

Selective Amnesia and Symbolic Violence: The Second World War as Represented in Eastern and Western Ukrainian Historical Museums

by

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In Blessed Memory of Anna and Helen Wald:

*Avenge, Almighty, thy slaughtered souls, whose bones
Lie scattered on Galician soil, cold.*

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Introduction

In this paper we compare historical museums dedicated to the representation of the Second World War (WW2) in the Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv and Lviv. These two cities have been chosen because they are very different in their histories and, in consequence, have developed differing political ideologies. Thus, Lviv, the western city located in the Galicia region near Poland, is seen as the city which has roots in the so-called “European cultural tradition” while the eastern city Kharkiv, on the border with Russia, is associated often with Russian tradition. But whereas the Ukrainians – as an ethnic group - living in Kharkiv also adopted the Russian and then Soviet cultures, the Ukrainians living in Lviv felt themselves dominated by Europeans, be they the politically dominant Austrians (before World War 1) or Poles (thereafter) and had a history of anti-Semitism¹ and the concomitant hatred for Jews.

For Kharkiv, WW2 provided no change in government until Hitler broke the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and invaded the Soviet Union in June of 1941. And when the city was invaded, its natural course of action was to fight the invaders and thus side unambiguously with the Allies in the war. Accordingly, it is no surprise to find local museums reflecting a more or less Soviet line in presentation of WW2 until Ukrainian independence in August 1991, followed thereafter by shifts in emphasis as more pro-Russian or pro-European governments come to power in the Ukraine.

Lviv underwent more dramatic changes from the outset of the war. Having become part of Poland after World War 1, Lviv was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1939 and was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. The local population was thus subjected to Stalin’s totalitarian rule, which included nationalization and transportation to Gulags, neither of which atrocities were characteristic of Poland’s relatively mild, albeit nationalistic, dictatorship. So that when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union and promised Lviv an independent Ukrainian state, it was natural for the Ukrainians to welcome the Nazis to Lviv and to side with them against local Poles and Jews and, of course, the Red Army when it made its return to the region.

The differences that result, from this split history between the cities, surface when memorial dates in the Ukraine are considered. One example of this is Victory Day, an official holiday celebrated on May 9th. While the event is widely celebrated in Kharkov, in April 2013 in Lvov the city council proposed declaring May 8th and 9th “days of mourning for those killed in the Second World War and for the victims of totalitarian regimes”, while forbidding the public use of either Soviet or Nazi symbols on those dates. (<http://www.unian.net/news/568097-vo-Lvive-8-9-maya-dni-skorbi.html>). The regional court suspended the implementation of the new decision until May 29, citing single constitutional norms in the Ukraine and the impossibility of different manifestations of memorial dates as the reason. (<http://www.unian.net/news/569679-sud-otmenil-den-skorbi-8-maya-vo-Lvive.html>).

The purpose of this paper is to show how the historical museums in Lviv and Kharkiv reinterpret the same period in different ways. It will be shown that the critical difference lies in the attitude towards the Holocaust, where in Lviv symbolic violence is used to place complete blame for all Jewish deaths on the Nazis, whilst in Kharkiv, selective amnesia leads to a continued adoption of Soviet framing, whereby it is “people” and not “Jews” who died. In Kharkov it is clear that the Red Army was heroic, even if this leads to contemporary ideological confusion vis a vis the costs and benefits of the city’s membership of the Soviet Union before and after WW2. The history of the war, however, is presented

¹ Some sense of this anti-Semitism may be grasped by reading Ivan Franko’s novel, *Fateful Crossroads*, which is set in the late 19th Century in Galicia and whose major Jewish character, Wagman, early on informs the reader that he is reputed to be “a usurer, a bloodsucker, a dangerous man” (p.71). Crude anti-Semitic stereotyping is characteristic of the works of the inaptly named “Ukrainian Shakespeare”!

more or less as it was viewed at the time. In Lviv, on the other hand, there is little ambiguity. Forced membership (as it is viewed) of the Soviet Union was evil, whereas the Nazis were bad because they killed all the Jews who were murdered in Lviv. Symbolic violence has been used in Lviv to turn the history of WW2 into blatant fiction. Nowhere in the government sponsored or owned museums is there any mention of Ukrainian collaboration in the murder of Poles and Jews and the abundant war crimes implied are totally whitewashed. The empirical data for this paper were collected during October and November 2012.

Kharkiv

Since its foundation in 1654 until the formation of an independent Ukraine, this city was part of the Russian Empire. After the revolution in 1917, Kharkiv became a part of the Soviet Republic of Ukraine. The city was a capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic until 1934, (this fact is an important factor in showing the city's importance and its inclusion into the Soviet state-building problematic).

“Kharkiv was a major industrial and financial hub, growing rapidly in the half century before 1917, from about 35 000 to 382 000 inhabitants. It had several large metalworking factories. Kharkiv leaders felt it to be an important regional centre, the focus of ‘Left-Bank Ukraine’. (Rex A. Wade, 70)

During the Second World War, or the “Great Patriotic War” as it is called in Ukraine and in some other post-Soviet countries, the Kharkiv region was the site of important battles. The myth of the brave and fearless Soviet soldier was fostered in the post-war era, and has been a feature of the everyday life of the region ever since. Evidence for this assertion is provided by monuments as a marker of the social determination of the city and there are many heterogeneous Soviet monuments, memorial pathways, the eternal flame at the Monument of the Unknown Soldier dedicated to the “Great Patriotic War” and a memorial to Lenin, which stands in the main square of the city. A similar domination is visible in the naming of streets (Kravchenko).

In this regard Lviv would be more eclectic, but more radical as well, because one would notice that “Shevchenko and Adam Mickiewicz stand only a few hundred meters from each other” (Wilson: 228) and monuments to S. Bandera and Lenin are located in the same city (Hentosh and Tscherkes).

The ethnic structure was always heterogeneous in both cities; in Kharkiv the main groups were Ukrainians, Russians and Jews (Rex. A. Wade: 71).

Lviv

The city was founded in the middle of the 13th century. During the 18th and 19th centuries (1772—1914) it was part of the Austro- Hungarian Empire, then less than one year later during WW1 came into the possession of the Russian Empire, from 1915 and until 1918 was incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1918 after the collapse of Austro-Hungary the Lviv territory together with several other cities was proclaimed as the West Ukrainian People's Republic (Zakhidnoukrayins'ka Narodna Respublyka, ZUNR), which existed less than one year and became in 1919 part of the Polish Empire. In 1939, after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Lviv, together with other nearby territories, became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR).

At this point, we need to introduce one of the major actors of the period in Lviv and provide Stepan Bandera with a historical context. In order to understand his position, certain pre-conditions need to be mentioned. During the Austro-Hungarian period, the inhabitants of Lviv lived under a tolerant political situation, the highest economic level and were part of a big multicultural empire as compared with the later situation in the Polish Kingdom (Anna Reid). After the empire's collapse, Lviv with other western regions, became part of the Polish Kingdom, which adopted the politics of assimilation towards the

Ukrainian language and ethnicity. In such historical conditions Stepan Bandera was born in Galicia to the family of the Greek-Catholic rite parish priest, who shared the idea of Ukrainian independence. Bandera is known as the leader of the nationalistic group, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), which was formed in 1929 and later split in 1940. This group fought for Ukrainian independence, principally via the ethnic cleansing of Jews and Poles in Galicia. It is Stepan Bandera, with whom this nationalistic movement is usually associated. (http://www.academia.edu/2096863/A_Terrorist_as_Hero_of_Ukraine)

The OUN was thus nationalistic, anti-Semitic and it was also naturally anti-Soviet, with roots originating in fascist ideology (Subtelny: 344; Wilson: 131; Reid: 146, 147).

First, being limited in rights, Bandera struggles as a partisan against the Polish authorities, and organizes the murder (but does not take part himself) of the Polish military officer and politician Bronisław Pieracki. After September 1939 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, when the Lviv territories came under Soviet protection, his main enemy became the Soviet regime; the organization was divided into different unions more or less open for collaboration with Nazi Germany with expectations of the future independence for Ukraine. "The Germans...with whom OUN maintained contacts throughout the 1930s were seen as the lesser evil than the Soviet Union with the Famine of 1932-33 and mass terror. Many Ukrainian leaders were unaware or did not want to know, that the Third Reich saw Ukraine as colonial land for German settlement and exploitation." (Hunczak: 98) But after the Nazi-occupation of the city, Bandera proclaimed Ukraine independence and after several months was arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. (Hunczak: 99)

The OUN had officially highly xenophobic attitudes towards ethnical minorities and Jews in particular. The relation to the Jewish question was declared at the Cracow congress of OUN in 1941, where it was promised to vanquish them as they were (without factual basis) seen as the most loyal prop of the ruling Bolshevik regime. (Wilson: 132, Reid) Murders were also organized against Polish minorities, living in Galicia and Volhynia (Snyder: 190).

In 1943, a Wing of the OUN was reorganised into the Ukrainian Insurgent Army ("Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiya", UPA) and at its peak between 1944 and 1947, had around 90,000 men under arms. (Wilson:133) It fought against Nazi-Germany (but there was also possible collaboration) (Prusin: 204; Snyder: 186), the Soviet and both Polish armies (pro-Soviet and partisans), which lead to the ethnic cleansing of the Galicia and Volhynia regions (Snyder: 190). The same year the SS Division Galicia was created, with public forbiddances to use the word "Ukrainian" in the title, it was officially announced on May 4, 1943 and had support "of the leading elements in Galicia"(Armstrong: 127). Some Ukrainian nationalists were collaborating with the alliance too (Armstrong: 128).

During World War 2, the population and government of Kharkiv were unambiguously on the side of the Red Army and the Allies against the Axis powers. The Ukrainian population of Lviv, on the other hand, in particular to the extent that they were followers of the OUN, was anti-Semitic and anti-Polish and supported the use of violence against these ethnic groups. The population was also pro Axis, either insofar as they believed that the Nazis would grant them independence or because they shared ideology with the Nazis vis a vis Jews and, to some extent Poles. In the remainder of this paper we consider the extent to which the historical museums of Kharkov and Lvov reflect this broad factual summary of the two towns' respective histories.

Research in Kharkiv

The Museum of Military Brotherhood

The museum is located in the village of Sokolovo in the Kharkiv region. It was under reconstruction at the time of observation, but we had the good fortune to discuss the plans for future exhibitions as well

as to see how the museum was looking last year when no serious changes were made. The goal of the museum is to present events of 'The Battle of Sokolovo', which took place during WW2 in 1943, when the First Czechoslovak Independent Field Battalion together with the Red Army won the battle against the Nazi-German army. Ludvík Svoboda, the commander of the battalion and especially Otakar Yarosh, the first foreign hero of the Soviet Union, have a special place at this exhibition.

This battle was not the only one taking place in the region, there were four others with the titles: "First battle of Kharkiv", "Second..." and so on. The reason this battle has needed to be emphasized and commemorated since the opening of the museum in Soviet times, is the accent on international relations with the "friendly socialist Czechoslovak republic". The Battle of Sokolovo was the first battle where Red Army and Czechoslovak forces (the First Czechoslovak Independent Field Battalion) cooperated together against the Nazi army. The battle is named after the village of Sokolovo, which is located in the Kharkiv region and where the battle took place on 8th-13th March 1943. It is famous for the actions of two people: Lieutenant Otakar Jarosh, who threw himself under a tank with a bunch of grenades and posthumously became the first foreign citizen to receive the military order "the Hero of the Soviet Union". The second person is Ludwig Svoboda, the commander of the Czechoslovak Battalion, who later became the president of Czechoslovakia. The event is also displayed and commemorated through street names in Kharkiv; thus there is Ludwig Svoboda Street as well as Otakar Jarosh Street. Hence we see the commemorative politics of the Soviet Union realized throughout different public spheres: in the museums and constructed sequential topology of the city, inherited and stable even after independence in 1991. According to the museum's guide, the initiative of opening the museum was issued by a representative of the 'Czech History Club', who created the plan of the expositions as well as the reconstruction.

The fundamental basis of the exposition is the Soviet type of heroic narrative. The exposition informs not only about the battle in Sokolovo but presents the participation of the Czechoslovak army in cooperation with the Soviet army during WW2. In the plan for the museums expositions, which was kindly presented to us, we've noticed that one of the tasks in the reconstructed museum will be "to present the role of the veterans in military-patriotic education of the youth". To approve the status of such an important place of memory it is planned to make a stand with material about: "Visits of the museum by government delegations and guests of honor".

In other words, the museum is basing its exhibition on what might be termed the Soviet pattern. The Soviet pattern is a number of aesthetic and linguistic rules that was typically adopted by any formal institution in the Soviet Union. Thus, one may view such standard phrases which construct the exhibition as the didactic story of the "brave epic pages of the history of Soviet Man". Interestingly, all information is provided in Russian and it is planned also to present plaques in Czech. The extent to which the population in this city is fluent in Russian is reflected in the fact that no use of Ukrainian is deemed necessary.

The Kharkiv Historical Museum

The exhibitions here are presented in Ukrainian; if there were any old plaques left over from the Soviet Union they were written in Russian. Most plaques are new and therefore written in Ukrainian. This observation is important because language is the special marker to show the politics of the museum regarding the re-actualization of the past. Simply put, changed plaques mean changed information on the plaque: that is to say, a re-interpretation of the history.

The key-concept for presentations of different periods of Kharkiv history can be described in several words: “aggression towards the city” and “occupation of the city”. This means that the whole history is reduced into the small world of “being a victim”, which is easy to implement, but is never enough to describe the success of Kharkiv during the Soviet period with its development of factories, universities, living infrastructure. The history of any city is always more diverse and Kharkiv is no exception.

The first mention of the word we find in the first room: “Turkish-Tatar aggression”. After this statement, the idea of occupation is presented at the exhibition of the Soviet period. The names of the stands are the best examples: “The creation of the USSR – was the total loss of the independence of Ukraine” or a stand telling of the “creation of dictatorship, destroying of nation”. The Soviet period is presented also through the topic of the 1932-1933 famine years. The stands show different diplomas, and newspapers such as ‘Pravda’ to show the feeling of the time, but without any special examples like the murders of the Polish officers as part of the Katyn massacre in Kharkiv carried out by the NKVD in 1941.(Fisher)

There is also a new tendency in describing the Soviet period using the word “despite”. “Despite the totalitarian regime there were educated people...”. The most important issues presented during the Soviet period are: the repressions of the 1930s perpetrated by the Stalin government towards the so-called ‘anti-Soviet political elements’, the famine in Ukraine of 1930-1932 known as “Holodomor”, the scientific development of the city of Kharkiv, and World War 2 with the accent on the fighting which took place in the Kharkiv region.

Moving to the war period, perhaps the most well-known battles are the Belgorod-Kharkiv Strategic Offensive Operation (or ‘Four battles of Kharkiv’), which are now presented at the place called ‘Height of Marshal Konev’ and the fighting near Sokolovo. These four battles were the last major conflicts occurring in the region and as a result the Kharkiv region and Belgorod (the Russian city located on the other side of the modern border) were liberated from Nazi-occupation. Both are sparsely represented at the museum because of the limitations of space but are presented in a separate museum and huge memorial complex. Resuming, we would say that the attention to the war period is high and could be checked through the large number of museums in the region dedicated to the topic.

Returning to our analysis, we see that the famine is shown as the period of external occupation and destruction of the gene pool of the Ukrainian nation. “The famine of 1930-1932 in Ukraine was provoked to keep Ukrainian folk in fear and obedience. The Village has lost diligent conscientious most hard-working proprietors...” A very important moment follows below in the second part of the plaque text: “...Especially the Ukrainian Autocephalous church was affected, which was legally eliminated in January 1930”. The accent on the “Ukrainian” as something which has the highest level of suffering is usually used in public discourses, and museums are no exception. The fact that the Ukrainian church was eliminated is true, but the same situation existed with all other churches: Russian Orthodox, Greece- and Roman- Catholic, Jewish, Armenian and others. Thus, this one example appears to show the close link between ideological background and historical education in museums. For further research it would be extremely useful to determine if the same methods were typical for all countries from the end of the 19th century. The whole exhibition presents the case of repression towards non-communists as well as success in different spheres of life during the USSR period. In particular, success was evident in exact science, architecture and economics.

On the next floor the exhibition of World War 2 is located. The war is presented with two polar forces: ‘Soviet army soldier’ and ‘German-fascist occupation soldier’. The representation is based on the

exposition created during the period, but the plaques and some printed information have been added since 2009. Two details have to be mentioned: first, the presentation of the Soviet soldiers as heroes and only heroes, the classical Soviet narrative, remains implemented. Second, the formulation of any phrases which specifies ethnicity, such as “Jew”, is avoided. For instance, on one plaque one may read about Kharkiv medics, who were helping “*nationals, who got into trouble*”. The statement shows the strategy of avoiding mentioning the ethnical roots of the victims, who are clearly Jews.

We can say that the “verified” or “traditional” history is presented at this exposition, which means that the function of the museum as a translator of ideology is taken as the norm. This further means that the main topics of the exposition are transmitted to other museums: that of the Kharkiv battles, the Holocaust issue, which appears to be mainly ignored and also the presentation of a famous Soviet singer, who maintained the morale of soldiers during the war by giving concerts at the front. All of these topics were developed into independent museums. Thus, we find the museum of Klavdiya Shulzhenko, which was created by a group of war veterans with the financial support of the local government; the “Height of Marshal Konev”, formally part of the historical museum; the “Museum of Military Brotherhood”, organized as a private initiative with the help of local authorities; and the Holocaust museum, also organized as a private initiative with the support of the Jewish foundation in Kharkiv.

The next hall is the newest exhibition “Kharkiv, Historical etudes of 19 century” (ethnography and history of the 19th century). Being the newest exhibition, the plaque, information, and stands are fresh. During the past six years, the content of the hall has been changed several times. First, during the Viktor Yushchenko presidential period, it was implemented as an exhibition about “Holodomor” (Ruban Y.G.). The government organized the financial aid to provide each regional museum with the standardized stands, new TV-screens and video on the given topic. Following the election of Viktor Janukovych, the room dealing with the “Holodomor” became a temporary exhibition and after several years was closed for “reconstruction”. The new neutral and more positive exposition was opened before the football tournament of “Euro 2012”, which took place in Ukraine and Poland. For the first time, English translation was implemented on the stands.

Summing up, we would argue that there exist two main tendencies which apparently contradict one another at the museum. On the one hand, the exhibition is based on the idea of the critics of the Soviet Union, while from the other it still glorifies some of its periods as in WW2 for example, where the representation of “valiant Soviet soldiers who saved the world”, remains supported. The new modern practice of showing the Soviet Union as a place of oppression is difficult to implement while using old stands and plaques left from the Soviet period.

The Holocaust Museum

The Holocaust topic is sparsely represented at the Kharkiv Historical Museum. This is in part because the limitation of physical space and variety of the possible issues which could be presented always provide an excuse for limiting the attention drawn to any historical topic even if the decision finally taken makes the ideology seem a more or less blatant factor. The Holocaust museum located in Kharkiv is a place which was opened to actualize the specific topic in detail and to make the Jews’ identity the main focus. It was the first to appear in Independent Ukraine (according to the guide). The organization was founded by the private initiative of several people. The museum is located in the center of the city, but the place is being rented on the second floor of a building where offices and

apartments are mixed. The museum consists of several rooms. One is organized as the museum's space and is full of photos, plaques and personal belongings of some of the Jews who lived in Kharkiv.

The second room, with a separate entrance, is the office/ place of the director/library - all together. Also part of the room is used as the space for a temporary exhibition dedicated to the Jewish history. At the time of observation (November 2012) there was an exhibition about the writer Bruno Schulz. He was killed during the Nazi occupation in Ukraine by a Gestapo officer in Drohobych, a town located in Western Ukraine, close to Lviv, where he lived. Schulz is an example of how complicated it is to identify and place the writer's heritage into any national frames: he was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the Galicia region, the heart of "romantic nationalism", wrote in German and Polish and was Jewish (Ficowski). Bruno is seen by several countries as "their" writer: Poland, Ukraine, Germany, his Jewish roots make him the cosmopolitan Jewish author as well (Ficowski). The same problem appears in defining Mikhail Bulgakov, born in Kiev, or Gogol, born in Poltava and who made the image of the "Ukrainian village" a famous narrative (Naydan). The museum is funded through the help of the Jewish community of Kharkiv and does not receive any financial support from the local municipal government.

In contrast to the Historical Museum, it does not omit information about the collaboration of local residents with the Nazi regime (it is not the central topic, but it is presented), as well as presenting information about the Righteous Among the Nations from the Kharkiv region. Ukraine has 2441 persons included on this list (<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/statistics.asp>) and holds fourth place in the rankings of number of saviors of the Jews during WW2. We should notice that this fact does not measure the "representation of bad and good forces in the world", but only the number of people who have been discovered as helpers. Further, the number bears no relation to the number of Jews murdered or saved in any given country. On the other hand, full diplomatic relations between the USSR and Israel were restored only in October of 1991. Prior to 1991 it was extremely difficult to search for such people, and hence the number might have been far larger (<http://neuezeiten.rusverlag.de/2010/12/17/1605/>).

The absence of Holocaust memory has deep roots since the Soviet era. Babiy Yar in Kyiv is an example that "efforts to memorialize the massacre of the Kyiv Jews were blocked by the Soviet authorities for decades; when a monument was finally erected, it did not mention the word "Jews" but only "the Soviet people" (Zhurzhenko Tatiana). Nevertheless, between 1941 and 1943 around 1.5 million Jews perished in the Ukraine (Burakovskiy Aleksandr). And still the neglect and omission of the Holocaust issue is the active strategy of representation used by museums in both cities. "As in Soviet days, the Holocaust is one of the great unmentionables, fitting in as badly with Ukraine's new story-book self-image of doughty Cossacks and martyred poets as it did the Soviets' square-jawed Slav brothers standing shoulder-to-shoulder against the fascist invader." (Rein, 166) However the omission in modern Ukrainian museums is typical for representation of the minorities, even if they were majorities in figures during the period in question, like the Poles in Lviv or the Jews in Ivano-Frankovsk (Reid). As Wilson states: "a basic feature of the canon of nationalized history is its ethnocentricity, the history is dealing with "Ukrainian people", special ethnos, which lead to the ethnic exclusivity of the national history, it brings the identification of the concept of the "Ukrainian people" with that of the "Ukrainian nation". "The coarsest approach is to ignore the presence of other ethnicities or nations in what was actually a common space and time" (Wilson: 17). Of course, it might be argued that ignoring other groups in the new nation's history (that is, the employment of symbolic violence) is efficient when there is little about the excluded history of which the locals may be proud. This is self-evident, given the ethnic cleansing carried out against both Poles and Jews (noted above).

The classical tendency visible in any part of the country is to disregard ethnicity when it involves Jews. Thus, as in the case of the Kharkiv region, in Ivano-Frankivsk (where Jews were over 60% of the entire population before 1941) one may find a granite monument with the description that: ‘German Fascist invaders shot over 100,000 Soviet citizens and prisoners of war.’ (Rein, 142) In summary, it should be noted that the reason why the Holocaust museum seems more objective in representing the material is its symbolical location out of the discourse of the Ukrainian nation-building process. Unlike the national historical museums, this privately funded museum has no need to resort to symbolic violence in order to limit Ukrainian nation-building exclusively to Ukrainians even if in the past they were, for considerable periods of time, a minority in some parts of what has become their own country.

Research in Lviv

The Museum of the Ukrainian Liberation Struggle

The National historical museum of Lviv is in the centre of the city in a good location displaying the main cultural heritage of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The building contains three floors used for three exhibitions, one level under reconstruction and the grand floor with the ticket office. The exposition under reconstruction is the “Museum of liberation competition”; it has moved to a new location and was opened in 2012. Our analysis below will be based on this museum’s exhibition.

The Museum’s exhibition is designed to relate the history of Lviv from the end of the 19th century up to the Soviet period. The main purpose is to show the political situation of the city, being part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, then a Polish protectorate, occupied by the Nazis and then absorbed into the Soviet Union. Lviv and the Western Ukrainian territories are presented as having been for the whole century under the pressure of external aggressors, with attention concentrated on the Polish and then Soviet regimes. The struggle for independence seems to be the leitmotif of the museum.

The first hall shows the material devoted to the development of the “Sich Riflemen” and “Sokol”. The “Sich Riflemen” was the first military unit of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, formed before World War One and was a Ukrainian unit of the Austro-Hungarian army. The youth organization “SOKIL” was and still exists as a national-patriotic sport organization. The Second hall represents the existence of The West Ukrainian People's Republic (late 1918-beginning of 1919). The Third hall is the elimination of The Ukrainian Military Organization; The Plast National Scout Organization of Ukraine; The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (“Ukrayins’ka Povstans’ka Armiya”, or UPA). Representation here is based not only on glorifying the main leaders such as Yevhen Konovalets, Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, but on highlighting the popularity of partisan activity among the broader populace through the Ukraine in its modern territories (whether or not it was so popular in reality). What we will not find here is the “UPA’s murder of tens of thousands of Polish civilians during its ethnic cleansing action in Volhynia. The UPA also killed tens of thousands of fellow Ukrainians, including political opponents, suspected traitors, and collaborators with the reinstated Soviet regime.” (John-Paul Himka: 219-220)

Thus, we will find many photos and maps of different members of the UPA. Part of the room is devoted to the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Ukrainian) or as it is often called “SS-Galicia”. It was a Nazi military formation organized by the volunteers from the region of Galicia with Ukrainian ethnic background (Gordon: 123). It was commanded by German, Austrian and Ukrainian officers, and was supported by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Armstrong: 171, 172). The union’s participation in ethnic cleansing is still questionable as no war tribunal has found anyone guilty from the group (Snyder: 165).

On the the museum's official information page, which describes the current exhibitions we find that the "SS Galicia" union is titled as "the Ukrainian Division "Galicia"; "Considerable part of materials describes the Bolshevik repressions in Western Ukraine"², but doesn't mention any facts or statistics relating to the self-evident Nazi collaboration. The focus has been shifted to the "Bolshevik invaders", who could be seen as only one part of the story, but no information is provided about the tasks and responsibilities of the union. In fact, using the combination of words "Ukrainian Division "Galicia" (Українська Дивізія «Галичина») without adding the word "SS", shows the further use of symbolic violence as a manipulating strategy of omission of inconvenient facts. On the plaque it states that "People were fighting for the freedom of Ukraine" but the part missing is "as the part of the Nazi SS". There is no mention whatsoever of the Jewish mass murders in Lviv. When we asked the guide why there were no references to the Holocaust, she answered that the issue had nothing to do with the material presented at the museum. She suggested visiting the Holocaust foundation in case of interest in "that topic also". In fact, the Holocaust foundation in Lviv did not have any permanent exhibition dedicated to the relevant topic at the time of observation and hence the guide's suggestion of turning elsewhere outside the museum, shows the lack of specific information available for publicity inside the museum.

On the basis of the above discussion, it seems reasonable to argue that the organizers are using only the "appropriate" (censored) material presentation. The method which is used is easy to put into frames of the "collective victimization" method (Himka: 219, 230), where, instead of describing the real historical events without glorification and/or white-washing, only the partial information is described. Moreover, the information about the murders and collaboration of the OUN-UPA members, which is not mentioned, is hidden under such justificatory formulations as "only the desire to make Ukraine independent motivated partisans..." to do this and that. And this assertion is made, of course, in the absence of any evidence.

Deconstructing the information given on the plaques, there is a substitution of the signifier: instead of the sign/word which has a negative image such as "SS troops Galicia", the designation is replaced by the sign of a different order: "Ukrainian Division" – which has a neutral or even positive connotation. Symbolic violence has been used to ensure the required positive image for the OUN-UPA discourse.

We would agree, based on the exhibitions, that seemingly the Holocaust has nothing to do with the activities of SS-Galicia at this exhibition, because the museum has a brightly visible ideological function of maintaining the commemoration of a heroic narrative of the Ukrainian past. Unfortunately, the neutrality or presentations of the disagreeable facts are still uncommon practice for the museums that were visited. Neither in Kharkiv Historical Museum, nor in Lviv, are any of the crimes made by the central "heroic group" mentioned. Nevertheless, the selective memory of Kharkiv should not be equated with the symbolic violence of Lviv. The population of Kharkiv fought on the side of the Allies during World War 2, whereas the population of Lviv was firmly in the Nazi camp. The implication of this distinction is that, in Lviv, the absence of the Holocaust masks local complicity in genocide, while in Kharkiv it represents a ludicrous maintenance of Soviet ideology perhaps buttressed by anti-Semitism.

It might be added that plaques with a description in English as we have seen both in Kharkiv and Lviv are not to be found in this exhibition. This demonstrates the local, inner purpose for creating the historical exhibition. It is for the consumption of those upon whom the symbolic violence is designed to work. The last hall represents the Soviet concentration camps, illustrated by some personified

² http://www.lhm.lviv.ua/eng/ekspozyciyi/viddil_vyzvolnyh_zmagan.html

examples. As a supposedly logical ending to the exhibition, there are stands relating to the demonstrations for the Independence of Ukraine in 1991.

Lviv Historical Museum

The Lviv Historical Museum consists of different exhibitions, dispersed throughout the city. Among these are the “Museum of Historical Treasures”, a museum dedicated to General-Lieutenant Roman Shukhevych, who was the leader of the UPA union and the memorial museum of Yevgen Konovalets, the leader of the OUN between 1929 and 1938, who was also military commander of the UNR army before the creation of OUN. The most catchall exhibition of the 20th century is presented at the exhibition located on the main square of the city, which was opened in 1995. Most exhibits are related to the museum of liberation struggle, but here one may also find a room dedicated to the Holocaust. As a standard exposition it presents various photos of mass-murders and the statistics of killed people.

But reading the plaques carefully provides further evidence of the symbolic violence which is the staple of Lviv’s historical museums. In the case of this museum there is the use of cliches to hide inappropriate facts. Thus: “During the years of German occupation (1941-1944) there were destroyed around 900 enterprises at the territories of Galicia... around 1 million people have died in prisons and concentration camps”. The two important elements in this text are that there is no mention of the ethnicity of the victims, who were mainly Jews, nor is any information provided regarding collaboration between the same Germans and the organizations presented in a positive light in the neighboring rooms.

The mythology that emerges from the written history continues with the next plaque, which introduces the stand about The Ukrainian Insurgent Army. “The Ukrainian Insurgent Army³ is the military-political formation, which was heroically fighting..., in 1942-1950 years against German and Soviet forces for Ukrainian Independent Soborna⁴ Country”. That is the information provided by the museum. As we see, absent are any comments about the ethnical cleansing of Polish and Jewish minorities as the method of “fighting for Soborna Country”, which took place and which would have demolished the heroism of the representation.

Thus, it is clear that even though the Holocaust is presented at the museum, it is provided with a glib description on the one hand and a very classically pathetic form on the other. It tells of the tragedy of “Galician people”, of local “heroes” and German “anti-heroes”. It makes the history of the Galician territories very clear, but effectively mythical-fictitious in nature. The Jewish topic is lightly presented in the topography of the city: there is a monument dedicated to the Holocaust, which is located far from the centre; flirting with the stereotypical perception of the Jews in mass culture⁵. Lviv has a Jewish foundation, which organizes events dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust, but as in Kharkiv, events and memorials are possible only with private financial aid. The exhibition about the history of the Jewish population in Galicia can be found in the Lviv Museum of History of Religion. At first, a small exhibition about Judaism was presented as part of the museum’s exhibitions; now it has moved to a separate building, in order to broaden the topics concerning the history of Galician Jews.

The Territory of Terror Museum⁶

³ The **Ukrainian Insurgent Army** (Ukrainian: *Українська Повстанська Армія (УПА)*, "Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiya", or **UPA**

⁴ **Sobornost** (Russian: *Соборность* "A spiritual community of many people living together")

⁵ See http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/portal/Soc_Gum/Mtpsa/2009_15/Demkov.pdf

⁶ <http://www.territoryterror.org.ua/en/museum/ghetto/>

Another museum is located on the site of an ex-Ghetto and ex-Soviet prison area. As is noted at the official site, the "Territory of Terror" Museum is created on the territory of the former "Transit prison № 25" and "Lviv ghetto". The stated idea of the exhibition is to commemorate the Holocaust and Soviet repression. "Transit prison № 25 was operating in the period between 1944 and 1955. It is estimated that via the "Lviv exile" over 500,000 prisoners from Galicia, Volyn, Transcarpathia and Bukovyna were deported over a period of 10 years. Most of the prisoners were people involved in the national liberation movements⁷ as well as thousands of common Ukrainian families". This description permits both groups to be depicted as victims on an equal footing; the Jewish people who were murdered by the local collaborators ("the national liberation movements") and those locals who were sent to prison owing to their activities during the war. Of course, there were also those locals who were imprisoned, not for killing Jews, but were kept in the prison for any demonstration of disobedience to the Soviet regime.

Thus, in this newest museum the same symbolic violence as throughout Lviv is repeated; the fact that the mass murders of WW2 were committed not only by "Nazis", but also by local groups who fought against "enemies" and used ethnic cleansing as a method for implementing their vision of an "Independent Ukraine" is nowhere mentioned. This means it is impossible to find anywhere a single word depicting Ukrainians as those who have to share the guilt of the past. The quotation used at the official site of the museum reads "During the Nazi occupation from November 1941 to June 1943 one of the largest ghettos in Eastern Europe was set up in Lviv... Previously inhabited by only twenty five thousand people, the district was soon occupied by 136,000 Jews who were put there by occupational administration. They were placed in homes, from which the previous tenants were evicted. Jewish families were forced to stay in the barracks of the former city block for socially vulnerable stratum... During 2 years of Nazi occupation in the Lviv ghetto and Yaniv concentration camp more than 200 thousand people were killed".

The facts of who and how many were murdered are subject to debate and vary from source to source (Snyder, Armstrong), but it should be noted that the phrase: "during the Nazi occupation", removes all responsibility from the local population and places it with the Nazis. It is not mentioned that Galicia representatives officially greeted Nazi leaders (Armstrong, Snyder), that Lviv was hung with placards expressing sentiments such as "Glory to Hitler and Bandera" and that the local nationalists murdered the same Jews⁸ as enemies of "Soborna Ukraine" (Reid, Prusin, Snyder, Armstrong).

Conclusions

In this paper we have compared historical museums dedicated to the representation of the Second World War in the Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv and Lviv. These two cities were chosen because their very different histories lead to an a priori presumption that the way their historic museums represent the war would be very different, even though both cities are part of the one unified country.

In the event, we have shown that that the critical difference between them lies in the attitude towards the Holocaust, where in Lviv symbolic violence is used to place complete blame for all Jewish deaths

⁷ In other words, although this is nowhere acknowledged, many of those who were exiled fought with the Nazis against the Red Army during WW2.

⁸ When the Germans decided to liquidate the Lviv ghetto, it was the local Ukrainian militia that threw grenades into the sewers of Lviv to maximize the number of deaths of Jews attempting to escape the ghetto. On this and further details of war crimes committed by Ukrainians in the Lviv ghetto and other parts of Lviv during WW2, see Chiger with Paisner, Lederman.

on the Nazis, whilst in Kharkiv, selective amnesia leads to a continued adoption of Soviet framing, whereby it is “people” and not “Jews” who died. In Kharkov it is clear that the Red Army was heroic and the Nazis evil, even if this confuses the treatment of Soviet technological and economic progress, on the one hand, and gulag policy and the Holodomor on the other. And yet the presentation of the war itself may be said to be reasonably accurate – in terms of generally accepted history - with current political factors determining what is presented or emphasized and what is omitted.

In Lviv the history of the Second World War has been rewritten as a fiction whereby all the war crimes committed by the various nationalist groups, the official local militia and the “SS-Galicia” military unit, not to mention the local population, against Poles and Jews, are blamed on the Nazis almost as if they were in the wrong place at the wrong time! On the other hand, the important enemy in Lviv was always the Soviet Union.

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