

ARTICLE

The Role of Museums in Creating National Community in Wartime Ukraine

Elżbieta Olzacka* 

Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations, Jagiellonian University, Poland

*Corresponding author. Email: elzbieta.olzacka@uj.edu.pl

Abstract

In the aftermath of the violent Revolution of Dignity (2013/2014) and the subsequent war in Donbas (2014–), a heroic story about the new beginning of a “united, Ukrainian nation” began to emerge. Shaping this new narrative are new museum projects devoted to Ukraine’s developing history. This article examines the process of these new institutions’ formation, the content of created exhibitions, and the activities conducted therein. It focuses on the role of the museums in activating, unifying, and integrating both the Ukrainian national community and civil society. This article is based on a qualitative analysis of materials collected during seven research stays in Ukraine, from June 2017 to August 2019, and focuses on four cases – Ukraine’s First ATO Museum in Dnipro; the Museum of the Heavenly Hundred in Ivano-Frankivsk; the *Ukrainian East* exhibition in the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War in Kyiv; and a project of the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv. The examined institutions are presented not only as places for gathering artifacts but also as laboratories of civic activism, participation, and dialogue.

Keywords: museum; national community; civil society; wartime society; Ukraine; war in Donbas; Revolution of Dignity

Introduction

The Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity, which lasted from November 2013 to February 2014, provided a profound cultural and political shift that determined the future of the state.¹ The conditions of political and military mobilization have liberated the Ukrainians’ sense of agency, empowerment, and patriotic attachment. Recently conducted research based on nationwide surveys indicates a national awakening, characterized by increased self-identification as Ukrainian, greater pride in being a citizen of the Ukrainian state, stronger attachment to national symbols, enhanced solidarity with their compatriots, increased readiness to defend Ukraine, and increased confidence in the people’s power to change the country for the better (Alexseev 2015; Kulyk 2016, 2018; Pop-Eleches and Robertson 2018; cf. Onuch, Hale, and Sasse 2018). The activity of Ukrainian society aimed at changing values, mentalities, and practices of remembering and commemorating was initially focused on removing the Soviet heritage from the Ukrainian public spaces (Liubarets 2016). In the winter 2013/14, many Ukrainian cities witnessed the spontaneous removal of monuments and memorial signs dedicated to Lenin and other Soviet heroes. At the same time, the violent course of the Revolution of Dignity and the subsequent war in Donbas allowed a heroic story about the new beginning of a “united, Ukrainian political nation” (Poroshenko 2015) to emerge. Hence, changes in the catalog of Ukrainian “heroes and villains” (Marples 2007) were accompanied by the appearance of new heroes. The first of them were participants of the protests who were killed in Kyiv in January and February 2014. Referred to as the Heavenly Hundred

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(*Nebesna sotnya*),² they have become an object of public commemoration, first expressed by the spontaneous shrines, replete with candles, flowers, ribbons, flags, icons, and photos of those killed, that arose both in Kyiv on the sites of their tragic deaths as well as elsewhere. Soon, with the beginning of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, Ukrainian public space has become saturated with commemorations dedicated to those who died fighting in Donbas (Sklokina 2018).

During my fieldwork in Ukraine, I observed that these new public sites of memory (Winter 2010) take the form of monuments, plaques, memorials, memory chambers, memory walls, murals, and various types of exhibitions. These exhibitions have been organized not only in the national museums of Kyiv and regional museums but also in public administration offices, educational institutions, volunteer centers, city streets, squares, parks, courts, airports, and even Orthodox churches. This article focuses on these new exhibition projects devoted to the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas that take the form of permanent institutions. I will examine the process of the formation of these new institutions, the content of created exhibitions, and the activities conducted in their framework in order to provide new insights into identity and community construction in wartime Ukraine.

For analysis, I selected the largest, the fastest-established, and the most dynamic operating institutions of this kind in the country (Ukraine's First Anti-Terrorist Operation [ATO] Museum in Dnipro; the Museum of the Heavenly Hundred in Ivano-Frankivsk; the project *Ukrainian East* in the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War in Kyiv; as well as the emerging Museum of the Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv). Moreover, these selected cases relay the specific details of institutions operating in different regions of Ukraine and at different levels of organization and financing.

Materials for this article were collected during seven research stays in Ukraine from June 2017 to August 2019 in Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Dnipro. Fieldwork allowed me to familiarize myself with the content of exhibitions, conduct interviews with Ukrainians involved in the new museum projects, and observe the daily functioning of museums, including guided tours and organized events. I was also able to collect additional materials, including official leaflets, museum prospectuses and publications, and content from their official websites and social media profiles.

I analyze these findings and compare the selected museums on three points, as proposed by Amy Sodaro (2018) in her institutional ethnography of memorial museums. The first is the social and political context in which the museums were created. Analysis of the musealization process reveals the motivations that drove the creation of the museums as well as their role in activating Ukrainian civil society. The second point is a close reading of the museums' exhibitions, focusing on similarities and differences in representation and exhibition strategies. I examine how the heroic story about the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas is created, and I also consider its role in building national bonds in Ukraine. Third, I compare how the museums function as centers of civic activity and dialogue, exploring how new institutions engage and integrate communities in patriotic education and cultural activity. After this analysis, I summarize the role of museums in creating a sense of national community through the experience of conflict by placing the case of contemporary Ukraine in a broader theoretical context.

Museum Creation: Activating Society

The idea of the musealization of the Euromaidan events appeared as early as January 2014 during the protests at the Kyiv Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Poshyvailo 2017, 5). Since there were many historians, artists, journalists, and museum employees among the protesters, they saw history in the making and wanted to preserve it. Among the first initiators of the Maidan Museum were Vasyl Rozhko, the Head of the Department for Museum Management of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine; Igor Poshyvaylo, an ethnologist associated with the National Centre of Folk Culture "Ivan Honchar Museum"; and Timur Bobrovsky and Kateryna Chuyeva, both archaeologists involved in cultural heritage preservation projects. In April 2014, this grassroots initiative took official form by gaining the support of both state and municipal institutions, including the Ministry of Culture of

Ukraine, Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR), and the Kyiv City State Administration. Also among them were the institutions associated with museums and the protection of cultural heritage, such as the National Art Museum of Ukraine, the Ivan Honchar Museum, the Ukrainian Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and the Ukrainian National Committee of the Blue Shields,³ as well as social organizations, including the Maidan Self-Defense (*Samooborona Maidanu*). In autumn of 2014, Maidan Museum (*Muzei Maidanu*) joined with another grassroots initiative known as Museum of Liberty (*Muzei Svobody*), led by Aleksandra Baklanova. The activity of the new group focused primarily on collecting and protecting artifacts and testimonies related to the Revolution of Dignity, as well as developing a vision for the future museum (Poshyvailo 2017, 28).

The first exhibition, organized by a joined initiative of the Maidan Museum and Museum of Liberty in October 2014, took a nontraditional format that defined the museum concept. The exhibition consisted of three independent parts: (1) the museum exhibition named *Freedom (Svoboda)*, created by the Ukrainian performance artist Vlodko Kaufman; (2) a full program of events, including film screenings, meetings with participants of events, and lectures; and (3) a unique space for visitor interaction. The space was designed to create “an opportunity for everyone to reflect on the experience of the last few months in their own way, to share their ideas about what freedom is and how the future museum should look like” (*Istorychna Pravda*, 2014). As Vasyl Rozhko, who became the chairman of the official working group of the Maidan Museum, emphasized, “Maidan Museum/Museum of Liberty is not a traditional museum. In addition to collecting exhibits, it should become a kind of laboratory for understanding the unique features of civil society in Ukraine. Combining two initiatives—the Museum of Liberty and the Maidan Museum—gives us the opportunity to realize the dream of a unique museum by creating it together with the community” (*Istorychna Pravda*, 2014).

But the ambitious project faced great challenges from the beginning. Developing cooperation between state institutions and civic initiatives turned out to be particularly important. This became apparent after the failure in the execution of the first competition to create a concept of memorialization of the Revolution of Dignity in the public space of Kyiv. The international competition, “The Territory of Dignity” (*Terytoriya hidnosti*), was announced in March 2014 by Yevhen Nyshchuk, the Minister of Culture of Ukraine, and was conducted in a professional and democratic manner. It was accompanied by public discussions and open meetings held every Tuesday at the architect’s house (Poshyvailo 2017, 44–45). The winning project was not implemented, though, as it was unclear who should take responsibility for its organization and financing.

Therefore, the next stage of creating a new museum became its formalization, according to the procedure appropriate for state institutions. In November 2015, the Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine (2015) decided to establish “The Memorial to the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred—Museum of the Revolution of Dignity” (*Memorial'nyi kompleks Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni – Muzei Revoliutsii hidnosti*), and in April 2016, by the decree of the president of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy 2016), the institution received national status. According to the documents, the management of the museum has become the task of the UINR, headed by Volodymyr Viatrovych, and securing the costs needed for its implementation was tasked to the Ministry of Finance. In this way, the museum obtained state support in the field of organization and financing, while trying to maintain an open, bottom-up formula of activity. Importantly, it was Igor Poshyvailo, one of the first grassroots initiators from outside political networks who became the director of the new institution.

The museum employees strongly emphasized that the concept was the result of widely conducted social consultations and discussions with various international experts. Participants of the Revolution of Dignity, from such organizations as the Maidan Self-Defense, AutoMaidan, the Maidan Library, and the Maidan Press Center, as well as the families of the heroes of the Heavenly Hundred, played an important role in creating the vision for the future museum (Poshyvailo 2017, 30). In 2017, an open and international competition for a memorial and museum project was held

(“Arkhitekturnyi konkurs na proekt Muzeiu Revoliutsii Hidnosti” 2018). The competition, which was successful this time, allowed for transparent and fair assessment in accordance with the standards of Western democracies. The museum also tried to preserve the transparency of its activities by publishing online the transcripts from meetings of the group working on the museum’s concept and public discussions over it.

However, neither the memorial nor the museum has yet been built. This is owed to the dubious legal status of the plot of Kyiv land set aside for the projects, as this land is where the killings on Institutska Street occurred in February 2014 (Radziievs’ka 2019; Poshyvailo 2019b). The prosecutor general of Ukraine noted that investigations of these events have not yet been completed, and the deep reconstruction of the former Institutska Street (renamed the Alley of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes) and its surroundings, which is included in the Memorial and Museum project, will prevent investigations and evidence proceedings from being carried out (Barbu and Klymenko 2019). This position is encouraged in part of the families of those killed during the protests. In March 2019, relatives of 26 members of the Heavenly Hundred, supported by several social organizations, announced in the Ukraine Crisis Media Center an open letter to Yevhen Nyshchuk, Igor Poshyvaylo, and Volodymyr Viatrovych, a “call to stop the destruction of the Alley of Heavenly Hundred Heroes” (Hoï 2019). The signatories of the letter do not agree to the complete reconstruction of the former Institutska Street and the creation of a memorial park nearby. In their view, this not only makes it difficult to conduct the investigation that is their priority but also “destroys the memory” that has been preserved “in the cobblestones that absorbed blood, in the trees our relatives hid behind, on the hills and the slopes they climbed” (Hoï 2019).

Urban activists, historians, architects, and members of the NGO Families of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred fight to “preserve the historical memory of the street where the hearts of our Heroes have stopped” (Zberehty_Instytuts’ku, n.d.) in the framework of the SaveInstitutska initiative. They organize press conferences, protest actions, and are active on social media (Suprun 2019). Nationalist organizations, such as S14 (С14/С1ч) and National Corps, also fight for “proper protection of memory” and the “investigation’s success” (5 Kanal 2019). For example, in May 2019, they destroyed the fence erected by the Museum to secure the reconstruction of Institutska Street and the construction of the Memorial to the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred (5 Kanal 2019). Despite these difficulties, the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity supports the organization of exhibitions in the public spaces of Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine (Poshyvailo 2019a). Also, the Information and Exhibition Center of Maidan Museum, located in the renovated House of Trade Unions on Maidan Nezalezhnosti, has been operating since January 2019 as a temporary substitute for the future museum (Salo 2018).⁴

Although the Kyiv Maidan Museum is “the only national museum in Ukraine devoted to collecting, exhibiting, interpreting, and disseminating the stories of the struggles by Ukrainians for national independence, human rights, individual freedoms, and dignity” (Salo and Pipko 2017, cover), it is not the first to do so. Rather, the first museum dedicated to the events of the Revolution of Dignity was established in Ivano-Frankivsk, the administrative center located in Western Ukraine. Its initiator and main contractor was artist Roman Bonchuk, an active participant in the Maidan protests. Under the influence of the tragic events of February 2014, Bonchuk painted an icon image that depicts fallen protest participants as new martyrs. Work on the painting developed into a much broader concept of creating a museum that would commemorate the dramatic events which took place in the capital and their participants.

The initiative of the artist, who was previously known for large-scale paintings on national themes, was financially and organizationally supported by Olexandr Shevchenko, a local businessman, social activist, and politician. Local volunteers and artists, who were free to express their artistic visions related to the Revolution of Dignity, actively participated in the creation of the museum’s interior. Consultants of the exhibition were Svitlana Oryshko, a local university employee, and Igor Huryk, the father of Roman Huryk, one of the youngest members of the Heavenly Hundred, who came from Ivano-Frankivsk. Other family members of the fallen, as well as

their friends and living protesters, joined the creation of the museum by donating artifacts such as personal belongings of those killed, as well as helmets, shields, and weapons that were used during the protests. The result was an unprecedented democratic space that was open to the ideas and creativity of the people involved. An important element of the exhibition is all kinds of gifted artwork from visitors as well as spontaneous paintings and notes—personal confessions, poems, quotes from the journals of protest participants—that cover the walls of the building.

The Museum of the Heavenly Hundred (*Muzei Nebesnoi Sotni*) was opened on September 11, 2015, after a year of intensive work supervised by Roman Bonchuk. In contrast to the Kyiv national project, financed by the state and promoted by state institutions, the Museum of the Heavenly Hundred is a private museum that is fully funded by Olexandr Shevchenko. Shevchenko emphasizes the patriotic motivations that stood behind the creation of the museum, but at the same time he uses his involvement in this project to support his own political activities, like the 2019 presidential campaign (e.g., *Kurs* 2019). The institution does not receive any support from regional and municipal authorities, which ignore its existence. Information about the museum is missing on the city's official website, and local leaders do not participate in the celebrations and events taking place in the museum. This is related to the political conflict between the local authorities associated with the Svoboda Party and Shevchenko himself, who was an independent people's deputy of Ukraine during the 7th and 8th convocations, loosely associated with the Ukrainian Association of Patriots (UKROP). Despite this, the museum conducts intensive cultural and educational activities, cooperating with local cultural and educational institutions. In February 2019, a new hall dedicated to the war in Donbas was opened, and exhibitions devoted to two local individuals who died during the anti-terrorist operation were launched in autumn 2019.⁵

Similar to the musealization of the Revolution of Dignity, the first exhibitions dedicated to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine were created spontaneously, under the influence of current events. In July 2014, heavy armed vehicles captured by the Ukrainian military in the regions of Luhansk, Sloviansk, and Debaltseve were exhibited in the memorial complex in front of The National Museum of History of the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945 (renamed in July 2015 to the National Museum of History of Ukraine in the Second World War). Organized through cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the Security Service of Ukraine, the exhibition aimed (1) to present evidence of the participation of the Russian Federation in the armed conflict in the country's east and (2) to illustrate the scale of war operations. The exhibition attracted huge interest, and from the beginning of 2015, museum employees began working on the new exhibition project "Ukrainian East" (*Ukrains'kyi Skhid*). On the one hand, the project was a response to the need of the historical moment, in line with the museum's mission. On the other hand, it served as an expression of the patriotic commitment of its employees.

So far, three large exhibitions—*Ukraine: The Reality of Modern War* (*Ukraina: Realii suchasnoi viiny*), lasting from January 2015 to August 2016; *Ukrainian East* (*Ukrains'kyi Skhid*), lasting from February 2017 to May 2018; and *On the Line of Fire* (*Na linii vohnyu*), lasting from May 2018—as well as four short-term projects,⁶ have been presented on the first floor of the museum building. While working on the exhibitions, museum employees collected over 5,000 original items. ATO participants donated a significant percentage of items, as did friends and families of fallen soldiers. The project curators also emphasize the role of volunteers in transporting and describing exhibits. In addition, during their work, museum employees cooperate with military journalists and grassroots initiatives, such as the Black Tulip Humanitarian Mission, the Public Art Project "Life at Zero" ("Zhyttya na nuli"), and the Museum of Formation of the Ukrainian Nation. Nevertheless, the exhibition project "Ukrainian East" is created primarily within the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War, which is the state institution under the Ministry of Culture jurisdiction. This ensures its constant financing and organizational support; however, as the museum staff emphasizes, this does not involve top pressure on exhibitions content.⁷

The first museum in Ukraine dedicated to the anti-terrorist operation also resulted from cooperation between veterans, social activists, and regional authorities, and it was created under

the direct influence of events. It opened in Dnipro, called Dnipropetrovsk until May 2016. The city is located in the south-central part of Ukraine, about 250 kilometers west of Donetsk and 160 kilometers from the frontlines of the conflict. Dnipro, which was significantly threatened by a pro-Russian separatist movement after the Euromaidan Revolution, is considered by its inhabitants as “the eastern outpost of Ukraine’s independence” (Portnov 2015). In the spring of 2014, the residents of Dnipro formed volunteer battalions en masse and encouraged a grassroots network of civil volunteer groups to support the Ukrainian army. The city also has the largest hospital in the region, Mechnikov Hospital, where those wounded in areas of conflict are transported and treated. The Museum of Anti-Terrorist Operation (The ATO Museum) or the Museum of Dnipropetrovsk Region’s Civil Feat during the Events of Anti-Terrorist Operation (*Muzei Hromadians'kyi podvyh Dnipropetrovshchyny v podiiakh ATO*) is dedicated to this civic uprising of the inhabitants of the region and focuses on the events of 2014–2015.

Already in 2015, a grassroots initiative of ATO veterans and volunteers was supported by the Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration and Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council. Thanks to the support of these institutions, the process of creating the museum went smoothly. As a part of Dmytro Yavornytsky National Historical Museum of Dnipro, the ATO Museum was located inside the Second World War memorial complex, in the building where the diorama “Battle for Dnipro” was opened in 1975 on the 30th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War. A working group consisting of ATO participants, civil volunteers, journalists, historians, and local museum workers started in January 2016, and on May the same year, the street exposition *Donbas Ways (Šlâhami Donbasu)* was opened. After a few more months of intensive work, in January 2017, the internal exhibition *Battle for Dnipro (Bitva za Dnipro)* was established. The ATO Museum, since it was created, has been the most-visited branch of the National Historical Museum of Dnipro, and it has become a center for veteran and volunteer organization activities (*Muzei ATO Dnipro* 2019).⁸

The institutions presented above differ in many respects. Kyiv museums are state institutions reaching both the Ukrainian public and international guests, while the museums in Dnipro and Ivano-Frankivsk are primarily targeted at the local communities. Museums also differ in their degree of professionalization. The Museum of the Revolution of Dignity and the “Ukrainian East” project were created by professional museum employees who had extensive experience in managing and organizing exhibitions. In addition, world-class experts help them create each exhibition concept. Both institutions not only abundantly use the achievements of the world museology but also have the opportunity to create new designs in the sphere of memorial museums. In contrast, the museums in Dnipro and Ivano-Frankivsk were initiated by involved activists, most of whom had no previous experience with working in museums. Nevertheless, the incorporation of the museum in Dnipro into the structures of the regional museum allowed it to provide not only the right infrastructure but also the professionalization of its staff. In turn, the museum in Ivano-Frankivsk, which does not seek institutional support from state or regional authorities, is looking for ways to professionalize its activities by working with local specialists.

Another difference is the housing conditions and the scale of activities related to them. For example, the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv is to be located in a new multistory building in the capital’s center, while the museum in Ivano-Frankivsk occupies the lower service floor of a normal, residential building. By contrast, both museums dedicated to the war in Donbas are located in buildings originally built to memorialize the Second World War. On the one hand, this limited the space to create an exhibition; on the other hand, this forced the museum to blend in with the existing narrative.

Nevertheless, all the examined institutions share a bottom-up and spontaneous way of their formation, unprecedented in the history of Ukrainian museology. As Igor Poshyvailo noted, never before have Ukrainian museums referred so much to the concept of “museum with the nation” (2017, 28). The visions of new exhibitions and institutions arose under the direct influence of violent events, and their active participants and observers were the first to take the initiative to realize it. At the same time, the cooperation of various actors in the creation of museums facilitated

the activation and affirmation of a new active society. As Vadim Yakushenko, head of the ATO Museum in Dnipro, highlighted, the new Ukrainian museums are “a reflection of present, witnessing the birth of a healthy and free society” (*Muzei ATO Dnipro* 2019, 22). The exhibitions analyzed would not have been possible without the involvement of both event participants, families and friends of the dead, and volunteers who donated, transported, or described thousands of objects for museums. Naturally, the open process of creating exhibitions is accompanied by conflicts and controversies, mostly because neither an official version of events related to the recent history of Ukraine nor a version widely accepted by all Ukrainians exists yet. In addition, some political groups and social organizations try to use the memory of these events and their participants to gain popularity and political capital. At the same time, the active participants in the discussion around the shape of memorialization are the families and relatives of the fallen, whose decisions and choices have a huge impact on the creation and shape of exhibitions. According to the museums’ creators, who emphasize the democratic and modern nature of new institutions, this required a completely new approach to creating a museum. Participants and witnesses of the events became the main sources of information, and so they in turn helped shape the public narrative about the history of Ukraine. As my analysis shows, the open process of creating exhibitions is related to their content, focused primarily on people—Ukrainians—who decided to devote their health and life to fighting for a free country.

Museum Exhibitions: Unifying Story

The narrative line of analyzed exhibitions does not focus on events or presenting a precise chronology. Such a timeline can be found only in the mini exhibition *Toward Freedom! (Nazustrich svobodi)*, opened on the ground floor of the Information and Exhibition Center of Maidan Museum in Kyiv. In the Museum of the Heavenly Hundred in Ivano-Frankivsk, the chronology of events is presented primarily in the form of artistic visual representation by a 30-meter panel occupying the central part of the exhibition hall. The huge painting created by Roman Bonchuk depicts the history of the Euromaidan Revolution, from the creation of a student tent town in November 2013 to what is commonly called the shooting of the Heavenly Hundred in February 2014.

Similarly, descriptions of the conflict stages are not dominant for exhibitions devoted to the war in Donbas in the Dnipro and Kyiv museums. Usually, the names of the place symbols, such as Sloviansk, Ilovaisk, Debaltseve, Donetsk Airport, and Mariupol, are sufficient without additional textual explanation. Even if descriptions, graphics, and maps depicting the course and chronology of warfare are woven into the exhibitions, they are of secondary importance. As the creators of the Dnipro exhibition explain, “It is not so important to record the fact of events in chronological order. It is important to convey the spirit, the feeling of transformation” (*Dnipropetrovs’kyi natsional’nyi istorychnyi muzei*, n.d.). The lack of precise event descriptions should also be associated with the dearth of verified information on circumstances that took place shortly before the creation of the exhibition. One must also note the problems arising from the interpretation of ongoing and vague processes, especially those that may spark social and political controversies. There may be no mention of the role of Kolomoisky’s forces in the defense of Dnipropetrovsk/Dnipro (Portnov 2015) or the avoidance of the subject of the Minsk Agreements, signed by Petro Poroshenko. It can be assumed that the degree of data saturation with exhibition descriptions in state museums will increase as official versions of Ukraine’s recent history crystallizes.

The story of the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas unfolding in museums is told mainly through the private biographies of specific people who played active roles in protests in Kyiv and hostilities in Eastern Ukraine. In the Ivano-Frankivsk museum, the open area around the above-mentioned huge panel is divided into several zones related to the activities of the protesters: the Maidan art, the Maidan spiritual center, the Maidan barricades, the Maidan self-defense, the Maidan hospital, and the Maidan kitchen. Each part is richly illustrated with photos and objects, such as helmets, shields, clubs, stoves, flags, canisters, fire extinguishers, paving stones, Molotov

cocktails, field kitchen items, dishes, stretchers, tires, barrels, elements of barricades, gas masks, bulletproof vests, and other protective clothing. The exhibition also consists of photos of 107 members of the Heavenly Hundred, together with short biographical notes, most often containing information about the date and place of birth, occupation, and manner of death. Separate stands are devoted to specific local heroes—Roman Huryk and Ihor Tkachuk—where their personal effects, such as a backpack, shoes, and a computer keyboard are displayed.

A similar strategy was used in the exhibition entitled “Ukrainian East,” where the main axis of the narrative is the story of people who fought and are still fighting in the east of Ukraine. They consist of both participants of the Ukrainian armed forces and numerous volunteer battalions formed since spring 2014, as well as civilian volunteers, chaplains, medics, and journalists united with them in the “symbolic battalion” (National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War 2018). The latest exhibition, *On the Line of Fire (Na linii vognú)*, is divided into three parts: “Ours” (*Nashi*), “Aliens” (*Čuzi*) and “Non-Aliens” (*[Ne]Čuzi*). The most elaborate part, “Ours,” focuses on the presentation of individual figures fighting in Donbas. Personal belongings of the fallen, often torn or stained with blood, are placed in cartridges and accompanied by photographs and brief descriptions of their lives. Particular attention was paid to five living cyborgs (*kiborhi*),⁹ whose names “are already inscribed in the history of independent Ukraine” (National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War 2018). Next to their lifesize wax figures, their personal belongings were placed.

Similarly people centered is the exhibition in the Dnipro museum, where the emphasis is on the great effort of the local people who took part in the combat operations. They both formed volunteer battalions and joined the Ukrainian army, as well as developed a civil volunteer network of support for the fighters. Separate stands are also devoted to chaplains and journalists operating on the front, as well as refugees from the warzone and the local people helping to shelter them. The narrative is saturated with photos of specific people, their statements, text messages, and posts in social media. Just as the main exhibition is devoted primarily to the living, in the next room is Memorial Hall, dedicated to the fallen from the Dnipropetrovsk region. Photographs of the fallen are placed in special cases on the walls along with their personal items, such as a chessboard, books, icons, a letter from a mother, and a mobile phone damaged by the explosion. The museum also includes a video hall where a four-dimensional, panoramic multimedia exhibition named *Dnipro – Outpost of Ukraine (Dnipro – forpost Ukrainy)* is displayed. The video, created by Yevgeniy Titerenko and Natalia Khazan, is primarily aimed at creating an effect of full immersion in the center of events together with the Ukrainian soldiers and volunteers, frontline journalists, and fleeing civilians.

The narrative created by the museum exhibitions facilitates the building of national bonds in a society experiencing conflict. The heroic story about the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas creates the borders of the national community, uniting within it individuals from different regions of Ukraine with different beliefs and personal biographies. All of the analyzed exhibitions create the story of new Ukrainian heroes who decided to change their country with their heroic deeds. Both in the case of members of the Heavenly Hundred and fallen members of ATO, museums emphasize that they were “ordinary people.” For example, the aim of the museum exhibition in Dnipro is to present “the usual feat of an ordinary citizen of our country who was not indifferent to the fate of the state” (*Muzei ATO Dnipro* 2019, 20). This aspect is seen in the exhibited photos—usually amateur—that present these new heroes in everyday situations, with family and friends, or partaking in a hobby. Also presented are items that accompanied the protagonists during their lifetime—clothing and footwear, elements of electronic equipment, book, and icons—indicating that he or she was the same as anyone else. However, those who decided to defend their homeland could differ in language, political views, and religion. In the film *Dnipro – Outpost of Ukraine*, this diversity is represented by emphasizing the multitude of volunteer battalions and religious symbols not only of Christianity but also of Judaism and Islam. Furthermore, a description of the exhibition *Toward Freedom!* proposes a definition highlighting the differences between the Heavenly Hundred Heroes: “There were one hundred and seven of them: from big cities and small

villages, men and women, young and old, with different level of education, of different faiths and social status, from every region of Ukraine” (Information and Exhibition Center of Maidan Museum 2019). What unites them all is “their unmatched heroism and self-sacrifice” (Information and Exhibition Center of Maidan Museum 2019). Short biographies of the fallen allow the presentation of their stories as a one-way road to make the final choice related to the struggle for freedom and independence of their country.

In addition, the exhibitions also tell the stories “about the heroes living among us” (National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War 2018). “The patriots of Ukraine” are not only those who died defending the country with gun. The new museums underscore civilian participation in the Revolution of Dignity and the conflict in Donbas, showing that patriotism extends beyond armed struggle and was expressed in voluntary activities as well as in the work of chaplains (“who care about the soul of the soldier”), medics (“who treat and save wounded bodies of soldiers in field conditions”), and journalists (“whose reports bring us a bitter truth about the war inspiring faith in the inevitable victory”) (National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War 2018). Hence, the presentation of specific figures provides a wide range of personal ideals and role models to imitate.

Simultaneous with the creation of “new heroes,” the concept of the Other and the Enemy crystallizes. In exhibitions devoted to the Revolution of Dignity, the enemy is identified with “authorities,” “Berkut fighters” and “*titushkas*,” “gangsters paid by the authorities, who also coordinated their actions with the police” (Information and Exhibition Center of Maidan Museum 2019). The topic of separation of society has not been taken up, but rather the impression is created that a united Ukrainian society arose against alien and evil power represented by pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian President Yanukovich, supported by Vladimir Putin.

Much clearer identification of the enemy is enabled by exhibitions devoted to the war. According to the description of the exhibition *On the Line of Fire*, “patriots of Ukraine [. . .] defend its sovereignty against the Russian aggressor in the eastern territories of our state, overcome the results of enemies’ intervention, hybrid war crimes, and break the plans of the creeping Putinism” (National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War 2018). The enemy is called “armed pro-Russian terrorists of the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic” and “Russian terrorists” (museum in Dnipro) as well as “Putin’s Russia” and “pro-Russian militant groups supported by the Armed Forces of Russian Federation” (museum in Kyiv). Therefore, the presentation of the evidence on the participation of professional Russian soldiers in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine is an important element of the exhibitions dedicated to the current war. This evidence includes military equipment made in Russia, as well as passports and documents of Russian soldiers found in the conflict zone. Particular attention is devoted to shooting down the Boeing MH17, which is the crowning proof of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and thus the entire peaceful world. Exhibitions representing the separatists primarily refer to their pro-Russian sympathies—these are the flags of Novorossiya, orange and black ribbons of St. George, or pictures from meetings in which communist symbols and flags of Russia are used. Creating the image of the enemy also favors the determination of boundaries of a coherent Ukrainian identity and establishes a new mechanism of national inclusion and exclusion.

Therefore, new exhibitions not only inform about specific events and people but also provide a coherent narrative about who Ukrainians are, what they are fighting for, and against whom they fight. “This war could continue for many years to come, but we cannot wait until it is over before we try to make sense of the events taking place. [. . .] We need to be clear about what we are fighting for, and where the country is going” (*Muzei ATO Dnipro* 2019), says Yuriy Fanygin, one of the initiators and originators of the ATO museum in Dnipro. Although the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas are two different historical events, in the process of memorialization they are often included in one frame of memory. Emphasizing the relationship between them facilitates the formation of the heroic narrative of the new beginning of the Ukrainian nation. At the same time, the need to unite and mobilize society in the face of the enemy means that potentially controversial topics are

avoided. They include the public support for Anti-Maidan, pro-Russian attitudes in Crimea and Donbas, or the bombing of Donbas by the Ukrainian army.

Moreover, it is worth noting the presentation language related to the policy of Ukrainization pursued by President Poroshenko (Kulyk 2019). All descriptions in the studied museums are in Ukrainian, without a double Russian-Ukrainian version. Guided tours are also conducted in Ukrainian, which in the case of the Russian-speaking Dnipro is not only a sign of an ideological position and the strong patriotic attitude but also—in the assumption of museum employees—has a great educational value. One of the volunteers cooperating with the museum and conducting the tours said in an interview that after 2014 he will no longer use the language of the aggressor, and speaking Ukrainian is his patriotic duty.¹⁰ All museums, to varying degrees, try to offer textual descriptions as well as guided tours in English. Kyiv museums in particular are geared to foreign tourists and take the mission of informing the world public about what is happening in Ukraine very seriously. In the case of the exhibition *Toward Freedom!* at the Information and Exhibition Center of Maidan Museum, for example, all subtitles are translated into English; the same is seen at the “Places of the Revolution of Dignity,” which are located in the center of Kyiv. The museum in Dnipro partly translated the description of the exhibitions into English. In 2019, the museum added to the main exhibition a completely English-language stand titled “Russian Aggression in Ukraine/ International support to Ukraine.” Also, the panoramic film “Dnipro – Outpost of Ukraine” was prepared in English and outlines the context of the conflict in more detail than the Ukrainian one. Particular emphasis in the film is placed on the grounding of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 with a Russian military missile system and the statement by the American actor Morgan Freeman, who begins his narration about the situation in Ukraine with the words “we have been attacked.”¹¹ It provides a recounting in which Ukraine is part of the Western world, struggling to build and maintain democratic order. Similarly, the list of civilian victims of Russian aggression in Ukraine and Syria on the abovementioned stand links the Ukrainian fight with the situation in the world and situates the war in Donbas within a global context.

Museum Activities: Integrating a Society

An important role in building the community is played not only by the story created by the museums but also by the activities associated with its dissemination. Each of the institutions declared for their purposes that they want to be more than just a place “where the exhibits are simply laid out, and guides talk about them” (*Muzeї ATO Dnipro* 2019, 20). For their creators, the new museums are to be rather “living space” where it is possible to work together to create a conscious and patriotic society. Importance is attached to educating the younger generation, in which the right attitudes should early be developed.

Educational projects organized by museums are the main means to achieve this goal. One of them is a financed by the Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration’s patriotic education project called the “Ways of the Heroes” (*Shliakhamy heroїв*), which started in autumn 2017. As a result, more than 12,000 children from the Dnipro and Dnipropetrovsk regions took part in a one-day excursion, including a visit to the military unit, the Heroes Remembrance Alley, and the ATO Museum. The aim of the project is not only to familiarize participants with the latest events in Ukraine but also to discuss patriotism and the future of the country. The participants have to “understand what it means to be a citizen of their country, to realize the price of independence, and to learn firsthand the truth about Russian aggression against Ukraine” (*Muzeї ATO Dnipro* 2019, 18–19). That is why the guides are veterans of the anti-terrorist operation and volunteers who helped the Ukrainian army in 2014–2015. According to the project curator, historian Yurii Fanygin, “They hear the truth from the first-hand experience of veterans and volunteers. They get an example to follow. The memory of Ukrainian heroes must live in the next generations! This is our goal” (*Muzeї ATO Dnipro* 2019, 22).

A museum in Ivano-Frankivsk offers a similar tour program, though without funding from the authorities. Schools and other institutions (e.g., orphanages, colleges, and universities) cover the cost of transporting participants, but museum admission and tours are free due to the funding of Olexandr Shevchenko. The guided tour lasts between an hour and an hour and a half, depending on the age of the students, and focuses on the main events of the Revolution of Dignity, current events in the country, and a discussion about what it means to be a patriot of your own country. The museum's main guide, Svitlana Kartush, associated with the museum from the very beginning, emphasizes that the purpose of the excursions is not only to learn about the events but also to honor those who fell during the Euromaidan and the war in Donbas. During the tour, students understand the "price of blood" that was paid for the opportunity to live in a free and safe Ukraine.¹²

Igor Poshivaylo, director of the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity, learned through the "Lessons about freedom" (*Uroky svobody*) project in Kyiv schools that reaching young people is not easy and requires a modern approach (Poshyvailo 2019b). One of the effective activation strategies—used by all the institutions studied—is the organization of meetings with participants of the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Eastern Ukraine. Such meetings offer more involvement, allow participants to get firsthand information, establish interaction that enables important questions, and confronts participants with the question of what they would do in a similar situation. Fighting for one's own country—as Poshivaylo emphasizes—is a free choice (Poshyvailo 2019b). The presentation of people who consciously made this choice could be an important and effective element in shaping the civic and patriotic attitudes of young Ukrainians.

Various types of workshops for children and young people organized by the examined institutions also play an activating role. One example can be the periodic action performance "Angels over Ukraine" (*Ianholy nad Ukraïnoiu*), organized in the framework of the "Ukrainian East" project. During this event, children cut and color "angels," imagining the dead "defenders of the fatherland"—very often their fathers, brothers, relatives, or friends.¹³ Similarly, the museum in Ivano-Frankivsk displays a map of Ukraine created from pieces of Maidan and Antimaidan tents on which the children had to draw their own dream. The Art Tent project, initiated in autumn 2014, was one of the first initiatives of the Museum of the Heavenly Hundred. The museum also cooperates with schools to organize events on the occasion of national holidays, such as the Day of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred, Defender of Ukraine Day, or the Day of the Ukrainian Volunteer. Nevertheless, these holidays are not part of the official city celebrations and are ignored by the authorities.¹⁴

Many events organized by the examined institutions are addressed not only to young people but also to adults. They include books and comics promotions; movie screenings; poetry and song evenings; photographic, poster, and painting exhibitions; meetings with artists as well as Maidan and ATO participants; lectures, supportive actions in solidarity with war prisoners; and more intimate activities, like birthday celebrations of dead heroes and writing letters to soldiers fighting on the front. Most active is the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv, which aims to be "an intellectual and creative hub, the heart of initiatives of all kinds for the inclusive reflection on the past and the consolidated creation of the future" (Maidan Museum, n.d.). The other examined institutions also act as an umbrella for different kinds of social initiatives, becoming centers of civic activity by integrating local communities.

Particularly active cooperation is being undertaken with organizations of ATO participants and veterans and family members of the fallen, as well as with the volunteer movement. On the one hand, the creation and functioning of exhibitions would be difficult without the support and commitment of these individuals and organizations. On the other hand, participating in museum activities becomes a way to continue fighting on the front. By passing on their stories and related artifacts, they participate in the creation of the public narrative about the history of Ukraine. Cooperating with the museum also enables them to commemorate those who died and is a way of honoring loved ones. Finally, this kind of activity in public space can be a method of combating one's own trauma associated with war.

The museums' activities outlined above are part of the symbolic policy strategy proposed by the UINR in the autumn of 2014.¹⁵ The document, "Recommendations for local executive bodies and regional authorities on the activities related to the heroization of people who gave their lives for Ukraine's independence, honoring their memory, patriotic education and consolidation of the Ukrainian nation," highlighted the importance of heroizing soldiers fallen in Donbas. Heroization became "an enzyme that unites the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian nation and mobilizes Ukrainian society to carry out ambitious tasks related to the state building" (UINR 2014). Memorialization of Ukraine's recent history—also in the form of new exhibitions and museums—is "an extremely important task for moral and ethical reasons, as well as for consolidating society, creating a coherent collective memory and national identity" (UINR 2014). Heroization is "an important element in raising the morale of soldiers" (UINR 2014) because it instills in them the feeling that the state will not forget their sacrifice and that the memory of them will be honored. At the same time, the heroic attitudes of Ukrainian soldiers and officers, their "courage, bravery, military skills, presented in the fight against the enemy" (UINR 2014), should become a model promoted by the state for all Ukrainian citizens and a model for educating future generations. The creation of new exhibitions and museums, as well as their activities, is to be one of the forms of such heroization and serve "to raise the morale of soldiers, to activate patriotic education of young people, and to honor the memory of fallen military" (UINR 2014).

Nevertheless, the dynamic activity of the examined institutions, based on the cooperation of museum employees, representatives of state and regional authorities, educational institutions, social organizations and activists, non-associated families of heroes, artists, journalists, and academics, has not been forced and is spontaneous and bottom-up. That is why museums are not only conducive to the implementation of the state policy related to the legitimacy and mobilization of collective actions related to the war, but also they are model contact zones, wherein the story of the community is cocreated. The motto of the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity, "We study Freedom! We protect Freedom! We create Freedom!" (*Piznavaïmo Svobodu! Zakhyshchaïmo Svobodu! Tvorimo Svobodu!*), is already implemented in all examined institutions. They make a democratic and creative space for individual and collective initiatives that generate social solidarity and activism. In that sense, the new museums could facilitate performing and affirming a new civil society that is able to self-organize and act independently of state institutions.

Conclusions: War, Museums, and Community Formation

Theories about the nation-creating function of museum exhibitions are both useful and challenging for analyzing phenomena in contemporary Ukraine. Like other public institutions related to the promotion of national values, museums "have, since their creation, been at the center of nation-making and nation-building processes" (Aronsson and Elgenius 2014, 2). The intensive demand for national museums appeared along with the Napoleonic wars and the rise of national states that needed to claim, articulate, and represent their common myths and values. Objects displayed in museums provide visitors the opportunity to experience the shared culture and history, which may reaffirm a sense of common heritage. Through strategies for objectivization of reality, they shape the viewers' sense of stability and help to establish coherent and strongly rooted identity (Macdonald 2003, 2). Therefore, museums are institutions of power that rely on giving meaning to the past and present while also producing official versions of history (cf. Sherman and Rogoff 1994). At the same time, they are capable of providing a foundation for legitimacy and representation of the nation, both domestically and internationally (Kaplan 2006; Knell 2011).

In the context of nation building, the most important topics for museums are wars and battles. It was in the fire of those confrontations that the nations were born and reborn again, thereby reaffirming their strength and will to survive. Stories of wars and revolutions, full of heroic deeds, were for centuries willingly used to develop national images and helped to forge a sense of national unity. Narratives of violence actively shaped collective memory by supplying heroes, martyrs, and

victims (Hutchinson 2007; Smith 1999; Tsang and Woods 2014). This takes on special significance in areas experiencing conflict where the evocation of the “glorious dead” is associated with a reminder of a moral obligation to them (Čolović 2011). Wartime, related to the need for social mobilization in the face of an enemy, reinforces the sense of collective identity and creates an opportunity to build a political community through the “baptism of blood” (Gagnon 2004; Khalili 2007; Sorek 2015). In circumstances of ongoing war, not only old heroes are celebrated, but new ones are also created in the process of memorialization through new monuments, holidays, and museum exhibitions. The museums become active participants in producing narratives about war heroism and martyrdom, and the way in which they memorialize and address the conflict and their participants could significantly impact the way the nation is perceived.

Hence, the new Ukrainian museums are focused on creating a national narrative, depicting the history of the nation as progressive and successful. They become a stage for exhibiting new national myths legitimized with authentic stories and objects. This new narrative is associated with the heroic struggle for a free and independent Ukraine during the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas and, as this article shows, museum exhibitions create a space for new heroes to build a new foundation story for the Ukrainian nation.

At the same time, new Ukrainian museums are becoming modern and democratic laboratories of civic activism, participation, and dialogue. In the concept of new museology, the museum becomes a facilitator for grassroots initiatives, enabling cooperation between the museum and its community (Heijnen 2010). By creating more democratic access to and engagement with exhibitions, the representations of nations and national values created in museums became products of social negotiations between different individuals, such as museum employees, scientists, politicians, sponsors, social activists, nonacademic historians, teachers, witnesses of historical events, their descendants, and the general public (Aronsson and Elgenius 2011, 5). Similarly, as my analysis shows, the process of musealization of the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas created not only a place for gathering artifacts of recent events but also for discussing Ukrainian history, culture, and future. New Ukrainian museums are becoming “a platform for civil society formation,” setting new paths of cooperation between state institutions and social organizations.

Finally, as Paul Williams pointed out, in the 21st century we observe a “global rush to commemorate atrocities” (2007), which results in new cultural forms of commemoration, including the memorial museum. The institutions, constructed around the world from Cambodia to United States, share common aesthetics and goals related to promote peace, tolerance, and the avoidance of future violence. They “seek to harness the perceived power of memory to heal communities and promote reconciliation” (Sodaro 2018, 3). In the modern interpretation of military museums and exhibitions devoted to war, there is also a focus on moral education and the perspective of war victims (Winter 2012). However, in the case of the ongoing conflict—as shown by the analysis of Ukrainian institutions—these tasks encounter difficulties. Because warfare is ongoing, and people are still dying on the frontlines, Ukrainian group solidarity is more necessary than moral reflection on the victims of war. Therefore, the perspective of the victim is usurped by the perspective of a hero who fights for a better future, bolsters solidarity, and gives hope for victory.

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Notes

- 1 Events that took place between November 21, 2013, and February 21, 2014, in Kyiv are called Maidan, Euromaidan, or the Revolution of Dignity (Onuch and Sasse 2016; Portnov 2014). The authorities' decision to use force against the protesters began a cycle of social mobilization across Ukraine. In January and February 2014, after dramatic events that resulted in the deaths of many protesters, President Victor Yanukovich was forced to resign and fled the country, and a new, revolutionary, and pro-Western government led by Arseniy Yatsenyuk headed the state. In the same month, Russia launched a military operation in Crimea, which belongs to Ukraine, and finally, on March 21, 2014, it was formally merged with the Russian Federation. During the so-called Crimean crisis, pro-Russian and anti-government demonstrations took place in several cities in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. In Donetsk and Luhansk, separatists managed to gain social support, and with the military and organizational support of Russia they were able to hold referendums and proclaim the independent People's Republics in April-May 2014. The Ukrainian state recognized the areas controlled by separatists as occupied territories and vowed to launch an anti-terrorist operation (ATO) against them. The operation quickly took the form of conventional warfare, using large military forces, heavy artillery, armored vehicles, and tanks (Maiorova 2017; Yekelchik 2015; Wilson 2016).
- 2 The name comes from the title of a poem by Ukrainian poet Tetiana Domashenko, written directly under the influence of events.
- 3 The Blue Shield is a nongovernmental, nonprofit, international organization committed to the protection of heritage across the world, especially in the event of armed conflict and natural- or human-made disaster. The Ukrainian National Committee was established on February 21, 2014.
- 4 Based on my fieldnotes (June 2017; June 2018; September 2018; February 2019) and interviews with museum employees (September 2018).
- 5 Based on my fieldnotes (October 2018; August 2019), Roman Bonchuk (designer of the Museum of the Heavenly Hundred), interviewed by author, October 2018, and Svitlana Kartush (museum employee), interviewed by author, August 2019. See also Druzhuk (2020).
- 6 These are the following exhibitions: *Ours*, dedicated to cyborgs, defenders of Donetsk airport (December 11, 2017); *The City of Mercy. Mechnikov Hospital* (April–May 2018), devoted to Dnipro's efforts; *Darkness. Chronicles of Inversions* (April–May 2019), being a reflection of the artist Serhii Zakharov on the events in Donetsk in 2014; and *Returning the Occupied Territories*, opened in July 2019 on the 5th anniversary of the liberation of Ukrainian territories.
- 7 Based on my fieldnotes (June 2017; June 2018; September 2018; February 2019) and interviews with museum employees (September 2018).
- 8 Based on my fieldnotes (September 2018; June 2019); Vadim Yakushenko (head of the Department "Dnipropetrovsk Region's Civil Feat during the Events of Anti-Terrorist Operation"), interviewed by author, September 2018; Yurii Fanygin (volunteer, Curator of the "Ways of the Heroes" project), interviewed by author, September 2018; and museum employee, interviewed by author, June 2019.
- 9 The word "cyborg" in the context of the war in Donbas is primarily used to refer to Ukrainian defenders of the Donetsk airport. Regarding the huge destruction of the airport, defended against constant attacks by DPR forces, it is said that "concrete did not withstand, but they withstood." The airport has become a symbol of Ukraine's fight against separatists.
- 10 Based on my fieldnotes and interview with ATO museum employees, September 2018.
- 11 Based on my fieldnotes (September 2018; June 2019).
- 12 Based on my fieldnotes (October 2018; August 2019) and Kartush, August 2019.
- 13 Based on my fieldnotes (June 2017; June 2018; September 2018; February 2019) and interviews with museum employees, September 2018.

- 14 Based on my fieldnotes (October 2018; August 2019), Bonchuk, October 2018, and Kartush, August 2019. See also *Ofitsiïnyi saït mista Ivano-Frankivs'ka* (2020).
- 15 In September 2019, after the victory of Volodymyr Zelensky in the presidential election, there was a change in the position of the Director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance. Volodymyr Viatrovych, a strong supporter of the nationalist narrative, gave way to Anton Drobovych, who represents a more subdued position regarding historical politics. Some commentators interpret Zelensky's popularity and victory as a retreat from the model of patriotism promoted by Petro Poroshenko, "which is based on the Ukrainisation of the public sphere and anti-Russian rhetoric" (Iwański 2019, 3). Many Ukrainians who live mostly in the east and south of the country still feel attached to Russian culture and language, and despite the increase of patriotic and anti-Russian sentiments among them, "there is still a group in society which does not agree with the state's historical policy" (Iwański 2019, 3). However, changes in the policy regarding the commemoration of the Revolution of Dignity and the war in Donbas are not yet visible, and the document signed by the new president on November 8, 2019, emphasized that the construction of the Memorial of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes at the former Institutska Street will be completed as soon as possible.

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