

## Ukraine's disputes over the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre

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On 29 September 2021 and 6 October 2021 two competing ceremonies were held in Kyiv to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre at Babi Yar, where Kyiv Jews and representatives of other ethnic and political groups were exterminated. No comprehensive commemoration of these crimes was offered, either during the Soviet era or in the last 30 years of Ukraine's independence. It was only in recent years that two projects to commemorate the Babi Yar massacre emerged. However, a sharp dispute between their initiators is ongoing. The first project, proposed by the Academy of Sciences and supported by 'patriotic' groups, presents the Holocaust against the backdrop of the martyrdom of other nations, and views Ukraine as a victim of two totalitarian systems. The other project, which is a private initiative, focuses on commemorating the genocide of the Jews on Ukrainian soil. However, this one has sparked controversy mainly due to the involvement in it of sponsors and contributors from Russia. This project has received backing from both the Ukrainian and Israeli governments due to its advanced stage of implementation, its cutting-edge design and its focus on Holocaust.

The dispute over the Babi Yar massacre goes beyond historical issues. It has become a tool in the political fight between the camp of President Volodymyr Zelensky and that of his predecessor Petro Poroshenko, a field of personal conflicts as well as the clash of different models of remembrance. The contentious issues include Ukrainian nationalists' collaboration with Nazi Germany, which the private project raises, and the involvement of Russian individuals in the initiative, which enables them to influence Ukraine's politics of memory. As a consequence, an important project, which has the potential to both shape domestic debates about the past and affect the perception of Ukraine abroad, is being devised without the participation of the state, which – at least at this stage – has abandoned any active policy in this area.

### The history of the Babi Yar massacre and its place in Ukraine's politics of memory

On 29–30 September 1941, German soldiers with the assistance of local police killed almost 34,000 urban residents of Jewish origin in the Babi Yar ravine located on the outskirts of Kyiv.<sup>1</sup> Although the

<sup>1</sup> See K.C. Berkhoff, 'Babi Yar', *SciencesPo*, 27 May 2015, [sciencespo.fr](http://sciencespo.fr); *The Babi Yar massacre*, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, August 2021, [hmd.org.uk](http://hmd.org.uk).



site is mainly associated with the mass murder of Jews, back in the 1930s it also served as a burial place for victims of the Holodomor and of acts of repression perpetrated by the NKVD. In 1941–3, aside from Jews, Ukrainians killed by German soldiers, including members of nationalist organisations, people of Romani origin, Communists, prisoners of war and others were buried there. The total number of individuals buried there is estimated at around 100,000, with Jews accounting for the majority of them. The most recent chapter in the tragic history of this site – the so-called Kurenivka disaster – happened in 1961. In an attempt to erase the memory of the crimes perpetrated there, the Soviet authorities repeatedly dumped industrial waste from a nearby brick factory in the Babi Yar ravine; this caused a disastrous mudslide that killed 1500 city residents.

Efforts to erase the memory of the Holocaust, including the Babi Yar massacre, continued until the final years of the USSR's existence. Having themselves launched several anti-Semitic campaigns after

**” Efforts to erase the memory of the crimes committed at Babi Yar continued until the end of the USSR's existence. The USSR placed the Holocaust in the broader context of the 'genocide of the Soviet nation'.**

World War II, the Soviet authorities attempted to conceal the fact that Nazi Germany's policy had targeted not only Communism but also Jews – a nationality that suffered more than others as a result of the war.<sup>2</sup> In the Soviet era, the Holocaust was deliberately presented as an element of a greater crime, i.e. the genocide of the Soviet nation, and in sites of the mass murders of Jews monuments were built to commemorate 'murdered Soviet citizens'. The 1961 mudslide at Babi Yar caused certain changes to the landscape resulting in the elimination of the ravine, which became the culmination of the process of erasing the events at Babi Yar from the collective memory. The knowledge of this place's tragic history was only spread through unofficial channels – in samizdat, family stories and grassroots initiatives.

It was only on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre (and one month following Ukraine's declaration of independence) that Leonid Kravchuk, then speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, admitted during a ceremony at Babi Yar that Jews had been the main victims of Nazi Germany. In addition, he apologised to the Jewish nation on behalf of the Ukrainian people for the crimes it had suffered, and admitted that some Ukrainians were also involved in these crimes. However, in the following years no single large state-sponsored memorial was built to commemorate the crimes committed at Babi Yar. The mental legacy of the Soviet politics of memory proved to be quite persistent and took a long time to be deconstructed. Moreover, in their initiatives, successive Ukrainian governments failed to consider the issue of the Holocaust as a priority: instead, they focused on the commemoration of the Holodomor, on de-Communisation, and on recognition of Ukrainian nationalist organisations and their role in history. There was no political will to reveal the darker episodes in Ukraine's WWII history, or to hold debates based on reliable historical research on the anti-Semitic attitudes held by Ukrainian citizens and members of nationalist organisations, and their collaboration with Nazi Germany. The extent of Ukrainian historiography in this field is limited; these issues are mainly studied by foreign researchers and Ukrainian historians living abroad, some of whom have links with nationalist organisations.

Although after 2000 several projects focused on commemorating the Babi Yar massacre were proposed – including one submitted by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (in 2001–3) and another one proposed by businessmen Ihor Kolomoysky and Vadym Rabinovych (in 2011) – none of them has borne fruit, due to the lack of political support and being blocked by other Jewish

<sup>2</sup> 'Historian Timothy Snyder: Babi Yar A Tragedy For All Ukrainians', RFE/RL, 29 September 2016, rferl.org.

organisations.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, Kolomoysky opened the Menorah centre in Dnipropetrovsk (now Dnipro), which in a sense replaced his proposed commemoration project. Menorah includes Ukraine's only – and, which is important, privately-owned – Holocaust Museum, as well as a synagogue, business, educational and cultural facilities.

For many years, the only object commemorating the tragic events at Babi Yar was the monument 'to the murdered Soviet citizens, prisoners of war and Red Army officers' erected in 1976. Following the collapse of the USSR, around 30 smaller monuments were built there to honour victims belonging to specific ethnic or political groups. In 2007, ownership of a major portion of the site was transferred to the Babi Yar National Historical Memorial Reservation supervised by the Ministry of Culture. However, this institution's activity has proved to be purely symbolic, due to insufficient funding. The legal and ownership situation of the site as a whole remains complicated: its administrators include around fifteen entities with vague legal statuses, including a sports centre and a shooting range. Most of the site is arranged as a park, and serves as a popular strolling area for local residents.

## The competing concepts for commemorating the Babi Yar massacre

It was only in recent years that two projects involving comprehensive concepts for the commemoration of the Babi Yar massacre have been put forward. At the same time, a sharp dispute has flared up between the two groups which proposed these projects over their historical-ideological and political aspects, as well as certain personal issues.

### 1. The 'state-sponsored' project

The first project was devised in 2017, during the presidency of Petro Poroshenko. It was developed under the aegis of the Institute of the History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in collaboration with the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory and other institutions. Its authors consistently refer to it as a 'state project'. A detailed concept of the project was revealed in 2019.<sup>4</sup> It presented the tragic events at Babi Yar in a broad perspective which was not limited to the mass murder of Jews; instead, the Holocaust was discussed in the broader context of the martyrdom of representatives of various nationalities and political affiliations. The project presented Ukraine as a victim of two totalitarian systems, the German and the Soviet one. However, it avoided any assessment of the collaboration between Ukrainian forces and Nazi Germany. The authors emphasised that making generalised judgements regarding this issue was not recommended, and that each event should be analysed separately.

This project is supported by some historians and museologists, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, as well as several Jewish organisations including the Association of Jewish Organisations and Communities of Ukraine (VAAD) and its head Yosyf Zisels, a former Soviet dissident. The project has never entered the implementation stage, and has remained at the conceptual stage, even though 27 million hryvnias (around US\$ 1 million) were earmarked for its implementation in the state budget in 2017.<sup>5</sup> The likely reason for this is that it no longer enjoyed political support following Poroshenko's defeat in the 2019 presidential election. At present, the project's authors and supporters are active in the media, although their statements are often focused not so much on commemorating the victims of the Babi Yar massacre but on offering sharp criticism of the competing concept.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See Л. Величко, 'Гроші на пам'ять', ЛІГА.net, 24 July 2021, liga.net; Y. Zisels, 'What is Happening around Babyn Yar Today?', Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, 4 September 2018, khpg.org/en.

<sup>4</sup> Концепція комплексної меморіалізації Бабиного Яру з розширенням меж національного історико-меморіального заповідника «Бабин Яр», Київ 2019, babynyar.gov.ua.

<sup>5</sup> 'What is Happening around Babyn Yar Today?', *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> See В. Хітерер, 'Меморіальний Центр Голокосту "Бабин Яр": що не так із критикою майбутнього меморіалу?', Українська правда, 18 August 2020, pravda.com.ua.

## 2. The private project

The other project – which in the Ukrainian media is often referred to as the ‘Russian’ project – was initiated by Mikhail Fridman and German Khan, Russian oligarchs of Jewish origin who were born in Soviet Ukraine. In 2016, they established the Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Centre (BYHMC) which is mainly intended to commemorate the extermination of Jews from Kyiv, one of the stages of the so-called ‘Holocaust by bullets’.<sup>7</sup> Aside from commemorating the martyrdom of these Jews, this project is intended to reflect on the attitudes of Ukrainian society and nationalist organisations during the Nazi German occupation. The concept envisages the creation of a large complex combining museums, research activities, educational and archival studies, modelled on Yad Vashem. It is to include museums commemorating all the victims of the Babi Yar massacre and the Kurenivka disaster (in this way the creators of this project acknowledged some of the ideas voiced by the supporters of the competing project).<sup>8</sup> The authors have decided to use innovative visitor interaction methods and cutting-edge multimedia technologies. The project was heralded by the ‘Babi Yar. Context’ documentary, directed by Sergei Loznitsa, which received the Special Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival.

The project’s implementation is to be completed in 2023, and the total value of the investment is estimated at US\$ 100 million. The project’s initiators made sure that 50% of the cost should formally be covered by Ukrainian citizens (the oligarchs Viktor Pinchuk and Pavlo Fuks, and the former boxer Volodymyr Klitschko), 49% by citizens of Russia and Israel (Fridman and Khan), and 1% by a US citizen (Ronald Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress).<sup>9</sup> Due to the initiators’ assets and contacts (Fridman and Khan have been active worldwide philanthropists for years), their project was joined by prominent politicians, renowned Holocaust researchers from several countries, and world-famous artists. In addition, the project has received backing (at the request of the President’s office, according to media reports) from the majority of Ukrainian Jewish organisations, including those linked with oligarchs.

” **The first concept for commemorating the victims of the Babi Yar massacre focuses on the extermination of Jews from Kyiv, while the other presents the Holocaust in the broader context of the martyrdom of various nationalities and political affiliations.**

## The competing celebrations

Separate anniversary celebrations have become one of the manifestations of the dispute over Babi Yar. The main celebrations organised by the state took place on 6 October 2021 (in order to enable Jewish guests to attend the ceremony, they were postponed from 29 September, as that date fell on a series of Jewish holidays). The event was attended by the presidents of Ukraine, Israel and Germany, as well as speakers of parliaments of several states. The ceremony was held at the BYHMC, making the Centre a co-host of the celebrations, and confirming its key role in the efforts to commemorate the Babi Yar tragedy.

The representatives of the ‘state’ concept, including the Institute of National Memory and the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, held their celebrations on 29–30 September, i.e. on the massacre’s anniversary. Most of the proponents of the ‘state’ concept failed to attend the ceremony at Babi Yar, and some of them only honoured the anniversary by posting

<sup>7</sup> This term refers to the initial stage of the extermination of Jews, i.e. the mass shootings which started when Nazi Germany attacked the USSR in 1941. See P. Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*, St Martin’s Griffin, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Creative concept of the Memorial’, Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Center, [babyar.org/en](http://babyar.org/en).

<sup>9</sup> ‘Гроші на пам’ять...’, *op. cit.*

commemorative messages on social media. President Zelensky, for his part, did visit Babi Yar and took part in a small separate ceremony. A special lesson focused on the history of this crime was held in Ukrainian schools on that day.

### The political aspect of the conflict over Babi Yar...

In July 2020, President Zelensky publicly came out in support of the BYHMC project, and Andriy Yermak, head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, was appointed as a member of the initiative's supervisory board. In addition, the project received backing from Kyiv's mayor Vitaly Klitschko. The support offered by the authorities was most likely due to the project's grand scale and advanced implementation, the fact that it did not need any funding from the state budget, and the involvement of world-famous artists, prominent figures and former heads of state in its activities. For Zelensky, several of whose family members perished in the Holocaust, this support likely had a partly personal aspect. He also found the project attractive due to its modern, multimedia form of commemorating the victims, developed by world-famous visual artists, and by its publicity abroad. Soon, the president began to 'privatise' the project's success: during his recent visit to the United States he emphasised that this memorial is being built under his government.

The authorities' actions have mobilised the opponents of the BYHMC, including the group affiliated with former President Poroshenko, who used issues related to the Babi Yar

**” The involvement of Russian oligarchs in the Babi Yar commemoration project triggers the potential risk of Russia interfering in the sensitive realm of Ukraine's politics of memory.**

tragedy as a tool in their political attack on Zelensky. Although they were right to emphasise the state's failure to take active steps to shape Ukraine's politics of memory, their reservations also included inflated accusations suggesting that Zelensky is serving the Putin regime. The project has been referred to as an instrument of hybrid war, and as Putin's Trojan horse, intended to discredit Ukraine on the international stage and to promote the image of Ukrainians as anti-Semites, nationalists and fascists.<sup>10</sup>

### ...and the risks associated with it

Although these accusations are largely motivated by the ongoing political fight, the criticism of the involvement of Russian oligarchs in this pivotal project relating to Ukrainian historical memory is far from irrational, especially in the context of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, and Ukraine's efforts focused on de-Communistation, de-Russification and its emancipation from Russia. Although Fridman and Khan are not among Putin's close collaborators, they are linked to the Russian ruling elite by a number of political and business initiatives.<sup>11</sup> This triggers the risk of Russia's interference in both the memorial's project and in the sensitive realm of Ukraine's politics of memory.

At present, it is difficult to tell what the overall narrative offered by the Memorial Centre will be like. One hint may lie in Loznitsa's documentary, created under the aegis of the BYHMC. One element in

<sup>10</sup> See 'Трагедія Бабиного Яру – це частина української історичної пам'яті', *День*, 3 September 2020, [day.kyiv.ua](http://day.kyiv.ua); 'Приватний проєкт меморіалізації Бабиного Яру є «троянським конем» Путіна – Зісельс', *Укрінформ*, 25 January 2021, [ukrinform.ua](http://ukrinform.ua).

<sup>11</sup> See I. Zaslavskiy, 'Mikhail Fridman, Pyotr Aven, German Khan, and their connections to the Kremlin and the FSB', *Underminers*, 21 May 2018, [underminers.info](http://underminers.info). Despite the fact that Fridman's business empire was built in the 1990s (i.e. before Putin came to power), which was also the peak of his political influence, since 2000 he has had to take the Kremlin's demands into account. Alfa Bank offered loans to state-controlled companies operating in strategic sectors, including the Uralvagonzavod tank factory. Although the loan offered to this company had been spent several years before Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the tanks and flamethrower systems it produced were sent to the Donbas post-2014. See M. Крутов, 'Не только танки. «Эксклюзивное» российское оружие в Донбассе', *Радио Свобода*, 19 August 2019, [svoboda.org](http://svoboda.org).

this film that may seem convergent with Russia's historical policy is the fact that its account of the history of World War II starts in 1941, and omits the previous Soviet-Nazi collaboration. Another such element is the film's opening scenes showing residents of Ukrainian cities giving a warm welcome to German troops, which would seem to require a historical context concerning Ukraine's previous Soviet occupation. At the same time, both the documentary and the achievements of the BYHMC thus far have clear anti-totalitarian overtones, and emphasise the tragedy of the war and the plight of human beings as its victims. This makes them fundamentally different from Russia's politics of memory, which is centred around the state as the subject of the fight and the resulting victory, and overshadows the tragedy of the victims.

### The dispute's personal aspects

The wave of criticism focusing on the BYHMC seems to be motivated by certain personal aspects as well. During its conceptual stage, the project received support from Ukraine's then government, including President Poroshenko, who attended its presentation back in 2016. Prior to taking his present post, the head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, Anton Drobovych, worked as the project's manager responsible for educational programmes. Back in 2015, Yosyf Zisels, who at present is a fervent opponent of the project, asked Fridman to support a project involving the establishment of a Jewish museum in Lviv, to no avail.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that since the 1990s Fridman and Khan have been involved in numerous philanthropy and cultural projects in several countries, including in Ukraine (Fridman is the initiator and sponsor of the Leopold Jazz Fest in his home town of Lviv, among other projects).

This criticism increased when Poroshenko's camp lost power and this group's representatives were no longer involved in the project. The criticism also targeted the project's artistic director Ilya Khrzhanovsky, a recognised, although controver-

**” Because the current Ukrainian government has abandoned any attempt to shape the country's politics of memory, in the coming years the leading part – in particular regarding the Holocaust in Ukraine – will be played by the private project in which investors and contributors from Russia are involved.**

sial, film director born in Moscow, who has emphasised the personal and family-related aspects of his mission (his mother is a descendant of a Jewish family from Vinnytsia). He was accused of attempting to create Disneyland-style memorials at Babi Yar, and of wanting to build installations 'on the bones', i.e. at the places where the victims of the Babi Yar massacre were buried, and in cemeteries which had existed there since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The criticism did not subside even when Khrzhanovsky withdrew his controversial ideas for commemoration, or when the results of a land survey were published and consent was obtained from the local rabbinate to build these facilities. This suggests that the criticism may actually be motivated by the project's success and publicity, not to mention the very fact that it is being implemented, whereas the competing project remains at the conceptual stage.

### The dispute's historical aspects

The dispute over Babi Yar is taking place in the realm of historical memory as well. The main line of division is between the groups supporting the view that Ukraine should be considered a 'victim of two totalitarian systems' and the proponents of the concept focusing on the Holocaust, viewing Ukrainian society and the nationalist organisations as either victims or perpetrators of crimes, depending on the context. In these disputes, one particularly contentious issue involves the assessment of the activities of

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<sup>12</sup> 'Гроші на пам'ять...', *op. cit.*

the OUN-UPA, of the anti-Semitic attitudes promoted by these organisations, and of their involvement in collaboration with the Nazis, motivated by their hope to restore an independent Ukrainian state.<sup>13</sup>

Since 2005 (i.e. during Viktor Yushchenko's presidency), recognition of the OUN-UPA's role in the fight for Ukraine's independence became an element of the process of shaping Ukrainian awareness and national identity, which is distinct from the Russian one. The importance of this role increased post-2014. Groups that support this view tend to adopt a selective and uncritical vision of the OUN-UPA's activities, and to emphasise their members' martyrdom and pro-independence ambitions, while frequently refusing to acknowledge certain incriminating facts. These groups react negatively to any attempts to start a debate on the crimes perpetrated by these organisations, which is the reason behind the patriotic groups' outrage in response to reports that Loznitsa's above-mentioned documentary contains references to the OUN-UPA's collaboration with Nazi Germany.

## Public attitudes towards the Babi Yar massacre and Jewish issues

The dispute over the strategy for commemorating the Babi Yar massacre is of little interest to Ukrainian society at large. A recent poll has shown that a mere 55% of the respondents were able to state the exact location of Babi Yar (i.e. Kyiv). When asked about the identity of the victims, 37.5% of the individuals surveyed replied that these were 'people of various nationalities', 27% that they were 'Ukrainian Jews', 14% 'victims of totalitarian regimes, German and Soviet', and 11% 'Soviet citizens'.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the events of recent years confirm that Jewish issues form an integral, neutral element of Ukraine's everyday life. Research shows that Ukraine has the friendliest attitude towards Jews compared with other countries in the region,<sup>15</sup> and the number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in Ukraine in recent years is insignificant.<sup>16</sup> This is reflected in the country's political developments: a candidate of Jewish origin won the 2019 presidential election by a landslide. It was frequently emphasised that Ukraine has become the only country (aside from Israel) in which both the president and the prime minister were individuals of Jewish origin: Volodymyr Zelensky and Volodymyr Hroysman.

Further proof of the country's neutral attitude to this issue is the fact that Zelensky's ethnic background was not an issue in his electoral campaign. Zelensky himself assessed the level of anti-Semitism in Ukraine as very low, which makes the present situation different from the Soviet era. A similar opinion has been voiced by representatives of Ukraine's Jewish organisations.<sup>17</sup> Influential and popular figures in Ukraine's political, business, media and cultural life include many individuals of Jewish origin.<sup>18</sup> The partly humorous term 'жидобандерівці' [roughly 'Jewish Banderites', supporters of the iconic nationalist ideologist Stepan Bandera], coined in Ukraine, became popular following Russia's 2014 aggression against this country, when many Ukrainian Jews took part in the country's defence in the Donbas and became involved in close cooperation with representatives of nationalist organisations. In September 2021, the Ukrainian parliament passed a law on preventing anti-Semitism, which was in line with the standards set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), and has been recommended by the European Union to its member states and to countries aspiring to EU membership.

<sup>13</sup> See Г. Касьянов, 'Еврейский вопрос. Почему Бабий яр 80 лет спустя остается территорией войны идей и смыслов', Фокус, 29 September 2021, focus.ua.

<sup>14</sup> 'Що думають українці про вшанування загиблих у Бабиному Яру', Фонд «Демократичні ініціативи» ім. Ілька Кучеріва, 9 July 2021, dif.org.ua.

<sup>15</sup> D. Masci, 'Most Poles accept Jews as fellow citizens and neighbors, but a minority do not', Pew Research Center, 28 March 2018, pewresearch.org.

<sup>16</sup> *Freedom House Annual Report on Hate Crimes in Ukraine, 2020*, Freedom House, freedomhouse.org.

<sup>17</sup> 'Рівень антисемітизму в Україні менше, ніж в європейських країнах – спікер єврейської громади Києва', LB.ua, 1 June 2021, lb.ua.

<sup>18</sup> A. Balcer, 'Wielokulturowe elity i obywatelska tożsamość narodowa niepodległej Ukrainy', The Batory Foundation, 9 September 2021, batory.org.pl.

## Is Ukraine facing a debate on its difficult history?

In the rivalry between the two competing concepts for commemorating the Babi Yar massacre, the Holocaust Memorial Centre, which is being dynamically developed, has now seized the initiative. Because the Ukrainian government has effectively abandoned any attempt to shape the country's politics of memory, in the coming years the leading part – in particular regarding the issue of the Holocaust in Ukraine – will be played by the private project, in which the state has no formal involvement. The fact that this project is independent of the state triggers a potential risk that Russia may attempt to stoke Ukraine's internal disputes over the country's past, to steer the narrative on the Holocaust, and to propagate Ukraine's image abroad in line with the intentions of the Russian leadership, i.e. as a 'country of Hitler's collaborators'.

Ukraine's image worldwide may also be affected by the attitude of the state of Israel: it has expressed satisfaction with the Memorial Centre's establishment, but it has consistently opposed 'equalling' non-Jewish victims with the victims of the Holocaust (which is part of Israel's Holocaust remembrance policy), and urged Ukraine to launch a comprehensive debate on the Holocaust, including on the attitudes which encouraged Ukrainian citizens to collaborate with the Nazis. In this context, the BYHMC is filling a major gap in Ukraine's politics of memory pursued thus far, which used to focus on presenting Ukraine's tragedy in a more general context as a victim of two totalitarian systems, and on recognising the role of nationalist organisations in the fight for independence. Ukraine's historiography has achieved little with respect to any nationwide remembrance of Holocaust which would offer a critical analysis of, for example, collaborationist attitudes within society and the involvement of nationalist organisations in the crimes targeting the Jewish population. However, the disputes over the BYHMC, combined with the attractive, modern form of this memorial centre, may contribute to increased awareness of Holocaust-related issues and encourage researchers to launch historical studies, to reflect on Ukrainian society's wartime attitudes, and to organise a substantive debate on these attitudes – both the heroic and the disgraceful ones. However, it should be expected that this process will be turbulent and long-lasting.