Memorializing Babyn Yar:
Politics of Memory and Commemoration of the Holocaust in Ukraine

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Supervisor: Peo Hansen
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ABSTRACT

Recently in the West, interest in the memory of the Holocaust considered as a commonly shared dark past has increased. In Ukraine the commemoration of the Holocaust is affected by the ongoing nation-building process, with a focus on the collective memories of the Holodomor (the Famine of 1932-1933) and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). At the core of the debates around the Holocaust remembrance lies the memorialization of Babyn Yar, a multilayered memory site where Jewish and non-Jewish collective memories compete. Public and political actors vie for its memorial space in order to promote their own views through recognition of their respective tragedies. The memorialization and landscape of Babyn Yar is therefore transformed together with changes in the memory politics of the Holocaust. This thesis studies the contemporary politics of memory and commemoration of the Holocaust in Ukraine with a focus on Babyn Yar and its memorial objects. Through the illustrations of the memory site this project analyzes the memorial space and grounds and explores the struggles over the collective memories in Ukraine.

KEY WORDS: Holocaust in Ukraine, Babyn Yar, politics of memory and memorialization, collective memory, sites of memory, Europeanization of memory, politicization of memory, transnational memory, nation-building, Holodomor, OUN.
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Finally, my friends and family deserve more thanks than I can express here. Without your support and encouragement this thesis would still be an unformed idea. You enabled me to push further and provided encouragement when I really needed it. Your love and support are much appreciated.

AUTHOR’S NOTE

The translations of the texts from Ukrainian, Russian, and Hebrew into English, including inscriptions on memorials, are made by the author. All the illustrations are produced by the author, unless otherwise stated. The responsibility for content, errors, and shortcomings in the text is the author’s alone.
Remembering means life. (Sally Perel, Holocaust survivor and author)

The best that can be achieved is to know precisely what it [the past] was, and to endure this knowledge, and then to wait and see what comes of knowing and enduring. (Arendt, 1968/1995: 20)

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>SU</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>UkSSR</td>
<td>Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic</td>
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<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPW</td>
<td>Great Patriotic War</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>USHMM</td>
<td>United States Holocaust Memorial Museum</td>
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<td>BYHMC</td>
<td>Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POWs</td>
<td>Prisoners of War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUN</td>
<td>Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPA</td>
<td>Ukrainian Insurgent Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UINR (UINM)</td>
<td>Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Ukrainian Institute of National Memory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAC</td>
<td>Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>JDC or Joint</td>
<td>American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>NKVD</td>
<td>People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs</td>
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<td>Cheka</td>
<td>All-Russian Extraordinary Commission</td>
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EXPLANATION OF DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this Master’s thesis several Soviet and Ukrainian terms are used to reflect cultural and historical memories of the Holocaust and World War II (WWII) in Ukraine. These terms are transliterated and translated into English, as commonly used in the Soviet and Ukrainian public discourse. Among them are the following terms:

The Great Patriotic War (GPW) (Velikaja Otecestvennaja vojna in Russian; Velyka Vityczynjana vijna in Ukrainian) – is a term in the historiography of the Soviet Union and post-Soviet states that describes the war of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) against Nazi Germany during the period from 22 June 1941 to 9 May 1945.

The Holodomor or The Great Famine (holodomor means a hunger, a famine in Ukrainian) – was an artificially made famine in Soviet Ukraine in 1932-1933 that killed about three to seven million Ukrainians. Some historians of Soviet Ukraine, especially those in the diaspora, consider the Famine as a genocide and call it the “Ukrainian Holocaust,” following the definition established by the Ukrainian-American historian Omeljan Pritsak in 1983.

Babyn Yar – is the site of the largest single Holocaust massacre. It means “an old woman’s ravine,” called Babyn Yar in Ukrainian, or Babi Yar in Russian. Many authors and scholars use the name Babi Yar in Russian, when referring to the ravine, which was also a common practice in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR) where Russian was the dominant language. In this thesis the name Babyn Yar is used, as transliterated from the Ukrainian language.

Ethnicity vs Nationality – in most cases the term nationality means someone’s citizenship, as in the passport that a person carries, which reflects the relation of this person to a state. However, in the Soviet discourse the term “nationality” (natsional’nost in Russian) meant ethnicity. Nationality was not considered as belonging to a state (this was referred to as citizenship), but belonging to a national group or national collective. Every Soviet citizen had a nationality along with citizenship, officially stated in their identity documents, and Soviet citizens had many different nationalities. In this thesis the term “nationality” means belonging to a group that shares certain characteristics, such as culture, history, language, ethnographic traditions, etc.¹

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND: THE HOLOCAUST – A POLITICALLY CHARGED TOPIC IN SOVIET HISTORICAL CULTURE

Notwithstanding that the Holocaust is associated with Nazi extermination camps in Germany and Poland, one-third of all Jewish victims annihilated in the European Final Solution were in fact Soviet citizens. Of those, 1.5 million came from the modern-day territories of Ukraine (Pohl, 2014). Furthermore, despite a common conception of the Holocaust as a distant industrial slaughter, in Ukraine it was a communal genocide to a large extent, observed and witnessed by non-Jews (Bartov, 2008: 571). If in Western Europe Nazis organized the Holocaust behind walls, in Eastern Europe they did not even attempt to hide it. This terrifying annihilation was called the “Holocaust by Bullets” by the French priest Patrick Desbois (2008), meaning the massacre of millions of Jews shot en masse, often over a few days’ time, and dumped in graves all over Ukraine and other Eastern European countries.

This tragedy happened before the deportation and murder of European Jews in death camps, before Belzec, Treblinka, and the well-known Sobibor. By the time the Auschwitz-Birkenau center opened, an enormous number of Jews had already been killed by the Germans and their collaborators in the Ukrainian territories (Desbois, 2008: vii). These Jewish victims of the Holocaust were not forcibly taken to the camps; they mostly walked by themselves to the sites where they were murdered, just near their own homes. As acknowledged by the director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Paul A. Shapiro: “These first mass victims of the Holocaust went largely forgotten through most of the post-WWII era. Their stories and the fates of their communities were obscured by clouds of Soviet secrecy and anti-Semitism” (Desbois, 2008: viii).

Anti-Jewish genocide was especially violent and fierce in the Soviet Union (SU), since for the Nazis these were not just Jews, but Jewish Bolsheviks, who were considered a “driving force” of a potential world revolution (Kruglov, 2002; Lower, 2007; Magocsi, 2010; Black, 2014). German general Erich Hoepner explained to his troops:

The war against Russia is an important chapter in the struggle for existence of the German nation. It is the old battle of the Germanic against the Slavic peoples, of the defence of European culture against Moscovite-Asiatic inundation, and the repelling of

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2 The statistics on the number of Soviet Jews annihilated in the Holocaust varies to a wide extent. According to the well-accepted figures, the Holocaust wiped out more than a third of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union (Altshuler, 1998), corresponding to approximately 1.5 million Soviet Jewish victims (Gitelman, 1990) who lived in the pre-1939 borders, or about 2.5 million who joined the USSR in 1939-1940 (Altshuler, 1987: 4; Kupovetsky, 1994: 2). Generally, Holocaust scholars and experts estimate the number to between 1.5 and 2 million Jews who were killed “by bullets” in the territories of the Soviet Union by German soldiers and their collaborators; and 1.5 million when referring to the Ukrainian Jewish victims of the Shoah.
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Jewish Bolshevism. The objective of this battle must be the destruction of present-day Russia and it must therefore be conducted with unprecedented severity. (Mazower, 2008: 143, citing Foerster, 1986: 18)

In this context historians Yitzhak Arad (2009) and Zvi Gitelman (1993/2015) argue that as far as the Germans were concerned, Jews and Bolsheviks meant the same evil, since they viewed the USSR as a product of Eastern European Jewry and Jewish Communism. Colonization of Soviet territories and annihilation of Soviet Jewry was seen as killing two birds with one stone – as the Final Solution of the Jewish and Communist Questions. As the American historian Catherine Merridale wrote (2005: 4), the defeat of the Red Army signified “the genocide of Slavs and Jews.” The Ukrainians, like all Slavs, were classified as the inferior races, while the Jews were at the bottom of the Nazi racial hierarchy (Magocsi, 2010: 675). Hitler’s plan therefore was to eliminate the Judeo-Bolshevik system. General Erich von Manstein wrote:

More strongly than in Europe, [Jewry] holds all the key positions in the political leadership and administration…. The Jewish-Bolshevist system must be exterminated once and for all. The soldier must appreciate the necessity for harsh punishment of Jewry, the spiritual bearer of the Bolshevist terror. (Gitelman, 1993/2015: 5)

The historical narrative of the Shoah as a unique tragedy of the twentieth century started to be established in the West throughout the 1960s to 1990s. Through numerous confrontations Europe admitted its dark past. In 1970 West German Chancellor Willy Brandt dropped to his knees before the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw (Rare Historical Photos, 2016). In his speech at the Stade Vélodrome (Orange Vélodrome) in 1995, French President Jacques Chirac “admitted France’s ‘collective error’,,” mainly the French population’s responsibility for the deportation of Jews to the camps during the Holocaust (Simons, 1995).

However, unlike in the West, the Shoah was not represented as a unique phenomenon in Soviet Ukraine and was not included in the Soviet official memory. The Jewish Catastrophe was an integral part of a larger national tragedy and suffering: the Nazi regime against the USSR, and the Nazi genocide of Slavs. In the Soviet mindset there was no Jewish Holocaust and a special tragedy of Jews separate from other Soviets. Compared to the postwar memorialization in the West access to the Holocaust scholarship and documentation was restricted in the Soviet Ukraine. The historiography of the Holocaust did not exist as such (Hirszowicz, 1992), but was universalized, obliterated (Korey, 1983/2015: 53), and suppressed by the historical culture of the Great Patriotic War (GPW). Overall, the memory of the Holocaust in Soviet Ukraine was characterized by a policy of forgetting. The victory over Nazi Germany in the GPW formed a supranational community of Soviets (Brunstedt, 2011). It

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3 Brandt became renowned for this famous gesture, which is considered one of the reasons he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971. Almost 30 years after his act, on 6 December 2000, a monument to Willy Brandt was unveiled in Willy Brandt Square in Warsaw (near the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw).
occupied a significant place in the national heritage of the Empire, whereas the Holocaust challenged this historical narrative. This national ideology shaped the national identity of all Soviet people of any nationality, including Soviet Jews. For instance, Boris Grigorevich, a Jew from Kiev, stated that during the GPW “we were all Soviet citizens, all the same” (Merridale, 2005: 258).

“Our relationship to the past does partially determine who we are in the present” (Rothberg, 2009: 5). The past is used for changing the contemporary context. This is what happened in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR) and is what is going on in the independent Ukraine in a new light. Commemoration of the Holocaust is affected by the nation-building process in the country with a focus on the victims of Communist crimes and resurgence of right-wing movements (Pohl, 2014), which is in contradiction with the memory of the Shoah.

The discourse of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) serves as a tool for nationalization of the country and the shaping of its national identity. Additionally, the Holodomor (the Famine of 1932-1933) takes a dominating position in the collective memory of Ukraine, utilizing the remembrance of the Holocaust as a platform for its own articulation. These contested memories construct a hierarchy of suffering and a struggle around collective memories of Ukraine’s dark past. This in turn brings a new set of questions. How to think about histories of victimization and suffering of different groups and their remembrance? Which histories and memories are more important? And, ultimately, what past should be canonized as a collective and national memory? In this context Walter Benn Michaels (2004; 2006) brings up an important argument questioning whether one history and memory should take precedence over another. Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that history, memory, and memorialization of the past can identify larger conflicts in a society.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PURPOSE**

Politics of memory and memorialization constructs a politically historical myth that affects public consciousness and views. Once a struggle over the memory occurs, this myth needs to be negotiated and recognized. History, memory, and consciousness are interconnected and mutually dependent elements of politics and culture. Thus, intersections of history, power, and culture crystallized in the memorialization of the Holocaust lie at the core of the present study.

In Ukraine the history of the Shoah is suppressed by two significant elements of Ukraine’s dark past – the Holodomor and the OUN. These dominating narratives of victimization and

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4 Michaels criticizes the collective memory evoked by the USHMM in Washington, D.C., since the memory of the Holocaust in the United States (US) blocks and exclusively displaces the national African American history. According to him, it takes the narrative of American racism, colonialism, and slavery out of the public collective memory and consciousness of Americans.
heroization are prioritized for the nation-building process in Ukraine. The historical memory of the Holocaust is promulgated by the “civilized” western countries and is not welcomed in the national historical discourse. Consequently, this project analyzes three struggles around collective memories of Ukraine’s history, with the focus on the “marginalized” remembrance of the Holocaust.

The overall purpose of this thesis is to study the contemporary politics of memory and memorialization of the Holocaust in Ukraine, with a focus on the case study of the Babyn Yar site and its memorials. Additionally, the conflict among several historical narratives and the contested role of their remembrance is considered.

Throughout this study the following research questions are investigated:

♦ How did the memory of the Shoah evolve in post-Soviet Ukraine and how is it remembered today? What place does the Holocaust occupy in the historical culture in Ukraine?
♦ What is Babyn Yar and what collective memories are represented at the site of commemoration? What conflicts lie at the core of the Babyn Yar memorialization? Why is it so important to memorialize Babyn Yar internationally?
♦ What role do historical narratives of the Holodomor and OUN play in shaping the national and collective memories in Ukraine?
♦ How is the Holocaust memory used by different political actors in national and international arenas?

**METHODOLOGY**

Although the politics of memory is rooted in the past, it has a direct impact on the present political and public context. The post-war memory boom of the 1960s proliferated a deep interest in the effects of remembrance on politics (Verovšek, 2016: 533). So far, there are many interpretations of memory politics and the lack of conceptual clarity about this phenomenon opens a new broad field of study. Peter J. Verovšek argues (2016: 539) that the politics of memory should be centered on the interaction between formal and informal settings. From this perspective, I will use the definition of “institutional memory” by Richard Ned Lebow (2006: 13). He describes it as “efforts by political elites, their supporters, and their opponents to construct meaning of the past and propagate them more widely or impose them on other members of society.” I am interested in the historical memory shaped by a state, and the strategies applied by political actors in these debates.

Politics of memory means a set of actions carried out by political agents, aimed to shape an official memory, which might include the following methods: organization of institutions
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aimed to commemorate the national memory; institutionalization of memorial days; adoption of relevant memory laws; organization of commemoration activities; creation of special museums and exhibitions under the patronage of certain political actors; distribution of funds directed to memorialization of historical narratives; erection of memorial complexes, monuments, and memorial plaques.

As part of this study I am interested in methods used in the processes of remembering, which show how the society reconstructs the past through public monuments and memorial places. Tim Cole (2003: 273) states that “the act of remembering is essentially political.” The study of commemoration sites and landscapes form devices by which we can analyze factors of their production via processes of memory and heritage (Post, 2015: 196). Moreover, it is possible to analyze the changes of the historical consciousness and collective identities by studying various memory sites. Thus, analysis of the Babyn Yar site and its memorial objects might reveal an evolution of the contested memories.

Following what I stated above, it is important to keep in mind that Holocaust memorialization is inevitably linked to the collective memories of the Holodomor and OUN. Thus, analysis of these two historical narratives is significant for understanding the place the Shoah occupies in the historical culture of Ukraine. As a central Holocaust site in the country, Babyn Yar is viewed as an integral part of the discourse on the Holocaust memory in Ukraine and thus lies at the heart of this project.

In order to achieve the research purpose and answer the questions of this thesis I use a combination of methods. For the analysis of the Holocaust memory in the historical culture of Ukraine I examine past and current debates on the topic through the use of policy documents, secondary sources, and archival records. In addition to these supporting materials, for the analysis of the Babyn Yar memory site I use visual research methods, mainly photographs taken at the site, illustrated in Chapter Four.\footnote{As part of my fieldwork at Babyn Yar in Kiev I investigated memorial objects and collected photos over two consecutive days in the middle of February. This is a cold season with some snow and rain. The first day was bright and sunny, with a clear blue sky, but the second day was rainy and cloudy. These weather conditions are reflected in the photographs.}

Photographs have long been associated with memories (see Sontag, 1989). They are more than momentaneous objects since they can influence our perception and remembrance of events. Being a mnemonic device, a photograph can say a lot. It is a trigger for memorialization, connecting the past with the present, transferring the meaning to the future.

While analyzing a memory site it is important to keep several things in mind. For instance, the time of the site’s production depends on the relevant memory politics. The initiators of the
site’s creation are under social and political control. Mainly those in power decide on the form, location, text, function, and performance of the site. The location of the memorial is often placed at the site of tragedy in order to direct attention to the past event. In this context, a public space is an important landscape that embodies collective memories of shared suffering. Moreover, a public space can be an expression of power, chosen as a subject to push a certain agenda onto a society. In the case of Babyn Yar the location plays a crucial role since it is a single site of several dark memories.

Then there are commemorative practices which are realized at the site. The text on the memorial represents a discourse which bears symbolic meaning. A monument inscription shapes public consciousness. The meaning and language(s) of this monument’s inscription and its subsequent modifications illustrate politics of memory and forgetting. The language of the text refers to the national and ethnic meanings of the memory site. “Text achieves symbolic importance by deflecting blame and assigning honor” (Post, 2015: 199). Depending on who funded the monument or the memorial plaque there can be an attempt to popularize a specific event and to direct attention to a specific group of victims. The text might both disclose and hide certain aspects of an event (Loewen, 1999). In the case of Babyn Yar, the text is crucial as a characteristic feature of the Holocaust memory politics in the UkSSR and post-Soviet Ukraine.

**CHOICE OF CASE STUDY**

No monument stands over Babi Yar.
A steep cliff only, like the rudest headstone.
I am afraid.

Today, I am as old
As the entire Jewish race itself….
I’m thrown back by a boot, I have no strength left,
In vain I beg the rabble of pogrom,
To jeers of “Kill the Jews, and save our Russia!”
My mother’s being beaten by a clerk.
O, Russia of my heart, I know that you
Are international, by inner nature.
But often those whose hands are steeped in filth
Abused your purest name, in name of hatred.
I know the kindness of my native land.
How vile, that without the slightest quiver
The antisemites have proclaimed themselves
The “Union of the Russian People!”…
No fiber of my body will forget this.
May “Internationale” thunder and ring
When, for all time, is buried and forgotten
The last of antisemites on this earth.
There is no Jewish blood that’s blood of mine,
But, hated with a passion that’s corrosive
Am I by antisemites like a Jew.
And that is why I call myself a Russian!

*Babi Yar* by Yevgeny Yevtushenko (1961); trans. by Benjamin Okopnik.
Introduction

Babyn Yar, also known as a “Jewish cemetery,” symbolizes the extermination of the Jews in Ukraine. Historically, Babyn Yar has been a central arena of numerous public and political debates, demonstrations, and commemoration activities, devoted to the memorialization of the Shoah in Ukraine. Moreover, this site of mass execution is subject to famous art works such as Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s poem *Babi Yar* (above) (1961), Dmitri Shostakovich’s Thirteenth Symphony *Babi Yar* (1962), and Anatoly Kuznetsov’s novel *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel* (1966). The lack of state policy regarding Holocaust memorialization is clearly manifested through the case study of the site, which is proved by Yevtushenko’s words “no monument stands over Babi Yar.” Thus, Babyn Yar, being a central memory site of the “Holocaust by Bullets” is a major focus of interest for the present study.

Furthermore, historical and contemporary struggles around the memorialization of the ravine makes this place even more interesting for this work. Babyn Yar is multilayered, being an iconic site of not only the Shoah, but also a stage of “mutual competition” (Rohdewald, 2008: 181) between Jewish and non-Jewish collective memories analyzed in this thesis, mainly the Holodomor and the OUN. All these remembrances were marginalized in the age of Communism. Consequently, along with the Holocaust symbolization the ravine has acquired an alternative memory to that of the Shoah, being an attribute of the national liberation struggle to obtain Ukrainian independence from the Soviet regime. This competition for the Babyn Yar space and memorial landscape culminated in around thirty monuments presently located on the grounds of the National Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar.” Among these are memorial crosses, a church, a Menorah, and other monuments and plaques, commemorating victims of the site itself, but also those victims which do not have any relation to either the history of the site, or its ground area. Being a subject of dispute among governmental authorities and academics Babyn Yar has attracted much attention in the public and political discourses in Ukraine and abroad.

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

This thesis aims to contribute to the broader fields of Memory and Holocaust studies, more specifically to the research line of memorialization policies of the Holocaust sites. Collective memory is related to social phenomena such as ethnicity, identity, and nationalism. Ukraine is a multiethnic country with collective memories of minorities not being included into the national official memory and nation-building process. Research areas of ethnicity and interethnic relations are therefore under consideration in this work.

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6 Babyn Yar was first named a “Jewish cemetery” by Lev Ozerov in his poem *Babi Yar* in 1946.
Introduction

Most academic studies on the Babyn Yar site do not explore the site itself, but Holocaust memorialization campaigns in the Soviet period, or examine only controversies around the commemoration of the place. Through an extensive analysis of the Babyn Yar memoryscape by means of illustrations and interpretations of their meanings, this thesis brings an understanding of the present memory politics and political orientation in Ukraine at national and international levels.

Theoretically, the analysis contributes to the discussion on memory as a constantly changing phenomenon and its role in the nation-building process. Besides, the study supports the conception on the Holocaust memory as an instrument of Europeanization. Practically, the findings from the case study of Babyn Yar demonstrate that sites of memory are largely living and not sedimented memorials, often being transformed under the influence of the political environment in the country. Politics of memory is often realized through the construction of monuments and memorials. Thus, the debates and discourses surrounding their creation are important parts of the memorialization politics.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of five Chapters:

The current Chapter One has presented the historical context of the subject, the research questions, the methodology used in the project, the choice of the case study, and the contribution of this work. Chapter Two examines the theoretical foundation of the project. Here I explore the concepts of collective and institutional memories, sites of memory (les lieux de mémoire), and Europeanization of the Holocaust memory, that are foundational for this thesis.

Hereafter, two analytical Chapters with a discussion of the main arguments follow.

Chapter Three overviews the main political and public debates regarding Holocaust memorialization in Ukraine. This is the context in which I examine the present Ukrainian discourse on the Holocaust, tracing connections to the Soviet past, and the present political situation with reference to the EU and Russia. Starting from the Soviet commemoration of the Shoah and its subsequent integration into the historical culture of post-communist Ukraine, I discuss collective memories of the Holodomor and OUN with regard to the Holocaust memory.

Chapter Four is devoted to the subject of Babyn Yar. I begin with a historical overview of the memorialization of the site and public and political debates around the subject. Furthermore, I analyze the present situation of Babyn Yar remembrance, by means of illustrations from the National Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar.” Finally, this Chapter discusses the context and debates over the creation of the BYHMC.

Chapter Five concludes the thesis, summarizing main findings and analysis.
CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MEMORY

Memory studies are closely linked to the field of the Holocaust studies (Kitch, 2008), thus memory lies at the foundation of the present work. This Chapter presents a theoretical discussion of the key concepts of this thesis, mainly memory, sites of memory, and Europeanization of memory in the context of the Holocaust in Ukraine. I am particularly interested in the collective and institutional memories of the Shoah, in Babyn Yar as a commemoration site of mass killings, as well as in Europeanization and transnationalization processes of the Holocaust memory, as exemplified in Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

COLLECTIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL MEMORIES

As Martin Conway (2004) notes, struggles for memory are a mechanism by which political forces compete for the present. The construction of memory intersects with politics (Lebow, 2006: 4), since historical memory constitutes a subject of the political “war.” Therefore, memory and power intersect at various stages (Snyder, 2002). Remembering is no longer just about history. What we remember and what we forget is a matter of national and political identities. Paul Connerton, in his book How Societies Remember (1999), reminds us of the link between memory, forgetting, and power. This conceptualization has been commonly used by scholars in relation to totalitarian and post-totalitarian periods. When a political power attempts to deprive a social group of their consciousness, it applies the politics of organized forgetting, depriving the group of their memories (Connerton, 1999: 14-15). This is one of the main characteristics of authoritarian and totalitarian oppressive regimes. Milan Kundera, a Czech-born French writer, defines the struggle for memory in the following way: “The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting” (Kundera, 1980: 3).

Memory occurs at three different levels (Lebow, 2006: 8): the collective (the subject of cultural history and sociology), the individual (the field of psychology), and the institutional (the area of history and political science). In this study the focus is on collective and institutional memories, which are social and political constructions (2006: 3).

The notion of collective memory derives from the work Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire (1925/1992) by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, a founding father of the field of memory studies, who views memory as a socially determined product transmitted through the generations. A student of Durkheim, Halbwachs emphasizes that individual memory cannot be separated from collective memory, since memories are shaped by individuals and members of social groups interacting with each other. Later, Jan Assmann (1995) shows that memory enables us to live in groups and living in groups promotes
construction of memory. Collective memories unite a group of people with shared experiences of the past into “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983).

Halbwachs emphasizes that collective memories possess a number of characteristics, such as maintaining the stability and integrity of the community. In this context Henry Rousso (2002: 6) states that much like an individual memory, a collective memory is directed to maintain an identity. An individual memory is shaped within collective framings, such as a family, a school, and a country. Thus, members of the community remember not individually and separately, but in a certain context and discourse, collectively. In this regard Halbwachs argues that memory reflects dominant discourses of the society and is created through the communication of its community members (Lebow, 2006: 8). Assmann (1995) divides the collective memory into communicative and cultural memories. Communicative memory is based on everyday communication and does not have a fixed point in the passing of time. Cultural memory has a fixed point maintained through institutional communication (realized in observance and commemoration practices) and cultural formation (presented in monuments, memorials, and texts) (Assmann, 1995: 129). Communicative memory is a living phenomenon, while cultural memory is a sustained and institutionally constructed product.

Halbwachs claims that history is a “dead memory,” and that memory is a collective representation of the past. Hereafter, Pierre Nora (1984; 1989) distinguishes between history and memory, pointing out that collective memories are connected to ongoing movements, since memory is a living, constantly changing, phenomenon. Therefore, memories cannot solely be viewed as a reconstruction of the past, but they are always more or less distorted in the present. They are interpreted by different political agents and used for building nationalism and shaping national identities, but also to destabilize them. National memory consists of shared experiences and a common interpretation of a nation’s collective past. Often national memories are products of politicized views of the past.

Political leaders often struggle to shape and control memory at the institutional level. Institutional memory analyzes efforts by political actors to build a certain image of the past and disseminate it widely in the community (Lebow, 20016: 13). In the politics of memory an institutional memory is a foundational analytical category used on the political stage. Here the context, or the discourse, shapes the way a society thinks and remembers, which is ultimately influenced by the political groups. However, in their book, The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe (2006), the authors argue that “institutionalized forms of memory are important but not all-controlling and that [political] leaders exercise only imperfect control over institutional memory” (Lebow, 2006: 15).
Collective memory has always been implemented by institutional memory (Lebow, 2008: 37). Collective memory spreads once a state fails to impose an institutional memory on the population (2008: 38). The state institutionalizes an official memory, as opposed to an unofficial memory. This was defined primarily by Peter Burke (1989) and later elaborated on by Nets-Zehngut (2012: 254–255).7 The state initiates the realization of the official memory and represents it in the national and international arenas. The state can both promote and demote certain (unofficial) memories. An institutionalized collective memory is realized through adoption of memory documents, organization of commemoration activities, and implementation of education (Kucia, 2016: 100). The Holocaust has been recently included into the official memory of numerous countries. However, each country has different Holocaust interpretations, as illustrated by James Young (1988, 1995). For instance, Israel regards the Shoah as part of the national Jewish history associated with a fight for survival resulting from a centuries-old tradition of anti-Semitism. Germany, considered as the main perpetrator of the Final Solution, includes the Holocaust narrative into its main official collective memory. Young (1995) highlights that in its attempts to build a new and equitable society, Germany is obliged to admit the dark past of its terrifying crimes. Along with Poland, Austria views itself as a war victim, thus it doesn’t pay much attention to the recognition of the crimes of its citizens at the level of respective official memories. In the US the collective memory of the Holocaust is built on the basis of the western democratic values of freedom, immigration, and multiculturalism. It is institutionalized at the state level and is used as a basic historical narrative for promoting ethnic inclusion and tolerance (Ivanova, 2004: 374-5). However, all this was not the case of the authoritarian Soviet memory politics, where the Shoah was part of an unofficial memory.

Both collective and institutional memories are associated with physical sites of memory, such as museums, memorials, monuments, and other commemorative objects or places – “things meant as reminders” (Assmann, 2013: 37). They are designed to represent a living memory of the past. Memory sites and monuments support and develop remembrance, or forgetting, that will be analyzed in the following section.

SITES OF MEMORY AND SITES OF FORGETTING

Memory lies not in time, but in space. In this context, following the previously mentioned work on the collective memory by Maurice Halbwachs, Frances Yates (1966) explores spaces of memory. Space is closely connected to memory, since space demonstrates memory through monuments, memorials, and sculptures. From here, sites of memory appear, a concept

7 Nets-Zehngut (2012: 254–255) identifies five types of collective memory: cultural, official, popular, autobiographical, and historical.
developed by the French historian Pierre Nora in his multi-volume work *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984). In his work, Nora studies symbolic places of memory made by the French nation for the nation itself. Sites of memory crystallize the collective memory of a social group. In fact, they are assigned “a collective memory function” by this group. Nora argues that memory constructs our future by identifying our attitude to the past. Thus, sites of memory are extremely powerful elements in shaping the collective memories of a society because they are products of past military and political victories. In this regard Paul Connerton (2009) talks about “places of memory,” to be understood as sites at which a shared historical consciousness is transmitted.

Politics of memory realized in sites of memory, including monuments and memorials intertwine history, remembrance, and public participation (Baer, 2000; Pickford, 2005; Kotljarchuk, 2013). Public spaces, monuments, and memorials are established as national symbols of historical representation and perform a political function. Inclusion of the collective memory of an ethnic minority is realized through sites of memory (Kotljarchuk, 2016: 152). As for Holocaust sites, they hold a complex social memory shaped by various factors.

Memories are accompanied by processes of remembering and forgetting. Nora highlights that the collective memory is a temporary phenomenon, characterized by constant evolution. Its content can be both remembered or forgotten when subjected to the present context (Nora, 1996). Thus, it is important to embody memory in physical places where “a sense of historical continuity persist” (Nora, 1989: 7), such as sites of memory. Physical spaces promote remembrance and acknowledgement of a dark past. Absence of such spaces suggests an official state policy of “organized forgetting” (Connerton, 1999; Ricœur, 2004).

In Soviet Ukraine the politics of Holocaust memorialization was characterized by organized forgetting. No spaces for the memory of the Holocaust were specifically created by any state initiative, which shows a deliberate silencing of this dark past. This was one of the major factors for uniting the nation, as emphasized by Ernest Renan:

Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation; thus the progress of historical studies is often a danger for national identity….. The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things. (Renan, 1992)

Runia (2007) highlights that commemoration is the result of admitting the past and its respective memories into the present. Until the 1990s the dark past of the Shoah was not recognized by the UkSSR. Additionally, the American historian of the Holocaust Omer Bartov outlines (2008: 557): “There are no sites of memory, and never were. They are, in fact, sites of forgetting.” These killing fields, where thousands were murdered, are represented today as sites of forgetting, where new life and new history is made. Mass graves of Jewish life in many places in Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, are hardly memorialized, since “those who
Theoretical Framework: Memory

remember or know are not there; and those who are there neither remember nor know” (Bartov, 2008: 557), or do not want to know or remember. Memory spaces are places embodied with national memories and commemorative activities. In Ukraine Holocaust sites occupy a special place in the national imagination (Golbert, 2004: 205). Some of them are visible, and are therefore memorialized, situated in prominent places and city centers, while some are invisible and forgotten, located on the outskirts, in the woods. Nonetheless, all of them are subjects of constant political and public debates. Memorials mobilize and shape public perception of the events. The struggle over the memory space nurtures these debates and contested memories.

EUROPEANIZATION OF THE HOLOCAUST MEMORY

Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the Holocaust has acquired new meanings by becoming a subject of national and collective memories in the West and the EU (Levy & Sznaider, 2002; Alexander, 2002; Kucia, 2016). This supranational European memory has politicized the Holocaust and made it a key pillar of a new European identity. This process of politicization is defined as the “globalization” (Alexander, 2002; Craps & Rothberg, 2011), “cosmopolitanization” (Levy & Sznaider, 2002), “transnationalization” (Craps & Rothberg, 2011), and “Europeanization” (Kucia, 2016) of the Holocaust memory. The historical narrative of the Shoah has become a universal symbol of transnational memory (Alexander, 2009), building a global “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983), characterized by the humanistic and moral values of a modern society. Dietsch (2006: 197) summarizes that the Europeanization or globalization of the Holocaust lies in its universalization.

As specified by Kucia (2016: 98), “Europeanization” is understood as the process of creating a collective European memory beyond national memories, which is also referred to the construction of supranational/transnational identities. Kucia adds that the Europeanization of the memory of the Holocaust means “the process of construction, institutionalization, and diffusion of beliefs regarding the Holocaust, as well as formal and informal norms and rules regarding Holocaust remembrance” (2016: 112). Kucia argues that the Europeanization of the Holocaust memory emerged once former Soviet bloc countries started to prepare for entry into Western organizations, such as the EU, NATO, Council of Europe, etc. Here the Holocaust became one of the key factors of Westernization and Europeanization of historical memories. Although the memory of the Shoah is not a formal condition of entry into these institutions, when intending to become EU members most Eastern European countries preliminarily Europeanized their Holocaust memories as part of their democratization and EU integration. In this context Tony Judt (2005: 803) claims that acknowledgement of the Holocaust provides a “European entry ticket.”
Theoretical Framework: Memory

Studies by Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, most notably their book *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (2001/2006), brought the field of collective memories into a new era of globalization. Alongside national and collective memory a “cosmopolitan memory” appears (Levy & Sznaider, 2001/2006; 2002), which is closely linked to social and political groups. Cosmopolitan memories are referred to as shared collective memories that go beyond national and ethnic boundaries. Levy & Sznaider emphasize that the Holocaust is an event remembered outside the groups of Jewish victims and German perpetrators that were directly involved, memorialized by nation states regardless of their ethnic belonging. Levy and Sznaider analyze the cosmopolitan memory that fosters and shapes supranational political identities in Europe, appearing as a result of the transnational memory of the Shoah.

Ned Lebow (2006: 5) claims that memory politics, democratization, and European integration are all interconnected as components of a larger interactive system. The Holocaust has become a defining political event and a central reference point for remembrance at the European transnational level (Uhl, 2017). This was demonstrated by the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (2005) who, in his Berlin speech devoted to the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, stated that: “Remembrance of the war and the genocide perpetrated by the Nazi regime has become part of our living constitution… this remembrance is part of our national identity. Remembrance of the Nazi era and its crimes is a moral obligation.” Remembering the Holocaust creates a collective responsibility for the crimes of the past for the sake of a common European future. Memories become a political and cultural power factor in European countries, with the Holocaust at the core of European memory politics. A recent research project, *The Holocaust and European Historical Cultures* at Lund University, shows through a number of case studies how the history of the Holocaust is used in European states for social, educational, and political purposes (Karlsson & Zanders, 2006). In addition, in 2017 a new non-profit project *Different Wars: National School Textbooks on WWII* (Volmer-Naumann, 2017) by the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum was presented. As part of this study authors from the EU and Russia, supported by the European Commission, compared how the WWII history, including the Holocaust, is narrated in school textbooks in Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany, and Russia.

In 2000 the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust took place, where institutionalization of an emerging European cosmopolitan memory was the primary concern. The adoption of the Stockholm Declaration was viewed as a key event of the universalization of the Holocaust (Uhl, 2017). Considering that the Shoah “fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization,” new global and universal values were debated politically and culturally. Therefore, Europe could represent itself as an “imagined community” (Anderson,
incorporating moral categories and shared values united under the universal imperative “Never Again,” as well as a post-national and cross-border solidarity of “readiness to act,” which frames the European cosmopolitan memory. Levy & Sznaider (2002: 101) define the main feature of the Holocaust universalization as an orientation towards the future and not to the past, since disasters can happen “to anyone, at any time, and everyone is responsible.” Therefore, the cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust is focused not on remembrance of the past but on positive change in the future. The recognition of the Shoah symbolizes a modern civilization with a distinct understanding of “good and evil” (Levy & Sznaider, 2006). At the Stockholm Forum the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Victor Yushchenko, stated that Ukraine was part of the common European historical culture (Dietsch, 2006: 196), and thus potentially part of a common European future.

In 2018 the EU became a partner of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA, formerly ITF). IHRA is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1998 by the Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson with the aim “to promote Holocaust education, research, and remembrance worldwide.” Although IHRA has some non-European members like Israel and the US, its main activities are focused on Europe, where the Holocaust took place. IHRA has thirty-one member countries, out of which eleven are from Eastern Europe. Ukraine, along with six other countries of the region (Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro), are not IHRA candidates (Kucia, 2016: 105). Despite a number of controversies, the Holocaust national memories in the Eastern European countries that acceded to the EU in 2004 and 2007 might be regarded as the most developed in the region (2016: 113), whereas three FSU countries (Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine) where the Shoah constitutes much of their respective histories have only recently begun earnest work on transforming the memorialization policy.

In the past decades the interest in Holocaust remembrance has increased, due to the emergence of new commemoration topographies in public spaces, mainly the erection of memorials, plaques, museums, and memorial sites (Uhl, 2017: 9). Consequently, an institutionalized universal approach towards memorialization of the Shoah was required. In 2005 the United Nations General Assembly, supported by the European Parliament, adopted a resolution designating 27 January as an International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. This was an official day of the Holocaust having been institutionalized as a global and cosmopolitan memory. As for Ukraine, only in 2011 upon adoption of the decree “About the 70th Anniversary of the Babyn Yar Tragedy,” did the government enact to commemorate 27 January as the Day of the Holocaust Victims.
CHAPTER 3. DEBATES ON THE HOLOCAUST MEMORY IN THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE OF UKRAINE

In the Soviet era the Holocaust memory in Ukraine was suppressed by the triumphal narrative of the GPW. Although there were constant attempts by individual groups to institutionalize it, the Shoah was not included into the official memory until the dissolution of the USSR and independence of Ukraine in 1991. In post-Soviet Ukraine the Holocaust memory is marginalized by the dominating historical narratives of the Holodomor and the OUN, considered as crucial for the nation-building of the country. These collective memories are more prioritized in the public and political discourse, regarded as primary national myths of victimization and heroization. The Shoah memory competes with these two historical elements in the national arena and it creates a struggle around collective memories of Ukraine’s dark past.

From this perspective this Chapter analyzes a contested memory and memorialization of the Holocaust in the present context in Ukraine. I begin with an overview of Holocaust memorialization projects in the UkSSR and the struggles around them, which illustrate the postwar Soviet memory politics. Initiatives undertaken by the local and diasporic Jewish communities are closely examined in this regard, including their commemoration activities, erection of monuments, fundraising campaigns, and publication of books. Hereafter I look at the subsequent integration of the Shoah memory into the historical culture of the independent Ukraine. I am particularly interested in the main directions of the scholarship, challenges, and debates around the inclusion of the Holocaust into the national history and memory of the country. In order to understand the current position of the Holocaust memory in the public and political discourse in modern Ukraine, a new nationalistic strategy in memory politics is analyzed with regard to the myths of the Holodomor and OUN. I look at the way the Holocaust is used as a platform to construct a narrative of victimization of the national genocide, the Holodomor. Finally, I am interested in the OUN myths of glorification, and its competing memories suppressing the Shoah, as well as the roles of the national heroes Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera in the contemporary memorialization politics of Ukraine, which are contradictory to the Holocaust remembrance.

MEMORIALIZATION OF THE SHOAH IN SOVIET UKRAINE

Holocaust memorialization in the UkSSR was under the control of Soviet postwar policies, characterized by an organized forgetting. This memory did not have any space in the commemoration practices of Soviet Ukraine. It was censored and downplayed in order to
repress national differences in the GPW memory (Gitelman, 1993/2015; Korey, 1983/2015). Some scholars view this ignorance as part of the ideology of the Stalinist regime and its explicit policy of anti-Semitism (Korey, 1983/2015: 53; Gitelman, 1990: 25-26). In the aftermath of the war Stalin fostered a number of anti-Semitic purges, including the anti-cosmopolitan campaign in the late 1940s, the struggle against Jewish bourgeois nationalism of 1946-1948, and the Doctors’ Plot of 1952-1953. So, as summarized by Zvi Gitelman (1997: 28), after Hitler’s Holocaust Soviet Jews were subjected to a new-made “Stalin’s Holocaust.” Nevertheless, some scholars argue this was not the case and the topic of the Holocaust was actually present to some extent in Soviet media, Soviet Yiddish literature, poetry, theatre, and film. Among others, the Soviet Yiddish journal *Sovietish Haimland* published materials on the Holocaust, including poems, stories, and memoirs. Besides, the Soviet media issued an article about the extermination of Jews in Babyn Yar in the 1940s (Al’tman, 2005). Hirszowicz highlights that there was a public understanding of the “special treatment” of Soviet Jews by the Nazis and it was mentioned in different ways in the Soviet discourse. However, in most cases there was no specification of Jewishness, as a defining characteristic of Nazi victims, instead they were called “peaceful Soviet citizens” (Hirszowicz, 1992: 40-44).

The anti-Jewish Soviet authorities continuously controlled the remaining Jewish communities and suppressed the revival of Jewish religious and cultural life, so the organization of any commemoration projects was not officially allowed. Nevertheless, for many Jews in the diaspora and Ukraine, the memorialization of the Final Solution was regarded as a duty and privilege. The publication of books was part of the struggle over the recognition of this memory. Only those works which are considered crucial in scholarly public discussions are summarized here. In the aftermath of the Shoah, in 1946, Soviet Jewish novelist Ilya Ehrenburg and writer Vasily Grossman collected twenty-seven volumes of material, containing testimonies, diaries, letters, and memoirs of Soviet Holocaust survivors and non-Jewish bystanders. They organized them in the *Black Book of Soviet Jewry* (*Chernaia Kniga*) and were about to publish it in eleven languages in the USSR. The authors sought to represent individual experiences of the tragedy but were simultaneously concerned about the political subject matter of their work. For instance, they had to delete the foreword by Albert Einstein, which stated that the aim of the book is to convince the reader that international security is effective when it protects not only state individuals, but also ethnic minorities of every country, since every human should be defended from extermination (Al’tman, 2005). However, upon examination, the Soviet Commission concluded that the book created the impression that the Nazis only fought against

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8 See also Hirszowicz, 1992; Kerler, 2003; Berkhoff, 2009; Altshuler, 2011; Zeltser, 2012.
Debates on the Holocaust Memory in the Public Discourse of Ukraine

the USSR for the purpose of destroying the Jews (Al’tman, 2005; Baranova, 2015), when Hitler murdered Soviet people of all nationalities “in equal measure” (Jews, Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Belarusians, etc.). Consequently, the Soviet censors decided that the “publication of the Black Book is inadvisable” (Baranova, 2015, citing Redlich, 1995: 366), since it emphasized the Jewish suffering more than the Soviet one. By 1948 all copies of the book were destroyed, and the work never appeared in the USSR. One copy was secretly sent abroad, published in Israel in 1980 and in post-Soviet Ukraine only in 1991 (Burakovskiy, 2011: 378). In the Holocaust historical culture, the Black Book has been viewed as the main non-fiction work, illustrating the dynamic of Soviet memory politics. The same fate befell Vasily Grossman’s book Life and Fate, sequel to the novel For a Just Cause, which was finished in 1960 and published in the West for the first time under the perestroika in 1980.9 The book describes the GPW, equates Stalinism and Nazism, and sets parallels between the Holocaust and Holodomor (Magocsi & Petrovsky-Shtern, 2016: 84). Only in Gorbachev’s era, with the policy of glasnost, was the book finally published in the USSR in the magazine Oktyabr in 1988. Anatoly Rybakov’s famous novel Heavy Sand was the first work of the Soviet literature illustrating Jewish life in Ukraine and the Shoa. The story appeared in the journal Oktyabr in 1978 and was published as a book in 1982.

Postwar Jewish communities were preoccupied with Holocaust memorialization. Despite numerous struggles, but with financial support from the Jewish diaspora in Israel and the US, Holocaust survivors and local Jewish associations organized private commemoration activities and the installment of small memorials, monuments, and stone obelisks. However, due to Soviet censorship, none of them referenced the Jewishness of the victims, dedicated instead to “peaceful citizens” and “victims of fascists.” Thus, the Holocaust was part of the unofficial memory in the UkSSR with most memorialization projects realized only in the later years of perestroika and the post-Soviet era (Golbert, 2004; 2008; Ivanova, 2004). Any attempts to organize commemoration and other Holocaust-related events were regarded by the Soviet authorities as Zionist and Israeli propaganda, encouraging the growth of Jewish bourgeois nationalism and Jewish emigration. As for the Jewish communities these were crucial attempts to build physical sites of pilgrimage as a unifying factor where remaining Jews could commemorate the past, but also renovate their present and future lives.

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9 Vasily Grossman, a military correspondent, wrote the novel in the 1950s. Upon submitting the work to the Soviet Committee for approval, the book was denied publishing and all copies were confiscated. The reason was that the book equates the Stalinist regime, and according to the publishers, it was not possible to issue such writing within the next two hundred years (Grossman, 1988: 817). However, two copies of the book were saved by Grossman’s friends and sent to the West, which were later published.
Although the scholarship on the Holocaust in Ukraine does not contain much research of these commemoration initiatives, there are several scholarly works of particular interest for the present thesis. Mordechai Altshuler (2002) and Rebecca Golbert (2004; 2008) provide an extensive overview of the memorialization activities in the UkSSR. Furthermore, a massive study of the national archival documents started in the 1980s describes the life of the Ukrainian Jewry in the postwar period, which culminated in the book Documents on Ukrainian-Jewish Identity and Emigration, 1944-1990 (2003) edited by Vladimir Khanin.

As noted by Mordechai Altshuler (2002: 275), one of the first memorial assemblies in Soviet Ukraine was organized by the Jewish community in Kharkiv in 1945, on the third anniversary of the local Holocaust. The initiative was rejected by state authorities and fell through. A similar situation arose in Odessa in 1946, when D. V. Klinov, a leader of the local Jewish community, gathered ashes and bones of murdered Jews and asked officials of Kiev to conduct an official burial, which was later refused (2002: 276). Another attempt was undertaken by the Jews in Kamianets-Podilskyi which was objected to by the mayor. Subsequently, the local community wrote a complaint to the Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Comrade Shvernik, which was not satisfied:

In 1946 we requested from the chairman of the city Soviet the opportunity to mourn the tragic day when our mothers, fathers and innocent children were subjected to mass murder and torment, but we were denied this request, which came from the depths of the souls of hundreds of Jew[s]… In 1947, when we had no place to pray, the Jewish community collected funds and acquired two rooms from a private home owner on 40 Leningradskaya Street. But despite the fact that we old people would not have bothered anyone, we were refused this arrangement as well, and were effectively forbidden to pray at all. Moreover, we were threatened, that if any kind of gathering of old people took place, they would regard us as an underground organization allegedly opposed to the Soviet regime…. [We have made] repeated requests for permission to modestly make order of the fraternal graves where our forefathers are buried and where tens of thousands of our parents, brothers, sisters and children were buried alive, where the land shuddered in horror and fear…. Despite these legitimate demands that issue from the broken hearts of hundreds of people and from mothers’ tears, this issue has not been resolved to this day. (Khanin, 2003: 86-87)

Efforts to rear monuments to the Holocaust victims were made in at least fifteen cities in the UkSSR (Altshuler, 2002: 282). The head of the Lviv Community, Lev Serebriannyi, proposed to have a monument installed on the common grave in “Piaski” in 1947. However, this did not happen since the chairman was subsequently arrested for an unrelated matter. Nonetheless, a monument was simultaneously set up in Ternopil at the initiative of Rabbi Hayyim Kleiper, with the inscription “In eternal memory and honor of the Jews who were murdered by the German Fascists,” in both Russian and Yiddish (Altshuler, 2002: 283). In Czernowitz there was an attempt to conduct a fundraising campaign and build a monument in
In response to this request, the authorities of Kiev argued that since the victims were Soviet citizens this was an issue for the whole city’s population, not only the Jewish community, and forbade a fundraising campaign (Altshuler, 2002: 284). The community of Korsun-Shevchenkivskyi started collecting funds for a monument “to the Jewish ‘heroes’ who perished during the German fascist occupation” in 1948. The money collected was later transferred to state revenues (Khanin, 2003: 105). Additionally, Altshuler (2002: 282-291) describes numerous initiatives by local Jewish communities in Ukraine to organize memorial ceremonies and fundraising campaigns in support of Holocaust commemoration projects, all of which were subsequently denied by municipal or national authorities. One of the main reasons for these denials was that the erection of monuments at the killing sites was the concern of Soviet municipalities, not Jewish religious associations. This happened in Uman, Lubny, Pryluky, Poltava, Kremenchug, Dnipro, as well as in other places. In Berdychiv the community sought to build a monument to the victims of fascism at the murder site, but the local authorities opposed it. Instead, Jews installed symbolic monuments at the Jewish cemetery. Only in the 1990s the monument was reared at the site of massacre (Altshuler, 2002: 289-291).

In the aftermath of the GPW, a set of hidden memorial processions were conducted at the Drobytsky Yar site of murder in Kharkiv. After Stalin’s death, on the initiative of the GPW veteran Aleksandr Kagan, the funerals of the murdered Jews were held and a modest obelisk to the “victims of the fascist terror of 1941-1942” (without the word “Jews”) was erected in 1954. In March 1971 the Secretary P. E. Shelest reported to the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) that a gathering of “pro-Israeli individuals” had been held at the burial site of victims of fascism in Kharkiv in May 1970 (Khanin, 2003: 185). Only in the late 1980s, at the initiative of the GPW veteran Saveliy Davyдов, with support from the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko and the chief editor of the newspaper Ogoniok Vitaliy Korotich, the Kharkiv Regional Committee “Drobytsky Yar” was created. Consequently, in 1988 the Kharkiv Regional Council enacted a bill to build a monument “to the victims of fascism, thirty thousand peaceful citizens of our city that were murdered.” Due to a lack of funds the construction was finished only in 2002 (Drobytsky Yar, 2008). That year the ceremony of the Memorial-Museum at Drobytsky Yar was opened by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma in attendance of local authorities, Jewish community, and about ten thousand city residents.

Rebecca Golbert describes private acts of remembrance taking place in public silence at the site of the former Pechora concentration camp, in southwestern Ukraine (Golbert, 2004: 219-221; 2008: 228-229). The first Holocaust memorial at the site of the Pechora massacre was set up in 1976 by a Jew from Donetsk through private funding (Golbert, 2008: 229-230). Later in the 1990s Pechora was officially recognized as a concentration camp and a memorial plaque
with an inscription dedicated to “thousands of peaceful citizens” was installed (an inscription specifying the Jewishness of the victims was added later). In Lviv, a historically vivid center of Jewish life, the construction of a memorial complex to the victims of the Lviv ghetto was initiated by the Lviv Association of Jewish Culture named after Sholem Aleichem in 1988. A monument with an inscription in Ukrainian was installed on the former ghetto site only in 1992.

Lastly, other memorial complexes and monuments were erected since the independence of Ukraine: in Sevastopol in 2003 with inscriptions in Russian and Hebrew; in Donetsk in 2006 with inscriptions in Russian and Hebrew; in Zolochiv in 2006; in Kryvyi Rih in 2013 with inscriptions in Russian and Hebrew; and in Uzhhorod in 2016. Until now, in many places in Ukraine the sites of mass graves have remained invisible; no memorials, no plaques, and no monuments stand on these memorial places marking their location and significance.

INTEGRATION OF THE HOLOCAUST MEMORY INTO MODERN UKRAINE

Integration of the Holocaust into the national history and memory of the FSU states has been a challenging issue, accompanied by a number of obstacles. Until the 1980-1990s most archive materials available to scholars and researchers were based in West Germany, and to a lesser extent also in East Germany (Arad, 2009). These were mostly reports from the Einsatzgruppen, orders of the Third Reich Nazi leadership, documentation, and correspondence by the German authorities, Nazi war trial protocols, memories, and testimonies. Only after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, and the establishment of independent post-communist states, did Soviet archives open, so that national and Western scholars could access these previously unknown resources. Consequently, more and more studies and academic dissertations on the topic of the Holocaust in the SU and Ukraine appeared, authored by domestic and foreign scholars in different languages. Yet, compared with similar studies in other European countries, the historiography on the subject is relatively scarce.

For decades the scholarship on the Final Solution focused on two types of traditional grand narratives: victims and perpetrators. The main perpetrators were mostly Germans, and there was little interest in their collaborators. Thus, the relations between the complicit local

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10 See also Gitelman, 1997; Romanovsky, 1999; Himka, 2008.
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and Jewish populations did not take much historical space. The narratives of the victims were based on their fates and experiences in ghettos and camps (Bartov, 2008: 558-559).

John-Paul Himka (2013: 634-643) describes public debates and scholarship on the Holocaust in Ukraine that appeared after 1991. Ethnic Ukrainian scholars publish materials mostly on WWII and preferably on the nationalists. Ethnic Jewish scholars mostly specialize on the history of the Holocaust. A large amount of the scholarly work is focused on the regional studies, including the Holocaust in the western Ukraine and the Jewish tragedy at Babyn Yar in Kiev. Overall, the modern historiography of the Holocaust in Ukraine is divided between two approaches: traditionalists, also called nationalists and nativists, who attempt to counter claims of the local collaboration and participation of Ukrainian nationalists in the Holocaust and Jewish pogroms. In most cases they do not know Western languages and therefore do not have access to Western scholarship and literature. They rely on Ukrainian and Russian-language sources and post-Soviet nationalist methodologies; and antitraditionalists, also called liberals and cosmopolitans, who attempt to “bring the dark past [of the local collaboration] to light” in order to fight an increasing anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial in Ukraine. They have access to Western scholarship and materials, have experience at universities abroad, and often reside in North America. In addition, Dieter Pohl (2014: 200) characterizes three main directions recently appearing in research about the Shoah: a regional interest in the Holocaust and the reconstruction of Jewish communities in Ukraine, coming from the National Academy of Sciences and Jewish organizations in Ukraine; an interest in Nazi perpetrator research, including studies on Nazi institutions and crimes, coming mostly from Germany and the US; a study of the local society and culture in response to the Holocaust in Ukraine, widespread in North America.

Following its independence, Ukraine’s first president Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994) officially apologized for the participation of Ukrainians in the Holocaust during his visit to Israel in 1993 (Magocsi & Petrovsky-Shtern, 2016: 268; Portnov, 2017: 353, citing Kravchuk, 2011). Though this decision was not directed towards a specific Ukrainian memory culture, but to an international Jewish one, this move determined the first approach to a state policy regarding the Holocaust memory, and set a new tone in Ukrainian-Jewish relations (Magocsi & Petrovsky-Shtern, 2016: 268). Leonid Kuchma’s presidency (1994–2005) marked the second approach which diminished the Jewish tragedy and excluded it from the historical memory of the country. Kuchma never used the word “Holocaust” as such in his public speeches. Instead, he highlighted the significance of the Holodomor in the public discourse of Ukraine.

The presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010) heralded a new era in national memory politics. His main policy orientation was towards nationalistic history and memory,
focusing on the rehabilitation and commemoration of the Holodomor and the OUN. Despite this, Yushchenko was the first president who in his Victory Day speech used the term “Holocaust” and granted Babyn Yar status of a national memorial. The main idea was to compare the Holocaust with the Holodomor and to combine these two genocides into one main tragedy of the whole Ukrainian nation. During the time of Viktor Yanukovych (2010-2014), the memory politics was yet again turned around. The renovation of the Soviet discourse and symbols was a cornerstone of his vision of a historical culture. No reference to the Holocaust and Jews was made by Yanukovych, even at the commemoration ceremony of the 70th anniversary of the Babyn Yar massacre (Yanukovych, 2011).

Finally, President Petro Poroshenko (2014-2019) officially apologized for the collaboration of some Ukrainians in the Shoah during his visit to Israel in 2015, where he also strongly emphasized that Ukraine had faith in a common European future (Poroshenko, 2015). This statement signals that at this stage the main national political strategy of Ukraine is to form a shared past connected to a “unified and common European future.” An admission of guilt is regarded as a mechanism to transform the image of the nation to a more honorable and humanistic one, where the Holocaust is used as a paradigmatic symbol of a model tragedy. However, two other elements of the national historical culture in Ukraine are at stake in this context: the Holodomor and OUN narratives. The following sections of this Chapter are devoted to the analysis of these collective memories at the historical and political arena of the country.

HOLOCAUST VS HOLODOMOR: COMPETITION OF VICTIMS

In Ukraine the memorialization of the Holodomor is inevitably tied to the memorialization of the Holocaust. The Shoah is underrepresented in the national memory and historical culture of the country, since it cannot compete with the crucial nationalistic narrative of the Holodomor.

In the UkSSR the historical memory of the Holodomor remained officially taboo until the late 1980s and was successfully applied only in the diaspora as a propagation of Ukrainian independence. Since 1991 the Famine was placed at the foundation of the nation-building process in the country and it acquired nationalist features of victimization (Kasianov, 2009). A national identity was shaped around the collective memory of Ukrainians suffering under Soviet terror. In this context, the Holocaust served as a universal platform with the aim of building a historical culture of the Holodomor on the national and international stages.

At the previously mentioned Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in 2000, Ukrainian Prime Minister Victor Yushchenko gave a speech devoted to the Final Solution, referring to another genocide more crucial for the Ukrainian nation:
The Holocaust is a permanent pain of the world Jewish community. At the same time, it is a tragedy of universal scale. The hard fate of the Ukrainian nation scattered it throughout the world. Ukrainians have lived through wars and famines as well as Stalin’s purges… That war [WWII] took lives of more than five million Ukrainians and ruined over 700 cities and towns as well as thousands of villages. But even before, in 1932-1933, around seven million Ukrainians died of the man-made famine and repressions carried out in the 1930’s by Stalin’s regime. Therefore, we know too well what genocide means… Today’s forum inspired me of another important idea – analogical commemorative forum on the victims of mass artificial famines in Ukraine under Stalin’s era. (Yushchenko, 2000)

In this way, almost ten years after the independence, Victor Yushchenko, then Prime Minister, sought to bring the Famine to the public discourse in Ukraine and abroad, applying the archetypical tragedy of the Shoah. In Yushchenko’s speech in 2000 the focus was not on the Jewish Holocaust and Jewish experience of extermination in WWII, but on the significance of the catastrophe of the Holodomor for the whole Ukrainian nation. For this purpose, Yushchenko compared the number of Ukrainian casualties in WWII (five million) with the number of victims of Stalin’s regime in Ukraine (seven million).

In 2007, Victor Yushchenko, having by then become President of Ukraine, delivered a speech at the Israeli Knesset, where he compared the “Israeli national genocide” with the Ukrainian one (Kanevs’kiy, 2007). In the following statement Yushchenko claimed that Ukraine needs support from other countries in recognition of the Holodomor as a genocide, and especially from Israel: “Knowing the Yad Vashem Museum, knowing the Jewish catastrophe, it’s easy for the Israelis to understand this huge tragedy, when seven to ten million people were lost in Ukraine during the Famine.” His initiative was not successful based on the argument that Stalin’s regime and collectivization campaign terrorized millions of Soviet citizens regardless of their nationalities. In this context Israeli politician Daliya Itsik asserted: “They are all victims of totalitarian regimes, and Israel joined a UNESCO resolution on commemoration of these victims” (Kanevs’kiy, 2007).

Viktor Yushchenko came to power as the President of Ukraine (2005–2010) in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution. One of his main ideological goals was to reorient Ukraine from the east to the west – from Russia to the EU. The creation of new national symbols and heroes, rewriting history, and redirection of memory constituted part of the nation-building process. Consequently, on the initiative of the President, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR) was established in 2006, aimed at restoring and preserving the true history of the Ukrainian nation, to form and realize the state policy in this regard.\(^\text{12}\) Since 2014 UINR has been a core state institution of memory politics, headed by Volodymyr Viatrovych.

\(^\text{12}\) For more information on the UINR, see also Kasianov, 2016.
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As part of his campaign Yushchenko attempted to get worldwide recognition of the Holodomor as a genocide. He claimed the Famine was, without any doubt, not death through hunger, but hunger as a tool of murder to restrain the insurgent Ukrainian population. This resulted in the establishment of the decree “On the Additional Measures on the Commemoration of the Victims of the Political Repressions and Famines in Ukraine” (2005), which included encouragement of the creation of museums and historical expositions dedicated to the Holodomor. Immediately after that the law “On the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine” (2006) was adopted, institutionalizing the Famine as a genocide against the Ukrainian people, and illegitimatizing its denial. This law prescribed an allocation of funds to preserve the national memory of the Holodomor, such as education activities, establishment of memorial signs and memorials, and the construction of a memorial in Kiev. As a result, on the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor the National Museum Memorial to Holodomor Victims, formerly called the Memorial in Commemoration of Famines’ Victims in Ukraine, was opened in 2008. Following the example of Germany on Nazism, Ukraine expected Russia to take responsibility for Soviet crimes, including man-made Famines. This state program was later popularized by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko (2014-2019), who in 2017 declared that not recognizing the genocide of the Holodomor is comparable to the amorality of denying the Holocaust (Ukrainska Pravda). Later, in 2019, Poroshenko claimed that since the Holodomor had been recognized by fourteen countries worldwide, it is only expected that Russia, as the successor of the USSR, will recant Soviet crimes (Gordonua.Com, 2019).

The political situation changed with the presidency of Viktor Yanukovych (2010-2014), who supported a strong brotherhood with Russia. Yanukovych claimed that the Holodomor was not a genocide of Ukrainian people, but a common tragedy of many Soviet states (including Belarus, Kazakhstan, and some parts of Russia) carried out by the Stalin’s totalitarian regime (TSN, 2010), and blaming Russia for this crime would be unjust (Sputnik, 2010).

However, after the events of 2013 and 2014 (the Euromaidan Revolution of 2014, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and the war in the Donbass region from 2014 and onward), a patriotic wave swept over Ukraine. In 2015 the UINR adopted so-called “Decommunization laws” or “Memory Laws,” comprised of the following four laws (Yurchuk, 2017: 126): the law “On Commemoration of the Victory over Nazism in WWII;” the law “On Condemnation of the Communist and National-Socialist [Nazi] Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and Prohibition of Propaganda of their Symbols;” the law “On the Legal Status and Honoring of the Memory of Fighters for Ukraine’s Independence in the Twentieth Century;” the law “On Access to the Archive of Repressive Organs of the Communist Totalitarian Regime.” The punishment for breaking these laws is imprisonment for five years. With this political program Ukraine
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officially started an anti-communist campaign, attempting to sever ties with Russia. The country intends to renounce its Soviet past, setting up nationalistic pro-Ukrainian views. The laws were met with significant international criticism from scholars and experts in North America, Europe, and Ukraine, who think the laws “contradict one of the most fundamental political rights: the right to freedom of speech” (Marples, 2015). Their main concerns were:

1. Concerning the inclusion of groups such as the OUN and UPA as “fighters for Ukrainian independence:” Article 6 of this law makes it a criminal offense to deny the legitimacy of “the struggle for the independence of Ukraine in the 20th century” and public denial of the same is to be regarded as an insult to the memory of the fighters. Thus, questioning this claim, and implicitly questioning anything such groups did, is being made a criminal offense.
2. Law 2558, the ban on propaganda of “Communist and National Socialist Regimes” makes it a criminal offense to deny, “including in the media, the criminal character of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991 in Ukraine.” (Marples, 2015)

The presidency of Yushchenko set up a new orientation in the memory politics of Ukraine, mainly the focus on the myths about the OUN and UPA and their leaders, characterized as democratic fighters against both totalitarian regimes of Nazism and Stalinism (Rudling, 2011: 24). At the same time, glorification of the OUN and UPA means denial of their collaboration with the German Wehrmacht against Jews during WWII, whereas in the Jewish collective memory Ukrainians are remembered as Nazi collaborators and Holocaust criminals (2011: 25). Thus, it is significant to analyze the role of the collective memories of the OUN and UPA in the historical culture of Ukraine, since it directly suppresses the Holocaust memory.

OUN AS NATIONAL HEROES OF UKRAINE

On the eve of WWII Ukraine constituted the UkSSR. During this period Crimea was not part of Ukraine, but of Russia, and other parts of the country (the western territories of the present Ukraine) were incorporated by the USSR later in the course of WWII. Northern Bukovina, which belonged to Romania, was annexed by the SU in 1940, despite the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact between the USSR and Nazi Germany. Polish regions of Eastern Galicia and a part of Volhynia were conquered by the SU in 1939. Transcarpathia, being part of both Czechoslovakia and Hungary at various times, was ceded to the USSR, and became Zakarpattia Oblast in 1946. All previous political regimes left significant traces on the identities, cultures, and historical memories of these regions and of the country in general.13

The authoritarian policy of Poland, and the subsequent terror of the Soviet regime, gave rise to a radical Ukrainian nationalism, institutionalized in 1929 as the OUN. As patriots their main goal was to fight for the liberation and independence of Ukraine. OUN was a far-right

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13 See also Himka, 2006.
Ukrainian political movement, characterized as fascist, anti-Bolshevik, pro-German (Mazower, 2008: 173, 458), anti-Semitic, and supportive of ideas of racial purity and “integral nationalism.”

Iaroslav Orshan highlights that the Ukrainian nationalism of the OUN was the same as German and Italian nationalism (Rudling, 2011: 3, citing Orshan, 1938). “Its leaders eagerly emphasized to Hitler and Ribbentrop that they shared the Nazi Weltanschauung and a commitment to a fascist New Europe” (Rudling, 2011: 3).

In 1940 the OUN was divided into two branches: OUN(b) or Banderivtsi (also called Banderites), a more radical wing led by Stepan Bandera, and OUN(m) or Melnykivtsi, a more conservative wing led by Andrii Melnyk (Mazower, 2008: 458; Rudling, 2011: 3, Himka, 2013: 627). Both wings were anti-democratic, following fascist ideals of a so-called “national dictatorship” (Rudling, 2006: 166). The UPA, formed in 1942, was the military arm of the OUN(b), who represented themselves as anti-communist (Snyder, 2003: 229).

By April 1943, the UPA had already 10,000-20,000 members and started the campaign of ethnic cleansing to purify the Ukrainian lands for a “future independent Ukrainian state” (Mazower, 2008: 506).

On 30 June 1941, OUN(b) proclaimed the independence of Ukraine. In their Declaration of Independence, the OUN stated it would:

- Cooperate closely with National Socialist Greater Germany, which under [the] Führer Adolf Hitler is creating a new order in Europe and the world and will help the Ukrainian people to liberate itself from the Muscovite occupation.

Karel Berkhoff (2004: 83) and Per Anders Rudling (2006: 167) highlight that anti-Semitism was an integral part of the OUN ideology, being active participants of anti-Jewish campaigns, including Jewish pogroms. Following the Nazi anti-Semitic attitude, the OUN established its own campaign against the Jewish population of two-million in Ukraine, actively publishing anti-Semitic articles. Moreover, as part of their Ukrainian policy, they attempted to develop guidelines for how to treat Jews, describing them as “racially unsuited for miscegenation and assimilation,” “morally damaging,” (Rudling, 2011: 6, citing Martynets, 1938: 10, 14-15), and an “abuse to the Ukrainian national organism.” Considering Jews as

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14 The term “integral nationalism” (“nationalisme integral”) was introduced by the French politician Charles Maurras in the 19th century, and later applied to the characterization of the OUN nationalistic doctrines by the American historian John Armstrong (1955: 279). Today this term is preferred by many historians to the term “fascism,” which bears a more negative connotation. Ideological views and theories of Ukrainian nationalists were close to fascism, for instance, regarding the doctrines of “racial purity” and the ideals of an ethnically homogeneous nation-state. However, neither the term “integral nationalism,” nor the term “fascism” was used by the OUN leaders themselves. Integral nationalism is considered a more extreme version of ethnic nationalism, characterized by the “belief that one’s nation is superior to all others, and may even be the result of biological natural selection” (Furtado, 1994: 90, citing Kellas, 1991: 75). See also Armstrong, 1968; Kellas, 1991: 51-53, 75; Furtado, 1994: 83, 87, 90; Kuzio, 2002; Magocsi, 2010: 640; and Rudling, 2011: 2-3.

15 For more information see further Orshan, 1938.

16 On the creation of the UPA, see Armstrong, 1955: 146-156; Marples, 2010: 29-32.
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“supporters of the Muscovite-Bolshevik regime” (Mazower, 2008: 173-174; Rudling, 2011: 6, citing Kul’chyts’kyi et al., 2006: 43), the OUN welcomed the Nazi Solution to the Jewish Question and took active part in liquidating Jews (Merridale, 2005: 254).17

“Nationalists who wish to build a nationally homogenous state need not kill all members of a minority population: killing many to remove most is sufficient” (Snyder, 2003: 200). Technically, as part of their political program, based on the doctrines of integral nationalism and a racially pure nation, the OUN viewed extermination of Jewish and Polish minorities, as a tool of establishment of an ethnically homogeneous nation-state (Merridale, 2005: 254). This culminated in the ethnic cleansing of the Poles of Volhynia and Eastern Galicia. So, by 1943 one-quarter of them was exterminated. Although today Poland calls this massacre a “Volhynian genocide,” according to the statements of senior UPA commanders: “The goal of OUN–UPA was not to physically exterminate all Poles, but rather to ethnically cleanse Western Ukraine in order to accomplish an ethnically homogeneous state” (Rudling, 2006: 171).

The historical representation of the OUN is highly controversial. They are regarded as either “villains” or “heroes” (Marples, 2007). Despite their integral nationalist ideology, collaboration with Nazi Germany, and ethnic cleansing of minorities, for Ukrainians today the OUN are national fighters and liberators from a totalitarian regime. Glorification of the OUN has been predominantly popular in the Ukrainian diaspora, especially in Canada and the US, and lies at the core of the Ukrainian historical memory. Some of the main OUN mottos were “Ukraine for the Ukrainians,” “Nation Above Everything,” and “Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the Heroes!” (Slava Ukrayini! Heroyam slava!). Forbidden by the Soviet regime, these slogans were revived in the Euromaidan Revolution of 2014, and were successfully integrated into the present-day Ukrainian public and political discourse. “Glory to Ukraine” even became an official greeting of the Ukrainian National Police in 2018. Additionally, red and black flags of Banderivtsi are often used in riots and marches in the present-day Ukraine.

As previously discussed, the era of Victor Yushchenko’s presidency was characterized by a nationalistic and patriotic approach towards the national politics of memory. In 2007 the Ukrainian society had widely differing opinions when Yushchenko awarded the title of the “Hero of Ukraine” to Roman Shukhevych, a prominent Ukrainian nationalist and the UPA commander. More controversial still was the decree adopted by Yushchenko in 2010, granting the same title to Stepan Bandera, a cult-figure of Ukrainian nationalism. This decree triggered international response, and it was highly criticized by political and public leaders. In this

17 For further discussion on the anti-Semitic attitudes of the OUN members under the pretext of a “social liberation struggle,” including collaboration with Nazi Germany and Jewish pogroms, see Merridale, 2005; Mazower, 2008; Rudling, 2011: 5-7, 8-10.
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context Polish authorities, namely Jarosław Kaczyński, the head of the ruling party of Poland, Law and Justice, and Polish MFA Witold Vashchikovsky claimed that “Ukraine will not enter Europe with Bandera,” arguing the Bandera cult does not contribute to Ukraine’s desired EU integration (Front News International, 2017; Yevropejska Pravda, 2017). Additionally, this raised strong concern with international scholars in the fields of Jewish and Ukrainian Studies.

The Ukrainian myths about the OUN do not depict them as murderers and perpetrators. Instead, the aim has been to rehabilitate the OUN as multiethnic and democratic organizations, effectively whitewashing their participation in the Final Solution and the Volhynian genocide. Moreover, the glorification of such OUN nationalist heroes as Bandera and Shukhevych, along with Bohdan Chmelnitsky (Cossack leader of the seventeenth century) and Symon Petliura (WWI national fighter) is at odds with the Holocaust memory. As highlighted by the Israeli historian Omer Bartov (Marples, 2010: 27, citing Bartov, 2007): “Rewriting of history on this part of Ukraine is an insult to the memory of Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Ukraine.”

If in the Soviet Union the memory of the Holocaust was suppressed by the historical myth of the GPW, in post-Soviet Ukraine the memory of the Shoah is marginalized by the dominating historical narratives of the Holodomor and the OUN, crucial for the nation-building of the country. Ukrainian independence signalled freedom of speech and liberty from Soviet censorship. However, lopsided Communist narratives were replaced by new skewed nationalistic myths. As previously highlighted in the current Chapter, the post-Euromaidan government started a campaign to change the landscape of Ukraine’s cultural memory from a Soviet (Russian) orientation to a nationalistic Ukrainian one, and this shift entailed a new strategy in memory politics.

Overall, there are thus two key difficulties surrounding the Holocaust memorialization in Ukraine: the competing memories of suffering between the Holodomor and the Holocaust; the exposure of the myth of the Ukrainian collaboration (a contested collective memory of the OUN) in the Holocaust. First is the issue of competing victimhood narratives, a battle of memories between the Holodomor and the Holocaust at the national level. The Holodomor was a catastrophe for the whole Ukrainian nation, positioned today as a cornerstone of the nation-building process, whereas the Holocaust is a tragedy of the Jewish minority, which only disturbs a national memory of suffering. Second, the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine brings up an issue of local collaboration with the Nazi regime in anti-Jewish violence. In this context there is another memory battle with the commemoration of the OUN members. Although they supported Nazi fascist and anti-Semitic doctrines, today they are glorified and heroized as freedom fighters. These are conflicting narratives of the national history and memory, employed in the independent Ukraine.
CHAPTER 4. BABYN YAR: CONTESTED MEMORY SITE

Over the decades since WWII, Babyn Yar has become an international symbol of the “Holocaust by Bullets,” considered the largest single Nazi massacre of Jews (Burakovskiy, 2011; Berkhoff, 2015). During the German occupation of Kiev (1941-1943), approximately 100,000 Jews were executed at Babyn Yar, with 33,771 Jews shot over the two-day period of 29-30 September 1941, during Yom Kippur\(^\text{18}\) (Khiterer, 2004; Merridale, 2005; Burakovskiy, 2011; Berkhoff, 2015). Additionally, the ravine was a burial place for victims of the Holodomor and Stalinist repressions of the 1930s, and later became a mass grave for other groups of Ukrainian people murdered by the Germans during the city’s occupation, amounting to about 150,000 lives (Magocsi, 2010: 679), including Roma, Soviet POWs, partisans, underground fighters, mentally ill, OUN members, Orthodox priests, and Syrets camp prisoners.

Today this historical massacre site is a battlefield of marginalized collective memories, the conflicts of which are analyzed in this thesis. It comprises the National Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar” and contains about thirty memorial objects devoted to tragic myths of the Ukrainian people. This memorial space highlights the urgent need for inter-memorial and inter-ethnic relations in inclusive politics.

Following the previous Chapters, the present Chapter studies the Babyn Yar site of remembrance. I begin with an overview of the historical memorialization of the ravine, the controversies and debates around it involving participation of Jewish communities, Ukrainian and Russian activists, and Soviet national authorities. Hereafter, a detailed analysis of the National Memorial Reserve itself is presented. Through illustrations of the site, I demonstrate an actual situation at the memorial grounds. I show that Babyn Yar is a contested space, disputed among various collective memories. Monuments are carriers of political ideas. Thus, the focus of this section is on the memorial objects; their location, style, and inscriptions. Following that, I examine the debates around a new memorial project: the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center (BYHMC), launched in 2016. I am interested in the conflicts and oppositions to this, including the arguments of the historians in the “Official Letter of Warning.” Finally, in the last section I demonstrate that Babyn Yar is, indeed, an international iconic symbol of the “Holocaust by Bullets,” as represented in the Holocaust and Jewish museums worldwide, as well as referred to in the speeches of international leaders. Besides, several Babyn Yar memorials were successfully created by Jewish communities outside Ukraine with support of national authorities in their respective countries. However, in Ukraine Babyn Yar is not a site of the Jewish massacre only.

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\(^{18}\) Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the year in Judaism.
MEMORIALIZATION OF BABYN YAR

At the core of the debates around the memorialization of the Jewish catastrophe at Babyn Yar lies the lack of recognition of the Holocaust in the official memory politics of Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine (Burakovskiy, 2011: 371). Babyn Yar serves as a renowned symbol of both national remembrance and Jewish activism in Ukraine, where the most notable commemorative efforts have taken place. In the view of Soviet authorities, it would have been better if Babyn Yar were destroyed or just simply disappeared (Mankoff, 2004: 399), given that all memorialization projects were viewed as manifestations of Zionism and Israeli propaganda. Thus, suppression of the site’s memory was a Soviet response to cosmopolitan campaigns and increased demand for Jewish emigration. This resulted in the neglected condition of the site for decades.

On the one hand, the importance of Babyn Yar as a site of the Holocaust was officially denied by the Soviet authorities; on the other hand, several Jewish and Soviet writers, intellectuals, leaders, and organizations were actively struggling for its recognition through works of art and commemoration activities. In 1943-1945 Soviet authors Mykola Bazhan, Ilya Ehrenburg, Lev Ozerov, and Savva Golovanivskii wrote poems about Babyn Yar. However, only Golovanivskii’s poem *Abraham* (1943) describes the eponymous story of an old Jew explicitly, while the other authors did not indicate that the main protagonists were Jews (Khiterer, 2016). After Stalin’s death, three controversial pieces of work about the Babyn Yar massacre appeared in the USSR: Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s famous poem *Babi Yar* (1961), Dmitri Shostakovich’s Thirteenth Symphony *Babi Yar* (1962), and Anatoly Kuznetsov’s documentary book *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel* (1966). Yevtushenko’s poem broke the Soviet “code of silence” over the history of the Holocaust and was met with numerous protests. Bypassing Soviet censorship, the piece revealed systematic state anti-Semitism and willful ignorance of the Jewish catastrophe. The poem was translated into 72 languages. Valery Kosolapov, editor of the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (The Literary Newspaper) where the poem had been published, was subsequently fired. Shostakovich’s symphony was one of the most famous of the twentieth century and was based on Yevtushenko’s work. For this symphony, Yevtushenko had to make two revisions with the following lines: “I am proud of the Russia which stood in the path of the bandits,” and “Here, together with Russians and Ukrainians, lie Jews.” Though the piece focuses on the Babyn Yar tragedy, no emphasis on a separate suffering and special fate of the Jews in the GPW is made (Gitelman, 1993/2015: 9). Anatoly Kuznetsov’s novel is based on his memories and testimonies of other survivors. Originally published in censored form in *Yunost* magazine in 1966, the book appeared later, uncensored, in the West,

The first attempts to commemorate victims of Babyn Yar by the Jewish communities and survivors started right after the liberation of Kiev (*Yad Vashem*). However, these projects were opposed by Soviet authorities, who did not want to discriminate victims in the collective memory of the GPW. In the report of the Soviet Propaganda Department it was mentioned that Jewish and Zionist activists organized a commemorative mass demonstration at the site on 29 September 1944 (Khanin, 2003: 51). The next year, in March 1945, the Ukrainian authorities even decided to build a monument in the ravine (Evsťafjeva, 2002; Khiterer, 2016). Yet, the construction was postponed for over three decades due to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the Soviet anti-Jewish political orientation. From that point onward, the memorialization campaign was frozen.

In the meantime, during the 1960s, Jews started to gather annually on 29 September at Babyn Yar to conduct memorial services. Such meetings were often broken up by the police and the participants were prosecuted. On the 25th anniversary of the massacre in 1966, one of the most renowned commemoration services was organized, attended by hundreds of people and several famous Soviet activists: Viktor Nekrasov, Ivan Dziuba, Sergei Dovlatov, Borys Antonenko-Davydovych, Vladimir Voinovich, Vladimir Bill-Bielotserkovski, and Sergei Parajanov. The participants demanded the recognition of the Jewish genocide and the construction of a monument at Babyn Yar. Additionally, in their speeches Nekrasov, Dziuba, Antonenko-Davydovych, and Bill-Bielotserkovski underlined the widespread anti-Semitism in the country and that Jews needed to unite to preserve their national culture (Khanin, 2003: 145). Notably, Dziuba stated that “Babi Yar … is a tragedy of humanity, but it occurred on Ukrainian ground. Therefore, a Ukrainian does not have a right to forget it, just as a Jew does not…” (Burakovskiy, 2011: 376; Khanin, 2003: 168). Nekrasov agreed: “That’s true, all kinds of people were killed in Babyn Yar, but only Jews were murdered just because they were Jews… And don’t forget, this was the first case of mass extermination of the Jews. Auschwitz was later…” (*Yad Vashem*). Consequently, Nekrasov was expelled from the Union of Writers of Ukraine and later from the country. Dziuba was arrested and spent five years in a Soviet concentration camp for dissidents (Khiterer, 2016). Nevertheless, in response to this request, a foundation stone was placed at the ravine in 1966 with an inscription in Ukrainian: “There will

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19 For a more detailed discussion of the influence of these works in the political debates, see Korey, 1993/2015.
be erected a monument to the Soviet people – victims of fascist crimes in the period of temporary occupation of Kiev during 1941–1943” (Illustration 2).

In 1969, at a meeting organized by the Kiev Gorkom devoted to the memory of Soviet soldiers and citizens killed by the fascists, three Jews tried to place a wreath in the form of a six-pointed star (the Star of David) on the stone memorial. This unauthorized “manifestation of nationalism” was broken up by the organ of internal affairs and the activists were arrested (Khanin, 2003: 177, 185).

Furthermore, in addition to commemoration activities related directly to Babyn Yar, Jews organized other memorial ceremonies at the ravine, by now considered as a national Jewish memory site in Ukraine. For instance, on 11 April 1972, on the 29th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Jews gathered near the memorial stone to mark a day of mourning in memory of the Shoah and Jewish heroism (Khanin, 2003: 215-217). The same year, on 7 September, Jews tried to lay down a wreath near the memorial stone with the text “To the memory of the eleven Israeli sportsmen. They were murdered because they were Jews,” referring to the Munich Olympics massacre. About twenty participants and organizers were arrested for this “violation of public order” (Khanin, 2003: 256).

Finally, the first official monument to the memory of “Soviet residents, soldiers, and POWs, who were shot at Babyn Yar by the German occupiers” was unveiled by the state in 1976, thirty-five years after the tragedy. Yet, it emphasized the tragedy of Soviet people, without any connection to the Jewish victims, not in plaques, nor in figures. William Korey (1993/2015: 70) questions why the monument was erected by the Soviet government only at this stage. He suggests that the real reason was international criticism towards the implementation of the Helsinki pact provisions, signed by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in 1975, specifically in relation to the religious and human rights of national minorities. Thus, this awaited monument purported to satisfy international expectations and to reduce Cold War
tensions. This was the first time, but not the last, when Babyn Yar was used as a subject of the foreign political orientation of the country, as if passing an exam of a “civilized” western nation.

This Soviet monument became a central symbol for the memorial services taking place annually on 29 September. This date was the first day of the extermination of the Jews back in 1941. Thus, it was regarded as an official Memorial Day of Jewish victims by the community in Ukraine and at a certain point it became an official Memorial Day of all the victims of the Babyn Yar tragedies. Illustration 3 shows survivors of the Syretske concentration camp attending the memorial service at the Soviet monument on 29 September 1978. The concentration camp was established in 1942. The camp was not built for Jews specifically, but for communists, Soviet POWs, partisans, and the Dynamo football players who were murdered there.

It took half a century before actual public and political changes in Ukraine began. The first official national commemoration ceremony at Babyn Yar took place on the 50th anniversary in conjunction with the creation of the independent Ukraine in 1991, attended by Ukrainian authorities, international representatives, and the general public. At this stage, the Holocaust memory was institutionalized as a national memory under the name of Babyn Yar.

In his official speech, the first Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk emphasized that Babyn Yar was an international mass grave where tens of thousands of people of different nationalities were murdered. However, only Jews were killed just because they were Jews. Kravchuk stated that the Soviet memory politics suppressed the catastrophe of the ravine, so he officially apologized to the Jewish community (Burakovskiy, 2011: 379). Besides, one of the international participants was the US President George H. W. Bush, who in his speech stated:

For many years the tragedy of Babyn Yar went unacknowledged, but no more. You soon will place a plaque on this site that acknowledges the genocide against the Jews, the slaughter of Gypsies, the wanton murder of Communists, Christians, of anyone who dared oppose the Nazi madman’s fantasies. (Clines, 1991)
As part of the commemoration activities in 1991, a public exhibition, “Jews – the Heroes of the Soviet Union,” devoted to the massacre was presented on Khreshchatyk, a central street in Kiev, so the Ukrainian public could learn about the tragedy (Illustration 4).

From that point onward dozens of monuments and memorial stones were erected at Babyn Yar. Children, Soviet POWs, Red Army soldiers, mentally ill, underground fighters, Ukrainian nationalists, Dynamo Kiev football players, Orthodox priests, and the victims of the Kurenivka accident of 1961 are now all memorialized at the site. After the independence the monuments and their meanings became more inclusive. Joint commemoration ceremonies of Babyn Yar victims have been organized by Jewish and Ukrainian associations, as well as by state leaders. Throughout the decades, every national group attempted to initiate a construction of their own memorial symbol.

Still, the official policy on the status and memorialization of Babyn Yar has been less clear. The well-established Ukrainian historians Vitaliy Nakhmanovich and Yuri Radchenko (2016) claim that Babyn Yar has been not assigned any official status and proper commemorative approach by the government. However, policy documents show a different perspective.

The first attempt to build the Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar” was initiated in 2005 by Ukrainian President Victor Yushenko with the order “On Measures to Implement State Policy in the Field of Interethnic Relations, Religions, and Churches” (2005). According to articles two and three of this order, the Government of Ukraine must:

2) ensure a proper preparation and organization of events in 2006, devoted to the 65th anniversary of the Babyn Yar tragedy, create a relevant organizing committee with the participation of representatives of public organizations, and approve the plan of events and finance its implementation;
3) consider by 15 October 2005, the issue of creating a State Historical and Cultural Reserve Babyn Yar.

So, already in 2005, the question of the formation of a relevant committee and reserve was raised. Nevertheless, the final decision was made only two years later, in 2007, by the Prime Minister Victor Yanukovych with the decree “On the State Historical Memorial Reserve ‘Babyn Yar’” (2007). This decree announced the construction of a complex of monuments at

the Babyn Yar Reserve and assigned it to the management of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ukraine, including allocation of state funds for necessary expenses. Yet, throughout the next year no real steps were taken towards creating the Reserve; it had neither a building nor an official ground area. So, in 2008 the Public Committee to commemorate the victims of Babyn Yar appealed to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine with a proposal to transfer the State Historical and Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar” to the UNMI (UNMI website). This proposal was supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the UNMI, and was formally approved in 2008. Later, in 2010, Ukrainian President Yushenko assigned the State Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar” a national status.

BABYN YAR: SITE OF MUTUAL REMEMBERANCE

Before the GPW, Babyn Yar was just a large ravine located on the outskirts of Kiev. Today, this is the National Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar” – a national site of collective memories in Ukraine, analyzed in this thesis. The Reserve is located in a residential area of Kiev between the Lukyanivka and Syrets neighborhoods, on the right bank of Dnieper river, right next to the Dorohozhychi subway station. It is surrounded by buildings, shops, cafes, and transport stations. In the summer, the Reserve looks cheerful, colored with a variety of flowers, plants, bushes, and trees. It is a nice public park to spend leisure time in with family, children, and friends. In this season Babyn Yar does not resemble a massacre site, or a mass grave with a tragic history. In winter the Reserve becomes more mysterious, as if to make a visitor more reflective and conscious. Particularly in this season – due to bare trees and long shadows – the Reserve acquires an appropriate atmosphere of a physical space embodying the dark past of Ukraine (Illustration 5). This dark past is reflected in the following illustrations representing collective memories of Ukraine throughout this case study of Babyn Yar.

The exact position of the original ravine is no longer discernible; the construction of the park altered the landscape. The site is placed within the public park and is divided into two
large distinct sections, separated by Melnykova Street (Yuriia Illienka St. since 2018) (Illustration 6):

Illustration 6. Map of the National Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar,” located at the site.

1) The smaller first section is located between the Melnykova, Oleny Telihy, and Dorogozhytska Streets, where a TV tower, a well-known Soviet monument, and other four memorial objects are placed (depicted at the bottom of the map).

2) The larger second section is situated at the intersection of Melnykova and Oleny Telihy Streets, where eleven memorial objects are kept (depicted at the top of the map).

In the present analysis I will examine the monuments, plaques, and other memorial objects in relation to their location, style, and meaning. For this purpose, I will use the map of the Babyn Yar Reserve, as represented in the Illustration 6. I will start with an analysis of the first section of the site, and the memorial objects located there. Then, I will proceed with the second section.

The first section of the Reserve is the most controversial, since this physical space and memorial landscape incorporates three contested collective memories of Ukraine: the Holocaust (including Soviet suppression of its memorialization), the Holodomor, and the OUN. This part of the site proves that Babyn Yar is more than just a mass grave; it is a subject of a
national competition of victimhood in the public and political discourse in modern Ukraine. To make sense of the continuing battles over the memorialization of this site we must turn to various myths created over its memorials.

To the right of the TV tower (see the map in the Illustration 6) are the Viiskove and Lukyanivske Cemeteries where, historically, bodies of the victims of the Stalinist purges and the Holodomor were buried. However, neither memorials nor memorialization ceremonies were organized there. Besides, official documents and public banners with basic facts installed at the entrances of the Reserve do not represent this myth as part of the historical narrative. Thus, this dark past is not included into the official Babyn Yar memory.

According to one myth, no mass killings of Kievan Jews happened at the site. Instead, bodies of the victims of the Holodomor and Soviet repressions of the 1920s and 1930s lie there (Nakhmanovich, 2004). In this context, Tatyana Evstafyeva and Vitaliy Nakhmanovich (Babiy Yar: 75-80) claim the Holodomor victims were buried at the former Bratske Cemetery, and the victims of repression were buried at the Lukyanivske Cemetery and Bykivnia. To support this myth, author Tatyana Tur has published propaganda since the mid-1990s. In her articles, Tur (1996/2011) argues that Babyn Yar is a place for the victims of the Holodomor, as well as victims of the terrors of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (Cheka) and the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in 1937 and 1938, while a modern myth of the Jewish Babyn Yar was promoted by the Soviet authorities in order to hide a “real communist crime.” Tur asserts that the NKVD started the story of the Jewish annihilation at the ravine, when the Nazis found graves of ten thousand victims of NKVD repressions there. After the analysis of Babyn Yar aerial photographs of the 1930s, Tur states that one place of the ravine is full of soil, and as a result of excavations, this is where Ukrainian victims of Cheka were buried after 1933. Furthermore, Tur claims that aerial photographs showed that the landscape of the ravine did not change during the Nazi occupation of the city. Thus, she is sure no Jews were murdered in 1941 at the site, instead they were taken away by trains.

Another myth, which appeared in the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, claims that communist historical narratives coming from Moscow constitute the main obstacle for true Ukrainian history (League of Ukrainian Canadians, 2007), mainly regarding what they claim are two falsehoods: that non-Ukrainians were executed by the Nazis at Babyn Yar, and that Ukrainian nationalists assisted Nazis in these mass executions. In support of this myth, Andry Mokhnyk, Deputy Chairman of the right-wing All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda party, and a former Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, asserted that “It’s a blatant lie. Babyn Yar is mainly a site of the tragedy of Ukrainians, with over 55,000 Ukrainians being murdered there. Simultaneously, Babyn Yar is a hallmark of the unbreakable Ukrainian spirit.
In Babyn Yar the Germans shot activists of the Ukrainian nationalist underground movement.” (League of Ukrainian Canadians, 2007). The Ukrainian diaspora in Canada uses Babyn Yar as a symbolic memoryscape of Ukrainian national liberation, whereas the Jewish tragedy at Babyn Yar only suppresses this nationalistic myth.

**Soviet Monument** (Illustration 7)

The first permanent memorial at Babyn Yar was the Soviet monument erected in 1976. This monument has been regarded as the most symbolic object of the memorialization campaign for the Jews in Ukraine and in the diaspora. Nevertheless, it serves as the central commemoration point for all victims of the site. Thus, this memorial is the most controversial one, reflecting the evolution of the official memory policy.

In the previous section of this Chapter, commemoration efforts of the Jewish communities and Soviet activists in relation to the memorialization of the site have been described. As part of these attempts, on the 25th anniversary of the Jewish tragedy at Babyn Yar, the Soviet authorities finally installed an official monument (Illustration 7, No. 13 in the map). However, the monument did not convey the Jewish tragedy of the ravine, having no symbolic connection to the events of 1941-1943 at Babyn Yar. Besides, it was placed not at the specific site of the mass killings, but about a kilometer away (Korey, 1993/2015: 62). The point is that for the authorities it was crucial to install a specifically Soviet monument in order to occupy a memorial site, and not let Jewish activists put their own there.

It is worth mentioning that an initial design of the sculpture, made by renowned Ukrainian artist Mikhail Lysenko, represented a Jewish family. However, it was altered at the final stage. Instead, a bronze sculpture in the Soviet monumental style was installed. The sculpture contains eleven figures which symbolize courageous Soviet people proudly fighting for the liberation of
their Motherland, despite pain and death. Some of these figures represent a Red Army soldier (in the center), a partisan, a wounded woman, a sailor protecting his mother with his body, a woman mourning a murdered man, and on the top of the sculpture a young woman suckling a child, despite having her hands tied with barbed wire. Overall, the monument does not reflect the Babyn Yar tragedy. Instead, it illustrates the struggle of all Soviet people under Nazi occupation. It emphasizes the values of human life and sorrow for the people who were massacred.

The memorial plaque with inscription in Ukrainian, “Here, in 1941-1943, the German Fascist invaders executed over 100,000 citizens of Kiev and POWs,” was installed at the bottom of the monument in 1976 (Illustration 8). Only in 1989, almost fifty years after the massacre, two memorial plaques were attached with the same inscriptions in Russian and Yiddish. No plaques and inscriptions in English were installed for an international audience to understand the meaning.


Throughout the decades, Jews in Ukraine and the diaspora actively fought against state anti-Semitism for the national recognition of the Holocaust and their national identity. The memorialization at Babyn Yar and the erection of the monument at the site were viewed as symbolic tools to realize these goals. However, the Soviet monument emphasized the significance of the GPW, equalizing victims regardless of their nationalities. As for the 1989 plaque in Yiddish, it indeed acknowledged the Holocaust as part of the site’s tragedy, but this can be understood only if one knows that Yiddish is a Jewish language, and that the presence of a Yiddish plaque suggests an official remembrance of Jews. Even today, no reference to the Jewishness of the victims is present in the Soviet monument or in any of its plaques. Instead, a separate Jewish monument – Menorah – is installed away from the Soviet sculpture.
Olena Teliha and OUN Members (Illustrations 9 and 11)

Right next to the Soviet monument and TV tower, on the way from the Dorohozhychi subway station, stands a wooden cross in memory of Ukrainian poet Olena Teliha and OUN members executed at Babyn Yar (Illustration 9, No. 15 in the map). The monument was unveiled after the Ukrainian independence, on 21 February 1992, on the 50th anniversary of Olena Teliha’s murder. According to Christian tradition, a cross marks the graves of the deceased. The plaque in Ukrainian states: “In 1941-1943, 621 members of the OUN anti-Nazi underground resistance were executed for the independent Ukrainian state in the occupied Kiev. Famous Poetess Olena Teliha was among them. Babyn Yar became a communal grave for them. Glory to the Heroes!”. On the top of the plaque is the coat of arms of Ukraine, the National Emblem. The text does not indicate Babyn Yar as the place of execution, just “occupied Kiev.”

It is considered that initially OUN fighters collaborated with the Nazis in order to achieve independence of Ukraine from the communist occupation. Some experts claim they assisted in mass killings of Jews at Babyn Yar. However, after the extermination of Jews, mass repressions of OUN members began, and by 1942 they were liquidated at the ravine (Berkhoff, 2004). They are remembered today as national heroes, “who were executed as fighters of the Ukrainian national revolution” (League of Ukrainian Canadians, 2007).

On both sides of the monument two other plaques list the murdered OUN members (Illustration 10). Among them are such well-known...
figures as: Volodymyr Bahaziy (Kiev’s mayor under Nazi occupation); Ivan Rohach (Ukrainian political activist and writer, co-editor of pro-Ukrainian newspapers along with Olena Teliha); and Bida Roman (Ukrainian police commander during the occupation of the city).

In addition to the previous memorial, a separate monument to Olena Teliha was unveiled on 25 February 2017 with an inscription in Ukrainian: “The monument to Olena Teliha and her fellows who perished for independence of Ukraine” (Illustration 11). This monument has not been yet indicated in the Reserve’s map in Illustration 6. The sculpture in the shape of the poet is located next to the commemorative cross, on Oleny Telihy St., in the area where the graves of Teliha and other OUN members are claimed to be found. In 2006 President Victor Yushchenko adopted § decree (2006) that approved a plan to install this monument. The opening ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Pavlo Rozenko, Kiev mayor Vitali Klitschko, Minister of Culture Yevhen Nyshchuk, Head of UINR Volodymyr Viatrovych, and representatives from clergy, general public, and political organizations. Memorial services are held twice a year: on 21 July (Teliha’s date of birth) and 21 February (Teliha’s date of death). The ceremony in 2019 was attended by Donbas soldiers, who are national fighters in the present conflict with Russia.

This monument gave rise to another discussion on the conflict of memories. In 2017, during the Ukrainian Parliament proceedings devoted to the 75th anniversary of the Babyn Yar tragedy, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin claimed that “many collaborators to the crimes were Ukrainians, among them, the OUN fighters — who mocked the Jews, killed them and in many cases handed them over to the Germans — particularly distinguished themselves” (Dolinsky, 2017). This caused national indignation in Ukraine. A number of Ukrainian politicians commented on Rivlin’s speech on their Facebook pages. In particular, Bogdan Chervak (Chairman of the OUN and Chairman of the State Committee for Television and Radio-Broadcasting of Ukraine since 2015) said the statement “humiliated the whole Ukrainian nation.” Additionally, Oleh Lyashko (leader of the Radical Party, member of Verkhovna Rada,
and candidate for presidency in 2014 and 2019) demanded official apologies from Rivlin to the Ukrainian state and its people, as well as recognition of the Holodomor by Knesset.

Furthermore, on 25 February 2007, during the memorial ceremony of the OUN members at the commemorative cross, Serhiy Bevz, member of the Patriots of Ukraine organization, emphasized in his speech that “tens of thousands of Ukrainians were shot at Babyn Yar only because they were Ukrainians… Ukraine is still ruled by foreigners, whose main goals are to exterminate Ukrainians” (League of Ukrainian Canadians, 2007). For decades, Ukrainian nationalists in the diaspora have been arguing for the glorification of the OUN leaders as national heroes in the fight for the liberation of the country. In this context, Babyn Yar has been also used as a symbol of the national struggle. Today, the memory of OUN members is crucial for the nation-building of Ukraine, therefore Babyn Yar will never be accepted as a Jewish mass grave by Ukrainian nationalists.

**Heritage and Joint** (Illustration 12)

In 2000, another memorial project at Babyn Yar caused public and political debates among Jewish and Ukrainian groups in Ukraine and diaspora when Joint (the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee based in New York) allocated millions of dollars for the building of a memorial and Jewish Heritage community cultural center. The project was intended “to immortalize the memory of the inhabitants of Kiev who were killed at Babyn Yar… [and] create a scholarly base for the history of the Holocaust and the history of Jewish people in the context of Ukrainian culture” (Burakovskiy, 2011: 380, citing Filvarov, 2002). On the 60th anniversary of the tragedy in 2001, a commemorative stele in the shape of a Magen David (six-pointed star) was installed (Illustration 12, No. 16 in the map), marking the site for a planned Jewish
Babyn Yar: Contested Memory Site

community center. It was placed right next to the Soviet monument and the OUN cross with the aim to “bring justice” to the Babyn Yar memory. The opening ceremony was attended by President Leonid Kuchma and Kiev mayor Oleksandr Omelchenko. This stele was meant to be a cornerstone for a new Jewish Heritage community and cultural center; however, the construction was postponed and remains so nearly twenty years later.

The stele consists of three parts with inscriptions in Ukrainian, English, and Hebrew (see Illustration 12). The first paragraph quotes the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel (37:14): “I will put my breath into you, and you shall live again.” Subsequent inscriptions are slightly different in each language. Words in Ukrainian inform the visitor that “This stone was laid on the 60th anniversary of the mass slaughter of Jews at Babyn Yar in sign of acknowledgement of the building at this spot the community cultural center ‘The Heritage’.” Words in English state the following: “This cornerstone of the Jewish Heritage community center was laid on the 60th anniversary of Babi Yar massacre.” Finally, words in Hebrew say: “This cornerstone of the Jewish Heritage community center is a symbol of rebirth. It was established on the 60th anniversary of Babi Yar massacre.” The inscriptions are virtually the same, yet the meanings differ. Specifically, the Ukrainian version emphasizes the Jewish slaughter at Babyn Yar, for the first time — right next to the paradoxical Soviet monument and the nationalistic OUN cross. However, it does not specify that the Heritage community center will be Jewish. The English version is more neutral, while the Hebrew version highlights that construction of the Heritage center symbolizes rebirth of the Jewish nation and memory, referring to the words of Ezekiel. It points out the heritage of the Jews is to build the center and memorialize the Jewish Holocaust at the site. Thus, memory means life, while forgetting equals death. Different meanings in each language directly represent the ongoing conflict around Babyn Yar, the Holocaust, and the Jewish heritage. Furthermore, at the top left corner of the stone, there is the logotype of the Joint organization. At the top right corner – there is the emblem of Kiev, which testifies the cooperation of the municipal authorities and the Jewish community in the realization of this project. The inscriptions end with the date of the establishment of the stele – 30 September 2001, the 60th anniversary of Babyn Yar.

Debates between Jews around the construction of the Heritage project and foreign sponsorship by Joint started in 2002. The project was endorsed by Kiev’s Chief Rabbi Yaakov Dov Bleich, the president of the Jewish Council of Ukraine Ilya Levitas, president of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress Vadim Rabinovich, the head of the Ukrainian Anti-Fascist Committee Alexander Shlayen; and was criticized by representatives from both Jewish and Ukrainian communities, mainly the head of the Jewish Federation of Ukraine (VAAD) Josef Zissels, the head of the Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies, Anatoly Podolsky, Vitaliy
Nakhmanovich, and others (Burakovskiy, 2011: 380; Berkhoff, 2015). There were two arguments in support of the construction of the Jewish Heritage community center and installment of the stele specifically at this location and date. First, socio-political; this center would be a reminder of the Jewish presence at the controversial site. It shows an intention of the Jewish community to dominate the memory space and the memorial day, and to win the “memory wars.” The second argument was ideological; inspired by the fatidic words of the prophet Ezekiel, the main goal is to transform the site of Jewish massacre and death into a Jewish center of a reborn living nation. The opposition argued that such a living center would disturb the human remains, which in fact contradicts the laws of Judaism.

In response to these controversies, a group of New York Jews, consisting of former residents of Kiev, created a committee called the Initiative Group “Save Babi Yar” in 2003, aimed to express their concerns on behalf of Jews in the diaspora. Accordingly, they appealed to the Ukrainian government to recognize Babyn Yar as a Holocaust site and install a Holocaust memorial there (Burakovskiy, 2011: 382). Additionally, they restarted an international design competition for this Holocaust memorial. However, any new constructions were not possible once the Reserve “Babyn Yar” was transferred to the UINM in 2008.

The Heritage center raised a number of significant issues among the public and political organizations, mainly: how to memorialize the Holocaust at Babyn Yar, and what memorial should be erected, if any; whether it is acceptable for national memorial objects to be initiated and financed by private individuals from Ukraine or abroad, or whether it is a state responsibility; and whether it is acceptable to exclude Ukrainian elites and intellectuals from the planning and realization of national memorial projects. Similar issues regarding the Heritage center are raised at this stage in Ukraine with respect to the new memorial project BYHMC at Babyn Yar, which will be discussed below.
In 2005 a monument to the victims of Nazism was unveiled next to the Soviet sculpture (No. 12 in the map), a stele of grey granite consisting of two sides with images:

1) the back side (left part of Illustration 13) represents a destroyed city with buildings turned to rubble, and a cathedral; the inscription in Ukrainian is dedicated to the “World ravaged by Nazism”;

2) the front side (right part of Illustration 13) has a number of parts. The left part of the monument represents burning camp prisoners, including a lonely child behind bars and a mother with an infant in her hands, symbolizing the suffering of Ukrainian slave workers. A bronze statue represents a short-haired little girl holding a doll, that can be either a daughter who remained without parents cut off by the war, or a young concentration camp inmate, who lost her childhood, although she is still a child. The inscription above the girl’s head states in Ukrainian “Memory for the sake of the future.” Next to the word “memory” is the “OST” stamp placed, which refers to the Ostarbeiter badge, that Nazi labor camp inmates were supposed to carry on their clothes. Ostarbeiter (Eastern workers in German) were foreign workers coming from Central and Eastern Europe, sent to the Reich to work as slaves, some as young as ten years old. Most of them were women; victims of rape and sexual violence. Many were forced to work so hard they breathed their last in the death camps, along with Jews (Merridale, 2005: 91).
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252). Nazis not only occupied Ukraine, but also sent away nearly 2.8 million Ukrainians for slave labor in Germany throughout 1942-1945 (Magocsi, 2010: 679).

In this context, a memorial stone (Illustration 14) is placed right next to the monument with a text in Ukrainian: “Let’s pay our respects to the memory of three million citizens of Ukraine, forcibly deported to Nazi Germany, the vast majority of which were tormented by slave labor, hunger, tortures, executed, and burnt in crematories.” On the top of the text the abbreviation “USVZN” (Ukrainian Community of Prisoners – Victims of Nazism) is stated.

The second section of the Reserve starts at the exit of the Dorohozhychi subway station with the Monument to the estimated 40,000 Jewish Children executed at Babyn Yar (Golbert, 2008: 242) (Illustration 15, No. 1 in the map), which captures the eyes of the visitors right away. The bronze sculpture was unveiled on the 60th anniversary in 2001 by the President Leonid Kuchma and is situated on the road where Jews were led to their place of execution back in 1941. This monument symbolizes the universality of childhood destroyed by the war. The monument represents a little girl holding out her hands asking for mercy. On both sides of the girl, two other figures sit; one is the fairy-tale clown Pierrot with his head low (to the left), and another is a baby doll with a kippah on his broken head, with his hands raised towards heaven. This monument is devoted to the thousands of children shot, tortured, or just left to die by the Nazi soldiers and their collaborators at Babyn Yar. The exact number of children murdered at the site is not known, since children under three years old were not registered. The number of surviving children amounts to less than ten.
The monument to the children opens onto the **Alley of Martyr** (Illustration 16, No. 2 in the map). The Alley is divided into two walking paths, surrounded by benches and trees, some of them are donated by organizations. For instance, RememberUs.org, a non-profit organization established in 2013 in Boston, US, operating in Ukraine, Israel, and the US with the aim “to raise awareness and commemorate lesser known Shoah events and sites of mass murder, especially in Eastern Europe,” donated metasequoia trees to the Reserve “In memory of the Jewish children killed at Babi Yar” (Illustration 17). The memorial sign with inscriptions in Ukrainian and English was installed in 2017.

In the middle of the Alley, a new commemorative sign was placed in September 2016 with an inscription in Ukrainian: “At this point tens of thousands of peaceful Kievan residents of Jewish nationality were shot during the Nazi occupation in 1941-1943.” Figures of a menorah and Magen David are pictured above the text (Illustration 18).

**Roma** (Illustration 19)

At the end of the Alley of Martyr a new monument in memory of the Roma people massacred at Babyn Yar was erected in September 2016. During the Nazi occupation of Kiev in 1941-1943, hundreds of Roma people were annihilated by the Germans only because of their ethnicity. They tried to leave the city before the occupation in their “Gypsy vans,” which is symbolized in a bronze sculpture (Illustration 19, No. 5 in the map). Both sides of the wagon have inscriptions in Ukrainian and Romani: “To the Roma who were exterminated by the
fascists during 1940-1945.” This “wagon” memorial is devoted to Roma victims not of only the Babyn Yar massacre, but to all Roma in Europe, victims of the Third Reich.

Illustration 19. “Gypsy wagon.”

On 29 September 1999 a foundation stone at the cost of Roma NGOs was put at the site with an inscription in Ukrainian: “In this place a memorial to the victims of the Roma Holocaust will be built.” Only in 2012 a state-sponsored memorial sign with a Ukrainian inscription: “In memory of the Romani who were shot in Babyn Yar” was installed at the same place (Illustration 20). Previously, memorial ceremonies were organized by Roma activists annually on 29 September. At these services participants put the photos of Roma relatives murdered by the Germans, in order to personalize the victims. Since 2004 an International Roma Genocide Day is held annually on 2 August.

Andrej Kotljarchuk (2015; 2016) calls the Nazi extermination of Roma people the “Roma Holocaust” and compares it to the Jewish Holocaust. In his studies Kotljarchuk argues the Roma minority was not included in the Ukrainian nation-building for a long time. However, since 2005 the government started to support memorial projects devoted to the “Roma Holocaust.” This intensification of the memory politics mirrors the continuing integration process of Ukraine into the EU (Nordström, 2008; Kotljarchuk, 2016). Kotljarchuk (2016: 167-166) explains that the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) monitors the implementation of the 2004 program of commemoration of the Roma genocide. In fact,
Ukraine, being a member of the EU program “Roma Decade 2005-2015,” was the only post-Soviet country who abandoned the name “Gypsy,” instead preferring the designated “Roma.” Thus, it can be seen that through inclusion of previously marginalized memories of ethnic minorities Ukraine attempts to Europeanize its values. Memorialization campaigns of the Jewish and the “Roma Holocaust” are used by the state as tools to improve its international image and to show the country is ready for the next step.

**Menorah** (Illustration 21)

In 1991, right after the proclamation of the Ukrainian independence, on the 50th anniversary of Babyn Yar tragedy, the first national Jewish monument was erected (Illustration 21, No. 6 in the map). National and international officials, including Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and future US President Bill Clinton came to the opening ceremony and gave commemorative speeches. A large bronze menorah-shaped sculpture symbolizes survival and renovation of the Jewish nation. The Menorah is a symbol of Judaism since ancient times. The monument portrays faceless figures standing in the line of death to be buried and annihilated. Some branches of the Menorah feature human remains lying in a ravine. Another branch represents a number of figures with raised hands ready for the shootings.

On both sides of the monument, two memorial signs, *Matzevahs* (headstones), are placed (Illustration 22). According to Jewish traditions, *Matzevahs* with inscriptions in Hebrew are usually put at the head of the

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20 The Menorah symbolizes seven days of the creation of the world, where the center light represents the Shabbat. The Menorah stands for enlightenment, Divine inspiration, and wisdom. The primary purpose of the Menorah in the Holy Temple is to spread the light of Godliness to the world.
grave to commemorate deceased Jews. At the Menorah memorial Matzevahs have inscriptions in Ukrainian and Hebrew: “The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground”. The meaning has a symbolic connection to the actual location of the monument. Here thousands of Jews were murdered by Nazis and here thousands of Jews were interred. The monument sits at the boundary of the former Lukyanivske Jewish and Kyrylivske Orthodox cemeteries. Back in September 1941 all Jews of Kiev were ordered to come to these cemeteries and from there were forced to go to their place of death. Today it is a quiet pathway where visitors can rest and reflect on a bench. But decades ago, this was a path of execution, called the Road of Sorrow (Illustration 23, No. 11 in the map). Remaining tombs with Matzevahs in Russian and Hebrew from the Jewish cemetery still stand along the Road of Sorrow without any fences and information stands (see Illustration 23).

Jewish Cemetery (Illustration 24)

Before WWII, Jews comprised approximately 26% of Kiev’s population. Most resided in districts close to Babyn Yar. There, Lukyanivske Jewish Cemetery was located – a large necropolis of about 25 hectares. The Jewish cemetery was created in 1892-1894 and contained separate sections for Karaim and Muslim graves. During the Nazi occupation most of the cemetery was destroyed and not renovated by the Soviet authorities afterwards. The Nazis used the tombstones to build furnaces where Babyn Yar victims were burned. After the war the municipality planned to set up a park with a sports...
complex. Consequently, the City Council closed the cemetery and moved most of the graves to the Kurenivka Jewish Cemetery. The graves of the most illustrious figures were transferred to Israel. Officially, the cemetery was liquidated in 1964. However, when the construction of the TV tower started in the 1980s, the workers complained they were continuously finding remains of graves. If not for the efforts of the Jewish communities in Ukraine and the diaspora, these remaining tombstones and burial places would be desecrated. At the back of the park, close to the Menorah monument, one can find a fence zone with gravestones still standing (Illustration 24, No. 10 in the map). The side fence was accomplished with funds donated by the US Jewish community of San Francisco. A memorial plaque was installed with words in Ukrainian, Russian, and English: “We will keep you in our hearts forever.” At the bottom of the plaque stands the name of the US Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad. This is an independent agency of the US government, established in 1985, whose interest consists in the preservation of sites in other countries, including Ukraine. These sites are an integral part of the historical cultural heritage and religion of the Jewish community.

Keeping in mind Soviet memory politics and the above-mentioned attitude towards Jewish graves, the Jewish community of Kiev set up an information board in Ukrainian right next to the entrance to the former Lukyanivske Jewish cemetery (Illustration 25).

Illustration 25. Information board at the entrance of the Jewish cemetery.

This board informs visitors about the history of the local Jewish community and the Holocaust tragedy at Babyn Yar. The left part of the board describes the crime of Nazism. The last paragraphs state:

After WWII the Jewish community declined. Most of its members assimilated and emigrated. The unique Jewish culture of Kiev disappeared from the face of the city.
Babyn Yar: Contested Memory Site

The history of the Jewish community of Kiev – is a symbol of inhumanity of the Nazis. They killed people only because of their ethnic origin. We must remember and not repeat it again!

Communism = Nazism (The word “Communism” in the original text is crossed out by unknown individuals).

The right part of the board describes the crime of Communism, in relation to the Jewish community and the fate of the burial site at Lukyanivske Jewish Cemetery. It can be observed that the text was damaged and consequently replaced. The last paragraphs state:

This abandoned cemetery – is a symbol of inhumanity of the Soviet rule. It did not respect either living or dead citizens. We must remember and never repeat it again!

Communism = Nazism (The word “Communism” in the original text is crossed out again).

With this board Kiev residents attempted to raise their voice against the Soviet government and to draw public attention to state anti-Semitism. Soviet authorities not only neglected the Jewish tragedy at Babyn Yar, they also did not display concern about its citizens. In this public board, the authors raise a significant political point, equating the crimes of Nazism with those of Communism. When the Nazi Holocaust ended, the Communist Holocaust still continued, referred to as “Stalin’s Holocaust” (Gitelman, 1997: 28).

Orthodox Priests (Illustration 26)

In close proximity to the Menorah monument (30-40 meters away) and the former Jewish cemetery stands another commemorative cross (Illustration 26, No. 7 in the map). An oak cross was unveiled in 2000 in memory of Orthodox priests killed at Babyn Yar for resisting Nazi occupation and hiding Jews. An Orthodox cross at the core of the monument symbolizes religious confession of the deceased. Under the cross a memorial plaque is set up with the Ukrainian text: “At this point two priests were shot on 6 November 1941, Archimandrite Oleksandr Vishnyakov and the Archpriest Pavlo for the appeal to protect the Homeland from the fascists. An honored death of His Reverends in the face of God.”
Behind the cross a small memorial chapel is placed in honor of the icon of the Mother of God; “Joy of All Who Sorrow” (Illustration 27, No. 8 in the map). Next to the chapel a memorial sign in Ukrainian states: “Temple-chapel in honor of the priests shot for calls for the protection of the homeland during the Nazi occupation of Kiev, archimandrite Oleksandr Vishnyakov, the archpriest Pavlo Ostryanskiy, the schemanun Esfir, and other innocently killed citizens of different nationalities.” These two memorial objects make Babyn Yar a symbol of national Ukrainian resistance to the Nazi occupants, in addition to the previously described monuments to the OUN members and Olena Teliha. In the map (Illustration 6) this memorial chapel is marked under No. 8 and called “Memorial chapel to the executed military and Kyiv residents.”

Kurenivka (Illustration 28)

Forgetting brings death. The Kurenivka mudslide of 1961 is proof of that.

In the 1950s Kiev’s municipality decided to fill Babyn Yar and to build a recreational park there, despite it being a mass grave. Consequently, the ravine was dammed up and silted with pulp from the Petrovsky brick factory. On 13 March 1961 this pulp burst and flooded a large part of the Kurenivka neighborhood, where hundreds died as a result. However, the accident was not publicized by the Soviet authorities and the consequences were kept secret. No real numbers were revealed to the public, no official commemoration events were organized in this regard. The survivors and families of the victims received compensation and stayed silent. Nevertheless, many residents of the city believed it was revenge by the victims of Babyn Yar for an attempt to desecrate the memory of the site’s
tragedy. Therefore, only forty-five years after the incident was it possible to memorialize the victims in the now independent country.

The first bell-shaped monument to the victims of the Kurenivka mudslide in Kiev was reared in March 2006 (Illustration 28) on the other end of the Reserve’s second section, right in Oleny Telihy St. (No. 4 in the map). The inscription in Ukrainian informs the visitor that the monument is “Established to the 45th anniversary of the Kurenivka tragedy on the initiative and at the expenses of the Party ‘Defenders of the Homeland’ and Suslov Ivan Nikolayovich. 13.03.2006.” The right memorial stone states:

Eternal memory of innocent victims of the Kurenivka tragedy.  
The tragedy will hurt the soul  
The loss embarrasses the heart  
The memory does not have to die  
The sorrow did not know the end.

Thus, memories should be kept alive for the purpose of not only remembering, but also learning from the mistakes of the dark past, so the present and future are brighter.21

On the whole, the Reserve does not look like a coherent space. This is not a memorial complex having one integral idea, but a memoryscape combining a number of monuments and plaques containing different historical grounds and meanings. Each memorial object and monument are only loosely connected and has no mutual relation, either stylistically or by definition. One gets an impression the monuments were erected in an attempt to compete with each other. This incoherence occurred due to a slow and complex memorialization campaign of the site and its collective memories. Struggles that accompanied the collective memories of the Holocaust, Holodomor, and OUN, analyzed in the previous Chapter, are represented at Babyn Yar Reserve. Monuments reflect public and political views of the state and society. The monuments at Babyn Yar Reserve reflect public and political discourse of the memory politics regarding the Holocaust, Holodomor, and OUN in Ukraine. This space illustrates the memory politics of, about, and over the past.

**DEBATES ON THE BYHMC**

Since the independence of Ukraine, Jewish and Ukrainian activists raised an issue to create a Museum and Memorial devoted to the Holocaust and Babyn Yar tragedy. One of the concerns

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21 In addition, there are a number of memorial objects within and outside the territory of the Reserve that were not analyzed in this thesis, for instance: a monument to a Nazi underground agent, the Hero of Ukraine Tatiana Markus, was opened in 2009; a monument to the members of the football team “Start” was installed in 1971; a monument to the victims of the Syrets concentration camp unveiled in 1991; a monument to the executed patients of the Pavlov Mental Hospital, the first victims of the Babyn Yar tragedy; and a monument to the author Anatoly Kuznetsov.
was where to locate such a memorial institution, since almost the whole territory of the ravine is a mass grave and a burial site. Such places are sacred and any construction is prohibited, according to Judaism. So, attempts to build a memorial outside Babyn Yar were undertaken. In 2012 the Committee of the National Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar” framed a plan of organization of the Reserve, which would include a memorial and a museum to the victims of Babyn Yar. However, this project has not been realized until now.

In his speech in Israeli Knesset in 2015, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko stated that Babyn Yar is a site of trauma for both Ukrainians and Jews. He also paid tribute to the Righteous Among the Nations and apologized for the collaborationists who existed in all European countries and helped the Nazis in the Final Solution. These words had a strong significance for the official memory politics of Ukraine. They highlighted that Ukraine is ready to accept humanistic values of tolerance, equality, and justice, which will connect the country to a united Europe (Berkhoff et al., 2018: 239-240). That same year, on the 75th anniversary of the Babyn Yar tragedy, Poroshenko passed a decree “About the Events in Connection with the 75th Anniversary of Babyn Yar Tragedy” (2015). In this decree he highlighted that the Babyn Yar tragedy is one of the most horrible catastrophes of the Holocaust and Kiev’s occupation. He emphasized that commemoration activities would unite the Ukrainian nation around the idea of building a law-governed European state, able to protect all its citizens. He therefore enacted international and national organizations, and Jewish institutions to organize exhibitions, lectures, publish related materials, and issue stamps with Babyn Yar symbols. With this decree the President raised a question of creation of the first memorial center to the Holocaust victims at the site of the massacre. Poroshenko claimed: “The memorial should become a symbol of unification of the nation… This is not a political action, but on the contrary – it is an action of the society” (Kostiuk, 2017).

Consequently, in 2017, a declaration for the establishment of the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center (BYHMC) was signed by well-known international leaders, including Natan Sharansky (Israeli politician and Soviet dissident), Yaakov Dov Bleich (Ukraine’s Chief Rabbi), Joschka Fischer (former German MFA), and Aleksander Kwaśniewski (former Polish President). In its Mission Statement, the BYHMC defines itself as “a nonprofit educational institution that documents and commemorates the Holocaust, in particular the Babyn Yar mass shootings of September 1941.” Its main vision consists of building a “democratic and resilient society on the foundation of an elaborated and common picture of history.”22 Thus, the BYHMC will be devoted to the Holocaust collective memory and Jewish victims of Babyn Yar

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22 See more at the BYHMC Mission Statement.
exclusively. As claimed by Yana Barinova, the chief operating officer of the memorial center, “BYHMC can become a human rights hub for Eastern Europe in the same way that the USHMM has become a focus for human rights issues globally” (Cohen, 2018). Following examples from the West, the BYHMC takes the platform of an archetypal tragedy of the Holocaust to promote Western values of democracy, tolerance, and human rights. For the construction of the BYHMC Memorial the models of the USHMM and Yad Vashem in Israel are used. The Center is planned to be finished by 2023.

Among the members of the Initiative Group, who will provide financial support and assure timely accomplishment of the plan, are Vitali Klitschko (Kyiv’s mayor), Joseph I. Lieberman (American senator of Jewish descent), Natan Sharansky (Israeli politician, originally from Ukraine, refusenik in the UkSSR of Jewish descent), Pavel Fuks (Ukrainian-Russian businessman, originally from Ukraine of Jewish descent), Victor Pinchuk (Ukrainian businessman and philanthropist of Jewish descent), German Khan (Ukrainian-Russian businessman and philanthropist of Jewish descent), Mikhail Fridman (Russian businessman and philanthropist, originally from Ukraine of Jewish descent), Timothy D. Snyder (American historian, expert on the Holocaust history), Svyatoslav Vakarchuk (Ukrainian musician and politician). Almost the same list of people is in the Supervisory Board of the BYHMC: Natan Sharansky, German Khan, Irina Bokova (former Director-General of UNESCO), Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Rabbi Yaakov Dov Bleich, Joseph I. Lieberman, Wladimir Klitschko (world boxing champion, philanthropist, and public figure in Ukraine), Victor Pinchuk, Joschka Fischer, Mikhail Fridman, and Pavel Fuks. The Academic Council headed by the well-known Dutch historian Karel Berkhoff consists of established, mostly international scholars.

Since the announcement of the creation of the BYHMC, the project has been subject to numerous public and academic debates. It has not been unanimously supported in Ukraine. The main opposition is that the center is at odds with the national memory politics in modern Ukraine. Some view it as a Western influence, since national recognition of the Holocaust serves as a moral factor for the EU integration, the so-called “European entry ticket” (Judt, 2005: 803). Others, following the opinion of Volodymyr Viatrovych (2017), regard it as another Russian intervention, since three “Russian” philanthropists are involved in the financial part of the project. Viatrovych is concerned that through Russian investments another powerful Russian involvement might occur – they will dictate who is guilty in the Holocaust (Ukrainians) and other unacceptable historical myths will be imposed on the public thought in Ukraine and abroad. However, as can be viewed above, those “Russian” philanthropists are of Ukrainian background and Jewish descent, but only based in Russia at present.
In this context, in March 2017 sixteen Ukrainian historians and specialists on the history of the Holocaust, Jews, and WWII in Ukrainian research and educational institutions, addressed an “Official Letter of Warning” to their colleagues at the BYHMC Center (Istorichna Pravda, 2017). Their main argument consists of the fact that Babyn Yar should not be connected to the Holocaust narrative only, ignoring other victims and dramatic events of the ravine’s history. They claim that this approach would only aggravate the memory wars that have raged around the site. In their letter they state:

1. We fully support the idea of creating a Memorial in the capital of Ukraine with a museum, scientific and educational components, devoted to the history and memory of the Holocaust....
2. We consider it unacceptable to construct a memorial center at Babyn Yar itself, or on the territory of one of the former cemeteries. Today, given the information available, the construction of the center is planned to be located on the site of the Jewish cemetery destroyed during the Soviet era, according to all historical maps.
3. We consider it artificial to separate the “Holocaust by Bullets” from the general history of the Holocaust in Europe. If such an approach is adopted, it will become another attempt at the level of historical memory to revive the united Soviet civilizational space and thus use the painful theme of the Holocaust to promote neo-imperialist ideas of the “Russian world.”
4. During WWII Ukrainian lands were occupied by different states, and the persecution and destruction of Jews took place here in a variety of ways. In particular, one quarter of the 1.5 million dead Ukrainian Jews were killed in Nazi camps in the occupied territory of Poland.
5. Therefore, we think it is right to devote a future museum to the whole Holocaust history, which will put it at the level of other centers of this kind in the world. At the same time, the Museum of the Holocaust history in Ukraine should be included in the context of the history of WWII and the Holocaust in Europe, which will contribute to the comprehensive incorporation of this issue into the new historical memory of the Ukrainian people.
6. The Jewish tragedy turned Babyn Yar into a global symbol of the Holocaust, and Jews accounted for more than two-thirds of the victims....
   At the same time, during the Nazi occupation, Babyn Yar was the site of the shooting of not only Jews, but all those whom the Nazis considered their enemies: Roma, Ukrainian nationalists, Soviet prisoners of war and underground fighters, the Syrets concentration camp prisoners, hostages, and the mentally ill.
   After the war, Babyn Yar became the territory of a man-made Kurenivsky mudslide, as well as a struggle for the right to immortalize the memory of the victims of the Holocaust.
7. Therefore, we consider it wrong to attempt to combine Babyn Yar with the Holocaust only, ignoring other victims and dramatic moments in this history. Such an approach will only aggravate the memory wars, which have been present at Babyn Yar for many years.
8. Although the history of the destruction of the Jews of Kiev should obviously become the key topic of the Babyn Yar Museum, we believe that the Holocaust Museum and Babyn Yar Museum should be separate institutions that reveal various aspects and different contexts of the twentieth century tragic history.

We hope that you as our Colleagues will understand and support our position and bring it to the founders and leaders of the BYHMC. (Istorichna Pravda, 2017)
Overall, the idea of the signatories of the letter is that there should be three memorial projects: a National Historical Memorial Complex “Babyn Yar,” a Museum “Babyn Yar,” and a Memorial to the Holocaust. One of the BYHMC declaration’s signatories is Ukrainian historian Anatoly Podolsky, who thinks a memorial or a museum “Babyn Yar” can be built on the basis of an already existing National Historical Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar.” This Reserve should be a well-prepared professional center, a museum of history and memory of the site’s tragedy, whereas a museum of the Holocaust should be a separate powerful institution, where the fate of the Jews during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine will be reflected since it is part of Ukrainian and European history. Finally, Podolsky added, these museums should be elaborated on by Ukrainian specialists with the cooperation of foreign colleagues. Besides, the Ukrainian government should finance such projects with the support of private and international funds, and not on the other way around, because Ukrainian history is part of European and world histories” (Kostiuk, 2017). Memory politics is a matter of state interest and national security. Ukrainian historians Vitaliy Nakhmanovich and Tetyana Pastushenko, signatories of the “Official Letter of Warning,” supported this argument. They are concerned there is no proper memorialization to the Holocaust tragedy. However, Babyn Yar is not a site of massacre of only Jews. So, they offer to build two separate institutions in Kiev: a museum (memorial) to the Holocaust and a museum to Babyn Yar.

The main conflict around the memorialization of Babyn Yar is that the BYHMC project is actively supported by foreign investors and experts; the state does not actively participate. The main problem around Holocaust memorialization lies in the issue of anti-Semitism, collaboration of the local population, and national competition of the victimhood narratives. Thus, Ukraine, as a multiethnic and multicultural country is supposed to resolve these issues through internal policy. A proper commemoration of the Holocaust memory is an important component of a “civilized” country at the international arena.

In addition, two other memorial projects devoted to the Babyn Yar memory have been developed simultaneously: a state project initiated in 2016 with the purpose to create a memorial museum at the former office of the Jewish cemetery next to the ravine, run by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and managed by the National Historical Memorial Reserve; a memorial park initiated by the Babi Yar Public Committee in 2006-2007, sponsored by the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter (EJU) in Canada (Zissels, 2018).
BABYN YAR: TRANSNATIONAL SYMBOL OF THE HOLOCAUST IN UKRAINE

Through numerous struggles from the postwar era until now, Babyn Yar has become a national memory site of all groups of WWII victims. These struggles shaped what Babyn Yar is today and depending on which agenda people were struggling for, we see different results at the site. In the absence of a clear national memory policy regarding Babyn Yar, this place remains an object of the competition among different collective memories in Ukraine, as well as a subject of political instrumentalization.

Nationally, Babyn Yar is considered as a symbol of the national struggle against the Nazi occupation, a tool of reinforcement for the national identity. Internationally, Babyn Yar is a central pillar of the collective memory of the “Holocaust by Bullets” in Ukraine. Commemoration ceremonies devoted to the memory of the Shoah have been organized there by Jewish communities since the end of WWII. Furthermore, Babyn Yar has been a point of reference for public and governmental authorities in their formal speeches related to various atrocities. Along with Treblinka, Sobibor, Auschwitz, Chelmno, and Belsen, there was Babyn Yar.

For instance, in the Christmas Eve Declaration made in 1972, Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme made a statement in response to the US bombings of Hanoi. Palme, comparing the US operation with several other historical acts of violence, said:

We should call things by their proper name. What is happening today in Vietnam is a form of torture. There can be no military justification for the bombing…

… The fact is that people are being tormented, that a nation is being tormented in order to humiliate it, to compel it into submission to force. That is why the bombing is an outrage. There have been many such outrages in modern history. They are often associated with names – Guernica, Oradour, Babi Yar, Katyn, Lidice, Shaperville, Treblinka. Violence has triumphed. But history has condemned those who were responsible. Now there is another name to add to the list – Hanoi. (cited in Myrdal, 1977: 248)

At the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in 2000, Ukrainian Prime Minister Victor Yushchenko referred to Babyn Yar massacre:

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

… Holocaust is a permanent pain of the world Jewish community. At the same time, it is a tragedy of universal scale… I am proud today that I would speak on behalf of one more person – Andriy Yushchenko, my father, prisoner of Auschwitz, who carried for the rest of his life the camp’s number 11367. He, as well as millions of Ukrainians, passed through all circles of the Holocaust hell.

The Babiy Yar in Kiev where over 100,000 people of different nationalities were executed, more than half of them were Jews. The Babiy Yar tragedy remains a deep

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sorrow of not only Ukrainian Jews but also of the entire Ukrainian nation. It was one of the gloomiest events in the history of World War II. That war took lives of more than five million Ukrainians and ruined over 700 cities and towns as well as thousands of villages. (Yushchenko, 2000)

Finally, at the UN Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in 2018, German Ambassador Christoph Heusgen welcomed attendees in the following way:

Excellencies, Holocaust Survivors and Families, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Today, we commemorate the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by the Red Army on 27 January 1945. Since then, for 73 years, the word Auschwitz has stood for inconceivable suffering and systematic murder – not only in Auschwitz, but in the many other concentration and extermination camps, such as Treblinka and Majdanek or in places like Babi Yar, where tens of thousands were massacred. (Heusgen, 2018)

In addition, international Holocaust museums represent Babyn Yar as a central symbol of the Ukrainian Shoah. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin provides a European map of major sites of the Nazi massacre, where Treblinka, Belzec, Auschwitz, and Babyn Yar are indicated (Illustration 29).

The Montreal Holocaust Museum in Canada puts symbolic names of the memory sites at the wall of remembrance, including the name of Babyn Yar (Illustration 30).
Finally, the USHMM in Washington, D.C., has a separate section devoted to the Babyn Yar tragedy (Illustration 31).

Illustration 31. Babyn Yar section at the USHMM. US.

Additionally, what is interesting is that despite the failure of a proper national commemoration of Babyn Yar in Kiev and Ukraine, there are well-established transnational memorials, built by the Jewish communities in the diaspora:

1) a Babyn Yar memorial was reared in 1972 in Nahalat Yitzchak Cemetery in Givatayim, Tel Aviv, Israel (Illustration 32);

2) a memorial park to the Babyn Yar massacre was opened in 1982 in Denver (Colorado, USA);

Illustration 32. Babyn Yar memorial in Israel. Tel-Aviv.
Photo Credit: Daria Shishaeva.
3) recently a memorial to the victims of the Babyn Yar massacre was erected in 2014 in the Sydney suburb of Bondi in Australia (Illustration 33). A memorial plaque was installed on the 73rd anniversary of Babyn Yar with the following inscriptions in Hebrew: “To the Memory of the souls of the Holy Martyrs at Babi Yar who sacrificed their lives in praise of the Holy Hashem [God]. May their souls be bound in the bundle of life.” And in English: “To the Memory of the Jews of Kiev massacred at Babi Yar by the Nazis and their Ukrainian collaborators, and in recognition of the suffering of Soviet Jewry.” If at Babyn Yar Reserve in Kiev no memorial objects tell of the collaboration of the Ukrainians in the Jewish massacre, the memorial plaque, unveiled by the national Jewish community of Australia, with the support of the Australian national authorities, directly refers to that collaboration. The debate on the local collaboration therefore is recognized in the Jewish communities of diaspora outside Ukraine.

Following the analysis in this Chapter it can be seen that over the years, Babyn Yar has created a memory image of the Holocaust site, being both a physical site to be memorialized and a conceptual symbolic site constructed through commemoration practices. If, in the Soviet era, this was a site of official forgetting of the Holocaust memory, as proved by Yevtushenko’s poem, recently it has become a new symbol of democratic and humanistic values, pushed forward by the West and the EU. At this stage of the memory politics in Ukraine, Babyn Yar, a national Holocaust symbol, is exploited by political actors as a mechanism for democratization and European integration of the country. The BYHMC is an instrument of such an integration. Simultaneously, at the European and global levels, the phenomenon of the Holocaust memory is a tool for promoting certain transnational myths and doctrines.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Over the last decades the Holocaust has come to play an increasingly important role in the West as a shared historical experience, unifying nations around the common dark past. In this way the Holocaust is politicized in national and international arenas. Its memory is exploited for political purposes globally. The remembrance of the Shoah is claimed to embody pro-Western values of human rights, tolerance, and democracy. However, in practice, the memory of the Holocaust is abused and violated for political reasons. It has become a subject of political gambles used to deflect public attention away from domestic issues and to improve the international image of the respective countries. Beginning with the first well-known political act associated with the memory of the Holocaust by West German Chancellor Willy Brandt in Poland in 1970, which brought considerable changes in the memory politics of Europe and the West, more and more state officials use the memory of the Holocaust for their own purposes. In recent decades various European and other world leaders have offered official apologies for denying aid to Jewish refugees in WWII: French President Jacques Chirac and Dutch Queen Beatrix in 1995, Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski in 2001, Bulgarian president Georgi Parvanov in 2008, and Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen in 2006. More recently, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau offered an apology in November 2018 on the fate of the ship MS St. Louis and the over 900 Jews who were sent back to Germany just before WWII. Nowadays the Holocaust has acquired a public and political role, becoming more than just a dark past in the history of mankind. Official apologies demonstrate declarations of failure and guilt. However, these apologies transform historical debates into contemporary political ones. This struggle over memory creates breeding grounds for politics of memory globally.

In Ukraine, a country that lost the majority of its Jews during WWII, the memory of the Holocaust is framed according to the national historical and political context. It is marginalized and suppressed by other collective memories significant for the nation-building process, mainly the historical narratives of the Holodomor and OUN. At the same time, as emphasized in this work, in Ukraine the memory of the Shoah is politicized by national leaders on the international stage.

Following the analysis of this thesis it can be concluded that memories are influenced by political agents. State policies shape collective memories and influence the way events are remembered. Political leaders use historical memories to create certain narratives in order to mobilize the population, construct public consciousness, and political identity. Therefore, politics play a crucial role in these framings. Memories and historical myths create symbols of ethnic heritage and empower nationalism and national identities. At this point the political
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legitimacy is justified as a nationalistic attempt to form a dominant commemorative narrative that highlights a common experience and destiny. Thus, national memories are products of politicized views of the past. Pierre Nora (1984; 1989) highlights that memory is a dynamic phenomenon. It cannot be regarded as a representation of the past, since memories become distorted in the present. They can be both sincere and insincere; used to build the national identity, but also to destabilize it. Often, memories become shared and unifying, but sometimes they are made intentionally divisive. Groups claim that their particular narratives of the past should become a master memory, so they compete for public and political space to memorialize these collective experiences.

Although the tendency to politicize history and memory is present in all countries, nevertheless, notably in the post-communist states, including Ukraine, application of history and memory for political purposes has had a visible impact in the twenty-first century. This is directly connected with an urgent need to nationalize multiethnic countries like Ukraine and shape their national identities. Histories are often nation-centered (Magocsi, 2004) framed as historical narratives of the titular national group. Myths of heroization and victimization are often the most successful. In Ukraine the historical narratives of the Holodomor and OUN, previously suppressed under the Soviet regime, shape the national memories of the population. These historical myths do not give room to the dark experiences of ethnic minorities. Instead they cause a struggle over memorialization. The Holocaust creates a competition of victimhood between Jewish and Ukrainian national remembrances, where the substance of these memories conflict at the national level. In the Ukrainian society there still exists a prevalent division between “us” (Ukrainians) and “them” (others). The memory of the Holocaust is not considered as part of “our” experience; thus, it is not accepted as part of a national history and memory in the society. Since the Shoah should be part of the official national remembrance, the memories of the Holodomor, OUN, and the Holocaust should become dialogical and negotiating, showing the significance of remembering traumatic pasts across cultural boundaries. Cross-communal remembrance promotes cross-cultural solidarity among marginalized groups. In Ukraine such mutual remembrances have the potential to generate a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Tim Cole (2003: 273) states that “constructing a memorial is a conscious act of choosing to remember certain people and events, and by implication choosing not to remember other people and events. And that conscious act is a political one, meaning in the sense that it is about power over memory, power over the past, and power over the present.” Memorials and monuments are built to remember and commemorate. Memorials inhabit a particular space and time, displaying historical, cultural, and political realities of the society. They reveal the politics of memory of the country; what is in fact allowed to be remembered, and what is not. Once a
memorial is there, it gives a perception of this dark myth being officially acknowledged. Sites of memory are therefore powerful symbols that support collective memories. They clarify layers of memorialization and play a crucial role in enforcing collective memories and shaping national identities.

In contrast to such iconic symbols as Auschwitz and Buchenwald, which are viewed as primary sedimented memory sites of the Holocaust, Babyn Yar is not devoted to one singular historical tragedy. It is a living memorial in the process of its memorialization. Furthermore, it is a good place to see how the analyzed memory tensions are playing out at the international level. As illustrated in Chapter Four, Babyn Yar has become a transnational symbol of the “Holocaust by Bullets” internationally – the Catastrophe of Soviet and Ukrainian Jewry. Nationally, however, Babyn Yar is regarded as a mass grave of various Ukrainian victims of both Communist and Nazi crimes, symbolizing an ultimate tragedy for the whole Ukrainian nation. This site of memory has been transformed into a central stage for national commemoration activities, initiated by public and political actors. They compete for the memorial space and grounds in order to recognize their own tragedies. This representation ultimately reduces the importance of the Holocaust at the site. The memorialization and landscape of Babyn Yar will be continually transformed together with the changes made in the memory politics of the Holocaust, which are affected by the political and public discourse. As shown in Chapter Four, debates over the commemoration of the site, including organization of memorial services, erection of monuments and plaques, and writing of inscriptions in various languages with different meanings represent the current state of affairs of the politics of memory and memorialization of the Holocaust in Ukraine.

In the late 1980s debates over the construction of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin started. Almost fifty years after the Final Solution, German activists led by the historian Eberhard Jäckel and the journalist Lea Rosh began pressing the German government to memorialize the tragedy of the European Jews. The project was criticized for its aim to commemorate only Jewish victims of the Nazi Regime, but not all those who perished. These debates continued for seventeen years. So only sixty years after the end of WWII, the Memorial was opened in 2005 with the support of such political leaders as former German Chancellors Helmut Kohl and Willy Brandt. These debates are similar to the current conflict over the Babyn Yar memory site in Kiev. The “Heritage” center, the first large construction on the site, was initiated in 2000 and financed not by the state but by the Jewish community and the foreign organization Joint. Although the project was welcomed by then Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Kuchma and other official authorities remained passive and did not demonstrate any tangible assistance or recognition in this regard. As for the BYHMC project of 2016, again, it
is initiated and actively supported by foreign Jewish institutions and investors. Nevertheless, no active recognition has come from the state authorities. So far, this project has provoked conflict among national groups.

In the meantime, the BYHMC is a “European entry ticket” (Judt, 2005) for Ukraine, another argument in favor of the EU integration. It demonstrates the way the Babyn Yar memory site is used for political purposes in international arenas. With the main goal of appealing to what the EU claims are pro-European shared values of human rights, tolerance, and democracy, the BYHMC proves that the memory of the Holocaust is one of the tools to Europeanize national values and prepare countries for the EU transformation.

Finally, the BYHMC represents a contentious issue in the Ukrainian society – the place of the Jewish community and the existing anti-Semitism. After the fall of the communist regime, the Jewish community in Ukraine, characterized by an increased emigration, was not developed under a well-defined structure. Its main financial support has come from the international Jewish institutions and foreign private donors, and therefore it is influenced by their views and initiatives. Until now everything related to the activities of Jews was the concern of Jews only. Thus, the community is dependent upon foreign support. Many investments come from such organizations as Joint (US), the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter (Canada), and others.24

Considering what terrible loss the Final Solution wrought upon the Jewish community worldwide, and specifically to Ukraine, the country should have acted proactively in the aftermath of the independence in 1991 and integrated the forgotten memory of the Shoah into its national historical culture. Despite a number of attempts cited in Chapter Three of this work, nonetheless, no serious actions have been taken by state authorities in order to properly memorialize the Holocaust. At this moment there still is no state and national museum either devoted to the history of the Holocaust, or to the Jewish history in Ukraine. From this perspective it is not surprising that major initiatives and contributions in regard to Jewish issues come from abroad. The existing private museums were opened with funds donated by foreign Jewish organizations and private donors.25 Until the government views the necessity of including Jewish communities and other ethnic minorities into the nation-building process,

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24 See also Privalko (2014: 19-20).
25 For instance, the Kharkiv Museum of the Holocaust (the first Holocaust museum in Ukraine) was created in 1996 by Larisa Volovik; the Museum of History of Odessa Jews “Migdal Shorashim” was opened in 2002 in Odessa, supported by funding from Jewish organizations, such as Joint and the Rothschild Foundation; the Chernivtsi Museum of the History and Culture of Bukovinian Jews was organized in 2008 with funds from the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities (VAAD) of Ukraine, and the Jewish Social and Cultural Fund of Chernivtsi; the Museum of Sholem Aleichem was built in 2009 in Kiev; the Museum of Mikhail Marmer was built in 2010 in Kryvyi Rih; and the largest Jewish cultural center Menorah was opened in 2012 in Dnipro with the help of funding from the President of the Dnipro Jewish community Gennadiy Bogolyubov (Ukrainian billionaire based in London) and the President of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, Ihor Kolomoyskyi (Ukrainian billionaire).
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including allocation of state funding for educational, cultural, and social purposes, these communities will seek foreign support. Besides, there is a need for cooperation between national authorities and Jewish communities in order to monitor acts of anti-Semitic discrimination, vandalism, and violence. It is important to implement a national policy to protect and preserve the Holocaust sites of memory, which remain the main targets of vandalism. Although the majority of Ukrainian Jews emigrated to Israel, Australia, Germany, and North America, there are over 103,000 Jews (0.2 per cent of the total country’s population), according to the national census of 2001 (Privalko, 2004: 7). Those who remain need their past memories to be recognized and their future to be protected.
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