BETWEEN OBLIVION AND REMEMBRANCE: THE REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLOCAUST IN SOVIET UKRAINIAN FICTION AND NON-FICTION OF THE 1940s–1960s

by

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ABSTRACT

The following thesis examines the representation of the Holocaust in Soviet Ukrainian fiction and non-fiction of the 1940s through the1960s – namely, in the journalism of Iaroslav Halan, Iurii Smolych, and Iurii Ianovskyi, prose works by Varvara Cherednychenko, Iurii Smolych, and Iurii Ianovskyi, Mykola Bazhan's poetry, as well as in the memoirs of Iryna Khoroshunova and Dina Pronicheva. It also analyzes Ivan Dziuba's speech delivered by him during the commemorative gathering in Babyn Yar in September 1966. The first two postwar decades in Soviet Ukraine were a crucial period that laid a foundation for the future commemoration of the Holocaust victims, in particular, of those who perished in the Babyn Yar massacre in Kyiv in September 1941. Such a representation was influenced by the Soviet policy on nationalities (both before and after World War II), the aesthetics of socialist realism, and, to a certain degree, by the subjectivities of the Ukrainian journalists and writers who oscillated between compassion and indifference towards their neighbours – and, consequently, between remembrance and oblivion. Drawing on the theoretical approaches of literary scholars (Mikhail Bakhtin, Katerina Clark, Evgeny Dobrenko) and memory studies scholars (Jeffrey Alexander, Aleida Assmann, Cathy Caruth), this study shows that the bottom-up approach to the formation of memory is no less important than the top-down approach and that the individual efforts of the writers and civil activists can go a long way even under the unfavourable political circumstances.

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Introduction

The following study is devoted to the examination of the complex and multi-faceted topic of the representation of Jews and the Holocaust in Soviet Ukrainian fiction and non-fiction of the 1940s–1960s. In the course of World War II, 1.5 million Jews – 60 percent of the country's Jewish population – perished in what is now known as "the Holocaust by bullets" (Shkandrij 2009, 167).[1] Such an enormous loss of human lives and the subsequent disappearance of a rich cultural tradition that was embodied in this ethnic group cast a long shadow on the population of Soviet Ukraine, the majority of which have been living side by side with Jews for centuries.

Yet, the abruptness of the tragedy and the Soviet post-war policy of commemorating the war victims in a generalized manner, without singling out Jews as specific targets of the Nazi persecution, made it even more difficult to acknowledge the event and to reflect upon it. Moreover, the Soviet interpretation of the events of World War II laid an emphasis on Stalin's and the Communist Party's role in achieving the victory over the Nazis. Such an approach marginalized the problem of the human sufferings during the wartime and paid little attention to the everyday life of ordinary people under occupation and in evacuation. The issue of local collaboration with the German war administration during the war was unequivocally condemned and thus never scrutinized or reflected upon.

The demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent Ukraine in 1991 brought new challenges to the processes of comprehension and commemoration of the Holocaust in the country. While censorship was gone, and there were no more restrictions regarding historical research, not everyone was prepared to accept the complicity of representatives of local Ukrainian population in Nazi crimes. It is important to emphasize that Ukrainians also acted as the saviors of the Jews – some of them did so at the cost of their own lives. For example,

[1] "The Holocaust by bullets" is the term that was coined to describe the specific nature of the killings of Jews in the territories of the occupied Soviet Union (and in particular in Ukraine). In Ukraine, the majority of the victims were killed by machine guns in the outskirts of cities, towns, and villages, in forests or ravines, often in the daylight and in close proximity to other local inhabitants. The most well-known mass killing of this type is the Babyn Yar massacre in Kyiv in September 1941.

the Ukrainian mayor of Nazi-occupied Kremenchuk, Synytsia-Vershovsky, was shot because he tried to protect the Jews. The Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church Andrei Sheptytsky saved the lives of 150 Jewish children and 15 adults. Sheptytsky "virtually alone in Europe... publicly defended the Jews and in a letter to Hitler protested against using Ukrainians to annihilate the Jews" (Bilinsky 382–383). Thus, the issue of the Holocaust remembrance in Ukraine is not simply one of acknowledging complicity and war crimes, but a complex and multi-dimensional issue that plays out at a national and local level, and an issue of remembrance and aftermath.

Since the beginning of the previous decade, Ukraine has seen an increasing amount of public attention to the issue of commemorating the Jews who perished during the war and to the promotion and preservation of Jewish culture as such. For instance, the Menorah cultural centre, which is one of the largest Jewish community centers in the world, was established in Dnipro in 2012; in 2015, the new memorial and educational space was opened on the place of the Golden Rose Synagogue in Lviv, the city in Western Ukraine where circa 150 000 Jews lived before the war. By the same token, a set of scholarly articles *Babyn Yar. History and Memory* about the Babyn Yar massacre of 1941 was published in Kyiv in 2016 (Hrynevych, Magocsi; 2016); the volume *Jews and Ukrainians: A Millenium of Co-Existence* edited by Paul Robert Magocsi (Canada) and Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern (USA, Ukraine) was published both in English and in Ukrainian (Magocsi, Petrovsky-Shtern; 2016). Most recently, in 2020, the outstanding Ukrainian poet and translator Marianna Kiyanovska received the main Ukrainian literary award – The Shevchenko Prize – for her book of poetry *Babyn Yar: holosamy* (English translation: *The Voices of Babyn Yar*, Harvard UP and HURI, 2022), which is written as a series of monologues by the victims of the massacre. Consequently, the proposed study is not only relevant to the fields of Soviet studies and Holocaust studies, but also has wider implications for contemporary Ukraine and the Ukrainian search of inclusivity and mutual understanding.

In this study, I contend that the Soviet Ukrainian writers[2] during and after World War II were more often than not sympathetic to Jews, although there were instances when sociopolitical circumstances and historical traumas prevented them from reflecting upon Jewish sufferings. This sympathetic attitude can be found in all genres of Soviet Ukrainian fiction and non-fiction that I chose for examination: in the wartime journalism and in the post-war journalistic accounts, in fiction (both in the novels and in the short stories that in many other respects aligned with the aesthetics of socialist realism), in poetry, and in the post-war non-fiction. There is a temptation to assume that such a sympathetic response was due to the official Soviet ideology that declared the equality between different ethnic and national groups in the Soviet Union. As it was stated in the 1936 Constitution, "equal rights for citizens of the USSR, regardless of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social, political life shall be an irrevocable law. Any direct or indirect limitations of these rights..., as well as any propagation of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, shall be punishable by law" (quoted in: Choseed 111).

However, the sympathy and understanding experienced by the Ukrainians towards the Jews were based not so much on the equality proclaimed by state leaders but rather on the inequality that these two groups experienced in their real life under Soviet rule. Initially, the Bolshevik leaders stuck to the policy of "indigenization" (Ukrainian: *korenizatsiya*) that supported education, literature and culture in national languages. This was true both for Ukrainians in the Ukrainian SSR and for Jews in the country. As Shkandrij noted, "the Bolsheviks had realized that establishing peace in Ukraine entailed making concessions to national aspirations, and a policy of Ukrainization was... announced" (Shkandrij 1992, 16). In 1923–1928, the state support of Ukrainian culture led to cultural Renaissance in Soviet Ukraine,

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[2] There is the difference of opinions regarding how to define a "Ukrainian writer". An author may be defined as Ukrainian because he or she writes (wrote) in Ukrainian. In my thesis, I stick to this definition. However, the authors who write in such languages as Yiddish, Russian, Crimean Tatar (*qirim tili*) and live on Ukrainian soil have every right to be considered Ukrainian as well. The latest scholarly article that examines, for instance, contemporary Russian-language literature of Ukraine is "Russophone literature of Ukraine: self-decolonization, deterritorialization, reclamation" by Alex Averbuch (*Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol. 65, No, 2, 2023: 146–162).

but very soon the party leaders realized that the most nationally-minded writers and artists represented a threat to state unity. In 1927–1928, there was a turn from the policy of Ukrainization towards a more uniform and Russian-oriented cultural policy. The gloomiest years for the Soviet Ukrainian intelligentsia were the 1930s, when large-scale repressions against Ukrainian cultural figures took place; the phenomenon of mass execution of Ukrainian writers and artists during the years of the Great Terror is now known as the "Executed Renaissance". The most infamous crime against Ukrainian intelligentsia was the Sandarmokh massacre in Karelia, Russia, where on October 27 1937 more than 1100 prisoners were executed. According to the Russian historian Iurii Dmitriev, who has been working to identify the victims since the 1990s, the number of ethnic Ukrainians who died in Sandarmokh was especially high: 289 writers, artists, and scholars were shot in a single day. Among them were such prominent figures as Mykola Kulish, Les Kurbas, Valerian Pidmohylny, Hryhorii Epik, Mykola Zerov and other writers who contributed to the development of Ukrainian culture during the years of "indigenization". Those who managed to survive the purges were intimidated and had to look for compromises with the state cultural policy of centralization and Russification. In the summer of 1934 the Soviet Ukrainian Writers' Union (Ukrainian: *Spilka Radyans'kykh Pys'mennykiv Ukrainy*) was established as the only professional literary organization in the republic, and it controlled not only who had the right to be published, but also had the privilege to define the direction of individual artistic searches.

With regard to Yiddish-language culture in the Soviet Union, the dynamics were almost the same. Initially, as Bernard Choseed noted, "within the general framework of Soviet society... the Yiddish-speaking Jews in a relatively short time succeeded in creating a Soviet Yiddish culture of real quality and quantity. At the high point of 1933, the four leading Yiddish publishing houses put out an aggregate of 391 titles in 1 351 000 copies" (Choseed 127). Closer to the 1940s, however, these literary works had a relatively small amount of readers, especially among younger people who found themselves incorporated into the Soviet project and were now

reading either in Russian or in Ukrainian: "Yiddish culture had reached the stage where it was no longer the culture of the Soviet Jews, but rather of an increasingly older and smaller *section* of Soviet Jews" (Choseed 134). During World War II, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was created, and one of its aims was to collect evidence regarding the German crimes against Jewish civilians in the Soviet Union. But the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 provoked a shift in the attitude to Jews: they were now regarded as representatives of a diaspora nationality who could be potentially disloyal to the USSR (Yekelchyk 91). Between 1948 and 1952, the Jewish intelligentsia, just like the Ukrainian intelligentsia in the 1930s, experienced persecution and physical extermination. In August 1952, thirteen Jewish writers, journalists, translators and scholars – members of Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee – were executed in Moscow, after three years of interrogation and imprisonment.

After Stalin's death and the subsequent beginning of the Thaw, those Ukrainians and Jews who survived repressions and World War II began to realize that there was yet another threat to their identity: oblivion. Soviet officials were preoccupied with creating a myth of the heroic Soviet struggle against the fascist invaders – a myth of all-Union struggle and victory under heroic Communist leadership where the sufferings and privations of ordinary people were minimized and where the victims did not have any distinct ethnic traits. At the same time, Ukrainians and Jews were not allowed to commemorate the victims of the Great Terror, of the Holocaust or of the post-war anti-Jewish campaign. Gradually, the representatives of both nations realized that only their joint effort could change the social and political climate in Soviet Ukraine.[3] In my opinion, the perfect examples of such an effort were the two commemorative gatherings in Babyn Yar in 1966, which had been organized by the representatives of young Jewish intelligentsia, Ukrainian writers and scholars who started their careers in the 1960s (*shistdesyatnyky*), as well as Russian dissidents.

[3] In official Soviet parlance, "Jewish" was regarded as a nationality (or an ethnic group) rather than a religion. Internal Soviet passports had a separate line (the so-called 5th line) where a person's national belonging was stated: Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Jewish, Latvian etc.

My study contributes to the revision of the concept of the "two solitudes" that signified the mutual estrangement between the Ukrainians and the Jews throughout the 20th century. According to this concept, which was coined in the late 1980s, the representatives of the two nations were living in close proximity but "were much more often 'apart' and almost never 'together'" (see in: Petrovsky-Shtern 8).[4] Two groundbreaking studies – by Myroslav Shkandrij (Shkandrij 2009) and Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern (Petrovsky-Shtern 2009) – focused on Ukrainian-Jewish relations through the prism of Ukrainian literature of the 20th century and revised the concept of "two solitudes". For instance, Shkandrij emphasized that although "the Jewish other has been constructed in Ukrainian literature" it is also important to realize "that for generations there has been a corresponding, often unconscious construction of the Ukrainian other. Long a stateless nation, Ukrainians have often found themselves portrayed in neighboring literatures in ways that diminish or deny their voice, the legitimacy of their concerns, or even their existence" (Shkandrij 2009, 5–6). An example of the construction of "the Ukrainian other" and of "the Jewish other" can be found in the Chapter 1 of this study where Soviet Russian journalists, when reflecting upon the Holocaust in the Nazi-occupied Kharkiv, seemed to forget that the victims of the mass killings were Jews and Ukrainians (instead, they were referred to as "Soviet people" or even as "Russian people").

Petrovsky-Shtern asserts that "the metaphor of 'two solitudes' of Jews and Ukrainians" should be replaced by "the idea of a cross-fertilizing dialogue between the two people" (Petrovsky-Shtern 9). Such a cross-fertilizing dialogue between two national groups is the object of Chapter 4 of this study.

At the same time, American scholars of Jewish descent Marat Grinberg (Grinberg 2020), Harriet Murav (Murav 2011), and Maxim Shrayer (Shrayer 2013) revised the presumption that there was no representation of the Holocaust in Soviet Russian and Soviet Yiddish literature. Despite the fact that official Soviet policy did not allow for public commemorative events (or

[4] Canadian historians Howard Aster and Peter Potichnyj edited one of the first sets of articles on this topic entitled "Jewish-Ukrainian Relations: Two Solitudes" (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1987).

tried to diminish them), Russian and Yiddish writers, just like the Ukrainian authors that are examined in this study, reflected upon the tragic events of their time. The approaches and findings of these scholars inform my analysis of Soviet Ukrainian fiction in Chapter 2 and of Mykola Bazhan's poetry in Chapter 3.

My study examines the journalistic works by Iaroslav Halan, Iurii Smolych, and Iurii Ianovskyi, prose works by Varvara Cherednychenko, Iurii Smolych, and Iurii Ianovskyi, Mykola Bazhan's poetry, memoirs of Iryna Khoroshunova and Dina Pronicheva, and, eventually, Ivan Dziuba's speech delivered in the course of the commemorative gathering in Babyn Yar in September 1966. It should be noted that a significant part of these texts are difficult to get access to (especially if it comes to the journalistic accounts and the prose works) because they have not been republished since the dates of their first publications. Due to the absence of the respective English translations, I translated the quotations on my own – except for the instances when such translations were available. Unfortunately, I was not able to include some of the materials that I had gathered for the purpose of this study – namely, the prose works of the two female émigré writers Eva Biss and Dokiya Humenna. Just like each scholarly work, this thesis has its limits; however, I hope to examine the texts of these authors in the near future.

Chapter 1

From Kharkiv to Nuremberg: Villains and Victims in Soviet Ukrainian Non-Fiction on World War II

In his book *The Metaphor of Power* ("Metafora vlasti", 1993), which explores literature and literary journals in Stalinist times, Evgeny Dobrenko contends that during the second half of the 1930s Soviet writers directed their efforts towards creating an image of the enemy (Dobrenko 190). The juxtaposition of the two opposites – the one associated with the hero and the other one associated with the villain (or the enemy) – is seen by Dobrenko as a fundamental feature of the "Manichean myth of socialist realism" (Dobrenko 193). This myth was deliberately produced by the state and utilized by Soviet authors of the respective period. Similarly, an increasing number of images of "saboteurs", "spies", and "traitors" can be found in Soviet Ukrainian literary texts of the 1930s – for instance, in Oleksandr Korniychuk's plays *The Scalade* (1930) and *Death of the Squadron* (1933).

At the same time, in Soviet Ukraine in the mid-1930s the Marxist theory of class struggle was replaced by the national-patriotic doctrine (Yekelchyk 110). In Dobrenko's words, the "revolutionary driven" man of the 1920s was followed by the "patriotically driven" man of the 1930s–1940s (Dobrenko 189). However, the theorist emphasizes that the two orientations often overlapped, which allowed the totalitarian state to use the premises of both doctrines to reach its own goals (ibid.). The core message remained the same: the individual human being had to sacrifice for the sake of the group understood as either a "class" or a "nation". The enemy was the one outside of this group and could thus be either "internal" (a saboteur or a spy who is hidden under the disguise of a party member/factory worker) or "external" (a fascist invader). (Dobrenko 186).

The aim of the following chapter is to examine the Soviet Ukrainian accounts of the trials of the German invaders in 1943–1946 and to reveal the ways in which the images of the victims

of World War II (Jews and Ukrainians) and perpetrators (Germans) were constructed and represented in Soviet Ukrainian press of that period. By revising Dobrenko's concept of the "Manichean myth of socialist realism", I am going demonstrate that the journalistic accounts of 1943–1946 revealed the authors' ambiguous attitudes towards both victims and perpetrators. These ambiguities were possible due to a temporary rise of national self-consciousness in Soviet Ukraine – and also due to the extraordinary circumstances of the war.

First, let me briefly explain what these circumstances entailed. The beginning of German-Soviet war brought an opportunity to reveal the national sentiments, and this was true regarding both Ukrainians and Jews. Such a revealing of patriotic feelings not only helped the soldiers to fight more fiercely (as they were defending their homes and families), it also allowed the possibility of dealing with the problems of the representation of the reality of war. Numerous crimes could not be represented without tackling the issue of victims' identities; the depiction of enemies required adaptable strategies of representation that fulfilled the expectations of the audience.

In the course of the war the Soviet press had to deal with the issue of mass atrocities committed in the occupied lands of the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1942, the Central Committee of the Communist Party ordered editors and frontline correspondents to devote "the most serious attention to the gathering and publication of materials about the atrocities and looting of the Germans" in the occupied territories (Berkhoff 2012, 117). The representation of Nazi crimes in the newspapers performed two important functions: it instigated hatred towards the enemy and inherently reinforced the support of the Soviet rule through the pursuit of justice. Therefore, during 1941–1943 the Soviet press informed their audience about German atrocities against the civilian population and, in particular, against the Jews. However, those were the messages conveyed by the means of official declarations – such as, for instance, the article "On the Fulfillment of the Hitlerite Plan to Exterminate the Jewish Population of Europe" published in *Izvestiia* newspaper in December 1942 (Rubenstein 37). The subjective journalistic takes on

the legal proceedings were no less important, mainly because they could reveal a more nuanced perception of the events. Taking this into account, the chapter examines two case-studies: the first one is the depiction of the Kharkiv Trial over Nazi invaders of 1943 by Soviet Ukrainian writers and journalists; the second one is the depiction of the Nuremberg Trial of 1945–1946 by Soviet Ukrainian writers and reporters.

The Kharkiv Trial over Nazi invaders was carried out from December 15 to December 18 1943, and was the first wartime trial where the defendants were the German officers, together with one local collaborator. The trial was enabled by the Moscow Declaration that introduced the regulation according to which the Nazi defendants could be tried by the authorities of the countries where the atrocities happened (Bazyler & Gold 94).

The trial combined the features of show trial and military tribunal. The proceedings were aimed not only at collecting evidence of the atrocities and pleading the defendants guilty, but also at demonstrating the Soviet preparedness to persecute the invaders. Subsequently, the media coverage of the trial was of great importance. As American journalist Edmund Stevens, who was also in Kharkiv at that time, noted, "The best Soviet writing talent was mobilized to cover the trial" (Bazyler & Gold 92).[5]

After the defendants had been executed on December 19, a set of materials and journalistic accounts of the proceedings was published in 1944. The volume was entitled *The Trial over the Atrocities Committed by Nazi Invaders in Kharkiv and Kharkiv Province during the Occupation* (Ukrainian: *Sudovyi protses pro zvirstva nimetsko-fashysts'kykh zagarbnykiv na terytorii Kharkova i oblasti v period tymchasovoi okupatsii*), and included the official indictment, the full transcripts of interrogations of the defendants and the eyewitnesses, the speech of the prosecutor, the verdict, and – what is of special interest to us – the collection of essays of Ukrainian and Russian writers who witnessed the trial. The Russians were represented, in particular, by Aleksei Tolstoi, Ilya Ehrenburg, and Leonid Leonov. Among the Ukrainian

[5] The representatives of the Allied press were also invited, but managed to get into the building only on the last day of the proceedings.

writers were Petro Panch, Volodymyr Sosiura (who contributed as a poet), Iurii Smolych, Pavlo Tychyna, and Maksym Rylsky (who was the author of the introductory essay).

The collection of texts in the volume was evidently a mix. During the trial, Ehrenburg, Leonov, and Tolstoy did not report for the local press – they did so for the central newspapers such as *Pravda* and *Krasnaia Zvezda*. In Kharkiv, the local Ukrainian newspaper *Radianska Ukraina* was the main publishing platform to cover the trial. There were, however, quite a few journalistic reports from the courtroom: the majority of the print space was filled by detailed descriptions of the court proceedings. Beginning December 18, 1943, the newspaper also published journalistic sketches. Later on, after the execution of the defendants, more sketches were added in the subsequent issues of *Radyanska Ukraina* – those written by Panch, Smolych, Tychyna, and Rylsky. To compile the essays in one volume could seem like an effort to combine two perspectives on the trial – the local Ukrainian and the Soviet one. However, what was the effect of such a conflation?

The structure of the volume, the choice of the authors and the cumulative effect that the anthology produced is a noteworthy example of how Soviet Ukrainian identity was constructed during the wartime. Since the beginning of the war, there were more opportunities to express and maintain Ukrainian identity in the Soviet Union, because such an expression helped to promote patriotism. In July 1941, Stalin in his radio speech emphasized that not only people's lives, but also their national identities were threatened by the Germans (Berkhoff 2012, 118). However, after the main battles of the war (i.e., the Stalingrad battle and the battle of Kursk) had been won by the Soviet Army in 1943, the policy to universalize war sufferings emerged. The Russians were put first not only with respect to fighting and suffering, but also with respect to memory policies.

This hierarchy of identities was produced by the structure of the volume and the interrelation of its three parts (this classification is proposed by me – *H. P.*). The first part is introductory, and it briefly summarizes the main idea of the volume: the endorsement of the

execution of the defendants. This part included three short essays. First, there was the article from *Pravda* newspaper followed by the essay written by Maksym Rylsky. That is, technically, the Ukrainian writer was to open the floor, although he did not witness the trial and only read the transcript of the proceedings. Both pieces laid an emphasis on the punishment for the perpetrators – and this message, as we will see later, will be revealed in the essays written by the stars of the Soviet press. The third essay was by *Pravda* special correspondent Elena Kononenko, and she focused on the evidence of German atrocities in Kharkiv. She mentioned seeing the remnants of people in Drobytsky Iar – a ravine near the city where 15 000 civilians, predominantly Jews, were killed: "If you dig deeper, thousands of big and small skulls could be seen. We stood in that valley. The wind was crying and moaning. And it seemed like the Soviet people killed by the Germans were moaning" (*Sudovyi protses*... 89).[6] She also witnessed the remnants of the wounded Red Army soldiers who died in the hospital after it was set alight by *Waffen SS* (*Sudovyi protses*... 89). In general, Kononenko's essay succeeded in appealing to the reader due to the fact that she presented evidence of visiting the places of atrocities.

The second part of the volume was, according to the proposed classification, the main part. It comprised the essays written by the "stars" of the Soviet wartime journalism – Ehrenburg, Leonov, and Tolstoi, including two essays by Tolstoi, two essays by Ehrenburg, and one essay by Leonov. All of them sought to depict the portraits of German perpetrators who were on the dock, and those were Hans Rietz, Wilhelm Langheld, and Reinhard Retzlaff. The culmination point of the second part and of the whole volume was Ehrenburg's essay *Justice*.

Let us first look at the contribution by Aleksei Tolstoi. In the texts entitled *Hangmen* (*Sudovyi protses*... 92–95) and *Barbarians* (*Sudovyi protses*... 102–106) he described the German officers as, in fact, ordinary people. Prior to the war, Wilhelm Langheld used to be a German clerk, and young Hans Rietz was a German professor's son and a law student. According to Tolstoy, they were motivated to participate in the atrocities during the occupation because they

[6] Here and hereinafter the quotes from Ukrainian and Russian sources are translated into English by me (unless indicated otherwise) – H. P.

"had to do their job" and "followed orders": "With all his appearance, Langheld says: trust me, honorable Mr. Justice, I'm nothing but an honest, decent bourgeois from Frankfurt. Although I killed circa 100 Russians, you should perhaps understand me: that's my function, my job, my duty to the Führer" (*Sudovyi protses*... 93). As Jeremy Hicks noted, such an approach to the depiction of the perpetrators during the Kharkiv trial was innovative, because it moved away from describing them as monstrous and sadistic people to their perception as "banal executioners". This description, in Hick's view, preempted the Western approaches to study the Holocaust, which emerged much later in the works by Raul Hilberg and Christopher Browning (Hicks 2013, 533). At the same time, the description of the defendants as "banal executioners" also preempted Hanna Arendt's reporting from the Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem in 1961. Arendt coined the term "the banality of evil". Eichmann, she stated, "was not Iago and not Macbeth, and nothing would have been farther from his mind than to determine with Richard III 'to prove a villain.' Except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement, he had no motives at all. And this diligence in itself was in no way criminal; he certainly would never have murdered his superior in order to inherit his post" (Arendt 133).

Another important issue was mentioning the poisonings of civilians with carbon monoxide in specially adapted vans. This highlighted the industrialized character of the German war and drew a parallel between the Holocaust in occupied Poland and in the occupied Soviet lands.

On the other hand, Tolstoi's approach to the depiction of the victims' identities can be seen as an embarrassing one. He did not refer to the civilians who perished in the massacres as Jewish people; moreover, he did not call them either Ukrainians or even Soviet citizens. Instead, in both essays he used the term "Russians" and "Russian people", even though he was speaking about the atrocities in Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv and Melitopol (*Sudovyi protses*... 93, 104). At the same time, Ehrenburg in his essay *Soul Destroyers* mentioned the Jewish ghetto in Kharkiv and referred to the victims as "Russians, Jews, and Ukrainians" (*Sudovyi protses*... 97). He also

quoted the direct speech of the survivor Maria Sokol who lived in the ghetto at the Kharkiv Tractor factory (*Sudovyi protses*... 96).

As I have already mentioned, Ehrenburg's essay *Justice* can be seen as a culminating point of the volume. Here, the journalist summarizes the overall meaning of Kharkiv trial. The defendants on the dock, according to Ehrenburg, were not unique; rather, they represented the whole German nation that was, in fact, the main target of the trial. "The good conscience of our people condemned... the whole fascist Germany" (*Sudovyi protses*... 110). Ehrenburg stressed that Soviet people searched not for revenge, but for justice; and this contrasted with the observation made by the British journalist Arthur Koestler. Koestler compared the process of the execution of the defendants in Kharkiv on December 18 1943, which was witnessed by thirty thousand people, to "socialist re-education" and to the revival of "public hanging as a mass festival" (Koestler 152).

The third part of the volume is represented by the essays written by the Ukrainian authors (pages 113–130 of the volume). It is the smallest part of the book that finally provides the readers with an opportunity to hear the Ukrainian voices – specifically, the voices of Pavlo Tychyna, Petro Panch, and Iurii Smolych. The Ukrainian contribution to the volume differs, first of all, in terms of its appeal to the Ukrainian historical legacy. For instance, Rylsky in his opening essay *Trial over Soul Destroyers* mentioned Taras Shevchenko's poetry in the context of the search for justice. He uses Shevchenko's metaphor "truth-revenge" (Ukrainian: "pravda-msta") that pointed towards the conflation of the search for justice and the subsequent revenge (*Sudovyi protses*... 90). Tychyna in his piece mentioned Zaporozhian Sich as a proto-state of Ukrainian Cossacks, and referred to Shevchenko and Gogol (*Sudovyi protses*... 123).

In addition to that, Rylsky and Panch begin their texts by creating the images of the Ukrainian lands devastated during the occupation. Panch in his sketch *The Deserved Penalty* begins with the image of Kharkiv in ruins; Rylsky mentions Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Poltava right after the liberation of those cities (*Sudovyi protses*... 86). Moreover, all the three authors sought

to emphasize the Ukrainian identity of the victims: Panch is referring to the victims as Ukrainian people (*Sudovyi protses...* 126), Rylsky in his opening essay calls the victims "Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Russian people – Soviet people" (*Sudovyi protses...* 87). Smolych in his essay mentioned Kharkiv civilians exterminated by the Germans, then – those killed in other Ukrainian cities and villages, and then – the civilians of Ukraine, Belarus', and Russia altogether (*Sudovyi protses...*128–129).

Overall, the Ukrainian authors of the volume were seeking to emphasize the national component of people's sufferings during the war. This is explained by their direct connection to Soviet Ukraine: Smolych and Tychyna have been living and working in Kharkiv since the early 1920s and were a part of Soviet Ukrainian cultural elite there. As opposed to that, Ehrenburg, Leonov, and Tolstoi did not have any ties with Kharkiv (although Ehrenburg was a Kyiv native), which allowed them to use a more generalized approach towards victims' identities.

The volume, although its content was meant to be balanced, represented the trial in a perspective that was relevant for fulfilling the current ideological tasks. It laid an emphasis on the figures of the perpetrators, which was especially evident in the essays that constituted the core of the volume – i.e., those written by the key figures of Soviet wartime journalism, Aleksey Tolstoi and Ilya Ehrenburg. The victims of the atrocities were represented in a generalized fashion, and their identity was stated in vague terms. They were referred to as either "Soviet citizens" (this defintion can be found in Leonov's and Elena Kononenko's contributions), or even "Russian people" (this definition was used by Tolstoi). It was only Ehrenburg who referred to the victims of Drobytsky Iar and Sokolnyky in Kharkiv as Jews (*Sudovyi protses...* 96–97). Panch, Rylsky, and Smolych mentioned the Ukrainian victims among civilians.

The balance between the perspectives of Russian and Ukrainian journalists who witnessed the trial was rather formal. All the articles by the Russian journalists were translated into Ukrainian; however, the names of the translators were not mentioned. The main message of the proceedings (the restoration of justice and the penalty for the perpetrators) was conveyed by

the Russian journalists, while Ukrainian authors played a supportive role in this respect. A look at the archival photos of the trial can serve as an additional verification of this presumption. In particular, in one of the photos[7] we may see Leonid Leonov at work during the trial and his Ukrainian colleague, Iurii Smolych, who is sitting behind Leonov's back. Leonov was evidently captured as an important person, while Smolych remained somewhere in the shadow of his Russian colleague.

Such an imbalance made the volume Ukrainian in form, but Soviet in content. Therefore, the book anticipated the hierarchy of identities in the post-war Soviet Ukraine: Russian people were supposed to be the first on the list of the victims, while Jews and Ukrainians were obscured.

If we now return to Dobrenko's theory of the "Manichean myth" that, as he contended, was characteristic of the Soviet pre-war literature of mobilization, we can notice that the war posed several challenges to the dichotomy of "heroes and villains". First of all, the category of victim was introduced, and being a victim was something not necessarily heroic. While the main aim of the wartime and postwar propaganda was to seek revenge, the memory about the war victims called for acknowledgment and mourning. At the same time, there was a conflict collision regarding the representation of the villains: should they be demonized or rather be regarded as "banal functionaries", as was proposed, in particular, by Tolstoi in his essays on Kharkiv Trial? A more complicated picture needed to be developed, and this can be traced in the Soviet Ukrainian reports of the Nuremberg Trial of 1945–1946.

The Nuremberg International Military Tribunal is considered to be one of the major political and legal events of the post-war era (Hirsch 701). The trial also performed a didactical function, and in doing so influenced the narratives of collective memory and identity that emerged shortly after World War II. Writers and journalists who reported from the trials saw themselves as those who should bear witness to what they had learned about victims and perpetrators, in so far as their accounts would shape the perception of Nazi crimes.

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[7] See Appendix, p. 96.

The issue that is discussed less often in the context of the Nuremberg Trial is how Soviet journalistic reports contributed to the subsequent formation of the images of enemies and war victims. As the eyewitnesses of the trial (and sometimes also of the Nazi atrocities), Soviet Ukrainian journalists and writers constructed the images of different groups whose members acted as perpetrators and suffered as victims during World War II.

The accounts of the post-war trials contributed significantly to shaping group identities of both victims and perpetrators. Those groups were not necessarily nationally or ethnically circumscribed, although that was often the case. I suggest that the concept of "groupness" can be applied here. The notion was introduced by the social theorist Rogers Brubaker to expand the understanding of group identity related to ethnicity, nation or race by imagining it not as a bounded entity but rather in "relational, processual, dynamic, and disaggregated terms" (Brubaker 167). Thus, we may think of ethnicity and nation in terms of "practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas", and "discursive frames" (ibid.).

While Soviet Ukrainian reporters had to transmit and maintain the main points of the Soviet propaganda, the role of their subjectivity in the production of the discourse was also important and should be, thus, reconsidered. The accounts of post-war trials chosen by me for the following analysis contributed to a personalized perception of what happened during the trials, suggesting a perspective different from the one seen through the prism of ideology. The reporters who came to Nuremberg from the Soviet state had themselves witnessed the Nazi atrocities. Thus, they were able to reflect on what they had seen and heard at the trials not as merely "passive observers", but as major eyewitnesses and representatives of the victorious nation. Consequently, as Jeremy Hicks notes, the journalists attempted "to convey their own specific wartime positions" (Hicks 2019, 3).

It is also important to mention the Soviet role in the International Military Tribunal, and especially in relation to the charges brought against Nazis by the Soviet lawyers. In particular, Soviet criminologist Aron Trainin established the notion of "crimes against peace", which was

used by the Soviet prosecution during the trial.[8] "Crimes against peace" meant "treating war itself as a punishable criminal act" (Hirsch 708). The charge of "complicity" was brought against the Nazis and implied participation in a "criminal conspiracy against peace" (ibid.). Here, we may establish a connection between the charge of "complicity" and the concept of "groupness". For as soon as "complicity" is seen as a part of the indictment, one should prove the belonging of an accused individual to a certain group, and this membership in itself may be considered a crime.

Although Soviet Russian accounts have become the object of analysis in recent studies (Berkhoff 2012; Hicks 2019), Soviet Ukrainian reporters and their take on the post-war trials have not been addressed yet. Below, I will turn to the texts by three Ukrainian authors who witnessed the proceedings: Iaroslav Halan, Iurii Smolych, and Iurii Ianovskyi. My focus for the subsequent analysis will be to seek for the "cultural idioms" and "discursive frames" that they utilized to describe different groups.

Iaroslav Halan – a Galicia-born playwright, journalist, and Soviet propagandist who resided in Western Ukraine – reported on the Nuremberg trial as a special correspondent of the *Radianska Ukraina* newspaper that had a circulation of circa 500 000 copies right after 1945. He did so together with his colleague Iurii Ianovskyi, whose contribution to the coverage of the trial is also discussed below. Halan's notes about the event were subsequently published as a set of 17 pamphlets entitled *Their Faces* (1948), and this publication was introduced by a preface with the same title.

In the preface written in 1947 Halan aimed at constructing a discursive continuity of fascism.[9] He used a range of historical images to persuade the reader that Nazism is a pan-European phenomenon and that its history starts long before Hitler came to power. The writer starts with an accident in the library of the Vienna University where armed Bavarian men attacked Jewish visitors (in the year of 1923). He depicts the attackers as "male horses" and

[8] In his 1944 work *The Criminal Responsibility of the Hitlerites*, written in co-authorship with Andrey Vyshinsky.
[9] The word "fascism" is used by Halan, and by the Soviet journalists in general, to refer to Nazism.

"beasts". Halan then moves from interwar Austria to fascist Italy, to Palermo, where the city is crowded with Italian paramilitaries, Blackshirts, who are described as stupid and ruthless. The author then makes an enjambment to the year of 1936, to Galicia under Poland, where Polish "followers of Mussolini and Hitler" attacked unemployed workers (Halan 353–354).

Subsequently, Bavarian pogromists, Italian paramilitaries, and Polish gendarmes were depicted as the members of one cohesive group of "fascists", although they belonged to different national entities, countries, and political regimes. For the author, it was important to demonstrate the continuity of the concept of fascism, and this continuity was necessary to create an impression of the ubiquitous enemy.

Again, there was the problem that had already been faced by the reporters of the Kharkiv Trial. Should the writers depict the enemies as demonic and dehumanized creatures or rather as banal perpetrators? Initially, Halan is inclined to use the first approach. When he addressed the "fascists" – those present at the Nuremberg trial – he already had an understanding of what these people looked like, and thus sounded not as a reporter but rather as an accuser. He wrote: "When I started off to the Nuremberg trial, I was not anticipating any surprises. I have already got to know fascism's face; I even felt I knew it in all the smallest details" (Halan 357). Having faced the defendants, Halan noticed that they turned out to be even worse than he thought: they were denouncing each other in the course of the trial and were not showing any signs of remorse.

In another pamphlet from the same cycle, *A Gallery of Man-Eaters*, the journalist faced the problem of the pre-existing grotesque image of the defendants. On the one hand, the same demonizing approach was relevant for the description of the enemies: they were characterized as "degenerates", human types whose faces "can only be seen in a criminalist's album" (Halan 365). On the other, however, Halan tried to reiterate the strategy used by the Russian cartoonist Boris Yefimov, the author of the cartoon series *The Fascist Menagerie* published in *Izvestiia* newspaper in December 1945. In the series, Yefimov depicted Nazi politicians so that they resembled animals – for instance, Göring resembled a snake, Ribbentrop – a jackal, and so forth.

Such an approach was used by Yefimov to combine the ideological message with a certain emotional component. Halan was also eager to utilize zoomorphic images: during the trial, Nazi politicians behaved as if they were in the "jungles"; the defendants on the dock resembled a "band"; German vice-chancellor von Papen is compared to a "lynx"; and so on (Halan 365). As Boris Yefimov recalled in his memoirs, a British cartoonist David Law was also present at the trial. When asked by his Soviet colleagues how he was going to depict the "fascists", Law responded: "Well, I will draw them in a manner that will allow the spectators to yawn at them" (Yefimov n. p.). The Soviet delegation was surprised by the answer, therefore Law explained: "I would like to depict Nazism as something so boring and uninteresting that no one would ever feel like being a Nazi" (Yefimov n. p.). Such an approach seemed irrelevant to the Soviet cartoonists, as the reality of the war was still very close to them. "British, Soviet, and French cities were still lying in ruins, the crematoriums of Maidanek and Auschwitz have not cooled down yet" (Yefimov n.p.), while Law was already suggesting that Nazis should be represented "not as killers and sadists but rather as boastful and not very smart 'philistines'" (Yefimov n.p.). Thus, Yefimov's manner of representing the defendants had a satirical component that was utilized to emphasize the "inhuman" nature of the perpetrators. This approach was also used by Halan in his set of articles.

Just like the Soviet journalists who witnessed Kharkiv trial, Halan focused more on perpetrators than on those who suffered under the occupation. When the victims are mentioned, they are referred to as "Soviet people", and both the Ukrainian and Jewish identities of the victims are obscured. For instance, in the already mentioned sketch *A Gallery of Man-Eaters* millions of "Soviet people were planned to be exterminated by starvation" by Germans (Halan 366). In *Their Faces*, it was Soviet people who "took the sword" and fought the Germans to prevent the global catastrophe (Halan 357).

Not only was the identity of the victims silenced by Halan, but also the roots of Nazi ideology. Only once, Julius Streicher was mentioned by Halan as an ideologist of anti-Semitism

and founder of the “Stürmer” newspaper (Halan 368). However, the economical roots of Nazi rule were depicted by Halan as no less important: German banker Hjalmar Schacht “opened the gate to the overwhelming career of the German-fascist criminals” (Halan 366); “Hitler and his band” were merely “the products of the commercial-political system of German imperialism” (Halan 366).

Iurii Ianovskyi, a writer and journalist born in Central Ukraine, was also reporting from the Nuremberg Trial for *Radianska Ukraina* newspaper. Ianovskyi’s letters to his wife, Tamara Zhevchenko, demonstrate that while in Nuremberg the writer was feeling extremely homesick. “I understand”, he wrote, “that to be here is a great honor for the Soviet writer, and I will try to live up to the standards no matter how many difficulties I face” (Ianovskyi 1983, 335). In Nuremberg, the writer was willing to dream of Koncha Zaspa, a quiet resort near Kyiv; however, he only remembered dreaming of “perpetrators, war, and other intimidating things that I am immersed into day by day” (Ianovskyi 1983, 335).

Ianovskyi’s homesickness that he experienced in the course of the proceedings was one of the reasons why his *Lysty z Nurnberga* (*Letters from Nuremberg*, 1947) were written in a more emotional way than the accounts by Halan. They were published in Kyiv in 1949, after the trial was over.

Letters from Nuremberg are divided into six relatively small parts. In the first one, Ianovskyi used familiar techniques to depict Nazi defendants: satirical and zoomorphic imagery. For instance, Göring is said to have a “female physiognomy”, and Julius Streicher is compared to a monkey (Ianovskyi 1949, 217). Ianovskyi expresses confidence that the main aim of Nuremberg is not only to punish the war criminals but also “to eliminate fascism”: “We know that the trials at Nuremberg are only the beginning but not the end of the elimination of fascism. After the trials the other steps [against fascism] should be taken...” (Ianovskyi 1949, 219).

Despite these appellations to the mainstream ideological clichés, his text is notable for a number of reasons. First of all, he consistently mentions Ukraine as a distinct territory and

Ukrainians as a national group which suffered during the war. This makes his account more personal and compelling. While describing his travel from Berlin to Nuremberg, he compares the old city of Altenburg to Ukrainian Chernihiv, as well as small German houses to Ukrainian peasant dwellings. He mentions the "Ukrainian grief" (Ianovskyi 1949, 220), the occupation of Kyiv (222), and Ukrainian territory and population as a target for removal and elimination according to Nazi policies (227).

However, the author's Ukrainian patriotism is contaminated with Soviet patriotism, and when Ianovskyi mentions his compatriots it is difficult to understand whether "Ukrainian" or "Soviet" people are meant. It is also emblematic that he lays an emphasis on the civilians as war victims, and mentions "the Jews who are sent to the places of mass shootings" as well as the Nazi efforts to hide the traces of mass crimes in Ukraine (Ianovskyi 1949, 225).

Another distinctive feature of the writer's account of the events is that he depicted not only Nazi defendants but also ordinary German people. In the course of the ride from Berlin to Nuremberg Ianovskyi and his colleagues experienced a car accident near a Saxonian village in the Soviet occupation zone. The Ukrainian journalists were hosted by a German family on New Year's Eve, and thus the representatives of the two nations who could not help but feel hostile towards each other celebrated the New Year together (Ianovskyi 1949, 228–229). At the same time, the writer is generally sympathetic to the average Germans and, in particular, to his hosts: "They put some food and bread on the table for us; we took some *horilka* that we had bought in Berlin... We drank a bit of *horilka* and celebrated the New Year at 10 pm sticking to Moscow and Kyiv time, together with our loved ones, who are now waiting for us there" (Ianovskyi 1949, 229). The Saxonians were depicted by Ianovskyi in a realistic manner, without the help of the grotesque and zoomorphic metaphors, which signalized the distinction between the images of Nazi criminals and ordinary Germans.

The most impactful part of *Letters from Nuremberg*, as it can be seen from today's distance, is the final, sixth part, where Ianovskyi dares to give voice to ordinary people in

extraordinary circumstances. In the end of his essay Ianovskyi's focus of attention is mostly on the civilians who gave evidence about the atrocities they had witnessed. He referred to the survivors as those who returned intact from the deathly places. In particular, one man from Kharkiv managed to remain alive in a mobile gas chamber, and a woman from Kyiv survived the Babyn Yar massacre (Ianovskyi 1949, 230). Ianovskyi summed up his *Letters...* with a call to execute the defendants (ibid.), just like the Ukrainian observers of the Kharkiv trial did in 1943. Given the provided testimonies, this appeal had a more powerful impact than the ideologically constructed charges. Survivors' testimonies in the last part of *Letters...* can be seen as one of Ianovskyi's main contributions to the post-war memory discourse.

The journalist's presence and creative work at Nuremberg was impacted by other important factors. In one of his letters to Tamara Zhevchenko, dated to February 1946, he spoke about being apprehensive of censorship that could potentially distort some of his correspondences or just obscure them. "I cannot imagine... how my correspondences are edited in Kyiv, as well as what is published and what is not. I have already sent ten articles, but I am not sure how many of them were out there" (Ianovskyi 1983, 335).

Among Ianovsky's texts that were not published in Radyanska Ukraina but were included into his later volumes there was a sketch *A Countryside Wedding in Ukraine*.[10] In the letter to Zhevchenko, the writer expressed his disappointment by the fact that the sketch remained unpublished in 1946 (Ianovskyi 1983, 336). *A Countryside Wedding...* is devoted to a propagandistic German brochure about life in the Ukrainian countryside. There, the Germans were depicted as friends and companions of the Ukrainian peasants. The foreign invaders, according to the brochure, were even participating in the Ukrainian wedding ceremonies as honored guests (Ianovskyi 1983, 167–168). While Ianovskyi's effort to denounce pro-Nazi propaganda was following the mainstream ideological line, it might be reasonable to ask why this essay was put off by the censorship. In his text, the writer mentioned, in particular, Alfred

[10] By the beginning of 1946 *Radyanska Ukraina* was published under the new title *Pravda Ukrainy*.

Rosenberg's special interest in Soviet Ukraine, its territory and culture.[11] Addressing Rosenberg's official speech on the eve of Nazi invasion, Ianovskyi highlighted the importance of Soviet Ukraine as a part of Eastern Europe in Rosenberg's strategic thinking. The journalist emphasized that there were "166 higher educational institutions, 27 742 collective farms, 130 theatres, and 29 000 schools" (Ianovskyi 1983, 169) in Soviet Ukraine before the invasion. Such claims, being true-to-fact, could also make editors feel suspicious of Ianovskyi's Ukraine-centredness as of something that did not fit the official Soviet policy of identity.

The last issue to be addressed here is the question of the personal responsibility of the Nazi collaborators as it was seen by the Ukrainian journalists. To that end, I will analyze Iurii Smolych's essay *What Happened at Pétain's Trial*. Smolych was born in Central Ukraine, but his early life and career was closely connected with Kharkiv, the capital of Soviet Ukraine up until 1934. Smolych's report on Pétain's trial was written in August 1945, and published in the set of pamphlets and articles *Pislya viiny* (*After the War*, 1947). This set was then republished in the Russian translation under the title *Sud idet* (*Come up for Trial*, 1951).

Among the three observers of the post-war trials Smolych was probably the most indoctrinated by the ideology, and this can be seen in relation to both his style and the strategies of portraying Phillipe Pétain. In the article we cannot find grotesque, satiric, or zoomorphic imagery, and the role of Pétain's personality and appearance is minimized. Smolych only informs the reader that the marshal is French, old-aged, and is a "traitor of his fatherland" (Smolych 1951, 14). At the same time, Smolych used the concept of a "people" (or a "nation") consistently throughout his report on the trial. The majority of charge counts against the defendant were connected with the notion of the "nation". Among them were the "damage to the interests of his fatherland", "the humiliation of his fatherland in front of the world", and "the effort to make his nation... to accept a new fascist, hitlerite order" (Smolych 1951, 16). Consequently, the main prosecutor in the court, in Smolych's view, is "the French people

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[11] During the occupation, Rosenberg was the head of the Reichministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories.

themselves" (Smolych 1951, 17). Throughout the text, Pétain is referred to as the "war criminal" and "the traitor" (Smolych 1951, 14–21). However, it may be noticed that the war victims were completely marginalized in Smolych's text. He did not refer to the Jewish victims in the occupied territory, although he mentioned the introduction of the "racial law" in wartime France (Smolych 1951, 15).

Smolych was also trying to address the issue of individual responsibility of high-rank political figures in different states during the Nazi occupation. This was the approach used, for instance, by the American journalist Harold Callender who reported on the Pétain trial for the *New York Times*. Callender assumed that although the marshal expressed "the lack of faith in France", he could only be judged "as an individual under a penal code which assumes that individuals, even in great historic crises, are agents capable of doing either right or wrong" (Callender 1).

While Callender questioned the degree of Pétain's responsibility, Smolych did not demonstrate any doubts concerning the marshal's guilt as a collaborator. The journalist's main concern was to demonstrate that the decision to change the sentence of death penalty for the defendant to life imprisonment signalled that the "groups of hitlerites" (Smolych 1951, 18) were still secretly operating and preparing for revenge. "We are onlookers but not just passive observers, – he wrote, – and from what we have just seen we may deduct that the whole world is witnessing an effort to attack the post-war order. The forces of reaction and pro-fascist elements in France have implemented the reconnaissance-in-force during Pétain's trial" (Smolych 1951, 18). Thus, Smolych utilized the concept of "complicity" that was relevant not for the individual but rather for the collective guilt.

Conclusion. As demonstrated above, the Ukrainian Soviet reporters' approach to the depiction of Nazi atrocities depended on the political and ideological contexts as well as on the reporters' subjectivities and specific circumstances of time and place. Although the dichotomous model implying a hero-villain opposition, as suggested by Dobrenko, impacted this approach, it was

hardly possible to create a consistent pattern for depicting heroes and villains in the fast-changing circumstances of the war, occupation, and the post-war time that followed. A more dynamic model to analyze the non-fictional texts of the 1940s can be used. In particular, I suggested utilizing the concept of "groupness" introduced by Brubaker, which allowed understanding group identity in "relational, processual, dynamic, and disaggregated terms" (Brubaker 167).

The reconsideration of the role of journalists' subjectivities in the production of the non-fictional discourse revealed that there was often a balance between the mainstream ideological line and the author's position. The reporters whose texts were analyzed above made different emphases and use various techniques to grasp the reader's attention – from building on the false historical continuity of "fascism" (Halan) to reviving the concept of after-war "fascist complicity" (Smolych).

The comparative approach towards the reports from the Kharkiv Trial of 1943 also highlighted the different strategies to describe the identities of the victims. While Soviet Russian journalists, in particular, Aleksei Tolostoi, referred to the Nazi victims in Kharkiv as "Russian" people, his Soviet Ukrainian colleagues Tychyna, Panch, and Smolych laid an emphasis on the Ukrainian identity of the civilians who perished in Kharkiv. However, both Ukrainian and Russian journalists also referred to the victims as to Soviet citizens (Rylsky and Smolych among the Ukrainians; Kononenko and Leonov among the Russian authors), which signals the tendency to speak about the identity of victims in a generalized fashion.

At the same time, the dividing line between the approaches to the depiction of Nazi victims should not necessarily be drawn based on the national identity of the reporter. In the case with the coverage of the Nuremberg trial this dividing line can be drawn between the Soviet Ukrainian authors themselves. While Halan and Smolych were more conventional in their depiction of the victims and invested more efforts in the portrayal of the Nazi defendants, Ianovskyi in his *Letters from Nuremberg* also focused on his experience of communicating with

ordinary Germans and brought up the testimonies of the survivals as a charge against the defendants. Generally speaking, the Ukrainian accounts of the Nuremberg trial laid a greater emphasis not on the sufferings of the civilians but on the ideological issues and their mainstream interpretation.

The wartime years and the necessity to mobilize the patriotic sentiments of the readers and to raise the civilians' morale allowed the plurality of viewpoints, although all of them had to fit within a dominant ideological framework. While non-fiction in printed mass media was largely controlled by the censorship, it was hardly possible for the reporters to deviate significantly from the mainstream ideological line. In fiction, the author's position and the strategies to communicate senses was a more complicated issue, which at times could exacerbate conflicts between Ukrainian writers and the ideological establishment. This problem is addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

The War and the Silenced Holocaust in Soviet Ukrainian Fiction of the 1940s

The representation of World War II in Soviet fiction has been the subject of numerous studies, given both the significance of the event and its importance in the context of contemporary memorial culture of the post-Soviet countries, Ukraine in particular. According to Katharine Hodgson, the short period since the beginning of the war when the censorship had been abated was succeeded by years of strict state control over the literary texts. “It was made clear to writers that the war was to be represented and interpreted in certain ways only. This period of repressive cultural control only came to an end after Stalin’s death in 1953” (Hodgson 111).

The post-war Soviet paradigm of interpreting the events of World War II laid an emphasis on the Communist Party’s, as well as Stalin’s, role in achieving the victory over the Nazi Army. This type of interpretation obscured the everyday human experience of wartime, which included sufferings and privations, facing moral dilemmas of survival in occupation, difficulties of life in evacuation, and witnessing the destruction of the Jewish population in Ukraine.

As Zvi Gitelman contends, the Soviet response to the Jewish tragedy during World War II can be seen “not as complete denial, but rather as a consequence of a universalist interpretation, according to which Jewish extermination was part of a larger phenomenon … a consequence of racist fascism.” (Gitelman 18). The tendency to diminish the Jewish sufferings became especially noticeable during the late 1940s – the period that is known as the “black years” for Soviet Jewry. During that time, the chair of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee Solomon Mikhoels was murdered in Minsk, the members of the committee were put on trial, and the publication of the collection of testimonies of Nazi atrocities against the Jews – *The Black Book of Soviet Jewry* – was suspended (Veidlinger 9).

By the same token, the late 1940s in Soviet Ukraine was the time of a hard-line ideological policy known as *Zhdanovshchina* named after Soviet politician Andriy Zhdanov, head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The policy, in particular, "aimed at eradicating all possible Western influence in the arts and sciences, in education and literature, and in other fields" (Lewytzkyj 1). According to Borys Lewytzkyj, integral to *Zhdanovshchina* "was the concept of the Russian people as the 'master race'", which even provoked criticism abroad (Lewytzkyj 2).

Therefore, the persecution of Jews labeled as "cosmopolitans" and Ukrainians labeled as "bourgeois nationalists" went hand in hand in the post-war years. This contributed, in particular, to the silencing of specific national experiences during World War II. As Myroslav Shkandrij put it, post-war Ukrainian literature "was criticized for highlighting the sufferings of its own people. There was even less tolerance for the portrayal of the suffering of wartime Jewry" (Shkandrij 2009 172).

Speaking about the representation of the Jewish destruction in Soviet literature, Harriet Murav makes the point that the phenomena of war and the Holocaust on Soviet soil can be regarded as "two parallel singularities" (Murav 111). At the same time, the absence of the Russian term for Holocaust does not mean that Soviet literature – written either in Ukrainian or in Russian – did not address the destruction of the Jews during and right after the war.[12] In Murav's view, to analyze Soviet response to the Holocaust a broadened definition "of what constitutes a Jewish response to the Holocaust and, furthermore, a critical awareness of the limitations of the term 'Holocaust' itself" (Murav 151–152) are needed.[13]

The lack of attention to the Jewish tragedy in Soviet literature is directly connected to the silence about the fate of Jews in the war in Soviet historiography. However, it also fits into the framework of diminishing the everyday human sufferings in the wartime. Murav emphasizes that

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[12] The term "Holocaust" started to circulate in Russian-language scholarship after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Murav 151).

[13] A part of Murav's monograph analyzes texts written in Russian and Yiddish by Soviet authors of Jewish origin. My work is focused on texts by Ukrainian authors that were written in the late 1940s; however, I believe that Murav's approach is productive for my research as well.

"the Soviet war narrative... rationalizes the 'unprecedented' sufferings of the Soviet people as the price paid for their unprecedented defeat of the Nazis. One enormity, the enormity of the victory, justifies... the enormity of unacknowledged pain" (Murav 152). It was not until the 1980s that this approach was challenged, in particular, by Svitlana Alexievich's book *War's Unwomanly Face* (1985; English translation of the book was published in 1990) where the reporter focused on the everyday female experience of fighting and surviving at the front. The full text of the *Black Book of Soviet Jewry* that contained the testimonies of those who witnessed the Holocaust in Soviet Ukraine (collected back in the 1940s) was published in Kyiv in 1991, around the same time.[14]

As for the Ukrainian experience in World War II, there is a common trend in contemporary scholarly literature to make a division between the literary texts written in Soviet Ukraine and those written in post-war emigration. This division is used, in particular, by Myroslav Shkandrij (Shkandrij 2009) and Mykola Soroka (Soroka 2012). The main argument that underpins this division is the political atmosphere in which those texts were produced, for there was no ideological censorship in Western countries where Ukrainian writers found refuge after the war. Soroka contends that Ukrainian émigré writing on World War II "was destined to record the complex truth and disclose numerous aspects of the war – what the Soviet discourse had tried to hide and sterilize within the ideologically motivated canon of a socialist realist style" (Soroka 492). Shkandrij emphasizes the role of a creative atmosphere that emerged in the displaced persons camps in German cities (Shkandrij 2009 187). During the years of 1945–1948 the organization called Artistic Ukrainian Movement (Mystetsky Ukrainsky Rukh, MUR) "was able to bring together the most talented writers from both Eastern and Western Ukraine in an endeavor to create a new, modern literature... free of ideological diktats" (ibid.).

[14] "The Black Book of Soviet Jewry" (also referred to as "The Black Book") was a 500-page set of documents about the anti-Jewish crimes of the Holocaust on the territory of the Soviet Union. The anthology was compiled by Russian writers and journalists Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman – both were of Jewish origin and both were born in what is now Ukraine. During the war, the Soviet state had supported the idea of making such an anthology, but did not allow its publication once the war was over. It was first published in Kyiv in 1991.

While I generally maintain this division, I find it necessary to emphasize two arguments that blur the dividing line between Soviet and émigré literature of the post-war years. First of all, literature written in exile had its own restrictions when it came to the depiction of the war. According to John-Paul Himka, in 1947 the Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Education Centre in Winnipeg organized a memoir contest for the Ukrainian émigrés. Sixty-four memoirs were submitted altogether, twenty-five of them were related to World War II, and fourteen of those twenty-five "made at least some mention of the Holocaust" (Himka 427). However, even the memoirs that mention the Holocaust "say almost nothing about Ukrainian involvement" (ibid.). On the other hand, the novel "Khreshchaty Yar" (1956, New York) by the émigré writer Dokiya Humenna who fled to the West in the course of World War II is quite explicit about the ambiguous attitude of non-Jewish Kyiv dwellers to the Babyn Yar massacre in Kyiv 1941 – in a sense that some of them stayed indifferent towards their neighbors' sufferings, although the majority was sympathetic with the Jews and terrified by the crime.[15]

Another argument that may impede the division between Soviet and émigré narratives relates to the realm of aesthetics. While Ukrainian literature in exile declared its opposition to the aesthetical paradigm of socialist realism, some of the authors were still under the influence of this paradigm, albeit with a different ideological emphasis. Katerina Clark in her *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* points to three characteristics of the Soviet novel: it is a form of popular formulaic literature, it is didactic, and it serves as a repository of the state myths (Clark XI-XII). Several Ukrainian émigré texts fit into this framework. In particular, Ivan Bahryanyi's novel "The Garden of Gethsemane" (1950) features all the three characteristics mentioned by Clark.[16] The protagonist Andrii Chumak is portrayed as a superhero who faced the worst sides of the communist totalitarian system, including imprisonment and tortures, but did not succumb to it. As Hryhorii Hrabovych (George Grabowicz) puts it, the personal suffering in Bahryanyi's novel

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[15] For the detailed analysis of how the non-Jewish population of Kyiv reacted to the Babyn Yar massacre in Kyiv in September 1941 see Chapter 4 of this study.

[16] I use Bahryanyi's novel as an example because it was canonized in Ukraine right after the beginning of the 1990s; it is now a part of the school curriculum in Ukrainian literature.

"is programmatically mirroring the collective suffering" (Hrabovych 14), and the rescue of the individual in the text "predicts the national liberation" (ibid.). Thus, the novel can be seen as a repository of a non-Bolshevik – namely, Ukrainian – national myth.

In what follows, I will analyze the selected works of Soviet Ukrainian authors to demonstrate the ways in which Jewish people – both as the victims of the Nazi genocide and as active fighters against Nazis – are represented. I aim to show the complicated relationship between the style of socialist realism, state censorship, and the Soviet Ukrainian authors' effort to introduce a multi-dimensional, non-conventional narrative of World War II while addressing the theme of Jewish extermination, as well as Jewish resistance, in Nazi-occupied Ukraine.

Cherednychenko, Smolych, and Ianovskyi: The Silenced Holocaust?

The official Soviet paradigm for the interpretation of the everyday war experience had been undermined even before it emerged as such. This can be seen, in particular, in the texts of Soviet Ukrainian authors who represented the positions of different national groups and social strata. For instance, Varvara Cherednychenko introduced a female point of view on the war years (*Ia, shchaslyva Valentyna – I, Happy Valentyna*, 1946), and Iurii Ianovskyi showed Nazi-occupied Kyiv through the eyes of children (*Kyivs'ka Sonata – Kyiv Sonata*, 1945). Cherednychenko strived to describe the identity of a Soviet woman at war in national terms, while Ianovskyi used the children's perspective to mitigate the effect caused by the devastation of Kyiv and its inhabitants. In his turn, Iurii Smolych in the novel *Vony ne proishly (They Did Not Pass*, 1947) depicted Soviet Ukrainians who helped Jewish people escape from the life-threatening danger imposed on them by Nazi occupiers.

The literary criticism of that time conceived of the voices in the fictional texts as that of the authors' ideological standpoints. As opposed to that, Russian philosopher and literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin introduced the understanding of a literary text as a conflation of two discourses: the author's and the hero's. In his essay *Discourse in the Novel* (1935), Bakhtin argued that the language of the novel "is defined by the diversity of social speech types... and a diversity of

individual voices, artistically organized" (*The Bakhtin Reader* 114). The essay was written in 1935, one year after the First Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, during which the doctrine of socialist realism was officially adopted as a main aesthetical (or rather, ideological) framework for Soviet literature. Some scholars argue that the concept of heteroglossia, which was explicated by Bakhtin in his *Discourse in the Novel*, can be regarded as an inherent opposition to the "monological and self-consistent stance of socialist realism" (Zhang 25).

Later on, in his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963) Bakhtin elaborated on his understanding of heteroglossia by stating that "the author's discourse... is treated stylistically as discourse directed toward its own straightforward referential meaning... But the author may also make use of someone else's discourse for his own purposes, by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has... an intention of its own. Such a discourse, in keeping with its task, must be perceived as belonging to someone else" (*The Bakhtin Reader* 105).

In my view, it may be productive to utilize Bakhtin's concept of two discourses for the analysis of Cherednychenko's and Ianovskyi's short stories on World War II, and to a lesser degree for the analysis of the Smolych novel from 1944. Bakhtin concentrates primarily on the language of the novel; however, his approach is also relevant to the artistic organization of the short stories. They can be seen as "shaped by the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces" (*The Bakhtin Reader* 114), which are opposed to ideological unification and centralization, as far as they introduce different perspectives and voices.

According to Bakhtin, there is always a distance between "a prose writer and the language of his own work" (*The Bakhtin Reader* 116). Consequently, the author speaks not *in* a language, but *through* the language, ventriloquizing the plurality of speech acts. While this ventriloquism was precisely the reason for the harsh criticism that, for instance, Cherednychenko faced after the war, it also sheds light on the contradictions of the perception of war and Soviet patriotism by the ordinary Ukrainians at that time.

Cherednychenko's *I, Happy Valentyna* was published in *Vitchyzna* journal in February 1946. Later on, in August 1946, this issue of the journal became a specific target for criticism, in particular, by the main Ukrainian weekly newspaper *Radyans'ka Ukraina*. In the short story, the genre of which is specified as *Notes from a Pink Notebook*, the female protagonist, Valentyna, speaks of her memories about the beginning of World War II. On the day of June 22, 1941, Kyiv was bombarded; however, it is only the words of Vyacheslav Molotov – in other words, the official discourse – that made the heroine feel that the war was there: "It was only after comrade Molotov's speech that we realized that the war had started" (Cherednychenko 111).

Within her narrative, Cherednychenko consciously mixes and even juxtaposes two discourses. The first one is the discourse of the heroine's pre-war memories about the encounter with her husband Yakov and of her aspirations to continue family life in Kyiv after the victory. This is a highly private, even sentimental narrative of a woman who sees the war not as a heroic event but as an essential obstacle to her self-realization as mother and wife. This part of Valentyna's consciousness is symbolized by the "red notebook" and by the "red dress" (Cherednychenko 112) that is stored in the protagonist's luggage. This "private" dimension of Valentyna's consciousness is embedded in her husband's letters from the front and her responses to those letters, which constitute the content of the diary.

The second dimension of protagonist's consciousness is the discourse of Valentyna's service for the front, while she works in evacuation as a medical doctor. This type of discourse is marked by the concepts taken from the official Soviet ideology of the wartime: "I will fight for the life of my Soviet soldiers. I will relieve them from the sticky fingers of death" (Cherednychenko 112).

Valentyna feels that her role as a doctor is somewhat subordinate to the role of the "true" fighter on the front, which is why she depicts her heroic deeds as something unostentatious. For instance, she has significantly lost weight; nevertheless, she gives two hundred grams of her blood to a wounded warrior. A mother of four, the heroine also conceives of herself as a mother

of the wounded soldiers in the hospital: “Now I have sons all over the Soviet land” (Cherednychenko 114). Her “sons” include representatives of different ethnic groups: besides Russians and Ukrainians, her patients are also a Tatar young man, a Kazakh, and a Jew. Here the contamination of private and public is especially acute.

This contamination is, however, not the only conflation of opposites to be observed in the story. No less important is the conflation of two national perspectives in the diary – of the Soviet one and the Ukrainian one. Valentyna’s family members have clear pro-Ukrainian sentiments but at the same time they are depicted as faithful to the Soviet project of state-building. The protagonist herself often appeals to Ukrainian history; at the same time, she also spreads her ideas among her colleagues and patients: “Among the patients, there is a proclivity for history, for the biographies of the prominent figures. We held a session of talks about Yermak, Razin, Puhachov, and Shevchenko. I delivered my talks about Lenin, Kirov, Krups’ka, Mayakovskyi, Pushkin, Tychyna – which I had prepared long ago as a student” (Cherednychenko 114). Here the surnames of Ukrainian poets – namely, Shevchenko’s and Tychyna’s – are incorporated into the range of Russian (and Soviet) historical and cultural figures. Valentyna’s elder son Vasyl’ reads the journal *Kievskaya Starina* (*Kiev Antiques,* printed in Kyiv during 1882–1906) and simultaneously dreams of becoming “a true Soviet diplomat” (Cherednychenko 120).

Moreover, Valentyna as a narrator finds the way to interweave Ukrainian and Russian history in the text introducing the figure of the Siberian doctor Hlib Mnohohrishnykh, Valentyna’s colleague in the evacuation. The doctor thinks of himself as of a descendant of 17th-century Ukrainian Hetman Demian Mnohohrishny who was sent to Siberia by the authorities of Tsarist Russia (Cherednychenko 116). In such a way, the narrator in the text points to the “Ukrainian” traces in Russian history. This was one of the reasons why Cherednychenko was harshly criticized during the Conference of Ukrainian writers held on August 27–28, 1946. The

aim of the gathering was to denounce "Ukrainian nationalism" and the elements of Mykhailo Hrushevsky's approach towards depicting Ukrainian history in the writers' texts[17].

As literary critic Stepan Kryzhanivs'ky noted, Cherednychenko's national engagement is "to be seen not as straightforward propaganda" but rather as a system of images she uses in the text (quoted in: Kysla). This was true as far as Valentyna's voice in the short story acted as a bearer of a nationally oriented consciousness. However, another critic M. Berezhnyi in his article *Pro zhurnal "Vitchyzna"* [*Regarding "Vitchyzna" Journal*] published in *Radyans'ka Ukraina* in August 1946 went even further by calling Cherednychenko's heroes "historical artifacts" that "have no connection to the real interests of the Soviet people". Finally, Iakiv Horodskoi in his article in *Literaturna Hazeta* [*Literary Newspaper*] published that same month called the heroes of Cherednychenko's story "the modernized Cossacks" (quoted in: Kysla).

Berezhnyi's and Horodskoi's statements were, however, not quite accurate, for the identity of the protagonists in *I, Happy Valentyna* had a clear Soviet dimension. Valentyna's greatest aspiration in the story was to return to the liberated Soviet Kyiv, and she saw her family as a model of Soviet society that strived for victory and achieved it. That this version of war history was somewhat idealized can be seen from the fact that Valentyna's whole family (including her four children, her parents, her husband, her brother, and his wife Rakhil) came home undamaged: "You are indeed happy, Valentyno Pavlivno! You return from the evacuation like a general officer who has preserved all of his fighters... And your house is intact, and your flat is still there" (Cherednychenko 122). This can be seen as a part of a post-war Soviet utopia, when the victory was primarily associated with courage and patience, and not with human victims and devastation of cities and villages. Still, as I demonstrated above, this idealized vision of Soviet victory did not prevent Cherednychenko from being accused of nationalist deviations.

In the post-war reality Cherednychenko's Valentyna found out that her overall appearance had been completely destroyed by the war. When looking at herself in the mirror, she

[17] Hrushevsky's "History of Ukraine-Rus'" (1895–1933) is considered to be the groundbreaking work of Ukrainian historiography.

said with bitterness: "Indeed, is this my face? Is this my slim figure of a young sportswoman? [...] Is it really possible that I am a human being 'made out of clay' that was squashed by these short-lived years of the war?" (Cherednychenko 123). Valentyna's mourning of her once healthy body stood in sharp contrast with the way in which the female protagonist of Iurii Smolych's novel *They Did Not Pass* (*Vony ne proishly*, 1947), Olga, anticipated the day when the war would come to an end. Olga, who lived in Kharkiv during Nazi occupation, did not address her devastating experience of survival and did not mourn the irrevocable changes in her physical appearance. Instead, she looked forward to living in peace. At the same time, Smolych's Olga kept in mind the large-scale consequences of the invasion: "[Let's assume] the war is over... Millions died. Millions are injured or disabled. Millions are unhappy. And then there will be peaceful time again. Oh, will it indeed be?" (Smolych 1947, 389). While Olga acknowledged that suffering and devastation are the primary components of the war, she did not allow herself to lament the past events. The main source of optimism for her was the after-war rebuilding: "We will start living and working again to rebuild our beautiful motherland together with all of our people" (Smolych 1947, 389).

Both Cherednychenko in her short story and Smolych in his novel addressed the issue of Jewish victims persecuted and exterminated by Nazi troops and war administration. This subtopic is explicitly present in both texts; however, as I contend, Smolych's take on the Holocaust in occupied Ukraine can be seen as a more simplistic one. In particular, the 4th and 5th parts of Cherednychenko's *I, Happy Valentyna* tell the story of Valentyna's sister-in-law Rakhil, a Jewish woman who had lost all of her family in the Babyn Yar massacre. Rakhil's plotline is significant due to the fact that this elderly woman cannot speak for herself. During the time of evacuation, where she was together with Valentyna's family, Rakhil received a letter from Kyiv stating that all of her relatives – old Fogelmans – perished in the ravine: "The old ones, the sons, and the grandsons – fifteen people altogether [perished]" (Cherednychenko 117). As a result, the

heroine suffered from a severe nervous breakdown and received care and support from the female protagonist.

In such a way, Cherednychenko touches upon two issues that could have provoked criticism. The first one is the so-called particularization of war sufferings, for it is clear from the text that the destiny of the Fogelman family was caused by their ethnic origin. Another issue was the emphasis on the fact that the war caused not only physical injuries and deaths but also mental traumas. Such an emphasis on the long-term consequences of the events can be seen as an effort to build a counter-narrative of World War II, although at that time the official narrative had not yet emerged. Understood as "innovative forces fostering beneficial societal change" as well as "forces holding productive potential for... ethical issues" (Lueg et al. 4), counter-narrative strived to provide a place for individual experiences and memories of the wartime.[18]

At around the same time, in 1944, Iurii Smolych in his novel *They Did Not Pass* introduced a young Jewish woman Ida Slobodianyk who was an acquaintance of the female protagonist, Olga. As a Jew, Slobodianyk was doomed to be exterminated by Nazi death squads. However, the law of the occupational administration suggested that if three people of non-Jewish origin could attest to the fact that the person was not a Jew, that person could be rescued. While Smolych's Olga was eager to help Ida, she also realized that such an attestation was very close to anti-Semitism: "Olga was outraged. What a shame! To prove that you are not a Jew? Is there something wrong in being a son of your own nation? Ida, of course, must be saved. (...) Olga has never thought that she is capable of doing it: to cover up someone who abandoned their origin... Abandoned their nation... To prove that someone is not a Jew *is almost like promoting anti-Semitism*." (Smolych 1947, 121; my emphasis). Olga, together with her fellow-students Maria and Nina, attested to Ida's non-Jewish origin, and put at risk their own security, because perjury was prosecuted by capital punishment. Later in the novel, Olga went as far as to hide Ida in her

[18] When in 1946 Cherednychenko was criticized for her novella, the dominant narrative of World War II in Ukrainian literature had not emerged yet. The well-known Soviet author Oles' Honchar had just begun to work on his *The Standard Bearers (Praporonostsi*, 1946–1948) war trilogy that was later also published in *Vitchyzna* journal. Honchar's novels are considered to be classical writings about the war within the scope of socialist realism in Ukraine.

household. Like Cherednychenko's Rakhil, Smolych's Ida experienced a nervous breakdown after having realized that almost all of the Jews in occupied Kharkiv were exterminated: "Ida was not crying and grieving any more... She... lost weight, and it was only in her eyes that the flame of horror and folly could be seen. She barely spoke to Olga. What, after all, should they discuss? Should they mention the SS-officers who were hunting for Jews in Kharkiv apartments or those ten thousand people who have died from starvation in the city?" (Smolych 1947, 160).

Smolych and Cherednychenko brought up evidence that the Holocaust in occupied Ukraine was a specific experience in terms of both the ethnic origin of the victims and their gender and age. Indeed, those of the Jews who did not evacuate and stayed in the occupied territories were mainly women, children, and elderly people, while Jewish men, being Soviet citizens, were fighting at the front.

At the same time, depicting this experience can be seen as a part of the 'principle of pairs' and 'proportionality'. This principle was discussed in the 1930s by the Soviet Russian writer and critic Leonid Radishchev. In his work *Poison – On Contemporary Anti-Semitism* (*Iad – ob antisemitizme nashikh dnei*, 1930) Radishchev stated that "in the era of socialist realism, the 'principle of pairs', 'parallels', and 'proportionality' have become necessary so that... the reader should not draw socially dangerous conclusions" (quoted in: Choseed 121). In the years before the war the "principle of proportionality" meant that Jews in Soviet literature should be represented as the supporters of the Soviet order. Such a representation, in its turn, had to attest to the fact that the Soviet state did not approve of anti-Semitism and created a favorable life and good working conditions for all national groups. The depiction of Soviet Jews as Nazi victims, as well as the depiction of Ukrainians as supporters (and, during the war, as saviors) of Jewish people should have emphasized the contrast between anti-Semitic Nazi Germany and the internationalist Soviet Union.

In Smolych's text the use of this principle was even more evident than in Cherednychenko's novella, since Olga's thoughts in the novel are often explained in detail by the

narrator. At times, her thoughts looked like an extract from a Soviet newspaper article. For instance, when Ida, having arrived at Olga's apartment, mentioned Kharkiv Jews – the victims of the German death squads – Olga reflected on Ida's words by the following passage: "The Hitlerites have already killed thousands of people in the city – communists, civil servants, civilians. They were killed just for nothing. That was awful, that was horrible; that was not a war but... a mass extermination. Olga *was terrified but not surprised*. She has already understood: fascists exterminate our people to create living space for themselves and to master it. This is how Hitler's 'new order' in Europe must look like" (Smolych 1947, 157; my emphasis). Olga's ideological literacy in Smolych's text guided the protagonist's actions no less than her sympathy towards Ida. In Cherednychenko's novella, Valentyna's sympathy to Rakhil is grounded in the fact that the latter is her brother's wife, while in Smolych's novel Olga let the readers know that Ida was her acquaintance, not even a close friend.

The representation of those who can be referred to as "Holocaust survivors" performed yet another function in both texts. When depicting Rakhil and Ida, Cherednychenko and Smolych could be relatively free in representing such emotions as anxiety and fear – the emotions that were shared by their Soviet counterparts (Valentyna and Olga respectively) but could not be revealed due to the socialist realist conventions that forced the authors to gloss over the reality. However, when it came to the depiction of the figures whose national identity was different from their own – i.e., to the Jews – those conventions could be partially abated. While Rakhil and Ida might be desperate and helpless, Valentyna and Olga as exemplary Soviet citizens had to be vigilant and reserved under most difficult circumstances – in Smolych's words, could be "terrified but not surprised".

Analyzing Soviet literature of the late 1930s and 1940s, Katerina Clark points to one of the symbolic patterns that were widely used in the fictional texts of that time. In particular, it was the pattern of a "small family" that reflected the principles and aspirations of the "great family" – Soviet society as such (see in: Clark 116). While in the 1920s–1930s everything was "public,"

during the war years the significance of the private sphere was restored, as far as "the wartime sanctification of hearth and home" served as "the primary source of identity and citizenship" (Kirschenbaum 827–828). Just like Cherednychenko in her text created a model of Soviet society using the image of a family in evacuation, Iurii Ianovskyi in his *Kyiv Sonata* (1945) depicted a half-utopian image of a "family" of two children. Felix and Volia, who lost their fathers on the front and their mothers during the Kyiv occupation, joined their effort to survive in the city.

The narration in *Kyiv Sonata* is in the third person, and Ianovskyi uses the narrative prism of a child to mitigate the devastating effect of war on the cityscape and Kyiv inhabitants. The author is conscious of the meaning of his narrative device, as in the very beginning he notes: "By the way, this story has a happy ending, which one couldn't expect in a God-damned place like Kyiv during the German occupation" (Ianovskyi 1945, 3). However, the realistic manner in which the story is written adds to the contrast between the gloomy reality of the occupied city and the children's fantasies, in which they imagined themselves walking into the cinema and buying ice-cream on the ruined Khreshchatyk (Ianovskyi 1945, 13).

One of the most striking episodes in the text is the description of the Jewish procession to Babyn Yar, which was witnessed by Felix, Volia, and Volia's then alive mother. Here, the contrast between the horrific reality of Jewish extermination in Kyiv and the consciousness of the protagonists is especially acute. Initially, the two boys think of the procession as a May Day demonstration, but soon they are disillusioned: "The demonstration was indeed strange. No one was either singing or laughing, and there was no music. Some people were walking with suitcases and bags, some were bringing blankets and pillows with them, and children were pushing carts with cheap things. Small dogs were silently running close to people. Women who just stayed alongside were crying and saying goodbye to those who went ahead" (Ianovskyi 1945, 7).

The protagonists encounter a female Jewish doctor and her paralyzed husband who are going to join the same procession; however, they are unable to do so due to the man's

immobility. The female doctor asks Volia's mother and the children to look for some pills in their abandoned flat, and while the three are looking for the tablets, the woman is speaking explicitly about the Jewish fate in Kyiv: "Everyone goes to Syrets, and no one comes back.[19] We've been staying here in the rain for two days already; one can hear gunfire and explosions from Babyn Yar side, so we wait until someone comes to take us there. Thank you that you were not afraid of approaching us" (Ianovskyi 1945, 7). The pills in the Jewish doctor's flat appear to be a poison, which is used for the couple's suicide. Again, Felix and Volia are not aware of what exactly they are bringing to the woman – as in the case with the Jewish death march which is mistaken for the demonstration. In such a way, Ianovskyi, on the one hand, evokes the effect of estrangement; on the other hand, he emphasizes that non-Jewish Kyiv natives were aware of the fate of city's Jews – as far as most of them used to be their immediate or remote neighbors.

While Felix, Volia, and Volia's mother facilitated and witnessed the elderly couple's suicide, it is remarkable that the female doctor regarded their behavior as an act of compassion: "I wish that you could also get help from someone in your last moments of life. Now, my husband and I do not have to wait that long, we will take the pills, and then everything is over" (Ianovskyi 1945, 8). Just like in Valentin Kataev's short story *Otche nash* (*Our Father in Heaven*, 1946), where a boy together with his mother tried to escape the Odessa massacre of Jews by wandering the streets of the frozen city, Ianovskyi's heroes were only able to choose between suicide and extermination. It can be summarized that Ianovskyi's view on Jewish extermination in Ukraine was far more pessimistic than the perspectives given by Cherednychenko and Smolych. In *Kyiv Sonata*, Ukrainians were sympathetic towards the Jews and their sufferings; however, the only help they could propose to them was to look for the suicide pills. In other words, Ukrainians were unable to rescue their compatriots.

As Bakhtin contended, an author can always "make use of someone else's discourse for his own purposes by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has an

[19] Syrets – a neighborhood in Kyiv where Babyn Yar is located.

intention of its own" (*The Bakhtin Reader* 105). In the beginning, I assumed that the depiction of Jewish sufferings in Soviet Ukrainian fiction of that time can be called "the silenced Holocaust". Yet, despite the censorship of the 1940s, this topic was explicitly present in Cherednychenko's, Smolych's, and Ianovskyi's texts that in many other respects complied with the norms of socialist realism. These authors used the discourses of "other" Soviet people to introduce "a new semantic dimension" into the dominant aesthetic paradigm. The voices and perspectives of Valentyna (Cherednychenko), Olga (Smolych), and Felix and Volia (Ianovskyi) helped to modify the one-dimensional and superficial depiction of the war experience instigated by the Soviet cultural establishment. At the same time, such a depiction aligned with the above-mentioned "principle of pairs' and 'proportionality' – in other words, the representation of Soviet Ukrainians as rescuers of Jews fit into the framework of unacceptability of anti-Semitism. Finally, the representation of the "Holocaust survivors" allowed Cherednychenko and Smolych to reveal such emotions as fear and anxiety – the emotions that were shared by the protagonists of their stories but were not directly expressed by them.

Smolych: Jewish fighters in "exemplary" socialist realism

As Katerina Clark emphasized in her study of the Soviet novel, the fiction written in the 1940s was often marked by incongruity (Clark 194). This incongruity stemmed from the fact that the aesthetical guidelines of socialist realism and the reality of the 1940s were gradually drifting apart. Although "life in the Soviet forties was decidedly grim, the response of literature had to become 'gayer'" (quoted in: Clark 194). Another aesthetical principle of the decade was the one of "conflictlessness". It implied that Soviet reality by that time has become so advanced that "the only possible conflict to be depicted was the one between the 'good' and the 'as-yet-less-good'" (ibid.).

The incongruity characterizes, in particular, an exemplary socialist realist text that I chose for analysis. Iurii Smolych's short story *The Immortality of Commander Khrystia* (from the set of short stories entitled *Peaceful People* [*Myrni Liudy*], 1943) used common clichés of Soviet

fiction of the 1940s. Addressing the life of Ukrainian people in the rear, Smolych turned to Soviet guerilla fighters, whose heroic deeds were often depicted in an exaggerated manner. One of the main goals of guerilla war was to prevent Germans from taking over the objects of civil infrastructure and agricultural goods. In Smolych's case, for instance, guerilla fighters destroy a sugar plant in occupied Ukraine.[20]

In *The Immortality of Commander Khrystia* we encounter the Jewish guerilla fighter Shlyoma Shleiman who fought against the occupiers side by side with Ukrainians. Thus, it can be suggested that Jews were represented by the Ukrainian authors not only as Nazi victims, but also as active participants of the resistance. According to Murav, approximately three hundred thousand Jews served in the Red Army during World War II (Murav 112). As Magocsi and Petrovsky-Shtern assure us, Jews "were third in number of awardees among wartime heroes of the Soviet Union in the defeat of the Nazis" (Magocsi, Petrovsky-Shtern 83). Still, Soviet Jewish soldiers faced a necessity to prove that they had been courageously fighting during the wartime – especially in the after-war years that were marked by repressions against the Jewish cultural elite.

As Murav contends, Soviet Yiddish writers "explicitly named themselves as fighting both for the Jewish people and for their Soviet homeland" (Murav 113) during the wartime. In the extraordinary circumstances two identities – the one of an ethnic Jew and the other of a Soviet citizen – not only overlapped but also reinforced each other. However, while analyzing the post-war poetry of Boris Slutskii (who was himself a Russian Jew), Murav also pointed to the fact that in Slutskii's texts "the role of Jew emerges in a subtle fashion that is at times surprising" (Murav 116). The same phenomenon – of an image of a Jew whose role in the fighting emerged "in a subtle fashion" – can be observed in Smolych's text.

In *The Immortality...*, the guerilla fighters in occupied Ukraine are headed by a young female fighter Khrystia, which can be seen as an extraordinary situation from the onset. Khrystia,

[20] Much the same clichés can be seen, for instance, in Oleksandr Korniychuk's play *Guerilla Fighters in Ukrainian Steppe* (1944).

who was severely wounded by the German soldiers, was about to die; however, she wanted to make sure that her death would not be in vain. To that end, the heroine elaborated a plan to deceive the German squads and to make them fall into a trap.

The world of the guerilla fighters in the short story is evidently based on binary opposites. The "heroic Soviet people" and "peaceful Soviet life" (Smolych 1943, 78) are juxtaposed to the Germans and occupational regime.[21]

We may point out at the incongruence of Khrystia's image: being only twenty five years old, Smolych's heroine is already an experienced horse rider, a warrior, a council deputy, and a "Stakhanovite telegraph operator" (Smolych 1943, 79). While Khrystia is affectionate to one of the guerilla fighters, Tymofii, she, unlike Cherednychenko's Valentyna, is primarily preoccupied by the planning of the operation to deceive and exterminate the German squad.

In the short story, Smolych introduced the image of a young Jewish doctor from Vinnytsya, Shlyoma Shleiman, who fought alongside the Ukrainian guerilla fighters. According to Khrystia's testament, Shleiman wrote a letter to the head of the German squad, lieutenant Milktaube, with an offer to visit the headquarters of the fighters so as to get secret information about their routes and protective works (Smolych 1943, 80). While Khrystia's plan was not approved of by the rest of the Ukrainian squad as it sounded too unrealistic, the fighters embarked on fulfilling it, and Shleiman was assigned to bring the letter to Milktaube, although it is highly probable that the carrier would be killed by the Germans on the spot.

As I have already mentioned, for the most part Smolych's novella is aesthetically one-dimensional and is based on the binary opposition between heroic Soviet guerilla fighters and treacherous German occupiers. But the part of the text that is devoted to Shleiman's engagement with Khrystia's plan is semantically ambiguous. For instance, when the members of the Ukrainian squad chose the courier to bring the letter to Germans, they first thought about

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[21] The set of the short stories, of which *The Immortality of Commander Khrystia* is a part, is entitled *Peaceful People* (Ukrainian: *Myrni Liudy*) with an evident reference to "Soviet" people.

Khrystia's beloved man, Tymofii. However, Khrystia proposed that the Jewish doctor Shleiman would do that, and Shleiman agreed. All the members of the Ukrainian squad realized that his decision would definitely make him a victim of the Nazis once they have read Khrystia's letter, and the doctor himself was aware of this:

"Shlyoma took the letter and put it into the bag with his surgical instruments. He was a bit pale; however, he remained calm. The guerilla fighters silently stepped aside to let him get through. – Shlyoma must not go! – Someone cried out suddenly, – Shlyoma is a Jew! – And everyone glanced at the man who had just cried out, and then at Shlyoma. – Indeed, he is a Jew... A Jew must not go. Whether Milktaube takes the letter seriously or not, he will certainly torture the Jew. Do not let him go!" (Smolych 1943, 83).

The reaction of the fighters to Shlyoma's decision attested to their understanding of German politics towards the Jews on occupied Soviet territories. The guerilla fighters were sympathetic to the doctor; however, Shlyoma himself reacted to the conundrum in an unexpected way: "And how does it really matter that I am a Jew? – Shlyoma cried out. – How does it matter? – His lips were trembling, his cheeks got red. *– I will go precisely because I am a Jew!* Will they torture me? Oh, they will torture everyone. Will they do it more fiercely? Well, I will spit in their face! Let them live with this! They will not survive – you will kill them! And when they see that a Jew arrives as a courier, they will be more likely to believe, because there's no hope for the Jew. *I am a Jew! I am a guerilla fighter!* I will go!" (Smolych 1943, 83; my emphasis).

Shleiman's "I am a Jew! I am a guerilla fighter!" can be connected directly to the phenomenon that is described as a "double designation" (Murav 113) in Murav's observations of the reception of the Holocaust in Soviet Jewish and Soviet Yiddish literature. Murav refers, in particular, to the poems by Itzik Fefer ("So what if I've been circumscribed", 1942) and Perets Markish ("To the Jewish soldier", 1943), where the soldiers stated directly the dual character of their identity (Jewish/Soviet). According to Murav, during the war "Jews were particularly good

Soviets, because they were Jews, because they were doubly the target for annihilation in Hitler's war against 'Judeo-Bolshevism'" (Murav 112).

While the other heroes of Smolych's short story (like Khrystia and Tymofii) were depicted as exemplary fighters who are psychologically one-dimensional and monolithic, Shleiman's character and his capability of making a conscious choice to suffer for the sake of his compatriots is perceived as a more semantically complex. The fact that Shlyoma himself is not a fighter but has an occupation that is peaceful *per se* (he is a doctor) contributes to the complexity of his choice. However, Smolych's text also entailed the above-mentioned Radishchev's principle of "pairs" and "proportionality". If in *They did not Pass* Smolych's emphasis was on the Ukrainian people who saved the Jews, in *The Immortality of Commander Khrystia* it was a Jew who was prepared to make sacrifices for the Ukrainian people.

Chapter 3

Babyn Yar through the Lens of Poetry: Mykola Bazhan's *The Pit*

On November 6 1943, the Ukrainian writers Mykola Bazhan, Oleksandr Dovzhenko, and Iurii Ianovskyi entered Kyiv with the divisions of the Red Army. Bazhan, Dovzhenko, and Ianovskyi had worked as war correspondents and therefore witnessed a lot during the war years. However, the day when they entered liberated Kyiv made a long-lasting impression on all of them. In particular, in his memoirs *Master of a Rose Made of Iron* (1979) Bazhan wrote: "It is difficult to recreate the atmosphere that surrounded us on the observation post of the Bukrynsky bridgehead. We seemed to be... unnecessary here, among the soldiers who tacitly, soberly, and consistently accomplished their task of a merciless struggle. We were just watching so that later we could tell people about what we saw, so that our children would know and tell their children" (quoted in: Aheyeva 237).

Bazhan, at that time a high-ranking Soviet Ukrainian writer and editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Za Radians'ku Ukrainu (For the Soviet Ukraine)*, was among the first Ukrainian authors to speak directly about the Babyn Yar massacre that took place in Kyiv in September 1941 in the course of the Nazi occupation of the city. While Bazhan was not the only poet to reflect on the Jewish tragedy in the 1940s (others included, in particular, Kyiv-born bilingual poet Olga Anstei, Kyiv-born Russian-Jewish poet and translator Lev Ozerov, Ukrainian poet Vasyl Shvets who served as a war correspondent), his legacy, as I contend, deserves special attention for several reasons.

First of all, at that time Bazhan was a well-established and widely-known Ukrainian author. In the 1920s, he began his career as an avant-garde writer, and, together with his colleagues Mykhail' Semenko and Heo Shkurupii, was influenced by futurism and expressionism. As he survived the Great Terror of the 1930s (unlike Semenko and Shkurupii, both of whom perished in the purges of 1937), Bazhan was forced to become loyal to Soviet

ideology. He joined the Communist Party in 1940, and became a part of the Soviet political and cultural establishment, acting as a head of the board of the Writers' Union of Ukraine in the 1950s and as an editor-in-chief of the *Ukrainian-Soviet Encyclopedia* (*Ukrains'ka Radians'ka Entsyklopedia, URE*) – starting from the 1950s and up until his death in 1983. A prolific writer and literary translator, in the 1930s Bazhan also published texts that attested to his loyalty to the regime – in particular, the poem *A Man is Standing in the Star-Covered Kremlin* (*Liudyna stoit' v zorenosnim Kremli*, 1931), which evidently depicted Stalin.

Another reason why Bazhan can be considered an important figure in the context of Ukrainian-Jewish co-existence before and after World War II is his long-standing interest in Jewish themes. In the beginning of the 1920s, Bazhan lived and studied in the town of Uman in Central Ukraine. Up until the demise of the Russian Empire Uman had been a typical East European *shtetl* – a town that was inhabited mostly by Jews and embodied the traditional way of life of East European Jewry, including the commitment to Orthodox Judaism. Therefore, Bazhan got a chance to observe the people of Uman, their everyday life and culture. His 1929 poem *Getto v Umani* (*Getto in Uman*) created a contradictory image of Judaism, as Bazhan deployed harsh expressionistic metaphors such as the "tetanus of religion" (see in: Bazhan 1929). At the same time, as Shkandrij emphasizes, in his *Getto v Umani* the poet "also underlined the power of faith" (*Babyn Yar Special Report* 7). Much later, in 1968, Bazhan wrote a poem *Deborah: From the Book of Uman Memories* (*Debora: Z knyhy umanskyh spohadiv)* that focused on the story of a young woman from Uman who had been raped during the revolutionary upheaval of 1918-20, and was later killed in Babyn Yar in 1941. In the poem, Bazhan addressed the deceased woman:

> Give me your hand. Give a hand.
>
> We will walk over the burned ruins together
>
> In illumination, in torture, in suffering,
>
> In a wave of anxiety pierced by flame.
>
> Give me your hand, phantom,

Give me your thin hand

On the burned ruins of Uman.

Here you are, standing by me,

Gazing at the path you took.

You have not changed at all

After all these forty-eight years.

(*Babyn Yar Special Report* 8; translated by Myroslav Shkandrij).

As the translator of the text puts it, "the poem is a moving requiem for murdered Jews and for the lost civilization of Uman, a town Bazhan knew well, and in which Jews and Ukrainians had interacted and influenced one another's cultures for generations" (*Babyn Yar Special Report* 7).

The war years in Bazhan's literary biography were paradoxically marked by the feeling of relief and freedom due to the fact that the state control over creative writing was partially toned down. "The years of the war, despite all the difficult feelings, were for me as a poet a happy time. They were, at least, definitely happier than the previous years – and perhaps even happier than some of those that were yet to come... I was able to write without coercion, to speak about the things that really filled my mind" (quoted in: Aheyeva, 227).

In this atmosphere of partial liberalization Bazhan created his poetical cycle *Kyiv Etudes* (*Kyivs'ki Etiudy*), which included the poem *The Pit* (*Yar*). The cycle was finished by Bazhan in 1943 and published in Kyiv in 1945 as a part of his poetry collection *In The Days of War* (*V dni vijny*). The book consisted of four parts: poems from the cycle *In The Days of War*, the lyrical poem *Stalingrad Notebooks*, the poetical cycle *Kyiv Etudes,* and the historical poem *Danylo Halyts'ky* (Bazhan 1945). The structure of the publication allowed Bazhan to hide the poetical cycle *Kyiv Etudes*, which was arguably the most semantically charged part of the book, behind the first ten poems that complied with the expectations of censorship and the poem about the

Stalingrad battle. In particular, the opening poem, *The Oath*, contained a refrain “Never, never will Ukraine be a slave of the German hangmen!” (Bazhan 1945, 5).

Consequently, Bazhan’s *The Pit* (as a part of *Kyiv Etudes*) came to the contemporary reader in disguise. The overall structure of the book promoted Soviet patriotism and loyalty to the official hierarchy of identities. However, the structure and the message of the cycle *Kyiv Etudes* deviated from the official discourse about Soviet victory in the war. On the one hand, Bazhan emphasized the national (in this case, Ukrainian) component in people’s sufferings, as he directly addressed the Ukrainian capital – Kyiv. On the other hand, he was also explicit about the traumatic experiences that were encountered by the Kyiv dwellers during the war. And one of the most traumatic events in the course of Kyiv occupation was the extermination of the Jewish population of Kyiv (more than 30 000 Jewish people) in the Babyn Yar massacre in September 1941, shortly after the city was occupied by Germans.[22] Finally, Bazhan’s cycle is written as an immediate (or almost immediate) poetical reflection, which allowed space for spontaneous allusions and images.

The cycle is comprised of seven parts: “On the Left Bank” (“Na Livomu Berezi”), “In the Street” (“Na vulytsi”), “Near the University” (“Bilia universytetu”), “The Pit” (“Yar”), “The Morning” (“Ranok”), “On the Square” (“Na ploshchi”), and “The Builder” (“Budivnychyi”) (Bazhan 1945, 59–74). Bazhan’s lyrical hero moved from the Left Bank of the Dnipro River to the Right Bank, reflecting on the devastation of such well-known Kyiv districts as Podil (“Na vulytsi”) and the historical centre where Kyiv University was located (“Bilia universytetu”).

Compositionally and emotionally, “The Pit” is the core part of the cycle. Although in the title Bazhan did not refer to the ravine as to “Babyn”, its name appeared in the poem itself, closer to the end. While creating one of the first literary accounts of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Bazhan faced at least two problems. One of them entailed the possibilities of realistic, or

[22] According to Karel Berkhoff, on the eve of Nazi invasion “more than one in four people in Soviet Kyiv was Jewish”. A significant part of the Jewish population of Kyiv was evacuated to the East; yet, many Jews chose to stay behind for various reasons, including the need to care for elderly family members, attachment to belongings etc. See in: Berkhoff, Karel. *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008. – P. 61.

mimetic, representation of the traumatic event by means of poetry. According to Cathy Caruth, "the chief symptom of trauma is the victim's failure to recognize that an overwhelming injury has taken place" (quoted in: Murav 153). Another problem of Holocaust literature is that it acts simultaneously as a reflection on the tragic event and as an act of witnessing. As Susan Sontag wrote with regard to wartime photography, war photographs "are both a faithful copy or transcription of an actual moment of reality and an interpretation of that reality" (Sontag 32). Consequently, the author of a work of Holocaust literature is regarded both as a witness and as one who strives to appropriately describe the experience of the insurmountable loss.

Bazhan's poem consists of twelve stanzas.[23] The first and the third stanzas give the reader a picture of the ravine in a plain, emotionless language, and the image of the ravine that can be grasped from the beginning of the poem may be compared to an old photograph:

> Rust-colored cavity, green clay,
>
> rotting garbage, moats.
>
> In terror of itself the wind
>
> enters the lungs, the wind
>
> of rusted badlands. [1st stanza]
>
> [...]
>
> Just a ravine, ragged and unkempt,
>
> The trembling branches of two pale aspens. [3rd stanza]

This description was, however, dissected by the second stanza where there was an unexpected shift to a more emotional mode of speaking. The author addressed his imaginary interlocutor with an appeal: "Do not pale, nor shrink, / nor shudder – Stand as if / facing judgement!/ Upright – like a warrior – stand!" We can hypothesize that the lyrical hero addressed the reader in his effort to search for revenge. At the same time the call "stand as if facing judgement" can be seen as a metaphor of the Last Judgement, which is supported by the

[23] Here and hereafter, I quote Bazhan's poem in Roman Turovsky's translation, which was published in: *Babyn Yar Special Report*, p. 6. Here, the poem is not dissected into stanzas. However, this dissection is present in the original Ukrainian text. See in: Bazhan, Mykola. "Kyivs'ki Etiudy". *V dni vijny*. 59–74. Kyiv, 1945.

last two lines of the second stanza: "There is no oath sufficient to swear, / There is no curse sufficient to lay". Thus, the first two stanzas of Bazhan's poem introduced two subtopics: the gloomy image of the site of mass extermination and the call for the retribution.

The event that constituted the main theme of the poem – the extermination of civilians – was brought to the forefront only in the end of the third stanza: "This is not silence! This – the / Ceaseless scream of a hundred thousand hearts, / the dying wail of all hope lost". The metaphor of the "ceaseless scream" can be related to Edward Munch's renowned painting "The Scream", which is explained by the fact that back in the 1920s Bazhan experienced the influence of the aesthetics of European expressionism, initially through the renowned Ukrainian stage director Les' Kurbas. Bazhan befriended Kurbas in 1920, when the stage director organized a theatrical studio in Uman and eventually offered Bazhan to become the local director of the studio (Bazhan 1983, n. p.). Before the revolution, Kurbas himself had been a student of Vienna University where he had been influenced by German expressionist drama – in particular, by Max Reinhardt. Thus, Bazhan turned to the artistic legacy of expressionism to depict Babyn Yar tragedy.

In the forth stanza, the poet created an equally expressionist picture of the ravine itself:

Silver ashes of burnt bones.

A cracked shard of cranial bone.

The walls of the ravine crumble.

Two golden braids aslither from a hole,

no rot, no hiding for the golden curls.

Here the reader could observe the contrast between the image of human remnants ("a cracked shard of cranial bone") and another image of golden braids and curls that were usually associated with a young woman's beauty and physical health.

In the fifth stanza, Bazhan focused his attention on human possessions – the artifacts of once-peaceful life: "In the moist sludge between steep walls / the glimmer of a pair of crushed reading glasses, / A child's bloodied shoe decaying on its side". "A pair of crushed reading

glasses" can be associated with elderly people, while a child's shoe is clearly a hint towards the children who were exterminated in the pit. In such a way, Bazhan created a panoramic picture of the victims' previous lives and identities, making an emphasis on the fact that those victims were predominantly civilians – because the majority of the male population was fighting at the frontline and did not reside in occupied Kyiv.

The poem's culmination, as I see it, was embedded in the seventh stanza of "The Pit". It was stressed by the amplification in the first two lines of the stanza:

This is the place of scarlet fires,

This is the place of brooks of tar,

of colliers picking apart the corpses

In search of gemstones and gold

(my emphasis – H. P.).

The eighth stanza marked the beginning of the other mode of the poem, which laid an emphasis on the influence of the horrific massacre on the Kyiv dwellers – i. e., the people who shared the same physical space with the victims in the pre-war years. Here, again, Bazhan turned to the aesthetics of expressionism:

Heavy, oppressive, insufferable smoke

floats over the noxious ravine.

It breathes death, breathes nightmare,

a deaf monster crawling through the streets and creeping into houses.

The image of "a deaf monster" that breathes death and nightmare was utilized by Bazhan to personify the Holocaust. While moving along the streets of Kyiv, the "monster" loses its speech in horror. Thus, the moment of historical catastrophe distorted the usual mode of speaking; however, a new kind of speech has not been created yet.

In the tenth and eleventh stanzas, Bazhan elaborated on the subtheme of witnessing:

The city folk is watching from its sorry hovels

how beyond the monastery domes,

beyond the graveyard poplars

burns human flesh and blood.

(my emphasis. – H. P.)

In addition to that, in the eleventh stanza, the witnesses of the catastrophe are also merged into one major onlooker – the city of Kyiv: "And Kiev's red face is gazing / at Babi Yar writhing in flames". In such a way, Bazhan combined the expressionist metaphor of history as a "monster" with a specific place of the tragedy.

The last, twelfth, stanza of "The Pit" served as a parallel to the second stanza. There, the author reiterated the necessity – but also the perceived impossibility – of retribution.

The twelfth stanza:

There is *no remorse* to quell this fire,

No measure set for retribution still.

Be cursed the one who dares forget!

Be cursed the one who asks forgiveness!

(my emphasis. – H. P.)

The end of the second stanza:

There is *no oath* sufficient to swear,

There is *no curse* sufficient to lay.

(my emphasis. – H. P.)

Analyzing Russian poetical responses to the Holocaust, Marat Grinberg suggested that Holocaust poetry could fall into one of the two categories: poetry of witness and poetry of commentary. While the poetry of witness aimed at providing an immediate response to trauma and to record the event, the poetry of commentary appeared to be more reflective. According to Grinberg, the impetus of the poetry of witness is "documentary and testimonial" (Grinberg 308); at the same time, the poetry of commentary is "much more conscious of the traditions with

which it engages, reframes, and finds either suitable or fundamentally unfit for comprehending and representing the catastrophe" (Grinberg 308).

However, the boundary between these two types of poetry is often not strict. As I have shown, the first three stanzas of Bazhan's "The Pit" were written in a manner that was close to the aesthetics of documentary photography, which makes the poem close to the poetry of witnessing. In the rest of the poetical text, however, the author used the devices of the expressionist aesthetics to depict the Babyn Yar massacre, represented Kyiv as a geographical and semantic centre of the tragic event, and highlighted the importance of remembrance. These messages were more relevant to the poetry of commentary, in Grinberg's classification. Consequently, "The Pit" created a hybrid form of Holocaust poetry that merged witnessing with commentary and connected an "objective" third-person historical narrative with a first-person emotional response to the tragedy.

As I noted in chapter 2 of this study, both the official Soviet policy to universalize war sufferings and the aesthetics of socialist realism made it difficult for the Soviet Ukrainian authors to speak openly about the Holocaust. Yet, some of the Ukrainian authors attempted to represent the disastrous events in Nazi-occupied Ukraine, and did so either explicitly (as, for instance, Cherednychenko, Smolych, and Ianovskyi) or, as in Bazhan's case, indirectly. Throughout the poem, the Jews are not mentioned as the main victims of the Babyn Yar massacre. However, several images used in "The Pit" attest to the author's intention to contribute to the memory about the Jewish victims. For instance, here is the sixth stanza of the poem:

A terrifying mark of a hundred thousand putrefactions;

The gley is fat with trampled shards of man.

First, a remark should be made regarding the number of "hundred thousand". This number is not chosen unintentionally, because more people were exterminated by the Germans in Babyn Yar after September 1941. However, the other Nazi victims were not necessarily Jews – they also included Soviet prisoners of war, Ukrainian nationalists, Roma people, and patients

of psychiatric hospitals. One hundred thousand was the official number of all those who perished in the ravine during the occupation and it was referred to by the Soviet authorities to highlight the "universalist" approach to the commemoration of the victims. Bazhan, himself a part of the Soviet cultural establishment, was most likely aware of this fact. Therefore, he used the number of victims without singling out the Jewish people.[24]

At the same time, the second line of the stanza: "*The gley is fat* with trampled shards of man" (my emphasis – H.P.) can be seen as a reference to the Holocaust, in particular, to Nazi experiments "in making soap from human bodies, which.... the Soviet side described at the Nuremberg Military Tribunal of 1946, and which became part of what most Soviets knew about Nazism" (Shrayer 232). The function of this reference was not only to introduce the Holocaust to the Soviet reader, but also to make a meaningful connection between the Holocaust in the West and in the Soviet Union. While the Jewish tragedy in the West was symbolized by the images of the concentration camps as symbols of mass extermination, the same event in Eastern Europe was later called "Holocaust by bullets". The majority of victims were shot in the outskirts of big cities, towns and villages, and their remnants were often hidden by the German army and/or the local collaborators. Consequently, the task of commemorating victims of the Holocaust by bullets was much more complicated after the war. For instance, Babyn Yar (in the 1940s, it was located in the outskirts of Kyiv) continued to be an abandoned ravine during the 1940s – 1960s. It was only after the spontaneous commemorative gatherings in the ravine in the mid-1960s that the monument to the victims was erected near the ravine (in 1976).

Because of this lack of commemorative effort, Kyiv urban space – as it was represented both in *The Pit* and in *Kyiv Etudes* – was of great importance to Bazhan. As the poet realized that the official policy was, in fact, directed towards the erasure of the memory about the Jewish victims, he simultaneously hoped that this memory would be nevertheless preserved by the Kyiv dwellers – people who for decades had been the neighbors and friends of the victims.

[24] Overall, more than 33 000 Jews perished in Babyn Yar. See in: Berkhoff, Karel. "The Shooting of the Jews Is a Fact": Kyiv's Non-Jewish Population and the Babyn Yar Massacre, September – October 1941. *Holocaust studii si cercetari*, 2021, Vol.XIII (1(14)), pp.89–115.

Let us consider, in particular, the ninth stanza of the poem:

Black and scarlet flames wander

along the land that lost its speech in horror,

the bloody hues reflect on *Kiev's soiled roofs*

the bloody hues reflect on *Kiev's soiled spires*.

(My emphasis. – H. P.)

Here, Kyiv's roofs and spires (the metonymy for Kyiv itself) can be seen as the carriers of the traumatic memory – as they reflect "the bloody hues" of the Holocaust.

This close reading of Bazhan's poem highlights yet another collision that evolves during the interpretation of the texts that depict the Holocaust. The poet was extensively using expressionist aesthetics to represent the Holocaust. Those images were tactile and easy to grasp; however, they could also provoke the collision that is now known as cultural appropriation. According to Theodor Adorno, cultural appropriation can be spotted in the situation when "the victims are turned into works of art, tossed out to be gobbled up by the world that did them in. The so-called artistic rendering of the naked physical pain of those who were beaten down with rifle butts contains, however distantly, the possibility that pleasure can be squeezed from it […] When even genocide becomes cultural property in committed literature, it becomes easier to continue complying with the culture that gave rise to the murder" (quoted in: Grinberg 309).

At the same time, "The Pit" can be seen as a turn towards the reconciliation between Jews and Ukrainians in post-war Kyiv. In his text, Bazhan made an effort to reconstruct collective identity by means of fictional narrative. In the context of the theory of cultural trauma, such an approach towards collective identity "is expected to produce a normative dimension for a society" (Alexander 27), to provoke sympathy, and to make national identity more inclusive through the incorporation of the traumatic narratives of the others. By inscribing the Babyn Yar massacre into the mental map of post-war Kyiv, Bazhan prepared the ground for the next stage of the Ukrainian reception of the Holocaust in the 1950s–1960s.

Chapter 4

From Individual Trauma to Collective Memory: Babyn Yar Commemoration in Soviet Kyiv, 1941–1966

In the previous chapters, I analyzed how Soviet Ukrainian writers reflected on the atrocities that were committed against Jews by the Nazi invaders. I started with the journalistic accounts that arguably entailed the most immediate reactions to the events, and then I examined the fictional texts that emerged either during or shortly after World War II. Yet, these responses could only lay the groundwork for the commemoration of Jews in Soviet Ukraine. For this commemoration to be sustainable, more effort was needed not only from writers and journalists, but from the community in general, as well as from the political and cultural institutions in the Ukrainian SSR.

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the formation of collective memory about the Holocaust in Ukraine through the lenses of two theoretical frameworks: the theory of cultural trauma and the psychoanalytical approach to trauma. Drawing on the example of Babyn Yar massacre, I will try to better understand the process in the course of which Ukrainians (and in particular, Kyiv dwellers) advanced from silence about the tragedy and, at times, indifference to the memory of the victims to a more sympathetic, compassionate attitude. I will also look at how this transformation was connected to the social and cultural movement of the 1960s (*shistdesiatnytstvo*) that emerged in Soviet Ukraine as a response of the Ukrainian cultural elite to de-Stalinization (after Stalin's death in 1953) and to the Khrushchev's Thaw.

The term "collective memory" was introduced by the French social scientist Maurice Halbwachs in 1925. In his work *On Collective Memory* Halbwachs highlighted the importance of the so-called "affective community", the members of which possess a shared experience of something in the past. Thus, remembering as a practice is possible within the group as well as with the help of the group. In any given historical period, the society comprises numerous

affective communities, and not all forms of collective memory are integrated into the historical narrative. As opposed to history, collective memory "is a current of continuous thought whose continuity is not at all artificial, for it retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive" (Halbwachs 80). According to Aleida Assmann, by introducing the notions of an "affective community" and a "social frame", Halbwachs adopted "a constructivist perspective, which distances him from collective mythmakers and essentialists" (Assmann 51). Assmann expanded on Halbwach's theory by stating that collective memory is "an umbrella term for different formats of memory that need to be further distinguished, such as family memory, interactive group memory, and social, political, national, and cultural memory" (Assmann 55). While "interactive group memory" is grounded in lived experiences that vanish with their carriers, "the manifestations of political and cultural memory... are radically different in that they are grounded on the more durable carriers of external symbols and representations" (Assmann 55). According to Assmann, "in order to transform ephemeral social memory into long-term collective memory that can be transmitted from generation to generation, it has to be elaborated and organized in various forms" (ibid.), such as visual and verbal sings, institutions of learning, monuments and sites of memory etc. However, what happens when there is a confrontation between the carriers of "ephemeral social memory" and the political milieu that strives to establish its version of "long-term collective memory"? In this chapter, by using two theoretical approaches to the cultural trauma as an object of collective memory, I will demonstrate that a bottom-up approach to the commemoration can challenge the predominant top-down approach and, consequently, change it.

The concept of cultural trauma was elaborated by the sociologist and cultural theorist Jeffrey Alexander. According to Alexander, in terms of cultural studies trauma is not "something naturally existing; it is something constructed by society" (Alexander 2). Such an approach differs from the lay trauma theory or, more exactly, from the "enlightenment" version of lay trauma theory. The "enlightenment" approach to trauma emphasizes that the abrupt change

caused by traumatic events necessarily "leads to the efforts to alter the circumstances that caused them... The objects or events that trigger trauma are perceived clearly by actors, their responses are lucid, and the effects of these responses are problem solving and progressive" (Alexander 3).

By contrast, the psychoanalytic version of trauma theory emphasizes the discontinuity between the shattering events in the world and individual psychological response to these events. The reaction to the traumatic event is not an action or a pursuit of social change, but a repression of the experience of trauma. As a result, "the traumatizing event becomes distorted in the actor's imagination and memory" (Alexander 5).

The psychoanalytic theory of trauma has become especially impactful in the 1990s; in particular, Cathy Caruth's groundbreaking work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* was published in 1996. In the introduction to her book, Caruth emphasized that trauma can be interpreted as a double wound: "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature... returns to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth 5). Caruth also pointed out the fact that the acknowledgment of trauma is always a belated phenomenon: "This truth [of a traumatic event. – H.P.], in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language" (Caruth 4).

As Alexander puts it, the distinctive feature of the theory of cultural trauma is its focus "on the collectivity rather than the individual" (Alexander 4), which sets this approach apart from the psychoanalytical understanding of trauma. According to the sociologist, the formation of cultural trauma entails the incorporation of the message of the traumatic event into the consciousness of a social group: "For traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity, social crises must become cultural crises. Events are one thing, representations of these events quite another. Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of *this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity*. Collective actors 'decide' to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where

they came from, and where they want to go" (Alexander 10, my emphasis – H.P.). The starting point of the formation of cultural trauma is a "claim" – a narrative "about a horribly destructive social process" (Alexander 11). Such claims are made by "carrier groups" – "the collective agents of the trauma process" (ibid.); these groups may be defined in national, generational, or institutional terms.

Alexander contends that the formation of cultural trauma is akin to the construction of the speech act. This formation involves a speaker (the carrier group), an audience, and a situation – "the historical, cultural, and institutional environment within which the speech act occurs" (Alexander 12).

Before I proceed to the analysis of the formation of cultural trauma in Soviet Kyiv in the 1960s, I will briefly describe the attitudes of Kyiv dwellers to the Babyn Yar massacre shortly before the mass killing, after the liberation of Kyiv in 1943, and in the late 1940s. I will also touch upon the experience of the survivor of the massacre, Dina Pronicheva, in the context of the psychoanalytical approach to trauma. Although I do not intend to introduce any additional historical sources or testimonies, I believe it is still important to summarize the key points of the reception of the massacre for the sake of better understanding of how a cultural trauma was being constructed.

The German troops entered Soviet Kyiv on September 26, 1941, and their invasion was accompanied by a series of explosions in the city centre that ultimately led to the destruction of the buildings on Khreshchatyk Street, the main street of the capital. Although those were Soviet authorities who mined the buildings on Khreshchatyk in the course of their retreat (following the policy of "scorched earth"), the German propaganda instantly blamed the Jews of Kyiv for the arsons. Drawing on the German propagandistic press of that time, Karel Berkhoff demonstrated that the invaders deliberately spread these rumors: "The official captions [under the pictures of ruined buildings] are that building blocks in Kyiv were either blown up by 'the Soviets', or

'razed to the ground by the Jews', or 'set on fire by the Jews'." (Berkhoff 95). As Anatolii Kuznetsov noted in his novel-document "Babii Yar" (1966; 1970)[25],

> "no other European capital met Hitler like Kyiv did. The city already had no potential to defend itself, and Soviet troops had retreated... However, the city burned itself down and took the lives of many of its invaders. The occupiers entered Kyiv preparing to celebrate, just like they used to enter other European capitals; instead, they were punched in the face..." (Kuznetsov 64, my translation. – H. P.).

Were Kyiv dwellers prone to believe the efforts of Nazi propaganda? As Iryna Khoroshunova, a 28-year old woman who survived the German occupation of Kyiv noted in her diary, although those rumors were perceived as absurd, a lot of Kyiv inhabitants were still inclined to believe them: "...Most of all, the Jews are blamed for the fact that we lost the war and that Bolshevism is over. Intellectually, we understand that all this is sheer absurdity. After all, three days ago nothing foreshadowed the collapse of the Soviet system, and all these rumors are deliberately spread by German propaganda. And yet you need to have great endurance to resist them. […] *Rumors endlessly grew that the city was set on fire by the Jews. It was quite obvious that this was another provocation*" (quoted in: Berkhoff 97; my emphasis – H. P.).

On September 28, 1941, the tri-lingual posters appeared on the streets of Kyiv.[26] The posters ordered all the Jewish population of Kyiv to gather on the corner of Melnykova and Dekhtyarivs'ka (misspelled by the occupiers as Dokhturovs'ka) Streets, having their documents, money, and winter clothes with themselves. Those who might disobey the German order were threatened to be shot.

The message of the posters, again, was interpreted by Kyiv dwellers as confusing. As historian Vladyslav Hrynevych noted, there were rumors that "the Germans were sending the Jews to Palestine, so they were heading to the station to board trains" (Hrynevych 110). Also, some of the non-Jewish inhabitants, as, for instance, medical doctor Fedir Bohatyrchuk, considered the possibility that the Jews would be taken to the labor camps. However, a counter-argument was made that children and elderly people could hardly perform any physical labor:

[25] The novel, distorted by the Soviet censorship, was first published in *Yunost'* journal in 1966; the uncensored version of the novel was published in London in 1970.
[26] The posters were written in Russian, Ukrainian, and German (Berkhoff 96, Kuznetsov 69).

"All Kyivans wondered what the gathering might mean, – Bohatyrchuck recalled. – Apparently, many thought, they want to send the Jews somewhere to work. There were even optimists who saw with their own eyes the special trains prepared for this purpose at the station. But then, why gather everyone? What kind of work, for example, could *young children, the very old, or elderly women do, who were also asked to come*?" (quoted in: Berkhoff 97; my emphasis. – H.P.). The 1945 publication "The Bloody Ravine" ("Kryvavyi Yar) in *Radians'ka Ukraina* newspaper by the writer and journalist Rafail Skomorovskii quoted the Ukrainian woman Tamara Mikhaseva who acknowledged the senselessness of these contentions: "Even on that day (September 28. – *H.P.*) people continued to spread these senseless rumors. Some of them said that it was a labor mobilization, others said it was a relocation, and there were those who suggested that Jewish families would be exchanged for the German POWs" (quoted in: Zeltser 94).

Nevertheless, a lot of non-Jewish Kyiv dwellers were inclined to believe the above-mentioned contentions. The fact that some of them accompanied their Jewish neighbors and relatives to the corner of Melnykova and Dekhtyarivs'ka Streets can corroborate that. In particular, Hrynevych wrote that his mother, who was then a schoolgirl, accompanied her classmate Mania and Mania's family to the place of mass shooting (Hrynevych 109). There was, however, a police cordon at Lukianivka[27], which prevented Hrynevych's mother from moving further (ibid.) Anatolii Kuznetsov in his novel drew a memorable sketch of Kyiv dwellers watching the Jewish procession on September 29:

> "My head was aching from noise and uproar. Everyone was discussing the same thing: where are they going to take them [the Jews. – *H.P.*]? And how are they going to do that? ...And then suddenly everyone got even more worried. The rumors were spread that there is a cordon ahead of us, on Melnykova Street. They let people in, but do not let anyone out. It was then that I got intimidated. I was tired; I had a terrible headache because of all this; I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to get back home... When I finally was back, I saw my grandfather. He stood in the middle of the yard listening at gunfire, and then he raised his finger. –You know what? – He said being shocked by what he had heard. – They do not take them anywhere. They shoot them" (Kuznetsov 72, my translation. – H.P.).

[27] A neighborhood in Kyiv.

We can assume that the explanations of the German order communicated in the September 28 poster (that the Germans were going to relocate the Jews either to Palestine or to the labor camps) could serve as a way to alleviate the pain that non-Jewish population of Kyiv felt right after the order was circulated. The poster[28] did not explicitly state the intention to kill the Jews of Kyiv – but there was a perceived threat in it. As Kuznetsov's twelve-year-old protagonist put it, "I read the poster twice, and it made my skin crawl. Because it was written with utmost cruelty; much hatred was in it" (Kuznetsov 69, my translation – H. P.).[29]

While reading the poster was the first traumatic moment for the non-Jewish Kyiv dwellers, watching the Jewish procession in the morning of September 29 appeared to be even more traumatic, especially when it became clear that the Germans created a police cordon, which was meant to keep the non-Jewish population away from the place of the gathering. The experience of Kuznetsov's protagonist can be compared to the experience of a car accident survivor described by Cathy Caruth. Referring to Sigmund Freud, Caruth suggested that from the place of such an accident "a person walks away apparently unharmed, only to suffer symptoms of the shock weeks later" (Caruth 6). It is in this context that Caruth defines trauma as an event that "returns to haunt the trauma victim" (ibid.)

On September 30 it became evident that the Jews had not been sent to Palestine and had not been relocated to the labor camps. As Berkhoff noted, Kyiv dwellers understood that by relying on several factors: "No evacuation of the Jews further on, out of Kyiv, was observed; instead, one saw at once the transportation of clothes. Near the place was the sound of shooting rounds and anxious voices. Non-Jewish companions came back and told stories, long or short..." (Berkhoff 101). The awareness that the Jews of Kyiv were machine-gunned by the Germans made city dwellers feel extremely anxious. An insightful note in Iryna Khoroshunova's diary dated by October 2, 1941, emphasized such emotions as despair, impossibility to directly express this despair, and being at a loss for words: "There are more and more such rumors and stories.

[28] The text of the poster is quoted in: Kuznetsov, Anatolii. *Babi Yar. Roman-dokument*. Kiev: Sammit-Kniga, 2008. P. 68.
[29] The novel is autobiographic, and Kuznetsov described his own experience as a twelve-year old boy in Nazi-occupied Kyiv.

Their heinousness does not fit in our heads. But we are forced to believe, because the shooting of the Jews is a fact. A fact that makes us all insane. And it is impossible to live with the awareness of this fact. The women around us are crying. And we? We, too, cried on 29 September, when we thought they were being taken to concentration camps. And now? Is it possible to cry?" (translation quoted in: Berkhoff 102; original quote in: Khoroshunova 89). She goes on by saying: "Was there anything like that in the history of humanity? No one will ever be able to think of something of that kind. *It is not possible to write, it is not possible to try to comprehend, because trying to comprehend will make us insane*." (Khoroshunova 90, my emphasis – H.P.). The impossibility to instantly comprehend the traumatic event mentioned by Khoroshunova can be also linked to the anxiety of being silent about what has happened: "traumatic feelings... come not only from the originating event but from the anxiety of keeping it repressed" (Alexander 5).

The end of World War II brought, on the one hand, the beginning of the repressions against those Jews in Soviet Ukraine who managed to survive the war. On the other hand, the post-war years opened up a path towards conscious silencing of the fact that Jews were, in fact, the main target of Nazi politics of extermination. In particular, after the liberation of Kyiv in November 1943 the Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation of the Crimes of the German-Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices (Ukrainian: *Nadzvychajna Derzhavna Komisiia, NDK*) was established, and the goal of the Commission was to collect the evidence about Nazi crimes as well as to present its findings to the public. However, from the very beginning the Commission was regarded by the Soviet authorities as a political tool, and the respective findings could be easily misrepresented or even falsified (Hrynevych 112). Such a falsification occurred, in particular, in 1943, after the discovery of the burials in Bykivnia woods near Kyiv, where in 1937–1938 NKVD buried the bodies of victims of Great Terror. However, the Commission concluded that the newly discovered mass graves contained the bodies of the prisoners of war executed by German invaders (Hrynevych 112).

Regarding the Babyn Yar massacre, the State Commission relied mostly on the testimonies of Soviet prisoners of war who were forced by the Germans to conceal the evidence of the mass killings in the ravine. Only 18 out of 237 prisoners managed to escape from captivity and survived; their testimonies were used as a basis for the report prepared by the Commission. However, when the final draft of the report (which was explicit about the fact that the German executioners targeted Jews just because they were Jews) reached Moscow, the text of the draft was revised significantly. As Hrynevych mentions, the text was read by Viacheslav Molotov and Mykyta Khrushchev, and then the revisions were made by the head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Georgii Aleksandrov. As a result, even passing mentions of Jews as Nazi victims were eliminated from the document, and in February 1944 *Izvestiia* newspaper informed the public that on September 29, 1941, "the Hitlerite bandits herded thousands of *innocent Soviet citizens* to the corner of Melnykov and Dokterevska streets. The executioners led those who had gathered there to Babyn Yar... People recounted seeing the Germans throwing infants into the ravine and burying them alive together with their parents, who were killed and wounded" (quoted in: Hrynevych 115; my emphasis). In such a way, the memory about Jews who perished in Babyn Yar was deliberately obscured.

On January 17–28, 1946, the Kyiv trial over the Nazi invaders took place in the city. It is important to emphasize that one of the massacre survivors Dina Pronicheva (Wasserman) was one of the major witnesses at the court proceedings. A recent documentary *The Kiev Trial* (2022) by Sergii Loznitsa contains the footage of the trial, including Pronicheva's emotional speech. Also, her testimonies are given in a "Shorthand Report of a conversation with Dina Mironovna Pronicheva, witness to the German crimes at Babyn Iar" (1946). In the report, the survivor elaborated on the major events in Kyiv that preceded the massacre: Jews being accused of setting Khreshchatyk Street on fire; the belief that the German order summoned the Jewish people to relocate them, and the overall intent of the German war administration to exterminate Jews merely because they were Jews.

Pronicheva's story and its details are perceived today as almost unbelievable. The survivor was married to a Russian man, but there was still an indication of Pronicheva's nationality in her passport[30]. When she reached the place of the mass murder, she threw away her ID card leaving only her trade union card and workbook with her – the documents where the nationality was not indicated. She told the commandant that she was not Jewish but Ukrainian. It is remarkable that she did not call herself Russian: this was probably due to the fact that in the beginning of the occupation Germans demonstrated a more tolerate attitude towards Ukrainians (compared to Russians) – this was true, in particular, with regard to Soviet POWs[31]. Initially, the commandant promised Pronicheva that she would be set free after his subordinates "have shot all the Jews" (Shorthand report, n.p.). Nevertheless, she was left near the ravine to be killed as a witness: "the German officer... said that we should all be shot, giving the reason that if even one person got away from here he would talk in the city about what he had seen here, and then the next day not a single Jew would appear here." (Shorthand report, n.p.)

Pronicheva was to be executed with the group of nine other witnesses. However, she managed to jump into the ravine: "I shut my eyes, squeezed my fists and threw myself down before a shot came. Of course, it seemed to me that I was flying a whole eternity because I was very high. I felt neither pain while I was falling nor the impact, nothing. My only wish was to live." (Shorthand report, n. p.) The survivor had been crawling for three days, and finally reached the Kurenivka grove. When Pronicheva was able to enter the first household on her path, she was initially eager to tell her whole story to the landlords; however, it has soon become clear that such sincerity would threaten her life, and she lied to the landlady: "I lied and said that I was coming back from the trenches, that I was from Bila Tserkva, and asked about the way to the city commandant, who could help me get home. She said, 'We'll show you the way,' and sent her

[30] In the Soviet Union, "Jewish" was regarded as a nationality rather than a religion. In Soviet passports there was an entry for citizenship, which was Soviet, and then for nationality, which could be Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish etc.

[31] As Karel Berkhoff noted, soldiers in the Wehrmacht assumed that Russians "had been irreversibly 'infected' with Bolshevism, the vicious ideology and political party created by 'Jewry.'" See in: Berkhoff, Karel. "The 'Russian' Prisoners of War in Nazi-Ruled Ukraine as Victims of Genocidal Massacre". *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, V15 N1, Spring 2001, pp. 1–32, 2001. – P. 4.

son somewhere." (Shorthand report, n. p.) The son returned soon – he brought a German officer who ordered Pronicheva to go with him.

Pronicheva's escape from the ravine was, in fact, only the first ordeal on her long path back home. Once again, she escaped from the German officers and hid in an abandoned carriage in Darnytsia[32]. Up until winter of 1942 she had been hiding in different places; she spent nights "in cellars, attics and ruins" (Shorthand report, n. p.). Later on, the woman was arrested and confined in Lukianivka prison, from where she also managed to escape with the help of a local partisan. Then, "ill, beaten, covered in scars", Pronicheva walked on her feet to Bila Tserkva – a town 70 kilometers to the south of Kyiv.

Because Pronicheva was an actress by training, she asked to be accepted to one of the Kyiv theatres that functioned in Bila Tserkva at that time. She, however, did not say a word about her rescue from the massacre and hiding in Kyiv – precisely because her colleagues would, most likely, denounce her to the authorities. Some of Pronicheva's coworkers pretended that they did not know her, but one actress, certain Koltsova, finally betrayed her: "When the actors in the theatre began persecuting me, Afanas'ev, the theatre's scene-shifter, announced that if anyone offended me he would deal with him. He took me under his wing because shortly before I arrived his Jewish wife had been executed before his eyes and his three-month-old child had been killed. I had to run from village to village and town to town many times. Afanas'ev always gave me advance warning." (Shorthand report, n. p.).

Pronicheva gave eye-witness testimony during the Kyiv Trial of 1946, and her memories were retold by Kuznetsov in his novel "Babi Yar" (1966; 1970); however, it can be assumed that her narrative as such did not receive much attention in post-war Soviet fiction. This lack of attention stemmed from the fact that everyday human experience of wartime was generally underestimated by the authors of socialist realism, although this experience could be revealed if it served an ideological purpose. In this context, Myroslav Shkandrij noted that "a fuller account

[32] A neighborhood in Kyiv located on the left bank of the Dnieper River.

of the Holocaust [in Soviet Ukrainian literature] would have called for fundamentally revising the Soviet war myth and raising uncomfortable issues" (Shkandrij 2009, 175). With regard to Pronicheva's story, the fact that those people who denounced her to the German police after her escape from the ravine were her compatriots was obviously an uncomfortable issue.

Yiddish writer Itsik Kipnis who lived and worked in Kyiv before the war and who spent the war years in the evacuation took part in the silent mourning procession to the place of the mass massacre in September 1944. In his essay "Among Jews" (also known as "Babii Iar") Kipnis wrote: "29 September. People are coming to Babyn Yar from all parts of the city. In my soul, I am praying for only one thing: friends, do not travel by streetcar, only on foot. We shall go along that road, along those streets that were filled to the edges with our still-living brothers. […]. Inside the streetcar, we can have more light, but the atmosphere there is way too ordinary and... someone else's gaze could at times touch my wound. Yes, it is insolent, and this gaze hurts, because our wounds are still not healed." (Kipnis 1–2). In this description, Kipnis emphasized three characteristics of that event: its silent mode, the necessity "to go along that road" (it was seen as a way to re-live the experience of the victims), and the intense grieving experienced by the participants: "We draw close. Quiet weeping is already heard from there. Everyone's faces are darkening, becoming tenser" (Kipnis 2).

Although the mourning processions like the one described by Kipnis were not prohibited by Soviet authorities, there was no political will to openly commemorate Jews who had perished in the ravine. The unwillingness to do so was related not only to the Soviet nationalities policy but also to the realm of everyday life in the after-war years. As the Jewish dwellers started to come back to Kyiv from the evacuation, their return was at times not welcomed by the rest of the inhabitants, for there was a profound lack of housing, and a significant part of the city was ruined. Some of the apartments that had previously been owned by Jews were now occupied by Ukrainians who survived the occupation. This provoked significant social tension in post-war Kyiv. This tension resulted in "blatant manifestations of anti-Semitism that went unpunished; for

example, the public use of the word *zhid*, offensive to the Jews, which was unimaginable before the war" (Hrynevych 120).

The emergence of the State of Israel in 1948 provoked a shift in the attitude to Jews in the Soviet Union and in Soviet Ukraine in particular. Starting from 1948, Jews were regarded as representatives of a diaspora nationality, and were thus deemed as potentially disloyal to the Soviet state (Yekelchyk 91). This year also marked the beginning of the harsh repressions against Jewish writers, intellectuals, and other public figures, including the arrest of the members of Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, the trial over them in Moscow and their subsequent execution in 1952. At least five out of thirteen defendants at the trial were from Soviet Ukraine: Peretz Markish, Itsik Fefer, Dovid Hofshteyn, Leib Kvitko, and David Bergelson. Itsik Kipnis, who participated in one of the first commemorative gatherings in Babyn Yar, was expelled from the Ukrainian Writers' Union and arrested in 1949, but survived the imprisonment. Also, the Office for the Study of Jewish Literature, Language, and Folklore (a part of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR), which collected documents and memoirs about Babyn Yar massacre for the Black Book of Soviet Jewry, was closed down in 1949 (Hrynevych 130–131). Thus, we can assume that during 1944–1948 the memory about Babyn Yar massacre was silenced; however, during 1948–1953 this memory together with its carriers – people and institutions – was consciously erased by the Soviet authorities.

Stalin's death in 1953 and the beginning of the Thaw brought hope for social and political change in Soviet Ukraine. The cult of Stalin's personality was denounced by Khrushchev in the course of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In Ukraine, the limited liberalization brought by the Khrushchev's Thaw resulted in the cultural and sociopolitical phenomenon of *shistdesiatnytstvo* and *shistdesiatnyky.*[33] According to Olena Zaplotyns'ka, *shistdesiatnyky* – a group of young Ukrainian writers, artists, and scholars who started their careers in the 1960s – were a cultural phenomenon "born of a time when literature and art

[33] In translation from Ukrainian: those who wrote in the 1960s.

became an ‘alternative to barricades’, when the struggle was not for an abstract political idea but for an individual. The new consciousness that arose from this resistance developed into political dissent only some time afterward” (quoted in: Bellezza xiii-xiv). Thus, it is not a coincidence that a hallmark event in the history of commemorating the victims of Babyn Yar took place in 1966 and involved one of the main cultural figures of the movement, literary scholar Ivan Dziuba.

It is precisely in 1966, as I contend, that the tragedy of the Babyn Yar massacre was constructed as a cultural trauma. As opposed to the mourning procession in 1948, when the participants silently went along the road to the ravine to share the feeling of immense suffering, the meeting on September 29 was, in fact, very close to a political manifestation.

According to Alexander, for a cultural trauma to be established, a “claim” should have been made, a “claim” that is defined as a narrative “about a horribly destructive social process” (Alexander 11). Such claims are made by “carrier groups” – “the collective agents of the trauma process” (ibid.). These groups may be defined in national, generational, or institutional terms, and with regard to the commemorative gathering in Babyn Yar in September 1966 one can point at three groups.

First, there was a new generation of young Jewish people in Kyiv. In most cases, they and their families had survived the massacre in the evacuation in Central Asia. A representative of this generation and one of the organizers of the meetings in the ravine in 1966, Emanuil Diamant (born 1937), has noted that those young Jews have realized that there existed a bond between the generations – and this bond implied the responsibility for the oblivion regarding the Jewish tragedy in wartime Kyiv (Diamant n.p.). Diamant himself emphasized the fact that in the beginning of the 1960s the phenomenon of reclaiming the historical legacy with regard to the commemoration of the Holocaust victims could be observed in the Baltic countries – at that time, the republics of the Soviet Union. For instance, in 1963 young Jews in Riga, Latvia, started to clean up the place of mass massacre in Rumbula forest, and in 1964 an improvised monument

was erected there. In 1966, a commemorative gathering took place on the territory of the Ninth Fort stronghold in Kaunas, Lithuania (Diamant, n.p.).

Another group involved in the construction of the cultural trauma was Soviet Russian intelligentsia. Here, the names of Ievgenii Ievtushenko and Viktor Nekrasov should be mentioned. A young albeit well-known Russian poet Ievtushenko visited Kyiv in 1961, and was appalled at the fact that the place of the tragedy was half-destroyed and completely abandoned by the city authorities. After the visit, Ievtushenko wrote a famous poem “There Are No Monuments Over Babyn Yar...” and recited it in the course of the creative evening in Zhovtnevyi (October) Palace in Kyiv. Although the poem did not directly mention the Jewish people who perished in the ravine, Ievtushenko’s recital made a long-lasting impression on the listeners. Emanuil Diamant, who also heard Ievtushenko reading the poem in October Palace, noted that his recital “instilled in me an understanding that everything that was happening to me and around me – to Babyn Yar, to the Jewish people, and to my own Jewish identity... – was my responsibility” (Diamant, n.p.)

Even more important was the role of a Kyiv-born writer and World War II veteran Viktor Nekrasov whose 1954 novel *In the native town* (*V rodnom gorode*) directly addressed the disastrous social consequences of war in Kyiv. Moreover, in 1959 Nekrasov’s article “Why was this not done?” was published in *Literaturnaia gazeta* in Moscow. In the appeal, the writer harshly criticized the policy of conscious oblivion of Babyn Yar victims and emphasized the necessity to commemorate them: “In the architectural department of Kyiv city council I was told that they are going to fill Babyn Yar with water... in other words, to fill in the pit, to cover it, and to establish a garden and a stadium on that place. How is it even possible? Who could think of that – to fill in the pit that is thirty meters in depth and to play football on the place of the greatest tragedy? No, it is not possible to let it happen” (Nekrasov 2; my translation – H. P.)

In September 1966, two groups from within Soviet society broke the silence about Babyn Yar in Kyiv. On the one hand, there was a group of young Jewish intelligentsia represented, in

particular, by Emanuel Diamant. On the other hand, there was Viktor Nekrasov, a Stalingrad battle veteran who had enough acclaim and authority to directly express his opinion regarding Soviet commemorative practices. On September 24, Diamant and a group of his friends placed a banner on the wall of the Jewish cemetery. The banner had two inscriptions, in Hebrew and in Russian, both of which read as: "Remember 6 million[34]". The group of the organizers asked everyone they knew to join the meeting near the entrance of the cemetery; according to Diamant, approximately fifty people joined the organizers on that day (Diamant, n. p.) The passersby could see the banner and read the inscription; however, no one gave any speeches on the occasion. Almost immediately, the KGB (Soviet security police) representatives arrived in two cars, and started to take photos and record the meeting on cameras. The majority of the intimidated participants decided to retreat and soon there were only organizers left. Suddenly, a man approached the group; to their surprise, it was Viktor Nekrasov. Nekrasov talked to Diamant and others, and it was decided to carry out a second meeting on the same place on September 29. "Nekrasov, – Diamant noted, – was confused by the sad experience of our *silent gathering*, and he continuously returned to this issue" (Diamant n.p., my emphasis – H.P.).

All the time between September 24 and September 29 the banner stayed on the wall of the cemetery – it is not quite clear why it was not dismantled by the authorities. According to Diamant, the fact that the banner was still on the wall inspired the organizers and even gave them a feeling that the second meeting will be almost a legitimate public event (Diamant n.p.).

It was on September 29 that the third group within the Soviet society – Ukrainian writers, including *shistdesiatnyky* – joined the meeting and played a crucial role in it. According to Hrynevych, about one thousand people assembled in Babyn Yar on that day, "mostly Jews. But there were also Ukrainians, Russians, and others who felt compelled by the moral need to demonstrate their sympathy and solidarity with the Jews in the struggle against anti-Semitism." (Hrynevych 136). Among the young Ukrainian writers who have just started their careers were

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[34] Six million is the number of Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

Ivan Dziuba (born 1931) and Yevhen Sverstiuk (born 1927), the older generation of Ukrainian intelligentsia was represented by Borys Antonenko-Davydovych (born Borys Davydov, 1899) who survived the Great Terror and returned to Kyiv from imprisonment and exile in 1957. The speech of young Dziuba at the meeting became a turning point in the history of Babyn Yar commemoration in Ukraine. Alexander compared the formation of cultural trauma to the construction of the speech act, and I contend that Dziuba's speech was precisely the "claim", the narrative "about a horribly destructive social process" that was needed for this construction.

Dziuba started his speech with these often-quoted words: "Babyn Yar is a tragedy of the whole of mankind, but it took place on Ukrainian soil. Therefore, a Ukrainian has no more right to forget about it than a Jew. Babyn Yar is our mutual tragedy, a tragedy first of all of the Jewish and the Ukrainian peoples. This tragedy was brought to our peoples by fascism" (Dziuba 29). He elaborated on this statement in an unexpected way, by bringing up the comparison between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union under Stalin. Imagine, Dziuba said, that fascism has won. There is no doubt "that they would have created a brilliant and 'flourishing' society, which would have reached a high level of economic and technological development... This regime would have done everything to affirm its 'truth' so that people would forget the price with which such 'progress' was bought, so that *history would justify or even forget the immeasurable crimes*, so that an inhuman society would appear to men as a moral one..." (Dziuba 29–30, my emphasis – H. P.). Just like the Nazi regime in Germany kept silence regarding the Holocaust, the Stalinist regime kept silence about the man-made hunger in Soviet Ukraine, which is known as Holodomor of 1932–1933, and the Great Terror, in the course of which a large number of Ukrainian intelligentsia was detained and executed. As Bellezza noted, the parallel between the totalitarianism of the Soviet regime and of Nazism (that was referred to as 'fascism' in the Soviet Union) "was already common in the West but it was unusual for the Communist bloc" (Bellezza 184).

The next important message of Dziuba's speech pertained to the Soviet nationalities policy. A year before the hallmark event in Babyn Yar Dziuba wrote a research paper called "Internationalism or Russification?" (1965). His work criticized Soviet cultural policy regarding different nationalities that inhabited the country, with an emphasis on Ukrainian culture. While the 1920s in the Soviet Union were characterized by the policy of "indigenization" (Ukrainian: *korenizatsia*), which implied the development of the indigenous cultures in Soviet republics on their way to socialism, the Stalinist rule in the late 1930s brought the reversal, to Russification in the realms of education, science, politics, and journalism. The same policy was pursued by the Soviet government after World War II and included repressions against Jewish writers and intellectuals in the end of the Stalinist era. Dziuba, however, tried not to condemn the whole Soviet system for the assimilatory policies – he spoke about the deviations from the principles proclaimed by Lenin. Still, "Internationalism or Russification?" was a bold undertaking. After Ukrainian and Russian Communist Party officials read the paper, Dziuba was expelled from the Ukrainian Writers' Union, persecuted, and arrested soon thereafter, in 1972.

In his speech in Babyn Yar, the writer reiterated his message about the Soviet policy of nationalities – this time, however, with regard to anti-Semitism. During the post-war decades, Dziuba emphasized, "no real struggle was undertaken against it [anti-Semitism]; what is more—at times, it was even artificially stimulated. It seems that Lenin's instructions on the struggle with anti-Semitism are being forgotten just as are Lenin's instructions on the national development of Ukraine" (Dziuba 30).

While the first two messages of Dziuba's speech were focused on the shortcomings of the Soviet policy of memory (the conscious silencing of the Babyn Yar tragedy) and on the consequences of the Soviet nationalities policy, his third message was addressed directly to the civil society – or rather, to a model of civil society as it could have been imagined at that time. According to Dziuba, Jews and Ukrainians in Soviet Ukraine needed to overcome prejudice and misconceptions regarding each other, but it was crucial for the members of civil society from

both sides to actively participate in that process. However, it was exactly the lack of such participation that impeded the reconciliation:

> "Unfortunately, there are a number of factors unfavorable to the establishment and expansion of that noble tradition of solidarity. *Among them is the absence of real publicity and transparency in nationality issues, as the result of which a kind of 'conspiracy of silence' surrounds the painful questions.* A good example for us in this regard could be the development of the respective situation in the fraternal socialist Poland. It is known how difficult the relations between the Poles and the Jews were in the past. Now there is no trace of the former hostility. What is the "secret" of such success? First, the Poles and the Jews were brought together by a common disaster in World War II. But we [in Ukraine] also had a common disaster. Secondly – and, unfortunately, we do not have that – in socialist Poland, *interethnic relations are the subject of sociological research and public discussion, the subject of constant attention and intervention of the press, literature, etc.*, and all this creates an atmosphere of good and successful national and intercultural education." (Dziuba 32, my emphasis – H. P.)

It should be noted, however, that in his effort to set up a positive example for Soviet Ukraine Dziuba over-emphasized Polish philo-Semitism of that time. In the end of the 1960s, Polish People's Republic saw an anti-Semitic campaign that was carried out by the minister of internal affairs, General Mieczysław Moczar, with the approval of First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' party Władysław Gomułka. Between 1968 and 1972, circa 13 000 Poles of Jewish origin left the country because of the restrictive policies and various forms of harassment.

The organizers did not use any sound-amplifying devices during the meeting, and not everyone was able to hear Dziuba's words. However, the scholar managed to write down his speech right after the meeting, and it then circulated widely in Ukrainian *samvydav* (self-publishing) (Bellezza 185). It was then translated into English and published in the anthology "Revolutionary Voices: Ukrainian Political Prisoners Condemn Russian Colonialism" (Munich, 1969).

During the meeting, Dziuba expressed the hope that social and cultural changes in Soviet Ukraine – such as an open discussion about difficult historical issues and Ukrainian-Jewish reconciliation – would have been possible without a radical political shift. Such an aspiration was a defining feature of the cultural movement of *shistdesiatnytstvo* that aimed at restoring the ground-breaking humanistic values in Soviet society. Yet, right after the end of the Thaw it had

become evident that those hopes were, in fact, delusional. The years of Leonid Brezhnev's rule brought a new wave of repressions against the Ukrainian intelligentsia, with a lot of Ukrainian writers, artists, and scholars, including Dziuba himself, being arrested and sentenced to imprisonment and exile.[35] The situation for the representatives of the two other groups mentioned above – Soviet Jews and Soviet Russian dissidents – was no less gloomy. After being expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Viktor Nekrasov immigrated to France in 1974. Emanuil Diamant, under the pressure of Soviet authorities, repatriated to Israel together with his family in 1971. Still, it is difficult to overestimate the significance of their collective endeavor in Babyn Yar in 1966. Not only did it contribute to the mutual reconciliation between Ukrainians and Jews, but it also demonstrated the potential of a civil society even under the circumstances of an authoritarian political regime.

Conclusion. Drawing on the two theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of trauma, I tried to explain and categorize the social and cultural processes that were taking place in Kyiv during 1941–1966 with regard to the infamous mass execution of Jews by the Nazis in Babyn Yar in 1941. As I contend, the first period of commemoration of the Babyn Yar victims (1941–1948) started immediately after the shootings in September. The non-Jewish Kyiv dwellers whose memoirs are now available (for instance, Iryna Khoroshunova and Anatolii Kuznetsov) emphasized such feelings as extreme anxiety, an inability to comprehend the horrific event, and an inability to find the appropriate words to express their feelings. This period can be best understood through the lens of the psychoanalytical approach to trauma, which entails, according to Cathy Caruth, the acknowledgment of the fact that trauma is always a belated phenomenon.

At the same time, the testimonies of the Babyn Yar massacre survivor Dina Pronicheva raised an uncomfortable issue of Ukrainian engagement with the attacks on the Jews during the occupation. For instance, the survivor's compatriots denounced her to the German police even after her escape from the ravine. Although Pronicheva's testimonies were extensively used as

[35] This is known as a 1972 pogrom of Ukrainian intelligentsia, when such prominent Ukrainian writers as Vasyl' Stus, Ivan Svitlychnyi, Yevhen Sverstiuk, Leonid Pliushch, Mykola Kholodnyi, Vasyl Lisovyi, Iryna Kalynets, and many others were detained and imprisoned.

evidence of Nazi crimes, they were not reflected upon in Soviet fiction, and consequently there was little understanding of what the survivor experience meant to Pronicheva herself.

One of the first mourning processions to the ravine in 1944 described by the Yiddish writer Itsik Kipnis (in his sketch “Among Jews”) can be also understood in terms of the psychoanalytical approach to trauma. The participants of this procession, according to Kipnis, felt the necessity “to go along that road” – in other words, to re-live the gruesome experience of their compatriots who perished in the ravine. The silent mode of the event indicated that it was still difficult to find the right words to speak about what the experience of Babyn Yar meant to those who returned to post-war Kyiv from the front or from the evacuation, like Kipnis himself.

The year of 1948 saw a shift in Soviet policy towards Jews, because after the emergence of the State of Israel Jews were seen as the representatives of a diaspora nationality and thus as those who could have been potentially disloyal to the Soviet ideology. This year also marked the beginning of the repressions against Jewish writers, intellectuals, and other public figures, including the arrest of the members of Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, the trial over them and their subsequent execution in 1952. Therefore, during 1941–1948 the memory about Babyn Yar massacre was silenced, and the Kyiv dwellers were not prepared to find the appropriate words to speak about the tragedy. However, during the so-called “black years of the Soviet Jewry” (1948–1953) memory about Babyn Yar was consciously erased by the Soviet authorities.

Stalin’s death and the beginning of Khrushchev’s Thaw brought a hope for the positive changes within the political system and cultural climate of the Soviet Union. The members of the cultural movement of *shistdesiatnyky* in Soviet Ukraine strived to bring awareness about the shortcomings of the Soviet policy of memory regarding Babyn Yar. While during 1941–1948 the initial steps to commemorate the victims were made by the Jewish community, the beginning of the 1960s saw the tendency towards the unification of the efforts of three different groups: Soviet Jewish intelligentsia, Soviet Ukrainian writers, and Soviet Russian writers and dissidents. Against this backdrop, the memory about the Babyn Yar tragedy was constructed as a cultural

trauma. According to Jeffrey Alexander, to establish a cultural trauma, a “carrier group” should have made “a claim” about “a horribly destructive social process” (Alexander 11). As I demonstrated, this establishment happened during the two commemorative gatherings in Babyn Yar in 1966. On September 24, the Jewish community prepared a banner with the inscription “Remember 6 million” and put it on the wall of the Jewish cemetery near the ravine. The installation of such a banner was a powerful gesture; however, the gathering on September 24 still lacked a coherent narrative about the perception of the tragedy. It was on September 29 that Ukrainian literary scholar Ivan Dziuba, one of the *shistdesiatnyky*, gave a ground-breaking speech at the location of the tragedy. Dziuba not only criticized the Soviet policy of Babyn Yar commemoration – he also emphasized that the responsibility to commemorate the victims and to facilitate the reconciliation between Ukrainians and Jews belonged to civil society as well. And indeed, as I have shown, Dziuba’s speech in Babyn Yar would not be possible without the preliminary preparations done by the Jewish community of Kyiv and without the support of Soviet Russian dissidents like Viktor Nekrasov and Vladimir Voinovitch who also participated in the September 29 gathering in the ravine.

Most importantly, both of the theoretical approaches to trauma reveal the importance of the “bottom–up” approach in memory studies. While the Soviet state was reluctant to recognize the unique fate of Soviet Jews in World War II and, to a large extent, had a monopoly on the policy of memory, the efforts of many people – including the intelligentsia – contributed to the emergence of an alternative model of remembering and commemoration. Such a model emerged because all the stakeholders felt that it was, in Dziuba’s words, their “duty before the best men of the Jewish and Ukrainian people who have called for mutual understanding and friendship”; their “duty before the Ukrainian soil on which we have to live together.” (Dziuba 33).

Conclusion

As I stated in the introduction, my work was guided by the intention to revise the metaphor of the "two solitudes" that denoted the mutual estrangement between the Ukrainian people and the Jewish people in the 20th century. On the eve of World War II, both Ukrainians and Jews were incorporated into the Soviet project of social modernization and were formally guaranteed equal rights in the Ukrainian SSR. However, the second part of the 1930s in the Soviet Union brought repressions against the Ukrainian writers and artists, and the end of the 1940s–beginning of the 1950s became the "black years of the Soviet Jewry". After the war, both Ukrainians and Jews realized that not only their lives, but also their identity and memory about the tragic events of the recent past were threatened. The emergence of the post-war Soviet policy that silenced the Holocaust in the Soviet Union with regard to the ethnicity of victims was the next step towards an oblivion that was catastrophic for the representatives of both national groups.

However, during and right after the war, Ukrainian journalists and writers spoke explicitly about the Holocaust in the occupied territories. In my work, I examined both "objective" and "subjective" Ukrainian narratives about the Jewish destruction that occurred between 1943 and 1947. The dividing line between these two narratives was often blurred. During these years, there was no official prohibition against speaking about the German atrocities against Jews – in fact, journalists and correspondents were encouraged to devote "the most serious attention to the gathering and publication of materials about the atrocities and looting of the Germans" (Berkhoff 2012, 117). Consequently, Ukrainian journalistic accounts of the Kharkiv Trial of 1943 and journalistic accounts of the Nuremberg Trial of 1946–197 are valuable sources that show us how the images of victims and perpetrators were constructed.

While examining the set of journalistic materials *The Trial over the Atrocities Committed by Nazi Invaders in Kharkiv and Kharkiv Province during the Occupation* (1943) I pointed to the differences between the accounts of Soviet Ukrainian and Soviet Russian journalists. The most

striking difference was the approach to describing the identities of the victims. Soviet Russian journalists – in particular, Aleksei Tolstoi – referred to the Nazi victims in Kharkiv as "Russian" people; at the same time, his Ukrainian colleagues Pavlo Tychyna, Petro Panch, and Iurii Smolych laid an emphasis on the Ukrainian identity of the civilians who perished in Kharkiv. It was only Ilya Ehrenburg – a Jew himself – who referred to the victims of Drobytsky Iar and Sokolnyky in Kharkiv as Jews (*Sudovyi protses...* 96–97). However, both Ukrainian and Russian journalists also referred to the victims as to Soviet citizens, and thus established the tendency to speak about victims' identities in a generalized fashion.

Despite the effort to create a "balance" between the accounts of Soviet Ukrainian and Soviet Russian journalists in the volume, the groundbreaking essays that examined the figures of the German perpetrators were written by the Russian journalists Aleksey Tolstoi and Ilya Ehrenburg. The fact that the core message of the proceedings (the restoration of justice and the penalty for the perpetrators) was conveyed by Russian journalists stood in contrast with the fact that the trial itself took place in Ukrainian Kharkiv where Petro Panch, Iurii Smolych, and Pavlo Tychyna had been working long before the war.

However, the dividing line between the approaches to the depiction of Nazi victims cannot always be drawn based on the national identity of the reporter. As I demonstrated in chapter 1, with regard to the coverage of the Nuremberg trial this dividing line can be drawn between the Soviet Ukrainian authors themselves. Among three Ukrainian reporters who witnessed the proceedings, Iaroslav Halan and Iurii Smolych were more conventional in their depiction of the victims and focused on the portrayal of the Nazi defendants. At the same time, their colleague Iurii Ianovskyi in his *Letters from Nuremberg* (1947) focused on his experience of communicating with ordinary Germans and brought up the testimonies of the survivors as a charge against the defendants. Bringing up such topics was obviously a deviation from the mainstream ideological line.

The necessity to mobilize the patriotic sentiments of readers during the wartime years temporarily allowed for a plurality of viewpoints, although this plurality, as my analysis in chapter 1 demonstrated, was often controlled and orchestrated. Such plurality of viewpoints was even more evident in Soviet fiction of 1943–1947. The aesthetics of socialist realism, as I contend in chapter 2, played an ambiguous role in representing the Holocaust in the prose works of Varvara Cherednychenko, Iurii Smolych, and Iurii Ianovskyi.

Cherednychenko and Ianovskyi in their short stories *I, Happy Valentyna* (1946) and *Kyiv Sonata* (1945) , as I suggest in chapter 2, challenged the emerging Soviet narrative of World War II – the narrative that emphasized the Communist Party's and Stalin's personal role in achieving victory and overlooked the sufferings and privations of ordinary people. Such issues as Soviet life under Nazi occupation (except for the guerilla fighting) and life in evacuation did not fit into this discourse. In the 1940s, the discrepancy between the gloomy war/post-war time and the necessity to gloss over reality produced an aesthetic phenomenon of "incongruity" (Clark 194). Against this backdrop, both Cherednychenko and Ianovskyi in their texts represented the positions of different national groups, genders, and social strata. Specifically, Cherednychenko strived to describe the identity of a Soviet woman at war in national terms, and Ianovskyi used a child's perspective to mitigate the effect caused by the devastation of Kyiv under the Nazi occupation. In Mikhail Bakhtin's words, both authors introduced their readers to "the diversity of social speech types... and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (*The Bakhtin Reader* 114).

The experience of Holocaust victims and survivors and their relationship with Ukrainian relatives and neighbors are represented both in *I, Happy Valentyna* and in *Kyiv Sonata*. Cherednychenko in her novella created a model of a Soviet society (Valentyna's family in evacuation) that included Jewish people as well. As Valentyna's Jewish sister-in-law Rakhil learned about her family's destiny in Kyiv's Babyn Yar, she lost her speech and received care from Valentyna and her family. The part of Cherednychenko's short story that was focused on

Valentyna's taking care of traumatized Rakhil' fit into the conventional narrative of a "small family" that reflected the principles and aspirations of the "great family" (Soviet society). At the same time, the author's effort to reconcile two dimensions of Valentyna's identity – the Ukrainian one and the Soviet one, both of which were threatened by the war – provoked the disapproval of Soviet literary critics. In such a way, the ideological establishment tried to tame the Soviet Ukrainian writers who went too far in their effort to introduce "the plurality of viewpoints" in their texts.

The representation of the Babyn Yar procession in Ianovsky's *Kyiv Sonata* was an even more striking example of creating the counter-narrative of World War II in Soviet Ukrainian fiction. While Cherednychenko's approach to depicting Rakhil's story was informed by the protagonist's largely positive attitude to life, Ianovskyi's perspective was far more pessimistic. The Jewish family in *Kyiv Sonata* was only able to choose between suicide and execution. At the same time, Ukrainians in the short story were sympathetic towards the Jews and their sufferings, but were unable to rescue their compatriots. Ianovskyi also used the effect of estrangement to mitigate the gruesome impression from the Babyn Yar procession: the protagonists initially mistook it for a demonstration. Such a mistake can be seen as a parallel to the popular attitude of the non-Jewish Kyiv dwellers to the German announcement ordering the Jews to gather on one of Kyiv's crossroads on September 29 1941. Initially, the dwellers were inclined to believe that their Jewish neighbors were taken either to Palestine or to the labor camps. Very soon, however, those beliefs were discredited.

Iurii Smolych in his novel "They Did Not Pass" (1947) also touched upon the theme of Ukrainians who had acted as the saviors of the Jews. However, his approach to this topic was, as I assume, more conventional than the respective approaches in Cherednychenko's and Ianovskyi's prose. I contend that Smolych's depiction of the female protagonist's interaction with her Jewish acquaintance can be seen as an embodiment of the "principle of pairs", "parallels" and "proportionality" that had been introduced in 1930 by the Soviet Russian writer

and critic Leonid Radishchev. In the years before the war, the "principle of proportionality" meant that Soviet citizens had to be represented as those who did not approve of anti-Semitism. Consequently, during the war the citizens had to act as the rescuers of the Jewish people, which can be seen in Smolych's novel where the female protagonist Olga hid her Jewish acquaintance Ida from the German police. However, the "principle of proportionality" also implied that Jews in Soviet literature had to be represented as the supporters of the Soviet order. Again, this can be seen in Smolych's novella *The Immortality of Commander Khrystia* (1943) where the author introduced the image of a Jewish doctor Shlyoma Shleiman, who fought on the occupied territories alongside the Ukrainian guerilla fighters. While Smolych's short story generally fit into the paradigm of "exemplary" socialist realism, the character of the Jewish guerilla fighter was semantically ambiguous. Initially, the members of the guerilla squad did not let Shleiman to fulfill an important mission because they realized that the Jew had no chances to survive capture. However, Shleiman himself made a decision to embark on his mission stating that he would go "precisely because" he was a Jew (Smolych 1943, 83). Such a decision, as I contend, can be linked to the phenomenon of "double designation" (Murav 113), which implied the conflation of two identities: the Soviet one and the Jewish one.

The Soviet Ukrainian poet Mykola Bazhan, who served as a war correspondent and entered Kyiv on the day of its liberation in 1943, was among the first Soviet Ukrainian authors to depict the tragedy of Babyn Yar in verse. His poem *The Pit* (1943, published in 1945) as a part of a cycle *Kyiv Etudes* came to the reader in disguise: the overall structure of the book promoted Soviet patriotism and loyalty to the official hierarchy of identities. However, *Kyiv Etudes* deviated from the official Soviet discourse about the victory. Bazhan emphasized the Ukrainian component in people's sufferings, as he directly addressed Kyiv – the Ukrainian capital. At the same time, the author focused on the traumatic experiences that were encountered by the city dwellers. I contend that "The Pit" was the core part of the cycle that combined the features of two types of Holocaust poetry: poetry of witness and poetry of commentary (Grinberg 308). The

first three stanzas of Bazhan's "The Pit" were written in a manner that resembled the aesthetics of documentary photography, which made the poem close to the poetry of witnessing. However, in the rest of the poetical text the author utilized the devices of expressionist aesthetics to depict the Babyn Yar massacre. Bazhan represented Kyiv as a geographical and semantic centre of the event, and highlighted the importance of remembrance, and this message was more relevant to the poetry of commentary. Consequently, "The Pit" created a hybrid form of Holocaust poetry that connected an "objective" third-person historical narrative with a first-person emotional response to the tragedy.

In the concluding chapter of this study (chapter 4) I demonstrated the connection between the depiction of the Holocaust in Soviet Ukrainian fiction and the social and cultural processes that were taking place in Kyiv during 1941–1966 with regard to the mass execution of Jews by the Nazis in Babyn Yar in 1941. Two theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of trauma informed my analysis in the chapter: the psychoanalytical approach (Cathy Caruth) and the theory of cultural trauma (Jeffrey Alexander). The first period of commemoration of the Babyn Yar victims (1941–1948) started immediately after the shootings in September. The non-Jewish Kyiv dwellers whose memoirs are now available (for instance, Iryna Khoroshunova and Anatolii Kuznetsov) emphasized such feelings as extreme anxiety, an inability to comprehend the horrific event, and an inability to find the appropriate words to express their feelings. This period can be best understood through the lens of the psychoanalytical approach to trauma, which acknowledges the fact that it is always a belated phenomenon. As I demonstrated in chapter 2, within the aesthetic framework of socialist realism, the protagonists as Soviet citizens had to be "vigilant" during the most difficult times; therefore, such emotions as fear and anxiety could be projected on their Jewish compatriots (as can be seen in Cherednychenko's and Smolych's texts). However, when in 1966 the excerpts from Anatoly Kuznetsov's "Babyn Yar" were published in *Iunost'* journal in Moscow, it became evident that the non-Jewish population of Kyiv was also severely traumatized by the events of September 1941. It is also worth noting that

the testimonies of the Babyn Yar massacre survivor Dina Pronicheva (that existed as a shorthand report) were extensively used as evidence of Nazi crimes, but they were not reflected upon in Soviet fiction, and consequently there was (and still is) little understanding of what the survivor experience meant to Pronicheva herself.

According to Yiddish writer Itsik Kipnis, one of the first mourning processions to Babyn Yar in 1944 was marked with silence. The participants felt the necessity "to go along that road", to re-live the gruesome experience of their compatriots who perished in the ravine. The silent mode of the event indicated that it was still difficult to find the right words to speak about what the experience of Babyn Yar meant to those who returned to post-war Kyiv. While during 1941–1948 the memory about the Babyn Yar massacre was silenced, and the city dwellers were not prepared to find the appropriate words to speak about the tragedy, during the so-called "black years of the Soviet Jewry" (1948–1953) memory about Babyn Yar was consciously erased by the Soviet authorities.

The onset of Khrushchev's Thaw brought hope for positive changes within the political system of the Soviet Union. The members of the cultural movement of the "generation of the 1960s" (Ukrainian: *shistdesiatnyky*) in Soviet Ukraine strived to bring awareness about the shortcomings of the Soviet policy of memory regarding Babyn Yar. While during 1941–1948 the steps to commemorate the victims were made by the Jewish community, the beginning of the 1960s saw the shift towards the unification of the efforts of three different groups: the Soviet Jewish intelligentsia, Soviet Ukrainian writers, and Soviet Russian writers and dissidents. In this context, memory about the Babyn Yar tragedy was constructed as a "cultural trauma" (Alexander 2004). This turning point happened during the two commemorative gatherings in Babyn Yar in 1966. On September 24, the Jewish community installed a banner with the inscription "Remember 6 million" on the wall of the Jewish cemetery near the ravine. However, it was only on September 29 that a coherent narrative about the perception of the tragedy emerged: the 35-year old Ukrainian literary scholar Ivan Dziuba, one of the *shistdesyatnyky*,

gave a ground-breaking speech at the location of the tragedy. Dziuba not only criticized the Soviet policy of Babyn Yar commemoration – he also emphasized that the responsibility to commemorate the victims and to facilitate the reconciliation between Ukrainians and Jews belonged to civil society as well. Dziuba's speech in Babyn Yar would not be possible without the preliminary preparations done by the Jewish community of Kyiv and without the support of Soviet Russian dissidents who also participated in the event.

The examination of the fictional and non-fictional accounts in this study contributes to the understanding that the metaphor of the "two solitudes" that emerged in the scholarship of the 1980s to describe the mutual estrangement between Ukrainians and Jews was challenged long before Ukrainian independence. While Ukrainian participation in the Holocaust and the Soviet failure to recognize the unique fate of its Jews in World War II remain gruesome facts of the history of the 20th century, I made an effort to highlight the fact that people have agency and the capability to sympathize with others under any regime. This capability, embodied in literary texts, journalistic accounts, memoirs and public manifestations, creates a fertile ground for mutual reconciliation.[36]

[36] The most recent historical research on this issue is John-Paul Himka's monograph *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944*. Stuttgart and Hannover, Ibidem Press, 2021.

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Appendix

Leonid Leonov and Iurii Smolych at the Kharkiv Trial, December 15–18, 1943.

Photo source: https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/288230444904509541/

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