This chapter explores historical politics as a tool of international relations. It will focus on how the politics of history shaped (bilateral) relations between Ukraine and its two most important neighbors, Poland and Russia, on subjects and topics that, in my opinion, best characterize the essence and currents of historical memory and politics in and between these states.

The well-known formula, “foreign policy is the continuation of domestic politics” acquires a special meaning in the case of historical politics. When a nation outfits its own internal space of collective historical memory, separating it from the previous “common space,” it nearly always has to sort things out with its neighbors. The symbolic significance, political importance, and conflict potential of this process expand enormously if and when historical relationships are considered in the context of dominance and subordination, from a postcolonial perspective, or as a history of competing national projects.

The solutions to these numerous dilemmas depend on a great number of social, political, economic, cultural, and other factors. Attempts to cope with the past almost invariably involve conflicts, either over the partition of property (civilizational and cultural achievements, “disputed” territories, invented traditions) or over historical grievances, oppression, enemies, and injustice.

Ukraine–Poland: “Thorny Issues”

Poland is the largest and most influential neighbor of Ukraine in “Eastern Europe.” Together with Canada, Poland was the first country to recognize Ukrainian independence on December 1, 1991, the day after the indepen-
dence referendum. Regardless of political affiliation, Polish political elites and influential intellectuals have invariably considered Ukraine an important strategic partner in the post-Soviet space and the new “Eastern Europe.” Moreover, they have been advocates of Ukraine’s position in Europe, albeit with varying levels of intensity. In 2017, a majority of Poles (67 percent) supported the idea of Ukraine joining the EU and 76 percent believed that Ukraine belongs to Europe.¹

Poland has always been the primary destination of Ukrainian migrant workers, and trans-border cooperation with Poland is more intense than with any other neighbor. According to various data, the number of Ukrainians working in Poland in 2019 was between 1.2 and 1.5 million.² As a country known for its successful reforms, Poland is a role model for Ukraine. The words “cooperation” and “mutual understanding” have become the magic ingredients in relations between the two states. Their political cohabitation is made easier by the existence of a common Constitutive Other, Russia, and similar “ontological anxiety”³ primarily concerning their self-identification between “East” and “West” and their relations with Russia. Poland increasingly plays the role of the “West” for Ukraine, and Ukraine, correspondingly, the role of the “East” for Poland.

All these similarities do not mean that there are no serious discrepancies in the two countries’ assessments of the mutual past; indeed, this was already a terrain riven with conflict in the nineteenth century, when national histories emerged as core components in the process of “national revival.” Both countries produce more history than they can consume, and that history is not easily digestible. The list of controversial historical topics already starts in the fourteenth century (ownership of Galicia) and continues on into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (the Union of Brest, the Cossack wars, and the Cossack state), and then heads into the nineteenth century (the Polish

³ The notion of “ontological anxiety” was used by Alexander Astrov to describe the politics of history in the Baltic states between 2004 and 2007. See “The ‘Politics of History’ as a Case of Foreign-Policy Making,” in The Convolutions of Historical Politics, ed. Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2012), 117–40. Obviously, the concept is fully applicable to the broader postcommunist region.
presence in Right-Bank Ukraine, the problem of Eastern Galicia). However, the most heated disputes, which often transcend debates among academics or journalists, concern the “short twentieth century”: the Ukrainian–Polish War of 1918–19, the brief history of the West Ukrainian People’s Republic, the “Ukrainian question” in interwar Poland, Ukrainian–Polish confrontation in Eastern Galicia and Volhynia during World War II, and Operation Vistula of 1947.

It is important to note that a certain division of labor emerged in discussions and face-offs over historical issues in both countries. In Poland, the political instrumentalization of the past in its most conflictual form was usually actualized by right-conservative (for instance, the Law and Justice Party or PiS) and right-wing organizations (such as Kresy) and veterans societies. Recently, the populists jumped in. In Ukraine, this role was mostly played by the “national democrats,” and right-wing (nationalist) organizations, such as the All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda,” mostly based in western Ukraine. Similar to their Polish colleagues, they cultivate an exclusivist model of collective/historical memory based on the ethnocentric national/nationalist narrative.

After the Orange Revolution, new actors joined the Ukrainian–Polish discussion about the past: the Ukrainian communists, who were destined to fight Ukrainian nationalism as a matter of course and because of the political situation, and the Party of Regions, whose leaders figured out that the past could be used to further the interests of the present during the 2004 presidential campaign. Quite remarkably, Ukrainian capitalists and “leftish” politicians became virtual allies of Polish right-wing groups and conservatives in their struggle against Ukrainian nationalism. All these forces intensified confrontational rhetoric both inside and outside the country.

The liberal and democratic intelligentsia and part of the Roman Catholic Church chose reconciliation and the principle “We forgive and ask for forgiveness,” which was formulated on the occasion of the Poles’ reconciliation with the Germans. On the international level, presidents played the role of mediators trying to stay above the quarrel. Leonid Kuchma and Aleksander Kwaśniewski were key players in the dialogue of reconciliation. This status quo was disrupted by Viktor Yushchenko, who personally took part in the

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4 In the case of Ukraine, we are speaking about the Greek Catholic Church.
veneration of the OUN, UPA, and their leaders, which effectively transformed him from a mediator into a participant in the confrontation.

Both countries had a centuries-old tradition of stereotyping their neighbor and this tradition was part of the debate. An analysis of studies dedicated to the relationship between Poles and Ukrainians and their stereotypes about each other indicate that the 1990s was the most complex period in their relations with each other. During this decade, the perception of Poles deteriorated in Ukraine. Between 1992 and 2002, the index of national distancing of Ukrainians from Poles (on the Bogardus social distance scale) increased from the relatively balanced score of 3.77 to the much higher 5.01 (out of 7). This dynamic, of course, was a result of a broader set of factors that do not directly involve historical issues. In Poland, the score reached 4.64, notably in regions bordering Ukraine.

Ethnocultural stereotypes were entrenched in school history courses. A content analysis of four Polish and five Ukrainian secondary school history textbooks in use in the early 2000s found that Ukrainians were mentioned 56 times in Polish textbooks, 38 times as an adversary and 12 times as a national minority. In Ukrainian textbooks, Poles received 268 neutral mentions, 49 mentions as an adversary, and 15 as a national minority, 34 positive mentions and 79 negative ones.

A study of negative ethnonational stereotypes in fourteen Ukrainian textbooks from 1997–98 carried out by the Ukrainian historian Natalya Yakovenko also came to some alarming conclusions: Ukrainian students received the message that “Poland and Ukraine are ultimately separate political, social, and cultural organisms, connected to each other exclusively by antagonism.”

Textbooks covered the most challenging topics of the common Ukrainian and Polish past, and according to members of the intergovernmental Ukrainian-Polish commission on school textbooks, the most dif-
difficult topic on which to come to a mutually acceptable interpretation was the activities of the OUN and UPA in the 1930s and 1940s.\textsuperscript{10}

Since the early 2000s, there was a positive trend in the mutual perception of Ukrainians and Poles that became more manifest after the Orange Revolution and the accession of Poland to the European Union. In the sphere of collective/historical memory and related stereotypes, it was probably at least partly due to the activities of the Ukrainian–Polish commission on textbooks. Włodzimierz Mędrzecki acknowledged improvements in the new generation of Polish history textbooks published in the early 2000s: the discussion of topics involving Ukraine became more balanced.\textsuperscript{11} Ukrainian textbooks also showed a tendency toward editing out negative cultural connotations.\textsuperscript{12} Sociologists found the improvement in mutual perception remarkable. According to the Polish Institute of Public Affairs (Instytut Spraw Publicznych), in 2013 the Bogardus social distance score reached its lowest point: 1.11 in Poland and 0.94 in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{13} However, the same study observed that historical questions are one of the most problematic issues in Polish–Ukrainian relations. Of all Polish respondents, two-thirds believe that there are events in the past for which Ukrainians should feel guilty. Only two-fifths of Ukrainians agreed. At the same time, half of the respondents in both countries agreed that Poles should make amends to Ukrainians for their past sins.\textsuperscript{14}

Two examples of historical controversies serve as vivid illustrations of difficulties that loom over the Ukrainian–Polish dialogue about the past.
The first is the story of the restoration of the memorial complex dedicated to Polish soldiers killed in the Ukrainian–Polish War of 1918–19 in Lychakiv Cemetery in Lviv. It is a compelling case of a local debate breaking onto the international political stage. The second is the debate on the Ukrainian–Polish conflict during World War II and the Volhynian tragedy of 1943, an illustration of an entangled national and international discussion.15

The Cemetery of Eaglets is a memorial complex that was constructed in 1939 as a place of memory for Polish soldiers who died in 1918–19; it fell into disrepair during the Soviet period. In the middle of the 1990s, with the Ukrainian (national) government’s agreement and with the approval of the Lviv city council, Poland undertook the restoration of the complex. In 2000, the Lviv city council passed a special resolution to end the reconstruction, though Poland insisted that the monument be rebuilt following the 1939 design.

The unveiling of the restored memorial was scheduled for May 21, 2002; the two countries’ presidents, Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Leonid Kuchma, were expected to appear at the event. However, the ceremony never took place: the president of Poland cancelled his visit because the Ukrainian side (the Lviv city council) refused to approve the commemorative inscription at the entrance of the memorial that favored the Polish side. The bone of contention was one word: while the Polish side insisted that the death of its soldiers had been heroic, the Ukrainians insisted that this term be omitted. There was no mention of a “heroic” death in the inscription for the neighboring memorial to the soldiers of the Ukrainian Galician Army, and the deputies demanded equality. Making the situation more complicated, the controversial word had been present in the original 1939 inscription.16 Moreover, the Polish side insisted that the memorial should include monuments to French and American soldiers who had also fought and died for Poland and pushed for the addition of specific sculptural symbols (the szczerbiec sword, and lions on pylons), which were also unacceptable for Lviv city council deputies, preoccupied as they were with ideological purity. The latter were also

15 Other stories, some local (such as events in Huta Pieniacka in February 1944) and some nation-wide (such as Operation Vistula in 1947) and their representations do not differ in discourse practices, positioning, or contexts from those we chose as examples.
infuriated by the fact that the agreements with the Polish side had been brokered at the presidential/national level, without their participation.

While the Poles were unanimous in their position, the opinions of the Ukrainians (those who knew about the conflict) on the matter were divided. Kyiv, as represented by Leonid Kuchma and those parliamentarians who supported him, advocated for accepting the Polish conditions. Lviv liberal intellectuals shared this position although their motives were different: they considered it nonsensical that the past should continue to cast a pall over the present and future of Ukrainian–Polish relations. The conflict remained frozen in its latent phase without provoking much outcry either in Poland or Ukraine. More important things arose: Poland prepared for the European Union membership referendum, and Ukraine witnessed a mass protest, “Rise up, Ukraine!” organized by the united anti-Kuchma opposition in the autumn of 2002. Finally, a new topic emerged in 2003 that was much more important than any debate over the “Cemetery of Eaglets,” the sixtieth anniversary of the Volhynian tragedy.17

The Polish side was well prepared for this anniversary. A number of studies on the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in Volhynia and Galicia during World War II were carried out due to the initiative of the Institute of National Memory, the Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites, and the National Security Bureau under the president of Poland. In 2000, Władysław and Ewa Siemaszko published the book *The Genocide of Poles in Volhynia Committed by Ukrainian Nationalists, 1939–1945*. It was 1,500 pages long and was primarily based on oral testimonies.18 The book, which was recommended for adoption in schools, immediately provoked fierce debate in Poland between Polish and Ukrainian minority politicians, researchers, and public figures. Polish Ukrainians believed that the book’s narrative and evidence was lopsided and cherry-picked; they also stated that the events represented in the book were consequences of the national policy of the Second Polish Republic. The book was also considered controversial among Polish historians who worked within the framework of analytical


However, this controversy did not prevent the book from becoming the touchstone of the genocidal version of events in Volhynia and the debate between representatives of Poland and Ukraine in 2000s.

The debate was unsurprisingly touched off by veteran organizations of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army), associations of residents from the “eastern Polish lands” (Kresy), and other right-wing organizations such as the Association for the Perpetuation of the Memory of Victims of Ukrainian Nationalists. These groups were responsible for the confrontational stance that was then picked up by their colleagues and adversaries from far-right Ukrainian organizations and even by some Polish and Ukrainian historians.

In broad strokes, those who wanted to “revive the memory of Volhynia” in the Polish collective consciousness used the following argument: a systematic mass extermination of Polish civilians began in Volhynia in the spring through the fall of 1943 and continued on a smaller scale until 1945. The massacre was initiated by the OUN with the help of the units of the UPA, with the goal of physically removing the Polish population from the region. Ukrainian peasants of Volhynia also participated in the mass murders. The total number of victims was between 38,000 and 60,000 (in some estimates, the figures 100,000–150,000 are advanced). The scale of the massacre of Polish civilians cannot be compared either to the retaliatory strikes of the Home Army and other Polish paramilitary units or to Operation Vistula, the deportation of Ukrainians from the eastern borderlands of Poland to the western regions of the country in 1947. The Ukrainian state must officially recognize the genocide of the Poles and apologize. The Polish state must honor the memory of the victims and recognize the events of 1943–45 as an act of genocide because this is the only adequate way to show respect to the victims.

The position of the Polish liberal intelligentsia, church, and government was more moderate. They advocated for mutual reconciliation and avoided words like “genocide” or “cleansing,” preferring to use the term “conflict.” The first public statements on the official assessment of events in Volhynia occurred in Warsaw at a meeting of Ukrainian and Polish MPs dedicated to issues of cooperation between the two legislative bodies that took place on

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19 They raised a wide range of objections: the biased selection of facts chosen to suit the interpretation of the tragedy as an act of genocide, the absence of analysis of sources (among which the memories of eyewitnesses played the main role), dubious calculations, a narrow documentary base, the absence of any evidence of similar actions of the Polish side, etc.
March 10–11, 2003. The Poles told their Ukrainian colleagues about the discussions in their country and proposed a joint statement that would include a “balanced” assessment of the events that occurred six decades before. At the same time, negotiations began for Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski’s visit to one of the Ukrainian burial sites for victims of the events in Volhynia. On March 19, the foreign ministers of Poland (Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz) and Ukraine (Anatoliy Zlenko) exchanged statements asserting that the sixtieth anniversary of events in Volhynia should serve as the basis for the historic reconciliation of the two peoples. The Polish minister called the anniversary “a reckoning with the truth” for the peoples of Poland and Ukraine.

Between April and May 2003, the presidential administrations of Poland and Ukraine discussed a mutual commemorative action in one of the villages of West Ukraine, which was scheduled for July 11. The negotiations were not easy for President Kwaśniewski: he faced intense pressure from right-wing organizations at home that demanded an uncompromising position on the “genocide of Poles in Volhynia.” Commenting on his own position, he declared that “we should be as resolute as possible and as sensitive as necessary.” Kwaśniewski already had some background in dealing with the controversial past. In April 2002 he showed his resoluteness when he expressed sympathy to the Polish Ukrainian victims of Operation Vistula. However, it should be noted that his statement was made in the context of the condemnation of crimes of the communist regime, which meant that the current Polish state was not responsible for this action. In early April 2003, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine sent its version of the joint declaration to the Polish Sejm “for approval,” according to Volodymyr Lytvyn, the speaker of the Verkhovna Rada. The contents of the document became the object of heated debates in both parliaments.

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22 July 11, the commemorative date of the victims of the action undertaken by the UPA and OUN in Volhynia in 1943 (the so-called bloody Sunday). According to the Polish narrative, ninety-nine Polish villages in Volhynia were simultaneously attacked by UPA and OUN units that day, and the attack was followed by large-scale massacres of civilians.
The pro-Kuchma majority of the Verkhovna Rada, which was not very interested in the topic, was ready to accept a “reconciliatory” formula, whereas national democrats and nationalists played the role of historical hawks. The right wing of the Our Ukraine faction, including representatives of nationalist parties, insisted that the Polish position was lopsided and based on anti-Ukrainian prejudice. Another faction of Our Ukraine headed by Viktor Yushchenko was inclined to accept the reconciliatory wording. Thirty-three MPs in the Verkhovna Rada (from the factions supporting Leonid Kuchma) published an address “to the Poles and Ukrainians” coupling the rhetoric of reconciliation with an appeal reinforcing the “necessity to contain and neutralize political extremism and xenophobia in the domestic policy of Ukraine.” The parliamentarians condemned the actions that led to the mass deaths of Polish civilians in Volhynia and called on the Polish government to “unambiguously condemn the actions that caused the mass deaths of Ukrainian civilians.” Of course the communists in parliament used their traditional phrasing and condemned “the crimes of the OUN–UPA.”

In the meantime, the modification of the text of the joint declaration became a genuine political scandal. In May 2003, a special delegation of the Polish Sejm visited Kyiv. The bilateral approval of the text by the Polish parliamentary delegation and the Verkhovna Rada working group was scheduled for May 29. However, it did not happen, and representatives of both bodies refused to comment on the issue. According to Deutsche Welle, the Polish delegation insisted on qualifying the actions of the UPA as ethnic cleansing. The Ukrainian side allegedly disagreed because such a formula would supposedly allow the families of Poles who died in Volhynia in 1943–44 to file lawsuits against Ukraine with the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Not having obtained the desired outcome, the Polish delegation went back home to consult the Sejm.

The text of the joint declaration was modified in June 2003, with all unacceptable formulas having been removed, but the public reading scheduled for July 10 was again jeopardized due to the intransigent position of far-

right members of the Sejm. However, at this point, the domestic policy factor became important. The presidents of both countries aspired to the role of peacemaker in the conflict, and for this reason, everything went smoothly on the presidential level; Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Leonid Kuchma planned a personal meeting in the village of Pavlivka in Volhynia (a major part of the village’s prewar Polish population was exterminated by the UPA on July 11–12, 1943). The text of the joint declaration of the Polish Sejm and Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada was approved one day before the meeting of the two presidents. However, it was not approved by some right-wing Polish MPs (for instance, the PiS, the League of Polish Families, the Polish People’s Party), some opposition MPs in Ukraine (the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, certain Our Ukraine MPs, especially those belonging to right-wing and nationalist parties), and by left-wing MPs. The communists declared that “neither Ukrainian nor Polish people are implicated in the tragedy.” The Ukrainian right-wing parliamentarian Stepan Khmara called the text of the declaration “humiliating for Ukrainians,” “distorted in favor of the Poles,” and “not corresponding to the historical truth.”

At the commemorative ceremony that took place in the village of Pavlivka on July 11, the presidents of Ukraine and Poland made a joint declaration “On Reconciliation on the Anniversary of the Tragic Events in Volhynia,” both reading the text aloud in the official languages of their countries. The declaration condemned the murders of Poles and Ukrainians, contained a plea for the public moral condemnation of the “perpetrators of crimes committed against the Ukrainian and the Polish people,” and expressed hope that in the future, young generations of Ukrainians and Poles will fully reconcile with each other, “completely disengaging themselves from the warped judgments of the tragic past.” In fact, the heads of the two states delineated the boundaries of official discourse: the rejection of mutual accusations; the
joint condemnation of criminal actions but not organizations, countries, or peoples; and a fixation on the future and not on the past when building relationships between peoples and countries. However, the official discourse only partly coincided with one of the discursive forms adopted by the broader society in both countries.

Debates between historians and public intellectuals on reconciliation and the depoliticization of the conflict soon moved from the arena of politics into the realm of ethics and morality (in the case of intellectuals) or to the purely professional sphere (in the case of historians). The reconciliatory position came at a price.

Intellectuals in both countries found themselves under tremendous pressure from the public, who was primed by the actions and statements of ultrapatriotic forces. The rhetoric (and, consequently, what was called historical memory) was dominated by the image of the Polish victim and the Ukrainian nationalist murderer, with the powerful emotional appeal “not to forget, not to forgive.” In many Polish Catholic churches, one could see commemorative plaques and markers to the “victims of the crimes of the OUN–UPA” (installed at the behest of the associations of natives of the Kresy). Opponents of reconciliation urged putting aside “political correctness” and the “pseudo-equalization” of victims from both sides. Books by Edward Prus and Wiktor Poliszczuk on the UPA and OUN, both of which were full of accusatory rhetoric and discordant facts, were printed in a much greater volume than research monographs containing a more balanced and multifaceted picture of Ukrainian–Polish relations in the interwar period.

At the same time, the Jedwabne debate played a role, making it easier for a part of Polish society to comprehend opinions that transcended the framework of traditional ethnonational history; this was shown by the statements and actions of important figures such as Jacek Kuroń and Adam Michnik. In his February 2003 letter to Miroslav Marinović, a participant of the Ukrainian dissident movement of the 1980s and a well-known public intellectual, Kuroń remarked that the “rhythm of anniversaries” takes events out of their historical context and substantially distorts the picture of Polish–Ukrainian relations. He emphasized that the Poles had for centuries been the stronger and more dominant power responsible for Polonizing the Ukrainian elite and at least twice during the twentieth century had obstructed Ukrainian independence. “The thought that Gospel truths do not concern the relations between
the peoples is not Christian and contradicts the spirit of the Gospel. This is why," he told Marinović, "I speak to you not only on my behalf—and I say: forgive us."33 "This plea for reconciliation seems to have been the most radical one issued: the majority of those in Ukraine who supported the idea of mutual reconciliation insisted on joint penance. An open letter of thirty-nine Ukrainian intellectuals rejected the principle of collective responsibility: "We are convinced," said the letter, "that the principle of collective responsibility of the whole society for the actions of its members does not have any underlying legitimation, whether partisan or universal."34

It should be taken into account that these were not the prevailing moods either in Poland or Ukraine (speaking specifically about the western regions of the latter country, where this particular topic was important). Even some intellectuals who were by no means inclined to produce their “own truth” over Volhynia vigorously defended their position. Ukrainian academic Jaroslav Isayevych (1936–2010), despite being a liberal-minded person, condemned the one-sided coverage of Volhynian events in Poland, asserting that mass murders of Ukrainians also took place in Volhynia. He believed that the Polish side was too aggressive in squeezing Ukrainians for penance.35 Yaroslav Dashkevych (1926–2010), a Lviv-based historian from the older generation who, back in 1994, suggested the unconditional condemnation of Ukrainian terror against Polish civilians in 1943–44, declared in May 2003 that Poland was turning from a strategic partner into an enemy.36 One more perspective, quite often heard, was articulated in a speech made by the Lviv Regional Organization of the Union of Officers of Ukraine to their Polish colleagues: it suggested following the advice of Pope John Paul II who called on Poles to “forget mutual grievances and stereotypes” and take all measures to ensure that nothing of the kind happens again. Discerning black from white in the pages of history was to be left to professional historians.37

When open public discussion of the “Volhynian tragedy” began and as the topic moved to the arena of national-level politics, Ukrainian and Polish historians already had their own history of examining “thorny issues.” This was the title of a series of conferences and publications that began in 1997 at the initiative of the World Association of Home Army Soldiers, the Polish magazine *Karta*, and the Union of Ukrainians of Poland. The debates were focused on the period from 1939 to 1947 as well as the preceding period of the Second Polish Republic. It soon became obvious that the factual side of the issue was not divisive. Controversial issues primarily included interpretations, causes of conflict, and terminology. While the Polish side mostly referred to “extermination,” “ethnic cleansing,” and even “genocide” when speaking about the events in Volhynia, the majority of Ukrainian historians preferred more neutral terms such as “Ukrainian–Polish conflict,” “Volhynian tragedy” or, to quote the most radical term used, “Volhynian massacre.”

A consensus on the causes of the events in Volhynia proved hard to reach. While some Polish historians who worked within the framework of analytical history did not see the ideology of the OUN as the principal cause of the tragedy and recognized the responsibility of the Polish government for anti-Ukrainian repression in the 1930s, they still insisted that it did not justify the murder of Polish civilians. Ukrainian historians maintained that the actions of the OUN and UPA should not be judged without taking into account the anti-Ukrainian policy of the Polish government during the interwar period and the actions of the Home Army and the Polish police toward Ukrainians during the Nazi occupation; such statements were perceived by Polish historians as justifications of the actions of Ukrainian nationalists.

In 2003, the Union of Ukrainians of Poland stopped financing the working group because of the serious disagreement over the assessment of one more “thorny issue,” the Vistula Operation of 1947. The thirteenth workshop held in Lviv in June 2008 proved to be the last. Ten volumes of published materials perfectly illustrate how one stops looking for truth when looking for “one’s own truth.” The thorny issues proved to be impossible to resolve collectively. Speaking of individual works, those authored by Grzegorz Motyka

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on the Polish side and Ihor Ilyushyn on the Ukrainian side seem to be the most balanced and free of exonerative-accusative rhetoric.\(^3\)

In 2003, the preliminary conclusions of the debate on Volhynia were on the table. The top political leadership, liberal intelligentsia, and some historians from both countries managed to come to an agreement that commemoration is a road toward reconciliation and mutual forgiveness. Representatives of the political elite, historians, public figures, and journalists who defended one-sided positions based on national interest and/or the ethnocentric version of the past retained the formula “vengeance is mine, I shall repay,” thus, opening the door to endless actions and counteractions that followed the pattern of the use and abuse of history. The debate of 2003 to some extent contributed to reconciliation, at least for those who wished to reconcile. On the one hand, it made known the part of society that was ready to discuss contentious historical issues in order to reach mutual understanding. On the other hand, the tone of the debates became much more moderate, and the voice of reason was not drowned out by political hysterics.

The following data shows that the broader population in both states was not very aware of the debate over Volhynia. In 2003, according to research conducted by the Razumkov Center, 48.9 percent of Ukrainian respondents knew nothing about the tragedy of Volhynia, and 28.4 percent “had heard something” about it.\(^4\) According to data from the Polish Center for Research on Public Opinion collected in 2008 (five years after the fiery debates described above), 39 percent of respondents “had heard something” about the events in Volhynia in 1943, 20 percent had “heard a lot about them,” and 41 percent knew nothing about them.\(^5\) In 2013, when Ukrainian–Polish relations were once again damaged by the seventieth anniversary of “Volhynia-43,” polling performed by the same institution indicated that 41 percent of Polish respondents had “heard something” about the events, 31 percent knew nothing about the tragedy, and 28 percent had “heard a lot” about it.\(^6\) In 2018, when Ukrainian–Polish rela-


tions in the field of historical memory deteriorated, the percentage of those well-informed about the event was 37 percent, of those who “heard something” was 44 percent, and those who “heard nothing” diminished to 19 percent.43

At the time when debates over Volhynia were raging, the continuation of the conflict over the “Cemetery of Eaglets” and the positions taken by different sides produced a tempest in a teacup, especially since the story in Ukraine was highly localized. However, some progress was achieved. The Polish side agreed to remove the controversial word from the inscription over the main tombstone. Both sides spoke of a common memory, and the idea was embodied by the following memorial plaque: “Here lie Ukrainian and Polish soldiers, dead in the war of 1918–1919,” with an arrow near the word “Ukrainian” pointing to the tombs of the Ukrainian Galician Army, and another arrow near the word “Polish,” pointing at the Polish tombs.

In June 2005, the presidents of Ukraine and Poland, Viktor Yushchenko and Aleksander Kwaśniewski, unveiled the memorial as the unity of two memories; participants in the ceremony placed wreaths first on the tombs of the Ukrainian soldiers, and then on those of the Polish soldiers. This, however, did not signify the end of the discussion. Oleh Tyahnybok, the leader of Svoboda, called the unveiling of the memorial “a national disgrace.”44 The same year, a commission appointed by the Lviv city council pointed out that one of the central elements of the memorial was not a cross but a stylized depiction of a (Polish) szczerbiec sword.45 Several inscriptions were also questioned. In 2015, some citizens of Lviv looked with apprehension on the two lions with shields installed at the entrance to the memorial, suspecting a hidden Polish national agenda.46 The local press said that a scandal was brewing, but there were no visible signs of conflict.

In 2017, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced its plans to print a new international passport. A new design envisaged illustrations on

45 The Szcherbick Sword, also known as the Notched Sword, was said to have been chipped by a Polish king who used it to hit the Golden Gate of Kyiv.
the pages devoted to the most important events in Polish history. One of the pages contained the image of the chapel from the Eaglets Cemetery. This immediately provoked an anxious response from the Ukrainian state, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a protest.47 As a result, the design of the page was changed.

The story was not over, however. Some unidentified persons erected two copies of the statues of lions at the entrance to the cemetery in 2015.48 In October 2018, the Lviv Oblast Council, under pressure from Svoboda, issued an order to remove the statues. This decision inevitably provoked a negative reaction from the Polish side.49

In the meantime, despite government declarations and mutual apologies between intellectuals in both countries, in 2003, the “problem of Volhynia–43” remained topical for at least two reasons. On the one hand, groups for which “Volhynia–43” was a part of their communicative memory felt unsatisfied, and on the other hand, the issue did not lose its attractiveness for mnemonic warriors interested in its mobilizing capacity.

In 2008, some Polish politicians made another attempt to pass a resolution on “genocide” in Volhynia through the Sejm and insert accusatory rhetoric into memorial events, but the reaction of Polish society to these acts was relatively weak (if we speak about the majority of citizens) or quite negative (in the case of the active liberal minority).50 There was no Ukrainian–Polish dialogue as there was in 2003; the commemoration was a domestic Polish event, with the actions of right-wing provocateurs

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50 A committee was created in Poland on the occasion of the “sixty-fifth anniversary of the genocide perpetrated by the OUN–UPA against the Polish population in the eastern lands,” spearheaded by Jaroslaw Kalinowski, leader of the Polish People’s Party. The committee demanded an official condemnation of the OUN and UPA as criminal organizations, the introduction of a special course in schools dedicated to the crimes of the OUN and UPA, and the closure of the Ukrainian newspaper *Nashe slovo.*
counteracted by the liberal intelligentsia. At the time, Ukraine was commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the famine of 1932–33, and all ideological resources in the country were directed toward this campaign; by this point, Ukraine had already formalized the famine (Holodomor) as genocide on the legislative level. Poland supported the efforts of Ukraine to recognize the Holodomor as a genocide of Ukrainians at the international level through a resolution passed in the Sejm in 2006 (a similar resolution was passed by the senate in 2018).

“Volhynia–43” was not the only topic that generated discussions on “historical reconciliation.” In 2006, Viktor Yushchenko and his Polish counterpart Lech Kaczyński unveiled a memorial in the village of Pavlokoma (eastern Poland) where, in the spring of 1945, a unit of the Home Army killed over three hundred Ukrainian residents (according to historians, it was a retaliatory action for the murder of eleven Poles). The inauguration of the monument was accompanied by now-commonplace appeals for reconciliation. At the same time, the inscription on the monument did not mention the nationality of victims or perpetrators, while a memorial cross to nine Polish victims of Ukrainian nationalists was situated nearby which specified that the dead were Polish and the perpetrators of their murder were Ukrainian nationalists. The attendees did not hear the expected formula “We forgive and ask for forgiveness”; instead Lech Kaczyński replaced it with a line from the Pater Noster. However obvious the desire for mutual understanding and reconciliation became at the top state level, the mood of at least part of Ukrainian society was summed up very well by the title of an article in the newspaper *Ukrajina moloda*: “To Forgive But Not to Forget.”

51 Suffice to mention, for example, the attempt of the committee to erect a monument in Warsaw to the victims of the events of 1943 depicting the bodies of tortured dead children. A scandal ensued, and it was found that the photo proposed as the basis for the monument was taken in the 1920s and portrays the murder of children by a mad mother. For more details on the 2008 Polish and Ukrainian debates on Volhynia, see N. Polyanska, “65-та річниця україно-польського збройного конфлікту на Волині в інформаційному просторі,” *Istorychni studiyi Volynskoho natsionalnoho universytetu im. Lesi Ukrayinky* 2 (2008): 108–12.


The erection of new memorial sites in both Poland and Ukraine in honor of the victims of a fratricidal war was expected to continue. In February 2009, the two presidents unveiled a monument to the Polish citizens of Huta Pieniacka (Lviv region) who had been killed by Ukrainian nationalists. The presidents exchanged standard platitudes on the utility of historical truth and the need for reconciliation. Viktor Yushchenko said that Ukrainians and Poles were provoked to kill each other by the National Socialist and Stalinist regimes.

These symbolic acts defined the official line of historical politics, at least formally. However, in terms of domestic politics, both sides took actions that made the prospects for a productive dialogue somewhat difficult. In 2007, Viktor Yushchenko conferred the status of Hero of Ukraine on Roman Shukhevych, the leader of the UPA and, according to general opinion in Poland—shared by some Ukrainian historians—the individual responsible for the actions of the UPA in Volhynia in 1943. In 2009, the Polish Sejm adopted a resolution, “On the Tragic Fate of Poles in the Eastern Territories,” that mentioned “ethnic cleansing with signs of genocide.” In the winter of 2010, just before the end of his presidential term, Yushchenko conferred the title of Hero of Ukraine on Stepan Bandera, the leader of the OUN-B. At the same time, he published a decree praising the participants of the “national liberation struggle,” including the OUN and UPA.

In 2013, the next “round” anniversary of the Volhynian tragedy provoked a new outburst of political angst. The sequence of events—discussions, statements by politicians, utterances of public opinion leaders, parliamentary initiatives—created a sense of déjà vu. The debate repeated itself endlessly. The Polish side, represented by the same political forces as before, became active once again. This time, the Sejm appointed a special MP group dedicated to the “affairs of the Kresy, the natives of the Kresy, and the heritage of the eastern lands.” The strategy was again concentrated on official recognition of the

55 A similar remembrance ceremony was planned in 2011 for Polish and Ukrainian victims in the villages of Sahryń (Poland) and Ostrovy (Volhynia). The event did not take place. In 2013, President Bronislaw Komorowski honored the memory of the victims of the Volhynian tragedy in Lutsk (officially, the president came for a public prayer). President Viktor Yanukovych did not join his counterpart, “for objective reasons.”


57 See the special issue of Yi magazine: http://www.ji.lviv.ua/n74texts/74-zmist.htm.
1943 tragedy as an act of genocide. Once again, liberals in both countries opposed the escalation of the dispute.

In late June 2013, the Polish Senate adopted a statement that described the events in Volhynia in 1943 as “ethnic cleansing with signs of genocide.” This was some kind of compromise with the right-wing opposition, which insisted on the unequivocal use of the word “genocide.” The Senate also rejected the right-wingers’ suggestion that the government establish an official commemoration date, the Day of Martyrdom of the Poles (July 11).

In Ukraine, almost 150 members of the Ukrainian parliament (mainly representing the Party of Regions and the Communist Party) expressed their concern about the debate in Poland and their desire to contribute to the search for historical truth. To do this, they addressed the speaker of the Polish Sejm in an open letter arguing that the events in Volhynia in 1943–44 should be described as genocide. The necessity of such a decision was explained by, among other things, the growth of xenophobic, antisemitic, and neo-Nazi attitudes in Ukraine. Yet this somewhat unusual move elicited no response. The Polish Sejm adopted a resolution that repeated the Senate formula. The fact that Ukraine was close to signing an EU Association Agreement was taken into account by the Polish leadership, both the president and the ruling parties. However, when compared with 2003, there was an evident cooling on the issue of reconciliation, in fact, the idea of releasing a combined statement by leading Catholic and Greek Catholic clerics had just expired.

58 The compromise formula “signs of genocide” was already used by the Sejm in September 2009 when the resolution on Katyn was adopted.


61 Of course, representatives of the Party of Regions used the topic of “Volhynia-43” only to discredit their political opponents, sometimes grotesquely copying “Western” practices. For instance, in July 2013, Vadym Kolesnichenko, a Party of Regions MP, declared plans to create a “center of identifying Nazi criminals” (in the context of debates on Volhynia); together with other members of the party, he proposed establishing the honorific “Righteous Ukrainian” for Ukrainians who saved Poles during the Volhynia tragedy. See “Kolesnichenko reshil zanyatsa rozyskov “natsistskikh prestupnikov”: Politik prodolzhayet ekspluatirovat Volynskuyu tragediyu,” Livy Bereg, July 9, 2013, http://lb.ua/news/2013/07/09/211526_kolesnichenko reshil zanyatsya.html.
Subsequent events around the topic of “Volhynia–43” resulted from the interaction of domestic and international policy issues. The Revolution of Dignity, followed by the Russian annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine greatly strengthened the positions of the right and far-right forces in the country, the very same groups that took the most active part in both violent protests and armed action. Despite their failure in both the presidential (2014, 2019) and parliamentary (2014, 2019) elections, the political right played a prominent role in “field politics,” organizing para-military groups, voluntary battalions, and eagerly taking part in the “Leninfall.” The “new” regime headed by Poroshenko intensified historical politics, using its mobilization potential to unite all those active in the war with Russia and to distract the public from its failures to reform the economy and resolve social conflicts. The prestige of the nationalist narrative in the public sphere reached unprecedented heights.

The main government institution responsible for the development and implementation of historical politics was now headed by Volodymyr Viatrovych, who proposed considering the Volhynian tragedy part of the Polish-Ukrainian war, effectively relativizing the question of OUN and UPA responsibility for the extermination of Polish civilians. He was also known for his encomiastic works on the history of the UPA and his strong ties with OUN-B institutions in North America.

State politics aimed at the more intensive promotion of the nationalist memory narrative could not foster the dialogue and reconciliation endorsed by some intellectuals and politicians in previous years. The established voting procedure for the memory laws appeared as a blatant insult to the Poles. On the morning of April 9, 2015, Polish president Bronislaw Komorowski delivered an emotional speech in the Verkhovna Rada expressing his hope that Ukrainians and Poles would not clash in discussions about past conflicts and their consequences. Ukrainian MPs met his speech with enthusiastic applause. In the afternoon, that same audience passed the law that obliged Ukrainian and foreign citizens to praise those who fought for the liberation of Ukraine, among them the OUN and UPA.

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The politics of decommunization, which was received with the understanding and full-throated support of the Poles, was followed by the massive expansion of the nationalist memory narrative. The renaming of Moscow Avenue (Moskovski Prospekt) in Kyiv to Bandera Avenue occurred on July 7, 2016, at the instigation of right-wing deputies on the eve of Petro Poroshenko’s visit to Warsaw (where he genuflected at the memorial to the victims of the Volhynian massacre) and in the midst of a new round of debates about the Volhynian tragedy in the Polish Sejm.64

All these potentially divisive actions went together with the rhetoric of reconciliation. In December 2014, President Petro Poroshenko, speaking to the Polish Sejm, mentioned the complicated shared past of Poland and Ukraine and again repeated the magic formula, “We forgive and ask for forgiveness.” In June 2016, Ukrainian public figures, former presidents, and leading clerics wrote an open letter to the Poles that reiterated this position: “We ask for forgiveness and forgive.”65

However, this time the context was different. After the triumph of the Law and Justice Party in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2015, Poland decisively turned toward affirmative historical politics aimed at “strengthening patriotism.”66 This meant the reinforcement of ethnic nationalism and ethnocentrism in historical politics. The PiS, allied with the radical nationalists and populists (Kukiz’15), again suggested making July 11 the Remembrance Day of the Victims of the Genocide of Poles. According to the PiS, Polish victims had not been sufficiently honored; in particular, their massacre by Ukrainian nationalists was not yet recognized by its rightful name—genocide.67 Michał Dworczyk, an MP representing the PiS, read a letter by two hundred Polish parliamentarians during a live broadcast on the Ukrainian television channel Espresso TV. The letter contained

reproaches to the Ukrainian leadership for the glorification of organizations and persons with a “specific reputation” (meaning the OUN-B and UPA). The Polish MPs said that the resolution on the memorial day of Polish victims of genocide being prepared in the Polish Sejm was not directed against Ukraine and Ukrainians.68 On July 7, 2016—the same day Moscow Avenue in Kyiv was renamed Bandera Avenue—the Polish Senate voted 60 to 23 to recommend the Sejm adopt a resolution containing the term “genocide.”69 Meanwhile, retired politicians in Poland including Lech Wałęsa, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, and Bronisław Komorowski (still believed to be influential figures) published an open letter asking for forgiveness for the past harm done by Poles to the Ukrainians.70

On July 22, 2016, the Polish parliament almost unanimously adopted a resolution that proclaimed July 11 the Remembrance Day of the Victims of Genocide Perpetrated by Ukrainian Nationalists against Polish Citizens in the Eastern Lands of the Second Polish Republic in 1943–1945 (442 MPs voted in favor, ten MPs abstained, no one voted against the resolution).71 The OUN, UPA, the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician), and other formations that collaborated with the Nazis were named as responsible for the murders of one hundred thousand Poles (and citizens of other nationalities as well). The resolution paid homage to those Ukrainians who saved Poles. According to the Sejm’s resolution, only the complete historical truth would lead to reconciliation and mutual forgiveness. The “complete historical truth,” apparently, meant defining the mass murders of Poles in Volhynia as genocide.72

72 In previous years, the Polish parliament had already approved documents that mentioned the word "genocide." In 2005, it condemned the 1915 genocide of Armenians, and in 2006, it expressed sympathy for Ukrainians, recognizing the Holodomor as genocide. In August 2012, the Sejm recognized the “Polish operation” of the NKVD in 1937–1938 as genocide. In October 2014, it condemned the genocide of Christians, Kurds, and Yazidis carried out by the Islamic State.
The reaction of the Ukrainian side in this conflict was easy to predict. President Petro Poroshenko expressed his regret. The International Relations Committee of the Verkhovna Rada condemned the “one-sided action” of the Polish legislators as “anti-Ukrainian,” “politically unbalanced and juridically incorrect.” Borys Tarasyuk, head of the parliamentary group on interparliamentary relations between Ukraine and Poland, stepped down, proclaiming that the Sejm’s decision was anti-Ukrainian. Volodymyr Viatrovych, the director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, called the Sejm’s decision a natural result of anti-Ukrainian hysteria in Poland. Piotr Tyma, the head of the Union of Ukrainians of Poland, indicated that the supporters of reconciliation only addressed the topic of Volhynia on major anniversaries, while the supporters of the confrontational genocidal narrative never stopped promoting it. He also pointed to an obvious (in his opinion) imbalance in the actions of the Polish side: the absence of any genuine attempts to discuss the mass murders of Ukrainians by units of the Home Army and other Polish military formations. Discussion about this issue flared up in the Ukrainian mass media. Nationalists and national democrats argued for symmetry when discussing both massacres. Liberals suggested condemning the actions of the Polish Sejm but urged avoiding confrontation. Everybody agreed that the conflict would be expedient for Russia, where the Communist Party of the Russian Federation registered a statement in the Duma expressing solidarity with the Polish Sejm.

The MPs from the Petro Poroshenko Bloc in the Verkhovna Rada swiftly registered a resolution honoring the memory of the Ukrainian victims of

Polish genocide. Its wording was nearly identical to the rhetoric of the Sejm, exemplified by the phrase that the truth “should form the basis of harmony and forgiveness between the Polish and Ukrainian peoples.”9 A commemorative date was proposed as the Remembrance Day of the Genocide Perpetrated by the Polish State against Ukrainians in 1919–1951.79 Stanisław Karczewski, speaker of the Polish Senate, told the Polish mass media that the adoption of such a resolution may complicate the dialogue between Poland and Ukraine.80 The resolution was never adopted.

On August 30, 2016, a group of “well-known Ukrainians” published an appeal to the Ukrainian parliament.81 The authors accused Polish MPs of a “breach of earlier agreements” (substantiating this claim with reconciliatory declarations from past years); the deliberate distortion of the “historical truth”; and of using politically irresponsible and juridically incorrect formulas. They suggested that the Verkhovna Rada should adopt countermeasures officially establishing three commemorative dates. The first was September 23, the “Day of Polish Repression of the Autochthonous Population of Galicia,” commemorating the so-called pacification of Ukrainians that began in 1930 and included numerous repressive acts against Ukrainians and their institutions in response to OUN terrorist attacks. The second was December 25, the “Day of the Genocidal Extermination of the Autochthonous Ukrainian Population by the Polish Underground in the Centuries-Old Ukrainian Land.” “It was on this day in 1942,” said the letter, “that the Polish chauvinists began murdering the Ukrainian population en masse, dancing on the corpses of the martyrs” (this date was devoted to the Armia Krajowa’s offensive, which caused civilian casualties among the Ukrainian population). The third commemoration day was April 28, the “Remembrance


78 Ibid.

79 March 24 was suggested as the commemoration day because of a large 1923 rally that took place in Lviv on that day, which was held in protest of the decision of the Allied Conference of Ambassadors to recognize Polish sovereignty over Eastern Galicia.


81 The authors included President Leonid Kravchuk, a number of played out “national democrat” politicians, and several professional historians.
Chapter 8

Day of Ukrainian Victims of Deportations by the Polish State” (devoted to Operation Vistula in 1947).82

Instrumentalizing the past to poison the present seemed to peak in Ukraine and Poland in the summer of 2016. At a certain point, both sides of the process came to their senses, especially as they recognized that their conflict about the past could benefit a third party, Russia. On October 20, 2016, the Verkhovna Rada and the Polish Sejm adopted a mutual declaration of memory and solidarity that was also supported by the Lithuanian Sejm. The declaration articulated the need for “impartial historical research” and the “containment of the forces that lead to arguments in our states.” The declaration pointed at the common enemy, Russia, and at the necessity of reaching consensus when confronting the latter.83

Nevertheless, aggressive comments were soon heard on both sides yet again. In December 2016, Witold Waszczykowski, the Polish minister of foreign affairs, urged the Ukrainian side to undertake mutually constructive actions in the sphere of historical memory, citing the example of Yad Vashem and Polish-German reconciliation. In particular, he hinted that the national glorification of the UPA (its anniversary was approaching) might obstruct the route toward mutual understanding.84 In January 2017, the western regions of Ukraine started to prepare for the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. In February, the UINP declared the start of the “national information campaign for the commemoration of the UPA.”85 This news provoked a nervous reaction on the Polish side. Jarosław Kaczyński, speaking to Gazeta Polska about his meeting with Petro Poroshenko, said that he told the Ukrainian president directly that there is no chance to get into Europe with Bandera.

The choice was simple: either integrate with the West and break with the UPA tradition, or remain with the East and everything that such a choice entails.\textsuperscript{86} In another interview, Kaczyński told the readers of the weekly \textit{Do Rzeczy} that Ukraine was creating a cult of people who perpetrated genocide against Poles, surpassing Germans in their cruelty.

In 2017–18, the conflict spread to a new domain. The memory war mutated into the war over graves. Polish authorities began to remove the memorial plates and monuments dedicated to UPA soldiers that were erected without formal permission. According to official statements, about forty such locations lacked legal status. The Ukrainian side responded with its own figures: according to data from the UINP, no less than one hundred Polish sites of memory in Ukraine had not received official permission. After the dismantling of the memorial to UPA soldiers in Hrushovychy in April 2017, the UINP suspended issuing permits for Polish exhumations in Ukraine.

By the end of 2017, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin regretted the excessive politicization of Ukrainian–Polish relations and lamented the Polish position: according to him, Ukrainians had apologized for acts of vandalism while Poles had not.\textsuperscript{87} Polish President Andrzej Duda, in turn, exclaimed that he did not object to the erection of Ukrainian monuments at grave sites in Poland, but he insisted that this should be done only after the exhumation and identification of the remains (Polish authorities claimed that UPA soldiers had never been buried in the tomb at Hrushovychy, for instance).\textsuperscript{88} At a meeting in Kharkiv on December 13, 2017, the presidents of both countries exchanged standard statements about the need to come to a mutual understanding on the problems of the past and promised to revive the work of the intergovernmental commission created for this purpose (in fact, the commission did not work either).\textsuperscript{89}


In winter 2018, the struggle for the “true past” in Poland and Ukraine resumed. The Sejm approved changes to the Law on the Institute of National Memory proposed two years earlier. Apart from other dubious regulations that provoked an international scandal (which were, in fact, aimed at Holocaust revisionism), the law contained mentions of “Ukrainian nationalists” whose crimes against the Polish people matched the crimes of Nazis and communists. Article 55 prohibited the public denial of these crimes and introduced criminal penalties for it, a fine or imprisonment for up to three years. In Poland, the amendments were predictably protested by the liberals and the opposition. In Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs routinely expressed concern. The same feeling was publicly shared by President Poroshenko. The Ukrainian parliament asked the Polish president to veto the law. There was some irony in this situation: the Polish law declared “Ukrainian nationalists” (i.e., the OUN and UPA) criminals and prohibited any public expressions of an alternative point of view, whereas the Ukrainian law from April 2015 declared them national heroes and required everyone, regardless of nationality, to honor them, prohibiting any form of public vilification of them.

In July 2018, the Ukrainian and Polish presidents broke the tradition of common statements on the anniversary of Volhynia-43. Duda visited the Ukrainian village Olyk to honor the memory of Poles killed there in 1943. Poroshenko stopped at the memorial of Sahryń, where Ukrainian villagers were massacred by Polish partisan forces in 1944. The Polish president called the events of 1943 “ethnic cleansing” and habitually appealed to “historical truth.” The Ukrainian president called for the same truth and mentioned that the conflict “between Ukrainian and Polish peoples is useful to a third party—‘Muscovy’—against which these people fought together in the past.” Poroshenko expressed hope that the Poles would cancel the new regulations on historical memory. In January 2019, the Polish Constitutional Tribunal stipulated that formulations like “Ukrainian nationalists” or “Eastern Little Poland” (Malopolska Wschodnia) could not be used as legal terms and, there-

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Some signs of normalization became visible after the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine in the spring and summer of 2019. During his visit to Warsaw on August 31–September 1, 2019, the newly elected president Volodymyr Zelensky promised to lift the ban on exhumations of Polish victims of violence that took place in the 1940s. The Polish and Ukrainian presidents agreed to create a bilateral commission on historical issues. At the end of September 2019, Ukraine officially cancelled the ban, and Poland restarted their exhumations in Lviv oblast. At his meeting with the Polish ambassador in Ukraine, Bartosz Cichocki, in January 2020, the new director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, Anton Drobovych, expressed hope that Poland would undertake concrete steps to restore Ukrainian sites of memory that had been destroyed in previous years.

The story about the past in Ukrainian–Polish relations is very instructive in many respects, especially in regard to the conflict potential of historical politics. Regardless of the political orientation of the individuals and parties at the helm, the ruling elites of both countries consider friendly and cooperative relations with their neighbor to be a top priority. Poland and Ukraine managed to find mutually acceptable solutions in almost every sphere, including economic, political, and cultural relations. There is only one exception, the sphere of historical memory. Many years of efforts made by high-ranking political leaders, public intellectuals, and civic leaders to effect reconciliation lack efficiency and seem condemned to a kind of Hegelian Schlecht-Unendliche. The primary and most basic reason probably lies in the rivalry between two exclusivist ethnocentric versions of the national/nationalist memory narrative, and, to make matters worse, of their radical variants. In effect, the Polish-Ukrainian memory war was a battle between Siamese twins.

The memory warriors from both sides belonged to the same side of the political spectrum: *Kresy* organizations, veteran organizations, populists and conservative right parties in Poland, and right-wing movements and right-conservative and populist political parties in Ukraine. The aggravation of the conflict coincided with the rise of these agents of historical politics to power. In Poland, those who support the revival of ethnocentric Polish identity based on an exclusivist national narrative achieved representation both in parliament and the presidency while their ideological twins in Ukraine controlled the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory and several other key agencies.95 Svoboda, which lost its position on the party lists in the parliament in 2014 and managed to secure just one MP in 2019, gained more importance at the local level. For instance, Svoboda was behind the decisions of local councils to rename streets after Bandera in central Ukraine and to display the OUN flag together with the national flag in public places on certain commemorative dates, an action which definitely did not invest in normalization of Polish-Ukrainian relations.96

It is normal that memory warriors in both countries present their debates over the past as a clash between Ukrainians and Poles or even an international conflict between the Ukrainian and Polish states. Both parties are interested in speaking on behalf of the whole nation. In Poland, these claims were better justified despite the fact that opposition to this kind of politics was still strong. In Ukraine, the right-wing and right-conservative political and ideological faction which claims nation-wide representation in the politics of history is much narrower. In reality, those in Ukraine who politically benefit from the conflict represent a relatively small fraction of the political spectrum who have situationally reached power and influence by taking over some of the institutions mentioned above.97 Both sides deployed negation-

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95 For instance, the leader of the OUN (Mel’nyk faction), Bohdan Chervak, held the position of deputy head of the State Committee of Television and Radio Broadcasting.
97 For instance, Svoboda failed to enter parliament by party list in the 2014 election. Likewise, candidates from nationalist parties in the presidential election that same year got 0.9 percent and 1.3 percent of the votes. The same happened in the 2019 presidential elections: the single candidate from different nationalist parties got 1.62 percent of the votes. In parliamentary elections during the same year, the Svoboda party managed to obtain one seat in the parliament.
ism to challenge the claims of their rivals. Accordingly, “much ado about nothing” has become paramount, and the problems of the past are used to construct a gloomy present.

Ukraine–Russia: “Fraternal Rivalry”

While in Poland different interpretations of the past were among the few topics that tarnished its otherwise conciliatory relations with Ukraine, in the case of Russian–Ukrainian relations, the number of complex and fraught issues was much larger. The “fraternal rivalry” often escalated into open conflict, with the two countries repeatedly balancing on the edge of open political and even military confrontation. Russia frequently voiced claims to Ukrainian territory. Only three days had elapsed after the Ukrainian parliament’s declaration of independence when Pavel Voshchanov, the press secretary of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, declared that Russia recognized the sovereignty of republics of the USSR but reserved the right to raise the issue of border revisions. In the case of Ukraine, this meant Donbass and Crimea.

The representation of Crimea and Sevastopol as Russian territory was often verbalized by top politicians (Vladimir Zhirinovsky, Yury Luzhkov) and by the supreme legislative body of Russia. In 1993, Ukraine and Russia were on the verge of armed conflict over the partition of the Black Sea Fleet. In 1994–95, Russia openly supported separatism in Crimea. In 2003 (the year of Russia in Ukraine100), Russia provoked a territorial conflict over the “Tuzla Spit” (“Tuzla Island” on the Ukrainian side of the conflict).

Trade and economic relations were dominated by incessant conflicts over the price of gas and Ukrainian debt (Ukraine was permanently in debt to Russia because of payments for energy). In the 2000s, specifically after the Orange Revolution, Ukraine and Russia went through a series of trade wars.

100 The Year of Russia in Ukraine is a case of cultural diplomacy. During the year, official public events devoted to the promotion of the culture, science, and history of the neighboring country take place in the partner country.
the most famous of which were the two “gas wars” (in 2006 and 2009) that transcended the framework of bilateral relations. In the 2000s, the center of gravity in Russia–Ukraine relations moved into the sphere of geopolitics: the Ukrainian government, having preached so-called multipolar politics for a long time, slowly drifted toward the “West” while, at the same time, top Russian leadership made increasing efforts to integrate Ukraine into the “Eurasian” space, which was dominated by Russia both economically and politically.

The annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and Russian military, technical, and political support for separatists in Donbass—leading to the creation of the satellite “statelets” of the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk—was the peak of this “brotherly rivalry.” In January 2015, the Verkhovna Rada officially labelled Russia an aggressor state.

The standard framework used to explain Ukrainian–Russian relations holds that Russian political elites aspire to revive the great-power status of Russia both in the region delineated by the borders of the former Soviet Union and in the wider world. Ukrainian political elites seek self-assertion through an independent state, and the Ukrainian national project, in this sense, contradicts the aforementioned ambitions of Russia, notably when Ukraine not only declares its affiliation with Europe but makes decisive steps “westward.”

The thesis that Russia is unable to be a great power without Ukraine as a satellite became commonplace. Not surprisingly, a kind of ontological anxiety about Ukraine is visible in the political, geopolitical, and cultural thinking of the Russian ruling class and its political and cultural elites. Russian elites have real problems with the recognition of Ukraine as the Other because they consider Ukrainians to be part of the greater Russian nation or, at least, a part of a common and historically determined cultural and political space. The Ukrainian aspiration for cultural distinctiveness and their self-assertion as the Other, i.e., separate from the Russian world, breeds cognitive dissonance, exasperation, and non-acceptance in Russia, especially when these assertions are accompanied by Ukraine’s move toward another cultural and civilizational space (the “West”). Self-determination for Ukraine is often perceived as a bad joke of history and a big mistake. In the most radical version of this stance, the thesis of the unnaturalness and artificiality of Ukrainian statehood is advanced by top Russian leaders.

In Ukraine, on the other hand, Russia’s reaction to Ukraine’s desire for separation and self-assertion outside the common cultural and political
space is simply considered a manifestation of nostalgia for an imperial past or the innate evilness of Russian elites. It further strengthens post-colonial discourse and contributes to the persistence of the antiquarian national/nationalist memory narrative. Russian elites build their worldview on the idea of statehood as the backbone of the nation. In this formulation, Ukraine has been a “natural” part of the Russian empire. Ukraine and Russia are constituent parts of one singular historical body, and the separation of one part disfigures and cripples the whole entity.

Ukrainian claims of cultural separation and independence are traditionally presented as the manifestation of successive intrigues by external forces (Polish, Austrian, and German) operating since the end of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. However, plots by the United States, the European Union, or, more generally, the “West” have replaced Russia’s old enemies.101

Finally, major contradictions in the interpretation of the common past are important. For Russian political and cultural elites, the imperial and Soviet past has been important for their historical legitimation.102 For Ukrainian elites, the central tenet in the historical justification of the Ukrainian nation and state has been liberation from the imperial and Soviet past, which was alien and imposed by external forces. At the same time, as with their relations with Poland, conflicts were provoked by similarities. Both countries were preoccupied with the past. Both had problems producing a single unifying historical narrative that successfully challenged local narratives. Both used the idea of a common past to explain present-day problems and defend contemporary goals.

The first open discussion, rather ideological than historiographical, took place in 1993, at a conference dedicated to the sixtieth anniversary of the famine of 1932–33 in Ukraine.103 The conference took place when Ukrainian–

101 The most representative collection of such clichés is a journalistic propaganda film with the telling title, Project Ukraine, filmed in 2014 for the Rossiya–1 TV channel, available online as a YouTube video, accessed December 24, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjZ741QCMEM&channel=Россия24.

102 Of course, the period of the late 1980s–90s, when the Soviet past was also condemned and negated in Russia, should not be confused with the 2000s, when it became the object of “normalization.”

103 Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. v Ukraini: przyczyny i naslidky; Mizhnarodna naukova konferentsiya. Kyiv, 9–10 veresnia, 1993 r.: Materiały (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 1995), 199. The texts of the speeches and reports published in the collection were edited before publication.
Russian relations were strained. In July, a resolution of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation declared Sevastopol to be Russian territory. In October, Russia claimed ownership over Ukraine’s gas transportation system as payment for its enormous gas debt. The conflict over the partition of the Black Sea Fleet was raging. In this context, the discussion of the famine often evolved into blaming Russia, or “Moscow,” for their perpetration of the famine. Russian historians who tried to defend the idea that the famine took place in all the grain-producing regions of the USSR found themselves in the role of “defenders” of the Stalinist regime. This episode essentially started the discussion among Ukrainian and Russian politicians and historians over the famine of 1932–33 that would evolve into a memory war in the 2000s.

The 1990s was a period of attenuated contact between Ukrainian and Russian historians. In Ukraine, the standard ethnocentric master narrative was emerging, while in Russia, interest in the Ukrainian past was minimal; moreover, politicians in the Russian federal center were barely interested in their own past. However, by the early 2000s, Russia experienced a revival of interest not only in its own history but also that of its neighbors, and Russian academics and specialists showed renewed interest specifically in the history of Ukraine. Projects on Ukrainian history received financial support in universities, research centers, and institutes, and in 2002, a large international conference took place in Chernihiv under the title “Ukraine–Russia: A Dialogue of Historiographies” with the participation of historians from Russia, Ukraine, and the Ukrainian diaspora.

The reestablishment of contact increased the interest of both sides in each other and, at the same time, provoked the first politically charged conflicts over history. At a session of the Russian-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Commission (the subcommission on cooperation in the sphere of humanities) that took place at the end of May 2002, representatives of Russia proposed establishing a Russian-Ukrainian working group to analyze how textbooks covered the history of Russia and Ukraine. This meant creating a joint commission of historians in the mold of the Ukrainian-Polish, German-

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Polish, German-French, and similar commissions. In June 2002, at a Russian-Ukrainian conference called “Russia and Ukraine in the European Cultural Space” held by the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, the Russian side again raised the issue of Ukrainian and Russian textbooks, in particular the presentation of the countries’ “common past.” A Russian-Ukrainian memorandum was signed, stating, among other things, the need to continue exchanges on the content of history textbooks in Russia and Ukraine. Alexander Chubaryan, the director of the Institute of World History, informed the press:

There was no intention to create a common textbook. We discussed the best way to interpret several controversial issues in Ukrainian and Russian history in textbooks published both in Ukraine and in Russia. In this sense, we considered it useful to continue the exchange of ideas we had started and, possibly, to create (as with other countries) a working group that would continue to research this issue, notably to exchange ideas on textbooks that have already been published as well as on those in preparation. We did not consider producing any common publications.106

Irrespective of intentions, the opposition in Ukraine (national democrats and nationalists) interpreted and used the proposal to establish a Ukrainian-Russian commission of historians as evidence of Leonid Kuchma’s pro-Russian-ness. As a result, a routine initiative created a big stir in Ukraine. The parliamentary elections of 2002 had just finished, and parties opposed to Kuchma scored results that made the government very uneasy: two opposition blocs, Our Ukraine and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, acquired an unprecedented one-third of seats in the parliament. Echoes of the mass 2001 political campaign “Ukraine without Kuchma” remained in the public consciousness while a new campaign, “Rise up, Ukraine!” was in preparation. In this context, the “harmonization” of textbooks with Russia was used by the opposition to prove that Kuchma was following a pro-Russian course and, thus, discredit him. The title of the article on the establishment of the

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The youth branch of the almost extinct People’s Movement of Ukraine organized a protest vigil in front of the offices of the Cabinet of Ministers. An opposition website Maidan published an “Open letter of Ukrainian Historians, Intelligentsia, and Community Leaders on the Threat of the Political Revision of Ukrainian history,” addressed to the president, the speaker, and the head of government. Several hundred Ukrainian citizens, ranging from secondary school students to professional historians and from artists to former dissidents signed the letter. The signatories believed that “harmonization” was a “violation of the rights of Ukrainian historians to hold independent academic interpretations, which was synonymous with the reestablishment of Russian political censorship of Ukrainian history textbooks.” The authors expressed their indignation with “Russian political pressure on the Ukrainians’ interpretation of their own history” and demanded the dissolution of the Russian-Ukrainian working group.

The letter mentioned topics that made the Russian side unhappy: the famine of 1932–33 and the events of 1917–20. Indeed, in both cases, certain textbooks included interpretations and conclusions of these events that negatively assessed the role of Russia. On the Russian side, Chubaryan listed those issues in Ukrainian history that were sensitive for Russians: Kievan Rus’; the evaluation of various Ukrainian statesmen, especially those from the seventeenth century; the process of reunifying Ukraine with Russia; the short-lived Ukrainian Rada of 1918; and, finally, the Ukrainian national movement during World War II.

In November 2002, the website Maidan declared plans to create a public Committee of Defense of Ukrainian History to be headed by the Lviv-based historian Yaroslav Dashkevych. This committee was never established, but neither did the intergovernmental commission on textbooks get off the ground. Instead a Ukrainian-Russian commission of historians emerged, organized by two academic institutions, the Russian Academy of Sciences’

107 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
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Institute of World History and the Institute of History of Ukraine in the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, under the leadership of the two directors of these institutes, Alexander Chubaryan and Valeriy Smoliy, respectively.

This episode marked the first case of open confrontation between Russia and Ukraine over the past. For the first time, the public took part in the Ukrainian government’s dialogue with Russia on historical politics. The improvisation of the two countries’ politicians is also interesting because it produced a precursory outline of the main controversial topics that would soon become the focus of memory wars between the two countries:

1. Ownership of Kievan Rus’ (mainly discussed by historians, rarely capturing the public’s attention);
2. Interpretations of past conflicts: the Battle of Konotop (1659), the Baturin Massacre (1708), the Battle of Poltava (1709), the Battle of Kruty (January 1918), and the war between Soviet Russia and the Ukrainian People’s Republic (1918);
3. The Great Famine of 1932–33 (Holodomor) in the Ukrainian SSR;
4. The Ukrainian nationalist movement during World War II (the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army);
5. Controversial historical figures, the most striking of which are Ivan Mazepa, Stepan Bandera, and Roman Shukhevych.

The first public confrontation over these issues took place in 2003, officially “the year of Russia in Ukraine,” when the first attempt to attain recognition of the famine of 1932–33 as an act of genocide against Ukrainians was made at the state level. Recommendations from parliamentary hearings on March 6, 2003, contained a directive calling on the government, “to raise the question of the recognition of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 as a genocide of the Ukrainian people in the UN, in accordance with established procedures.” Despite the efforts of Ukrainian diplomats who advocated for the adoption of a separate decision (resolution) on the famine of 1932–33 in Ukraine, they

only managed to agree on a joint statement, which was lower in terms of its official status, although even the publication of this document could be considered a success. Further, the text of the statement contained the term “Holodomor,” which was the first step toward its internationalization. The statement analyzed by the UN Human Rights Committee on November 7, 2003 did not contain the term “genocide” because the Ukrainian side was content with the mention of the Holodomor. According to Ukrainian politicians, Russia was the main opponent of the use of the term “genocide” in the text of the statement and the main initiator of lowering the status of the document (there was no open public debate).

In 2004, mass electoral protests in Ukraine provoked by abuses during the presidential campaign led to the Orange Revolution, the accession of Viktor Yushchenko to power with the support of the West, and the defeat of Moscow-supported Viktor Yanukovych. Yushchenko declared accession to the European Union a national strategic goal, abandoning the policy of maneuvering between Russia and the “West.” Somewhat paradoxically, the “move to Europe” went hand in hand with the escalation of historical politics that promoted the national/nationalist memory narrative. In the meantime, Russian political leadership activated its efforts to consolidate society on the basis of a common historical myth (the Great Patriotic War and victory, for example). This central myth presupposed the build-up of a generally positive image of the Soviet era—so long as the excesses of Stalin’s rule were condemned.

In Ukraine, the development of the national/nationalist memory narrative, however, fundamentally entailed a negative assessment of the Soviet period. Consequently, Russian ruling elites’ representation of the era as a joyous age of “common history” inevitably led to conflicts. Under the considerable influence of the Ukrainian diaspora in North America, Yushchenko chose to evaluate the whole Soviet period through the lens of the famine of

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and sought international recognition of this event as an act of genocide against Ukrainians.\textsuperscript{113}

The Russian government perceived the Ukrainian leadership’s efforts to internationalize the Holodomor (with an emphasis on the famine as genocide version) as an attempt to gain specific international status as the nation that suffered the most during the Soviet era. (It is worth recalling that the mid-2000s also marked the beginning of Russia’s conflicts with EU newcomers who promoted their own image as victims of Soviet totalitarianism). Of course, internationalization was also an attempt to oppose the “common historical legacy,” which was perceived as a step toward Ukraine’s further separation from its eastern neighbor. Finally, in Putin’s eyes, Ukraine was engaging in a campaign to discredit Russia as the successor state to the USSR. This last point was the most painful because it occurred exactly at the moment when the Russian government was attempting to revive the image of Russia as a world leader, and, at the same time, create a positive image of Russia in the West. Russian officials and politicians at all levels were especially exasperated by statements from Ukrainian politicians (mainly national democrats and right-wingers) about the specific historical guilt of Russia toward Ukraine, with demands for apologies and, in some cases, material compensation for losses inflicted by the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{114} Another source of frustration was the

\textsuperscript{113} International events to promote the idea of Holodomor as genocide were carried out under the clear influence and with the active participation of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC). In the circular letter of the UWC’s International Holodomor Coordinating Committee, the section dedicated to the tasks of the Committee started with the item: “Use the Holodomor issue to politicize and Ukrainize the society in the diaspora and in Ukraine.” See “Mizhnarodnyi koordinatsiinyi komitet dlya planuvannya vidznachennya 75-liitya Holodomoru v Ukrayini 1932–33 rr.” Ukrainian World Congress Newsletter, 2007–1, 3.

\textsuperscript{114} Let us quote the most eloquent examples of such rhetoric. Speaking at the parliamentary session dedicated to the memory of the victims of the famine of 1932–1933, Ivan Drach, a well-known Ukrainian poet from the Sixties generation and member of Our Ukraine, said the following: “If we speak in earnest about all this, about this terrible event of the past century that broke the spine of the Ukrainian nation so much that it still cannot rebound, we should first of all speak about one state—about Russia. It has always sent here waves, from Peter’s associate Menshikov to Muraviev, who shot our students under Kruty and shelled Hrushevsky’s house. If we do not understand all this, if we conceal it and hide it in papers, we won’t understand anything. . . . And we must know that this is the 349th year of Russia in Ukraine, not the first one—this is the anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 [applause]. It is a no-brainer that a state, before the start of the year of its culture [in Ukraine], should apologize, should do penance for everything that happened during the centuries because such were the relations between the Ukrainian and Russian people.” See Parliamentary hearings on honoring the memory of the victims of the Holodomor of 1932–1933, February 12, 2003, http://lib.rada.gov.ua/static/LIBRARY/povni_text/parlament_sluhan/golodomor.html. Yaroslav Kendzor, a member of the Verkhovna Rada and a former participant of the dissident movement of the 1960s and 1970s, coauthor of one of the draft laws criminalizing the de-
negative ethnic stereotypes and anti-Russian themes not only in statements by politicians, but also in supposedly scholarly research, school textbooks and manuals, and in various visual representations about the Holodomor.115

Because such statements were frequently voiced by Yushchenko’s supporters specifically, their content was ascribed to the president himself. Despite his evident personal preoccupation with the problem of the Holodomor, Yushchenko did not create much space for such accusations during his presidential term. When speaking to the Russian media on November 24, 2006, Yushchenko directly stated that Ukraine did not blame Russia for the famine of 1932–33.116 During his visit to Austria on July 8, 2008, Yushchenko reiterated this point, again emphasizing that Ukraine did not blame Russia for the tragedy of 1932–33.117 Speaking during the general debate of the sixty-third session of the UN General Assembly on September 24, 2008, he declared that the desire of Ukraine to honor the memory of the victims of the famine of 1932–33 “is not directed against any people or state.”118 However, he never publicly commented on or condemned any of the aforementioned statements by representatives of his own political force and allies.119

115 For instance, a tenth-grade textbook contained the following passage in the section dedicated to collectivization and the famine of 1932–33: “The smell of decaying corpses in the emptied Ukrainian houses had not yet dispersed when trains were sent with settlers from other republics of the USSR, mostly from Russia.” See Fedir Turchenko, H. Novitnya Istoriya Ukrayiny (10 vols.), Part 1 (Kyiv: Heneza, 2002), 282. The comments to a photo exposition on the wall of St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Monastery near a memorial sign to the victims of the Holodomor contain direct mentions of Ukrainian villages becoming empty after the famine of 1932–33 and filled by settlers from Russia. Finally, the 2005 journalistic documentary film Holodomor: Ukraine, the Twentieth Century: Technology of Genocide, which is used in secondary schools, contains a number of statements that can be characterized as Russophobic.


119 An interesting example is the reaction of Yushchenko’s entourage to a passage from the interview given by Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, the head of the SBU, to the Russian newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta on June 15, 2009, where he remarked: “As for a third party, whether Russia or any other state—we do not have any grievances. The crime was perpetrated on Ukrainian territory; its executors and organizers will be officially authenticated but we know from the declassified documents that these were representatives of the Ukrainian government, of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and of the punitive bodies that ex-
In his decree on Remembrance Day of Victims of the Holodomors and Political Repression announced in October 2006, Yushchenko instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to “activate work on recognition by the international community of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as a genocide of the Ukrainian people and one of the greatest tragedies in the history of mankind.”

In early November 2006, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov told the Ukrainian media that there were two grave problems in Russia–Ukraine relations: the status of the Russian language and the Holodomor. Three weeks later, the parliament of Ukraine adopted the law that qualified the Holodomor as a genocide of the Ukrainian people (it was voted through by pro-Yushchenko MPs and the socialists who joined with them on the issue).

A proper memory war broke out in 2007 that transcended the limits of bilateral conflict. International recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide was the focal point of this conflict. The Ukrainian Ministry of

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122 Debates on the arena of foreign relations were amplified by a domestic campaign. In early April 2008, the lower house of the Russian State Duma delivered a statement which, on the one hand, condemned the disregard of the Soviet regime for human life and, on the other hand, stated the absence of evidence that the famine of 1932–33 was an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. See “Russian lawmakers reject Ukraine’s view on Stalin-era famine,” RIA Novosti, April 2, 2008, last accessed December 20, 2020, www.en.rian.ru/world/20080402/102810217.html. Curiously, a short article by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, “To Drive a Wedge between Brotherly Peoples?” became popular in the Russian press and websites at the same time. The article, published in Izvestiya on April 2, 2008, qualified the efforts of the Ukrainian government to recognize the Holodomor as genocide as “a propaganda shriek” that was born in “musty chauvinist minds, full of spite against the ‘Moskals’” who had “ascended to the top government circles of today’s Ukraine.” Russian TV aired Aleksii Denisov’s film Holodomor–33: Unlearned Lessons, which mainly emphasized the anti-Russian meaning of the Holodomor mythology. All of the Russian mass media essentially supported the official position of the government, qualifying the famine of 1932–33 as an all-Union tragedy with special emphasis on the immorality of Kyiv’s efforts to defend the Ukrainian “genocidal” version of the tragedy because doing so “drives” a wedge between brotherly peoples.” Professional historians defended the same position.
Foreign Affairs worked assiduously to achieve recognition of the Holodomor as genocide through resolutions aimed at both individual countries and international organizations. Their Russian counterpart worked no less tirelessly to block those efforts. As a result of these efforts, Ukrainian diplomats gained recognition of the Holodomor as genocide from the national legislative bodies of fourteen countries (some had recognized it years earlier, in the 1990s), but no international organization went this far, largely because of Russian pushback.

In March 2007, Yushchenko created the Coordination Council on Preparations for Commemoration on the Occasion of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine, which he presided over himself. The new body included Volodymyr Ohryzko, the acting minister of foreign affairs; Volodymyr Vasylenko, the representative of Ukraine in the UN Human Rights Council; and four representatives of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) including Stefan Romaniw, an Australian citizen and head of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Bandera faction), who also chaired the International Holodomor Coordinating Committee established by the UWC.\(^\text{123}\)

At the very first session of the Coordination Council, Yushchenko declared: “I see our goal as the worldwide recognition of the Holodomor as genocide. First of all, the question is whether to seek the adoption of relevant resolutions or decisions by the UN, the European Parliament, the European Union, and the OSCE.”\(^\text{124}\) In his decree “About the Measures on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine” issued on March 28, 2007, Yushchenko called on state bodies to “carry out additional events on recognition by the international community, in particular by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the European Parliament, of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as a genocide of the Ukrainian people.”\(^\text{125}\)

In August 2007, Volodymyr Ohryzko sent a letter to the heads of the foreign diplomatic missions of Ukraine, proposing that they work with the

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\(^{123}\) The activities of the UWC’s International Holodomor Coordinating Committee can be followed by reading its circular letters: http://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/Holodomor/Komitet_ua.html.


International Holodomor Coordinating Committee (IHCC) of the UWC to carry out an international publicity and a lobbying campaign to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Holodomor. He envisaged establishing working contacts with representatives of the UWC and engaging with the Ukrainian communities of receiving countries on a recurring basis.\footnote{Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, “To the heads of foreign diplomatic establishments of Ukraine,” Letter no. 100/21/100-1769 of September 4, 2007. Author’s personal archive.} The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created a special working group that specialized in activities aimed at the international recognition of the Holodomor. The secretariat of the president also began to cooperate with the diaspora: the UWC IHCC maintained constant contact with Ivan Vasyunyk, the deputy head of the secretariat of the president; and the diaspora organization joined forces with the foundation “Ukraine-3000,” which was established by First Lady Kateryna Yushchenko.

Responding to the initiatives of the Ukrainian delegation, the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly of UNESCO (193 member countries) unanimously adopted the resolution “Remembrance of Victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine” on November 1, 2007. Ukrainian efforts to include the term “genocide” into the resolution were unsuccessful; the first version did not include this term and only mentioned the Great Famine (Holodomor) in Ukraine.\footnote{United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Item 14.3 of the provisional agenda. 34 C/50, October 8, 2007, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001538/153838e.pdf.} Subsequent discussions on amendments, in which the Russian delegation participated, ended in a compromise, the main essence of which was the removal of the term “genocide.”

While the resolution was titled “Remembrance of Victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine” and addressed specifically to one country, it also expressed sympathy with the victims of famine in Russia, Kazakhstan, and other regions of the former USSR.\footnote{United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Report of the PRX Commission, 47, October 26, 2007, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160852.} Curiously, although representatives of the Russian Federation were part of the working group that prepared the final text of the resolution, Russia was not among the forty-five states that supported the document. Two other important decisions were made at the conference concerning UNESCO’s participation in the implementation of
a special UN program on Holocaust education and its role in the struggle against all forms of Holocaust denial.  

On November 17, a group of hooligans from the Eurasian Alliance of Youth vandalized the display dedicated to the famine of 1932–33 in the Ukrainian House on Arbat Street in Moscow. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a statement on the incident, which elicited a response from the press and propaganda department of its Russian counterpart that included all the standard diatribes against the Ukrainian authorities concerning the internationalization of the Holodomor. “Proclaiming the tragic events of those days an ‘act of genocide’ against the Ukrainian people is a lopsided distortion of history for contemporary political goals,” said the Russian document; it continued by arguing that such initiatives (by Ukraine) insult the memory of people of other nationalities who died because of the 1932–33 famine in the former Soviet Union. Increasingly, the conflict with Russia over the famine became the focal point for certain groups in Ukrainian politics. Deputy Foreign Minister Ohryzko declared that these statements did not correspond to reality and revealed the lack of basic historical knowledge on the part of the Russians.

On November 24, Ukraine received support from its diplomatic allies. A session of the Baltic Assembly adopted the statement, “In Remembrance of the Victims of Genocide and Political Repression in Ukraine in 1932–33.” On November 30, a statement dedicated to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932–33 was published during a session of the Council of Ministers of the OSCE in Madrid; it was a joint statement proposed by Ukraine that notably did not contain the word “genocide.” The Russian  

129 Recall that a special resolution of the UN General Assembly on November 1, 2005, established the International Remembrance Day of Holocaust Victims (January 27), and condemned all forms of Holocaust denial.

130 The members of this organization became notorious after another provocation: according to the electronic media, they vandalized the coat of arms of Ukraine at Mount Hoverla in the Carpathians.


133 Statement by the delegation of Ukraine, also on behalf of Germany, the United States of America, Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, The Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, France, Georgia, The United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Norway, Poland, The
delegation did not sign this statement, electing to make its own instead; it stated that millions of citizens of many different nationalities were victims of the famine, and it would be unjust to talk of the annihilation of only ethnic Ukrainians.134

Already in early November, Joseph Daul, the leader of the European People’s Party-European Democrats Group (EPP-ED) in the European Parliament declared that he would, in the name of his entire group, raise the question about the recognition of the Holodomor as “an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people.”135 (The main lobbyists for this law were probably parliamentarians from the Baltic countries because Ukraine is not a member of the European Parliament). Daul mentioned the figure of ten million dead and declared that the Holodomor was already recognized as genocide by twenty-six countries.

On October 23, 2008, discussion on the issue was brought to a close. The resolution of the European Parliament on the “commemoration of the Holodomor, the Ukrainian artificial famine (1932–1933)” qualified the event as a “crime against humanity.”136 The text of the resolution contained a reference to the Ukrainian Law of 2006 (qualifying the famine as genocide) and the 1948 UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

During the preparations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (PA OSCE) in April 2008, Ukraine proposed a draft of a document that, in addition to all the standard commemorative rhetoric on honoring the memory of the victims, labeled the famine a genocide. Representatives of the Russian Federation readily opposed this conceptualization. In August, the PA OSCE promulgated a resolution that expressed sympathy for the tragedy of Ukrainians in 1932–33 and offered support for the efforts of Ukraine to raise aware-

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134 Ibid., 92.
ness of the famine. The organization urged parliaments all over the world to take measures to recognize the Holodomor. A Russian-language digital media outlet responded to this resolution with the title, “Did They Lose the Holodomor case?” 137

The same battle took place in 2007–2008 at the United Nations. In May 2007, Yuriy Sergeyev, the permanent representative of Ukraine to the UN, gave a speech during the informal thematic debates of the sixty-first session of the UN General Assembly, urging it to respond to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great Famine (Holodomor) of 1932–33 “by adopting a relevant document.” His suggestion did not include a desired status for the document, but he remarked that Ukraine did not accuse any particular country for the famine, blaming only the totalitarian regime. 138 In October 2007, Petro Dotsenko, the Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Ministry’s representative to the UN, declared that Ukraine would seek formal recognition of the Holodomor as genocide against the Ukrainian people. 139 This initiative coincided with the sixtieth anniversary of the UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the famine of 1932–33.

In March 2008, Valery Loshchinin, Russia’s permanent representative to the UN office in Geneva, urged the UN not to raise the issue of recognition of the Holodomor as genocide. Historical truth, in his words, was different. Millions of people from different ethnic groups had been victims of the tragic events during those years, he said—Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Tatars, Bashkirs. 140 In July of that year, the Ukrainian delegation suggested adding the Holodomor issue to the agenda of the Sixty-third session of the UN General Assembly, but the final decision was postponed due to the opposition of the Russian delegation. At the September 19, 2008 session of the UN Human Rights Committee, the Russian representative said

that the Ukrainian side’s attempt to monopolize the tragic history of the famine, which was experienced by many peoples in the USSR, was wrong and morally injurious.141

On September 22, 2008, the Ukrainian delegation withdrew the issue from the agenda, “taking into consideration that it is being addressed in other global forums,” or, according to the Russian side, because of a total lack of support from other national delegations.142 Meanwhile, Viktor Yushchenko declared that a variant of the resolution that was acceptable to Ukraine had more supporters than opponents. When speaking about the general political situation in the world at the general debates of the sixty-third session two days later, Yushchenko ended his speech with a reminder of the famine of 1932–33, remarking that “it had a genocidal character” and floating the figure of ten million victims, but he also mentioned other peoples that suffered and invited the UN to honor “every national tragedy.”

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a statement saying that the resolution “Truth About the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine” was withdrawn by the Ukrainian delegation because of the lack of support from other countries. The ministry emphasized that this withdrawal was the only correct decision as the statement used formulas that could hardly be considered balanced or diplomatic. It stated:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia emphasizes once again that the attempts of the Ukrainian leadership to entrench the interpretation of the events of 1932–1933 in the territory of the former USSR as a genocide of the Ukrainian people at the global level are politicized and aim to sow discord between the brotherly peoples of Russia and Ukraine. We consider as sacrilege Kyiv’s political speculations based on the memory of millions of victims of the tragedy that struck the peoples of the former Soviet Union.143

The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented its own version of the events:

Chapter 8

The Russian Federation, using its leverage as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council and employing the methods of open pressure and blackmail, tries to deprive this UN member state of the right to bring a matter of importance for this state before the UN, the most representative global organization. . . . Such actions contradict the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter and the procedural rules of the General Assembly. The uncooperative position of the Russian Federation contradicts the approach of the global community to the assessment of the nature of the Holodomor.144

In December 2008, a new attempt by the Ukrainian delegation to bring the matter of the famine before the UN General Assembly failed once more because of the resistance of Russian diplomats.145 A political contributor to the news agency RIA Novosti commented, “out of desperation, Ukrainian representatives to the UN began to collect signatures for at least a declaration on the issue, but lost to Moscow once again, with a vote of 160 to 30.”146

Top Russian leadership found support for its efforts to block the internationalization of the Holodomor as genocide issue not only inside Russia but also from outside.147 For instance, the attitude of most influential European countries toward the campaign for the international recognition of the Holodomor was quite detached. An attempt to achieve such a resolution in France ended in failure (it should be noted that France experienced internal uneasiness because of its recent recognition of the genocide of Armenians during World War I and attempts to criminalize its denial). The attempts of representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora to make the state bodies and parliament of the United Kingdom accept formulas that included an unambiguous mention of genocide were politely but categorically dismissed. Germany all but ignored the timid advances of Ukrainian diplomacy on this

147 In 1995, the Russian State Duma established Remembrance Day of the Victims of the Genocide of Armenians (April 24). In 2015, participating in the remembrance events in Yerevan, Vladimir Putin qualified the events of 1915 as “genocide.” In November 2015, the Russian State Duma registered a draft law calling for the introduction of criminal charges for the denial of the genocide of Armenians.
issue. Israel did not show any inclination to support Yushchenko’s advances. Nor did postcommunist countries show any unity. In Slovakia, a declaration recognizing the famine of 1932–33 as genocide failed to pass in parliament. Other new members of the European Union, Bulgaria and Romania, also ignored Yushchenko’s appeal to the parliaments of the world.

The Ukrainian–Russian confrontation over the internationalization of the Holodomor reached its climax when Russian President Dmitry Medvedev refused to attend the official commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the famine of 1932–33 in Kyiv. The Russian president not only refused but transmitted a statement to President Yushchenko. It provided a compendium of all the standard mantras of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the all-Union (vsesoyuznyj) character of the tragedy and the corresponding hard rhetoric, using words like “cynical and amoral” to assert the argument that the Ukrainian government sows discord among fraternal peoples. The most interesting passages of the “message” mention Ukraine’s attempts to enter the “preparatory class of NATO” at the same time that it was seeking to internationalize the Holodomor; it also included President Medvedev’s comical attempts to teach Yushchenko “real” history.148 The two presidents (or rather their counselors) demonstrated the same level of competence in addressing the problems of history.

Similar rhetoric also dominated verbal jousts over other controversial topics of the Russian-Ukrainian “common past.” The struggle against “expressions of anti-Russianism” and “nationalism” in Ukraine, specifically concerning the revision of the past, became the central topic of the Russian mass media, state institutions, and a number of non-governmental organizations in 2007–2009. The topic of “nationalism in Ukraine” within the context of collaboration with the Nazis became especially popular in the Russian media. The equation “Ukrainian Nationalism = Nazism” that had appeared in Soviet propaganda as early as the 1940s was given new lease on life. In 2004, Donetsk billboards depicted Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko in Nazi uniform. In Ukraine, the topic was actively exploited by the communists and the Party of Regions in their political struggle against the so-called “orange power,” a political coalition that included the

Svoboda party, whose ideological premises presupposed following the radical Ukrainian nationalist program exemplified by the OUN-B.

The general tone of discussions on television since 2007 went as follows: Ukraine was a part of the common Russian territory that became separate as a result of unfavorable circumstances. When Yushchenko and the “orange politicians” came to power due to “Western” interference, Ukraine turned into a hotbed of nationalism that harmed Ukrainians themselves, especially Russian speakers, and Russians cannot remain oblivious to this problem. This cliché narrative sometimes created real peculiarities. For example, news coverage of the Lviv café Kryivka, which was decorated like a “Banderite” forest bunker inside to attract tourists, received the following coverage on the channel TVTsentr: “A new provocation in a longer chain of offensive acts against Russian and Soviet historical values [emphasis added].” In West Ukraine, a Nazi café has been opened right in the city center. Russian speakers are not allowed in, and Nazi portraits adorn the walls of the venue.” In TVTsentr’s interpretation, Nazis included not only Shukhevych and Bandera (the latter “distinguished himself by his peculiar ferocity in the years of the civil war,” according to the coverage) but Petliura as well. The coverage included material on the “forced Ukrainization” of the media space and the presentation of the “correct” approach to historical memory (nurturing the memory of the Soviet past). This news coverage can be considered a digest of negative media stereotypes about Ukraine and Ukrainians cultivated by the Russian TV channels.

As in the case of the Holodomor, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs became the main belligerent in the memory war. On December 14, 2007, it delivered a statement on “anti-Russian manifestations in Ukraine.” The list of problems included: renaming the streets in Lviv, anti-Russian statements at the unveiling of the monument to the victims of the Holodomor in Zaporizhzhia, acts of vandalism against monuments dedicated to Soviet soldiers in the western regions of Ukraine and a bust of Pushkin in Lviv, and the intentional burning down of the Russian cultural center in Lviv.

149 http://www.kryivka.com.ua/ is the website of the café (currently unavailable). Its exotic design—an underground forest bunker—made it popular among tourists. Of course, it could also be interpreted as propaganda for the nationalist underground movements.

practical terms, the statement contained a record of all “anti-Russian activities” for ten years, which reinforced the narrative about the “blatant nationalist, anti-Russian, and Russophobic moods and manifestations in Ukraine.\(^{151}\)

In fact, these are attempts to use the controversial periods of our common history for momentary political gains, and they accommodate questionable ideological orientations.” The statement mentioned “certain political forces in Ukraine that deliberately abet such actions and in so doing, exacerbate Russian-Ukrainian relations” and expressed hope that “not only the Ukrainian authorities, but the intelligentsia, veterans, and young people would also weigh in. It is high time to respond to such nationalist vagaries in kind.”\(^{152}\)

The appeal to the “intelligentsia, veterans, and young people” did not fall on deaf ears. In June 2008, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs came out with a longer statement called a “comment” which used the “defense of rights of compatriots” as a pretext for its assertions. It was a response to an address by Oleksandr Volkov, the prefect of the Russian community of the Ivano-Frankivsk region. Volkov, a citizen of Ukraine, who was in a position (according to the comment) to “build up polite and respectful relations with the authorities,” had submitted an address to the president—not the Ukrainian president, but to Dmitry Medvedev. In his address, he spoke about the honors bestowed on the veterans of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician) in the local musical and dramatic theater at the end of May.

In the comment from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the event in Ivano-Frankivsk was branded a “sacrilegious act” of Ukrainian radical nationalist organizations, and an insult to the Russian citizens of Ivano-Frankivsk “who paid with their blood for the liberation of Ukraine from

\(^{151}\) Lermontov and Pushkin Streets were renamed in honor of Dzhokhar Dudayev and General Chuprynka, respectively, in 1996. The doors of the Russian cultural center were set on fire in May 2001, and the organization calling itself “Galician Wolves” claimed responsibility. The group did not reveal itself in any way either before or after the incident. The report about the allegedly anti-Russian and antisemitic words of the chairman of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists at the unveiling of the monument to the victims of the Holodomor in November 2007 was found to be false: according to the Prosecutor’s Office, he was not present at the ceremony. The bust of Alexander Pushkin, placed on the façade of the Russian cultural center in Lviv, really was attacked by vandals in 2005 and 2007.

the German Fascist invaders.” The statement expressed the utmost aston-
ishment at the reaction of local “official structures” that virtually supported
the celebration of “former SS-men responsible for the executions of hun-
dreds of thousands of Ukrainians, Russians, Belarusians, and people of other
nationalities.” This was followed by an array of grievances against the offi-
cial historical politics in Ukraine: bestowing of the title of Hero of Ukraine
on Roman Shukhevych, a “captain in the SS armies”; wars with monuments
commemorating “our common history, tombs of Soviet warrior-liberators;”
the intention to equalize “Nazi criminals and militants of the OUN-UPA”
with veterans of the Great Patriotic War; and the initiatives of “Ukrainian
nationalists and their sponsors” aimed at abrogating the celebration of
Victory Day over “Fascist Germany.” “We hope,” said the document, “that
the official authorities of Ukraine, professing their adherence to democratic
European values, realize the harmfulness of the glorification of SS members
and put an end to attempts to revise the results of World War II.”153 The
statement also contained an appeal to international organizations like the
UN and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It was at
this point that the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs began its longstand-
ing promotion of a resolution directed against those who “collaborated with
the Nazis.” Such a UN resolution was first presented in November 2008,
approved in December 2012, and finally adopted in 2015.154

Political euphemisms such as “official authorities of Ukraine” or “offi-
cial structures” were now dropped; the main source of rancor and exas-
peration was named instead. “On the official website of the President of
Ukraine, there are a growing number of decrees hammering into the heads
of Ukrainian citizens a radically revised list of ‘symbolic dates’ from the his-
tory of Ukraine.” A list of such decrees followed: the decree “On Additional
Measures for the Recognition of the Ukrainian Liberation Movement of the
Twentieth Century” listed the Ukrainian Military Organization (one
of the founders of the OUN), the Carpathian Sich (military formations in
Carpatho-Ukraine activated by the OUN), the OUN, the UPA, and the

153 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Kommentariy departamenta informatssii i pechati
MID Rossi v syvazi s obrashcheniyem starosty Russkoy obshchiny Ivano-Frankovskoy oblasti (Ukraine)
ru/bpr_4.nsf/newsline/75EABB35DB1CACB1C135747100594B1A9.

154 Text of the draft resolution against the glorification of Nazism as approved by the UN General Assembly on
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Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (also created by the OUN). The list was summed up in the following way:

It is astonishing that no decree has been published to seek protection for J. Demjanjuk, who is now in the Federal Republic of Germany awaiting his sentence on the charge of exterminating Jews in Hitler’s concentration camp. After all, the Lviv Oblast Council is officially interceding on behalf of this military criminal.155

If there are things that Russophobes prefer not to remember, they include the common fight of the peoples of the USSR against Hitlerism, the Ukrainian fronts in the Soviet Army that paved the way for the victory, and the partisan movement in Ukrainian territory occupied by the fascists. It is not just the “tilting” of today’s politics into history, it is an insult to memory of millions of dead and their descendants, including citizens of present-day Ukraine.156

The commemoration of events and dates related to earlier events in Ukrainian history was also contextualized as “anti-Russian and nationalist manifestations.”

In March 2008, Viktor Yushchenko published a decree on the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Konotop (1659), which mentioned “the victory of the army led by Hetman Ivan Vyovsky” but did not mention those who lost the battle because the presidential administration decided to

155 In August 2009, the Lviv City Council approached Viktor Yushchenko with a request to come out in favor of Ivan Demjanjuk. In the 1980s, Demjanjuk’s trial was a kind of test case in the search for Nazi criminals having perpetrated crimes against humanity. Demjanjuk was accused of having participated in the extermination of Jews when working as a guard at the Treblinka extermination camp. In 1988, Demjanjuk, deported from the US, was sentenced to death in Israel. However, in 1991, the Supreme Court of Israel annulled this verdict because of evidence that he had been confused with another person. In 1998, his American citizenship was restored. However, in 2001, he was again accused of crimes against humanity in the camps of Sobibor, Majdanek, and Flossenburg. In 2009, he was extradited to Germany and sentenced to five years in prison in 2011. Demjanjuk appealed the case but did not live to see the result, dying at the age of 92. Per German federal law, the sentence was annulled. In 2019, Netflix released a mini documentary series about Demjanjuk, The Devil Next Door (dir.: Yossi Bloch and Daniel Sivan).

be “politically correct.” The goal of these memorial events was defined as the “restoration of historical truth and national memory, the dissemination of full and objective information about the events of the middle of the seventeenth century in Ukraine,” and, of course, “support for a public initiative.” The decree outlined a vast and pretty standard range of events that included issuing a commemorative stamp and coin. 157

However, the public, supported by the president, opted for different rhetoric. The Battle of Konotop was represented as a victory of the Ukrainian army over the Russians in a Ukrainian–Russian war. 158 Another article, published by an academic historian, depicted the events of 1658–59 as “the war of Cossack Ukraine” against “Tsarist Russia.” 159 Of course, Russia did not overlook this “nuance” which practically became a stereotype.

The Department of Information and Press in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs countered this rhetoric two months later. This time, it was a comment responding to an “inquiry from the Russian press.” The comment said the following:

It is puzzling and regrettable to observe that some forces in Ukraine today analyze Russian-Ukrainian history only through the lens of really complicated, and sometimes controversial events and figures that are only remarkable due to the fact that they somehow were directed against Moscow, against Russia, against Russians. In the name of this goal, they eulogize names and actions that one would be uncomfortable with in another situation. This includes a bloody battle caused by the treason of yet another hetman [i.e., Ivan Vyhovsky]. All that remains in this situation is faith in the wisdom of the Ukrainian people who would not allow themselves to be forced into an artificial and unnatural confrontation with Russia. History games, especially when nationalism-based, have never led to anything good. 160

160 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, “Kommentarij departamenta informatsii i pe-
A new confrontation came a year later, caused by preparations for a common celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Poltava. However, in October 2007, Yushchenko signed a decree dedicated less to the anniversary of the battle than to the activities of Hetman Ivan Mazepa who broke with Peter the Great and allied with Charles XII against Russia. The Russian side, meanwhile, was preparing for the collective celebration of the tricentennial of the “victory of Russian arms.” In Russia, the date of the Battle of Poltava was included on the list of seventeen official Days of Military Honor.

The difference in approaches was so evident that on the eve of Yushchenko’s visit to Moscow in February 2008, which was supposed to be focused on issues related to the delivery of Russian gas to Ukraine, the assistant to the Russian president said that “several serious ‘pain points’ have recently made themselves felt.” One of the most sensitive issues was the Ukrainian government’s desire to create a “national version” of history, to “use legislative instruments to confirm a lopsided, essentially anti-Russian interpretation of historical events common to both countries.” The importance of the problem was highlighted by the fact that issues of “common history” were discussed during the meeting alongside questions about NATO membership, European integration, and the delimitation of the Straits of Kerch.

In his memoirs, Viktor Yushchenko affirms that he explained his position on historical issues to Vladimir Putin and proposed a number of initiatives directed at reconciliation. For instance, he says he suggested commemorating not just the Battle of Poltava but also the “Baturin Massacre” of 1708. He also proposed transferring Mazepa’s archive to Ukraine. According to Yushchenko, Putin never responded. Speaking at a press conference after the conclusion of negotiations, Vladimir Putin said, “we discussed the topic of interpretive approaches to the common history of our states and peoples in detail. I am convinced that any speculation on historical subjects used to...
serve political goals are unacceptable and cause great damage to Russian–Ukrainian relations.”

In March 2009, the 370th anniversary of Ivan Mazepa’s birth was made a state holiday in Ukraine. Viktor Yushchenko instituted a state award, the “Cross of Ivan Mazepa.” Poltava was preparing to install an ostentatious monument to the hetman. One of the central streets of Kyiv took Mazepa’s name. On May 15, 2009, the Department of Information and Press in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a statement on this commemoration. The statement discussed the “attempt to rehabilitate hetman Mazepa,” in particular the street name change in Kyiv, the introduction of a new state award, and the erection of monuments in Kyiv and Poltava. The State Duma of Russia also got in on the action. “The names of Peter the Great, of soldiers and generals, “young birds in Peter’s nest,” names of victorious regiments, and the heroism of Cossacks and inhabitants of Poltava will not be forgotten,” said the statement. “Nor will the treason of Ivan Mazepa—whose very name became denominative and who was anathematized by the Russian Orthodox Church—be forgotten. It cannot be surprising that there are people in the leadership of Ukraine who perceive treason as a model to emulate, and who deny themselves and their own people the historical right to be considered descendants of the victors of the Battle of Poltava.” The most expressive, and outlandish comments on the plans to erect monuments to Ivan Mazepa and Charles XII in Poltava were made by Viktor Chernomyrdin, the ambassador of Russia in Ukraine: “Just imagine that we put a monument to Hitler in Stalingrad today. How would it look?” Articles that ran in the Russian press took a similar tone as evidenced by the titles of their publications.

165 The text of this statement could not be found on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The quotes that follow are from the mass media.
169 Igor Shishkin, “Poltavskiy yubiley i falsifikatsiya istorii,” KM online, July 15, 2009, section “Infor-
Non-governmental organizations also took part in the battle over the “correct” interpretation of the past. In September 2009, a conference, “Transnistria and the Northern War: Past and Present” was organized by the Foundation of Modern History, the Transnistrian branch of the Institute of CIS countries, and the University of Tiraspol. The orientation of the event can be judged by the report to the Ukrainian authorities approved by the participants of the conference. It ran as follows: “The research community of historians addresses the leadership of Ukraine, girded with authority, calling it to abandon the pernicious course directed at the deterioration of traditional fraternal relations between the Russian and Ukrainian people, the falsification of our common history, and the subjugation of the historical past to the short-term interests of the ever-changing political situation.”

The titles of the conference papers spoke for themselves: “The Victory of Poltava and the Establishment of the new Great Power, Russia,” “Battle of Poltava—Heroes and Traitors,” “Anathematizing Mazepa,” “Mazepa as Interpreted by Pushkin,” “Peter the Great as an Outstanding Military Leader,” and “A Criticism of Falsifications and the Distorted Perception of the Historical Events Surrounding the Battle of Poltava.” It should be noted that a year before, the very same organizations had held a conference called “Political

170 The term “non-governmental organizations” (or public organizations) should deceive no one. NGOs loyal to the government were funded by the government and essentially defended the official ideological line.


172 A “non-governmental organization” that counts among its founders three ministries (including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), two federal agencies (immigration and border guard), the government of the city of Moscow, Moscow State University, and the institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences.


Falsification of History as a Hurdle on the Way to the Democratization of International Relations in the Post-Soviet Space.”

While in the case of the Holodomor and the glorification of the OUN and UPA, the divergence of two opinions was born out of the conflict between the Soviet and the national/nationalist models of collective/historical memory, in the case of the Battle of Poltava and the glorification of Ivan Mazepa, the issue arose from an older tradition. Since the era of Peter the Great, Mazepa was considered a traitor in Russia. He was already anathematized in the eighteenth century, and Yushchenko’s attempts to discuss the revocation of anathema with the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church were not met with sympathy. The fact that Mazepa was celebrated in Ukraine as a national hero and independence fighter only made matters worse. In Ukraine, meanwhile, Russian assertions of a “correct” interpretation and evaluation of history were seen as an example of the traditional encroachment of Russia on Ukrainian sovereignty and Russia’s refusal to recognize the sovereignty of the Ukrainian nation and to respect Ukrainian history. In Russia itself, the liberal intelligentsia criticized Russia’s attempts to “reeducate” Ukrainians: “We blame Ukrainians for ‘politicizing the history,’ but we do the same thing ourselves with ill-concealed glee.”

Both the official Ukrainian interpretations of the “common” past and popular works on history (and even academic texts) actually contained post-colonial motives, which implied the negative characterization of Russia as the Other. The nationalization of history in line with the ethnonational canon assumed such an approach on its own, and the “struggle for the independence of Ukraine” represented in the framework of such a canon inevi-

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175 See the conference proceedings published in Politicheskaya falsifikatsiya istorii kak baryer na puti demokraticheskogo reformirovaniya mezhdunarodnykh otnoesheniy na postsovetskoye prostranstvye (Tiraspol: TsSPI "Perspektiva," 2009). Among various materials of the conference, an article by Dmytro Tabachnyk, MP of the Verkhovna Rada, which was different in type and in quality, stands out: “Those Who Sell Ukraine: A Continuity of Judas from Mazepa to Yushchenko.”


177 For more details on this historiographic tradition on the imperial past, see Georgiy Kasianov, “Piknik na obochine: osmysleniya imperskogo proshlosti v sovmennoy ukrainskoy istoriografii,” in Novaya imperskaya istoriya postsovetskogo prostranstva, ed. I. V. Gerasimov, et al. (Kazan: Ab Imperio, 2004), 81–108.
tably led to xenophobic connotations and metaphors. This trend was represented as an orgy of nationalism.

It should be noted that, according to sociological data, a positive attitude toward Russians prevailed in Ukrainian society in general even in the midst of these memory wars. Various opinion polls held between 2006 and 2009 stated that 71 percent to 88 percent of Ukrainian respondents had a good opinion of Russians, while 7 percent to 15 percent had a poor opinion. In Russia during the same period, positive attitudes toward Ukrainians deteriorated and negative sentiments proliferated: in 2006, almost 70 percent thought well of Ukrainians, while those with a poor opinion amounted to slightly over 20 percent; in 2009, these figures equaled 29 percent and 62 percent, respectively.

In the winter of 2010, the Russian government used one more occasion to share its views on historical politics in Ukraine. When Stepan Bandera was posthumously given the title of “Hero of Ukraine,” Prime Minister Vladimir Putin commented that the “orange authorities” spit in the face of their sponsors (he evidently meant the United States and European Union). The theme of “Ukrainian nationalism” was used in the context of the memory war even during the relative improvement of Russian-Ukrainian relations after the accession of Viktor Yanukovych and the Party of Regions to power. Yanukovych deescalated tension between the two countries somewhat, both through his acts in the “real sector” of politics (the Kharkiv Agreements on the Russian Black Sea Fleet and the adoption of a new law on language) and in the symbolic sphere. Besides the active promotion of the Soviet nostalgic narrative in the collective/historical memory space, Yanukovych made an important concession to Russia: when speaking at a session of the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on April 27, 2010, he declared that “to recognize the Holodomor as a fact of genocide against one or another ethnic group would be erroneous and

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unjust.” The statement was made just one day before the examination of a report on the famine of 1932–33 and the approval of a relevant resolution, on account of which Ukrainian participants in the session continued their rearguard action against their Russian opponents, defending the use of the term “genocide.” A few weeks later (May 2010), Dmitry Medvedev made an official visit to Kyiv and laid wreathes at the Holodomor Victims Memorial together with Viktor Yanukovych.

Not long before these events, in March 2010, Yanukovych publicly promised to “make a decision” concerning Yushchenko’s conferral of the title of Hero of Ukraine on Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych. Soon after Victory Day, Yanukovych made a decision, but not the one everybody expected. On May 14, 2010, while speaking at a session of the Public Council on Humanities under the President of Ukraine, he declared the need to achieve mutual understanding on historical figures that raise controversy in society and suggested a “gradual approach and sensitivity” in resolving such issues. It was not very difficult to enact a gradual and sensitive approach: Donetsk courts had already canceled Yushchenko’s decrees in April.

It was during this time that intrigue arose around the creation of a common Ukrainian-Russian book for history teachers (the October 27, 2010 decision of the Subcommittee on Cooperation in Humanities between Ukraine and Russia of the Russia-Ukraine Intergovernmental Commission). Because of the opaque statements of officials and the incompetency of journalists, the book was immediately dubbed a “common textbook,” triggering a strange discussion in which opposition members demoralized by their defeat during the presidential election, nationalists, and journalists reiterated affirmations that Russia would dictate to Ukraine how to write history, thus reenacting scenes from 2003. As for historians themselves, they reacted with caution, though several respectable Ukrainian historians joined the working group that prepared the piece. In February 2011, Alexey Vlasov, director general of the Information and Analytics Center of Lomonosov Moscow State University and a member of the working group, said that the text in prepara-

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tion was not a textbook, emphasizing that “neither colleagues from Kyiv nor colleagues from Moscow are ready to write a common textbook.”

By the same token, Hennadiy Boryak, deputy director of the Institute of History of Ukraine, categorically denied the idea of a “common textbook,” saying, “historians of both countries clearly realized that in a situation where two national historiographies exist with their own visions of history, their own tools, approaches, assessments, collections of historical sources used by researchers, and so on, the creation of a common textbook would mean destroying the heritage of national academic history heritage from the past quarter century or, at the very least, ignoring it.”

He also described plans to prepare a reference book dedicated to complex issues in Russia and Ukraine’s common history, that would contain all the various interpretations of controversial points. Chubaryan, the director of the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, declared that all previous attempts by various countries to create common textbooks “failed spectacularly” and confirmed that the text to be prepared would be a manual for history teachers.

Despite all these affirmations, public discourse never dropped the topic of a “common textbook.” Some professional historians contributed to the ideological component of the topic, their basic argument being quite understandable: a common textbook would entail the loss of sovereignty of Ukrainian history and subjugate it to the “Kremlin framework” of history.

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187 I personally had to give no less than a dozen explanations to journalists of various newspapers and electronic media from both Ukraine and Russia, stating that it is not a “common textbook” but a limited-edition experimental publication.

Curiously, by this time, historians of both countries already had experience cooperating with each other. The efforts of the Ukrainian-Russian commission of historians created in 2002 resulted in the synchronous publication of a history of Ukraine in Russian prepared by Ukrainian historians and a history of Russia in the Ukrainian language prepared by Russian scholars.\textsuperscript{189} A series of working meetings and conferences conducted during the preparation of the publication confirmed divergences on almost all the problematic historical points listed when the commission was established. Despite this fact, discussions between the researchers were calm and both sides were given the chance to set forth a version of the controversial topic they considered acceptable. The capacity to discuss such topics relatively dispassionately and academically was also demonstrated at the level of individual discussion.\textsuperscript{190}

In September 2012, the ministers of education of Ukraine (Dmytro Tabachnyk) and Russia (Dmitry Livanov) announced a reader for history teachers called \textit{Ukraine and Russia at the Crossroads of History}. Once again, the media called it either a textbook or a manual. The text offered a set of “non-controversial” topics, from the culture of Ancient Rus’ to the history of everyday life in the second half of the 1950s. Tabachnyk declared that even “the most attentive and malevolent critic reading these modules would be unable to find one page of text that does not make a Ukrainian a patriot of Ukraine and a Russian a patriot of Russia.”\textsuperscript{191} Alexander Chubaryan called the publication of the teaching aid “a breakthrough” and said that topics were being chosen for a next edition, and Livanov gave notice of plans to create a Russian-Ukrainian commission for expertise in history textbooks.\textsuperscript{192}

Critics who feared an ideological dictate from Moscow were still discontented when they received a “politically correct” product “without Mazepa and the UPA.” One of the articles written about the reader was titled: “The Common History of Ukraine and Russia was Reduced to Folklore, Nobles,

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\item[192] “Istoriki Ukrainy i Rossii napisali shkolnoye posobiye.”
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the Szlachta, Khrushchev-era Houses, and Cinema.” One of the authors of the newspaper Den’ asked, “even if it is a reader and not a textbook, how safe is it for Ukrainian education and research?”

By this time, the Russian president already had his own vision of “common history” (in these circumstances, the term became quite odd) that he had expounded on at the NATO summit in Bucharest on April 4, 2008. The main points of his speech that specifically concerned Ukraine can be distilled to the following: 1) Ukraine received lands from other countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and “huge territory” in the east and south from Russia; 2) “Crimea was simply given to Ukraine following a decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU [in 1954]. Not even normal state procedures for the transfer of this territory were followed;” 3) Ukraine is a “complicated state formation,” and if “NATO challenges” and “other problems” are brought in, they might bring this “state formation” to the brink of collapse; and 4) “17 million Russians live in Ukraine. Who can tell us that we do not have any interests there? The south, the south of Ukraine is completely . . . there are only Russians there.”

It is not hard to see that all these topics were further developed between 2014 and 2015. It started with Crimea. In his so-called “Crimean speech” in the Russian State Duma on March 18, 2014, Vladimir Putin essentially gave a lecture on the history of Crimea and Russia, laying out his own version of events past and present. Calling the Russians the most riven nation in the world (after the breakdown of the USSR), he declared that Crimea was given to Ukraine in 1991 as a “sack of potatoes,” which constituted a “blatant historical injustice.” Putin called the 1954 Crimean decision illegal, a “closed-door deal.” This speech was a preface to the signing of an agreement that attached the annexed Crimea to Russia.

In August, Putin again addressed the topic of Crimea. At the 2014 Seliger National Youth Forum he said that the incorporation of Crimea into Russia

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restored “historical justice.”196 On the anniversary of the annexation, which was called “reunification,” the president of Russia sang the Russian national anthem at a concert on Red Square and told the audience that Crimea was not simply a strategically important territory but a place where millions of their compatriots lived, a place that was the cradle of Russian spirituality and statehood.197 A year later, he reiterated the thesis that millions of Russians had been waiting for years for the restoration of historical justice, for the reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia.

These history exercises were not limited to Crimea. Already in his “Crimean speech” on March 18, 2014, Putin mentioned that after the Revolution, the Bolsheviks transferred “large territories of the historical South of Russia into the Ukrainian Republic. It was done without taking into account the ethnic composition of the region, and today it is contemporary southeastern Ukraine.” In just one sentence, the “historical South of Russia” turned into “contemporary southeastern Ukraine.” Soon the passage about the “historical South” morphed into the idea of “Novorossiya”198

Less than one month later, the so-called Russian Spring spread in Donbass, with armed takeovers of administrative buildings, government facilities, and law-enforcement buildings—in some cases carried out by well-organized and well-equipped professionals known as “little green men,” some of whom came from Crimea—and rallies and demonstrations by the local population mixed with Russian “tourists” who held signs with slogans like “Come, Putin!” and “Ukraine is Rus!”

On April 7, 2014, the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) was proclaimed. Ten days later, the Russian president, speaking on the Direct Line with Vladimir Putin television show, used the term Novorossiya for the first time to refer to lands that included Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Odessa, and Mykolaiv.199 He again declared that these territories were

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198 Novorossiya (New Russia)—the historical name of the southern regions of the Russian Empire from the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.
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given to Ukraine by the Bolsheviks and expressed concern for the rights of Russian-speaking citizens in these lands. Speaking about his readiness to help them defend their rights, Putin reminded viewers that the Federation Council gave him the power to use military force in Ukraine.

On April 24, 2014, the Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) was proclaimed. At the beginning of May, the DNR and LNR conducted referendums on independence according to the pattern set by the Crimean referendum. A month later, on May 24, 2014, the leadership of the DNR and LNR announced a federation under the name Novorossiya and even chose its parliament, headed by Oleg Tsaryov, the deputy chairman of the Party of Regions who had chosen Moscow as his permanent residence. On the same day, the congress in Donetsk, which created the “People’s Front of Novorossiya,” was attended by delegates from Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Odessa, Luhansk, Mykolaiiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson; only Dnipropetrovsk did not fit into the political geography of the region proposed by Putin.

The recognition of Novorossiya by historians and public figures with Russian government connections can be deduced from the interventions at the roundtable “The History and Culture of Novorossiya,” organized by the Russian Historical Society. In his remarks opening the conference, Valery Fadeyev, the head editor of Expert magazine, said that the “name Novorossiya has become known to many people only recently, but its history is already 250 years old.” In his opinion, without looking into the history of the region, it was impossible to understand “the deep reasons for the present unwillingness of the inhabitants of southeast Ukraine to live in Ukraine.” Vitaly Tretyakov, the dean of the Higher School of Television at Moscow State University, declared that Ukraine was an artificial state formation where in the southeast, a Ukrainian minority imposed its will on the Russian majority. As for Vladimir Pligin, the chairman of the State Duma Committee on Constitutional Legislation and State-Building, he declared the need to create a psychological portrait of a citizen of Novorossiya in order to start imagining the optimal form for the government structure of the region.

Yury Petrov, director of the Institute of Russian History in the Russian Academy of Sciences, announced plans to create a “large work” on the history of Novorossiya by the end of 2015. In his interview with the BBC, he also said that this work would serve as the foundation for a history textbook “for the teachers in the region.” He described his plans as stemming from “purely academic interest,” while at the same time substantiating their topicality because of the war in the region. Petrov also explained to the BBC that “Novorossiya objectively exists as a historical and cultural phenomenon.”

It was to this “objectively existing phenomenon” that historian Aleksandr Shubin dedicated his History of Novorossiya, which was written in barely a month and embraced the history of the region—according to his own expression—“from Targitai to Borodai” (or from the Scythians—whose legendary forefather was Targitaus—to September 2014). Shubin was one of the few Russian historians who openly condemned the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Ukrainian historians recognized both the achievements and plans of their colleagues and the underlying political reasons for the revival of the term Novorossiya. Shubin’s book was heavily criticized less for its content than for the context of its publication. The Novorossiya project itself was attacked by Fedir and Halyna Turchenko as “the last manifestation of Russian imperialism.”

However, historical arguments and counterarguments over Novorossiya soon lost their relevance. The project failed to attract mass support along the lines of referendums held in Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk. This failure was confirmed with a botched attempt to repeat the Donbass scenario with the seizure of administrative buildings in Kharkiv in 2014 and the declaration of the Kharkov People’s Republic, which was crushed by force with the support of pro-Ukrainian activists and because of the tragic events on May 2, 2014 in Odessa. After the signing of the Minsk Agreements in 2015, the Russian government focused on maintaining the DNR and LNR as auton-

205 Street clashes between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian demonstrators in Odessa caused over 50 deaths.
omous territories inside of Ukraine that were under Russian control. There was no need for Novorossiya anymore. In May 2015, Oleg Tsaryov said that the activity of Novorossiya’s ruling bodies was “placed on hold.”

In January 2018, the Verkhovna Rada again officially labelled Russia an aggressor state and recognized the self-proclaimed republics in Donbass as occupied territories. It was only after the presidential and parliamentary elections in the spring and summer of 2019 that the prospect of restoring negotiations between leaders in Ukraine and Russia emerged. The leaders of Germany and France backed the restoration of talks between Ukraine and Russia within the framework of the “Normandy format,” and the leaders of the four countries met in Paris on December 9, 2019; this meeting was considered a sign of a “thaw” in Ukrainian–Russian relations. However, the thaw did not actually mark any change in attitudes toward the past. On December 19, 2019, speaking at a big press conference in Moscow, Putin mentioned that some “native Russian lands that never had any relevance to Ukraine” were transferred to Ukraine in the Soviet period. In June 2020, he again mentioned “a huge amount of Russian lands, traditional Russian historical territories” were received by the former Soviet republics.

The topics and subjects described here certainly do not cover the whole story of the use (and abuse) of history in Ukrainian–Russian relations. However, they do allow us to get an idea of how historical politics at the intergovernmental level translates rivalries between national projects and national identities into international relations. The Russian–Ukrainian conflict over the past can be seen as a conflict between the Soviet nostalgic (with elements of imperial nostalgic) and Ukrainian national/nationalist memory narratives. It is also a conflict between inclusivist and exclusivist models of memory. The development of this conflict led to the revival of the idea of the unnaturalness of Ukrainian statehood in the rhetoric of the Russian ruling class, whereas in Ukraine, it led to the ethnicization of the Soviet and imperial nostalgic narratives, which began to be identified exclusively with ethnic Russians (or Russian language speakers).

As the experience of the twentieth century shows, such a conflict is often almost inevitable between neighbors who share a common past. The conflict arises both from the aspiration to separate “our” and “their” past and/or from the desire to revive it as a common past. Russian–Ukrainian debates over history translated into the political sphere demonstrate, once again, the conflict-generating potential of historical politics. The war over the past can easily become the ideological basis for a real war. As it turned out, mobilization on the “historical front” was quickly transformed into military mobilization.