

The Heavenly Hundred: Fallen Heroes of the Euromaidan in Post-Revolutionary Ukraine

1. Introduction

The cult of national heroes emerged in Europe in tandem with the development of modern nations and nation-states. Already in the nineteenth century, Thomas Carlyle and Ernest Renan connected hero worship with the legitimization of the new social order, in which religion and allegiance to the monarch were being supplemented, if not replaced, by the mythology of the nation with its cult of national heroes.¹ Many nineteenth-century national heroes were living "great men" (and very few women), but the fallen heroes proved no less powerful a component of the national imagination and one that was better suited to the continuing national myth-making precisely because they were dead. It was left to the living to invest their lives and the ultimate sacrifice with political meaning. As Anthony D. Smith has argued, the cult of fallen heroes could easily be included in the "liturgy of the nation" because it was based on the pre-national Christian adoration of Jesus and the holy martyrs. Mass rituals of celebrating fallen national heroes were thus occasions for the nation to worship itself through the celebration of the sacred communion between dead martyrs for the national cause and their living ancestors.²

Twentieth-century revolutionaries sensed the crucial importance of fallen heroes for cementing new political communities. As Katherine Verdery puts it, dead bodies served as the perfect means for accumulating "symbolic capital"; they "sacralized authority and politics in new ways."³ Historians of the Russian Revolution have shown the prominence that the fallen-heroes cult acquired just as the revolutionaries were destroying the monuments to the old regime's official

1 Gerwarth, Robert: 'Introduction', in: Gerwarth, Robert (eds.): *Hero Cults and the Politics of the Past: Comparative European Perspectives*, European History Quarterly 2009/39 (3), p. 381-82.

2 Smith, Anthony D.: Will and Sacrifice: Images of National Identity, in: *Millennium* 2001/30 (3), p. 577,582.

3 Verdery, Katherine: *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburials and Post-Socialist Change*. New York 1999, p. 33, 37.

heroes. Decades later, the collapse of communism in Europe resulted in the political rearrangement of the dead bodies and their statues reflecting the realignment of symbolic political order.⁴

Ukrainian history has had its share of dead national heroes, none more famous or more worshipped than the national bard Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861). A peasant-born poet and artist, Shevchenko also participated in a secret political society, resulting in 1847 in his imprisonment, forced army service in Central Asia, and a subsequent ban on visiting Ukraine. For Ukrainian intellectuals of Shevchenko's time, he was already a martyr in his lifetime, but the cult of Shevchenko as the father of the nation truly developed after his early death (of natural causes) in the imperial capital of St. Petersburg in 1861. The transportation of his body to Ukraine and burial there displayed features of a national ritual; a pilgrimage to his grave soon became the occasion to declare the visitor's identity as a modern Ukrainian.⁵ Martyrdom eventually became a generally accepted paradigm describing the fate of Ukrainian cultural figures under tsarist and Soviet rule, but particularly during the Great Terror. In histories of Ukrainian literature and culture, the entire period of the 1920s and early 1930s became known as the Executed Renaissance, which name was originally used in the title of a poetry anthology published by an emigre scholar in Paris in 1959.⁶ It is no accident that the Ukrainian movement's revival in the last years of the Soviet Union was marked by the reburial in November 1989 of another poet and national symbol, the dissident Vasyl Stus (1938-1985), who had died in the Gulag. The reburial ceremony in Kyiv, which some 30,000 people attended, became a national ritual, allowing its participants to claim "ownership" of the mythologized poet through their shared national belonging.⁷ It is worth noting that such a symbolic identification with martyred poets who wrote in Ukrainian implied a version of a modern Ukrainian identity that was language-based and ethnic rather than civic. Only the popular revolutions of the twenty-first century left in their wake new fallen heroes, who could represent an inclusive, civic, and political understanding of a modern Ukrainian nation.

⁴ On the former topic, see Figes, Orlando / Kolonitskii, Boris: *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917*. New Haven 1999; and, on the latter, Verdery 1999.

⁵ Yekelchyk, Serhy: 'Creating a Sacred Place: The Ukrainophiles and Shevchenko's Tomb in Kaniv (1861-ca.1900)', in: *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 1995/20 (1-2), p. 15-33.

⁶ Hryniuk, Halyna: 'The Executed Renaissance Paradigm Revisited', in: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2001-2005/27 (1-4), p. 67-96; Blacker, Ulleam: 'Martyrdom, Spectacle, and Public Space: Ukraine's National Martyrology from Shevchenko to the Maidan', in: *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 2015/1-2, p. 257-292.

⁷ Shostak, Natalya: 'To whom does a Poet Belong? The Reburial of Vasyl Stus as a Ritual of Cultural Appropriation', in: *Spaces of Identity* 2002/2 (3/4), p. 7-18.

2. Searching for a national memory

Neither the wars of the twentieth century nor the attainment of independence in 1991 furnished post-Soviet Ukraine with powerful symbols promoting national cohesion. The grand narrative of the Ukrainian Revolution (1917-20) is one of defeat at the hands of stronger neighbors accompanied by the nation's "betrayal" by industrial workers and most urbanites. The memory of World War II remains deeply divisive, with Ukraine's western provinces identifying with nationalist insurgents who were active in that region, and most of the center and east still embracing the Soviet narrative of the "Great Patriotic War." Since one side's heroes are the other's enemies, the memorial discourse on the war remains heterogeneous and regional.⁸ The post-Maidan government attempted in 2015 to undermine Soviet war mythology in Ukraine by moving the Victory Day celebrations from 9 May to 8 May (as in the rest of Europe) and renaming it the Day of Memory and Reconciliation, but it is too early to judge the success of this step. The continued conflict with Putin's Russia, which elevated the myth of the Great Patriotic War to the status of a civil religion, leaves the new Ukrainian authorities little choice but to keep building an alternative narrative for their country. Yet, the humanistic Western notion of Victory Day as an occasion to remember the dead and seek reconciliation with former enemies does not fit well with the simultaneous passage in April 2015 of Soviet-style legislation introducing a new canon of national heroes, "fighters for Ukrainian independence," criticism of whom would be made illegal. All of the people and organizations on this list were twentieth-century anti-Soviet nationalists, including the highly controversial Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).⁹ Making ethnic nationalists of the totalitarian age the official heroes of post-Maidan Ukraine might have been intended as an anti-Russian gesture or a radical method of uprooting Soviet historical memory, but these heroes could not support an inclusive civic identity for Ukrainian patriots of

⁸ Marples, David R.: *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine*. Budapest 2007; Portnov, Andrei: *Uprazhneniya s istoriei po-ukrainski* [Exercises with history in Ukrainian]. Moscow 2010.

⁹ At the same time, the Ukrainian parliament passed the law on decommunization, which criminalized all the symbols of the Soviet state and its heroes, as well as those related to Marxism more generally. See Nabok, Svitlana: 'Bortsi za nezalezhnist - vyznannia symbolichne?' [Independence fighters - symbolic recognition?], in: *Naukovyi zapsyky IPEND im. I F Kurasa NAN Ukrayiny* 2015/78, p. 118-128; Portnov, Andrii: 'Pro dekomunizatsiu, identychnist ta istorychni zakony deshcho inakshe' [On decommunization, identity and historical laws in a somewhat different way], in: *Krytyka*. May 2015, available at: <http://krytyka.com.ua/solutions/opinions/pro-dekomunizatsiyu-identychnist-ta-istorychni-zakony-deshcho-inakshe> [12.12.2019].

various ethnic, linguistic, and regional backgrounds - the diverse and very modern citizenry that sided with the Maidan.

National commemorative rituals remained equally undefined. Pilgrimages to Shevchenko's grave made sense in the imperial context, when the very commitment to Ukrainian culture was ipso facto a political statement. The Soviet state adopted this tradition for its purposes by building a grand Soviet-style monument at the gravesite and placing the Writers' Union in charge of annual trips there. In doing so, the Soviet ideologists transformed visitations to the national bard's grave into a minor official ritual in a "safe" ethnographic mode, quite in line with their general reshaping of the Soviet Ukrainian identity.¹⁰ In the mid-1960s, when young Ukrainian writers and artists known collectively as the "Sixtiers" initiated alternative annual meetings near the Shevchenko statue in the park opposite Kyiv University, the authorities saw this as a political rather than cultural matter. The KGB photographed the participants and tried to disperse the meetings, particularly in 1967, when the detention of some participants led to a public demonstration in front of the Communist Party's headquarters in Kyiv.¹¹ Indeed, some young Ukrainian intellectuals of the "Sixtiers" generation who came to the poet's statue, went on to become political dissidents.

The commemorative models familiar to the Ukrainian public were Soviet ones, chief among them the late-Soviet version of commemorating the war. In contrast to the Khrushchev period, when de-Stalinization of historical memory led to the adoption of such Western traditions as the monument to the Unknown Soldier, the full-blown cult of the Great Patriotic War under Leonid Brezhnev (in power 1964-1982) was best represented by gigantic statues of the Motherland, including the one in Kyiv, and a general shift from mourning the dead to celebrating the Soviet state.¹² Perhaps more promising was the new tradition of commemorating the Holodomor, the state-engineered famine of 1932-33, which the Soviet Union did not acknowledge until its very last years. President Leonid Kuchma created Holodomor Memorial Day in 1998 with a ceremony taking place every year on the fourth Saturday in November.¹³ The commemorative ceremony

¹⁰ On the connection between Shevchenko's inclusion in the Stalinist canon and the general Soviet downgrading of Ukrainian culture to ethnographism, see Fowler, Mayhill C.: *Beau Monde on Empire's Edge: State and Stage in Soviet Ukraine*. Toronto i.a. 2017.

¹¹ Kasianov, Georgii: *Nezhodni: ukrainska intelihentsia v russi oporu 1960-80-kh rokiv* [Dissenters: Ukrainian intelligentsia in the resistance movement of the 1960s-80 s]. Kyiv 1995, p. 70-72.

¹² Yekechkyk, Serhy: *Ukrainskyi dosvid Druhoi svitovoї viiny*. Kyiv 2020, p. 131-132, 135-137.

¹³ It seems counterintuitive, given Kuchma's overall careful balancing between Russia and the West, that he would be the one who initiated state commemorations of the Holodomor, which Russia refused to acknowledge as a specifically Ukrainian tragedy. But in the political context of the late 1990s this step made perfect sense as a blow struck at Kuchma's main political competitor at the time, the Communist Party of Ukraine. See Hrynevych, Liudmyla: 'Holod

originally took place in front of the small Holodomor monument on Mykhailivska Square until the unveiling in 2008 of a majestic Holodomor Candle monument in the Eternal Glory Park, an established memorial space that the Soviet authorities developed in 1957 to house the stela of the Unknown Soldier. Under Kuchma's successor, the openly anti-Russian President Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010), commemorative marches and the lighting of candles on Holodomor Memorial Day became well-established mass rituals throughout the country, thus confirming sociological data on the Holodomor's acceptance into popular historical memory.¹⁴ Of course, lighting candles for the dead has deep religious connotations in Ukrainian culture, but doing so in public spaces is probably linked to modern Western traditions of public mourning, including Holocaust-related commemorative ceremonies (and, in the latter case, directly stemming from the Jewish religious tradition of the *Yahrzeit*, or "memorial" candle).¹⁵

Yet the Holodomor did not present an opportunity to celebrate Ukrainian resistance to the oppressors. There was no national equivalent of ghetto rebellions or Jewish partisans; even though the Ukrainian peasants resisted collectivization in 1929-30, during the famine they were hapless victims of the Stalinist state. When Ukraine's relations with Russia soured after the Orange Revolution of 2004-2005, Ukrainian patriots focused on another historical event, the Battle of Kruty (January 1918). An episode in the Bolshevik war against the Ukrainian People's Republic, the Battle of Kruty was mythologized already by its contemporaries as the heroic sacrifice of young Ukrainians fighting in the name of Ukraine. On 16 (29) January 1918, some 450 Ukrainian troops from Kyiv, most of them military cadets, as well as some high school and university student volunteers, with the help of seventy local "Free Cossacks" militiamen managed to stop the Bolshevik advance near the strategically important railway station of Kruty. Facing a much stronger enemy of 4,000-6,000 bayonets that had an armored train and artillery at its disposal, the Ukrainian troops suffered heavy

1932-1933 u publichnii kulturi pamiaty ta suspilnii svidomosti v Ukrainsi'! 'The famine of 1932-1933 in public culture of memory and public consciousness in Ukraine', in: *Problemy istorii Ukrayny: fakty, sudzhennia, poshuky* 2007/17, p. 389-401.

¹⁴ Yushchenko's push to rebrand the Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation, which remains controversial among scholars, also appears to have been successful within Ukraine, where 80 percent of the population now shares this understanding. '80 protsentiv ukraintsiv vvazhaiut Holodomor henotsydom: sotsiolohiia' 1'80 % of Ukrainians consider Holodomor to be genocide: sociology, in: *Istorychna Pravda*. 24 November 2015, available at: <http://www.istpravda.com.ua/short/2015/11/24/148747/> [12. 12. 2019].

¹⁵ On the element of the sacred in general and "memorial candles" in particular in public commemorations in the West, see Jacobs, Janet: "From the Profane to the Sacred: Ritual and Mourning at Sites of Terror and Violence", in: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 2004/43 (3), p. 311-315.

casualties. After the battle the Bolsheviks executed twenty-seven captured Ukrainian students.¹⁶

The now-familiar narrative of Kruty did not emerge until the spring of 1918, when the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic returned to Kyiv with the German and Austrian occupation forces. The sacrifice of the young heroes, so the story went, halted the Bolshevik advance for a crucial four days that allowed the Ukrainian diplomats to sign the Brest Treaty with the Central Powers. Thus, their deaths were not in vain, but helped "save" Ukrainian statehood. Although this patriotic narrative had no currency in Soviet Ukraine after the Bolshevik's ultimate victory in 1920, it survived abroad. The UPA guerrillas during World War II celebrated 29 January as the day off for commemorating Kruty, as did the Ukrainian diaspora after the war.¹⁷

In independent Ukraine, the cult of Kruty developed slowly but surely even before the Orange Revolution, but especially under Yushchenko.¹⁸ The Russian annexation of the Crimea and the Donbas war further elevated the cult of Kruty, now reimagined primarily as the last stand against Russian rather than Bolshevik (and primarily Russian) troops. Ukrainian schools now hold a Lesson of Courage on or around 29 January to teach students about Kruty; in 2016 President Poroshenko personally conducted such a lesson at the Ivan Bohun Military Lyceum in Kyiv, a militarized high school offering its graduates automatic admission to military colleges. Talking to present-day Ukrainian cadets about their predecessor's heroic deed, the president connected the Bolshevik invasion of 1918 and Putin's policies as manifestations of the same "imperialist itch" (*sverbliachky*) to restore Russian rule in Ukraine: "Then, as now, Russia could not come to terms with the existence of an independent Ukraine. Then, as now, a hybrid war was underway." To bring home the point about the young Ukrainians' patriotic sacrifice, Poroshenko also announced that the Museum of Kruty would now feature an exhibit devoted to the young heroes of the present war: 21 volunteers under 18 and 650 fallen soldiers and volunteers under the age of 25 were showcased as of December 2015.¹⁹

¹⁶ Factual details about this much-mythologized event differ in various accounts, which rely mostly on later memoirs. There are no extant documentary traces of the battle or the execution of POWs. See Boiko, Olena: 'Bii pid Krutamy: istoriia vyyvchennia' [The Battle of Kruty: A history of study], in: *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 2008/2, p. 43-54.

¹⁷ Zinkevych, Osyp / Zinkevych, Nadiia (eds.): *Kruty: Zbirka u pamiat heroiv Krut* [Kruty: a collection in memory of the Kruty heroes]. Kyiv 2013; Liubovets, Olena et al. (eds.): *Bii pid Krutamy v natsionalniu pamiaty* [The Battle of Kruty in national memory]. Kyiv 2013.

¹⁸ Soldatenko, Valerii / Liubovets, Olena: 'Bii pid Krutamy: istoriia, symbol, pamiat' [The Battle of Kruty: history, symbol, memory], in: Liubovets, Olena et al. (eds.): *Bii pid Krutamy* [The Battle of Kruty]. Kyiv 2013, p. 24-26.

¹⁹ Ofis Prezydenta Ukrayny: 'Vystup Prezydenta pid chas Uroku Muzhnosti u Kyivskomu viiskovomu litsei imeni Ivana Bohuna' [The President's speech during the Lesson of Virtue in

While the Russian-Ukrainian conflict that started in 2014 invites many parallels with the Bolshevik invasion of 1918, the power of Kruty as a historical symbol cannot be reduced to the young age of the heroes. They were also - and still are - represented primarily as young students, that is, civilian volunteers. The author of the 2006 monument, sculptor Anatolii Haidamaka, designed it as a classical column painted red and placed on top of a mound suggestive of Cossack graves. The otherwise puzzling red column only starts making sense when visitors learn that it is intended as an allusion to the main building of Kyiv University, a red-and-black neoclassical structure with eight such columns at the front entrance, and that it represents the student volunteers. Historians know that students only constituted a minority, perhaps a quarter, of the Ukrainian troops,²⁰ but their civilian status dovetailed perfectly with the myth of Kruty as a sacrifice on behalf of the nation. In mythological thinking, the young age of the victims suggested their innocence; and their status as civilians, their martyrdom - something the cadets could not provide for the national narrative as the military following their orders. Such sacralization of the fallen heroes made for a more powerful national myth of Kruty. However, in the form in which the modern Ukrainian state inherited this myth, it functions as part of Ukrainian ethnic patriotism; its heroes are represented as young Ukrainians rather than citizens of various ethnic backgrounds, some possibly even Russian-speakers.²¹

3. The celestial revolutionaries

Strong Christian overtones can also be observed in the commemorative practices that emerged after the Euromaidan Revolution of 2013-14. As a popular revolution unfolding in the multiethnic and essentially bilingual Ukrainian capital, the Euromaidan was bound to produce a more inclusive canon of heroes, which would be different from the ones inherited from twentieth-century conflicts. However, few people expected that these would be fallen heroes.

the Ivan Bohun Kyiv Military Liceum']. 29 January 2016, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBpgfm2b-bk> 112.12.2019].

²⁰ Boiko 2008, p. 43; Soldatenko / Liubovets 2013, p. 22-24.

²¹ There is no information available about the ethnic and linguistic identities of those who fought on the Ukrainian side at Kruty. Scholars are even having trouble establishing the complete list of those who were reburied in Kyiv in March 1918. See Shandro, Vasyl / Troshchynska, Tetiana / Starykov, Hryhorii: 'Bii pid Krutamy: De mezha mizh v'yhadkamy i realiiamy u podiakh sichnia 1918 roku?' [The Battle of Kruty: where is the line dividing inventions and realities?], in: *Hromadske radio*. 30 January 2016, available at: <https://hromadske.radio.org/programs/hromadska-hvyla/biy-pid-krutamy-de-mezha-mizh-v'yadkamy-i-realiiamy-u-podiakh-sichnya-1918-roku> 112.12.2019].

In 2005, a tense standoff in the center of Kyiv between protestors and police was resolved peacefully. Swift international mediation and the ambivalent position of the outgoing President Kuchma created the conditions necessary for a non-violent, political solution. As a result, the Orange Revolution produced no fallen heroes. For the revolutionaries the story of the kidnapping by the police and assassination of investigative journalist Georgii Gongadze in 2000 served as a symbol of the government's criminal nature.²² The dismemberment of his body (his head was never recovered) paralleled some powerful Christian narratives of martyrdom; at the same time, his mixed ethnic identity and Georgian name made him an icon of civic rather than ethnic-based protest. Still, Gongadze's name remained the opposition's rallying cry only until the Orange Revolution. After its victory, the new government's failure to push for an immediate investigation and trial of his killers rendered this symbol impotent. The investigation seemed never-ending: the executioners were sentenced in 2008 and 2013, but their connection to the highest-ranking officials remained unproven. Meanwhile, Gongadze's mother refused, until 2016, to bury his body, all the while various political forces cynically blamed his murder on their enemies of the day. The absence of real closure, together with widespread disillusionment in the victors of the Orange Revolution, undermined the power of this symbol.

Events unfolded differently during the Euromaidan Revolution. President Viktor Yanukovych refused to acquiesce to the protestors' demands, and police quickly escalated from beatings with batons and tear-gassing to firing rubber bullets, which cost several protestors their eyes. This time the protestors, too, were prepared to respond in kind. Culturally and politically diverse as the protesting crowd was, right-wing radicals emerged early on as the most visible vanguard of the revolution. Throwing Molotov cocktails at the riot police helped escalate the violence even further. On 22 January 2014, the first two protestors, Serhii Niholian and Mikhail Zhizneuski, died of bullet wounds near the barricade on Hrushevsky Street, although the authorities denied responsibility. More bodies of dead revolutionaries, some of whose bodies bore signs of torture, were soon found elsewhere. The death toll increased dramatically during the violent clashes of 18-20 February 2014, when the riot police attempted to clear the protestors' camp from the capital's main square and the protestors took a desperate last stand there; firearms were first used openly, if still sparingly, on both sides. The bloodiest day was 20 February, when protestors armed with wooden sticks and homemade metal or wooden shields tried to push the police up Instytutska Street, toward the government quarter. Forty-seven revolutionaries died that day on Instytutska, most of them sustaining bullet wounds after being

²² Wilson, Andrew. *Ukraine's Orange Revolution*. New Haven 2005, p. 51-55; Koshiw, Jaroslav. *Beheaded: The Killing of a Journalist*. Bristol 2002.

shot at from above, presumably by police snipers. In the city in general, 67 protestors and 13 police officers were reported dead, and hundreds more were wounded.²³

The unprecedented bloodbath on a scale not seen in Kyiv since World War II was a major factor in President Yanukovych's disappearance the next day, which also saw a significant share of the Ukrainian elites changing sides in the conflict. On 22 February, the revolution's victory was confirmed by a parliamentary vote to remove Yanukovych and appoint an acting president representing the opposition. On 24 February, the Ukrainian parliament also approved a resolution demanding that the next democratically elected president bestow on each of the fallen heroes Ukraine's highest military honor, the gold star of the Hero of Ukraine. The term "Heavenly Hundred" (*Nebesna Sotnia*) was not mentioned in the resolution, although it was already appearing in the social media, apparently having been created by the poet Tetiana Domashenko on 21 February. At the time, it was a poetic metaphor, because the official death toll according to the Ministry of Health still stood at 77, although this number was being constantly updated. By April 2014 the Ministry of Health confirmed the deaths of 105 revolutionaries, most of them killed or gravely injured in Kyiv during 18-20 February.²⁴ President Poroshenko eventually awarded posthumously 104 Hero of Ukraine medals, as well as three medals of the Hero of the Heavenly Hundred to one Belarusian and two Georgian citizens who, as foreigners, could not be recognized as Heroes of Ukraine.

Established in November 2014, the Hero of the Heavenly Hundred medal depicted the fallen heroes as white figures with angel's wings, but also with their trademark sticks and homemade shields.²⁵ Designers followed this trend, which by then became established in popular culture in the capital and other regions that had supported the Euromaidan - open appropriation of religious symbolism for the commemoration of the revolution, if not the de-facto representation of the Heavenly Hundred as saintly protectors of Ukraine. At the same time, however, it is significant that the first two of the Heavenly Hundred were not ethnic Ukrainians. The Belarusian citizen Mikhail Zhizneuskai, who had lived in Ukraine for several years and was involved with a right-wing Ukrainian group, became a Hero of the Heavenly Hundred rather than a Hero of Ukraine. The

²³ Yekelchyk, Serhy: *The Conflict in Ukraine*. New York 2015, p. 104-110.

²⁴ 'Musii sprostovuvie dani volonteriv pro 780 zahyblykh na Maidan' [Musii denies the volunteers' information about 780 perished on Maidan], in: *Ukrainska Pravda - Zhyttia*. 11 April 2014, available at: <http://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2014/04/11/163047/> [12.12.2019].

²⁵ 'Nahorodzhenykh ordenom Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni nazyvatymut rytsariamy- ukaz' [Those decorated by the Order of Heavenly Hundred will be called the knights - the order!], in: *Ukrainska Pravda*. 3 November 2014, available at: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/11/3/7043101/> [12.12.2019].

second of the two, the ethnic Armenian Serhii Nahoian (Nigoian), was born in Ukraine and thus qualified for the nation's highest honor, but his parents arrived only a few years before his birth as refugees from the contested Karabakh region in the Caucasus. More than any other of the Heavenly Hundred, Nahoian became the visual representation of the fallen heroes. His Jesus-like bearded face with large expressive eyes started appearing on pins, posters, and graffiti even before the victorious revolution (illustration 1). It also helped that Nahoian did not belong to any political organization and comes off as a kind, quiet person in documentary footage. Whether he spoke Armenian or Russian in his private life, he knew Ukrainian and was filmed on the Maidan reciting a poem by Taras Shevchenko. He was also only twenty years old. In other words, he was the perfect symbol of a civic, inclusive revolution made by people of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but encoded through familiar Christian symbols.



Illustration I. Fresco of Serhii Nahoian; photo by Serhy Yekelchyk, 2015.

The rest of the Heavenly Hundred were likewise people of diverse social, political, and cultural backgrounds. No statistics have been compiled on their ethnicity, but a significant proportion of names sound Russian; some could also be Polish and Jewish. There were two Georgians and two Armenians, including Nahoian. Four of the Hundred were born in the Donbas, the region traditionally represented as the Ukrainian Vendee. Tellingly, when a book with biographies of the Heavenly Hundred and reminiscences about them came out in August 2014, it combined entries in Ukrainian with ones in Russian, the editors clearly wishing to stress that the new Ukrainian civic identity was not language-based. At the same time, this book emphasized the religious connotations of the Hundred's martyrdom both in its cover design (featuring a star-lit night sky over the

Maidan) and in the three introductions by major religious leaders (the heads of the Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic churches, as well as a spokesperson of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate). The latter two of the three explicitly compared the Hundred's sacrifice to that of Christ.²⁶

The fallen heroes of the Heavenly Hundred were not buried together. In most cases, relatives picked up their bodies for burial in their place of residence. Nahoian was interred in a village in Dnipropetrovsk oblast, and Zhizneuskai in a village in his native Belarus. However, the case of Zhizneuskai also presented an opportunity for a mass public ritual in Kyiv, which established certain memorialization patterns for the Hundred. Because he would have turned twenty-six on 26 January 2014, just four days after he was killed, that day his body was brought to Saint Michael's Cathedral near the Maidan (a place where wounded revolutionaries received shelter during the protests) for a religious wake. A crowd of some 10,000 mourners filled the square in front of the cathedral. Afterwards they carried his coffin through the streets where the fighting took place while singing his favorite Ukrainian song, "Oi, plive kacha po Tysyni" (Hey, a duckling is swimming down the Tysyna). With its appropriately sorrowful melody and words, this song became a mainstay of patriotic funerals for the Heavenly Hundred and the Ukrainian soldiers killed in the Donbas.²⁷ Bringing the coffins of the Heavenly Hundred to the Maidan for a public farewell ceremony also became a tradition, as demonstrated during the first mass funerals held on the evening of 21 February. The ritual-in-the-making featured public recitations of the "Our Father" and singing of "Oi, plive kacha po Tysyni."²⁸

Burials in different parts of Ukraine and beyond its borders resulted in the need to establish a single, central memorial space for the heroic myth of the Heavenly Hundred. Such a space emerged immediately- and spontaneously- on Instytutska Street, where most of the victims on 20 February lost their lives. Initially, impromptu shrines decorated with flowers and candles, as well as the orange plastic helmets that the protestors used as protection from rubber batons, also developed elsewhere: on the Maidan itself, Khreshchatyk Boulevard crossing the Maidan, Hrushevsky Street leading from Khreshchatyk uphill to the government quarter, and in Mariinsky Park, near the parliament. These were all

²⁶ Trybushna, Olena I Solomko, Iryna (eds.): *Nebesna Sotnia* [Heavenly Hundred]. Kharkiv 2014, p. 7-9.

²⁷ Although many people were under the impression that it was a folk song, the current text is a literary composition dating from the 1920s. See Sokil, Vasyl: 'Pro pisniu "Plive kacha po Tysyni" ['About the song "Plyve kacha po Tysyni"]', in: *Narodoznavchi zoshyty* 2014/ Seria filolohichna 4, p. 817-821.

²⁸ 'Na Maidani proshchaitisia iz zahyblymy heroiamy' ['At Maidan, they bid farewell to the deceased heroes'], in: *iPress*, 21 February 2014, available at: http://ipress.ua/video/na_maidani_proshchayutsya_iz_zahyblymy_geroyamy_ljudy_nalashtovani_na_rishuchi_dii_translyatsiya_49024.html [12.12.2019].

places where the revolutionaries died. However, Instytutska Street soon emerged as the principal commemorative site. It was not the new government that made this decision; rather, such an understanding developed as a result of spontaneous agreement among the public. Much like the Orange Revolution, but on a greater scale, the Euromaidan revealed civil society's readiness to take things into its own hands. Volunteering, donating, and crowdsourcing quickly became the principal mechanisms for providing the revolutionaries with food, shelter, and medical care.²⁹ The experience of social mobilization against the state left the wider group of Euromaidan activists and their supporters confident in their ability to get things done. They also believed in the society at large rather than the new authorities as the custodians of the revolution's legacy and memory. Thus, the creation of a principal commemorative space became a matter of informal public consensus that was reflected in spontaneous commemorative practices. The latter featured a strong element of sacralization, but also underscored the Heavenly Hundred's uniqueness as heroes of a new type: civilian martyrs representing civil society.

Many factors combined to make Instytutska Street the people's choice. Perhaps the most important was social media, which circulated shocking videos of the unarmed protestors trying to advance uphill, being shot one by one in the lower part of Instytutska. Thus, the fighting on Instytutska became the most recognizable visual image of the protesters' sacrifice. Already on 22 and 23 February 2014, Kyivites blanketed large stretches of Instytutska Street with flowers.³⁰ Yet, there were also pragmatic considerations.

In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, the spring and summer of 2014, the Maidan, Khreshchatyk Boulevard, and Instytutska Street remained a de facto pedestrian zone. When I arrived in Kyiv on a field trip in late April 2014, the barricades were still standing and the tents on the Maidan remained occupied by those protesters who had not joined the National Guard of Ukraine and had nowhere else to go. Some tents had been turned into impromptu "museums of the Maidan." Souvenir sellers sold various Maidan paraphernalia, especially orange plastic helmets painted elaborately like Ukrainian Easter eggs. Right-wing nationalist groups proudly displayed armored personnel carriers captured during the revolution and recruited passersby for their volunteer battalions in the Donbas. Barricades themselves served as spontaneous memorial sites and were decorated with candles (standing in small painted-glass jars reminiscent of

²⁹ Diuk, Nadia: 'Euromaidan: Ukraine's Self-Organizing Revolution', in: *World Affairs Journal* 2014/176 (6), p. 9-16.

³⁰ Zhyhalo, Andrii: 'Ukrainci vstelyly kvitamy dorohy z Maidanu do Instytutskoi' ['Ukrainians have laid flowers to the road from Maidan to Instytutska'], in: *Gazeta.ua*, 24 February 2014, available at: http://gazeta.ua/articles/politics/_ukrayinci-vstelili-kvitami-dorogu-z-majdanu-do-institutskoyi/543949 [12. 12. 2019].

church icon lamps) and flowers; as a symbol of spilled blood, red carnations predominated among the latter. Only one barricade, at the lower end of Hrushevsky Street, was partially disassembled to enable traffic flow. Instytutska Street remained bottled up by the two barricades located in its lower part, one near Khreshchatyk, and the third at the top of the hill, near the upper exit from the Khreshchatyk subway station. Yet, it was becoming clear already that the practical needs of Kyivites dictated the restriction of memorial space. Cordonning off that much space in the city center (which in Kyiv traditionally served as a transportation hub with only a small part of Khreshchatyk turned into a pedestrian zone on weekends) created traffic jams on adjacent streets and difficulties for emergency vehicles. The section of Instytutska nearest to the parliament was never closed to traffic, although protesters had died there as well. Traffic was soon resumed on Hrushevsky Street and at the northwestern end of the Maidan. Most of Khreshchatyk and the Maidan remained off-limits to cars, as well as the lower, hilly part of Instytutska, an area with available alternative routes or back-alley access. By the summer of 2015 only the lower part of Instytutska Street remained closed to traffic. This closure inconvenienced few people, as there were no residential buildings on either side, and the only business with a car entrance from Instytutska, the Ukraina Hotel, was sufficiently close to other streets.³¹

Perhaps more important, this section of Instytutska Street was the site of the most gruesome and cold-blooded killings during the revolution. Videos posted on YouTube showed unarmed protesters carrying their useless, homemade shields being shot dead one by one from a position high above them.³² Unlike in other places, where the protesters returned fire or threw Molotov cocktails at the police, Instytutska was a place of victimhood and sacrifice. Its martyrs best represented civilian heroism and resistance to oppression; their memory could best be mobilized to legitimize the new political order.

The Ukrainian parliament discussed the proposal to rename the entire street or its lower part in honor of the Heavenly Hundred as early as 23 February 2014. However, the prerogative to do so belonged to the Kyiv municipal authorities, who followed proper procedure by initiating a public discussion in the summer and passing the resolution in November 2014. The lower part of Instytutska from

³¹ In the summer of 2016 cars going to the hotel could drive down the street. Only the short section between the entrance to the hotel's parking lot and Khreshchatyk Boulevard remained cordoned off with small cement hemispheres.

³² See, among others, 'Video rasstrela maidanovtsev 20 fevralia, sniatoe belgiiskim zhurnalistom Patrick van Gompel s bajkona' ['Video of Maidan protesters being shot on February 20th', recorded by the Belgian journalist Patrick van Gompel]. 24 August 2015, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ql0Pf0gp1U> [12. 12. 2019].

Khreshchatyk up to its intersection with Olhynska Street became known as the Alley of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred.³³

By then, popular memorialization of this location was largely completed. Volunteers rather than the state installed two exhibits of the Heavenly Hundred's portraits, essentially makeshift shrines, one at the alley's lower end and another at the upper one (illustration 2). Individual volunteers and groups also marked the approximate sites where the protesters died with an assortment of crosses or small granite signs, like those one can see at any Ukrainian cemetery.³⁴ Others used the tradition developed at memorial sites commemorating the victims of Stalinist terror by attaching pictures of the fallen to the trees along the Alley. Many stones and posters featured fragments of poetry ranging from naïve verses written by amateur writers to Ukrainian literary classics. The sacralization of this memorial site took many forms, including a small wooden chapel of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the upper part of the Alley to repeated inscriptions to the effect that the Hundred was watching from Heaven. The chapel eventually had to be relocated by the city authorities because it was impeding access to underground communications, but the large cross remained at the head of the symbolic "grave" formed by the portraits of the Hundred. A poster hanging near the upper shrine featured a large image of an eye composed from tiny portraits of the Hundred and the warning, "We see everything. The Heavenly Hundred." Graffiti near the lower photo exhibit showed the Hundred in the clouds and large, white angel's wings spread above them with the slogan underneath: "They protected us with their wings." On a field trip in December 2015, I observed people walking down the alley in the evening and making the Sign of the Cross near the symbolic "graves," as if in front of holy relics.

Yet, such religious symbolism coexisted with the emphasis on the revolution's civic, inclusive character. Instead of a memorial plaque, an upright iron shield was installed near the upper shrine with an inscription carved through it, telling passersby that this is a memorial site (*mistse pamiaty*) of the Revolution of Dignity, another designation of the Maidan underscoring its civic values. The two collections of portraits did not categorize the Hundred by their ethnicity or citizenship, nor did they specify political affiliation. The lower one made a point of indicating only the province of residence on top and the name and profession

³³ 'Chastynu vulysi Instytutskoi pereimenuvaly na aleiu Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni' [The part of Instytutska Street was renamed to the Alley of Heavenly Hundred], in: *Ukrainska Pravda - Kyiv* 20 November 2014, available at: <https://kiev.pravda.com.ua/news/546db4da6e2fb/> [12.12.2019].

³⁴ On the modern tradition of impromptu commemorative "shrines" in the public space, see Santino, Jack 'Performative Commemorations, the Personal, and the Public: Spontaneous Shrines, Emergent Ritual, and the Field of Folklore', in: *Journal of American Folklore* 2004 117 (10), p. 363-372.



Illustration 2 Heavenly Hundred - upper shrine fragment; photo by Sethy Yekelchyk, 2015.

at the bottom, which had the effect of emphasizing both social and national unity, rather than political and ethnic divisions. The portraits at the upper shrine listed only names and places of birth.

The authorities had no choice but to embrace the popular commemorative culture developing on the Alley. Like other such rituals, it focused on the anniversaries, in this case, of the revolution's beginning (21 November) and the worst day of the shootings (20 February). Yet, ordinary Ukrainians arriving in the city center with flowers and candles regularly found themselves squeezed between the security perimeter protecting dignitaries and the political show organized by right-wing volunteer battalions. On 21 November 2015 a commemorative rally in Kyiv started with a prayer on the Maidan in the presence of President Petro Poroshenko and other politicians. Citizens arriving after 11 a.m. were unable to enter the square and watched from beyond the security fence. Since the revolution itself involved intense physical struggle with the police for control of the space in this very same square, some members of the public felt that physical resistance would be justifiable in this case, too. They started shaking the barrier; this action resulted in the minor clashes with riot police. Once the president left, people could finally take their flowers and candles to the shrine in the lower part of the alley. Veterans of the Euromaidan started gathering on the square in the late afternoon. When the planned concert there was about to begin, they too began pushing against the barrier and broke it in some places. After taking over the temporary podium, they interrupted the concert and demanded that the new authorities report to the people on what they had done since the revolution. The dignitaries ignored the request, but there were no arrests made, no doubt because of potential unwelcome parallels with the Yanukovych regime.³⁵

³⁵ 'Godovshchyna: boikot i vstrechi' ['Anniversary: boycott and meetings'], in: *Segodnia* 23 November 2015.

On 20 February 2016, the Day of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred, the nationalist radicals managed to steal the show. Remembering the lessons of November 2015, the authorities did not organize an official ceremony in the lower part of the Alley or on the Maidan. Instead, the president and his spouse made an unannounced, brief stop in the morning near the upper shrine on the Alley, a narrower space that was much easier to secure. The short ritual included laying flowers at the shrine, making the Sign of the Cross, and kneeling before the portraits in silence, which action the public was welcome to interpret as either a silent prayer or a secular minute of silence.³⁶ This effectively meant leaving the lower shrine and the Maidan for political opponents on the right. Indeed, although the overwhelming majority of people that day arrived singly at the lower shrine to deposit their flowers and light their candles, the right-wing radicals captured the media's attention with a political show near the Independence Column on the Maidan (on the other side of the Alley, opposite the lower shrine). The members of the OUN volunteer battalion, named after the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, called on the public to continue the revolution by trashing the offices of Russian-owned banks; they managed to inflict significant damage on one nearby branch of Alfa-Bank. The Ukrainian army command had disarmed the battalion and forced it to retreat from the front in April 2015 as part of its general crackdown on unruly volunteer units with their own political agendas, but the former commander Mykola Kokhanivsky, who had also been among the leaders of the Maidan, was now trying to carve out a new niche in street politics for his supporters.³⁷

Another militarized political group, the Revolutionary Right Forces, which announced its existence in November 2015 as a coordinating body of nationalist volunteer battalions, also held a mini-rally near the Independence Column later that day. Their representatives called for the cabinet to resign, and installed a tent nearby as a symbol of alleged continuity with the Maidan's occupiers during the revolution. The Right Sector and a few lesser-known right-wing groups also held meetings in the city center, albeit poorly attended ones. By mid-afternoon the radicals were gone, although the public continued bringing flowers and candles

³⁶ 'Poroshenko vshanuvav pamiat Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni' [Poroshenko honored the memory of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes], in: *Depo*. 20 February 2016, available at: <http://www.depo.ua/ukr/politics/poroshenko-vshanuvav-pamiat-nebesnoi-sotni> [20.02.2016].

³⁷ The OUN denied any involvement in the incident. See 'Chervak: OUN neprychetna do insydentiv u tsentri Kyieva 20 liutoho' [Chervak: OUN is not connected to the incidents in downtown Kyiv], in: *Radio Svoboda*. 21 February 2016, available at: <http://www.radiosvoda.org/a/news/27565148.html> [12.12.2019]; 'Pogromy, gromkie lozungi i slezy: kto i zachem prishel na Maidan v Den pamiatni Nebesnoi sotni' [Pogroms, loud slogans and tears: who and why came to the Maidan on the Day of Remembrance of Heaven hundred], in: *Segodnia* 21 February 2016.

to both shrines. There was a concert underway on the Maidan, and people stopped by the stands across the lower shrine displaying photographs from the lives of the Heavenly Hundred.³⁸ In the evening, the authorities got back into the game of building memorialization traditions by switching on 105 powerful search lights along the alley, all projected upwards, as if tracing the Heavenly Hundred's path to Heaven. Some media outlets claimed that the search lights were installed in the exact places where the heroes died, although in reality only a minority among the Heavenly Hundred were killed on Instytutska Street.³⁹

Students at all Ukrainian schools and colleges began the day of 20 February 2016 with a minute of silence followed by the singing of the national anthem. However, the commemoration of the Heavenly Hundred in the public space took different forms in the regions. In Kharkiv, the same Shevchenko monument that had served as the focus of the local Maidan, also became a commemoration center. Unlike in Kyiv, in this eastern city with split allegiances Ukrainian flags were featured prominently at the rally on 20 February - including a hundred-meter-long one that marchers carried through the streets. Given the fresh memory of a bomb attack on a similar march in 2015, which left three people dead and dozens injured, such a pointed display of Ukrainian flags was clearly intended as a statement on the region's Ukrainian identity. The minute of silence in Kharkiv honoured the three victims of that bombing, as well as the four Kharkivites who died on the Maidan in Kyiv.

In Odesa, the commemoration centered on the statue of the Duke de Richelieu, the traditional symbol of the city that also served as the center of the Euromaidan in Odesa during the revolution.⁴⁰ The participants decorated the Odesa steps descending from the monument with candles forming the words "Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred." However, the city authorities did not see the Duke as an appropriate memorial site and instead took wreaths to the Shevchenko statue as a better symbol of the state's Ukrainian identity. The unveiling of a commemorative marker to the Hundred - a plaque on a stone cube announcing plans to erect a monument in that spot - in front of the regional administration building sparked an altercation between the representatives of moderate and right-wing Ukrainian parties over the issue of making speeches in

³⁸ 'Pogromy, gromkie lozungi i slezy'.

³⁹ Panteleeva, Ksenia: 'Na Maidani zapalyly 105 "promeniv hidnosti" na chest Nebesnoi Sotni' [On Maidan, 105 'dignity lights' were lit to honor the Heavenly Hundred], in: *Gazeta.ua*. 20 February 2016, available at: http://gazeta.ua/articles/kiev-life/_na-majdani-zapalili-105-promeniv-gidnosti-na-chest-nebesnoi-sotni/679905?mobile=true [12.12.2019].

⁴⁰ Armand Emmanuel Sophie Septimanie de Vignerot du Plessis (1766-1822), the 5th Duke of Richelieu, during his time as a French royalist-in-exile served as governor of Odesa in 1803-1805 and as governor-general of the province of Novorossia from 1805 to 1814.

Russian.⁴¹ In Dnipropetrovsk (renamed as Dnipro in May 2016), the large city closest to the front but firmly controlled by pro-Ukrainian business and political elites, commemorative activities have been traditionally low-profile and focused on the temporary commemorative marker to the Heavenly Hundred (a large cross and a stone with a memorial plaque) near the regional administration building, in an alley named after the Heavenly Hundred. Instead of being dominated by the national flag's blue-and-yellow, red roses and white doves gave the commemoration on 21 November 2015 a more humanistic color scheme. On 20 February 2016, mourning ceremonies in Dnipropetrovsk were limited to the laying of flowers and a prayer; the participants of the evening concert also concluded this event by marching to the commemorative marker.⁴²

The commemorations in major cities have thus focused on symbolic graves, these memorial spaces often named after the Heavenly Hundred. But they were also related to or linked by memorial marches to the locations of the Euromaidan protests there, as well as universal symbols of Ukrainian identity (Shevchenko statues) and local seats of power. The actual graves of the Hundred have also served as commemorative venues, especially in villages, but the only ones the press reported on consistently were the memorial rallies at the grave of Serhii Niholian in the village of Bereznuvativka, Dnipropetrovsk oblast. On every anniversary of the revolution, his death on 22 January, and the mass shootings on 20 February, hundreds of people traveled there with flowers and candles.⁴³ Just like Kyiv's Alley of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred became the revolution's principal commemorative space, Niholian became an impersonation of its values.

⁴¹ Gorshkova, Marina: 'V Odesse so skandalom otkryli pamiatnyi znak geroiam Nebesnoi Sotni' [In Odessa, with scandal, they opened the memorial sign to the heroes of Heavenly Hundred], in: *Komsomolskaia Pravda v Ukraine*, 20 February 2016, available at: <http://kp.ua/incidents/530209-v-odesse-so-skandalom-otkryly-pamiatnyi-znak-heroia-nebesnoi-sotny> [12.12.2019].

⁴² 'V Ukrayini vshamuvaly pamiat heroiv Nebesnoi sotni' [In Ukraine, they commemorated the heroes of the Heavenly Hundred], in: *Ukrainska Pravda*, 20 Februa_ry 2016, available at: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/02/20/7099757/> [12.12.2019]; 'V Dnepropetrovske sostoiatsia moleben po sluchaiu vtoroi godovshchiny Evromaidana' [In Dnepropetrovsk, public prayer took place on the occasion of the second anniversary of Maidan], in: *112 kana*. 20 Februa_ry 2016, available at: <http://112.ua/obshchestvo/v-dnepropetrovske-sostoyalsya-moleben-po-sluchayu-vtoroy-godovshchiny-evromaydana-293291.html> [12.12.2019].

⁴³ 'Obshchaia molitva i vozrozhdenie veche' [General prayer and revival of the veche], in: *Segodnia* 23 November 2015/4; 'Na Dnipropetrovshchyni vshamuvaly pershoho zahybloho pid chas revolutsii hidnosti Serhia Niholian' [In the Dnipropetrovsk region, they honored the first fallen during the Revolution of Dignity Serhii Niholian], in: *Radio Svoboda*, 22 Janua_ry 2017, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/28249857.html> [12.12.2019].

4. Civil society and memorial spaces

It was the mobilization of civil society that made the Euromaidan Revolution possible, and the spontaneous emergence of memorial spaces was also the result of popular initiative rather than the state's program. However, the new revolutionary authorities oftentimes imagined commemoration in traditional categories of grand monuments designed by well-connected sculptors and approved by those in power. Tensions soon developed between the state and society over the issue of memorializing the revolution, and thus, over determining its legacy.

As early as mid-March 2014, a functionary from the office of then Acting President Oleksandr Turchynov called the Kyiv municipal council to put in a word for a commemorative project on Instytutska Street. Designed by a well-known Ukrainian architect, the proposal featured a massive granite wall embedded with portraits of the Heavenly Hundred. However, the composition of the Kyiv city administration had also changed after the Euromaidan and now included young professionals, who believed in the revolutionary values. They saw the project as mimicking the old-fashioned, Soviet-cemetery, Socialist-Realist style, and the very notion of phone calls made from the president's office as reflecting the undemocratic procedures that were typical of the old regime.⁴⁴ Instead, the city council's Department of Urban Construction and Architecture held an open international competition for the memorialization of the "Territory of Dignity" and overall redesign of the city center, which generated 478 expressions of interest from forty countries and 149 complete submissions in four categories.⁴⁵ Public hearings before the competition showed that the concerned public did not want a traditional monument, preferring to commemorate the fallen revolutionaries in a new way reflective of the revolution's civic character. This directive was reflected in the competition program. The submissions were also displayed publicly on large stands installed on the Maidan, and the public could make its input by voting online. When the jury named the winning projects, it turned out that an Italian team of architects won in the category "Memorial-

⁴⁴ Bondar, Anna: 'Zberezhennia istorychnykh plastiv mista Kyeva' [Preservation of historical layers of Kyiv city], presentation at the international conference on "Living in the Modern City: Kyiv of the Late Nineteenth-Mid-Twentieth Centuries", Center for Polish and European Studies, National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy". Kyiv 10 December 2015.

⁴⁵ Kyivska miska derzhavna administratsiia. Departament mistobuduvannia ta arkhiteturysty: 'Rezul'taty konkursu "Terytoriia hidnosti" prezentuvaly rodynam Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni' [The results of the competition "Territory of Dignity" are presented to the families of the Heroes of Heavenly Hundred]. 13 September 2015, available at: <http://kga.gov.ua/rss/l138-rezultati-konkursu-teritoriya-hidnosti-prezentovali-rodinam-gerojiv-nebesnoji-sotni> [12.12.2019].

izing the Revolution of Dignity and Commemorating the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred."⁴⁶

The simple and affordable Italian project was also very inventive. It envisaged rectangular openings in the road surface on the Alley of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred, with a single red maple tree in each opening. Each opening suggested a grave, and the fallen red leaves would symbolize blood, with "veins" also marked in the pavement as paths; the experience of strolling up or the Alley would constitute a "memorial walk." The project also assumed that the alley would remain a pedestrian zone. This fit well with the design submitted by Taiwanese architects, which won in another category and envisaged the transformation of the entire Khreshchatyk Boulevard into a pedestrian zone.⁴⁷ No first or second prizes were awarded in the category of the revolution's museum.

A very similar story unfolded in Dnipropetrovsk, where in December 2015 the public learned at the last moment that the two shortlisted projects of the monument to the Heavenly Hundred were to be displayed at the local House of Architecture. What provoked an outcry was not so much the traditional artistic decisions of the two projects, as the lack of transparency and public consultation in the competition procedure itself. As a result of public protests, the decision was put on hold.⁴⁸

Journalists and the public welcomed the iconoclastic competition results in Kyiv, but the practical implementation of the winning projects has stalled. The state and the city lacked funds, while the old-regime model of monumental construction in the downtown area - attracting private investors by including commercial space in projects or awarding them construction permits for projects elsewhere in the city - did not seem appropriate. Just like the ideals of the Euromaidan could not be implemented by post-Maidan politicians still playing by the old rules, the democratically chosen memorialization projects could not be turned into reality because they were unattractive to oligarch investors. By 2018, a new competition for the design of a Memorial Complex of the Heavenly Hundred produced a long list of forty projects. President Poroshenko personally unveiled,

⁴⁶ Other categories included the new design of the Maidan and the city center in general, the future museum of the revolution, and the new concept of the nearby Ukrainian House. See 'Kievskie pamiatniki posle Evromaidana: pobezhden li "sovok"' ['Kiev monuments after Euromaidan: has "sovok" been defeated?'], in: *Kiev online*, 25 September 2015, available at: <http://kiev-online.net.ua/politika/Kievskie-pamyatniki-posle-Evromaidana-pobezhden-li-sovak.html> [12.12.2019].

⁴⁷ Salii, Iuliia: 'Konkurs "Terytoriia hidnosti": Jstoriia uspikhu ta urok dlia vlady' ['The competition "Territory of Dignity": success story and lesson for the authorities'], in: *Ukrainska Pravda - Zhyttia*, 3 December 2015, available at: <http://life.pravda.com.ua/culture/2015/12/3/204230/> [12.12.2019].

⁴⁸ Viktoriia Narizhna, personal communication, 16 December 2015.

on the Maidan, an exhibit of stands representing their designs, but public reaction was lukewarm.⁴⁹

In the short run, members of the public who cherished the democratic ideals of the revolution had to fight over the fate of the House of Trade Unions, a large, modern building on the Maidan situated in the corner closest to the Alley. This house was set on fire during the revolution, and some protestors burned to death. However, the owners of the building, the Trade Union administrations of Ukraine and Kyiv, saw it as prime commercial property rather than a symbol of the revolution. Public outcry erupted regularly over the illegal construction of additional floors of luxury condos, the envisaged opening of a karaoke restaurant in the building, and even the display of a huge cellphone company's advertisement on the construction tarpaulin covering the building.⁵⁰

Attacks on the space that the public considers reclaimed from the old regime came from other directions as well. On 11 February 2016, the city council adopted an unpublicized decision to discontinue the tradition of turning Khreshchatyk Boulevard into a pedestrian zone on weekends and holidays. Although this older tradition did not develop as a result of the Euromaidan, energetic public protests linked the notion of a pedestrian zone with that of a public space essential for any modern city - as demonstrated by the revolution. The city authorities quickly relented.⁵¹

The emerging civil society also had to fight for a small park and communal garden in the city center known informally as the Square of the Heavenly Hundred. Before the revolution, this space between the Maidan and Saint Michael's Monastery was a symbol of the criminal symbiosis between the old city authorities and business sharks. Encircled by a metal fence, it was waiting for a high-rise hotel building to be constructed there in violation of maximum height and other restrictions. In the meantime, this cozy little square cloistered among other buildings served as an illegal dump. During the Euromaidan protesters disassembled the fence, using it to construct their barricades. Beginning in March 2014, local residents and Maidan activists cleared the ground, planting trees

⁴⁹ Plakhonin, Andrii: 'lakyi nam potriben Memorial' ['What kind of memorial do we need'], in: *Den*, 17 February 2018, available at: <https://day.kyiv.ua/uk/blog/polityka/yakyy-nam-potrib-en-memorial> [12.12.2019].

⁵⁰ Kyrychenko, Lesia: 'Tantsy na peple' ['Dancing on the ashes'], in: *Segodnia*, 12 November 2015/33; Rybinskaia, Irina: 'Kommercheskoi reklamy ne budet na obgorevshem zdaniu Doma Profsoiuzov, gde pogibli liudi' ['There will be no commercial advertising on the charred building of the House of Trade Unions, where people died'], in: *Fakty*, 11 December 2015/2.

⁵¹ Shandro, Vasyl / Bahalika, Anastasiia / Tyshchenko, Ihor: 'Tradysiuu pishokhidnu zonu na Khreshchatyku po v_ykhidnykh khochut skasuvaty' ['Traditional pedestrian zone on weekdays' Khreshchatyk is intended to be cancelled'], in: *Hromadske Radio*, 14 February 2016, available at: http://hromadskeradio.org/programs/hromadska-h_v_yla/tradyciynu-pishohidnu-zonu-na-hreshchatyku-po-v_ykhidnyh-hochut-skasuvaty-tyshchenko [12.12.2019].

there, building a children's playground, and starting a small community garden. On the wall of a neighboring building a Portuguese artist painted a large mural with Niholian's portrait. In order to pre-empt the developer's recapture of this space by legal means or by the (more common) use of thugs-for-hire, the activists behind the project registered an NGO called "Garden City," and in July 2015 staged a grand opening of the transformed square. The attendees included President Poroshenko, the Portuguese ambassador, and Niholian's father. Tellingly, even the high-profile inauguration of the garden did not result in the city reclaiming this piece of land from the developer by citing procedural violations. The issue of ownership remained on hold as of July 2016, when the project received a Special Mention at the European Prize for Urban Public Space competition in Barcelona.^{s2}

With the issue of the Euromaidan museum also on hold after the inconclusive results of the architectural competition in this category, the revolution's artefacts remained stored in the backrooms of two unrelated museums in the city. Even though the state supported the initiative of Maidan activists, who had originally established the informal "Museum of Freedom" and preserved the items for the future exhibit, even the 2016 presidential decree creating the "National Memorial Complex of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred and the Museum of the Revolution" did not mean that it would open any time soon. Parliament refused to allocate any space near the Alley; funding from the state budget commenced only in 2016 and amounted to a meager 5 million hryvnias (US \$200,000) per year.^{s3}

By 2016, two other developments were undermining the cult of the Heavenly Hundred. In an eerie parallel to the Gongadze case, the case against their killers was taking years to investigate, with various political forces trying to exploit it to their advantage. It also looked increasingly likely that only some of the shooters might be punished, but not the higher authorities who had issued such orders. Two dozen riot-police officers escaped to Russia to evade responsibility; the leading figures of the old regime also lived there, beyond the reach of Ukrainian justice. Their crimes having gone unpunished, the sacrifices made by the

^{s2} 'Poroshenko vystupiv na prezentatsii hrafiti z portretom Nihoiiana u skveri Nebesnoi Sotni' ['Poroshenko delivered a speech at the presentation of graffiti with Niholian's portrait in the Heavenly Hundred Sq.'], in: *5 kanal*. 9 July 2015, available at <http://www.5.ua/chronika-mai-dany/poroshenko-vystupiv-na-prezentatsii-hrafiti-z-portretom-nihoiiana-u-skveri-nebesnoi-sotni-86902.html> [12.12.2019]; 'Kuleba: V Barselone skver Nebesnoi sotni poluchil nagradu Osoboe upomianie-2016' ['Kuleba: in Barcelona, the Heavenly Hundred Square got a "Special mention-2016" award!'], in: *Gordon*. 4 July 2016, available at: <http://gordonua.com/news/culture/kuleba-v-barselone-skver-nebesnoy-cotni-poluchil-nagradu-osoboe-upomianie-2016-139334.html> [12.12.2019].

^{s3} Roshenko, Olena: 'Dlia muzeiu Revoliutsii Hidnosti niiak ne znайдут місце' ['For the Museum of Dignity, they still cannot find the place!'], in: *Ukrainska Pravda*. 1 April 2016, available at: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/04/1/7104074/> [12.12.2019].

Heavenly Hundred remained incomplete. If they died for a new Ukraine marked by political transparency and an efficient justice system, this Ukraine was taking its time to emerge. As well, some unwelcome wrinkles started appearing on the generally accepted version of the Hundred's martyrdom. The early belief in (possibly Russian) snipers on the roofs was undermined by the autopsy results. The bullets recovered from the bodies were fired from standard police and army assault guns, special guns designed to stop cars by blowing out tires, and hunting rifles loaded with buckshot - not weapons that snipers would use.^{s4} The most likely killers, then, were the very same rank-and-file riot policemen who had been fighting with the protesters for months before they suddenly resorted to firearms. Then a former Maidan activist named Ivan Bubenchyk, a native of Lviv, revealed in a 2016 interview that he was the one who fired the first fatal shots on the worst day of carnage, 20 February 2014, by killing two police officers from behind from an assault rifle.^{s5} He was protected by a blanket amnesty that the new authorities granted to the revolutionaries, but the mythologized version of the events lost some of its shine. The Euromaidan Revolution was beginning to look just like other revolutions - bloody and frenetic, combining the idealistic heroism of unarmed protesters with cold-blooded killings on both sides. Although the public did not reimagine the Heavenly Hundred's martyrdom, they were no longer exclusive representatives of the Euromaidan.

It also became increasingly clear that for a significant number of Ukrainian residents, especially in the eastern and southern oblasts, the myth of the Heavenly Hundred failed to provide a uniting, civic identity as citizens of a new, democratic Ukraine. In November 2014, 72 percent of the people polled in the Ukrainian-controlled areas of the Donbas considered the Euromaidan Revolution a "coup" engineered by the West or the Ukrainian opposition; 40 percent of respondents in the Ukrainian East outside the Donbas shared the same view.^{s6} In a 2019 nationwide poll, 28 percent of respondents affirmed their previous negative attitude to the revolution and 27 % stated their more recent disillusionment

^{s4} Sheremet, Pavel/ Musaieva, Sevgil: 'Serhii Horbatiuk: Meta ne tilky prytiahnuti vynnykh, a i ochystyty pravookhoronni orhany' ['Serhii Horbatiuk: the aim is not only to penalize the guilty, but also to purge the law enforcement organs'], in: *Ukrainska Pravda*. 22 February 2016, available at: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2016/02/22/7099895/> [12.12.2019]; 'GPU: Eksperdy identifitsirovali 24 puli iz tel ubitykh na Maidane' ['General Prosecutor's Office: the experts identified 24 bullets from the bodies of those killed on Maidan'], in: *Delovaya Stolitsa*. 10 February 2016, available at: <http://www.dsnews.ua/society/gpu-eksperdy-identifitsirovali-24-puli-iz-tel-ubityh-na-maydane-10022016065200> [12.12.2019].

^{s5} Siik, Ivan: 'Maidan Activist Ivan Bubenchyk: It's True, I Shot Them in the Back of the Head', in: *Bird in Flight*. 19 February 2016, available at: <https://birdinflight.com/world/maidan-activist-ivan-bubenchyk-it-s-true-i-shot-them-in-the-back-of-the-head.html> [12.12.2019].

^{s6} 'Richnytsia Maidanu - optyuvannia hromadskoi ta ekspertnoi dumky' 2014 [12.12.2019].

and their doubts that the Maidan had been necessary.⁵⁷ In contrast to the Heavenly Hundred, the opponents of the revolution constructed their own cult of hero martyrs - the forty-two pro-Russian protesters who died on 2 May 2014 in the fire at the Odessa Trade Union Building, which Ukrainian radical nationalists allegedly set on fire with the intent to burn them alive.⁵⁸ Because the Euromaidan empowered the public at large to define commemorative practices, regional differences could now create tensions between local practices and the national narrative of the Euromaidan Revolution.⁵⁹

Finally, as the war in the Donbas got underway, the cult of the Heavenly Hundred became supplemented by that of fallen soldiers serving in the regular army units and volunteer battalions. In a clear sign that the Alley was functioning as a sacred memorial space, some bodies were brought there for a public farewell ceremony, usually near the Independence Column across from the lower shrine. In the long run, the connection thus established between the Heavenly Hundred and Ukrainian war heroes was bound to privilege the latter because the ongoing war continued to generate their very own fallen heroes for all regions of Ukraine, with rows of fresh graves cropping up in cemeteries across the country. Monuments to Ukrainian soldiers began to be erected in the capital and various regions before the authorities could decide on a national memorial to the Heavenly Hundred.⁶⁰ When the highest-profile Ukrainian POW in this conflict, the female pilot Nadiia Savchenko, was released from a Russian prison, she paid her first visit not to the Alley, but to the graves of her fallen comrades at a Kyiv cemetery.⁶¹ Finally, in a very telling turn of events, some veterans of the Donbas war opened a

⁵⁷ Trapeznikova, Daria: 'Chy dopomozhe Muzei Revoliutsii Hidnosti zasvoity uroky neshchadavnoho mynuloho i zhurtuvaty hromadianske suspilstvo pered vyklykamy maibutnoho' [Will the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity help to learn the lessons of the recent past and to unite civil society before the challenges of the future?], in: *Den*. 19 April 2019, available at: <https://m.day.kyiv.ua/uk/article/den-ukrayiny/rozkol-po-liniyi-vidpovidalnosti> [12.12.2019].

⁵⁸ On this controversial and much-mythologized event, see Hale, Henry E / Shevel, Oxana / Onuch, Olga: 'Believing Facts in the Fog of War: Identity, Media and Hot Cognition in Ukraine's 2014 Odessa Tragedy', in: *Geopolitics* 2018/23 (4), p. 851-881; Richardson, Tanya: 'The Regional Life of Geopolitical Conflict: The Case of Odes(s)a Oblast', in: *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 2019/46 (3), p. 263-303.

⁵⁹ Zhurzhenko, Tatiana: 'Beyond Commemoration: Urban Representations of Ukraine's Unresolved Conflict' [unpublished paper].

⁶⁰ 'V Ukrayini vidkryly pershyi pamiatnyk voinam ATO' [In Ukraine, the first monument to ATO soldiers is opened!], in: *Ukrainska Pravda*. 20 March 2016, available at: <http://www.pra.vda.com.ua/news/2016/03/20/7102685/> [12.12.2019]; 'Statuia v chest dobrovoltsev' [Statue in honor of the volunteers], in: *Segodnia* 11 June 2016; 'Pamiatnik - sobiratelyniy obraz' [Monument - collective image], in: *Komsomolskaia Pravda v Ukraine* B July 2016/7.

⁶¹ Glukhov, Denis: 'Savchenko pobivala na kladbischche, gde pokhoroneny boitsy ATO' [Savchenko visited the cemetery where ATO soldiers are buried!], in: *Komsomolskaia Pravda v Ukraine*. 28 May 2016, available at: <http://kp.ua/politics/540589-savchenko-pobivala-na-kladbische-hde-pokhoroneny-boitsy-ato> [12.12.2019].

cafe decorated with patriotic and war-related paraphernalia in Kyiv's Trade Unions Building, still under renovations after being burned during the revolution - a business incursion into a memorial space previously considered sacreligious.⁶²

War heroes, however, are linked inseparably with their comrades-in-arms, both conscripted soldiers and fighters in volunteer battalions. As the war dragged on, stories of senior officers' incompetence and corruption blackened the army's image. The authorities had to disarm some volunteer battalions and incorporate others into the National Guard, but a number of former volunteers went on to commit violent crimes using their old service weapons. If the media coverage of such robberies and shootings harmed the image of volunteers at home, audiences abroad were concerned about the use of neo-Nazi symbols on the chevrons and banner of the Azov volunteer regiment.⁶³ The pro-Putin media had a field day connecting the entire Euromaidan Revolution and the Ukrainian army to Nazism, regardless of the extreme right's actual marginality in Ukrainian politics. As shown above, some former field commanders on the Ukrainian side sought careers in politics, trying to appropriate for their purposes not only the cult of war heroes, but that of the Heavenly Hundred as well. The greatest war hero created by the Ukrainian media, the Hero of Ukraine and parliamentarian Nadiia Savchenko, quickly lost much of her popularity after her return to the country in 2016, as a result of some misguided statements about the need for a dictatorship and her interest in becoming the head of state.⁶⁴

As the Ukrainian public evaluated with well-deserved skepticism the achievements of the country's new authorities and the rhetoric of various street politicians sporting army fatigues, the dead martyrs of the Heavenly Hundred reclaimed their significance as a symbolic resource. With its powerful religious overtones, their myth simultaneously referenced an inclusive civic project at the heart of the Euromaidan Revolution. Their memory could be mobilized as a legitimating tool by the government, but civil society could just as easily hold the authorities responsible for betraying the ideals of democracy and transparency that the society-at-large inscribed onto the memory of the Heavenly Hundred.

⁶² 'Biznes vs pamiat. Skandal z kafe Karate! bilia Budynku profspilok' [Business vs memory. The scandal with Karate! cafe next to the Building of Trade Unions], in: *Korrespondent*. 20 April 2016, available at: <http://ua.korrespondent.net/business/economics/3671875-biznes-vs-pamiat-skandal-z-kafe-karatel-bilia-budynku-profspilok> [12.12.2019].

⁶³ Umland, Andreas: 'Ukrainski dobrovolchi bataliony i polk "Azov"' [Ukrainian volunteer battalions and Azov regiment], in: *Krytyka* 2015/11-12, p. 2-11.

⁶⁴ 'Savchenko kazhe, shcho musy staty prezydентom i ne vykliuchiae dyktatuyr' [Savchenko says she must become a president and the dictatorship is not ruled out!], in: *Ukrainska Pravda*. 23 July 2016, available at: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/07/23/7115707/> [12.12.2019].

Like countless dead national heroes before them, the case of the Heavenly Hundred demonstrates that it is the survivors and beneficiaries of the revolution who invest its martyrs with symbolic meaning. For the Heavenly Hundred, becoming the symbol of the Euromaidan meant the erasure of their individual regional, linguistic, and political characteristics - especially the participation of some in right-wing militarized groups - and retroactive investment with supra-ethnic civilian engagement as the new article of faith. Yet, the Heavenly Hundred's commemoration as civilian martyrs representing the society at large broke the previous Ukrainian tradition of ethnic martyrdom. It also positioned civil society as the primary custodian of their memory and the values of the revolution.

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