconquest of Western Ukraine in 1944. For the Ukrainian Canadian Diaspora, Soviet Union was an enemy, an oppressor who crushed their hopes for the independence and statehood of Ukraine.

After escaping to the West and establishing there, they raised families, instilling in their children the dream of Ukrainian independence from Russians and Soviets and hatred towards the oppressor. They conducted anti-Soviet propaganda, founded anti-Soviet organizations, actively lobbied Western governments to carry out a hard-line policy towards the Soviet Union. When Gorbachev opened up the Soviet Union to Western influence in the late 1980s, Canadian and American Ukrainians flocked to Ukraine to help Soviet Ukrainians build an independent state of Ukraine, a dream they had cherished for so long. They helped revive in Ukraine the memory of the totalitarian crimes of Stalinism, actively contributing to the growing movement within Ukraine to condemn Soviet totalitarianism in the same manner as Nazism was condemned.

These were two antagonistic readings of the Soviet past, which clashed with each other for the whole short history of Ukrainian independence, and the condemning side won, at least on the level of memory politics, in 2015, with the adoption of the decommunization law by the Ukrainian government. It was another manifestation of the importance of memory, of the crucial role it plays in the assessment of the past and the determination of the future course for the community that remembers. Being born and raised in that community and being exposed to only one of these two collective memories of the Soviet past, I wanted to see the big picture of the memorial landscape, to see what colours dominate it at different periods of time, to see the nuances in various parts, to understand how this changing memorial landscape influences the present. I am part and parcel of my research and being fully aware of it, I tried as much as I can to remain objective. However, this objectivity comes not from the detachment from the object of my study, but, on the contrary, from the deeply subjective identification with the culture I study and the genuine desire to understand the complexity and antagonism of the memory of Soviet experience in Ukraine and the challenges that stem from it. I also wanted to offer my own modest vision of how these challenges could be overcome.

Chapter 1: Methodology

In seeking to answer a research question, a social scientist determines what type of research design is the best, with two main approaches dominating the social sciences – qualitative or quantitative. These two types are not mutually exclusive - scholars often combine both methods. However, the nature and logic of studying a problem is still defined by the qualitative or quantitative approach: what objectives of the research will be formulated; what research strategies will be used; which data will be collected and how it will be analyzed and explained; and what type of knowledge a research will produce.

In part, the difference in the two approaches comes from the data that scholars use to understand and explain a social fact. Quantitative research employs numbers or numerical data. A qualitative investigator works with more fluid, more subjective soft data – texts, oral productions, impressions, photos, symbols. Qualitative research examines a case in details, which occurs naturally in the course of social life, taking into account the specific social-historical context, which is of fundamental importance for the interpretation of an event. The authenticity of an interpretation depends on sensitivity to the context. Qualitative research relies on principles of interpretive or critical social science. It approaches the data with an open mind, without a specific goal to test a hypothesis on a causal relationship between a small number of variables. New hypotheses are often generated in qualitative studies thanks to the openness of the researcher, and social relationships are established, but for a narrow set of cases. A qualitative study does not have a formalized, clearly defined set of steps with standard practices and consistent principles, terms, and rules. The logic of a qualitative study emerges in the research process, it is the logic of practice, and a researcher follows a nonlinear path, based on “judgment calls” and norms, shared among experienced researchers (Neuman 2014, pp. 167-169).

Two ideal type types of research - qualitative versus quantitative - reflect the complex nature of sociology as the science of the constantly changing social in myriads of its forms and contents. Auguste Comte, one of the founders of sociology, perceived the new discipline (sociology) as the general science of humanity, which crowned the maturing of basic sciences, from mathematics at the base, through astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology. Comte placed sociology at the summit of the hierarchy of science (Tilly 2001, p. 6753). For him, society, just as the natural world, could be understood through scientific inquiry; the methods of the natural sciences should be applied to the objective study of society. Comte's belief that the social and natural world can best be understood through scientific inquiry became known as positivism; it lies at the core of sociology as a science. In a scientific inquiry, explanations are based on systematic observation, experimentation, comparison, and historical analysis (Murray, Linden and Kendall 2014, pp. 9-10).

For Comte, sociology was inextricably linked to history: the goal of sociology was to analyze the evolution of humanity through historical stages. Landmarks of early sociological thought (19th century) followed exactly this pathway. Karl Marx's *Capital*, Max Weber's *Economy and Society*, and Ferdinand Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* situated the present in vast historical syntheses, showing that the current dilemmas have roots in the past and that recent history channels the general directions of the future (Tilly 2001, p. 6753). In the 20th century, Norbert Elias with his *Civilizing Process*, Barrington Moore Jr. with *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Immanuel Wallerstein with *The Modern World-System*, William H. McNeill with *The Rise of the West* addressed major historical questions, blending history and the social sciences. Later 20th century works by Göran Therborn, Theda Skocpol, Jürgen Habermas, and Orlando Patterson continue the tradition of grand syntheses (Tilly 2001, pp. 6753-4).

These major works combine history's focus on the particularities of the context with the explanatory function of sociology, striving to determine some common causal mechanisms across time and space.

However, as sociology grew and expanded, it departed more and more from historical disciplines, developing its own specialties and focusing on observations of the current processes and structures. Historians, on the other hand, became specialized in particular times and places. Misunderstandings between sociologists and historians grew, which could be brought down to two essential claims: sociologists saw history as a descriptive, particularizing science that provides raw material for sociology as an explanatory, generalizing science; historians, in turn, questioned the universal character of sociological studies, because sociologists focus on the narrow historical moment – present, and handpick examples from history to illustrate general arguments, ignoring the particular place-time settings of these examples (Tilly 2001, p. 6753).

The seminal works, cited earlier, belong to the tradition of historical-comparative research, which is now one of the leading methods of inquiry in social sciences. Historical contingency and context dependency of an event limits the generalizability of its explanation to a particular unit in space and time (Kiser and Hechter 1991, p. 2). Comparative-historical sociology has come to be dominated by middle-range explanations, tailored to particular historical cases.

Historical-comparative sociologists, who are the closest to historians, stress the complexity, uniqueness, and contingency of historical events. They reject the positivism of natural sciences, because the social reality has a fundamental subjective dimension, and therefore cannot be known in the same objective causal manner as nature. The social reality can be only interpreted (Kiser and Hechter 1991, p. 11).

Therefore no general theory can be formulated to explain the social reality.

Those historical-comparative sociologists, who adhere to inductive generalism, also rely on historical uniqueness. They advance some causal relations, but these relations are rooted in a specific case or a small number of cases. Their theory, instead of being formulated at the beginning, emerges in the process of research. It is not explicitly stated, and therefore arguments, advanced by “inductivists,” are untestable (Burawoy 1989, pp. 775, 778).

Explanations of causality that emerge or are inferred from empirical observations are not reliable because in the social reality, unlike in an experimental setting, it is impossible to control for all possible spurious causes. Historical data, which historical-comparative sociologists collect and analyze, are nonexperimental; they are fragmentary and limited. For that reason, inferring causality from them is difficult, but possible. This causal web is composed of the complex, contingent, collective effects of social interaction. Rational actions of motivated individuals are part of this web, as are errors, unanticipated outcomes and indirect consequences of the actions, the influence of social networks and non-human environment (Tilly 1997, p. 49).

Causal mechanisms operate in various combinations and sequences, at several different scales, with different weights, depending on a concrete historical situation, which determines the outcome of their concatenation. An explanation of a complex social phenomenon, such as aging, nationalism, revolution, and so on, should entail a relevant, verifiable causal story, based on differing cause-effect relations. The effects of causal mechanisms, formulated in this story, should be demonstrated in other contexts as well; the validity of the explanation would depend on how well the presence of causal mechanisms is established, and their robustness demonstrated, based on many kinds and scales of evidence. The outlined criteria do not depend on the number of units being analyzed – they apply in both large-N multivariate analyses and small-N case studies (Tilly 1997, p. 50).

The latter have been an object of criticism by positivist social scientists that reject them (especially single case studies) as intrinsically inferior and unscientific because these studies are only implicitly comparative and do not allow theoretical generalizations (Steinmetz 2004, p. 372; Carmel 1999, p. 142).

The comparison is one of the constitutive methods of sociology since its emergence as a science (Ebbinghaus 1998, p. 304) and is considered the only legitimate form of research by positivists (Steinmetz 2004, p. 373). Since, according to positivists, causal generative mechanisms are universal and do not depend on time and space, historical research can be subsumed under cross-sectional comparative

research (Steinmetz 2004, p. 381). By comparing a social phenomenon across time and space, historical-comparative research identifies a series of necessary and sufficient causes to a particular phenomenon, allowing to construct a theoretically rigorous explanation (Skocpol 1984, p. 369–374).

As Steinmetz shows, a case study of a specific social event, process, or community, is the precondition for any comparison or sustained theoretical reflection. A case study is an indispensable building block for all sociology, because only by studying complex, overdetermined, empirical objects, can a social scientist develop a theory or make a comparison (Steinmetz 2004, p. 383), and the plausibility of this theory will depend on how carefully a scientist studied that object. The case study does not have to include a comparison to provide a social scientific explanation. It is self-sufficient and can yield a plausible explanation without resorting to a comparison, and it is as important in the overall sociological enterprise, as comparison or theory.

Sociologists, conducting case studies and small-N comparisons, especially working on non-Western societies or subaltern cultures, or on arguably incomparable events, like the Shoah, have also been criticized by “theorists of incommensurability” (Steinmetz 2004, p. 372). These theorists stress the uniqueness and unrepeatability of events, making their comparison impossible. The critical realist approach, advocated by Steinmetz, removes this contradiction by positing that any event is unique in the sense that it is produced by less than universal mechanism or a conjunction of mechanisms in a specific time and place, but it still is determined by certain causes and as such can be explained (Steinmetz 2004, p. 390). Even the most significant or tragic historical events, such as Shoah, or the French or Russian Revolution, can be explained and compared. The Shoah is incomparable as an experiential and empirical event, but it is comparable at the level of the social forces that produced it.

The design of my research follows the qualitative approach of a case study, since my hope is to understand how the Ukrainian society assesses its Soviet past, and qualitative research with its focus on depth and

complexity fits my goal the best. The Ukrainian society is diverse ethnically, linguistically, and culturally. To account for that diversity, I made a conscious choice to include in my analysis two regions of Ukraine, representing two poles of the Ukrainian civilizational continuum – Halychyna and Donbas. My work is a small Ns comparison within the case study of Ukraine. My research is also historical, as I trace the evolution of memory of the Soviet past over the twenty five years of post-Soviet, independent Ukraine.

Research question

The central question that frames my research is how the Soviet past is remembered in Ukraine. Given a mixed legacy of the Soviet period in the history of Ukraine and the resulting ambiguous attitude towards it, I am interested more in the memory of dark pages from this period, when the oppressive aspects of the Soviet political system manifested themselves clearly and cruelly – during the Stalin regime. Stalinism is most often conceptualized in the social sciences and in political discourse as a dictatorship that sacrificed millions of life in the name of a utopian Communist future. It is the worst period of Soviet totalitarianism – a system, in which the one-party state subjugates civil society and gains total control over economic, political, and cultural life. This reading of Stalinism was present in Ukrainian political discourse since the beginning of independence (the early 1990s) and slowly gained strength to become dominant. By focusing on the memory of Stalinism in Ukraine, I want to see whether this memory occupies a predominant place in the remembrance of the Soviet period as a whole and eclipses the later Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods, which are associated with positive features of the Soviet system – achievements in industry and science, economic stability, the welfare state, free education and free medical care. When Stalinism is perceived as the essence of the Soviet system, the Soviet past is interpreted negatively or condemned. If the later period is prominently remembered, it means that in general the Soviet system is perceived positively.

This is a hypothesis which I want to test, an insight which I gained, based on the knowledge of current Ukraine that I acquired through personal experience of living in Ukraine and extensive readings as a scholar. My main goal is to conduct an exploratory research into the question of social memory of the

Soviet past in Ukraine by looking at its variations within social levels, the levels of state authorities and of civil society, and within regions, given the historically conditioned cultural and political diversity of Ukraine. A case study design is an approach par excellence in this type of research, as it examines in depth a particular social phenomenon, which allows for a rich and realistic description and a comprehensive theoretical explanation that captures the complexity of social life. A qualitative case study develops theoretical perspectives from the particular and concrete, and the theory, which is formulated at the end of the study, can make only limited generalizations. The validity of such a theory should be tested not by the generalizability, but by its applicability (Carmel 1999, p. 143).

A case study not only examines closely the internal features of a specific case. It also places it into a larger context and enables the scholar to link the actions of individuals to large-case structures and processes (Neuman 2014, p. 42). In a case-study research, the investigator reveals and then demonstrates to others the causal mechanism of general social forces shaping and producing results in particular settings (Walton 1992, p. 129). “Case studies have a detailed focus but tell a larger story” (Neuman 2014, p. 42). They produce evidence which enables the researcher to more effectively depict complex, multiple-factor events or situations and processes developing over time and space (ibid).

In my research, I trace the crescendo of the anti-Soviet narrative dominant in the official memory politics in Ukraine since 1991. The urban memorial space of Lviv follows a typical trajectory: it has been increasingly filled with monuments to victims of the Soviet system, starting with the late perestroika. In Donetsk, my research follows the history of the monument to victims of political repressions, starting with the discovery of a burial site, the excavations that followed, the installing of a monument, and commemoration ceremonies two decades later.

The spatial dimension of my research was determined by the regional specificity of Ukraine. Historically, Ukraine has been split between Russia and the West, and this long division shaped two distinct cultural,

social, and political orientations, which continue to influence politics and culture in independent, post-Soviet Ukraine. It is a continuum from West to East, in which a pro-European orientation gradually subsides, and a pro-Russian orientation rises. My initial intention was to map out the social memory of Stalin's Great Terror in several historical-cultural regions of Ukraine. During my field research trip to Ukraine in the summer of 2013, I went to Lviv, Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Kyiv. I visited local museums of history and monuments; conducted archival research online and in libraries; carried out and recorded interviews with historians of the Great Terror, heads of regional commissions on the rights of the rehabilitated and civil society activists, involved in the maintenance of places of mass burials of victims of Stalinist repressions.

I started writing the report on my research in November 2013, having in mind my initial plan to cover all four cities. However, the evolving crisis in Ukraine, triggered by the Ukrainian political leadership of the time to postpone the signing of an Association Agreement with the European Union, disturbed my plans and prolonged my writing for two years. I was not able to concentrate on the past when the present was boiling before me, filled with crushed hopes, anger, revolt, fire, shootings, desperation, loss, death, and civil war. The overwhelming support of the Euromaidan Revolution in Western Ukraine and the anti-Maidan protests in Eastern Ukraine, especially Donetsk, came out very clearly for me and collided with the impressions and assessments that I already had from my research trip. It was evident to me that the memory of the Soviet past played an important role in this opposite reaction to the prospect of aligning with Europe at the expense of lessening ties with Russia, which led me to the decision to focus on only Lviv and Donetsk.

The manifestations of this memory of the Soviet past kept evolving as I was working on the text of my thesis. The adoption of the decommunization laws by the Verkhovna Rada in spring of 2015 signalled the victory of the Western Ukrainian (Central European) narrative/condemnation of the Soviet past as a period

of totalitarianism. I could not ignore such a crucial development, and therefore I included the decommunization laws in my analysis.

I do not focus on the memory politics of the two quasi-republics of Donetsk and Luhansk which emerged as the reaction to the Euromaidan's nationalist and anti-Russian elements in rhetoric and actions. But my general remarks in the comparison of Lviv and Donetsk and in the conclusion clearly show that the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic with their pro-Soviet symbols and celebrations of Soviet holidays embraced the positive reading of the Soviet past, consistent with the assessment that was already there before Euromaidan of 2013-2014. "Modern Ukraine" therefore in the title of my thesis means the recent Ukrainian history, including the dramatic and crucial period of Euromaidan – from 1991 to present.

The historical context is crucial for understanding any social issue, especially when one studies social memory, which by definition is retrospective. Therefore I provide a short history of Donbas and Galicia (Halychyna, the regional core of Western Ukraine) as political and cultural entities before 1937, when the Great Terror in Donbas began, and in 1939 when the Soviet troops took under control Western Ukraine. I rely on secondary sources – monographs and articles on Ukrainian history, written by Ukrainian and Western scholars.

To trace the evolution of social memory of the Soviet past on the level of state politics, I analyzed the content of the relevant Ukrainian legislation: the Law on Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repressions; the Law on Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine; and the Decommunization "package" (On the Legal Status and Honouring of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the Twentieth Century, Law on the Condemnation of Communist and Social-Nationalist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and on the Banning of the Propaganda of their Symbols, and the Law on Immortalizing the Victory over Nazism in the Second World War of 1939-1945). I also conducted an analysis of the accompanying juridical documentation and debates of these laws in parliament (Verkhovna Rada).

My research is a comparative qualitative case study, involving a comparison on two levels – regional and international. I focus more on the parallel assessment of two culturally-historically different territorial entities within Ukraine – Lviv, as the heart of Halychyna, and Donetsk, as the heart of Donbas. I compare the memorial space of these two cities, tracing the history of monuments and museums to Stalin's victims, describing commemorative ceremonies, analyzing actors involved in commemoration and interpreting the meaning they attribute to the events of the past and their actions to remember that past. I also zoom out from the regional and national to the international level, comparing Ukraine with Russia and Central/Eastern European countries, as these two regions of Ukraine clearly represent two different approaches to the Soviet past, found in these countries. To see how the memory of a traumatic event has worked in other cases, I looked into how Western Europe dealt with the legacy of the World War II, using secondary sources, such as academic articles and books.

I was interested in the evolution of social memory over time and in the general explanations of these trends, rooted in their cultural context. Relying on secondary sources as evidence entails several potential problems, related to the subjectivity of historians, apparent when facts are selected without a clear and explicit conceptual framework, or without an explicit purpose; when the selection process is non-transparent; or when the temporal order of a historical narrative obscures causal factors (Neuman 2007, p. 123). A historian is also rooted into a certain culture and has a certain ideology, which influence the writing. This individual bias can be reduced by referring to historical accounts of the same period, written by other historians, or by taking into account the ideological and cultural positioning of the author. This is the strategy I used when selecting authors who wrote the recent history of Ukraine.

My research relies mostly on non-obtrusive primary sources (Berg 2007, p. 147): newspapers, official documents (laws, decrees, and juridical assessments), public statements of politicians in the press and parliamentary debates. I also used obtrusive sources: interviews with historians, state and non-state

actors, grass root activists and politicians involved in the active remembrance of the Soviet past. Open-ended, in-depth interviews are an indispensable tool of qualitative research, as they allow the researcher to engage a social actor into a discussion as an active participant, whose insights, feelings, and cooperation help to reveal subjective meanings (Neuman 2014, p. 461). I conducted around 50 interviews in June-August of 2013. To identify respondents, I used the snowball sampling technique. Prior to conducting interviews, I obtained the approval of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board of the University of Ottawa. The total length of all interviews is 60 hours. These were open-ended, non-structured interviews, with an initial set of questions to provide a general framework for the discussion. I transcribed the most important of these interviews, the ones which provided insight into the motivation of actors, the meaning they attach to their actions, and also factual information, unavailable in official accounts of events (15 interviews in total). Being an insider to the culture, knowing the language and history of Ukraine, helped me to create a trustful, intimate environment with the respondents.

The interview guide containing questions is in appendix 1. It was more guidelines than a precise questionnaire. I adapted it to each individual interview.

I included several direct quotes from the interviews in the thesis to let the actors speak in their own voices. I have also relied on some interviews for factual information or statistics. In all instances I reference interviewees by their last names throughout the text. They are also listed in the bibliography.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for my research took shape gradually, in the process of collecting and analyzing data, and weaving them into an explanatory narrative. Before doing field research, I had a preliminary theoretical basis, derived from Maurice Halbwachs' classic concepts of memory as a social phenomenon and the plurality of group memories in a society and Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire* as material objects or

symbols, that a community creates or preserves to remember the events from the past and confer a certain meaning to them.

I expanded and deepened my understanding of memory during the research trip to Ukraine. I have seen how social memory is a field of contestation between various groups and the state; how the past is instrumentalized by various political actors in pursuit of current goals; and how memory is intrinsically linked to emotions. Reading the academic literature on the memory of the socialist/Soviet past in Eastern Europe and Russia confirmed my observations.

As a result of my research, I came to define social memory as the collective remembrance and interpretation of the past. It has several dimensions, reflecting various facets of the human being. It is knowledge of the past that is constructed and based on feelings. It is a moral judgment about the past, based on contemporary norms. It is mediated and passed on through cultural transmission. It is a Durkheimian social fact (Durkheim 1982, p. 50-51), exercising external constraint on an individual. It is malleable and subject to pressure from various groups. It serves as one of the building blocks of a group's identity and secures the social cohesion of a group and its continuity in time. Social memory will resurface in the public space once the force of oppression is lifted. Is it especially so, when the memory is about injustice, committed against a certain social group, because the wrongdoing demands public recognition, as the memory of Stalinist repressions shows.

My qualitative comparative case study research seeks to explore how the repressive aspects of the Soviet system in Ukraine are represented in state and social memory and how it varies regionally, given the geopolitical and cultural duality of Ukraine between Europe and Russia, and to establish how this memory is shaped and shapes the present in post-Soviet Ukraine. The dissertation follows the logic of a case study presentation.

I start by defining the conceptual framework of my research. I then provide a larger European context and look into how the memory of fighting against and collaborating with the Nazi regime during World War II developed in post-war Western Europe. Since Ukraine is on a memorial continuum between former socialist countries of Central Europe and Russia, I look into how these countries dealt with the legacy of communist rule. I then proceed to the case study of Ukraine, starting with the national level and then focusing on the regional level, Donbas and Halychyna. Since I am interested in the memory of a specific event from the past, it is essential to describe this event. I, therefore, do a short excursion into the history of the Great Terror and the first Soviet annexation of Halychyna, sketching the period preceding these events. The last empirical chapter of the dissertation deals with the most recent policies of the Ukrainian state to condemn the Soviet past. In the final chapter of the thesis, I sum up the findings of the research and state the main conclusions, namely, that Ukrainian society is divided on the assessment of the Soviet past, and that since Ukraine is aspiring to become a democratic, pluralist country, the state should not dictate how the Soviet past is remembered, but rather work on creating the conditions in which an open, honest, and respectful discussion of the divisive past would be conducted by large circles of society.

Chapter 2: Social memory framework

Origins of the concept of collective memory – Maurice Halbwachs

Memory has always been one of the main topics of reflection of social thinkers, starting with Greek philosophers, but a distinctively social perspective on memory emerges at the turn of the 20th century (Olick and Robbins 1998, p. 106). Collective memory becomes an object of scientific inquiry in the early 20th century, simultaneously with the so-called crisis of historicism (Klein 2000, p. 127), when many German intellectuals became concerned that an obsession with the methods and objects of historical research with its relativism were eroding the absolute values of the nation and corrupting the commitment to the present by focusing on the past (Megill, 1997, p. 416).

Maurice Halbwachs, a French philosopher and sociologist and a disciple of Durkheim, introduced the term of collective memory into the social sciences (Coser 1992, p. 21). Halbwachs formulated the essential characteristics of collective memory which laid the foundation of the field of memory studies: the social nature of memory formation; memory as continuity in time which perpetuates identity; memory as a narrative and a story of past events.

Halbwachs's most important legacy is a definition of memory as a fundamentally social process. In his seminal work *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* [*The Social Frameworks of Memory*], published in 1925, he defined memory as a capacity, something formed and practiced exclusively in society, arguing against Bergson's psychological interpretation of memory as a property of the subjective mind (Olick 1999, p. 334). It is in a society that people acquire their memories. It is also in a society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories (Coser 1992, p. 38).

The act of recalling is social in its nature because we appeal to our memory only when a question is asked to us by real or imaginary others. We consider ourselves to be members of the same group as the person asking the question, and we share the same perspective. 'Memory of others comes to the aid of mine and mine relies on theirs, giving me the means to reconstruct my memories' (Coser 1992, p. 38).

It is individuals who remember, even though their memory is shaped by the social framework and a group membership (Olick 1999, p. 335).

Talking about collective memory, Halbwachs means not one immense collective memory, encompassing the whole society, but the memory of various groups that form society: family, religious groups, social classes (Halbwachs 1992, p. 40). Memories, recent or distant, persist not because they are continuous in time, but because they are shared by members of a group; they are a part of thoughts common to a collectivity. If a person wants to recall certain memories she needs to place herself in the group's

perspective, accept the group's interests as her own, and follow the direction (or slant, as Halbwachs puts it) of the group's reflections (ibid, p. 52).

Halbwachs notes that there are many collective memories in society, composed of a plurality of groups, and every given group, delimited in space and time, must support its memory if it wants to survive (Coser 1992, p. 22). Collective memory is necessary to maintain the identity of the group and the social bond that holds individuals within a group together. An individual, by preserving and reproducing memories from different epochs, as in continuous relationships with others, assures the continuity of her personal identity (Halbwachs 1992, p. 47). Society, by engaging its citizens in preserving records of, commemorating, and re-enacting various significant events from the past, creates and maintains a social bond that links citizens to one another. It is not only the common significant historical experience that shapes a group, but also its memory.

Society (a group) has a longer memory than an individual. Halbwachs makes a distinction between an autobiographical and historical memory. An individual or autobiographical memory preserves events that we personally and directly experienced. It fades away if it is not brought back to awareness by contacts with people who lived this experience with us. "Autobiographical memory is always rooted in other people" (Coser 1992, p. 24).

In opposition to autobiographical memory, or what we could call living memory, historical memory does not rely on the volatility of the physical mind. It is kept in records, written and otherwise, such as photography. A person has access to historical memory through these records or by participating in various kinds of commemorations and enactments. In historical memory, a person does not remember the event personally. She recreates the past, stored and interpreted by social institutions (Coser 1992, p. 24). This historical memory provides continuity of a society in time.

A group's collective memory is best understood when compared to history. Halbwachs observes that a group's collective memory does not simply record the past, as history does. It selects from the past what is relevant to the group's present, what "still lives or is capable of living" in the consciousness of the group (Halbwachs 1980, p. 80). The continuity from the past is built by applying a judgment within the group itself, whereas history is a collection of events considered the most important in the history of whole humankind, "the sequence and totality of the facts such as they are not for a certain country or a certain group but independent of any group judgment" (Halbwachs 1980, p. 83). History is written by a small number of erudites, professional historians. For historians, historical facts have the same value. Trying to be objective and impartial, national historians write a record of events, synthesized with the string of events in other countries, as to not break the continuity. In Halbwachs' poetical comparison, history is like an "ocean fed by the many partial histories" (1980, p. 84).

To sum up the distinction between history and memory, in Halbwachs' interpretation: history is objective and neutral, while the memory is subjective and judgmental. History is dead, while memory is alive. History is a book, a record of past events, while collective memory is an act of selection, preservation, and commemoration of a string of records in the book of the past, which allows a group to preserve itself, to maintain its identity. History is a record of events, while collective memory is a depositary of traditions (Halbwachs 1980, p. 83).

However, this traditional conception of history was revised by Halbwachs' contemporaries, the founders of the famous Annals School of History, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch. These two historians, who, like Halbwachs, were inspired by the Durkheimian school, revolutionized the history writing by bringing in the social. They cracked up the history of the elites – political, military, diplomatic – and enlarged it to include the history from below, the history of everyday life of ordinary people, their structures and their experiences in geographical and social environment over the long term (*la longue durée*) (Dash 2011; Little

2008). The Annalists strived to write the total history that would incorporate all aspects of the society: its political and social structure, economy, beliefs, as well as the most basic and the most subtle manifestations of collective mentality. Both Bloch and Febvre were interested in the study of man as a social being, as integrated into the social group (Rhodes 1978, p. 112).

They wanted historians to immerse into present and write a history-problem, a history that would look at the past from the interests of the present and would question the past, a living history that would pulsate with the present and be engaged with the issues of the present. History in this interpretation comes up to collective memory (Ogino 2015, p. 201).

Revival of interest in the collective memory by the end of the 1980s

Memory remained on the margins of social science interests, except for experimental psychology and clinical psychoanalysis, until the 1970s (Klein 2000, p. 127; Ogino, *ibid*), if not the 1980s (Uhl 2012, p. 80), or post-Cold War Europe, with the fall of Iron Curtain (Whitling 2012, p. 88). The dissolution of the Soviet Union marked not only the end of the socialist project, it signified the end of the modern era with its “utopian energies” and certainty about the future and the belief in progress, on which the notion of a teleological process of modernization was based (Uhl 2012, p. 80). It also delegitimized the totalitarian “grand narrative” of modernity (*ibid*) with its large-scale theories and philosophies.

These grand narratives not only served to interpret the past, but they also oriented the future (Assmann 2006, p. 211). Societies, having lost the envisaged progress on the horizon of the future, turned towards the past as a point of reference in the orientation of social norms and values (Uhl 2012, p. 80).

The end of socialist rule in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union released memory narratives, which were silenced or relegated to the private sphere by the official version of the history of World War II and its aftermath. Post-communist governments opened access to the archives that were out of bounds during the

Cold War. The new evidence and resurging memories provided a new basis for history and memory (Assmann 2006, p. 211).

In the post-traumatic state of Western Europe after the two world wars and the Holocaust, certain memory narratives were also repressed. They start to emerge in the 1980, when the accumulated violence, cruelty, and guilt are surfacing after a period of silence and psychic paralysis (2006, p. 212). There was a conscious decision by the political elites to forget the “uncomfortable” past for the sake of national unity and peace, as in De Gaulle’s France or post-Franco Spain, as will be addressed at length in the chapter on memory and forgetting.

Generational changes also took place by the late 1980s when those who experienced these traumas personally or witnessed them started dying, and their living memory has been translated into “externalized and mediated forms” (Assmann 2006, *ibid*).

Outside Europe, a dramatic and fundamental change in the form of the fall of European colonialism occurred, freeing indigenous narratives and memories, suppressed by colonizers (*ibid*). Another factor for the memory boom was the digital revolution in communication technology which provided not only more efficient ways of storing and circulating information (Assmann 2006, p. 212), but also increased exponentially the quantity of information about the past and facilitated our access to it.

Pierre Nora’s *Lieux de mémoire*

The scholarly “memory boom” was sparked by French historian Pierre Nora who directed the anthology “*Lieux de mémoire*,” a large-scale collaborative research and publication project that ran between 1984 and 1992 and included seven volumes of chapters on important events from French history. The goal of this ambitious historical project was to study the “national feeling” by analyzing the principal places in which “the collective heritage of France was crystallized..., the collective memory was rooted” and to create thus a “topology of French symbolism” (Nora 1996, p. XV). *Lieux de mémoire* reflects a process of formation

of a new type of French national consciousness that had to adapt to dramatic changes: the diminished power of the nation-state as a result of European integration and internal “regionalization”; the realization that the Revolution of 1789 is over and the demise of the equation between the French nation and the Revolution; and the influx of immigrants, not easily adaptable to the norms of “Frenchness” (Nora 1996, p. XXIII). The “agricultural, providentialist, Universalist, imperialist, and state-centered” nation suddenly became aware that its roots are threatened, and with the realization of this threat France revitalized the attachment to its national roots. The polyphonic study of *Lieux de mémoire* is a history of French memory (ibid).

Nora’s collaborative project became the response of French historians to the rupture in the organic unity of history and memory of a nation, to the link between past and present, maintained through memory. In the acceleration of history, the present is rapidly slipping into a historical past that is gone for good (Nora 1989, p. 7). The break with the past is bound up with the collapse of living memory that is passed from one generation to another, providing a sense of continuity. This memory lived in “the warmth of tradition, in the silence of custom, in the repetition of the ancestral” (ibid). With the disappearance of the living memory, real environments of memory, as Nora calls them, nations started building sites of memory, *lieux de mémoire* (ibid).

In his introduction to the *Realms of Memory*, an English edition of the *Lieux de mémoire*, Nora provides a following definition of a *lieu de mémoire*: “...any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (1996, p. XVII). A community *constructs* these objects to sustain its memory; these objects are invested with certain symbolism. The theoretical novelty of Nora’s project consists, in his view, in the effort by historians to look beyond the historical reality and discover this symbolism and recover its memory (ibid).

According to this expansive definition of a memory site — as opposed to an original and narrower conceptualization as a physical *site*, a material reality— historians who contributed to Nora’s project, analyzed not only geographical places, such as Reims or the prehistoric caves of Lascaux, or monuments, such as Versailles and the Eiffel Tower, but also historical figures, such as Joan of Arc, literary and artistic objects, such as *Discourse on Method* by Descartes or *Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust, emblems, commemorations, and symbols, such as the French flag or the “Marseillaise.” Historians showed that memory sites contain conflict and division – various groups appropriate its meaning for different ideological or political purposes. This multiplicity of references of a memory site demonstrated that the notion of French national identity has never been unitary, but plural and unsettled (Kritzman 1996, p. X).

For instance, Michel Winock in his essay on Joan of Arc analyzes how this historical figure was used both by the Left and by the Right in the construction of their mythologies. For the neo-nationalists of Jean-Marie Le Pen, Joan of Arc represented the spirit of defence of the homeland from foreign incursions, while for the Left she embodies courage in the fight against the corruption of the Church (Kritzman 1996, p. X; Winock 1998, pp. 433-483).

The anthology *Lieux de mémoire* is the history of the memory of multiple voices, which is interested not in the causality of the events, but in their effects; not in establishing a historical “truth” of what happened, but “in its perpetual re-use and misuse, its influence on the successive presents”; interested not so much in traditions, but in deconstructing how these traditions are created and passed on (Nora 1996, p. XXIV).

There are fundamental distinctions between memory and history in Nora’s interpretation. If the metaphor of memory is a living organism, the metaphor of history is a drawing of this organism, devoid of life. It is not only the breath of life that is taken out of the organism, but colours, movements, everything that makes it alive. “Memory is life,” states Nora (1989, p. 8). It is a fruit of living societies and evolves constantly following the dynamics of remembering and forgetting. This evolution is natural and is unconscious of its

successive deformations. It can be manipulated and appropriated. History is a product of an intellectual working through the past – it is a reconstruction of things past, always problematic and incomplete. Memory is a bridge, a bond that links us to the eternal present, while history is a representation, a painting of the past. Memory is affective and magical – it picks up facts that suit it. History is analytical and critical. Memory endows remembrance with a spirit of sacredness; the always prosaic history strips it again. Memory belongs to one group exclusively, while history claims to be universal and belongs to all and no one in particular. Memory lives in the concrete (spaces, gestures, images, and objects), while history is interested in and manifests itself in temporal continuities and causalities. Memory is absolute, while history is relative. Memory spontaneously exalts events of the past, while history with its critical gaze annihilates them. The true mission of history is “to suppress and destroy memory” (Nora 1989, pp. 8-9).

The *lieux de mémoire* are the ultimate incarnation of the consumption of memory by history. Museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, testimonies, and monuments are all signs of the realization that a spontaneous, natural memory is gone and that a conscious commemorative effort is needed to preserve moments of the past from being swept by history. *Lieux de mémoire* are “moments of history torn away from the movement of history, then returned...like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded” (Nora, 1989, p. 12). *Lieux de mémoire* are sites of three simultaneous meanings: material, symbolic, and functional. For instance, an archive is a physical place, but if we do not imagine it as a guardian of our memory, it will not become a *lieu de mémoire*. A functional site, like a classroom manual, becomes a *lieu de mémoire* only as an object of ritual (Nora 1989: p. 19).

In a *lieu de mémoire* a community (a nation) eternalizes not only the event itself but also its meaning. By showing how this meaning can be re-used and misused by various groups within a large collectivity, such as a nation, Nora brings us back to Halbwachs’ plurality of memories within a society, to the presentism and constructivism of collective memory, and to the importance of memory as a foundation of identity.

The cultural memory of Jan Assmann as a shared knowledge of the past

This function of memory is called the “concretion of identity” by Jan Assmann, another important contributor to the exploding field of memory studies. Assmann talks about cultural memory as a form of collective memory. Cultural memory is the storage of knowledge about the past from which a group derives the awareness of its uniqueness and its unity. The elements to be included in this storage are determined by a sharp distinction between “we are this” (positive determination) and “this is our opposite” (negative determination) (Assmann 1995, p. 130). Cultural memory, like Halbwachs’ collective memory, cannot preserve the past in its entirety. It reconstructs those parts of the past which are relevant to the present. It always relates the knowledge of the past to an actual, current situation.

However, it does not mean that cultural memory erases the parts that it finds irrelevant. Cultural memory, according to Assmann, exists in two modes – the mode of potentiality of archives, which preserve the traces of the past in its totality, and the mode of actuality, when a group, living in a contemporary context, takes the “objectivised meaning” of a record of the past and puts it into its own perspective, giving it a new and relevant meaning.

Assmann’s objectivised meaning, crystallized in an object of art or a commemorative ceremony as a shared knowledge of the past, echoes Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*. Aby Warburg, a historian of art inspired Assmann to formulate his theory of cultural memory. Warburg believed that works of high art and objects of common use, such as posters, costumes, or postage stamps, crystallize in themselves a collective experience, materialize the culture of a certain epoch, whose meaning become accessible when we touch these objects (Assmann 1995, p.129). Memory as a culture can be formed through its transmission to new generations in the institutionalized heritage of society, and in that sense, the existence of objects of culture as the materialization of the communicated meaning and the knowledge of the past is a prerequisite (ibid). An “object” of culture does not mean only a material thing. A rite or a commemoration can also be an object of culture.

Cultural memory has to be cultivated, and for this society must formalize the transmission through ceremonies, organized by institutions, and form specialized bearers of the cultural memory, people whose profession is to preserve and transmit cultural memory (Assmann 1995, p. 131).

Cultural memory is built and structured according to the normative self-image of a group, and this relation creates a system of values and a scale, or differentiations, of the importance of knowledge and symbols of the past.

Because the process of the selection of the past is laden with values, the representations of the past are not neutral. They are subject to contestations and are charged with identity politics (Uhl 2012, p. 81). A collectively shared knowledge about the past is always “situated” (Marchart, quoted in Uhl 2012, p. 83) because it is produced not by some kind of imagined collectivity, but by specific social groups who promote their own perspectives and have varying “powers of definition” (ibid). The objects of cultural memory, from this point of view, reflect the social power structures and tell us which groups succeeded in affirming their own conception of the past as a universal, binding memory of society (Uhl 2012, p. 84).

Analyzed through the prism of power structures, memory is conceptualized as politics. The primary concern of memory as politics is negotiations around the collective understanding of history (Uhl 2012, p. 83), whereas in memory as culture (Pierre Nora and Jan Assmann) the emphasis is placed on the themes of public debate and the transmission of knowledge (Uhl 2012, p. 84). In both conceptualizations memory appears as an intentional, that is, a rational project. However, as Heidemarie Uhl remarks, memory cannot be reduced to strategic calculations and planned interventions of specific actors. Memory has an emotional-affective dimension: historical points of reference are selected to a large extent in accordance to the “obsessions, passions, and emotional energies” (Uhl 2012, p. 84) of a current generation whose turn came to assess the past of the society to which they belong. A new generation might let the old places of remembrance fade away or inscribe a new meaning on them. Social memory is composed of the strata of

memories of multiple generations. It resembles a palimpsest (Uhl 2012, p. 85) that still bears the traces of the original writing, erased in the preparation of new writing.

This comparison of memory with a palimpsest raises the question of the intentional or “natural” process of erasing and forgetting. In Uhl’s poetic comparison, forgetting is natural: memory is erased by the relentless, indifferent, and impersonal power of time, akin to the power of wind tearing dead leaves from trees in the fall, or waves erasing traces of human feet on a sandy beach. This is what could be called a passive forgetting.

There is also an active forgetting when an event or a figure from the past is erased from memory by the conscious efforts of current social or political actors, as with Trotsky in Soviet memory. Frederick Whitling conceptualizes this active forgetting as *damnatio memoriae* (damnation of memory), a practice that existed in ancient Rome (Whitling 2012). I will expand on this point in the chapter on memory and forgetting.

Plurality of definitions of collective memory

There are many other definitions of memory shared by a group, as opposed to individual memory. The term “collective memory” has been used to denote an aggregate of individual recollections, official commemorations, collective representations, and “disembodied constitutive features of shared identities” (Olick 1999, p. 336). To reduce the ambiguity of the concept, many employ it to denote explicitly commemorative activities and production.

Olick suggests that the concept of “collective memory” be used as a “sensitizing” term to indicate that any mnemonic process, practice, and outcome are social in nature. In that sense, collective memory studies should be replaced by “social memory studies.” The proper term “collective memory” is used by Olick in the sense of “public discourses about the past as wholes or narratives and images of the past that speak in the name of collectivities” (Olick 1999, pp. 345-346).

Whitling, following the popular analytical strategy, identified by Olick (1999, p. 336), proposes to refer to collective or public memory as rituals of remembrance, public commemorations, or official acknowledgment. Such a conceptualization of collective memory in the analysis of commemorative activities allows the identification of driving political forces behind the activities and the establishment of their goals and agenda (Whitling 2012, p. 94). Read in that sense, collective memory means, in fact, the memory of a group.

The American historian John Bodnar (1992) calls collective memory a public memory, acting as a substitute for national memory. He shows how two different types of group memory - vernacular and official - express their positioning about the past in a symbolic discourse of metaphors, signs, and rituals, and promote and attempt to control their own memory as public. Vernacular memory is the memory of various social groups who want to protect their interests and values, derived from firsthand experience (Snyder 1993, p. 396). The nation-state acts as a mediator/controller of these various interests and memories, regulating the content of public memory and dominating public commemoration as a symbol and structure (Snyder, *ibid*).

Paul Connerton, a British social anthropologist, concurs with the idea that a collective or social memory exists as something different from individual memory. Social memory is essentially the memory of a group, and the size of that group varies enormously - from villages and clubs, where people know each other and interact in person, to nation-states and world religions, so extensive that members of these groups cannot know each other personally (Connerton 2006, p. 1). For him, what is crucial is how this memory is conveyed and sustained. To answer this question, studies of social memory can follow two lines of inquiry: as a dimension of political power, in the sense that control of memory conditions the hierarchy of power, or as unconscious elements of collective memory, such as our memories of the great master-narratives of the 20th century, class or Western-based, which continue to shape our thinking.

He makes two important observations about memory in general. Concerning memory as such he notes that our experience of the present depends to a very large extent on our knowledge of the past: not only do present factors influence our recollections of the past, but also the past to which we connect our present affects our present experiences (Connerton 2006, p. 2). The second observation is about the essence of social memory: any society maintains a social order, and a shared memory, images of the past, is the basis of that order. Social memory legitimizes the present social order. The more diverse are memories of various groups within society, the more difficult it will be for them to share experiences and assumptions (Connerton 2006, p. 3).

However, it is not sufficient to state that memory is fundamental to our present and that it binds society together. It is important to show this memory at work, to show how it is sustained and conveyed. To do so, Connerton studies ritual performances that transfer images of the past and of the recollected knowledge of the past to new generations, which make collective remembering possible (Connerton 2006, pp. 39-40).

Eric Hobsbawm's "invented tradition."

Ritual performances or practices are also fundamental for what Eric Hobsbawm called "an invented tradition": the conscious work by European elites to create new traditions in the face of radical social change brought by modernity (Britton 2012). Modernity destroyed customs, broke the social order, and delegitimized traditional authority. Invented traditions are the reaction of people to the constant change and innovation of the modern world. People are searching to structure at least some part of social life as unchanging, invariant and find references in the past or establish this past by "quasi-obligatory" repetition (Hobsbawm 1983, p. 2).

In the face of an uncertain and unsettling present, elites had to invent new traditions that would establish authority, social control, and solidarity. They did so through a set of rituals following overtly or tacitly accepted rules. Through repetition, these practices seek to inculcate certain norms and values. Authors of

the invented tradition seek and establish continuity with a suitable historic past. The suitable past, to use Eric Hobsbawm's term, is chosen deliberately. An example is the deliberate decision to rebuild the British parliament in the 19th century in the Gothic style of the 14th-16th centuries (Hobsbawm 2004, p. 1-2) to stress the continuity with that era.

History, which becomes part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of a nation, a state, or a movement, includes only parts of the past that have been selected for preservation by those whose function is to do so (ibid). Such a history is different from popular memory which might preserve a different past and assign little importance to events deemed significant by national history.

The "nation" with its associated phenomena (nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols and national histories) is an example of an "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm 2004, p. 13), because a nation, like any social group, uses the past to construct and maintain its identity, to cement its cohesion, and to legitimize its actions.

National memory

A nation designates a large collectivity, composed of many social groups with diverse interests and power to pursue them. The "official memory" of the nation, manifested in school textbooks, official commemoration ceremonies, monuments, is shaped to a large extent by dominant groups holding political power, having economic resources, and privileged access to media. In the construction of national memories the political elites select events in the past that would fit into the glorious story of a heroic nation, which, in the case of hegemonic nations, triumphed over its enemies, or, in the case of minority nations, symbolized the martyrdom of a tragic hero who resisted the hegemony (Assmann 2006, p. 5). In both cases, the historical referents, selected by the dominant groups, strengthen a positive self-image of the nation through a heroic narrative (ibid).

These narratives, however, reject moments of shame and guilt, such as the killing of Native Indians by European colonizers, or the trade of Africans as slaves, the Armenian Genocide, or the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33. The “victims of history,” who are destitute of resources and power because of their social and economic position, cannot inscribe their representations and interpretation of the past into the “official” book of memory unless they acquire political influence. As Tony Judt observed, “memory is inherently contentious and partisan: one man’s acknowledgment is another’s omission” (2005, p. 11), and a group in power promotes the remembrance of events that it deems significant.

National memory is a top-down creation of institutions and social groups. It is mediated by the political elite and engraved in media, symbols, and practices which individuals internalize in their hearts and minds. On the basis of national memory, dominant groups and institutions construct an identity and legitimize political actions (Assmann 2006, p. 4). In this sense, material and immaterial *lieux de mémoire*, constituting the commemorative landscape of a nation, map out the social power structures. They stand as symbols of “power of definition” of certain groups which succeeded in establishing their particular interpretation of the past as a universal and binding memory of a nation (Uhl 2012, p. 84).

Collective memory is not only the result of political calculations and intentional cultural creation. Collective memory also has an emotive-affective dimension (Uhl 2012, p. 85). Certain historical points of reference are chosen from the inventory of factual information about the past because they are able to invoke emotions of empathy and identification. Collective memory, by sifting the past and selecting certain events to wave into the historical narrative, reconfigures “history in general” into a specific and emotionally charged “our history,” upon which a collective identity is built (Assmann 2006, p. 5).

What is a collective memory?

How can collective memory be defined, based on the reflections above? Collective memory in the most general sense is the remembrance and interpretation of the past. As a product of human activity, it has

several dimensions, reflecting various facets of a human being: it is knowledge of the past; it is the knowledge that is generated by and generates feelings; it is a moral judgment about the past, based and reinforced by contemporary norms.

Individuals are bearers of collective memory as only concrete human beings possess the capacity to remember. But the memory that they bear is socially mediated. An individual acquires knowledge about the past through culturally organized transmission by forebears and contemporaries (Schwartz 2007, p.1). Collective memory is a Durkheimian social fact. It exists outside of individuals and is able to exert an external constraint on them. Collective memory is binding. It is also malleable and subject to change as a group selects from the past what it deems to be worthy of remembering. The interpretation of the past also changes with time as a group (society) evolves, and its assessment of the past follows the intellectual and ethical evolution of society.

Within a small group collective memory is cohesive and relatively homogenous, while in a larger collectivity, composed of many groups, such as a nation, collective memory is heterogeneous and conflicting, and reflects the successes and failures to arrive at a common consensus regarding the past.

Collective memory is socially organized and elaborated in representations, such as affectively charged and mobilizing historical narratives about the past, sites, monuments and commemoration rites (Assmann 2006, p. 217).

Collective memory provides social cohesion for the group. As Renan noted in his famous speech "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" (What is a nation?), the nation is a soul, a spiritual principle constituted of two essential components (the present and the past) that form a unity, the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories (Renan 1992, p.10). Collective memory is also the basis of a group's identity as it secures continuity in time. Memory preserves the self-awareness of a group as an entity.

History and memory

The dichotomy between history and memory is to a large extent contingent. Historians of the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe were writing national histories in order to legitimize claims to nationhood. Their selection of events from the past and interpretation were subjective and dictated by the interests of the present. With the advent of mass media historians lost their exclusive rights as guardians and interpreters of the past. Journalists, artists, and, more recently, bloggers joined their ranks. History was “democratized” by magazines, newspapers, televisions, films, and by the rise of genealogy. Agreeing with the American historian Barry Schwartz (2007, p. 1), I see history as one of the vehicles of collective memory. History at the formal level is written by historians and includes research monographs and textbooks (ibid). History as a science has higher structuralizing and ordering aspirations, relates past events in a more nuanced way, and takes into account the complexity of historical context (Pakier and Strath 2012, p. 11). Schwartz also distinguishes history at the popular level of mass media and entertainment and at the informal level (conversations, letters, and diaries). Commemoration consists of rites and commemorative objects - non-verbal, such as shrines, relics, statues, paintings, prints, photographs, and verbal (eulogy and ritual oratory) (Schwartz 2007, p. 1).

Historians who write history as a science seek to establish the causality of chronologically arranged events, while commemorative agents attribute moral significance to events and actors, which are considered by a collectivity as an embodiment of its ideals (ibid). Historians, as noted before, study events in their complexity and ambiguity, whereas commemorative agents “purify,” simplify events in order to convert them into “objects of moral instruction” (ibid).

The difference between history and memory as commemorative practice lies in the different degrees of involvement of reason, morality, and emotions. While history as a science is an intellectual, objective investigation of the past which seeks the truth without passing a moral judgment, at least explicitly,

commemoration is designed to provoke an emotional response and to assess an event from the past by universal categories of evil or good.

Chapter 3: Through forgetting to remembering: Memory in the post-war Western Europe

There are various ways to work through the past, especially when that past is violent and brings up a settlement of scores between victims and perpetrators. The uncomfortable truth about collaboration with the regime of perpetrators is forgotten for the sake of preserving peace and social cohesion in the present. National memories of World War II in Western Europe, formed in the immediate aftermath of the war, are an illustration of such intentional forgetting.

The Nazis were declared the main culprits of the most destructive war in European history. Everybody agreed that Germans started the war. The Nuremberg trials, organized by the victors of the war —the Allied Forces, including the Soviet Union — convicted a number of German officials¹. However, the selectivity and apparent hypocrisy of the Allies in the judicial process, who were careful not to touch on broader moral and judicial questions that would open the door to discussing the Soviet Union's violent practices before and during the war, undermined the exemplary and jurisprudential functions of Nuremberg (Judt 1992, p. 87). The Allies understood in a short period after the war that the denazification of Germany and Austria had to remain limited – civil administration and local self-governments needed employees, and since too many of them served under the Nazi regime, it was impossible to purge them all. In 1948 the amnesty law, adopted by Austria, restored the civil rights of half a million of former registered Nazis. The Allies also avoided a deep and sustained denazification because they were careful not to alienate Germans and Austrians from the Western bloc.

¹ In Nuremberg trials, which lasted from November 1945 to October 1946, twenty four most important political and military leaders of the Third Reich were tried by the Allied Forces – the Soviet Union, Great Britain, the USA, and France. Twelve of the accused were of war crimes were executed. Afterwards, a dozen smaller trials were held mostly by Americans in their occupied zone of Germany.

Amnesia by common accord established itself in Germany and Austria. Forgetting the crimes of the recent past was necessary to ensure the transition of West Germany to a stable democracy, as memory and justice risked to produce a right-wing revolt that would undermine a still fragile democracy (Herf 1997, p. 7). By the early 1950s, the question of identification and punishment for Nazi crimes slipped into oblivion (Judt 1992, p.88).

In Germany, the memory of Germans, who attempted to assassinate Hitler in July 1944, was instrumentalized to distinguish between evil Nazis and good Germans. The latter continued the traditions of Bismarck, the founder of the Reich. Nazism was interpreted as an aberration of a positive national history, while anti-fascist resistance was used to stress the continuity of a “good” national tradition (Berger 2012, p. 121). The dominant narrative of the war in Germany in the 1950s portrayed evil Nazi leaders that misled the Wehrmacht soldiers who had fought heroically at the front (ibid). Publications and movies talked about bombed-out German cities, the ethnic cleansing of Germans from Central Europe, and German prisoners of war behind barbed wire (Moeller, quoted in Berger 2012, p. 121-122). With the onset of Cold War, the memories of the anti-fascist resistance of Germans were pushed to the background, and communist resistance was marginalized. In the public commemoration, the indiscriminate suffering of Germans, whether supporters or opponents of the Nazi regime, was emphasized (ibid).

In Italy Fascism was presented as an “anti” moment in the national history, an anti-Risorgimento, as opposed to the Risorgimento, the political and social movement for the unification of Italy as a nation in the nineteenth-century. The resistance to fascist Mussolini regime was described in postwar Italy as the “second Risorgimento” (Berger 2012, p.121). Meanwhile, anti-fascist resistance was blown out of proportion in political discourse. It was a myth that distorted the inconvenient truth that the resistance emerged late, only in the northern part of the country, and was limited in scope (Khazanov and Payne 2008, p. 414). In post-war commemoration in Italy, as in Germany, the fascist leadership and the puppet

regime of Germany in the north were presented as the main culprits and the enemy of the Italian people who fought against them. The civil war between fascist and anti-fascist Italians was brushed aside and marginalized. The official memory policy was focused on Italian victimhood, especially on victims of the German occupation after 1943 (Berger 2012, p. 122).

Declaring Nazi Germany as the main culprit of World War II became for Western European countries a convenient way of escaping the very difficult question of their national guilt and their own responsibility for war crimes (Judt 1992, p. 88). For instance, in post-war France the predominant narrative in the national memory of the war was that of heroic resistance and self-liberation, while collaboration with the Nazi occupants, the instauration and support of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime, and its direct involvement in the Holocaust were played down (Khazanov and Payne 2008, p. 414).

In France, like in Germany and Italy, the narrative of resistance went in pair with the mourning of victims (Berger 2012, p. 122). The “unfinished mourning,” as Rousso calls the immediate aftermath of the war until 1954, was a way to circumvent the difficulty of finding a consensus in celebrating the Liberation, which for substantial parts of the French elite was a defeat, and to honour the dead in the civil war between Vichists and Gaullists (Paxton 1991, p. 2). In an effort to preserve national unity, several amnesty laws were adopted after the war - in 1947, 1951, and 1953. From the 40,000 prisoners arrested in 1945 for facts of collaboration, only 1,570 were still in prison in 1952. By 1964 their number dropped to zero (Rousso 1985, p. 71).

From 1954 to 1971 an “embittered silence” was established by common agreement (ibid). Partisans of Vichy were appeased by the “shield theory,” elaborated by Robert Aron’s *Histoire de Vichy*. In this view, by signing an armistice with Nazi Germany, establishing a French government on non-occupied Southern France, and collaborating with Nazis, Marshal Pétain had saved France from worse (Paxton 1991, p. 2).

The myth of Resistance was enforced all over Europe, from Italy to Poland, through media and literature. In this myth, non-German nations in their overwhelming majority heroically suffered from and resisted German Nazis and their handful of traitorous collaborators. After the liberation of Western Europe by Allies, everyone sought to identify with the winners and distance oneself from internal and external enemies (Judt 1992, p. 86).

The retouching of the past was accepted not only by former collaborators of the pro-Nazi regimes and bystanders, but even by those who genuinely resisted it. In spite of the fact that resisters were in power in the years immediately after the war and could debunk the myth of resistance, they endorsed it to reinstate social cohesion and restore the legitimacy and authority of the state. Moreover, one of the main actors of the Resistance movement, the Communist Parties in France and Italy, hoped to capitalize on the inflated myth of mass resistance in elections (Judt, *ibid*).

For the same reasons, the retributive punishment of criminals and collaborators after the Liberation was partial and aborted. In both France and Austria the necessity of representative, exemplary trials that would establish and punish perpetrators was understood and implemented, but only to a small extent – by reducing to the minimum the number of convictable and convicted persons in order to leave the social fabric untouched, or where it was broken, to repair it through what Judt called “benign collective neglect” (Judt 1992, p. 93).

However, political amnesia is not a permanent state. The memory of the violent past will resurface if the wounds inflicted by the past are not healed (Khazanov and Payne 2008, p. 414). The postwar amnesia started slowly to dissipate in the 1960s. Many myths about the war were questioned, and demands were voiced to break the silence over the Holocaust and collaboration (Berger 2012, p. 125). Several events contributed to this revision of the national narrative of suffering and resistance in Germany: the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961-62; the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials in 1963-65; a controversial thesis in the early

1960s by German historian Fritz Fischer that Imperial Germany bore the main responsibility for World War I; the appearance of artistic forms of working through the past, such as the drama *The Deputy, a Christian Tragedy* by Rolf Hochhuth, and the screening of films (Berger 2012, pp. 125-126). This prompted the new generation of Germans to ask embarrassing questions (Judt 1992, p. 97). The student revolt of the late 1960s propelled the Nazi topic to the forefront of public debates (Berger 2012, p. 126), and a critical inquiry of the past began in the 1970s (Khazanov and Payne 2008, p.415). A new master narrative of German history was elaborated, which stressed mass support of the Nazi regime, a very limited resistance, and the crimes committed by Germans.

In France, during the 1960s and 1970s, the myth of extensive heroic resistance to Nazis was replaced by major debates on the extent and character of collaboration with Nazi Germany (Berger 2012, p. 127). Historical re-examination of the years of occupation, conducted at the Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent, revealed the widespread support of the Vichy government within occupied France (Flood and Frey, quoted in Berger, *ibid*). The massacre of civilians in the village of Oradour-sur-Glane on June 10, 1944, when the 2nd SS Panzer Division ("Das Reich") of the Nazi Waffen SS sealed off and killed 642 villagers, started to be increasingly remembered as an atrocity committed local Alsace collaborators enrolled in the SS (Berger 2012, p. 127). French public discourse shifted towards the recognition of collaboration with the Nazis and highlighted the divisions within French society during the war, breaking the myth of resistance.

By the early 1960s France moved to the condemnation of Nazi collaborators: in December of 1964, a law was adopted suspending the statute of limitations for crimes against humanity, following a similar law in the Federal Republic of Germany. The law was applied to prosecute prominent Vichy French public officials, who escaped the postwar purge thanks to protection by well-placed friends and old boy networks. The first charges were filed with a nine year delay, in 1973. The person charged was Paul Touvier, an official of the Vichy Milice, a French paramilitary police, who had helped the Germans in repressing the

French Resistance (Paxton 1991, p. 2). Other Vichy officials were later brought to justice, such as the former head of the French police, René Bousquet, his deputy Jean Leguay, and Maurice Papon, who after being the secretary-general of the Prefecture of Bordeaux under Nazi occupation, became after the war a minister in De Gaulle's Cabinet (ibid). The "Butcher of Lyon," the Gestapo chief Klaus Barbie, was the first to be convicted in this series of trials. The indictment of Vichy officials moved at a very slow path, showing that "la guerre franco-française", to use Rousso's term for the division of French society over Vichy (1985, p. 55), is far from over and was reignited by more controversial acts, such as the decision by French President Pompidou to grant amnesty to Touvier (Rousso 1985, p. 78). Following complaints against Touvier, accusing him of crimes against humanity, Touvier was arrested in 1989, tried and in 1994 sentenced to life imprisonment. He died in prison two years later.

The period of the late 1960s-early 1970s in France saw the "return of the repressed," as Rousso calls this period - the period of self-flagellation, the denunciation of crimes of the Occupation, especially of the role of Vichysts, collaborators, and non-resistants (Rousso 1985, p. 76, 78). The new generation, who participated in the demonstrations of May 1968, rejected the vision of a unified France, which fought against Nazis (p. 76), and asked their parents 'devastating' questions about their actions during the war (Paxton 1991 p. 3). Artistic and scholarly work, such as Marcel Ophul's documentary *Le chagrin et la pitié* (The Sorrow and the Pity) and Paxton's book *La France de Vichy*, contributed to this awakening (Paxton 1991, p. 3).

A similar reckoning with the past occurred in Italy. Historians interpreted the Mussolini regime as an outcome of Risorgimento. The Italian Communist Party presented the post-war Italian state as an heir to fascism, undermining the legitimacy of the Italian Republic that could no longer claim continuity with a unified anti-fascist struggle (Berger 2012, p. 127).

The more self-critical discourses of the 1960s-1970s can be explained by several factors: the recognition of the centrality of the Holocaust in World War II, the highlighting of the collaboration of governments in

occupied Europe and the acknowledgment of the overwhelming support by the population of their fascist governments (Berger 2012, p. 132-133).

In the 1980s and 1990s, after the critical revision of the war, more positive collective memories re-emerged. They did not, however, resemble the apologetic narratives of the 1950s. The new forms of memorialisation became more nuanced, allowing for greater complexity instead of the dichotomy of good and evil, victims and perpetrators (Berger 2012, p. 132-133).

Judt saw in this rigorous investigation and interrogation of Europe's competing pasts, "one of the unsung achievements and sources of European unity in recent decades" (2005, p. 12). He believed that history should be the main instrument of recall, not memory. Memory is a poor guide to the past because it is inherently contentious and partisan. Memory confirms and reinforces itself, while history contributes to the disenchantment of the world. History needs to be learned and relearned, as generational memory dies away, and the meaning of signs and symbols of the past is at risk to be lost by new generations of Europeans (p.13). Memory is subject to forgetting, and "only the historian, with the austere passion for a fact, proof, evidence, which are central to his vocation, can effectively stand guard" (Yerushalmi, quoted in Judt 2005, p. 12).

History and memory are interconnected. History records, or strives to record the past objectively, while memory is subjective. However, as the memory of World War II in post-war France, Germany, and Italy shows, the competing subjectivities of different memories contribute to the objective, that is, critical assessment of the past. And it is a memory that to a large extent dictates the assessment of the recent past, especially when this past contains a tragic and divisive civil war. Following such a period, society is not able to address the very difficult question of guilt and suffering right away. As Tony Judt noted, "some measure of neglect and even forgetting are the necessary condition for civic health" (2005, p. 12).

The most important lesson learned by Western Europe after the war is that in order to be able to put the divisive past behind, a country needs to assess it openly and honestly, allowing competing memories to express themselves and engage in a public debate. It is a very difficult process which requires time, respect and readiness to hear a divergent opinion. In this process a common understanding of the divisive past is reached, which allows a society to put it beside and move on, as it happened in France with Vichy or in Germany with their Nazi past (Judt 2005, p. 12). It took Germany sixty years of denial, education, debate, and consensus to do it (Judt, *ibid*). The honest reckoning and repentance for the totalitarian criminal past was done through the prosecution of criminals, cleansing of political structures, official apologies, reparations, restitutions to victims, and corresponding commemorative practices (Khazanov and Payne, p. 413). The persecution was however limited, as the German courts refused to retroactively apply the concept of the crimes against humanity to the crimes, committed by Nazis during the war, which led to acquittals and undeservedly short sentences.

The circumstances which facilitated to a great extent an honest reckoning with the criminal past were the Nuremberg trials which led to the general acceptance of the absolute, unambiguous defeat and the complete discrediting of the former regime and ideology, which made impossible any revival of such regime. The trials also established the nature and extent of crimes committed by Nazis (Herf 1997, pp. 206-207; Antic 2004). This was achieved entirely by the occupying forces.

The “pact of silence” in post-Franco Spain (Boyd 2008, p. 135) is another example of active forgetting of the recent violent past for the sake of maintaining social peace and stability. After the death of Franco in 1975 Spanish political elites decided to bury political and social cleavages that led to the bloody war of 1936-1939 and build a new political order, based on mutual respect and tolerance. They adopted the Amnesty Law of 1977, which covered the period of the civil war and the years of Franco’s dictatorship from 1939 to 1975. As a result, victims of Franquist repression were not granted official recognition, nor were the

perpetrators punished. This compromise reflected the balance of power between the Franquist right and the socialist left, the will of the majority of Spaniards to avoid an “official reckoning” with the past (p. 135), and a consensus of shared responsibility for the war (Aguilar 1997, 90). Thanks to this consensus Spain’s transition to democracy was non-violent and successful and is viewed as a “model transition” (Gunther, Montero, and Botella 2004).

In Spain, in the 1980s the first transitional governments avoided removal of public symbols of the victory of the Franquist regime (statues and street names, for instance). Franco loyalists continued working in the judiciary and the administration. But historians were free to pursue their scholarly research of the past and the publications and scholarly conferences abounded. A deluge of popular publications, TV programs, and films responded to the never-fading interest of ordinary Spaniards in the civil war of 1936-1939 (Boyd 2008, pp. 135-136).

By the 1990s historians accumulated accurate historical information on the civil war under the Second Republic of 1931-1939. Their research was facilitated by the opening of archives of the civil war, which were inaccessible during the Francoist regime. Historians were able to refute the myth of equal responsibility for the civil war. In the conditions of consolidated democracy, it became possible to politically assign responsibility through the most proximate cause of the war – a military uprising against the Second Republic in July of 1936 (ibid).

The examples of Italy, Spain, Germany, and France show that following a period of violence, in which a country is split into warring camps, society tends to forget for some time the suffering inflicted on each other by various sides of the conflict and to avoid difficult questions of guilt in order to restore broken social ties. Once the stability and order are restored, society moves to the open, public assessment of the violent past: institutionalized public remembering becomes the very foundation of collective identity (Judt 2005, p. 12). The main driver of the critical engagement with the past is the new generation, born after the

war, children and grandchildren who are asking difficult questions. The European Union can be considered as a monument to the memory of World War II in the sense that it was created out of the hard lessons learned from the experience of the totalitarian war, subjugation, and the European-wide Holocaust (Müller 2012, p. 31), out of the desire to avoid another devastating war.

Coming to terms with the past became the global grand narrative of the present with the dissolution and discrediting of communist regimes by the end of the 1980s (Elster 1998; Misztal 2005, p. 1324). The human rights language, which emerged in Europe out of the realization of the atrocities of World War II, spread globally, and with it the thesis about the necessity of remembrance of past injustices as the basis of retroactive justice (Misztal, *ibid*). A common understanding was formulated that a democratic regime, which emerges in the aftermath of an oppressive one, has to redress injustices of the past. Former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe proceeded to the settling of wrongs committed during the Communist rule by the state and its agents. This search for justice was spurred not only by the domestic factors of the liberalization and the need to understand the Communist experience but also by the Western European ethos of critical engagement with the past.

Chapter 4: Assessment of the Communist past in Central-Eastern Europe

In countries formerly members of the communist bloc, the recent past has become the central topic of public debates. Communism was delegitimized in the eyes of the majority of the population as an oppressive and authoritarian system. The main subjects included the imposition of Soviet rule after 1945; repression against the political opposition, most intensive in the early years (in 1948-53); the communist experience; and the history of the resistance to the communist rule in East Germany and Poland in 1953, Hungary of 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 (Rees 2012, p. 220). In the case of Poland, another topic was the attempt by the military government of General Wojciech Jaruzelski to crush the Solidarnosc movement.

As in post-war France and Italy, the communist past is presented in Museums of Communism in Hungary, Poland, Romania, Baltic states as an aberration, a catastrophe in national history, a disaster, an event of non-national history, during which the nation became a victim. Communist rule was exclusively terrorist, imposed and sustained by violent, uncontrollable external forces - the Soviet Union, the Great Powers, and foreign Communists. Communism was alien to these nations, and therefore they bear no responsibility for the decades of Communist rule (Apor 2012, p. 236).

In Poland, for instance, whoever resisted the communist "occupation," is seen as a hero of the national liberation, because the communist dictatorship was just another period in the history of the repression of the Polish nation. This idea was at the core of memory politics of the Polish government when conceptualizing the Museum of Freedom (p. 238). This Museum was to represent the history of the Polish nation as a manifestation of its essence - the love for freedom, and the constant strive and struggle to achieve this ideal. The Ministry of National Cultural Heritage recommended that exhibitions of the museum focus on the "unique aspirations" of Poles for freedom, including the Polish victory over Nazism and communism (Main 2008, p. 389).

This Museum, initiated by the Socland Foundation, has never been constructed, to my knowledge. A search on Google brought up the European Solidarity Centre, a museum and library in Gdansk, devoted to the history of the Solidarnosc movement in Poland, which opened in 2014. The idea of the museum was proposed in 1998 by the mayor of Gdansk and a historian. It was supported by regional and national authorities, including the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Polish initiative was welcomed and sustained by the European Union, who contributed half of the sum needed for the construction of the museum. The other half came from Gdańsk's city budget ("About ECS/History").

The European Solidarity Centre is located on the site of Gdansk Lenin Shipyard, where on August 31, 1980 the leadership of Solidarnosc, led by Lech Walesa, signed an agreement with Polish authorities, in which the authorities agreed to establish independent trade unions. This victory of Polish workers marked the beginning of dramatic changes that triggered democratization processes throughout the socialist block and precipitated its dismantlement. As it is stated on the Centre's website, the Centre is the symbol of Solidarnosc's peaceful revolution, of the possibility of deep democratic changes, brought by bloodless resistance to an authoritarian regime ("ECS/Exhibition").

In Romania, the Memorial of the victims of Communism and the Resistance is also located in the prison of Sighetu Marmatiei, a small town on the border with Ukraine. The premises of the museum were built during the Austro-Hungarian Empire as barracks. In the 1950s it was used to detain major figures of the inter-war Romanian elites. The museum, in the words of its creators, represents the entire communist regime. The Memorial was opened in 1993 with one room, which supposedly was a torture chamber (Apor 2012, p. 235). The museum, as stipulated on its website, is dedicated to "what happened under communism in Romania and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe" (ibid). In reality, the museum reflects only the dark side of the communist rule - forced collectivisation, labour camps, security service terror, and the tyranny of Ceausescu regime. The museum claims to epitomize the entire communist regime,

simplifying a complex historical phenomenon of a relatively long duration into an abstract, ahistorical tale of violent clashes between oppression and resistance (Apor 2012, p. 235; Cristea and Radu-Bucurenci 2008).

The history of communism in the museums mentioned above, instead of providing a historical explanation for the emergence of communist regimes in Central-Eastern Europe, mystifies communism, presenting it as a catastrophe, a disaster beyond the limits of human capacities and comprehension (Apor 2012, p. 236). For instance, the Romanian historian Stelian Tanase described communists as “eternal beings of darkness” who remained hidden in the bunker for almost half a century when they were running the Romanian world. They did not come to the surface for not even one day to obtain legitimacy, remaining alien to society and continuously conspiring against it (Cristea and Radu-Bucurenci 2008, p. 278).

Tanase was a member of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, convened in April of 2006 under President Basescu to investigate the origins of the Communist regime in Romania. The commission’s task was to examine the main institutions, methods, and personalities that made possible the crimes and abuses. Another, non-academic task, was to pass a moral judgment on the Ceausescu dictatorship and to encourage a reckoning with the past “throughout a painful, albeit inevitable, acknowledgment” of the crimes of the Communist regime (Tismaneanu 2008 p. 169). The Commission consisted of academics (historians and social scientists) and civil society personalities — former political prisoners and dissidents, and “major figures of democratic exile” (ibid). Based on its report, President Basescu condemned the totalitarian communist regime in Romania as illegitimate and criminal, imposed by foreign dictate and founded upon a “fanatical ideology...imported from the USSR” (Basescu 2006). The same apologetic idea of the imposition of a dictatorial regime from abroad is voiced. As Hungarian historian Peter Apor (2012, p. 237) commented, the Commission did not provide neither a historical analysis of the reasons for the crimes committed by the communist regime, nor their social and

political context. Instead, the report attributed the crimes to “a vaguely defined, undifferentiated conglomerate of the ‘communists’”.

Basescu’s condemnation of the communist regime is the “officialization” of the previously marginalized public memory of communism, supported by various civic groups and church organizations (Apor, *ibid*). Representations, generated by this anti-communist memory, draw extensively on Christian symbolism and depict the Romanian nation as the martyr. Monuments to victims of communism and exhibitions in museums, such as the Romanian Peasant Museum, present the victims as fighters for national dignity. The essence of the Romanian nation is determined by the Orthodox Church and the all-Romanian state. In the exhibitions, the peasantry is represented as an atemporal, profoundly Christian, and unchanged community. Communism destroyed that life, brutally rupturing the harmonious history of the nation, anchored in its state and its church (Apor 2012, p. 237; Cristea and Radu-Bucurenci 2008, p. 279-95).

In Hungary and Romania, anti-Communist memory is intimately connected with nationalism, recovered after the breakdown of an internationalist socialist ideology. The nationalist memory, represented in museums, tend to omit historical events that contradict the narrative of the nation as a victim of external forces and call for a difficult self-reflection on the responsibility of individuals and movements acting in the name of the nation as perpetrators. Research and public debates around collaboration and direct involvement in the Holocaust became the litmus test for the maturity of democracy of Central-European countries. The reaction of Polish society to the book *Neighbors: the Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne* by the Polish-born American historian Jan Gross illustrates well the difficulty in the responsibility of Polish civilians for crimes against Jews. In the book, published in 2001, Gross explores a pogrom in the German-occupied Polish town of Jedwabne in the summer of 1941, in which upward of 1,600 Jews, virtually the entire village population, were killed by their Catholic neighbours. The book debunked a self-

comforting national myth that Poles were solely victims of a brutal Nazi aggression. It cracked open a dark page in Polish history and gave an impulse to an open and confrontational debate on Polish guilt.

Gross' book came under harsh criticism on the part of those who embrace a nationalist version of Polish history. The famous leader of the Solidarnosc movement Lech Walesa called Gross "a mediocre writer" and "a Jew who tries to make money". Gross indirectly replied that Walesa probably did not read the book and he was under the influence of "a very nationalist, anti-Semitic priest" ('Historian Launched' 2013). In a more recent development, Walesa called on Jan Gross to hand back the Knight Cross of the Order of Merit, which Gross was awarded in 1996 for his academic work and support for the transition to democracy in Poland. Walesa's statement echoes the words of the current President of Poland Andrzej Duda from the ruling Law and Justice party, which embraces the nationalist version of Polish history as a nation-martyr. Duda believes that the Polish state should determine "historical politics" as part of the construction of international position" (Harper 2016).

In Hungary, the Budapest museum, devoted to the history of the communist period, has a very telling name: The House of Terror. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the current leader of the National Conservative Party Fidesz – the Hungarian Civic Alliance. In his address, Viktor Orban expressed hope that eventually the history of the twentieth century Hungary will be represented truthfully, for what it was - the fight for freedom, and will teach future generations the meaning of this fight (Apor 2012, p. 233).

The House of Terror, as with other anti-Communist museums, emphasizes the violence and terror of Communist oppressors and the martyrdom of the nation-victim. In the House of Terror the history of the "short twentieth century" is presented as a battleground for the world domination of two equally barbarous totalitarian ideologies: German Nazism and Soviet Communism. The museum provides first an overview of the period of rule of the Hungarian Fascist party, the Arrow Cross. The largest part of the museum is devoted to the period of Communist rule. Hungarians are shown as suffering subjects and

victims of this war (Apor 2012, p. 243). Such self-exculpating interpretation of national history demonstrates the unwillingness to confront episodes in history when Hungarians were not victims, but perpetrators, as with the social and legal exclusion and subsequent deportation of Jewish citizens of Hungary and the collaboration of the authoritarian Horthy regime with Nazi Germany. Exhibitions in the museum represent a conscious, manipulative comparison of the short-lived period of Arrow Rule (15 October 1944 to 28 March 1945) and the much longer Communist rule, depicted as an undifferentiated terror regime (Apor, *ibid*).

For instance, in the exhibition of the House of Terror and of the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius, Communist prison cells hold a central place (Apor 2012, p. 234). The museum in Vilnius is located in the building which served as a prison both for the KGB and the Gestapo. Museums of occupation in Riga and Tallinn are also located in former Communist prisons, particularly underground cells (Mark 2008).

The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in Riga, situated in the building of the former Latvian Red Riflemen's Museum, was opened on July 1, 1993, with an exposition on "atrocities of the Soviet regime" in Latvia in 1940/1941. It was later expanded and now includes the three occupation periods. The first section is dedicated to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which divided East Europe into Soviet and German spheres of influences. The second section covers the first Soviet occupation of 1940-1941, the German occupation period of 1941-1944/45, and the second Soviet occupation (1944/45-1991). The last section is devoted to the movement for independence in the perestroika era, culminating in the sovereignty in 1991. The historical narrative of the museum is expressed in its goal: "to portray life during the three occupation periods suffered by Latvia and Latvians. The items of the exhibition tell about Latvia during the fifty year-long subjugation: about power politics, Soviet and Nazi terror, the destruction of Latvia's economy, Soviet and Nazi totalitarian ideologies, the opposition to the regimes, and finally how Latvians regained their freedom in 1991" ("Museum of the Occupation").

The Museum of Occupation also includes as its part the “KGB House,” turned into a Soviet prison in 1940, where opponents of the Soviet regime were detained, interrogated, and executed. On the museum website, it is stated that from June 1940 to June 1941, at least 3,355 political criminal investigations were opened against Latvian citizens. The bodies of “many detainees” were found in several common graves and in the yard of the Riga Central Prison. At the end of June of 1941, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the retreating Soviet “Cheka” organized the transfer of about 3,600 persons from Latvia’s prison to prisons and labour camps deep into the territory of the Soviet Union. In the postwar years, the KGB continued to occupy the building (“KGB Building”). The text on the Museum’s website indicates that after the death of Stalin in 1953, the Cheka replaced physical torture with more subtle psychological methods.

What is interesting to note here is the historical decontextualisation of the word Cheka, an incomplete acronym of the All-Russian Special Commission (*Vserossiiskaya chrezvichainaya komissiya*), created in December of 1917 by the Council of People’s Commissars for combating counter-revolution and sabotage. Indeed, the Cheka became the generic nickname of Soviet repressive organs, as the Museum’s website notes (“KGB Building”). However, in a museum as an institution that preserves history, the usage of such term is inappropriate. The ‘Cheka’ has undergone many structural transformations and changed names following the political evolution of the Soviet state system - from VChK to GPU in 1922 to NKVD in 1934 to KGB in 1953, with several other changes in between (“Federalnaya sluzhba”).

The Estonian Museum of Occupations in Tallinn also focuses on three periods of occupations: the first Soviet occupation in 1940–1941, the German occupation in 1941–1944, and the second Soviet occupation in 1944–1991. According to the Museum website, its audio-visual displays and photographs illustrate “the events of the era, repression, and national resistance, as well as showing how people coped with the day-to-day realities of this difficult period” (“The Museum of Occupations”).

The museum was established by Olga Kistler-Ritso, an Estonian émigré to the United States, whose family suffered in the hands of Soviets (“Kistler-Ritso”). She created the Kistler-Ritso Foundation in 1998. In 1999 the Foundation started collecting objects, documents, and articles for the exposition and working on a program of scientific study (“The Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation”).

A brand-new building of the museum was opened in 2003. Tunne Kelam, a member of the Kistler-Ritso Foundation, former Soviet dissident and chairman of the centre-right Pro-Patria Union, in his opening speech, stated that the Museum is a memorial to the collective tragedy experienced by the Estonian people, a mark of Estonians’ perseverance and persistence, and a symbol of the Estonians’ duty to remember. In his words, “We cannot and must not forget the past. Only full awareness of the occupations of recent history gives us a guarantee that the crimes against humanity and peoples committed by power hungry totalitarians can and will never again be committed.” He also stressed that the Museum rests on the assessment of the criminal nature of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its Estonian branch, the Estonian Communist Party, which through its repressive organs committed crimes against humanity and the war crimes in Estonia (Kelam 2003). The research work of the Museum aims to convey the Estonian “national catastrophe” and “the anti-human character of the Soviet national and economic policy” (“Who We Are”). The extension of the exhibition of the museum, to be opened in 2018, will include a new section on the history of the resistance movements. Its name will be changed to Vabamu, or House of Freedom, ‘to educate and encourage Estonians and visitors to reflect on the recent past, to make them aware of the fragility of freedom and liberty, and of the importance to stand up for justice’ (Cavegn 2016).

In Poland, historical exhibitions also follow the trend present in the museums of Sighetu-Marmatiei, Budapest, Tallinn, and Riga, namely, to interpret the “short history of Poland” as the domination over Poland of two totalitarian regimes—Nazi Germany and Soviet Communism. One of the major exhibitions, organized by the History Meeting House and arranged by the KARTA Centre, was entitled ‘The Faces of

Totalitarianism: Twentieth-Century Europe.” Designed as an introduction to the history of modern dictatorships, the exhibition covered only the beginning of the Communist regime in Poland. It presented in parallel the genesis and functioning of the Communist system in Russia and the Nazi dictatorship in Germany (Apor 2012, p. 242).

The KARTA Centre is a non-governmental organization and a research and cultural institution, devoted to the documentation and popularization of the history of Poland and Eastern Europe. It was founded in 1982 during martial law in Poland as an underground opposition centre in association with the independent historical quarterly KARTA (“Poland”). Its archive contains documents on the fate of Polish citizens in the USSR and the Soviet occupation and resettlement after the Second World War. A separate collection contains information about Polish citizens persecuted by the Soviets in 1939-1956 (“Archiwum Wschodnie”). In 2001 the KARTA Center co-founded the EUSTORY, an informal network of non-governmental organisations carrying out historical research competitions for young people in Europe (“Eustory”).

In all of the cases presented above, the history of former Communist states and former Soviet republics in 1940-1989 is interpreted as a succession of Nazi and Soviet occupations. The nation - Polish, Romanian, Hungarian and so forth - is seen as a victim at the hands of barbaric, cruel regimes. Soviet Communism is equated to Nazism in its criminal and authoritarian nature. By reducing the complexity of Communism to solely a terror regime, and by comparing it next to the already established emblematic violence of Nazism, the promoters of such interpretation of Central European history hope to present Communist crimes as ultimate catastrophe of European civilization. Moreover, by claiming that communism was as destructive and merciless as the Nazi regime, the promoters of this point of view hope to establish the history of Central-Eastern European communist dictatorships as a genuine European event (Apor 2012, p. 242).

However, depicting the period of 1940-1989 as a caesura, a break in the history of the nation, and presenting the nation solely as a victim, goes against Western European historical memory of the World War II, based on notions of political and moral responsibility. In Western Europe, Auschwitz and the Holocaust function as powerful safeguards from the repetition of such horrendous crimes in the future. Eastern Europeans, to the contrary, avoid their responsibility (Apor, 2012, p. 243). Since their accession to the European Union (EU), Central European states have actively promoted the idea of the equivalency of Communist and Nazi totalitarianisms and of the necessity to condemn crimes committed by Communist regimes. For instance, Polish Members of the European Parliament, affiliated with the Law and Justice Party and the League of Polish Families, contributed the most to the April 2008 debate in the European Parliament about the Remembrance of “war crimes committed by totalitarian regimes” at the pan-European level and the potential role of the European Commission in fostering such remembrance. Comments made by the Polish MEPs contributed to the parliament’s adoption in September 2008 of a resolution that August 23rd be declared “European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism” (Gledhill 2011, p. 493).

Noting that on August 23rd, 1939, the Soviet Union and Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which divided Europe into two spheres of influence, and that the Stalinist and Nazi regimes committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, which under international law do not have statutory limitations, the European Parliament proposed to proclaim August 23rd as a European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, “in order to preserve the memory of the victims of mass deportations and exterminations, and at the same time rooting democracy more firmly and reinforcing peace and stability in our continent” (“Declaration”). This declaration is another manifestation of the Western European ethos of remembering as an attribute of stable democracy, of memory as a duty. A direct recognition of efforts of anti-communist Central and Eastern-European elites to obtain an international condemnation of the Soviet-backed Communist regimes is the point in the declaration stating that “the influence and significance of the

Soviet order and occupation on and for citizens of the post-Communist States are little known in Europe” (ibid).

Representatives of Central European countries made the recognition of the criminal nature of Communist regimes one of the main issues on their agenda. The Declaration of the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism was the result of a public hearing organized in April-2008 by the Slovenian Presidency in the Council of the European Union. The proceedings featured research into serious human rights violations committed under totalitarianism, and issues of remembrance, recognition, redress, and reconciliation. The majority of papers dealt with the period of Soviet occupation, extended up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990 (Jambrek 2008). As the result of the public hearing, several steps were recommended, such as the establishment under EU auspices of a permanent governmental forum, which would “take note” of all the national investigations of the crimes by the Communist and other totalitarian regimes; and the establishment of a European Foundation, which would support and coordinate research and educational projects on totalitarian experiences (Jambrek 2008, p. 314).

In June 2008, a conference, entitled *European Conscience and Communism*, was initiated and hosted by the Czech government in Prague. A Declaration, adopted at the conference, called for “Europe-wide condemnation of, and education about, the crimes of communism” and the formulation and promotion of an all-European assessment of Communist regimes as criminal and anti-humane. Among many proposed steps was the establishment of the European Day of Remembrance (adopted by the EU in September, as we saw above) and of an Institute of European Memory and Conscience which would act both as a research and public awareness institution and a museum-memorial to the victims of all totalitarian regimes (“Prague Declaration”).

In October 2011, also in Prague, the Platform of European Memory and Conscience was established during a summit of the Visegrad Group countries. Governments of the Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland,

and Slovakia), and some European government institutions and NGOs, are among the founders of the Platform. Poland, who was presiding the EU in 2011, initiated and accelerated the realization of the project of the Institute as the Platform of European Memory and Conscience. The Platform acts as a non-profit international NGO involved in research, documentation, awareness raising and education about totalitarian regimes ("Platform").

The decommunization of former Communist parties was a process determined both by internal factors of transition to liberal democracy and the perspective of joining the European Union. In the case of East Germany, decommunization was directly influenced and enforced from outside, by the West German authorities, with the active support of East German anti-communist political and social forces. In that sense, decommunization in East Germany can be compared to denazification of West Germany in the after-war years. In the rest of the former Communist camp external influence was indirect, sparked by a desire from elites to burnish their democratic credentials in preparation for an accession to the European Union. For instance, in 1993 the Czech Republic passed an act condemning its Soviet-era government with the perspective of joining the EU. Similarly, in 2001 the Bulgarian parliament passed a resolution condemning the former Communist regime with a view towards becoming a member of the EU. The Romanian Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania was set up eight months before Romania's announced accession to the EU in 2006. Based on this report, Basescu officially condemned the Communist regime of Ceausescu as a criminal on December 18, 2006 (Rees 2012, p. 230).

Despite the efforts by Central European states to establish a pan-European program of collective remembrance of Communist regimes as criminal, European institutions have been reluctant to initiate or organize memory projects that would foster pan-European collective memories of the Central European recent past (Gledhill 2011, p. 488-489). However, the former Communist states, now members of the

European Union, were able to draw pan-European resources for individual projects fostering a reckoning with the Communist past (Gledhill 2011, p. 497).

Chapter 5: Russia Faces its Communist Past

While in Central Europe the leitmotiv of the memory narratives is the condemnation and rejection of Communism as a whole, in Russia the multifaceted Soviet experience is remembered in a more ambivalent, complex way. There is a distinction between Stalinism and the rest of the period, especially the after-war years and the times of the late Soviet socialism (1960-1970ss), which Russians and millions of other nationals on the post-Soviet space remember as times of social stability and security. In the dominant memory narrative of Russians, Stalinism did not eclipse the Soviet history, nor did it discredit Communism as an ideology of social justice and equality.

At the April 2008 EU public hearings on crimes of Nazi and Communist regimes, the Russian representative, historian Mikhail Narinski from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations noted the complex nature of communism as a historical phenomenon, consisting not only of the political regimes, but also the doctrine, ideology, and Communist parties with their followers. Communism cannot be reduced to crimes, committed in its name by political regimes. There were German communists who died in Nazi torture chambers. There were Communists who participated in the anti-Nazi resistance. One cannot condemn communism in its entirety (Narinski 2008, p. 275).

To put behind the totalitarian past, a nation must, first of all, acknowledge the crimes of a totalitarian regime and to condemn them, as Russia did with Stalinism (Narinski, *ibid*). Russia condemned the crimes of Stalinism as politics, as an ideology, and as a law. An example of this castigation is the statement by the State Duma of the Russian Federation in April 2008 “To the Memory of the Victims of the 1930’s Famine in the Territory of USSR.” Rejecting the interpretation of famine as ethnic genocide, Duma qualified the famine as a result of repressive collectivization and rapid and massive industrialization in all agricultural regions

of the Soviet Union. Deputies of the State Duma firmly condemned Stalinist regime which sacrificed the rights and lives of Soviet citizens to achieve its economic and political objectives (“Zaiavlenie” 2008).

According to Narinski, while condemning Stalinism and its totalitarian crimes, it is important not to equal Stalinism as a political system to the Soviet people and their heroic achievements, such as the victory in World War II (2008, p. 276). This statement points to the central legitimizing myth of the Russian and Soviet state (Rees 2012, p. 224-225). The Soviet Union paid a huge price for the victory over Nazism — 27 millions deaths. This explains why the notion that Nazism and Stalinism were “evil twins” did not find a large support within Russian society (Rees 2012, p. 225) and why Central European states failed to obtain from Western European countries the equation of Communism with Nazism and the total condemnation of Communism as an evil.

In dealing with the totalitarian past, the common understanding in the Soviet and the Russian society was that the most important thing is to establish the human dignity of the victims: to rehabilitate them and put in place mechanisms for reparations of damage caused to them. Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign in 1953-1956 and the rehabilitation of repressed nations and victims of political repressions by corresponding laws of the Russian Federation in 1991 are the manifestations of this understanding.

In 1954, a year after the death of Stalin², the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union created a Commission to review cases of all persons convicted of “counter-revolutionary crimes” by judicial and extrajudicial authorities. The Central Commission, headed by the State Prosecutor General of USSR, R. Rudenko, supervised local commissions on republican, regional (krai) and oblast levels.

The Commission, in operation for two years, reviewed cases of 337,183 people. 153,502 saw either their

² Three weeks after the death of Stalin in March of 1953, on the initiative of the then Minister of Interior of the USSR, Lavrentii Beria, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party voted for the large amnesty of the half of the prisoners of the gulags. There were 2.5 million detainees at that time, of which only 220 000 were ‘particularly dangerous state criminals’. Around 1.2 million were released as the result of this broad amnesty, first of all women with children up to 10 years of age and pregnant women, underage detainees, old and gravely ill people (Melnikov 2017).

cases closed, their terms of detention shortened, their exile terminated, or received amnesty. Only 14 338 persons were rehabilitated (4,2%). The conviction of the majority of persons - 183 681 persons - were recognized as legitimate. This high number is explained by the fact that commissions were operating within the framework of the Soviet laws which were adopted in the 1930s (Lavinskaia 2007). No specific law was developed and adopted to regulate the rehabilitation of those who suffered political repressions. It was done only through various government decrees and rulings, which indicates that de-Stalinization and rehabilitation were rather a reaction to the force of circumstances than a conscious state policy (Petrov 2006, p. 25).

The most important step in the restoration of the dignity of victims was the 1991 Law on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression". The law's purpose was to condemn the terror and mass repression of the totalitarian state against its citizens because of their political and religious beliefs or their ethnic and social origin, to rehabilitate all victims of political repressions on the territory of the Russian Federation since October 1917, to restore their civil rights and to repair other consequences of the lawlessness, and to offer compensation for material damages according to available possibilities ("Zakon Rossiyskoy" 1991).

According to an official of the Rehabilitation Commission, in the first two years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, two million people applied for legal rehabilitation. One million of the applications were examined, and half of the applicants obtained the status of rehabilitated, while as of 1995 another half million of applications were still under review (Adler 2001, p. 288). According to the data of the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation, from 1992 to 2001 the Prosecutor's Office examined 636,336 cases involving 901,127 people, of whom 634,165 were rehabilitated; it also reviewed applications from 978,891 individuals, 917,532 of which were satisfied (Petrov 2006, p. 39).

Narinski believes that Russia has done its duty, namely, to reckon with its totalitarian past, at least on the official level. Scholars have also produced a large body of research on political repressions in the Soviet

Union (Lavinskaia 2007). Professional historians, such as Viktor Danilov, [Aleksandr N. Dugin](#), Nikolai Ivnitski, and Viktor Zemskov, carried out an enormous work to estimate the number of victims of the Stalin regime —famines, dekulakization, purges —as well as the size of the Gulag population and the casualties in World War II (Rees 2012, p. 222). A large number of books, articles, and published archival documents in the 1990s and 2000s, contrasts with the scarcity of such works in the late 1980s, when the crimes of the past were exposed in a deluge of articles, analyses and memoirs, written by journalists or individuals, trained in social sciences and humanities (Davies 1989, quoted in Rees 2012, p. 219; Andrieu 2011, p. 202).

These dramatic revelations led to a general repudiation of the Communist past throughout the former Communist camp of Central European countries. Communism was discredited as an evolutionary dead end, and the new anti-communist governments embarked on what they claimed was the road to liberal democracy and a free market. In Russia the Soviet/socialist past was not rejected in its entirety, only Stalin regime was condemned as totalitarian. Akin to former socialist countries of the Central Europe, President Boris Yeltsin followed the neoliberal trend, rejecting Gorbachev's "third way" (Rees 2012, p. 221).

Following the August 1991 coup d'état by old guard Communists, Yeltsin accused the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of anti-constitutional activities, dissolved its Central Committee, nationalized its property and eventually ban the party altogether. However, several People's Deputies appealed Yeltsin's decision to the Constitutional Court. Several public hearings were held throughout 1992 ("Postanovlenie" 1992). Human rights activists and democrats hoped that it would eventually lead to a "Nuremberg trial" for the Party and its condemnation for "crimes against humanity." However, the legal forum did not venture beyond constitutional issues (Adler 2003, p. 14).

The Court supported the dissolution of the ruling structures of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, but not the confiscation of its property. The primary party organizations should be left intact. The Court condemned the "dictatorship" of a "small number" of party bureaucrats, led

by the Politburo and its Secretary General, presented as having acted secretly from the rank and file members and often even from the party functionaries. Communist leaders initiated, and local officials executed, “politics of repression towards millions of Soviet people, including deported nations.” The Court also established that during the period of the governance of the CPSU the state and party formed one whole and that the party usurped state powers. By bringing under its control all of the state institutions, the CPSU placed itself above the state and the law (“Postanovlenie”).

As can be seen from the decision of the Constitutional Court, the consensus of the judges was that the Communist Party as a social organization, a social movement, was legitimate and legal. It is the authoritarian leadership that usurped power and designed and implemented policies of repression against the people and rank and file members of the Party. The Court condemned the ruling Communist elite. Communism maintained its unblemished reputation and remained popular among a significant part of the Russian population. The Court also recognized as constitutional Eltsin’s dissolution of the governing body of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation as its part. However, the dissolution of the local party cells, formed on a territorial basis, was declared non-constitutional (“Postanovlenie”).

In 1993, a new Communist Party was formed – the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) — as the heir of the Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (“O partii”). The Party representatives have been elected in all of the parliamentary elections in Russia. Presently the faction of the CPRD in the State Duma has 92 seats out of 450 (“Fraktsii”).

The condemnation of the repressive methods of governing under Stalin is also present in President Putin’s assessment of Stalin. In a press conference in December of 2009, Putin answered the question of his attitude towards Stalin: *“One cannot, in my opinion, provide an assessment in whole. It is clear that from 1924 to 1953 when the country was ruled by Stalin, it changed radically. The country transformed itself from an*

agrarian country into an industrial one. Although it destroyed the peasantry, the industrialization was implemented indeed. We won the Great Patriotic War. Whatever whoever might say, victory was achieved...Even if we talk about losses...Nobody today has the right to throw a stone at those who organized and headed this victory. If we had lost the war, the consequences for our country would have been much more catastrophic. One can hardly imagine. However, all the positive things that were undoubtedly achieved were achieved at an unacceptable price. Repressions took place - it is a fact. Millions of our fellow citizens suffered. Such a way of ruling the country, of achieving results is unacceptable, is impossible. Certainly, in this period we had not only a cult of personality, there were massive crimes against our people. It is a fact. And we must not forget it' (Akopov 2016).

In the post-communist transition literature, Russia is cited as an example of a failed or partial attempt at reckoning with its totalitarian past. The perpetrators of crimes of the Soviet repressive machine were never prosecuted, not even publicly exposed. No Truth Commissions were set up (Khazanov 2008, p. 298). Lustration has not been carried out. The repentance of state officials, direct descendants of the Soviet bureaucratic party-state, was short-lived and insincere (ibid). The majority of Russians categorically refuse to admit their voluntary or involuntary complicity in the misdeeds of the Soviet regime (p. 300). Worse even, they feel nostalgic for the Soviet past. Their president, Vladimir Putin, a former KGB officer, personally contributed to the revival of the “false myth” of the *Chekists* as honest officers serving the Soviet state. One of his first acts was to restore the bust of Yuri Andropov in the headquarters of the Federal Security Service (FSB) of the Russian Federation and a commemorating plaque on the building (p. 306). A critical look at the history has been censored through the creation in 2009, under Medvedev’s presidency, of a “Historical Truth Commission,” officially called the Commission to Counteract Attempts at Falsifying History to Damage the Interests of Russia (Andrieu 2011, p. 213). Instead of establishing facts about the past, the Commission’s main task was to challenge Eastern European narratives about the World War II and the post-war years of Soviet occupation and to whitewash Soviet crimes (ibid).

All of these actions in the realm of official memory show the efforts of the Russian political elite to answer the need by ordinary Russians for political stability and restoration of national pride (Andrieu 2011, p, 200). It was dramatically undermined by the fall of the Soviet Union and the transition to market economy in the 1990s, which led to the pauperization of millions of people. The duration and depth of Sovietisation also explain why the revelations about the violations of human rights and crimes, committed under Stalin, did not translate into a condemnation of the Soviet period (Rees 2012, p. 224). The majority of the Russian population does not have a personal, direct memory of these dark pages of history. Most people experienced the Soviet system during the Brezhnev period, when life was stable and prosperous (Rees 2012, p. 224), especially in comparison with life under Stalin and the deprivation brought by the WW II.

There are also other reasons for Russia's 'failure' to follow the commonly accepted postulate on the necessity of condemnation of the authoritarian/totalitarian past and the repentance for the crimes committed. The new elites which come to power are not radically new. The first post-Soviet Russian government included representatives of the old communist guard. These former communists could not accept the assessment of the Soviet period solely as a period of totalitarianism, based on fear and repression. Moreover, this assessment did not coincide with the general views of ordinary Russians. There was no widespread demand for the public, open atonement for the crimes of the past because that past was perceived not through the Western gaze as totalitarianism, in which all of the citizens were complicit in collaboration with the all-powerful party-state. For the majority of the Russian population, it was a lived experience of stability, social equality, and relative economic well-being. Another reason for Russia's perceived failure in reckoning with its totalitarian past is that the victims of the Stalinist purges, being marginalized, did not form a social group capable of formulating public demand for an open trial of the perpetrators.

Finally, the most fundamental reason why in Russia Communism was not condemned as criminal, as it was in Central Europe, is because it was a home-grown phenomenon. Russians could not blame anyone for imposing the communism on them, as Poles, Romanians or Czechs did by blaming the Soviet Union. In Russia, Soviet communism is deeply rooted in national history. Moreover, it is still associated with modernization, rebuilding of the country and the emergence of Russia as an industrial power and as a global superpower (Andrieu 2011, p. 207).

The Stalin period is more remote in time. Although it is still debated in contemporary Russian society, it is overwritten by the memory of the late socialism “with human face”, which is remembered by millions of Russians. That is why the paradigm of totalitarianism in relation to the Soviet Union of the 1970-1980s does not correspond to the perception by ordinary Russians of their lived experience. What they remember is not a life under constant surveillance and fear, as Western authors, proponents of the totalitarianism school of Sovietology saw the life in the Soviet Union (such as Merle Fainsod (1963), Richard Pipes (1994), Paul Hollander (1981), and Robert Conquest (1990) (see also Shlapentokh, Shiraev and Carrol 2008, p. 21-22). Such reading of the Soviet period brushes over the genuine support that the Soviet state had on behalf of millions of Soviet citizens. Many of them did believe in Communist ideals of social justice and equality, and they worked hard and honestly to achieve these ideals. They felt proud of their great country, for free medicine care and education, and social mobility that it provided. And they did live in economic and social security, even if it was provided by the Soviet state at the cost of closing the borders and limiting the influx of information and liberal ideology from the West (see the works of the Sovietologists – “normalizers”, such as Stephen Cohen (1985), Arch Getty (1985), Moshe Lewin (2005), Alexander Dallin (1992)).

That is why Russians do not perceive their past through the lenses of “accomplices” of the regime logic. This regime was not “imposed” on them. In fact, for the majority of Russians, it was not a “regime,” but a

socialist state, a welfare state, built on socialist values, and rooted in national history. The Russian state and large number of Russians acknowledge that Stalinist regime commit massive violations of human rights and carried out deportations and executions. Yet the Stalin period cannot be extended to the whole 74 years of Soviet history. And this is clearly seen in Russians' nostalgia for the Soviet past that they still feel today. For instance, the Levada Center in Moscow periodically asks people whether they feel nostalgic vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. In April 2016, 56% said that they regretted the dissolution of the Soviet Union, while 28% did not ("Bolshe poloviny rossiyan" 2016). The highest level of regret was registered in 2000 (70%), and the lowest in 2012 (49%). Sociologists of the Center explain that the peak of nostalgia for the USSR in the late 1990s-early 2000s was triggered by disillusionment with reforms and the failure by the government to ensure a decent standard of living for the population. The current decrease in Soviet nostalgia can be explained by the high level of support for the present leadership of the country, which improved significantly the economic situation within Russia and restored Russia's status as an important player in world politics. People who would like to return to the Soviet Union belong to socially vulnerable categories - those over 55-year of age and rural residents who are facing problems of pensions, rising prices, of medicine, etc. These problems make them remember a better life in Soviet times. Among the youth only one in four respondents wants the return of the Soviet Union. The survey also showed that although 44% of Russians want to see the Soviet Union and the socialist system restored, they realize that this is unrealistic, while 14% believe it is still possible ("Bolshe poloviny rossiyan" 2016).

A segment of the population did not forget the crimes of the Stalinist past, which is seen in the creation of *lieux de mémoire* of this period of Russian history. The first *lieu de mémoire* is the State Museum of GULAG History, founded in 2001 by Anton Antonov-Ovseenko, a well-known historian, writer and a public figure, a famous dissident who himself spent several years in the Gulag ("O muzee"). The museum calls itself a museum of memory, founded on a "painful event" that is very difficult to comprehend (ibid). Collections of the museum include archival documents, letters, and memoirs of former Gulag prisoners, their personal

belongings; artworks made by artists, former prisoners of the Gulag, and by modern artists offering their own vision of the subject (ibid). The Museum tells the history of the Gulag, the Soviet labour camp system, as an instrumental and integral part of the Soviet state in the 1930-1950 and describes its political, administrative and economic role. It acts a centre of all kinds of artistic and educational activities related to the history of Gulag. The Museum is a state institution under the responsibility of the Department of Culture of Moscow City Administration. It is financed by the state, as well as by revenues generated from the Museum activities, and donations by private individuals, organizations, and companies ("Kontseptsia" 2015). In 2015, Museum was moved to a larger facility. Besides the permanent exhibit, the new building contains rooms for temporary exhibits, a cinema theatre, archives repository, a movie theatre, research centre, studio of visual anthropology, library, editorial centre, and social and volunteer centre ("O Muzei"). It opened on October 30, 2015, the Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Political Repressions.

Also notable is the decision by state authorities to erect a national monument to the victims of political repressions ("Otkrytyi konkurs"). An open competition took place in 2015. Around 350 projects were presented. The winner is the Wall of Sorrow by the sculptor Georgi Frangulian ("Stena skorbi" 2015). The function of the monument, according to the planners, is not only to preserve and transmit memory about the tragedy, but also inspire thoughts about the inadmissibility of the usage of terrorist methods in state governance, about the supreme value of human life, and each citizen's responsibility for the future of the country ("Otkrytyi konkurs").

Russia is working through its Stalinist past. In the *Conception of the State Policy on the Commemoration of the Victims of Political Repressions*, adopted in August 2015, it is clearly stated that Russia cannot become a rule-of-law-state in full and play a leading role in the world without immortalizing the memory of many millions of its citizens, victims of political repressions. The country must make sense of the tragic experience of the 20th century, after the October Revolution of 1917, full of social cataclysms and

characterized by the break of traditions, the loss of continuity of culture, and the rupture of the intergenerational links (“Kontsepsiya” 2015). As described in the document, this process started in the perestroika period and continued under Yeltsin. After the August 1991 putsch, the new ruling elite of Russia reassessed the Soviet period and recognized the presence of political repressions before and after Stalin (ibid). This was a new policy, compared to Khrushchev’s condemnation of only Stalin’s “excesses.” Several normative acts were adopted by President Yeltsin in this regard, extending the historical and legal rehabilitation to participants of the armed rebellion in Kronstadt in the Spring of 1921 (“O sobytiyakh” 1994); to former Soviet prisoners of war and civilians, repatriated after the war (“O vosstanovlenii” 1995); to priests and believers who were unlawfully repressed (“O merakh” 1996); and to participants of the peasant rebellions of 1918-1922 (“O krestianskikh vosstaniyakh” 1996).

All of these decisions were taken on the basis of recommendations by the Commission on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repressions, created in December 1992 and headed by Aleksandr Yakovlev, one of the “architects” of perestroika (Adler 2003, p. 280), who previously chaired a similar commission under Gorbachev³ (Yakovlev). It was one of the manifestations of the re-thinking of the Stalin’s legacy, undertaken by the progressive part of the Communist leadership of the Soviet Union. The result of the “additional study” of Stalin years was summed up in a Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, adopted on January 16, 1989. This decree cancelled the extrajudicial sentencing of people by “troika” and by “special councils” and encouraged initiatives to build monuments to victims of repressions and to maintain places of their burials (“Kontsepsiya” 2015). From 1991 to 2015, according to the *Conception* document, 3.5 million people were rehabilitated and an additional 260,000, children of the repressed, were recognized as repressed and were rehabilitated as well.

³ This commission was created in September of 1987 under the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU. It was entitled “The Commission on the additional study of materials, related to repressions of 1930-1940s and the beginning of the 1950s” (Yakovlev).

As evidenced in the state conception and in the public statements of Russian officials, including President Putin, on the level of state politics in Russia, there is a clear condemnation of the political terror of the Stalin's regime against its citizens. Most recently, at the opening of the Memorial to the victims of political repressions "The Wall of Sorrow" in Moscow on October 30, 2017, Putin reiterated again that death and suffering of millions of people are crimes that cannot be justified by any so called highest good of the nation (Redking 2017). The opening of the monument is also an indicator that the Russian state acts on the plans of the commemoration, outlined in the Conception of State Policy on the Commemoration of the Victims of Political Repressions

Putin echoes the opinion of the majority of people in Russia. A consensus is being forming in the Russian society, which perceives the political repressions under Stalin as a tragedy and an occurrence of an extreme violence, as the public opinion polls show (Romanov 2017). Polls also show that the majority of Russians are aware of the Stalinist persecutions and consider them to be a policy designed and carried out by the top Soviet authorities. For instance, in October of 2017, the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) jointly with the Museum of History of GULAG and the Memory Foundation conducted a poll on the subject of political repressions of the 1930s-1940s in the Soviet Union. It showed that almost three quarters of Russian citizens (75%) know about the persecution of people for political reasons. 65% believe that political repressions were initiated by the leadership of the country, while 22% think that it was an initiative from below, by ordinary citizens and employees of the party, Soviet and security organs. 71% believe that political repressions were massive and were applied to both guilty and innocent⁴ ("Press-vypusk" 2017).

⁴ Among these, 23% of respondents evaluate the number of victims in hundreds of thousands of people, 19% cite several millions, and 17% estimate the numbers of victims in tens of thousands of people. 71% of Russians think that among victims of political repressions under Stalin were both innocent and guilty (38% believe that half of the victims were innocent; 22% cite three quarters of innocent, and 11% believe that all of the persecuted were innocent). The main feature of these political repressions was that they were carried out in the violation of human rights, often

There was no direct question in the poll whether these repressions should be considered criminal and who should bear responsibility for the crimes. VCIOM is a research center associated with the government of the Russian Federation through its Board of Directors where sit high-ranking functionaries of government agencies. Various state agencies and departments are also the main clients of the centre. Although the centre is an independent agency, one can assume with a certain level of probability that its poll questions reflect not only the opinions of ordinary Russians, but also the official line which shows ambivalence towards Stalin.

Putin's position in that regard is a telling example. When asked by the American movie maker Oliver Stone about his attitude towards Stalin, Putin answered that Stalin was a complex figure and his attitude towards Stalin is also complex. Putin explained that he is against the demonization of Stalin, as it is done in the West, but he also thinks that one should not forget about the horrors of Stalinism. He drew a parallel with Cromwell, who came to power on blood and terror, but whose monuments still stand in Great Britain. Stalin was "a product of his time", and opinions about him may vary from the demonization to the recognition of his victory over Nazism. Russian President believes that the "over-demonization" of Stalin is a way to attack Russia and the Soviet Union ("Putin rasskazal" 2016). History should be debated, discussed openly and freely; various interpretations are possible. This is a natural process of searching for truth. But an honest reckoning with the past should not lead to the settling of scores and the split in the society, said Putin at the opening of the Wall of Sorrow (Redking 2017).

Thus, the ambivalent, 'complex', in Putin words, attitude towards Stalin on the official level is explained by the desire to preserve the social fabric of the Russian society, the liberal part of which has always advocated not only for the recognition of repressions, but also for the identification and condemnation of perpetrators. Levada-Center is a well known Russian non-governmental research organization that

without the due process (41% of respondents believe that); punishment was too harsh (21%) or unjust (people should not be punished for what they were punished – 18%)

represents the liberal Russian intelligentsia. The Center has many joint projects with Western research institutions and is partly funded by various western foundations. In its recent polls of public opinion regarding the repressions of the 1930-1940, the Center formulated its questions in the discourse of responsibility for crimes and crimes, in stark contrast with the previously cited survey by VCIOM, where political repressions “were initiated” by the ‘political leadership’ of the country. In the Levada-Center survey one of the questions was how to qualify the political repressions, and one of the multiple choice options was that political repressions were a political crime that cannot be justified (“Bolshoi terror i repressii”). In April 2017, 39% of the respondents chose this answer, a stark drop compared to 2007, when this percentage was 72%. In contrast, the percentage of those who believe that the persecutions were a political necessity and are historically justified rose from 9% in 2007 to 25% in 2017 (ibid). The majority of the respondents hold the political system responsible for the repressions of the Stalin period – 41% named both Stalin and the state, 19% indicated Stalin and another 19% indicated the state system⁵ (ibid). According to the April 2017 poll, 50% of the respondents believe that those responsible for the repressions should be left alone because of the statute of limitations, whereas 21% believe that they should be tried (ibid).

Interpreting the results of the polls, Lev Gudkov, director of the Levada-Center, states that the majority of Russians do not understand the essence of the Stalin’s totalitarian regime which through the selective political repressions targeted its perceived enemies. He bases his opinion on the fact that 61-69% of the respondents in the period between 2000 and 2017 believe that Stalin’s terror was directed against all the people of the country (“Bolshoi terror i repressii” 2017). However, in the same polls, 71% of respondents categorized all the victims of Stalinist persecutions as victims of political repressions (ibid), which indicates the awareness of the intentionality of the terror versus the randomness of the punitive machine of the Soviet state, as it may appear when one refers only to the question of who was targeted in the terror.

⁵ Data from the 2009 poll.

Gudkov believes that Russian society is incapable of naming the motives and concrete culprits (persons and institutions) of the repressions and hold them responsible because of the conscious tabooing of the subject by the Russian leadership whose goal is to eclipse the guilt of the state authorities for the terror, to remove the idea of the accountability of state authorities to their citizens (ibid). The memory politics of the Russian leadership seek to mythologize the Soviet past, to push to the margins of the public memory the sense and the timing of Stalin's repressions and to supplant it with the officious myth of the Great victory, personified by Stalin. There are no authoritative figures in the Russian society who could give the moral and political assessment of the actions and the personality of Stalin, while the academic and intellectual elites do not have any significant influence on the public opinion. In the absence of such moral and intellectual leaders or the lack of their public authority, the mass consciousness cannot resist the 'restalinisation' from above, since the masses are not capable of comprehending the course of history ("Bolshoi terror i repressii"). This post-soviet "double thinking", or the double consciousness of the Russian society, when Stalin is considered responsible for political repressions, but is not recognized as a 'state criminal', has a fundamental function of preserving the Russian national identity: one of the building blocks of this identity is the positive attitude towards the Soviet Union. If one declares Stalin criminal, then one should declare criminal the Soviet state as a whole, as it was done in case of Nazi Germany (ibid). Russian collective consciousness resists such classification out of the instinct of self-preservation.

The same goal – to preserve the social fabric of the Russian society – drives the ambivalent memory politics of the Russian political leadership and the Russian state who are well aware that declaring Stalin criminal would provoke a strong resistance of a significant part of Russians. In Levada-center poll of 2017, 56% of Russians believed that Stalin has more merits than 'defects' (ibid). Gudkov states that the Russian public opinion is highly impacted by the state propaganda, such as glorification of the Great victory and the mythologization of the war, state censorship in the media and in schools, the state-sponsored campaign against the 'falsification' of history. It is certainly true. But it is also true that Russian public space is not

under the tight control of the state, and individuals and groups who consider Stalin a tyrant and a criminal, are free to express their opinions, albeit with certain restrictions. For instance, a well-known human rights organization Memorial, which was founded by the famous Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov and which focuses on the rehabilitation of victims of political repressions, was added by the Russian Ministry of Justice to the register of non-profit organizations functioning as foreign agents, because it collaborates with Western human rights organizations and receives funding from various Western institutions. The Levada-Center is in this register as well.

The Museum of the History of Political Repression Perm-36, known as the Gulag Museum, also received the request to register as foreign agent. The museum was operated by the Memorial Society on the territory of the former forced labour camp. It had a prolonged conflict with the left-wing and patriotic organizations, such as the local cell of the Communist party of the Russian Federation, and local authorities. They were accusing the Museum of presenting the Baltic and Ukrainian anti-Soviet insurgents during the WWII as martyrs of the Soviet regime. In spring of 2014, when following the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Russian patriotism reached its pick, the conflict exacerbated. Local authorities withdrew their financial support, cut water and electricity. The camp was transferred under the municipal responsibility, and new people were appointed by the state authorities.

According to the former director of the Perm-36 Museum Viktor Shmyrov, they changed the content of the exhibits of the museum from political repressions to the system of camps' (Peter 2015). Shmyrov also states that transferring of the museum under the state authority and changing of the content was approved by president Putin himself and that the museum will eventually be closed under the pretext that the number of visitors is dwindling and there is not enough public interest in the subject (Peter 2015).

However, the museum is well and functioning. It is called now the Memorial Complex of Political Repressions and has the statute of the state autonomous institution of culture of the Perm Region. One of

the exhibits of the museum, Veshchdoc (or material evidence in colloquial Russian), created on the occasion of the 80-th anniversary of the Great Terror, is based on archival and investigative cases from the Perm State Archive of Social and Political History. It talks about Stalinist repressions, conducted for political reasons ("Vystavka 'Veshchdoc'"). Another exhibit, entitled "Between dream and reality" and created on the occasion of the 100 anniversary of the Russian Revolution, presents different views on more than a century-old era of communism, including the Soviet Union ("Mezhdunarodnaia vystavka"). Judging by the description of the exhibit, it reflects an objective picture of the Soviet experience, which included not only GULAG, but also the conquest of space, the technological and scientific advancements, public access to literacy, education, and health care.

The Perm-36 museum was not shot down. It was transformed according to the perception of the Soviet past by the majority of Russians and by the Russian state. The Russian state recognizes and condemns the fact of political repressions, carried out by its predecessor, the Stalin regime. It does not approve it covertly, nor does it try to belittle its importance and scale, as the director of Levada-Center suggests ("Bolshoi terror i repressii"). The GULAG Museum in Moscow, the Perm-36 Museum, the recently opened Memorial to Victims of Political Repressions in Moscow, Butovo training ground Memorial, many other sites of mass burials, as well as books of memory and other initiatives by the civil society organizations to preserve the memory of victims of political repressions, as well as public opinion polls testify that Russians remember Stalin's terror and the majority of them condemn the political terror as means of governing a country. But they are not willing to hold Stalin personally responsible for the terror and declare him a criminal. They have also acquitted Communism as ideology and social movement from the persecutions committed by the Soviet leadership, when Yeltsin tried to ban the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. The memory of political repressions did not take over the positive assessment of the Soviet experience and the great achievements of the Soviet Union, the main one being the victory over Nazism. The ambivalence of the memory politics of the Russian leadership is not only the reflection of the ambivalent attitude of Russians

towards the Soviet past. It is also a conscious effort to preserve the unity of Russia as a country that rebuilds itself after the disastrous period of neoliberal reforms of the 1990s. Such ambivalence allows for the co-existence and expression of diverging views on the Soviet experience, without overtly suppressing the ones that do not fit into matrix of the majority.

Chapter 6: Ukraine's Soviet Legacy

In Ukraine, on the official level, the assessment of the Soviet past followed an ascending line towards the condemnation of the whole period of 1917-1991 as a “totalitarian regime,” culminating in the adoption of the package of “Decommunization Laws” in April 2015. Such conceptualization of the Soviet period in Ukrainian history is a manifestation and a product of a gradual political movement towards the European Union and democratization and away from Russia.

Ukraine has always been split politically, culturally, and socially between Europe and Russia: in South-Eastern Ukraine, the largely Russian-speaking population has always been closer to Russia due to common historical roots, while in Western Ukraine the Ukrainian-speaking population has always been oriented towards Europe because of a different common past and culture. This division does not cut Ukraine in two neat opposite halves. Between them lies Central Ukraine as a “transitory” zone, with no clear preference for one or another orientation, but presenting a balance between the two. This numerically large and strategically important center remains ambivalent on the Soviet past (Shevel 2014, p. 162). On two extremes of this Russia-Europe opposition are Donetsk and Lviv. In the chapters devoted to these cities, a more detailed historical and social analysis of the Donbas and Halychyna (Galicia) regions is provided.

The assessment of the Soviet past in Ukraine has been stretched on a continuum from overall celebration to complete negation. The Left, represented until 2015 by the orthodox Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), led by Petro Symonenko, unambiguously qualifies the Soviet period as positive (Shevel 2014, p. 154). In Symonenko's opinion, Soviet Ukraine was a country with a powerful economy, a highly developed industry and diversified agriculture, and world-class science, arts, literature, and education. In Soviet Ukraine, and more generally in the Soviet Union, the social system was based on principles of social justice, equality, and

respect of the working people. It was the Great October Revolution and Soviet power that granted Ukrainians the right to self-determination and Ukrainian statehood (Symonenko 2012).

Symonenko also embraces the old Soviet interpretation of the Ukrainian nation as part of an Eastern Slavic brotherhood and/or a component of a single “Soviet people” (Shevel 2014, p. 153). With this vision of the Soviet past the period of Ukrainian independence is seen as the coming to power of powerful oligarchs who appropriated people’s property and bought political parties to represent them in the government, while “national-fascist clowns of different varieties” have been sowing antagonism and xenophobia by promoting the “Ukraine for the Ukrainians” slogan and program (Shevel 2014, p. 154). Ukrainian nationalists are portrayed as direct descendants of Nazis who in 1941-1944 “here, on the Ukrainian land, killed our great-grandfathers, grandfathers, and fathers,” declared Symonenko in Kyiv, during the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Babyn Yar massacre (“Symonenko v Babynomu Yaru” 2011).

On the opposite end of the spectrum of assessment of the Soviet past is the Ukrainian Right, which sees the Soviet period in the history of Ukraine as a continuation of Russian imperialist rule. In this version of history, the Soviet past is totally black. The Soviet regime colonized Ukraine even more, crushing Ukrainians’ aspirations for an independent state with collectivization, famine, the destruction of the cultural elite in 1932-1937, and policies of Russification throughout the Soviet period. In the Right’s view of the Ukrainian nation and the Ukrainian state, Russia is presented as the main “Other,” against which the Ukrainian identity is constructed. The Soviet period is yet another period of occupation, which ended in 1991 when the dream of independent Ukrainian state was finally realized (Shevel 2014, p. 155).

The main bearer of this nationalist interpretation of the Soviet past became Rukh (full name - Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring, *rukh* meaning ‘movement’ in Ukrainian) (Shevel, *ibid*). Rukh, as a social and political organization, grew out of many grass-root organizations and associations, which mushroomed in the perestroika era. Many of them became politicized later, acquiring a national dimension

(Smoliy 2008, p. 890). The political program of Rukh, elaborated by the Union of Writers of Ukraine and published in February of 1989 in *Literaturna Ukraina*, the Union's weekly newspaper, had as its main focus the rebirth and comprehensive development of the Ukrainian nation (Magocsi 2000, p. 670). The program stressed the Ukrainian character of the country and the need to protect the Ukrainian language, however, without calling for independence. Instead, Rukh envisioned Ukraine as a truly sovereign state within a transformed Soviet Union, where Ukraine could determine its own political, economic, and cultural policies without Moscow's interference (Magocsi 2000, p. 671). Rukh supported the cultural rebirth of national minorities —Jews and Crimean Tatars, in particular — and adopted a special address to Russians in Ukraine (Haran and Sydorchuk 2010, p. 184).

Because of its ideological, political, and economic pluralism, Rukh attracted people with sometimes diametrically opposing views, from liberal Communists-reformers to dissidents, human rights activists, and right-wing nationalists. At the founding congress of Rukh in September 1989 in Kyiv, the movement had an impressive 280,000 members, making it a large democratic front (Haran and Sydorchuk 2010, p. 184). The support of prominent Ukrainian writers, such as Ivan Drach and Volodymyr Yavorivskiy, and philosopher Myroslav Popovych, was instrumental in granting Rukh more legitimacy and enlarging its social basis of support, compared to the limited popularity of dissidents and human rights organizations, such as the Helsinki Group (Haran and Sydorchuk 2010, p.184).

At the founding congress, Ivan Drach was elected Chairman, while Mykhailo Horyn, a prominent Ukrainian dissident and human rights activist and member of the Helsinki Group, was elected as the head of the secretariat (Haran and Sydorchuk 2010, p.184). These two prominent figures represented two opposing programmatic poles within Rukh. Moderates, such as Drach, Yavorivskiy, and Dmytro Pavlychko, who were established Soviet Ukrainian writers, voiced a moderate vision of Ukraine, outlined in the program. Radicals, dissidents like Horyn, Levko Lukianenko, and Viacheslav Chornovil, insisted that Ukraine should

secede from the Soviet Union and become independent (Smoliy 2008, p. 892). At the founding Congress, it was noted that Rukh did not represent the whole of Ukraine, since up to 50% of its members were from Western Ukraine. The warning was voiced that Ukraine's destiny is being decided not in Kyiv or Lviv, but in the East and the West. The social basis of Rukh was also restricted by class. Out of 1109 delegates, the overwhelming majority (984) represented the intelligentsia, while workers and peasants were significantly underrepresented (Smoliy 2008, p. 893).

Many historical facts suggest a lack of Ukrainian nationalist sentiment in South-Eastern Ukraine. On January 21, 1990, Rukh organized the largest public action of the perestroika era in Ukraine - a human "live chain" to represent the unity of Ukraine, from Lviv to Kharkiv. However, when it became clear that it would be impossible to mobilize a sufficient number of people in the East, the chain was shortened. It connected Kyiv to Ivano-Frankivsk along the highway through Zhytomyr, Rivne, Ternopil, and Lviv. According to the data of the Ministry of Interior, around 450,000 people participated in the live chain, while organizers claimed that one million did (Kasianov 2008, p. 20-21).

In the first democratic elections in Ukraine in March 1990 the Democratic Bloc, of which Rukh was a member, obtained 25% of the vote (Kasianov 2008, p. 16). It scored poorly in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, except for the cities of Kharkiv and Donetsk (Kuzio and Wilson 1994, p. 125), while in the three Western oblasts of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil it obtained a sweeping 43 out of 47 seats. In Central Ukraine, it won 50% of the seats (ibid). In the elections to regional councils, which took place at the same time, the Democratic Bloc won a large majority in Western Ukraine. It also obtained 60% of votes in the regional council of Kharkiv, and 40% in Kyiv region. (Kasianov 2008, p. 16). The Communist Party of Ukraine still preserved its strength in rural areas outside of the three Western oblasts, in small towns, and in Southern and Eastern Ukraine (Kuzio and Wilson 1994, p. 126).

Lviv oblast elected as the head of the regional council a prominent Ukrainian dissident, Viacheslav Chornovil. In its first statement, the new council described Lviv oblast as “an island of freedom,” which is set on the right path to destroy the totalitarian system and to fulfill the Ukrainian nation’s eternal vision - an independent, democratic Ukrainian state (Kuzio and Wilson 1994, p. 127). In the spring of 1990, the Lviv Regional Council made another statement, which condemned the “double” occupation of Ukraine by the Soviet Army in 1919 and 1939. The deputies urged to recognize as illegal Ukraine’s belonging to the Soviet Union on the grounds that Ukraine was annexed to the Soviet Union by “occupational authorities” (Kasianov 2008, p 17).

In all three oblasts of Western Ukraine, one of the first decisions of regional councils was to replace Soviet symbols with Ukrainian national symbols and to close down Communist Party cells in factories and institutions (Kuzio and Wilson 1994, p. 127). The first case of the dismantling of a Lenin statue in Ukraine happened in Chervonohrad, in Lviv region, on August 1, 1990. By August 24, 1991, the day the Ukrainian parliament declared independence, 246 monuments to Lenin had been dismantled in Lviv region alone, while by the end of the 1990s, more than two thousands were removed throughout Western Ukraine. The decisions to do away with the monuments were taken by local councils, where the majority of deputies were from Rukh (Podobed 2014).

In the all-Union referendum on March 17, 1991, which was a desperate attempt by Gorbachev to save the Soviet Union as a federation of equal sovereign republics, regional councils in Galicia added a question on the voting bulletin: “Do you support a full independence of Ukraine, which guarantees equal rights to all citizens, regardless of their nationality and religion?”. The majority said a decisive “yes” to independence (85-90%) and “no” to the Union (76-80%) (Kasianov 2008, p. 26-27). Throughout Ukraine, except for these three Western Ukrainian regions, and the city of Kyiv, the majority of the population voted for maintaining the Soviet Union (Kuzio 2000, p. 169).

In Eastern Ukraine, particularly in Donbas, the national-patriotic movement was marginal. During the protests of the summer of 1989, miners made social and economic demands (improving living conditions, lowering production norms, increasing coal procurement prices, etc.). These strikes laid the foundation of the independent workers movement in Ukraine (Smoliy 2008, p. 894). However, the deterioration of the central economy and the political crisis in Moscow pushed miners to demand more autonomy for the Ukrainian republic. In June 1990, in Donetsk, the first Congress of Miners of the USSR, where 58% of delegates were from Ukraine, stated that the main cause of stagnation in the economy was the system of management, led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). On July 11 of the same year, in a one-day warning strike, miners organized numerous rallies in support of demands by the Congress. Among these were the resignation of the current government and the creation of a government of national trust, the depoliticization of law-enforcement agencies, the cessation of party committees in mines and plants, and the nationalization of the CPSU assets (Smoliy 2008, p. 896). National-democrats joined the miners' protests. Yellow and blue flags appeared at street demonstrations (Kasianov 2008, p. 21).

In the spring of 1991, a new wave of miners' protests rolled through major Donbas cities. Protesters voiced the same economic and political demands. Days-long strikes culminated in a miners' march on Kyiv, where they hoped to raise workers from around Ukraine. In early April, a Republican striking committee was formed in Kyiv. It did not lead to an all-Ukrainian strike, but the miners' protests had all-Union repercussions (Smoliy 2008, p. 900), as Gorbachev accelerated his efforts to negotiate a new Union treaty. On April 23 he invited to Novo-Ogarevo, near Moscow, leaders of nine Soviet republics in an attempt to work out a new compromise formula for the Union. However, time was running out, as the situation was rapidly escalating. Democrats were demanding radical reforms, which met with resistance from Communist conservatives. Socio-economic conditions continued to deteriorate, leading to growing popular discontent (*ibid*). In June, a founding congress of the all-Ukrainian Organization of Solidarity of Workers

took place in Kyiv. Participants reiterated demands, voiced earlier by miners: Ukraine's exit from the USSR; dissolution of the CPSU and of parliament (Verkhovna Rada) and so on (ibid).

These demands echoed intentions of the so-called "sovereign-communists" within the CPU. With the departure of the hard-liner Volodymyr Scherbytsky from the position of First Secretary of the CPU, the Communist elite (also known then as "nomenklatura") started changing. A number of Communists, led by Leonid Kravchuk, the head of the Ideology Department of the CPU, supported the autonomy of Ukraine as a way to distance themselves from Moscow and increase their power in Ukraine, but still within the Soviet Union. However, the rapid rise in popularity of Rukh and a worsening economic situation in Ukraine pushed sovereign-communists to more radical steps. In October 1989, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the law "On Languages in the Ukrainian SSR," which granted Ukrainian the status of state language (Kasianov 2008, p. 15). In the March 1990 elections to the Rada, the group of Communists, or the group of 239, which was led by Oleksandr Moroz and included all Communists, from the most conservative to the "sovereign-Communists", gained the majority (Kasianov 2008, p. 16).

In July 1990 Ukrainian Communists finally dared to adopt a "Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine," following the examples of several republics, including Russia. The Declaration described a large autonomy of Ukraine, including the creation of its own army, a national currency, and ownership of all natural resources. National democrats, as pro-Rukh deputies were called, tried to use this Declaration as an opportunity to amend the Constitution of Ukraine, but their attempt met a unified resistance of the Communist majority (Harasymiw 2002, p.6). In August, under pressure from the all-Ukrainian strike of miners of Donbas, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the declaration "On the Economic Independence of Ukraine" (Kasianov 2008, p. 21).

Crucially, it was the sovereign-communists, joined by national democrats, who demanded from Moscow the recognition of a full sovereignty of Ukraine in a new Union treaty and added a corresponding question to

the referendum of March 17, 1991 (Kasianov 2008, p. 25). The stalemate between the two wings of the CPU, conservatives and sovereign-communists, characterized Ukraine's transition from a Soviet republic to an independent state (1989-1991). Conservative Communists in Kyiv were acting in cooperation with Communist hardliners in Moscow, who opposed Gorbachev's reforms (Kuzio 2000, p. 160). In August of 1991, they attempted a coup d'état in Moscow, a so-called putsch. A significant part of Communist MPs in the Rada supported the "putschists" (Kasianov 2008, p. 27).

The necessity to declare the independence of Ukraine became the main subject of political debates. Leonid Kravchuk, the leader of sovereign-communists and head of the Verkhovna Rada, took a cautious, wait-and-see position, trying to avoid an open conflict with Moscow, which could provoke bloodshed. The opposition acted resolutely. On August 19, the first day of the putsch, democratic parties and Rukh formed the coalition "Independent Democratic Ukraine," condemned the coup d'état in Moscow, and called upon citizens to organize acts of civil disobedience. They also asked Kravchuk to condemn the putsch.

Radical nationalists created the paramilitary organization Ukrainian National Self-Defence. The Union of Ukrainian students began an indefinite strike on the central place in Kyiv. The Union of strike committees of some cities in Donbas declared a pre-strike preparedness (Kasianov 2008, p. 28). It was, however, becoming clear that the conservative Communist coup in Moscow was failing. On August 21, at an emergency meeting of the Verkhovna Rada, Kravchuk condemned the coup d'état in Moscow as anti-constitutional only when it became clear that the putsch had failed. Although several regional committees of the CPU supported the putschists, the Central Committee of the CPU condemned the coup d'état. Even the most conservative Communists in the Verkhovna Rada understood that they did not really have a choice. On August 24, 1991, by an absolute majority (346- in favour, 4 - against), deputies of the Verkhovna adopted the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine (Lytvyn 2003, p. 57). On August 26, 1991, the Presidium of the Verkhovna Rada suspended the Communist Party of Ukraine on the grounds that the party

leadership by its actions supported the coup d'état (Pyrih 2007, p. 517). The next day the Central Committee of the CPU convened a plenum which declared the decision of the Verkhovna Rada ungrounded and anti-constitutional and proclaimed that the CPU breaks all ties with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and becomes completely autonomous. In spite of these declarations, Leonid Kravchuk, who only a few weeks ago left the CPU, signed on August 30 the decree of Verkhovna Rada 'On the prohibition of the activities of the Communist Party of Ukraine' (Bilotserkivskiy 2007, p. 512). However, after the Court rescinded the ban, the Communist Party of Ukraine was recreated, at a conference in Donetsk in 1993, and Petro Symonenko became its new leader.

In parliamentary elections to the Rada throughout the years of Ukrainian independence, the CPU had its basis of support in South-Eastern Ukraine, a highly industrialized area with strong industrial, cultural and language ties to Russia. In the 1994 election, the CPU obtained 85 seats out of 450 and formed the largest faction. In the 1998 elections, it received 123 seats and formed the basis of the parliamentary majority. Symonenko was the main rival of President Leonid Kuchma in the 1999 presidential elections. In the 2002 elections, the CPU got 65 seats. The electoral support of the CPU continued dwindling. In the 2012 parliamentary elections, the Communists secured only 32 seats. During the 2014 extraordinary elections to the Verkhovna Rada, the CPU for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine did not gather the necessary 5% of votes to obtain seats in the parliament (Central Election Commission 2014). After the Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014 and the overthrowing of President Yanukovich, the Communist Party of Ukraine was accused by the new Ukrainian leaders of complicity in "terrorist and separatist" activities in Crimea and Donbas ("Turchynov khoche zaboronyty" 2014). The Security Service of Ukraine opened an investigation in June 2014. The CPU, however, was able to participate in the parliamentary elections.

In April 2015, the Rada adopted the law "On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and Banning of their Propaganda and Symbols," which effectively

outlaws the CPU. In July, based on this law, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine issued a decree to that effect. The attempts by the CPU to appeal the decree in Ukrainian courts failed. In this way, the new, Euromaidan government of Ukraine embraced the anti-communist, anti-Soviet rhetoric of the Ukrainian nationalist Right, which was reborn during the perestroika period. Prior to the Euromaidan events, between the Left and the Right, there was also in Ukraine an “amorphous” Centre, who never offered a clear vision of Ukraine’s past and historical memory (Shevel 2014, p. 13-14). The Centre used memory instrumentally, to gain political allies from the Right or the Left, and tried to avoid a black and white view of the Soviet past (ibid).

The first two Ukrainian presidents, Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma, were themselves to a large extent products of the Soviet system, and could not repudiate the Soviet past (Kuzio 1998, p. 7). As in any transition period, no government can start from a “clean sheet.” There is always continuity with the “ancien regime” by maintaining the old cadres to run the state apparatus and economic infrastructure. In 1990 Ukraine, the old party nomenklatura remained in power, embracing a moderate version of Ukrainian nationalism ideology. Kravchuk in 1992 condemned the famine of 1932-33 as a genocide against Ukrainians, planned by the state and by the Communist Party authorities “on the basis of instructions, given from outside” (quoted in Kuzio 1998, p. 10). In an official ceremony in August 1992, he accepted the regalia of the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UNR), which had been proclaimed in November of 1917, following the October Revolution in 1917, and existed for three years, from the president of the UNR in exile, Mykola Plaviuk, thus declaring officially a historical continuity of two Ukraines - a pre-Soviet UNR and a post-Soviet Ukraine.

Kuchma, who belonged to a “pragmatic group” (Kuzio 1998, p. 9), had a “gray” picture of the Soviet legacy of Ukraine. For instance, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Second World War, Kuchma invited Ukrainian military officers to draw inspiration from both Cossack and Soviet traditions in their

efforts to build new Ukrainian armed forces (quoted in Kuzio 1998, p. 10). Kuchma also incorporated in his political views the nationalist version of Ukrainian history, according to which Ukrainians have been conducting endless liberation fights against foreign “occupation” regimes (first of all, Russians, but also Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, etc.) until gaining of independence in 1991. Even despite over seventy years of the “cosmopolitan idea” of Soviet Communism, Ukraine “had always maintained its own ferment of independence” (quoted in Kuzio 1998, p. 10). Under Kuchma’s presidency a Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Famines was established, to be officially commemorated on the fourth week of November (“Pro vstanovlennia” 1998). It primarily aimed at the Great Famine of 1932-33, which Ukrainian nationalists and national-democrats put on the political agenda as one of the main articles of accusation against the Soviet regime as heir to Stalin’s totalitarianism.

Legislating the 1932-33 as a genocide

During the Soviet period, the 1932-33 famine was taboo. The memory of this tragic, devastating event was limited to personal recollections and private discussions. People within Ukraine kept quiet for fear of being accused of anti-Soviet propaganda. It was never brought into the public domain. With perestroika, it became one of the main topics in the revelation of crimes of Stalinism in Ukraine. The anti-Soviet Ukrainian Diaspora in North America, who made of famine one of the central points in their campaign of the defamation of the Soviet Union, played an instrumental role in bringing the question back to Ukraine by the end of the 1980s (see Ostriitchouk 2013, pp. 223-252; Mokrushyna 2010).

Within Ukraine itself, it was Soviet Ukrainian writers such as Ivan Drach, Dmytro Pavlychko, Oles Honchar, Borys Oliynyk, Volodymyr Maniak, and dissidents, such as Levko Lukianenko, Ivan Dziuba, and Viacheslav Chornovil, who took over the baton from the Diaspora (Ostriitchouk 2013, pp. 255-256). In fact, they already started the work of discovering “blind spots” in the history of Ukraine, following the example of publications in Moscow literary journals, such as *Znamia*, *Ogoniok*, and *Novyi mir* (Smoliy 2008, p. 885). The Communist party itself changed its historical narrative. In December of 1987, in a speech on the

occasion of the 70-th anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine, the First Secretary of the CPU Volodymyr Shcherbytsky recognized that during the 1930s there was a famine in villages of Ukraine (Smoliy 2008, p. 886).

After the publication of first archival documents not only from abroad, but also from Ukraine, the Central Committee of the CPU in January 1990 voted a resolution to recognize the famine of 1932-33 as a true people's tragedy, caused by the criminal policy of Stalin, Molotov, and Kaganovich against peasants. The CPU also condemned the Republican leadership's "cynical" way of conducting the campaign of grain procurement. The resolution tasked party historians with the publication of scientific articles and archives on the 1932-33 famine in Ukraine and recommended the mass media to provide an objective, truthful, and documented coverage of the famine (Ostriitchouk 2013, p. 262).

In spite of these official revelations, Ukrainians did not show a great interest in the subject, and the educational mission of Ukrainian intellectuals and the Ukrainian Diaspora continued. The Association of Researchers of the 1932-33 famine-genocide in Ukraine was created in 1992 (Ostriitchouk 2013, p. 267). It deployed energetic efforts to revive the memory of famine in Ukraine with roundtables, publications, religious services, installation of monuments, and the maintenance of burials. It is under the pressure of numerous demands from this Association that Leonid Kuchma signed the decree on the official Day of Commemoration (Ostriitchouk 2013, p. 273). The question of the Ukrainian famine became highly politicized under the pro-Western, nationalist-leaning president Viktor Yushchenko. In an effort to build a national identity that would unite Western and Eastern Ukraine, he controversially chose the famine of 1932-33 as a foundational block of this identity. Yushchenko followed the logic of the Ukrainian Diaspora that had created the image of Ukraine as a nation-victim at the hands of the Russian/Soviet Empire since the emergence of Soviet Ukraine in 1922. In November 2006, Yushchenko introduced a draft law recognizing the famine of 1932-33 as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation ("Proekt zakonu pro

holodomor” 2006). If adopted, this law would officially settle the question of the intentionality of the famine, which became the heart of the public debates in Ukraine and Ukrainian circles abroad.

Leading Western historians, supported by the Ukrainian Diaspora, argued that the famine was the result of Stalin’s deliberate policy to destroy Ukrainian peasants through collectivization and an artificially created famine. The collectivization was a campaign, launched in 1929 by the Soviet authorities, to abolish individual farms and create instead state-owned and collective farms (*radhospy* and *kolhospy* in Ukrainian. According to Soviet history books, poor peasants joined these farms voluntarily and enthusiastically. The so-called *kurkuli* (or *kulaki* in Russian), well-off farmers who hired poorer peasants to help with work, were labelled exploiters, arrested and stripped of their possessions. Some were executed and more than a million people were deported to far-off regions of Russia. Even poor peasants, who resisted the collectivization, were often labelled *kurkuli* or their supporters (“Holodomor basic facts”) and punished accordingly. Collectivization destroyed the class of farmers not only in Ukraine but throughout all agricultural regions of Russia and other Soviet republics.

Collectivization resulted in chaos and a decrease in agricultural production. The Soviet state desperately needed grain to feed the rapidly growing urban population and to purchase abroad the machinery required for industrialization. In 1932 the Communist Party set unrealistically high grain quotas for collective farms in villages. In the requisition campaign, Soviet authorities sent special teams to search homes. Even the seed, set aside for planting, was confiscated. Starving farmers tried to leave in search of food, but they were apprehended and sent back to their villages, following a special decree by Soviet authorities. People were prevented from taking even a few stalks of grain according to a law adopted in August 1932. In some places, soldiers were protecting the cropping fields. The theft was considered an act of sabotage, punishable by execution. The Soviet Ukrainian leadership informed Moscow of starvation, asking to send in

aid and to reduce quotas. Stalin, however, ordered local official to intensify grain collection efforts (“Holodomor basic facts”).

Ukrainian demographers have estimated the total number of direct deaths in the Famine at 3.9 million (Rudnytskyi et al. 2015, p. 64). The figure was used by the Kyiv City Appeal Court in a 2009 trial on the famine. The Court ruled that the leadership of the Bolshevik regime (Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich in Moscow, and Postyshev, Kosior, Chubar, and Khataievich in Soviet Ukraine) “employed on the territory of Ukraine in peacetime the repressive apparatus of the Communist totalitarian regime, took a decision and artificially created conditions for the extermination by hunger of a part of Ukrainian nation” (“Postanova apeliatsiynoho sudu” 2009). Stalin and his accomplices, according to the ruling, intended to suppress the national liberation movement in Ukraine and prevent the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state. Because of the death of all of the accused, the guilty verdict could not be announced, and the case was declared closed (ibid). The court officially identified the leadership of the Communist Party as the main culprits of the famine. On the next day, the Head of the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) Valentyn Nalyvaichenko stated in a press conference that the indirect losses through the unborn children constitute 6.1 million people, bringing the total of human losses in the Ukrainian famine of 1932-33 to a staggering number of 10 million (Hryha 2010). Ukrainian demographers, however, estimate the number of indirect losses at 0.6 million (Rudnytskyi et al. 2015, p. 69).

The counter-narrative of some Western historians and many Russian historians, does not deny the fact of the famine itself. The main point of contention is the claim that the famine was a planned act, directed specifically against the Ukrainian nation. R. W. Davies and S. G. Wheatcroft, the most cited researchers, see the famine as a consequence of collectivization, de-kulakisation and forced grain acquisition. A severe drought and weed infestation, which affected the principal grain-producing regions of the USSR — Ukraine, the Volga region and the Kuban in Russia, and Kazakhstan — added to the already severe shortage of food.

Not only Ukrainians, but Kazakhs and Russians died from famine. From the Davies and Wheatcroft perspective, the Stalin government was guilty of mismanagement and miscalculation, but not of a deliberate act of genocide targeting specifically Ukrainians, because there is no clear statement of such intention in any of the documents related to the famine (Davies and Wheatcroft, cited in Rees 2012, pp. 227-228).

Other historians argue that the famine could be framed as genocide, but against the peasantry as a class, and the outcome — the destruction of private farms — could serve as the basis of a genocide case (Ellman 2007). The dispute about whether the Ukrainian famine of 1932-33 can be considered a genocide was legally resolved in November 2006, when the Verkhovna Rada, by a narrow margin of 233 votes out of 450, passed the bill that recognized the famine as a genocide against the Ukrainian people. The law pointed out the culprit, the totalitarian regime of the USSR, which through its criminal actions “organized the Holodomor that resulted in the destruction of millions of human lives, of the social foundations of the Ukrainian people, their ancient traditions, spirituality, and ethnic selfhood” (“Pro Holodomor” 2006). The vote was split along party lines: the national-democratic parties Our Ukraine, of President Viktor Yushchenko, and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, supported by the Socialist Party, voted in favour, while the Communist Party of Ukraine and the pro-Russian Party of Regions abstained (Rees 2012, p. 229).

During the debate, the Party of Regions and the CPU opposed the use of the word “genocide,” replacing it in their version of the law by “tragedy” and “crime against humanity.” They also proposed to use “Ukrainian people” instead of “Ukrainian nation,” because the victims of the famine were not only ethnic Ukrainians (Rees 2012, p. 228). Another objection of the CPU concerned the clause on criminalizing famine denial, directly copied from the law on the denial of the Holocaust. Communists criticized this clause on the grounds that it would prevent researchers from studying archives, organizing conferences, and debating with colleagues (“Fraktsiya KPU zaklykaye” 2006). The clause on administrative responsibility for the

denial of Holodomor was taken out of the law on the famine and replaced by a paragraph stating that the denial of the Holodomor is recognized as a desecration of the memory of millions of victims of the Holodomor, a humiliation to the dignity of the Ukrainian people and is illegal ("Pro Holodomor", 2006).

During the debates in the Verkhovna Rada on November 28, representatives of the Communist Party opposed the law, reminding that the Central Committee of the CPU in its resolution of January 1990 recognized and condemned the violent methods of collectivization and disastrous grain procurement policy, which, coupled with an unprecedented drought and a poor crop, led to a terrible famine. The resolution also named party and economy managers guilty of errors and crimes. CPU MP Holub, voicing the position of his party, stated that President Yushchenko's bill on recognizing the Holodomor as genocide uses human tragedy to create a myth that the Ukrainian ethnos is a chosen one and to form on this basis a social environment enabling the ideology and practice of "neo-fascism." In this view, the bill, instead of its declared purpose of unifying Ukrainians, splits them and, if adopted, will strain relations with Russia (Holub 2006). Another deputy from the CPU, Tsybenko, at the beginning of deliberations in the Rada, accused the national democrats of using the controversial question of the 1932-33 famine to distract public attention from their failure to provide decent conditions of living for Ukrainians. The attempts by national-democrats to institute neoliberal reforms, such as raising prices for food and heating, led to a huge demographic loss of 6 million people since the end of the Soviet Union (Tsybenko 2006). These accusations were voiced by other Communist deputies as well.

Representatives of the Party of Regions also saw in the Holodomor draft law not the attempt to establish historical truth and justice, and it was claimed, but the desire to create an environment hostile to Russia, to present the Russian people as culprits, and demand material and moral compensation from Russia as the legal successor of the Soviet Union (Khara 2006). The Party of Regions proposed an alternative draft law on the Holodomor, which in their view reconciled the two opposite versions presented by Communists and

National-Democrats. The draft law qualified Holodomor as a crime against humanity, committed by the Stalinist regime, and a national tragedy of the Ukrainian people. The Party of Regions believed that Verkhovna Rada, as a legislative body, could not convict a policy as a criminal act, because such decisions are the competence of the courts, according to Ukrainian law. Only the Criminal Code of Ukraine can qualify an act as a genocide. Therefore any such recognition by the Rada in a law violates Ukraine's Constitution. Viacheslav Zabarskiy, the author of the Party of Regions' draft law on the Holodomor, remarked that the historical memory of Ukrainians should be formed on the condemnation of any crime against humanity, irrespective of ideology or of who committed it. Such a balanced approach would ensure ideological parity among various political groups and would be truly moral (Zabarskiy 2006).

However, this call for a balanced, objective and democratic approach was not heard by the nationalist-democratic bloc, determined to put on record the crimes of the "Stalin/Soviet regime" against the Ukrainian people. The vote on Ukrainian famine did split Ukraine and did worsen relations with Russia.

After he was elected President in 2010, the allegedly "pro-Russian" Viktor Yanukovich tried to roll back the nationalist reading of Ukrainian history by declaring that the famine of 1932-33 was not a genocide directed against one specific nation, but a tragedy common to all the peoples of the Soviet Union, a result of Stalin's totalitarian regime and its attitude towards people (Piatnitskaya 2010).

The Party of Regions also followed up on its idea to recognize all crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine. In July 2013, 148 Ukrainian deputies signed an address to the Polish Parliament calling upon them to recognize the mass killing of Polish civilians by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), the underground army of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists under Bandera (OUN-B), in Volyn region in 1943 as genocide against Poles. The deputies came from the same parties that opposed the recognition of the Ukrainian famine as genocide - 119 were from the Party of Regions, 23 from the Communist Party, and six unaffiliated ("Deputaty vid Partiyi" 2013). On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Volyn massacre,

Polish senators were debating how to qualify the massacre of Poles, carried out by the OUN-UPA. In a resolution, the Polish parliament (Sejm) stated that around 100,000 Poles were murdered and categorized the Volyn massacre as “ethnic cleansing with characteristics of genocide,” ignoring the call of Ukrainian historians to conceptualize the massacres as “mutual ethnic cleansing of the Ukrainian and Polish populations” (“Senat Polshchi” 2013). Polish, as well as Western historians dispute the figure of 100 000 and estimate that between 40,000-60,000 Poles were killed by the UPA in Volyn region (Snyder 2003, p. 170).

Ukrainian national-democrats reacted harshly to the address signed by deputies from the Party of Regions and the Communist Party. The first Ukrainian president, the “national communist” Leonid Kravchuk, called it an “anti-public, anti-national act that can be compared to national treason” (“Kravchuk pryryvniav” 2013). Deputies of the extreme nationalist party Svoboda Oleh Tyahnybok, the leader, and Iryna Farion stated that it is unprecedented in the ‘world history’ that deputies, elected by the people of a state, tried to discredit their state by asking politicians from another state to “publicly humiliate their own nation, their own heroes.” The deputies who signed the address to Polish Parliament are traitors and should be punished (“Farion zvynuvachuye 2013”).

Ukraine’s decommunization laws

The anti-Soviet orientation of Ukrainian nationalists is rooted in their hate of imperial Russia as the oppressor of Ukrainian aspirations for an independent state. Ukrainian nationalists see in the Soviet Union the continuation of the Russian Empire, and this view was institutionalized in the adoption, in 2015, of the so-called laws on decommunization, which consist of four laws: the “Law on the Condemnation of Communist and Social-Nationalist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and on the Banning of the Propaganda of their Symbols”; the “Law on Access to the Archives of the Repressive Organs of the Communist Totalitarian Regime of 1917-1991”, the law “On the Legal Status and Honouring the Memory of

Participants of the Struggle for Ukraine's Freedom in the 20th Century", and the law "On Immortalizing the Victory over Nazism in the Second World War of 1939-1945" ("Dekomunizatsiya").

The adoption of these laws was done in breach of the legal order, determined by the Ukrainian Constitution and regulations of the Verkhovna Rada. A draft law, after it is tabled and before it is introduced in the Rada, is reviewed by a group of experts (known as the Holovne naukovo-ekspertne upravlinnia, or Chief Scientific and Expert Directorate), who provide an academic and legal assessment of the bill and its conformity to various requirements of the Ukrainian legislation (economic, financial, ecological, etc.). It is then examined by a corresponding special committee of the Rada. If approved, with or without amendments, by the Directorate and the Committee, the draft law is then submitted for deliberations by the Rada. As a rule, draft laws pass three readings during a plenary session of the Parliament ("Poriadok pryiniattia"). All of the four decommunization laws were adopted without any deliberations. The text of the "Law on the Condemnation of Communist and Social-Nationalist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine" was tabled by a group of deputies, headed by the leader of Radical Party Oleh Liashko, on April 3, 2015, registered in the Rada on April 6, included in the agenda of plenary session on April 7, and voted for on April 9. In other words, the group of experts had two-three days to assess the law. These experts outlined several problems with the law.

The first criticism was about the ban on the "Propaganda of Communist and/or National-Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes and their Symbols." According to Art. 3, par. 1 of the new law, propaganda of this nature is declared "a desecration of the memory of millions of victims" of these regimes and is prohibited. If a legal entity, a political party, association of citizens, or a printed media engages in such propaganda or uses symbols of these totalitarian regimes, it will be refused registration or its activities can be terminated, or, in the case of printed media, its publication will be stopped ("Pro zasudjennia" 2015). Experts in their assessment report indicated that according to chapter 11 of the Ukrainian Constitution, the social system in

Ukraine is based on the principles of political, economic, and ideological pluralism, and no ideology can be recognized by the state as mandatory. The principle of political pluralism is manifested in a multi-party system and in the freedom to conduct party activities, while the principle of ideological pluralism manifests itself in the diversity of ideologies as systems of concepts, ideas, and views on life. No ideology, including the Communist and National-Socialist ones, can be banned, and no association of citizens can be banned just because it professes a certain ideology ("Vysnovok" 2015). There are certain limitations to the freedom of political activities, provided in the Constitution, such as a ban on political parties and social organizations, whose programmatic statements or actions threaten the independence of Ukraine, seek a change in the constitutional order by violent means, violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine, undermine the security of Ukraine, incite hatred and so on. But these provisions concern parties and social organizations, not an ideology per se. Only an amendment to the Constitution of Ukraine would be a legal step to ban the Communist and National-Socialist ideologies, not a simple law, as the bill of the Law on Condemnation proposed.

The group of experts also drew attention to the fact that the Verkhovna Rada, by introducing the law on Condemnation, overstepped its authority and violated the principle of separation of powers, enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine. According to the Constitution, only the courts as a judiciary body have an exclusive competence to ban a political party or an association, while the Rada is a legislative body. The Constitution has supremacy over laws or regulations, adopted by the Rada, and any new law or regulation has to conform to the Constitution and not contain any new requirements, not mentioned in the Constitution. There is already a provision in the Constitution as to when a political party or a social organization can be banned.

The Law on Condemnation requires amendments to several existing laws of Ukraine, in particular, laws on the election of deputies at all levels of power. For a parliamentary election, the novelty is that the Central

Electoral Commission refuses to register a candidate from a party which is deemed to conduct the propaganda of “totalitarian” regimes or displays their symbols. The same limitations concern the election of the president of Ukraine and the deputies and heads of regional and local councils. The group of experts reminded in their report that the Constitution of Ukraine already stipulates requirements concerning candidates in parliamentary and presidential elections, and any change to these requirements can be done only by amending the Constitution. As for local elections, the Law on Election should be amended before the Central Electoral Commission is empowered to refuse registration.

The Law on Condemnation calls for the renaming of all toponyms (cities, districts, squares, streets) that contain symbols of the “Communist totalitarian regime” and the removal of monuments and commemorative signs of “individuals, implicated in the organization and realization of the Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine, of political repressions, people who held leading positions in the Communist Party, in the highest levels of power and management of the USSR, the Ukrainian SSR and other Soviet republics (with the exception of those engaged to a great extent in the development of Ukrainian science and culture), to members of the Soviet organs of state security, and to events commemorating the activities of the Communist Party, the establishment of the Soviet power on the territory of Ukraine, and the fight against the participants of the national liberation movement in Ukraine in the 20th century (except names and appellations, related to the resistance to and the victory over Nazi Germany or to the development of Ukrainian science and culture). The Law stipulates that if local organs of “self-government,” that is, elected councils at the district, urban, or oblast level, fail to act accordingly, then the head of the administration at the respective level, appointed by the center, is empowered to take the decision instead. If this fails, then the Verkhovna Rada can intervene, based on recommendations provided by the Institute of National Memory.

Legal and academic experts noted that this order of implementation of the Law on Decommunization violates Ukrainian law because local state administrations are not allowed to intervene in the decisions and activities of local councils. Moreover, according to the Constitution of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada does not have the competence to rename localities, but only to establish and change limits of districts and cities without recommendations from any institutions. The provision of recommendations by the Institute of National Memory, therefore, is unconstitutional (“Vysnovok” 2015). The Law on Condemnation leaves practically no chance to any village or town to keep their old names, “corrupted” by their link to anything symbolizing Soviet power. There is no provision in the law for a democratic way of taking such important decision — no referendum, or no consultation with the population. Given the anti-Communist stance of the director of the Institute of National Memory Volodymyr Viatrovykh, who has been glorifying the OUN and UPA for many years (McBride 2015), there is little doubt about the tenor of recommendations that the Institute might formulate.

The Law on Condemnation gives the following definition of what constitutes “propaganda of Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes”: “public denial, including in the media, of the criminal character of the Communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991 in Ukraine, of the National-Socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regime; spreading of information justifying the criminal character of these regimes, the actions of Soviet organs of security, or the establishment of Soviet power on the territory of Ukraine (...), the persecution of participants in the fight for independence of Ukraine in the XXth century, production and/or propagation, and use in public of products containing symbols of Communist, National-Socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes” (art. 1.1.2 of the Law). As punishment for such propaganda, the law calls for “restriction of freedom”, and imprisonment from five to ten years with or without confiscation of property.

Propaganda, however, includes the public sale of souvenirs or the signing of anthems. How can these activities be equated with a crime? (Shevel 2015). In their report the Rada experts note that only crimes

against human life, such as murder and crimes against humanity, which were committed during Soviet times, constitute a threat to society and are punishable under the Criminal Code. They also note that the punishment, as provided for in the law, violates one of the fundamental principles of criminal law, namely, that the severity of punishment must correspond to the gravity of a crime. The Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for confiscation of property only for felonies and treason (particularly grave predatory crimes), as well as crimes of any severity against the national security of Ukraine and public safety. The Rada group of experts was also concerned by the use of the generic term “the state” which, according to the law, sees to the implementation of legal provisions (“Vysnovok” 2015). A law should designate specific bodies of the state system responsible for concrete tasks, as opposed to assigning responsibility to an abstract “state.” The group also criticized the declarative nature and lack of legal precision of two other decommunization laws.

The European Commission for Democracy through Law, known as the Venice Commission, and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, in a joint interim opinion, reiterated concerns expressed by Ukrainian legal experts. The report concluded that the Law on Condemnation is too broad in scope and its sanctions excessive. Its provisions “are not precise enough to enable individuals to regulate their conduct according to the law and to prevent arbitrary interference by public authorities” (quoted in Coynash 2015). Among key recommendations was the necessity to provide a clear definition of the term “propaganda,” especially because it is used in the law to criminalize conduct. They found “the criminal nature” of the regime too vague and recommended narrowing down the denial of crimes to specific crimes. Simply displaying a symbol or using a name do not constitute an actual danger to society and should not entail criminal responsibility. The principle of the proportionality of the punishment to the offense should also be respected in the provision of the law that bans political parties and associations. Such a ban jeopardizes freedom of association; and political parties should be prohibited from participating in elections or be dissolved only as “a measure of last resort in exceptional cases.” The Law could also result in

disproportionate restrictions on media freedom since it allows the state to censor the media and even shut them down if the state finds that they engage in “propaganda” (Coynash 2015)

The law “On the Legal Status and Honouring of Fighters for Ukraine’s Independence in the Twentieth Century” (“Pro pravovyi status” 2015), also was met critically by human rights activists and scholars, concerned with the threat that it could pose to media and academic freedom. The first article declares that the legal status of these “fighters” is given to persons, who took part in all forms of political, armed and other collective or individual fight for Ukraine’s independence as a member of all types of anti-Soviet authorities, organizations, structures and formations that existed on the territory of Ukraine between 1917 and 1991. Chapter 6 of the law states that “Ukrainian nationals, foreigners and stateless persons who publicly express disrespect for those stipulated in Article 1 of this law ... bear liability” and that the “public denial of the legitimacy of the struggle for Ukraine’s independence in the XXth century is deemed a desecration of the memory of fighters for independence (...) and a “denigration of the dignity of the Ukrainian people” and is unlawful. The law does not specify who will be tasked with determining what constitutes “disrespect” or “denigration,” especially regarding the highly divisive question of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) (Coynash 2015). What some view as legitimate criticism may be considered as the ‘desecration of memory’ by others.

The OUN and UPA are included in the list of fighters for Ukrainian independence. This has been a very controversial question in Ukraine since 1991. The OUN was one of the most extreme nationalist political groups in Western Ukraine between the wars. Both of its factions, under Bandera and Melnyk, collaborated with the Germans after the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union – in the case of Melnyk, for the entire duration of the war (“Open Letter” 2015). The OUN also bore responsibility for anti-Jewish pogroms in Galicia at the beginning of the war (Himka 2011). The Ukrainian Insurgency Army, affiliated with the OUN-Bandera faction, arose primarily from defectors of Ukrainian battalions of the German police and from the

mobilization of the local population and fought mainly against Soviet forces. In its first major campaign, it slaughtered tens of thousands of Poles in Volyn in 1943 in one of the most heinous acts of ethnic cleansing in the history of Ukraine (“Open Letter” 2015).

In the open letter to Ukrainian President Poroshenko, elected in 2014, scholars and experts on Ukraine from abroad and within Ukraine called upon him not to sign the two laws that were analyzed above. They stated that if signed, these laws would have a profound impact on Ukraine’s image and reputation in the Western world since their content and spirit contradicts one of the most fundamental political rights: the right to freedom of speech. These laws are an official attack on historical memory that precludes an open debate. They will alienate Ukrainians “who now find themselves under de facto occupation.” (“Open Letter” 2015). President Petro Poroshenko did not listen to this warning. He signed all four laws on May 15, 2015. Ukrainians who live “under de facto occupation” refers to those who live in Russia-annexed Crimea or in the unrecognized Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR), which emerged in 2014, following the Euromaidan - mass protests in Kyiv against the decision by President Yanukovich to postpone the signing of a trade agreement with the European Union.

Soviet memory in post-Euromaidan Ukraine

The dominant narrative of these events in Ukrainian and Western political discourse is that it was a “Revolution of Dignity.” Ordinary Ukrainians rose against an autocratic, corrupt, and pro-Russian ruler who usurped power, stole billions and tried to stop Ukraine on its road to a bright, democratic European future by turning it back to its Soviet-Russian past, into the arms of the tyrant Putin (see, for instance, Toner 2017, Bernd 2014, and websites, such as Euromaidan Press and Vox Ukraine). There are several flaws in this narrative which ignores unpleasant aspects of this revolution, such as the important role of far right paramilitary groups which escalated the violence between protesters and security forces on Maidan (Ishchenko 2016), or the fact that Euromaidan represented mainly Western-oriented Ukraine, i.e., Western and Central Ukraine, while South-Eastern Ukraine remained largely passive. Demonstrations took place

across the South-East after Yanukovych fled Kyiv and a new pro-Western, nationalist government came to power. One of the first actions of the new government was the decision to abolish the 2012 Law on Languages which granted Russian the status of the regional language. According to the law, Russian could be used in public administration, education, media, and cultural institutions in regions, where a language minority constituted more than 10 percent. The Verkhovna Rada revoked the law, which sparked mass protests in Donetsk, Odessa, and Kharkiv. The Interim President of Ukraine, Oleksandr Turchynov, did not sign the revocation — the new ruling elite realized the danger of such step that would alienate and indeed alienated many in South-Eastern Ukraine (Arel 2014). But it was too late, as many interpreted the signal that the new Ukraine is anti-Russian. This message reinforced the anti-Maidan feeling in South-Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, where many disapproved the violent means of certain groups of Euromaidan that were throwing Molotov cocktails at police and security forces (Verednikova et al., 2014). For instance, in April 2014 survey by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, over eighty percent of the population in the South-East of Ukraine condemned the use of arms by protesters. Seventy percent of residents in the Donetsk region and sixty-one percent in the Luhansk region viewed the Euromaidan as a Western-sponsored armed coup, while the average for the rest of southeast was only thirty seven percent (“Dumky i pohliady” 2014). Huge majorities in Donbas, and a majority in Kharkiv, considered illegal the appointment of Turchynov as interim President (ibid). The revocation of the language law whipped the protests, giving rise to what was called the ‘Russian Spring’. It culminated in March 2014 with Russia’s annexation of Crimea.

During the pro-Russian uprisings in Donetsk and Luhansk protesters occupied regional administrations, exactly as Euromaidan protesters had done in Western Ukraine. They asked their regional councils to hold a referendum on the future of Donbas. The demands by protesters echoed the grievances that had been heard in Eastern Ukraine since Ukraine became independent: decentralization, Russian as the second official language, and closer political and economic ties with Russia. Regional high public officials, scared of

the anti-Ukrainian popular revolt gaining power, fled the region. The power vacuum was filled with many people who were active in pro-Russian social organizations before the Euromaidan (Kudelia 2014). The West and post-Euromaidan Kyiv accused Russia of spurring these movements claiming that without Russia's instigation nothing would have happened. These claims are grounded. Russian volunteers poured into Donbas to help local militia to defend against what they called Ukrainian "fascists"; Russian nationals were involved in building the new quasi-states of DNR and LNR; Russia unofficially sent military support and expertise (Sakwa 2016, pp. 147-156; Robinson 2016, pp. 511-517). Russian regular troops made short incursions into the territory of Ukraine in August 2014 to prevent the defeat of Donetsk and Luhansk rebels at the hands of the Ukrainian Army (Robinson 2016, p. 513). Russia also provides large humanitarian assistance – as of November 2017, sixty nine humanitarian convoys were sent to Donbas by the Russian Federation ("Spot Report" 2017).

However, claims that it was solely the Russian intervention that spurred the rebellion in Donetsk and Luhansk ignore an essential fact: the majority of protesters in Donetsk and Luhansk were local people (Kudelia 2014, Sakwa 2016, p. 149). The emergence of the DPR and LPR was the response in Donbas to the nationalist, anti-Russian ideology of the far right elements of the Euromaidan and actions of the new Ukrainian political rulers who came to power in Kyiv through what a majority in Donbas perceived as a coup d'état (Verednikova et al. 2014, "Dumky i pohliady" 2014).

One of the fundamental questions of difference between Euromaidan Ukraine and the rebellious Donbas was over historical memory. Those who remained in Donetsk and are now building a new republic call the Kyiv government, among other names, a fascist junta. From their point of view, the Kyiv government embraced Nazi ideology by glorifying Ukrainian nationalist figures, such as the leader of the OUN Stepan Bandera and the commander-in-chief of UPA, Roman Shukhevych. Kyiv is thus seen as having betrayed Soviet Ukrainians who defeated Nazi Germany in World War II, known in the Soviet narrative as the Great

Patriotic War. The head of the DPR, Aleksandr Zakharchenko, reacting to the decommunization laws, said that a state which makes heroes out of executioners does not have a future. These laws will only split Ukraine further. He added that the current Ukrainian political elite are afraid of the “Nazis” and “punitive squads” that they bred on Maidan. Ukrainian politicians adopted these laws to gratify “Nazis” so that these Nazis do not throw them out of their luxury mansions and offices (“Podpisanie” 2015).

The DPR continues to celebrate Victory Day on May 9, holding a military parade, laying flowers at the Tomb of Unknown Soldier, and marching in the Immortal Regiment on the main street of Donetsk and other cities. The Immortal Regiment is a grass-root initiative that emerged in Russia in 2007 and spread across the country and abroad in 2015, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Soviet victory in World War II. On May 9, 2015, half a million people took part in the march of the Immortal Regiment, wearing placards with portraits of their relatives who fought in the war. President Vladimir Putin was marching, like an ordinary Russian, with the picture of his father (“O nas”).

In Ukraine, one of the laws from the decommunization package, the “Law on Immortalizing the Victory over Nazism in the Second World War of 1939-1945” desecrated the black and white myth of Soviet victory, in which the Soviets are good, and the Nazis are evil. The Law replaced the term “Great Patriotic War” by the “Second World War” and the Soviet year of the beginning of the war - 1941 - by the European one - 1939. It designated the Soviet Union as a “communist totalitarian regime,” together with Nazi Germany, as the main culprits of the war. According to the law, both regimes committed numerous crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of genocide. Ukrainian lawmakers introduced in this law a new holiday, mimicking the European official tradition of commemorating World War II as a National Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation on May 8. May 9 remains the Day of Victory, only not of victory in the Great Patriotic War, but of victory over Nazism in the Second World War. Throughout the Law, there is no indication who obtained victory over Nazism that the Law celebrates. One of the forms of immortalizing the victory is a

commemoration of the “expulsion” of Nazis from cities and towns of Ukraine, which before 2014 was celebrated in Ukraine as “Day of Liberation from Fascist German Invaders”. The term “fascist,” which was used in the Soviet Union and Ukraine before the Euromaidan to refer to Nazi Germany, is completely absent from the law (“Pro uvichnennia” 2015).

On the recommendation of the National Institute of Memory, the red poppy was introduced in the commemorations of the World War II in Ukraine in 2014, again copying the European tradition and attempting to replace the Saint George ribbon, which was and remains the symbol of victory in the Great Patriotic War in Russia and in the DPR and LPR. Precisely for these reasons the Saint George ribbon is forbidden in Ukraine. It became the symbol that divides Ukraine because for many Ukrainians it is perceived as the symbol of Donetsk and Luhansk “separatists” and “terrorists” (Borshch 2015). During the celebration of May 9, 2016, in Ukraine far right nationalists attacked people from the Immortal Regiment, trying to disrupt the march. Some of the extremists made attempts to tear down medals from veterans. In the central province of Cherkasy, nationalists also attacked people who were celebrating Victory Day with Soviet red flags of victory with sickle and hammer on them. These symbols are now considered illegal in Ukraine, and the police opened a criminal investigation against the people who wore them (“Khronika” 2016). In all major cities of South-Eastern Ukraine, Victory Day was marked by clashes between far right nationalists and those who were commemorating the Soviet victory in World War II.

The laws on decommunization are divisive because they are not built on a national consensus. They were adopted hastily, without any public debate. The black interpretation of the Soviet past as a totalitarian, criminal regime is imposed on a significant part of Ukrainian population that does not agree with such view. For instance, according to a recent sociological survey, conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Ukrainian Sociology Service with the goal to establish what unites and divides Ukrainians, a majority or a strong plurality of the population in three regions of South-Eastern

Ukraine negatively perceive the collapse of the Soviet Union: in Donbas — 70%, (12% perceive it positively), in Kharkiv — 52% (against 31% positive), and in Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia — 49% (against 39% positive) (“Shcho obyednuye” 2015). These figures differ dramatically from Halychyna (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil regions), where 88% view the dissolution of the Soviet Union positively. Overall in Ukraine, 51.7 % have a positive attitude, while 32.2% view the collapse of the Soviet Union negatively (“Shcho obyednuye” 2015).

Regions of South-Eastern Ukraine also differ from the rest of Ukraine on the questions of the OUN and UPA. The creation of the OUN in 1929 is viewed on the national level positively — 37 %, but the percentage of negative attitudes is also significant — 31%. In the four historical regions of South-Eastern Ukraine, the negative perception prevails over positive ones, and Donbas is leading, with 68.4% against 6.3%. Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia (Lower Dnieper area) follow with 49.2% against 24.2 negatives; then Mykolaiv, Odessa and Kherson regions (Black Sea area) with 43.4% negative and 17% positive, followed by the Kharkiv region (Slobozhanshchyna) – 38.6% against 16.8%. To contrast, in Halychyna 88.5% see the creation of the OUN positively, while a tiny 1.8% sees it negatively. Regarding the question of the creation of the UPA, the picture is similar: in Donbas — 70% view it negatively, and only 8% - positively; Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia — 54.2% negative and 22% positive; Kharkiv — 40.6% negative and 18.3% positive; and in the Black Sea area — 37.8% perceive UPA negatively, and 21.7% positively. Overall in Ukraine, 40.2% have a positive attitude towards the UPA, while 31% view it negatively (“Shcho obyednuye” 2015).

When the Law on Condemning was voted in the Verkhovna Rada in April 2015, the Opposition Bloc (40 deputies) and the Vidrozhennia Party (22 deputies), representing South-Eastern Ukraine, did not vote at all, as they were absent or abstained. The law was adopted by the majority of 254 votes out of 422 (“Poimenne holosuvannia” 2015). All of these data show that the package of laws on decommunization was

rushed through the Parliament by the nationalist lobby to consolidate an ideological victory over “pro-Soviet” Ukraine. Given only a few days, one can assume that many deputies who supported the bill did not even read it. The criticism, formulated by law experts, historians, human right experts, noted above, shows that these laws were not prepared thoroughly (“Vysnovok” 2015). Their main purpose was symbolic - to break with the Soviet/Communist past of Ukraine, to condemn it, and to erase it from the public space and public memory. As Ukrainian historian Georgiy Kasianov noted, the aim of two of these laws (“On Condemnation” and “On the Legal Status of Fighters”) is to repudiate the nostalgic Soviet narrative and to replace it by a nationalist narrative (Kasianov 2016).

The underlying ideological basis of these laws is the positioning of Ukraine as a victim of Russian/Soviet imperialism, a manifestation of the postcolonial syndrome, as Kasianov notes, when certain groups within society create a civilizational Other to lay on him the historical responsibility for the problems of today (ibid). Corruption, social inequality, the widely used Russian language, a lack of national unity, the absence of a strong civil society and other problems in post-Soviet Ukraine are blamed on Soviet Russia as the heir of Tsarist Russia, which for centuries subjugated Ukraine.

The decommunization is, in fact, de-Sovietisation, while its methods of implementation resemble Bolshevik methods. For instance, Kirovohrad, named after a prominent Russian/Soviet politician Sergei Kirov, has to change its name according to the Law on Condemning. In a 2016 survey, the majority of inhabitants of the city (67.9%) did not want their city renamed and only 30.6% were in favour of changing to Elisavethrad, the old name of the city in Imperial Russia. A majority (54.9%), however, were in favour of Elisavethrad if Kirovohrad could not be kept (“Stavlennia” 2016). The City Council did not support the idea, and having difficulties in obtaining a majority for a new name, asked the Verkhovna Rada to make the decision on the basis of a list of several proposed names, including Elisavethrad. Not surprisingly, the Rada did not select

Elisavethrad, but, on the recommendation of the Institute of National Memory, chose Ingulsk - after the name of river Ingul that flows through the city.

The residents of Kirovograd protested this decision, preferring Elisavethrad ("V Kirovohrade proizoshli" 2015). Since both proposed names, Ingulsk and Elisavethrad, divided the city, the City Council decided to take them off the list ("V Kirovohrade reshili" 2016). Instead, the Council supported the proposition of a Committee of the Verkhovna Rada to rename it Kropyvnytsky, in honour of a Ukrainian playwright of the 19th century, a native of this region, who, according to Rada deputies, refused to translate his works in Russian and propagated the Ukrainian language ("Kirovograd" 2016). In May 2016, around a hundred inhabitants of Kirovograd protested in front of the Verkhovna Rada, demanding the Parliament not to rename Kirovograd. Protesters held posters "Ask me how to name my city," "The name of the city is citizens' choice," "Kropyvnytsky - a violation of human rights" ("Pod Radoi" 2016). The President of Ukraine made it very clear that democracy in Ukraine is limited by anti-Russian ideology. Communities in Ukraine are free to choose any name they want, except "imperial names." 'I will not permit that the map of Ukraine be stained again with Novorossiia toponyms', declared President Poroshenko ("Poroshenko zaproponuvav" 2016).

Novorossiia (New Russia in Russian) is the historical name of the province in Russian Empire, which was created in 1764 in the region north of the Black Sea and was called *Novorossiyskaya guberniya*. It included the current Ukrainian region of Donbas, Zaporizhia, the Black Sea littoral, Tavria, and the Azov sea littoral (that is the modern Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odessa regions of Ukraine), plus Crimea. Novorossiia remained a province of Russian Empire until its collapse in the February Revolution of 1917. After the civil war of 1917-1922, when Bolsheviks won and solidified their power, the region became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The term was revived in spring of 2014 by pro-Russian rebels in the same Ukrainian regions which were part of Novorossiia. The corresponding ideology was also

used by some Russian political strategists to provide ideological coherence to rebels in Donetsk and Luhansk and to express aspirations to add Kharkiv, Odessa, and other regions of south-east Ukraine to the DPR and LPR, but it did not work out and the Novorossiia project was closed (Dergachev and Kirillov 2015). President Putin contested the historical belonging of Novorossiia to Ukraine, stressing on several occasions that Ukraine as a country was formed within the Russian Empire and later expanded significantly under the Soviet Union (see, for instance, his December 2017 annual press-conference (Krylov 2017)).

Volodymyr Viatrovykh, the head of the Institute of National Memory, who presented all four decommunization laws in Verkhovna Rada, is convinced that these laws are a preventive step to “finally” start the cleaning of the country from “Sovok,” Sovok being a pejorative term for anything related to the Soviet Union. The campaign against Sovok is seen as crucial for Ukraine’s national security reasons, as Russian “propaganda” uses the Sovok nostalgia for mobilizing Ukrainians to fight against Ukraine. In this view, the majority of people in the DPR and LPR are those who still live in the Soviet past. The Soviet past, therefore, has to be uprooted. Otherwise the “threat of a greater expansion of Russian aggression will hang over us,” declared Viatrovykh (Pietsukh 2015). For him and the nationalist forces that he represents, the decommunization laws are very important symbolically because they are an official statement that Ukraine is an heir not to Soviet Ukraine, but to the pre-Soviet Ukrainian Popular Republic and is the result of the liberation movement of the 20th century, that, in spite of the defeat, finally took revenge in 1991 (ibid).

On April 9, when all four decommunization laws were debated in Verkhovna Rada (although there were no debates in the real sense of this word, given that no deputy raised a critical word), Yuriy Shukhevych, the son of the UPA leader who became a deputy in 2014 and who authored the Law on the Legal Status, reiterated the same idea that Viatrovykh voiced: that Bolshevik Russia committed an aggression against Ukraine and took its independence away. Only in 1991, thanks to the national-liberation fighters throughout the century, Ukraine gained its independence back. The head of the Verkhovna Rada,

Volodymyr Groysman, confirmed Shukhevych' words that Ukraine has been fighting Russian imperialism, Russian occupation for one hundred years, and the time has come for the Ukrainian state to honour all those who fought with blue-yellow flag and trident for the Ukrainian state (Groysman 2016). Introducing decommunization laws in the Verkhovna Rada, Viatrovykh linked the current fight of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and volunteer battalions with rebellious Donetsk and Luhansk to the examples of Russian attacks, cited above, trying to create a historical continuity between now and the events of 1914-1918 (Viatrovykh 2015).

This historical continuity was one of the leitmotifs of the debates in the Verkhovna Rada regarding the decommunization laws – Russia's annexation of Crimea and the support for non-recognized republics of Donetsk and Luhansk were, but the latest examples of Russia's centuries-old aggressive imperialistic policies towards Ukraine. Bolshevik Russia subjugated the nascent Ukrainian People's Republic and imposed its rule over Ukraine, whereas now Putin's Russia is making a stab at Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty. Ukraine is a victim of Russian aggression, and since it was Russian Bolsheviks who enforced the Soviet power on Ukraine, decommunization laws are very important: they symbolically and legally repudiate the Soviet past as a period of "occupation", foreign to Ukrainians. They resisted it heroically, and ultimately, successfully, because Ukrainian Parliament did vote for these laws.

If it was not for the annexation of Crimea and the following emergence of strong Ukrainian patriotism/nationalism in response to it, the decommunization laws might have never been passed. This wave of newly discovered patriotism was harnessed by long-time proponents of the Ukrainian nationalism, such as Shukhevych and Viatrovykh, to bring to completion their anti-Soviet crusade.

Post-Euromaidan Ukraine clearly and, and it seems, irrevocably condemned its Soviet past as that of a totalitarian and criminal state. It claims its descendance now from those who fought against Soviet power. All throughout Ukraine, particularly South-Eastern Ukraine, monuments to Lenin have been torn down, a

trend which was initiated during Euromaidan, when in December of 2013 protesters hammered down the statue that stood there all 22 years of Independence. This epidemic of the destruction of monuments to the leader of the October Revolution was dubbed “Leninopad,” or Fall of Lenin Statues, in Ukraine. The post-Euromaidan wave was the third one. The first wave took place in Halychyna in the 1990s, and the second wave came in the 2000s in Central Ukraine (Kutkina 2017).

In the speech in Bykivnia on May 15, 2016, President Poroshenko said that over one thousand “idols” to Lenin were dismantled since December 2013 to April 2016 in Ukraine and around 150 idols to other Communist figures (“V Ukraïni” 2016). Before being dismantled, monuments were desecrated, painted with Ukrainian national symbols, or dressed into Ukrainian embroidered shirts. The tallest monument to Lenin, which existed in Ukraine - 20.2 meters - was destroyed in Kharkiv in September 2014 by right-wing paramilitary groups, Euromaidan activists, and Kharkiv football “ultras” (“U Kharkovi” 2014). The mayor of Kharkiv, Gennadiy Kernes, was against the demolition of the monument. He accused the police of inaction and failure to intervene and stop the non-sanctioned dismantling. He voiced a very sober attitude towards the past saying that Kharkiv is a tolerant city and values all monuments of the past. The City Council did not destroy any of them because “these monuments are a memory, memory to what was good and what was bad in history” (“Seichas ne vremia” 2014). However, his voice stood no chance to be heard in a country, basking in a (re)discovered sense of patriotism and nationalism.

Post-Maidan Ukraine does not tolerate Sovietism and breaks with its Soviet past resolutely like the Bolsheviks did with Tsarist Russia. The political elite do not hear warnings from its friends about its undemocratic means of shedding the Soviet past. Ukrainians do not seem to have learned lessons from the European ways of dealing with violent pages of history in an open forum. The ideology of Ukrainian nationalism, which excludes Ukrainians who perceive the Soviet experience positively, imposes one official memory, precluding a pluralism of opinions, vital for democracy. This other, non-nationalist Ukraine is not

heard in official discourse, is not given room in the public space, and is ignored by authorities. In the black and white picture imposed by nationalists, there is no place for a nuanced assessment of the Soviet past. And yet, if such an assessment were made in an open discussion, where participants with opposing opinions are at least given a chance to speak, Ukraine would have more chances of becoming a real democracy where a plurality of opinions is allowed, and a free discussion of the divisive, complex past can take place.

The positive memory of the Soviet past is being silenced in Ukraine, but it continues to live under the cover of silence. The same survey, conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Ukrainian Sociology Service, found that 46,8% of Ukrainians perceive positively the creation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in Kharkiv in 1917, and only 19,6 perceive it negatively, with Halychyna and Volyn being the only regions where negative attitude prevails over positive ("Shcho obyednuye" 2016). This attitude reflects a real assessment of the Soviet past by Ukrainians, and not laws adopted by the Verkhovna Rada. The Soviet past is a mixed bag. One can snatch out of it only negative pages - famines, repressions, gulags. But there are other, undeniable objective facts that even nationalists cannot deny: Ukraine as a state and territory was formed under the Soviet Union and became an industrialized nation with a full literacy (Kasianov 2016). The industrial, intellectual, and human resources potential that was created in Soviet Ukraine supported the existence of independent Ukraine for 24 years of its independence, during which nothing qualitatively new in main industrial sectors has been created (ibid). By denouncing its Soviet past, Ukraine denounces itself. It is destroying itself, devouring its own flesh, like a snake eating its tail, an Ouroboros, caught in the cycle of destruction and renewal.

Chapter 7: Rehabilitating and remembering victims

Rehabilitation of victims

The decommunization law package, at least at the political and legislative level, is a final point of victory for the nationalist anti-communist forces in Ukraine, which condemned the whole Soviet period. To a great extent, this condemnation resulted from the Russia's annexation of Crimea and assistance to Donbas rebellion, following the February 2014 overthrowing in Kyiv of President Viktor Yanukovich. By contrast, at the beginning of the Ukrainian independence, nationalist forces were too weak to combat the resistance of the pro-Communist political elites. This opposition between the two camps over the interpretation of the Soviet past was manifest in the debates of the bill "On the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression in Ukraine" that took place in the spring of 1991.

Levko Lukianenko, a famous Ukrainian dissident, summed up the essence of the law. Soviet authorities in Ukraine were positive (good) authorities. They had a legitimate right to shoot those who resisted them because the armed fight against the state is bad. The current Ukrainian authorities are the heirs of the previous Soviet authorities and they recognize that among shot people were innocent. With the rehabilitation law, the current Ukrainian power holders recognize that the executions done by their predecessors were wrong. The law rehabilitates those who resisted Soviet power peacefully (passively, in Lukianenko's terms), not those who used violence. The criterion to determine whether an action was legitimate or illegitimate is the Motherland, which is defined in Article 56 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR as Soviet power, not "our primordial Ukraine" (Lukianenko 1991, section 49). In other words, those who took up arms against the Soviet power to defend the "primordial Ukraine" are considered criminals, whereas those Soviet KGB-ists, who shot defenders of the "primordial Ukraine", acted legitimately, in view of the current Ukrainian authorities. Lukianenko, referring to the history of the establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine in 1917-1921 as a "Bolshevik/Soviet" occupation of Ukraine, called it "sovitska," a pejorative name, used in Ukrainian nationalist terminology to denote that Soviet

power was imposed on Ukrainians by Russia. This “occupational” power forced Ukraine into a “new communist empire.” For this reason, “sovitska” power is illegal, according to the international law, as it never held a democratic election. And because this power is illegal, armed resistance against it is legal. Therefore, the law should also include those who used violence.

In Lukianenko’s opinion, the Verkhovna Rada as the supreme body of people’s power must officially recognize that Ukraine was under a Soviet and “fascist” “occupation,” and thereby recognize as “patriotic” anti-Soviet armed resistance in Soviet Ukraine before World War II and the OUN-UPA insurgency in Western Ukraine, as well as any other resistance to an “alien and despotic” Soviet power in Ukraine. In this view, fighters against “tyranny” must be honoured and compensated, while the activities of the “cruel, repressive machinery” of the Soviet secret police (Cheka, NKVD) and other organs must be morally condemned. However, concluded Lukianenko, the current Verkhovna Rada, as an organ of transition from non-freedom to freedom, is incapable of restoring justice (Lukianenko 1991, section 50).

The Verkhovna Rada of post-Euromaidan Ukraine, elected in the early election in October 2014, did just that - restored “historical justice,” which all the previous convocations of deputies failed to do. Apparently, they were not free enough. The Law “On Condemning the Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes and Banning the Use of their Symbols” declares the Communist regime of 1917-1991 in Ukraine as criminal regime which used state terror and proceeds with a long list of all imaginable techniques of this terror, starting with individual and mass murders and ending with the absence of political pluralism. Based on these “numerous” violations of human rights, the Communist totalitarian regime is condemned as incompatible with fundamental rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen (“Pro zasudzhennia” 2015).

In the preamble to the Law, the Verkhovna Rada, referencing international and domestic legislation on the defence of human rights, mentions the Law on Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repressions as a

historical example of Ukraine's condemnation of "Communist totalitarian regime." However, there is not a single word about a "Communist totalitarian regime" in the text of the rehabilitation law, even in its last amended version of 2012. Instead, the law merely mentions the Stalin regime and its leaders in the Republic. On the other hand, the 2006 Law on the Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine, adopted under President Yushchenko, does condemn, in the preamble, the criminal acts of the "USSR totalitarian regime" ("Pro Holodomor" 2006). Yushchenko was known for his nationalist views and attempts to glorify the OUN and UPA. He tried to launch a process of reconciliation between the veterans of these military organizations and the veterans of the Soviet Army who fought in World War II. However, these attempts were unsuccessful, because society was not ready (Shevel 2014).

With the rehabilitation law, the Ukrainian state condemned the repression committed by the Stalin regime, and dissociated itself from its terrorist methods of governance. The Ukrainian state recognized the suffering of victims, expressing sympathy to them and to their family and relatives, and declared its intention to restore justice, to eliminate the consequences of arbitrariness and violations of civil rights, to provide a reasonable compensation for material and moral damage, and guaranteed to the Ukrainian people that these violations will never happen again and that human rights and the rule of law would be preserved sacredly ("Pro reabilitatsiyu" 1991). The Ukrainian state extended the period of rehabilitation, which, during the "de-Stalinisation" campaign under Khrushchev, has previously covered the period of the 1930s to the 1950s, i.e., the time of Stalin's rule, to 1991, when the law came into force. In the rehabilitation process were included persons who were wrongly committed by courts of Ukraine or repressed in any form on the territory of the Republic by other State organs: deprivation of life or liberty, forced resettlement, exile and deportation outside of the Republic, deprivation of citizenship, forced institutionalization into medical facilities, deprivation or limitation of other civil rights or freedoms on grounds of a political, social, class, national, or religious criteria.

The law identified three groups of persons to be rehabilitated. The first group consisted of those who were unjustifiably convicted by courts or repressed by extrajudicial bodies, including “dvoikas,” “troikas,” or special councils, for having committed on the territory of Ukraine acts qualified as “counterrevolutionary crimes” by the Criminal Code of Ukraine prior to coming into force in December 1958 of the Soviet law “On the Criminal Responsibility for State Crimes.” The second group included persons, convicted for political or religious activities according to certain articles of the Criminal Code: “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda”; the spreading of deliberate fabrications discrediting Soviet state and society; violation of the law on the separation of state and church and of school and church; and assault on a citizen’s body and rights under the pretext of performing religious rites. Also included into this group were individuals living permanently in Ukraine, who were deported from another Soviet territory and wrongly convicted, as well as people who were subjected to coercive medical treatment. The third group were people who were exiled, deported and deprived of property on political, social, national, religious and other grounds under the pretext of the fight against kulaks, and the alleged opponents of collectivization.

Mykola Naumenko, the head of the Verkhovna Rada Commission on Veterans, Pensioners, Repressed, and Low-Income Persons, who presented the draft law on rehabilitation in the Rada in March 1991, noted that by rehabilitating people, convicted of anti-Soviet propaganda and for performing religious rites, parliament recognized that not only the convictions, but also the articles of the Criminal Code, on which they were based, are violations of the citizens’ constitutional rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech and freedom of opinion (Naumenko 1991, section 17). According to Naumenko’s report, from 1953 to 1989, 485,457 people were rehabilitated in Ukraine, including the results of the decree “On Additional Measures to Restore Justice for Victims of Repression Having Taken Place in the Period of 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s,” adopted by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet in January 1989 (Naumenko 1991, section 14).

Previous acts of legislation, related to rehabilitation, had two serious shortcomings: they did not provide a comprehensive list of individuals eligible for rehabilitation, and did not establish in a clear manner the period, during which these repressions were considered illegal. It was one of the reasons for which a new law was needed, explained the Minister of Justice of the Ukrainian SSR, Vitaliy Boyko. Moreover, these acts were adopted at the Union level, while Ukraine, following the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine, needed its own legislation on rehabilitation, especially considering the numerous requests received from victims and their relatives (Boyko 1991, section 30). Naumenko also noted that in the existing Union-level legislation there was no provision for the compensation of the damage to property (Naumenko 1991, section 14). The Ukrainian law, it was claimed, filled these gaps and was prepared in consultation with the All-Ukrainian Association of Repressed and many victims (Naumenko 1991, section 15).

During the deliberations, several remarks were voiced anticipating the main ideas of the post-Maidan law on the condemnation of the communist regime, mainly by deputies from Western Ukraine and Kyiv. Deputy Chuchuk from Ivano-Frankivsk asked why in the preamble to the law the political assessment of repression did not extend to people and organizations who were “carrying out a genocide” on Ukrainian land. The same concern was expressed by Deputy Chernenko from Donetsk (Chernenko 1991, section 26). Naumenko replied that those who had taken decisions not based on the law had been already sentenced. The courts in due course will decide who acted illegally and will bring them to justice. There is no need for a political assessment of the past (Naumenko 1991, sections 22-23). Deputy Shevchenko from Kyiv objected to the terminology used in the explanatory note to the law, such as “kulaks” and “OUN gangs and their accomplices.” He stated that such terms are unacceptable and explained their usage by the fact that the explanatory note was prepared by the same institutions which had committed “bloody crimes” against Ukrainian people. He also declared that political prisoners of the 1980s would not accept rehabilitation “from hands stained with blood” (Shevchenko 1991, section 28). Naumenko replied that the explanatory

note was drafted using the historical terms which were used in documents of the corresponding historical period (Naumenko 1991).

There were several other comments of conceptual nature. Deputy Holubets from Ivano-Frankivsk suggested that the preamble part of the law contains, besides the reference to repression under Stalin, repressions committed under Khrushchev and Brezhnev as well (Holubets 1991). Deputy Porovsky from Rivne proposed to indicate explicitly that those who were children of parents, repressed as members of the OUN-UPA, are also rehabilitated. He also noted that many within the UPA were fighting against the Nazis and the rehabilitation law should not call the whole UPA indiscriminately as a “bandit formation.” Those members of OUN-UPA who did not commit crimes against humanity should also be rehabilitated (Porovsky 1991). Porovsky presented the OUN-UPA as armies of the people, claiming that it comprised almost half a million soldiers - 220,000 in the OUN armed underground and 200,000- 220,000 in regular military units of UPA⁶. Feeding such huge armies required efforts of almost all of the population of Western Ukraine, according to Porovsky. He presented the fight between the OUN-UPA and the Soviet army and NKVD as a “fratricidal war, unleashed by Stalin communist terror,” since many Ukrainians served in Soviet forces (Porovsky 1991).

The figures, cited by Porovsky, are overestimated. The number of members of UPA fighting in 1944-1945 varies from 14,000 to 23,000, with approximately the same number of members of the OUN underground (Patryliak 2015). Ivan Katchanovski cites approximately the same estimates: 20-23,000 UPA members in 1944 and 20,000 for the OUN-Bandera fraction in July 1941, at the peak of its influence (Katchanovski 2015, p. 220).

⁶ Historians do not consider that the OUN had an armed insurgent force separate from the UPA. The OUN underground was largely unarmed)

Deputy Bohdan Rebyrk from Ivano-Frankivsk, himself a former political prisoner, a Deputy Chair of the Commission on the Repressed, told the Verkhovna Rada that he spent 13 years in the Gulag, and met many people who, like him, were innocent victims of the regime which existed in Ukraine until 1985. He asked a rhetorical question: who personally is not to blame for what happened in Ukraine? Ukraine was a victim of two “cannibals” — from the Reichstag and the Kremlin. The UPA was an attempt by Ukraine to defend itself from both evils. Western Ukraine remembered well the famine of the 1930s in Eastern Ukraine and saw how Stalin crushed the Communist Party of Western Ukraine in 1939-1941 (Rebyrk 1991).

Genrikh Altunian, a deputy from Kharkiv, another former political prisoner and dissident, stated that with the rehabilitation law the Verkhovna Rada is expressing words of apology, words of repentance to many millions of its citizens, living and dead. He reiterated Rebyrk’s words about everyone’s responsibility for what happened in the country. Some are guilty because they were perpetrators, some because they remained silent, and some because they collaborated. “Not until we stop and look at ourselves, look into our souls and repent and ask for forgiveness, can we move forward. Otherwise, the danger of returning to the past will remain,” warned Altunian. In that sense, the rehabilitation law has a historical importance (Altunian 1991).

The law was adopted in April 1991. According to it, persons who could not be rehabilitated included those who were justifiably convicted of high treason, espionage, subversive acts, sabotage, terrorist acts, crimes against humanity, punitive actions against civilians, murders and torture of citizens and aiding and abetting invaders during the Great Patriotic War, armed incursions into the territory of Ukraine, and the organization of armed groups which committed murders, robberies. Another category of persons not to be rehabilitated were those perpetrators who were repressed afterwards (“Pro reabilitatsiyu” 1991, art. 2). The law provided for monetary compensation of the repressed — a monthly minimum wage for every month spent in prison up to 75 months. Confiscated houses and other property, whenever possible, were to

be returned to the victims or their heirs in kind or their cost reimbursed. Houses and other property which were nationalized remained the property of the state.

The time spent in imprisonment, multiplied by three, was counted as work experience for the calculation of pensions. Rehabilitated persons in need of better housing conditions were given priority in the state program for social housing. In the case of the death of a rehabilitated person, such right was passed to his/her spouse or children under certain conditions. Rehabilitated persons, who lived in the countryside, were to receive an interest-free loan and a priority in the state program of supplying building materials. People who became disabled as a result of repressions or were retired, if rehabilitated, were to be given various benefits, such as free travel by local transportation, preferential spa treatment, reduced payments (50%) for utilities, priority in medical assistance and 50% discount on prescription drugs; priority in installing a telephone; and free consultations with a lawyer on questions related to rehabilitation.

The law also provided for a judicial mechanism of rehabilitation. The prosecution had now to re-examine all criminal cases of individuals entitled to the rehabilitation according to the law. When an individual is rehabilitated, the prosecution issues an appropriate certificate. If the prosecution rejects the demand for rehabilitation, it must send the case and its decision to a corresponding court or martial court that had previously found the individual guilty. When a person was convicted by an extrajudicial body, such as the infamous "troikas," the case was to be sent either to a local court on the territory where the conviction took place, or to the Supreme Court of Ukraine. The court can rule that a person was convicted for sound reasons and therefore cannot be rehabilitated, or that a person was wrongly convicted and should be rehabilitated. A court's decision can be appealed by the prosecutor or the head of the court or the person who was refused rehabilitation. Permanent commissions were to be created under regional, city and district councils of people's deputies, whose task were to establish facts of "dekulakization" and to compensate material losses, and restore the rehabilitated citizens' right to work, housing, and pension. The

commissions were to send requests to the Minister of Interior to verify facts on rehabilitated persons, such as the baselessness of their exile, deportation, or special settlement, as well as the illegal confiscation and seizure of property, and report the results of the verification to commissions (“Pro reabilitatsiyu” 1991).

After the adoption of the law, a special group was created within the SBU to review criminal cases for rehabilitation. This group was also organizationally part of the States Archives of the SBU since all the cases are kept in these archives. After a detailed examination, a group would prepare corresponding conclusions and send them to the prosecution’s office or to courts to pronounce a final verdict. Between 1991 and 1998, 312,200 criminal cases were reviewed, involving 447,500 people. 292,600 people were rehabilitated, while 127,400 were not (Vernydubov 1998, p. 10). Those rehabilitated included people convicted for “anti-Soviet agitation,” violation of the law on the separation of religion and state, and members of OUN-UPA who did not participate actively in killings, robberies and other acts of violence. Repressed members of OUN-UPA, who were arrested while bearing arms, but were not proven to have participated in killings, were rehabilitated as well. People who were not rehabilitated included traitors who during German occupation voluntarily worked as policemen, village headmen, officials of German institutions and by their actions contributed to the establishment and strengthening of the occupation regime (Vernydubov 1998, p. 11). According to the SBU, by 2007, after having reviewed archives of criminal cases, 740,120 people were rehabilitated (“Shchodo zakhodiv” 2007). In the “Rehabilitated by History” academic project, a nationwide series of volumes containing the names of rehabilitated persons by regions, approximately the same number is listed - over 700,000 (“Holovna redaktsiyna”).

While Ukrainian politicians, activists and intellectuals since 1991 tend to inflate the number of victims, often by “millions,” those involved in the practice of rehabilitation process, have a sober attitude towards the past, an attitude based on real names and real figures, without falling into the fallacy of generalization. The head of the Lviv Regional Commission on the Rights of Rehabilitated Persons told me in 2013 that he

had names of 12,000 people in his database (Tertula 2013). Around 9,500 were rehabilitated according to Article 3 of the law - as those who were deported as “gang accomplices,” a Soviet euphemism for those suspected of sympathizing with the OUN-UPA, and opponents of collectivization; and 2,700 rehabilitated were convicted for political reasons, that is under article 54.1 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR (in the version of 1929) – counterrevolution, or national treason.

Regional commissions function within the regional councils of people’s deputies. These commissions have a dozen members from regional and city councils and representatives of various local government departments. There are also commissions at the district level. Since almost all who were eligible for rehabilitation have been rehabilitated, most of the questions that district and regional commissions are now dealing with are compensations for confiscated property or for time spent in prison. A person who was deported and is seeking compensation files a request to the district Commission on the Rights of the Rehabilitated. The Commission sends a request to the Minister of Interior to confirm the fact of deportation. Based on its records, the local department of the Minister of Interior (the police) issues a certificate that the deportation had indeed taken place. If no records exist, testimonies of witnesses (neighbours, family members) can be used as evidence. The difficulty lies not in the recognition of repression, but in obtaining material compensation.

The Law on Rehabilitation prohibits the return of real estate if they were confiscated by the state. Apartments and homes of people imprisoned or deported by Soviet authorities were very often given to other people. That is why the Law stipulates that real estate is returned to their previous owners “if possible.” Otherwise, a material compensation should be paid. In practice, this question is difficult to resolve. The Law does not provide a clear mechanism on how the size of the compensation should be calculated. The secretary of the Donetsk regional commission on the Rights of the Rehabilitated Galina Fateeva explained to me that they have sent numerous inquiries to the Verkhovna Rada regarding this, but

have not received a clear answer (Fateeva 2013). Monetary compensation for time spent in prison is established in the Law as between fifteen and seventy-five minimum monthly wages, without specifying from what period these wages should be taken. Fateeva told me in 2013 that in that year they were using a 1996 minimum monthly wages to pay compensations. Taking into account multiple inflation in Ukraine since 1996, the amount paid to the rehabilitated becomes a very derisory sum of money. Regional councils of deputies supplement the support to rehabilitated persons through local initiatives, such as one-time payments on the occasion of Victory Day (May 9) or the Day of Victims of Political Repressions (third Sunday of May).

One of the drawbacks of the Law on Rehabilitation is that it does not provide social benefits, such as free public transportation or reduced (50%) fees for utilities, for persons, rehabilitated under Article 3 (deported persons). In the 2004-2005 fiscal years, the city council of Donetsk decided to grant all rehabilitated persons, including those rehabilitated under Article 3, a 50% reduction for utilities. The city had money in the budget only for that period and the measure was temporary. Many persons concerned did not pay attention to this and continued paying the reduced fees. As a result, they accumulated a considerable debt to municipal services. Frustrated, people turned to the Regional Commission on the Rights of the Rehabilitated. Fateeva, as the secretary of the Commission, had to explain for several weeks that this reduction was only temporary. Another shortcoming of the Law on Rehabilitation is that its social benefits and compensations do not extend to children of the repressed.

Fateeva told me of another emotionally difficult episode from her work. A newspaper in Donetsk published an announcement that allowances would be paid to relatives of the repressed. They flocked to the City Council, and Fateeva had to explain to them that this announcement was a groundless rumour. It turned out there are 25,000 relatives of rehabilitated persons in Donetsk (Fateeva 2013).

Fateeva told me that she always remembers the words of one elderly gentleman who worked in the commission when she joined it. He told her that this work involves real people with their tragic destinies. She never forgets it and tries to answer any request that she receives (Fateeva 2013). In fact, she works on the voluntary basis, because this position is not paid: it is assigned to people who already work for the city and receive salary in their main place of work.

In Donetsk, the majority of the rehabilitated persons are those who were declared “enemy of the people” in the Stalinist purges of 1937-1939. Another large group is comprised of members of ethnic minorities who were deported from Donetsk during the war— Germans, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Tatars. According to the Ukrainian Law on Rehabilitation, they were rehabilitated as deported and therefore are not entitled to any social benefits. Fateeva told me that she receives inquiries from ethnic Germans who were born in Donetsk region but now live in Russia. They ask for a certificate on deportation, because in Russia they can receive such benefits, according to the Russian Federation Law “On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples.”

There have been many attempts to amend the Ukrainian Law on Rehabilitation to extend the status of the rehabilitated to children who were born to parents living in deportation. Regional commissions on the rights of the rehabilitated sent requests to the Verkhovna Rada (Tertula 2013, Fateeva 2013). Several new bills of the Law were registered but never got to be debated. The last draft law dates from 2015. It seeks to redress the shortcomings mentioned before. At public debates of this bill in Luts'k, it was noted that it is important to rehabilitate at least symbolically all those who suffered from political repressions indirectly, such as losing a wife, a husband, or their parents; or lost property; or were deprived of civil or political rights. This restoration of historical injustice is particularly important given the fact that the state does not have enough resources for the social benefits and compensations for lost property, even for a relatively small number of people that could be rehabilitated under the new Law, between 15,000-20,000, according to estimates of researchers (“Yakym bachat” 2015).

Remembering victims

A national historical project “Rehabilitated by History” emerged in the context of political liberalization in the early 1990s. The opening of archives and lifting of ideological restrictions gave historians the opportunity to study topics that had been forbidden by official Soviet historiography, such as repression and dissidence in the Soviet Union. In 1991, the book *Represovane kraieznavstvo* (Repressed Ethnography), on the repression against ethnographers in the 1920s-1930s, was published to honour academician Petro Tronko.⁷ Based on the archives of Soviet security organs, it contained a collection of biographies of repressed researchers and artists. The book filled the blanks in the unknown pages of the lives of the repressed and, most importantly, raised the question of the emergence and functioning of the Stalin’s system of terror (Podkur 2010, p. 13).

Another book which reinforced the interest of researchers in this subject was the publication of statistics of the mass repressions of 1920-1950s in the Poltava region. It was a joint project of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, of the Poltava Pedagogical Institute, and of the employees of the Poltava department of the Ukrainian KGB under the direction of Tronko. After the publication of these two books, it became clear that a large-scale study of the repressive Soviet machine was in order (Podkur, *ibid*). One of Tronko’s disciples, the young historian Yuriy Danyliuk proposed to model it after the nation-wide research and publishing project *History of Cities and Villages of the Ukrainian SSR*, an impressive multi-year, multi-volume undertaking, involving professional and amateur researchers in every corner of Ukraine. Tronko, who was the initiator and the head of the editorial board of the project, was the ideal

⁷The term ethnographer does not reflect the broader sense of the Ukrainian term *kraieznavets*, which literally means “a connoisseur, an expert of the region.” These experts study a certain geographical-historical-political unit from different perspectives: natural sciences (geography, geology, meteorology, fauna and flora), demography, economy, history, literature and culture. The aim is to build a detailed, all-round scientific knowledge of a region, involving three collective actors: the state, educational institutions, and grass-root activists. Participants at the state level include museums, research institutions, and local councils. The educational sphere involves students under the direction of teachers. At the civil society level there are various regional associations and societies of amateurs, interested in the study of a region, the so-called *suspil’ne kraieznavstvo*, which conduct research, organize conferences, exhibitions etc., with the support and encouragement of local and central state authorities.

candidate to lead this new large-scale initiative. Besides being an experienced researcher and manager, he also had the ear of high-ranking Ukrainian officials and could get an approval faster and easier than a simple scholar with no links to power holders.⁸

Petro Tronko was a Ukrainian national-communist, as Roman Podkur, the executive secretary of the national editorial board of the project *Rehabilitated by History* told me in the interview (Podkur 2013). Tronko had an exemplary and successful career of a Communist civil servant and researcher. Born into a family of peasants in the Kharkiv region, he raised to the rank of the Vice-President of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Tronko received numerous awards from the governments of both Soviet and independent Ukraine. In the second half of the 1930s, he held high-ranking positions in the district and regional councils of the Komsomol of Sumy region. In 1939 he was sent to Stanislav, later renamed Ivano-Frankivsk, as part of Komsomol and Party mission to Sovietise newly annexed Western Ukraine (Podkur 2010, p. 9-10). As the First Secretary of the Stanislav Regional Committee of the Komsomol, he organized the electoral campaign of the People's Assembly of Western Ukraine. He witnessed first-hand the deportation of thousands of families of Ukrainian peasants and disapproved of such brutal methods of Sovietisation (Podkur 2013). He never idealized the actions of the leadership of the Communist Party and of the Soviet state, and, as a historian and a researcher, emphasized the importance of an objective, multifaceted study of the "contradictory processes of the Soviet reality" (Podkur 2010, p. 10).

Tronko believed that particularly important was the research of "one of the darkest and cruellest periods" in the history of Ukraine — the emergence and spread of totalitarianism in the 1930s (Tronko 1995, p. 4).⁹

⁸ Throughout his career Tronko held important positions within the Ukrainian political and scientific establishment, which enabled him to plan and implement key projects in the restoration of historical places and monuments of the Ukrainian past and in the creation of new ones. He led the planning and building of the Memorial *National Museum of History of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945* and of the *Khortytsia* National Museum-Reserve of the Zaporizhzhia Cossacks.

⁹ Tronko describes in the following emotional terms the Soviet reality of the 1920s-1930s: "The civil war ended; it seemed peaceful days came. But new trials waited ahead. They constructed factories and plants, but destroyed churches and historical monuments. They declared welfare, but starved people to death. They blasted with explosives

He considered it a sacred duty of Ukrainian historians to research and publish the critically important series “Rehabilitated by History.” Such large-scale intensive work would return from oblivion the names of politicians, artists, writers, scientists, workers, and peasants, undeservedly forgotten by the Soviet state; restore historical truth, however unpalatable, including the commemoration of the fighters for freedom and independence of Ukraine; formulate proposals to state institutions as to how to preserve the memory of innocent repressed citizens; and put into circulation newly declassified documents on the intentions and actions of the political leadership, state organs and security services of the USSR. This would create new opportunities for the academic study and conceptualization of the questions related to the emergence and functioning of the totalitarian Soviet system (Tronko 1995, p. 4-5).

The project “Rehabilitated by History” was approved by government decree in 1992. The decree stipulated that the project would last from 1994 to 2000, and its results would be regularly published in the periodical “From the archives of VUCHK-GPU-NKVD-KDB” (Tronko 1995, p. 4). The main editorial board was formed, headed by Petro Tronko. Following the model of kraieznavtso projects, Tronko envisioned the series as a truly national project uniting efforts of state organs, educational institutions, and civil society (Tronko 1995, p. 5). Each regional volume was to follow an identical template. The first book should contain an introductory article, outlining how the Soviet regime worked in a given region. Essays on repressed statesmen, scientists, artists, writers, workers and peasants, born in the region, should allow the reader to form an idea of the scale of the “social cleansing” of Soviet society. A chapter entitled “Documents Speak” (*Movoyu dokumentiv*) would illustrate the methods of Soviet security organs (Podkur 2010, p. 16). Special attention was to be paid to the commemoration of the victims of repression, specifically the place of their burial. The research in the preparation of a regional volume should allow the establishment of such places since they were practically unknown. Tronko believed that this was the “sacred duty” of the researchers to

cathedrals and churches, while in reality they were deforming ages-old people’s morality and traditions. They clamored about literature and art, national in form and socialist in content, while in fact they were stifling a living word, a fresh thought” (Tronko 1995, p. 4).

find out the places of burial and notify the state authorities so that they immortalize the memory of the repressed (Tronko 1995, p. 8). Every regional volume should contain the lists of repressed, based on the analysis of the archival criminal cases. The number of books in each volume would depend on the number of the repressed (Podkur 2010, p. 16).

Only the names of rehabilitated persons were to be included in the books. The members of regional editorial boards, while deciding whether to include a name or not, should be guided by the criteria, outlined in the Law on Rehabilitation. As we saw earlier, these categories concerned people repressed for “counterrevolutionary crimes,” “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda”, “defamation” of the Soviet state and social order, “separation of church from state”, “dekulakisation”, complicity with “gangs” (OUN-UPA) and so forth (“Pro Reabilitatsiyu” 1991). Repression took the form of execution or imprisonment, stripping of citizenship, forced delocalization, expulsion, and deportation outside of Ukraine, coercive institutionalization (Tronko 1995, p. 9). At the same time, professor Tronko advised that regional editorial boards should not limit themselves by these definitions. Expert councils could request to include the names of citizens that had not been yet rehabilitated. The question whether to include such a name or not had to be examined at joint sessions of editorial boards and expert councils. As an example of persons who were not rehabilitated legally but could be included in the series, Tronko cited the case of members of OUN-UPA. He considered them as a “serious counteraction” to the totalitarian regime, and if their actions did not fit the definition of felony, there was no reason why they should not be listed in the *Rehabilitated by History* (Tronko 1995, p. 10).

The main goal and principle of the national project *Rehabilitated by History* was to symbolically restore justice and publicly recognize as innocent all those who were wrongly convicted by the Soviet regime. The names of all people, rehabilitated during the Khrushchev “Thaw” and after, as well as during the perestroika era, had to be listed in the books. Names of repressed members of ethnic minorities had to be

included as well. In cases where information was lacking, illegal deportations should be covered in the introductory articles to regional volumes, as well in the national, aggregate volume (Tronko 1995, p. 10).

The realization of the project turned out to be difficult for several reasons. The most prosaic one was the lack of funds. In the financial hardships of the 1990s, academic publishing was not one of the priorities of the state. Moreover, members of the editorial boards, who were conducting the research, were chronically underpaid, or not paid at all. As a result, many left and only true enthusiasts remained (Podkur 2010, p. 17). They managed to find sponsors, and the publishing continued, although episodically. Several other books, products of the research conducted within the *Rehabilitated by History* project, came out in print in the midst of the political-economic crisis of the 1990s.

Another difficulty was related to the reluctance to cooperate on the part of the Security Service. Many leading managers of the central apparatus and the regional departments did not understand the importance of this project (Podkur 2010, p. 17), and again, Tronko took the lead in that regard. He convinced them of the political, social, and moral significance of the project. As the research process began to unfold, historians and archivists of the SBU established good working relations. Step by step, they declassified and published statistical data on mass repression in Soviet Ukraine, information and analytical documents of the state security organs, and so forth. This joint work allowed historians to reconstruct the historical process of repression, its scale, causes, and the logic of the state apparatus which was carrying them out (Podkur 2010, p. 18).

Initially, it was planned that the whole project would be completed by 2000. Each region had to publish its own volume that would consist of several books (23 regions of Ukraine plus the Republic of Crimea). However, in the beginning, nobody knew how much material would have to be processed. It turned out to be much larger than expected, and the initial plans had to be reviewed several times. Today, in 2017, it has not been completed yet. The main reason for such a long delay lies in the difficulty to find funding. The

project is not a priority for local authorities who are in charge of financing the research and publication. In the regions, where the head of the editorial board knows the head of the regional administration personally, the board works well, has 7-8 full-time permanent employees who do not have to search for additional employment to supplement their incomes. Because these research units produce concrete results, they are given additional tasks.

Such was the case during the Holodomor campaign, launched by President Yushchenko in 2007 as part of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Great Famine of 1932-933. The presidential decree, dated March 28, 2007, stated that all regional administrations had to prepare regional books of memory, which would contribute to the national book of Holodomor victims. A single register of victims of the Holodomor was to be created as well. The deadline was November 2008, coinciding with the annual Day of Commemoration of the Victims of Famines, held during the fourth week of November. Under the stress of such short deadlines, regional administrations decided to use the already existing research resources, namely, the editorial boards of the *Rehabilitated by History*, which had to put everything aside and organize, conduct and coordinate the research and publication of the regional books of victims of the Holodomor. This was a *kampaneishchina*, campaigning style of work when oftentimes the quality and carefulness of work is lost in a hurry to complete a task by the deadline. “They were ‘holodomoring’”, told me Roman Podkur (Podkur 2013). Throwing all the efforts to complete the Holodomor project on time delayed the work on the *Rehabilitated by History* books.

A great part of the state bureaucratic apparatus was involved in the realization of the “megaproject” of the book of Holodomor victims: regional administrations, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the State Committee on Archives. On the local level, thousands of amateur historians, archivists, and teachers were involved as well. Teachers organized groups of students who would interview their relatives or residents of villages regarding their

experience of the Holodomor. In short, it was a project of a national scale and utmost emergency, to some reminiscent of the Soviet-era campaigns, when everything and everyone worked for one goal (Ryzhkov 2008).

As of 2013, regional editorial boards of the *Rehabilitated by history* in 23 oblasts of Ukraine published 91 books. Over a hundred books are planned (Podkur 2010, p. 19). Based on the criminal cases, preserved in national archives, personal cards for over 700,000 victims had been created by the researchers. These data are now being transferred to a national Internet database of victims of political repressions, found on the web-site of the *Rehabilitated by History* project ("Natsionalnyi bank represovanykh"). The research conducted within this project created a new branch in Ukrainian historical science — the study of the state terror of the Soviet period. Over six thousand books by Ukrainian and foreign authors have been published as a result of this study (Podkur 2010, p. 19). The Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences played a central role in the research work, ensuring consistency and a high academic level of the regional volumes ("Holovna redaktsiyna").

In the regions, the work advanced on various paths. It depended mostly on the attitude of regional authorities to the project and their readiness to provide financial support. Political factors, such as the political affiliation of regional authorities, did not affect the work of the editorial boards in regions (Podkur 2013, Bezrodnyi¹⁰ 2013). For instance, Donetsk was the first to complete the project (Bezrodnyi 2013). The last ninth book of the Donetsk series was published in 2012. According to Roman Podkur, the executive secretary of the national editorial board of the *Rehabilitated by History project* in 2013, the Donetsk team, as well as teams in other regions of South-Eastern Ukraine (Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia, for instance), had a business approach to the realization of the project. They knew that it was needed to be done, and worked accordingly (Podkur 2013).

¹⁰ Volodymyr Bezrodnyi, whom I interviewed in Donetsk, was the deputy head of the Donetsk regional editorial board of the *Rehabilitated by History*.

In Lviv, the editorial board has published only one book so far (its content will be analyzed in the next chapter) not because of a lack of money or will. The problem is of methodological nature. As mentioned before, the *Rehabilitated by History* books were to include only the names of people who were officially rehabilitated between the 1950s and the 2000s. However, in Lviv region, there are thousands of people who did not qualify for the rehabilitation because they were convicted on the basis of an article which was not mentioned in the Law on the Rehabilitation. Such is the case of families who were deported to Siberia and the Far North after the head of the family was arrested for participation in the OUN-UPA. His case was processed by the state security organs, while the cases of his family's members were sent to the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Interior is not mentioned in the Law. The Lviv editorial board wants to include the names of family members in the *Rehabilitated by History* books and to regroup names of one family together, instead of listing them in alphabetical order (Podkur 2013). In the second volume of the *Rehabilitated by History* for Lviv region names of members of the same family - both those who were convicted on the basis of the article 54.1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine - counterrevolution (state treason) and those who were deported - are listed by the alphabetical order ("Reabilitovani istoriyeyu" 2014).

The question of participation in the armed resistance to the Soviet regime is a thorny one. It has divided Ukrainian society since the beginning of Ukrainian independence. In the Soviet version of Ukrainian history, which was the only history taught in schools and universities, the combatants of OUN-UPA were fascists, Nazi collaborators, against whom the Soviet Army fought during and after the war. This interpretation is still largely popular in South-Eastern Ukraine. In Western Ukraine, though, for a significant part of the population, especially the so-called "patriotic" one, OUN-UPA members are heroes who paid the highest price for the liberation of Ukraine from Soviet occupiers and the Nazis. They fought against the Soviet totalitarian regime, which killed them or ruined their lives by sending them and their families in exile or to the Gulag. Therefore, they should be considered victims of Soviet punitive organs and should be

rehabilitated as members of the movement for the liberation of Ukraine. The Ukrainian state should recognize them as such and grant them the same social benefits as the ones granted to veterans of the Great Patriotic War.

On the regional level, this narrative was put in practice by the Lviv Regional Council in December 1991, with the adoption of the resolution “On the National Liberation Movement and Granting of Perquisites to Political Prisoners of Fascist and Bolshevik Prisons and Camps”. The resolution called upon the Verkhovna Rada to recognize the national-liberation struggle of the 1930s-1950s as a legal just fight for an independent Ukraine, to make necessary changes to the 1991 Law on Rehabilitation so that it recognizes the right to rehabilitation and compensation of all participants of the national liberation movement; to simplify the rehabilitation procedures; and amend the housing legislation of Ukraine by equating prisoners of fascist and Bolshevik camps to categories of the population that need an improvement of the living conditions and should be granted a liveable dwelling. The resolution specified mechanisms to implement the last point, such as facilitating the creation of housing cooperatives or privatizing for free and transferring the ownership to former political prisoners and their direct descendants of the house or apartment that they currently occupy. Veterans of the UPA and other political prisoners were to be granted other privileges, such as priority access to health services, installation of a telephone line, etc. (“Ukhvala 197”).

This program has been implemented in Lviv region since then. However, obtaining the recognition of the Lviv initiative on the national level turned out to be difficult. The Lviv regional chapter of the All-Ukrainian Association of Political Prisoners and the Repressed proposed several times to the Verkhovna Rada a new version of the Law on the Rehabilitation, based on the Lviv interpretation of the Ukrainian past. However, these proposals were not heard and never made it to a new law.

In January 2009, Vadim Kolesnichenko, a deputy of Verkhovna Rada from the Party of Regions, tabled the draft law “On Banning the Rehabilitation and Heroisation of Fascist Collaborators of 1933-1945”. This draft was instituting criminal liability for attempts to revive the “inhuman ideology of Nazism and Fascism in Ukraine,” counteracting attempts to propagate such ideology (“Verkhovnyi Sud” 2009). Kolesnichenko represented Sevastopol until his resignation from the Verkhovna Rada in April 2014, after the annexation of Crimea. His grandfather was a member of a tank crew of the Soviet Army, who died in combat during World War II. He always publicly defended the Soviet version of Ukrainian history and promoted the linguistic rights of the Russian minority in Ukraine. He became one of the co-authors of the Law on Languages, adopted in 2012. Kolesnichenko’s draft law, however, did not pass the review by the Supreme Court of Ukraine. Putting aside the evaluation of political intentions of the bill, several objections of a procedural character were formulated. The terms “fascist collaborators,” “rehabilitation of fascist collaborators” and “heroisation of fascist collaborators” are not included in the Criminal Code of Ukraine. Given that the bill suggested a criminal liability, it was against Ukrainian law, which stipulates that crimes must be defined in the Criminal Code. Another objection by the Supreme Court was that the terms of imprisonment, foreseen by the bill, were too harsh – between 10 to 15 years, or even a life sentence in prison (“Verkhovnyi Sud” 2009).

The ideological battle over history was taken on by President Viktor Yushchenko, who on January 28, 2010, at the very end of his disastrous term in power signed the decree “On Honouring the Participants of the Fight for the Independence of Ukraine in the 20th century.” This decree listed all armed formations which fought against Bolshevik/Soviet armies and authorities in the first half of the century, including the OUN-UPA, as fighters for the independence of Ukraine and ordered the Cabinet of Ministers together with the Security Service of Ukraine and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine to draft the bill “On the Legal Status of the Participants in the Fight for the Independence of Ukraine in the 20th Century.” The Ministry of Education, the Institute of National Memory and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine were to

develop instructions and teaching material on the subject. Local regional and city administrations had to organize events to “properly” commemorate the fighters, including an active patriotic education of youth and renaming of streets, squares, schools in honour of “prominent participants of fight for the independence of Ukraine in the 20th century and events, related to the Ukrainian liberation movement of the 20 century” (“Pro vshanuvannia” 2015).

During his five years in office (2005-2010), Yushchenko tried unsuccessfully to reconcile two ideological enemies – the Soviet veterans of World War II and the combatants of OUN-UPA. Yushchenko’s decree was a “slamming of the door” by the end of his term, an attempt to bring an official recognition of the underground nationalist movement, which was vilified by the Soviet historiography. Yushchenko’s successor, Viktor Yanukovych stuffed the decree under the carpet. Yanukovych represented Eastern Ukraine where the nationalist version of Ukrainian history has always provoked a hostile reception. Yanukovych was not as ideologically driven as Yushchenko. He simply ignored the decree. However, another political force, built on Communist ideology and Soviet legacy, the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, led by Natalia Vitrenko, called upon Yanukovych to repeal Yushchenko’s decree. In an address to Yanukovych, signed, in addition to Vitrenko, by several other organizations, it was stated that this decree “propagates the criminal ideas of national-socialism and integral Ukrainian nationalism (fascism) in violation of the Constitution and de facto recognizes them as a national ideology, while also recognizing people who adopt such ideology as national heroes.” Under the cover of this decree, it was claimed, neo-Nazi parties and movements are being formed in Ukraine, which create their own terrorist units and organize mass actions under the slogans “Ukraine for Ukrainians,” “Glory to Ukraine – Death to Enemies,” “Ukraine above all,” and that a civil war is being fomented in Ukraine (“Zvernennia” 2013). This address was signed on November 15, 2013, a week before Kyiv would erupt with the Euromaidan protests. Earlier in the year, the Supreme Administrative Court of Ukraine ruled that Yushchenko decree was legal (Tkachuk 2013).

In Donetsk region, the regional editorial board pursued a goal of symbolical significance - to restore historical justice for thousands of citizens, residents of Donetsk region, and return from oblivion forgotten names (Blednov 2012, p. 7). Members of the editorial board collected and processed secret documents and other materials of three central archives in Ukraine – the Central State Archives of Public Associations (TSDAHO, Kyiv, — the former archives of the Communist Party of Ukraine), the Central State Archives of the Supreme Organs of Power and Management of Ukraine (TSDAVO, Kyiv — essentially, the government archives), and the Archives of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), as well as the Donetsk Region State Archives and Temporary Archives of the SBU in Donetsk region. The researchers also worked in several Russian archives: the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF, Moscow), the Russian State Archives of Economy (RGAE, Moscow), and Russian State Archives of the Contemporary History (Moscow). The recollections of the victims and of their relatives were also used in the research. Students of the Department of History of the Donetsk National University participated in the research. They also wrote papers and defended theses on the subject of the rehabilitation of victims of totalitarianism (Blednov 2012, p. 8).

The Donetsk editorial board was formed in December 1992, headed by the deputy head of the Donetsk regional administration. It worked for ten years. The editorial board published within the *Rehabilitated by History* project seven issues of the collection *Truth over the Years* (Pravda cherez roky), containing essays, research papers, recollections of the repressed, and documents found in archives. In 1997, the Donetsk Regional State TV Company produced a seven episodes documentary series under the same title, which was shown on regional and national TV channels. Articles on totalitarianism and its victims appeared regularly in the regional press (Blednov 2012, p. 8-9). In the *Rehabilitated by History* books, the structure of an article on a concrete victim follows a template: family name, given name, patronymic, date of birth place of birth, nationality, education, political affiliation, workplace, date of arrest, place of residence, date of conviction and by what instance, and sentence. If it was a death sentence, then the place and date of

execution are indicated, when available. Otherwise, it is stated: “There are no data on the execution of the sentence.” An article ends with the year of the rehabilitation (“Reabilitovani istoriyeyu” 2012, Donetsk 9, p. 307).

It is important to note that in the Donetsk edition of the *Rehabilitated by History* project, the accusation under which a person was arrested is not mentioned. Apparently, this decision was made in Kyiv by the Institute of History and by Petro Tronko who formulated the methodology and instructions of the project (Nikolski 2013). Donetsk complied. Other regions, however, turned out to be more “courageous” (ibid), and included the information on the accusation in the personal articles of the repressed, as in the Zaporizhzhia and Luhansk volumes of the project. Moreover, the place of burial is not listed anywhere because of the premeditated secrecy of Soviet security organs which wanted to cover their crimes. The “sacred duty” (in Tronko’s words) to immortalize victims of political repressions by erecting monuments on their graves was achieved in Donetsk not from above, by the state, but from below, through efforts of *Memorial* and other social activists.

In Lviv, remembering of victims was also generated from below, but this grassroots movement was more powerful. It sprung from a deeply rooted nationalist feeling, which Soviet rule did not succeed in eradicating; from the memory of anti-Soviet resistance during World War II and its crushing by Soviet power; and from the memory of mass deportations, organized by Soviet authorities in 1939-1941 and 1946-1948. The historical experience of Lviv region explains the massive support for the repudiation of the Soviet past and the commemoration of the victims of Soviet repression.

Chapter 8: Lviv

Historical context

Before World War I, Galicia (*Halychyna*) was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Because of the relatively liberal policies of Vienna towards ethnic minorities, the Ukrainian speakers of Halychyna were able to form a national consciousness and develop a strong civil society, from agricultural cooperatives to educational and cultural organizations (Hrytsak 1996, pp. 193-194). After the end of World War I, as a result of several international agreements on the political and geographical division of Europe, Halychyna became part of the recreated state of Poland and was internationally recognized as such in 1923 (Magocsi 2000, p. 526). The Ukrainian minority was to be granted full civil rights and religious, educational, and linguistic privileges (Magocsi 2000, p. 525).

The Polish state, which saw the political autonomy of ethnic minorities as a threat to national interests, conducted an assimilation policy. This policy was dictated largely by practical reasons: in the new political arrangement after World War I Poland included eastern territories with a large presence of ethnic minorities (Himka 1994, p. 351). Ukrainians, whose population was estimated at between 5,2 and 6 million, were the largest ethnic minority (14-16%) and lived on one-third of the territory of Poland (Hrytsak 1996, p. 187). The assimilation policy of the Polish state was consistent and manifested itself in administrative, economic, educational, and political aspects. Civil servants were recruited mostly from ethnic Poles. The Ukrainian language was banned from use in governmental agencies by a law passed in 1924.

The Ukrainian school system, built under Austrian rule, was replaced with a bilingual, Polish-Ukrainian system, in which the Ukrainian language held a secondary role (Himka 1994, p. 352). The number of Ukrainian schools decreased sharply from 2,426 in 1922 to 352 in 1938, while the number of Polish-Ukrainian schools increased from 1,635 in 1928 to 2,485 in 1938 (Magocsi 2000, p. 594). Polish soon dominated Ukrainian in the bilingual schools (*ibid*). In response, Ukrainians developed a large network of

private schools, especially at the secondary level. It was done mainly through the efforts of the “Ridna Shkola” (Native School) Society.

Land reform was also conducted in a way which favoured Polish nationals: the land which became available as a result of the parceling of large estates in Ukrainian-inhabited territories was given to Polish colonists instead of the land-hungry local Ukrainian peasants (Magocsi 2000, p. 594). Over 200,000 Polish officers and soldiers, or so-called *osadnyky* (colonists) in Ukrainian, relocated to the eastern territories of Poland as a result of the laws passed by Polish Sejm in 1920 and 1925. The scope of these laws was to reinforce the presence of the Polish national element in the traditionally Ukrainian territories (Hrytsak 1996, p. 188).

In the Halychyna of inter-war years the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians were peasants. For instance, in 1921, 94% of Ukrainian population lived in villages (Himka 1994, p. 355), while Poles lived predominantly in cities and towns (Magocsi 2000, p. 586).

Halychyna under Polish rule in the interwar years remained a largely poor, extensive agriculture economy. Ukrainians developed a large network of cooperatives and credit unions. Such cooperatives promoted the use of modern techniques and machinery in farming and provided financing and marketing services. By 1939 this network had around 3,500 cooperatives and covered the whole region (Magocsi 2000, p. 589). Each cooperative also had its own publications in the Ukrainian language (*ibid*). In general, this movement was motivated by national patriotism which favoured the economic strengthening of the Ukrainian minority in Poland (Magocsi 2000, 592) without resorting to political or military actions. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church preserved its status during the interwar years, not in the least thanks to the leadership of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky,

In the political realm, the most important parties were the centrist Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance (*Ukrainske natsional'ne demokratychnе obiednannania*, or UNDO). Its ultimate goal was an independent

Ukraine; but, considering the current political situation, the party concentrated on achieving positive changes for Ukrainians in Poland through legal means (Magocsi 2000, p. 593). This party was the strongest in both the Sejm and the Senate in all of the elections to the Polish Parliament (ibid, p. 594). The party defended the interests of Ukrainians in Poland. Several other parties also represented more or less the centre of the political spectrum (for a detailed list see Hrytsak 1996, p. 193).

The Communist movement in Halychyna was also active. It was supported by Ukrainians first of all because the Soviet Communists opposed the territorial rearrangement of Europe after World War I and advanced the unification of Western Ukraine with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Communist Party of Western Ukraine (KPZU) was created in 1923 on the basis of the Communist Party of Eastern Galicia, founded in 1919. The KPZU was part of the Polish Communist Party, where it had an autonomous statute (Hrytsak, pp. 195-196). The success of the policy of Ukrainization in the Soviet Union inspired a part of the Galician intelligentsia. The disillusionment came with collectivization and the famine in the early 1930s (Himka 1994, p. 358). Importantly, the KPZU refused to condemn what Moscow considered the “nationalist” stance of Ukrainian Communists within Ukraine when several of its key leaders were purged in 1928. A decade later, in 1938 the Comintern declared that the entire Communist Party of Poland was disbanded (Magocsi 2000, p. 593). Another popular party from the left of the political spectrum was the Ukrainian Socialist Union of Workers and Peasants (*Ukrains'ke selians'ko-robitnyche socialistychne obiednannia*, or Selrob), with a pro-Communist and pro-Soviet orientation. It was banned by the Polish government in 1932, but the Union continued working clandestinely (Hrytsak 1996, p. 196).

The policy of assimilation of the Polish government and its unfavourable attitude toward the Ukrainian minority provoked discontent among nationally conscious Ukrainians. Overall, the majority of political and intellectual Ukrainian elite defended legal means of cooperation with the Polish government. A radical part, however, favoured terror and violence as means of achieving the creation of the Ukrainian state. The main

organization, which promoted this point of view, was the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), founded in 1929 by leading Ukrainian military figures under Colonel Evhen Konovalets, who fought in the Galician regiments of the Austro-Hungarian Army, and nationalist students' organizations (Hrytsak 1996, p. 197). The military component of the OUN came from the previous organization, the Ukrainian Military Organization (*Ukrains'ka viys'kova orhanizatsia*, or UVO). Konovalets envisaged the OUN as a mass political organization, which should be the legal and visible sector of a clandestine and extremist unit, represented by the UVO (ibid).

The young wing of the OUN was more radical. They saw terror and violence as a political instrument against its internal and external enemies and a way to provoke Polish authorities to carry out repressive actions against the Ukrainian population. These repressive actions would awake the revolutionary spirit of Ukrainians, who would eventually rise and dispose of their oppressor. Under the leadership of Stepan Bandera, the OUN carried two sensational political assassinations. In October 1933, Oleksiy Mailov, an attaché of the Soviet Consulate in Lviv, was shot dead as a revenge for the collectivization and famine in Soviet Ukraine. In June 1934, the Polish Minister of the Interior Bronislaw Pieracki was shot by the OUN as the organizer of "pacification" campaigns of 1930.¹¹ After the killing of Pieracki, the Polish government created an "isolation" camp at Bereza Kartuska for people perceived as a threat to security, peace and social order; in other words, for political prisoners. Initially, the camp was filled with Ukrainians suspected of revolutionary activities, Communists, and members of the Polish political opposition.

In September 1934, Poland abolished the law on the protection of national minorities (Hrytsak 1996, p. 199). By the end of the 1930s, most Ukrainians grew dissatisfied with Polish rule and the efforts of the Polish government to build a strong Polish nation-state while ignoring the interests of national minorities.

¹¹ These pacification campaigns were the response of the Polish government to the violent acts of Ukrainian extremist groups. The Polish army and police were sent to towns and villages where riots took place, and conducted beatings, arrests, and the closure of schools and agricultural cooperatives. As Hrytsak notes, the most repulsive aspect of the pacification was the principle of collective responsibility according to which whole Ukrainian communities were punished for actions of some individual Ukrainians (Hrytsak 1996, p. 191).

In such conditions the prospects of a political compromise between Poles and Ukrainians were illusory (Magocsi 2000, p. 598).

On September 17, 1939, as a result of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of non-aggression and the division of Poland between Stalin and Hitler, the Soviet Army occupied the eastern parts of Poland, following the German invasion of Poland. Many Ukrainians, Jews, and Byelorussians greeted soldiers with joy. In the narrative of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the Red Army was liberating them from Polish oppression (Smoliy 2008, p. 692). A *Pravda* editorial, on September 14, 1939, skilfully framed the national oppression of Ukrainians and Byelorussians by Polish rulers: “The lands of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia are being settled by military colonists, the so-called *osadniki*. Poles that represent only a minimal percentage of the population are the dominant force which keeps in its hands all the state apparatus. The ruling circles of Poland maintain their dominance over national minorities by punitive expeditions, martial courts, white terror, and the instigation of interethnic hatred” (Smoliy 2008, p. 691). The protection of the rights and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia was used by the Soviet Union as an official pretext to invade Eastern Poland (Hrytsak 1996, p. 210).

After the “reunification” of Western Ukraine with Soviet Ukraine, the Soviet regime started to build a new political and social order. Under the command of the Ukrainian Front, a committee was created to organize elections. Most active members were party and Komsomol functionaries from other regions of Ukraine (Smoliy 2008, p. 693). The elections to People’s Assembly of Western Ukraine were held on October 22, 1939. Voters could only vote for a single list of candidates who supported the “reunification” of Western Ukraine with the Soviet Union (Magocsi 2000, p. 617). Many Ukrainian historians consider this election illegitimate because the candidates were imposed from above, while the attempts to present alternative candidates, for instance, from non-Communist parties or civil society organizations, were suppressed (Hrytsak 1996, p. 156; Smoliy 2008, p. 694). As a result, 1484 deputies were elected (Smoliy 2008, p. 693).

Four days later, on October 26, 1939, the newly elected People's Assembly adopted the Declaration on the State Authority in Western Ukraine and the Declaration on Western Ukraine's joining the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. On November 1, 1939, the Supreme Council of the USSR approved the request, and Western Ukraine became part of Soviet Ukraine (Magocsi 2000, p. 617).

The Sovietisation of newly annexed regions began. In the spring of 1940 elections to local state authorities were held, again with a substantial implication of the Soviet military (Smoliy 2008, p. 694). Following the official course of Ukrainization in an attempt to win the sympathies of the population, local Ukrainians obtained many positions in the state apparatus and local municipal councils. However, the bulk of the Soviet party and state system in Halychyna was formed by Ukrainians from Eastern, Central, and Southern Ukraine. Thousands of teachers, doctors, agronomists, engineers, and geologists came to Halychyna. In the first half of 1940, 14,000 Communists arrived to the region. By the fall of 1940, the human resources department of the Communist Party of Ukraine reported another 40,000 were getting ready to be sent (Smoliy 2008, 694). These workers, however, did not represent the best part of Soviet managers and specialists, who were needed in Soviet Ukraine, and often lacked education: in 1939, between a third and a half of civil servants did not have even a secondary school diploma (Hrytsak, p. 213).

The local intelligentsia, educated in the spirit of the rule of law and the respect of religious traditions and the authority of the church under Austrian and Polish rule, found it hard to accept the "command-administrative" methods of the new regime, the arrogance of Communist bureaucrats, the arbitrariness of the security service, and the general disregard of morality (Smoliy 2008, p. 695). A significant part of the political and intellectual Ukrainian elite fled to the German-occupied part of Poland, in Western Galicia, where they were allowed to develop a network of civil society organizations —cooperatives, schools, Ukrainian educational societies. All the legal activities of Ukrainians were coordinated by the Ukrainian Central Committee in Krakow, which represented the interests of the Ukrainian population before German

authorities. The Committee was created in June 1940 and was headed by the demographer Volodymyr Kubyovych (Hrytsak 1996, p. 216).

Those who stayed in Lviv cooperated with the Soviet regime either passively or actively. For many, it was a matter of sheer survival. Others, thanks to the Ukrainization of cities and towns, obtained positions in educational and research institutions. There were also those who greeted the Soviet regime without reservations: former members of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, several writers, as well as senior and junior officers (Hrytsak 1996, p. 215).

The old, “bourgeois” socio-political structure was destroyed: all political parties, cultural organizations (among them “Prosvita” and the Shevchenko Scientific Society), cooperatives, and newspapers were abolished (Magocsi 2000, p. 619). New, Soviet forms of social organization were introduced from above: party and Komsomol committees, trade unions, meetings, lectures, rallies (Smoliy 2008, p. 695). The Greek Catholic church was not abolished, but its influence was greatly undermined by all kinds of administrative means, such as banning all church publications, removing religious teaching and symbols from schools, and abolishing church control of all schools. The Soviet state even seized Greek Catholic seminaries (Magocsi 2000, p. 619).

Pursuing the policy of Ukrainization, Soviet authorities transformed bilingual Polish-Ukrainian schools, which were set up in Ukrainian villages by the Polish government, into unilingual Ukrainian schools. The same was done with high schools, known as *gymnasia*, in towns and cities (Magocsi, *ibid*). New Ukrainian newspapers began to appear in major cities. The Polish University of Lviv, named in honour of Jan Kazimierz, was Ukrainianized and given the name of Ivan Franko. A branch of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences was established, largely staffed by former members of the Shevchenko Scientific Society. The Opera Theatre was ukrainianized as well and renamed Ivan Franko Theatre of Opera and Ballet (Hrytsak 1996, p. 213).

In the economic realm, Sovietisation meant the nationalization of industry and expropriation of large landed estates. Over a year and a half, the Soviet state expropriated 2,200 enterprises, and new enterprises were created, significantly reducing unemployment (Smoliy 2008, p. 696). By early December 1939, about 2.7 million hectares of land were confiscated from large landowners (mostly Poles), Polish state officials, and from churches and monasteries (Magocsi 2000, p. 618). A little less than half were given to 747,000 landless and land-poor rural households, who also received horses, cows, tools and grain (Smoliy 2008, p. 696). The larger part of the confiscated land was used to create Soviet-style state farms (*radhospy*) and especially collective farms (*kolhospy*, or *kolkhozy* in Russian) (Magocsi 2000, p. 618). Collectivization, however, did not find enthusiastic support among peasants, since in May 1940 there were only 155 collective farms in Western Ukraine and 529 by the end of the year (Smoliy 2008, p. 696). The Soviet state resorted to forced collectivization, and by June 1941, the number had grown to 2,651, which included 177,000 peasant households (*ibid*).

Soviet authorities were preoccupied with securing the Western borders of the Soviet Union. The security services monitored the state of public opinion closely and quickly suppressed any opposition. The main mode to fight the enemies of the Soviet regime, or the “enemies of the people,” in Soviet terms, was deportation. The first wave of deportation in late 1939 targeted the social elite — professionals, industrialists, and bureaucrats who had not fled to the Western territories of Poland under German occupation, known as *Generalgouvernement*. Two other waves of deportation, in April 1940 and June 1941, swept anyone perceived as disloyal to the Soviet regime. Historians have estimated that approximately half a million Polish citizens, 20 percent of them ethnic Ukrainians, were deported from Galicia and western Volhynia to labour camps in Siberia and Kazakhstan (Gross 1991, p. 73), although some estimates place the number at 330,000 (“Agreements and Disagreements” 1999). If one adds soldiers forcibly drafted into the Red Army or POWs, the number is close to or exceeds one million (Kondratiuk 2001, p. 157; Parsadanova 1989, p. 158).

According to the latest research by Polish historians, which takes into account evidence from Russian archives, around 415,000 former Polish citizens came back from their eastern exile. This number represents approximately half of all the civilian Poles that were deported or evacuated to remote areas of the USSR from Eastern Poland, as well as those who were forcedly enrolled into the Red Army (Karpus 2001, p. 147).¹² The mass deportations resulted in the “de-Polonization” of cities and villages in Halychyna (Magocsi 2000, p. 620).

The Soviet repressive machine targeted without class or ethnic distinction all those who put up real or perceived resistance to the new Soviet order: Polish and Ukrainian nationalists, Jewish entrepreneurs, Greek Catholic and Orthodox clergy, members of the scientific and cultural elite, peasants and workers (Smoliy 2008, p. 67). Even those who declared their loyalty to the Soviet state were not spared. For instance, on September 24, 1939 a delegation of Ukrainian political parties (Ukrainian National-Democratic Union [UNDO], Ukrainian Social-Radical Party, and Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party), headed by Kost Levytsky, the “dean” of Ukrainian politicians in Halychyna, met with Soviet military and high-ranking officials and assured that they were ready to cooperate with Soviet authorities. In exchange of ceasing their political activities, the Halychyna political elite were asking the Soviet regime to create conditions for and support the functioning of Ukrainian economic and cultural-educational organizations. As evidence of its loyalty, the UNDO decided on September 21, prior to the meeting with Soviet officials, to dissolve itself. Several days later similar decisions were taken by the leadership of other legal political parties. However, it did not save them from persecution. At the end of September and early October 1939 leaders of all major parties were arrested and deported to the East, including Kost Levytsky. Ukrainian intelligentsia activists in towns and villages were also arrested (Kondratiuk 2001, p. 123).

¹² Two cited articles, by Zbigniew Karpus and Kostiantyn Kondratiuk, are part of a joint project of Ukrainian and Polish historians, entitled “Ukraine – Poland: Difficult Questions,” which lasted from 1997 to 2006 and consisted of a dozen seminars, dedicated to the thorny questions in Polish-Ukrainian relations during World War II and in the postwar years. Ten volumes were published. Each topic was presented by a Ukrainian and a Polish historian, and, following the debates, a joint “protocol of agreements and divergences” was signed.

Such methods of incorporation of Western Ukraine into the Soviet System antagonized a significant part of the Western Ukrainian population, and formed a large social basis in support of Ukrainian nationalist and national-democratic underground, creating conditions for collaboration during the German occupation (Smoliy 2008, p. 697-698). The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) abstained from large-scale actions and resorted to the assassination of party bureaucrats and the distribution of anti-Soviet leaflets. OUN's main focus was on building and strengthening its clandestine network (Hrytsak 1996, p. 157).

Soviet authorities knew of these activities. The NKVD collected information on OUN networks and carried out the arrests and liquidation of OUN members. In January 1941 the NKVD organized the "Trial of 59" — a trial of 59 OUN members, most of whom were students.¹³ In May of the same year, another trial was held in which the 62 young students from various districts of Lviv oblast stood accused. Twenty of them received death penalty (Kondratiuk 2001, p. 156).

The Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of non-aggression did not last long. In spring of 1941, Hitler decided to attack the Soviet Union. The Barbarossa operation, a military campaign to invade the Soviet Union, was ready in May and launched on June 22. The attack took Stalin by surprise. In spite of many warnings of the intelligence service that Nazis were preparing for the invasion, he had refused to believe the evidence. Soviet troops were unprepared and badly equipped. German forces, having concentrated in strategic points of attacks large numbers of machinery and troops easily broke Soviet defence (Hrytsak 1996, p. 217). Soviet forces were rapidly retreating to the East. On June 29, 1941, a week after the beginning of the invasion, the German Army entered Lviv. By mid-July they were controlling all Western Ukraine and Bessarabia. Kyiv fell on September 16 (*ibid*).

¹³ This trial will be described more in details in the section on the Zamarstyniv prison.

About numbers

Facing rapidly advancing German troops, the Soviet leadership had to rapidly decide what to do with prisoners that were kept in prisons of Western Ukraine. The collective book *History of Ukraine* estimates the number of prisoners at 34,000 (Smoliy 2008, p. 697). Inna Fedushchak, however, provides the lower figure of 15,547 people (Feduschchak 2006, p. 121). She bases her estimate on a document entitled “Distribution, Limits and Admission to Prisons of the Ukrainian USSR as of June 10, 1941” (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p.338-341). This document contains a table in which one column lists prisons by oblasts, another — the limits of prisoners per prison, and a third — the actual number of people detained in these prisons. When one adds the number of prisoners in Lviv oblast (prisons no. 1, 2, and 4 in Lviv and a prison in Zolochiv for a total of 5,770 prisoners) and Drohobych oblast (prisons in Drohobych, Peremyshl, Sambir and Striy, with a total of 3,082 detainees), as well as prisons in Stanislav oblast (in the cities of Stanislav, Kolomyia, Pechenizhyn — 3,017 prisoners) and in Ternopil oblast (prisons in Ternopil, Chortkiv, Berezhany, and Kremenets — 3,687 prisoners), the overall number comes to 15,547 (Fedushchak 2006, p. 121).¹⁴

As geographical limits of Western Ukraine, Fedushshak took the current understanding of the notion of Western Ukraine, which includes Lviv, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk. However, in another book, co-authored with Oleh Romaniv, she includes in the total number of people executed by the retreating Soviet troops two other regions – Rivne and Volyn (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 61-62). If one adds the number of detainees in Volyn region (3,209) and Rivne (1,611), the total number is 20,376 detainees. This number is smaller than Feduschchak’s estimate of the number of people executed by the retreating Soviet police in June-July 1941, which is around 22,000 (ibid, p. 63).

¹⁴ The lands annexed by the Soviet Union were administratively reorganized into six oblasts similar to those in the rest of the Soviet Union (Drohobych, Lviv, Rivne, Stanislav —later known as Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil and Volyn (Dmytruk, 1999, p. 74). Drohobych region was later merged with Lviv region.

How could that be? A relatively small difference in figures (1,633 persons) could be explained by some errors in reporting either by the NKVD, on which the number of detainees is based, or by some errors in calculation made by Fedushchak. We will analyze her sources later in the text. But the main difficulty in making sense of this discrepancy stems from the fact that executions were not the only means used to empty prisons, since prisoners were also evacuated to the East. On June 23, 1941, the NKVD Commissar Merkulov sent a directive (no. 2445/M) to republican and regional offices, asking them to “study” the question of the evacuation of the vast majority of detainees in prisons. According to the directive, the total number and profile of arrested people had to be provided by the security institutions, and an estimated number of people that should be evacuated. The detainees were to be deported to central and eastern regions of the Soviet Union. The directive also asked to examine all the records of people that had been arrested, and to compose lists of people that should be executed (Kulakovsky 1994, p. 192).

On the same day when the directive was issued (June 23), Deputy Commissar of the Soviet NKVD Chernyshov sent a telegram to the Soviet Ukraine NKVD chief Serhienko in Kiev, indicating that 23,236 detainees from NKVD prisons of Western Ukraine were to be transported to the eastern regions of the USSR (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 342). This plan includes following prisons:

- In Lviv region: 4,591 people from Lviv and 614 people from Zolochiv, for the total of 5,205 detainees;
- In Drohobych: 1,283 from Sambir, 884 from Stryi and 838 from Peremyshl, for a total of 3,005 people;
- In Stanislav: 2511 from Stanislav, 347 from Kolomyia, 94 from Pechenizhyn, for a total of 2,952 people;
- In Ternopil: 1577 from Ternopil, 346 from Berezhany, 1279 from Chortkiv and 439 from Kremenets for a total of 3,641 prisoners;

- In Volyn: 1999 from Lutsk, 317 from Volodymyr-Volynskyi and 788 from Kovel for a total of 3,104;
- In Rivne: 738 from Dubno, 896 from Rivne, and 53 from Ostroh, for a total of 1,687 prisoners.

The total of prisoners to be evacuated was 19,594. If we go back to the number of prisoners detained in Western Ukraine as of June 10, 1941, we have 20 376 detainees. The difference is 773 prisoners, which is within the margin of error. Thus, based on these two documents, we can assume that around 20,000 people were detained in prisons of Lviv, Drohobych, Stanislav, Ternopil, Volyn, and Rivne regions of Western Ukraine at the beginning of the German invasion. According to a non-dated document on the evacuation of prisoners from all prisons of Ukraine (dated probably later than August 7, 1941, judging by the latest day mentioned in the report), the total number of people executed in prisons of Western Ukraine amounts to 7,448 people. The distribution is the following: 2,464 in Lviv region; 1,101 in Drohobych (Stryi and Sambir); 1,000 in Stanislav; 683 in Ternopil (Ternopil's city and Chortkiv); over 2,000 in Lutsk (Lutsk city and Kovel, with data from Volodymyr-Volynsky unavailable; and 200 in Rivne (Bilas 1994, vol. 2, p. 267-271). Another archival document from the NKVD (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 367-373) provides a figure of 5,700 people executed in Western Ukraine. If one adds to this the figure 2,000 prisoners shot in Lutsk, not mentioned in this report, one arrives at 7,700 people, which is close to the result based on the previously analyzed document.

Distribution of detainees in prisons of Western Ukraine* per document dated June 10, 1941	Number of prisoners to be evacuated per Chernyshov's telegram of June 23, 1941**	Number of executed prisoners***
Lviv region: Prison no1 – 3638 Prison no2 – 801		

Zolochiv Prison (prison no 3) – 625 Prison no4 – 706 Total - 5770	5205	2464
Drohobych region: City of Drohobych – n/a Peremyshl - 856 Sambir - 1310 Stryi - 916 Total - 3082	3005	1168
Stanislav region: City of Stanislav – 2555 Kolomyia - 357 Pechenizhyn - 105 Total: 3017	2952	1000
Ternopil region: City of Ternopil – 1592		

Chortkiv – 1292		
Berezhany – 351		
Kremenets – 452		
Total - 3687	3641	683
Volyn		
Lutsk – 2055		
Volodymyr-Volynskyi – 318		
Kovel – 836		
Total: 3209	3104	2194
Rivne oblast:		
City of Rivne – 659		
Dubno – 618		
City of Rivne – 277		
Ostroh – 57		
Total: 1611	1687	200
All six regions together: 20,376	19,594	7709

*Six regions are included, following the delimitation used by Inna Fedushchak: Lviv, Drohobych; Stanislav; Ternopil; Volyn; Rivne.

**As the breakdown by the number of people to be evacuated does not list specific prisons for cities in which there were several prisons, as in Lviv and Rivne, only a cumulative figure per region is indicated.

*** Based on a non-dated report on the situation with prisoners in all of Ukraine.

The total number of executed prisoners, including those who were shot in an attempt to escape during the evacuation, is thus 7,709. Based on the analysis of a report on the evacuation of prisoners, dated July 5, 1941, the historian Kondratiuk evaluates the number of executed as “more than 8,000” (2001, p. 161). He includes in his calculations 767 detainees, executed in the prison of Uman, which in June 1941 was part of Kyiv oblast. The same number is mentioned in the July 12 report, analyzed above. I did not include this number in my calculations because I wanted to find out how many prisoners were executed in the six regions of Western Ukraine. On the basis of the analysis of archives of the Prisons Department and the Convoy Troops Department of the NKVD, Russian archivists Gurianov and Kokurin arrived at the figure of 8,789 prisoners, shot in all of the prisons of Ukraine (1994, p. 20).

We thus have a figure of 8,000-9,000. Fedushchak in her book cites the figure of 22,000 (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 63). How can such a huge difference (14,000) be explained? I will focus only on one region since it is the subject of my research. Fedushshak states that “the number of victims in prisons 1, 2, and 4 of Lviv is estimated at around 4,000 people” (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 56), although she also cites the figure of 2,464 prisoners from the NKVD report mentioned above. She substantiates her estimates based on two articles printed in *Ukrains'ki visti* (Ukrainian News) on July 5 and July 12, 1941. These articles describe how Lviv residents flocked to prisons when the last of the retreating Soviet troops were leaving the city and made a terrible discovery – hundreds of corpses, shot and mutilated in the cells of the prison on Lontsky, over 600 in the prison on Zamarstyniv, and at least 300 in the “Bryhidky” prison on

Kazymyryvska Street. The number of 300 is based on the testimony of a driver who would transport the detainees on a truck to a place called Povystavova place where they were shot. The July 12 article states “that one can almost surely talk about thousands of victims in the Bryhidky prison, without providing any source or estimates (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 260). Feduschchak, while reporting these facts, also follows the tragic and horrified style of the articles – she talks about “many thousand” mass of victims, without explaining where this figure is taken from (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 57). She also cites the number of 649 corpses that were found in Zolochiv prison (*ibid*), using as one of the references the recollections of a certain Rubizhny from England. These recollections were recorded in 1991. Rubizhny was a little boy in July 1941. In his recollections, he talks about how he came to the Zolochiv prison to find out what happened to his grandfather. He describes how the corpses were put in the yard of the prison. There were 752 corpses in total. How could he know the exact number of these corpses if he was only a little boy? And how could he remember such a precise figure all these years? This makes us question the reliability of the figure of 4,000 prisoners executed by the Soviet police in late June 1941 in three prisons of Lviv.

In the cumulative list of victims per region, Feduschchak includes Uman with 954 persons shot, although Uman, as we saw above, was part of the Kyiv region in 1941. For Drohobych region, for instance, she cites Sambir – 1200 victims and Stryi – 1101, while in the NKVD report the total number of persons executed in both of these prisons is 1101. For Dubno prison in Rivne region, she cites the astonishing number of 1500, calling the execution “the cruellest massacre of the detainees” (Romaniv and Fesushchak 2002, p. 62). As a source, Feduschchak uses an article entitled “Bandits are Torturing Endlessly,” published in “Ukrainian daily news” (“Ukrayinski shchodenni visti”) on July 10, 1941. This article is very short, and it is worth citing in here in full:

“In all cities of Western Ukraine German soldiers, in their victorious march, see the most terrible images. World opinion even today lives under the impression of the most heinous mass murder, committed by Red executioners on thousands of Ukrainian men and women. News continues to come in on the slaughter of the Judeo-Bolshevik cabal. In Dubno Bolsheviks killed 1,500 Ukrainians. Doctors’ examinations showed that these non-human Barbarians first raped women and children, and then killed them. After the terrible suffering that the inhabitants of Western Ukraine had to endure, everywhere now they are greeting with grateful heart the arrival of the German Army” (Romaniv and Fedushchak 2002, p. 326).

Using such emotion-laden sources requires a sober approach if one seeks to establish the true number of executed people. These sources are not sufficient to estimate numbers. However, the number of 4,000 executed prisoners, established by Fedushchak in such an uncertain manner, is uncritically taken on by a historian who wrote an article on the Soviet period of 1939-1941 for the website of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky. Although this anonymous author cites the figure of 2,464 executed prisoners, as stated in an NKVD report of July 12, 1941, s/he also quotes the figure of 4,000 prisoners, referring to the research conducted by Fedushchak (“Radianskyi period”). On another page of the museum website, dedicated to the executions of June 1941, it is stated that as of June 24 in three prisons of Lviv and a prison in Zolochiv, 2,072 people were shot (“Masovi rozstrily”). The article referencing a report from the head of the Lviv regional department of the Ukrainian NKVD, Lieutenant Lerman, sent on June 24 to the head of the Lviv region of the Ukrainian NKVD, Captain Diatlov (Bilas 1994, vol. 2, p. 228-229). There is no such number in that report. There is a cumulative table of prisoners shot in three prisons of Lviv, the total mounting to 1,808. Data from prison 3 are absent because a person sent there to report is completing his work, and the contact with this person had not been established.

On the webpage of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky, it is stated that on June 26 new execution lists were composed containing 2,068 names. They were executed on June 24-28. How can one shot a person on June

24, if that name was included in the list on June 26? By adding these two numbers – 2,072 and 2,068, an anonymous author of this webpage arrives at the conclusion that 4,140 prisoners were shot in Lviv. The source on which the author bases the conclusions is the list of prisoners of prison no. 1 executed in June 1941 (“Z arkhiviv” 1997). This list was prepared by the Security Service of Ukraine and published in the historical research journal *Z arkhiviv VUChK-GPU-NKVD-KGB*. It is composed of several separate tables divided in the following way: list of prisoners who were shot on June 26, whose criminal cases are kept in the Lviv region department of the SBU (40 names); list of prisoners executed in June 1941 whose criminal cases are kept in the Lviv region department of the SBU (207 names); list of prisoners executed in June of 1941 whose criminal cases “are absent” in the Lviv region department of the SBU (397 names); list of prisoners who were shot on June 26, whose criminal cases “are absent” in the Lviv region department of the SBU (66 names). The total is 710 names. This figure is smaller than the one cited in Lerman’s report – 924.

The reference department of the SBU has also prepared lists of detainees in the other three NKVD prisons in Lviv oblast who were executed in June of 1941 (“Z arkhiviv” 1998). According to these lists, 450 people were killed in prison no. 2, 301 in prison no. 3 (Zolochiv), and 324 in prison no. 4.

The total number of people executed in June 1941 according to the lists made public by the SBU is 1,785. In the absence of detailed lists of people shot by June 24, 1941, in the prisons of Lviv region, it is impossible to establish the degree to which the total of 1,808 from the Lerman report overlaps with the lists prepared by the SBU. Since it is reasonable to assume that the overlap was not complete, then the figure of 2,464 from a NKVD report of July 12, 1941, seems the closest to reality. Of course, one must take into account that the lists made public by the SBU might not be complete. I would, therefore, rely on the figure of 2,464 executed prisoners, rather than the one over 4,000, provided by Fedushchak.

Who were those prisoners? To answer this question, we should look first at what goals the NKVD pursued in annexed Western Ukrainian territories. According to Russian historians Gorlanov and Roginski (1997), from the *Memorial* Society, both the arrests and deportations were similar to the repressions, carried out on the “old” Soviet territories – they pursued the Sovietisation of the local population. However, the repressions on the newly annexed territories were carried out in a much more intensive way. The fight against “class enemies,” the “nationalist counter-revolution,” and the “liquidation of kulaks,” which had been going on in the Soviet territories for 20 years, had to be done in Western Ukraine in an accelerated fashion. Another, perhaps more important reason for the increased scale of arrests and deportations was the pressing necessity to clean the border zone from “suspect” or potentially “suspect” elements in the face of the ever-growing threat of war. These two goals, combined, determined who was repressed in the former Polish territories, and how. Deportation was perceived by Soviet authorities as the most effective way of cleansing, which explains a higher number of deportations compared to arrests. As the result of four deportation campaigns, carried out by Soviet authorities in 1939-1941, at least 320,000 citizens of Poland were relocated to eastern and northern regions of the USSR (Khaustov 1997). Around 108,000 were arrested in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, based on accusations of counter-revolutionary acts (Gorlanov and Roginski 1997).

Judging by the data on social status and criminal charges of the prisoners, the main factor in designating an enemy by Soviet authorities was social status and engagement in anti-state activities. Data on social status are incomplete. However, they allow retracing the dynamics of arrests from 1939 to 1941. I sum up these data in the following table:

Social status of arrested in Western Ukraine	Number of people arrested in September-December 1939	Number of people arrested in January-Mai 1941
“Former” people: kulaks, landlords, bureaucrats of the Tsarist regime, merchants, officers	3962	514
Workers	1191	792
Intelligentsia and functionaries	2135	691
Individual farmers	1177	4534
Total (including other categories):	9286	8217

As we can see, the bulk of the arrested people at the beginning of the first Soviet occupation came from the so-called “former” people (42.6%), followed by civil servants and the intelligentsia (23%), workers (12.8%) and individual farmers. In the first half of 1941 the number of “former people” drops significantly in absolute and in relative terms: (6.25%). Individual farmers constitute by far the largest category of prisoners (55%), followed by workers (9.6%), the intelligentsia and civil servants (8.4%).

Regarding the charges against the arrested, here is the table which presents both the number and dynamics of these charges. I included the most frequent articles:

Type of accusations	September- December 1939	1940	January – May 1941	Total per category
Illegal crossing of border	4340 (46.7%)	26281 (58%)	1964 (24%)	32585 (51.8%)
Various crimes, punishable under the Criminal Code (including article 58: crimes against the state)	3125 (33.65%)	7644 (16.8%)	365 (4.4%)	11134 (17.7%)
Being a member of a counter-revolutionary group/organization	1049 (11.3%)	8401 (18.5%)	3452 (42%)	12902 (20.5%)
Counter-revolutionary agitation	490 (5.3%)	1348 (3%)	378 (4.7%)	2216 (3.5%)
High-treason and espionage	157 (1.7%)	664 (1.5%)	851 (10.3%)	1672 (2.7%)
Anti-Soviet conspiracy			748 (9.1 %)	748 (1.2%)
Total:	9286	45365	8217	62868

The largest category concerned people who illegally crossed the border. The movement was in both directions between Soviet-controlled and German-controlled territories. The second largest group were people accused of being a member of a counter-revolutionary organization, followed by various crimes against the State. In this category were crimes such as non-reporting by a family member of the full legal age of a serviceman who escaped abroad, or non-reporting of a “counter-revolutionary” crime (“Ugolovnyi kodeks” 1938). Another interesting category is an anti-Soviet conspiracy. This charge is absent in the 1939 and 1940 yearly reports. It appears in 1941, which can be explained by the growing resistance to the Soviet regime in Western Ukraine in the second half of 1940. For instance, in January-June 1941, 827 people were arrested in all of the Soviet Union on charges of anti-Soviet conspiracy, of which 748 (90%) came from Western Ukraine.

The nationality factor was secondary in importance, according to the analysis of historians from *Memorial*. They provide a following cumulative table of arrests by nationality per years on the territories of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus:

Year	Total of arrested	Including			
		Poles	Ukrainians	Jews	Byelorussians
1939	19382	10557(54.5%)	3033 (15.6%)	2100 (10.8%)	2489 (12.8%)
1940	75448	28932	15599	20406	4580 (6%)

		(38.3%)	(20.7%)	(27.8%)	
1941	12310	3459 (28.1%)	5554 (45.1%)	1084 (8.8%)	1022 (8.3%)

Here is a cumulative table of arrests, carried out in 1939-1941 in Western Ukraine, provided by the Polish historian Grzegorz Mazur (2001, p. 95):

Year	Poles	Ukrainians	Jews
1939	5406	2779	1439
1940	15518	15024	10924
1941 (Jan. – May)	1058	5360	797
Total:	21982	23163	13160

From the dynamics of the number of arrested by nationality, one can assume that the first blow of NKVD was directed at Poles, who as a “titular” nation were dominating the power structures in Western Ukraine – functionaries, military, intelligentsia, business and industrial elites. Most Ukrainians arrested at the beginning came from the intelligentsia, small entrepreneurs, and businessmen. Jews also came from the business milieu. In 1940 both Poles and Ukrainians started to build resistance and the number of arrested increases. By the end of 1940, the underground Polish military resistance is crushed by the NKVD, and the latter focuses its attention on the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). For instance, based on the list of 757 prisoners that were shot in late June 1941 in prison no. 1 on Lontsky street in Lviv, 509 were

Ukrainians (67%), 177 were Poles (23.3 %), 53 were Jews -- 7 %, 11 Russians (1.5 %) and 7 persons of other ethnicities (0.9 %) ("Radianskyi period").

The last detachments of Soviet troops left Lviv on June 28. Residents of the city fled to prisons in search of their relatives. They saw awful pictures – corpses of victims were left in prison cells unburied because the retreating NKVD did not have time to transport victims for execution outside of prisons or to bury them in prisons yards. When the first German troops, which included the Ukrainian battalion "Nachtigall" under the command of Roman Shukhevysh, entered the city on June 30, part of the bodies was taken out of the basement of Lontsky prison and exhumed from freshly dug graves. On July 1 and 2, bodies were exposed in prison yards to enable relatives to recognize them. The German occupation authorities supported these actions, as they were interested in the dissemination of information on Soviet crimes. The process of exhumation was recorded on film to be used for anti-Soviet propaganda, as evidence of the first-ever exposure of Soviet crimes ("Radianskyi period").

Bodies recognized by relative were taken by them home to be buried. Unrecognized bodies from prison no. 1 were buried in a common grave in the Lychakiv cemetery, while bodies from Bryhidky (prison no. 4) and Zamarstyniv (prison no. 2) were buried in the Yanivsky cemetery (Fedushchak 2006, p. 153). Bodies in the cells located in the basement of the Zamarstyniv prison, whose entrances were cemented by the NKVD, were left there for sanitary reasons. In February-March 1942 German authorities, as part of an investigation of Soviet crimes, interviewed witnesses who indicated other places in city prisons where graves were dug. As a result, the remains of 1,500 persons from three Lviv prisons were buried in Yanivsky cemetery. When Soviet forces returned to Lviv in 1944, they destroyed graves and gravestones of executed prisoners, which were installed under German occupation (ibid).

The investigation of Soviet executions by German authorities was accompanied by the publication in the local press of terrifying accounts of atrocities committed by NKVD executioners ("Radianskyi period"). I

have already quoted an example of an emotionally charged report. There are plenty of these reports in the Romaniv and Fedushchak's book *The Western Ukrainian Tragedy, 1941* (pp. 255-326). These publications breathe horror and hatred towards the Soviet regime which crushed the dissent and resistance of the local population cruelly.

From the perspective of Lviv and Halychyna, in general, the Soviet regime was an occupant, who imposed its power and ideology through brutal force. This reading underlies the material memorial landscape of Lviv, in particular, the part that represents the victims of executions carried out by retreating Soviet forces in June 1941. There are several sites of memory, related to these events. Some of them emerged as the result of remembering work and of the uncovering of historical truth that started during the perestroika period. The "Memorial" society has been the main actor in this regard in Lviv. Monuments and graves that were created with the active involvement and support of this organization commemorate the victims of the totalitarian communist regime, without defining this regime as "Soviet" or "Moscow" (such as the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow). In contrast, the Memorial on Yanivsky cemetery, which was built in great part thanks to the dedicated efforts of the pro-nationalist League of Ukrainian Women, directly points to the Moscow Communist regime. The memory of Soviet executions in June of 1941 is inextricably linked to the memory of fighters for the independence of Ukraine, combatants of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and soldiers of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen in World War I. Like these heroes, those who were executed in NKVD prisons sacrificed their lives on the altar of sovereign Ukraine. They are buried in the same cemeteries and the same crosses are installed on their graves. Lviv residents commemorate them on the same day and in the same procession.

The Lviv Memorial Society

As elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, in Lviv Memorial played a crucial role in the memorialisation of victims of Stalinist repressions. In the summer of 2013, it issued membership card no. 11,641, told me Yevhen Hryniv, the former head of Lviv Regional Memorial in the personal interview in Lviv (Hryniv 2013).

This represents the ordinal number of all the members that have belonged to Memorial from the first day, not those who are members now. In 2012 there were 11,286 membership cards. According to Yevhen Hryniv, Memorial has now around 3,500 active members throughout Lviv region. Membership is paid not once a year but every season. It is done purposefully to keep in constant contact with people who could otherwise disappear after having paid their yearly contribution. Memorial functions very much like a party: there is a certain organizational discipline, accountability, and regularity of meetings, without which it would have disintegrated, like many civil society organizations from the perestroika era (Hryniv 2013).

There are 24 branches of Memorial in district centers and towns. All of them prepare annual reports and plans for the next year. Annual conferences are held, where representatives of each branch are present. Every three years a general assembly is organized in which a new board is elected. The board is comprised of the heads of district branches, city branches, active members of the regional organization, and the executive of the youth organization of Memorial, a separate legal entity. The youth Memorial has a scout-style section for school-age children. They organize camps and help the adults in the maintenance of monuments. The youth of Memorial participate in all public activities of the organization, including the commemorations in Bykivnia, a mass grave of 1937 Stalinist terror near Kyiv (Hryniv 2013). They are also involved in the search and exhumation of victims of political repression.

One of their most time-consuming tasks is the distribution of *Ukraïns'kyi Memorial*, the organization's newspaper. They give it out to the deputies of the city council, regional council, and of the Verkhovna Rada, send it out to schools and libraries in the Lviv region and to various Ukrainian organizations (Fomichov 2012).

The main incentive for young people to join Memorial is the same as that of adults — a national-patriotic motivation (Hryniv 2013). Youth is also driven to Memorial because it is an organization that is doing something concrete, not only conducting meetings and issuing declarations and addresses. Memorial is one

of the rare civil society organizations that has not split up as a result of “domestic” disputes (Fomichov 2012). It has survived for 24 years since its inception in 1989, which cannot be said about many other civil society organizations that were founded at the end of perestroika. On May 27, 1989, when Memorial was officially registered, it had 14,000 members and 20 branches in districts of the Lviv region. The head of the council was Academician Ihor Yukhnovsky, and the head of the executive was Yevhen Hryniv (Makarchuk 2012, p. 7, col. 3).

There is continuity in the organization. Hryniv, as we just mentioned, was the head of the executive for 22 years (1989-2011).¹⁵ Many others have been working in Memorial since its early days as well. They have now formed a “Council of Elders,” while the executive power has been transferred to the next generation who are now running the organization. The successors have been formed within the organization. For instance, the present head of the executive, Roman Hunda, has been active since the very beginning. He organized the first “political” Nativity Plays (*vertep*) in Lviv in 1990, was in charge of the clandestine transportation of the newspaper *Poklyk sumlinnia* (Call of Conscience) from Vilnius to Lviv, and set up the youth organization of Memorial (Fedun 2012). There are several other people from the same generation who have taken over positions in the executive. The organization has its own flag, while regional branches have their own pennants.

Memorial publishes its own national newspaper, *Ukrains'kyi Memorial*. It started in 1989 as *Poklyk sumlinnia*, a highly popular newspaper with a pro-democratic and pro-national content which was an alternative to the official Communist press. The first several issues were printed in the typography of the Lviv Conservatory, but after the newspaper was banned by authorities, its printing was moved to Vilnius,

¹⁵ When a group of “national-patriotic” people was leading a campaign to discredit Memorial in the scandal surrounding a construction project on the territory of Lontsky prison, as we saw in the previous section, they accused Hryniv of “clinging to power.” He replied by saying that he has a habit of doing things thoroughly and with results, and only organizations, where the leaders have not changed frequently, have achieved something and are still functioning. Hryniv also named several projects that he would like to see accomplished, including the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory (Zolotarenko, 2006, p. 2, col. 4).

where the popular democratic movement was less restricted than in Ukraine and smuggled to Lviv by Memorial activists. It had an unusually large circulation of 35-40,000 copies (Fedun 2012). *Poklyk sumlinnia* was popular because, like other pro-national, democratic alternative unofficial publications – known as *samvydav* in Ukrainian and *samizdat* in Russian, literally “self-published — that sprung out in Lviv at the end of the 1980s, it provided a voice for free speech, for the expression of repressed feelings of grief, and for reflections on profound changes sweeping the society. For instance, in its first issue, in August 1989, several articles describe meetings held in Lviv, Lutsk, Nesteriv, and Zolochiv to commemorate the memory of victims of Stalinist repression; a list of repressed Lviv musicians is published; a story of Soviet arrests and deportations during 1939-1941 is told; the restoration of graves of Ukrainian Riflemen by a Student Fraternity is described. In his address to the readers, published on the first page, Yukhnovsky, the head of the Lviv Memorial, lays out the vision and the program of actions of the organization:

- To revive the sense of national dignity and civil power of Ukrainians, sense that comes from the realization that Ukrainians are masters of their own land and are responsible for what happens with it and on it;
- To restore historical justice towards all those who were tortured to death, executed and killed in two world wars, in Stalin’s terror, and in the “neo-Stalinist era”;
- To establish justice on behalf of the state towards millions of innocent people who were wrongfully convicted and deported to Siberia, Kolyma and other places, towards hundreds of thousands of people who fled from Stalin’s terror and are scattered now throughout the whole world;
- To condemn, with the support of all the people, infamous state politics of “national genocide”;
- To instil in people’s souls the sense of citizenship and responsibility for electing a government that would serve its citizens;
- To understand the reasons that gave rise to Stalinism and could lead to a new Stalinism in the future;

- To systematically gather materials affirming the burning necessity to build a state governed by the rule of law (Yukhnovsky 1989, p.1).

The general tone of this first issue of *Poklyk sumlinnia* is civil, tolerant, pro-democratic and pro-national at the same time: it recognizes that Stalinism was a criminal, terrorist regime whose goal was the oppression of all independent thought and resistance, and it did suppress methodically and cruelly the fight of Ukrainians for their own state. Now that freedom of expression is re-established and civic conscience (re)awakes, state and civil society must work together on building a new democratic, tolerant Ukraine where the rule of law prevails. This inclusive vision was the founding principle of Memorial in the Soviet Union. Andrei Sakharov, who was the driving force behind its creation, believed that Communism was a universal evil, not national in nature (Russian, Chinese or Cambodian), and that Communist ideology was anti-humane and anti-democratic (Hryniv 2013). This is why in the Statute of Memorial adopted in 1989, it is stated that “membership in Memorial is incompatible with the propaganda and practice of chauvinism, of national and religious intolerance, of anti-humanistic ideas” (“Ustav”, ch. 6).

Ukrains'kyi Memorial is currently printed in approximately 4,000 copies. All the editorial work and articles are done on a voluntary basis, but the printing and distribution require hard currency. Memorial does not have its press and used to print its newspaper inexpensively in the “Vilna Ukraïna” state printing house. However, since its privatization, the printing services became costly, and Memorial cannot afford them. Shipping is also costly, as the postal service exceeds the cost of printing. This is why several issues are now combined in a single edition - the only issue of the newspaper in 2012 had 32 pages, while in 2008, for instance, there were two editions of 16 pages each.

The last issue focuses on the activities of Memorial: researching and establishing names of those who suffered injustice and death during Stalin period, exhuming and reburying bodies of victims. There are letters from people asking for help in finding their disappeared relatives; correspondence with public

officials regarding the commemoration of victims of political repressions; materials from archives of the KGB and of the Communist Party. The main purpose of all these publications is to describe and assess the losses caused by the “Communo-regime” to the Ukrainian people and to Ukrainian spiritual and material culture (Fomichov 2012).

Such an interpretation of the Soviet past has been consistently advanced by Yevhen Hryniv since the inception of the organization. He has been advocating for years for the creation of a museum of colonial regimes, in which not only the damages inflicted on the Ukrainian people by the Soviet regime would be covered, but also the period of Polish and Nazi occupation and the losses caused by these regimes. For instance, in the archives of Memorial in 2005 two volumes of correspondence with the administration of all levels are kept, regarding the installation of such a museum in the Zamarstyniv prison (“Navkolo problem” 2005, p. 7).

Memorial has played a key role in the sites of memory - the monuments to victims of NKVD executions of June 1941 in Lviv prisons and other monuments to “victims of Communism”. These monuments reflect the collective memory and assessment of the Soviet past as the rule of a brutal and anti-humane regime. The repressed memory resurfaced as soon as the censorship was removed by the end of the 1980s, and has been materializing ever since. The following chapter deals in details with four of these new sites of memory – the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow, the Lychakiv Cemetery, the Memorial to Victims of the Moscow Communist Regime in the Yanivsky cemetery, and the Museum-Prison on Lontsky Street.

Chapter 9: Sites of memory of NKVD executions in Lviv

Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow

In 1989, following an official request of the head of Lviv “Memorial” Ihor Yukhnovsky and the head of the executive of “Memorial” Evhen Hryniv, the Lviv regional office of the KGB, headed by Malyk, released a list of people executed by the Soviet police in prisons of Lviv region in 1941. The transfer of this list was

facilitated by the then head of the City Council Bohdan Kotyk, the last Communist mayor of Lviv.¹⁶ The list, containing 9,865 names, was published in the Memorial newspaper *Poklyk sumlinnia* (Call of Conscience). It was supplemented by 245 names and reprinted by the newspaper *Za vil'nu Ukraïnu* (For a Free Ukraine) (Hryniv, Pavlyshyn and Horbal 2012, p. 28).¹⁷

The idea of requesting the names of executed people was suggested to Hryniv and Yukhnovsky by Viacheslav Chornovil, who in 1989 was not yet engaged in official activities. According to Hryniv, in a private conversation, Malyk told Chornovil about the fact that in the yard of the Zamarstyniv prison were buried bodies of persons who were executed by the retreating Soviet secret police in June 1941. Chornovil conveyed this information to "Memorial." In 1989 it was hard to predict whether the Soviet regime would remain or fall. Therefore the leadership of Memorial decided to take advantage of this opening and to erect a granite wall with the names of executed as a vivid, tangible proof of the true nature of the Communist regime. They sent a request to city authorities asking permission to build such a wall. The mayor supported their request.

Lviv city architect Vasyl Kamenshchyk created a general layout of the wall. Sculptor Ivan Samotos, a member of the executive board of Memorial, designed a model of a sculpture representing a half-naked male figure, wearing pants and a torn apart shirt. He is tied to the cross in Christ-like position. The cross is suspended within a larger, double-lined cross, the inside of which contains lines of barbed wire fence. The pedestal, on which the smaller cross is installed, reads: "In memory of the victims of political repression." Sculptor Ivan Samotos did not charge "Memorial" for the design of this sculpture, only for the materials (Hryniv 2013). The sculpture was inaugurated in 1996 in a solemn ceremony of a second re-burial of

¹⁶ He was re-elected to this position by the first democratically elected Lviv City Council in March 1990. Kotyk also initiated the adoption of a resolution by the Lviv City Council to dismantle the statue of Lenin in front of the Opera House.

¹⁷ The newspaper was an organ of Lviv Regional Council of People's Deputies, created at the initiative of Viacheslav Chornovil, the then head of the Regional Council. There is an inconsistency in the number of names, provided by the head of Memorial, Evhen Hryniv. In a TV program "Stosuietsia kozhnoho", broadcast on 25 September 2012 on Lviv Regional State TV station, Evhen Hryniv talked about 962 names.

corpses, found in the yard of Zamarstyniv prison. In 1997 the remains of 122 victims were added to the already existing grave (Klak 2006).

It is not clear when the second reburial took place. In the TV program “Stosuietsia vsikh” (Feilo 2012), the anchorman uses the date of 1999, while in the footage of the scene of the reburial one can read “Archives of 1996.” There is no mentioning of the number of coffins in this TV program. Most probably, the second reburial occurred in 1999, when, according to the web-site of the organization Poshuk, a part of Memorial, in an official ceremony in a sarcophagus on Marsove pole the remains of 142 people who died in a NKVD regional hospital or in a transit prison were reburied. They had initially been buried in the Zamarstyniv cemetery from 1949 to 1957. In 1996 “Memorial” carried exhumations at the cemetery. Several test pits were made and the remains of 20 people were found, who had been put in primitive coffins and naked. Because of the lack of funding and support of local authorities, “Memorial” and “Poshuk” had to stop the excavations. In fall 1999 they restarted the work, this time with the support of the Lviv regional administration. A group of five archaeologists from “Poshuk,” assisted by 20 soldiers of the National Guard, who helped with the excavation, found the remains of 122 people on the ground of the Zamarstyniv military cemetery. According to the researchers of “Poshuk,” all of these people died as a result of injuries and illnesses inflicted by torture and inhumane treatment in the hands of the NKVD.

After the second exhumation in 1996, activists of “Poshuk” gave to the Office of the Prosecutor 74 metallic tags that were attached to the legs of deceased. However, it was not clear if any investigation was opened by office. An article, published on the Poshuk web site and most probably written shortly after the ceremony of reburial in 1999, states that an investigation was not opened. After the first exhumation, carried in 1996, when activists of “Poshuk” sent a request to the Office of the Prosecutor to open a criminal investigation and find documents that could help identify the names of the deceased, the Prosecutor

refused to do so.¹⁸ The exhumation of 1999 was stopped after two weeks because the finances allocated for this work were exhausted.

The exhumed remains were put in coffins and exposed in a conference room for two weeks. Relatives, journalists, and the public at large came to visit, while press conferences and meetings with activists of “Poshuk” society were organized.

On 24 October 1999 a solemn ceremony of reburial of the remains was held. One hundred and forty-two coffins were put in rows on the square next to the wall of the former Zamarstyniv prison.¹⁹ Hundreds of people gathered on that square – locals, people who came from outside Lviv and Lviv oblast, representatives of regional and local authorities, and public figures. Speeches were delivered and a religious service held, with the participation of all the churches. After the meeting, the procession marched in the streets of Lviv towards the place of the burial – the field of Mars near Lychakiv cemetery where a sarcophagus had been placed into the ground. Soldiers of the Ukrainian National Guard carried the coffins. People marched with church banners and anti-communist slogans. The ceremony was broadcast all over Ukraine (see footnote 20).

In the first reburial that took place in 1994, 66 victims of the Soviet executions of 1941 were buried in the field of Mars in Lviv, in a common sarcophagus which was paid for by “Memorial” (Feilo 2012). An official solemn ceremony was held in downtown Lviv, in front of the Opera House. Coffins were exposed on the ground. “Memorial” prepared a series of pictures of victims that were identified, as well as the list of all those who were executed in Zamarstyniv prison. The head of “Memorial,” Yevhen Hryniv, delivered a speech in which he denounced the crimes of the “Red Horde” not only in the prisons of Lviv, but the killing by the Communist regimes of “hundreds of millions of human lives” of various nationalities. The ceremony

¹⁸ This information was taken from an internet source that does not exist anymore.

¹⁹ According to another data, 122 victims of NKVD executions in Zamarstyniv prison were buried on that day on Lychakiv cemetery (Memorial ‘Lychakivske’).

was attended by clergy, Lviv citizens, and city authorities. Among these 66 victims (Feilo 2012) were 18 people who had been part of the so-called “Trial of 59” (Hunda 2008).²⁰

As for the exhumation in the yard of the Zamarstyniv prison, between Zamarstyniv Street and the actual building of the prison, it was carried out in 1990, again following a suggestion of the head of regional KGB Malyk that bodies of executed people were buried by the retreating Soviet police in the yard of the prison. In 1990 the building of the former Zamarstyniv prison hosted offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It was considered a high-security facility. In the yard, there was a little square – Lenin monument in the centre, encircled by “Kremlin” pines. It seemed to be an unlikely place to hide underneath the remains of victims. “Memorial” activists had doubts. However, after having interviewed many witnesses (people who lived in the neighbourhood, eyewitnesses), they decided to start excavations. All these people confirmed that it might be that executed prisoners were buried in the prison yard. In 1939-1941 the yard was separated from the street by a 3-meters tall brick wall, and whatever was happening in prison, could not be seen (Feilo 2012).

Upon obtaining all the necessary permissions from the prosecutor’s office and the sanitary-epidemiological service, Memorial started excavations. Journalists from all over Ukraine and from abroad were informed and came expecting to see the exhumation. After having dug two meters deep and having found nothing, activists became disappointed and almost gave up. However, they took off a couple of layers of earth and came across a large amount of human bones and skulls with bullet holes right under the pedestal of Lenin monument. In total, the remains of 66 people were found. The Communist press immediately reported that these were the victims of German invaders, probably Jews. “Memorial” activists contacted the Office of the Prosecutor, and, with the support of the Lviv City mayor, were able to obtain a forensic examination and later a ballistic examination of skulls. The conclusion of these examinations was that the remains were 40-60 years old, which corresponds to the date of Soviet executions in 1939-1941. The ballistic expertise

²⁰ The Hunda article provides a different number of re-buried individuals (64) than in the Klaks article (2006).

determined that the people whose remains were exhumed by “Memorial” activists were shot from small-calibre guns, similar to those that were used in mass shootings during Stalinist purges in Bykivnia and the October Palace in Kyiv. Memorial thus obtained legal corroboration of who carried out these executions and when (Feilo 2012).

All the investigation – forensic examination, researching archives, and interviewing witnesses – took a long time, which provoked a wave of criticism. The head of “Memorial” was accused of hiding the remains instead of burying them according to Christian tradition, with mourning and dirge. However, he refuted these accusations, explaining that “Memorial” insisted on obtaining legal evidence of executions to document Soviet crimes in an eventual trial of Communism, in which emotions are of no use (Feilo 2012). Not all of the remains were exhumed in the yard of former Zamarstyniv prison. According to data in the possession of “Memorial,” there are 380 more people, buried on that territory, in the basement of a church that once stood there. The retreating Soviet police threw the bodies of executed people in this basement. During the reconstruction work, the basement was filled with concrete. When “Memorial” workers asked the sanitary service of the City Council permission to proceed with the excavation, the sanitary service did not grant the permission because of the risk of possible infections contained in the remains – being preserved in concrete and not having contact with soil, these remains had not decayed properly (Hryniv 2013).

There are three other mass graves of victims of Soviet executions of 1939-1941 that have not been exhumed. One of them is the asphalted yard of the former prison Bryhidka, on Horodotska Street, which is used currently as a drill ground for students of the Academy of Internal Affairs (the former prison being part of the complex of buildings of this Academy). According to “Memorial,” the remains of over 300 people lie under the asphalt in this yard. Another place is near a KGB office on Konovaltsia Street (Hryniv 2013). It is unclear when exactly the sculpture was installed on the wall of the former Zamarstyniv prison, in 1996 or 1999. It was most likely unveiled when the second solemn reburial of victims of political repressions

took place in 1996 or 1999 (see above) The sculpture is visible in the video of 1999 when a reburial is taking place (Feilo 2012, 28:41). Plaques containing the names of executed people were added later. The first plaque contained 1,750 (Hryniv 2013) or 1,755 (Feilo 2012) names. The second plaque with 640 names was added much later.

On the field of Mars the two mass graves, in which victims of Soviet executions are buried, are marked by a general plaque “Pokhovannia zhertv komunistychnoho rezhymu, zamordovanykh u Zamarstynivskiy viaznytsi u 1941 r.” (The Burial of Victims of the Communist Regime, Tortured to Death in the Zamarstyniv prison in 1941.” The plaque is installed on a stone cross, the form of which imitates the cross from the tombs of the Sich Riflemen, regular military units of the Army of the Ukrainian People’s Republic.²¹ Using the same symbol for two different events, distanced in time, and for two different groups of people, is an evident sign of the continuity of the anti-Soviet collective narrative of the past in Lviv – the victims of Soviet executions of 1939-1941 in Western Ukraine are commemorated under the same nationalist symbolism as soldiers who fought against the instauration of Soviet rule in Central Ukraine.

Neither the Wall of Sorrow nor the reburial of remains found on the territory of the Zamarstyniv prison on its adjacent cemetery has been supported financially by the state. The “Memorial” society has covered all the expenses, taking money from membership fees and donations from private companies. Memorial sent many requests to the director of the Lychakiv cemetery, which is attached to the field of Mars. The cemetery is the property of the city of Lviv, and the management of the cemetery is subordinated to Lviv city authorities. In spite of many requests by the “Memorial” and by ordinary citizens to allocate some funds for the engraving of names of those buried in the field of Mars, the tombs remain anonymous.

Officials from City Hall gladly attend ceremonies, hold patriotic speeches and cut ribbons, but do not provide any financial assistance (Feilo 2012). The Wall of Sorrow was also erected largely at “Memorial”

²¹ The unit operated from 1917 to 1919 and was formed primarily from Ukrainian commanders and soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army. The first unit was formed in Kiev on 13 November 1917. Commanded by Colonel Yevhen Konovalets, the Sich Rifles had up to 25,000 men at their peak, including artillery, cavalry, reconnaissance and machine gun units.

expenses. In the early 1990s, when the idea of erecting this wall was taking shape, Memorial was able to obtain some money from the first democratically elected Lviv regional council (Rada), headed by Chornovil. It was also suggested that “Memorial” takes money from relatives of people whose names were to be engraved. However, “Memorial” did not take this suggestion to avoid possible accusations regarding the usage of money in the future (Hryniv 2013).

Memorial planned opening the museum “Ukrainian Golgotha” in the premises of the former Zamarstyniv prison. Such a museum would showcase the damage inflicted by the Communist regime on Ukrainian culture, arts, and people. At the time when these plans were made, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the building of the prison belonged to the Lviv Academy of Internal Affairs. The rector of the Academy supported the idea, and to vacate the premises, he asked city authorities to provide the Academy with another vacant building, specifying that the Academy would cover itself expenses related to the conversion of the building for educational purposes. His request was not answered (Matviiv, n/a).

A separate plaque on the wall, in Ukrainian only reads: “Stina pamiati i skorboty. Kolonial’ni rezhymy Avstriyi, Polshchi, Nimechchyny, Rosiyi vykorystovuvaly tse prymishchennia yak kativniu ukrayinskoho narodu. Tut bude stvoreno musey “Ukrayinska Holhoha”. Orhanizatsiya Memorial, Oblasna derzhavna administratsiya, Miska vlada. Skulptor I. Samotos. Arkhitekt V. Kaminshchyk. Vykonav O. Kryskiv”. Then, on a separate plaque, the same text is written in English: “The colonial regimes of Austria, Poland, Germany and Russia uses this building as a torture chamber of the Ukrainian people.” The Ukrainian Calvary Museum will be opened on this site. The “Memorial” Foundation, Regional State Administration, City Council.” The names of the sculptor, architect and the engraver are not mentioned.

On the same plaque, above this text, another text is engraved: “From September 1939 to June 1941 49,867 people were murdered in the prisons of Western Ukraine. 1,738,256 were exiled to Siberia. In 1941, in the course of six days, 7,348 prisoners were executed here. Ukrainians, Poles, Jews. Remember and pray for the innocent victims”. Letters and numbers on the plaque are blurred and hard to read – they are engraved in

the granite and gilded; however, time and weather have tarnished the gilding. One can guess the numbers only by looking at the Ukrainian equivalent of the text.

It is interesting to note the evolution of the conceptualization of the monument: on the plaque announcing the creation of the museum “Ukrainian Calvary”, the prisons of Western Ukraine are used by all colonial regimes to torture the “Ukrainian people”, while the text that talks about the exact number of victims mentions Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews. In the Ukrainian version of the text under each of these ethnic nouns the national symbol is depicted: a trident for Ukrainians, a Polish Eagle for Poles and David’s Star for Jews.²² Both texts, English and Ukrainian, avoid naming the executioner – the Soviet regime. The names of people inscribed on the wall are not divided by nationalities. The mention of Poles and Jews plays a rather symbolic function: the underlying message of the Wall of Sorrow that Memorial wanted to convey is that Communism is not only an anti-Ukrainian evil, it is also an international evil (Feilo 2012). Moreover, in the English text, the wrong translation gives the impression that all 7,348 prisoners, executed during six days, were executed in Zamarstyniv prison, while the Ukrainian text talks about “prisons” in the plural. It refers to three prisons that were functioning in Lviv in June of 1941 – Zamarstyniv, Lontskoho, and Bryhidky (“Navkolo problemy tiurmy Lontskoho” 2005).

Such an elusive approach is criticized in the book *Zakhidnoukraïn’ska trahedia, 1941* (The Western Ukrainian Tragedy, 1941), which makes an attempt to analyze the period of the first Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine in 1939-1941, with a special emphasis on June 1941. Inna Fedushchak, head of the Lviv Regional Society “Poshuk” (Search), collected the names of people executed during this period in Western Ukraine. All throughout the book a highly charged language is used to describe the actions of the Soviet regime: “genocide,” “crimes against the Ukrainian people,” “the Red regime,” “Russian imperialism,” “Communo-muscovite,” “our distressed land,” and so forth. The same terms were used in Ukrainian

²² Some nationalist-minded people objected to the intention by Memorial to mention other ethnicities, except Ukrainians. Some were even against the English language plaque, advancing that all the plaques should be only in Ukrainian. From time to time the star of David and the Polish eagle on the Wall of Sorrow are smeared with paint (Hryniv 2013).

underground and emigration to stress the “criminal Russian genesis” of the Soviet regime (Romaniv and Fedushchak 2002, p. 13). Against such a clear and peremptory calling, the elusive text on the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Grief, in which the Soviet regime is not mentioned at all, reveals nuances in assessing the Soviet past in Halychyna.

Yanivskyi memorial

When Soviet forces left Lviv on June 30, 1941, the locals flew to prisons and broke open the cells. They took corpses outside. Relatives of executed prisoners came from Lviv and the Lviv region to identify the bodies of their loved ones, to take them home for a burial. Those were corpses of people shot immediately before the Soviet retreat. However, many corpses were decayed beyond recognition – those were prisoners, executed a week earlier. The corpses from three Lviv prisons (on Lontsky Street, Zamarstyniv, and Bryhidky) were buried in the Yanivskyi cemetery – 513 people in total (Drotiak 2012a). Inna Fedushchak, the Memorial official in charge of finding mass graves and identifying the names of the victims of Soviet executions, spent several years in the archives. While working with the archives of 1941-43 and drawing on data gathered by Memorial, she found out that in February-March 1942 Nazi authorities set up an international commission to investigate the Soviet crimes in Lviv. The commission heard testimonies of people whose relatives disappeared in Soviet prisons and whose bodies were not found in June-July 1941. The commission also carried out a second inspection of the territory and premises of the three prisons and interrogated members of the technical staff of these prisons who were unable or unwilling to escape. As a result, more remains were exhumed: 200 in Lontsky prison, 320 in Zamarastyniv, 435 in Bryhidky, and some were found in a temporarily adapted building on 125 Kazymyryvska Street, for a total of 1080 people. With those that were buried in July of 1941, the total number is 1593 people (Drotiak 2012a).

The majority of these remains, around a thousand people that were 60 years later identified by Memorial, were buried in the Yanivsky cemetery, according to a decision of the German authorities. Some of them were buried in the plot 76 of the Lychakiv cemetery, where fallen soldiers of the Sich Riflemen units, of the

Red Ukrainian Galician Army and of the Ukrainian Galician Army were buried in 1933 (Hryniv 2013). In the case of the Yanivskyi cemetery, the site of burial where the victims of Soviet executions were buried was also close to a sector filled with graves of Ukrainian soldiers from the 1917-1921 period.

During the Soviet period, this section of the cemetery was deliberately destroyed. After the graves of Ukrainian soldiers were levelled with ground and fragments of riflemen crosses taken away and dumped into the soil to solidify the bedding of Lviv streets, city authorities started giving away plots to public servants, managers and the educational elite, active members of the Communist party, who came to Lviv after 1945, or to their descendants. Another part of the Yanivskyi cemetery was transformed into a dump for wastes from the cemetery (branches, paper, and cans). Soviet authorities were quite aware of the fact that local people held commemorative ceremonies in this place where graves of soldiers of Ukrainian Galician Army and the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen had been located. On religious holidays people would bring flowers and attend religious masses, served clandestinely by disguised priests. This place was invested with a high anti-Soviet symbolism.

Bringing the cemetery of Ukrainian soldiers back to existence became one of the channels through which Memorial carried out its re-establishment of historical memory. In 1998 the cemetery was completely restored and new crosses installed, while the fragments of original crosses that were found on Sakharov Street in Lviv were suspended on a sort of commemorative arch, erected near the graves, as a “remembrance of ancestral glory and warning to posterity” (from the plaque at the entrance to the alley of graves of Sich Riflemen). The restoration process started in 1994 and was completed in 1998.²³

As for the place of burial of prisoners, executed by the Soviet regime, Memorial forwarded several requests to city authorities drawing their attention to the fact that the territory needs to be cleaned and a monument erected. Their requests fell on deaf ears. Memorial, together with activists of the Lviv branch of the All-

²³ The original cemetery was created in 1934, when the Polish government, after numerous requests by the Galician intelligentsia, finally gave the permission to bury Ukrainian soldiers in this place.

Ukrainian League of Ukrainian Women (Kushnir and Kokhalevych 2011) took upon themselves the cleaning of this section of the cemetery, which had been transformed into a dump. Students from the vocational school no. 28 volunteered to help them with the cleaning.²⁴

After many years of continuous requests from Memorial and League of Women activists, in 2001 the City Council signed a decree enjoining the direction of the cemetery to install several temporary crosses and ensure that no new burials take place within the limits of the territory cleaned by civil activists. The City Council also allocated funds in the budget for the construction of a commemorative complex. A “Concept for Arranging the Graves of Victims of Political Repression in June 1941 on Yanivskyi Cemetery, Lot no. 55” was developed and adopted thanks to the efforts of many activists and deputies of the City Council in 2003.

In 2006 a new mayor was elected, Andriy Sadovyi, who took the project under his personal control and entrusted the state architectural enterprise “Mistoproekt” with the realization of the project. The “Memorial to the Victims of Political Repression by the Moscow Communist regime in Ukraine, Lviv, June 1941” was solemnly opened in 2010. A requiem liturgy was served and the ceremony was attended by dozens of people. Speeches were given about the terrible executions carried out by the Soviet regime (Iryna Kalynets, a former dissident and a “national heroine” of Ukraine), about the necessity to remember (Petro Franko, the head of the All-Ukrainian Association of Political Prisoners and the Repressed) and to stay united so that no occupant invades our lands again (Sadovyi) (Ilchyshyn 2010).

²⁴ The civil society organization All-Ukrainian League of Ukrainian Women (AULUW) was created in 1995 at the initiative of Slava Stetsko, the head of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, a right-wing, nationalist party in Ukraine, and the widow of OUN leader Yaroslav Stetsko. The first head of the League became Daria Husiak, who spent many years in Soviet prisons and was “an active participant of the fight for freedom of Ukraine.” She was a member of the OUN and a personal messenger of Roman Shukhevych, the UPA commander. Thanks to her “tireless, selfless” efforts, branches of the AULUW were open in 22 oblasts of Ukraine. The Lviv branch of the AULUW defined its goals as follows: the revival of religious and national traditions, education of the civic consciousness of contemporary Ukrainians, recovery of public morality, popularization of “glorious pages” of our past, filling in of “blank spots” (lacunas) in the history of Ukraine, restoration of names that were undeservedly forgotten, taking care of tombs of prominent persona and of victims of totalitarian regime, participation in the building of the state (“Vseukrayinska liha”).

The Memorial complex is situated at the east end of the Yanivsky cemetery. There is a separate entrance with a double-wing door. A big round latch, with half on each wing, represents two young females with bowed heads, facing each other and holding a wreath. The inscription above the latch reads: "Nasha smert – vashe zhyttia" in Ukrainian and in Latin "Mea mortis – tea vita" (My death is your life).

A stairwell leads to a rectangular monument, over which under a crown of thorns, with a cross inside, an inscription in Ukrainian reads: "U chervni 1941 roku u Lvivskykh tiurmakh enkavedysty zakatuvaly tysyachi myrnykh hromadian" (in June 1941 in Lviv prisons NKVD agents tortured to death thousands of civilians). To the right of this monument, a red brick wall outlines the limits of the cemetery. Bricks are laid in two-three layers in such a way as to form crosses, concaved in the wall. Their line stretches from the entrance to the end to the memorial. Along the wall, a double line of gray stone crosses runs in parallel. In the centre of the memorial complex, a granite crucifix is installed, with three higher concrete crosses standing behind. In the left side of the wall, on concaved crosses, a plaque reads: "Pid tsiyeyu stinoyu skorboty spochyvayut' szertvy zlochyniv NKVD u Lvivskykh viaznytsiakh. 1593 neopiznani osoby ta 24 skryni ludskykh ostankiv" (Under this wall of sorrow rest the victims of the crimes of the NKVD in Lviv prisons. 1593 non-identified persons and 24 boxes of human remains). From left to right, three similarly made plaques read: "Zakatovany u Zamarstynivskiy tiurmi. 368 osib ta 24 skryni ludskykh ostankiv" (Tortured to death in Zamarstyniv prison. 368 persons and 24 boxes of human remains); "Zakatovany u tiurmi 'Bryhidky' 942 osoby" (Tortured to death in "Bryhidky" prison. 942 persons); "Zakatovany u tiurmi na Lonstkoho 283 osoby" (Tortured to death in Lontsky prison. 283 persons). At the right end of the wall, facing the wall, there is a sculpture of a crucified beautiful young girl, under which two lines of bronze metallic letters read: "Strastoterptsiam khrystovym. Smertiu smert podolaly." (To the Martyrs of Christ. By their death they overcame death).

The Christian symbolism of martyrdom is at the centre of the Memorial. It is represented visually in crosses of different sizes and the figure of a crucified young female. It is also underlined by the words used in the text, written in various parts of the Memorial – “tortured to death,” not “killed” or “shot.” English and Ukrainian inscriptions at the entrance to the Memorial, from Shevchenko Street, denoting the name of the memorial, stress the anti-Ukrainian nature of the regime not only by indicating that here rest victims of this regime, but also naming the perpetrator - the Moscow Communist regime: “Memorial zhertvam politychnykh represiy Moscovskoho komunistychnoho rezhymu v Ukrayini. Lviv, cherven 1941» (Memorial to victims of political repressions by the Moscow Communist regime in Ukraine, Lviv, June 1941).

There are always icon lamps and flowers on the pedestal of the red granite cross and of the plate on the top of the stairs. The Memorial has been incorporated in a ritual commemoration of the fighters for the freedom of Ukraine that began several years before the Memorial was built. Since the 1920s, the inhabitants of Lviv developed the tradition of visiting on Pentecost days the graves of Sich Riflemen and of soldiers of Ukrainian Galician Army who died for the independence of Ukraine (“Zeleni sviata” 2007).²⁵

According to Ihor Kalynets, a prominent Ukrainian dissident and poet, a procession of several thousand people would walk on Sunday from downtown to the military graves of the Yanivsky cemetery. The procession was headed by youth and seniors of the Lviv Regional Organization of Plast, followed by priests, religious brotherhoods, and citizens of Lviv. Young girls were carrying crowns of thorns and wreaths made of barbed wire. Once on the cemetery, commemorative masses would be served, people would sing patriotic songs and recite patriotic verses. On Monday the same rituals would be repeated on Lychakiv Cemetery (Kalynets 2005).

²⁵ In the Christian tradition, Pentecost celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his Ascension. Pentecost occurs 50 days after Easter (inclusive of Easter Day). On Pentecost Sunday Ukrainians of both Greek Catholic and Orthodox confession visit the graves of their relatives. They also decorate churches and homes with green branches, hence the name Zeleni sviata (green holidays) for Pentecost in Ukrainian.

When the Soviet regime destroyed these graves in the postwar years, people would still come here on religious holidays, mostly women and youth. Disguised Greek Catholic priests would serve a solemn mess. These places of burial became underground sites of memory where the historical truth could be resurrected and commemorated.

The KGB kept these places under surveillance. Some people got arrested, some got fines. During one of such commemorations Kalynets was arrested. Later, by the end of the 1980s, with glasnost and perestroika, he returned to this tradition, renewing it together with other civil activists, such as Roman Pankevych, a former UPA official ("Zeleni sviata" 2007).

The commemoration of fallen Ukrainian heroes takes place over the two days of the Pentecost. On the first day the procession, consisting of Greek-Catholic priests, civil activists, and other Lviv residents, gather on Yanivsky cemetery, near the Memorial to Sich Riflemen. A memorial service is held and a speech glorifying the courage and the sacrifice of fighters for Ukraine is given by the archbishop of Lviv. The procession then visits the graves of prominent figures of the Ukrainian Resistance and the famous Ukrainian poet Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, praying near every grave. Then all the visitors go to the Yanivskyi Memorial to the Victims of Communist Repression, where another memorial service is held.

The next day all the ceremonies are held at the Lychakiv cemetery, in two locations. One is the field of Mars. There are two sites in this field. The first is a symbolic cross on the site of the burial of the Sich Riflemen, situated at the northern end of the alley along which Soviet soldiers are buried. The second is situated on the southern end of this alley, close to the two graves of the victims of Communist executions, exhumed on the territory of Zamarstyniv prison and its cemetery. It is called "The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army." In 2007 the building of the Wall of Memory had started here. It was supposed to contain crypts for the burial of fighters for the freedom of Ukraine, victims of repressions and victims of the Second World War, and bear corresponding commemorative plaques. The Wall has not been

completed. It now contains the tomb of an unknown UPA soldier from Sambir district. He is called “unknown,” because only his alias is known, not his real name. He was buried here in 2008. According to the plan, a statue of Archangel Michael, chief of heavenly hosts and patron of the human race, holding a sword, will be erected here. On the wall, symbols of the military insignia of UPA will be installed (“Memorial Ukraïnskoï Povstanskoï Armii”).

The second location in Lychakiv cemetery, that functions as a site of memory of those who fought for a free Ukraine, is plot 76, which features the Memorial to the Ukrainian Galician Army, the army of the short-lived Western Ukrainian National Republic after World War I. It consists of two parts, following the topography of the land. In the higher part, on the hill, stands on a high column Archangel Michael, holding in one hand an oak branch (symbolizing glory) and a sword (symbolizing courage) in another. On the left side of the column, a large granite wall is erected, under which prominent figures of the Ukrainian liberation movement and Ukrainian culture are buried. The “Throne of Memory,” built in the form of a semi-circle, faces the column. It consists of granite plates on which names of soldiers of the Ukrainian Galician Army are engraved. The “Throne” also includes two obelisks, between which seven bronze cartouches, representing the military insignia of the Army and of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, are installed.

The lower part of the Memorial to the Ukrainian Galician Army is plot 76 of the Lychakiv cemetery, where soldiers of the UPA, of the Waffen-SS “Halychyna” Division, former political prisoners, dissidents and “repressed,” as well as “other personalities, who sacrificed their lives in the heroic battle for the freedom of the nation and for the independence of Ukraine” are buried (“Memorial voïnam Ukraïns’koyi Halytskoï Armii”). These graves are situated in concentrated circles around the chapel, in which the president of the Western-Ukrainian People’s Republic, Yevhen Petrushevysh is buried. On the left side of this cemetery, while facing the column of Archangel Michael, a wall has been built in the memory of persons who died in the famine of 1946-1947. The wall is made from black and gray granite, bearing an inscription: “To the

Victims of Communist Repression and of the Famine of 1946-47". Several high "Riflemen" crosses are erected along the wall.

Going back to the commemoration of fighters for the freedom of Ukraine that is traditionally carried out during Pentecost, the ceremonies are held at the Lychakiv Cemetery. The procession starts at the Symbolical Cross on the field of Sich Riflemen. In 2013 a memorial service was held by numerous priests, accompanied by the municipal choir Homin. A short public meeting was held, and several Sich Riflemen songs were sung by the choir. After this, the procession visited the Tomb of the unknown soldier of the UPA and the field of honourable burials (*pole pochesnykh pohkovan'*), where prominent figures of Ukrainian culture and of the Ukrainian independence movement are buried.²⁶ The final ceremony of the commemoration of fighters for freedom of Ukraine was held on the Memorial to the Ukrainian Galician Army. Initiated by Ihor Kalynets under the motto "Our heroes – our memory", this commemoration was organized by several civil society associations, such as "Zarvanytska initsiatyva," "Nebaiduzhi," "Narodnyi kontrol'" and patriotic youth organizations —the National Scouts Organization of Ukraine "Plast" and the Youth Nationalist Congress (Antoniak 2013).

The active involvement of Ihor Kalynets in this commemoration is not accidental. It has deep roots in his youth, when he and his wife, Iryna Kalynets, publicly denounced the destruction of graves of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen in the Yanivsky cemetery in 1971. Iryna Kalynets sent letters to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPU, and to the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, after she witnessed the destruction of graves. Gravediggers told her that it was being done according to an oral order from the City Council. In an interrogation of January 13, 1972, carried out by the local department of the KGB, she

²⁶In 2012 two well-known Ukrainian dissidents, Iryna Kalynets and Mykhailo Horyn, were buried here.

stated that she had written that letter not because those were the graves of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, but because she finds it inadmissible to destroy graves in cemeteries (Melnyk n/a).

Other dissidents, such as Rostyslav Bratun, Viacheslav Chornovil, and Ivan Hel', also protested together with Iryna Kalynets (Hryhorchuk 2005). Viacheslav Chornovil, in a letter to the Chairman of the Presidium of Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, wrote in August of 1971 that "what was happening in Yanivsky cemetery in Lviv, almost in the centre of Europe, can be measured (comprehended) only by Asian Medieval norms." Thousands of people came to visit the desecrated, ravaged tombs. Ordinary citizens protested. Among the Lviv intelligentsia only Iryna and Ihor Kalynets mastered enough courage to stand up, but "who can stand up against the Horde? Tombs were covered with gravel, and the place was sold out for new burials" (Dziuban 1998).

With the progressive opening of Soviet society, triggered by perestroika and glasnost, the Kalynets couple became very active in the national-democratic movement. The commemoration of destroyed graves of Sich Riflemen became one of the main public actions in Lviv of 1988, together with a massive procession to the place of burial of the victims of Communist repressions in Yanivsky cemetery on November 1, 1988 ("Yuvilei Iryny Kalynets"). The Kalynets couple were among initiators of these actions. As members of the Memorial organization, they also participated in the restoration of the burials on Yanivsky cemetery.

This restoration was seen in 1989 by Memorial members as a way of raising the awareness of the public without provoking authorities and attracting new members to the organization. The same Rostyslav Bratun, a writer, who protested against the destruction of the graves of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen in 1971, was ready to lead efforts to restore these graves (Hryniv 2008).

Memorial sent a request to the then head of the Executive Committee of the Lviv Regional Council to provide information on where the tombstones and crosses from the Sich Riflemen graves could be. Their request was answered because the head of the Committee, although a member of the Communist Party,

supported privately the idea of commemorating victims, in the style of Gorbachev's commemoration of victims of Stalinist repression. Having received a note of support from him, members of Memorial started excavations on Sakharov Street (which was named Suvorov Street in Soviet times). According to local residents, present in 1972, following an order of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party, the tombstones were thrown into the earth to level the ground and then asphalted over, although, other sources affirm that it happened in 1948, immediately after the war (Dziuban 1998). Excavations, carried out by Memorial, indeed led to the discovery of many Sich Riflemen crosses (Hryniv 2008).

According to other reports, the first discovery of the Sich Riflemen crosses was purely incidental. In 1988 on Sakharov Street in Lviv a construction company was digging the soil to replace water pipes. They dug out fragments of seven crosses (Dziuban 1998). It is not clear what happened to these crosses – they eventually disappeared, but excavations of Memorial, most likely, were prompted by this discovery.

Following the excavation, Memorial created a special group whose task was to identify those who were buried in the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen cemetery, destroyed by the Soviet regime. They published a pamphlet containing these names. It gave a strong impetus to the whole process. Memorial put forward a request before the City Council to adopt a resolution to restore the commemorative complex. The session of the City Council agreed, but not without conflicts. Deputies of City Council, natives of Eastern Ukraine, protested against it, given the fact that 700 new tombs had already been installed there.²⁷ The resolution was nonetheless passed. The Lviv City Council entrusted Memorial with the task of transferring these tombs to another place, without allocating any funding for it.

Memorial worked on the case for three years. They had to find and contact all the relatives of those who were buried in the cemetery on the top of the Riflemen graves. All cases were dealt with on an individual basis (Hryhorchuk 2005). After the place had been cleaned, the City Council allocated money for the

²⁷ There were around 700 tombs of Soviet activists in the cemetery by the beginning of 1990s (Hryhorchuk 2005).

building of the cemetery of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen. The support of deputies was overwhelming. Especially active were the Kalynets couple. A separate commission was created which supervised the construction of the memorial (Hryniv 2013).

As mentioned before, it was completed in 1998. A stone plate at the entrance to the Riflemen cemetery, tells the short story of this burial: "In this place found eternal rest over 700 riflemen and officers of the Ukrainian Galician Army and Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, who fell in the Ukrainian-Polish war of 1918-1919, fighting for our independence. The organization of the burial lasted for 14 years after the war. In 1934 the Ukrainian community built Riflemen cemetery here. The Communist regime destroyed it. The most devastating damage was done to our sacred place during the 1970s-1980s when streets were paved with Riflemen crosses, and Soviet dignitaries were put in Riflemen graves. The restoration of the Memorial began in 1994 and was completed in 1998. Some fragments of Riflemen crosses are preserved here in remembrance of ancestral glory and as a warning to posterity."²⁸

The Memorial to the Victims of the Communist Regime at the Yanivsky cemetery is also included as a site of memory in the official ceremonies on the Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Political Repression, which falls on the third Sunday of May every year.²⁹ For instance, in 2009 representatives of regional and city authorities participated in a commemorative religious service, after which a minute of silence was

²⁸ На цьому місці знайшли вічний спочинок понад 700 стрільців і старшин Української Галицької Армії та українських січових стрільців, які полягли в українсько-польській війні 1918-1919 рр., виборюючи нашу державність. Упорядкування поховань тривало 14 повоєнних літ. У 1934 році українська громада спорудила тут стрілецький цвинтар. Комуністичний режим зруйнував його. Найнищівнішого плюндрування наша святиня зазнала у 1970-1980 роках, коли стрілецькими хрестами мостили вулиці, у стрілецькі могили ховали радянських достойників. В 1994 році почалася відбудова меморіалу, і оновлений постав він у 1998 році. Частина уламків стрілецьких хрестів зберігається тут як пам'ять про дідівську славу, як пересторога нащадкам.

²⁹ Originally this day was commemorated on the fourth Saturday of November, as part of the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Holodomors and of Political Repression." It was inaugurated in 2000 by a decree of President Kuchma. The decree added the part "political repression" to the existing Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Holodomors, instituted by the same President in 1998. In 2007, President Yushchenko, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Great Terror of 1937-38, issued a decree that separated the commemorative day in two, leaving the remembrance of the victims of Holodomors in November and establishing a Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repressions in May ("Pro zakhody").

observed, and flowers were laid down in front of the Monument to the Victims of Communist Crimes on Shashkevych place. After a short meeting, the procession marched to the Wall of Memory and Sorrow, on the way laying wreaths under the plaque commemorating victims of security forces of the totalitarian regimes (on Bandera Street), near the commemorative sign to the victims of Holodomors and political repression on Chornovil avenue, and under the Wall of Memory and Sorrow.

These ceremonies were held in 2009 ("Den pamiati" 2009). Four years later, in 2013, the list of commemorative sites was expanded to include the building of a former prison on Sudova Street, the building of a Lviv probationary ward on Horodotska Street, the Yanivsky Memorial to the victims of "Moscow Communist Regimes," and the monument to innocent children, "tortured to death" in Lviv prisons in 1950-1951 (field no. 50 of Yanivsky cemetery). Wreaths and flowers to all these sites were laid by the Lviv regional branch of the National Scout Organization of Ukraine ("18-19 travnia" 2013).

Museum-Prison on Lontsky

The history of the creation of Lviv's National Museum-Memorial of the Victims of Occupation Regimes "Museum-Prison on Lontsky" is an example of the complexity and contingency of the institutionalization of a certain type of memory and of a certain perspective on the past, which inescapably casts off other interpretations and shades out pages of history that do not fit into that specific perspective. There are multiple actors involved in the reconstruction of the past, and it is their political, social and ideological views that define their dealing with that past. The capacity of these actors to mobilize material resources and public opinion plays a key role in the question whose memory will leave traces in the physical and symbolic public space of the community that was born out of that past. The history of the creation of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky brought forward a clash between a nationalist exclusive and a post-Soviet inclusive memory of Soviet repression.

It began in 2000, when Memorial carried out excavations in the yard, adjacent to the prison, searching for the remains of Roman Shukhevych, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). This yard, as well as the building of the prison, was at that time the property of the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU). Excavations were done according to Ukrainian law, with the participation of the Office of the Prosecutor and forensic experts. The excavations lasted 18 days and were carried out exclusively at Memorial's expenses. An official press conference was called on the territory of that yard, featuring top regional and city officials, the mayor of Lviv and various grassroots organizations. It was announced that no remains of Shukhevych were found, but instead, workers of Memorial came across fragments of human skeletons that most probably were brought here together with soil, which was dumped in the yard. These remains were sent for forensic expertise. After that, they were returned to Memorial, which promised to bury them in one of the graves on the field of Mars ("Navkolo problemy" 2005).

In 2004 the SBU, facing an acute problem of a lack of housing for its employees, decided to build on the territory of the yard a high-rise apartment building. This decision triggered a wave of indignant cries from various social activists, deploring the sacrilege of the site "watered with the blood of our patriots" (Hrabovsky 2005, p. 6). Because of this public outcry, the SBU sent a request to the building company HalychArt and to Memorial, as an organization known for its dedicated work and expertise in uncovering mass graves of victims of executions, to carry out a second, full and final inspection of the yard in order to establish whether it contains any traces of burials. Memorial agreed to send its representatives to participate in the excavations, organized by the building company, under the following conditions: if the SBU and HalychArt proceed with the building, it cannot contain any bar, restaurant, or entertainment facilities. Moreover, the SBU agreed to give Memorial the premises of three cells in the Lontsky prison for an exhibition on the victims of this prison, to install a commemorative bas-relief and to build a chapel (Hrabovsky 2005, p. 6).

The excavations revealed a few fragments of bones that were documented and sent to Kyiv for expertise. However, it was not established definitively whether the exterior yard of the Lontsky prison contained any graves, because it would have required digging by hand, with shovels, until encountering rock, carefully examining every stratum of soil. HalychArt, by contrast, carried excavations by drilling exploring pits in the ground ("Navkolo problem" 2005).

Upon obtaining clearance from the municipal services, in September 2004 HalychArt proceeded with the construction without having obtained the approval by the City Council.³⁰ The question was brought up in a regular session of the City Council because the plot of land, where the construction had started, had to be re-classified from "defense purposes" (being in a permanent lease by the SBU) to "civil and residential." Deputy of the City Council Vira Liaskovska, supported by Ivan Hel, a social activist and former political prisoner, as well as by the Kalynets couple, demanded the shutdown of the construction. They organized a press conference, accusing the head of Memorial Yevhen Hryniv of "lobbying the odious construction on the bones of the victims of terror who were tortured to death." They even accused him of having collaborated with the SBU all this time, even in the Soviet era.³¹ "Such a derision of the souls and memory of those who were murdered in this prison should not only be condemned; it should impose an appropriate penalty to those responsible for this unauthorized construction and those who assisted them in this crime," states the press release of the event.³²

Iryna Kalynets, Vira Liaskovska, and Ivan Hel accused Hryniv of giving the permission to start the construction in the yard of the former NKVD prison, "a horrendous torture chamber", in which "practically all well-known Ukrainian writers, poets, painters, and public figures were tortured" ("Prezydentovi

³⁰ The Internet article, from which the following information is taken, does not exist anymore; therefore the author cannot reference the source properly. However, other sources corroborate the information provided. See Kharchenko 2005).

³¹ Ivan Hel stated that the KGB directed Hryniv to found Memorial (Kipiani and Ovsienko, 2012).

³² Even the subtitle of the article about this press-conference follows an exaggerated style of nationalist discourse on the victimhood of the Ukrainian nation – "The Blood of Those Tortured to Death Cries for Vengeance" ("Krov zakatovanykh volaye pro pomstu"). As mentioned in note 19, the Internet article is not available anymore.

Ukrainy” 2005; Hrabovsky 2005, p. 6). They signed a letter to President Viktor Yushchenko and senior officials, complaining about Hryniv (“Prezydentovi Ukrainy” 2005).

Hryniv justly replied that Memorial, as a non-governmental, non-municipal organization, does not have any authority to issue any permit, and all those who accuse him, especially the Deputy of the City Council Vira Liaskovska, should know this (Hrabovsky 2005, p. 6, col. 4). The role of Memorial was to answer the question whether the plot of land under construction contains any grave of victims of political repression (“Navkolo problem” 2005, p. 6, col. 4).

The question of the construction in the yard, adjacent to Lontsky prison, was even on the agenda of a session of the Lviv Regional Council of People’s Deputies in June 2005. A special commission, created at the initiative of Vira Liaskovska, examined specifically the role of Memorial in this affair. It is worth noting that nobody from this organization was invited to attend the session and to answer questions of the deputies. The main rapporteur of the commission was the same Vira Liaskovska. Apart from accusing Hryniv of authorizing the construction, she also inquired about what happened to the human bones that were found during the excavations of 2000. Moreover, she stated that Memorial has been doing nothing to commemorate the victims of political repression and proposed to create a group that would conduct such activities, including herself and Ivan Hel. She added that the building company HalychArt did not obtain any permission from the municipal services and called upon deputies not to believe a word from “Ukrainian Memorial”, a newspaper of the Lviv Memorial organization (Hrabovsky 2005, p. 6, col. 1).

Ivan Hel then took the floor. He called Hryniv “an enemy of the Ukrainian people,” together with the head of the Ukrainian Communist Party Petro Symonenko. He reiterated that Memorial has been idle and called a lie an affirmation by Hryniv that the shooting of prisoners took place in the interior yard of the prison, not in the exterior yard where the construction is planned.

Ivan Hubka, a former political prisoner and member of Memorial, claimed that when he was sitting in a cell in Lontsky prison, he heard cries and orders to shoot people, and because his cell overlooked the interior yard, it could happen only there, not in the exterior yard, as Liaskovska, Hel and Kalynets believed. Hel called Ivan Hubka “a liar” and stated that the interior yard of the prison was too small to carry out the executions (“hardly two cars can pass one another”)(Hrabovsky 2005, p. 6, col. 1).

Yaroslav Dashkevych, a well-known professor of history and academician, was called as an expert. He said that he had in his possession aerial photos, taken by Germans in 1941, where one can clearly see black spots representing prisoners being shot. The shooting took place in the exterior yard.

However, in the same interview with Evhen Hryniv that I have been quoting to relate the Memorial session of the Lviv Regional Council, there are two pictures of the interior yard of the Lontsky prison – one taken in 2005, and another one taken in 1941, when Germans exhumed the bodies of prisoners, executed by retreating Soviet forces, a photo that comes from German archives.³³ On the picture, one can clearly see rows of unearthed dead bodies. Another fact that Hryniv cites as evidence that the shootings took place in the interior yard, is that the exterior yard can be seen from two sides, on Briullova and Kopernika streets, and it would make no sense for the NKVD to execute people in plain sight, while the interior yard is almost completely hidden from view by a high wall surrounding the yard. If Soviet authorities wanted to hide their crime, it would be easier to do so by executing prisoners in the interior yard.

The Liaskovska-Hel-Kalynets group had in mind to discredit the activities of Memorial. The problem of the Lontsky prison was covered in the main Lviv newspapers, and the leaders of Memorial gave a radio interview, explaining the situation that I described above. And yet Liaskovska called on the deputies of the Regional Council not to believe Memorial. A group of workers of Memorial sent the mentioned earlier letter-complaint to the President of Ukraine, the Prime Minister, the Head of the Verkhovna Rada, and the

³³ The remains of over 600 prisoners were exhumed then and buried in the Yanivsky cemetery (“Navkolo problemy” 2005).

regional and Lviv city administration, listing several accusations directed against Hryniv. It was stated in the letter that the direction of Memorial did not hold any assembly for months and did not organize regional conferences for years. Neither the organization, nor its leadership participate in the social and political life of the city and region. The leadership allows neither ordinary citizens, nor NGOs, to access documents on political repression that people sent to Memorial, and many documents have disappeared ("Prezydentovi Ukraïny" 2005). According to the letter, the search and excavations of the remains of "victims of totalitarian regimes" that Memorial undertakes are done without inviting experts, without notifying local authorities, and without respecting norms and rules, established by legislation. The bones, excavated in mass graves, are kept for years in the organization's premises, in a neighbourhood with private houses, which is against sanitary norms, while the head of Memorial, Mr. Hryniv, does nothing to re-bury "our innocent compatriots, tortured to death" and instead uses these remains to put "moral pressure" in order to get more financing. The letter ends with the request to audit Memorial in order to find out how it uses the premises and several phone lines that it rents from city authorities and whether the state should support a "practically non-existing organization." The letter was signed by 23 workers of the "Memorial" ("Prezydentovi Ukraïny" 2005).

In her comments to the letter Iryna Kalynets stated that members of Memorial made public "striking facts of the criminal activities of its leadership", namely the permission by Yevhen Hryniv to build an "entertainment facility" on the territory of a terrifying torture chamber, the former prison of the NKVD (Comment to the letter by Iryna Kalynets - "Prezydentovi Ukrayiny" 2005). I have already reported the reply of Yevhen Hryniv to the accusation of giving such permission. As for the fact that Memorial does not bury the remains found during excavations, the fact of the matter is that "Memorial" initiated the reburial of remains found in the yard of the Zamarstyniv prison and the cemetery, adjacent to it, on the field of Mars. Members of the organization were actively involved in the cleaning of the graves of victims of Soviet executions of 1941 in the Yanivsky cemetery and in the preparation work for designing and building the

Yanivsky memorial complex. They have also carried out excavations at the Pidzamche railway station where Soviet authorities buried people from Central and Eastern Ukraine who fled to Lviv, trying to escape the famine of 1946-1947, but starved to death. Memorial built a chapel on Pidzamche, while the remains were solemnly buried in the Lychakiv cemetery, close to the cemetery of Ukrainian Riflemen. Given all these facts, the accusation that Memorial was doing nothing to preserve the memory of victims of Communist repressions was an overstatement, to say the least.

Moreover, there was a practical reason explaining why the excavated remains were not reburied shortly after the excavation. Archival research and interviewing witnesses is a long process. The remains had to be sent for forensic expertise to establish hard evidence to be used in an eventual trial of Communist crimes. Memorial has been promoting for years the idea of this trial.

In all the issues of *Ukrains'kyi Memorial*, which are published on the organization's website, there are letters from citizens, asking Memorial to help them find out what happened to their relatives. People come to the office of Memorial where every visit is documented. Since 1989 the organization has been conducting a vast correspondence with various state institutions requesting information on those who disappeared during the tumultuous years of war and repressions. From 1989 to 1991 Memorial held several public audiences, meant to be a Nuremberg-2, a trial of Communism. The idea was to gather factual evidence, provide a legal and juridical assessment and to indict Communism as an ideology that committed terrorist acts against the civilian population. Due to the strength of the Communist party and the omnipresence of Communists in the state apparatus, it was impossible to indict concrete individuals.

Memorial is focused on Stalinist repressions against civilians: executions during the first Soviet occupation of 1939-1941, deportations in the postwar years, and convictions for "anti-Soviet propaganda." The testimonies of people, who came to these audiences, were recorded on reels or written down by a secretary; some people also typed or wrote by hand their testimonies themselves. Memorial gathered over

6,000 testimonies on people who were killed. Some of the names that came up in the research were selected to be inscribed on the Wall of Memory and Sorrow. The researchers of Memorial had to confirm these names by going through archives and legal cases. Memorial consulted with lawyers as to a possibility to set up a trial of Communism. The advice they received was that a trial could be envisaged if similar evidence were collected in several regions of Ukraine. Most regional organizations of Memorial, however, did not conduct a thorough research, preferring meetings and propaganda type activities. Even if such work had been done, the probability of a trial of Communism was very small, given that the whole judicial system in Ukraine at that time (judges, prosecutors, lawyers) was staffed with former Communists. As a result the idea of a Nuremberg-2 for communism remained unrealized (Feilo 2012).

As for the accusations against Yevhen Hryniv, following the complaint of Ivan Hel, Memorial was audited and investigated for half a year by city and regional authorities. No unjustified expenses, misappropriations or abuses were found. The only irregularity was a payment in advance for coffins, which Memorial had not yet received (Zolotarenko 2006).

Conceptualization of the “occupational past” by Museum-Prison on Lontsky

The title of the current Museum-Prison on Lontsky Street is the “National Museum-Memorial of Victims of Occupation Regimes.” By “occupation regimes” are meant the Polish, Soviet and German regimes, which all used this prison to incarcerate criminals and political dissidents. However, in the actual exposition of the museum only one period, the Soviet one, is covered, specifically, the executions of the prisoners by retreating Soviet forces in late June 1941.

A prominent place in this exhibition is dedicated to the members of the Ukrainian resistance who were arrested by the Soviet regime in the occupation of 1939-1941. It is the first stage of the exhibit, as explained on the website of the Museum (“Persnyi etap”) and as the director of the Museum told me (Zabily 2013).

The exposition is a work in progress, requiring thorough and time-consuming research, which is slowed down by a lack of funding and limited access to archives.³⁴

For instance, the anti-Jewish pogroms that followed the retreat of Soviet forces are not even mentioned in the exhibition of the museum (Blacker 2013). These pogroms began after the discovery of corpses in Lviv prisons. Upon their arrival into the city, Germans forced Jews to retrieve the bodies and lay them out for public display. Germans followed in the footsteps of the locals who on late afternoon of June 30 were already venting their anger on Jews who they considered collaborators of Bolsheviks (Himka 2011, p. 211)³⁵. The Ukrainian nationalist militia (members of the OUN) were the main perpetrator of pogroms that took on the largest scale on July 1 and continued two-three days after. Several thousand Jews were killed during this pogrom (Himka 2011, p.221).

Zabily explained to me in the interview that pogroms are not presented in the museum not because of a lack of will, but because these events have to be researched and the mechanisms behind these events uncovered – who is to blame, and why it happened. Otherwise, a simple mention of these events is just an “irritant” that does not provide an answer and does not serve as a starting point of reflection on these problems (Zabily 2013).

Interestingly, in 2010 the former director of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky Volodymyr Viatrovych cited the same reason, defending the museum from the complaints of historians that the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, while on his visit to Ukraine in 2010, was shown only exhibits focusing on atrocities perpetrated by the Soviet secret police against Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews in June 1941, but not a

³⁴ The Museum is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, and all the expenses pertaining to the maintenance of the building and amenities, as well as the salary of workers, including of the researchers, are covered by the state budget. However, the research itself and the work on the exhibition is not financed, as the director of the Museum told me. That is why a charitable foundation “Building and developing the Memorial ‘Museum on Lontsky’” was created in 2009, at the same time as the museum, to support this work.

³⁵ Here we see the same theme of the “Judeo-Bolshevik commune”, present in the book *Zakhidnoukrayinska trahedia 1941*, published in 2002 and financed by American Ukrainian Diaspora.

word was said in those exhibits about the anti-Jewish pogroms. “It is premature at this time to assess this museum because it is a work in progress. The plans are to work at developing a full picture of all the tragedies that took place in this prison, including tragedies against Jews,” stated Viatrovykh (“Ex-Director Defends” 2010). Three years later, it was still a work in progress and there was still no stand, no exhibit on anti-Jewish pogroms, or Polish repression, or Nazi executions, in spite of Ruslan Zabily’s declaration that the Museum-Prison on Lontsky is meant to be a site of memory, of commemoration of all those who perished, regardless of their national origin (Zabily 2013).

Since the creation of the museum in 2009, researchers have been working on the activities of the dissidents in the 1960s (“Istoriya stvorennia”). The period and perspective from the standpoint of “liberation movement for Ukrainian independence” neatly fit into the general concept of the museum, which is to uncover the relationship “man – system” and to remind people of all ages and of all nationalities that a very high price was paid for freedom and to show how the totalitarian systems destroy human beings in practice. In this relationship there are only two possibilities – either you fight the system and you become an “enemy of the people,” or you give in and become a cog of the system (Zabily 2013).

The head of Memorial Yevhen Hryniv has expressed some criticism of the exposition of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky. He believes that the Museum should expand the period covered to include not only the Polish and Nazi periods, but also the era when Lviv was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Hryniv and Horbal, 2011). The Polish government organized Polonisation and pacification campaigns, trying to subdue the Ukrainians of Halychyna. The Nazis forcefully deported masses of Western Ukrainians to work in Germany and Memorial has documented the names of over 3,000 individuals who were hanged or shot by the Nazis in Lviv region. As it is, the Museum can be accused of being one-sided and biased. Finally, the Museum-Prison on Lontsky represents only the crimes of the Communist regime, without portraying the Communist

ideology. Is it unimaginable that any Holocaust museum, for instance, would talk about the extermination of the Jewish people, while ignoring Nazi ideology (Hryniv and Horbal, 2011).

Aside for the fact that the museum was opened not a long time ago and that the premises of the former prison are not well adapted for museum installations, one reason why the exhibition of the Lontsky museum is so limited and lacking an interpretive framework is the unwillingness to invite to the council of the museum research institutions that have been working for decades in this field, such as the Institute of Ukrainian Studies, the editorial staff of the “Annals of the UPA”, and Memorial” (ibid).

This lack of collaboration between various groups or organizations, involved in the research and commemoration of victims of Stalinist repression, has been noted by Hryniv several years ago when Memorial was accused of doing nothing to preserve the memory of victims and making a profit on people’s bones. In that case, the group criticizing Memorial purposefully ignored what had been done by the organization. Moreover, they insisted that a Museum of specifically Communist crimes be created in Lontsky prison (“Navkolo problemy” 2005).

The current exhibition of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky reflects such a vision. The Museum is conceptualized not as a reminder of a tragedy, but as a symbol of the indestructibility of the Ukrainian fight for liberation.³⁶ The main ideas that the exhibition is supposed to convey are: the triumph of good (sacrifices in the name of independence and freedom) over evil; the grandeur of the spirit of resistance and sacrifice in the name of the independence of Ukraine; other nations have also suffered, and Ukrainians fought and obtained independence not only for themselves but for others as well; it is impossible to physically destroy the aspiration for freedom, hence, it is impossible to destroy freedom itself. The decision to select precisely the prison on Lontsky Street as a memorial complex is grounded in the following reasons: this prison, used by various occupation regimes (Polish, Soviet, German), symbolizes the

³⁶ This principle, as all of the following description of the conceptual framework of the museum, is taken from the Lontsky Street Prison Museum website.

continuity of the Ukrainian people's struggle for independence; what was happening in this prison, impersonates crimes against humanity, which cannot be forgotten; the tragedy of Western Ukraine is intertwined with the tragedy of the rest of Ukraine during the repressive actions of occupation regimes and with the tragedy of other nations and countries, which found themselves under totalitarian regimes. Two main semantic levels are thus built into the "Memorial": the tragedy of occupation, where three occupational regimes – Polish, Soviet, and German – will be represented; and the representation of the grandeur of the spirit of the fight for the independence of Ukraine ("Misiya").

The current exhibit of the Memorial-Museum on Lontsky Street is composed of three story lines. The first is the story of the building, the second depicts the conditions of everyday life in prison, and the third relates the executions that took place in late June 1941. The exhibit occupies the first (ground) floor, while the second floor and the basement remain unchanged. The director of the museum told me that before the opening suggestions had been made to renovate the interior of the prison, but he opposed this idea categorically, striving to preserve the authenticity of the place. The entrance to the museum is situated on the former Lontsky Street, now named Briullova. In the hallway and the corridors of the ground floor, stands the walls contain the history of the building, a partial list of names of prisoners shot by the NKVD in June of 1941, and internal regulations of the prison in different periods.

Several cells are opened for view by visitors — the office of an investigator, a photo laboratory, death row cell, and a cell of solitary confinement. In a separate cell are exhibited archival materials on one the "most renowned" prisoners – Father Mykola Khmiliovsky, the head of the clandestine Greek Catholic Church and member of parliament of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council, a Ukrainian political organization, formed in 1944 by the OUN and UPA in order to coordinate to enlarge the social and political basis of support for the armed resistance against Germany and the Soviet Union. In another cell visitors can view a video made by the Nazis after the Soviet retreat, of mutilated dead bodies, taken from the prison and put on

the ground by four-five men, and of local citizens, waiting in line to see the bodies, with women crying over the dead bodies of their relatives. In a separate cell, there are also pictures and Ukrainian newspapers of the time that extensively covered the crimes of the Communist regime.

On the wall of the hallway leading to the longer corridor of the prison a map of Soviet repression is hanged, featuring the number of people executed by Soviet regime in various prisons of Lviv and Lviv region.

Around the doorway, another tall stand, stretching from the floor to the ceiling, contains the articles of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR on counter-revolutionary crimes. In one of the cells on a wall facing the entrance a collection of reproductions of Soviet propaganda posters of the time is displayed, and excerpts of Soviet songs are played, in order to recreate the historical background of the “most tragic period” in the history of the Lontsky prison and to show the “sharp contrast between official propaganda and the real life in the USSR, in particular, using the example of the conditions of life in Lontsky prison” (“Pershyi etap”).³⁷

At the end of the corridor, where the exposition ends, a plate of memory is installed – a black stand, ceiling tall, on which the names of people “tortured to death” in 1941 are written in white. It is an exhaustive list of all the names known to researchers of the museum today. Audio-recordings of former prisoners are played against the background of the plate.

The Museum-Prison on Lontsky Street, as a historical museum, aims to develop “scientific and cultural responsibility,” that would contribute to the formation of critical thinking and productive criticism of past and present. It acts as a medium through which authentic artefacts provoke feelings of visitors (“Misiya”). Printed banners, which include pictures and statistics, situate these artefacts in a historical context, weaving them into a certain type of historical narrative. This narrative pretends to be neutral and objective, but by omitting the Polish and Nazi occupation periods, it projects a strong anti-Communist bias.

³⁷ As if all the population of Lviv was living in prisons during the Soviet period, or “Soviet occupation,” of 1944-1991 (Radianska okupatsiya).

Through the artefacts, according to the website, the Museum aims to facilitate a dialogue between various ethnic, religious, cultural and political groups. The Museum has become a meeting place for associations of victims of repression, for scout and veteran organizations, military and historical clubs; a place for “tolerant discussions” of the artistic and scientific intelligentsia of various confessions. Teachers and university professors bring their students here; volunteers come to work – all of this is a reflection of the general conception of the Museum as a place and medium of communication (“Misiya”).

Among the Ukrainian partners of the museum are the Centre for the Study of Liberation Movement of Ukraine, an independent research NGO, which studies the history of the 20th century Ukraine as a continuous struggle for independence; the Ukraine 3000 International Charitable Foundation, an independent, non-profit, non-political charitable organization, which was founded in 2001 by Viktor Yushchenko, who as President of Ukraine advocated intensely and successfully for the recognition of the Holodomor as a genocide against the Ukrainian people; the Ivan Franko Lviv National University; The Ukrainian Catholic University; the “Pamiat” (Memory) society, whose mission is the search, exhumation and reburial of victims of military actions of the First and Second World Wars, of the restoration and arrangement of military cemeteries and research of military operations and sites where they took place; the municipal enterprise *Dolia* (Destiny) of the Lviv Regional Council, which has the same mission as “Pamiat” society; and so forth. The international partners of the museums are the Centre for the Study of Genocide and Resistance of Lithuania in Vilnius, an interdepartmental state organ, which studies all manifestations of genocide, crimes against humanity and repression against the Lithuanian population and armed and unarmed resistance against the occupation; the Museum of the Victims of Genocide, which is a part of the previously mentioned Centre and which is situated in the former building of the KGB, where “during fifty years the crimes of the Soviet regime were planned and executed” (“Muzei zhertv genotsida”).

The Museum-Prison on Lontsky cooperates closely with the Vilnius Museum, orienting itself in the same direction, but not borrowing directly (Zabily 2013). The director of Lviv Museum has made several trips to Poland to study the Polish experience. In both cases, in Lithuania and Poland, the state supports the museums and has the necessary instruments and institutions to elaborate and implement the politics of national memory, which “consolidate the nation,” while in Ukraine most initiatives come from grass-roots organizations. During the 22 years of independence, states Zabily, the Ukrainian state has done little to prepare Ukrainian society for facing its traumatic past. Access to information has been selective and limited. Lustration has not been carried out, and as a result of “questionable compromises,” people with anti-Ukrainian convictions are in power. The lack of political will has slowed down the process of condemnation of totalitarianism, but this process is inevitable if Ukraine plans to become one day a member of European Union. “I am convinced that nobody wants us in Europe with this luggage” (Zabily 2013).

Thus, the position of the director of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky and of his like-minded colleagues resembles the views and political program of Central-Eastern European liberal democrats, who advocated and carried out de-communization in the form of lustration, the banning of Communist symbols and of the Communist Party, the conviction of officials, guilty of repression against civilians and so forth. In this view, the period of “real socialism,” or Communism, was the period of Soviet totalitarianism, imposed by a foreign power by force and brutality, and has to be condemned as such. On the website of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky, under the rubric “History of the Prison” the years 1944-1991 are called the years of “Soviet occupation.”

Zabily considers that all throughout Ukraine the Soviet period was a period of occupation, starting with the end of the Ukrainian People’s Republic (1917-1921), and the interpretation of the Soviet regime as one of occupation should be extended to the whole territory of Ukraine. Such an approach corresponds closely to

the exhibition “People’s War,” created by the director of the Museum of Soviet Occupation in Kyiv, Roman Krutysk. Materials for this exhibition were collected during two years of work in archives of 18 regions of Ukraine by Krutysk and his assistant in 2009-2009. By gathering data on peasant armed rebellions, the exhibition conveys a message that there was a massive armed resistance against the Soviet regime all throughout Ukraine (“Povstantsi”). Among historians who participated in the preparation of this exhibition is Volodymyr Viatrovych, the head of the Centre for the Study of the Liberation Movement. The “People’s War” project was made possible with the support of the “Our Ukraine” party, whose leader, Viktor Yushchenko, also supported the creation of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky through his “Ukraine 3000” foundation.

In the Lontsky Museum’s interpretation of the Soviet regime as a totalitarian system, everyone was implicated in one way or another. A small portion openly protested, while all the others were drawn by the system, even those, who resisted passively. They survived by pretending to believe in what the system was telling them, but in their private lives they thought otherwise. Such a rift of conscience under totalitarianism had serious consequences, one of them being the absence of civil society in Ukraine. In the realm of national memory this duality of conscience manifests itself in the schizophrenic condition of contemporary Ukrainians: while the Great Ukrainian Famine, orchestrated by Stalin, is qualified as a crime, Stalin has not been declared a criminal.³⁸ However, public opinion poll on Stalin, conducted by the KIIS in

³⁸ The prosecution of officials guilty of gross human rights violations has never been undertaken in Ukraine. The furthest that the Ukrainian legal system went in this aspect was a pre-trial investigation of top-rank Communists, responsible for the Holodomor, genocide-famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine (including Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Postyshev, Kosior, Chubar and Khatayevych). The SBU commission of inquiry, based on historical documents and testimonies of witnesses, established beyond doubt the direct involvement of these leaders in the planning and implementation of the Holodomor and sent the results of the inquiry to the Kyiv City Court of Appeal, which was to decide whether to launch a criminal prosecution. The Court validated all the findings of the SBU investigation, but decided to close the case on the grounds that all of the accused were dead, and, according to the Criminal Code of Ukraine, any criminal investigation against a dead person has to be closed. Thus, the Ukrainian state has stopped short of officially declaring Stalin and his collaborators criminals, guilty of the deaths of 4 million Ukrainians (Postanova apeliatsiinoho sudu 2010).

February 2016, showed that the majority of Ukrainians (70%) consider Stalin a cruel tyrant who destroyed millions of innocent lives (Novikova 2016)³⁹.

Views of Ruslan Zabily fit into the nationalist version of Ukrainian history and its “Ukraine as a victim of Soviet totalitarianism” discourse. However, he recognizes himself that local population did believe in the “Communist” ideology in Western Ukraine, and if there were no support for the Soviet power, it would not have lasted for so long (Zabily 2013).

Zabily represents a generation of historians, who were too young to know from their own experience what living in the Soviet system really meant. Yevhen Hryniv represents an older generation, who at the time of the end of the Soviet Union was an adult and had made a career as an academic and a researcher. His interpretation of the Soviet past differs from Zabily’s. In Hryniv’s opinion, as he expressed it in the 2013 personal interview, Communist ideology did not take root in Western Ukraine. Ordinary people accepted Soviet rule as they accepted Polish rule in the inter-war period, and went on with their lives. A radical change of power at the dawn of independence turned out to be impossible, because the former political dissidents, who led the popular democratic movement in Halychyna, were not prepared and did not know how to manage the country. It is one thing to fight against something, advancing ideological arguments, and a completely different story when one confronts reality and the necessity to resolve practical problems (Hryniv 2013).

In the first democratically elected Lviv Regional Council of People’s Deputies Viacheslav Chornovil, a well-known Ukrainian dissident, became the head, and Hryniv was elected the head of People’s Control, the most powerful position in the regional council after the chairman and the head of the executive committee

³⁹ This opinion decreases in numbers from the West (87.1) to the East (51, 2%). At the same time, the opinion that Stalin was a wise who led the USSR to power and prosperity, decreases from the East (45%) to the West (10.8), whereas the national total is 28.2% (Novikova 1016).

(Hryniv 2013).⁴⁰ They cooperated closely, and during one of the conversations, Chornovil confessed to Hryniv that he was disorientated and did not know what to do. “You know, what I had been learning for 15 years?” asked Chornovil. “I had been learning how to fight, and I fight very well. But I know nothing about how to run the economy, how to run production, industry” (Hryniv 2013). Faced with this real problem, Chornovil was forced to invite to his administration several former Communists-economists and managers, much to the dissatisfaction of the local population, who wanted to have a new leadership, untainted by “collaboration” with the Soviet regime. However, the national-democrats could not offer any alternative. No new government can start completely anew, with people whose mind and conscience are pristinely clean and free from the influence of the old regime unless they recruit these people from abroad. The situation in Lviv at the beginning of the 1990s clearly demonstrates that a radical change was impossible at that time.

Hryniv was accused by nationalist activists to be a KGB agent (*KGBist*). Even if he was at some point, all of what has been done by Memorial under his direction since independence raises the question of why would he be involved for so many years, without any direct political gain, investing his money and effort? When he visited the Museum-Prison on Lontsky in 2011, together with a delegation of the Ukrainian World Coordinating Council, he was asked why the graves of victims of political repressions remain nameless and if Memorial had an exact and reliable information on the victims of repression (who was repressed and when, where are buried the remains of those “tortured to death” or shot by Soviet punitive organs, why were they repressed and why did they die?). In these questions, one can hear the echo of accusations against Hryniv that were brought forward by the Hel-Kalynets group in the controversy around the plans to build an “entertainment facility” on the territory of the Lontsky prison. Hryniv replied that the majority of names of all those who were killed by the NKVD in late June 1941 are engraved on the Zamarstyniv Wall of

⁴⁰ In the Soviet Union, People’s control committees played the role of civic control on the fulfillment of state plans, on public misconduct, and on the proper spending of public funds and resources. The highest coordinated body was the Committee of the People’s Control of the USSR, appointed by the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR. Every Soviet Republic had its own committee, as did autonomous republics, regions, and districts. Groups and posts of people’s control existed also in village and town councils, in enterprises, kolkhozes, institutions, organizations and military units.

Memory and Sorrow, but that Memorial still needs more funds to finish the Wall, and it is hard to get support from the authorities. He also reminded that establishing the names and destiny of the repressed is a very thorough work, requiring painstaking research in archives and interviewing people. In the same article that describes Hryniv's visit to the Museum-Prison on Lontsky Street, there is a detailed report on persons, whose remains were exhumed by Memorial on the cemetery behind the Zamarstyniv prison (Hryniv and Horbal 2011, pp. 6-7).

When I asked Ruslan Zabily if he knows about the activities of Memorial, he said that he had heard nothing about it for several years. This is hard to believe, if only because the laying of wreaths at the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow is incorporated into the official program of city authorities during the Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Political Repression in Lviv, just as the Museum-Prison on Lontsky is. When the museum was being created, the team of researchers did not approach Memorial for help, consultation, or documents. As Hryniv told me, they thought, in a truly "Galician" spirit, that Memorial will compete with them or stand in the way of their activities. As was mentioned earlier, Memorial lobbied for many years for the creation of a museum of totalitarian regimes. When such a decision was finally made, people who had not been involved in the lobbying process jumped on the bandwagon because that meant jobs, positions, and money (Hryniv 2013).

The concept of a museum of totalitarian regimes, advanced by Memorial would show the damage and losses inflicted on Ukrainians as a stateless nation by all occupation regimes – Polish, Soviet, and German. In the interpretation of former Soviet political dissidents Kalynets, this museum should be the museum of Communist crimes ("Navkolo problem", 2005), or the Museum of NKVD terror, according to Vira Liaskovska, a former Communist turned ardent patriot. Ivan Hel emphasized that the first museum to be

opened in Lviv should be a national museum of the fight for liberation.⁴¹ As seen from the concept and the current exposition of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky, this museum embraces precisely the vision of Kalynets-Hel. The only thing that remains from the original idea, proposed by Memorial, is the title “Museum-Prison of Occupation Regimes.” However, only the crimes of the Soviet regime are represented in the museum for now.

History of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky: Controversies of “Memory Games”

The website of the museum indicates that work on the “Museum-Memorial” began in 2006, when, at the initiative of the community and with the support of the Regional Service of the SBU a commemorative cross was installed in the yard of Lontsky prison, and the premises of the prison were opened for the first time to the public and journalists (“Istoriya stvorennia”). When I asked Ruslan Zabily how the Museum came into being, he told me that the impetus was given by citizens, indignant at the decision to build in the interior yard an apartment block or a shopping and entertainment centre. During the excavations in preparation for laying the foundation of the building the construction manager “turned out to be a decent person” and told the deputies of the regional and city council that soil containing some human remains had been taken away from the yard during the night to conceal terrible findings. This stirred the indignation of deputies and the community. The construction was ended, and then the idea was formulated by the community that a museum should be built in this place, a memorial. A working group was set up which included researchers from the Centre for Research of the Liberation Movement, representatives of civil society, deputies of the

⁴¹ In June of 2003 Ivan Hel gave an interview to Vakhtang Kipiani, the founder and the editor-in-chief of *Istorychna pravda* (*Historical Truth*), an independent web newspaper that publishes research articles on hotly debated events in the history of Ukraine, and to Vasyl’ Ovsienko, a political dissident, writer, publicist and a member of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group. In this interview Hel says that Hryniv is lobbying the “primitive regional council and deputies” about the idea of creating a museum of victims and repressions of totalitarianism in Lviv. Hel had an “agreement” with the presidential representative in Lviv region that, as a “symbolic figure,” he would become the director of the museum. Overall, the activities of Hryniv and of Memorial are “destructive,” since he exhumes bones and skulls and keeps them for 5-6 years unburied. He claimed that Hryniv is totally indifferent to all of this, as he was under the Soviet Union, when he was the head of the Department of Atheism in the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He then repeated the charges of misappropriation of funds (Kipiani and Ovsienko 2012).

Lviv regional and city councils, members of *Pamiat*, the Society for the Search of Victims of Wars, and of the Lviv Regional Society *Poshuk*, close to Memorial (“Istoriya stvorennia”). The SBU joined later (Zabily 2013).

In 2007, at the request of the Lviv city council, the Center for Research of the Liberation Movement started researching the history of the Lontsky prison. The research was finished in 2008, and the collected material formed the basis of the future exposition of the museum. In 2008 the Collegium of the SBU issued the decree announcing the creation of the museum. The SBU was involved from the beginning because the premises of the Lontsky prison were its property. Placing the museum under the jurisdiction of the SBU helped to avoid difficulties associated with the settlement of ownership issues (Zabily 2013).

However, such a decision sparked discontent within the Lviv liberal-minded intellectual community, close to Memorial. In an open letter many intellectuals and civil activists voiced their concerns over the fact that a museum as an institution, which is supposed to research the history of repression and crimes against humanity, is being created as a structural unit of the Security Service of Ukraine.⁴² While noting that the willingness of the SBU to contribute to the creation of the museum by opening access to archives is a sign of an important and positive development of the Ukrainian state, they stated that the elaboration of the concept of the museum and its functioning should not be dependent on political factors, the ideological orientation and personal views of the people occupying the highest public offices. The only way to secure the autonomy of the museum is to transfer it in trust of the community (hromada) of Lviv (“Hromadskist’ L’vova”).

The community, or rather, a certain part of it with nationalist-patriotic views, indeed played a key role in the creation of the museum, particularly the former dissidents Iryna Kalynets and Ivan Hel and the deputy of the Lviv City Council Vira Liaskovska, who, as mentioned before, tried to discredit Memorial and its

⁴² The letter was signed, among others, by the well-known Soviet dissident Myroslav Marynovych, by the head of the Lviv Regional Association of Political Prisoners and Repressed, Ivan Hubka, and by the long-term political prisoner, Oles’ Humeniuk, head of the Lviv Regional Brotherhood of the OUN-UPA.

director Yevhen Hryniv, long-term Soviet prisoner and Hero of Ukraine Yuri Shukhevych⁴³, Tetiana Krushelnytska, the grand-daughter of the poet and art critic Ivan Krushelnytsky, shot by the Soviet regime in 1934. The support from the state, and especially from the SBU, came because people in key high-ranking public offices hold the same pro-nationalist views, as the representatives of civil society. For instance, Volodymyr Viatrovych, the director of the Centre for the Research of the Liberation Movement (CRLM) and a member of the supervisory board of the Lontsky museum prison, served in 2008-2010 as the head of the Archives of the SBU, precisely at the time when the museum was being created. It was also the period of the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko, who is known for his nationalist vision of the history of Ukraine. Yushchenko donated 160,000 hryvnia through his charitable foundation "Ukraine 3000" to the development of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky ("Tiurma na Lontskoho").

In September 2009, the CRLM, the SBU, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, the Lviv Regional Council and the Lviv City Council signed a partnership agreement on the creation of the museum. The Institute of National Memory was involved in the process because in 2009 it still had executive power to develop memory politics. It was created by Yushchenko in 2006, inspired by the Polish model. The main tasks of the Institute were defined as follows: to draw the public's attention to the history of Ukraine; to ensure thorough research on all the stages of the Ukrainian people's struggle in the 20th century to restore the Ukrainian state; and to implement measures directed at the commemoration of fighters for Ukrainian independence, victims of famines and political repression. With the election of President Victor Yanukovych the Institute was reformed in 2010 into a purely research institution within the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. As one can see from the main tasks of the Institute in 2009, the Museum-Prison on Lontsky fitted well into the ideological program of national memory under Yushchenko.

⁴³ Yuri is the son of Roman Shukhevych, the head of the OUN and commander-in-chief of the UPA.

On the practical side, the Institute was involved in the creation of the museum, because the idea was to eventually transfer the museum from the jurisdiction of the SBU to the Institute. The election of Yanukovych blocked that and the museum found itself in a legal limbo until September 2010 when Zabily was arrested by the SBU in Kyiv and held for 14 hours. SBU officers questioned him regarding a possible leak of state secrets. They confiscated his laptop and two hard disks containing declassified documents on the history of the UPA (Kabachiy 2010) and conducted a search of the Museum. The SBU took away personal laptops of researchers containing audio- and video recollections of Ukrainian dissidents of the 1960s, printed material and pictures, related to the activities of the dissidents. The head of the Lviv regional office of the SBU explained that these two confiscated notebooks were the property of the SBU, since the Museum is under SBU jurisdiction, and materials were of “limited access.” Zabily, reportedly, had access to documents containing state secrets and had a responsibility not to divulge these state secrets. A Museum researcher, however, claimed that the confiscated documents were not classified. The SBU cryptically explained that the criminal case it opened was not against Zabily as a person, but “over a fact” (za faktom), the allegation being that Zabily was getting ready to make public secret documents (“SBU stverdjuye” 2010).

Viatrovych reacted to the detention of his friend and colleague Zabily by saying that employees of the SBU are not only trying to cover crimes of Stalinism, they are also practicing the same methods they used in 1937. Zabily noted that the SBU interest in his research on the Ukrainian nationalist liberation movement was an attempt to intimidate historians working on this topic, leading to the establishment of a reactionary regime (“Lviv Historian” 2010).

This scandal brought a new development to the process of transferring the Museum under the jurisdiction of the Institute of National Memory. As mentioned before, the latter was dismantled and revived as a merely research institution, tasked with studying Ukrainian history and processes of the formation of

national memory. While the leadership of the Institute prior to this change was composed of pro-nationalist historians and intellectuals, such as Ihor Yukhnovsky and Roman Krutsyk, the new administration embraced a more moderate position, without a clearly expressed ideological stance, although the Director of the Institute, Valeri Soldatenko, in 2013 was a former Communist and a historian of the Communist Party. The director of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky and his like-minded colleagues, knowing the anti-nationalist views of the new government in general and of the Institute of National Memory in particular, became worried that transferring the Museum to the Institute would threaten the very nature of the Museum. They opposed actively this transfer, and by the end of 2011 the Museum was placed instead under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture.

There was another interesting episode in the creation of the Museum, demonstrating that a memory that mobilizes social opinion can lead to attempts by various political and social actors to gain political and financial dividends. In spite of the so-called cooperation of the Lviv City Council and the Advisory Board, comprised of the representatives of civil society, the Mayor of Lviv initiated the registration of the municipal enterprise “Museum-Memorial of Victims of Occupation Regimes “Prison on Lontsky” under the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Lviv City Council and appointed his assistant as museum director without coordinating the candidacy with other partners (“Tiuremna taina Sadovoho” 2010). These actions sparked criticism of members of the group that had been working for two years on the creation of the museum. They pointed to the young age, lack of appropriate education and of the experience in management of the mayor’s appointee and wrote a letter to the Head of the SBU asking him to see to the liquidation of this municipal enterprise. Liaskovska said that the Mayor does not want to close the enterprise because of a large amount of money that was allocated from the city budget to set up the museum (Yuzyk 2009). Yuri Shukhevych stated that in Lviv everything is up for sale, even conscience. He accused Sadovy of playing into the hands of Poles who want the museum to reflect only the repression of the totalitarian regime, not those of the occupation regimes. The name “Ukrainians” is not even mentioned

in the letter, addressed by Sadovy to the President with the request to grant the municipal enterprise the status of a national museum. The letter talks about “inhabitants of Lviv,” in spite of the fact that many people from Halychyna were murdered in the prison, and this again plays into the hands of those who pretend that Lviv was built not by Ukrainians, but by other nations. There are even people who would like to transform the “Prison on Lontsky” Memorial into a museum of Holocaust. This letter, added Shukhevych, was written by “a non-Ukrainian hand.” What the Mayor of Lviv really wants, was to eventually privatize the Museum, sell it and build on its place a hotel (“Tiuremna tayina Sadovoho” 2010).

This ill-fated municipal enterprise was dissolved several months after it was registered. But the entrepreneurial spirit of its former director found another way: the idea of “Territory of Terror”, another museum of totalitarian regimes, which would be created on the premises of two sites – the transit prison no. 25 and the Lviv ghetto.

Territory T

According to Ukraïns’kyi Memorial, the Lviv Memorial society first proposed a “Territory of Terror” museum. The researchers of the society, after many years of thoroughly studying the legal cases and sentences, established the names of all the prisoners that were kept in Prison no. 25 in downtown Lviv. Over 263,000 prisoners went through the prison during its existence between 1944 and 1955, and 1716 of them died while in prison (Drotyak 2012a).⁴⁴ An additional 416 died in 1944-1945, while the prison was used as a temporary confinement for people who were arrested, tried and sentenced to deportation to camps in the Russian Far North and in Siberia. Prisoners came from all regions of Western Ukraine – Halychyna, Volyn, Bukovyna, and Zakarpattia. These 416 prisoners died, in all probability, because of

⁴⁴ The transit prison was built in the fall of 1944 on the order of SMERSH, a Red Army counterintelligence unit, on the territory of the former Jewish ghetto on present-day Chornovil Street, directly behind a railway embankment. It consisted of 21 barracks, enclosed in a three meters high brick wall. People from Western Ukraine, who were sentenced to deportation, were kept in prison prior to being shipped by train to the destination of their expulsion. After the war, by the end of 1945 the prison was transferred to the Lviv NKVD in the corrective labor camps division. It was closed down in 1955, and the building was converted into a hospital for war veterans (Drotyak, 2012a).

torture during interrogation and unsanitary conditions in prison – in cells, 25-45 square meters large, up to 60 prisoners were kept. There was not enough room, so people had to take turns to lie down and sleep; toilets were located directly in cells (Drotiak 2012a). The dead were buried on the territory of the prison, along the railway embankment. According to Memorial, only 15-17% of people, who went through the transit prison, were involved directly or indirectly in the anti-Soviet insurgent movement. Most of them were innocent victims of the Communist terror (ibid).

In the early 1990s Memorial asked the City Council to declare the territory surrounding the building of the transit prison a memorial area and to build a monument. It also requested that funding be allocated from the city budget to exhume and rebury 416 people, presumably buried in the prison yard. The then mayor of Lviv, Vasyl Kuibida, agreed to this request and promised to Memorial director Hryniv to create such a zone. However, during a plenary session of the city council, while the mayor was away, a decision was taken to rent the territory of the transit prison to small businesses. That is how a car shop, a car wash and a restaurant ended up in the territory where a memorial dedicated to the memory of victims of Communist terror had been planned. Funding from the city council also never materialized. Having waited in vain, in 1996, Memorial finally erected a commemorative cube at its expense (Drotiak 2012a; Hryniv 2013). On one side of the cube, placed on one of its angles, sign in golden letters reads: “Tut bude sporudzheno memorial zhertvam komunistychnoho teroru” (A Memorial to the Victims of Communist Terror will be built here). On the other side another inscription is engraved: “U 1944-1954 rokakh tut bula peresylna tiurma dlia viazniv Halychyny, Volyni, Bukovyny ta Zakarpattia. Cherez neyi do taboriv Hulahu proishlo ponad 250 tysiach osib, z yakykh 419 tut pokhovani” (In 1944-1954 a transit prison for prisoners from Halychyna, Volyn, Bukovyna and Zakarpattia was located here. More than 250,000 people were sent from here to Gulag camps, 419 of whom are buried here). The commemorative cube was designed by the same architect that created the statue of the tortured prisoner on the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow – Mykhailo Samotos, a member of the Lviv Memorial society.

This cube is situated close to the cross in the memory of the victims of the Holodomor, which was also installed by Memorial. A white marble plate is attached to the wooden crucifix. The text, written in golden letters, reads: «Na mistsi kolyshniroyi hulahivskkoyi peresylnoyi tiurmy bude sporudjenyi znak pamiati zhertv holodomoru. Terorystychnyi rezhym...Vnaslidok yakoho zahynulo ponad 9 milioniv ukrayinstiv. Orhanizatsiya 'Memorial'. Oblasna i miska rada. 23 lystopada 2002 roku» (On the place of former Gulag transit prison a sign in memory of victims of Holodomor will be erected. A terrorist regime As the result of which over 9 million Ukrainians died. "Memorial" organization. Regional and city council. November 23, 2002). Memorial followed here the inflated numbers used by nationalists. In the middle of the plaque letters are so faded that it is impossible to read them. The City Council agreed to create a commemorative zone around the former prison in 2000. The date on the marble plaque of the Holodomor crucifix confirms this. However, nothing has been done ever since to build a memorial of the victims of totalitarianism. In the summer of 2013, when I visited Lviv and went to see this place, the car shop and car wash were still there, and a small restaurant with an open summer patio on the top of the car wash was welcoming people to a shashlik (barbecue).

Although it has not materialized yet, the project "Territory of Terror" has taken a virtual form - a web-site <http://territoryterror.org.ua/>. Apart from collecting, researching and publishing materials, related to "political, social, ethnic and religious repression of totalitarian regimes against people who lived within the territory of Ukraine in the 20th century" ("Mission Statement"), the site also offers non-fictional materials, such as documentaries, exhibitions and information leaflets. The director of this virtual museum is Taras Cholij, the same person who was appointed the director of the ill-fated municipal enterprise "Prison on Lontsky Street". There is no information as to the team of researchers who work in the museum. In contrast, on the website of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky there is a separate page with pictures and short bios of its employees. The web-site "Territory of Terror" has an extended version in English, including abstracts of research articles, while the website of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky is only in Ukrainian. The

only Ukrainian partner of the Territory of Terror is a NGO “Western Ukrainian Historical Research Centre” with which it carries out most of its projects. The head of the Centre is the same Taras Cholij. The organization does not have an address or a phone number in the index of Lviv NGOs, nor a web-site (“Zakhidno-ukraïns’kyi tsentr”).

Among the various projects of the virtual “Territory of Terror” museum is the “Living History” project, in which testimonies of people who suffered in the hands of totalitarian regimes are collected. Over a hundred interviews have been videotaped since 2009. Some of these interviews were used in the documentary “Zoloty veresen. Khronika Halychyny, 1939-1941” (Golden September. Chronicles of Galicia, 1939-1941), produced by Taras Cholij. Other projects include: “Urok pamiaty” (A Memory Lesson) — an event at an educational institution, during which youngsters meet with witnesses of historical events of the past century: former political prisoners, veterans, historians; the exhibitions “Ridna shkola – 130”, dedicated to the 130th anniversary of the Ukrainian Pedagogical society of the same name, and the exhibition “Zakhidna Ukrayina 1939-1941” (Western Ukraine 1939-1941).

The website of the “Territory of Terror” project also contains the mission and architectural design of the future Memorial Museum of Totalitarian Regimes, to be created on the premises of the former transit prison no. 25 and the Lviv ghetto. The Museum plan features the following architectural elements. The “Avanzone,” or entrance portal, will have the monument “To Repressed Ukrainian Families” in the centre and will be fenced with a symbolic wall. Metal gates with the inscription “Territory of Terror,” on the model of Nazi concentration camps, will lead to a “Totalitarianism Alley.” Along one side of this alley a collection of monuments from the Soviet era will be displayed, such as the statue of a Soviet pilot. The “Memory Wall,” running on the other side of the alley, will contain granite slabs featuring the names of prisoners of the transit prison and will be topped with a barbed wire. The “Colonnade of Tyrants” in the Empire style will contain portraits of Stalin and Hitler, bordered respectively by hammer and sickle and swastika symbols, as

well as a wall providing a textual explanation of crimes, committed by “totalitarian tyrants.” On a separate wall a map-scheme of the Gulag camps and a map of Nazi concentration camps will be displayed, accompanied by textual explanation and statistics. This wall will border a fragment of a railway, by which people were shipped to concentration camps. On the railway a “cattle wagon” from the 1930s-1950s will be placed. The whole structure is supposed to symbolize the forced deportation of millions of people.

Along the central alley, after the rail road section, five wooden barracks, imitating typical camp barracks, are planned, creating a “time tunnel” that will guide visitors through the XXth century history of Ukraine. The first barrack covers events that took place in Europe and Russia in 1917-1939; the second tells the story of the Soviet occupation of Halychyna, including the deportations and executions in prisons in June-July 1941. The third features the Second World War and Nazi occupation, and the history of the Lviv ghetto. The fourth presents the history of the transit prison no. 25 (1944-1955), as well as post-war repression, Gulag imprisonment, deportations, and the Ukrainian resistance movement. The fifth (1955-1991) pursues the theme of Gulag camps and NKVD, repression against the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the church, the Ukrainian national liberation movement, and decline and collapse of Soviet totalitarianism. Some elements of the complex are already recreated on the site of Chornovil St. 45 –two barracks, watchtowers, and barbed wire entanglements (“Museum Complex”).

From a short description of this future Museum of Totalitarian Regimes one can clearly see that the historical narrative underlying its concept is the same as the narrative of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky: the history of Ukraine in the 20th century is one of oppression by various occupation regimes and the liberation struggles of the Ukrainian people. In the planned “Terror” museum, however, on the conceptual level, at least, Nazi crimes are given a more obvious and prominent place, than in the already existing Museum-Prison on Lontsky. The future museum also provides a broader picture of the losses and suffering inflicted on Western Ukrainians by the Soviet regime, such as the repression against the Ukrainian Catholic

Church and the Ukrainian intelligentsia. This approach appears to answer criticism, advanced by Memorial in regard to the Museum-Prison on Lontsky, in which not only direct human losses would be reflected, but also damages inflicted by the Soviet regime on the spiritual and material culture of Ukrainians (Hunda 2012). In all probability, this concept, formulated by Memorial at least a decade ago in the form of a museum of totalitarian regimes and presented many times since then to Lviv city authorities, has been borrowed by the team who developed the conceptual foundation of the “Territory of Terror” project.

It is worth noting in this regard that Memorial criticized the pamphlet advertising the creation of the “Territory of Terror” memorial complex (and reproduced on its website) for inflating the number of people who went through the transit prison. In the pamphlet the figure of half a million people was mentioned, while the real number, according to Memorial, is smaller by half – approximately 263,000, as indicated above. Since prisoners had been already sentenced and kept in prison for deportation, all their names were well documented. Such a wilful neglect or ignorance is indicative of a lack of collaboration between various activists and NGOs working in the field of historical memory in Lviv (Drotyak 2012a). It also reflects the political nationalist project to inflate numbers in order to make more convincing the image of Ukrainians as victims. The same problem was observed in the case of Museum-Prison on Lontsky, when Memorial was not invited to participate in the elaboration of the concept and the preparation of the exhibition. These facts show that Memorial was sidelined because of its civic, not national-patriotic framing of the memorialisation.

Other monuments to victims of Communist regime in Lviv

There are several other monuments in Lviv that commemorate victims of the Soviet/Communist regime and bear witness to what many describe as its “criminal, anti-human nature.” One has only to follow the official program of the commemorations during the Day of Victims of Political Repressions to identify all of these sites of memory. In addition to those that I have already analyzed — the Yanivsky Memorial to the

Victims of the Moscow Communist Regime and the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow — there are two other sites that I will describe briefly.

The most recent one is a monument to children, “tortured to death” in Lviv prisons in 1949-1951. It is erected on a communal grave of 26 children, three years old or less, who died in two Lviv NKVD prisons – Zamarstyniv and Bryhidky. The monument was consecrated in May 2012, on the Day of Commemoration of Victims of Political Repressions, and is located on Lot 50 of the Lychakiv cemetery. Created by the Lviv sculptor Yulian Savka, it represents a mother who bent her head over the head of a young child in a grief. The driving force behind its conception was the All-Ukrainian Association of Political Prisoners and the Repressed, who for fifteen years had been lobbying for a proper arrangement of the grave (“U Lvovi vshanuvaty” 2012), and in particular the head of this Association, Petro Franko (“U Lvovi vidkryly” 2012).

Another former political prisoner, Vasyl’ Kubiv, was the impetus behind the building of the Monument to the Victims of Communist Crimes. He gave up the presidency in the Lviv Regional Association of Political Prisoners in order to focus on this project. In 1992 he founded the trade union *Neskoreni* (Unsubdued), which he registered as an NGO and through which he carried all financial operations related to the building of the monument. He successfully lobbied for and organized the dismantling of a Soviet monument on Shashkevych square and obtained a decision by the Lviv City Council to allow the building of a new monument, named “To the Victims of Communist Crimes.” In the economic chaos of the early 1990s it was not easy to carry out any construction, but Kubiv, dedicated and determined, found his way. He went back to his home village of Derenivka, in Ternopil, and arranged for a stone block to be delivered to Lviv. The sculptor Ivan Samotos made it a commemorative block, engraved with the text: “A monument to victims of communist crimes will be built here.” The block was solemnly inaugurated on Shashkevych square in June 1992.

Many of Kubiv's comrades thought that the monument would not be built in a foreseeable future. But Kubiv was very determined. In the same year he created a regional organizational committee and a selection jury that would examine future designs of the monument. A competition was launched, which included four tours in various locations across the city. A public account in a bank was opened to raise the necessary funds, which made it possible to purchase two tons of bronze, a feat of efficiency in the rapid devaluation of the Ukrainian currency in the early 1990s. Kubiv also obtained, from the Ministry of Culture, materials from a Soviet monument of Lenin that had been dismantled in downtown Lviv. Upon his insistence the design of the sculptor Shtaier was retained.

As the head of a trade union Kubiv was able to arrange with a sculpture factory and, as an experienced building engineer, he supervised himself the construction work. His comrades from the Association of Political Prisoners raised money in churches. He personally visited local businessmen, "begging" for support, asked the Ukrainian Diaspora for help. The intense financial and moral support of Mykola Horyn, a well-known dissident and then Head of Lviv Regional Council, and of Vasyl Kuibida, the mayor of Lviv, was critical in the completion of the monument. The Monument was inaugurated in November 1997, the first of its kind in Ukraine, in a ceremony, attended by a large crowd. The national anthem of Ukraine was performed by several choirs, including *Neskoreny*, a popular amateur choir of former political prisoners, veterans of liberation movement, the UPA and labour veterans.

Victims of communist repression – fighters for Ukrainian national independence

The memorial space of Lviv abounds in monuments to victims of communist regimes, which represent and reinforce the victimhood of the Ukrainian nation at the hands of a brutal occupier. This memorialisation of the "criminal, anti-humane nature of the Soviet regime" appears in parallel to the destruction of the memory of the "glorious Soviet past," which began with perestroika and glasnost. For instance, the town of Chervonohrad, in Lviv oblast, allegedly became the first locality in Ukraine and in the whole Soviet Union to take down a monument to Lenin on August 1, 1990 (Semkiv 2012).

In Lviv, the dismantling of the monument to Lenin that stood in front of the Opera House took place in September 1990 and was sanctioned by the City Council. More than 50,000 people attended the event (Chopovsky 2005, p. 372). The destruction of monumental symbols of the Soviet past reflected a strong anti-Communist, nationalist drive that spread in Halychyna at the end of the Soviet Union. For instance, in its first official document, "An Address to the People," the first democratically elected Lviv Regional Council, while calling Lviv region "an island of freedom," declared that by "the will of destiny" Lviv region was called to prove that people's councils are capable of ending once and for all the totalitarian system – the discrimination of national, political and civic human rights, a centralized, "deleterious" economy, and the usurpation of power by the Communist Party, which drove the Lviv region to an economic, social and ecological catastrophe. Under such "tragic" circumstances, the de-ideologisation (in other words, the de-communization) of the executive branches of local councils, as well of the judiciary, should be one of the first steps of the first national democratic government that strives to build an independent democratic Ukrainian state, a centuries-old dream of the Ukrainian people ("Vidozva").

In Lviv region and in general in Western Ukraine, the wave of de-communization of the material cultural space in the early 1990s led to the disappearance of monuments to Lenin in virtually all villages and cities of this part of Ukraine (Symonenko 2009, p. 56). These monuments, glorifying the founder of the Soviet Communist regime, a "butcher" of the Ukrainian people, were not only dismantled but even recycled to make monuments to the victims of this "butcher." As we saw above, upon the insistence of Vasyl' Kubiv, the bronze bust of Lenin was melted and re-casted into the monument to victims of communist crimes that stands now on Shashkevych square in Lviv (Kubiv 2003).

De-communization, however, did not mean de-ideologisation, as the dethroned Soviet heroes were replaced by nationalist ones in the memorial space of Western Ukraine. The wave of the "Ukrainization" of the city of Lviv started in the early 1990s with the renaming of the streets (Rasevych 2013) and continues

to the present day. The historical narrative is the story of the fight for national liberation against occupation regimes and the glorification of the invincible spirit of those who fought. Even those who did not take arms or openly and intentionally opposed the Soviet regime, but perished in its hands, rank among fighters in the collective memory of Western Ukrainians – they died as martyrs, sacrificing their lives on the altar of national independence. The places of burial of victims of Soviet executions of 1939-1941 in Lviv prisons are a telling example of this intertwining of the heroisation of fighters against Soviet oppression and of the mourning of those who were killed by the oppressor.

Not only do these civilian victims inhabit the same symbolic space in the collective memory of Western Ukrainians, they also share the same physical space, being buried close to one another. On the field of Mars in the Lychakiv cemetery the two graves of people who were executed in the Zamarstyniv prison are adjacent to the tomb of the unknown soldier of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the so-called Wall of Memory that has never been materialized and was meant to become a Memorial to the UPA. Moreover, the stone cross on the graves of Zamarstyniv victims imitates the Maltese cross from the tombs of Sich Riflemen, regular military units of the Army of the Ukrainian People's Republic. In addition, on plot 76 of the Lychakiv cemetery, above which towers the Memorial to the Ukrainian Galician Army, the victims of Soviet executions, found on the territory of the Lontsky prison and the Zamarstyniv mountain slope, are buried together with the soldiers of the UPA, of the Waffen-SS "Halychyna" Division, former political prisoners, dissidents and victims of repression. In the Yanivsky cemetery the Memorial to the Victims of Communist Regimes, although not physically close to the burial sites of the Sich riflemen and soldiers of the Ukrainian Galician Army, belongs nevertheless to the same symbolic space of commemoration on Pentecost days, when people visit the graves of these fighters and the Yanivsky Memorial to the victims of communist regime.

The memory of the victims of communism and of the heroes of national resistance resurfaced in the public space at the same time during perestroika and glasnost at the end of 1980s. Since its inception in 1988 Memorial concentrates its efforts not only on establishing names of victims of Soviet executions and Stalin's deportations, but also on the restoration of the graves of Sich riflemen in Lviv, on the search of the burial sites of UPA Commander Roman Shukhevych and other UPA soldiers. The commemoration of the destroyed graves of the Sich Riflemen became one of the main public actions in Lviv in 1988, along with a massive procession to the place of burial of victims of communist repression on Yanivsky cemetery.

The parallel between these two public memories continues to the present. The material memorial space of Lviv has been populated with heroes who fought for Ukrainian independence and prominent figures of Ukrainian culture. It is nationalist and anti-communist in nature and has been tainted with an anti-Russian sentiment (Rasevych 2013). In June 2013, while on my field research trip, I attended the musical and dramatic performance "Night Without Dawn," commemorating the victims of NKVD executions in Lviv prisons in June 1941. The performance was held in the yard of the Lontsky prison under an open sky. There were large-scale photos of people who were executed. Alternating with elegiac music or against its backdrop, young artists were reading poetry by dissident poets Vasyl' Symonenko and Vasyl' Stus, quoting names of executed persons from the book *Western Ukrainian Tragedy: 1941*, by Oleh Romaniv and Inna Fedushchak and excerpts from *Tango of Death* by Yuriy Vynnychuk, a novel about interwar Lviv and the beginning of Soviet occupation in 1939. In these excerpts Soviet officials, and more specifically, Russians are described as noisy, dirty occupants who behave like savages, eating with their hands and talking loudly, evicting Lviv inhabitants from their apartments and moving in. In another excerpt, a scene is described where Germans open the yard of the Lontsky prison so that local people can come and identify their relatives, murdered by the Soviet police. Horrifying details of tortured bodies speak volumes about the cruelty of NKVD executioners. One could feel disdain and hate in the description of Soviet occupiers.

Accidentally, later in the same year, I had an opportunity to meet with Yuriy Vynnychuk in Ottawa. I asked him whether the description of Western Ukrainian feeling towards Soviet troops is historically accurate. He answered that he read almost all of the newspapers that were published in Lviv in the interwar period, and that anti-Soviet (anti-Russian) feeling pervaded most of them. He also told me that many people who read his novel, especially in Eastern Ukraine, were shocked by his depiction of Soviet troops in 1939 Lviv. It echoes closely the representation of communist functionaries from Soviet Ukraine and Russia in the Romaniv and Fedushchak book, with its stress on civilized Western Ukrainians. These partocrats, “red beggars,” flocked to Lviv “escaping the ever-present Soviet scarcity of everything in the remains of the bourgeois welfare of post-Polish Lviv” (Vynnychuk 2012, p. 33).

The anti-Russian orientation of the memory of communist crimes in Lviv is evident only in one monument – in the Memorial to Victims of Political Repressions by the Moscow Communist Regime in the Yanivsky cemetery, solemnly inaugurated in 2010. On monuments erected earlier the regime which carried repression is only identified as Communist, as with the Monument to Victims of Communist Crimes on Shashkevych place, unveiled in 1997, or the plaques on two mass graves of the victims of Zamarstyniv prison in the field of Mars, installed in 1996 and 2005. The commemorative plaque to the victims of the secret services of totalitarian regimes on Bandera Street states the names of punitive organs – the Gestapo, NKVD and MGB (which succeeded the NKVD in 1946). The date of the inauguration of this plaque is unknown. The Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow does not mention who carried out the executions in the Lviv prisons in June 1941, limiting itself only to the number of victims and a general statement about the colonial regimes of Austria, Poland, Germany and Russia. Communist crimes are thereby inscribed in the long history of Ukraine under foreign occupation.

Because of the multiple representations of the Soviet executions in 1941 in Lviv, public memory is inclusive and exclusive at the same time, depending on the group that promotes it. In a paradoxical, yet logical

development, the memory that grew out of the social-national awakening of perestroika and glasnost unites all the victims of Soviet repression under the same “Communist International,” to quote Yevhen Hryniv. The Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow, the product of Memorial, lists three ethnic groups on its plaques – Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews, even though the names of victims are not sorted accordingly, they are listed in the alphabetical order. Such a representation is grounded in Sakharov’s reading of Communism as a supra-national, universal evil and Stalin’s totalitarianism as an anti-humane system that destroys its enemies regardless of their ethnic origins.

In the representations of memory formed under the influence of people holding strong nationalist convictions, such as the former dissidents Ihor Kalynets, Iryna Kalynets and Ivan Hel, the victimhood of Ukrainian people is emphasized, while the tragic history of other ethnic groups is not represented at all. The exhibition in the Museum-Prison on Lontsky tells the story of the imprisoned members of the OUN, but does not mention the pogroms, which took place very shortly after the arrival of the Germans in the prison. The dead bodies of people, executed by retreating Soviet forces, were presented in Nazi propaganda and by activists of the OUN (b) as victims of “Judeo-Bolshevism,” and local people, Ukrainians and Poles, were encouraged to avenge the dead by inflicting violence on the Jews of Lviv (Rossolinski-Liebe 2009, p. 18). Moreover, as mentioned before, although the Museum-Prison on Lontsky, in using the plural form in its title, claims to be a museum of three occupation regimes – Polish, German and Soviet, only the period of Soviet occupation of 1941 is narrated in the museum.

Both types of memory of Soviet executions of 1941 are inscribed in the general historical narrative of the Ukrainian fight for national liberation, in which the Soviet period is represented as a totalitarian occupation regime that suppressed attempts at free thought, open resistance and national independence. As noted before, such a reading of the Soviet rule is widely used in the Baltic States. In this regard Western Ukraine is part of the East and Central European community of memory, where the Soviet officials (one should read –

Russians) are seen as occupiers, imposing with brutality a totalitarian regime of low culture on culturally and civilisationally superior Europeans.

The memory of Soviet repression against the civilian population in Lviv is rooted in the national-democratic awakening, triggered by perestroika and glasnost. The Lviv regional Memorial society grew out of the all-Union Memorial of Andrei Sakharov, and has remained true to its universal, non-ethnic spirit of human rights and freedom until today. A Ukrainian nationalist component, however, has been strongly accentuated in the activities of Memorial since the beginning, due to the overall pro-nationalist frame of mind of Halychyna, which is considered by many to have been the guardian and the stronghold of Ukrainian spirit in the Russified Soviet Ukraine. The participation of former political dissidents with strong pro-Ukrainian views in Memorial society, such as the Kalynets couple and Hel, strengthened this nationalist component, and eventually led to a very public ideological conflict within the organization, as documented earlier. As the result of this conflict, Memorial lost in popularity and in public visibility, and the work on preserving and representing the memory of Soviet executions in Lviv prisons in 1941, and more largely of Soviet political repression in general, bifurcated and began to run in parallel: the initiative of Memorial to create a museum of occupation regimes in Lviv was seized by a group of national patriots, actively supported by Iryna Kalynets, and was implemented in the form of the Museum-Prison on Lontsky.

The initial vision of Memorial, according to which the museum should have reflected the oppressive ruling of Halychyna by all foreign powers before 1991, was replaced by a historical narrative of the victimhood of Ukrainian fighters against brutal Soviet occupiers and atrocities committed by the Soviet regime in wartime Lviv. The conflict between an old and universal discourse of victims of Soviet political repressions that is not nationality specific and that was characteristic of the end of the Soviet era and the beginning of independence, on the one hand, and a nationalist stance stressing the specifically anti-Ukrainian nature of the Soviet regime, was present in other regional Memorial organizations as well. It led to a de-facto

disappearance of these organizations or a complete re-profiling of their activities, in which the preservation of historical memory of political repressions was completely excluded. I will discuss these changes in the following chapter on Donetsk. The conflict, however, did not lead to a complete isolation of Memorial. The society continued to cooperate successfully with various nationalist-patriotic organizations, such as the All-Ukrainian League of Ukrainian Women, in building the Yanivsky Memorial to Victims of Political Repression. A strong nationalist feeling that unites many, if not the majority, of people in this region of Ukraine, enlarges the basis of support for the memory of Soviet anti-Ukrainian repression and maintains, multiplies and diversifies the manifestations of this memory.

The initiative to “materialize” this memory comes from below, from various groups or organizations of civil society. The Ukrainian state reacts to this initiative, but does not lead it. In the case of the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow, the graves of victims of Zamarstyniv prison on Lychakiv, and the Memorial on Yanivsky cemetery, Memorial had to send and voice many requests to the city mayor and city authorities, explaining the importance of preserving the memory of victims and asking for financial support. In the case of Museum-Prison on Lontsky Street, a group of civil activists, including the Kalynets couple, led the efforts in lobbying for the creation of the museum, ensuring the cooperation of the Ministry of Interior and of the Lviv City Council. The Monument to the Victims of Communist Crimes on Shashkevych place was erected because of the dedicated work and insistence of Vasyl Kubiv, who relentlessly canvassed state officials in support of the monument. City and regional authorities have supported the civil society’s initiatives in preservation of memory of victims of Soviet repressions, but this has not been their priority. Representatives of the state seem to prefer symbolic participation, rather than financial or material help, as examples of the laying of wreathes to monuments during the Day of Commemoration of Victims of Political Repression suggest.

Memory of Soviet repressions in Lviv is inseparable from the assessment of the Soviet regime as totalitarian, criminal and anti-humane. Such a reading of the Soviet past marks the material memorial space of Lviv and stems from the dedicated efforts of civil activists, who in many cases experienced themselves the repressive fist of the Soviet regime, such as Vasyl Kubiv, the author of the Monument to the Victims of Communist Crimes, or Petro Franko, the head of the All-Ukrainian Association of Political Prisoners and of the Repressed, who lobbied for the erection of the monument to children who died in NKVD prisons in Lviv. The efforts of these activists gained the support of the public and the state because of a commonly shared interpretation of the Soviet past in Halychyna. In contrast, Donbas represents a different picture.

Chapter 10: Donetsk

Donetsk – historical context

Donetsk is the capital of Donetsk region, most commonly referred to as Donbas, or Donets river Basin. This compound toponym was introduced by the mining engineer Yevgraf Kovalevski from Kharkiv who, in the 1820s, conducted geological prospecting of the Donetsk mountain ridge and was the first in the world to map out the coal seams in what is now South-Eastern Ukraine (Yakubova 2014, p. 8). For a long time, the Donetsk steppe basin was part of a huge territory known as a “Dykoye pole” (Wild Steppes), which stretched from Mongolia to Pannonia and through which nomad Eurasian tribes migrated for centuries (Hrytsak 2007, p. 32). Being under the control of the Crimean Khanate, the area of the contemporary Donetsk region was a “frontier,” a buffer zone between the nomad cultures of Tatars, Nogai, Krymchaks and other tribes and the agricultural civilization of the Dnipro region (Podniprovia in Ukrainian), which was developing under the protectorate of the Rzeczpospolita (the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth of 1569–1795). The steppes abounded in hunted meat and fish, and despite the constant danger of attacks by nomadic tribes, who considered the steppes as a territory to roam, Cossacks and peasants, who were fleeing serfdom and harsh exploitation both in Rzeczpospolita and in Muscovy, fled here. The Cossacks were coming from both Zaporizhia and the Don. In the 1670s-1680s, this spontaneous colonization became irreversible (Yakubova 2014, p. 10).

Cossack settlers founded diversified individual farms which initiated the economic development of the region. In the summer of 1663, a first fortified town was built on the Right Bank of the Donets River under the protection of the Mayak fort. This town was run under the principles of Cossack self-governance. Around the Mayak fort salt-works were built, and later a town named Soliane (from 1784 — Sloviansk) emerged, inhabited by Ukrainian Cossacks. By the end of the 17th century, all of the settlements between

the Donets and Tor rivers were under the jurisdiction of the Iziium regiment of Sloboda Cossacks, an autonomous formation within Muscovy.

In 1686, as a result of an “Eternal peace” treaty between Muscovy and the Rzeczpospolita, Ukrainian territories on the Left Bank of Dnipro River and Slobozhanshchyna became part of Russia that, under the leadership of the ambitious reformer Peter the Great, transformed itself into an imperial power.⁴⁵ Attracted by the strategic importance of the Tor salt-works, he decreed in 1701 the construction of the city of Bakhmut, which in 1703 became the capital city of the Azov gubernia (province).

Russia continued to consolidate its presence and power in the Black Sea and Azov Sea regions. A new military-administrative formation was created in 1752, called “New Serbia,” with the goal to develop the area economically. New Serbia covered over 1.4 million hectares. The land was given by the Russian administration to the “natural” enemies of the Ottoman Empire, with whom Russia was at war for the control of the Black Sea region – Serbs, Montenegrins, Vlachs. Two regiments were formed from the military settlers for the protection of New Serbia. A similar structure operated in Slavianserbia, created in 1753 in Bakhmut province and populated by Ukrainians, Russians, Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins, and Moldavians. Both Nova Serbia and Slavianserbia were liquidated in 1764, with the creation of Novorossiia province.

After the Russian victory in the 1768-1774 war with the Ottoman Empire Russia took full control of the Black Sea and Azov Sea regions, and the colonization of these territories increased dramatically. A complex,

⁴⁵ Slobozhanshchyna, or Sloboda Ukraine, corresponds to the territory of the present-day Ukrainian oblast (province) of Kharkiv (in its entirety), and parts of the Sumy, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts, as well as parts of the Belgorod, Kursk, and Voronezh oblasts of Russia. Sloboda is a Slavic term meaning “freedom” or “liberty,” and also a self-governing settlement in 16th-to 18th-century Ukraine. The inhabitants of a sloboda were exempted by the owner (usually a magnate, the state or the church) from obligations, such as fees and taxes, for an extended period (15 to 25 years) in the hope of attracting peasants and skilled workers from other regions (Sloboda). The largest number of slobody sprang up in the first half of the 17th century in Right-Bank Ukraine and Left-Bank Ukraine. From 1650 to 1765, the territory referred to as Sloboda Ukraine became increasingly organized according to Cossack military custom. The relocated Cossacks became known as Sloboda Cossacks. There were five regimental districts (*polki*) of Sloboda Cossacks: Ostrogozhsky, Khar’kovsky, Okhtyrsky, Sumsky, and Izyumsky.

mosaic settlement of ethnic minorities in Southern Ukraine, and in Donets Basin, in particular, reflects the complex process of the expansion of the Russian Empire (Yakubova 2014, p. 15-16).

The acquisition of new large territories, coupled with a lack of human and material resources caused by incessant wars, pushed the Russian imperial administration to elaborate and implement policies of state-sponsored colonization. The intensive settlement of foreigners began by the end of the 18th century. Colonists were coming from Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. They created a network of colonies across the Donets Basin. These colonies had self-governance under the Russian Civil Code. They were grouped into colonist counties with social-economic and religious autonomy. The heads of the county administrations were appointed from the Russian population. At the same time Ukrainian locals, who constituted the majority, continued to develop Donetsk steppes. It was a process of massive popular colonization.

The settlement and economic development of Southern Ukraine by the end of the 18th/beginning of the 19th centuries was unprecedented in world history at that time. The population grew from several thousand to over a million by the mid-19th century. Colonization reached its end – there were no free lands anymore. The government switched to the policy of restraining inward migration. The growth of the population, although slowed, continued due to a rapid industrial and agricultural development.

Coalfields and iron ores, discovered in Donbas in the times of Peter the Great, became the foundations of the economic building of the region. State privileges, granted to foreign investors under the Great Reforms of Alexander I, attracted European entrepreneurs. Foreign joint stock companies produced up to 70% of Donbas coal and held leading positions in other capital-intensive industries. The Southern industrial region was formed by the end of the 19th century: over 300 works operated here, among them – 13 metallurgical plants, which produced one-third of all metal in Russia. Machinery construction, coke, and soda industries were developing. Near Mykytivka (Horlivka area) a mercury plant was operating, the first of its kind in the

Empire. Bakhmut and Slovianoserbsk districts remained leading producers of salt. A fast-developing network of railways linked Black Sea ports to grain-producing provinces. Labour migration, triggered by the industrial boom, changed the ethnic composition of the region. Workers for plants and factories were hired mainly in industrial centres of Russia. For instance, in 1892, 80% of the population in the town of Yuzovka (future Donetsk) was from Moscow guberniya. In the Oleksandrivka metallurgical plant two-thirds were ethnic Russians.

Most workers in mines and plants were smallholder and landless farmers from Russian guberniyas. The settlements that emerged around plants and factories had terrible living conditions: simple overcrowded barracks, no water, no roads (Kuromiya 2002, pp. 34-35). The agrarian sector attracted a lot of migrants as well. Ukrainian peasants from Kharkiv, Chernihiv, and Poltava guberniya constituted the majority in villages. The elite was international in its ethnic composition, predominantly Russian and Jewish. A lot of engineering and technical personnel were Europeans. They lived in European-style suburbs, frequented clubs and other cultural institutions. Workers and foreign specialists lived in two separate worlds, coming together only during work. With such flagrant contrast in socio-economic status and living conditions, conflicts with clearly ethnic characteristics were unavoidable. Riots were frequent in cities and towns, directed not only against foreigners but also against Russian owners.

In spite of all these problems, the Donets Basin becomes by the end of the 19th century a modern well-developed industrial and agricultural region of the Russian Empire. The absence of peasant serfdom, a free labour market, large individual farms of colonists, massive foreign investments, a fast-developing number of joint-stock companies and a network of banks, as well as the creation of zemstva⁴⁶, provided the impetus for the powerful economic growth of Donbas.

⁴⁶ Zemstva were elected bodies of local self-governance who were in charge of cultural and economic activities in the municipalities (schools, roads, hospitals etc.). Local budgets were formed on the basis of taxes on real estate.

The proponents of the swift modernization of the Russian Empire hoped that Donetsk region, or Donbas, would become a melting pot, in which peasants would be transformed into a modern political nation. However, the modernization of Donbas was successful only regarding technology. In the social aspect, Donbas remained a divided society, where the gap between the working poor and the rich owners was strikingly visible even in living conditions. Foreign capitalists were not interested in developing an infrastructure. For instance, Yuzovka, which was founded in 1869 by the Welsh businessman John Hughes to build steel plants and open coal mines in the region, resembled more a conglomerate of workers' settlements around the steel plants than a city. Only downtown with several streets and a square had an urban allure. Before the Revolution of 1917, Yuzovka did not even have the official status of a city (Kuromiya 1998, p. 34-35). Social inequality was intensified by harsh economic exploitation and ethnic divisions. As Kuromiya notes, violence was part of everyday life in Donbas prior and during the revolution (1996, p. 3).

In the political and social turmoil, triggered by the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, several political forces led a fight for Donbas: the Ukrainian People's Republic, anarchists under the leadership of Nestor Makhno, the Don Host, and the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic.⁴⁷ Russian Marxists of the 19th century saw Donbas as the forge of the industrial proletariat who will carry out the revolution (Hrytsak 2007, p. 35). Bolsheviks also considered Donbas as the social basis of their revolution, because it was the most industrialized region of Ukraine. Donbas had to become a springboard for the Sovietisation of the Ukrainian village which, in the Bolshevik view, was a stronghold of Ukrainian nationalism. That is why the leadership of Bolshevik Russia considered the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic as a threat (Yakubova

⁴⁷ Donetsk-Krivoy Rog was created on 12 February 1918 as a self-declared Soviet republic within the Russian Soviet Republic (RSFSR) and claimed the territories south of the Ukrainian People's Republic, which included the Donbas, Kharkiv, Ekaterinoslav, and part of the Kherson Governorate. Another territory claimed was part of the Don Host Oblast. In the beginning, the republic's capital was the city of Kharkiv, but later with the retreat of the Red Guard it was moved to Luhansk. The Republic was disbanded at the 2nd All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets. It failed to achieve recognition, either internationally or by the Russian SFSR, and in accordance with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was abolished.

2014, p. 39), in spite of the fact that this republic was founded by the Bolshevik Artem (real name – Fedor Sergeev) and was based on Bolshevik principles. Therefore, Donbas remained within Soviet Ukraine.

The Revolution of 1917 and the civil war that followed destroyed the industrial basis of Donbas. For instance, if in 1916 the production of coal constituted 1.7 billion poods⁴⁸, while in 1920 it dropped to 273 million. From 3,260 mines that were functioning in Donbas before the Revolution, only 893 remained open after. The bulk of mines required major repairs due to inundations and blockages. In 1916 there were 295,000 miners; by the end of 1920 only 130,000 remained (Nikolski 2004, p. 10-11).

The young Bolshevik state actively started to rebuild the Donbas economy. In February 1920 Donbas was proclaimed a special economic and military-administrative zone. Labour conscription targeted all male population of age 18-45. Former coal industry workers were demobilized and sent to the reconstruction of the mines. Thousands of former officers and soldiers of Denikin armies and Don Cossacks were sent there as well. They became part of the Donetsk Labour Army, which was formed in March 1920.⁴⁹ Forty percent of the members of this Army were ethnic Russians, 36% - Ukrainians, the rest coming from ethnic minorities. Their main task was to work, to fight “bands,” and to provide the state with fuel (Yakubova 2014, p. 40).

Labour mobilization, and the politics of war communism in general (wage levelling, for instance) led to massive desertion. Soviet authorities introduced the *New Economic Policy* (NEP), which in fact was a return to recruiting and a free labour force. Special recruitment campaigns were conducted in the Ukrainian SSR and the Russian Federation to refill the labour force (Nikolski 2004, p. 11). In October- December 1921

⁴⁸ Or approximately 280,000 tons.

⁴⁹ Labour armies were created in 1920-1921 on the basis of units of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army to support the economy. They were tasked with economic and partially administrative activities. Some of these armies were also tasked with fighting bands. Labour armies were part of “war communism” and the realization of the Party’s policy of the militarization of labour under the difficult conditions of civil war and a dysfunctional economy.

over 58,000 workers came voluntarily to work in Donbas, most of them – from Russia (Yakubova 2014, p. 41). Progressive NEP measures helped to restore the Donbas industry.

From the mid-1920s Soviet authorities set course to intense industrialization. Old factories, plants, and mines were renovated, and new ones built. Energy production was crucial for a fast developing industry. In 1937 the total output of Donbas electric power stations exceeded 12 times the production before the revolution (Nikolski 2004, p. 11). Metallurgy, machine-building, and chemicals production were growing rapidly. Salt and glass production, as well as food industries were following the path. However, the social sphere was falling behind — the standards of living were decreasing and the environment was deteriorating.

Forced industrialization brought about dramatic social change. The influx of workers from Russia and Ukraine, as well as the migration of peasants to mines, plants, and construction sites, increased urbanization exponentially. Between the two all-Union censuses of 1926 and 1939 the urban population of Donbas increased four-fold (Nikolski, *ibid*). Donbas villages were also undergoing a deep transformation. Forced collectivization deprived peasants not only of their land and equipment but also took away any incentive to work. The productivity in agriculture declined sharply and livestock decreased. Because of the confiscation of grain by the state an unprecedented famine occurred in Donbas, as throughout the whole Soviet Ukraine. Whole villages would die out. Peasants fled to cities, where public canteens were set up to feed the population. Cities also provided work. Soviet authorities tried to compensate for the loss of the Ukrainian peasantry by bringing in Russian villagers, and then – villagers from regions of Ukraine. However, Russian peasants did not acclimate well and many returned to their home villages in Russia (Yakubova 2014, p. 45). Through all of these demographic, socio-economic, and political processes, the urbanization of Donbas became irreversible (Yakubova 2014, p. 47).

The Great Terror in Donetsk

The Great Terror refers to the peak in August 1937-November 1938 of a large-scale campaign of political repression against anti-Soviet individuals suspected of undermining the foundations of the Soviet state (Werth 2010, p. 1). During this period 767,397 persons had been sentenced by extrajudicial bodies (troikas, tribunals and others); 386,798 of them were shot and the rest were sent to GULAG camps (Getty 2002, p. 113). The main group which became a target and suffered the most (half of all executions) were former kulaks (ibid).

There are various interpretations of the reasons for which the Great Terror was launched and the nature of it. Many historians see it as centrally planned and directed (Khlevniuk 1998) and a continuation of the totalitarian essence of the regime to police society (Conquest 1990). Some explain it by the fear of economic decline in the face of a foreign threat (Manning 1993). My reading of the Great Terror comes from works of Arch Getty and Yuriy Zhukov.

The Great Terror came after a relative liberalism and the judicial relaxation (Getty 2002, p. 113-114), when the Soviet leadership, after securing the victory in the cruel collectivization campaign, released the grip over society and tried to democratize the whole system. Mass punitive operations were discouraged by the political leadership and greatly decreased. Stalin's Constitution of 1936 provided for the universal suffrage and the direct secret vote. For every seat in the Supreme Soviet there had to be at least two-three candidates (Zhukov 2012). The Constitution restored the rights of previously banned organizations, especially religious groups. Bolsheviks had serious and real reasons to fear religion because it preserved its popularity in the population – in the census of 1937, over half of the adult population (57%) declared themselves religious believers (Getty 2002, p. 125). Former kulaks who returned home after having purged their terms, were also restored in their civil rights. This provoked fear and discontent of local (regional) officials who did not know how to deal with the former kulaks and were asking Moscow for directives. Local and regional officials were also afraid that anti-Soviet elements would campaign and be elected as the

result of the new Constitution (Getty 2002, p. 123). They also feared electoral competition since many of party secretaries were not educated, having only several years of schooling (Zhukov 2012). Facing growing resistance from local and regional officials to the elections, announced by the Constitution, Stalin made a compromise: on the same day (July 2, 1937) that the law on contested, universal, secret ballot elections was published in Pravda, the Politburo approved the campaign against the anti-Soviet elements that officials in regions complained about. Hours later Stalin sent a letter to the republican and regional party leaders ordering the start of the kulak operation (Getty 2002, p.126).

Following instructions from above, leaders of the Donetsk Region Communist Party launched a campaign against enemies of the Soviet order. The First Secretary of the Donetsk Regional Committee Sarkisov, a former member of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition, felt personally threatened, which explains his zeal in the cleansing of the party from class enemies. By the beginning of 1938 in Donetsk region, which included at that time both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, over 7,000 former Trotskyites, Zinovievists, White Guardists, kulaks and other “enemies” were excluded from the party. Later they would become the first targets of the great purges of 1937-38 (Nikolski 2004, p. 41).

Another field in which the Stalin terror would be unleashed later was the conviction of members of the engineering and technical staff for sabotaging the Stakhanovite movement which emerged in 1935 in the mines of the Donets Basin. The movement sprang from below, out of a genuine desire of workers to build a strong economy and a bright future (Nikolski 2004, p. 41). It was focused on increasing worker productivity and the output in industry and agriculture. The Communist Party picked up the initiative and demanded that managers and technical staff in all stages of coal production implement Stakhanovite methods. However, the majority of mines did not have modern equipment, making it impossible for managers and engineers to create the same favourable conditions which Stakhanov and other individual records men had. Moreover, the rush to break records distracted attention and rerouted means to conduct

regular maintenance and reparations, which led to further wearing out of the equipment and resulted in the increase of incidents and outages. More and more engineers and technical staff were accused of sabotage – in 1936 their number reached over one thousand (Nikolski 2004, p. 42).

The NKVD regional office in Donetsk oblast started the liquidation of “Trotskyite nests.” In August-September 1936, 600 people were arrested on the accusations that they were helping Trotskyites. The majority of these people occupied leading positions in the mining and other industries. At the beginning of 1937, the campaign of finding and destroying wreckers and spies took on a new speed. Sarkisov, the First Secretary of the Donetsk Region Communist Party and a former Trotskyite, blamed “Japanese-German Trotskyite agents” for all of the structural problems of Donets Basin industries – they were responsible for fires and incidents in mines, delays in the construction of new plants and factories, resistance to the implementation of new technologies, sabotage of work security measures, opposition to Stakhanovite movement etc.

Sarkisov himself was arrested in July 1937, together with other high-ranking communist officials. They were accused of directing a “wrecking subversive organization of Trotskyites, rights, and nationalists” which supposedly existed in Donbas. After several months of investigation and “handling” by the NKVD they were shot (Nikolski 2004, p. 44).

The new party leadership that was appointed after the execution of Sarkisov and his colleagues followed in Sarkisov’ footsteps – they continued feeding the repression machine with new “enemies of the people,” and themselves were grounded by the machine. On July 2, 1937, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks adopted a resolution in which party organizations were asked to register through NKVD all kulaks and criminals that came back home after having served their imprisonment term in labour camps. The most adverse had to be arrested immediately and shot after an administrative trial by a troika, while the rest were to be sent to the North (Nikolski 2004, p.43). These estimates, based on the

names of people already under police surveillance (Werth 2010, p. 3), had to be provided to Moscow within five days (Junge and Binner 2003, pp. 17-18). The next day, on July 3, the Central Committee asked Republican, regional, and local party committees to designate troikas - the regional party first secretary, the chief of the regional NKVD and the regional prosecutor – for extrajudicial “hearing” of the cases of the repressed (Nikolski 2004, p. 43). The Politburo planned that these troikas would examine only the cases of the “first category,” while people belonging to the “second category,” kulaks and former criminals, were to be sent camps, following an NKVD order, without any formal investigation (Junge and Binner 2003, p. 18).

By July 11th, most regional administrations sent to the centre the required lists of kulaks and criminals, as well as names of members of troikas. The lists were based on the NKVD inventory of “suspicious anti-Soviet elements,” which was created in the 1920s using intelligence data (ibid).

Following these decisions of the Central Committee, the NKVD starts planning the campaign of Great Terror in details. On July 16 in Moscow takes place the conference of heads of regional offices of NKVD in Russia and Ukraine, where the operation had to start first (Junge and Binner 2003, p. 21). Although the proceedings of this conference are absent, analysis of the communications of participants of this conference shows that most probably at this conference quotas for each region were established and instructions were given on how to conduct purges. Also, the participants of the conference might have been informed that the purges should target not only former kulaks and criminals but also other anti-Soviet “elements” (ibid).

Stalinists were convinced that there was a large coalition of internal enemies of the Soviet state: “followers of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rykov, bourgeois nationalists, Mensheviks, social-revolutionaries, White Guard generals” (ibid). Similar conferences were held on the level of republics, territories, and oblasts (Junge and Binner 2003, p.22).

In Donetsk region in mid-1937 new people came to power after the arrest of Sarkisov and his subordinates. The new first secretary of the regional party committee was an ethnic Latvian, Eduard Pramnek. He came

to Donetsk from Gorky and brought with him his closest entourage (Vasyliiev 2004, p. 50). These people had no connection to Donbas or Ukraine and were therefore considered particularly suitable for carrying out “a serious and thorough cleansing in Donbas” which had never been done before, as Pramnek stated himself at a plenary session of the regional party committee (Nikolski 2004, p. 42). Pramnek was one of the members of troikas. Two others were Roman Rudenko, the prosecutor of the Donetsk region in 1937-1938⁵⁰, and David Sokolinski, a Jewish Bolshevik and the head of the Donetsk regional office of the NKVD (ibid).

On July 30, 1937, Mikhail Frinovski, the first deputy people’s commissar of the NKVD and the head of the State Security of the NKVD, presented to the head of Stalin’s secretariat, Aleksandr Poskriebychev a 19-page document called “Operational order of the People’s Commissar of the Interior of the USSR n° 00447 concerning the punishment of former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements.” Frinovski took an active part in the preparation of this project - he informed Stalin and other members of the *Politburo* of the planning process and received instructions from them. On July 31 the order was approved by the *Politburo* and sent to the NKVD heads in republics, territories, and oblasts (Junge and Binner 2003, p. 22). According to the order, the repressive measures targeted several categories of people: former kulaks who were deported in 1929-1931 and who returned home after having served their term or escaped from labour settlements; the so-called “byvshie liudi” (“former people”) — former Tsarist officials, policemen and military who fought against the Soviet regime in the 1920s; and “all the other counter-revolutionary elements” — bandits, recidivist thieves and swindlers, contraband smugglers and other criminals (Werth 2010, Nikolski 2013).

All these anti-Soviet elements were to be divided into two categories. The first category was to include particularly active and vicious individuals. They had to be immediately arrested and condemned by the

⁵⁰ Rudenko survived the terror of 1937-1938 to become the main accuser from the Soviet side at Nuremberg process. Since 1953 he held the position of the Prosecutor General of the USSR till his death in 1981.

troika. Less active anti-Soviet elements were to be ascribed to the second category, be immediately arrested and sentenced to ten years of forced labour in the Gulag (Werth 2010, p. 2). Every region and republic was given round-numbered quotas of persons to be repressed.

Ukraine had a quota of 28,800 (of whom 8,000 were to be shot) (Werth, *ibid*). In 1937-1938 in Ukraine 267,570 people were arrested, of whom 122,237 were shot (Bilas vol. 1, 1994: 379). This figure, which is ten times higher than what was required by the Centre, is explained by the fact that regional party and NKVD bosses, eager to show their zeal in the fight against enemies, demanded an increase in the quotas (Werth 2010, p. 4). As for the Donetsk region, according to historian Volodymyr Nikolski⁵¹, in 1937-1938 the NKVD arrested for political reasons 25,381 people, or 9.4% of the total number of repressed individuals in the Ukrainian SSR. Compared to other regions of Ukraine, Donetsk suffered the most significant losses in the repressions of 1937-1938 (Nikolski 2011, p. 184). Roughly two-thirds of the arrested were shot (17,065 people), and one-quarter (6,289) was sent to labour camps and prisons (*ibid*, p. 97).

As in 1936, one of the main fields of the fight against enemies of the people was the coal industry. One of the most known “accomplishments” of the NKVD in Donetsk region is the trial against the leading engineers of the trust “Budionugol.” These engineers were young specialists educated in Soviet institutions. They were accused of belonging to a Trotsky-Bukharin organization and of industrial sabotage. Some interrogations were conducted personally by Rudenko and Sokolinski. NKVD methods are well-known: physical torture, psychological pressure, and distortion of the transcripts of interrogations. After the confessions were extorted, a commission of experts was appointed to review the conclusions. However, members of the commission could not personally communicate with the accused. A large propaganda campaign was organized in the regional press and plants and factories newspapers. The accused were

⁵¹ Nikolski has written extensively on the subject of political repressions in Donetsk region. As he told me in the 2013 personal interview in Donetsk, he teaches a related course at the Donetsk National University; he also has undergraduate and graduate students under his supervision who study the political repressions under Stalin. The topic has been researched extensively and without any push from above (Nikolsli 2013).

blamed for wrecking the trust on instruction from Sarkisov, who was already shot by that time. Disoriented and terrified, miners demanded punishment for wreckers. Following a show trial, all but one of the accused were sentenced to death by shooting, and one received a 25 years imprisonment term (Nikolski 2004, p. 45).

No major plant or factory was spared in the great purge. At the oldest metallurgical plant in Stalino, known for its well-trained, stable and devoted to the profession workers, the Stalin terror took away leading engineers and qualified workers (But and Dobrov 2002, pp. 211-220). NKVD punitive actions also targeted ordinary workers, especially former landlords, kulaks and oppositionists who tried to escape purges by taking on the hardest jobs in mines. However, quite often Stalin's all-Seeing Eye and punishing hand would find them even under the ground. As Nikolski noted with irony in the personal interview, the Soviet power, the power of workers and peasants, suffered from 'state schizophrenia' – it was destroying oneself by killing ordinary workers and peasants, the same people it claimed to represent and defend (Nikolski 2013).

Another accusation under which the NKVD targeted people in Donbas was nationalism – Ukrainian, Greek, and German. People of these nationalities allegedly sought to separate Ukraine from the Soviet Union, the Azov region – from Ukraine and so on. Sometimes the mere fact of being a Ukrainian was sufficient to be accused, in addition to the standard "being a member of a Trotskyite counter-revolutionary terrorist organization," or belonging to a "Ukrainian nationalist organization" (Nikolski 2004, p. 45).

Ethnic cleansing was a characteristic feature of the Great Terror in Donetsk region. Following NKVD directives, the State Security organs carried out "Greek operation" in Donetsk region. Numerous false cases were based on an alleged Greek organization whose goal was an armed insurrection in order to create a fascist Greek state. 3,628 people were arrested in Donbas in the "Greek operation." The vast majority, 3470 of them were shot, while 158 were sent to camps (Nikolski 2004, p. 46). Similar cleansings targeted ethnic Germans, 4,625 of whom were arrested. 3,608 of them were shot (ibid). In the "Polish" operation, 3,777

people were arrested, of whom 3029 were shot, and 723 were sent to camps for a term ranging from 5 to 10 years (ibid).

Education suffered in the Great Purge as well. 400 teachers were repressed and 4,000 were fired (Nikolski 2004, p. 47). In spring of 1938, a group of leading managers and professors were arrested under the accusation of being members of a Ukrainian nationalist insurgency organization (Nikolski 2004, p. 48).

Nationalism and belonging to nationalist organizations were the third most frequent accusation in purges in Donbas in 1937-38 – 3,122 received this verdict (12.3% of a total of 25,381). Counter-revolutionary agitation was second, with 5,584 (22% of the total). The most frequent accusation was membership in a counter-revolutionary organization (6,675 persons accused or 26.3% of the total) (Nikolski 2004, p. 49).

The vast majority of those repressed were from the workers and peasants – 11,340 (44.68% of the total) and 4,685 people (18.46%), respectively. The third largest group were functionaries – 4,135 (16.3%), followed by professionals, such as engineers, doctors, agriculture specialists – 2,965 (11.7%). Business managers constituted 3% (761 persons). Party and Komsomol functionaries were among the least numerous groups of repressed – 208 persons or 0.82 %. By nationality (ethnicity) the largest group were Ukrainians (34.4% - 8,741), followed by Germans (21.6% - 5,487), Greeks (15.2% - 3,862), and Russians (14.1% - 3,568). If one compares the percentage of the repressed by ethnicity to the percentage of this ethnicity in the Donetsk population, Germans by far outnumbered all the others: the correlation is 14.4 times (1.5% of the total population); Greeks – 7.2 times (3.1%); Russians – 2.2 times (31.2%); and Ukrainians – 1.7 times (59.4%) (Nikolski 2011, p. 99-104).

Regarding the age, the largest group among victims were people younger than 45. Within this group, people 30-31 years old were the majority – 60% (Nikolski 2004, p. 49).

The vast majority of repressed were not members of the party (76.3%). The educational level was much higher than the level of the bulk of the population. For instance, if in the whole of Donetsk region the ratio of people with a university education was 6.6 per 1,000 people and 106 with a secondary education, among the repressed these numbers were 93 and 118 respectively (ibid). The purges targeted the most educated part of the population.

The “confessions” of arrested were extracted during uninterrupted days-long interrogations and beatings. There are numerous witnesses of brutality, given by NKVD workers who themselves participated in the interrogations (Junge and Binner 2003, p. 27). Prisoners were forced to sign blank pages of interrogation folios that were printed in advance, and the confession would be typed later by the interrogator and examined by the commanding officer. If the prisoner’s confession deviated from the scenario, established by the prosecution, it would be re-typed to suit the general line, and a prisoner would be forced to sign this forged confession again (Werth 2010, p. 4).

The use of violence was sanctioned from the top. For instance, in March 1937, Andrei Vyshinski, Prosecutor General of the USSR, stated that “there are periods, moments in the life of society, and in our life, in particular, when laws become obsolete and have to be put aside (Junge and Binner 2003, p. 26). According to Order 00447, the investigation had to be carried out in an “expedited and simplified manner” – no legal defense, no confrontation of witnesses, no consultations with experts, no collecting and verification of data (ibid).

After the culpability of the arrested was established, the case would be transferred to the troika, who would then decide on a death sentence or a ten-year sentence in labour camp. The verdict would be pronounced in the absence of the accused. The executions were carried out during the night in prisons or a remote area on the outskirts of a city. Often a person sentenced to death did not even know that he was taken to execution (Werth, 2010, p. 4). He would be given back his personal belongings and told to proceed to the

exit where a group of three armed soldiers would take him to a cell where he would be shot (Nikolski 2013). Relatives of the executed would be told that he received ten years of camp imprisonment with no right to correspond (Werth, *ibid*).

Donbas in the after-war period

The Nazi occupation left Donbas in ruins. General losses of the population, due to killing of civilians by Germans and deportations to Germany were huge – almost half of the population of Donetsk region was decimated. When the Soviet Army liberated Donetsk in September of 1943, from 3.1 million of the prewar population of Donetsk region (Zhirokhov 2011), only 1, 5 million were accounted for (Liakh et al. 1999, p. 107). In 12 months of occupation Germans killed 279, 000 people and deported to Germany 200,000 residents of the Donetsk region (*ibid*). In the city of Donetsk, from the 507,000 residents at the beginning of the war, only 175,000 remained when the war ended (“Istoriya Donetska”). According to certain estimates, during the two years of occupation the Germans killed 468,000 people and deported to labour camps in Germany 350,000 (Zadniproviskiy 2007, p. 11).

After the liberation of Donetsk region, only 10% of the prewar number of workers remained (Liakh et al. 1999, p. 108). All 882 mines of Donbas were destroyed and flooded, and all large electric power stations were put out of action. The Nazis blew up dams and destroyed a complex system of water delivery. The whole industry of Donbas lay in ruins after the Soviet Army retook the region in September of 1943 (Zadniproviskiy 2007, p. 11).

The reconstruction of Donbas infrastructure and industry started as the Soviet Army was liberating one town after another. Priority was given to factories and plants which suffered the least and therefore could be restored as fast as possible at the lowest cost and with a minimum of material resources. The country at war needed fuel, metal, and equipment. An integral part of the reconstruction of Donbas was the rebuilding of houses and the restoration of the urban infrastructure.

The entire Soviet Union participated in the reconstruction of Donbas. Industrial enterprises throughout the country produced equipment for Donbas plants and mines; collective farms from all over Ukraine were sending to Donbas food supplies (potatoes, meat, honey, and other food) as well as seeds, cattle, and machinery necessary to restore the agricultural production (Liakh et al. 1999, p. 111). Russian plants took under their patronage Donbas metallurgical plants, sending them equipment and critical material. In shops dilapidated by war, machine builders of Leningrad were building equipment for electric power plants and factories of Donbas. Before the war was over, Donbas supplied tens of millions of coal, millions of tons of metal and military equipment to the Soviet Army. By the end of 1949, four years after the war, the industry of Donbas reached its pre-war level (Khavin 1956).

Throughout the postwar period, Donbas kept developing as a large industrial region. Gradually the most important demographic problem of the region – workforce turnover – was solved for the most part. The Brezhnev “stagnation” years (1965-1980) became the “golden age” for Donbas workers – progressive methods of salaries and wages were implemented, social and financial incentives were provided, industrial workers received social support and benefits. The registered savings of Donbas residents grew exponentially by 741 per cent in 1965-1980 (Yakubova 2014, p. 68).

By the end of perestroika, however, the socio-economic situation in Donbas was rapidly deteriorating. The coal-producing complex was suffering from disinvestment, and coal production was falling. Inflation was rising, and the availability of food and goods was limited. By 1990 the majority of the population in mining cities and towns became deeply disillusioned with the results of perestroika. People lost trust in the party leadership of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian SSR and in their ability to lead the country out of economic and political disarray (Adamovych 2007, 10).

This disillusionment explains the support for Ukrainian independence in Donbas where the large majority of the population speak Russian and where Ukrainian nationalism has always been marginal. In the 1991

referendum, 83.9% of the Donetsk population and 83,7% in Luhansk voted for independence, with a high turnout (77-81%) (Wilson 1997, 128-129). In the independent Ukraine Donbas remained one of the main producers of metal, fuel, machinery, and chemicals on the national scale. Donetsk oblast was also the largest producer of coal in Ukraine (Vermenych 2004, p. 450).

Secret of Rutchenkovo field revealed

In 1988 activists of a movement that would be formalized in March 1989 as the All-Union Historical and Educational Society “Memorial” interviewed people, living close to the residential block “Tekstilshchik” in the Kirovski district of Donetsk. Activists knew that somewhere in this area purportedly were buried victims of Stalin’s terror in 1937-1938. The locals who were interviewed not only confirmed this information but also indicated the approximate location where these graves were (Rudik 1990, Parseniuk 1999, p. 57). Relying on these testimonies, activists of Memorial, of the Donetsk human rights groups *Donbass-88* and of the student group *Pluralism* started sending requests to local and regional state institutions, asking authorities to open an investigation and to carry out excavations (Virovets 2007). The executive committee of the Kirovski district council (raispolkom) and the local branch of the KGB replied: “The information is not confirmed”; “The information not available” etc. (Rudik 1990, Parseniuk 1999, p. 57).

Approximately at the same time, in the second half of 1988, “by a strange coincidence,” the same executive committee decided to give the same territory, on which mass graves were supposedly located, to the garage cooperative “Tekstilshchik.” According to a *Pluralism* member who later participated in excavations in Rutchenkovo field, activists found this suspicious – the field had been abandoned for quite some time, and the residential block “Tekstilshchik” was built well before perestroika. Why was the decision to give out the field to members of this residential cooperative was taken only in 1989, not before? Although it is true that this residential block was relatively close to the “secret facility” (where victims were buried), the distance

between them was quite significant. Local authorities should have certainly had a scheme of the buildings in the area of that time (Virovets 2007).

Most often, residential blocks in Soviet cities consisted of high-rise buildings, with no space for garages close to the buildings. Garages were built later in a separate location, often at a significant distance from the blocks (people would have to take public transportation to get to these garages). Therefore the decision of the Kirovski executive council to give out the Rutchenkovo field for the housing cooperative might seem logical and legitimate on the surface if it were not for the timing of this decision.

Not having access to secret state archives, activists of the Memorial and other human rights organizations conducted another survey of local people, asking them to remember what happened in the 1930s in Rutchenkovo field. Several months later, the weekly newspaper *Gorniatskaia slava* (Miner's Glory) of the Kirov mine published an announcement, asking those who knew something about the mass graves, to help with establishing the truth (Virovets 2007). According to another source (Rudik 1990), another newspaper, *Gornyi mashinostroitel* (Mining machinist), of the Rutchenkovo mining machinery plant, published the address, following a short article, "I tut rodilsa slukh" (And a Rumor Sprang Up) in the most read newspaper *Vecherni Donetsk* (Evening Donetsk).

The article sparked a wave of testimonies from locals and workers of the plant (Pashchenklo and Yanov 1994). The plant council of veterans of war and labour directed them to the editorial office of the plant newspaper. All the testimonies, which were done on a purely voluntarily basis, were thoroughly documented. Witnesses had to indicate the address where they lived in the 1930s and their current address, to make sure that they could be contacted again in case a corroboration of the information should be required. Journalists at the newspaper and the head of the plant council started examining these testimonies to present it as evidence to "corresponding organs and instances" that the so called rumours were well founded.

They interviewed each witness individually, corroborated their stories and kept only facts that were mentioned in all of the testimonies: a road, an area, circumscribed by a high fence, and the territory inside it (Pashchenko and Yanov 1994). The road, according to testimonies, was built in 1936. It was reddish because of the color of burner rock from which it was made. The rock was taken from an old dump. Because it was hard to extract it, the building of the road lasted for some time, keeping local people wondering – where this road is supposed to lead. Witnesses remember seeing covered trucks, called by locals “black crow” (*chernyi voron*). One witness, an old timer of the plant and the area, stated that many of his friends could confirm it, but they are afraid of talking (ibid).

As for the territory behind a high fence, it appeared in 1937 on the field where locals used to herd goats and cows. It was the size of a football field, delimited by a high wooden fence with a gate and lookout towers on the corners. Guards did not allow anybody to come near the fence. Local people called this place a “military secret.” Of course, rumours circulated about people being shot. One woman who was 19 years old in 1937 and had a baby recounts that one day she decided to pay a visit to her mother-in-law. The road passed close to the “military secret,” and, driven by curiosity, she put her baby on the grass and ran up to the fence. Through a small hole she saw a freshly dug ditch, and next to the ditch was a pile of corpses, covered with tarpaulin, however incompletely – feet were visible. The guard saw her and pointed a gun at her. The woman grabbed her baby and ran away. Her mother-in-law told her that trucks carrying dead bodies passed every day on the road. “Ours have been shot for politics,” she explained to her daughter-in-law (Klementieva 1989b).

In October 1941, when retreating Soviet troops left Donetsk and Germans did not enter the city, during two-three days of absence of any authority, locals fled to the forbidden zone. The wood fence was taken down – boards were brought home to be burned in the stove and heat the house. Inside the fence witnesses

remember seeing huge tanks, some of them empty, some filled with lime.⁵² According to other testimonies, there was one tank, filled with water (Kashkakha 2013b). There was also a small cabin (*storozhka*), in which one of the witnesses remembers seeing various factory or plant passes and certificates, and a long coat rack with sharp hooks, like in a butcher shop. Another witness affirms having seen ID cards of Red Army soldiers, covering the floor, and traces of blood (Kashkakha 2013b). Besides the cabin, locals saw several ditches. One of them was fresh and non-covered. One witness stated that among the naked bodies she saw a cadaver in a Red Army uniform. Another woman remembers that she heard cries of a woman who had recognized among the dead bodies her son, a soldier (Pashchenko and Yanov 1994). Other witnesses confirm the fact that in this fresh ditch were buried Red Army soldiers, some of them badly wounded – legs and arms bandaged, military blouses and overcoats. One witness remembers seeing bodies in hospital slippers, in plaster, clutches lying beside (Rudik 1990). Besides the fresh ditch, there were also several others, made before – some of them already covered with wild grass (Pashchenko and Yanov 1994).

Witnesses, who in 1941 were 10-15 years old, stated that all the residents of the village, neighbouring Rutchenkovo field, knew that in October 1941 Soviet forces were shooting wounded Red Army soldiers from a close-by hospital because they did not have time to evacuate them. So when they left the city, locals fled to the forbidden zone to look at those who were shot and maybe find among dead bodies their relatives that were arrested. Not only wounded Red Army soldiers were found in Rutchenkovo field. Eye-witnesses also recall seeing cadavers in suits and mining uniforms. One even recognized his German language teacher, who was also an ethnic German. Eye-witnesses recognized the body of worker of a compressor house who was arrested at the beginning of the war because he rang too late the siren warning of an air raid by German aviation (Rudik 1990).

⁵² Lime was used to cover the cadavers in mass graves to prevent the spread of infection from decaying tissues.

As mentioned before, state authorities did not validate testimonies gathered by Memorial and other human right organizations, or “informal” organizations, as they were known during perestroika years. The request by activists to open an investigation and to carry out the excavation of the mass graves remained unanswered. Instead, the construction of garages started. While digging, local people would stumble upon human bones; kids would play with skulls (Rudik 1990). Memorial decided to appeal to citizens. Hand-written announcements were posted in public places, and people answered the call. The excavation work started. Having obtained the permission from the owner of a garage, activists used a bulldozer in April 1989. The first grave was discovered (Rudik 1990). When an investigator from the Office of the Prosecutor arrived at the excavation site, he asked in anger who allowed activists to start excavation, and then, after having seen the bones, let drop a remark: “Maybe, these are dog’s bones?” (ibid). However, students-historians and archaeologists, who were carrying out the excavation and had professional skills, had no trouble identifying these bones as belonging to humans. Faced with irrefutable evidence, the Prosecutor had no choice but to open an investigation (Kashkakha 2013b, Glotov 1989).

There is also another version of how the excavation started. According to this version, human bones were discovered incidentally, when the construction of garages began (Glotov 1989, Parseniuk 1999). This information was also confirmed to me in a written interview by Aleksandr Evglevskiy, archaeologist and senior researcher of the Donetsk National University and the head of the group of archaeologists who worked on the burial site (Evglevskiy, 2013). Local people notified the militia and local authorities became involved. The deputy head of the Kirovski district executive committee V. Zhmykhov was entrusted with organizing the excavation. People from the Office of the Prosecutor office called upon experts from Faculty of History at Donetsk University to provide professional help. A team of students was sent to Rutchenkovo field (Evlglevskiy 2013).

According to Zhmykhov, the excavation started on April 8, 1989, at the directive of the district executive committee ("Raskopki" 1989). This date corresponds with the date when the bones were discovered, according to Dmitri Virovets, a student of the faculty of history of Donetsk University, who participated in the excavation and who later published his recollections on the Internet (Virovets 2007). From his recollections one can conclude that students started the excavation on their own, having waited in vain for the support from authorities. Virovets notes that the team of students-volunteers carried out the bulk of digging work, while Zhmykhov provided assistance in the form of transportation, food, and tools (ibid).

The fact remains that on April 8 the bucket of the bulldozer dug out human remains at a depth of over one meter ("Raskopki" 1989). A commission was created by the city council, which included members of the Office of the Prosecutor, medics, and representatives of Soviet organs of power (ibid). As the result of the excavation the approximate limits of the ditch, containing human remains were established (Klementieva 1989a). The ditch was composed of nine pits, from which the remains of 160 people were excavated (Klementieva 1989b; Glotov, 1989). These remains were sent for forensic expertise. The regional bureau of forensic expertise determined that these remains were bodies of Soviet people, victims of Stalinist repressions, who were buried on Rutchenkovo field in the 1930-1940s. Before the execution, the victims were detained in prison or a camp, as almost all of them were killed at close range. The majority of skulls found during the excavation had a bullet hole in the neck (Glotov, 1989).

Besides the skulls, excavators also found a revolver and gun bullets, shells, bottles with stamps of 1938-1939, three miner's tokens and other objects from the period of 1934-1938 (ibid). All of these findings proved beyond doubt that the bodies belonged to victims of Stalinist purges of 1937-1938. In an attempt to establish their names senior investigator Nikolai Vodopianov, who was appointed to investigate the case, sent official requests to the regional archive, to the Central Archive of the Soviet Army, and to the regional office of the KGB. All three instances send a similar answer: there are no records on who might be buried

on Rutchenkovo pole. When Glotov, the author of the article on which I base partially my rendition of the investigation, asked Vodopianov to show him these requests, Vodopianov replied that he could not provide the letter from the KGB, because it is classified information. Glotov rightfully was musing in his article afterward how non-existing information can be considered secret. If the KGB was willing to cooperate, they could have found their colleagues who worked in the organs in the 1930s and who would have known for sure what happened on Rutchenkovo field. This could have led to identifying at least some of victims' names (Glotov 1989).

In his article, Glotov notes the indifference of Donetsk city authorities to the Rutchenkovo field burials. They delegated the responsibility to the Kirovski district executive council, which set up a working group. However, this group failed to organize real work on excavation and investigation. If it were not for students and volunteers, the excavation would have been stalled. No digging machinery was sent in to help with the excavation; the construction of garages went on in spite of the discovery that there were several more ditches in which human remains lie. Journalist Glotov asked the head of the Donetsk city executive council why the state does not support the excavation on Rutchenkovo field. The functionary replied that they did not know that the burial site was that significant and "underestimated the situation." He promised to set things straight. The next day Glotov met on the excavation site a major, a specialist in the field. He was sent here by one of the military units of Donetsk on the request of city authorities. The major explained to Glotov that the excavation was being done amateurishly – the contour of the site was not delineated and the site was not protected, which had already led to several cases of looting.

There were no representatives of the Office of the Prosecutor, of the State Security Service and the Ministry of Interior, and of the Sanitary Control, which are supposed to be present permanently on an excavation site, according to law. There was no designated place where the human remains could be stored until a proper burial. The head of the department of public services of Kirovski district, who participated in the

discussion between Glotov and the major, noticed that the district alone could not carry out the excavation – the volume of work was too high and required machinery and personnel that the district does not have. He promised to send a report to city's executive council.

This conversation took place several days before the publication of Glotov's article in *Pravda*, on July 4, 1989. The daily newspaper *Pravda* was the most authoritative and influential media outlet in the Soviet Union, the central organ of the Communist Party. The publication of Glotov's material sent a strong signal down the party command chain, to Donetsk local authorities and media. In addition, Ukrainian National TV broadcast twice a program on Rutchenkovo pole. The working commission, set up by the city authorities, finally recognized on July 7 the fact that there is a mass burial in Kirovski district (Virovets, 2007).

Nevertheless, the commission decided to bring the excavation to a halt and start preparing the reburial of excavated remains. Alexandr Evglevskiy, professor of Donetsk University who supervised the students' excavation work (this work was accounted as their summer practice camp) explained to me that the decision to close the excavation was dictated partly by sanitary preoccupations: in the opened ditch were found decaying bodies, which in the summer heat could lead to contamination. The deeper they dug, the larger was the number of decaying corpses. Another reason was that as the result of the excavation work it became clear that there was more than one ditch, and since there was neither a schema of the burial site, nor any document describing the position of the ditches, it was hard to continue digging "in the dark." It was a communal grave, without any system. The third reason was that if the excavation continued, many more dead bodies would have been discovered, and the whole issue would have received greater attention, and therefore it would have been much harder to conceal it (Evglevskiy 2013). Another historian-professor of the Donetsk University confirmed one of the reasons that Evglevskiy mentioned – because the excavation was carried in the hot summer months (June – July), there was a terrible stench on the field from the human flesh that did not decay under bandages (Nikolski 2013).

Why bandages? Here lays the whole controversy surrounding the excavation on Rutchenkovo field. In several pits that were dug in Rutchenkovo, in the upper level of the piles of dead bodies corpses in Red Army uniform were found – many of them bandaged or in plaster. There were also unearthed blood-stained bandages, oxygen bags, and hospital utensils of that period. In a separate pit student blouses that closely resembled the uniform of students of factory schools (FZU) were found (Virovets 2007, Evglevskiy 2013).⁵³ These findings confirmed the rumours that several days before the occupation of Donetsk by the Germans, the retreating NKVD forces shot wounded Red Army soldiers and students of a factory school (children of “enemies of the people”) that they did not have time to evacuate. After having entered the city, the Germans gathered locals on Rutchenkovo field and showed them freshly buried corpses, a very telling evidence of NKVD crimes. A report on this event was published in October 1941 in *Donetskiy vestnik* (Herald of Donetsk), a newspaper which was printed and circulated in Donetsk during the German occupation by the Iuzov City Council (Virovets 2007)⁵⁴.

According to an episode on Rutchenkovo field in the documentary TV series *Riven sekretnosti – 18*, the Germans not only gathered locals but ordered them to take shovels and dig. One of the eye-witnesses of that event, Aleksandr Domanski, who was 12 years old in 1941, recalled seeing bodies of Red Army soldiers, hardly covered by soil. A participant of the excavation on Rutchenkovo field in 1989, Vladislav Ustenko, stated that bodies of Red Army soldiers, found during excavation, had a bullet hole in the neck, which makes it clear that they were shot. Students-archaeologists, carrying out the excavation, also found human remains belonging to 15-16 years old students, together with personal belongings – soap holders, toothbrushes, milk bottles. It is not clear if they also found personal belongings of wounded soldiers – in the documentary we see a valise in which, among few clothes, there is an embroidered shirt. The presence

⁵³ FZU is the acronym for «shkola fabrichno-zavodskogo uchenichestva» which was popularly, but wrongly deciphered as “fabrichno-zavodskoye uchilishshe”, the lowest level of vocational school in the USSR from 1920 to 1940. These schools were created at large plants and factories in order to train qualified workers (“Shkola”).

⁵⁴ German occupation authorities changed Donetsk’s name back to Iuzovka.

of these objects testifies to the fact that these people were preparing to leave. Nikolski, a historian who studied the Stalinist purges in Donetsk extensively, said in the documentary, that the decision to execute young students might have been taken by the panicked director of a factory school – he received an order to evacuate students but was not given any transport. Vladislav Ustenko offers his own explanation: because the Nazis, after occupying a region, were sending youth to forced labour in Germany, the Soviet secret police decided to execute students rather than letting them be used as a workforce, strengthening the power of their enemy. This was a cruel, but a very lucid logic of the Soviet commanders (Ivanov 2011).

The rumours about the NKVD execution of wounded soldiers and students of factory schools circulated until the summer of 1989. People would talk about it privately during family gatherings (Pashchenko and Yanov, 1994). During the excavation in the summer of 1989 locals were approaching students-archaeologists, who were working on the excavation, and were telling them about these rumours. As Virovets recalls, they first refused to believe them, mainly because the Nazis had publicized it widely in the fall of 1941 (Virovets 2007). It is interesting to note that this anti-Nazi feeling is present also in an article by N. Rudick about the excavations. Rudick, a member of the Donetsk Memorial, referred to *Donetskiy vestnik* as a “rag,” printed by “traitors,” who, for their own purposes, made public many facts on Stalin’s terror. The newspaper was striving to legitimize the Nazi occupation regime in the eyes of the local population by unveiling the truth on the crimes of the Soviet regime (Rudik 1990).⁵⁵

The local amateur historian Oleksandr Kashkakha, however, doubts that the public exhumations of Rutchenkovo by the German occupation authorities ever took place. Except for the publication in *Donetskiy Vestnik*, there is only one account of such public exposure of “Soviet crimes,” not corroborated by any other testimony. Moreover, this account is unreliable, since the witness was 11 years old at that time and his

⁵⁵ Making a public display of the victims of NKVD killings was a widespread Nazi propaganda technique, used to discredit the Soviet Union in the eyes of local population. They resorted to this technique in Lviv and Vinnytsia, among other cities.

testimony seemed to have been influenced by perceptions which were formed later in life by the hardship of life in the 1940s. (Kashkakha 2013c). The witness recounts that Germans forced locals to dig with their hands. Corpses were buried 1 meter deep under the ground. The temperature in the fall of 1941 was very cold – on November 7, 1941, the temperature fell to minus 20, according to Kashkakha — and to dig the ground not just with hands, even with shovels was physically impossible. He also believes that the shooting of factory school students is no more than a myth because this story is based only on one article in the “fascist” *Donetskiy vestnik*. Nobody has ever seen the actual killings, while there are four supposed places of their burials. In the article, it is said that an NKVD major shot a column of teenage students just because they were moving from Stalino (Donetsk) towards the Rutchenkovo railway station.

Kashkakha notes that the fact of the killings is taken for granted, and the research is focused solely on providing a logical explanation for them. Three reasons have been advanced: 1) Soviet forces were not able to evacuate students; 2) they did not want to leave qualified workers to the Germans; 3) students were from special factory schools reserved for children of the enemies of the people. The culmination point in this story of a crime committed by Communists was a tunic, found during the excavations of 1989. This tunic is repeatedly presented as a uniform of a factory school student. However, the investigators did not accept it as evidence that the “bloody” regime wanted to cover its crimes (Kashkakha 2014).

Kashkakha refutes as unsubstantiated the claims that students of a factory school were shot and buried at Rutchenkovo. He notes that nowhere in the publications the concrete name of a school is mentioned. Furthermore, there were no factory schools reserved only for children of enemies of the people, despite the popular belief during perestroika. Therefore the explanation that students were shot because Soviet authorities did not want to leave them behind as qualified workers does not hold. There are no direct witnesses of the killings.

Finally, the main “hard” evidence, a student tunic, turned out to be the blouse of a rank-and-file or low-rank NKVD or Red Army officer. Students of factory schools had a strictly defined uniform and the tunic found in Rutchenkovo graves did not fit that description. If this was a blouse of a student of a factory school, where are then belt buckles with the letters RU (remeslennoye ychilishche – factory school), where are the uniform buttons, and, most importantly, the stripes with the number of the school? (Kashkakha 2014).

This debunking of the myth was done 25 years after the excavation. In those times of perestroika and glasnost, there was a general aspiration and enthusiasm to uncover the inconvenient truth about the crimes of the Soviet regime against its citizens, often accompanied by untruthful exaggerations. In spite of the absence of evidence that the killing of wounded soldiers and apprentices of factory school really took place, historians, students, and activists who carried the excavation had a strong impression that it was the main reason behind decision by the Donetsk authorities to cease the excavation and close the investigation of the mass graves on Rutchenkovo field. According to Dmitri Virovets, one of the students, the local KGB had a hostile attitude since the very beginning of the excavation and had no interest in a fair investigation (Virovets 2007). The regional Office of the Prosecutor, which opened an investigation, acknowledged the fact of mass killings during Stalin’s terror but refused to recognize that wounded Red Army soldiers were executed on Rutchenkovo field. They closed the investigation (Rudik 1990). The archaeologist who supervised the student excavation work in Rutchenkovo told me that the purpose of the excavation was to establish the category of victims and the mechanism of their execution. Once it became clear on the basis of findings, that these were victims of Stalinist purges, the investigator decided to terminate the excavation (Evglevskiy 2013).

The main investigator, Nikolai Vodopianov, from the regional prosecutor’s office, spent many days on the excavation side. He also interviewed eyewitnesses who claimed to remember the events of 1937-1941. In an interview to *Vecherniy Donetsk*, on May 27, 1989, he complained that it was hard to carry out his task

because he did not have any experience in this kind of investigation and was working mostly alone, while a complex work like this required a commission of experts, like the one who investigated the Kuropaty tragedy in Belarus. Vodopianov consulted his colleagues in Kyiv who worked in such a commission (Klementieva 1989b). In that interview, he also suggested that the commission on Rutchenkovo field should help him find the names of former NKVD officials who “investigated the cases of so-called ‘enemies of the people’ before the war” (ibid). Judging by the interview that Vodopianov gave several weeks later to the correspondent of *Pravda* Glotov, the commission did not help – as mentioned earlier, Vodopianov sent official requests to several archives, asking to provide any information on Rutchenkovo execution, and was told that no information was available (Glotov 1989).

From all these facts one can conclude that the authorities were not willing to carry the investigation until the end. They did not impede it, but neither did they help it. According to the legislation in effect during that period, the investigation of a criminal case had to be carried out within two months, after which the case should be solved or closed. An investigator could ask for an extension if needed (Klementieva, 1989b). Donetsk city authorities decided to close the Rutchenkovo mass graves investigation because they established what needed to be established: dead bodies, found in those graves, belonged to victims of Stalinist purges of 1930-1940. On July 7, 1989 the Commission on the Rights of the Rehabilitated and on the Erection of Monuments to Victims of Repression of the Donetsk city council ruled that the burial on Rutchenkovo field was the burial of victims of repression in the 1930s-1940s and that the excavation should be stopped (Parseniuk 1999, p. 59). Following the halt of excavation, a commemorative stone was installed on the Rutchenkovo field with the inscription that read: “A monument to the victims of repression in Donbas in 1930-1940 will be erected here” (Ivanov 2011).

The excavation lasted for three months. Students of Donetsk University carried out the bulk of the digging, helped on occasion by human rights activists. The remains of over 500 people were exhumed. A total of

four pits were dug, forming a trench (Rudik 1990). The depth of pits was up to four meters. The excavation was done at random – there was no plan of the site. As mentioned before, it became clear during the excavation that there were several trenches. The testimonies of eyewitnesses from 1941, while differing in the size of the burial, allowed establishing at least the direction of trenches (Klementieva 1989b). If the excavation did continue, these trenches most probably would have been found, and the exact perimeter of the burial would have been delineated. It did not happen. The concrete places of burials were not identified, and the precise contours of the burial were not established (Parseniuk 1999, p. 59).

As for the number of people who were buried there, various figures have been cited. Rudik, a member of Donetsk Memorial, claims at least several thousand (Rudik 1990). Boris Parseniuk, who was the co-chair of Donetsk Memorial in 1989, mentioned the same number at the solemn opening of the commemorative stone on Rutchenkovo field on September 16, 1989 (Velichko 1989). The current head of Donetsk Memorial, Oleskandr Bukalov, also talks about several thousand victims (“Vragam naroda”). Several thousand are also cited in an article published in *Vecherniy Donetsk* on the eve of the ceremony (“Pole nashei boli” 1989). The deputy head of Donetsk regional branch of *Prosvita* Maria Oliynyk in her speech on occasion of the Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Political Repression on May 16, 2013, on Rutchenkovo field declared that 80,000 Ukrainians, victims of Bolshevik terror lie in the mass grave of Rutchenkovo (Oliynyk 2013a). These figures are also cited by Tatiana Zarovnaia, a journalist that wrote several articles on Rutchenkovo field (2007, 2012). This figure— from 50,000 to 80,000 — was given by the KGB in a reply to a request sent by the Donetsk *Prosvita* and *Pluralism* groups in 1989 when the Rutchenkovo field secret was being revealed (Oliynyk 2013b). In his *Pravda* article, Glotov writes that 40,000 people were executed in the whole Donetsk region (Glotov 1989). This number appeared suddenly, as Virovets notes. Most probably, Glotov, being a correspondent of a central newspaper of the Communist Party, got this number from the KGB itself. As we saw above, Volodymyr Nikolski, a well-known scholar of Stalinist repressions in Donetsk, based on a thorough examination of the SBU archives, estimates the total

number of victims of repression in Donetsk region in 1937-1938 as 25,381, of whom 17,065 were shot (Nikolski 2011, p. 97). This figure of people killed is four times lower than the figure quoted by M. Oliynyk.

According to NKVD archives, the execution of “enemies of the people” was carried out not only in Donetsk, or Stalino, as it was called in 1937-1938, but also in Artemivsk, Mariupol, and Voroshylovhrad. In the execution reports the place of burial was not indicated – it was only stated who carried out the sentence and who were shot (Nikolski 2013). Omitting the place of burial was intentional: to cover the traces of mass crimes, the Soviet secret police issued a decree stipulating that the place of burial of executed people should not be indicated in the protocols of execution. This decree was issued in 1922, according to Bukalov, the head of Donetsk Memorial, at a time when the secret police was known as the GPU (Zarovnaia 2007), or in 1926 or 1927, according to Nikolski (2013).

Moreover, even if a group of people were executed in one prison, they would not be buried all in the same place – the NKVD would bury the corpses in different places so that the number of executed persons and the number of buried people would never coincide, explained to me in an interview Anatoli Dermainer, the secretary of the Donetsk regional commission on the commemoration of victims of war and victims of political repression (Dermainer 2013). As for the exact number of people who are buried on Rutchenkovo, it is hard to state, since the exact perimeter of the territory of the mass grave is not established and the number and the size of ditches remain unknown. The excavation was closed before the information could be obtained. The names of the people buried on Rutchenkovo field remain unknown too. Only two names were identified during the excavation: the first one was a name engraved on a cigarette case, which belonged to a certain V. D. Pokaraiev, apparently a mining engineer from Kryvyi Rih, and the second was one Kozlovski, whose name was written on a toothbrush (Virovets 2007).

The re-burial and the memorial service of the victims were held on September 16, 1989. It gathered a large crowd: residents of Donetsk, relatives of the repressed, and representatives of Memorial regional

organizations from Moscow, Kharkiv, Simferopol, Dnipropetrovsk, and Artemovsk. A member of the executive of the all-Union Memorial society was in attendance as well – A.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, a grandson of the well-known statesman and party leader Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, who was shot in 1938. The secretary of the Donetsk City Committee of the Communist Party V.K. Pashnova thanked all those who carried out the excavation that had started “with difficulty.” She talked about the necessity to understand what terrible consequences indifference, denunciations, and baseness can have and to apprehend how “we have lost many of the moral principles that our people had always had.” Those who lie in Rutchenkovo field should serve as a reminder that the main human quality is the ability to respect each other, honour and decency. This is the message that we should pass on to future generations (Velichko 1989). The co-head of Donetsk Memorial Borys Parseniuk, who was himself repressed, stressed that Stalinist repressions did not spare any nationality, social origin or profession. He called upon the state to identify the executioners and to qualify the repression as a crime against its people. He also reminded that the city executive council should vote for the allocation of social benefits for the repressed. Other speeches emphasized that the young generation needs to know the truth about a horrific period of our history and that the restoration of this truth — why these unlawful actions happened and what their consequences are— is the beginning of a purification from Stalin’s heritage (Velichko 1989). Attention was also drawn to the fact that the investigation did not answer the question whether wounded Red Army soldiers and apprentices of a factory school were shot.

After the speeches, a minute of silence was observed in the memory of fallen victims. The brass-band of the Donetsk Higher Military School performed the anthems of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR. A salute to arms was given. After that, people in attendance one after another threw a handful of earth in two deep graves, in which the human remains from the Rutchenkovo field were placed. It is a symbolic gesture of saying goodbye to the defunct. Then the earth was shovelled into the graves, and wreaths were laid on the grave mounds. In the east end of the graves, in the immediate proximity, a boulder was installed with a granite

plaque, on which a text was engraved: “A monument to the victims of repressions in Donbas in 1930-1940 will be erected here”. At the funeral ceremony the Donetsk Memorial publicly announced the opening of a charitable account for donations for the construction of a monument. Members of Memorial set up at the funeral ceremony a mobile exposition on the excavation on the Rutchenkovo field, which also contained a large map of the Gulag system on the territory of the USSR, photos, documents and stories of the repressed (Velichko 1989).

There is an interesting detail in the article covering the funeral ceremony. Among people who attended the memorial service, there were a few who would mutter: “Stalin shot – and rightly so.” The author of the article resented, asking rhetorically: what arguments do such individuals still need to change their minds? Or maybe there are no arguments that could convince them (Velichko 1989)?

Erecting the monument

In preparation for the funeral ceremony a grave site was developed – asphalted alleys were built, leading towards the graves. As for the monument, it took seventeen years to build it. In June 1990, a public competition was launched for the best conceptual design of the memorial to victims of repressions. In January 1991 the jury, after having examined all the submissions, concluded that no project could be retained (Parseniuk 1999, p. 60). Parseniuk, the co-head of the Donetsk Memorial at that time, rightfully noted that such a memorial should include not only the monument, but all the territory of mass graves that should be properly delineated and marked. However, since the investigation of Rutchenkovo field was closed, and no information was available in archives, according to the official responses, it was impossible to establish the exact perimeter of the burial. However, it could have been done, if the will was there. According to Nikolski (2013) and Parseniuk (1999, p.60), an aerial photograph of the Rutchenkovo field was done, probably in the spring of 1989. These photographs showed several circles, on which particularly green vegetation was growing. These circles, as Nikolski notes, were the pits in which dead bodies were buried, a dense green color coming from the decomposition of “organic” human flesh (Nikolski 2013).

After the solemn burial on Rutchenkovo field, Donetsk Memorial sent numerous requests to the city and region authorities asking for the reopening of the investigation of the Rutchenkovo burial and an objective and careful examination of the question of Red Army soldiers and factory school apprentices (Parseniuk 1999, p.60). Memorial also solicited that garages, which were built on the site of burial, be transferred to another location. Today the garages are still there, but the monument to the victims is there as well. It was erected in 2005, during a “Holodomor campaign” (Avilova 2009).⁵⁶

On November 25, 2005, the official opening of a monument to victims of political repression took place on Rutchenkovo field. The ceremony was attended by the head of the Donetsk regional administration, the mayor of Donetsk, the honorary consuls of Armenia and the Federal Republic of Germany, the Consul-General of Bulgaria, and representatives of the All-Ukrainian Association of Political Prisoners and the Repressed. Within the same ceremony, after the opening of the monument, a meeting on the occasion of the Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Holodomors and Political Repression was held (“Pamiatniki i memorialy”). The monument was designed by the architect Volodymyr Buchek and the sculptor Olexander Porozhniuk. It is built in the form of a cross-like white plate, composed of two parts – the horizontal, a shorter bar, is put behind a vertical one. A four-meter high bronze figure of a gaunt man in a loincloth, with arms raised towards the sky, is affixed to the plate. The monument stands on a rectangular base, tiled with red granite plates. In front of the rectangular base, there is another base in the form of a triangle, tiled with gray granite. On the front part of this base a phrase is engraved in white letters in Ukrainian: «Zhertvam politychnykh represiy, zakatovanyh u 1930-1940-kh rokakh ta pokhovanym tut» - “To victims of political repression, tortured to death in the 1930s-1940s and buried here.” The formula “tortured to death” clearly was inspired from the national level. The figure of a man resembles a tree whose hands-branches are directed towards the sky, as if in an attempt to escape from the terror on Earth (source, from which this

⁵⁶ This campaign, which intended to prove that the Great Famine of 1932-33 was a genocide against the Ukrainian people, began in 2005 under the presidency of Victor Yushchenko, who made the nationalization of the history of Ukraine a political priority.

information was taken, could not be found anymore). Funding for the monument came from the Donetsk city administration (“Pamiatnik zhertvam”).⁵⁷

In 1990 the territory surrounding the commemorative granite boulder was given the status of the cemetery of victims of political repression (“Pamiatniki i memorialy”). Part of that territory was also cleaned and developed – the alley leading to the granite boulder was paved. However, since the exact perimeter of the burial could not be established, there is no clear demarcation of the graves on the present site. All that a visitor sees, as I did in 2013, is the monument and two flower beds with a paved alley in the middle, leading to the monument. There are no explanatory plaques, no commemorative signs, no historical information whatsoever regarding the monument. All that a visitor is provided with is this vague inscription on the monument itself. No wonder that people set up gardens and picnics nearby.

I did not see any garden while I was there in the summer of 2013. The field around the monument looks more like a wasteland. It is overgrown with grass, empty plastic bags and garbage are scattered here and there. The monument and the territory surrounding it are owned by the Kirovski district administration. However, it is private individuals and civil society organizations that clean the site. Representatives of Russian Memorial come to Donetsk once or twice a year, and then a small group of local activists joins together for a “subotnik” (the Soviet tradition of Saturday voluntary work) on Rutchenkovo field. They have even installed a couple of wooden crosses to mark the field as a cemetery and to let people know that they are desecrating a burial. Some of the relatives of those who are buried in the field, but live in other cities, come to Donetsk on vacation and also visit the Rutchenkovo site and clean up the area (Oliynyk 2013).

⁵⁷ After 1989, when it became clear that the prospect of having a monument in the nearest future was not very probable, Memorial decided to use the funds it initially raised for a commemorative plaque at the Donetsk conservatory, where the secret police was located from 1932 to 1966 and where victims of Stalin purges were shot in 1937-1938.

Another group who has taken interest in the Rutchenkovo monument is the Transfiguration Fellowship of Small Orthodox Brotherhoods (Preobrazhenskoye sodruzhestvo malykh pravoslavnykh bratstv). This religious community that sprang up from the Russian Orthodox Church organizes pilgrimage trips to places of burial of victims of Soviet repressions on the territory of the former Soviet Union (Nakonechnaia 2012). The Preobrazhenskoie Fellowship raises awareness of the crimes of the Soviet regime against all of the people of the former Soviet Union and against the Orthodox Church ("O proekte").

The pilgrimage trips to Rutchenkovo field started in 2009 (Zykov 2010). Pilgrims come from Moscow to hold a memorial service and to clean the site. They are joined by the local parishioners of the Donetsk Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. For instance, in 2012 the commemorative service in memory of all innocent victims who were killed in Soviet repressions was held by the prior of the Sviato-Pokrovski church in Makeevka, Father Aleksandr Vinnik. After the service, those in attendance collected the garbage and installed crosses. The press-secretary of the Donetsk and Mariupol eparchy, Archpriest Georgiy Guliaev, called the assistant of the Governor of Donetsk region directly from the cemetery, explaining to him the necessity to fence the entire territory of Rutchenkovo field and asking to raise awareness about this place among locals (Nakonechnaia 2012). Nakonechnaia, one of the "sisters and brothers" of Preobrazhenkoie Bratstvo and a former Donetsk resident, notes that when they invite Donetsk residents to a commemorative service on Rutchenkovo, they are surprised to see how little locals know about this place. Nakonechnaia herself did not know about Rutchenkovo field before joining the "Bratstvo" (ibid).

Rutchenkovo field is included in the official ceremonies of the Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Political Repressions, held on the third Sunday of May, and during the Day of the Commemoration of the Holodomor, on last Saturday in November. In May 2013, the ceremony was attended by representatives of the state authorities, former political prisoners, relatives of the repressed, local citizens, and the clergy ("V

Donetsku vshanuvaly” 2013). The head of Donetsk Memorial, Oleksandr Bukalov, in his speech noted that people, buried on Rutchenkovo, were not politicians, although the repressions are qualified as political. A great tragedy of the time is that executioners kept walking the streets, after having shot innocent people (ibid). Bukalov has been stating since the independence of Ukraine that in Donetsk the streets and public spaces wearing the names of those who are guilty of “the destruction of their own people” should be renamed (“Ob uvekovechenii” 2005). After the ceremony on Rutchenkovo field, participants of the commemoration laid flowers to the commemorative plaque on the building of the conservatory and the commemorative plaque of Vasyl Stus on the building of Donetsk National University. A memorial dinner, sponsored by the Donetsk City Council, concluded the Day of Commemoration. Participants stressed the necessity to raise public awareness of the tragic pages of history, especially among school youth, and to think about innocent victims of terror not once or twice a year, but more often (“V Donetsku vshanuvaly” 2013).

The ceremony of commemoration of the victims of the Holodomor was also held on Rutchenkovo field on November 22, 2013. The state authorities were represented by the first deputy head of the mayor of Donetsk Mykola Volkov, who also took part in the ceremonies during the Day of Victims of Political Repression, and the deputy head of the Donetsk Regional Administration (“U Donetsku” 2013). This ceremony was much better attended than the one that was organized in front of the Shevchenko monument in downtown Donetsk (“Vshanuvannia” 2013). The participants in the commemoration visited the same places as during the Day of Victims of Political Repression, adding to it a commemorative stone on the site of a future monument to the victims of the Holodomor. On a marble plaque that is affixed on the stone, an engraved text reads: “Vsem nevinno ubiennym i zamuchennym vo vremena Stalinskikh repressiy, Holodomora i fashistskoi okkupatsiyi” – to all the innocents who were killed and tortured to death during Stalinist repression, the Holodomor and the fascist occupation” (“Vshanuvannia” 2013). The ceremony of

commemoration during the Day of Victims of the Holodomor takes place on Rutchenkovo field because there is no monument to victims of the Holodomor in Donetsk.

Another group that participates every year in the commemorations is the Donetsk regional organization of the All-Ukrainian Association of Political Prisoners and the Repressed. This organization includes many natives of Western Ukraine, who were arrested and deported to Siberia at the end of the 1940s either as participants or accomplices of anti-Soviet resistance or as members of the family of these fighters. After they had served their term in prison or in a Gulag camp, they went to work in Donetsk, partly because some of them were not allowed to return to their home villages and towns in Halychyna, partly because work was more easily available in the highly developed industries of Donbas. These Western Ukrainians, being already victims of Soviet postwar deportations and bearers of a traumatic memory of Soviet repressions in Western Ukraine, revive and reinforce the memory of Stalinist purges in Donetsk.

The participation of members of the Donetsk organization of Political Prisoners and the Repressed in commemorations on Rutchenkovo field is organized mainly through the energetic efforts of the deputy-head of Donetsk regional branch of *Prosvita* Maria Oliynyk. She is a native of Western Ukraine herself, from Ivano-Frankivsk, and became active in Ukrainian national-democratic movement during perestroika and has continued to fight for the Ukrainization of Donbas ever since. She is the head of both the Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk regional branches of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (KUN), a political party that was established in Ukraine in 1993 on the basis of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN).⁵⁸

⁵⁸ KUN was the initiative of Yaroslava (Slava) Stetsko, wife of Yaroslav Stetsko, the leader of the OUN in exile from 1968 until his death in 1986 in Munich. Slava Stetsko was a member of the Central Committee of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations and its Chairman after the death of her husband. She was also an executive member of the World Anti-Communist League. She returned to Ukraine in 1991 where she became actively involved in Ukrainian politics. She was elected a deputy of Verkhovna Rada in the 1994, 1998 and 2002 parliamentary elections as a representative of the Ivano-Frankivsk region. In 1993 she founded KUN and became its chairman until her death in 2003.

During the commemoration of the Day of Political Prisoners and the Repressed Maria Oliynyk organized a bus from downtown to the Rutchenkovo field for members of Donetsk regional branch of the Association of Political Prisoners and the Repressed. The bus was paid by city authorities. In 2013 the ceremony was attended by a dozen elder men from this branch that were holding posters with slogans: “Communist Party – Red Devil – killed 15 million Ukrainians” – “Ban the Communist Party of Ukraine – the Red Bandits” and so on. The meeting on Rutchenkovo field was also attended by city authorities. Youth from neighbouring schools were in attendance as well, standing on two alleys leading to the monument and holding Ukrainian flags. Oliynyk pronounced an inflammatory speech about “innocent sons of Ukraine killed by Bolshevik terror.” According to her, 80,000 people are not buried but dug in the ground of Rutchenkovo field. And nobody talks about them – authorities, SBU, NGO, mass-media, no one. “Is it possible that this painful subject is of interest to no one, and we are indifferent to the question who crucified our bereaved nation and why?” (Oliynyk 2013a).

The crucifier was the Soviet totalitarianism, as Maria Oliynyk explained to me in a personal interview. “The Soviet system was built on fear...an iron curtain was preventing people from knowing what was going on behind the border...We saw only what was happening inside. They [people who hoped to democratize the Soviet system] did not understand that once the system is open to democracy, it will crumble’ (Oliynyk 2013b). Her interpretation echoes the Western Ukrainian narrative of the victimhood of the Ukrainian nation at the hands of Soviet totalitarianism.

Commemorative plaque on Artema Street

Besides the monument on Rutchenkovo field, there is only one other material symbol of the memory of Soviet purges in Donetsk – a commemorative plaque on a building on 44 Artema Street. This building, which was used by the secret police in 1932-1966, is now occupied by the Prokofiev State Music Academy. The text on the plaque, written in Ukrainian, states: “Tens of thousands of innocent citizens were repressed by organs of NKVD-MGB-KGB, which were located in this building from 1932 to 1966” (“Desiatky tysiach

nevynnykh hromadian buly represovani orhanamy NKVS-MDB-KDB, yaki mistylysia v tsiomu budynku z 1932 po 1966 rik"). The plaque was installed in March 2004 after many years of official circumlocution which the Donetsk "Memorial" organization had to battle ("Ob uvekovichenii" 2005). In a city which bolsters many plaques honouring the memory of Communist leaders and writers-Chekists, there was no interest to commemorate their victims not among ordinary citizens, neither within state institutions (Bukalov 1998). That is why it took 14 years to have a plaque on repressed people installed in Donetsk.

In a personal interview that I conducted with Oleksandr Bukalov in 2013, he told me that he contacted the History Museum of Donetsk region several times and inquired whether the museum had some artefacts from the Great Terror period. "One could feel that "komuniatskyi" [pejorative for Communist] spirit in the museum then [in the early 1990s]; that spirit is probably still there today' (Bukalov 2013). They were not interested in recording that part of history, Bukalov told me, and that is why they refused some personal objects that he offered them. Bukalov was wrong. In fact, the museum does have a large enough section on the Great Terror in Donetsk, with stands explaining the specificity of repressive acts in the regions, photographs and personal belongings of people who repressed and rehabilitated.

As for the plaque on Artema Street, the idea to install it appeared in the fall of 1990. At a meeting commemorating the victims of totalitarian regime, held by Donetsk Memorial, a resolution was adopted asking the City Council to create in the basement of the Music Academy a museum of victims of repressions (Bukalov 2003a, p. 11). The Commission on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Rehabilitated and on the Creation of Monuments to the Victims of Repression, under the auspices of the Donetsk City executive council, sent a request to the Donetsk Regional Council to "install a commemorative plaque on the former building of NKVD-MGB on 42-44 Artema Street, immortalizing the memory of innocent victims of repressions in the 1930s-40s and at the beginning of the 1950s, and to open a museum of repression".

All the necessary documents were to be prepared by a member of Memorial (Bukalov 2003a, p. 12)⁵⁹. The Commission also sent an inquiry to the KGB asking to confirm the historical facts about the building on Artema Street. The KGB confirmed that the premises hosted the state security police, in its various incarnations (MGB, NKVD, MGB, and MVD) .The basement of this building was used until the beginning of the 1960s as an internal prison for detention of persons under investigation. During the 1930-1940s and the beginning of the 1950s in the Donetsk region, legal and extralegal organs (“dvoiki,” “troiki” and “special councils”) repressed approximately 40,000 citizens, based on the accusations of “counterrevolutionary crimes.” The mass repression occurred mostly in 1937-1938 (Bukalov 2003a, p. 13).

In 1991, following the August coup d’état, which led to the dismantlement of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party lost its power, and the impetus to commemorate the victims of Stalinist repression, which came from the Soviet leadership in Moscow, waned. In addition, a drastic deterioration of economic conditions made the perspective of creating a monument on Rutchenkovo field less and less realistic. The money for the monument, which Memorial started collecting since the burial ceremony on Rutchenkovo field in September 1989, quickly depreciated (that amount was already quite scarce even before the inflation).

As mentioned above, Donetsk Memorial decided to focus on the commemorative plaque on Artema Street. Sculptor Porozhniuk agreed to make such a plaque free of charge, but the cost of the material had to be covered. Memorial tried for many months to get funding from the Donetsk city authorities, but its requests fell on deaf ears. An agreement could not be reached regarding the text of the plaque and the authorities attempted instead to install a commemorative plaque to the NKVD officials (Bukalov 2003a, p. 19).

⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that in the decision of the state commission the KGB is omitted from the list of punitive organs, found on the plaque: the NKVD-MGB-KGB. Oleksandr Bukalov, the head of the Donetsk “Memorial”, in his article of September 24, 1998, mentions the lack of desire of “certain functionaries” to include the name of the KGB in the text of the plaque. What we see here, is an attempt of the city authorities to distance the KGB, which was functioning till the end of the Soviet Union and was reformed in the Security Service of Ukraine in September of 1991 (“Zasnuvannia”), from the executions, carried out by the NKVD and MGB.

By 1993 Memorial decided to pay for the material for the plaque from its own budget. The organization asked the Donetsk City Executive Council to pass a resolution on the installation of a plaque, to help with its financing of the plaque, and to install the plaque on the Day of Soviet Political Prisoners in October (ibid). A city official said that he will not allow the installation of a plaque, bearing the text in Ukrainian, in a region where the predominant language is Russian.⁶⁰ Moreover, the request must first be examined by the city district where the plaque is to be installed, Voroshylovsky district.

A lengthy red tape carousel began. The executive council of Voroshilovsky district charged a representative of the district Association of the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments, a certain A. Panov, with preparing the resolution on the installation of the plaque. According to Bukalov, Panov did all he could to forestall a positive decision in this matter. He started by verifying the authenticity of the response of the KGB on the building on Artema Street. Then he decided to “correct” the text, proposed by Memorial. One of the new versions, advanced by Panov, was a downright glorification of the NKVD and the KGB (Bukalov 2003a, p. 20). In order to obtain public support for his version of the text, Panov organized a series of consultations with various civil society organizations, although the text of the plaque had been already agreed upon between Memorial and various experts from the Voroshylovski district, and Panov’s task consisted only in preparing the resolution, whether to install the plaque or not. Memorial was asking only for this. Changing the text on the plaque was not in the competency of Panov. Involving various civil society organizations who did not participate in the initiative of installing the plaque was inappropriate since Memorial came up with this initiative by itself and paid for the plaque from its budget. Panov’s strategy was to slow down the decision-making process, and he was quite successful – the question of installing the plaque was stuck in bureaucratic grindstones for three years (Bukalov 2003a, p. 16).

⁶⁰ The original text, written in Ukrainian, contained emotionally charged words, such as “tortured to death” and “innocent” victims, expressions typical of plaques commemorating victims of Communist repressions in Western Ukraine. Bukalov, the head of the “Memorial” in Donetsk, told me in the interview that the question of language was not really important for them. It just “happened” that the text was written in Ukrainian.

In October 1996, six years into the efforts to have the commemorative plaque installed, Memorial, tired of a bureaucratic boycott by the Voroshylovski district authorities, sent an open letter to the mayor of Donetsk. In this letter, Memorial, telling the story of red tape procrastination, noted that local authorities always find money to install commemorative plaques honouring Communist leaders, while the memory of tens of thousands of innocent citizens of Donetsk is of no interest to bureaucrats. Memorial requested that the mayor stops the “bureaucratic carrousel” and takes a resolution to install the plaque. In January 1997, the City Council of Donetsk examined the request. The representatives of Memorial were not invited. No decision was taken, but the Council of Veterans took upon itself the initiative to issue an opinion regarding the installation of the plaque. It comes as no surprise that their opinion was unequivocal – not to install the plaque. Memorial tried to find out why the Council of Veterans took such a decision, but received no answer.

The Donetsk City Executive Committee held another meeting regarding the plaque. Memorial could not get an invitation. At this meeting the Executive Committee decided “to consider unsuitable the installation of a plaque commemorating victims of political repressions in the 1930s-40s-early 50s” (Bukalov 2003, p. 29). Had there been a larger public support for preserving the memory of victims, the city authorities might not have dismissed so easily the idea of a commemorative plaque, as Oleksandr Bukalov rightfully noted (*ibid*, p. 30).

Periodical reminders that Memorial had been publishing in the press remained a voice in the wilderness. In 2003, in an attempt to raise public awareness, Memorial published a brochure upon which my account is based – *Istoria odnoi memoiral'noi doski* (The Story of a Commemorative Plaque). The head of Memorial, Oleksandr Bukalov, distributed the brochure among people’s deputies at the city and regional level. He sent some brochures to the deputies who represented Donetsk in the Ukrainian Parliament. Two deputies replied. One of them, Serhiy Bubka, sent a request to the Donetsk City Council, down the chain of command,

so to speak. Orders from above cannot be ignored. Local bureaucrats began to bustle about. They called Memorial, demanding explanations, shouting, behaving rudely. But they promised that the plaque would be installed in the third quarter of 2003 (Bukalov 2013). It took them a little bit longer – as I noted at the beginning, the plaque was inaugurated in March 2004.

Chapter 11: National heroes/nameless victims: divisive memory of Stalinist purges in Donetsk and Lviv

Donetsk and Lviv present a contrasting picture. In Lviv, the memory of victims of the Soviet regime has a solid presence in the urban landscape, with the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow, the Yanivskyi Memorial to the Victims of Moscow Communist Regime, the Monument to Victims of Communist Crimes on Shashkevych Square, and the Museum-Prison on Lontsky. In Donetsk, there is only one monument that can match the size of the monuments in Lviv – the Rutchenkovo field. Not only is this monument on the outskirts of Donetsk, further increasing its geographical and mnemonic marginality is the dominance in downtown Donetsk of monuments glorifying the Soviet past – monuments to Lenin, to Artem, the founder of the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic, and to Soviet soldiers-liberators of Donbas (without mentioning numerous busts of prominent Communists, Soviet military leaders, writers, doctors etc).

In Lviv, the remembrance of the victims of the Soviet regime is a truly popular (in the sense of people's) practice, in which civil society organizations play a crucial role. The Pentecost commemoration of heroes, who fought for an independent Ukraine, is an example of this popular remembering. Both in Lviv and in Donetsk the state representatives participate in the rituals of the Day of the Commemoration of Victims of Political repression. In Lviv, however, this participation seems to be more active and more massive, while in Donetsk the state officials are doing the required minimum. Moreover, in Donetsk, the public remembering of the victims of Stalinist purges is supported on the civil society level mostly by Ukrainian

pro-nationalist organizations, which do not enjoy a large local support. Former political prisoners and repressed individuals, who come to Rutchenkovo field on their own initiative, are in an absolute minority when one takes into account the bulk of Donetsk's population.

In Lviv monuments to victims of Communist crimes have been emerging since the perestroika period, demonstrating the continuity and vitality of the memory of these victims in Western Ukraine. In Donetsk, after the upsurge of truth about Stalin's crimes during the end of the 1980s-early 1990s, the memory of Stalin's victims began to die out and was revived through efforts from above. The monument on Rutchenkovo field was erected 16 years after the excavation, in 2005, when, under Yushchenko's presidency, a powerful campaign to recognize the Holodomor and to sanctify its memory was carried out. In this campaign, the Ukrainian nation was portrayed as a martyr at the hands of the Stalin regime, and those, who were executed in the Great Terror, were but a small portion of countless victims of the totalitarian evil.

On the Zamarstyniv Wall of Memory and Sorrow the names of people, killed by the NKVD in June 1941, are written in golden letters. The Lviv Memorial society struggles financially to maintain the Wall and has to constantly beg the Lviv authorities for money to finish the inscription of all the names. However, such a Wall exists. In Donetsk, there is no mention at all of the names of victims on the monument on Rutchenkovo field. It is not that their names are unknown. All the names of victims of political repression during the Soviet era, from 1917 to 1991, have been researched and published in nine books of the Donetsk volume of the "Rehabilitated by History" series. These books contain approximately 48,000 names (Nikolski 2013). However, it was impossible to establish who exactly among the victims of the purges of 1937-1938 is buried on Rutchenkovo field because of the secret police instruction not to indicate the place of burial in the lists of executed people. In Donetsk region, the project "Rehabilitated by History" was completed in 2012. In Lviv region, to note in passim, only the first book was published in 2009. This book contains the

history of Lviv region in 1939-1991 (presented as a history of resistance of the local population to the Soviet regime), the documents of Soviet “punitive” organs (to use the terminology of the book), and the memoirs of repressed. The publication of the names of victims of Soviet repression has not started yet, because it took historians a lot of time to process the archives of the Ministry of Interior, and they wanted to include in the project the names of those who were deported to Siberia and the Far North (from personal correspondence with the Executive Secretary of the project “Rehabilitated by History”).

The number of Western Ukrainians who were killed or repressed by the Soviet regime is much higher than the number of victims in Donetsk region. In 1939-1941 only, the NKVD arrested over 23,000 Ukrainians (“Radianskyi period”). After the war, in 1947-1953, more than 200,000 Western Ukrainians were deported to Siberia and Central Asia and around 87,000 were convicted of direct participation in, or support of, the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) (Vedeneev 2012).⁶¹ The memory of all these people is preserved by their children and grandchildren who live in today’s Lviv. This living memory nourishes the historical memory of Soviet rule in Western Ukraine.

In Donetsk, the memory of Stalin repressions is eclipsed by the suffering under the Nazi occupation and overwritten by the glory of industrialization and the celebration of victory in the Great Patriotic War under Stalin’s rule.

In Lviv victims of Soviet executions of June of 1941 are celebrated as heroes who fought against the Soviet regime for the national liberation of Ukraine. Ukrainian nation is a victim at the hands of the criminal totalitarian monster. However, in this victimhood narrative the war crimes, committed by the fighters of OUN-UPA, are passed over.

⁶¹ Because of the constraints of space I cannot discuss more broadly and more precisely the question of the number of victims of Soviet repression in Western Ukraine. I am citing some of the figures just to illustrate the difference in the intensity of repression in Lviv region versus Donbas.

In Donetsk victims of Stalin's repression are barely acknowledged as an echo of a totalitarian regime distant in time. This echo is drowned in the material mnemonic space celebrating the achievements of the Soviet state, heir of this totalitarian regime. The crucial distinction between Donetsk and Lviv is that Soviet power has never been perceived as an occupation regime in Donbas, like it has been in Halychyna.

These opposing memories have their dominant representations in their respective regions, overshadowing alternative views of the past. In Lviv the Memorial's interpretation of the totalitarian Soviet past is framed through the perspective of human rights, in contrast to the dominating nation-victimhood paradigm. In Donetsk there is a tension between the thoroughly studied and collected names of the repressed by the historians of state research institutions and the avoidance of the subject of political repressions by the regional authorities.

Dominant narratives of the memory of the Soviet past in both Donbas and Halychyna stem from lived experiences, but they are constructed by the conscious effort of political and social actors. As Jan Assmann noted, the memory of a group is selective – group leaders choose from the past the events that are most relevant to the present and that are deemed to reflect the group's values. The representations of these events in various material and non-material forms become the objectivised knowledge of the past, in which some pages are highlighted and some are left in the shadow, either purposefully or unwillingly. In Halychyna crimes of the OUN-UPA are willingly hidden in the glorification of their fight against the Soviets. The participation of the local nationalist police and the local population in the pogroms after the occupation of Lviv by Nazi Germany in late June – early July of 1941 is not represented in the Museum-Prison on Lontsky. In Donetsk, the victims of the Great Terror are commemorated, but this memory is overshadowed by the dominant narrative of the achievements of the Soviet industrialization and victory in the Great Patriotic War.

The memorial public space in Lviv reflects the anti-Soviet collective identity of Ukrainians as a nation-martyr at the hands of Russian/Soviet imperialism, whereas in Donetsk the material memorial landscape represents a (post)Soviet, anti-nationalist regional identity of Donbas. These two different concretions of collective identity, to use Jan Assmann's term, are manifestations of a conscious decision to establish and maintain a temporal and semantic continuity with certain events from the past, to "reinvent" the past by highlighting these certain events and pushing to the background the others, as in the "invented tradition" of Eric Hobsbawm. The destruction of the Lenin monuments in Halychyna in the early 1990s, followed by the *Leninapad* throughout Ukraine after the Euromaidan, and preservation of these monuments on the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk not controlled by the Ukrainian government (LNR and DNR) are a vivid manifestation of such "invented tradition."

Monuments to various figures of events of Soviet history in Donetsk are sites of memory (Nora's *lieux de mémoire*) that symbolize the will to save from oblivion, to remember the Soviet past as a period of the great achievements of a great country, while in Lviv the absence of such monuments and the commemoration of victims of Soviet repression clearly indicates a negative assessment of the Soviet past.

Conclusions

Social memory in the most general sense is the remembrance and the knowledge of the past. A collectivity chooses certain events from the past, which it deems worth remembering, and represents them in symbols, weaves them into a story, a narrative of the past. Some moments from the past become landmarks in that narrative, while others are relegated to oblivion, intentionally or unintentionally. In the case of a purposeful forgetting a collectivity tries to erase from memory not only the event itself, but also a certain interpretation of it, which is considered now outdated or outlawed, because a collectivity has evolved, and its understanding of the past changed. The present affects the past because a collectivity selects certain

episodes of the past, based on values and preoccupations of the present. In return, the past, as Paul Connerton (2006, p. 2) noted, affects the present experience of a collectivity, because it influences how the collectivity perceives the present.

Social memory is formative because it educates new generations, not only in its institutionalized forms, such as history books, monuments, or commemorations, but also in its informal existence, in family intergenerational communication. Memory is one of the agents of socialization of new members into the community. In its institutionalized forms, social memory is also normative. The events of the past are not only recorded, selected and recreated based on certain values. Official commemoration ceremonies provide scripts of remembrance, indicating what is to be remembered and how. In other words, it provides norms of conduct.

Monuments in public spaces and history books as a manifestation of social memory reflect the power structure within society, symbolizing the “power of definitions” of certain groups who, with the mobilization of material and non-material resources, succeed in affirming their group memory as societal memory. The most effective way is to tap into public resources, and the fullest access to these comes with being in power. “He, who controls the past, controls the future. He, who controls the present controls the past,” wrote George Orwell in his dystopian novel *1984*. Through official memory ruling elites legitimize their control of power, endorsing their own remembrance and interpretation of the past and ignoring or even suppressing the collective memory of non-dominant groups. National memory is contentious. As a conglomerate of memories, where official memory is but one of many, national memory contains the memories of all of the groups constituting a nation. In a democratic society, these pluralistic memories are allowed to exist and are given voices. In authoritarian societies, such memories are marginalized or suppressed.

Shared memory is the foundation of a group. Society as a large group is a community that remembers something in common and has forgotten something in common, as Renan (1992) pointed out. In a society, recovering after a war, diverging interpretations of the past emerge, threatening to deepen lines of division already drawn in the conflict. That is why a period of wilful forgetting, or benign neglect, is needed to restore social cohesion. Postwar Europe demonstrates it well. A tragic, traumatic event requires the work of time to apprehend what happened, and in France, Germany, and Italy, opposing memories of the war co-existed in the public space and were voiced, without repressing them. Justice was served through trials of perpetrators, albeit only of a small number of them. These trials fulfilled a very important symbolic function – to recognize and condemn publicly the criminal Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators as the culprit. In Germany the perpetrators were brought to justice by foreign powers who defeated the Nazis – the Allies, including the Soviet Union, organized the Nuremberg trial. In Italy and France, the settlement of accounts was a complex internal affair, reflecting the divisions of wartime. The process of assessing World War II took place under democracy. In postwar Francoist Spain, a blanket of silence was put by the Franco regime on the memory of Republicans, their fight against the regime and their victimhood. Only after the death of Franco in 1975 was this blanket lifted, and the truth emerged. By the consensus of the elites, no official condemnation of Franco was made, and the question of the divisive past was left to the civil society to debate.

In Central-Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union, the memory of the recent Communist past was dominated from early on by the overall condemnation of the Communist system as criminal and imposed on the local populations by an external power —the Soviet Union. This condemnation was to a large extent inspired politically by the perspective of joining the European Union.

In Russia, there was no external pressure to condemn the Communist past. Working through that complex past originated with perestroika in the late 1980s when the truth about large-scale Stalin repression was

revealed in articles, memoirs, and TV programs. The All-Union Memorial Society, founded by the famous Soviet dissident and human rights activist Andrei Sakharov in January 1989, declared as its main purpose the study of political repression in the USSR. Regional branches were opened throughout the country, and Memorial became the centre of research on the punitive Soviet system and its victims. The Russian state, the heir of the Soviet power, condemned the ruthless methods of the ruling Communist party elite in governing the Soviet Union (see the chapter on Russia for many examples of state decrees and laws in this regard). Russians remember Stalin's terror and the majority of them condemn the political terror as means of governing a country. But they are not willing to hold Stalin personally responsible for the terror and declare him a criminal. There are political and social groups who still glorify Stalin, but they are marginal. The memory of political repressions did not take over the positive assessment of the Soviet experience and the great achievements of the Soviet Union, the main one being the victory over Nazism. The ambivalence of the memory politics of the Russian leadership is not only the reflection of the ambivalent attitude of Russians towards the Soviet past. It is also a conscious effort to preserve the unity of Russia as a country that rebuilds itself after the disastrous period of neoliberal reforms of the 1990s. Such ambivalence allows for the co-existence and expression of diverging views on the Soviet experience, without overtly suppressing the ones that do not fit into matrix of the majority.

Ukraine in its official memory politics over the short history of its independence moved from an ambivalent attitude towards the Soviet legacy, in which Stalinism was repudiated, to a condemnation of Soviet power as a whole. Two trends in the assessment of the Soviet past were present in Ukraine since perestroika. The first is a nationalist narrative, akin to the Baltic States, which sees Soviet power as an alien regime, imposed on freedom-loving Ukrainians by Moscow tyranny. In the interpretation of Ukrainian right-leaning nationalists, Soviet Russia is the continuation of Russian Imperialism, which for over three hundred years subjugated Ukraine and suppressed its aspirations to independence. The second trend, closer to the Russian assessment of the Soviet past, consist in the condemnation of Stalinist repression, mixed with a

rather positive or neutral assessment of post-Stalinist history, or at least not branding it as criminal and repressive.

The Communist Party of Ukraine was banned in August 1991, not because of the Communist ideology, but because it supported the putsch of conservative Communists against Gorbachev. It was re-established two years later. In the 1991 Law on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression, the Ukrainian state condemned the anti-humane, anti-democratic laws of the Soviet period and the arbitrariness and lawlessness of the state, while emphasizing the particularly grave crimes of the Stalin regime ("Pro reabilitatsiyu" 1991). Kuchma's assessment of the Soviet past was also not a pure condemnation, as he valued the development of industry and science, achieved since the 1950s. In Yushchenko's decree on the recognition of the Holodomor, the Soviet totalitarian regime is accused of orchestrating an artificial famine to physically destroy the Ukrainian nation ("Pro Holodomor" 2006). The same decree provided for the creation of a National Institute of Memory as a central executive authority, which would develop and oversee the implementation of official memory politics in Ukraine (ibid). Yanukovych public statement that the famine of 1932-33 was a tragedy, suffered by other nations of the Soviet Union, such as Russians and Kazakhs ("Yanukovych: Golodomor" 2010), was met with reprobation and strong criticism by Ukrainian nationalists. In 2015, the National Institute of Memory of Ukraine developed a package of decommunization laws, in which the Soviet period of history in Ukraine is seen as the repression of Ukraine's struggle for independence, and Soviet power is condemned as criminal and anti-humane. These laws were indeed revolutionary, as they were adopted hastily, without due process, and they were imposed from above, without a proper societal debate. In the context of what Kyiv and the West call Russia's "hybrid war" against Ukraine, the complete decommunization of Ukraine is a question of national security for Ukraine, declared President Poroshenko in May 2016 ("Poroshenko zaproponuvav" 2016).

Decommunization is, in fact, the de-Sovietisation of Ukraine. In the decommunization laws, the Soviet state is called “totalitarian” and equated to the Nazi regime. The sickle and hammer are equated to the swastika and are outlawed. And yet, the industrial and technological achievements of the Soviet state are part and parcel of the collective identity of Donbas and other regions of South-Eastern Ukraine, where Soviet power meant modernization. The Donetsk physical memorial space is punctuated by monuments to various Soviet leaders. The statue of Lenin stands unwavering in downtown Donetsk and Luhansk, the only major cities, which preserved this statue in post-Maidan Ukraine. In Donetsk, major anti-Maidan meetings took place at the Lenin monument, not only because this monument stands in a downtown square. The place was also chosen because of its symbolic meaning as the representation of the Sovietness of Donbas and its values: hard work, stoicism, proletarian pride, and paternalism. With the transformation of the Donbas rebellion into a Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and a Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR), whose survival would be impossible without Russia’s military and humanitarian assistance, the ideological cleavage between Ukraine and Donbas became very much evident. As monuments to Lenin were falling throughout South-Eastern Ukraine, they survived on the territory of the DPR and LPR. As names of streets, villages, towns, and cities in Ukraine were de-Sovietised, in Donetsk and Luhansk, they remained the same as they were during Soviet times.⁶² As the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory developed and implemented a new state memory politics, in which the Great Patriotic War was transformed from a heroic fight of Ukrainians against the Nazis into Ukraine’s victimhood at the hands of two totalitarian evils, in Donetsk people proudly celebrated Victory Day on May 9. I argue that the memory of the Soviet past played a central role in this ideological divergence.

⁶² The map of the decommunization of Ukrainian toponyms, prepared by the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory of Ukraine, visualizes well this cleavage: the territories of Crimea, DNR, and LNR remain dark areas on an otherwise clear blue map of Ukraine with record numbers of name changes: 51,493 streets and 987 towns and cities renamed, 1,320 monuments to Lenin and 1,069 monuments to other “totalitarian idols” taken down (Ponad 50 tysiach vulyts).

The memory of the Soviet past reinforces values, which were formed in the 70 years of Soviet experience. The Donbas regional identity is built on these values: preference for a welfare state, internationalism, collectivism, proletarian pride, social justice, and stability (Mokrushyna 2015b). Besides the appreciation of the Soviet legacy, the Donbas regional identity is also based on close cultural ties with Russia, the Russian language, and Orthodoxy (Dychkovska 2007, p. 60). Donbas has always had a strong regional identity, and its regional patriotism was the strongest in Ukraine compared with other regions (Mokrushyna 2015a; Kononov 2014).

Evidence for the appreciation of the Soviet past by Donetsk residents emerges not only from my study of collective memory in this city. It is also present in various sociological surveys, conducted at different times in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The residents of this region believed that independent Ukraine should preserve all that is valuable from the USSR and incorporate it into its own spiritual traditions (Kononov 2007, 2014; Vakulova 2007).

As my study shows, Donetsk honours its Soviet past, ignoring its dark pages. The repressive aspects of the Soviet state are acknowledged, as the *Rehabilitated by History* shows. The monument to repressed on Rutchenkovo field and the commemorative plaque mark the memory of repressions in the material symbolic space of the city. However, they were ultimately made possible following a direct intervention from Kyiv. Local authorities boycotted these projects as long as possible. The Stalinist repressions were condemned, but this condemnation does not extend to the rejection of the whole Soviet system as criminal and anti-humane. The Donbas memory of the 1930s, as in Soviet times, is based on an official forgetting of the repressions. The general assessment of the Soviet past is positive, and it is logical and natural, given the fact that the region was developed economically, socially, and culturally in the Soviet period, especially in the afterwar years. This Soviet past is incorporated into the collective identity of Donetsk as its integral

part, whereas in the rest of Ukraine this past is declared anti-Ukrainian and the continuation of the Russian Empire's subjugation of Ukraine.

In the memorialisation of the Soviet past, Donetsk belongs to the Russian cultural space, not the Ukrainian one. Lviv, on the other hand, has since the beginning of independent Ukraine been part of the Central-Eastern European memorial continuum. In this memorial tradition, Soviet power is seen as a foreign invader who imposed by force its authoritarian rule and stalled a nation's democratic evolution. The victims of the June 1941 NKVD executions of Lviv prisons are commemorated together with combatants of the OUN-UPA as fighters against the Soviet regime. Lviv's fifty years of Soviet experience could not erase the memory of repression and deportation by the Soviet authorities in 1939-1941. The scale of the suppression of resistance to Soviet power explains to a large extent the black memory of the Soviet past in Lviv.

An anti-Soviet Ukrainian nationalism survived in the underground, in the dissident movement within Ukraine, and in the Ukrainian Diaspora. It is not by accident that the former dissident Vyacheslav Chornovil was the first elected head of the Lviv Regional Council in 1990. The fall of monuments to Lenin started in Halychyna. It was in Halychyna that the Ukrainian national sentiment was the strongest in Ukraine. It is also evident in the debates of the Law on the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repression in early 1991, when it was former dissidents and deputies from Western Ukraine who proposed to qualify the whole Soviet period of Ukrainian history as totalitarian and anti-Ukrainian. In surveys, conducted in 2007 and 2014, quoted earlier, the majority of residents of Halychyna stated that Ukraine as an independent state should abandon the cultural heritage of Tsarist Russia and the USSR and develop its own spirituality (Kononov 2007, 2014).

Lviv and Donetsk are two extremes on the Ukrainian national continuum stretching from the culturally and politically West-oriented Ukraine to Russia-oriented Ukraine. This dichotomy of Ukraine is widely

acknowledged in political and scientific discourse. When I was designing my research on the memory of the repressive aspects of Soviet power in Ukraine, I included in my study Kharkiv and Kyiv as two distinctive points on the Ukrainian continuum. I wanted to discern the memory at play in culturally and linguistically diverse regions of Ukraine. And I did my field research in Lviv, Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Kyiv in the summer of 2013. I saw that the memory of the Soviet past was as complex as the Soviet past itself. In fact, this past is not even the past, because it lives in monumental Stalin-style architectural buildings on Khreshchatyk and in the world famous gigantic concrete building of Gazprom in downtown Kharkiv, an impressive symbol of Soviet industrial power and revolutionary ambitions to build a new world. It lives in monuments to Soviet soldiers and to the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War. It lives in the monuments to Soviet Ukrainian writers, architects, engineers who contributed to the development of Ukraine. It lived in monuments to Lenin, until they were toppled by protesters during the Euromaidan. It also lives in the Bykivnia Memorial to victims of the Great Terror of 1936-1937 near Kyiv and in the Piatykhvatky Memorial near Kharkiv, where Soviet citizens, executed in 1936-1937, are buried side by side with Polish officers, shot in the spring of 1940 by the NKVD.

I wanted to include these memorials into my analysis, but the events that happened three months after my field research trip to Ukraine altered my initial plan. In November 2013, protests erupted in Kyiv over the decision of the Ukrainian political leadership to postpone the signing of an association agreement with the European Union to negotiate better terms for Ukraine, whose close economic ties with Russia would suffer under the agreement. These protests, which became known as Euromaidan, ended with the overthrowing of President Yanukovich. The Russian annexation of Crimea and the civil war in Donbas followed. Among the factors which triggered the war were competing political and economic interests, cultural and linguistic division, and the support of the two sides of the conflict by foreign powers. When following the dramatic events unfolding before my eyes, I was struck by the confrontation of two opposing memories of the Soviet past in this war – on the Kyiv side and on the Donetsk side. This opposition determined my decision to look

deeper into the black and white memory of the Soviet past, into Lviv and Donetsk, to gain an insight into the manifestations of these memories and the role they play in the present.

In Lviv's material memorial space, the Soviet past is embodied in monuments glorifying fighters against the Soviet "regime" and commemorating its victims. In Donetsk, the Soviet past is immortalized in statues to Soviet commanders, workers, soldiers, academics, and in the monument to the founder of the Soviet state – Vladimir Lenin. In Lviv, streets of the city were renamed many years ago, eliminating any trace of the glorification of the Soviet past. Donetsk's map reads like the history of the Soviet Union, containing names such as Krasnooktiabrskaya (Red October), Partisans Avenue, and Lenin Boulevard. In Lviv, the memory of the Soviet past has some anti-Russian, or rather is imbued with anti-Moscow overtones, as in the inscription in the gate to the Yanivsky Cemetery Memorial. In this memory narrative, Soviet Moscow is the continuation of Tsarist Russia, which subjugated Ukraine for centuries and crushed Ukrainian aspirations to independence. In Donetsk, monuments and streets commemorate Russian writers, composers, and important events from the Russian and Soviet history. Soviet history is also seen as a continuation of Tsarist Russia, but it is associated with industrialization and modernization, with the victory in the Great Patriotic War, and with Soviet internationalism.

When the Euromaidan protests started in Kyiv in November 2013, there was no noticeable presence of right-wing forces among demonstrators, with the exception of the opposition party Svoboda. Afterwards, they organized torch marches on Khreshchatyk, the central street of Kyiv, in the midst of protests, and held Bandera readings in the Kyiv City Hall, seized by protesters. Paramilitary units, who called themselves "self-defense," began to emerge with a nationalist underpinning. One group, known as Pravyi Sektor, had an explicitly formulated extreme nationalism program. It is with the emergence of these paramilitary units that the slogans "Ukraine above all" and "Muscovites should be hanged on branches" began to be heard on Maidan, the central square in Kyiv. In fact, from the beginning, the Euromaidan protests were an

affirmation of Ukraine's political course towards Europe and turning back on Russia. When Yanukovych and the Ukrainian government proposed to European officials to hold trilateral negotiations, involving Russia, Ukraine, and the European Union to settle thorny economic questions, the EU refused, stating that the Association Agreement is between Ukraine and the EU, and Russia should not interfere.

The coverage of the confrontation between the protesters and the police was framed by the Ukrainian media as a fight for democracy between a self-organized civil society and forces defending an authoritarian regime. Yanukovych was described as a greedy dictator-oligarch who built a vertical chain of power and controlled all of the power structures, akin to Vladimir Putin. Anti-Maidan protests that were organized in Kyiv in support of Yanukovych were depicted as staged by the authorities – miners and local functionaries from Donbas were allegedly herded on trains, sent to Kyiv to demonstrate their loyalty to the regime, and co-opted by payments or threats to be fired. This depiction fits neatly into the narrative of the Soviet totalitarian state that has total control over society and prevents the emergence of any grassroots initiative. Because Donbas is Soviet, by definition, its population is not capable of self-mobilization.

With the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the popular uprising in Donetsk and Luhansk, supported by Russia, the anti-Soviet mood in Ukrainian public discourse intensified manifold due to the identification of Russia with the Soviet Union. "The aggressor-state," as Putin's Russia is referred to by Ukrainian politicians, is seen as an heir of the Soviet authoritarian state, which in turn is interpreted as the successor of the Russian Empire. The decommunization in Ukraine has a distinctively anti-Russian character in many instances, such as the renaming of cities and villages, when locals wanted to go back to the old, pre-revolutionary names, but the authorities ignored their wishes because these names were "imperial." Monuments to Lenin, which survived until Maidan, were destroyed in South-Eastern Ukraine in many cases by local groups espousing Ukrainian nationalist views, as it was the case in Kharkiv. Because of Russia's perceived and real intervention in Ukraine's territory and politics, patriotism fed the popularity of the

Ukrainian nationalism, which was not shared by the majority of the population in South-Eastern Ukraine, but became mainstream in the aftermath of Maidan.

The Ukrainian new political leadership, the former official opposition before Maidan, used this genuine patriotism to discredit its political opponents. The Communist Party of Ukraine, which under Yanukovych presidency had 32 seats in the Verkhovna Rada, out of 450, was declared illegal and banned. On the wave of patriotism, nationalist politicians succeeded in adopting the decommunization laws, which de jure marked the revolutionary rupture of Ukraine with its Soviet totalitarian past. This rupture was done without a large societal consensus. There were no debates, involving various social actors and engaging various groups within Ukrainian society. Such debates would have produced a more nuanced evaluation of the Soviet past, not only as a state-Party regime, but also a welfare state, not only characterized by Stalin repression, but also by the modernization of industry and development of science, free education and free health care, and the development of culture. The condemnation of the Soviet past was imposed from above by the Westernizing political and intellectual elite of Ukraine, who picked up the resolute anti-Communism of Ukrainian nationalists. The passage of decommunization laws in the Verkhovna Rada was facilitated by the resentment against Russia following the annexation of Crimea and the support of the rebels in Donbas. Ukrainian political elites also emulated the post-communist model of Ukraine's western neighbours – Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary- in the repudiation of the communist past.

And yet the methods by which the decommunization in Ukraine has been implemented in the aftermath of Maidan bear a striking resemblance with the Soviet eradication of dissidence. Monuments to Lenin are thrown out, in spite of protests by local citizens; laws are passed without consultation with the public; people who hold pro-Russian views are put in jail. All of this goes against the principles of democracy which the current Ukrainian leadership proclaimed to be building in Ukraine. The Western European experience in the past several decades shows that an honest reckoning with the traumatic, divisive past is

possible only through an open public debate, in which divergent assessments have the right to exist, without any risk of official reprimands for those who express these assessments. Such approach to the past, however, takes time, as it took Western Europe several decades after the Holocaust and collaboration with the Nazis to develop it. History as a science is the best equipped to provide a serious, truthful, and non-partisan study of the past, while any attempt to use the past for political gains of the present will threaten national identity and cohesiveness. Politics, based on a divisive past, will also be divisive (Khazanov and Payne 2008, p. 426).

My research shows that the public remembrance of victims of Stalinist purges in Lviv has reinforced in Western Ukrainian identity its roots in a nationalist, anti-Soviet interpretation of the past, while in Donetsk Eastern Ukrainian identity continues to be based on the forgetting of Stalin's victims, focusing instead on the positive sides of the Soviet legacy. This drifting in opposite directions is problematic for the project of national identity if political leaders try to impose a duty to remember or a duty to forget on everyone within Ukrainian society, as it risks damaging the fragile unity of Ukrainians as a mnemonic community. Instead, the Ukrainian academic and political leadership should work on creating a public space, in which a plurality of contending voices would speak to one another (Sennett 1998, 14).

The Lviv historian Vasyl Rasevych (2014), when discussing the division between Eastern and Western Ukraine, talks about a proletarian, multi-national Donbas, whose historical memory is much closer to the Russian politics of memory. He explains that Ukrainian "Westerners" perceived "Easterners" as Ukrainians, but spoiled by Soviet propaganda, which lied and concealed from them the true history. Westerners believed that their mission is to convert Easterners back to their national roots, which they betrayed. Like teachers that explain to first-year students their ABC, "Westerners," with their "ethnocultural potential," wanted to convince Easterners that the Western model of society is the only correct one, a truly Ukrainian

one. And neither Westerners nor Easterners gave the slightest thought to the idea that in a democratic society everybody has a right to nurture culture and tradition that s/he cherishes the most.

Another Ukrainian historian, Yaroslav Hrytsak, noted in the comparative analysis of Halychyna and Donbas regional identities, that “Sovietness” unites these two diverging identities, allowing Ukrainian political leaders to keep the country together. But as the Soviet identity is withering away, it will be replaced by a new identity, and a crucial question is what this identity will be (Hrytsak 1998, pp. 276-277). In the “official memory,” determined by memory politics, Ukraine through its decommunization laws condemned the Soviet past, therefore delegitimizing Soviet identity. This policy by the post-Maidan government in Kyiv was, on the one hand, a reflection of a grassroots movement among a large part of Ukrainian society towards democratization. On the other hand, it was also a politically calculated, non-democratic action, aimed at delegitimizing ideologically political opponents. It was imposed on a divided society, further deepening the schism between West-oriented and Russia-oriented Ukrainians.

The Russian annexation of Crimea and support of the rebellion in Donetsk and Luhansk against what is perceived as a right-wing nationalist regime in Kyiv greatly reduced the number of Ukrainians with pro-Russian views. However, there are still many Ukrainians who feel nostalgia about Soviet social security, collectivism, and internationalism, who celebrate the victory in Great Patriotic War and are proud of Soviet traditions and of the great power that the Soviet Union had. Decommunization alienates these Ukrainians because it refuses them the right to have a positive memory of the Soviet past. Decommunization is imposed on society by a political faction which makes awkward and crude attempts to transform a complex history and memory into a simplistic, narrow narrative of a nation-victim of Russian/Soviet imperialism, while at the time plundering the remains of former “public property” (Kasianov 2016).

Promoting one “official truth” about the past is anti-democratic and oppressive. As Tony Judt noted in his analysis of the memory of World War II in Europe, even a benign neglect, which passes over the injustices

done by one group over another, is necessary, if society is to survive the aftermath of the violent period. But after the benign neglect the forgotten memories come back. Soviet experience shows that memory, which dispels this “truth,” is resilient and impossible to silence. Even though the Soviet leadership managed to conceal information on mass repression and crimes by the state’s repressive organs, popular memory preserved it for decades. It exploded into public space during the perestroika years. This ontological discrepancy between official Communist ideology and Soviet reality was one of the main reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union. The truth that poured into the public space in the form of memoirs, articles, and TV programs discredited Soviet power in the eyes of millions of Soviet citizens.

In the Baltic republics, where the memory of the struggle for national liberation and its suppression by the Soviet Union were still alive at the end of the 1980s, nationalism sprung to life again. Since Soviet power was imposed on the local population in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia by occupying Soviet troops in 1940 and once more at the end of World War II social memory internalized the Soviet period as a period of national oppression, depicting the Baltic nations as victims of the Soviet invasion. As the example of the Tallinn’s Museum of Occupation shows, the Baltic Diaspora played an active role in the restoration and framing of the repressive nature of the Soviet state after the regaining of independence by the Baltic States. The Ukrainian Diaspora has been instrumental in the condemnation of the Ukrainian Soviet past, inscribing it into a long history of the victimhood of the Ukrainian nation in the hands of Imperial, and later Soviet Russia. Cases in point are the active lobbying of the Diaspora in Ukraine and internationally for the recognition of the Great Famine of 1932-33 as a genocide against the Ukrainian nation; protests in front of the Soviet embassies in Ottawa and Washington against violation of human rights in the Soviet Union; and the active role of the Ukrainian-American lobby in the establishment in 1959 of a Captive Nations Week (“Captive Nations 50th Anniversary” 2009).

In Russia, the revelation about mass graves from the Stalin era discredited the Soviet power in the eyes of millions of Soviet citizens in the late 1980s and was one of the main reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union. The narrative, however, began to change in the 1990s. There are many reasons for that, as explained in the chapter on Russia. One was that Soviet power was a home-grown phenomenon, and there was no foreign power to blame, although in the Russian nationalist narrative Bolshevism was brought to Russia by foreigners from the West. Central European countries, on the other hand, made the Soviet Union responsible for imposing the communist rule in their countries. Their narrative of taking no responsibility for Communism has grown over the years, and is at odds with the EU narrative on memory.

Another fundamental reason for Russia's way of dealing with the totalitarian Soviet past is that this past contains not only repression and crimes, but also, as pointed out above, modernization, victory in the Great Patriotic War, social security, confidence in the future, free health care and education, and high culture. This memory eclipses the memory of dark pages of the Soviet past (collectivization, deportations, Great Terror, GULAG camps), which is present in the public space.

In Ukraine, the memory of the Soviet past is divided, as my research shows. In Lviv, the dominant narrative is the repression of the Ukrainian national liberation struggle. In Donetsk, it is the celebration of Soviet achievements in industry, science, culture. The memorial space of Ukraine stretches between the two opposites – the Baltic type and the Russian type. These two different memories stem from the historical experience of Soviet power in two different regions. The opposing readings of the Soviet past have constantly clashed on the national level, as the debates of the Law on Rehabilitation and the Law on the Holodomor have shown. Various political forces used the nationalist narrative of Ukrainian victimhood at the hands of Russian/Soviet imperialism to obtain a political advantage, as occurred during the Yushchenko presidency and with the decommunization laws. Such historicizing strategy is short-sighted and dangerous, as it presents a distorted picture of the past, and it drives a wedge into an already

fragmented society instead of integrating the conflict-generating episodes from the past (Mink in Neumayer and Mink 2016, p. 4) into the national narrative. On the other side of the ideological (and real) war, the memory of the Soviet past is also instrumentalized by the leadership of the Donetsk People's Republic to justify their fight against 'nationalist' Kyiv and to mobilize the support of the population, and the official narrative in the DPR also simplifies the past and brushes out the inconvenient truth.

Memory cannot be legislated from above. It survives official bans and silencing. The narrative of Ukraine as a nation victim of the Soviet alien regime goes against the living memory of the Soviet past that millions of Ukrainians share. Ukraine was one of the builders of the Soviet Union (Kasianov 2016), and this reality is reflected in the memory of the Soviet past. Imposing one version of history on a divided society does not contribute to the strengthening of social cohesion; it tears apart the social fabric and threatens a fragile unity of a divided society.

The embrace by Ukrainian elites of European integration at the expense of severing ties with Russia ultimately led to a civil war in Donbas, where the local population was the closest to Russia culturally and linguistically. The memory of the Soviet past is another common feature that inscribes Donetsk into the Russian space. Only through a thorough historicization can a society allow for a more nuanced and inclusive forms of memorialisation and a greater complexity of the assessment of the past, which does not reduce a complex, tragic, painful period of history into the dichotomy of good and evil, victims and perpetrators (Berger 2012, p. 132-133).

Spain's example shows that it is possible to build democracy in a country where divisions caused by the civil war are deep. A national consensus is required for reconciliation, a peaceful dialogue, and negotiations are the only possible solution, not confrontation (Khazanov 2008, p. 414). It applies both to the current armed conflict in Ukraine and to the memory of the Soviet past in Ukraine. There should be no "official" history of Ukraine, and no memory politics developed by the National Institute of Memory.

A line should be drawn between the Soviet past and the Ukrainian present, leaving it to the historians to study the complex Soviet past, as it was done in Spain in 1976 (Khazanov 2008, p. 413). Ukraine which wishes so intensely to become part of the European Union should learn from Germany, France, and Italy on how to work critically and honestly through a traumatic, divisive past, in an extremely difficult, but necessary open public debate. Painful self-questioning regarding the past was spurred in Central and East-Central European countries in preparation for and joining the European Union (Müller 2012, p. 32). Critical self-reflection is a condition *sine qua non* for understanding a complex historical period, without emasculating it, reducing to absolute categories of good and evil and transforming it into a weapon in current political battles. It is a very difficult task, as it requires a certain maturity of the society, the capacity to recognize one's guilt and mistakes. It requires honesty and courage. It requires a willingness to open one's mind and hear the other. It requires the possibility of speaking freely.

The collective memory of various groups within the larger society should be allowed to exist and not be silenced or trimmed by the pruners of official memory politics. The memory of a society is like a forest where trees of collective memory grow. If a society aspires to build a democracy, all trees should be left intact, and their voice should be heard, and only a grassroots large social consensus should determine what should be remembered and how.

As Barbara Misztal noted, remembering *per se* is not a solution to all problems, but open and reflexive public recollection that allows adopting a critical and open approach to the past (Misztal 2005, p. 1336). The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur spoke about the "appeased" memory that does not forget about the evil suffered or committed. The appeased memory remembers and recognizes it, but strives to speak about it without anger (Ricoeur 2003). This is what is needed in Ukraine - large public debates without anger, a free exchange of opinions, and a diversity of perspectives and interpretations of the Soviet experience if Ukraine wants to build an inclusive, pluralist democracy. The Ukrainian academic and political leadership

should work on creating a public space, in which the plurality of contending voices would speak to one another (Sennett 1998, p. 14). Out of this polyphonic, inharmonious debate, a common understanding of the past can emerge which will bring Ukrainians together, will allow them to put the past to the rest, to take from there what is good and incorporate it into the common project for the future.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide¹

For semi-structured, in-depth interviews

To be conducted by Halyna Mokrushyna as part of the research for the PhD Thesis “The Gordian knot of past and present: a legacy of political repressions in the politics and memory of modern Ukraine”

General questions²

1. How is the Soviet past seen/remembered in the Ukrainian society at large?
2. How do you and a group you identify yourself with perceive the Soviet past?
3. Is there a general interest within Ukrainian society towards repressions, carried out by the Soviet authorities?
4. If there is, why and what social groups are interested in it and promote the remembrance of these repressions?
5. If there is no interest, why, and who opposes the attempts to draw attention to repressive acts of the Soviet authorities and to condemn these acts?
6. What is the position of the Ukrainian state officials regarding the necessity to remember victims of political repressions and to recognize the illegal nature of these repressions?
7. How are you personally involved in the process of remembering the victims/recognizing the illegal nature of the repressive actions of the Soviet regime?

Specific questions related to various aspects of working through the legacy of political repressions in Ukraine³

Rehabilitation of victims

1. Why is it important to rehabilitate victims?
2. How is the rehabilitation conducted (how to apply, where, what compensations are available, how the decision to compensate/rehabilitate is taken and by whom, is there a possibility to appeal that decision).
3. The Law on Rehabilitation has been criticized for many shortcomings. What are these shortcomings?
4. Is the Ukrainian state doing/has done enough to rehabilitate the victims? If not enough, what else should be done?

¹ The list of questions is not exhaustive. Other questions elucidating or defining more accurately the information given by an interviewee will be added in the course of the interview.

² These questions will be posed to all interviewees.

³ These questions are addressed for interviewees, involved in a specific type of activity.

Commemoration of victims of political repressions

1. Why are you involved in the commemoration of victims of political repressions?
2. Who is in charge of maintaining this monument to victims of political repressions (name of the monument)?
3. Does the state support the maintenance of the monument? If it does, how?
4. If it does not, why? What is the reaction of state officials?
5. Who come to visit the monument and attend commemorative ceremonies?
6. What social groups support the commemoration of victims of political repressions?

Lustration

1. What is the rationale for implementing lustration?
2. What are the arguments cited against lustration?
3. Who opposed lustration?
4. Who promotes it?
5. Why lustration has not gathered a large public support within Ukrainian society?

Opening of and access to archives of the Communist party and of the Security Service

1. Is it important to declassify these archives and provide public access to them? If it is, why, if it is not, why.
2. Has the Ukrainian state taken right actions and decisions in this regard?
3. Is there a pressure from Ukrainian civil society to open these archives? If there is, who advocates it and why?

Attempts to condemn/bring to justice the Communist Party/Communist officials for massive political repressions against population

1. Why is it important to condemn/bring to justice Communist officials, involved in massive political repressions against the population?
2. Why did these attempts fail?
3. Who opposed these attempts?
What were the arguments used by those who opposed/dismissed these attempts?