

Social and political memories colliding in public space

The case of post-Euromaidan Shyshaky

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Introduction

Representations of the past and commemorative practices in Eastern Europe have been the focus of memory studies scholarship for many years, and contestation around events of the past in public space, “memory work”,¹ and monument-building in the aftermath of regime change is of particular interest for scholars of East European societies and affairs. How the past is re-negotiated in public space exemplifies not only the treatment of symbolic politics of political regimes, but also speaks of emerging democratic civic cultures.²

The aim of this paper is to contribute to existing scholarship on symbolic memory politics in the post-Soviet context, and in doing so, also position it in relation to developments within the broader field of political memory studies.³ Based on a series of visits to the provincial town of Shyshaky in Central Ukraine 2016 and 2018, I evaluate the commemorative and political developments around the town’s memory landscape and unveil the complexities of memory work in post-Soviet/post-Euromaidan Ukraine.

To comprehend recent memory-related developments, I entangle the discussion of Shyshaky’s memory landscape with the conceptual field of social and

political memory. I use the framework of societal-political interaction over memory⁴ to show how various memory actors perform their memory work on the ground and how local political agents are mediating the demands coming from officials in Kyiv and from the immediate milieu of local activists and local inhabitants. The framework serves as my conceptual lens to evaluate memory work on the ground. On the other hand, my thrust is also polemic and I problematize the changes in the town’s memory landscape under the “de-communization” policy mandated by the Ukrainian government in 2015.

My core argument is that official governmental memory politics is secondary to a broader social memory dynamics in re-structuring the local memory landscape in terms of how it rep-

resents Ukraine’s WWII experience and its Soviet past. In Shyshaky, symbols of the Great Patriotic War remain an essential part of the provincial memory landscape. Moreover, when it comes to the implementation of the removal of the Soviet symbols there is a great deal of negotiation of Kyiv’s top-down “de-communization” campaign at the grassroots level. Soviet symbols are not fully obliterated from the public space, nor are they substituted with an imposed commemoration of the Ukrainian WWII nationalists. Instead, I argue that the pattern of exclusion/inclusion when dealing with

abstract

This paper examines the politics of monument building and the “de-communization” of public space in Ukraine. It first introduces the conceptual categorization of societal-political interaction over memory in order to showcase permutations between the two types of memory. It then proceeds to evaluate recent memory developments in the case study of the provincial town of Shyshaky in central Ukraine. I argue that official governmental memory politics is secondary to a broader social memory dynamics in re-structuring the local memory landscape in how it represents Ukraine’s WWII experience and its Soviet past. Approaching the local memory developments as a case of permutations between social and political memories yields greater and more accurate insight.

KEYWORDS: The politics of history, de-communization, ethnography, public space, monuments, Ukraine



Figure 1. The central square of Shyshaky.

monuments locally pertains to broader *social-to-political memory* interactions. Thus, the assumption of aggressive “nationalization” of the past in the public space in the aftermath of the 2014 Euromaidan protests is not a completely accurate one.

The novelty and added value of the paper comes from two facts. First, the conceptual categorization used in the paper has not previously been applied to evaluating Ukraine’s memory dynamics. The paper does not merely apply it to the case, but instead offers a more nuanced perspective on the original categorization gathered from the analysis. Second, empirically speaking, there is a particular need for an ethnographic case study of Ukraine’s recent de-communization campaign.⁵ There are some empirical data on the results of the campaign in the media. For instance, Ukraine’s remembrance institute has reported the factual information about the campaign’s empirical outcomes, mostly concerning the number of renamed streets and removed Soviet symbols and statues all over the country.⁶ However, such data say nothing in-depth about the qualitative side of things locally. In this regard, this micro-level case study of Shyshaky is meant to provide insights into the process of de-communization and what the policy’s empirical outcomes have been in the example of the provincial town.

In what follows, I introduce the conceptual perspective for this paper. The next section also explains the preference for reinvigorating a typology of societal-political memory interaction vis-à-vis Bernhard and Kubik’s recent typology of mnemonic actors. I then proceed with describing the field and speaking about how Shyshaky’s local memory landscape is relevant to study and what can be drawn from its example regarding national memory dynamics.

Political and social memory interaction

Studies on political memory regularly assert the involvement of political and social “memory actors” or memory agents in collective memory construction and national memory making. However, these studies fail to show with enough conceptual rigor how these various actors enter the memory politics field.⁷ Thus, when approaching the phenomenon, memory studies scholarship essentially captures political agency in the politics of memory either by focusing on history textbook production, official commemoration, or mandating policies by governmental remembrance institutes as a part of the “memory games” of political elites.⁸ Bernhard and Kubik outlined a pathway for studying political agency in national memory construction in their recent landmark study.⁹ In developing their framework, Bernhard and Kubik aimed to identify and to be able to profile the main stream of political and public debates on collective memory. This aim presupposes a focus on macro-level commemoration, i.e. on national memory circulated through official, high-profile activities. In contrast, the focus of the present paper is on the sub-national level of memory developments as exemplified by the case study of a provincial town. This focus puts at center stage the categories of social and political memory and the attempt to capture permutations between these two categories.

This paper reinvigorates the conceptual discussion about societal-political interaction over memory by returning to the perspective on the variety of memory actors. To do this, I rely on Eva-Clarita Onken’s account of non-state and non-political power actors’ involvement in the realm of political memory construction.¹⁰ Her main argument is that the “societal world” represented by individual and societal agents of various societal back-

Table 1. The actors and types of societal-political interactions over memory

Type of interaction	Level of organization (social capital)	Level of “memory consciousness”	Type of orientation towards the political world	Level of engagement with the political world
Recognition	Low (individuals)	Weak	Social rootedness { Contrasting Contrasting Contrasting	Inactive — absence of “direct political consequence or obligation” ¹¹ from politicians, usually symbolic recognition
Representation	Medium (professional, social, and ethnic group organizations)	Strong		Active — politically vocal
Participation	High (political parties and individual politicians)	Strong, self-assumed agency in articulating historical experiences in the political agenda		Active — seeking political incumbency, participation in party politics
Complicity	High (e.g. academically established historians)	Strong	Supplementary	Active – affiliation or co-optation into the “political apparatus”; “direct association and liability” to/with politicians

SOURCE: ONKEN, (2010) “MEMORY AND DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM”.

grounds seeks to influence the “political world”.¹¹ Through this, she understands the “processes of public meaning-making”,¹² i.e. the formation of representations of the past in public-political space. To more thoroughly and systematically capture this phenomenon, Onken introduces four categories or “modes” for how social memory interacts with political memory and juxtaposes the modes against two additional criteria – the “memory consciousness” and social capital accumulated by an actor.¹³

DRAWING FROM Aleida Assmann’s distinction between “four formats of memory”,¹⁴ Onken focuses on notions of social and political memory and attempts to differentiate between the modes of interaction over political memory coming from the social memory realm and to define its agents more neatly. In Assmann’s original formulation, social memory refers to collective perceptions of the past circulated in a cohort formed by similar historical or socializing experiences.¹⁵ Assmann considers a generation as embodying certain social memories and argues that “as a group of individuals of more or less the same age that have witnessed the same incisive historical events, generations share a common frame of beliefs, values, habits and attitudes.”¹⁶ Onken has extrapolated this point on generational embeddedness of social memory to include other sociological categories such as gender and professional occupation. Furthermore, political memory breaks away from this generational embeddedness. Political memory is institutionalized from the top down and is a durable format of memory, represented foremost in historical sites and monuments.¹⁷ The exercise of political power stirs the

pattern of commemoration and representation of the past and is a constitutive element for building up political memory. Political memory encapsulates narratives of the nation’s past and expresses them in public-political spheres of commemoration.¹⁸ Building on Assmann’s categories, Onken introduces the ways that memory actors of social memory relate to political memory construction. Table 1 outlines the categorization of societal-political interaction over memory.

Notions of a memory actor, memory consciousness, and political action are central to the understanding of societal-political interactions over memory. According to Onken, memory actors are “individual societal actors” who either act as agents of particular social (generational, professional, gendered) memory or belong to a particular social memory background.¹⁹ Depending on the level of self-assumed agency in the articulation of historical experiences (“memory consciousness”) and the social and political capital that the actors acquire, Onken differentiates between the modes of *recognition*, *representation*, *participation*, and *complicity*.²⁰ In all four types of interaction, memory actors engage in political actions understood as “any kind of activity, even unsuccessful, that seeks a voice within the struggle over public meaning and power”.²¹ Although the author does not state it explicitly, social rootedness is usually linked to contrasting orientations of memory actors towards the political world. The more the actors are “rooted” in particular social memories, the less they are inclined to follow the historical representations mandated from the public-political world. Actually, there is a particular need for the actors to voice or elevate a particular rep-

“POLITICAL MEMORY ENCAPSULATES NARRATIVES OF THE NATION’S PAST AND EXPRESSES THEM IN PUBLIC-POLITICAL SPHERES OF COMMEMORATION.”



Figure 2 and 3. The monument to the Fighters for the Soviet power. The inscription says: "To the Fighters for the Soviet power from the workmen of Shyshaky, 1971." In the upper right corner is a quote from Russian Soviet novelist Maksim Gorky: "Yes, you died! But you will remain an example of endeavor for freedom and light in the song of the brave ones" (translated by the author).



Figure 4. The Fighters for the Soviet power was "de-communized" in the spring of 2018. The new element is a drawing of the map of Ukraine covering the original inscription.

resentation of the past within the public space and thus alter the existing state of affairs of a memory field.

The special issue of the *Journal of Baltic Studies* supplements Onken's conceptual categorization and provides an example for each mode of interaction. The *recognition* mode is exemplified by the Soviet "nostalgists" who are passive and unorganized, but who have a nascent positive evaluation of the Soviet past that contrasts with the established discourse regarding the *ancien régime* in three Baltic states.²² The more social capital resources a memory actor gathers and the more pronounced the partisan memory issue for that memory actor is, the higher this actor moves up the conceptual categorization ladder. Thus, the professional strata of school history teachers, who are more vocal in opposing the state-sponsored narratives about the Soviet past than the "nostalgists", and whose professional occupation gives means to impact civic education, falls into the category of *representation*.²³ Furthermore, the case of Lithuanian female politicians who suffered forceful deportation in the Soviet Union, who engaged in politics after the break-up of the Soviet Union, and who sought political incumbency in addition to being publicly vocal about their experiences, fall into the *participation* mode.²⁴ Finally, Estonian academic historians coming into the "political world" up to the point of being co-opted by the government and thus taking a supplementary orientation towards governmental narratives over the past exemplify the category of *complicity*.²⁵

THE BOTTOM-UP conceptual categorization comes down to three interrelated propositions. First, the novelty of the framework pertains to a more nuanced and neat outline of memory actors beyond simply invoking the expression of an "agent of memory" as a point of reference. Second, the four modes of interaction help to see how societal actors turn into political memory actors showcasing societal-to-political memory interaction and

profiling the ways in which they come into setting the discourse on the historical past. Also, the categorization introduces the criteria of memory consciousness and social capital in order to differentiate between memory actors. Finally, even though memory actors sometimes seek and get political incumbency and, especially in the case of complicity, when memory actors get on board with political incumbents, they are distinguishable to a degree from purely political incumbents, i.e. they come from the societal world in order to influence the public articulation of history.

This paper contributes to the model of societal-political interaction over memory by examining the politics of monument building and the changing memory landscape in the Ukrainian context. In the next sections, I show how the conceptual categorization introduced by Onken applies to the changes in the memory landscape of Shyshaky. Parallel to that, I also disentangle and assess the permutations of de-communization policy over the last three years locally.

Describing the field

The relevance of Shyshaky's memory landscape as a study subject is due to the fact that the town's changing landscape is illustrative of broader social memory developments and national memory dynamics. On the one hand, in recent years, the town has witnessed the inclusion of a commemoration of Kyrlo Os'mak, a famous Ukrainian nationalist of the 1940s, into its landscape. Given the controversy around wartime Ukrainian nationalists in Ukrainian society, this speaks a lot about the WWII remembrance shift in the local milieu. It is also important to point out that Os'mak's remembrance in the Central Ukrainian town is an example of the reception of nationalist memory beyond Western Ukraine. Historically speaking, the anti-Soviet nationalist warfare of the 1940s was limited to a few Western



Figure 5. The GPW memorial (1971) consists of the monument to the Unknown Soldier, the place for the Eternal Flame, two obelisks with the names of Red Army soldiers — the natives of the Shyshaky region — and six graves of local partisan heroes and Communist Party officials.

Ukrainian regions and had no tangible relations to other parts of Soviet Ukraine. Due to its historical experience, the country's west is known for pronounced nationalist politics and memory. Furthermore, the Shyshaky region is also the birthplace to Mykola Gogol, a Russian writer of the 19th century. His persona is commemorated in the names of local villages and a monument. The cult of Gogol as a part of the local heritage points to the presence of Russian imperial legacies in the town. Being a Ukrainian native and Russian novelist, Gogol is a fascinating example of Ukrainian colonial identity and Russian-minded intellectual biography at the same time. However, in contrast to memory work regarding Soviet memory heritage, Gogol's placement in local remembrance is sidelined and has not been the subject of any public controversy in recent years.

On the other hand, the biggest change in local remembrance in decades is taking place due to the governmental “de-communization” policy launched in 2015 and the subsequent removal of Soviet symbols in the country. The assessment of the policy developments in the last three years and the policy's implementation and permutations at the local level demonstrate the dynamics of its contestation/acceptance locally. The need to trace the policy implementation substantiates the relevance of the case study.

THIS PAPER IS BASED on three consecutive fieldtrips to Shyshaky. The first and the main one took place on 20–26 July 2016. It included the main bulk of fieldwork, including the first interview with Fedir Deriy – the deputy head of the Shyshaky Territorial Council – on the topics of local politics and remembrance, additional unstructured conversations with a few local inhabitants regarding commemoration practice locally, photographing of the town's memory landscape, and collecting historiographical data about the monuments and the town's topography. In the course of two follow-up trips in August 2017 and August 2018, I

conducted unstructured interviews with my interlocutor Deriy on the topics concerning the legal work around monument building and the implementation of de-communization policy. In addition, this paper relies on a study of local legal acts issued by the Shyshaky council and acts of the Poltava state administration in order to trace the implementation of the de-communization policy.

Negotiation and contestation of memory in Shyshaky

There are two bulks of monuments composing the town's memory landscape. The first one, and the main one, emerged in the 1970s during the Soviet era in Ukraine. It is prevalent in terms of the quantity of monuments and their symbolic agglomeration in the center of the town. Figures 1–7 show the variety of Soviet memory heritage in Shyshaky. This bulk of monuments includes commemorative monuments to WWII, local partisan heroes, and local communist party leaders as well as the monument that commemorates the imposition of the Soviet regime in Ukraine (“Fighters for the Soviet power in Ukraine”). The second bulk emerged in modern post-1991 Ukraine and is represented by two monuments, one devoted to the Chernobyl catastrophe liquidators (2002) and the other to Kyrylo Os'mak (2007), a Shyshaky's native and a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) (Figures 8, 9).

The treatment of the Soviet memory heritage differentiates between two waves of memory work in town. In the first wave, which started in 1991 and lasted until early 2014, new memory objects were added to the landscape of Shyshaky; however, they co-existed with Soviet narratives and the memory heritage of the town without challenging the heritage directly. The situation changed in 2014 with the removal of Lenin's monument. This event signified changing local attitudes towards the political memory of the Soviet past. The removal of Lenin's monument



Figure 6. The monument devoted to local partisan hero Kuprian Tutka (1978). The inscription says: "K. I. Tutka, kommissar, commander of the partisan squad, died in unequal combat with fascists and auxiliary police on June 10, 1942".

Figure 7. The monument to Dmytro Cornilych, the commander of the partisan squad, 1894–1942 (1974).

Figure 8. The monument to Kyrylo Os'mak (2007), the member of OUN and the President of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council. The inscription says "The life of heroes does not end with their death!".

summed up two decades of changes in the social memory of the town and resulted in a re-configuration of political memory instituted in Soviet times during the 1970s. In a way, the two waves complement each other. Some changes were nascent in the post-1991 period of memory work but were carried out in post-Euromaidan de-communization.

Topographically, the majority of the monuments presented in the paper are situated in the town's center and alongside two adjacent streets, the Partizanska and Os'mak streets. The Soviet memory heritage enjoys the symbolic prominence in terms of center-periphery as far as it was constructed in the 1970s and thus takes up the town's center. Yet, the monument to the Fighters for the Soviet power occupies the outskirts of the town's center in relative isolation from the others. The monuments of the post-Soviet wave of memory work gravitate around the Soviet heritage. Some idiosyncrasies are present in the local memory space. For example, monuments to Kuprian Tutka, a communist partisan hero, and Kyrylo Os'mak, a member of anti-Soviet nationalist movement, are placed in very close proximity (50 meters) to each other. Similarly, the monument to the Chernobyl Liquidators, containing an Orthodox cross as a part of its composition, used to be the closest neighbor to the Lenin monument.

The town's memory landscape underwent major changes in the heat of the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv in 2014. For the first time, the prominence of Soviet heritage was questioned in the spring of 2014 with the removal of Lenin's monument. The story behind this is illustrative of how societal memory actors pursue change from the bottom up while the "political world", represented here by the local council, remains only a mediator of the

change. In contrast to the Western parts of Ukraine, where Lenin's monuments were already coming down in the early 1990s,²⁶ Shyshaky's Lenin enjoyed an uncontested place in the local milieu after 1991. The same applies to the 2000s, when limited grassroots efforts of de-communization took place in some other regions of Central Ukraine, notably in neighboring Kyiv and Cherkasy regions. This less-known and even marginal process was studied by Oleksandra Gaidai, who argues that the removal of Lenin's monuments usually required a consensus of village chiefs, local bodies of self-government, and local communities in the case of Central Ukraine in order to become successful or widespread.²⁷ In any case, this sporadic and limited process from the 2000s did not impact the Shyshaky or Poltava regions.

The monument to Lenin was removed on February 23, 2014, in the midst of the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv. The local "Svoboda" party activists had argued in favor of its removal appealing to the authorities since the outset of the protest in Kyiv. In contrast, the local chamber of the Communist Party of Ukraine defended Lenin's presence as a part of the local landscape. The Shyshaky territorial community council supported the status quo in the

argument between the parties over Lenin's place in the local public space. However, when the *Leninopad*²⁸ and the tensions of the violent crackdown on protesters reached a pinnacle in Kyiv, the local council followed the all-Ukrainian trend and finally removed the monument. The removal happened in the presence of Communist Party representatives on February 23, 2014.²⁹ After the removal, the local authorities transferred the monument to the local communists, who had decided to preserve it in the premises owned by the district organization of the Communist

"THE TOWN'S MEMORY LANDSCAPE UNDERWENT MAJOR CHANGES IN THE HEAT OF THE EUROMAIDAN PROTESTS IN KYIV IN 2014."

Party. Since that time, the Lenin monument pedestal has not been filled with any other monument (Figure 1). Symbolically speaking, it reserves a free spot in the public space of the town and opens up for building the town's identity without Lenin. In addition to that, in early March 2014, the council on its own renamed one of the town's streets to the Heavenly Hundred Street, thus commemorating the Kyiv protesters.³⁰

Assessing these developments in conceptual terms, I argue that the event of Lenin's removal falls into the participation mode of societal-political interaction over memory. The request to remove Lenin's monument from public space as well as voices to preserve it came from two institutionally organized local groups that were appealing to the authorities and trying to shift the memory equilibrium of the town in one direction or another, thus becoming involved in memory contestation. The local council, representing the "political world" in Onken's terms, has acted only as a mediator of the change. It is important to note that the wave of removals of Lenin's monuments in Ukraine came in early 2014, that is, a year before the de-communization law prescribing the removal of totalitarian symbols was drafted and adopted by the Parliament. Thus, Shyshaky became a part of this wave of removal preceding the adoption of a formal legal framework a year later.

THE OTHER REMNANT of the political memory of Soviet times is the monument to the Fighters for the Soviet power in Shyshaky (Figures 2–4). The monument became a part of local politics and contestation in the early spring of 2017. Firstly, the poor state of the monument catches the attention of any pedestrian passing by (Figure 2). In 2016, the local authorities neither commemorated nor renovated the monument. The reason for that was the

absence of a broader societal request or commemorative significance attached to the monument locally. This situation dragged on until the spring of 2017 when, according to the authorities,³¹ the few patriotically minded deputies of the Shyshaky council initiated covering

the inscription on the monument glorifying the establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine. Secondly, in contrast to the voluntary removal of Lenin's monument two years prior, the current Ukrainian law warrants the removal of the Fighters monument explicitly.³² However, it is worth noting that the monument has not been dealt with in the almost two years since the law gained legal force. The initiative to cover the inscription relied on the grassroots enthusiasm of the deputies and had nothing to do with actually complying with the requirements of the law. In conceptual terms of societal-political interaction, the actions of the councils' deputies altering a quintessentially Soviet monument can rather be seen as *complicit* with the governmental policy of de-communization; individual memory actors took their own supplementary orientation towards official policy

mandated from the parliament. Importantly, these actors were elected representatives of the local community and were not governmental incumbents pushing the de-communization agenda. Finally, the events around both the Lenin monument and the Fighters monument were the consequence of changing social memory locally. It is important to point out that the monuments had lost commemorative significance for local residents and authorities long before the issue of de-communization was propelled to the center stage of the national political agenda. The prerequisite of governmental de-communization policy played a secondary role in the developments in the local context.

It is also worth pointing out the permutations of local politics. Since the elections of 2015, the local council has enjoyed a prevalence of national-democratic parties in its composition. The Party of Regions, which dominated local and regional politics in the previous local elections of 2006 and 2010, has vanished from local politics. Similarly, the Communist Party had declining support in the previous local elections and vanished from the town's and Ukraine's political scene in 2015. Apparently, this also plays into de-communization developments locally as far as there are no active communists to actually voice up discontent with new policy being implemented.

The quintessentially Soviet Great Patriotic War (GPW) monument continues to be the most significant commemorative place for the locals and authorities. Visually, in the absence of Lenin at the main square, the monument's prominence has grown for anyone entering the center of the town (Figures 1, 5). The Unknown Soldier, the central element of the composition, can be approached from any adjacent street or neighborhood. The site is a place for official wreath-laying ceremonies and local commemoration practices.

Built in 1971 and renovated in 2005, the GPW monument has preserved Soviet symbols and framing without any alternation since the break-up of the Soviet Union. The monument has been co-opted in modern Shyshaky's commemoration. Visually, in front of

the Unknown Soldier, the Soviet coat of arms is displayed. Two red stars decorate obelisks on either side of the Unknown Soldier that contain the names of Red Army soldiers. Inscriptions frame Ukraine's WWII experience as the "Great Patriotic War" as well as use the expression the "Fatherland War". At first glance, the monument challenges the law on condemning totalitarian regimes by displaying the symbols of the Soviet Union and commemorating party officials. Yet, the monument is a burial place as well. In the front of the GPW monument, there are reburial places for local partisan heroes and local Communist Party officials. This distinguishes it from any other monument in town and explains why the monument cannot be de-communized. The same law that prescribes removal of the Fighters monument excludes the GPW monument from de-communization.³³ Ac-

"POST-2014 DE-COMMUNIZATION PERTAINS TO MONUMENTS OFFERING CLEAR IDEOLOGICAL, SOVIET REGIME-GLORIFYING MEMORY NARRATIVES."

ording to the law, an object commemorating the liberation of Ukraine from the Nazis should be kept and commemorated. In fact, the monument is full of Soviet-era memorabilia because of this provision of the law. The point here is that the law does not uniformly exclude Soviet-era interpretations of WWII from the public space.

Furthermore, assessing the GPW monument from the premises of conceptual categorization, it might be said that the monument presents a puzzling case. As far as there is no broader contestation of the monument in the symbolic space of the town coming from the authorities or local enthusiasts, it seemingly falls beyond such categorization. However, I argue that this rather points to the need to extend the categorization. In Shyshaky, the Soviet historical interpretation of WWII became an organic part of the local landscape and has never been challenged. In a way, this also speaks of social-to-political memory interaction by showing that the social and political memories of the town are entangled. This is not only because contestation is absent, but also because the locals actively commemorate the monument annually. During the fieldtrip in the summer of 2016, there were two monuments with commemorative flower wreaths beneath. One was the monument devoted to the Chernobyl Liquidators, and the other was the GPW monument. Commemorative wreaths appeared in front of the two monuments repeatedly in the follow-up trips in the next years as well as were present in a number of commemorative events. This is a revealing constellation of the Soviet heritage; while the Lenin monument and the Fighters monument had lost any commemorative significance, the GPW monument had been co-opted in local commemoration. Interestingly, the Chernobyl Liquidators monument and the Afghanistan War memorial (Figure 9, 10) commemorating events from the Soviet past were not installed until a decade after the break-up of the Soviet Union, thus adding a new element into local commemoration. This leads to the conclusion that post-2014 de-communization pertains to monuments offering clear ideological, Soviet regime-glorifying memory narratives and does not exactly alter other Soviet-era memory fabric.

The monument devoted to local partisan hero Kuprian Tutka (Figure 6) consummates the Soviet frame of the local memory landscape. Kommissar Tutka is a prominent figure in local history. Born in Shyshaky, Kuprian Tutka headed the partisan units and the resistance to the Nazis. He died heroically in combat with German troops. The co-existence of Tutka's memory with a memory of Ukrainian nationalist is a revealing case of local memory developments.

TURNING TO THE SECOND BULK of the town's monuments, built after the break-up of the Soviet Union, the monument to Kyrylo Os'mak is the one that exemplifies normalization of the Ukrainian wartime nationalist movement in modern Shyshaky.³⁴ The memorial to Os'mak was erected in 2007 in close proximity to Tutka's monument. The decision regarding the erection was unanimously adopted at the session of the Shyshaky territorial community council on December 5, 2006. The decision was made on the initiative of the group of the deputies affiliated to



Figure 9. The monument to the Chernobyl Liquidators (2002). The inscription says "To the Liquidators of the Disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant from the grateful inhabitants of Shyshaky."



Figure 10. The monument to the War in Afghanistan (2003). The inscription says: "To the Sons of Shyshaky's land." On the sides, two plaques commemorate locals who perished in Afghanistan: Oleksandr Mykolayovych Dz'uba (1960–1984) and Serhiy Ivanovych Kovtun (1964–1987).

the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists. In December 2007, the monument was vandalized by unknown hooligans and thereafter restored.³⁵ Acts of vandalism have never been the case for any Soviet-era WWII objects in town. Additionally, the local council renamed the adjacent street after the Ukrainian nationalist to commemorate the fellow countryman on February 11, 2008.³⁶

A native of Shyshaky, Kyrylo Os'mak was a participant in the struggle to create an independent Ukrainian state in 1917–1922. During the WWII, Os'mak fled to Kyiv first and to Western Ukraine after, where he became involved in the nationalist movement.³⁷ In 1944, Os'mak became the head of The Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council established by the OUN as a political body, an underground representative of the nationalist movement.³⁸ Eventually, with the Soviet crackdown on nationalist resistance, Os'mak was captured by the Soviet state security forces, was sentenced, and was a prisoner of the Vladimir Central Prison in Russia until 1960. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko awarded Kyrylo Os'mak the Order of Freedom posthumously on October 31, 2018.³⁹

Assessing the Os'mak monument in local memory space calls for two points. Firstly, the events around the inclusion of the monument in the local space can be described in terms of social-to-political memory categorization through the *recognition* mode of interaction. Recognition is reminiscent of memory

actors wanting acknowledgment of certain alternatives to official discourse memories. Thus the memory of the Ukrainian nationalist underground that was quashed in the Soviet Union has re-emerged in post-Soviet Ukraine. In Shyshaky, the case of the Os'mak memorial entered local media discourse and politics in the early 2000s, and there was growing support to find a place for a memorial to the Ukrainian nationalist in the town's public space. Again, as in the case of other reconfigurations of public space in Shyshaky, the pursuit came from individual memory actors, namely incumbent local council deputies. Secondly, the case of Os'mak points to a broader trend of normalization of Ukrainian nationalists' remembrance in modern Ukraine. The trend, however, has a longer timespan reaching back to before the 2014 Euromaidan protest and the subsequent adoption of the de-communization policy. There is a long-standing debate around memory of the nationalist movement in Ukraine spanning over three decades.⁴⁰ In Shyshaky, Os'mak's memorialization happened long before the protest of 2014 took place, and the Russian annexation of Crimea has propelled a more assertive memory policy of the Ukrainian government concerning WWII remembrance.⁴¹ Against the expectation that normalization of a Ukrainian nationalist memory in Shyshaky should be a new, post-2014 phenomenon, it actually relies on the changes in social memory of the town and is exemplary of post-Soviet Ukraine's memory dynamics.

IN RECENT YEARS, the local memory landscape has become contested due to the controversy surrounding the re-naming of streets under the de-communization law mandating changes in local topography. These events demonstrate how the mandated policy was negotiated and contested locally and yielded close attention. In May 2015, the Poltava State Administration assigned territorial communities forming the region to rename streets and to dismantle memory objects in accordance with the law on condemning totalitarian regimes.⁴² The renaming concerned 21 streets in Shyshaky and 15 streets in neighboring settlements.⁴³ The action of the authorities in Poltava stirred up local discontent. In a public gathering of the local inhabitants that followed the wave of mandated renaming in town, Shyshaky authorities were petitioned to keep the names of some of the streets. This was implemented thereafter by the order of the local territorial council.⁴⁴ However, the local activist and member of the OUN,⁴⁵ Volodymyr Chmyr, petitioned the district court to revoke the decision of Shyshaky's council on the grounds that it violated the de-communization law. The Shyshaky court abrogated the local council decision, therefore completing the de-communization stirred from Kyiv and Poltava.⁴⁶

Turning back to social-to-political memory categorization, the events regarding renaming present a mixed type of memory contestation. On the one hand, the events yield further differentiation of the original conceptual categorization, which offers a rather static understanding of the political world as a unitary and uniform phenomenon with various memory actors coming to contest certain public-political representations of the past. In Shyshaky, there are two political worlds, the world of territorial

community and the world of governmental memory politics, the latter of which interferes from above in the affairs of the former. These public-political "worlds" do not coincide, with local authorities having their own attitude to the official memory politics and navigating between the immediate demands of the territorial community and those of official Kyiv. Furthermore, the original framework presupposes that the *complicity* mode refers to co-optation of a societal memory actor into the public-political sphere to a point of direct association. The ideal type of complicity would be a governmental remembrance institute, co-opting individual memory actors or a professional group into the state apparatus. In Shyshaky, however, the actions of individual memory actor initiating the court's proceedings might be considered as complicit with and having supplementary orientation towards the policy of the government *without* having any direct association. These two points attenuate the societal-political interactions in the conceptual categorization.

Conclusions

The pattern of inclusion and exclusion of monuments in the memory landscape of Shyshaky pertains to and is better understood through the lens of societal-political interaction over memory. In Shyshaky, changes in the social memory of the town led to changes in its memory landscape after 1991 and after 2014. These changes came from individual memory actors contesting particular elements of the town's memory landscape. This often leads to revealing configurations. On the one hand, the Soviet heritage in the town has been re-negotiated in a way that excludes references to the Soviet regime in Ukraine from public space. The events around the removal of the Lenin monument as well as the Fighters for the Soviet power monument illustrate this point well. On the other hand, the memory of the Great Patriotic War remains uncontested and has been co-opted in local remembrance without alteration and coexists with the commemoration of a Ukrainian nationalist. Furthermore, the governmental de-communization policy is present in Shyshaky, but this policy is secondary to broader social memory dynamics in re-structuring the local memory landscape. Some notable changes took place long before the "de-communization" law mandating the removal of Soviet symbols and monuments was adopted in the aftermath of Euromaidan. This leads to the conclusion that assessing de-communization should be carefully contextualized and should be seen as a part of long-standing changes in the social memory of the town and of Ukrainian society more broadly. ✖

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- totalitarian regime symbol among other “images, monuments, memorial signs, inscriptions dedicated to the events related to the communist party’s activities, the establishment of the Soviet authority over the territory of Ukraine or its individual administrative areas, persecution of fighters for independence of Ukraine in XX century (except the monuments and memorial signs related to resistance and driving the Nazi invaders from Ukraine or development of Ukrainian science and culture”.
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