Politics of Memory in Latvia and Ukraine: Official Narratives and the Challenges of Counter-Memory

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Abstract

This article provides a comparative analysis of the national cases of mnemopolitics of Latvia and Ukraine. The authors examine the historical politics of Ukraine and Latvia through the prism of two conceptual approaches - the "nationalizing" state of Rogers Brubaker and the "memory regimes" of Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik. The article demonstrates how two opposite narratives compete and coexist in both countries - the official national-centric and Soviet counter-memory narratives. In Latvia, the Soviet narrative was replaced beyond the bounds and acquired a pronounced ethnic shell acting through the Russian-speaking community, becoming completely informal. At the same time, the presence of a significant part of the Russian-speaking population with its own identity and collective memory, as well as the activation of the historical policy of the Russian Federation with its revisionist view of the history of the Baltic states, creates a real threat to the historical memory and identity of Latvia and turns them into security objects. In Ukraine, two narratives until 2014 demonstrated both competition and a strange symbiosis in both formal and informal commemoration. The hybrid war of Russia against Ukraine, in which the technology of manipulating via historical memory was actively used, caused measures to securitize the Ukrainian national narrative (laws of decommunization), its strengthening and updating. However, the volatility of the state strategy in the historical memory, its dependence on the change of power, do not exclude a return to ambivalence and uncertainty in the politics of memory.

Keywords: politics of memory, narratives, Latvia, Ukraine, decommunization.

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Introduction

The instrumentalization of history and its use in public policy today is not only an ubiquitous practice in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, but also often determines their connections with each other. Such an increase in the importance of memory and, in general, of the "symbolic" in the real politics often a priori causes concern and condemnation in the academic environment. In which one does not always pay attention to identifying cause-effect relationships of these practices, their motivational conditioning, finding out whether they are an ideological frame of the geopolitical expansion and the fight against pluralism, either become a response to the challenges for identity and national security. Moreover, the point is not so much in ignoring these questions, but in the complexity of the answers to them. Indeed, historical memory, acting as a means of solving political problems, requires a certain uniformity and neutralization of its natural pluralism and controverse. In the case of those countries that have relatively deep "cracks" in the ethnic, linguistic, and civilizational structure, the state policy of memory is accompanied by the existence and competition of the so-called "counter-memory" as an alternative to the official narrative.

In this regard, a comparative analysis of various national cases of the mnemopolitics of Central and Eastern Europe and especially those cases where the competition of formal and informal narratives is clearly visible as in Latvia and Ukraine will make it possible to better understand the complex and somewhat ambivalent significance of historical memory for political pluralism.

Despite the differences in their geopolitical position, Ukraine and Latvia are similar in a number of features that are directly related to the context of historical memory. The first factor is related to the identity division of the society on an ethnolinguistic basis in Latvia and on a regional, sociocultural, and partially linguistic basis in Ukraine.[1] Second, they share the recent historical background associated with being part of the USSR. Thirdly, they experience the destructive informational and propaganda influence of the Russian Federation with the goal of devaluing the national narrative within the framework of "Soft power" in Latvia and hybrid aggression in Ukraine.

In this context, this study applies two conceptual approaches. On the one hand, this article uses the concept of the "nationalizing" state of Rogers Brubaker, according to whom the official narrative has taken shape as a "nation-centric" in

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[1] Latvia is rather neatly divided into two large groups: the indigenous Latvians, who make 62,1% percent of population, and the Russian native speakers, who make up 37,2%, in "Latvia Population: Demographic Situation, Languages and Religions," European Commission, accessed August 7, 2020, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions.

post-communist countries.[2] We will see how this concept initially was rigidly implemented in Latvia and for a long time was imitated by Ukraine, intertwined with Soviet commemorative traditions. On the other hand, there is the concept of the "memory regime" of Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik, according to whom the memory regime can be described as divided into the official and alternative narrative of counter-memory in both countries, where the second is based on the Soviet legacy.[3]

The hypothesis of this research is that unlike other countries in the region, competition between national and Soviet narratives in Ukraine and Latvia still determines the agenda of mnemonopolitics and is a zero-sum game. That is, reconciliation or any synthesis of them is fraught not only with the rejection of the fundamental issues of the national narrative, but also with significant transforming the format of national identity as seen by political forces interested in deconstructing Soviet legacy and Russian influence. Such an option is not possible in Latvia; it will mark a return to the identity ambivalence in Ukraine that accompanies geopolitical uncertainty and multi-vector nature.

In the first part of the article, we will consider the theoretical models of historical politics used in the subsequent empirical analysis. In the second part, the analysis identifies the nodal points of the Latvian official narrative and the marginal narrative of counter-memory formed in the environment of the Russian-speaking community. In the third part, the analysis turns to the Ukrainian case of mnemopolitics, examining it in a retrospective perspective.

Theoretical Framework

The definition of the "politics of memory" is diverse in terms of the studied semantic field: history/historical politics,[4] politics of memory,[5] memory

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2   Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 11-12.

3   Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik, "The Politics of Memory and Commemoration," in *Twenty Years after Communism*, eds. Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

4   Pilvi Torsti, "Why Do History Politics Matter? The Case of the Estonian Bronze Soldier," in *The Cold War and Politics of History*, eds. J. Aunesluoma, P. Kettunen (Helsinki, 2008.) 19–35; Alexey Miller, "Историческая политика в Восточной Европе начала XXI века," [Historical politics in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the XXI century], in Историческая политика в XXI веке [*Historical politics of the XXI century*,] ed. by Alexey Miller, Maria Lipman (Moscow: New Literary Review, 2012), 7–32.

5   Nikolay Koposov, "Память строгого режима," [Memory of a strict regime,] in *История и политика в России [History and Politics in Russia]* (Moscow: New Literary Review, 2011).

politics,[6] politics of regrets[7] or "symbolic politics."[8] We suggest such an interpretation of the politics of memory, which includes all practices related to the formation of collective/historical memory from formalizing historical narrative to memorial laws.

Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik's concept of "memory regimes" defines the mode of memory or "mnemonic mode" as the dominant pattern of memorial politics that exists in society now in relation to a specific, significant past event or process.[9] Memory modes, in turn, are the building blocks of the official field of historical memory. The main criterion for determining the mode of memory is the type of "mnemonic actors" and their interaction. Mnemonic actors are political forces that are interested in a specific interpretation of the past. According to Bernhard and Kubik, diversity is divided into four types - mnemonic warriors, mnemonic pluralists, mnemonic abnegators (deniers) and perspectivists. Mnemonic warriors are inclined to a single, one-way mythologized vision of the past, while mnemonic pluralists insist on a different vision of history. Mnemonic abnegators avoid the politics of memory as such, and mnemonic prospectors assume that they solved the problems of history and thus found the key to a better future.[10] The authors determined the type of memory mode by the constellation of actors, which assumes that the presence of at least one mnemonic warrior makes the mode fractured. A mode where there is no warrior in the mix and at least one actor-pluralist is called "overarching". A regime where none of the participants is a warrior or a pluralist – they are all abnegators – is considered unified. The essence of the analysis is how to encode mnemonic actors in the contexts of different countries, in order to evaluate the nuances of the predominant memory mode. Bernhard and Kubik define the mnemonic regime in Latvia, Ukraine, and the Baltic countries in general as fractured. In this context, our task is to consider the main elements of the memory regimes of Latvia and Ukraine, the factors that determine their separation and the prospects for overcoming it or, conversely, aggravation. It is obvious that the presence of mnemonic warriors creates all the conditions for an active historical policy. The appeal to Brubaker takes us beyond the broad and diverse field of "memory studies," and it allows us to understand the mnemonic policy of

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[6] Zheng Wang, *Memory politics, Identity and Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[7] Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[8] Olga Malinova, "Политика памяти как область символической политики" [The politics of memory as a field of symbolic politics,] in *Методологические вопросы изучения политики памяти: Сборник научных трудов* [*Methodological issues of studying the politics of memory: Collection of scientific works*,] ed. by Alexey Miller and Dmitry Efremenko (Moscow-St. Petersburg: Nestor-history, 2018), 28.

[9] Bernhard and Kubik, "The Politics of Memory and Commemoration", 8.

[10] Bernhard and Jan Kubik, "The Politics of Memory and Commemoration," 13-14.

Latvia (and all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics) as an element of the "nationalizing state". Nationalizing states adopt nationalisms, which include demands made on behalf of the "titular" nation, are defined in cultural terms, and differ sharply from the totality of the demands of citizens as a whole. The titular nation means, in this case, the legitimate "owner" of the state. Despite having "its own" state, the titular nation has a weakened cultural, economic, or demographic position within that state through discrimination against that nation until it achieves independence. This is used as a justification for "compensation" or a kind of "compensatory" project of using state power to defend certain previously inadequately satisfied interests of the titular nation.[11]

The politics of memory and, more broadly, of identity are no less influenced by nationalism, which crosses the borders of the "external national homeland", in this case, Russia. It asserts the right and even the obligation of the state to monitor the political and cultural conditions in which there are its ethno-national "compatriots", to defend their well-being, to support their activities and organizations, to protect their interests.

Concerning Latvia, we can see that the nationalism of the "historical homeland" (Russia) arises and interacts dynamically with the "nationalizing" nationalism (Latvia). In the Latvian context, the nationalism of the Russian-speaking minority is closely intertwined to that of the nationalism of the historical homeland, Russia. The nationalist positions of the Russians of Latvia, as a rule, are characterized by the requirements of state recognition of their special status and the assertion of certain collective, based on nationality, cultural and political rights.

There are several intersections of nationalism and mnemonic politics. On the one hand, it seems obvious that the position of the state being nationalized leads to the active incorporation of the official historical memory of the titular nation as a goal, and to the formation of a countermemory of national minorities as a protest reaction. On the other hand, the nationalism of the "external historical homeland", inciting the nationalism of minorities, often becomes a decisive factor in the radicalization of the titular nation, which feels threatened by its security. Moreover, if this concept is almost completely relevant in relation to Latvia, Brubaker's format of the "nationalized" state had some hybrid reflection for Ukraine. We will try to see and explain these differences in the empirical part of this article.

The strategy of historical policy is based on mnemonic narratives and, conversely, historical policy arises as a system of narratives used by government officials, state representatives, cultural entrepreneurs, etc.[12] The

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[11]   Brubaker, "Nationalism Reframed," 57.
[12]   Vlad Strukov and Viktor Apryshchenko, "Introduction," in *Memory and Securitization in Contemporary Europe,* (eds.) Vlad Strukov and Viktor Apryshchenko (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), 18.

narrative, which is a story-driven, offers a picture of a chain of interrelated historical events is the main format for representing the past in both historiography and political discourse.[13] According to the Polish historian Jerzy Topolsky, linking individual episodes that form a horizontal projection of the narrative that occurs at three levels. These three levels include the information mediated by the historian's imagination, the rhetoric, or the audience's beliefs in the plausibility of the semantic scheme and "politics", or "theoretical - ideological bases", which include values or worldviews of the authors of the narrative.[14]

Unlike professional historiography, historical policy or politics of memory works with simplistic narratives that reduce complex contradictory historical processes to perceptual emotional patterns. The narrative outlines the contrasting of "us" and "them" impact on protecting the internal area of the society.[15]

This research used the concepts of the regimes of memory of Bernhard and Kubik and that of the "nationalizing state" of Brubaker to analyse the study of Latvian and Ukrainian cases of mnemonic politics.

Exploring narratives as products of the politics of memory, we turn to their public political components such as laws, declarations, commemorative dates, and rituals. We believe that historiographic discourse is a separate and self-sufficient subject of research.

The Main Trends in The Formation of The Politics of Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia And Ukraine

Based on the concept of the "nationalizing state" advanced by Brubaker, post-communist Latvia and Ukraine should have established national narratives of memory. However, such a movement can be traced only in Latvia. The rapid reversal of the Latvian historical narrative immediately after gaining state independence is explained by the aggressive policy towards the past that was dictated during the Soviet period. Referring to that period, the historian Irēna Šneidere summed up: "Historical facts and events that were unacceptable for the regime were hidden, and outright lies became the basis of historical

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[13]   Olga Malinova, "Политика памяти как область символической политики," [The politics of memory as a field of symbolic politics,] 37.

[14]   Jerzy Topolski, "The Role of Logic and Aesthetic in Constructing Narrative Wholes in Historiography," *History and Theory*. 38. No. 2 (1999): 202. DOI: 10.1111/0018-2656.00086.

[15]   Victor Aprishchenko, "Память как безопасность," [Memory as security,] in *Новое прошлое*, [*New Past,*] no. 3 (2016): 99-100.

concepts."[16] According to Vita Zelche, "the historical openness compromised the myths on which the Soviet system was based."[17] In this case, the collapse of the Soviet vision of history also meant the collapse of the regime, which was initiated by the events of June 1988, when the term "occupation" was voiced at the plenum of the creative unions of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR), which later became the cornerstone for the entire official historical narrative of Latvia in the 20th century.

The writing of new textbooks on the history of Latvia was one of the the main tasks, which was implemented in a short time. It is a paradox, but but these textbooks were written not by historians, but by politicians and journalists. This was due to the total distrust of society towards historians. After all, they were the mouthpiece of Soviet historical propaganda for the past 50 years. The lack of a professional approach to the creation of a new historical narrative led to the fact that the old Soviet myths were replaced by others. There was the creation of those journalists and politicians who, unlike scientists, could quickly and clearly respond to public inquiries. This approach was not too much different from what was practiced in post-war Latvia, but it was necessary to break with the Soviet past as quickly as possible. This was the beginning of the period that Vita Zelče calls "the era of illusions and fantasies,"[18] when the wounds of the Soviet past were healed by nationalism, myths about the glorious past and plans for revenge against the former oppressors.

These plans were put into practice in connection with the creation of the Center for Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism. Former Soviet functionaries were not only denied access to public service but were also brought to trial for participating in the repressive measures of the communist regime. In this way, in the case of Latvia, historians were not creators of politics of memory. Rather on the contrary, it was the collective memory that shaped the view of the past events among the historians of independent Latvia.[19]

In contrast to Latvia, after the declaration of independence of Ukraine in 1991, radical shifts have not been seen in the issues of the politics of memory. This state of things was connected primarily to the attitude of the elites. These were the same representatives of the party nomenclature who were more concerned with promoting their own interests, rather than de-Sovietization and decommunization at the state level. If the policy of "nationalizing" history was

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[16]   Irēna Šneidere, "*Historical Science and Communist Ideology in Soviet Latvia (1944–1991): Some Aspects*," in *Second Congress of Latvia. History and Identity. Congress Report*, eds. Bleiere, Diana and Karlsone, Anete (Rīga: Zinātne, 2008), 133.

[17]   Vita Zelce, "History–Responsibility–Memory: Latvia's case," in *Latvia Human Development Report 2008/2009: Accountability and Responsibility,* eds. Juris Rozenvalds and Ivars Ijabs (Rīga: Advanced Social and Political Research Institute, 2009), 48.

[18]   Zelce, "History–Responsibility–Memory: Latvia's case," 49-50.

[19]   Ibid.

carried out at the level of the leadership elites in Latvia, then education became the main object of the national view of history in Ukraine, and the politics of memory was carried out inconsistently and depended largely on the person who, at one time or another, held the presidency. This explains why the segmentation of periods of historical policy in accordance with the cadences of the Ukrainian presidents is widespread in the Ukrainian literature.[20]

During the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994), in accordance with the tasks of ideological substantiation of nation building, a corresponding historical narrative was introduced, which was to replace the Soviet concept of the history of Ukraine.[21] At the same time, in the early 1990s, the state did not (or rather did not have time to) take serious steps to approve the national-state narrative at a - broader than just educational - social level in the form of national holidays, or to emphasize certain memories, dates or events. In addition, the most controversial conflict of the Ukrainian-centric concept, the history of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), had not been propagandistically formed yet as a key episode of the national historical memory.[22]

The new President Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004) at that time quite clearly grasped the growing political influence of Ukraine's historical and cultural differences, and therefore tried in every way to neutralize it quite skilfully and even preventively, overshadowing the most controversial historical issues. His humanitarian policy was characterized by attempts to combine Soviet and Ukraine-centric historical narratives. The Day of Unity of Ukraine, the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holodomor, and the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repressions began to be celebrated at the state level during

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[20] "Концептуальні засади державної політики памяті," [Conceptual Principles of the State Policy of Memory,] Igor Simonenko, accessed June 3, 2020, https://niss.gov.ua/doslidzhennya/gumanitarniy-rozvitok/konceptualni-zasadi-derzhavnoi-politiki-pamyati-analitichna.

[21] Serhii Pakhomenko, "Історична пам'ять як інструмент політики: донецький вимір," [Historical Memory as a Tool of Politics: Donetsk Dimension], *Історичні і політологічні дослідження [Historical and political research,]* no. 3. (2013), 273.

[22] OUN is an Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. It was a social and political movement, founded in 1929 with the aim of restoring the Ukrainian independent national state. The OUN fought against the Polish administration in Western Ukraine, including using terrorist methods. Its representatives expected to use the Soviet-German conflict to implement the goal of creating an independent Ukraine, for which the OUN entered an alliance with Germany. Organization proclaimed the restoration of an independent unity of Ukraine, which caused Hitler's indignation, after the occupation of Lviv by the Germans on June 30, 1941. OUN leader S. Bandera was arrested and deported to Berlin. The OUN went to underground work and began to fight against the German occupation of Western Ukraine, and later against Soviet power in this region. UPA (Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiya) is a Ukrainian Insurgent Army. It was an armed formation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in 1942-1954. UPA operated in Western Ukraine.

that period. At the same time, the "Defender of the Fatherland Day", became official holiday again, it was given to the Soviet Army Day, and was celebrated on February 23rd. On the one hand, the state, initiated research to study and evaluate the activities of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). On the other hand, the Law "On the Perpetuation of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945" was adopted. It provided for the "prevention of the falsification of the history of the Great Patriotic War in scientific research, educational literature, textbooks and the media."[23]

There are certain critiques concerning the artificiality and perniciousness of this approach, but it should be noted that it did not cause too much resonant indignation of supporters of a particular view of the past. Although, obviously, not only the apparent "balance" of this attitude to history played a role here, but above all, a clear, centralized, closed to the president and his administration system of power and emphasized the strict *subordination to it of regional political elites. In such circumstances, they had neither the* ability nor the desire to use humanitarian issues to incite protests in society. Therefore, even under the leadership of Kuchma, the local governments of the Eastern regions of Ukraine were quite an appropriate "responder" of the state humanitarian policy, and, if they dared to promote something else, it was only on the language issue. Both presidents Kravchuk and Kuchma deliberately avoided difficult issues of the past that could lead to disagreements with Russia, or between different regions of Ukraine. This passive position of the Ukrainian leaders was dominant until 2004.[24]

If "historical" manoeuvring was an expression of an ambivalent attitude to the historical past for Ukraine and a desire to soften regional contradictions on this issue, so the adjustment of the national narrative was conditioned by Europeanization for Latvia and the need to include the Holocaust issue in official politics of memory. Since 1998, the official statements of Latvian politicians began to raise complex and painful issues of the historical past. For example, it was the issue of the participation of Latvians in the genocide of Jews during the Second World War. There was a long and painful procedure to integrate the Latvian historical narrative into the European one. The recognition of the Holocaust was one of the main statements that the historian Tony Judt called "European entry ticket."[25] The Latvian Commission of Historians, created in 1998, supervised this integration process. In this regard, Vita Zelče

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[23]   Pakhomenko, "Історична пам'ять як інструмент політики: донецький вимір," [Historical Memory as a Tool of Politics: Donetsk Dimension] 273-274.

[24]   Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Yuliya Yurchuk. "Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine: Reflections from the Post-Colonial Perspective," in *Memory Studies* 12 (6), (2019), 5.

[25]   Tony Judt, "Europe After World War II: Rising from the House of the Dead. How does Europe's recent history continue to inform its present and future?", accessed July 7, 2020, https://www.theglobalist.com/europe-after-world-war-ii-rising-from-the-house-of-the-dead/.

noted "Latvia began to look at history with European eyes"[26] in 1998. All of the above gives us the opportunity to conditionally distinguish two periods of the formation of the politics of memory in Latvia between 1988 and 1998.[27]

In Ukraine, on the other hand, after the Orange Revolution in 2004, the politics of memory in the spirit of a national narrative have rapidly intensified. Among Ukrainian leaders, President Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010) was the first who demonstrated a clearly expressed position on issues of the recent past. His memory politics was clearly anti-Soviet in nature. He refused to manoeuvre on historical issues and influenced historical memory not only in line with the national-state concept, but also with an increased emphasis on the Holodomor and UPA, which became focal points of the national narrative.

In comparison to Latvia, the emphasis and commemoration of the Holodomor victims was to be somewhat similar to the deportations and to reinforce the images of victimhood and suffering of the Ukrainian nation. The implementation of this provided for a number of measures that included the legitimation of the Holodomor as genocide at the legislative level, the campaign to recognize the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in the international arena; the creation of the National Book of Memory of Holodomor Victims; the encouraging of the publication of scientific research on the subject of the Holodomor of 1932-1933; and the creation of the National Museum "Memorial to the victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine", etc.[28] The policy of glorifying key UPA personalities was more controversial. In June 2007, the centenary of Roman Shukhevych's birth was officially celebrated. Then president Yushchenko posthumously awarded Shukhevych the title of Hero of Ukraine.[29] In addition, shortly before the end of his presidency in early 2010, Yushchenko awarded Stepan Bandera the title of Hero of Ukraine.[30]

The established infrastructure of historical policy in Latvia focused on promoting the idea of occupation. Among its institutes are the private "Museum of the Occupation of Latvia" is particularly active with an exhibition and research centre that were included by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia into the protocol for obligatory visits by foreign official delegations, the Military Museum of Latvia, and since 1998, the Latvian Commission of Historians under the President of Latvia. However, it should be noted that, unlike other countries in the region, including Estonia, no special

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[26] Zelce, "History–Responsibility–Memory: Latvia's case," 50.

[27] Ibid.

[28] "Голод 1932-1933 рр. в державній політиці памяті та суспільній свідомості", Bohdan Korolenko, [The Famine of 1932-1933 in the State Policy of Memory and Public Consciousness], accessed May 25, 2020, https://old.uinp.gov.ua/publication/golod-1932-1933-rr-v-derzhavnii-polititsi-pam-yati-ta-suspilnii-svidomosti.

[29] Roman Shukhevych (1907-1950) – a leader of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

[30] Stepan Bandera (1909-1959) – a leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

Institute of National Remembrance was created in Latvia.

In Ukraine, the key actor in the politics of memory is the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR), established in 2006. UINR becomes the main coordinator of the new state memorial strategy - revision and condemnation of the Soviet past for Ukraine. In this, the Ukrainian institute is inspired by the experience of decommunization carried out by similar institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. In its activity, it repeated the presidential instructions in the politics of memory. During the presidential period of Yushchenko, the issues of the Holodomor of 1932-33 and OUN-UPA were at the forefront. All the activities of the Institute and its director Igor Yukhnovsky were focused on perpetuating the memory of famine, political repression, and the national liberation movement during the Second World War at the state and international level. During the regime of Yanukovych, the communist Valery Soldatenko became the UINM director, which immediately affected the research topics. Since the President avoided painful questions of the past, the Institute also focused on the relatively neutral issues of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917-21 (Soldatenko is a specialist in these issues) and the Second World War, which was again called the "Great Patriotic War."

The politics of memory under Viktor Yanukovych were not only a step backward compared with the Yushchenko Presidency, but also welcomed back forgotten Soviet historical myths, and the pro-Russian view of modern Ukrainian history. There was a return to Soviet and Russian commemorative practices and narratives. Holding military parades on May 9, returning the term "Great Patriotic War" to textbooks, refusing to condemn the crimes of the Stalinist regime, and spreading military symbols of a contradictory nature (the St. George ribbon and the red flag) are examples of this.[31]

That is why the participants of the Revolution of Dignity[32] in 2014 used attributes and slogans as symbols, which either were pushed to the periphery or were banned under the Yanukovych Presidency; this included the Cossacks and the OUN-UPA. The personality of the new director of the Institute of National Remembrance, Volodymyr Viatrovich, is also an indicator of the preference granted by the Ukrainian government to a nationalist view of the recent past. As Viatrovych is a specialist of the topic of the Ukrainian nationalist underground, this direction became dominant in the studies of the Institute of National

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[31] Oleksandr Grytsenko, *Президенти і пам'ять. Політика пам'яті президентів України підґрунтя, послання ,реалізація, результати (1994-2014)* [Presidents and Memory. The Policy of Memory of the Presidents of Ukraine (1994-2014): Background, Message, Implementation, Results], (Kyiv: K.I.C, 2017), 872.

[32] Revolution of Dignity led to political and social changes in Ukraine as a result of mass protests from November 21, 2013 to February 2014. The excessive concentration of power in the hands of President Viktor Yanukovych and his "family," as well as the refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the EU were the main reasons for the protests.

Remembrance after 2014. In Ukraine, for the first time, there was a discussion about the contribution of Ukrainians to the victory over Nazism in World War II. Previously, there was no question of this, since the winner was considered as "the Soviet people" - an amorphous concept, an invention of Soviet propaganda, which has become firmly established in the official Russian historical perspective.

The introduction of laws on decommunization for consideration by the parliament and the president was the next logical step of the Ukrainian authorities. The tradition of adjusting historical policy in connection with the changes of the President remains. From the very beginning, President Volodymyr Zelenskyi indicated that this area would not be a priority for him but made it clear that in trying to consolidate society and reduce tensions with Ukraine's neighbours, especially Poland, he would abandon the most radical manifestations of the national narrative. However, during the first year of his Presidency, the change of leadership of the Institute of National Remembrance was the only significant step in this direction, and Anton Drobovych replaced Volodymyr Viatrovych. The new director proposed a more liberal course in historical politics, with a focus on local and minority history. The focal points of the national narrative - the Holodomor, the anti-terrorist operation, the national movement, and the decommunization remained unchanged in the official commemoration, but the authorities' attention to them, as well as to the politics of memory in general, decreased.

Thus, the post-2014 Ukrainian memory politics is highly dependent on Soviet and Russian postulates and operates in response to these imposed dogmas, often creating new myths, developing their own version of history, as was the case in Latvia.[33]

Nodal Points of the Latvian and Ukrainian National Narratives

The two key points in the post-Soviet state-building project in Latvia were the concept of occupation and the idea of legal and political continuity of the current state with the Republic of Latvia 1918-1941. The topic of occupation as a key issue goes through all the political and legal memorial documents issued by the Latvian Parliament (Saeima) in 1996, 1998 and 2005. The declaration of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, "On the Occupation of Latvia" of August 22, 1996, emphasized the Soviet genocide against Latvians and the traces left by half a century of occupation.

"Throughout the occupation of the USSR, purposefully carried out genocide against the people of Latvia, thereby violating the Convention on the Prevention

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[33]   Törnquist-Plewa, Yurchuk, "Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine: Reflections from the Post-Colonial Perspective," 6-12.

and Condemnation of Genocide of December 9, 1948 […] The Soviet leadership deliberately flooded Latvia with hundreds of thousands of migrants and with their help tried to destroy the identity of the people of Latvia".[34]

As it can be seen, in these parliamentary declarations the use of the term genocide is not limited to Stalinist crimes. The Latvian definition of genocide is clearly wider and concerns not only mass deportations in 1941 and 1949, but also the Soviet ethno-demographic policy.[35]

In the Declaration on Legionnaires of 1998, "On Latvian Legionnaires in the Second World War" of October 29, 1998 the idea of the identity of the two occupation regimes serves as the basis for denying the pro-Nazi character of this formation. It is also emphasized that Latvians were forcibly drafted into this legion.[36] These messages were very controversial. Although Latvia never tried to designate the memory of the legionnaires at the European level, it still considered their glorification at the national level justified and not contradicting the European collective memory. Some of the legionnaires collaborated in the early years of the war with the Nazis and took part in the Holocaust, but the vast majority did not, and the organization was not called criminal during the trial in Nuremberg. However, they wore SS uniforms. European mnemonic standards, with all their expansion to the condemnation of Stalinism, still do not allow their members to glorify such disputed formations of the Second World War. Therefore, the EU put pressure on Latvia, and it refused to celebrate the Legionnaire's Day officially on March 16, which was held in 1998-2000. Finally, the Saeima approved "On the condemnation of the totalitarian communist occupation regime of the USSR carried out in Latvia" on May 12, 2005.

Another key idea of the national narrative related to the concept of occupation is the idea of the legal continuity of the present republic with the Republic of Latvia before the Second World War. It is already embodied in the return (largely symbolic) of the Constitution of 1922. The securitization of historical narrative with its concept of a "republic-continuation," occupation and genocide has not only symbolic meaning and was called upon to influence collective memory more intensively. This process has laid certain moral and political legal foundations for specific political and legal decisions with far-reaching consequences. This refers to the institution of non-citizenship and criminal cases against persons accused of crimes during the Second World War.

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[34] "On the Occupation of Latvia," Declaration of Saeima, 22 August 1996, accessed June 14, 2020, http://lpra.vip.lv/deklaracija.html.

[35] Katja Wezel, "The Unfinished Business of Perestroika: Latvia's Memory Politics and Its Quest for Acknowledgment of Victimhood in Europe," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 44, No. 4, (2016), accessed June 14, 2020.

[36] "On Latvian Legionnaires in World War," Saeima of the Republic of Latvia Declaration, accessed June 14, 2020, https://www.nacionalaapvieniba.lv/valodas/.

Unlike Latvia, there could be no question in Ukraine of either the succession of the modern Ukrainian state or the Soviet occupation. Only in the symbolic and scientific-educational discourse Ukraine began to be considered as the successor of Kyivan Rus, the Cossack State and short-term Ukrainian states of the period 1917-1921.

For more than twenty years of Ukraine's development as an independent state, two historical narratives coexisted in understanding and assessing its past.[37] The first is defined as Ukrainocentric (nation-centric), national-state, or nationalist (the latter being somewhat categorical).[38] It is based on the view of national statehood as one of the main social values, and the struggle for it is seen as the meaning of the historical process in the Ukrainian lands. The ideological core of this narrative is the idea of the unity of Ukraine and its European identity. According to it, the presence of Ukrainian lands in the Russian Empire and the USSR is estimated as a dependence with varying degrees (in different historical periods) of national oppression. The second narrative is defined as Soviet or imperial, or more neutrally, East Slavic. It continues the pre-Soviet vision of an "all-Russian" history, transformed in Soviet times into the common history of the three fraternal Slavic nations, led by the Russians.[39]

Two phenomena of Ukrainian history of the twentieth century had specific ideological and social significance for the national-state narrative. These are the Famine-Genocide (Holodomor) of 1932-1933 and the activities of nationalist organizations during the Second World War and in the decade after it - Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The Holodomor of 1932-1933 is the genocide of the Ukrainian people, which is recognized through legislation, that is, not just a crime of the Stalinist regime, but a targeted policy of exterminating Ukrainians.[40] The

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[37] "Націоналістичне проти радянського: історична пам'ять в незалежній Україні", Volodymyr Kulyk, ["Nationalist vs. Soviet: Historical Memory in Independent Ukraine"], accessed May 25, 2020, http://www.historians.in.ua/ index.php/en/istoriya-i-pamyat-vazhki-pitannya/379-volodymyr-kulyk-natsionalistychne-proty-radianskoho-istorychna-pamiat-u-nezalezhnii-ukraini).

[38] "Політика історичної пам'яті в контексті національної безпеки України: аналітична доповідь," [The Policy of Historical Memory in the Context of National Security of Ukraine: An Analytical Report,] ed. Volodymyr Yablonsky (Kyiv: National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2019), 6.

[39] Sergii Pakhomenko, Kateryna Tryma and J'moul A. Francis, "The Russian–Ukrainian War in Donbas: Historical Memory as an Instrument of Information Warfare," in *The Use of Force against Ukraine and International Law Jus Ad Bellum*, Jus In Bello, Jus Post Bellum, eds. Sergey Sayapin and Evhen Tsybulenko (The Hague: Asser Press by Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2018), 301.

[40] Holodomor is mass famine, which covered the entire territory of the Ukrainian SSR in 1932-1933 within the borders existing at that time and caused millions of victims. It was committed by the leadership of the Soviet Union in order to suppress Ukrainians obedient

activities of the nationalist political (OUN) and military (UPA) formations are interpreted by Ukrainian historians as a national liberation movement against the German and Soviet occupation.

Otherwise, these phenomena are evaluated in the Soviet narrative. The anti-Ukrainian orientation of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 is denied, in the definition of which as genocide is seen an opaque hint to Stalin's neo-imperial policy as the heir to Russian imperialism. This hint is irritating the supporters of the Soviet narrative, who claim that other peoples of the USSR, not only Ukrainians, suffered from hunger. The OUN and UPA are considered Nazi collaborators, and their celebration as a revision of the results and historical memory of World War II.

Considering the remark that the ideological and value differences of Ukrainian society should not be simplified by the usual East-West dichotomy, it is well known the tendency of East and South Ukraine to follow the Soviet view of history and the West for the Ukraine-centric territories. At the same time, there is a widespread opinion in the public consciousness that the strongest "bastion" of Soviet ideas of the past is a specific region of Eastern Ukraine - Donbass. This view, although not devoid of stereotypes, is still based on the fact that most often the public articulation of disagreement with the Ukrainian-centric version of history reflects itself in the political and social discourse of this region.

It may seem that the problem of the activities of the nationalist paramilitaries of the period of World War II - the Latvian Waffen SS Legion and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) was a common painful issue of historical memory both for Ukraine and for Latvia. However, this comparison is too crude, to say the least - erroneous. First, it should be noted that from a historical point of view, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Latvian Legion are organizations that cannot be considered identical. To summarize, the UPA is a paramilitary part of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, whose goal was to liberate itself from Soviet and Nazi occupation. Latvian Legions were a volunteer unit of the Waffen SS. Of course, one should not exclude the possibility that some legionnaires really saw in the activities of the legions the way to a free Latvia, however, these goals were not even declared. According to Mārtiņš Kaprāns and Mykola Makhortykh it would be much more appropriate to compare LL with the 14th Grenadier Division of the Waffen SS.[41] But in a broad context, OUN-UPA as a whole and the Latvian Legion compared.

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and the ultimate elimination of Ukrainian opposition regime including efforts to build an independent from Moscow Ukrainian State. In 2006 by the Law of Ukraine "About the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine."

[41] Mārtiņš Kaprāns, Mykola Makhortykh, "Discussing Wartime Collaboration in a Transnational Digital Space: The Framing of the UPA and the Latvian Legion in Wikipedia," in *Traitors, Collaborators and Deserters in Contemporary European Politics*

The memory of these two organizations at the official level is a vivid indicator of the differences between Latvia and Ukraine in matters of the attitude of political elites to the recent past. For 20 years, the Day of Remembrance of Latvian Legionnaires (March 16) has been taken away from the official calendar of memorable dates that are celebrated at the state level. This change is connected with the turn, since 1998, of the Latvian politicians towards the European view of history. Nevertheless, authorities somehow recall the tragic fate of the legionnaires, and the conflict around March 16 is still open.

Ukrainian politicians used the memory of the UPA as a bargaining chip in their political games. In April 2015, the UPA was recognized at the state level as composed of fighters for independence, and denying this fact became as a criminal offense. This fact raised questions in the EU countries, which linked such a decision of the Ukrainian authorities to a violation of freedom of speech. At the level of society, we also see clear differences in the perception of the OUN-UPA and the Latvian Legion. In the case of Latvia, the confrontation is observed according to the ethnolinguistic principle (Latvians/Russians), and in the Ukrainian version - according to the regional (East/West).[42]

The fact that the Soviet system, although unintentionally, isolated from each other those Latvians who fought in different camps during the war, has played an important role in shaping the collective memory of Latvians about the events of World War II. Those who were involved in the legions were sent to Stalin's camps, and when they returned, they were forced to remain silent about their past. The same Latvians who fought in the Soviet army were forced to prove their loyalty to the regime all the time. After the war, the Soviets carried out the so-called "demographic occupation" of Latvia - a lot of migrants poured into the country from all over the USSR, who were carriers of their collective memory whose influence is also undeniable.[43]

How the skepticism about nation-centric historical politics is appropriate here? Of course, the nationalizing state according to Brubaker takes all measures to fix its narrative, often ethnocentric and usually anti-communist in nature.[44] In addition, from a liberal-neutral point of view, it looks one-sided and anti-pluralistic. However, as Eva Clareta Onken points out, democracies also have many opportunities to work with a multitude of social memories that are constantly generated and assigned in changing political and socio-economic

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of Memory, eds. Gelinada Grinchenko, Eleonora Narvselius (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 169-195.

[42]   Kaprāns, Makhortykh, "Discussing Wartime Collaboration."

[43]   Dagmara Beitnere-Le Galla, "Second World War History: Memory Conflict and Dialogue," *Sociology and Anthropology* 4 (7) (2016): 536-545.

[44]   Brubaker, "Nationalism Reframed," 104.

conditions.[45] It should also be noted that critics of Latvian historical policy often neglect pluralism themselves, not finding a place to demonstrate arguments or at least the prerequisites for the formation of just such a national narrative. In particular, Ammon Cheskin does not indicate that the occupation as the most important nodal point was chosen not only because the new elites imposed a "nationalist" version of collective memory, and found the corresponding ideological level as influencing collective memory.[46] This fact is also connected with the consequences of the occupation in the form of repression and deportations, which occupied a central place in the collective memory of ethnic Latvians, being earlier (in Soviet times) outside the official mnemonic field. Latvia can serve as a good example of how the Soviet authorities tried to create an official "history" and a long-term "collective memory" of Soviet brotherhood and liberation.[47]

Nevertheless, in the private area of family memory, supported to some extent by the literature and research of emigrants, parallel collective memory of lost statehood, individual suffering, and political terror under the Stalinist regime prevailed. Without the existence of such parallel narratives, a powerful desire for independence would hardly have become possible, when in the late 1980s, with the abolition of censorship and the change in political premises, this memory was easily called up and brought tens of thousands of people out of doors.[48]

According to Viktor Apryshchenko[49] and Elizaveta Gaufman,[50] the meanings of security are shaped by past historical experience. For Latvians, deportations were the main trauma and the axis around which their identity was formed. Anthropologist Vieda Skultans claims that this tragic plot of their history had the same meaning as the Holocaust for Jews.[51] Therefore, as soon as the right socio-political moment arrived, collective trauma received public actualization and played a major role in the formation of the national narrative, which became to some extent compensation for all resentment and humiliation, physical violence and (in a broader sense) the structural destruction of everyday

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[45] Eva-Clareta Onken, "Memory and Democratic Pluralism in the Baltic States – Rethinking the Relationship," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 41, No 3 (2010): 281.

[46] Ammon Cheskin, "History, Conflicting Collective Memories, and National Identities: How Latvia's Russian-Speakers Are Learning to Remember," *Nationalities Papers*, 40, no. 4 (2012): 561–84.

[47] Eva-Clarita Onken. "The Baltic states and Moscow's 9 May commemoration: Analysing memory politics in Europe," *Europe-Asia*, Vol. 59 (2007).

[48] Zelce, "History–responsibility–memory: Latvia's case," 51.

[49] Viktor Apryshchenko, "Memory as Security: Images of the Past in 2014 National Referenda in Europe," in *Memory and Securitization in Contemporary Europe,* eds. Vlad Strukov and Viktor Apryshchenko (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), 28.

[50] Elizaveta Gaufman, *Security Threats and Public Perception: Digital Russia and the Ukraine Crisis (New Security Challenges,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), 222.

[51] Vieda Skultans, "Theorizing Latvian Lives: The Quest for Identity," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3, no. 4 (1997): 764.

life, prospects, and plans. Moreover, historical traumatic experience defined the meaning of security, which assumed the occupation as the main cause of suffering, and the USSR and Russia as the main threat. Aleida Assmann identifies four formats of memory: individual, social, political, and cultural.[52] Individual and social memories are formed at the community level and based on their memories. And they are ascending, directed from the social environment to the level of power, without the support of which they disappear after several generations. Political and cultural memories are descending, they come from the elite, tend to unambiguous interpretations and pragmatic use of the past by the state and political elites, which are historical politics. It is obvious that the co-optation of ascending and descending memories brings success to the state policy of memory.[53]

Based on the concept of Assmann about descending and ascending memory, in this case we see their convergence and wide response and positive answer, the so-called descending (social and individual) memory of the ethnically Latvian part of Latvian society. However, in the specific conditions of Latvia, such an active incorporation of a national-ethnic narrative simultaneously turned into a serious threat in the form of stigmatization of the Russian-speaking community. Most Latvian Russians did not accept the national narrative of occupation. Moreover, under the influence of the aggressive historical policy of Russia, the Russian minority of Latvia adopted the narrative of the historical homeland with the opposite Latvian understanding of the events of 20th century history, where the Soviet "liberation" of Latvia from the Nazis and the May 9 commemoration as Victory Day are the central issues.

According to a 2012 poll, 58.5% of Russian-speakers believe that Latvia ended up in the USSR as a result of a voluntary decision.[54] A poll conducted in the summer of 2015 showed that 26% of the respondents have celebrated May 9 in the previous five years, with a huge difference between the answers of Latvians (7.5%) and Russian-speakers (65.8%).[55] Moreover, in the course of in-depth interviews conducted by Latvian researchers among members of Russian-speaking nongovernmental organizations, three most relevant topics can be observed: the linguistic and cultural self-preservation; preserving the historical memory with a special emphasis on celebrating May 9 and maintaining a

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[52] Aleida Assmann, "Длинная тень прошлого: мемориальная культура и историческая политика" [The Long Shadow of the Past: Memorial Culture and Historical Politics,] (Moscow: New Literary Review, 2014), 19.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Mārtiņš Kaprāns, "Remembering communism in Latvia: a nationalizing state and the multi-directionality of the past," in *The New Heroes – The New Victims*, eds. Gubenko, Igors, Hanovs, Deniss, Malahovskis, Vladislavs (Riga: Zinātne, 2016), 78.

[55] Vita Zelce, "The Transformation of 'Holiday' in Post-Soviet Space: Celebrating Soviet Victory Day in Latvia," *Europe-Asia Studies* vol.70, Issue 3 (2018): 388-420.

network of Russian schools as guarantors of preserving the identity.[56] The special status of May 9, the Second World War, and Victory Day celebrations are significant elements of the collective myth for Russian speakers in Latvia, which became part of their national identity, while this special holiday simultaneously became a natural form of identity demonstration for Russian speakers. As a result, any form of refusal by Russians in Latvia to celebrate this event is associated with a threat and is very painfully perceived in the context of the fear that may arise as a result of the thought of losing this viable myth.

In such a situation, there is usually serious tension within the state, which, on the one hand, adheres to the ideas of an open society and pluralism, but, on the other hand, bases most of its claims to legitimacy on a national narrative of the past or political memory. Moreover, it mainly consists of collective ethnic categories that are not shared by a significant part of society.[57] Latvian researcher Zaneta Ozolina calls this situation a "security dilemma."[58] After the declaration of independence in the early 1990s, when Latvians were looking for their renewed identity based on European values, representatives of the Russian community perceived these attempts as a threat to their identity. Latvian society perceived the admission into the European Union and NATO as the irreversibility of the sovereignty of the state and the stability of the nation, but this caused an ambiguous reaction from the Russian speaking community, including as a threat to the ethnic group, as their national identity is associated with Russia.[59]

The search for a new identity for Latvians implied not only its adaptation to European values, but also the formation of a national historical narrative. This completely contradicted the perception of history in the spirit of the Soviet narrative inherent in the Russian-speaking community. We believe that this, and not just the Europeanization of Latvia, caused Russian speakers a sense of threat and rejection. And the aggressive historical policy of the Russian Federation (especially active recently), the main tool of which is the propaganda of "fascisation" of Latvia and its inability to state building not only deconstructs the national narrative in the eyes of the Russian-speaking community, but also creates a direct threat to national security.

In Ukraine, the nationalization of the narrative met with even fiercer resistance in 2005-2009. Local elites in Eastern Ukraine reacted particularly

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56 Sigita Struberga, "Non-governmental Organisations: Source for Inclusion or Exclusion?," in *Societal Security. Inclusion-Exclusion Dilemma. A portrait of the Russian –speaking community in Latvia*,ed. Zaneta Ozolina (Rīga: Zinātne, 2016), 102.

57 Onken, "Memory and Democratic Pluralism in the Baltic States – Rethinking the Relationship," 286.

58 Zaneta Ozolina, "Societal Security: Conceptual Framework," in *Societal Security. Inclusion-Exclusion Dilemma. A portrait of the Russian –speaking community in Latvia*, ed. Zaneta Ozolina (Rīga: Zinātne, 2016), 26.

59 Ozolina, "Societal Security: Conceptual Framework," 13.

negatively to the proposed changes to the historical narrative. Active information campaigns were launched and accused the president and the government of rewriting history, rejecting the idea of the Holodomor as genocide of the Ukrainian people, and equating the "heroization" of UPA activists with Nazism. President Yushchenko's initiatives to reconcile Soviet veterans with UPA veterans, the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the UPA at the state level, and propaganda events that introduced the history of the nationalist underground activities to the Eastern regions of Ukraine inevitably caused a negative public response, amplified by the media, controlled by local politicians. At the official level, this response was formalized in the relevant resolutions and appeals of the Donetsk regional and city councils. The condemnation of the idea and political practice of glorifying the UPA was at the core of these documents, emphasizing its collaborationism with the use of brightly negative evaluation tokens such as "fascist manuals" and "henchmen" (*pryhvosni*).[60]

In 2009, a group of Donetsk historians and political scientists established the Center for Political Science Analysis and Technology. Among its tasks were to debunk the reactionary political myths imposed by the "orange government" (including Donbass as a mafia region), to support a positive information image of Donbass and the South-East, to study and popularize the regional identity of the Donetsk region. One of the members of that institution, historian Aleksey Martynov, published a number of articles that combined emotional journalism and scientific elaboration, and exposed the collaborationism of Ukrainian nationalism during World War II.[61] Because he used one-sided selected sources and historiographical material that could be evaluated as forms of counterpropaganda, used the well-known practice of "labelling," reduced their scientific nature.[62]

The Revolution of Dignity of 2013-2014, Russia's occupation of Crimea and part of Donbass, the protracted military and political conflict with Russia became a serious reason to change the national narrative and formed a new policy of historical memory in Ukraine. The policy of historical memory became as an instrument of national security.

In comparison to Latvia, where the change from the narratives of the Soviet past began in the first years after independence, 2014 can be considered the starting point of mass decommunization in Ukraine. The rehabilitation of the national historical narrative has become a new task of the transformed policy of historical memory in Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR) under the leadership of Viatrovych was becoming a key actor in the politics of memory in Ukraine. UINR became the main coordinator of

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[60]   Pakhomenko, "Історична пам'ять як інструмент політики: донецький вимір" [Historical memory as a tool of politics: Donetsk dimension,] 274.
[61]   Ibid., 276.
[62]   Ibid.

the new state memorial strategy - revision and condemnation of the Soviet past for Ukraine. The Ukrainian institute was inspired by the experience of decommunization carried out by similar institutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

In April 2015, at the request of Viatrovych, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Ukrainian Parliament) adopted a package of four "historic" laws. These were: "The legal status and honouring the memory of fighters for Ukraine's independence in the XX century", "The perpetuation of the victory over Nazism in World War II 1939-1945", "The access to the archives of the repressive organs of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991" and "Condemning the communist and National Socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes and banning the propaganda of their symbols" laws.[63]

The concept of decommunization, which was introduced under this package of laws, to some extent followed the experience of European countries, including Latvia. In a general sense, decommunization laws focused on several changes in the national narrative. In the first place, they included the recognition that the Ukrainian liberation movement was the main subject of Ukraine's independence. The range of structures recognized as fighters for independence was expanding; social benefits for their members were adopted; responsibility for "public contempt" for the participants in the liberation struggle was included. In the second place, was seen the rejection of the concept of the "Great Patriotic War", the abolition of norms on the "Victory Banner"[64] and other Soviet and Russian commemorative practices, the recognition that both totalitarian regimes, which committed "numerous war crimes, crimes of genocide" were implemented. Thirdly, the free access to the archives of the former repressive bodies of the USSR was guaranteed by the state. Finally, the criminalization of the Nazi and Soviet regimes, a ban on their propaganda and symbols, the criminal liability for the violation of this regulation, the definition by law of a "schedule" for the dismantlement of the Soviet monuments and renaming propagandistic Soviet toponyms, with responsibility for its non-fulfilment were implemented.

On the one hand, it is observed that the nation-centric paradigm of the historical discourse is being fixed at the societal level without public consultation and discussion. On the other hand, under the influence of the Russian aggression, Ukraine is destined to pursue an active, even slightly hostile, promotion of nation-centric memory. It is a tool of self-defence of its humanitarian and identity space.[65] According to Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, the

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[63] Pakhomenko, Tryma, Francis, "The Russian–Ukrainian War in Donbas: Historical Memory as an Instrument of Information Warfare," 309.

[64] The Soviet Banner of Victory was the red banner raised by the Red Army soldiers on the Reichstag building in Berlin on May 1, 1945.

[65] Pakhomenko, Tryma, Francis, "The Russian–Ukrainian War in Donbas: Historical Memory as an Instrument of Information Warfare," 309-310.

presentation of bills in one package, which dealt with a wide variety of politics of memory issues, was a mistake because aspects that should have become a medicine for society, gave rise to a real threat of new conflicts, including at the international level.[66] For example, the heroization of the Ukrainian nationalist underground organizations caused a sharply negative reaction from Poland.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine also significantly influenced the Latvian national narrative and its anti-Soviet accent was increased. The anti-Soviet emphasis of the national narrative has intensified since 2014 under the influence of the changed geopolitical situation in connection with Russian aggression against Ukraine. The memories of the Soviet invasion of 1940 and the occupation of Latvia revived in public and political discourses, and historical memory again updated its significance as an object of security.

There are three changes in the legislation that were adopted by the Latvian Parliament (the Saeima) in 2014 and which clearly reflect the securitization process. In the first place, several amendments to the Criminal Code were made, which provide for criminal prosecution through denial or acquittal of totalitarian regimes.[67] The second important expression of the increased concern regarding identity and memory was the amendment to the relevant law indicating the deadline for the full opening of the Committee for State Security (KGB) archive in 2018.[68] At that time, the KGB documents were made public and information about agents and informants of the Soviet special services became available to the public. In addition, although most of the documents contained only name cards without any mention of the activities of these people, nevertheless a wide public resonance created a certain public barrier for the popularization of the pro-Soviet/pro-Russian historical narrative. Finally, in 2014, the main paradigm of the Latvian national narrative - the paradigm of two evils - the Soviet and Nazi occupation was introduced into the Latvian Constitution. The preamble, added to the constitution, emphasizes that the people of Latvia "condemn the Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes and their crimes."[69] The author and initiator of the amendment was Egils Levits, the current President of Latvia.

The second wave of securitization of memory concerns the period 2019-2020, and it is connected not only to the ongoing war in Ukraine, but also to the explicit revisionist historical statements of the Russian leadership regarding the

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[66]   Törnquist-Plewa,Yurchuk, "Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine: Reflections from the Post-Colonial Perspective," 11-12.
[67]   Kaprāns, "Remembering Communism in Latvia: A Nationalizing State and the Multi-Directionality of the Past," 82.
[68]   Ibid.
[69]   "Constitution of Latvia, 15 February 1922," Legal Acts of The Republic of Latvia, accessed June 12, 2020, https://likumi.lv/ta/en/id/57980-the-constitution-of-the-republic-of-latvia.

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the outbreak of the Second World War, as well as the ongoing propaganda deconstruction of the Ukrainian idea of statehood. This wave includes the designation of historical memory as an important element of national security in the Latvian National Security Concept, adopted in August 2019; a resolution by the Latvian Sejm condemning Russian historical revisionism (January 2020), and amendments to relevant laws that finally ban Soviet and Nazi symbols and uniforms at public events (May 2020).[70] Thus, the historical policy of Latvia is subordinated to national-state imperatives. It has been carried out quite strictly and consistently since the restoration of independence, and Russian historical revisionism only stimulates its further intensification, despite the counter-memory of the Russian-speaking community of the country.

Conclusions

Based on the concepts of Bernhard and Kubik, Latvia and Ukraine are characterized by a divided memory regime, which means competition and the coexistence of two opposing narratives - official national and Soviet (Russian) counter narratives. If the dividing line is generally ethnic in nature in Latvia, it is rather regional and sociocultural in Ukraine. Latvia's tough and purposeful policy of introducing a national narrative makes it a classic example of a "nationalizing state" according to Brubaker. The preservation of the ambivalence of the Ukrainian historical policy does not allow it to be fully attributed to this paradigm. Both countries were forced to abandon the Soviet historical narrative in order to legitimize themselves as independent states. However, Latvia did it decisively and categorically, often to the detriment of an objective understanding of history. In Ukraine, the rejection of Soviet ideological dogmas was uneven, had a clearly expressed opportunistic character, which depended on the foreign policy and was strongly dependent on the personality of the president, who, in turn, was a representative of one or another regional elite. In Latvia, ethnic Latvians created the politics of memory at the request of the local intelligentsia, which was at the core of all the reforms in the country. The Soviet occupation of Latvia and the related deportations and repressions, as well as the idea of legal and political continuity of the Republic of Latvia from 1918-1940 with modern Latvian statehood are the nodal points of

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[70]   Serhei Pakhomenko, "Рефлексии Латвии на российскую гибридную агрессию против Украины: кейс политики памяти" [Latvia's Reflections on Russian Hybrid Aggression Against Ukraine: A Case of Politics of Memory], *The Scientific Journal of Cahul State University "B. P. Hasdeu:" Social Sciences,* 11, no. 1 (2020): 41-43.

the Latvian national narrative. Historical policy defines these subjects as central, which determines the corresponding infrastructure and commemorative calendar.

In contrast to Latvia, a hybrid approach to historical policy was dominating in Ukraine until 2014, characterized by the coexistence of two historical narratives. These are Ukrainian-centric (national-state) and Soviet, which sometimes compete, other times combine with each other, as in state commemorative practices, and in the public mind. Certain nodal points of the official narrative - the Holodomor and the insurgency of Ukrainian nationalists during World War II were officially approved only in the mid-2000s. It was connected to the active historical policies of President Yushchenko, whose national-centric imperatives have been considered with skepticism by the elites and the citizens in the East and South of Ukraine.

The significant Russian-speaking minority in Latvia formed an alternative narrative, a kind of "counter-memory," where the main plot is Soviet "liberation" of Latvia, and as a commemorative practice there is Victory Day. This is due to the presence of a significant segment of the Russian-speaking population with its own identity and collective memory, and the activation of the historical policy of the Russian Federation with its revisionist view of this region's history and the neighbouring Baltic countries. This creates a real threat to the historical memory and identity of Latvia and turns them into an object of security.

The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, where the wide use of historical memory was one of the instruments used led to the securitization of the politics of memory in Ukraine, which included large-scale decommunization and the formation of a new commemorative calendar in accordance with the national-state narrative. During the current presidency of Volodymyr Zelenskyi (2019-2014), a Ukrainian-centric narrative is formally retained and the generally indifferent attitude to mnemonopolitics is emphasized at the same time. This may cause the rehabilitation of the Soviet narrative and a return to the identity ambivalence that accompanies geopolitical uncertainty.

For Latvia, the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine using historical memory as an information and propaganda weapon has led to a re-actualization of the historical experience and collective trauma of Latvians connected with the Soviet occupation and accelerated the formation of new meanings of security. These meanings imply the strengthening of political and legal measures to protect the national narrative as an element of identity.