

# FROM SOVIET TO POST- OR ANTI-SOVIET: TWO L'VIV MUSEUMS OF WAR IN SEARCH OF A NEW UKRAINIAN NARRATIVE OF WORLD WAR II

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**While most of the historical events that took place in L'viv, Ukraine, during and after World War II are being successively researched, less attention has been paid to their representation throughout the Soviet period and its transformation afterwards. This article looks at two war museums in L'viv representing the most prominent competing historical perspectives on World War II in Ukraine today: the Soviet narrative of heroism and liberation, as put forward by the Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District, and the Ukrainian narrative of a no less heroic fight for freedom and self-determination, as presented by the Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine. The first was the state narrative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, is still supported by many Ukrainian citizens and politicians, and continues to influence ideas about how war should be commemorated; the promoters of the second have hoped to make it the new Ukrainian master narrative, but they encounter a variety of difficulties, which will be addressed in this article. The article examines the circumstances, motives, and goals of the museums' creators, of the exhibitions' narratives (and silences), and their design.**

**The analysis is based on empirical research conducted in L'viv between August 2015 and October 2017 as part of the interdisciplinary research project "L'viv: Museum of War," a collaboration between the artist Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair and the historian Alexandra Wachter.**

**Keywords:** Ukraine; World War II; Nationalism; Holocaust; War in Donbas; Museum; Memory; Politics of History

Piles of rubble, blackened walls, gaping windows, and the skeletons of formerly splendid staircases leading nowhere—with recent Ukrainian media coverage in mind, these are images that evoke the destruction of a war zone. Some views of the dilapidated building of the Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District (Pri-karpatskii voennyi okrug, PrikVO) might pass for the remains of the embattled Donetsk airport, a symbol for the armed conflict between pro-Russian and Ukrainian militaries. Today there is little left of the former splendor of an institution that, in the words of Volodymyr Boiko, was once "one of Ukraine's best museums."<sup>1</sup> The building was abandoned in the 1990s, and most passersby do not even know that the ruin used to be a prestigious institution in Soviet L'viv.

Both the decaying museum's evocation of images of the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the personal judgment of Boiko, the man who heads the Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine (Muzei vyzvol'noi borot'by Ukraïny, MvBU), aptly symbolize the ongoing struggle around the interpretation, presentation, and commemoration of the recent historical past in Ukraine. With the end of communist rule, the Soviet master narrative of the Great Patriotic War lost its exclusive status, but attempts to replace it with a new Ukrainian master narrative have not been as successful as various actors had hoped. Since 1991 the politics of history have changed with presidents on the national—and local politicians on a regional—level and moved between honoring Soviet-Ukrainian traditions and fulfilling Ukrainian nationalist desires. When the armed conflict broke out in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 between "pro-Russian" and "pro-Ukrainian" sympathizers, both sides started to exploit the narratives of the Second World War/Great Patriotic War and the Ukrainian armed fight for independence for propaganda purposes to heighten the combative spirit and maintain popular support. Part of this process involves the creation of illustrated narratives and their merging with the visual archives.

Using the example of two museums in Western Ukraine, this article asks whether and how current WWII narratives mirror existing dissonances and split identities in contemporary Ukrainian society—which, today, is itself in a state of war. It combines historical research on the emergence and development of displays with an analysis of views expressed by the museums' directors and representatives of veterans' organizations in order to identify fractures and continuities in the representation of the past. It also asks whether the existing polyphony of voices might be read as a form of communicative memory, whereby mutually shared histories take the place of a master narrative (Assmann 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boiko, May 5, 2016.

While most of the historical events that took place in L'viv during and after World War II are well researched, including previously silenced topics like the L'viv pogroms and the Holocaust (e.g., Pohl 1996; Mick 2010, 2011, 2015; Himka 2011; Struve 2015), less attention has been paid to their representation throughout the Soviet period and its transformation afterwards. The recent anthology *Krieg im Museum: Präsentationen des Zweiten Weltkriegs in Museen und Gedenkstätten des östlichen Europa* by Ekaterina Makhotina et al. (2015) examines museums and memorials in Eastern Europe, but the only contribution on Ukraine is Iryna Sklokina's chapter on the Kharkiv Historical Museum. Despite numerous studies on the memory of World War II in former communist countries, there are generally few comparative studies (exceptions are Kurilo 2008 and Makhotina et al. 2015), and hardly any about museums in Ukraine (Ganzer 2005; Sklokina 2015). Ekaterina Makhotina and Martin Schulze Wessel (2015:9) have pointed out that war museums in East Central Europe tend to serve the consolidation of a social majority through a historical narrative and/or to fill the blank spaces that were left by the communist master narrative. In this they differ from museums in Western Europe, many of which have tried to move away from the original goals of war museums—legitimizing state power, heightening readiness for defending the state, and strengthening nation-state identities, as described by Sharon J. Macdonald (2000); there is instead a tendency towards presenting the experience of the individual and critically examining notions of nation, heroism, and patriotism. In East Central Europe state museums usually abandoned the communist master narrative but not the concept of building a new, collective identity, a concept that is highly topical in contemporary Ukraine. The choice of L'viv for such a case study was motivated by its reputation as a center of ultranationalist Ukrainian organizations and by the concentration of bloodshed, repression, and expulsion during and after World War II that forced a Soviet-Ukrainian identity onto the formerly multinational city. Despite this, L'viv remains a site at which Western and Eastern European cultures of memory and identities coexist, overlap, compete with and complement each other, and where new identities are being negotiated.

This article's focus is on the two museums mentioned above. They represent the prominently competing historical perspectives on World War II in Ukraine today: the Soviet narrative of heroism and liberation, as was put forward by the Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District (PrikVO museum), and the narrative of a no less heroic fight for freedom and self-determination of Ukraine, as presented by the MvBU. The first was the state narrative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, is still supported by many Ukrainian citizens and politicians, and continues to influence ideas about how war should be commemorated; the promoters of the second have hoped to make it the new Ukrainian master narrative, but they encounter a variety of difficulties, which will be addressed in this article.

The analysis is based on empirical research conducted in L'viv between August 2015 and October 2017 as part of the interdisciplinary research project "L'viv: Museum of War," a collaboration between the artist Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair and the historian Alexandra Wachter. The authors visited the ceremonies of different ethnic

and ideological groups over the course of an entire commemorative calendar year, discussed ideas about the future representation of specifically local events during and in the aftermath of World War II with experts and passersby, and examined existing, demolished, and planned representations of the historical events in local museums. The collection of visual footage, interview recordings, photographs, archival material, and found objects serves as the basis for scholarly analysis and artwork that reflects on identity politics among different actors of memory.



Figure 1. Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District, 2016. Photo by the authors.

Currently there is no museum in L'viv that provides a comprehensive picture of L'viv between 1939 and 1954 (the year the Ukrainian Insurgent Army [UPA] was officially defeated by the Red Army), but a significant number of museums include certain aspects. Some of these, like the main branch of the L'viv Historical Museum, have adapted their exhibitions from the Soviet era, while making use of original objects and photographs. Others were created as new branches of existing museums, like the Museum of Lieutenant-General of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army Roman Shukhevych, the MvbU (both are branches of the Historical Museum), and the new branch of the Museum of the History of Religion (formerly Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism) with the exhibition *Those Who Saved the World*. A third type falls in the category of school museums, for example the school museum Ukrainian Women in the Fight for Statehood, the Museum of Metropolitan Andreï Sheptyts'kyï, and the Museum of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician). They were created after 1991 along the lines of Soviet school museums. And finally, there are museums without any precursor whatsoever: the private museum room of the Jewish Charitable Foundation Hesed-Arieh; the Lonts'okho Street Prison Museum; the National Me-

morial Museum to Victims of Occupational Regimes; and the museum Territory of Terror, which is still under construction. Other museum plans, like the museum Ukrainian Calvary in the former NKVD prison on Zamarstyniv'ska Street, dedicated to crimes committed by the Soviet Union towards the civilian population between 1939 and 1941 (Wachter and Shapiro-Obermair 2017), remained projects. The Soviet museum next to the Hill of Glory, a small museum dedicated to the Soviet intelligence agent and partisan Nikolai Kuznetsov, and an unknown number of school museums on the topic were closed—or, rather, destroyed—after 1991. The most interesting fate is that of the PrikVO museum.

This article is roughly divided into three sections, covering the time span between the founding of the PrikVO museum in 1965 up until today. In the first section we outline the making, ideological conception, and structure of the Soviet PrikVO museum as described by the museum's guidebook and its former director. The second section explores the search for a new master narrative after the collapse of the Soviet Union, including the struggle that emerged around the building of the former Soviet museum, and the founding of the Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine. Special attention is given to the traditions that the makers of the MvbU refer back to, both Ukrainian nationalist and Soviet. The third and main section compares the narratives and design of the MvbU and the new PrikVO museum, as it has been installed in an altered form on the territory of a military base. It looks at parallels and examines which aspects are silenced. It also explores the museums' relation with survivors' organizations and the directors' professional and personal stances, for example in regards to commemorative dates of World War II/Great Patriotic War. The article concludes with some final remarks about World War II commemoration in L'viv in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.

### **A MUSEUM OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR IN L'VIV: "THE BEST ARTISTS FROM MOSCOW"**

When Boïko describes the former PrikVO museum as "one of Ukraine's best museums," he speaks not with bitterness but with admiration—and a hint of envy for the substantial support that Soviet military museums used to get:

I remember when the Lenin museum was founded in Kyiv. Then, there was the Museum of the Great Patriotic War [situated in Kyiv, opened in 1981]. What tremendous resources there were! Gigantic resources! That was very important for the Soviet power, in order to present its history in a convincing and unequivocal way, they did not economize on anything, and this PrikVO museum that was created, of the Carpathian Military District, it was created at very high standards.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike young Ukrainian nationalists, for whom former Soviet monuments and museums are hated symbols of the enemy that should be destroyed, Boïko takes a

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boïko, May 5, 2016.

pragmatic stance. In his view, any state power has the right and duty to propagate a—selective and convenient—version of its past. It therefore seems only natural to him that the Soviet Union would have done just that when it used museums not only “to teach, to inform” but also “to persuade” (Sklokina 2015:131). And, he maintains, this kind of propaganda work is especially needed in times of crisis: “Whenever there are social and political upheavals, museums play a very important role.”<sup>3</sup>

The Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District was initiated not in times of acute crisis but around the time when social and economic problems threatened to provoke popular anger in L'viv. Tarik Amar argues that authorities wanted to distract from such ills by launching an antireligious—and more specifically anti-Jewish—campaign (2015:274), and the initiative for a military museum to promote a local Soviet narrative might also be viewed with this context in mind. It was founded by order of the Minister of Defense of the USSR and the head of the Political Commandment of the Soviet Army and the Naval Forces of the USSR, and “solemnly opened on May 7, 1965, on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people over fascist Germany” (*Muzei istorii voisk...* 1980:5), that is, before the Soviet cult of the war reached its peak. It was common practice to choose the proximity to Victory Day, May 9, for the opening of monuments or museums of the Great Patriotic War; in this case, it was even the first official celebration since 1945. What deserves some attention is the fact that it was also the first such museum in Ukraine and one of the first in the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup>

When L'viv became Soviet between 1939 and 1941 and again in 1944, a lot of effort was invested into giving the formerly multiethnic Eastern Galicia<sup>5</sup> a new, Soviet identity by means of industrialization, cultural and ethnical cleansing, the influx of communist cadres and workers from eastern parts of Ukraine and Russia, and politics of memory. In the words of Amar, who described this process in his recent study *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv*, the Communist Party functionaries needed to connect “Lviv’s past not only to a general Soviet Marxist account of universal history but also to the specific teleology of the postwar Soviet Union, anchored in the key myths of the Great October Revolution and the Great Fatherland War” (2015:283). This was not an easy task, as communist traditions have never been strong among Ukrainians in L'viv and the war was largely associated with the Ukrainian fight for independence. Until the opening of the PrikVO museum, a small number of monuments referred to the “liberation of L'viv” in July 1944, like the Soviet tank on Lenin Street (1944), the burial ground Kholm Slavy (Hill of Glory, 1952), and a statue of Nikolai Kuznetsov

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boiko, May 5, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> The Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Minsk opened as the first of its kind in 1943 and local historical museums in Ukraine included the war in their permanent exhibitions shortly after the war, but other large-scale projects in planning were not implemented until 1981 (Kyiv) and 1995 (Moscow).

<sup>5</sup> By the time the Red Army reconquered L'viv in July 1944, the Jewish population had been driven out, deported, or killed by the German occupiers and local collaborators, and by the end of the 1940s the Polish population had been largely expelled by the Soviets.

(1962), a Soviet partisan and intelligence agent who was allegedly killed near Brody by fighters of the UPA in 1944. But a more substantial history of military glory during World War II had yet to be promoted. Allies were found in the high numbers of military staff from Eastern Ukraine and Russia who remained in L'viv after the war. They were assigned to the Carpathian Military District, and the museum was given its name. The district had been established in Chernivtsi in July 1945 and combined with the L'viv Military District in May 1946. The new museum was thus named in honor of a military district that did not yet exist during the war that it was meant to promote.

The PrikVO museum was first accommodated in a building at 99 Lenin Street (now Lychakivs'ka Street) and, on July 12, 1974, moved to a new building at 48a Stryis'ka Street that was specially designed for this purpose. The museum formed part of the new Soviet war memorial site in the upper area of the Park of Culture named after Bohdan Khmel'nitskiĭ, which included the Alley of Glory and the memorial To the Military Glory of the Red Army. Similar to the Monument of Victory in Leningrad, the ensemble was part of Soviet plans for a new city center and gateway towards the broad avenue leading to the Carpathian region. The museum was meant as the new city center's central focus point, the "opera house of this district," as the art historian Bohdan Shumylovych explained to us, replacing the bourgeois opera house from which political parades started.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 2. Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District, postcard.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Bohdan Shumylovych, January 29, 2017.

According to Soviet urban legend, the complex was funded by popular means, more precisely by the donations of former servicemen of the Carpathian Military District and their families. The museum's directors were not cultural workers but high-ranking military men in retirement who combined military expertise and fame with ideological trustworthiness. Ivan Kaliberda, a Hero of the Soviet Union, Red Army Major General in retirement, and the museum's director from 1969, confirmed the popular narrative:

It was built with popular means, that is, soldiers, officers, generals, all according to their means, made some donation, then the district command also gave money, and then a piece of land by the park was given.... Well, and the district command, with its means, that is, with building units, built, drafted a very convenient, very spacious, and very beautiful building.<sup>7</sup>

The myth of a *narodnyi muzei* (people's museum), and of a people's monument, is tenacious and has been put forward by representatives of the Soviet narrative as an emotionally charged argument against the monument's demolition. When it was painted yellow and blue by unidentified youths after a parade in honor of the SS Division Galicia on the night of April 28, 2016,<sup>8</sup> several passersby whom we interviewed appealed to the respect for those donors while expressing their indignation at the vandalism.

Although the museum was officially telling the history of the Carpathian Military District, the strategy to link it to pre-1945 military glory was successful. It was popularly known as the Museum of the Great Patriotic War or, sometimes, the Red Army Museum. Kaliberda volunteered an explanation for the museum's focus on the Great Patriotic War:

We call it Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District, well. But it shows more material on the history of the Great Patriotic War. On all its phases, all its stages. And not only on the history of our district but about *everything*, about the whole Soviet Union, how it fought the war with fascist Germany. So ... well.<sup>9</sup>

The permanent exhibition was divided into six thematic sections, whereby the section "The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People" occupied two out of six major halls, while the other five sections that treated the prewar and postwar periods<sup>10</sup> were

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Ivan Kaliberda, June 29, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> *Parad vyshyvanok* (Parade of Embroidered Shirts), officially named *Marsh velichii dukha* (March of the Greatness of the Spirit), was last held in 2016, on the anniversary of the SS Division Galicia's inauguration (April 28, 1943), and was attended by veterans and patriotically minded young Ukrainians.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Ivan Kaliberda, June 29, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> According to the guidebook, two prewar halls treated the sections "The Great October Socialist Revolution," "The Civil War in the USSR," and "The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in the Years of Peaceful Construction of Socialism," and two postwar halls—the sections "The Military District in the Postwar Period" and "Brothers in Class, Brothers in Arms" (the latter meaning the countries of the Warsaw Pact).

located in the remaining four halls. According to the guidebook, visitors learned “about the military operations during war years of some units that are now part of the Carpathian Military District decorated with the Order of the Red Banner,” thus establishing a connection, albeit a weak one, between the Soviet cult of war and the military district stationed in L'viv.

The narrative of the Great Patriotic War was constructed along tested blueprints. Etienne François describes these basic elements as such:

the heroic and victorious fight of the Soviet Union against the fascist aggressor between 1941 and 1945, the immeasurable barbarity and atrocities exceeding all imagination of Nazi Germany, the leading role of the CPSU and other communist parties, the willingness to make sacrifices and the courage of soldiers and partisans who are presented as heroes and martyrs, the joint fighting of all nationalities, etc. (2015:363)

The PrikVO museum also included local elements to create a “Soviet Ukrainian view of history,” a strategy that has been described by Wilfried Jilge (2006:53), for example, individual deeds of heroic resistance along the Ukrainian and Belarusian border in the first weeks of the war, Ukrainian Heroes of the Soviet Union, and the liberation of L'viv and L'viv region.

Next to heroic deeds, Soviet war museums also presented the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity. They can be assigned to the category “the immeasurable barbarity and atrocities exceeding all imagination of Nazi Germany” (François 2015:363). The presentation laid the focus on striking details etched into collective memory through repetition and memorable images. Details used were often taken from reports of the *Chrezvychnaia gosudarstvennaia komissii* (Extraordinary State Commission, ChGK), which collected materials about the damage caused by the German invaders. The report on L'viv includes the description of an orchestra, set up in the Lemberg-Janowska concentration camp by SS guard Richard Rokita. Both the PrikVO museum and the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Minsk illustrated the Holocaust with a photograph of that orchestra captioned “Tango of Death.”

According to the museum's guidebook, the Great Patriotic War was shown through “materials and documents, combat weapons and personal belongings, photographs and sculptural busts of heroes who distinguished themselves in action for the fatherland, banners and military relics of formations and units” (*Muzei istorii voisk...* 1980:30). Daniel J. Sherman (2010:209) has described traditional army museums as primarily designed for commemoration, relying on the capability of sacralized objects to “speak” for themselves. The scientific representation of the past is hereby of lesser importance than its glorification. The set of recognizable symbols and objects—or “military relics,” as the museum's guidebook aptly calls them—typically includes heroes (busts, portraits), weapons, medals, flags, as well as a panorama or, at least, a diorama—a large showcase with miniature models of battle scenes arranged before a painted background. The museum's particular pride was indeed a large diorama, which was presented in a separate hall:

And seventhly, there is the [diorama] created by artists from Moscow, it is called diorama *Towards L'viv*. Here you go. The best artists from Moscow were invited to create this diorama. And it was in the museum. And in the museum it was electrified. You want to show some event, like the Lvov-Sandomierz Offensive, or some other episode? Here you go, press the button, just like you press the doorbell of an apartment, and the diorama opens, the part that is needed.<sup>11</sup>

The diorama *Towards L'viv* depicted the Battle of Brody, or Brody Cauldron, where the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician) was encircled and crushed by the Red Army in 1944. It was a work by the Grekov Studio of War Artists in Moscow, carried out in 1974 by Petr Zhigimont and Mikhail Anan'ev. Whether they really were the "best artists" is not the question; the fact that they were from Moscow, for Kaliberda, is synonymous with being of high quality, and proof of the museum's significance.



Figure 3. Kaliberda (second from the right) with pioneer children. Courtesy of Ivan Kaliberda.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Ivan Kaliberda, June 29, 2016.

The photographs in Kaliberda's album from his time as director depict him with, alternately, military men and pioneer children and, thus, testify to the fact that the museum was run in accordance with Soviet guidelines for the propaganda of "revolutionary, military, and labor tradition," as the museum's guidebook outlined (*Muzeii istorii voisk* 1980:5). Soviet war museums addressed a wider public and were prominently included in tourist guidebooks and tours, but the main target groups were young children taken by their school or pioneer organizations and soldiers-in-training "who are summoned to firmly defend the interests of our fatherland and the fraternity of socialist countries" (5). Kaliberda commented on a picture that shows him among a group of children with pioneer neckties: "We had the full-size bust of [Vladimir] Lenin, and schoolchildren asked me.... No, not the schoolchildren, the teacher asked me to have my photograph taken standing among the schoolchildren." Other pictures show scenes of military oath takings that were held on the museum's grounds. After retiring as the museum's director, Kaliberda continued to conduct "patriotic education" in schools and in the L'viv Military Academy, where he "talked to cadets about heroic matters, to cadets of the engineer corps, about the Great Patriotic War, what I know about it, what I experienced."<sup>12</sup>

Based on the descriptions by Kaliberda and the museum's guidebook we can conclude that the Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District was a Soviet war museum par excellence, possibly designed with an eye on the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Minsk (1943), completed with Ukrainian details to support the Soviet-Ukrainian narrative, and noteworthy in its imposing size and early foundation in a city that was known for its anti-Soviet sentiment. In 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, "the museum, too, fell apart,"<sup>13</sup> but even in its apparent absence the Soviet museum of the Great Patriotic War continues to play an important role in the struggle for a new, Ukrainian (master) narrative.

## TRANSFORMING MEMORY

Throughout the Soviet period the memory of the Ukrainian fight for independence was kept alive among former fighters, namely of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the SS Division Galicia, in the Canadian and American diaspora. It started to be reintroduced into Ukraine in the later phase of perestroika, and when the Soviet Union collapsed, there were hopes among these veterans and their sympathizers that this predominantly Western Ukrainian narrative could replace the Soviet narrative. When Boïko came to L'viv in 1994 from Zaporizhzhya in southeastern Ukraine, the first resolutions about the creation of a new war museum had already been passed by the city council and the PrikVO museum was in the center of attention. But the building, which now belonged to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, had also incited the desires of other actors promoting alternative narratives.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Ivan Kaliberda, June 29, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Ivan Kaliberda, June 29, 2016.

According to Boïko, one suggestion was to turn the PrikVO museum into a memorial museum dedicated to victims of Stalinist repressions. Once this idea was discarded, there seems to have been a dispute over whether the museum should be turned into a museum of the military history of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, which would have included their membership in the Red Army, or whether it should become a museum of the liberation struggle of Ukraine, which would have implied a radical reassessment of the local World War II narrative. The project of a museum of the liberation movement received political support from Stepan Davymuka, who in 1992–1994 was the region's governor (*prestavnyk prezidenta Ukraïny u L'vivs'kii oblasti*). In 1992 he gave the order to establish a Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine and specified its location:

At first, since the first order of the year 1992, which I mentioned, it was decided ... together with and on the basis of the museum ... and, actually, on the basis of this building, the two-storied building designed especially for the museum of the Carpathian Military District, to transform it into the Museum of the Liberation Struggle.<sup>14</sup>

The idea was to use the rich collection and the building of the Soviet museum to tell the same story from a Ukrainian nationalist perspective. What could have been more tempting than swapping places with the former enemy in his own "pantheon" and placing one's own heroes on his pedestals? But things were more complicated than many had hoped, even in L'viv, which is considered a stronghold of ultranationalist Ukrainian sentiment. After the declaration of independence, Ukrainian heroes, traditions, and symbols were used to propagate a national culture and interpretation of history, but the promotion of controversial heroes like Stepan Bandera was not officially supported during the 1991–1994 presidency of Leonid Kravchuk (see Jilge 2006:57).

In the end the museum's collection was "rescued" from being used as the raw material for a more extreme, Ukrainian nationalist narrative: by order of the commander of the Carpathian Military District it was transferred to a nearby military base on Stryś'ka Street. Kaliberda, who was still director at that time, commented on these events as such:

Well, these comrades from the Political Department of the type that have no connection with and no knowledge about the history of the military district, came. They started to intervene, and I kicked them out, well. And quite obviously I was not to their liking. Well. Not to their liking. And soon after I heard that they will transfer the museum to one of the military bases on Stryś'ka Street.<sup>15</sup>

None of the promoters of alternative museum projects was able to secure for their vision the building that had incited so many desires. The decision as to which narrative should replace the Soviet one was evaded by giving preference to commercial interests: the building was sold to an investor who intended to convert it into a hotel. This plan

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boïko, May 5, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ivan Kaliberda, June 29, 2016.

never materialized; according to urban legend—because excavators turned up human bones, most probably the remains of deceased patients of the German military hospital that had been located in the military academy opposite. But, as such details had not stopped other investors in L'viv,<sup>16</sup> the real reasons were probably of a different nature. While the Soviet monument nearby is still the subject of heated discussions and acts of vandalism today, the building of the PrikVO museum was abandoned to its fate. Few people know about its past or the exhibition's almost secretive existence in the military base, where it was reinstalled with some adaptations. Notwithstanding this oblivion, the ruin of the PrikVO museum stands as a symbol of the unsolved question of a collective Ukrainian narrative and identity and of the continuous influence of Soviet politics of history.

### COMBATANTS' VIEWS

The project Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine found shelter under the umbrella of the L'viv Historical Museum and in a historical building close to the city center. The two-storied nineteenth century villa on Lysenko Street is the former home of the Riflemen Society. In 1868 the Prosvita (Enlightenment) Society promoting Ukrainian culture and education was founded in this building. According to Boiko, who joined the project in 1995, the concept was changed several times: one idea was to dedicate the museum exclusively to the UPA, but it seems that the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance suggested that a larger and “continuous story” would be more advantageous.



Figure 4. Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine, 2016. Photo by the authors.

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<sup>16</sup> The most prominent example is the five-star hotel Citadel Inn. It is situated in the Second Maximilian Tower of the former Austrian citadel, which became known as the “tower of death” with interrogation and death cells when the area was used as a camp for Soviet and Western European prisoners of war in 1941. Only half of an estimated 284,000 prisoners are believed to have survived.

Similar to the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, the institute is officially promoting a Ukrainian narrative with a nationalist tendency. Its activities concentrate on investigating crimes committed against Ukrainians and on presenting traditions of resistance and the fight for independence, while less favorable topics like collaboration and involvement in crimes are addressed, if at all, half-heartedly or excused as a reaction to crimes against Ukrainians. But as Stefan Troebst (2013:137) has pointed out, the plurality of voices in Ukraine that has emerged since 1991 contradicts the desire to create a homogeneous culture of remembrance. Official politics of memory have changed with presidents, and the institute has not been as successful as its Polish namesake. It was founded in 2006, during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010), which also saw a campaign in 2008 by the Security Service of Ukraine that denied involvement of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in the Holocaust and the contested awarding of the title Hero of Ukraine to the nationalist leaders Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera. When a decree by the next president, Viktor Yanukovich (2010–2014), ordered its closure, it resumed work as a research institution. Under President Petro Poroshenko (in office since 2014) it successfully promoted the signing of the controversial “decommunization laws” and succeeded in placing state archives concerning Soviet repression under its jurisdiction.

Boïko refers to a long tradition of the musealization of Ukrainian military history. He claims that its foundation was laid by Sich Riflemen in 1915 and cites three museum projects as precursors: a museum room presenting artwork “dedicated to Ukraine in Arms,” initiated by Sich Riflemen; the Ukrainian military-historical museum in Prague that collected documents of the Ukrainian diplomatic mission of the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UNR) and the Ukrainian Galician Army, and collaborated with emigrants in Canada and the United States (1925–1946); and the Museum of the Young Community and the Ukrainian Army that he claims was established at 48 Pototskiï Street in 1937, with material from the Cultural-Historical Museum in L’viv, and supported by a local organization of war invalids and veterans in the United States. The further destiny of the museum room is unknown, while the museum in Prague and the Museum of the Young Community and the Ukrainian Army were shuttered as nationalist when communism became the new state ideology in Czechoslovakia and Western Ukraine respectively. Since then the systematic collection of materials was left to those in exile in Canada and the United States. “We intuitively felt this tradition,” Boïko claims:

This is why we made this museum, in tribute to the memory of the ideologists of the museum that they wanted to establish 100 years ago; they, the Sich Riflemen, wanted it, and the combatants of the Galician Army wanted it, and the soldiers of the UPA had the wish, and the *diviziniki* [members of the SS Division Galicia] had the wish to create such a museum. And in fact we, by answering their demands, did what we did.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boïko, May 5, 2016.

What was done was done not only as a continuation of Ukrainian commemorative traditions in exile or underground, but also with admiration of Soviet craftsmanship in historical propaganda. And with the same goal, as Boïko maintains: "This museum is needed, it is especially needed in the circumstances in which Ukraine is today, there has to be an understanding, who am I, that is, every person has to ask this question and find an answer."<sup>18</sup> Like museums of the Great Patriotic War, the MvbU wants to strengthen nationalist identity and patriotism, and its director stresses the heightened need for such propaganda in times of crisis. But the narrative that it offers is as limiting as the narrative presented by its role model: it excludes the experience of large parts of the population and ignores critical aspects that do not fit the narrative of heroism and martyrdom.

## **MINEFIELDS AND VETERANS**

So what topics are presented in the MvbU and in the adapted PrikVO exhibition, now officially Museum of the 58 House of Officers (hereafter the new PrikVO museum), and how? What is their main narrative, what other narratives are presented and omitted, and where do they overlap? Both museums tell the history of military formations and armies with a strong focus on World War II and Western Ukraine, and both try to construct a Ukrainian continuum that ends with Maidan and the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine today. But to reach this joint position they have to navigate several minefields.

## **ATTEMPT AT A UKRAINIAN MASTER NARRATIVE**

The MvbU mainly tells the story of paramilitary troops fighting for the freedom and statehood of Ukraine and of Ukrainian formations in regular armies, like the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen and the SS Division Galicia, which were part of the Austro-Hungarian and the Wehrmacht respectively. The main emphasis is on the fight of the UPA against the Soviets during and after World War II, but earlier military formations are presented to construct the narrative of a continuous tradition and of a fertile breeding ground from which nationalist heroes like Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera emerged. "It means that there is continuity," Boïko explained:

The Ukrainian Military Organization formed the new and strong Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which generated the military wing that creates the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. It was joined by young people, young powers who headed the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, like Roman Shukhevych. Both he and Stepan Bandera came from the tradition of Plast,<sup>19</sup> which made them who they were.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boïko, May 5, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Plast is a Ukrainian scouting organization founded in 1911. Many members were actively involved in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Today it promotes "an all encompassing, patriotic and self-educating program for Ukrainian youth based on Christian principles" (<http://old.plast.org.ua/en/>).

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boïko, May 5, 2016.

The OUN and UPA leaders mentioned are at the center of the ideological conflict between post-Soviet and Ukrainian nationalist interpretations of history. In Russia and among social strata in Ukraine that adhere to the Soviet narrative, they are considered traitors and fascist collaborators; (pro-)Russian propaganda extensively exploits the notion that Western Ukrainians who had hoped for Ukrainian statehood were *banderovtsy* (Banderites) and fascist collaborators by definition. This has not contributed to a more differentiated presentation of Western Ukrainian history. The history of the Ukrainian fight for independence is an important part of Ukrainian historiography, but the MvBU does not critically assess delicate issues, like the distinctively anti-Semitic and racist bias of the OUN and its fascination with totalitarian nationalism in Germany and Italy. It omits repeated cooperation with the Wehrmacht and German intelligence services (for a detailed analysis of that collaboration prior to and during World War II, see Struve 2015); crimes committed by Ukrainians against non-Ukrainians, for example in the ranks of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police or as Nazi concentration camp guards; the massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia by the UPA; or the participation of Ukrainians in the hunting and murder of Jews during the L'viv pogrom in the summer of 1941. At the same time the engagement of Ukrainians in the SS Division Galicia is prominently presented in the exhibition not as a form of collaboration but as a necessity of the time in order to fight communism and receive military training.

The Division was a military formation of the Waffen-SS, initiated by Otto von Wächter, the Governor of District Galicia, after the German defeat at Stalingrad in 1943. The museum's showcase includes photographs of an official ceremony in L'viv, probably on July 18, 1943. Military officials overlook the square from a gallery in front of the L'viv opera house, while Ukrainian men and women in embroidered shirts, carrying swastika flags and flags with the Division's emblem, march past. The pictures in the exhibition are relatively harmless, as a comparison with photographs at the Simon Wiesenthal Archive in Vienna shows. Images depicting Ukrainians giving the Hitler salute to a huge swastika in front of the tribune are not included. Like other Waffen-SS formations, the division operated under the High Command of the Wehrmacht. It has not been found guilty of specific war crimes as a division, but there is evidence of involvement of its members in massacres of the Polish and Jewish population, and at the Nuremberg Trials the Waffen-SS in general was declared a criminal organization. Many Ukrainian soldiers escaped surrender to the Soviet Union because, when captured in Rimini, they were treated as Polish citizens and managed to emigrate to the United States and Canada after their liberation.

The museum's makers might have met with criticism, including from Western visitors shocked by the sympathetic representation of an SS division. The printouts in Ukrainian and English that provide visitors with some background information on the history of the different formations do not seem to have been part of the original concept. The SS Division Galicia is presented as the "Division 'Galicia'—The First Ukrainian Division of Ukrainian National Army," a name it bore only between April 25 and May 8, 1945, and anticipated criticism is denounced as Soviet propaganda:

After World War II a lot of charges of war crimes were brought against Ukrainian combatants, which were initiated by the Soviet Union. All conducted investigations, including the most thorough inquiry of the Canadian Commission of Deshen in 1986, did not confirm the imposed charges. In an unambiguous decision it was declared that participation in the division cannot be a reason for prosecution.

This explanatory text on the showcase mentions the Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals in Canada, headed by Jules Deschênes, which was established in 1985. It was a reaction to accusations that war criminals had been granted Canadian citizenship, and investigated individual cases but did not rate membership in the division as a crime itself. That there were investigations about alleged heroes at all must have been unpleasant enough. It is not convenient to include critical aspects or complex characters in a museum that replaces Soviet heroes with Ukrainian role models: "We present here our heroes, who were unknown in Soviet times.... If these people are exemplary, people with whom we should measure up and from whom we should learn, and be proud that we have such people," Boïko explained.

In telling the story of paramilitary troops fighting for the freedom and statehood of Ukraine the Mvbu has filled substantial gaps in the Ukrainian-Soviet narrative but left significant blank spaces in doing so itself. It wants to consolidate a social majority through a historical narrative, ignoring that, unlike the Soviet Union and Russia, contemporary Ukraine lacks the means (and necessary political support) to impose a new master narrative to which there is opposition among the population—even in Western Ukraine.

### UKRAINIAN MILITARY HISTORY

The new PrikVO museum does not claim to present a new master narrative. It tells the story of Ukrainians serving in regular troops, namely the Austrian-Hungarian Army, the Red Army, and the Ukrainian Armed Forces, but also displays reconstructed warriors of early principalities and Cossacks: "We show all our Ukrainian military history from the twelfth century up until today," the museum's director Serhiï Palisa told us.<sup>21</sup> The focus of the exhibition, which was designed on the basis of the old PrikVO museum in the second half of the 1990s, is on the fight of Ukrainians against fascism during World War II in the ranks of the Red Army. This can be explained by the legacy of the old museum and the rich material available but also by army traditions and staff continuity, which led to the "rescue" of the PrikVO museum from being "hijacked" by the Ukrainian nationalist narrative in the first place. The Armed Forces of Ukraine were created as the immediate successor of the Soviet Army on Ukrainian soil in 1991 and are subordinated to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. As a museum of the military history of Ukraine, the new PrikVO museum tries to construct a Ukrainian continuum in this vein. The museum's makers are closely associated with the House of Officers and the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Ukrainian elements of the Soviet Ukrainian narrative were strengthened, without denying the Soviet past, and very

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<sup>21</sup> Guided tour by Serhiï Palisa, March 24, 2016.

limited information about the former enemy, the UPA, was added, obscuring its armed conflict with the Red Army and war crimes committed against the civilian population.

No changes to the Soviet original seem to have been made to the treatment of the Holocaust. A showcase with the title *What It Was like in L'viv Region* shows the "Tango of Death," an execution, several corpses hanged on a balcony (the Judenrat), the so-called tower of death (Second Maximilian Tower) in the area of the citadel that was used as the POW camp Stalag 328, and the entrance gate to Lemberg-Janowska camp. No substantial context or facts are given, and the specific character of the Holocaust as a systematic genocide against Jews remains blurred.

Palisa maintained that the exhibition is in dire need of modernization, without indicating what exactly modernization would imply and whether it would also mean a change of focus. In any case, it demonstrates that being pro-Ukrainian and anti-Russian does not necessarily imply being anti-Soviet.

### RIVALS AND ENEMIES

The narrative that Ukrainians were fighting on different sides but for the same goal (against fascism and for a free Ukraine) is also the official version of the All-Ukrainian Association of Veterans, which predominantly represents UPA veterans, but not of the Association of Veterans of Ukraine, which adheres to the Soviet narrative that Ukraine was liberated by the Red Army and classifies UPA veterans as fascist collaborators. Both veterans' associations are under attack by more radically minded nationalists, whose focus is on the fight against Russian/Soviet intruders and who classify Ukrainians who fought in the ranks of the Red Army as traitors.

On the eve of May 8, two members of the All-Ukrainian Association of Veterans explained to us their interpretation of the past outside their office in L'viv town hall. The Soviet war against Nazi Germany could not have been won without Ukraine and the millions of Ukrainians who gave their lives, they maintained, and those who survived should reconcile with UPA veterans, who fought first against German, then Russian occupiers: "We now propagate reconciliation, peace. Between the Red Army and the UPA. But the communists don't want that, and that's why there is such a..." one of them began, and the second added: "They say: We don't want reconciliation, we don't want. There are such 'Russified' Ukrainians, you know..."<sup>22</sup> At this point he was interrupted by a young man on a bicycle who presented himself as a "Ukrainian nationalist" and member of a military formation that actively fought in the east of Ukraine. The heated discussion between generations that followed demonstrated that communists are not the only ones who reject the interpretation offered by the All-Ukrainian Association of Veterans. One of the organization's representatives tried to distract us from the scene, while his colleague struggled to stand up to his young compatriot, who was as unwilling to reconcile as "such Russified Ukrainians."

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with two members of the All-Ukrainian Associations of Veterans, May 7, 2016.

The UPA continued fighting the Red Army long after the end of World War II, therefore surviving veterans tend to be slightly younger, but both organizations are now mostly run by survivors' descendants and, in the case of the Association of Veterans of Ukraine, "veterans of labor." Many active members of the All-Ukrainian Association have a family history that includes both UPA and Red Army involvement; reconciliation is not seen as a political act between contemporary Ukraine and Russia, which are de facto engaged in an (ideological) war, but as a means to heal grievous ruptures in family histories. "You know, two brothers, my brother served in the Insurgent Army, one of them, in the Insurgent Army, and the other, he was not in the Insurgent Army and was drafted into the Red Army; what do you think, is it possible to reconcile them, two brothers?" the older man asked the young nationalist. The young man, in turn, would not accept family ties as valid grounds for action: reconciliation with the Russian or Polish empires, he maintained, is neither realistic nor desirable. Both, however, agreed that there could be no peace with Russia today. And both, without doubt, know that peace can also not be taken for granted in Ukrainian society.

Later, with tea and cookies, vodka and *buterbrody* (sandwiches), the organization's representatives asked us for information on an event that had been held by the rival veterans' organization the previous night. It was a festive concert to honor veterans for their deeds in the Great Patriotic War. The program included ritual speeches (in Ukrainian), children dancing and singing in colorful costumes, and musicians in uniform performing Soviet wartime songs. Both content and format were (post-)Soviet, albeit painted in yellow and blue: the huge flag decorating the stage was Ukrainian, as were some of the children's costumes. The activists of the All-Ukrainian Association of Veterans were particularly interested in finding out how many people had attended the concert, how long it had lasted, and, above all, whether and which representatives of the city had been present. Official recognition of one's martyrdom and/or heroism is of utter importance to all groups acting in the field of World War II remembrance, and they jealously monitor how much recognition is granted to their alleged rivals. But although most such Soviet-style events are tolerated, they are not usually attended by official representatives of the city.

### **NATIONAL IN CONTENT, SOVIET IN FORM**

Both exhibitions make use of a mix of photographs, documents, and "sacralized objects" to construct a narrative of heroism and martyrdom. The new PrikVO has a certain advantage in this, as it can draw on the rich collection of weapons, uniforms, medals, busts, and artwork, as well as personal belongings of soldiers that were collected by the original PrikVO museum. "Our archive is crammed with our collections, because we do in fact have more than 10,000 units, among them unique pieces, which ... Russia always envies us, that all this has been preserved, especially when it comes to the artwork of war artists of the Grekov Studio—we have the originals, more than

25 paintings," Palisa told us.<sup>23</sup> And the collections are regularly expanded with new artifacts. We were given a guided tour in Ukrainian by the director himself, which started with a historical explanation of the museum's foundation in 1965, the date when the first PrikVO museum was opened in the city center. Like Boïko, Palisa bemoaned the times when the museum still had substantial financial support, 61 members of staff (in comparison to two today) and covered more than 2.5 thousand square meters.<sup>24</sup> Today the museum has two halls and a spacious foyer that is used to exhibit "military relics" of the current armed conflict and uniforms of all periods of Ukrainian military history. It was painful to listen to the emotionally charged explanation of uniforms, banners, and especially photographs of young soldiers who recently fell in battle in Eastern Ukraine.

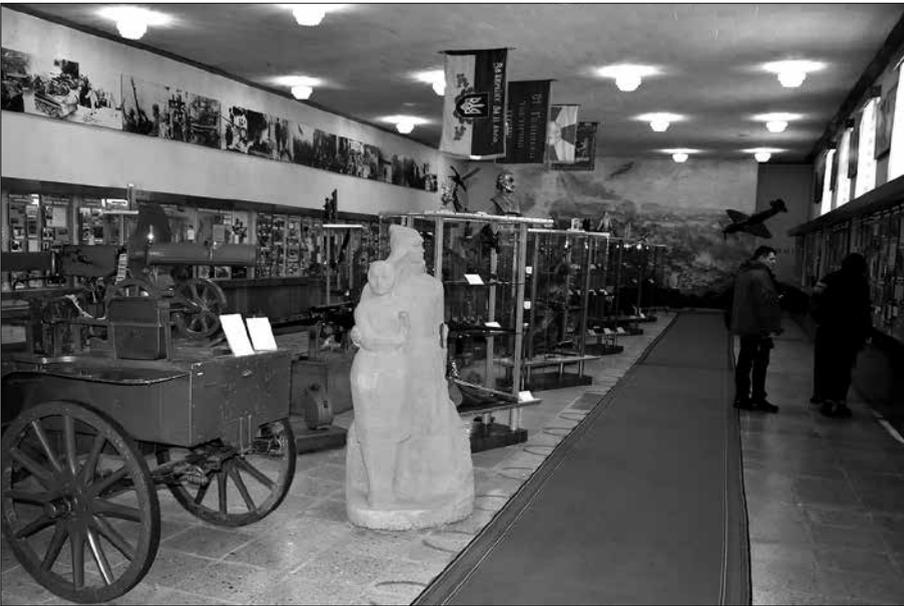


Figure 5. Museum of the 58 House of Officers (new PrikVO museum), main hall, 2018.  
Photo by Oleksandr Poroniuk.

We were then led into the main hall. The design and structure are straightforward and traditional. Combat weapons are placed in the hall's center, and conventional stands with photographs and brief captions along its walls. A frieze of blown-up photographs forms a second visual row above the stands; banners of military units are hanging from the ceiling. The director concentrated on the weapons in the center, leaving aside the stands that mostly present Soviet history. Before we returned to the foyer, where valuable Soviet medals were unwrapped, we briefly walked through the smaller hall. It contains 12 larger-than-life busts lined up along the wall,

<sup>23</sup> Guided tour by Serhii Palisa, March 24, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Palisa spoke of 7.5 thousand square meters, the museum's brochure—2.5 thousand.

and a bas-relief depicting a soldier with the epigraph “Your act of bravery is eternal, soldier!” The persons portrayed were not explained as part of the tour but could later be identified as nine Russian, one Belorussian, and two Ukrainian war heroes, several with the official title Hero of the Soviet Union. Illustrations in the old museum’s guidebook identify them as Soviet originals.



Figure 6. Museum of the 58 House of Officers (new PrikVO museum), hall with busts of Soviet Heroes, 2016. Photo by the authors.

The exhibition of the MvBU, on the contrary, has to make do with copies of busts from the Ukrainian Museum of New York. They represent Ukrainian nationalist heroes like Stepan Bandera or Dmytro Dontsov. Similar to the new PrikVO museum, the exhibition occupies two halls plus two smaller rooms, and it also features uniforms, medals, and combat weapons. These, however, are integrated into the exhibition’s display, which is of a totally different nature. Especially in the main hall it borrows from rustic-style, nationalist interior design, with raw timber beams simulating peasants’ cabins or the underground hideaways called *kryivka* that were used by the UPA to hide in the forests. The exhibition architecture tries to create an atmosphere and capture the visitor emotionally. The last section of the main hall treats the Soviet Gulag system, indicating that Ukrainian patriotism used to lead to the Gulag, but hopefully will come to a good end eventually.



Figure 7. Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine, hall 2, 2016. Photo by the authors.

The new PrikVO museum used the original material without dismantling the Soviet master narrative. It painted it in yellow and blue where possible and added Ukrainian aspects. That it does not use more contemporary presentation techniques might be owed to the fact that it does not have the means of Soviet, contemporary Russian, or Western war museums. The MvbU presents a counter narrative to the former Soviet narrative and in doing so had to draw on different materials. Its wealth lies in the rich collection of documents and printed matter collected within Ukraine and by Ukrainians in the diaspora. Despite its rustic appearance resembling Eastern European post-Soviet interior design, the museum's presentation and objectives are strongly influenced by Soviet war museums.

The continuity in form and the shift of paradigm in content are most aptly illustrated by aspirations to reuse the PrikVO diorama, which is currently stored at the Museum of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Kyiv. It has been agreed that its paintings will be given to the MvbU as a loan, and the museum has plans to erect a specialized building to accommodate it.<sup>25</sup> If not the whole collection of the PrikVO museum, then at least its core will be used for a new interpretation of the battle. That Ukrainians fighting in the ranks of the Wehrmacht were not victorious does not diminish their glory. The speaker guiding through a commemorative ceremony for soldiers of the SS Division Galicia on April 27, 2017, at the Lychakiv Cemetery used the same rhetoric as the former enemy when he solemnly declared that "the division earned itself immor-

<sup>25</sup> "Diorama 'Bii pid Brodamy' perejde z Kyieva do L'vova," UNIAN, August 29, 2012 (<http://www.unian.ua/society/688151-diorama-biy-pid-brodami-perejde-z-kieva-do-lvova.html>).

tal glory in the battle by Brody, in Slovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria."<sup>26</sup> The inspiration in Soviet forms of representing the past has proven rather persistent. But its outmoded spirit of an old-style museum is not suited to attracting a wider audience. "There are museums of the old type. These are not very interesting for young people, they don't visit such museums," a young couple told us, when asked about war museums in L'viv.<sup>27</sup>

### VICTORY VS. REMEMBRANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Soviet museums of the Great Patriotic War were traditionally places to commemorate and honor rather than stimulate discussion. At anniversaries they organized meetings with veterans for younger generations, held ceremonies, and offered special guided tours. When asked about their museums' activities on May 8, the day when Europe commemorates the end of World War II, and on May 9, when most Soviet successor states celebrate Victory Day, both Palisa and Boïko seemed unsure how to answer. Ukraine tried to take a two-pronged approach in this ideological conflict. In 2014 the Institute of National Remembrance recommended abolishing Soviet traditions (Hellbeck, Pastushenko, and Tytarenko 2015:56), and in 2015 presidential decree No. 169/2015 established the Days of Remembrance and Reconciliation dedicated to all victims of World War II. It was foreseen that official celebrations start on May 8, as in Western Europe, and continue on May 9, as in Soviet times. In practice, May 9 is left to the Association of Veterans of Ukraine and other civil organizations with an ideological orientation towards Russia. These groups keep alive Soviet traditions of flower- and wreath-laying ceremonies, which have been complemented by a religious service. May 8, on the contrary, has become an official act with diplomats. It takes place at a simple cross marking the place of the prisoner of war camp Stalag 328 in the former Austrian citadel in the city center. Here too, the wreath-laying ceremony with military honors is followed by a religious service.

Palisa and Boïko first referred to official diction, then voluntarily, but with visible discomfort, continued to describe their personal ambivalence. Boïko, as head of the MvbU, convincingly advocates the nationalist view as the one that Ukraine needs today, but in private he seems to take a softer view. Like Kaliberda, he is a child of the Soviet Union, was raised in Eastern Ukraine, and his father, too, had been drafted into the Red Army:

Well, May 9, before Russia used to come here on this day on May 9. Our view on this festive day, how ... it is a state holiday, not a working day. We understand that people lost their lives. My father lived through the whole of the war, from the first to the last day. He was wounded several times. And probably something was also transmitted to me from him, and I am not the only one, and to say now that this did not happen, it seems not honest to me. If we speak of these principles, and not of a seven-minute political boom. Therefore we remember it. We remember. Without May 9, Europe might have been different. And the fate of,

<sup>26</sup> Ceremony for soldiers of the SS Division Galicia, April 27, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Street interview with a young Ukrainian couple near L'viv Citadel, May 2, 2016.

let's say, many *diviziniki*, might have been different. Well, yes, there is such a date. And yes, there was the Soviet Union.... We do not celebrate it of course, there is nothing like this for us, but we have respect towards those who carry medals.<sup>28</sup>

The notion that “Europe would not be the same” is a common element of Victory Day speeches. Palisa, too, when talking about May 9, used distinct Soviet wordings, albeit in Ukrainian:

Well, you know what, May 9 and May 8 ... because in L'viv we usually celebrate May 8, just like in Europe, and on May 9 school kids and veterans come here. We remember this heroic deed that was committed by our people and its contribution to the victory in World War II. That's why we take care that the young generation also remembers what these soldiers did for them, those who fought for the liberation of Ukraine, for the liberation of Europe, for the victory over fascism. That's why we undertake a whole complex of events which are not only in connection with the museum's exhibition, but also with explanations, with meetings with veterans, including soldiers and officers who are now protecting Ukraine in the east of our country.<sup>29</sup>

Both directors follow the Soviet narration of liberation of Ukraine and Europe but disarm their statements by retreating to official ground: Boïko by clarifying that May 9 is not celebrated in the museum, and Palisa by drawing a parallel between Ukrainians defending their country in World War II and in the armed conflict today.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Military museums are not the only institutions performing a balancing act between different groups in Ukraine, but they are a barometer of society's current state. Some of them have to accommodate, under one roof, former Soviet museums and new museums presenting a radical reassessment of the local World War II narrative (e.g., the National Military Museum of Ukraine and the Historical Museum of L'viv), and each comes with its own bearers of memory and/or ideology. Museums like the new PrikVO museum that present a “Ukrainized” Soviet narrative try to accommodate both Soviet and UPA veterans but exclude veterans of the SS Division Galicia; museums like the MvBU are more nationalist and cooperate with veterans of the UPA and *diviziniki*. The coexistence of these narratives is possible not only in the museums but also in the minds of its directors. Although they take a clear, pro-Ukrainian position in the current conflict, they do not outright reject the Soviet-Ukrainian narrative. War museums thus mirror dissonances and split identities in contemporary Ukraine, but also the ability to accommodate apparently opposing views.

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Volodymyr Boïko, May 5, 2016.

<sup>29</sup> Guided tour by Serhii Palisa, March 24, 2016.

The comparative analysis of the Soviet and new PrikVO museums and the MvBU shows that attempts to replace the Soviet with a Ukrainian master narrative have not been successful. The nationalist narrative of the armed fight for Ukrainian independence is more dominant here than in most other parts of Ukraine, but even in L'viv it does not have the all-encompassing presence the Soviet narrative used to have. It did not get enough political support to take its place in the building of the PrikVO museum and not enough financial support to create a modern museum that would attract a wide and young audience.

Despite attempts to narrate a different version of World War II, there is a strong continuity of Soviet formats. Both museum directors look back with nostalgia to the Soviet museum's large budgets and copy Soviet ideas about presenting war through heroism and martyrdom. They rely on typical features of Soviet propaganda, using striking details like the "Tango of Death" to heighten the effect, or the blending out of the experience of large parts of the population. The selective treatment of the Holocaust stands for a continued practice of presenting only those aspects of the past that fit the needs of a certain group of people.

On the positive side, there is a relatively high degree of freedom to commemorate and present different views on World War II in L'viv, and the borders between narratives and groups of actors are not always as rigid as might be expected. The fact that none of the competing narratives managed to occupy the space of the PrikVO museum—physically or metaphorically—means that there is, to some degree, plurality in the musealization and commemoration of World War II in L'viv. At the same time the void that it left has some dangers: communication between different groups is not always based on mutual respect and can be a source of conflict, exploited by political powers for their own objectives, or even lead to war. Communicative memory in Aleida Assmann's definition would mean that the proponents share their perspectives on an equal footing. And there is potential for that in L'viv: the still empty building of the museum Territory of Terror, the original concept of which has been discarded, is currently used as a platform for discussion, discourse, and temporary exhibitions.

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- Interview with and guided tour by Serhii Palisa, director of the Museum of the 58 House of Officers, conducted and recorded by the authors at the Museum of the 58 House of Officers, March 24, 2016.
- Street interview with a young Ukrainian couple near L'viv Citadel, conducted and recorded by the authors on May 2, 2016.
- Interview with Volodymyr Boiko, director of the Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine, conducted and recorded by the authors at the Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine, May 5, 2016.

- Festive concert for veterans of the Great Patriotic War, recorded by the authors at the Palace of Culture named after Khotkevich, May 6, 2016.
- Interview with two members of the All-Ukrainian Associations of Veterans, conducted and recorded by the authors on Rynok Square and in the organization's office, May 7, 2016.
- Interview with Ivan Kaliberda, Hero of the Soviet Union and director of the Museum of the History of the Carpathian Military District from 1967, conducted and recorded by the authors in the interviewee's home, June 29, 2016.
- Interview with the (art) historian Bohdan Shumylovych, researcher at the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, conducted and recorded by the authors in the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, January 29, 2017.
- Ceremony for soldiers of the SS Division Galicia, recorded by the authors on Lychakiv Cemetery, April 27, 2017.

## ОТ СОВЕТСКОГО К ПОСТ- ИЛИ АНТИСОВЕТСКОМУ: ДВА ЛЬВОВСКИХ МУЗЕЯ ВОЕННОЙ ИСТОРИИ В ПОИСКАХ НОВОГО УКРАИНСКОГО НАРРАТИВА О ВТОРОЙ МИРОВОЙ ВОЙНЕ

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*Мы выражаем благодарность сотрудникам Центра городской истории Центрально-Восточной Европы во Львове за ценные замечания и поддержку проекта. Особой благодарности заслуживают директора тех музеев, о которых идет в речь в этой статье, – Иван Калиберда, Владимир Бойко и Сергей Палиса. Мы признательны всем информантам, которые подробно рассказали о своих взглядах, поделились опытом и пригласили нас принять участие в памятных мероприятиях. Также благодарим рецензентов статьи и редакторов журнала Laboratorium за предложения по доработке текста.*

**В то время как исследования исторических событий, происходивших во Львове во время и после Второй мировой войны, ведутся активно, гораздо меньше внимания до сих пор уделялось советской репрезентации этих событий и ее последующей трансформации после распада СССР. В этой статье рассматриваются два музея военной истории во Львове, которые предлагают два очевидно конкурирующих истори-**

ческих взгляда на Вторую мировую войну, существующих в современной Украине. Музей истории войск Прикарпатского военного округа транслирует советский нарратив героизма и освобождения, в то время как Музей освободительной борьбы Украины представляет нарратив не менее героической борьбы за свободу и самоопределение. Первый нарратив, отражающий официальную идеологию УССР, до сих пор пользуется поддержкой многих украинских граждан и политиков. Эта перспектива остается важным фактором влияния в формировании политики памяти о войне. Сторонники второго нарратива стремятся сделать его новым доминантным украинским нарративом, однако сталкиваются при этом с рядом трудностей, о которых пойдет речь в этой статье. В работе рассматриваются обстоятельства, мотивы и цели, которыми руководствовались создатели музеев, анализируются нарративы (включая и «белые пятна») экспозиций, здесь также уделяется внимание оформлению музейных выставок. В основе анализа лежит эмпирическое исследование, проведенное во Львове с августа 2015 года по октябрь 2017 года в рамках междисциплинарного проекта «Львов: музей войны», организованного совместно художником Екатериной Шапиро-Обермаир и историком Александрой Вахтер.

**Ключевые слова:** Украина; Вторая мировая война; национализм; Холокост; Донбасская война; музей; память; историческая политика