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MORESHET

Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism

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Holocaust Study and Research Center, Givat Haviva

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From Soviet to Post-Soviet Remembrance of the Shoah in Ukraine: Memory Trapped Between the Pursuits of Identity and Post-Soviet Nation-Building [Abridged Version]

Holocaust Remembrance in all Eastern European post-Soviet societies has arguably been characterized by remembrance, practice and discourse utilized to serve the aim of nation-building. This article examines the dynamics of *Holodomor*, World War II and Holocaust Remembrance in the Soviet Union and since its disintegration in Ukraine, with an additional focus on its nature and relevance in the crisis which has enveloped Ukraine since 2013.

The disagreements between the Russian Federation and Ukraine about the political, constitutional, territorial, demographic, linguistic and cultural shape of Ukraine in general and of Eastern Ukraine in particular, which has existed since the disintegration of the Soviet Union but which took a more conflictual and violent form late in 2013, have also been a battle for identity for both countries.[1] After communism was disqualified as a supranational state ideology which ascribed meaning to the polity, its encompassed nations and nationalities and the individual citizen, both Russia and Ukraine have endeavored to reconstruct themselves as nation-states. To that end, they have been in need of positive national narratives, of something to "look back to" and "to go on",[2] a history which is intended to provide a national purpose and identity, and which gives meaning and cohesion to their respective social collectives.

Identity, in the words of the philosopher and religious thinker Jonathan Sacks, "comes laden with history, memory, a sense of the past and its injustices, and a set of moral sensibilities that are inseparable from identity: loyalty, respect and reverence".[3] In a similar vein but more directly referring to the nations of

Eastern Europe, the historian Tony Judt wrote in 1990 that:

> [a]ll they could look back to – and herein lies the problem – is exactly what they're now getting: nationalist rhetoric, a strong emphasis on the identity of nation and religion, and a deep resentment at the damage caused to the country, not only by Communists, but also by other countries.[4]

For Ukraine, a country with historically pluralistic and competing ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities, this has meant, in the most general terms, the necessity to negotiate its ambivalent economic, geopolitical, demographic and cultural position between the more western parts of Eastern Europe and Russia at the regional and international level, and in particular between the Russian-speaking majority in the East and the Ukrainian-speaking population in the West at the national level.[5] For post-Soviet Russia, "dreadfully unsure of its place in the world",[6] it has meant, under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, especially since 2012, a neo-revisionism which challenges the perceived unipolarity of the current world order and asserts Russian independence from the West, aiming at a restoration of its respect and dignity internationally as a great power. At home, it has meant a political centralism, *étatism* and a conservative traditionalism, all aimed at creating social unity.[7]

Before beginning our discussion, it seems appropriate to outline the main historical facts defining the discourse of history and remembrance which will be analyzed below. One of the chief discursive reference points is the *Holodomor* ("hunger extermination"). In 1932-33, Stalin's grain requisition policies caused an artificial famine in the southwestern Soviet Union which cost the lives of over three million people in Ukraine, both ethnic Ukrainians and also people from other nationalities. While ethnic Ukrainians were hardest hit, the famine was also part of Stalin's intention to force Ukrainians and other peasants to accept Soviet collectivization.[8] For Soviet Ukraine, the Second World War meant the German occupation from Nazi Germany's invasion of the USSR in June 1941. According to Alexander Kruglov, The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic between June 1941 and June 1942 accounted for over 2.47 million

Jews, with approximately 2.7 million Jews inhabiting the territory of what is today post-Soviet Ukraine in mid-1941.[9] During the following three years, the Nazis and their collaborators murdered an estimated number of at least 1.5 million Jews on Ukrainian territory, almost half of all Soviet victims of the Shoah and more than one quarter of all European victims of the Shoah.[10] In more general terms, over all the occupied parts of the Soviet Union, at least 2.5 million Soviet Jews were killed in the Shoah.[11] The Second World War itself, in the Soviet Union and in post-Soviet Russia called the "Great Patriotic War", is generally estimated to have cost the Soviet Union 20-27 million lives, including civilian and military losses, with the Soviet Union making the largest contribution to the allied war effort against Nazi Germany, and with ethnic Russians bearing the brunt of all Soviet combat deaths.[12]

In seeking answers to their identity quests,[13] post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine have taken recourse to discourses and a political rhetoric which have their roots in the historical events of the 1930s and the period of World War II and the Shoah.[14] Post-Soviet Russia under President Putin adopted the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany as a "foundation myth",[15] whereas the Ukraine has opted for the *Holodomor* "genocide" as its "founding myth",[16] or, perhaps much more pertinently expressed, as its "chosen trauma".[17] Vamik Volkan defined a "chosen trauma" in terms of a feeling of humiliating injury, helplessness, victimization and enormous losses, shared by a large group.[18]

Such historical events and their discourses in both countries are also at the forefront of political rhetoric and justification, including elements of mutual demonization, in the current conflict over the destiny of Ukraine. The British political scientist Richard Sakwa locates the roots of this "Ukrainian" crisis of 2013-2015 in the "domestic contradictions that have been simmering since independence in 1991 but with roots that go all the way back to the emergence of Rus and the division between its Kievan and Muscovite manifestations, between Ukrainianism and Malorussianism."[19] Even though Ukraine may be viewed as "another side of Russia itself, while Russia is inevitably part of Ukrainian identity",[20] Ukraine's struggle for national identity has been about accepting or negating this reality of being Russia's historical, cultural and geopolitical neighbor and "other",[21] against highly complex internal and

regional divisions. Sakwa describes Ukraine's ideological struggle as one of "two contrasting visions of statehood", namely one of "monist nationalism", in other words "Ukrainianism", desiring a state that is "officially monolingual, unitary and culturally specific",[22] against a pluralist model of national inclusiveness,[23] namely a "Malorussian"[24] model that at its heart would also allow for more than one state language to be constitutionally recognized. The American historian Wendy Lower writes that:

> The warring parties have something in common: Ukraine's past. The conflict over who controls Ukraine's future is also a conflict over its history. Propaganda posters in Kiev's Maidan Square, billboards across the country, and television coverage on Ukrainian and Russian networks use the inflammatory images of Nazism, Hitler, and the Holocaust to assert their divergent claims. Ukrainian nationalists are portrayed as "Nazi fascists," and Russian separatists are scorned as followers of a Hitler-moustached Putin. Antisemitic cartoons and provocations are weapons in this propaganda war.[25]

The purpose of this article is to examine the specific characteristics of Shoah remembrance and its discourse, but also that of the *Holodomor* and World War II more generally, in Ukraine from Soviet to post-Soviet times and up to the present conflict over the future of Eastern Ukraine, which has also become a conflict of interpreting history. In doing so, the article also reflects on a more abstract level on how a thoroughly complex history of a nation that has not properly come to terms with its past, and whose national memory is subject to nationalistic memory politics, may affect its present so emphatically as it does in the case of today's Russia and Ukraine. Furthermore, it will be suggested that the way in which a nation engages with antisemitism and the Shoah more specifically, or refuses to engage with it, is indicative of whether or how a nation is ready to promote peaceful coexistence with its neighbors externally and with various minorities and ethnicities internally.

Firstly, European history provides ample evidence that societies in crisis choose scapegoats to externalize their problems and deflect away internal

violence:[26] "Antisemitism is only contingently about Jews. Jews are its *victims* but they are not its *cause*. The cause is *conflict within a culture*. It is the potential internal violence that, if expressed, has the power to destroy a society."[27] Sacks argues that from this follows that wherever one finds extreme antisemitism, one "will find a culture so internally split and fractured that if its members stopped killing Jews they would start killing one another".[28]

Secondly, once a society defines an enemy or "Other", dehumanization, demonization and a sense of victimhood follow:[29]

> Just as it is necessary to rob your enemies of their humanity, so you have to find a way of relinquishing responsibility for the evil you are about to commit. You must define yourself as a victim. It follows that you, in committing murder, even genocide, are merely acting in self-defence.[30]

Translating this correlation between antisemitism and the state of a society to the level of national remembrance, it may be proposed that a society which proves unwilling or unable to deal with its past antisemitism and the Shoah, with the former conditioning the latter, may be demonstrating, after all, that it is not yet ready to analyze and deal with its internal conflicts, neither historical nor present. As matter of fact, as will be discussed below, today's conflict between Russia and Ukraine is awash with the phenomena just named, such as dehumanization, demonization and a conviction of victimhood.

National remembrance brings the past into the present, offering the possibility for society to mourn, to examine critically one's history, and to identify with it. Jonathan Sacks suggests the following about the relationship between historical events, memory and national identity:

> [T]here is a profound difference between history and memory. History is *his* story – an event that happened sometime else to someone else. Memory is *my* story – something that happened to me and is part of who I am. History is information. Memory, by contrast, is part of identity. I can study the history of other peoples,

> cultures, and civilizations. They deepen my knowledge and broaden my horizons. But they do not make a claim on me. They are the past as past. Memory is the past as present, as it lives on in me. Without memory there can be no identity. […] As with individuals, so with a nation: it has a continuing identity to the extent that it can remember where it came from and who its ancestors were.[31]

This effect that historical memory may have on national identity also outlines the dynamics of historical discourse and remembrance in Russia and Ukraine, where the past is very much present, living on in the current confrontation about Ukraine's character and identity.

In the Soviet Union, Holocaust and World War II remembrance was characterized by official discourse which drew its strength from the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany. The war was commemorated as having been won, with the victims mourned and identified generically as "мирные советские люди" ("peaceful Soviet people"), with no special significance being attached to the Holocaust as an attempt to specifically eradicate the Jewish people, nor with Jewish victims identified as such.[32] The Ukrainian-Jewish survivor of the Shoah and historian Boris Zabarko writes about the immediate post-war period that:

> Each [survivor] made a major effort to return to normal life in the hard conditions after the victory, which made survivors use all their physical and emotional strength. In this respect, those who survived the Holocaust were no different from all the other Soviet people who had to fight post-war disintegration and losses. They were an integral part of Soviet society. Moreover, the official policy of the authorities emphasized the unity of all citizens under the Fascist occupation and actively created obstacles to describing the specific fates of Jews in the Holocaust by all means they had at their disposal. Jews understood this ideological prohibition and accepted it for the sake of their own safety; many were hiding their Jewish roots.[33]

Likewise, the German historian of Eastern Europe Stefan Rohdewald notes that, "the glorification of victory was soon more important than remembering the victims, and little attention was paid to the victims' ethnic background."[34] Much earlier, in 1990, the American specialist of Russian Jewish history Zvi Gitelman had described that in both Soviet historiography and Russian-language Soviet popular writings about the Holocaust, the specific Jewish fate was generally downplayed and submerged with the suffering of all Soviet peoples. Also, resistance to the Holocaust was often universalized.[35]

The reasons for this may have been twofold: antisemitism, the existence of which was negated, and ideology. According to the researcher Olga Baranova, both popular antisemitism[36] and Soviet ideology combined to create what she calls the Soviet "politics of memory of the Holocaust" and caused a situation in which "the Holocaust and Jewish suffering was not denied or completely erased from Soviet history books and the memory of Soviet Jews and non-Jews, but has been adapted and rewritten within the confines of a conforming ideological narrative".[37] Discussing research by the scholars Zvi Gitelman,[38] Thomas Fox,[39] Lukasz Hirszowicz,[40] and others, Baranova identifies a number of ideological motivations which, in combination, prevented the overall recognition of the specifically Jewish dimension of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union: the Jewish catastrophe was viewed as subordinate to Hitler's war of extermination against all Slavs; publically discussing the genocide of the Jews would also have meant admitting and discussing collaboration of Soviet citizens with the Nazis, something which would have made an explanation necessary as to why so many Soviet citizens turned against the Soviet state to collaborate with the enemy. Also, in theory, antisemitism, which was a motivating factor in collaboration, did officially not exist in the communist Soviet Union any longer, so it could also not be acknowledged. The Soviet Union strove to create a universal Soviet identity based on the experience of all Soviet citizens and peoples having been victims of the Nazis and having fought the Nazis together and in unity, something that again did not leave space for elaborating on Jewish fates.[41]

Moreover, among those parts of the Soviet population which resented communism and Soviet rule, antisemitism was particularly strong. The reason for this was that the ascent of communism was often associated with Jewish

support of communism; such popular beliefs were also due to Nazi propaganda. After the war, the policy seems to have been to draw attention away from the fate of Jews in order to strengthen support for the communist and Soviet regime. Furthermore, phenomena such as antisemitism and racism, which motivated Hitler's Holocaust, were not communist categories of thought: communism viewed World War II and the Holocaust through the prism of class struggle and imperialism. Hence, ideology occluded the view towards the Jews having been targeted by the Nazis specifically, for specific reasons, and in a greater dimension than the general Soviet populace.[42]

Into this social setting came the publication in 1961 of a poem entitled "Babi Yar" by the Russian poet Evgenii Evtushenko.[43] Babi Yar/Babyn Yar,[44] a territory of ravines in Kiev where the Nazis and Ukrainian collaborators shot 33,771 Jews on 29-30 September 1941,[45] though considerably less well known to the Western public as a site of Nazi mass murder than the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in the Polish town Oświęcim, carries great symbolic power for Russian and Ukrainian Jewry.

Fifteen years later, on September 19, 1961, precisely on the twentieth anniversary of the German forces' entry into Kiev, the Soviet literary journal *Literaturnaia Gazeta* published Evtushenko's poem "Babi Yar", whose first line reads: "Над Бабьим Яром памятников нет" ("Above Babi Yar there are no monuments"), in which Evtushenko, as a Russian national, identified with the Jewish victims and the Jews of his days, mourning the dead and attacking both historical and contemporary antisemitism. For the first time since the war, a moral voice like that of a poet publically identified Jewish victims as Jews, and as having been killed because they were Jews, not simply because they were "peaceful Soviet citizens".[46] The poem triggered a number of poetic responses, mainly attacking Evtushenko, whereas others supported him, and also led to a political discussion about antisemitism.[47] In a meeting with the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Evtushenko argued that communism could not be built successfully with a phenomenon like Judaeophobia. In a speech in 1963, Khrushchev denied the existence of a Jewish people, however, and of Jewish suffering being any different from the suffering shared by all Soviet nationalities.[48] Only after the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* and the disintegration of the

Soviet Union did it become possible to treat the Holocaust as a topic in its own right, and for historians to study it. The first ever official remembrance ceremony of the Shoah conducted by the Russian government took place in April 1994,[49] more than fifty years after it had begun.

The breakdown of the Soviet Union initially opened up post-Soviet societies to a different historical discourse free from ideological imperatives. It brought about new difficulties of its own. Chief among them was the loss of time in terms of recording history and collecting personal memories which made it difficult for historians: those survivors of the Shoah who had been adults at the time of the war had passed away, and those who had been children were often not able to remember events with the accuracy preferred by historians.[50] Nevertheless, the "stories of the survivors are doubly important, not only as evidence of what happened, but in order to understand their unique perspective".[51]

A further challenge to post-Soviet historiography has been the sheer complexity of historical issues, ranging from the fact that the Holocaust in Ukraine, for example, had hardly been researched, and from the involvement of Ukrainian and other nationals in the persecution and murder of Jews, the different roles played by the different regions in Ukraine, to the lack of a detached examination of Soviet history and of Soviet crimes against her own people, reaching back to the early days of Soviet communism and the Civil War and to the Stalinist period.[52] Of course, this lack of historical examination included the Holocaust; Martin Dean states that for:

> many understandable reasons the history of the collaborationist local police in the Soviet Union has been largely neglected hitherto. Whilst doggedly prosecuting all collaborators as traitors at home, the Soviet government was reluctant to acknowledge publicly the scale and extent of collaboration with the German invaders.[53]

Post-Soviet states like Russia and Ukraine lacked interest in the pursuit of such matters, for one overarching reason which subsumes other, more specific reasons: the quest for a positive national narrative: "[t]o remoralise a nation, leaders often revive memories of former glory".[54] Such efforts resulted in the

employment of what Irina Prokhorova calls a "heroic model of the past".[55] In this respect, a prediction made in 1990 seems to have come true: "With the absence of a strong democratic tradition, given the long history of antisemitism and xenophobic nationalism, the next steps in Eastern Europe are likely to be ambiguous, complex, and problematic".[56]

While Post-Soviet Russia continued to subordinate Holocaust remembrance to that of the "Great Patriotic War", a memory construct going back to the 1970s under Leonid Brezhnev,[57] in the 1990s it acknowledged the specific Jewish suffering of the war period. The 2000s, however, saw again the tendency to universalize the uniqueness of the Holocaust. The "Park of Victory"[58] at *Poklonnaia gora* ("Hill of Veneration") in Moscow, completed in 1995, includes a synagogue as Russia's first Holocaust museum and identifies Jewish victims as such. However, a sculpture originally named "The Tragedy of the Jewish People" was then dedicated to "The Peoples". The official brochure of the memorial presents the Holocaust as "one of the most dramatic episodes of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War",[59] again subordinating it to the Soviet war effort, and the official website does not accord any separate space to the Holocaust. The Soviet Union's glorious victory remains Russia's most important positive historical narrative.[60] In 1992, a research and educational center named "Holocaust" was established, which has produced a school textbook on the Holocaust and which also published survivors' autobiographies.[61]

Nevertheless, Holocaust remembrance is not given much public attention;[62] the main burden of remembrance lies on the Jewish communities and Holocaust survivors associations themselves, who mostly have their own small Holocaust museum rooms, often located on the premises of the local Jewish community or the *Hessed*.[63] In addition, there exist private, Jewish, non-Jewish and joint initiatives promoting Holocaust remembrance through printed and internet publications and educational programs,[64] and also by way of organizing personal encounters with former prisoners of Nazi concentration camps and ghettos and by contributing organizationally and financially to the setting up of memorial stones and commemorative plaques dedicated specifically to the Jews who suffered at particular places of mass murder. For example, a joint Jewish-Protestant initiative led in November 2011 to the creation of a memorial

site in the village of Lubavichi in Russia's Smolensk region, dedicated to the 483 Jews who were killed by the Nazis and their collaborators in the village on 4 November 1941.[65] Holocaust memory in Russia may still be viewed as characterized by an "evident disinclination to acknowledge that the vast majority of Auschwitz victims were Jews",[66] as Klas-Göran Karlsson writes. In addition to the fact that in Russian society there is no public discussion of the Holocaust,[67] "[s]ilence, obscurity, omissions, and misinterpretations based on nationalist, antisemitic, or other ideological convictions are still recurrent features in Russian historical narratives of the Second World War in general, and of the so-called Great Patriotic War in particular."[68]

Remembrance requires a readiness to engage in a collective critical historical introspection, which in German discourse, for example, is often referred to as *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*, a coming-to-terms with one's past, which may be defined as a:

> complex of public, moral, political, juridical and cultural processes that encompass a nation's attempts to come to terms with its past. […] True *Aufarbeitung* goes beyond the legal establishment of who was responsible for which individual crime by asking questions about how a wider nation-wide and corporate complicity in such crimes was possible, analy[z]ing the various aspects of history which gave rise to a culture of political crime. Such processes need to be at least partly willed by government, owing to the control which it exercises over research and teaching from secondary to higher education, and are facilitated by free media and a civil society that at large desires to deal with its past rather than cover up and actively forget or even glorify its history.[69]

As it appears, the authorities in post-Soviet Russia have been reluctant to fully embrace and sponsor a systematic process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, of coming to terms with its communist and in particular Stalinist period, but also with some of its war-time actions and collaboration. This may be due to a fear that as a result, the notion of Russia's greatness as a nation might be tarnished;

such an effect might have added to the general instability that a new Russian Federation in search of an identity was faced with during the first decade after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. Today, more than twenty-five years after the end of communism, this tendency is exacerbated by an official domestic conservatism, by nostalgia for past Soviet greatness, and possibly also by the loss by civil society of some of its former freedom and strength.

Remembrance of national tragedies presupposes both comprehensive knowledge and research of the subject matter, and at least a certain degree of public will by civil society and the powers that be. Both aspects have been lacking in post-Soviet Ukraine. Even though Ukraine and Russia were both victims and perpetrators of their shared Soviet past,[70] the Ukrainian case is much more complex than the Russian case from the outset, owing to Ukraine's much more complicated years during World War II. Even though Ukraine, together with Belarus, suffered the most from the Nazi Holocaust in the Soviet Union, it played a very ambiguous role during the German occupation. Furthermore, a professional engagement with its history, both in Ukraine and elsewhere, became only possible once the Soviet Union ceased to exist. The German historian Dieter Pohl wrote in the mid-1990s that "the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine has not been written as yet… The description of the events of those years is still episodic. And even the mass slaughter of civilians in Babi Yar has not been described in detail yet";[71] Pohl affirmed in 2008 that "scholars have largely neglected the history of this community's destruction (and even more so the destruction of the Russian Federation's Jews)."[72] In 2005, Zabarko stated that "even in the most fundamental research of Western scholars, the Holocaust in the occupied territories of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Russia and other former Soviet republics, has not been designated as a separate sub-topic."[73] Surprisingly, even the positive role of individual Ukrainians in saving the lives of Jews during the Shoah was omitted from official historiography; Zabarko suggests that the reason for this may have been that such testimonies of personal courage for humanity and against collaboration would have amounted to an indirect accusation of those who collaborated.[74]

Since the above comments were written by Pohl and Zabarko, much more scholarship has become available on the Holocaust in the Ukraine,[75] which is

partly due to greater access to archives than in Soviet times and to the absence of official antisemitism.[76] While the decades in which research on this topic was impossible can still be sensed, the Holocaust in Ukraine has become a major topic in recent years in Western historiography, be it in Israel, Germany, France or the Unites States. As far as Ukrainian historiography itself is concerned, however, there was less of an active research interest in the Ukraine, even though the country holds the largest archival documentation.[77] Research on this subject, however, has been done in Ukraine since the 1990s, also acknowledging and studying Ukrainian collaboration.[78]

Notwithstanding the fact that in its first decade of independence, Ukraine experienced a debate about the Holocaust and the massacre of Babi Yar,[79] the previous ideological suppression of a Holocaust discourse gave way to a new historiographical discourse, which saw Ukrainian history of the twentieth century as a battle for Ukrainian liberation,[80] leading to an interpretative paradigm of "one Ukrainian people under which numerous historical tragedies are being subsumed",[81] thereby once more marginalizing Jewish suffering. On the one hand, since 1991, a number of high-level commemorative ceremonies have taken place at Babi Yar.[82] In 1991, the public participated in the commemoration, and a number of publications were issued, including Grossman and Ehrenburg's "Black Book".[83] If compared to the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, when "people came to the area of the ravines individually to remember those close to them who had perished, leaving only small bouquets of flowers so as not to draw attention",[84] this already is immense progress.

On the other hand, however, the Ukrainian government's pledge to create a memorial at Babi Yar has still not come to pass.[85] The government organized an international Holocaust conference, but left it to Jewish and civil society representatives to add memorial plaques dedicated to Jewish victims to those which already existed at places of mass murder of "peaceful Soviet citizens" across the country.[86] There has been no significant government support for Holocaust research, and historians collecting and publishing survivors' biographies, for example, have had to rely on limited support from civil society in Ukraine and in the West.[87]

More importantly, however, the Holocaust discourse became more and more instrumentalized, in particular under the leadership of President Yushchenko from 2005-2010, to make it fit into a Ukrainian narrative, turning Babi Yar into "a fraternal grave for many groups of Ukrainian people".[88] This included attempts to prove that the majority of the victims belonged to different categories of Ukrainians, rather than having been Jews,[89] thereby misappropriating the site of the mass shootings of Jews for nationalistic ends. The Ukrainian appropriation or "nationalization" of Holocaust discourse appears to revolve around three major strategies, all ultimately aimed at creating a positive Ukrainian historical identity.[90] First, the *Holodomor* as the "Ukrainian Holocaust" or "genocide" also became the "founding myth" of post-Soviet Ukraine.[91] Second, the view was propagated of the Ukrainian peoples having been joint victims of both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, thereby disregarding Ukraine's involvement in both contexts and excluding its culpability from them. This process of externalization became Ukraine's most important strategy. Third, the attempt was made to create a longer historical sequence of commemorating the loss of Hetmanate Ukraine in 1708, the Ukrainian-Soviet war of 1917, the *Holodomor*, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), as well as the deportation of the Crimean Tatars.[92] In the case of all three strategies, the intended result is to present the catastrophes which the various peoples of Ukraine, including the Jews, experienced in the twentieth century, as having been purposefully directed against the Ukrainian nation first and foremost, even though over the course of events such a nation had not existed in one and the same shape or form, neither ethnically nor territorially. As a result, the Ukrainian post-Soviet Holocaust discourse has been used "as a rhetorical framework for the *Holodomor* on the one hand, and its marginalisation and externalisation on the other".[93] In a similar vein, Sam Sokol suggested that "a sort of replacement theology is at work, with Ukrainians seeking to compete with the Jews in a game of victimhood."[94] Consequently, as the Ukrainian historian Anatoly Podolsky wrote in 2013, today's "Ukraine has so far neither conducted an objective evaluation of the role of Ukrainian national forces and their activities in World War II nor admitted to Ukrainian collaboration in the Holocaust."[95] Presumably, the reason for such strategies

of deflecting responsibility away from the Ukrainian nation, something that has been coined "deflective negationism",[96] has been the desire "to protect the reputation of the nation".[97]

Among a few rhetorical aspects which have been used amidst this Russian-Ukrainian "war" of propaganda, interpretation and legitimacy over a serious military and territorial conflict in the center of Eastern Europe, a conflict which in reality appears to be one about the ideological and constitutional character of Ukraine, there are two which stand out. These are mutual accusations of being "Nazi", "fascist", or "Hitlers"; and the mutual accusation of genocide and human rights abuses. Both relate to post-Soviet Russia's and post-Soviet Ukraine's "founding myths": the victory over fascism in the Russian case, and the so-called *Holodomor* "genocide" in the Ukrainian case. They exemplify how historical discourse, originating in the Holocaust and World War II, is being instrumentalized by various political actors.

Let us begin this discussion with the "Nazi" and "fascist" rhetoric. Russia has accused the Ukrainian government of being "fascist", and Western representatives have compared President Putin personally and Russian actions to Adolf Hitler and his expansionist policies.[98] Despite their joint victory over Nazi Germany, the Western powers (which today, of course, include Germany and a number of post-Communist and post-Soviet East European member-states of the European Union), and Russia have subscribed to divergent concepts of what it means to be a "Nazi" or a "fascist". Such semantic depth goes beyond the simple reference to Ukrainian political parties such as *Svoboda*, government members or militias which can be identified as neo-Nazi.[99]

From a Western point of view, Nazism and fascism are associated with the historical experience of tyranny and totalitarianism, war and occupation, antisemitism and genocide. The Western responses to this are the notions of universal human rights and of democracy. From the point of view of Russia, however, the terms today signify "anti-Russian" or "pro-European" attitudes.[100] The Soviet Union's victory over the Nazis is today celebrated as a Russian victory,[101] and the victims of World War II are in the first instance Russians, not the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe. As a result, the term "fascism" in Russia does not so much imply antisemitic or dictatorial tendencies, but rather

a notion of Western "Russophobia".[102] The British Slavist Jeremy Hicks writes that:

> the Russian media frequently use the label "fascist" for anyone hostile to Russia, the Russian language, Russian people, Russian speakers, or the interests of the Russian state. It is a synonym for the recent coinage "Russophobia", echoing the term Islamophobia; it is evidently open to abuse, and allows for the silencing of any criticism of Russia.[103]

The second rhetorical paradigm deserving attention is the use of references to "genocide". Mutual accusations of genocide or associated human rights violations play a significant role in the current conflict. Certain roots of this conflict, such as radically Ukrainianizing attempts to force Russian-speakers to accept the Ukrainian language as a single national language, especially in the East and in the Crimea, go back a number of years to the so-called "Orange Revolution" of 2004 and were reinforced by proposed legislation in February 2014 by the *Verkhovna Rada*, the Ukrainian parliament.[104] Already in 2005 a pro-Russian Ukrainian website, called "Anti-Orange", accused the government in Kiev of conducting an "Orange genocide of the Russian nation",[105] due to its attempts to introduce Ukrainian as the official language in the Crimea. In the present conflict, Sergei Naryshkin, the speaker of the Russian parliament, the *Duma*, referred to the Ukrainian government as committing a "real genocide of both the Russian and Ukrainian nations."[106]

As with the term "fascism", the term "genocide" means different things to the West, to Ukraine and to Russia.[107] The term "genocide", having been conceived by the international community to give a name to the Nazi crimes against the Jews, gained rhetorical currency after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, something which laid the ground for today's rhetoric.[108] As the post-Soviet states set out to re-invent their national historical, linguistic and cultural narratives, some also began their "genocide wars",[109] their quest for recognition of specific national calamities as "genocides". Evgeny Finkel described the "search for lost genocides"[110] as the phenomenon of newly-born states with little or no history of independence to use the invented status of "genocide victim"

as a "very efficient mechanism to brush aside demands to confront injustices and crimes committed by members of the 'suffering nation.'"[111] In the words of the Bulgarian scholar Tzvedan Todorov, a nation which conceptualizes itself as a victim of genocide "obtains a bottomless line of moral credit. The greater the crime in the past, the more compelling the rights in the present – which are gained merely through membership in the wronged group",[112] thereby again enabling the "wronged group" to externalize its responsibility. Likewise, Sakwa observes that in Ukraine, "[a]s with so many of the former Communist Eastern European states, nation-building was accompanied by a pronounced cult of victimhood. In particular, the Holodomor […] was crucial for the nation's self-identification."[113] Against this general background of externalizing one's past, of using a narrative of being a victim of genocide to claim rights and avoid a self-critical historical introspection, post-Soviet Ukraine had indeed to come to terms with the *Holodomor*, which could not be discussed during Soviet times, and had to find answers to the question whether it was a genocide, after all. The Ukrainian-American political scientist Alexander Motyl asked in 1993:

> Who is to be held accountable? The all-too-easy answer is: the Soviet system or Stalinism. But who in particular? Some point a finger at "the Russians," but Ukrainians also took part. A more reasonable reply might be: the secret police and its party henchmen. Many, clearly, must still be alive. Should old wounds therefore be opened in the quest for justice?[114]

Unsurprisingly, in the course of the post-Soviet years the *Holodomor* debate caused much friction between the Russian and the Ukrainian speaking populations of Ukraine, and between Russia and Ukraine, in particular under the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko,[115] even leading the *Verkhovna Rada* in 2006 to pass a resolution recognizing the *Holodomor* as an "act of genocide against the Ukrainian people",[116] thereby "couching it in anti-Russian terms" and making it "uniquely a Ukrainian tragedy".[117]

The *Holodomor* discourse is especially relevant to Eastern Ukraine and the Donbas region with its fought-over regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, since its

Ukrainian peasant population was destroyed by the *Holodomor*, to be replaced by more Russified Soviet workers.[118] The "[d]estruction of peasantry was equal to the destruction of Ukrainians as a nation because it was a 90 percent peasant nation. So this is part of the explanation why we have the current troubles, why Donbas is so rebellious, disloyal",[119] suggests the Ukrainian scholar Mykola Riabchuk. His statement reflects "the view of many in western Ukraine that the people of the Donbas were not 'real Ukrainians'".[120] This conviction gave former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, currently leading her Batkivshchyna ("Fatherland") party, reason to suggest that the eight million Russians in Ukraine, approximately twenty percent of Ukraine's citizenry which the Ukrainian state is supposed to protect, "must be killed with nuclear weapons".[121]

It should be added that in political rhetoric, Ukrainian representatives have mostly avoided using the term "genocide" to refer to the current crisis about Eastern Ukraine, however, as it would only delegitimize the historical *Holodomor* discourse, and even that discourse seems to have waned since the end of Yushchenko's presidency.[122] The term "genocide" has been in greater use by the pro-Russian Donbas insurgents, however, who frame "their actions not as a first choice but as the last resort of a people trying to protect its fundamental human rights"[123] against a government which they claim conducts human rights abuses, and amidst a lack of international and legal support for their own actions.[124] A discussion similar to the those above on "fascist" and "genocide" rhetoric could be held about the use of the paradoxical and self-contradictory rhetoric of antisemitism by the various parties involved.[125]

Even though there does not yet seem to exist a sufficient nation-wide willingness to address deeper layers of historical responsibility, the present crisis has highlighted that there is a readiness among parts of the Ukrainian population to make the Soviet past forgotten. Throughout Ukraine on 22 February 2014 over 100 statutes of Lenin were destroyed by citizens, something that has been called "Leninopad"[126] ("The Fall of Lenin"), in an attempt to further the "externalization of communism". The term describes a re-interpretative concept implying that Ukraine had nothing to do with Soviet communism and that it was simply a "nation-victim" that could not have borne any responsibility itself.[127] In April 2015, Ukraine's parliament ratified a law, signed into force by

President Petro Poroshenko in May 2015,[128] which aims to "de-communize" or "de-Sovietize" Ukraine, perhaps in a way in which post-war Germany was de-Nazified or other post-communist countries, such as Poland, tried to deal with their communist past. The law, which may be unconstitutional, and which recognizes members of the UPA, which committed ethnic cleansings in 1943 as fighters for Ukrainian independence, intends to "condemn the communist and the national socialist totalitarian regimes in the Ukraine and to prohibit propaganda and its symbols", which does not affect specific purposes of education, for example, but demands the re-naming of a multitude of street names, the destruction of monuments and so forth. It also intends to open up all archives of repressive organs which had hitherto been closed,[129] and only granting personality rights to regime "victims".[130] While such a law may be seen as an attempt to come to terms with Ukraine's totalitarian past, by declaring the "communist totalitarian regime" to which Ukraine belonged for seventy-four years as a Soviet republic, "criminal",[131] it again does so very selectively, casting itself exclusively as the victim of the Nazi and the Soviet regimes in which, surely at different levels and to different degrees in different regions, it participated. Thereby, Ukraine, like Russia, perpetuates the paradigm which may be observed since Soviet times, namely one of avoiding a full-scale self-critical historical introspection, a paradigm of re-interpreting history in a way which suits the need for a positive historical and national narrative.[132] In doing so, it may, in fact, rather be projecting the very dark sides of its own history into the present and perhaps even the future. In the words of Jonathan Sacks, "[b]lame cultures perpetuate every condition against which they are a protest."[133]

In 2016, Ukraine officially commemorated the Shoah on two important dates. The first was held in June at the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War in Kiev,[134] a ceremony held jointly with the Embassy of the State of Israel, dedicated to granting the Yad Vashem recognition of "Righteous Among the Nations" to six Ukrainian families – twelve individuals – that saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust, increasing the number of Ukrainian "Righteous Among the Nations" to 2,573,[135] a number which places Ukraine fourth after Poland, the Netherlands and France in numbers of "Righteous Among the Gentiles."[136] The second one, consisting

of an afternoon reception of Ukrainian President Poroshenko and an evening commemorative event involving German President Joachim Gauck and other international leaders and representatives (with the exception of Russia) was held in September to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacres.[137] While the above ceremonies were conducted with great care and in a dignified and solemn manner, they may still be viewed within the context of Ukraine's efforts to make history serve current political purposes and to improve Ukraine's perception by the world. In the first case, Ukraine demonstrates that many more Ukrainians saved Jewish lives than the public seems to be aware of, which again may be seen as drawing attention away from a public discussion of Ukrainian collaboration.

As far as the second case is concerned, at President Petro Poroshenko's reception on 29 September 2016, for example, he presented the need to confront what he indirectly referred to as present-day Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine as a lesson learned from the massacres at Babi Yar and the world's unwillingness at the time to save more Jewish lives by confronting the German aggression. While admitting to Ukrainian collaboration, he effectively downplayed the specific Jewish suffering by submerging it with Ukrainian suffering during both World War II and the Holodomor.[138] At the evening ceremony, however, the President did speak about the massacre of Kiev's Jews. Neither at the afternoon nor at the evening commemorative ceremony, however, were actual Ukrainian or generally Soviet survivors of the Shoah involved; they were only invited as passive guests.[139] On the day before, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin had visited Kiev and given a speech in the Ukrainian *Rada*, expressing his concern about the lack of studying Ukrainian collaboration during World War II, something that drew much criticism from the Ukrainian public and media.[140] On 29 September 2016, however, an international "Initiative Group" signed a Declaration of Intent to build a proper Holocaust memorial at the Babi Yar site by 2021, supported by an announcement by President Poroshenko.[141]

In the final analysis, it may be suggested that the systematic lack of *Aufarbeitung*, of coming-to-terms with the past, has been instrumental in perpetuating national grievances between Russians and Ukrainians, a complex conflict which had already played a role before and during the Shoah and

World War II: the Soviet Union and these two successor states have been largely unwilling to fully consider the greatest catastrophe of the twentieth century and commit to new research and remembrance of the Holocaust in all its dimensions above and beyond the glorification of victory or one's own exclusive elevation to victimhood. Evgenii Evtushenko had argued that "Babi Yar was a crime of Fascism. But our silence of many years about somebody else's crime has become a crime in itself. Concealment becomes murder as well, the murder of memory."[142] Even though some progress was made initially by both post-Soviet countries, by and large the way in which the *Holodomor*, the Holocaust and the Second World War have been remembered and discussed in Russia and Ukraine has not helped to exorcise the demons of the past, one might say. Rather, it has fed them, by marginalizing the true nature of the Holocaust and the complicity of East European nations in it, and by linking remembrance to nationalistic ends. The irreconcilable and harsh political rhetoric of today's Russian-Ukrainian conflict may well be a function of this. Burakovskiy suggested that "the refusal to recognize the Holocaust as elemental to the twentieth-century histories of both [the Soviet Union and Ukraine] has allowed the issues of acquiescence, responsibility, and antisemitism to be avoided."[143] What has been happening in Eastern Ukraine in the past three or four years may at least partly be seen as a consequence and continuation of this refusal to engage more fully with one's past, for both Russia and Ukraine.

Endnotes

1 Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), pp. 14-25, 106, 212-213.

2 Tony Judt, "The Unmastered Future: What Prospects for Eastern Europe?", *Tikkun*, 5:2 (1990), 11-18 (p. 14).

3 Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2015), p. 22.

4 Judt, p. 14.

5 Sakwa, pp. 7-25.

6 Sakwa, p. 207.

7 Sakwa, pp. 30-35, 207, 234-237.

8 Andreas Kappeler, "Vom Kosakenlager zum Euromaidan", in: *Testfall Ukraine: Europa und seine Werte*, ed. by Katharina Raabe and Manfred Sapper (Berlin: Suhrkamp 2015), 33-45 (p. 44); Anatol Lieven, *Ukraine & Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1999), p. 36, cited in: Matthew Kupfer, Thomas de Waal, "Crying Genocide: Use and Abuse of Political Rhetoric in Russia and Ukraine", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 28 July 2014, at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/28/crying-genocide-use-and-abuse-of-political-rhetoric-in-russia-and-ukraine/his9> (para. 32 of 50) (accessed 19 May 2015); Sakwa, pp. 18-19.

9 Alexander Kruglov, "Jewish Losses in Ukraine, 1941-1944", in: *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*, ed. by Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 272-290 (p. 273).

10 Boris Zabarko, "Geschichte und Gedenken an den Holocaust in der Ukraine: Zur Bedeutung der Erinnerungen und Zeugnisse der letzten Generation, die den Holocaust in der Ukraine überlebt hat" (unpublished article, p. 2, personal communication with Boris Zabarko, Kiev, December 2014). Jewish population numbers before and after WWII and victim numbers of the Holocaust vary among researchers and depend on the borders and territories considered, on migration, deportations and imperfect statistics. For a discussion of Jewish population numbers in Ukraine before WWII, see note 3 of Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower, "Introduction", in: *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*, 1-22 (pp. 1, 17-18). For a discussion of the Jewish Holocaust victims in Ukraine, see Dieter Pohl, "The Murder of Ukraine's Jews under German Military Administration and in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine", in: *The Shoah in Ukraine*, *History, Testimony, Memorialization*, 23-67 (pp. 57-58) and Alexander Kruglov, "Jewish Losses in Ukraine, 1941-1944", in: *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*, 272-290.

11 Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, and Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 2009), p. 525; Arad estimates the number of direct Jewish victims in the occupied Soviet republics at ranging between 2,509,000 and 2,624,500. In addition, Arad lists categories of "indirect" victims, such as 120,000 Jewish soldiers falling in battle, and many thousands of victims of the sieges of Leningrad and Odessa, and of starvation and disease more generally. For further discussions of Soviet Jewish victim numbers, see Harvey Asher, "The Soviet Union, the Holocaust and Auschwitz", in: *The Holocaust in the East: Local Perpetrators and Soviet Responses*, ed. by Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist and Alexander M. Martin (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014 [also avaliable at:

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276806923_The_Holocaust_in_the_East_Local_Perpetrators_and_Soviet_Responses_Edited_by_Michael_David-Fox_Peter_Holquist_and_Alexander_M_Martin_Pittsburgh_PA_University_of_Pittsburgh_Press_2014_Pp_280_Paper_2795_>]), 29-50 (p. 29, note 1 on pp. 203-204), and Olga Baranova, "Politics of Memory of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union", <http://www.iwm.at/publications/5-junior-visiting-fellows-conferences/vol-xxxiv/politics-of-memory-of-the-holocaust-in-the-soviet-union/> (accessed 4 July 2017), 1-10 (p. 2, note 1 and 2 on p. 9).

12 Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crises and Change*, 2nd ed (Routledge: Oxford and New York, 2007), pp. 419-420.

13 For a more thorough discussion of Ukraine's and Russia's post-Soviet quests for a national identity, see, for example, Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). For a discussion of Russia's search for identity, also see Boris Groys, *Die Erfindung Rußlands* (Munich 1995), pp. 19-36.

14 In this article, the terms Shoah and Holocaust are used synonymously and interchangeably.

15 Zvi Gitelman argued in 1990 that the "Great Patriotic War" had already in the post-War decades become the Soviet Union's new "legitimating myth", since the Soviet Union's legitimation had shifted from the Revolution to World War II [Zvi, Gitelman, "History, Memory and Politics: The Holocaust in the Soviet Union", *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 5 (1990:1), 23-37 (p. 32)].

16 Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "The Geopolitics of Memory", <http://www.eurozine.com/the-geopolitics-of-memory/> (accessed 21 January 2018); Stefan Rohdewald, "Post-Soviet Remembrance of the Holocaust and National Memories of the Second World War in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania", *Forum for Modern Language Studies,* 44 (2008), 173–184 (pp. 174, 177). Keith Lowe likewise suggested that after World War II, new national identities based on the notions of heroism and bravery were created to compensate for one's own suffering and to distract attention from one's own betrayal, crimes, and moral failure [Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (New York 2012), pp. 61-75; Irina Prochorova, "Der autoritäre Virus und das Unterbewusstsein Europas", in: *Testfall Ukraine: Europa und seine Werte*, 149-163 (p. 157)].

17 Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 56.

18 Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 56, elaborating on Vamik Volkan's ideas.

19 Sakwa, p. 238.

20 Sakwa, p. 256.

21 Sakwa, pp. 70, 91.

22 Sakwa, pp. 14-15.

23 Sakwa, p. 23.

24 Sakwa, p. 8.

25 Wendy Lower, "Introduction", in *The Holocaust in Ukraine: Selected Articles from* Holocaust and Genocide Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, 1-8, (p. 1), <http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/holgen/holocaustinukraine_intro.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2015); cf. also Sakwa, p. 253.

26 Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, pp. 74-77, discussing René Girard's ideas about externalizing internal social violence.

27 Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 76 (emphases in original).

28 Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 76.

29 Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, pp. 56-61.

30 *Not in God's Name*, p. 58.

31 Jonathan Sacks, "History and Memory", in *Pesah Haggada with Essays and Commentary by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks: The Applbaum Edition* (Jerusalem: Maggid, 2013), (pp. 35-41) p. 38 (emphases in original).

32 Cf. Stefan Rohdewald, "Post-Soviet Remembrance of the Holocaust and National Memories of the Second World War in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania", *Forum for Modern Language Studies,* 44 (2008), 173–184 (p. 173); cf. Pohl, "The Murder of Ukraine's Jews under German Military Administration and in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine", p. 56, and Olga Baranova, "Politics of Memory of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union", <http://www.iwm.at/publications/5-junior-visiting-fellows-conferences/vol-xxxiv/politics-of-memory-of-the-holocaust-in-the-soviet-union/> (accessed 4 July 2017), 1-10.

33 Boris Zabarko, *Holocaust in the Ukraine*, trans. by Marina Guba, Library of Holocaust Testimonies (London and Portland, OR: Valentine Mitchell, 2005), p. xxv.

34 Rohdewald, p. 173.

35 Gitelman, Zvi**,** "History, Memory and Politics: The Holocaust in the Soviet Union", 23-37 (pp. 29-31); cf. Kiril Feferman's comprehensive discussion of Holocaust memory in the USSR: *Soviet Jewish Stepchild: The Holocaust in the Soviet Mindset, 1941-1964* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2009), https://www.academia.edu/7167113/ (accessed 16 September 2017).

36 On Soviet antisemitism, see also Dmitrii Tsvibel', "Babiy Yar", at: <http://evreiskiy.kiev.ua/dmitrijj-cvibel.-babijj-jar-10417.html>(accessed15 May 2015); Matthias Messmer, *Sowjetischer und postkommunistischer Antisemitismus: Entwicklungen in Russland, der Ukraine und Litauen* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 1997), p. 385; Gitelman, "History, Memory and Politics: The Holocaust in the Soviet Union", pp. 33-34.

37 Baranova, p. 9; see Jeremy Hicks, for example, for a discussion of the hidden Jewish aspects of the Soviet filmic representation of the German occupation: *First Films of the Holocaust: Soviet Cinema and the Genocide of the Jews, 1938-1946* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

38 Zvi Gitelman, "Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union", in: Zvi Gitelman (ed.) *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997); Gitelman, "The Soviet Union" in David S. Wyman (ed.), *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 295-324.

39 Thomas C. Fox, "The Holocaust under Communism" in: Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2004), 420-439.

40 Lukasz Hirszowicz, "The Holocaust in the Soviet Mirror", in: *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR, 1941 – 1945, ed. by* Dobroszycki and Gurock, 29-60.

41 Baranova, pp. 4-6.

42 Baranova, pp. 4-5.

43 Several writers and poets had brought the Nazi mass murder of Babi Yar to the surface in their works, such as Liudmila Titova in 1941, Il'ia Erenburg in 1945, Iakov Khelemskii in 1946, Naum Korzhavin in 1945, Pavel Antokol'skii in 1946, mostly without identifying Jews as the victims of the catastrophe, however (Tsvibel'). Vassilii Grossman and Il'ia Erenburg had compiled the *Black Book: On the Murderous Commonplace Slaughter of Jews by the German Occupiers in the Territories of the Soviet Union and in the Death Camps of Poland During the War, 1941-1945* (Zabarko, *Holocaust in the Ukraine*, p. xviii.), documenting the Nazi crimes in the USSR and Poland. Intended for publication in 1947, the Soviet censors prevented its publication in 1948. It was only published by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem in 1980 in Russian and subsequently translated into other languages (Messmer, p. 59).

44 For the purpose of this article, the widely accepted transliteration from the Russian ("Babi Yar") is used. Babi Yar encompasses an area of more than 59 hectars, which from the late 1940s to the 1960s was first used as sand quarries, later to be partially filled for local transportation and residential building, meaning also that the original locations of the mass murders cannot be identified any longer (Burakovskiy, p. 374).

45 Kruglov, "Jewish Losses in Ukraine, 1941-1944", in: *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*, p. 275; for more reading on the Babi Yar massacre, consult Feliks L. Levitas, *Babii Iar: Sud'by i pamiat'* (Kiev: Nash chas, 2016), for example.

46 Tsvibel'.

47 Tsvibel'.

48 Tsvibel'.

49 Messmer, pp. 389-390.

50 Zabarko, "Geschichte und Gedenken an den Holocaust in der Ukraine: Zur Bedeutung der Erinnerungen und Zeugnisse der letzten Generation, die den Holocaust in der Ukraine überlebt hat", pp. 8-11, 16-17.

51 Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-44* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 2000), p. xiii.

52 Cf. Sakwa, pp. 22, 29.

53 Dean, p. xii.

54 Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 56.

55 Prokhorova, p. 157.

56 Michael Lerner (Ed.), "After the European Revolutions", *Tikkun*, 5:1 (1990), p. 11.

57 Zhurzhenko, "The Geopolitics of Memory", and Zhurzhenko, "Shared Memory Culture? Nationalizing the 'Great Patriotic War' in the Ukrainian-Russian Boderlands", in: *Memory and Change in Europe: Eastern Perspectives*, ed. by Małgorzata Pakier, and Joanna Wawrzyniak, Studies in Contemporary European History, 16 (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2016), 169-192 (p. 171).

58 For a discussion of the history of the Victory Park in Moscow, see Nurit Schleifman, "Moscow's Victory Park: A Monumental Change", *History and Memory*, 13 (Fall/ Winter 2001), 5-34.

59 Cited by Rohdewald, p. 174.

60 Rohdewald, pp. 174-175; cf. the minutes of a conference on this question organized by the Sakharov Center in September 2013, "Mezhdunarodnye debaty 'Kholokost i Pobeda kak otpravnye tochki sovremennoi politiki'", accessible at: <http://www.sakharov-center.ru/discussions/?id=2361> (accessed on 9 August 2015).

61 Rohdewald, p. 175; see <http://www.holocf.ru/> (accessed 18 May 2015); for a more detailed analysis of Holocaust Education in Russia and a discussion of the work of the Russian Holocaust Research and Education Center, see Kiril Feferman, "Preaching to the Converted? Teaching about the Holocaust in Modern-Day Russia/ Den Bekehrten predigen? Vermittlung des Holocaust im heutigen Russland", in: *Holocaust Education im 21. Jahrhundert /Holocaust Education in the 21st Century*, ed. by Eva Matthes and Elisabeth Meilhammer (Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt, 2015), 230-239.

62 According to a 2012 survey of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) about Holocaust remembrance among its membership, Russia has no official Holocaust memorial day, but a number of Russian towns and cities,

including Moscow, observe since 2006 the 27 January as International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, a day that is also observed as "Day of Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camp in Auschwitz". Also, the November pogrom of 1938 is occasionally marked. Such commemorations also include school activities and honoring the Righteous among the Gentiles [Holocaust Memorial Days in the OSCE Region: An overview of governmental practices, http://tandis.odihr.pl/hmd (accessed on 18 May 2015); cf. Il'ia Al'tman, "Memorializatsiia Kholokosta v Rossii: Istoriia, sovremmennost', perspektivy", *Neprikoznovennyi zapas*, 2005, 2-3 (40-41) (Section 5 of 5 ("Rossiia i Kholokost"), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2005/2/alt28.html> (accessed 9 August 2015), which also includes a brief discussion of Holocaust education in Russian secondary and higher education.

63 "Hessed" is the Hebrew word for "mercy", designating Jewish welfare centers assisting Jewish communities in post-Soviet cities, mostly operated in cooperation with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). See <http://hesed.ru/whatishesed/> and <http://www.jdc.ru/programmy/pomosch-pozhilym/khesedy/> (accessed 12 July 2017), for example.

64 e.g. *Zov Siona* (*The Call of Zion),* a Russian Christian internet portal promoting knowledge of the Holocaust and of Jewish and Israeli affairs, <http://callofzion.ru/pages.php?cid=7> (accessed on 18 May 2015).

65 <http://www.newsru.com/arch/religy/11nov2011/lubavichi.html> (accessed on 18 May 2015).

66 Klas-Göran Karlsson, "The Reception of the Holocaust in Russia: Silence, Conspiracy and Glimpses of Light", in: *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. by John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013) , 487-515 (p. 488).

67 Karlsson, p. 510.

68 Karlsson, p. 488.

69 Nicolas Dreyer, " 'Post-Soviet Neo-Modernism': An Approach to 'Postmodernism' and Humour in the Post-Soviet Fiction of Vladimir Sorokin, Vladimir Tuchkov and Aleksandr Khurgin" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of St Andrews, 2011), p. 146.

70 Cf. Berthold Seewald, "Die Ukraine – Opfer und Helfer der Sowjetunion", *Die Welt*, 26 July 2015, < http://www.welt.de/geschichte/zweiter-weltkrieg/article144398102/Die-Ukraine-Opfer-und-Helfer-der-Sowjetunion.html> (accessed 4 August 2015); Sakwa, p. 22

71 Dieter Pohl, "The Nazi Occupation of Ukraine in 1941-1944 as Reflected in Works of Western Scholars", *Ukrainian Historical Journal*, 5 (1994), p. 130, quoted by Zabarko, *Holocaust in the Ukraine*, p. xvii.

72 Pohl, "The Murder of Ukraine's Jews under German Military Administration and in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine", p. 23.

73 Zabarko, *Holocaust in the Ukraine*, p. xvii.

74 Zabarko, "Geschichte und Gedenken an den Holocaust in der Ukraine: Zur Bedeutung der Erinnerungen und Zeugnisse der letzten Generation, die den Holocaust in der Ukraine überlebt hat", p. 11.

75 e.g. Felix Levitas, *Ukrainian Jewry During the Years of World War II* (Kiev, 1992); *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR, 1941–1945*, ed. by Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey S. Gurock (Armonk, NY, and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1993); *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*, ed. by Zvi Gitelman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997); *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. by Dan Stone (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2004); Il'ia Al'tman, *Zhertvy nenavisti: Kholokost v SSSR, 1941-1945* (Moscow: Fond "Kovcheg", 2002); Boris Zabarko, *"Nur wir haben überlebt" – Holocaust in der Ukraine: Zeugnisse und Dokumente*, ed. by Margret and Werner Müller (Weilerswist-Metternich: Dittrich, 2004); Boris Zabarko in collaboration with Margret and Werner Müller, *Überleben im Schatten des Todes. Holocaust in der Ukraine: Zeugnisse und Dokumente*, Heft 57, Historisches Forschungszentrum, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Bonn, 2004); Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–44;* Zabarko, *Holocaust in Ukraine*; Zabarko, *Zhizn' i smert' v epokhu Kholokosta: Svidetel'stva i dokumenty*, vols. 1-3 (Kiev: Dukh i litera, 2007); Patrick Desbois, *Der vergessene Holocaust: Die Ermordung der ukrainischen Juden. Eine Spurensuche*, trans. by Hainer Kober (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2009) [originally published as *Porteur de Mémoires. Sur les traces de la Shoah par balles* (Neuilly-sur-Seine, Cedex: Éditions Michel Lafon, 2007)]; *The Unknown Black Book: the Holocaust in the German-Occupied Soviet Territories*, ed. by Joshua Rubenstein and Ilya Altman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008); *Besatzung, Kollaboration, Holocaust: Neue Studien zur Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden*, ed. by Johannes Hürter and Jürgen Zarusky, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 97 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008); *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*, ed. by Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010); Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*; Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (Basic Books: New York, 2010); *The Holocaust in the East: Local Perpetrators and Soviet Responses*, ed. by Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist and Alexander M. Martin; *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public discourse after the Holocaust*, ed. by Roni Stauber, Routledge Jewish Studies Series (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. by John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic; Zabarko, Boris, *My khoteli zhit'…: Svidetel'stva i dokumenty*, vols. 1-2 (Kiev: Dukh i litera, 2013-2014), <http://www.netzulim.

org/R/OrgR/Library/Zabarko/BorZabarko_book1.pdf> (vol. 1) and <http://www.netzulim.org/R/OrgR/Library/Zabarko/BorZabarko_book2.pdf> (vol. 2) (accessed 6 July 2017). Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2015); Kai Struve, *Deutsche Herrschaft, Ukrainischer Nationalismus, Antijüdische Gewalt: Der Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2015); Eric C. Steinhart, *The Holocaust and the Germanization of Ukraine* (New York and Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Museum, German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 2015); see also Havi Dreifuss's recent article, "Jewish Historiography of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe", in: *Polin - Studies in Polish Jewry: Writing Jewish History in Eastern Europe*, 29 (1017), ed. by Natalia Aleksiun, Brian Horowitz, Antony Polonsky (Oxford and Portland, OR: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2017), 217-245.

76 Zabarko, *Holocaust in the Ukraine*, p. xviii.

77 Zabarko, *Holocaust in the Ukraine*, p. xviii-xx.

78 Rohdewald, p. 176; Anatoly Podolsky, "Collaboration in Ukraine during the Holocaust: Aspects of Historiography and Research", in: *The Holocaust in Ukraine: New Sources and Perspectives.* Conference Presentations. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, 2013, pp. 187-198; Podolsky, "Collaboration in Ukraine during the Holocaust: Aspects of Historiography and Research", in: *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public discourse after the Holocaust*); Radchenko, Yuri, "Accomplices to Extermination: Municipal Government and the Holocaust in Kharkiv, 1941-1942", *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 27 (2013:3), 443 – 463, and "'We emptied our magazines into them': The Ukrainian auxiliary police and the Holocaust in Generalbezirk Charkow, 1941 – 1943", *Yad Vashem Studies*, 41 (2013:1), pp. 63 – 98. Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel (eds.), *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2010), p. 106, note 6, list twelve items of doctoral research having been done in post-Soviet Ukraine on the Holocaust in Ukraine.

79 Aleksandr Burakovskiy, "Holocaust remembrance in Ukraine: memorialization of the Jewish tragedy at Babi Yar", *Nationalities Papers*, 39 (May 2011:3), 371–389, p. 372.

80 Burakovskiy, p. 372.

81 Burakovskiy, p. 372; cf. Wilfried Jilge, ''Competing Victimhoods – Post-Soviet Ukrainian Narratives on World War II", in: Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth A. Cole, Kai Struve (eds.), *Shared History – Divided Memory. Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939-1941*, Leipziger Beiträge zur Jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur, V (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2007), pp. 103-131 (p. 128).

82 These included a ceremony in September 2006 with Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and Israeli President Moshe Katsav in attendance, in addition to representatives of many nations and of civil society, commemorating the 65th anniversary of the beginning of the massacres (Rohdewald, p. 175).

83 Burakovskiy, p. 378.

84 Burakovskiy, p. 374.

85 The only Holocaust memorial in Ukraine was established in 1996 in Kharkiv (Rohdewald, p. 175); see <http://holocaustmuseum.kharkov.ua/museum/koncept.html> (accessed 12 July 2017).

86 Rohdewald, p. 176.

87 Zabarko, "Geschichte und Gedenken an den Holocaust in der Ukraine: Zur Bedeutung der Erinnerungen und Zeugnisse der letzten Generation, die den Holocaust in der Ukraine überlebt hat"; cf. "Presentatsiia knigi Borisa Zabarko 'My khoteli zhit'..."', June 2016, <http://vaadua.org/news/prezentaciya-knigi-borisa-zabarko-my-hoteli-zhit> (accessed 10 July 2017), Sue Surkes, "In a Ukraine forest, terrible events of 75 years ago given resonance by handful of survivors", *The Times of Israel*, 9 May 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/in-a-ukraine-forest-terrible-events-of-75-years-ago-given-resonance-by-handful-of-survivors/> (accessed 7 July 2017), and Shimon Briman's article on memory and collaboration in Zolochiv in L'viv district of Western Ukraine: "Ubiistvo marsian Zapadnoi Ukrainy", *Evreiskii mir: Gazeta russkoiazychnoi Ameriki*, 7 February 2017, <http://evreimir.com/134491/ubijstvo-marsian-zapadnoj-ukrainy/> (accessed 17 July 2017).

88 Burakovskiy, p. 385.

89 Burakovskiy, p. 385.

90 Cf. Sakwa, p. 18.

91 Zhurzhenko, "The Geopolitics of Memory"; Rohdewald, p. 177.

92 Rohdewald, pp. 176-177. The OUN, led by Stepan Bandera, came into existence during the Second Polish Republic as an extreme nationalist resistance movement against Polish authorities and Polonization. After the Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine in 1939 and the German occupation two years later it supported the Nazis and participated in acts of murder against Jews, in acts of violence against Poles and in military actions against the Soviets. Both OUN and UPA continued their guerilla efforts against the Soviet Union until the early 1950s and become heroes of Ukrainian independence in Western Ukraine (Kappeler, pp. 36-37).

93 Rohdewald, p. 178.

94 Sam Sokol, "Babi Yar as a Symbol of Holocaust Distortion in Post-Maidan Ukraine", *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs,* 11 (2017:1), 35-46 (p. 42).

95 Podolsky, p. 194.

96 John-Paul Himka, "The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Ukraine", in: *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, 626-661 (p. 651).

97 John-Paul Himka, p. 639.

98 Sakwa, pp. 135, 253.

99 Jeremy Hicks, "World War II symbolism runs deep in Russia-Ukraine standoff", *The Conversation*, 12 March 2014, <http://theconversation.com/world-war-ii-symbolism-runs-deep-in-ukraine-russia-standoff-24234> (para 4 of 10) (accessed 19 May 2015); cf. Sakwa, pp. 21-22, 158; Kupfer and de Waal (para. 5, 44 of 48).

100 An account for why Russia perceives the West's liberal-idealist political values as embodied in the European Union, for example, as anti-Russian, may be found in Sakwa, e.g. pp. 32-34, 226-237.

101 The symbolism of the George ribbon being used in Russia to commemorate World War II since the 60th anniversary of its end emphasizes the trend of framing the war victory as Russian, rather than Soviet, victory, and of placing post-Soviet Russia into some kind of continuity with pre-Soviet Russia (Hicks, para. 1-2 of 10).

102 Hicks (para. 1-7 of 10).

103 Hicks (para. 7 of 10).

104 Sakwa, pp. 59-60, 161.

105 Ol'ga Kievskaia, "Oranzhevii genotsid russkogo naroda startoval", 25 May 2005, <http://www.anti-orange-ua.com.ru/content/view/810/46/> (accessed 19 May 2015, not available any longer on 5 November 2017).The same article by Kievskaia is cited by Kupfer and de Waal, "Crying Genocide" (para. 40 of 50, note 18), http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/28/crying-genocide-use-and-abuse-of-political-rhetoricin-russia-and-ukraine/his9 (accessed 21 January 2018).

106 Matthew Kupfer, Thomas de Waal, citing: "Naryshkin: sobytiya na Ukraine – genotsid russkogo i ukrainskogo narodov" [Naryshkin: developments in Ukraine – the genocide of Russian and Ukrainian peoples], *RIA Novosti*, 6 May 2014, <http://ria.ru/politics/20140506/1006700879.html> (accessed 19 May 2015).

107 Kupfer and de Waal (para. 6-9 of 48).

108 Kupfer and de Waal (para. 6-9 of 48).

109 Sakwa, p. 20.

110 Evgeny Finkel, "In Search of Lost Genocide: Historical Policy and International Politics in Post-1989 Eastern Europe," *Global Society,* 24, no. 1 (January 2010), pp. 51-66.

111 Cited by Kupfer and de Waal (para. 20 of 48).

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113 Sakwa, p. 18.

114 Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993), p. 14.

115 Sakwa, pp. 19-22.

116 Kupfer and de Waal (para. 25-27 of 48); Sakwa, pp. 19-20, see also p. 137.

117 Sakwa, p. 20.

118 Kupfer and de Waal (para. 32-33, 39 of 48); Andrew wilson,"Vergangene Zukunft des Donbass", in: *Testfall Ukraine: Europa und seine Werte*, p. 63 (pp. 59-72); Oleksandr Kramarenko, „The So-Called Holodomor… Consequences for Ukraine", *Den'*, 21 November 2006, at: <www.day.kiev.ua/en/article/close/so-called-holodomor>; "Donbas Has Always Been Ukraine: the Holodomor and Russification Legacies", 5 June 2014, at: <http://maidantranslations.com/2014/06/05/donbas-has-always-been-ukraine-the-holodomor-and-russification-legacies/> (both accessed 8 August 2015).

119 Kupfer and de Waal (para. 39 of 48).

120 Cf. Sakwa, p. 152; for a thorough account of the Donbas insurgency, see Sakwa, pp. 148-182.

121 Antony Penaud, "People from Donbass seen from other Ukrainians", Johnson's Russia List [website] (12 August 2014). Available at: <http://russialist.org/people-from-the-donbass-seen-from-other-Ukrainians/> [in JRL, 2014-176/5], cited by Sakwa, p. 152.

122 Kupfer and de Waal (para. 45-46 of 48).

123 Kupfer and de Waal (para. 43 of 48).

124 Sakwa, pp. 186-187

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127 Zhurzhenko, "The Geopolitics of Memory".

128 "Ukraine verbietet sowjetische Symbole", *Die Zeit*, 16 May 2015 (para. 1 of 6), <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2015-05/ukraine-verbot-sowjetische-symbole>; "Glava dershavy pidpysav zakony pro dekomunizatsiiu", <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/glava-derzhavi-pidpisav-zakoni-pro-dekomunizaciyu-35325> (both accessed 9 August 2015).

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132 See also Georgiy Kasianov's article "History, Politics and Memory (Ukraine 1990s-2000s)", in: *Memory and Change in Europe: Eastern Perspectives*, ed. by Małgorzata Pakier, and Joanna Wawrzyniak, Studies in Contemporary European History, 16 (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2016).

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139 The author of this article was present at the discussed ceremonies in June and September 2016 and is relaying here his personal impressions of the ceremonies taking place on 29 September 2016.

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142 Evgenii Evtushenko, quoted by Zabarko, *Holocaust in the Ukraine*, p. xvii.

143 Burakovskiy, p. 372.