4. Non-governmental Organizations

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Non-governmental Organizations

Actors of historical politics discussed in this chapter belong overwhelmingly to the category of non-governmental organizations, yet their influence on state historical politics is often significant. It can be direct, due to the physical presence of representatives of these organizations in central government bodies or in local self-government. It can also be indirect, through lobbying and participation in political actions, and through opposition activities, mass media, social networks, and so forth.

It is difficult to take stock of all the non-governmental organizations that, with varying degrees of intensity, participate in historical politics at all levels, from national to local. For instance, the state register of civil organizations counted as many as 352 political parties in December 2020.1 However, the majority of these exist only on paper. The Ukrainian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments established in 1966 lists almost five hundred local divisions (no one knows how many of them really function).2 The register of civil organizations involved in the field of historical memory includes the names of several hundred organizations with a broad range of interests, from hobby-like activities (historical fencing) and the cultivation of the Cossack heritage to the search for and preservation of the burial sites of dead soldiers3 or victims of repression.4

The following chapter addresses the most typical examples of non-governmental organizations, assessing their role and influence in historical politics.

1 Ministerstvo yustytsii Ukrainy, Departament derzhavni reestratsii ta notariatu, accessed December 12, 2020, http://ddr.minjust.gov.ua/uk/ca0c786b666db50250f0d448d6e3ac69/politychni_partiyi/.
3 See http://rgo.informjust.ua/.
4 See http://rgo.informjust.ua/.
Many civic institutions are quite similar in terms of their actions and rhetoric, and the diversity of names does not necessarily imply variety in the types of actions they perform. Consequently, the cases discussed here will be able to give a general impression of certain types and archetypes of actors of this type.

**Political parties**

The first decade of Ukrainian statehood witnessed the creation of a multiparty system and the development of political pluralism. The large majority of political parties that emerged during this time (by the end of the 1990s, their number was close to 150) were basically short-term political projects. As a whole, this majority hardly took any interest in historical politics. Until the beginning of the 2000s, the confrontation between the national/nationalist memory narrative—backed by the state since 1992—and the Soviet narrative—swiftly transforming into the Soviet nostalgic narrative—was a central issue in the realm of historical politics. Accordingly, it resulted in a division of labor between political parties that traditionally professed a certain ideology and worldview. Drawing on tradition and for the sake of simplicity, we can divide them into “left” and “right.”

The left versus right pattern helps illuminate a clear outline of the fundamental conflicts that form the basis of historical politics in Ukraine. Among five political parties and blocs represented in the Seventh Verkhovna Rada (2012–14, right before the “left” parties departed the political arena), two were leaders in terms of their share of historical questions raised in policy documents and public presentations: the Communist Party of Ukraine (63 percent) and the nationalist All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” (46 percent).5

Among political parties on the left, the most influential players were the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU),6 the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU), and the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, which broke away from the SPU in 1996. The Communists were the most interested in and consistent

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6 It was created in 1993 at a congress in Donetsk as a successor to the Communist Party of Ukraine, which was banned by the Presidium of the Verkhovna Rada in August 1991. There were two other Communist parties, the CPU (renewed) and the Communist Party of Workers and Peasants, but they were so local in their scope that they only became known after their ban in the summer of 2015.
on issues of historical politics. They advocated on behalf of the Soviet-style Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history, representing the Soviet period as the “Golden Age” of the history of Ukraine, thus, investing in the promotion of the Soviet-nostalgic narrative. In the 1990s, the Communists were the main opponents of the nationalization of the history of Ukraine. An analysis of the party’s media from the 1990s demonstrates that the range of topics in which the CPU was interested remains unchanged. The defense of the Soviet myth of the “Great Patriotic War,” the denial of the nationalist heroic myth of the OUN–UPA, and the denial of the genocide interpretation of the Holodomor are the CPU’s core positions.

The Holodomor question was a convenient tool to manipulate social issues against those who hold power. For instance, in 2000, protesting against government plans to open the land market, Communists used the slogan “No to land sales and to the Holodomor 2000!” The radical-minded CPU members are ready to defend even Stalinism, which is generally condemned by the more moderate leftists. Communists established their own commemorative date, March 5, as “the day of Stalin’s memory,” and on the party website, one can find a number of enthusiastic articles about the “leader of peoples.” To protect and promote the Soviet nostalgic narrative, Communists used the parliament. Between 1994 and 2014, their faction was among the most active in developing and lobbying for draft laws, resolutions, and addresses by the Verkhovna Rada concerning the interpretation and representation of the past.

The Socialist Party of Ukraine was less visible in the field of historical politics. The evolution of the party in the 1990s led to the rejection of the Lenin cult and to a moderately critical assessment of the Soviet period. In 2003, the Socialists joined the promoters of the Holodomor as genocide. In November 2006, the SPU supported the law designating the famine of 1932–

7 For more detail, see Svitlana Kostyleva, Novitnya kompartyyna presa Ukrayiny pro storinki radyanisko minuloho, Henotsid Ukrayinskoho narodu: istorychna pam’yat ta polityko-pravova otsinka; Mizhnarodna naukovo-teoretychna konferentsiya lytopada 25, 2000 r (New York: Materialy, 2003), 573–82.
8 Since 1996 agricultural lands in Ukraine have been redistributed among land shareholders (peasants who live in the countryside) as private property shares (up to 6 hectares per person). The agriculture land market should start in the Fall 2021. See, for instance, “Ko dnyu pamyati I. V. Stalina,” KPU, March 5, 2013, http://www.kpu.ua/ru/50677/ko-dnyu-pamyati-i-v-stalina.
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33 as genocide, using the formula proposed by Oleksandr Moroz, the leader of the party and then-speaker of the Verkhovna Rada. According to one of the Socialist MPs, his faction used a broad interpretation of genocide: “The genocide of the Ukrainian people,” he said, “impacted every Ukrainian, Russian, Jew, Moldovan, Belarusian, Romanian—every person who lived under Stalin’s heel back then.”

The “Progressive Socialists” were known in politics mainly because of their scandalous leader Nataliya Vitrenko. It was she who started litigation that aimed to repeal President Yushchenko’s decree legitimizing the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army as participants in the struggle for independence. The PSPU always spoke out against closer relations with NATO and the “West” and took an active part in public anti-nationalist actions, for instance, street fights against nationalists in Kyiv on October 14, the anniversary of the UPA.

At the end of the 1990s, a powerful financial-industrial group formed in Ukraine, springing from the “gray” privatization of the Donbass industrial complex. Since the early 2000s, it was an increasingly influential regional conglomerate of “red directors,” industrialists, financiers, managers, and state bureaucrats. In 1997 they created their own organization for political representation, the Party of Regional Revival of Ukraine, renamed the Party of Regions in 2001. Initially, the leaders of the Party of Regions were not very interested in issues of symbolic capital: they were more interested in physical capital, the capitalization of assets they secured during the “primitive accumulation” of the 1990s, and their participation in the distribution of state financial flows, preferences, and benefits. Until the 2010s, historical issues were all but absent from the policy documents of the party.

In the field of practice, using the past to serve the interests of the Party of Regions in the present was initiated by hired spin doctors during the presidential campaign of 2004 when, in order to discredit their principal opponent, Viktor Yushchenko, they used symbols identifying him with Nazism and xenophobic nationalism. This task was made easier by the fact that Yushchenko’s allies included political forces professing the basic principles of Ukrainian “integral nationalism” (for instance, the All-Ukraine Union

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“Svoboda” or the Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Self-Defense). Since the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, the Party of Regions has increasingly used the methods and technologies of historical politics to perform current and prospective political tasks.

The upper ranks of the party began to promote “ideologists” such as Dmytro Tabachnyk, who had once been a professional historian, and Vadym Kolesnichenko, an MP from the city of Sevastopol. In 2006, the Party of Regions resisted Yushchenko’s attempts to promote the law designating the Holodomor as genocide in the Verkhovna Rada. In historical politics, this party, representing the interests of big business, was, in fact, allied with the Communists, which by definition should have been its opponents given that the Party of Regions represented “exploiters” and “capitalists.” For the Party of Regions itself, the Soviet nostalgic narrative was more a convenient tool than the manifestation of any deeply held beliefs of the party leadership (with the probable exception of several older industry managers who began their careers in the Soviet Union). As cynical pragmatists, these party leaders merely chose the most advantageous ideological backing for their economic and political activities.

The Soviet nostalgic version of historical memory was expedient for the Party of Regions because of a wide range of external circumstances. First, it was popular in Donbass because the Soviet period (except the 1980s) was the “golden age” of the region, the era when miners and industrial workers belonged to the most privileged and well-paid strata of the working class. Second, the propagation of the nostalgic version of the Soviet past served the interests of local industrial-bureaucratic clans because it supported the system of social patrimonialism that had emerged during the Soviet period. Within this system, it was local administration that routinely made decisions on all issues. The Soviet nostalgic narrative was also expedient as an antithesis to the national/nationalist narrative, which was seen as an exter-

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12 Dmytro Tabachnyk completed his postgraduate studies at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR and became well known in the late 1980s as a gifted and prolific political essayist who denounced Stalinism. He began his political career in the Kyiv City Committee of the Komso- mol, later becoming a deputy of the Kyiv Council. In 1991, he defended his candidate (equivalent to PhD) thesis, and in 1995, his doctoral thesis (equivalent to a German Doctor habilitatus). Both were dedicated to Stalinist repression. Tabachnyk was one of the few high-ranking members of the Party of Regions who could make competent statements on historical issues. His views are decidedly pro-Russian: he supported “Eur- asianism” and called himself a Little Russian. He is one of the most radical critics of “Galician nationalism.”
nal threat proceeding from either Kyiv (which could be blamed for the social and economic hardship of the region) or “Western Ukraine,” the stronghold of “Banderites.” In Donbass, the Soviet nostalgic narrative was not only a part of the communicative memory but also an object of dedicated preservation, reconstruction, and cultivation enacted by the local ruling class represented by the Party of Regions.

Besides the major players mentioned above, there are several specific local ventures, two of them worth mentioning: the Motherland Party (created in Odessa in October 2008), and the Russian Unity Party (created in Simferopol in 2010). These parties, which were rather short-term mobilization projects, soon became well known in Ukraine because of their involvement in public scandals involving “identity” issues. The activists of these parties carried out a motor rally, “On the Roads of Victory,” that turned into a provocative raid on Lviv on May 9, 2011, which led to street skirmishes.\(^\text{13}\) In 2012, the same international motor rally started in Sevastopol and, after passing through a number of Ukrainian cities, ended in Moscow.\(^\text{14}\) The activists of the Motherland Party notoriously attacked the office of the Prosvita Society in Odessa in 2008.

National democratic and nationalist groups and parties were the most consistent rivals to and opponents of the Soviet nostalgic narrative. They represented no less than two dozen petty political parties. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, the People’s Movement of Ukraine for Perestroika (Rukh) played a prominent role in instrumentalizing the past to rival the monopoly held by the ruling Communist Party over the interpretation of the past. Initially, from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, Rukh was a broad alliance of “national communists,” nationalists, national democrats, democrats, and the creative intelligentsia whose membership reached no less than about 300,000.\(^\text{15}\) In the early 1990s, it took the form of a political party known as the People’s Movement of Ukraine, which almost immediately led


\(^{15}\) A dozen PhD theses have been dedicated to the People’s Movement of Ukraine. The first analytic work: O. Haran, Ulyty drakona: z istoriyi Rukhu ta novykh partiy Ukrayiny (Kyiv: Lybid, 1993). For an example of “party” history, see Hryhoriy I. Honcharuk, Narodovy Rukh Ukrayiny Istoriya (Odessa: Astroprint, 1997).
to a series of internal rivalries and splits. Thanks to the People’s Movement (when it was not yet a party), history was brought to the streets: this organization was one of the major forces behind such large-scale events as the “Chain of Unity” (January 1990) and the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Zaporizhzhia Cossacks in August 1990.

In the second half of the 1990s, the party and its adherents lost their influence, and in 1999, one of its biggest factions split off to become the Ukrainian People’s Party, which was not much different ideologically from the People’s Movement. In 2002, MPs from the People’s Movement who were elected as part of the Our Ukraine Bloc proposed a law calling for the “objective and honest evaluation” of the contribution of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) to the struggle for Ukrainian independence. Between 2005 and 2008, the People’s Movement repeatedly raised the issue of the status of the UPA veterans.

Several small parties usually described under the umbrella term “national democrats,” which varied from Christian democrats to conservatives and included several groups created solely for the purpose of passing the electoral barrier such as the People’s Self-Defense Political Party, can be counted among the political forces ideologically close to the People’s Movement. National democrats occasionally united into electoral blocs and coalitions (2002, 2004, 2007) in order to reach their short-term political goals. The best-known electoral alliance, Our Ukraine, and its political vestiges were probably the most active agents of historical politics during both their rise and their decline. Some national democrats also made eclectic alliances with, for example, the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc or the populist Oleh Lyashko Radical Party. In general, they were famous for their propensity for conflict—both inter- and intra-party, their poor management, and by their inability to work together for long.

17 See, for example, the Ukrainian Republican Party “Sobor,” the European Party of Ukraine, the Party of Defenders of the Fatherland, the Christian-Democratic Union, and “Our Ukraine.”
18 The People’s Union “Our Ukraine” was created in the spring of 2005 as a political force supporting President Viktor Yushchenko. The party quickly declined because of internal strife and low-quality management: it won 14 percent of the vote in the parliamentary elections of 2006 and 2007 (when it was the pro-presidential party) and less than 2 percent in the parliamentary elections of 2012.
Issues of interpretation and representation of the past were and probably are among the few topics that ensured unity in this sphere. Practically all the representatives of the national democrats followed the exclusivist model of the national/nationalist narrative; unconditionally supported Yushchenko’s historical politics; and were inclined to favor the antiquarian and archaic version of Ukrainian national history. Moreover, national democrats willingly supported the active promotion of the nationalist narrative, for instance, advocating for the “historical rehabilitation” of the OUN and the UPA, which actually proved to be the promotion and glorification of these groups.

Their allies, the nationalists, represent two groups of organizations: émigré and inland parties and groups. Émigré organizations returned to the “heartland” at the beginning of 1990s. The “Bandera OUN” created its representation in the form of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (KUN) with the legal status of a political party. The “Mel’nyk OUN” moved to Ukraine under its own name, and registered as a non-governmental, non-party organization. It is not hard to guess that these groups contributed to the popularization of the history of the nationalist movement. The KUN struggled unrelentingly for state recognition of members of the OUN and UPA as combatants and the soldiers of the latter as war veterans. Slava Stetsko (1920–2003), the head of the organization, authored the first draft law dedicated to this problem. The “Mel’nyk OUN” also created the Oleh Olzhych educational center and library and the Olena Teliha publishing house.

Émigré nationalist organizations were involved in the organization of structures that practiced radical street methods of historical politics. For instance, in 1993, the Bandera OUN spearheaded the creation of the All-

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19 The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was created at the beginning of 1929. Initially it was a conglomerate of youth nationalist organizations from western Ukraine and Ukrainian army veteran organizations from émigré circles (the Ukrainian Military Organization). OUN ideologists promoted the idea of a permanent national revolution (including the most violent military forms of the struggle) that would result in the creation of the Ukrainian national state under one single supra-party organization headed by a supreme chief. In 1941, the OUN split into two parts. One, represented by younger “practitioners” from the western Ukraine—the majority of those involved in terrorist activities against the Second Polish Republic (which was considered by them to be an occupying power), formed a “revolutionary” OUN headed by Stepan Bandera. Since that time, members of this faction have called themselves Bandervites (banderivtsi) or the Bandera OUN. The older generation of the OUN, mostly from émigré circles in Western Europe, was headed by colonel Andriy Melnyk; they were informally called Melnikites (melnikyvtsi) or the Mel’nyk OUN. Both factions claimed “legitimacy” and collapsed into “fratricidal conflict” during World War II. For more details, see the classical work on the topic: J.A. Armstrong, Ukrainian Nationalism, 3rd. ed. (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1990).
Ukrainian Organization “Stepan Bandera Trident” (Tryzub); this became a de facto paramilitary unit. The members of Tryzub took part in various protests, including violent ones (“Ukraine without Kuchma,” in 2001), and stood guard on the Maidan in the fall of 2004. One of their most notorious acts was the destruction of the Stalin bust (monument) in Zaporizhzhya in December 2010.

During the “Revolution of Dignity” of 2014, the Tryzub leadership directed the formation of a new right-wing political force, the Right Sector, which took an active part in the confrontation with riot police at the Maidan and later in the destruction of Lenin monuments during the winter of 2014. One of the former founders of Tryzub, Andriy Parubiy, became commandant of Maidan Self Defense—a civil self-defense force, organized by protesters—during the winter of 2013–14 (he had given up his membership in Tryzub by this time) and speaker of the Verkhovna Rada in April 2014. At that time, he was an MP from the People’s Front Party, which could be ideologically defined as Populist if populism can be considered an ideology. In this position, he contributed much to the decommunization of Ukrainian memorial space from 2015 to 2017.

In the “right” segment of historical politics, a prominent role has been played by the All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda,” created in 1995 as the Social-National Party of Ukraine (and renamed in 2004). Its political program was based on the ideas of Yaroslav Stetsko, the chief theoretician of the Bandera OUN in the 1940s to 1950s. The representatives of the party in parliament authored and co-authored dozens of draft laws and resolutions promoting the radical version of the national/nationalist narrative. Svoboda was active in cultural vandalism and the destruction of Lenin monuments as well as in public anticommunist actions in the streets.

The political program of Svoboda contains sections specifically dedicated to issues of historical politics. It delineates a range of tasks like amending the constitution to include statements on legal continuity between the modern Ukrainian state and the Kievan Rus as well as “three centuries of the national liberation struggle of Ukrainians.” No less important is the demand to officially acknowledge “the fact” of the occupation of Ukraine.

20 Maidan Self Defense is the name of a civil society organization created in December 2013 after a peaceful group of protesters was severely beaten by the police. In the course of events of the “Revolution of Dignity,” Maidan Self Defense turned into a kind of people’s guard organization. It was dispersed in the spring of 2014.
between 1918–91 by Bolshevik Russia. The party insists that the Verkhovna Rada, United Nations, and European Parliament recognize the “genocide of Ukrainians in the twentieth century” and proposed the introduction of a course on the history of the genocide of Ukrainians in the twentieth century into the school curricula. Svoboda demanded free access to the archives of state organs responsible for political repressions, recognition of the status of the UPA, and the creation of a state memorial museum on the “Armed Struggle of the Ukrainian Nation for Independence,” among other things.21

As can easily be seen, many state actions in the field of historical politics since the summer of 2015 have implemented some of Svoboda’s goals, despite the fact that the party failed in the elections of autumn of 2014 and did not manage to get into parliament by party list. Additionally, Svoboda was extremely active at the local level: it is mostly due to the party’s actions at local councils in Central Ukraine and Kyiv that many central streets in oblast centers were renamed between 2015–17 after OUN and UPA leaders.

**Civil society organizations**

Ukrainian researchers have already addressed the role of civil organizations22 in historical politics.23 They even propose a sort of taxonomy to distinguish these entities according to their functions. One group is composed of those involved in research, and the preservation, development, and popularization of historical memory. Another is identified by their membership: veteran organizations, Cossack associations, organizations of repression victims, national minorities, and so forth. To diversify the picture, it might also be appropriate to distinguish between those that were actually created by active citizens and, thus, exemplify the self-organization of civil society at the grassroots level and those that were sub-projects of political parties and shadow interest groups. The latter imitate civil society and are used to enhance the public legitimacy of certain versions of historical memory.

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22 “Civil organizations” refer to non-governmental entities formally created by groups of citizens.
As a rule, the types of activities organized by civil organizations in the sphere of historical politics might not be perceived as innovative or diverse. In most cases, they deal with routine matters related to cultural, educational, and propaganda projects (exhibitions, publication of leaflets, creation of private museums); public actions (demonstrations, vigils, collective public addresses, memorial events); and advocacy (work with authorities to promote or block policies aimed at advancing certain representations of historical memory). However, in many cases, they provoke controversy, outrage, and scandal.

The history of the participation of civil organizations in historical politics requires a separate systematic study. According to a rough estimate made in 2009, no less than 2,000 civil organizations in Ukraine have been directly or indirectly involved in activities related to historical memory.²⁴ We will concentrate mostly on those that were actively involved in historical politics within the above-suggested framework of interaction and confrontation between different memory narratives.

It should be noted that the agents and advocates of the national/nationalist memory narrative initially (in the late 1980s) were opponents of the official historical politics promoted by the ruling Communist Party. When Ukraine became independent, these groups essentially turned into promoters of the official, “state-building” historical politics for the purpose of advancing and imposing the national/nationalist narrative. Organizations that backed the Soviet nostalgic or imperial narrative found themselves in opposition to the basic tenets of official historical politics.

The “invasion” of civil society organizations into the sphere of historical politics and the end of the state monopoly in the field occurred in the late 1980s. Civil organizations took active part in production and reproduction of history and memory. Groups created during the Soviet period (for instance, the Ukrainian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments) were challenged by the newly established ones, such as the Memorial Society, the Kyiv Culturology Club, and others. Interestingly, both types merged into one current in their criticism of the extremes of the Soviet system and their call for the reinvention of the “true” history of Ukraine without blank spots and taboos. They have played an

²⁴ Chupriy, “Rol hromadskykh orhanizatsiy.”
enormous role in destabilizing the foundations of the official Soviet memory narrative and aggressively promoting the national/nationalist alternative. When the latter was elevated to the level of an official canon, larger stakeholders (political parties and movements) joined the realm of historical politics, pushing civil organizations to the margins of the field, at least on the national level.

What follows are several typical examples of activities performed by organizations that promote the national/nationalist memory narrative. Most of them emerged and evolved in the process of combating the Soviet narrative in the late 1980s, when “battles for history” were an important element of anticommunist and anti-Soviet mobilization.

The All-Ukrainian Vasyl Stus Memorial Society (Memorial) was established in March 1989 and registered in 1992 as a cultural-educational, human rights, and philanthropic organization. In 2014, Memorial was re-registered as a “human rights organization.” Initially, the activists of Memorial mostly contributed to the rehabilitation of the victims of political repressions, searched for the burial sites of those who were killed by Soviet repressive institutions, and took care of the new monuments. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Memorial initiated and took part in almost all public opposition activities, even when they did not involve history. In April 1991, to a great extent because of pressure from Memorial and its political allies, the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic adopted the law “On the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repression in Ukraine.” From the 1990s to the 2000s, Memorial was engaged in uncompromising criticism of the Soviet system (mainly by uncovering its crimes) and in the popularization of the struggle of Ukrainians against the Soviet regime. The latter naturally led to the promotion of apologetic representations of the memory and history of the OUN and UPA; for instance, six out of nine student essays selected for the short list of the Memorial Society competition on the

25 Named after the Ukrainian poet and political dissident Vasyl Stus, who died in a Soviet prison camp in 1985.
26 Official site of the organization: http://memorialstusa.com.ua/
28 In 2007, the Kyiv branch of Memorial established a “Museum of Soviet Occupation.”
29 It should be noted that the most active of the local Memorial organizations (in Kiev) has been headed since 1999 by Roman Krutsik, a cofounder of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists.
history of Ukraine were dedicated to Ukrainian nationalism and the nationalist movement.30

The All-Ukrainian Society of Political Prisoners and Victims of Political Repression, founded in June 1989 in Kyiv and registered in 1992, can be considered as analogous with Memorial. According to the Society itself, it has chapters in twenty-two regions of Ukraine and boasts some forty-thousand members. The statute of the Society defines its goals and objectives as follows: research and dissemination of information about the national liberation struggle in Ukraine after 1917, especially in the context of the fates of political prisoners; “restoration of the truth about the activities of the OUN-UPA as a legitimate struggle of the Ukrainian people for its liberty, independence and statehood”; the search for and compilation of records of political prisoners and victims of political repressions; keeping track of the burial places of fighters and victims; and cultural educational work, like participation in public events and state commemorations aimed at the “revival of the natural and historical environment.”31 From the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 2000s, Society activists organized the reburial (in Kyiv) of the most famous Ukrainian political prisoners who died in Soviet prisoner camps in Siberia (Vasyl Stus, Yuriy Lytvyn, Oleksa Tykh in 1989; Mykhailo Soroka in 1991; Marta Bandera, Stepan Mamchur in 2002, Kyrylo Osmak in 2004). The Society actively endorsed efforts to recognize the OUN and the UPA as combatants fighting for the freedom of Ukraine and to make the status of their veterans equal to the social and political status of Soviet veterans of the Great Patriotic War.

In the western regions of Ukraine, representatives of the Society even succeeded in securing symbolic social benefits for their members from the local authorities (reductions in costs of utility services, increased retirement allowances). It publishes Zona magazine (the last issue placed on the website of the Society dates from 2011). During Yushchenko’s presidential term, the Society supported all initiatives aimed at the promotion of the national/
nationalist memory narrative, mainly providing him with “moral-political” support in statements, participation in events, and so forth. As the organization includes mostly retired people of advanced age, the poorest stratum of society, its financial and organizational capacities and its influence at the national level are very limited.

It is worth mentioning some ideological relatives of these organizations that are active on both the national and local levels. The Roman Shukhevych All-Ukrainian Fraternity of OUN-UPA Soldiers\(^{32}\) (registered in 1995) proves to be one of the most active in the propagation and glorification of the Ukrainian nationalist movement of the 1920s to 1950s. The Lviv Regional Society “The Quest” (registered in 1996), the major tasks of which are “to search and study the biographies of the unknown victims of wars and repressions, the search for the sites of their burials, and the restoration of historical truth,” focuses mostly on the history and memory of the nationalist movement. The philanthropic foundation “Heroika” concentrates its effort on the “popularization of the history of the First (1917–20) and the Second (1939–50s) Liberation Struggle,” merging them into one single narrative, the memory of the Ukrainian revolution and the nationalist movement of World War II.\(^{33}\)

The Center for Studies of the Liberation Movement (TsVDR or the Center) created in 2002 in Lviv deserves special attention. The center advertises itself as an independent civil organization “that studies various aspects of the Ukrainian liberation movement in the twentieth century, the politics of national memory and the processes of overcoming the legacy of the totalitarian past in the countries of the former USSR, Central and Eastern Europe.”\(^{34}\) Initially, the center received funding from the OUN-B related entities of the Ukrainian diaspora while OUN-B recognizes TsDVR as its “facade organization.” For a long time, the Center focused its efforts primarily on research and the organization of an archival collection dedicated to the history of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, as well as the popularization of their “glorious past.”


\(^{33}\) Official site: Heroika http://geroika.org.ua/about-us-in-english/. Liberation Struggle (Vyzvol‘ni Zmahannia): the term was introduced in the early 1920s for the period 1917–1921. Often mixed with the term “the Ukrainian Revolution.”

\(^{34}\) Official site: http://cdvr.org.ua/pro-nas.
During Yushchenko’s presidency, the organization obtained direct access to the highest echelons of power and, thus, to the formation of the politics of history. Volodymyr Viatrovych, the Center’s director, was first appointed the head of the archival division of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (which, in fact, did not yet exist), then promoted to the position of “research and study” advisor to the head of the Security Service of Ukraine, and finally became the director of the SBU archive (2008–2010). In the same period, the Center became the de facto main executive of the National Memorial Museum of Victims of Occupation Regimes, or Loncky Prison, the newly created institution that formally belonged to the SBU.

TsDVR’s real moment of fame, however, came only after the Revolution of Dignity. The center functionaries obtained top positions at the governmental institutions responsible for the formation of historical politics. TsDVR staff members constituted the core of the “historical memory” group within the civic movement named the Reanimation Package of Reforms (RPR), and they presented their findings and activities as an achievement of civil society though, in fact, they were a proxy of UINP.

The history of TsDVR is remarkable in the sense that members of one non-governmental organization promoted the national/nationalist memory narrative (reserving special attention for the nationalist component), received direct access to administrative resources at the top state level, and spearheaded a massive effort aimed at the eviction of the Soviet nostalgic narrative from the memory space. The greatest success in this field, the so-called decommunization of 2015–18, was achieved thanks to the aforementioned administrative resources and the support they received from high levels of government.

One more important example of a civil society organization that directly influenced the shaping and implementation of historical politics is the Association for Research of the Holodomors in Ukraine, registered in September 1992. The association emerged at the initiative of the writer Volodymyr Manyak, one of the main promoters of the idea of the Holodomor as a genocide of the Ukrainian people. Promotion of this version of the event became the principal activity of the association. From the moment of its for-

35 Official site: http://www.lonchoho.lviv.ua/
36 For a more detailed view of the activities of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, see the previous chapter.
mation, it included professional historians as its most devoted and active members, such as Oleksandra Veselova (1939–2015) and Vasyl Marochko (who continues to chair the board of the organization). The association is an example of a genuine grassroots initiative. During its most productive years (the 1990s), it existed almost exclusively because of the enthusiasm of its members (at its height, it counted around seven hundred members and thirty-seven local chapters).37 It defined its main task as “the research and preservation of the people’s historical memory of one of the most tragic pages of history, the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine, as well the famines of 1921–1923 and 1946–1947.”38

The regular activity of the association—the search for the burial places of the victims of the 1932–33 famine, the creation of monuments and memorial sites, and research—was complemented by a massive effort to promote the formula “famine = genocide of Ukrainians” at the level of national historical politics. In June 1993, the association proposed the creation of a temporary commission of the Verkhovna Rada whose task would be to prove the genocidal nature of the famine. The materials of the case had to be transferred to the International Court of Justice in the Hague.39 In November 1998, the association recommended that the Ukrainian government create an Institute for Research on the Genocide of the Ukrainian People. Two years later, the members of the association repeated their suggestion, albeit changing the formula to the Institute for the Research of the Genocide of the Ukrainian Nation.40

In 2002, the MP Levko Lukyanenko, the incumbent head of the association, submitted an official plan for the creation of the institute to the government.41 It seems to have been the first attempt to create a state institution specialized in historical politics, a kind of prototype of an Institute of National Memory. In 2006, the members of the association vigorously contributed to the adoption of the law “On the Holodomor of 1932–1933.” According to Stanislav Kulchytsky, he and Vasyl Marochko personally prepared and filed a package of

38 Ibid.
39 “Propozitsiyi shchodo vshanuvannya 60-kh rokovyn holodomoru v Ukrayini.” Undated typescript document held in the author’s personal archive.
40 Oleksandra M. Veselova, Ž istoriyi strojeniya i diyalnosti Asotsiatsii doslidnykiv holodomoriv v Ukraini (ADHU), (Kyiv: Vyd-vo ADHU, 2007) 82, 90.
41 Oblikovo-kontrolna kartka No. 4452/2 vid July 12, 2002. Author’s personal archive.
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documents that sought to convince MPs to vote for the draft law which legitimized the genocidal interpretation of the event.

Speaking of non-governmental organizations that support and cultivate the national/nationalist narrative of historical memory, it is impossible not to mention the Ukrainian Cossack formations. Cossack organizations have always enjoyed the special attention and patronage of the state, albeit in mostly formal and symbolic ways. President Kuchma, for instance, issued five decrees in support of the Cossack movement and established a commemorative date on October 14—the Day of Ukrainian Cossacks. A three-year national program for the “revival and development” of Ukrainian Cossackdom between 2002 and 2005 was adopted; however, it was never implemented.42

Viktor Yushchenko, who issued two decrees in support of the Cossacks, was elected Ataman (Chieftain) of the Ukrainian Cossacks as symbolic support for his politics of history. Another plan for a state national program for the development of the Cossack movement was produced by the succeeding government with the same outcome as its predecessor.43 Curiously, the preamble of this project, approved by the government, listed the problems of the Cossack movement. The document mentioned the negative public perception of Cossack organizations (identified as a legacy of the Soviet policy of “persecution of Cossack traditions”), the fragmentation of Cossack organizations, and the lack of control over them (particularly in relation to their possessions of arms, including firearms).44 The four-page plan indicates the seriousness of the intention to develop Cossackdom. It serves as a brilliant example of bureaucratic rhetoric and verbiage. Probably the most important state action in the field occurred in 2008, when the open-air museum “Cossack Tombs” (created back in 1966) on the site of the Battle of Berestechko (1651) was given national status.

This quite formal attitude of the government to “initiatives from below” probably enabled the Cossack movement to preserve its grassroots status. By 2011, according to some estimates, Ukraine counted more than seven hundred Cossack organizations with some three hundred thousand members:

42 "Ukaz Presydena Ukrayiny, ‘Pro Natsionalnu prohramu vidrodzhennya ta rozvytku Ukraїnskoho ko-
43 Kabinet ministriv Ukrayiny, “Rozporyadzhennya vid veresnya 17, 2008 roku, Pro skhvalennya Kon-
tseptsiyi Derzhavnoyi tsilovoyi natsionalno-kulturnoyi prohramy rozvytku Ukraїnskoho kozatstva na
44 Ibid.
approximately forty of these organizations held all-Ukrainian status, 25% were regional, while the influence of the rest was limited to a district (rayon) or municipality. Cossack organizations initiated and participated in the restoration of churches and monasteries and the erection of monuments to the outstanding historical figures of the Cossack era: Bohdan Khmelnytsky (in Odessa), Ivan Vykovsky and Ivan Samoylovych (in Zhytomyr Region), Petro Sahaidachny (in Kyiv), Ivan Bohun (in Vinnytsia Oblast), and Ivan Mazepa (in Galați, Romania). They invariably took an active part in public commemorative actions to celebrate the emblematic events of Cossack history.

Cossack organizations became more visible at the national level during the Maidan events in Kyiv from November 2013 to February 2014. Some of them took active part in defending the Maidan (a Cossack Hundred was formed), and the events themselves were marked by the active use of Cossack rituals and Cossack heroic rhetoric which was enthusiastically received by the public.

The overview of civil organizations functioning within the framework of the national/nationalist memory narrative should not omit the most emblematic example of a non-governmental institution that, for all practical purposes, represents state politics. The international philanthropic foundation “Ukraine 3000” was created in 2001, although, as public financial statements of the foundation start only in 2005, it can be inferred that it became genuinely active after this date. Kateryna Yushchenko, the wife of President Yushchenko, chaired the supervisory board, a fact that may explain the greatly increased activity of the foundation between 2005–10. During this period, cash donations to the foundation totaled 63.4 million hryvnias. When Yushchenko left office, donations decreased: between 2011–15, they totaled only 25.4 million hryvnias (over this period of time, the hryvnia itself was devalued three times).

The program branch of the foundation, called “Yesterday,” was assigned historical politics. Support for museums and publishing houses and the promotion of the genocide version of the famine of 1932–33 were its major areas of responsibility. In three years, expenditures soared to almost 10 times

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46 Chupriy, “Rol hromadskykh orhanizatsiy.”
47 The word “hundred” is a conventional name borrowed from Cossack practice. This “hundred” could include from several dozen to several hundred people during the Revolution of Dignity, taking into account the rotation of participants in the course of the protests.
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their original levels: from 112,300 hryvnias in 2006 to 1,138,000 hryvnias in 2009.\(^{48}\) This foundation developed the Lessons of History program, which aimed to “bring society as much truth as possible about the greatest tragedies of the Ukrainian people.” Among the latter, the famine of 1932–33 enjoyed special attention. The funds of the foundation were used to collect oral evidence of this event, to publish nine books about the Holodomor, and to hold contests for banners and works of journalism. The most famous action organized by the foundation was the creation of a touring exhibition, “Execution by Hunger—The Unknown Genocide of Ukrainians.” The text of the placards was translated into eight languages,\(^{49}\) and the exhibit traveled around the world with the support of the foreign diplomatic missions of Ukraine.

We will conclude with a typical example of cooperation between various actors (parties, civil organizations) in the promotion of the national/nationalist narrative. A street banner in Lviv calling for a public celebration (which included an assembly, theater show, and concert) of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the “Act of Restoration of Ukrainian Statehood”\(^{50}\) lists partners and co-organizers of the event: the Taras Shevchenko Prosvita Society, the Stepan Bandera Center for National Revival, the Society of Political Prisoners and Victims of Political Repressions, the Alliance of Ukrainian Women, the League of Ukrainian Women, the Memorial Society,\(^{51}\) the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the People’s Movement of Ukraine, and the All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda,” with the support of the regional state administration and the regional Council of People’s Deputies.\(^{52}\)


\(^{50}\) After this action was taken by the Bandera OUN in Lviv on June 30, 1941, the Nazis began persecution of its initiators and adopted repressive sanctions against the Bandera OUN.

\(^{51}\) It should not be confused with a Russian organization of the same name. See its website, http://www.memoria.com.ua/.

\(^{52}\) Author’s personal archive.
Now we move to an overview of the activities of civil organizations representing the Soviet nostalgic memory narrative. Some of them belong to the Soviet legacy itself: for instance, the Organization of Veterans of Ukraine in close cooperation with the Communist Party of Ukraine (and traditionally chaired by a CPU member). The main goal of the organization is the social protection of Soviet Army veterans and combatants.\textsuperscript{53} However, it was probably one of the most visible entities in the sphere of historical politics. The organization holds the “heroic-patriotic education of the young,” the “contribution to the perpetuation of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945, the preservation of monuments and memorial sites dedicated to the protectors of the Motherland,” and work “strengthening the friendship between peoples”\textsuperscript{54} as its core activities.

The activists of the organization took part in all of the public commemorative activities related to the anniversaries of World War II. This event was interpreted and represented exclusively as the “Great Patriotic War,” the most important formula of the Soviet narrative. Members of the organization did their best to block attempts to rehabilitate and glorify the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists both at the political level and in the field of “rewriting history.”\textsuperscript{55} “We angrily condemn new attempts of certain political forces in Ukraine to rehabilitate the war-dogs of OUN-UPA,” declared an address of the Kyiv Organization of Veterans of Ukraine. “It is a cynical humiliation of the blessed memory of the dead soldiers of the Great Patriotic War and a hateful outrage upon the living veterans of war and labor.”\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{53} The organization includes as its collective members such groups as the Ukrainian Alliance of Peacekeeping Soldiers, “Cubans,” (those who served in Cuba), “Afgans” or the Ukrainian Alliance of Afghanistan Veterans, the All-Ukrainian Organization of Disabled Veterans of War and Armed Forces etc., 2012, http://www.rada-veteran.kiev.ua/організація-ветеранів-україни. This link is not available anymore.

\textsuperscript{54} Statut Ogranizatsiyi veteraniv Ukrayiny, 2012, http://www.rada-veteran.kiev.ua/статут-організації-ветеранів-україни. This link is not available anymore. Information about the organization can be found here: http://zvitiaga.org/catalog/award/orgraniyita-veteraniv-ukrayini


The organization was the most steadfast opponent of Yushchenko’s historical politics, which was seen by its leaders as systematic “ideological and information warfare against the historical memory of the people.”\textsuperscript{57} They especially criticized him for negating the Soviet experience and praising nationalist organizations and leaders. In the spring of 2015, the organization condemned the Verkhovna Rada’s adoption of laws honoring the participants of the national liberation struggle (in this case nationalist organizations) and banning communist symbols.\textsuperscript{58}

The next civil society organization can serve as an example of a purely political project, essentially transferring the interests of one specific party to the non-party sector. The All-Ukrainian Civil Organization “Human Rights Public Movement” of “Russian-Speaking Ukraine”\textsuperscript{59} (RU) was established in March 2008 in Severodonetsk at the all-Ukrainian “Congress of deputies of all the levels.” RU proclaimed the defense of the rights of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine and national minorities as its main goal. Equally important tasks were “the popularization of shared history as the integrating factor for all East Slavic peoples” and “counteraction to the propaganda and rehabilitation of Fascism and Nazism in Ukraine as well as to the actions aimed at the rehabilitation, glorification, and social legitimation of persons and formations that took part in World War II on the side of Germany and its allies.”\textsuperscript{60} The board of the RU was headed by Vadym Kolesnichenko, the Verkhovna Rada MP from Sevastopol and one of the most well-known and scandalous speakers of the Party of Regions. In 2012, he claimed that the RU brought together more than 120 civil society organizations and counted some ten thousand members. He also claimed that the organization was financed solely by ordinary Ukrainian citizens.\textsuperscript{61} This statement was more wishful thinking than reality.


\textsuperscript{59} See: http://r-u.org.ua. The link is not available, the organization is no longer functional.

\textsuperscript{60} See: O nas, http://r-u.org.ua. The link is not available, the organization is no longer functional.

The best-known achievement by the RU was the traveling exhibition “The Volhynia Massacre: Polish and Jewish victims of the OUN-UPA,” created in cooperation with the Polish Society for the Perpetuation of the Memory of Victims of the Crimes of Ukrainian Nationalists (the well-known Polish nationalist civic organization). The opening of the exhibition in Kyiv in April 2010 provoked a public scandal: representatives of Svoboda and other nationalist units started picketing the exhibition and then damaged some of its artifacts. The cultural attaché of the Polish embassy in Ukraine called the exhibition “a powerful provocation.” The exhibition traveled from one region of Ukraine to another and was banned by local authorities in the western regions of the country.

In January 2015, the Security Service of Ukraine declared Vadym Kolesnichenko wanted (by this time, he had become a citizen of Russia). One of the leaders of RU, Oleg Tsaryov (also a former member of the Party of Regions) became speaker of the united parliament of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk “People’s Republics” in June 2014. Like his colleague, he was listed as wanted by the SBU (he is currently living in Moscow). However, the website of the RU continued to function until 2017, and the organization was in the list of civil associations registered by the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice for a while (a new registration certificate was issued in March 2015).

Russia-based civil organizations were also active in Ukraine. The Institute of CIS countries headed by Konstantin Zatulin (repeatedly declared persona non grata in Ukraine) deserves special mention. The website of the institute featured a “Ukrainian branch” with an address in Kyiv. The register of civil associations of the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice lists a branch of the institute registered in 2009 as a legal entity in Sevastopol (with a branch in Kyiv). The institute published a digital magazine, Monitoring “Ukraine,” mostly featuring a bibliography of Ukrainian and Russian media.

64 The majority of these organizations active in the field of the politics of history belong to and are funded by state proxies, directly or indirectly.
65 Also known as the Institute of Diaspora and Integration. Official site: https://i-sng.ru/.
66 Ibid.
publications. In the 2000s, especially between 2007 and 2013, the institute repeatedly joined various events that criticized Yushchenko’s historical politics and promoted the Soviet nostalgic narrative. In October 2008, the SBU submitted a request to the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice to cancel the registration of the institute as an anti-Ukrainian organization. In 2013, representatives of the right-wing parties demanded the closure of the branch as a “sabotage organization.” In 2018, the Kyiv branch was represented by one person only and did not function.

This overview would be incomplete without mentioning the non-governmental organizations representing a perspective between the two dominant memory narratives described above. The *Nova Doba* Association of Teachers of History and Social Science created in 2001 is one of the most active and influential civic organizations working in the sphere of didactic history. It is a member of Euroclio and mainly works with history teachers and high school students. It actively promotes an inclusive model of historical memory, implements projects aimed at nurturing cultural tolerance through history teaching, organizes training, and publishes textbooks both for teachers and students. *Nova Doba* is supported mostly by international donors.

One of the best-known all-Ukrainian organizations showing an active interest in issues of history is the Congress of the National Communities of Ukraine, which publishes the newspaper *Forum of Nations* that contains permanent columns like “Babyn Yar,” “History,” and “Crimes of Totalitarianism” and organizes public actions aimed at the development of a culture of tolerance. The executive director of the congress is Yosyf Zisels, a well-known public figure and participant in the human rights movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Like *Nova Doba*, the congress defends the principles of multiculturalism in representations of the past.

Special mention should be given to non-governmental organizations working with dimensions of cultural memory that sometimes do not fit into mainstream historical politics and often are in latent conflict with it. In 1999, the Tkuma Ukrainian Institute of Holocaust History Studies was estab-

70 Official site: http://www.novadoba.org.ua/.
71 Official site: http://kangu.org/.
lished in Dnipropetrovsk. In 2002, the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies was founded in Kyiv as a charity foundation attached to an academic establishment, the Institute of Political and Ethno-National Studies of the National Academy of Sciences. Both organizations combine research and educational activities dedicated to the study of the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine with the promotion of Holocaust education. The Civic Committee for the Perpetuation of the Memory of the Victims of Babyn Yar created in 2003 works in the same vein. It was largely thanks to their efforts, which had long been supported mainly by Western partner organizations, that Holocaust memory returned to the Ukrainian memorial landscape.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning a non-governmental organization that occupies a special place in historical politics without directly participating in it. For a quarter of a century, the International Renaissance Foundation, established in 1991 by the American philanthropist George Soros, has consistently supported projects aimed at the promotion of an inclusive model of historical memory and a culture of tolerance. The foundation financed translations of non-fiction books in the fields of humanities and social science from European languages, sponsored projects that aspired to overcome xenophobia and cultural intolerance in history teaching, and assisted in the organization of events (summer schools, conferences, workshops, cultural and artistic events, and exhibitions) aimed at overcoming the extremes of the national/nationalist narrative and offering balanced criticism of the Soviet nostalgic version of historical memory.

**Mass media and web-based communities**

The mass media traditionally plays an important role both in promoting and disseminating basic memory narratives. During the perestroika years, opposition newspapers, information leaflets, and brochures were very important for the mobilization of critics and opponents of the regime, and the questions of the past were widely used in them. Television and radio, which were totally controlled by the authorities, mostly protected the official (Soviet) memory narrative.

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73 Official site: http://www.holocaust.kiev.ua/.
74 Official site: http://www.kby.kiev.ua.
75 The foundation is a Ukrainian legal entity.
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That being said, the first “mnemonic warriors” of the opposition came from the official mass media. For instance, Literaturna Ukrayina (Literary Ukraine), the newspaper of the Union of Writers of Ukraine (and of the Party Bureau of the Union of Writers of Ukraine), became the mouthpiece for the intelligentsia, which produced its own Fronde. They published texts about the famine of 1932–33 and the Stalinist repressions. Thick literary journals also became involved in the revision of the past: Zhovten (renamed Dzvin in 1990), and Prapor (renamed Berezil in 1991) in Lviv and Kharkiv, Kur’yer Kryvbasu in Kryvyi Rih, and Vitchyzna and Dnipro in Kyiv. Starting in 1989, even official party propaganda outlets like Pod znamenem leninizma began to criticize “the extremes of Stalinism.” Independence, and especially the boom of digital media, led to the marginalization of all the literary journals, which lost their status as masters over the minds of the intelligentsia.

The media has enormously expanded in the years following independence with the appearance of a number of new media outlets. Many of them were involved in elaborating and disseminating competing versions of the past. The newspaper Den’ (The Day), published since 1996, became the best-known and most vigorous promoter of the national/nationalist narrative. In its advertising space, the editorial board defines itself as follows: “Den’ has strengths which distinguish it from other print media outlets. It is influential, daily, and distributed nationwide. Published in Ukrainian, Russian, and English, it has nothing in common with the yellow press.”?6 Over the last twenty years, the newspaper has acquired a relatively stable and devoted audience: analysis of readers’ responses and comments shows that its active audience is largely composed of supporters and partisans of an ethnocentric version of Ukrainian history. Den’ is the only all-Ukrainian newspaper that consistently promotes the idea of a “correct,” “true” history of Ukraine.77 It carried out a multi-year project, Ukraina Incognita, that sought to fill in the blank spots of history; it consisted of a regular column and a series of books that republished the articles

76 Advertisement: https://day.kyiv.ua/en/advertisement.
77 Other media that often invoke the topic of historical memory include Zerkalo nedeli (with a permanent column entitled “History”), the newspapers Ukrayina moloda and Silski visti, and, the magazine Ukrayins’ki tyzhden magazine (also with a permanent column entitled “History”). In general, they follow the national/nationalist narrative. The newspaper 2000 supported a highly critical attitude toward the extremes of this approach. It should also be noted that the Russian media, such as Komsomolskaya Pravda v Ukraine, Fakty i kommentarii, Vesti, Regnum, Rosbizneskonsalting (RBK), and others were permanently present in the Ukrainian media space.
from this column. These collections included *Dvi Rusi* (Two Rus’, 2003), *Syla miabkoho znaku* (The Strength of the Soft Sign, 2011), *Povernennia v Tsarhorod* (Return to Tsargrad, 2015), *Sestra moja Sofija* (My Sister Sophia 2016), and *Ave: Do stolittia het’manatu Pavla Skoropods’koho* (Ave: To the Centenary of the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky, 2018). Declaring that history is the most powerful source of Ukrainian identity, Larysa Ivshyna, the chief editor of the newspaper and a great enthusiast of its *historical* projects, described the mission of the project (and of all the other actions of her newspaper in the field of historical politics) in the following way: “The attentive ‘reading of processes’ that took place and are currently taking place in the post-Soviet space convinced me that we observe the struggle not just for resources, not just for petroleum and gas, but, first and foremost, for a place in history.”

According to one of the regular writers for *Den’*, the well-known historian Stanislav Kulchytsky, “*Den’* chose history as a weapon, not an ordinary tool for self-education. *Den’* fights for the genuine modern Ukrainian truth and genuine Ukrainian historical truth.”

This mention of “historical truth,” typical for affirmative and didactic history, brings us to another large media project, the *Historical Truth* website, which was created in 2010. It soon became one of the most popular digital media sites (the owners claim twenty-one million visitors have visited the site over the past ten years). The website of the project defines its philosophy in the following manner: “We are open to all competent points of view and opinions, we do not publish sponsored articles, we do not participate in party and electoral campaigns, but we reserve the right to have our own opinion about all events, figures, and phenomena, whether from today or yesterday.”

Journalist Vakhtang Kipiani, the chief editor of the website, demonstrates his adherence to a relatively balanced variant of the national/nationalist narrative of historical memory. The content of the website reflects his position: it is hard to find an article or material promoting the Soviet nostalgic narrative. At the same time, the archive contains a lot of artifacts and documents from the Soviet period, some of which are absolutely unique because

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80 “Pro proekt ‘Ukraina incognita.’”
81 Supporters and other adherents of the Soviet nostalgic narrative could speak to a broader public through blogs on *Ukrayinska pravda* (Ukrainian Truth), of which *Historical Truth* is a part.
the archive project of the website accumulates documents from personal collections gathered on a voluntary basis. It should also be noted that *Historical Truth* occasionally publishes studies, articles, and materials critical of the Ukrainian national/nationalist narrative. This website is also rich in representations of the history and memory of non-Ukrainian ethnic groups.

Another important Internet project is the *Historians in Ukraine* website, founded in January 2012 as a web resource and a forum for professional discussions. According to one of the site’s founders, historian Andrii Portnov, the need for the site stemmed from a request for “rational-critical self-assessment that is steadily losing its position in Ukraine to loud and alluringly primitive propaganda, complacency, and narcissism, increasingly overt aggression . . . and apathy that all the time becomes more and more all-encompassing.”

It is difficult to assess the popularity and influence of this website (its Facebook page has about eight thousand followers). Currently, it is one of a few websites that regularly publishes and discusses analytical materials on historical politics and has a special column dedicated to these issues. Portnov himself is one of the most active researchers of historical politics. The editors of the website (Volodymyr Masliychuk, Volodymyr Sklokin, Vladyslav Yatsenko, Mykhailo Haukhman, Hryhorii Starykov, Serhii Hiryk, Vadym Nazarenko, and Volodymyr Sklokin) also actively participate in discussions on the problems of historical memory both in real and virtual settings.

The founders of the most recent internet project, *Lykbez* (Historical front), created in the summer of 2014, openly declare their desire to influence historical politics. The website was established on the initiative of the civil organization Research Society for the Humanities. According to its declaration, it is a “civic education project founded in the summer of 2014 with the goal of the popularization of Ukrainian history and the debunking of propaganda and historical myths.” The structure and the name of the project suggest that its main tasks were to counter Russia’s information war and act as a sort of counter-propaganda based on bringing “historical truth” to the general public. The “Topical” column includes Donbass, Crimea, and southeastern Ukraine. According to the founders of the website, these ter-

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82 Website: www://historians.in.ua.
ritories require special attention, and the website plays an important role in the “exposure of propaganda and historical myths” (the website has many texts in Russian). The presence of professional historians in the organization, some of whom follow the canons of analytical history both on the website itself and in the organization’s public projects (public lectures, book publishing), ensures a certain balance that allows one to treat the somewhat bellicose name of the website with a certain degree of self-irony. The site publishes many texts that are somehow closer to a balanced academic discussion than to counter-propaganda, though the latter is also present.

Historical topics also occupy a privileged place on the information portal Zaxid.net. This website is currently one of the few that support liberal discourse in the field of historical politics. The editors are among the most ardent critics of the extremes of the national/nationalist narrative and its political representatives (for instance, Vasyly Rasevych).

It is hard to evaluate the influence of all the aforementioned projects because neither the number of printed copies in circulation nor the number of followers and website views provides any clear evidence. The number of active discussants of these publications on Facebook, as a rule, does not exceed a few dozen.

The most influential media in Ukraine is television. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, all the main all-Ukrainian television channels were privatized or established by private persons, mostly by oligarchs; their information policy quickly became dependent on the preferences and political orientations of their owners. These preferences, in turn, were dependent on proximity to central state power. The positions of the major TV channels on historical politics were determined by the participation of their owners in the political sphere. Generally, issues of history did not play an important role in programming. Interest in historical issues was based largely on commercial, rather than political, considerations.

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86 See zaxid.net.
87 According to one of the recent ratings, the top 10 popular TV channels are Inter, 1+1, ICTV, Ukraine, STB, Novy kanal, TET, NTN, 2+2, and PixelTV. See Nazvany samye retingovyje kanaly Ukrainy, June 10, 2019, https://ubr.ua/market/media-market/nazvany-samye-rejtingovye-telekanaly-ukrayini-388578. For data on the owners of these channels, see “Vlasnyky ukrayinskikh telekanaliv: khto vony?” Infographics, April 10, 2016, http://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-infografika/1997592-vlasniki-ukrainskih-telekanaliv-hto-voni-infografika.html.
The most notorious television program that elicited a major public response was *Great Ukrainians*, which was broadcast in 2007–2008 by Inter, the highest-rated channel in Ukraine. Viewers from across Ukraine chose ten “great Ukrainians,” including seven historical figures,\(^{88}\) five of whom were known to Ukrainians because they were featured on national banknotes. All ten became characters in short educational films broadcast by the same channel. It was a commercial project, but the response it generated delivered clear evidence of the strong public interest in the problems associated with the interpretation of the past. It should be noted that Inter could be regarded as a major promoter of the Soviet nostalgic memory narrative. It broadcast Russian-made television series that advanced the myth of the Great Patriotic War, although in this case as well, it was essentially commercial interest that played the leading role in this decision. Inter also produced two large digital video projects in the computer animation genre, *Great Patriotic War* (2005) and *The Country: The History of the Ukrainian Lands* (2006), together totaling 183 episodes of television.

Among the national-level television channels, three have shown a more or less consistent interest in historical issues: the First National Channel recently launched the project *Declassified History*; the 1+1 Channel celebrated the first anniversary of independence by starting the *Ukraine: The Retrieval of Our History* project; and the Channel 5 has a series called *Historicisms*. Among regional channels, ZiK, which is mostly broadcast in the western regions of Ukraine, hosts the project *Historical Truth with Vakhtang Kipiani*. Recently this channel went national.

Russian media were also present in Ukraine, broadcasting either through cable television operators or through satellite television. By 2014, sixty-six Russian television channels were available in Ukraine at the national level.\(^ {89}\) They were especially popular in the eastern and southeastern regions. Some of them actively participated in the “memory war” with Ukraine in 2007–10.

\(^{88}\) In descending order: Prince Yaroslav the Wise, Nikolai Amosov, Stepan Bandera, Taras Shevchenko, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Valeriy Lobanovskyi, Viacheslav Chornovil, Hryhorii Skovoroda, Lesya Ukrainka, and Ivan Franko.

Russian channels were also the main providers of popular history series about the “Great Patriotic War.”

The annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine combined with information warfare led to prohibitive measures against the Russian mass media. By February 2016, thirty-three Russian television channels were banned in Ukraine, including those that paid particular attention to history issues (TVCI, Rossiya-1, NTV, Zvezda, REN-TV). In the following years, about a dozen other Russian channels were banned. Since 2017, the ban has also extended to Russian social networks and internet services (VKontakte, Odnoklassniki etc.).

Discussing actors and agents of historical politics, we usually focus on institutions since they have a systemic impact on the elaboration, development, and implementation of historical politics. However, it seems obvious that all these institutions alone would not be able to perform their functions without certain human capital. Historical politics is a process and result of the efforts of people who work in the aforementioned places: state employees of different ranks, politicians, public figures, “discourse-mongers” (journalists, writers, cultural professionals), and others. In this cohort, a special place belongs to the professional group whose main occupation is to study, interpret, and explain the past.

90 In the period 2004–13, forty such series were made, nine of them represented as Russian-Ukrainian co-productions. Calculation based on data from “Sovremennyye rossiyskiye serialy o Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine, 2015,” https://afisha.mail.ru/series/selection/448_sovremennie_rossiiskie_seriali_o_velikoi_ otechestvennoi_voine/. Access to this resource in Ukraine has been blocked by the Ukrainian authorities since April 2017.