

(Re)conceptualization of Memory in Ukraine after the Revolution of Dignity

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Abstract

In Ukraine, having arrived at a critical stage of its history, three areas can be highlighted at the level of legislation during the struggle for the way forward since the end of 2013: the language issue, the constitutional process, and the efforts to eliminate the Soviet legacy. The subject of our analysis is the four laws belonging to the 2015 legislative package on decommunization, with an outlook to the broader context, as well. The four laws in question decide about who are heroes and who are enemies in history; what Ukraine's relationship is with World War II, as well as with the Communist and Nazi regimes. The laws point out firmly and excluding any further debate the primacy of the country's independence over all else, and the protection of the ideal of independence by any means concerning both the past and the present. The laws prescribe impeachment as a sanction for denying their contents. This story – hot memory influenced by politics – will be summarized for the period of 2015–2016.

Keywords

Ukraine, "decommunization package", national memory, identity crises, democratic values

Jan Assmann's impactful concept of memory developed in the 1990s breaks up the unitary categories of history and memory, and offers a nuanced typology of the typical uses of the past today. Regarding the latter, Assmann distinguishes between 'hot' and 'cold' memory. Hot memory directly shapes our present lives. In turn, if the past is transferred to the region of cold memory, it will lose its daily relevance, that is, it will gently be transformed into a cultural representation and problem.¹

The 2004 Orange Revolution and the 2013–2014 'Euromaidan'² (in official Ukrainian political narrative: Revolution of Dignity) in Ukraine are a kind of culmination of the post-communist transition having taken place in Eastern European countries peacefully, where social activism turned into revolution, somewhat belatedly compared to other states of

1 ASSMAN, Jan: *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, 2011, 50.

2 Euromaydan, EuroMaidan = European Square.

the region. Social movements leading to the revolutions have emerged in a society of transition, seeking its own ethnic-cultural identity. In the background of the protests the country's macro-regional divisions and the different foreign policy orientations of the populations of the individual regions played a significant role. Main forces behind the revolutions were the pursuit of the way, the lack of leaven connecting Ukrainian society, the search for identity and the commitment to democratic values.³ In our study we mainly seek to answer the question how adequate the answers of everyday politics have been to these social movements.

In Ukraine, having arrived at a critical stage of its history, three areas can be highlighted at the level of legislation during the struggle for the way forward since the end of 2013:⁴ the language issue,⁵ the constitutional process (in connection with the responsibility following from the second agreement of Minsk),⁶ and the efforts to eliminate the Soviet legacy. The latter has been targeted by the so-called 'decommunization package' approved by the Ukrainian Parliament on 9 April 2015, and signed by the President on 15 May. The most important basis of reference for the legislative package is Article 11 of the Constitution (1996) which obliges the state to promote the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness. The professional background institution is the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM) which was established in 2014 by eliminating an academic research institute⁷ founded in 2006, and reorganizing it as a government agency under the same name.⁸ According to the respective government resolution, the new UINM is directly subordinate to the Ukrainian government (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine), with the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. It is responsible for the implementation of the state policy on the revitalization and preservation of the national memory of the Ukrainian people.⁹

3 REZNIK, Oleksandr: From the Orange Revolution to the Revolution of Dignity: Dynamics of the Protest Actions in Ukraine, in: *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 4, 2016, 750–765; KHMELKO, Irina – PEREGUDA, Yevgen: An Anatomy of Mass Protests: The Orange Revolution and Euromaidan Compared, in: *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 2014, online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.04.013> (Downloaded 1 February, 2017).

4 See on details: HURI Projects of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, online: <http://www.huri.harvard.edu/projects.html> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

5 CSERNICSKÓ, István – FEDINEC, Csilla: Four Language Laws of Ukraine, in: *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 23, 2016, 560–582; CSERNICSKÓ, István – FERENC, Viktória: Transitions in the language policy of Ukraine (1989–2014), in: *Sociolinguistic Transition in Former Eastern Bloc Countries: Two Decades after the Regime Change*, SLOBODA, M. – LAIHONEN, P. – ZABRODSKAJA, A. (Eds.), Frankfurt am Main 2016, 349–377; CSERNICSKÓ, István: Language policy in Ukraine: The burdens of the past and the possibilities of the future, in: *Future Research Directions for Applied Linguistics*, PFENNINGER, S. E. – NAVRACSICS, J. (Eds.), Bristol – Buffalo – Toronto 2017, 120–148.

6 Ukraine and the Minsk II agreement, in: *European Parliament Briefing*, January 2016, online: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573951/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)573951_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573951/EPRS_BRI(2016)573951_EN.pdf) (Downloaded 1 February 2017); ASH, Timothy: Ukraine's constitutional reform conundrum, in: *Kyiv Post*, January 25 2016, online: <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/timothy-ash-ukraines-constitutional-reform-conundrum-406630.html> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

7 KASYANOV, Georgy: К десятилетію Українського інституту національної пам'яті (2006–2016) [On the Tenth Anniversary of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (2006–2016)], in: *Historians.in.ua*, 2016, online: <http://historians.in.ua/index.php/en/dyskusiya/1755-georgij-kas-yanov-k-desyatiletiju-ukrainskogo-institutu-natsional-noj-pamyati-2006-2016> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

8 Official Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/index.php?id=1> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

9 Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Some questions of the Ukrainian institute of national memory,

The (re)formulation of the national memory narrative in Ukraine has been taking place since the early 1990s. The continued coexistence of 'old' and 'new' memory has always been accompanied by conflicts, mainly because political groups in power have constantly attempted to utilize memory. At the level of legislation, the three emblematic stages of policy intervention are the following: converting the Soviet narrative of the victory in World War II into a Ukrainian national narrative; declaring the 'Holodomor' (the great famine in 1932–33) as a genocide of the Ukrainian people; and the legislative package on decommunization. The latter, according to Ukrainian historian Georgy Kasyanov's assessment, may be perceived as a consequence of identity crisis developed in the country and of the failed attempts to combat it.¹⁰

The subject of our analysis is the four laws belonging to the 2015 legislative package on decommunization, with an outlook to the broader context, as well. The four laws in question decide about who are heroes and who are enemies in history; what Ukraine's relationship is with World War II, as well as with the Communist and Nazi regimes; and deal with the issue of as yet closed archives (basically the disclosure of KGB archives). The laws point out firmly and excluding any further debate the primacy of the country's independence over all else, and the protection of the ideal of independence by any means concerning both the past and the present. The laws prescribe impeachment as a sanction for denying their contents. This story – hot memory influenced by politics – will be summarized for the period of 2015–2016.

Independence or the 'Belarusian Way'

Samuel P. Huntington wrote in the first half of the 1990s: "[...] Ukraine, however, is a cleft country with two distinct cultures. The civilizational fault line between the West and Orthodoxy runs through its heart and has done so for centuries. [...] Historically, western Ukrainians have spoken Ukrainian and have been strongly nationalist in their outlook. The people of eastern Ukraine, on the other hand, have been overwhelmingly Orthodox and have in large part spoken Russian."¹¹ Then he continues: "As a result of this division, the relations between Ukraine and Russia could develop in one of three ways. [...] armed conflict [...] Ukraine could split along its fault line into two separate entities, the eastern of which would merge with Russia [...] Ukraine will remain united, remain cleft, remain independent, and generally cooperate closely with Russia."¹² According to Pachlovska, the question is whether Ukraine should integrate or reintegrate into Europe. The Catholic part of the Slavs is less problematic from this perspective: during their history their belonging to Europe has never been questioned. In turn, Orthodox Slavs have constantly been busy trying to prove their radical difference from the rest of the European world.¹³

12 November 2014, No. 684, online: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/684-2014-%D0%BF> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

10 KASYANOV, Georgy: Историческая политика и «мемориальные» законы в Украине: начало XXI в. [Historical policy and the «memorial» laws in Ukraine: the beginning of the 21st century], in: *Историческая Экспертиза [Istoričeskaja Ekspertiza]*, 2, 2016, 28–57.

11 HUNTINGTON, Samuel, P: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York 1996, 165–166.

12 Ibidem, 167–168.

13 PACHLOVSKA, Oxana: *Finis Europae: Contemporary Ukraine's Conflicting Inheritances from the Humanistic*

The revival of the Greek Catholic Church banned during Soviet times has not been so successful as to date that a 'Greek Catholic Western Ukraine' would exist. However, from another aspect, there are no doubt historical-socializational differences between the various regions of Ukraine.¹⁴ The reference for the historical roots of the simplistic model of Eastern and Western identities is not correct either. After all, the fault line regularly emerging in Ukrainian election maps does not cover the former Austro-Hungarian territories or those of the Russian Empire. In the western part of Ukraine, Galicia and Volhynia, free of Habsburg influence, display the same pattern, while Bukovina and Transcarpathia show different ones. Galicia's and Volhynia's identical conception of nationalism was formed during a later period, under the Polish supremacy between the two World Wars.

In particular, Polish authoritarianism intensifying in the 1930s opened a wide space for Ukrainian nationalism, which did not reject extreme means of anarchism and political extremism, either. In contrast, in the Soviet territories, particularly in the 1920s, Ukraine and Belarus were showcase areas where illiteracy had been eradicated via the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages, thus averting nationalist movements. This was the period of 'korenizatsiya' (nativization or indigenization): the promotion of the mother tongue (Ukrainian and Belarusian) in order to bring up a regional Soviet elite. When the shift occurred towards the 'united Soviet people', that is, an ideology based on Russian identity and language, after the emigration of a large part of hardcore nationalists during World War II, the potential of resistance against Soviet ideology faded away, it had to be re-produced.¹⁵

After the breakup of the Soviet Union it has become clear that in the line of the former republics, now independent states, the biggest question mark is the relationship between the heirs of Kievan Rus: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. In Huntington's words: "In 1995 Belarus was, in effect, part of Russia in all but name."¹⁶ 1995 is the year of a referendum due to which, amongst other things, Russian became a second state language, and the country took the road of economic integration with Russia. According to the data of the 2009 census, 83.7% of the population identify themselves as ethnic Belarusians, although the Belarusian language is spoken by proportionately fewer people than Russian in Ukraine. 5,058,400 people out of a population of 9,503,800 have Belarusian as their mother tongue, but only 2,227,200 persons use it as their primary language in their daily communication; furthermore, as a second language it is only spoken by slightly more than one million people.¹⁷

«West» and the Byzantine «East» (A Triptych), in: *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe*, ZALESKA ONYSHKEVYCH, L. M. – REWAKOWICZ, M. G. (Eds.), Armonk – New York – London 2009, 40–68.

14 KARÁCSONYI, Dávid – KOCSIS, Károly – KOVÁLY, Katalin – MOLNÁR, József – PÓTI, László: East–West dichotomy and political conflict in Ukraine – Was Huntington right?, in: *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin*, 2, 2014, 99–134.

15 MILLER, Alexei: Дуализм идентичностей на Украине [Dualism identities in Ukraine], in: *Отечественные записки* [Otčestvennye zapiski], 1, 2007, online: http://www.strana-oz.ru/2007/1/dualizm-identichnostey-na-ukraine#_ftn1 (Downloaded 1 February 2017); МИНЕИВА, Охана: Не все так просто з тими українцями... [Not so Simple with Ukrainians...], in: *Отечественные записки* [Otčestvennye zapiski], 1, 2007, online: <http://www.strana-oz.ru/2007/1/ne-vse-tak-prosto-z-timi-ukrayincyami> (Downloaded 1 February 2017); RIABCHUK, Mykola: *Die reale und die imaginierte Ukraine*, Berlin 2005.

16 HUNTINGTON, 164.

17 National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20100918005813/http://belstat.gov.by/homep/en/main.html> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

For Ukraine, the slogan 'return to Europe' has an additional meaning – the return of Ukrainian nation-builders to the norms, the compensation of historic injustice, or a healing process of a pathological development. The statement expressed in Riabchuk's 2009 study¹⁸ has lost nothing of its validity.

In the 1860s the four Gospels were translated into Ukrainian, however, political will prevented them from being published because the Ukrainian-language Gospels could have proven the existence of an independent Ukrainian language. The consequences of that would have been incalculable: the voice of separatists demanding autonomy could have been strengthened. The 1863 circular of Pyotr Valuev, Minister of Interior of Imperial Russia, banned the publication of religious texts and books in Ukrainian, however, this prohibition did not apply to literature. Alexander II's Ems Edict of 1876, in contrast, contained a complete ban.¹⁹ The famous half sentence of the Valuev Circular, pursuant to which 'no separate Little Russian language ever existed, exists, or could exist' is frequently referred to even today. In response, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko declared in one of his 2015 autumn speeches – 152 years after the promulgation of the Valuev Circular: "Our answer is this: «It existed, it exists and will exist!»"²⁰

In early 2017, when this study is being written, the fault line can rather be drawn along the language question: in Ukraine patriotism and unpatriotism are separately measured by sociologists among Russian and Ukrainian speakers,²¹ and a belief seems to emerge very clearly that political and public actors alike are trying to grasp the possibility of national cohesion along the destructive and constructive effects of language on national consciousness.

A number of nationally oriented politicians and intellectuals have traditionally spoken about two Ukraines. Half of the country is seen in its mentality and language as Ukrainian, the other half as 'Creole'.²² The latter are perceived as forcibly Russified Ukrainians who shall be 'reoriented' to the Ukrainian language and nation. Many advocates of this logic divide the country's population into moral categories based on ethnolinguistic grounds.²³ Ethnic Ukrainians who speak Russian are often qualified as orphans, traitors or janissaries who had forgotten their homeland and family backgrounds.²⁴ The linguistic assimilation

18 RIABCHUK, Mykola: Cultural Fault Lines and Political Divisions: The Legacy of History in Contemporary Ukraine, in: *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe*, ZALESKA ONYSHKEYVYCH, L. M. – REWAKOWICZ, M. G. (Eds.), Armonk – New York – London 2009, 23.

19 Details: MILLER, Alexei: The Ukrainian Question. The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the 19th Century, in: *Central European University Press*, Budapest – New York 2003.

20 Speech of the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko during to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor, Kyiv, 28 November 2015, online: <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/vistup-prezidenta-na-ceremoniyi-vshanuvannya-pamyati-zhertv-36377> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

21 Ідентичність громадян України в нових умовах: стан, тенденції, регіональні особливості [The identity of the citizens of Ukraine under the new conditions: status, trends, regional differences], Kyiv 2016, online: <http://www.uceps.org/upload/Identi-2016.pdf> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

22 RIABCHUK, Mykola: *Дві України: Реальні межі, віртуальні війни* [Two Ukraines: real boundaries, virtual wars], Kyiv 2003; ZURZHENKO, Tatiana: Миф о двух Украинах [Myth about two Ukraines], in: *Перекрестки* [Perekrestki], 3–4, 2005, 16.

23 MASENKO, Larysa: *(У)мовна (У)країна* [Conditional Ukraine/Linguistic country], Kyiv, 2007, 57.

24 KULYK, Volodymyr: The Politics of Ethnicity on Post-Soviet Ukraine: Beyond Brubaker, in: *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, 1–2, 2001, 197–221; PAVLENKO, Aneta: Language rights versus speakers' rights: on the applicability of

of Russian-speaking Ukrainians – as Shumlianskyi²⁵ points out – is regarded as a moral crime. Hnatkevych, for instance, has accused with ‘degenerating the Ukrainian nation’ those Ukrainians who speak Russian with their children at home, who were ‘infected’ by the ‘disease’ of Russification, and are not looking for a ‘cure’.²⁶

Ukrainian intelligentsia clearly rejects the Belarusian way, but has not managed to find its own yet. Masenko for example believes that Belarus said ‘yes’ to Russian and became completely Russified; Latvia said a definite ‘no’ and began developing its own national language; Ukraine, however, has constantly replied ‘I do not know’ to the challenge.²⁷ The Russian language therefore was a complicit in genocide committed against the Ukrainians in the eyes of one part of society, whereas a victim of state-building in the eyes of the other part.²⁸

Who is a Hero?

If a Ukrainian historical personality were to be named, at least one name would certainly pop up in everyone’s mind, in the minds of non-Ukrainians as well: the name of Stepan Bandera. This is so despite that we do not even know of a thorough biography of his, most of the literature related to him is indirect. He was a short, thin man, struggling with rheumatism since his childhood, occasionally he was able to walk only with a stick. He was born an Austrian subject in a Ruthenian Greek Catholic village of few hundred inhabitants. In the 1920–30s he was an activist in Galicia pertaining to Poland at the time. However, during World War II, when radical banderists and the paramilitary Ukrainian Insurgent Army were involved in incidents still causing controversy, he was in jail most of the time, or just watching the events from a distance. His impact is, however, unquestionable. Today, dozens of Bandera statues stand across Ukraine, but only west and north-west from Kiev. Transcarpathia is an exception: here not a single memorial has been erected to honor him. The conflicting situation inherent in the fact that collective memory – including the perception of Bandera himself – is dissimilar in different parts of the country, and that some of its components are irreconcilable, has been realized by great politics, too. They have tried to address the problem by two prominent answers. Viktor Yushchenko, who became president thanks to the ‘Orange Revolution’, tried to create common memory by putting the Holodomor of the early 1930s into the focus of attention. In 2010, Yushchenko declared Bandera the hero of Ukraine, that is, he elevated him into the official pantheon of

Western language rights approaches in Eastern European contexts, in: *Language Policy*, 10, 2011, 37–58.

25 SHUMLIANSKYI, Stanislav: Conflicting abstractions: language groups in language politics in Ukraine, in: *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 201, 2010, 142.

26 HNATKEVYCH, Yuriy: *Чи злетить птах у синє небо? Нариси про русифікованих і русифікаторів та гірку долю української мови в незалежній Україні* [Does a bird fly into the blue sky? Essays on Russified and Russifiers and the plight of the Ukrainian language in independent Ukraine], Kyiv 1999, 11.

27 MASENKO, Larisa – HOROBETS, Olena: Офіційна двомовність не об’єднує країну, а сприяє її розпаду [Official bilingualism does not unite the country but contribute to its fragmentation], in: *Портал мовної політики* [Portal movnoyi politiki], 2015, online: <http://language-policy.info/2015/06/larysa-masenko-ofitsijna-dvovovnist-ne-ob-jednuje-krajynu-a-spryyaje-jiji-rozpadu/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

28 BOWRING, Bill: The Russian Language in Ukraine: Complicit in Genocide, or Victim of State-building?, in: *The Russian Language Outside the Nation*, RYAZANOVA-CLARCE, L. (Ed.), Edinburgh 2014, 56–78.

national heroes without a national consensus. People have reacted to this step sensitively not only domestically but also abroad. However, in the same year, the court – on the bases of individual petitions and with a reference to the fact that Bandera was never a Ukrainian citizen, thus cannot be Ukraine's hero either – annulled the presidential decree. The decision was approved by the appellate court and the Supreme Court as well. So actually nothing has changed beyond rousing the tempers all over again; both decisions satisfied only half of the country – each time a different half.

Accordingly, the Institute of National Memory rejects that Bandera would have a cult in Ukraine. On 16 January 2017, the Institute published a post of Volodymyr Viatrovych on its official Facebook page. In this post, the Institute's director posed a rhetorical question, 'Is there a Bandera cult in Ukraine?', then he replied: during the decommunization more than fifty thousand streets and squares were renamed in the country, of which merely thirty-four received Stepan Bandera's name as a new one, and only four new monuments were erected in his honor.²⁹

According to official Ukrainian historiography, in the period of World War II the Ukrainian territories – due to their geopolitical position – were in the epicenter of the eastern theater of war. During World War II, call-ups were continuous: about 10% of the Ukrainian population, millions of people, served in the Soviet army. In addition, in the resistance movement organized by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists as well as in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army founded in 1942 by the Organization, a minimum of one hundred thousand people took part in the battle in which the Soviets were considered enemies. Along the opposite, in fact mutually exclusive interpretation of these two facts, a struggle of political forces for shaping the politics of memory – at both the national and the regional level – has been witnessed over the past two decades. However, the interpretation of the issue has caused tensions in the relationship between Ukraine and Russia, as well.

In Ukraine the nationalization of memory is related to the re-interpretation of the Soviet narrative of the 'Great Patriotic War', to the re-evaluation of basic events, actors and historical consequences, during the development of new national identities and a national 'memory culture'. Nationalization does not imply 'de-Sovietization' of memory in every case, if by that we mean purposefully taking stock of the past. Rather, it can be observed that local power tore down the 'archaic' Soviet symbols – for pragmatic reasons, possibly unnoticed –, partially replaced them with national and religious symbols, or integrated them into the new historical narrative. However, the 'common victory' continues to carry important symbolic meaning, and in the Ukrainian-Russian relations it serves to legitimize projects related to post-Soviet reintegration and the 'strategic partnership' between the two countries.³⁰

To date, perhaps the only consensual situation is ensured by the 1993 law on the status and social protection of war veterans under which everyone is considered a veteran who took up arms until 1944, thus members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army as well. On this

29 Online: https://www.facebook.com/uinp.gov.ua/posts/747068775447759?__mref=message_bubble (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

30 ZHURZHENKO, Tatiana: «Чужа війна» чи «спільна Перемога»? Націоналізація пам'яті про Другу світову війну на україно-російському прикордонні [«Common Victory» or «Not Our War»? The Nationalization of World War II Remembrance in the Ukrainian-Russian Borderlands], in: *Україна Модерна [Ukrayina Modërna]*, 18, 2011, 100–101.

situation was built Act No. 314-VIII of 2015 'On the Legal Status and Honoring the Memory of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the Twentieth Century'.³¹ The law distinguishes between individual and collective participation in the battles of independence, it recognizes as legitimate the Ukrainian People's Republic – having reigned in certain periods of the first half of the 20th century –, the Ukrainian State (Hetmanate), the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, the East Lemko Republic, the Hutsul Republic and Carpathian Ukraine including the territory of Transcarpathia, as well as all civil institutions and military organizations of these state formations, including the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Carpathian Sich National Defense Organization protecting the independence of Carpathian Ukraine.

Whose Victory?

Today in Russia 9 May, that is, 'Victory Day' is one of the biggest state holidays. In the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, 9 May was not a central issue in internal political settlements. In turn, in 1995, the 50th anniversary was celebrated in Moscow in full splendor, with a procession at Red Square and a military parade on the mountain of Homage, where the Victory Park had just been completed by the time of the jubilee.³² From then on, Victory Day has been similarly praised every year, since 2008 the military parade has also taken place at Red Square. The two most important requisites of the central celebration are the 'Banner of Victory' and the 'Ribbon of Saint George'. The Banner of Victory is the team flag which was raised on the Reichstag on 1 May 1945, by Alexei Berest, Mikhail Yegorov and Meliton Kantariya. The historic Georgian ribbon had only been handed out by volunteers in Moscow in 2005, yet by next year it became a well-known symbol throughout the country, and even spread abroad. Since 2007, the ribbon has also been worn by government leaders in Russia, on the occasion of, among others, the central ceremony organized at Red Square.

World War II belongs to the contentious issues in both Ukrainian historiography and public opinion to this day, while politics has been constantly involved in memory policy-making.³³ According to official historiography, World War II took place between 22 June 1941, and 28 October 1944 in the territory of present-day Ukraine, although some hold that for Ukraine the war began in March 1939 when Hungary occupied Carpathian Ukraine (i.e., a large part of the territory of today's Transcarpathia).³⁴

During the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich – fled-ousted in February 2014 – an attempt was made to incorporate the 'Banner of Victory' among the requisites related to the celebrations. The law of 2000 'On Perpetuation of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of

31 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/laws/law-ukraine-legal-status-and-honoring-memory-fighters-ukraines-independence-twentieth-century> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

32 *Poklonnaya Hill*, online: <http://www.poklonnayagora.ru/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

33 PORTNOV, Andrii: Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991–2010), in: *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, BLACKER, U. – ETKIND, A. – FEDOR, J. (Eds.), New York – Basingstoke 2013, 233.

34 GEBHART, Jan – KUKLÍK, Jan: *Druhá republika 1938–1939. Svár demokracie a totality v politickém, spoločenském a kulturním životě*, Prague 2004; HAI-NYZHNYK, P.: Карпатская Украина в 1939 г. как одна из «разменных монет» Мюнхенского договора [Carpathian Ukraine in 1939 as one of the «small coins» Munich agreement], in: *Западна Беларусія і Западна Украіна в 1939–1941 гг.: людзі,событці, дакументы* [Western Belarus and Western Ukraine in 1939–1941: people, events, documents], St. Petersburg 2011, 25–42.

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1941–1945³⁵ was supplemented in 2011 with the following regulation: "the Banner of Victory is the emblem of victory of the Soviet people, army and fleet over fascist Germany in the years of the Great Patriotic War" which must be used at victory ceremonies, and displayed on buildings along with Ukraine's state flag.³⁶ The law was met with considerable resistance, given that the 'Banner of Victory' is a military team flag, but its symbolism is clear: a red flag with a sickle, a hammer and a five-pointed star. Based on a citizen petition, the modification of the law was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court, on the grounds that the Constitution provides an exhaustive definition of state symbols, that is, what the state flag, the state coat of arms and the national anthem are, and also establishes that state symbols are inseparable from state sovereignty in their content.³⁷ In 2014 the Ukrainian holiday calendar was changed, along the very logic of dismantling the 'Russian connection'. In his Independence Day speech of 24 August, President Petro Poroshenko declared: "Ukraine will no longer celebrate according to the military-historical calendar of a neighboring country. We will pay tribute to the defenders of our homeland, not to those of a foreign country."³⁸ By means of a presidential decree,³⁹ instead of 23 February – which had formerly been the Soviet Army's Day, today it is 'Defender of the Fatherland Day' in Russia – 14 October was to become the 'Day of the Defender of Ukraine' (in the Orthodox church calendar 14 October is the Intercession of the Theotokos – in Church Slavonic: 'Pokrov' – i.e. the day of the Holy Mother of God, as well).⁴⁰ The goal of all this was explained as "to bow before the courage and heroism of the defenders of Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity, the Ukrainian people's military traditions and victories, as well as to strengthen the patriotic spirit of society". This day is also the day of Ukrainian Cossacks, and on this day in 1942 was the Ukrainian Insurgent Army formed. Presumably the intention was to make it a uniformly praisable day. Its acceptance is not indisputable: according to a survey conducted in the fall of 2015, only 41% of the population believe that the Ukrainian Insurgent Army played a positive role in history.⁴¹

On this was built the second element of the 'decommunization package', i.e. Law of Ukraine No. 315-VIII of 2015 'On Perpetuation of the Victory over Nazism in World War II

35 Law of Ukraine "On Perpetuation of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945," April 20 2000, No. 1684-III, online: <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1684-14> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

36 Law of Ukraine "«On Perpetuation of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945» concerning the order of the official use of the copy of the Victory Flag," April 21 2011, No. 3298-VI, online: <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3298-17> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

37 Decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, June 16 2011, No. 6-RP, online: <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/v006p710-11> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

38 Speech of the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko on the 23rd anniversary of Ukraine's independence in Kyiv on 24 August 2014, online: <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/31066.html> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

39 Decree of the President of Ukraine on celebration of the Day of the Defender of Ukraine, 14 October, 2014, No. 806, online: <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/806/2014> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

40 ZHURZHENKO, Tatiana: A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis, in: *Die Friedens-Warte: Journal of International Peace and Organization*, 1–2, 2014, 264.

41 OSNACH, Sergij: Як мова визначає наших героїв і вітчизну. [How do determine language our heroes and homeland], in: *Портал мовної політики [Portal movnoyi politiki]*, 2015, online: <http://language-policy.info/2015/12/yak-mova-vyznachaje-nashyh-herojiv-i-vitchyznu/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

of 1939–1945'.⁴² The text of the law stipulates that World War II broke out as a result of the agreements between Nazi Germany and the Communist USSR, the two regimes committed crimes against humanity and against mankind, as well as war crimes and genocide in the territory of Ukraine. In order to commemorate all victims of World War II in Ukraine Memorial and Reconciliation Day is celebrated every year on 8 May, whereas 9 May is 'the day of victory over Nazism in World War II' (in short: Victory Day). According to the website of the Institute of National Memory, the symbol of Memorial and Reconciliation Day is the red poppy flower.⁴³

A report on the website of the Institute on the opening ceremony of public celebrations organized for the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II says that the poppy is "the symbol of the memory of people who fell in World War II and who are falling in East Ukraine in the fight for freedom and independence."⁴⁴ The Institute has also developed a draft law entitled 'National holidays in Ukraine' in which, in the Institute's director's own words, "the focus has clearly been transferred from 9 May to 8 May".⁴⁵ The establishment of new national holidays can best be described by Hobsbawm's concept 'Inventing Traditions'. 'Invented tradition' refers to practices with symbolic and ideological functions that will gradually replace old, denied traditions, deemed to oblivion.⁴⁶ For today's Ukraine, the enemy at the end of World War I, in World War II as well as today is the 'Moscow Horde'.⁴⁷ The establishment of new holidays suggests that Ukrainian memory policy wishes to participate in the World War II victories, at the same time it rejects the Ukrainian part of liability for any crimes committed by the Soviet army. The Ukrainian hybrid war, the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict in April 2014 has encouraged the remembrance of the Western neighbors, too: citizens of the neighboring countries were reminded by Ukrainians of 1956 and 1968 on the road to the Hungarian as well as the Slovakian border, respectively.⁴⁸ Let us note that in both conflicts it was not the 'Russian' but the Soviet army who took part, which is not simply a difference in rhetorics. For Ukraine one of the biggest challenges in this area is that in the meantime Russia undoubtedly tries to monopolize

42 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/laws/law-ukraine-perpetuation-victory-over-nazism-world-war-ii-1939-1945> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

43 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/page/ukrainska-druga-svitova> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

44 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/news/u-kievi-startuvav-proekt-maki-pam-yati> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

45 Інститут нацпам'яті хоче декомунізувати 9 мая [Institute of National Remembrance wants decommunisation of May 9], in: *Korrespondent.net*, January 27, 2017, online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3806693-ynstytut-natspamiaty-khochet-dekommunizyrovat-9-maia> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

46 HOBBSAWM, Eric: Introduction: Inventing Traditions, in: *The Invention of Tradition*, HOBBSAWM, E. – RANGER, R. (Eds.), Cambridge 1984, 1–14.

47 Petro Poroshenko issued an appeal for the Day of remembrance of the Battle of Kruty, online: <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/zvernennya-do-ukrayinskogo-narodu-u-zvyazku-z-dnem-pamyati-g-39798> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

48 PIPASH, Volodymyr: На виїзді з Закарпаття з'явилися білборди, що апелюють до історичної пам'яті сусідів України [Away from Transcarpathia appeared billboards that appeal to the historical memory of neighboring states of Ukraine], in: *Zakarpattya online*, July 22, 2015, online: <http://zakarpattya.net.ua/News/142858-Na-vyizdi-z-Zakarpattia-ziavlylysia-bilbordy-shcho-apeliuiut-do-istorychnoi-pamiati-susidiv-Ukrainy> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

the symbolic capital of the victory over Nazi Germany, and simultaneously frames the Ukrainian leadership having come to power in 2014 as the heir of 'Ukrainian nationalism and fascism'.⁴⁹

The Archive Belongs to Everyone

The text of Law No. 316-VIII of 2015 'On access to Archives of Repressive Agencies of Totalitarian Communist Regime of 1917–1991'⁵⁰ was composed by Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. One of its key rules is that the scope of the law on the protection of personal data does not extend to information available through this law. The concealment of personal data contained in the files may be requested from the archives only by the victims or their relatives. Access to the files is free and unrestricted, photos or copies can be made using own devices, or requested from the archive for a fee. Documents are available upon a written application and identity verification.

The Sectoral State Archive of Ukrainian Institute has stepped up as the central actor of document management, where all the relevant documents from the period of 1917–1991 are required to be placed, within a period of two years. In addition, the Law makes it the duty of the state to acquire materials available in foreign archives.

According to critics of the law, herding files to a single archive does not only facilitate access but also upsets the current system of archives. Classification into the category of 'repressive bodies' is not clear; thus the selection of documents is arbitrary. The definition of 'victim' is quite vague; common criminals, murderers, robbers may also be included. Disclosing names of staff members of the institutions concerned are indiscriminate, not separated by categories – for example, those in connection with informers, as well as those who detected common criminals are included into the same category –, thus the audience is not able to distinguish either. The establishment of the new central archive was decided by the government, not the parliament. Instead of moving documents from one archive to the other, a modern solution could have been or could be digitizing and making available the digitized material via modern facilities.⁵¹

Lenin for the Last Time?

In the absence of a uniform memory policy not only the erection of new monuments is a dissonant process, but the breakdown of old Soviet monuments, too.

After the disintegration of USSR, the most certain sign of the regime change taking place in the public space was the bringing down of Lenin statues around the period of the turn of the state in the framework of a wide variety of rituals: in public, in the presence of a large crowd, secretly, during the night, simply and without frills, without crowd celebrations, etc. In the schools there were no Lenin rooms any longer, no paintings of Lenin hung in

49 ZHURZHENKO, *A Divided Nation?*, 264–265.

50 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/laws/law-ukraine-access-archives-repressive-agencies-totalitarian-communist-regime-1917-1991> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

51 BERKOVSKYJ, V.: *Дуже відкритий архів* [Too open archive], in: *Критика* [Kritika], 2015, online: <http://krytyka.com/ua/solutions/opinions/duzhe-vidkrytyy-arkhiv> (Downloaded 1 February, 2017).

the offices of public institutions anymore (though the custom of hanging portraits of the reigning state leaders in the 'office' has not been faded away).

In the period of 1990–1993 nearly two thousand Lenin statues were got rid of in Western Ukraine. Over the next decade (between 1994 and 2004) the central part of the country excelled in clearing Lenin monuments away: about six hundred were demolished. After the 2004 Orange Revolution, until Yanukovych came to power (2005–2010), pulling down statues of the proletariat leader continued once again in the central regions of Ukraine: another six hundred disappeared. Then, a peaceful period ensued in this respect. According to a 2012 survey, the main streets of most Ukrainian settlements still bore Lenin's name, and thousands of Lenin statues were standing in public places. On 8 December 2013, however, now under the aegis of the Revolution of Dignity, the crowd defying the Yanukovych regime knocked down the Lenin statue of the capital, Kiev. The revolutionary period between November 2013 and February 2014 swept away more than five hundred Lenin statues in the central, southern and eastern parts of Ukraine. This was the period mentioned as Leninfall (in Ukrainian 'Leninopad', 'Leninoyal' or 'vozhdepad').⁵² According to the summary of the Institute of National Memory, in 2016 a total of 2,389 Soviet monuments were got rid of in Ukraine, among which the number of disappeared Lenin statues was 1,320.⁵³

The 2013–14 series of events has not only led to the self-liquidation of the Party of the Regions having occupied a strong position since a number of cycles, but also to the ban of the Communist Party. On 26 August 1991, two days after Ukraine's proclamation of independence the party had already been temporarily suspended by way of regulation, but in 1993 it was reorganized, and virtually until the early parliamentary elections of 2014 it was the only Ukrainian party whose representatives occupied seats in the Supreme Council in each cycle. In July 2014 the faction of the Communist Party was disbanded in the Ukrainian parliament by means of a procedural process, and at the same time, based on a prosecution submission, legal proceedings began against the party, which managed to participate in the 2014 autumn elections, but did not reach the 5% parliamentary threshold. The party charged by supporting separatism and terrorism soon got banned by the court's decision.

Before the end of the case, Law No. 317-VIII. of 2015 had been born "On the condemnation of the communist and national socialist (Nazi) regimes, and prohibition of propaganda of their symbols".⁵⁴ The law does not generally prohibit the items indicated in its title, but gives more accurate conceptual and contentwise definitions. The list of objects belonging to the subject matter includes the (Soviet) Communist Party, the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) regimes, and the Soviet state security organs. Within this, symbols of the 'communist totalitarian regime' contain the flags, coats of arms and other state symbols of all the former socialist countries, including the USSR, its former republics (the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, too); the hymns of the Soviet Union and its republics; any flag, emblem

52 Online: <https://ukr.media/leninopad/> and <http://leninstatues.ru/leninopad> (Downloaded 3 February 2017).

53 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/sites/default/files/userupload/decomun-2016.jpg> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

54 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/laws/law-ukraine-condemnation-communist-and-national-socialist-nazi-regimes-and-prohibition-propagan> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

or attribute which displays the sickle, the plow, the hammer and the five-pointed star in any constellation resembling the Soviet period; monuments and inscriptions commemorating persons involved in illicit events or the events themselves; the very designation of the Communist Party; furthermore, municipalities and public places are prohibited from bearing these names. In December 2015 the Venice Commission expressed its concern that the law could impede freedom of expression, deprive political parties from the possibility of participating in the elections, and entail unlawful prosecutions.⁵⁵

The subpage of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory 'FAQ. What you need to know about decommunization'⁵⁶ tries to expand the framework of interpretation of these laws. To the question whether the law actually prohibits the Communist and Nazi ideologies and symbols, the following answer is provided: "Neither the ideology, nor the symbols can be banned as it is not possible to ban the past. It was what it was. The law condemns the inhumane totalitarian regimes which have grown out of these ideologies, and prohibits the propagation of their symbols. Propaganda of the ideologies and symbols of Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes dishonors the memory of millions of victims of Communism and Nazism, thus it is forbidden." To the question whether it is possible to keep the old name of a village or street if it falls within the scope of the law the answer is clear: "No, it is not possible." If the local government refuses to rename, it is considered as sabotage. However, veterans may continue to wear their Soviet awards, and it is not allowed to tamper with the Soviet symbols of military graves. Interestingly, it is not necessary to introduce the name change of a settlement or public space in identity documents or official papers relating to immovable property, etc., those remain valid all the same.

In October 2015 the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory published a list of 520 names of those people after whom institutions or public spaces cannot be named in Ukraine.⁵⁷ The list contains persons with a 'Soviet' and/or 'communist' past, mainly Soviets or foreigners having lived in the Soviet Union, including not only party and government functionaries, but 'ordinary people' as well, such as engineer Vasyl Bazhanov, 'one of the pioneers of Soviet coal mining'. The list includes names of those individuals only who the Ukrainian settlements and public places resemble in any way. For example, Lenin, Nadezhda Krupskaya ('Lenin's wife'), Engels, and Marx are on the list, but Stalin is not since nothing is named after him in Ukraine anymore. Among the more than five hundred names a few foreigners can be found, including representatives of the Comintern, founders of Communist parties in some countries, or, for example, the only non-functionary, French symbolist poet Henri Barbusse. The list does not include a single writer or poet but him. There appears, however, the name of a 14-year-old child, Vit'a Gurin, who "was a student of the No. 1 school of Juzovka [Donetsk], killed at Easter of 1929 in the local club because of anti-religious propaganda, and whose name was used for the propagation of communism in Donbass". 70 of the 520 names are linked to the Donbass region.

55 Ukraine law banning Communist and Nazi propaganda has a legitimate aim, but does not comply with European standards, say constitutional law experts of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR, Press release – DC190, 2015, online: <https://www.google.hu/#q=gumit%C3%B6rv%C3%A9ny> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

56 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/news/faq-use-shcho-vi-khotili-diznatsiya-pro-dekomunizatsiyu> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

57 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/publication/spisok-osib-yaki-pidpadayut-pid-zakon-pro-dekomunizatsiyu> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

According to the Institute of National Memory, three percent of the country's settlements had to be renamed. The summary made at the end of 2016 mentions a total of 32 cities and 955 towns and villages renamed, furthermore, 51,493 streets and squares got new names.⁵⁸ Some of these are located in Crimea, de facto belonging to Russia, and in the area controlled by East Ukrainian dissidents. Several guides have been published to inform mayors, bureaucrats and the public opinion about how to rename public spaces and institutions. The Institute of National Memory has even released infographics for those interested.⁵⁹

Not all of the settlements have been silently buying into the renaming experiment. In this regard, the fuss around changing the name of Dnipropetrovsk city is instructive. The original name of the village founded in the 18th century was Katerynoslav, it was named after the Dnieper River and Soviet-Ukrainian politician Grigory Petrovsky in 1926. Petrovsky is also included in the list of those historic personalities after whom nothing can be named in Ukraine. During the selection process of the new name of the county seat located along Ukraine's largest river, many proposals were put forth, but without a doubt the most original ideas were those of the city government⁶⁰ and opposition MP Oleksandr Vilkul.⁶¹ According to Vilkul's proposal also presented to the parliament as a draft law,⁶² the new name of *Dnipropetrovsk* after the name change should be *Dnipropetrovsk* (sic!). The essence of the proposal is that the name of the county seat is to keep the reference to the Dnieper River (in Ukrainian: Dnipro), but the Soviet-Ukrainian politician is to be replaced with Apostle (Saint) Peter (in Ukrainian: Petro). This means that while the name of the city would remain *Dnipropetrovsk*, its etymology would be amended: instead of *Dnipro + Petrovsky*, *Dnipro + Apostle (Saint) Petro* would be the eponymous.

According to the official website of the Kiev parliament, a bill under No. 3854 was registered on 1 February 2016, which is to alter the names of districts and settlements.⁶³ The law was adopted on 4 February by Parliament.⁶⁴ Until the beginning of May 2016, more than a hundred settlements received new/old names in Ukraine.⁶⁵ President Petro Poroshenko has

58 See Website UINM, online: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/sites/default/files/userupload/decomun-2016.jpg> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

59 Online: http://fs152.www.ex.ua/get/172344833/infographic_names_new-page-001.jpg (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

60 Депутати змінили «інтимологію», щоб зберегти назву Дніпропетровську [Members of City Council have changed the «intimologi» to keep the name of Dnipropetrovsk], in: *Українська правда [Ukrayins'ka pravda]*, 29 December 2015, online: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/12/29/7094054/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

61 Вілкул пропонує перейменувати Дніпропетровськ у Дніпропетровськ [Viluk provides renamed Dnipropetrovsk to Dnipropetrovsk], in: *Українська правда [Ukrayins'ka pravda]*, February 4 2016, online: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/02/4/7097863/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

62 Draft decree of the Verkhovna Rada, 3 February 2016, No. 4001, online: http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=58036 (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

63 Draft decree of the Verkhovna Rada, 4 February 2016, No. 984-VIII, online: http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=57991 (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

64 Plenary session of the Verkhovna Rada, 4 February 2016, online: http://portal.rada.gov.ua/news/Plenarni_zasidannya/124779.html (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

65 «Декомунізовані» Дніпродзержинськ і ще кілька міст отримали нові імена [The «decommunized» Dniprodzherzhynsk and a few cities have new names], in: *Zakarpattya.net*, 19 May 2016, online: <http://zakarpattya.net.ua/News/156133-Dekomunizovani-Dniprodzherzhynsk-i-shche-kilka-mist-otrymaly-novi-imena> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

declared that the completion of decommunization is a national security interest.⁶⁶ In any case, pursuant to a parliamentary decree adopted after a long debate on 19 May 2016, Dnipropetrovsk was renamed as Dnipro.⁶⁷

Not only cities but small rural settlements as well are not necessarily enthusiastic about decommunization. For example, the local self-government of the Western Ukrainian village Zhovtneva has denied the name change. According to their justification, the village was not named after the 1917 coup in Petrograd, but after the local, typically yellowish clay soil.⁶⁸ However, in 2016 Zhovtneva 'fell', a parliamentary decree⁶⁹ gave a new name to the village of little more than seven hundred inhabitants: *Zaberezh*. Other towns oppose forced name change by reinstating their old names amended by the parliament. This is what two villages in the central part of Ukraine did, for instance.⁷⁰

A national Internet news portal Korrespondent.net in its article titled 'Little fantasy: how is decommunization taking place?'⁷¹ has drawn the attention to a few interesting events. The report reveals, for example, that even the popular sparkling wine *Sovetskoye Shampanskoye* (Soviet Champagne)⁷² could not keep its original name, the manufacturer has chosen the designation *Sovetovskoye Shampanskoye* (Sovietov Champagne) instead.⁷³

The press also considers among the oddities of the wave of renaming that Hennadiy Moskal, governor of the westernmost province, Transcarpathia, in one of his decrees renamed the main street of a small village from Lenin to Lennon Street, after the murdered

66 Порошенко: Декомунізація повинна бути завершена [Poroshenko: Decommunization must be completed], in: *Korrespondent.net*, 15 May 2016, online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3682845-poroshenko-dekommunizatsiya-dolzhna-byt-zavershena> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

67 Decree of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On renaming of the city of Dnipropetrovsk in the Dnipropetrovsk region", 19 May 2016, No. 1375-19, online: <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1375-19> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

68 Még mindig sok a szovjet rendszerhez köthető utcanév Kárpátalján [There are still many street names associated with the Soviet regime in Transcarpathia], in: *Kárpátalja.ma*, 29 November 2015, online: <http://www.karpatalja.ma/karpatalja/kozelet/meg-mindig-sok-a-szovjet-rendszerhez-kotheto-utcanev-karpataljan/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017). The village was originally referring to the 1917 Great October Socialist Revolution got its name; жовтень the Ukrainian word for October. The Ukrainian жовтий is yellow.

69 Decree of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On renaming of some settlements of Transcarpathian, Odesa and Chernihiv regions", 14 July 2016, No. 1467-VIII, online: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1467-19> (Downloaded 1 February, 2017).

70 На Черкащині декомунізованим селам вернули старі назви [On Cherkas region for the decommunized villages returned to the old name], in: *Korrespondent.net*, 12 October 2016, online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3756858-na-cherkaschynе-dekommunizyrovannym-selam-vernuly-starye-nazvaniya> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

71 Мало фантазії. Як проходить декомунізація [Little fantasy. How to doing Decommunization], in: *Korrespondent.net*, 4 February 2016, online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3624948-brak-fantazyi-kak-prokholdyt-dekommunizatsiya> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

72 *Sovetskoye Shampanskoye* (Soviet Champagne) – generic brand of sparkling wine produced in the Soviet Union and its successor states (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova).

73 Ukrainians say farewell to «Soviet champagne» as decommunization law takes hold, in: *The Guardian*, 4 January 2016, online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/04/ukrainians-say-farewell-to-soviet-champagne-as-decommunisation-law-takes-hold> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

star of the Beatles.⁷⁴ Most commentators also had a large smile when it was reported⁷⁵ that a settlement in Donetsk province, *Novohorodske* (Новгородське, where *нове* = new, *городське* = civic, urban) was to be renamed as Нью-Йорк, i.e. *New York*, and even a bill was submitted to Parliament on this issue.⁷⁶

In the territory of today's Ukraine, the first mass renaming of geographical names naturally did not occur as a result of the legislative package on decommunization. The Soviet power transformed place names throughout the Soviet Union according to the communist ideology, and Russified the names of many towns and villages.⁷⁷ A place name reform was launched immediately after Ukraine became independent. In the first half of the 1990s a number of towns which had been renamed during the Soviet era took back their old names. Part of the renaming process was getting rid of names associated with Soviet ideology and figures of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For example, Чапаєвка [Chapaevka] village in Vinnitsa county (named after trooper Vasily Chapayev who participated in the battles of the 1917 revolution and the subsequent civil war) successfully reclaimed its pre-1946 name Війтівка [Viitivka] in 1995.⁷⁸

A number of settlements could take back their pre-Soviet names whose non-Slavic population reclaimed a minority-language designation. A town, for example, named Минеральне [Mineral'ne] during the Soviet era, was given its traditional Hungarian name back: *Tiszaásvány*, the Ukrainian version of which became Тисашвань [Tysaashvan'].⁷⁹ The massive wave of transforming place names on an ideological basis, however, is indeed the consequence of decommunization in Ukraine. Changing geographic names and names of public spaces on a massive scale has been an integral part of language policy and planning also affecting names,⁸⁰ which aims to transform the mental map and to reconstruct reality. However, the above-mentioned events point out that – although Poroshenko has proudly announced that decommunization 'in Ukraine restored historical justice' – this process has also failed to unite society.⁸¹

74 Москаль першим із голів ОДА взявся за декомунізацію [Moskal first of Head of State Administration begins the decommunization], in: *Hennadiy Moskal Official Site*, 2 March 2016, online: http://www.moskal.in.ua/index.php?category=news&news_id=2128 (Downloaded February 1 2017); Москаль переіменувал вулицю Леніна в Леннона [Moskal renamed Lenin Street in Lennon], in: *Українська правда [Ukrayins'ka pravda]*, 2 March 2016, online: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2016/03/2/7100887/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

75 Поселок на Донбасі хотят переіменувать в Нью-Йорк [Settlement in Donbas to be renamed as New York], in: *Korrespondent.net*, 16 December 2016, online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3788774-poselok-na-donbas-se-khotiat-pereymenovat-v-nui-york> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

76 Draft decree of the Verkhovna Rada, 9 December 2016, No. 5517, online: http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=60678 (Downloaded 1 February, 2017).

77 RANNUT, Mart: Beyond Linguistic Policy: the Soviet Union versus Estonia, in: *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*, SKUTNABB-KANGAS, T. – PHILLIPSON, R. (Eds.), Berlin – New York 1995, 179–208.

78 Decree of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On restoration of individual settlements Tulchyn and Bershad in Vinnytsia Oblast of the former names," 17 May 1995, No. 281/95-PV, online: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/281/95-%D0%BF%D0%B2> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

79 Decree of the Verkhovna Rada URSR, February 22 1991, No. 765-XII, online: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/765-xii> (Downloaded 1 February 2017). Details: BEREGSZÁSZI, Anikó: Language Planning issues of Hungarian Place-names in Subcarpathia, in: *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*, 43, 1996, 1–8.

80 WALKOWIAK, Justyna B.: Personal Names in Language Policy and Planning: Who Plans What Names, for Whom and How?, in: *Names and Naming: People, Places, Perceptions and Power*, PUZEY, G. – KOSTANSKI, L. (Eds.), Bristol – Buffalo – Toronto, 2016, 197–212.

81 Online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3754360-poroshenko-hordytsia-mashtabamy-dekommunyzatsyy>

Conclusion

Reinterpretation of the empire's history began immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁸² In this process, not just the historical memory of the newly created post-Soviet states has been rewritten. Rewriting history has been accompanied by redefining identity and emotional discussion of language issues closely related to identity.⁸³ This process is not over in Ukraine even twenty-five years after gaining independence. With regard to decommunization laws, Internet commentators have formed two basic groups: those who think that legislature decided too quickly, without a discussion, and those who opine the debate has been going on for twenty-five years, it was past time to make a decision.⁸⁴ The standard professional position has been summarized by Oxana Shevel as follows: in connection with Soviet history it is politics that has decided, on ideological basis, who is good and who is bad, who is 'ours' and who is 'enemy'.⁸⁵

However, in Ukraine, virtually at war since April 2014, the issue of who is with us and who is against us is contentious not only from a historical perspective. The problem is generating controversy even today.

Between the parts of a divided society, President Petro Poroshenko is trying to strike a balance sometimes desperately. According to the President, for instance, 62% of those fighting for Ukraine in the East are Russian-speaking.⁸⁶ He also emphasized that "Ukraine is loved in Russian just as much as in Ukrainian".⁸⁷ Also, in his speech dated 9 May 2016, he said: "Today the descendants of those who fought under the command of [Rodion] Malinovsky [Marshal of the Soviet Union, military commander in WWII], or [Roman] Shukhevych [military leader of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army], are now protecting Ukraine together against the aggression of the Russian Federation."⁸⁸ A part of politicians and intellectuals positioning themselves on the national wing, however, tend to exclude their fellow citizens of Russian

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82 BLOMMAERT, Jan: *Discourse*, Cambridge 2006, 151.

83 PAVLENKO, Aneta: Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory, in: *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 3–4, 2008, 275–314, doi:10.1080/13670050802271517.

84 KULYK, Volodymyr: [About substandard laws and insensitive critics], in: *Kpymuka [Kritika]*, May 2015, online: <http://krytyka.com/ua/solutions/opinions/pro-neyakisni-zakony-ta-nechutlyvykh-krytykiv> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

85 SHEVEL, Oxana: Щоб відповідати європейським стандартам, закони «про декомунізацію» потребують змін [To meet European standards, laws «On decommunization» need to be changed], in: *VoxUkraine*, 7 May 2015, online: <http://voxukraine.org/2015/05/07/decommunization-laws-ukr/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

86 Порошенко: Большинство воюющих за Украину на Донбассе – русскоязычные [Most fighting for Ukraine at the Donbass – the Russian-speaking], in: *Korrespondent.net*, 31 March 2015, online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3497931-Poroshenko-bolshynstvo-vouiuishchykh-za-ukraynu-na-donbasse-russkoiazychnye> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

87 Порошенко: На русском языке Украину любят не меньше, чем на украинском [Poroshenko: Ukraine is loved in Russian just as much as in Ukrainian], in: *Українська правда [Ukrayins'ka pravda]*, 23 August 2014, online: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/08/23/7035607/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

88 От РФ защищают потомки «красных» и УПА – Порошенко [From the Russian Federation to protect the descendants of «red» and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army – Poroshenko], in: *Korrespondent.net*, 9 May 2016, online: <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3680137-ot-rf-zaschyschait-potomky-krasnykh-y-upa-poroshenko> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

mother tongue who do not (prefer to) speak Ukrainian from the nation. Ukrainian linguist Yuri Shevchuk, teaching Ukrainian language at Columbia University in the United States, for example, doubts whether Russian native speakers can be good patriots: "The hybrid war in the East has broken out on the front of culture and civilization, as well. Previously, it was quite clear who were devotees and who were enemies of the Ukrainians in the field of language and culture. Now, however, the surprising concept of »new« patriots has appeared, who love Ukraine but do not like the Ukrainian language. This notion has raised serious doubts in me."⁸⁹ Shevchuk takes a clear stance against all manifestations of Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism: "Linguistic schizophrenia deprives the Ukrainian language from its protecting role in those existential situations when your life is in danger, and based on your language you can distinguish your own from the enemy."⁹⁰

One of the most famous Ukrainian linguists, Larysa Masenko is also eyeing the Russian-speaking part of Ukrainian society with suspicion: "For Russia, victory in the linguistic and cultural war with Ukraine was a prerequisite for the current military intervention, as well as for the occupation of Crimea and part of Donbass. In its plans for the revitalization of the Soviet Empire, the Kremlin counts on the part of Ukraine's population which has been »crystallized« by means of control over the Ukrainian mass media."⁹¹

Taras Marusya sees a parallel between decommunization and de-Russification: "Decommunization, which is still ongoing, will be incomplete without de-Russification and decolonization" – he claims.⁹²

Creating a legal distance from the Russian imperial past and the Soviet historical heritage therefore entails the intention of distancing from the Russian language, identified as the main symbol of the Russifying traditions of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, as well. In Ukraine, decommunization and de-Russification are happening at the same time. We believe that in a strained Ukraine it would be appropriate and wise to acknowledge that historical memory and perception of the language issue may have different interpretations. Policies in which the Ukrainian intelligentsia and political elite have been engaged in this area, are unable to reach a consensus. In addition to internal conflicts, the international situation is not to be overlooked, either. And this is not only about the relationship of Russia to Ukraine. The lower house of Poland's parliament on 11 July 2016, evaluated the

89 SHEVCHUK, Y. – VLASIUK, Hanna: "Двомовність як хвороба. Професор Колумбійського університету називає українську мовну ситуацію «мовною шизофренією» [Bilingualism as a disease: Columbia University professor evaluate's Ukraine's language situation as «linguistic schizophrenia»], in: *Портал мовної політики [Portal movnoyi politiki]*, 2015, online: <http://language-policy.info/2015/07/dvovnist-yak-hvoroba-profesor-kolumbijskoho-universytetu-nazyvaje-ukrajinsku-movnu-sytuatsiyu-movnoyu-shyzofrenijeyu/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

90 SHEVCHUK, Yuriy – PALAZHIJ, Galyna: Мовна шизофренія – нова, потужна форма русифікації [Language schizophrenia – a new, powerful form of Russification], in: *Портал мовної політики [Portal movnoyi politiki]*, 2015, online: <http://language-policy.info/2015/09/yurij-shevchuk-movna-shyzofreniya-nova-potuzhna-forma-rusyifikatsiji/#more-1780> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

91 MASENKO, Larysa: Мовознавча солідарність по-українськи [Linguistic solidarity in Ukrainian], in: *Портал мовної політики [Portal movnoyi politiki]*, 2015, online: <http://language-policy.info/2015/09/larysa-masenko-movoznavcha-solidarnist-po-ukrajinsky/#more-1821> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

92 MARUSYK, Taras: День слов'янської писемності і культури: декомунізація буде неповна без дерусифікації [Day of Slavic Literature and Culture: decommunization will be incomplete without de-Russification], in: *Портал мовної політики [Portal movnoyi politiki]*, 2016, online: <http://language-policy.info/2016/06/den-slov-yanskoji-pysemnosti-i-kultury-dekomunizatsiya-bude-nepovna-bez-derusyifikatsiji/> (Downloaded 1 February 2017).

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1943–1945 events of Volhynia against Poland as "a genocide perpetrated by Ukrainian nationalists", and declared 11 July as Remembrance Day.⁹³ Ukrainian victimization and language policy does not facilitate the establishment of social peace.

21st century Ukraine, which in 1991 inherited the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic along with the burdens of the Soviet past, is now struggling with the divisive demons of the past and the present on her way to Europe. And although one of the symbols of decommunization is a picture where the Nazi swastika and the Communist hammer and sickle are thrown into the trash together,⁹⁴ the country will not easily get rid of the shadows of the past for a long time to come.

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93 "Сейм Польщі визнав Волинську трагедію геноцидом поляків [Polish Sejm acknowledged Volyn tragedy as genocide of Poles]," *Українська правда [Ukrayins'ka pravda]*, 22 July, 2016. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/07/22/7115606/> (accessed 1 February 2017); MAGIEROWSKI, Mateusz: (A)symmetry of (Non-)memory: The Missed Opportunity to Work Through the Traumatic Memory of the Polish–Ukrainian Ethnic Conflict in Pawłokoma, in: *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 4, 2016, 766–784.

94 See Website UNIM. <http://www.memory.gov.ua/page/dekomunizatsiya-0> (accessed 1 February 2017).

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