

# Academics Executed on the Wulecki Hills in L'viv: From a Local Wartime Crime to a Translocal Memory Event

Eleonora Narvselius and Igor Pietraszewski

## Contentious Historical Legacies of the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland in the Twentieth Century

Less than a hundred years ago, the ethnic landscape of the former Habsburg province of Galicia, whose territory is now divided between Poland and Ukraine, underwent sweeping changes. For almost six centuries before the outbreak of WWII, Poles and Jews used to dominate the demographics of many Galician urban settings. The city of Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv, home to one of the oldest east-central European universities, was claimed by Poles, Jews, and Ruthenians/Ukrainians as their cultural metropole.<sup>1</sup> Despite perpetual tensions among the three main population groups, the city and the region did not experience episodes of shocking violence with strong ethnic overtones until the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

In the wake of the Soviet repressions in 1939–41, the exterminatory policies of the Nazis in 1941–44, and the postwar population exchanges, the demographic composition of the city changed drastically. Nevertheless, even being stripped of its pre-war Jewish and Polish populations, distinct local genealogies of the region were persevered in various postwar contexts due to the continuing, although restricted, cross-border circulation of ideas, people, and goods within eastern Europe and between east and west.<sup>3</sup> Gradually, fragmentary links with prewar cultural diversity could be retrieved behind the backdrop of Soviet or “real socialist” ideological conventions. With the end of the Soviet system, Poles and Ukrainians managed to quickly establish partner relationships on high political levels. In tandem with this, a dialogue was launched about the troubled history, which resulted in several important

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1. In the German-speaking parts of Europe the city is still known as Lemberg. The authors call it by its Polish name, Lwów, when referring to the interwar years or to the Polish academicians whose careers were built then. The Ukrainian name, L'viv, indicates the postwar period comprising the Soviet decades and Ukraine's independence.

2. Christoph Mick, *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914–1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City* (West Lafayette, Ind., 2016), 1–2.

3. On the Iron Curtain turning to a permeable “Nylon Curtain” see György Péteri, “Nylon Curtain—Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe,” *Slavonica* 10, no. 2 (July 2004): 113–23.

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commemorative initiatives cutting across the confessional and political lines of division.<sup>4</sup> In the new millennium, however, Polish-Ukrainian relations have been affected by increasing confrontation in the domain of history politics.<sup>5</sup>

As unresolved memory conflicts affect both societies, public efforts to come to grips with contentious historical legacies continue. They have been well in line with the idea that “memory must become an object of public policy after communal violence.”<sup>6</sup> To scrutinize how this dictum is achieved in practice, this study zooms into multiple contexts of remembrance of one resonant wartime crime that eventually became publicly-commemorated due to contacts and exchanges between various memory actors. We also highlight a transformed quality of commemoration that morphed from local to translocal. Although it was tempting to use the more conventional term “transnational,” we presume that “translocal” is more accurate in this context, as it does not only refer to processes and phenomena transcending the boundaries of national states, but also lays a particular emphasis on networks and interactions that bypass state institutions.<sup>7</sup> It also makes sense to distinguish between translocal and “transcultural.” Translocal better conveys the idea of entanglements between localities whose populations, even separated by significant distances and state borders, tend to maintain dense contacts underpinned not so much by common cultural affinities as by ideas about shared personal genealogies and similar historical destiny.

This study thus explores how one local historical occurrence, namely the murder of a group of renowned Polish academics under the Nazi occupation of Lwów/L'viv, evolved into a translocal commemorative project underpinned by heterogeneous claims on truth, originality, and identity.<sup>8</sup> This case may also serve as an apt illustration of the difficulty of figuring out consensual

4. Among them is the inaugural of the restored Pantheon of the Defenders of Lwów, also known as Cemetery of the Lwów Eaglets, in 2005.

5. See Grzegorz Motyka, *Wołyń'43: Ludobójcza czystka-fakty, analogie, polityka historyczna* (Kraków, 2016); Georgiy Kasianov, “Burden of the Past: The Ukrainian-Polish Conflict of 1943/44 in Contemporary Public, Academic and Political Debates in Ukraine and Poland,” *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 19 no. 3–4 (December 2006), 247–59; Eleonora Narvselius, “Tragic Past, Agreeable Heritage: Post-Soviet Intellectual Discussions on the Polish Legacy in Western Ukraine,” *Carl Beck Papers*, no. 2403 (2015), 1–76.

6. John D. Brewer, “Memory, Truth and Victimhood in Post-Trauma Societies,” in Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (London, 2006), 214. So far, studies of “mnemonic reconciliations” have resulted in many interesting research findings; see, for example, Michael H. Bernhard and Jan Kubik, eds., *Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration* (New York, 2014), 13; Elin Skaar, Siri Gloppen, and Astri Suhrke, eds., *Roads to Reconciliation: Conflict and Dialogue in the Twenty-First Century* (Abingdon, Oxon, 2005); Kristin Leigh Kopp and Johanna Nizynska, eds., *Germany, Poland and Postmemorial Relations: In Search of a Livable Past* (New York, 2012); Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, ed., *Whose Memory? Which Future? Remembering Ethnic Cleansing and Lost Cultural Diversity in Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe* (New York, 2016).

7. Clemens Greiner and Patrick Sakdapolrak, “Translocality: Concepts, Applications and Emerging Research Perspectives,” *Geography Compass* 7, no. 5 (May 2013): 373–80.

8. Uilleam Blacker and Alexander Etkind, “Introduction,” in Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, Julie Fedor, eds., *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe* (New York, 2013), 6.

grammars of commemoration in the east European borderlands, permeated by not always easily-detectable capillary links of historical affinity and conflict. Surprising twists of memory about the murdered academics indicate the existence of a negotiated and highly-contested terrain of meaning within which a range of options is possible, depending not only on ideological dictates and state symbolic politics, but also—and sometimes primarily—on the inclinations and priorities of smaller actors. In what follows, we focus on agency and rhetoric of those actors and milieus that have defined core messages of the memory event in question. In conclusion, we point out the principal lessons pertaining to the commemoration of perished populations of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland that can be drawn from the discussed case.

### Execution on the Wulecki Hills as a Historical Event: Riddles and Ambivalence

The morphing of historic occurrences into historical events and commemorative projects is seldom a linear and predictable process.<sup>9</sup> Cases of politically- and ideologically-motivated assassination are especially instructive in this respect. That the murder of a specific group of the Polish intelligentsia in June 1941 turned into an event charged with potent symbolism is partly the effect of all the unanswered questions and contradictory pieces of evidence that create a perfect ground for rumors and speculations.<sup>10</sup> This particular crime has also been inscribed into fractured and contradictory commemorative contexts, which makes establishment of its consensual interpretation quite a problematic enterprise. The death of several dozen people may seem as a relatively insignificant loss against the background of fourteen million victims of the deliberate killing policies of the Nazis and Soviets in the “bloodlands.”<sup>11</sup> However, as a memory event, the case of the Lwów professors, similarly to *Sonderaktion Krakau*, has been singled out from other operations targeting Polish elites.<sup>12</sup> Representing the dynamics of multidirectional memory,<sup>13</sup> in

9. Marek Tamm, ed., *Afterlife of Events: Perspectives on Mnemohistory* (Basingstoke, Eng., 2015), 4.

10. No written arrest warrant or order about the execution has ever been found, see Andrii Bolianovs'kyi, *Ubyvstvo pol's'kykh uchenykh u L'vovi v lypni 1941 roku: Fakty, mify, rozsliduvannia* (L'viv, 2011), 23. Also, no perpetrators have been sentenced or imprisoned for this particular crime. The case was heard at the International Tribunal in Nuremberg in 1946 and then reopened in Germany and Poland, but it became practically impossible to sentence the perpetrators. See Dieter Schenk, *Noc morderców: Kaźń polskich profesorów we Lwowie i holokaust w Galicji Wschodniej* (Kraków, 2011), 9–18; 307–72 [translation from German: Dieter Schenk, *Der Lemberger Professorenmord und der Holocaust in Ostgalizien* (Bonn, 2007)]; Zygmunt Albert, *Kaźń profesorów lwowskich: Lipiec 1941* (Wrocław, 1989), 130–31; Bolianovs'kyi, *Ubyvstvo*, 63; Ołia Hnatiuk, *Vidvaha i strakh* (Kyiv, 2015), 50.

11. Timothy D. Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, 2010), 411.

12. *Intelligenzaktion* started in the fall of 1939 after the military defeat of Poland, see Anna Meier, *Die Intelligenzaktion: Die Vernichtung der polnischen Oberschicht im Gau Danzig-Westpreußen* (Saarbrücken, 2008). A similar operation, *AB Aktion*, took place in 1940 in the General Government.

13. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, 2009).

various contexts it has been entangled with—and sometimes, in effect, also obscured—such topics as the Holocaust, wartime massacres in Volhynia and Galicia, Sovietization of the occupied eastern Polish lands, and Polonization of the Recovered Lands.

It has been established beyond any doubt that on the night of July 3–4, 1941, an Einsatzkommando led by SS-Brigadeführer Eberhard Schöngarth shot to death a group of prominent academics on the Wulecki Hills (in Polish, *Wzgórza Wuleckie*), close to the city center of L'viv/Lwów. The massacre was observed by terrified dwellers of several houses in the vicinity. The oft-cited number of victims is forty-five.<sup>14</sup> Among the executed were five women. Among the males were twenty three professors, many of them figures of international renown affiliated with the L'viv Medical Institute, the University, the Polytechnics, the Zoo-Veterinary Institute, and the city hospital. Professors of medicine and physicians were the largest group, followed by scientists from the Polytechnics. Among the victims was also one priest, a doctor of theology.

The execution was a continuation of the large-scale extermination campaign targeting the Polish intelligentsia. Two years earlier, in November 1939, 183 employees of the Jagiellonian University were arrested and transported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the aftermath of *Sonderaktion Krakau*.<sup>15</sup> Compared to Kraków, however, a significantly smaller group of academics was singled out during the first days of the Nazi occupation of L'viv. The question why exactly these individuals were selected for the massacre looms large both in the historical quest and in commemorative contexts. Historical studies suggest several possible explanations that add more details to the portrait of the perpetrators and draw attention to the victims.

A crucial reason for distinguishing this small group might be their alleged co-operation with the Soviet authorities.<sup>16</sup> The former prime minis-

14. Józef Krętosz, "Likwidacja kadry naukowej Lwowa w lipcu 1941 roku," w Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz, Alicja Ratuszna i Ewa Żurawska, eds., *Niezwykła więź Kresów Wschodnich i Zachodnich: Wpływ lwowian na rozwój nauki i kultury na Górnym Śląsku po 1945 roku* (Katowice, 2012), 17–18; Bolyanovs'kyi, *Ubyvstvo pol's'kykh uchenykh*, 144–45; Schenk, *Noc morderców*; Jan Draus, *Uniwersytet Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie 1918–1946: Portret kresowej uczelni* (Kraków, 2007), 110–17. On losses of the Lwów academy from the Nazi and Soviet repressions, see the mentioned book by Draus, and also Adam Redzik, "Uniwersytet Lwowski w latach 1939–1946," in Adam Redzik, Roman Duda, Marian Mudry et al., *Academia Militans: Uniwersytet Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie* (Kraków, 2017), 984–89, 1032–52; Krętosz "Likwidacja kadry naukowej," 13–14; Tadeusz Skarzyński, *Martyrologia, straty wojenne i okupacyjne środowiska Politechniki Lwowskiej (1918–1945)*, in *Politechnika Lwowska macierz polskich politechnik. Materiały konferencji naukowej*, Wrocław, September, 25–26 (Wrocław, 1995), 137–77.

15. The survivors were released after international protests. However, the course of action was different in L'viv, as Governor-General Hans Frank made it clear that he did not want to repeat the "mistake" made in Kraków (Redzik, "Uniwersytet Lwowski," 1032). Aside from the murder on the Wulecki Hills and extermination of Jewish academics by the fall of 1943, the L'viv academia was decimated in other ways. All in all, L'viv lost 91% professors of medicine, 36.4% of natural sciences, 33.3% of law, 24% of humanities, and 64% of theology (Włodzimierz Bonusiak, *Kto zabił profesorów lwowskich?* [Rzeszów 1989], 112).

16. During the first Soviet period (1939–41) all of them stayed in L'viv, and some even became deputies of the L'viv City Council (Albert, *Każń profesorów*, 126–27; Bolyanovs'kyi,

ter of Poland, Prof. Kazimierz Bartel, as well as several other Polish academics who were called to Moscow shortly before the German occupation, could be a given target. Only eight of the eighteen delegation members, however, were arrested despite the fact that German authorities knew all their names.<sup>17</sup> This and many other contradictions provoke further questions about circumstances of the assault on the L'viv academic elite as an episode in the chain of unprecedented brutalities accompanying the end of the Soviet and the beginning of the Nazi occupation in summer 1941.<sup>18</sup> These details may also provide a clue about the complexity of motives and interests behind the massacre. Selectivity of the executions can be reasonably explained both by the reliance of the Nazis on inaccurate lists, and by the tactic of random terror.<sup>19</sup> Purely mercantile motives could also have played a role in targeting at least several professors, as immediately after their deaths the Dutch art dealer and SS man Pieter Menten quickly appropriated their valuable possessions.<sup>20</sup>

Although this particular crime might have been triggered by an array of possible motives, for the Nazis the victims' elite status and Polish nationality was a sufficient reason for their extermination.<sup>21</sup> That the majority of the executed on the Wulecki Hills were doctors and scientists—a well-connected, influential and especially respected stratum of Polish nationals—prompts this conclusion.<sup>22</sup> The group was quite homogenous in terms of ethnicity owing to the prevalence of ethnic Poles among the university professors before the German occupation of L'viv.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that the group included

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*Ubyvstvo, 15*; Schenk, *Noc morderców*.) Following this logic, another given candidate for the arrest would be the world-renowned mathematician Stefan Banach, a member of the Academy of Sciences of the UkrSSR. However, he managed to survive and even get employment as a feeder of lice in Prof. Rudolf Weigl's famous laboratory during the Nazi occupation. The alleged collaboration with the Soviets was an argument against commemoration of professors raised by a former mayor of post-Soviet L'viv Vasyl' Shpitsner: "Pol's'ki vcheni, rozstriliani u L'vovi, spivpratsiuvaly z bil'shovykami, eks-mer," *Zaxid.net*, April 4, 2011 at [https://zaxid.net/polski\\_vcheni\\_rozstrilyani\\_u\\_lvovi\\_spivpratsiyuvali\\_z\\_bilshovikami\\_\\_eksmer\\_n1126313](https://zaxid.net/polski_vcheni_rozstrilyani_u_lvovi_spivpratsiyuvali_z_bilshovikami__eksmer_n1126313) (accessed February 7, 2020).

17. Bonusiak, *Kto zabił*, 39.

18. See their detailed overview in Anatolii Plichko, *Do pytan'nia pro uchast' ukrainsiv u vbyvstvi lvivs'kykh profesoriv ulitku 1941 roku (do 75-richchia podii)*, Sait Komisii Matematyky NTSh at [www.math.lviv.ua/ntsh/files/Plichko.pdf](http://www.math.lviv.ua/ntsh/files/Plichko.pdf) (accessed February 7, 2020).

19. Schenk, *Noc morderców*, 174; Roman Volchuk, *Spomyny z peredvoiennoho Lvova ta voiennoho Vidnia* (Kyiv, 2002); Hnatiuk, *Vidvaha i strakh*, 47–48.

20. About the postwar Menten trials see Hans Knoop, *The Menten Affair* (London, 1979).

21. Altogether, during the WWII, Poland lost 45% of its physicians and dentists, 40% of university professors, over 15% of teachers, 57% of lawyers and over 18% of its clergy (Ian C. B. Dear and Michael R. D. Foot, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War* [Oxford, 1995], 894).

22. Considering that the victims' collective identity motivated the murder, it has been argued that the assault on the Polish intelligentsia could be classified as a case of genocide against the Poles, see Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Jefferson, NC, 1998), 22–23.

23. During the interwar period, majority of the academic staff in L'viv consisted of ethnic Poles. Poles also made up around 40% of the academic staff during the "first



two Jews (Dr. Stanisław Ruff and his son), one part-Ukrainian (Prof. Adam Sołowij), and one person of Austrian origin (Prof. Franciszek Gröer, released but then captured anew in 1942) indicates that the “race” and ethnicity of the victims was less important in this context than their social status.

This is not to say that ethnicity was a factor of minor significance in Nazi-occupied L'viv. On the contrary, it became a matter of life and death in a myriad of contexts. The brutality of the German regime reignited local ethnic conflicts, especially the older Ukrainian-Polish animosity that was further aggravated by the effects of the preceding Soviet occupation.<sup>24</sup> On the ruins of the Polish state, Germans offered the opportunity for collaboration that was readily explored by Ukrainian nationalist forces. One of its most well-known episodes was the formation of the Nachtigall Battalion, stationed in L'viv during the first days of July 1941, that consisted mostly of Galician Ukrainians and operated under orders of the faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists led by Stepan Bandera, the OUN(b).<sup>25</sup> Polish-Ukrainian strife escalated in tandem with the implementation of the Final Solution in 1942–43 and culminated in large-scale interethnic violence in Volhynia and Galicia. Although cities were not affected by the massacres on the same scale as the countryside, in Nazi-occupied L'viv ethnically motivated assaults became a part of daily reality. The Lwów academy had turned into an arena of bitter

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Soviets” in 1939–41. Among those with the title of full professor, Poles were clearly the majority (52), compared with Ukrainians (22) and Jews (8). At the Polytechnics, Medical Institute, and Zoo-Veterinary Institute the majority of professors were also Poles, see Grzegorz Hryciuk, *Polacy we Lwowie 1939–1944: Życie codzienne* (Warsaw, 2000), 130; Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists* (Ithaca, 2015), 69.

24. Christoph Mick, *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914–1947*; Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv*, 88.

25. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was a radical political movement fighting for the establishment of an independent state of Ukraine. It practiced revolutionary terrorism and directed its main efforts primarily against the Soviets and Poles. After its split in 1940, its two factions became known as the OUN(b), “Banderites”, and the OUN(m), “Mel'nykites”, after their leaders Stepan Bandera and Andrii Mel'nyk. The role of the OUN remains contested in historiography, especially in regards to collaboration with Nazi Germany, participation in the extermination of Jews, and the mass murders of Poles in Volhynia and Galicia in 1943. On the possible participation of Nachtigall in the killings of Jews at the beginning of the Nazi occupation of L'viv, and on the OUN's share of responsibility for these crimes see John-Paul Himka, “The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 53, no. 2–4 (April 2015), 209–43; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust*, 210–12; Per Anders Rudling, “Theory and Practice. Historical Representation of the Wartime Accounts of the Activities of the OUN–UPA (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists–Ukrainian Insurgent Army),” *East European Jewish Affairs* 36, no. 2 (December 2006); Grzegorz Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942–1960. Działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej Powstańczej Armii* (Warsaw, 2015), 74–99; Kai Struve, “OUN(b), nimtsi ta antyievreis'ke nasyl'stvo v Halychyni vlitku 1941 roku,” *Ukraina Moderna* 24 (May 2017), 223–28; Karel C. Berkhoff and Marco Carynnyk, “The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Its Attitude toward Germans and Jews: Iaroslav Stets'ko's 1941 Zhyttiepys,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 23, no. 3–4 (December 1999): 149–82. Nevertheless, the OUN and its structures did not figure as an accused part in the Nuremberg trial, and neither were they charged for the murder of the L'viv academics, see Schenk, *Noc morderców*, 129–32; Bolianovs'kyi, *Ubyvstvo*, 138–39.

national and political-ideological contestation already before the war, but the German occupation brought unprecedented violence in its wake.<sup>26</sup> In the opinion of contemporaries, the murder of the Polish professors could not have happened without denunciation by Ukrainians.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, rumors circulated that Ukrainians had taken part in the murder itself. Bearing in mind that the Nachtigall Battalion was in L'viv in the first days of July and could be connected to the anti-Jewish violence, some historians have concluded that responsibility for the execution of the professors also belonged to this detachment.<sup>28</sup> As the old animosity between Galician Poles and Ukrainians was a part of the daily context in Nazi-occupied L'viv, it gradually became elevated as the genuine explanation for the murder on the Wulecki Hills by these protagonists. This interpretation was represented primarily by Polish expellee organizations, whose resettled inhabitants of the borderland territories, together with their relatives, were dissatisfied with the official story that pointed to German aggressors as the principal culprits.

### Memory Event “Lwów Professors” Takes Shape: Unnamed Victims, Multiple Perpetrators, and Academic Legacies before 1991

Immediately after capture of L'viv in July 1944, Soviet authorities confirmed the information about the professors' deaths, which had previously been circulated by the Polish government in London.<sup>29</sup> Since that time and until the early 1990s, their commemoration evolved autonomously in Poland and

26. On *numerus clausus* and “ghetto benches” at interwar Polish universities see Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington, 1983), 73; Mariusz Kulczykowski, *Żydzi–studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)* (Kraków, 2004). On Ukrainian-Polish strife in the Lwów academia, see Draus, *Uniwersytet Jana Kazimierza*, 63–70. As a result of the escalated Ukrainian-Polish fighting in 1943, one Ukrainian and one Polish professor of medicine were assassinated. The prominent Ukrainian physician, Prof. Marian Panchyshyn, died of heart attack in the wake of this event (Hryciuk, *Polacy we Lwowie*, 355; Redzik, “Uniwersytet Lwowski,” 1045–51).

27. As an anonymous correspondent wrote in the wartime Polish newspaper *Nurt* in May 1943: “Almost all the names of the medical department were stroke out once and for all by the German crime and Ukrainian prompts”; quoted in Jacek Trznadel, *Kolaboranci: Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński i grupa komunistycznych pisarzy we Lwowie 1939–1941* (Warsaw, 1998), 13. The version maintaining that the prescription lists had been submitted to the Nazis by Ukrainian students active in the OUN also finds support among researchers, see Albert, *Każń profesorów*, 115; Schenk, *Noc morderców*, 174; Bonusiak, *Kto zabił*, 72–85.

28. Among them is Tadeusz Piotrowski who states that “it is beyond dispute that thousands of Jews and Poles lost their lives in Lwów in those first days of July, that most of the professors died . . . on July 4, 1941, and that Nachtigall was not withdrawn from that city until July 7. Those who deny Nachtigall's participation in these atrocities must tell us what exactly the regiment did there during that time. In any case, since no one has ever stated that the Ukrainian, pro-Nazi Nachtigall opposed these atrocities or in any way tried to prevent them, its members are guilty at least of the sin of omission” (Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust*, 210–11). See also Bonusiak, *Kto zabił*, 38–85.

29. The Soviet authorities could immediately make use of it to contrast the tragic fate of the professors in the Nazis' hands with their favorable treatment by the Soviets. Nevertheless, the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Scientists instructed the L'viv regional authorities in a secret note from 16 January 1945 not to publicize information about the

the USSR.<sup>30</sup> This happened against the background of postwar (geo)political divisions and Soviet ideological dictates, but the situation was cemented by more subtle lines of conflict. With the reannexation of the eastern Polish territories (so-called *kresy*) by the USSR in 1944, Soviet and Polish authorities organized massive “repatriations” and population exchanges across the Polish-Soviet border that in effect erased the remaining Polish academic milieu from L’viv. At the same time, survivors who continued the world-famous traditions of Lwów academia were welcome in Kraków, but most importantly a part of them were directed to build higher education and boost Polishness on the former German territories given to Poland in 1945, primarily in Breslau/Wrocław. The cultivation of a prewar identity among the resettled as well as their regular contacts with the *kresy* lost to the Soviets were not in interests of the communist authorities either in Poland or Soviet Ukraine. Meanwhile, Ukrainian-style Sovietization made topics relating to the historical presence and achievements of Poles increasingly sensitive in postwar L’viv.

As a result, the commemorative topography of the mnemonic event “the murdered Lwów professors” became remarkably asymmetrical. The local memory, stressing the high achievements and martyrdom of the murdered academics, drifted westwards where it was cherished primarily by the university elite who gradually strengthened their positions against the authorities.<sup>31</sup> From the outset, Wrocław and Kraków positioned themselves as natural inheritors of Lwów academia’s traditions, and as guardians of the legacy of the executed professors.<sup>32</sup> Especially in Wrocław, where, according to different estimates, between five to nine percent of the postwar population was comprised of expellees from Lwów, memory of the professors was nurtured not only in academic circles, but also in a broader cultural and educational context.<sup>33</sup> On the other side of the redrawn eastern border of Poland, in Soviet L’viv, the narrative about the professors became fractured, and its different parts were used for furnishing disparate historical plots. Achievements of the local predecessors were known in western Ukrainian academic circles, but continuation of the prewar academic traditions and the acknowledgement of their scholarly ancestry were not practiced. As for the story about the murder on the Wulecki Hills, it was subsumed in the broader narrative of the Great Patriotic War: the killed intelligentsia was presented as both Soviet victims of the Hitlerites and fighters against fascism.

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murder until the Committee submits its own version to the western press. Derzhavnyi arkhiv L’vivs’koi oblasti (DALO), fond P-3, op.1, od. zberihannia 242, ark. 5.

30. Although Soviet and Polish authorities used similar rhetoric on WWII, joint commemorations were not practiced on the former Polish territories annexed by the USSR.

31. Teresa Suleja, *Uniwersytet Wrocławski w okresie centralizmu stalinowskiego 1950–1955* (Wrocław, 1995), 200–30.

32. Teresa Kulak, Mieczysław Pater, Wojciech Wrzesiński. *Historia Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1702–2002* (Wrocław, 2002), 202, 288–89.

33. Janusz Goćkowski and Bohdan Jałowiecki, “Prace nadesłane na konkurs ‘Czym jest dla ciebie miasto Wrocław’ jako materiał socjologiczny,” in Jan Wojtaś, ed., *Wrocławskie reminiscencje socjologiczne* (Wrocław, 2009), 67–96; Teresa Kulak, *Wrocław: Przewodnik historyczny* (Wrocław, 1997), 278.



A core question pertaining to commemorative topography is whether the discussed event was remembered in postwar Germany. The wartime extermination of the Polish elite did not become a part of the national memory culture in the same manner as the Holocaust. Nevertheless, in 1960 the German public was reminded about the murdered L'viv professors in connection with the resonant Soviet-led campaign against Theodor Oberländer, the West German politician who used to serve as the advising officer of the Nachtigall Battalion.<sup>34</sup> Several decades later, in the 2000s, the German historian Dieter Schenk assumed the role of a public memory actor actively promoting knowledge of this specific crime. Hence, the cross-border topography of the discussed memory event has nowadays a more complicated shape than the nexus between Poland and Ukraine or between L'viv, Wrocław, and Kraków.

Aside from the topography, another crucial factor that shaped the discussed mnemonic event was the constellation of mnemonic actors. Over the span of half a century, the memory of the perished Lwów professors has been kept alive in the Polish People's Republic and to some extent in Soviet Ukraine primarily due to the efforts of academic elites. The achievements and martyrdom of the prominent representatives of the partly dispersed, partly displaced, and partly extinct academic community of the prewar Galician metropole became an important element of the institutional heritage of postwar Polish academia.<sup>35</sup> In the 1990s, several educational institutions in L'viv could also claim this as part of their heritage and reposition themselves as custodians of the professors' memory. The important role of publicly commemorating the event was gradually assumed by the actors prominent for their strong moral and personal commitment. The Roman Catholic Church, whose influence on both sides of the Polish-Ukrainian border has grown exponentially since 1991, together with relatives of the murdered academics began to speak with their own distinct voices. From the first postwar years until the present day, however, various gatekeepers, ranging from Communist Party functionaries and high-level politicians to city administrations and public relations advisers have monitored the endeavors of the academic custodians, the relatives, and the church.

In postwar Poland, the story about the Lwów professors was firmly inscribed into the traditional framework of martyrdom and the revival of the Polish nation. It oscillated between two main lines of narration. On the one hand, the general condemnation of "Hitlerite fascism" and homage to all murdered Polish intellectuals was installed as a politically-acceptable commemorative formula. The academics and intelligentsia were thereby distinguished as a special kind of wartime victims and this, in projection, could give them leverage vis-à-vis the party-state. At the same time, this narrative conveniently avoided the controversy that mentioning of Lwów and the *kresy* would imply in the contemporary political situation. On the other hand, the competing story of martyrdom of specifically the Lwów professors, and the discrete

34. Schenk, *Noc morderców*, 346–48; Bolianovs'kyi, *Ubyvstvo*, 49–69.

35. In particular, at the Wrocław University, the Wrocław Polytechnics, the Silesian Polytechnics in Gliwice, and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

but persistent reminders about their particular legacy in the Recovered Lands became more pronounced towards the end of the socialist period.

The vagaries of the Wrocław monument to the murdered Lwów professors aptly demonstrate this dynamic. As has been mentioned, the academic elite originating from Lwów played a crucial role in the development of Polish higher education in the former German territories.<sup>36</sup> Universities in postwar Wrocław renounced any German academic legacy and proclaimed their institutional ancestry from the prewar Lwów academia. Accordingly, the emotional and symbolic charge of the Lwów heritage was strongest in Polish academic circles. Construction of a monument to the Lwów professors had been discussed in Wrocław since 1949, but the first real opportunity emerged only in 1956, on the fifteenth anniversary of the murder. A lack of both funding and enthusiasm from the Polish authorities blocked the initiative at that time, however. Despite the drawback, the academics remained committed to their cause and organized fund-raising.<sup>37</sup> The memorial that was officially titled “the monument to Polish scientists, victims of Hitlerism” was finally unveiled on September 3, 1964, on the territory of the Wrocław Polytechnic campus.<sup>38</sup> When announcing the planned inauguration, local newspapers followed the official prescription and wrote about “martyrdom of *all* [authors’ emphasis] Polish scientists murdered by barbaric fascism in WWII.”<sup>39</sup> The stylistics of the commemoration emphasized secular heroism rather than mourning or religious values, as the public ceremony included military guards, military salutes, and a march of the Wrocław academics around the new monument.

The design of the memorial is quite abstract. Its central section features stylized human figures, one of them falling, the other being shot (Figure 1). In his official inaugural address, Prof. Stanisław Kulczyński, the former rector of Jan Kazimierz University of Lwów, turned to the habitual rhetoric of the martyrdom of all Polish scientists.<sup>40</sup> In compliance with official imperatives, Kulczyński addressed the wartime losses of national science in a broad international context, and focused specifically on the mission of Wrocław academia as a cultural outpost of socialist Poland on the Recovered Lands. Nevertheless, he also mentioned a special “vision of a scene that took place on

36. The postwar Wrocław Polytechnics alone employed fifty-four academics from Lwów, see Zbysław Popławski, “Gdzie jest dziedzictwo Politechniki Lwowskiej,” in *Politechnika Lwowska macierz polskich politechnik: Materiały konferencji naukowej* (Wrocław, 1995), 95.

37. Roman Mierzecki, “Budowa wrocławskiego pomnika w latach 1956–1964 ku czci polskich profesorów zamordowanych we Lwowie w 1941 roku,” *Analecta* 16, no. 1–2 (2007), at [www.lwow.home.pl/mierzecki/analecta.html](http://www.lwow.home.pl/mierzecki/analecta.html) (accessed February 7, 2020).

38. Its scheduling corresponded neither to an anniversary of the murder of the Lwów professors nor to any WWII-related event significant in the local context. Instead, it coincided with the inauguration of a new academic year.

39. Quoted in Mierzecki, “Budowa”; see also: *Słowo Polskie*, October 5, no 236 (1964), 1. Curiously, although the opening address of Bolesław Iwaskiewicz, the Head of the National Council of Wrocław, did not mention Lwów, the speech itself was revealingly titled “The speech on the occasion of opening the monument of the murdered Lwów professors” (Archiwum Politechniki Wrocławskiej, sygn.3312.2, karta 6.2).

40. Kulczyński managed to survive the war in Kraków.



**Figure 1. Monument to the Lwów (L'viv) professors in Wrocław. Sculptor Borys Michałowski. Photo by Eleonora Narvselius.**

July 4, 1941, under the wall of death in the sand pit of Wólka in Lwów.”<sup>41</sup> His speech signaled that the Wrocław academics were determined to follow their own line of narration, notwithstanding political pressure.

In 1966, shortly after the inauguration of the monument in Wrocław, the professors were honored in Kraków. A plaque placed in the Franciscan church for the first time revealed their names in a public space.<sup>42</sup> In 1981, with the rise of Solidarity, the monument in Wrocław was also complemented with

41. Mierzecki, “Budowa.”

42. Albert, *Każń profesorów*, 133.

plaques containing the names of the Wulecki Hills victims.<sup>43</sup> Instead of being dedicated to all the fallen Polish scientists of WWII, it became a site explicitly commemorating those who perished in Lwów.<sup>44</sup> Notably, the plaques were unveiled not by politicians or academic functionaries, but by the widow of one of the victims, Dr. Maria Witkiewicz. From being an arena of confrontation between an academia keen on forging its institutional heritage and regional ancestry, on the one hand, and the authorities imposing an idea of an all-national heroic pantheon, on the other, the monument gradually became a site of grief, prayer, and mourning.

Memorialization of the professors took a different course in postwar Ukraine. Throughout the Soviet period, the event itself was regarded as a local episode without broader resonance or significance for (Soviet) Ukrainian history or identity. Nevertheless, in 1946, Abrachamowicz Street, adjacent to the Wulecki Hills was renamed after murdered Prof. Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, who cooperated with the Soviet authorities and used to be a member of the Union of Soviet Writers. In 1956, on the fifteenth anniversary of the crime, there were plans to erect a monument on the Wulecki Hills, but eventually they were put on ice.<sup>45</sup> Apparently, this happened due to the tense international situation in the wake of Iosif Stalin's death. In the atmosphere of increasing discontent against Soviet dictates in central Europe, the inauguration of a monument in the former Polish metropole annexed by the USSR might look provoking. Also, as has been mentioned, an endeavor of the Wrocław academics to mount a similar monument in their city around the same time failed. Although officially the initiative was postponed for lack of funding, orders from Moscow seems to be a more plausible explanation.<sup>46</sup>

While in Wrocław the plans to honor the professors with a monument were finally realized in the 1960s, in L'viv this decade was empty of similar commemorative initiatives. Nevertheless, the memory event reemerged, but in a significantly modified frame. In the changed political climate of the 1960s, Soviet authorities launched a massive campaign against "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism." To discredit the postwar Ukrainian insurgence, the story of the wartime collaboration of Ukrainian nationalists with the Nazi was brought into the limelight. Although directly after the war Soviet propaganda never mentioned the Nazi-led Nachtigall Battalion as responsible for the extermination of the L'viv intelligentsia, this version gained currency in

43. Even that time the funding came not from the state, but from the academic authorities of Wrocław, see Mierzecki, "Budowa."

44. Olga Mikołajczyk, "Pomnik rozstrzelanych profesorów lwowskich," *Wrocławski portal matematyczny*, at [www.matematyka.wroc.pl/doniesienia/pomnik-pomordowanych-profesorow-lwowskich](http://www.matematyka.wroc.pl/doniesienia/pomnik-pomordowanych-profesorow-lwowskich) (accessed February 7, 2020).

45. A. Drbal, M. Kotsab, "Profesor Kaspar Weigl (1880–1941), tretii zaviduvach Kafedry heodezii L'vivs'koi Politekhnyky, *Heodeziia, kartohrafiia i aerofotoznimannia* 74 (2011): 4, at <http://ena.lp.edu.ua:8080/bitstream/ntb/10234/1/30.pdf> (last consulted March 7, 2020); Albert, *Każń profesorów*, 134.

46. On close postwar cooperation between Polish and Soviet authorities in the sphere of cultural politics see: Patryk Babiracki, *Soviet Soft Power in Poland: Culture and the Making of Stalin's New Empire, 1943–1957* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2015).



the 1960s.<sup>47</sup> Rumors circulated that the new Soviet monument to the executed academics had to contain an inscription reading “To the scientists shot by the Hitlerites and the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists.”<sup>48</sup> The vagaries of this phantom monument, which was repeatedly discussed by the local authorities, went to the stage of project documentation and was almost finished, but then hastily dismantled in 1980, is a remarkable story.<sup>49</sup> Even such initiated persons as the mayor of Wrocław, Rafał Dutkiewicz, and the former rector of Wrocław Polytechnic University, Prof. Andrzej Wiszniewski, who propelled the eventual building of the L'viv memorial in 2011, stated in their interviews that they did not know about its Soviet predecessor.<sup>50</sup>

Rare pictures of the unfinished monument provide a clue that the project, authored by L'viv sculptor Emmanuil Mys'ko, conceptually resonated with the one in Wrocław.<sup>51</sup> Both compositions were anthropomorphous and stylized, although Mys'ko, who was famous for his sculptural portraits, laid an accent on the facial features of several figures emerging from a massive rock. This detail could have had fatal consequences; according to one rumor the composition was dismantled in 1980 (according to another one, in 1976) after a denunciation claiming that one of the figures resembled a local dissident.<sup>52</sup> Another account states that this happened because of the easily recognizable figure of the “unreliable” Kazimierz Bartel, who until the outbreak of WWII was the Prime Minister of “bourgeois” Poland.<sup>53</sup>

It seems, however, that the costly monument that could allegedly be so useful for discrediting the nationalist movement in western Ukraine was hastily dismantled not because of a banal denunciation, but rather due to a coincidence of political circumstances, much like in the 1950s. Soviet-Polish relations grew tense in the wake of the riots sparked in 1976 by food price increases in

47. Hnatiuk, *Vidvaha i strakh*, 50; Bolianovs'kyi, *Ubyvstvo*. Notably, one of the chief Soviet propagandists, the writer Vladimir Beliaev, published two different versions of his pamphlet on the murder of the professors. The earlier version titled *Taiemnytsia “Vul'ky”* [The Secret of Wulka] was published in Ukrainian. Beliaev mentioned the practice of drafting “black lists” by the OUN and concluded about a possible denunciation of the professors (Volodymyr Beliaev and Mykola Rudnyts'kyi. *Pid chuzhymy praporamy* [Kyiv, 1956], 121). Almost two decades after the campaign against Oberländer, Beliaev published a revised version of the same text in Russian. This time he wrote unequivocally about the “shooting of the professors by the hands of the loyal fascist servants, the Ukrainian nationalists, legionnaires of Nachtigall” (Vladimir Beliaev, *Ia obviniayu!* [Moscow, 1978], 29).

48. Yaroslav Hanitkevych, “Tragediia hrupy l'vivs'kykh profesoriv u 1941 rotsi (do 70-ii richnytsi straty vchenykh),” *Naukove Товариство ім. Т. Шевченка*, On-line zhurnal Товариства, blog Yaroslava Hanitkevycha, October 10, 2011, at [ntsh.org/content/ganitkevich-ya-tragediya-grupi-lvivskih-profesoriv-u-1941-roci-do-70-yi-richnici-strati](http://ntsh.org/content/ganitkevich-ya-tragediya-grupi-lvivskih-profesoriv-u-1941-roci-do-70-yi-richnici-strati) (accessed February 7, 2020).

49. See an eye-witness account in Jerzy Janicki, “Zawiłe dzieje jednego pomnika,” *Przekrój* 1 (1991), 32.

50. Rafał Dutkiewicz, interview with Igor Pietraszewski, Wrocław, July 15, 2015; Andrzej Wiszniewski, interview with Igor Pietraszewski, Wrocław, July 20, 2015.

51. Reproduced by Albert *Każń profesorów*; and in the album *Emmanuil Mys'ko. Skul'ptura* (L'viv, 1999).

52. Bohdan Tscherkes, interview with Eleonora Narvselius, L'viv, April 15, 2015.

53. Ihor Melnyk and Roman Masyk, *Pam'iatnyky ta memorial'ni tablytsi mista L'vova* (L'viv, 2012), 237; Jerzy Janicki. “Zawiłe dzieje jednego pomnika.”



Poland and the subsequent advance of the Solidarity movement. Another contributing factor could have been internal struggles in the L'viv branch of the Artists' Union of the Ukrainian SSR, spurred by constant accusations against local artists for their dissenting artistic styles and nationalist spirit.<sup>54</sup> The critique could personally target Emmanuil Mys'ko, who was the head of the L'viv Artists' Union organization in 1966–81. Notably, Mys'ko was commissioned for the monument to the professors around the same time as he worked on the L'viv monument to military glory of the Soviet Army (1968–70).<sup>55</sup> While the latter project was granted a prestigious award in 1972, the former one was not mentioned even in the post-1991 album "Emmanuil Mys'ko. Sculpture." Curiously, a picture of the model of the "vanished" monument was nevertheless reproduced in the album without any accompanying inscription (Figure 2).

Yet another reason behind the demolition of Mys'ko's monument might be the difficulties associated with inscribing a specific group memorialized on the Wulecki Hills into the official cult of the Great Patriotic War, which had been taking form since 1964. A letter from the Head of the L'viv Regional Department of Culture, Yaroslav Vitoshyns'kyi, dated July 8, 1968, indicates that local Soviet dignitaries likely initiated discussions about the monument mainly due to pressure from Polish milieus. It is worth quoting the letter at length, as it conveys the impression that the L'viv regional authorities had difficulties with formulating a consistent and politically correct justification of the commemorative project:

. . . On July 1941 in L'viv, on the Vulets'ki slopes (presently Suvorov street), German fascists shot more than thirty prominent figures of science, culture and technology, including the outstanding Polish writer, professor, author of numerous literary works and translations, member of the Union of Soviet Writers, Tadeush Boy-Zhelens'kyi, Professor of the Polytechnic Institute and an honorary member of many Academies of Sciences Kazimir Bartel, Doctors of Physical and Mathematical Sciences Volodymyr Stozhek and Anton Lomnyts'kyi, Doctor of Chemistry Stanislav Pilat, Doctors of Technical Sciences Roman Vitkevych and Volodymyr Krukovs'kyi, Polish anti-fascist writer Halyna Hurs'ka and many others.

In order to commemorate the victims, the people of the city have repeatedly requested to establish a monument dedicated to this tragic event. This issue has also been raised by the public and by some individual leaders of the Polish People's Republic.

The ambassador of the PPR to the USSR told of the monument to the victims of fascism in L'viv during a reception by the Minister of Culture of the USSR, Comrade K.O. Furtseva.

The construction of the monument will be yet another page of national honor of those who fell victim to the bloody crimes of the Nazis; [it] will also be of great importance in the international education of workers, as among the

54. William Jay Risch, *Ukraine's Window to the West: Identity and Cultural Nonconformity in L'viv, 1953–75* (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2001), 133–148, at etd.ohiolink.edu/pg\_10?0::NO:10:P10\_ACCESSION\_NUM:osu1486474078047143 (accessed February 7, 2020).

55. Dismantled in 2019.



**Figure 2. Model of the monument to the professors that disappeared in the 1970s. Sculptor Emmanuil Mys'ko. Source: *Emmanuil Mys'ko. Skul'ptura* (Lviv, 1999), 17.**

executed there were people of different nationalities—Poles, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Jews.

This monument is also necessary to prove the groundlessness of some elements' claims that monuments associated with the Polish people are not maintained, [by which] they mean the graves of detachments of the Polish Army troops at the Lychakiv cemetery. But these are graves with anti-Soviet inscriptions, belonging to the tombs of the interventionists of 1920, members of the Polish Legions, the Polish troops of General J. Heller's [must be Józef Haller] army. They died in the battles for the conquest of the city after the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, as well as in the battles

against the working people of western Ukraine who fought for Soviet power in 1920, and in the battle with *budionivtsi* [Budionnyi's soldiers], who went to help the brotherly Ukrainians in 1920.

. . . The future monument consists of two groups, the symbolic and memorial ones. The symbolic group is a series of vertical concrete monoliths, which reflects the resilience and courage of the fighters against fascism.

The fact of this tragic event will be marked with the help of plaques and inscriptions.<sup>56</sup>

Hence, the document proposed to consider the executed professors as both victims of and fighters against fascism; as an ethnically diverse group suitable for the “international education of workers”; as the “correct” sort of Poles deserving commemoration (unlike the soldiers of the Polish Legions); and as compatriots of the brotherly people of the PPR. It is especially noteworthy that Vitoshyns'kyi mentioned Kazimierz Bartel, whose lifelike portrait on the unfinished monument was, according to rumors, the reason for its demolition. The letter confirms that the Soviet authorities knew what personalities they intended to commemorate, even though they had difficulties with devising an ideologically-acceptable formula. Social categorization of the fallen intelligentsia was quite problematic as, according to the emerging Great Patriotic War canon, the commemoration embraced primarily soldiers and an unspecified “peaceful population.” Representatives of the ideologically unreliable academia of the recently-annexed territories rhymed badly with the canonized narrative of the Great Patriotic War. Instead, on the wave of the monumentalization campaign that took place in Soviet Ukraine between 1966 and 1980, another monument was unveiled on the territory adjacent to the main building of the L'viv Polytechnics.<sup>57</sup> The sculpture titled “Flame” presented a young woman with a stylized Ukrainian embroidered belt around her waist and an open book and carnation in her raised hands.<sup>58</sup> It was mounted in 1976 to honor “the staff and students of the Polytechnic Institute fallen in struggle with fascism in the Great Patriotic War.”<sup>59</sup> To pay tribute to the collective wartime heroism of medics, the sculpture of the fairy-tale character Danko was unveiled on the territory of the L'viv Medical Institute a bit earlier, in 1975.<sup>60</sup> Although the biggest part of those executed on the Wulecki Hills were renowned local physicians, this fact was eclipsed by the memorialization of unspecified medics and metaphorical references to the self-sacrificial fight of the Soviet people. Also, commemorative projects located on the Wulecki Hills proved to be too controversial. Instead, throughout the whole Soviet period, L'viv honored nameless heroic scientists in line with the official formula that was abandoned in Poland after 1981.

56. DALO, fond P–1338, op. 1, od. zberigannia 1068, ark. 22–23 (Proekt pam'iatnyka). The language of the original is Ukrainian; all names are reproduced in Ukrainian transcription.

57. Volodymyr Badiak, *Pam'iatkookhoronna istoriia L'vova* (L'viv, 2014), 104.

58. DALO, fond P–120, op. 4, ark 62 (Rasporiazheniia po L'vovskomu ordena Lenina politekhnicheskomu institutu). The monument still exists.

59. *L'vovskaia Pravda*, May 9, 1976, 4.

60. A character from one of Maxim Gorky's short novels: a young man who with his flaming heart lit people's way in the darkness.

### **“A Monument without Inscription”: Commemorating the Lwów Professors after the End of the Soviet System**

With the collapse of the socialist bloc and the declaration of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the idea of commemorating the executed professors with a monument in L'viv gained new momentum. As the border between Poland and Ukraine was open and political relations largely amicable, Polish successors of the Lwów academic traditions managed to quickly establish institutional links with universities in L'viv. Previous contacts and personal friendships, similar to those between the rector of the L'viv Polytechnics, Yuri Rudavskiy, and his counterpart from Wrocław, Andrzej Wiszniewski, played a crucial role in this process.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, the plan to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the professors' tragic death and erect a monument on the Wulecki Hills as a new project was put on ice partly for financial reasons, but also due to the changing political climate, in which the exclusivist rhetoric of national pride and grievances began to win the day on both the Polish and Ukrainian side of the border. In L'viv, the only tangible evidence that the anniversary did not go unnoticed is a memorial plaque installed in the ancient Latin Cathedral, a place of paramount symbolic importance for the local Polish community. Thus, in this respect L'viv repeated the pattern of Poland, where the postwar Catholic church played a key role in immortalizing national martyrdom, and was the first to reveal the murdered professors' names in a public space. Nevertheless, the academia kept up with the Catholic clergy in their determination to raise public awareness about the fate of the prewar Polish scientists. The first public event that brought the common academic legacy of L'viv and Wrocław into the limelight was organized in 1994. An exhibition titled *Forefathers and Fathers: The Achievements of Polish Graduates of the Architecture Faculty in the Lwów Polytechnics* was launched by Prof. Olgierd Czerner, director of the Architecture Museum in Wrocław. Presented both in L'viv and Wrocław, the exhibition made it clear that academic milieus of the two cities were not only inscribed into the same historical narrative, but also shared a remarkable institutional and personal ancestry.<sup>62</sup> A year later, in 1995, a memorial plaque was installed on the house of the prominent geodesist Prof. Kaspar Weigel who was shot on the Wulecki Hills.

In Ukraine, these events paved the way to public acknowledgement of the Polish academic legacy of the L'viv Polytechnics in particular. The museum of the Polytechnics presently includes a number of exhibits referring to the executed professors, although as part of the overarching narrative about the academic staff's fate under the two totalitarian regimes, with a special focus on Soviet repressions. In the hall of the museum, one can see portraits of the professors side by side with images of OUN(b) leaders Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, who are much more familiar for the local audience. The questionable inclusion of these personalities in the pantheon of academic martyrs is justified by the anti-totalitarian narrative regarding the

61. Andrzej Wiszniewski, interview with Igor Pietraszewski, Wrocław, July 20, 2015.

62. Iwona Juszkiewicz and Olgierd Czerner, eds. *Praojcowie i ojcowie: dorobek polskich absolwentów Wydziału Architektonicznego Politechniki Lwowskiej. Wystawa* (Wrocław, 1995).

“repressed academia,” as these two Ukrainian nationalist leaders murdered by the Soviets in the 1950s were students of the Lwów Polytechnics before the war. The same logic is evident in the museum of the L’viv National University, where only one exhibit refers to the murdered professors, namely the book by Zygmunt Albert, which is presented side by side with publications about postwar Ukrainian dissidents. Meanwhile, the permanent exhibition of the L’viv Medical Academy Museum of History does not single out the murder of its prominent physicians whatsoever. The names of Franciszek Gröer, Jan Grek, and Antoni Cieszyński are mentioned, but in a celebratory context, as world famous scientists. Meanwhile, the exhibition focuses on those figures who, like Prof. Marian Panchyshyn, are better suited to a narrative about the contribution of Ukrainian science to the national liberation movement.

By the end of the 1990s, an imperative rule was added to the scenarios of Polish-Ukrainian commemorations that contributed to a regular war of words around commemorative inscriptions and definitions. In particular, the local identity of the murdered professors, that is, as residents of Lwów/L’viv, was countered with the prescription of their (ethno)national belonging. A resolute and vocal proponent of the latter was the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in L’viv.<sup>63</sup> With its support, an unpretentious memorial resembling a gravestone was installed in 1995 at the site of the execution. It was dedicated to the “Polish professors of the Lwów institutions of higher learning, and members of their families,” and contained a table with the victims’ names. A bit later, a local branch of the Polish Society for the Care of Military Graves contributed a cross. Thereby, a provisional structure that came to be primarily due to efforts of local “memory entrepreneurs” was marked as a distinctly “Polish one,” becoming an easy target for vandals spraying anti-Polish slogans. Nevertheless, for nearly two decades the site and the associated event remained on the margins of local memory politics.<sup>64</sup>

In 2008, on the wave of increased interest in symbolic politics during Viktor Yushchenko’s presidency, the mayors of L’viv and Wrocław announced a project competition for a new memorial on the Wulecki Hills. The formal foundation for the cooperation was laid as early as 2002, when the two cities signed an official partnership agreement.<sup>65</sup> Around that time, the idea of a monument to the professors began to look opportune and implementable. Curiously, our interviews with the involved officials and academics indicated that repeatedly, personal engagement and friendly relations between several influential actors (most importantly, between the mayors, Sadovyi and Dutkiewicz) were crucial for the success of the enterprise. A gentlemen’s agreement was achieved thanks to active contacts, compatible cultural capital of

63. Jacek Żur, Consul of Poland in L’viv, interview with Eleonora Narvselius, L’viv, April 17, 2015.

64. As Professor Wiszniewski recollected, when he visited L’viv in the early 2000s, the modest stone on the Wulecki Hills was overgrown with nettles and looked like an abandoned grave.

65. Łukasz Stręś, “Wrocław i Lwów jako miasta partnerskie,” *Zeszyty Naukowe Koła Wschodnioeuropejskiego Stosunków Międzynarodowych* 4 (2005), 57.



the involved officials, and their shared visions of public good, rather than due to pragmatic political calculations or material interests.<sup>66</sup>

To speed up the construction of the monument in L'viv, a fund-raising campaign was announced in the Polish media. While the project evoked enthusiasm in Poland, the attitude towards it in L'viv was rather wary, especially when the rumor arose that the monument would be erected in front of the main building of the L'viv Polytechnics.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the project competition ran smoothly. Among nearly thirty projects, a Polish-Ukrainian jury headed by reputed Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak selected the work of Alexander Śliwa, an architect from Kraków. The funding was shared between L'viv and Wrocław. L'viv officials laid particular emphasis on the ethical justification, as the monument was said to be “a tribute to the past and not a political move.”<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, a purely pragmatic argument about the necessity to revitalize the territory adjacent to the campus of the L'viv Polytechnics also played its role in the negotiations.<sup>69</sup> The initial ambition to make the monument much higher, more visible and accessible from several sides was eventually withdrawn.<sup>70</sup>

Unveiled on July 3, 2011, on the 70th anniversary of the execution, the monument dedicated to the murdered professors became the second post-Soviet memorial landmark commemorating non-Ukrainians in L'viv.<sup>71</sup> Although during the opening ceremony some cautious references to the Polishness of this memorial site were made (red and white colors, a choir of children wearing Krakówian-style costumes, and even the euphemistic phrase about “professors writing in the Polish language” dropped by the mayor Dutkiewicz), the monument bears no traces of national specificity.<sup>72</sup> It bears no inscription either. This detail surprised commentators in the Polish media and gave rise to many speculations.<sup>73</sup> The design of the monument does include a bronze element that resembles a folded page, but it is left blank. It has been reported

66. The stake of the mayor Rafał Dutkiewicz in the L'viv monument correlates with his enthusiastic support for the academic traditions of Wrocław. He graduated from Wrocław Polytechnics, was taught by professors originating from Lwów, and on his initiative the insignia of Lwów's Jan Kazimierz University rectors, stored after the war in Kraków, were eventually transferred to Wrocław in 2006 (Rafał Dutkiewicz, interview with Igor Pietraszewski, Wrocław, July 15, 2015).

67. Bohdan Tscherkes, interview with Eleonora Narvselius, L'viv, April 15, 2015.

68. Available at <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/public-hearings/204151-protokol-gromadskih-sluhan-projektu-mistobudivnoji-dokumentaciji-sporudzhennia-pamatnika-vchenim-m-lvova-rozstrilanim-nacistami-u-1941-roci-na-vuleckih-pagorbah-infrastrukturi-dla-jogo-obslugovuvanna-ta-blagoustroju-parku-studentiv> (accessed March 12, 2020).

69. Bohdan Tscherkes, interview with Eleonora Narvselius, L'viv, April 15, 2015.

70. Personal communication with Yaroslav Hrytsak, May 18, 2017.

71. The monument for the victims of the L'viv ghetto was unveiled in 1992.

72. The phrase from Dutkiewicz's address that was avidly commented on in Polish media was: “Scientific works of the L'viv professors murdered here by the Nazis were most often published in the Polish language”, at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVrZa8nv71g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVrZa8nv71g) (video unavailable).

73. “Lwowski pomnik polskich profesorów bez napisu,” TVP Info, July 3, 2011, at [www.tvp.info/4814195/lwowski-pomnik-polskich-profesorow-bez-napisu](http://www.tvp.info/4814195/lwowski-pomnik-polskich-profesorow-bez-napisu) (accessed February 7, 2020).

that, according to the initial plan, a German text of the execution warrant was to be carved there.<sup>74</sup> Other accounts stated that no such inscription whatsoever was planned.<sup>75</sup> According to yet another source, in 2011 the monument was left without inscriptions because the Polish and Ukrainian parties could not reach consensus on use of the adjective “Polish.”<sup>76</sup> The formulation approved by the municipal authorities of L’viv and Wrocław was rejected by the Polish government’s Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites, which insisted on the inclusion of the word “Polish” in the text. Nevertheless, in 2012, a granite stone dedicated in three languages to the “honor of the professors from L’viv (in Polish, *profesorów Lwowskich*) murdered by the Nazis in 1941” was installed on the path leading to both the unsophisticated earlier monument and its aesthetically-accomplished official counterpart.

Conceptually, the memorial on the Wulecki Hills alludes to the Bible and emphasizes the sanctity of human life. The central part of the monument is an arch consisting of ten stones, symbolizing the Ten Commandments of God. The fifth stone, alluding to the Commandment “Thou shalt not kill,” protrudes from the structure (Figure 3).<sup>77</sup> In the words of Prof. Bohdan Tscherkes, who headed the working group of the architects in charge of the monument, since 1991 the leitmotif of the commemorations of the professors was “In the face of science, like in the face of God, everyone is equal.”<sup>78</sup> Thereby, the intention was to underscore the shared religious values, and so avoid a controversy that could be easily stirred up if the site had referred to iconic representations of Polishness alone.

In the course of the commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murder on the Wulecki Hills, dialogue ran side by side with confrontation. From the Ukrainian side, confrontative rhetoric was employed by the ultra-right political party *VO Svoboda*. At a session of the L’viv City Council, its representatives opposed opening the monument with the motivation that the Ukrainian authorities neglected public opinion and violated Ukrainian laws on property rights. During the opening ceremony, the *Svoboda* deputy who delivered his address on behalf of the L’viv Regional Council, reproached Poles for their hostility to monuments of Ukrainian national insurgents erected on the Polish territory. Notably, while focusing on divisive rhetoric, where ‘yours’ and ‘ours’ were clearly demarcated, representatives of *Svoboda* preferred to overlook

74. <http://uni.wroc.pl/wiadomości/pomnik-na-wzgórzach-wuleckich/we-lwowie-odślonięto-pomnik-rozstrzelanych-profesorów> (no longer available). Such an inscription could affect the credibility of the memory site, as such a document has either never been found or, alternatively, never existed.

75. This information was confirmed by Bohdan Tscherkes.

76. Melnyk and Masyk, *Pam’iatnyky*, 239.

77. Emphasis on the uniting power of religious ethics played a crucial role in the orchestration of another Polish-Ukrainian commemorative event that drew international attention, namely the unveiling of the restored Lwów Eaglets Cemetery in 2005, see Liubomyr Khakhula, “*Rizuny*” *chy pobratymy? Suchasni pol’s’ki dyskursy pro Ukrainu* (L’viv, 2016), 178–207. The intended emphasis of the religious component following the eventual success of the commemorations at the Cemetery of the Lwów Eaglets (Polish teens who had fallen during the Polish-Ukrainian struggles for Lwów in 1918) was also confirmed by Yaroslav Hrytsak, the head of the Polish-Ukrainian jury that selected the winning project of the professors’ monument.

78. Bohdan Tscherkes, interview with Eleonora Narvselius, L’viv, April 15, 2015.



**Figure 3.** The monument to the Polish professors unveiled in L'viv on July 3, 2011. The older monument from the 1990s is visible at the background. Photo by Eleonora Narvselius.

that the construction of the monument in L'viv was an initiative demonstrating common values of the two national and urban communities, among them the declared value of being a part of the democratic and peaceful Europe.<sup>79</sup>

Meanwhile, the joint commemoration was questioned not only by radical politicians from L'viv, but also by the Polish side. In an article published shortly before the official opening ceremony, historian Piotr Łysakowski, affiliated with the Polish Institute of Memory (IPN), repeated the argument about the participation of Ukrainians in the murder of the professors.<sup>80</sup> Overemphasis on two principal stakeholders in the commemorative event on the Wulecki

79. This rhetoric of the common “European home” was prominent in official speeches delivered at the unveiling of the monument.

80. Available at <http://www.polska1918-89.pl/pdf/mord-na-profesorach-lwowskich--lipiec-1941,2200.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2020). The same was previously stated in the letters of the League of Descendants of the Lwów Professors to presidents of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma in 2002 and Viktor Yushchenko in 2005. Nevertheless, an investigation

Heights—the Polish and the Ukrainian ones—also resulted in a curious episode. The monument unveiling ceremony was attended by Dieter Schenk, the author of an award-winning book about the execution of the professors. The German historian had intended to participate in the official part of the opening and bring an apology for this particular crime of the Nazis but, similarly to the relatives of the professors, was not allowed to speak.<sup>81</sup> This episode indicated that the rigorously-staged commemoration became a matter of settling a feud between neighbors, a deal between the Polish and local Ukrainian communities. An apology of a repentant German could allegedly interfere with the bipolar orchestration of the Polish-Ukrainian commemorative ritual.

Overall, the monument on the Wulecki Hills was a successful commemorative closure that finally paid tribute to an important but for political and ideological reasons “inconvenient” group of WWII victims. As a next step in popularizing their memory, a special exhibition on the territory of the L’viv Polytechnics campus was announced.<sup>82</sup> In 2011, this project remained unrealized, however, because of serious disagreements between the Polish and Ukrainian parties on its form and content. After 2014, warfare in Ukraine was the excuse to put the project on ice. In 2016, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the execution of the professors coincided with the resolution of the Polish Seim about the wartime massacres in Volhynia as a case of genocide committed by Ukrainian nationalists. That year, a sense of bitterness colored the ceremony in front of the monument that crowned the strenuous efforts of Polish and Ukrainian enthusiasts to find a common commemorative formula. Although both the Ukrainian and Polish delegations were represented by high dignitaries and the ceremony attracted media attention, the official addresses were clichéd and the atmosphere quite tense. In contrast, cordiality permitted a semi-official ceremony that was organized on the next day around the modest older monument built in 1995. The addresses of the speakers standing at the foot of the monument that lists the names of the murdered intelligentsia focused on the circumstances of their death and on the continuous efforts of local Poles to preserve their memory. After the ceremony, many participants stayed to talk and take pictures with acquaintances, priests, and Polish visitors invited to the event.<sup>83</sup>

The establishment of two different scenarios of commemoration on the Wulecki Hills that perform a contrast between the “official” and the “grass-roots” prompts the conclusion that we are witnessing the transformation of the commemorative model formed in the 1990s. This “post-Soviet” model

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conducted by the IPN confirmed the old conclusions about the German implementers of the murder and closed the case in 2006.

81. Jerzy Borzęcki, “Skandaliczne przemówienie i zakazane słowo ‘polskich,’” *Kurier Galicyjski*, July 15–28 (2011), 9; see also <http://www.lwow.com.pl/profesorowie/pomnik/pomnik.html> (accessed March 9, 2020). The text of Schenk’s undelivered speech was reproduced in the Polish translation of his book (*Noc morderców*, 7–8).

82. Vasyl’ Kosiv, interview with Eleonora Narvselius, L’viv, September 24, 2013. See also <http://portal.lviv.ua/news/2011/07/03/150003> (accessed February 28, 2020).

83. Mayor Dutkiewicz mentioned in an interview that the intact preservation of this older unofficial monument was one of the conditions for building the new one. Rafał Dutkiewicz, interview with Igor Pietraszewski, Wrocław, July 15, 2015.



comes close to what Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi calls multivocal commemoration (allowing groups with different interpretations of the same past to hold ceremonies in a shared space, in a shared time, and with a shared scenario). Meanwhile, in the 2000s a competing model of fragmented commemoration became prevalent. Its core feature is “multiple commemorations in various spaces and times where diverse discourses of the past are voiced and aimed at disparate audiences.”<sup>84</sup> Evidently, the discussed memory event and the accompanying commemorative practices were caught in the mainstream of the Polish-Ukrainian memory dispute that has become increasingly polarized since the beginning of the 2000s, when Poland gained accession to the EU, the visa regime between Poland and Ukraine was established, and heated discussions on Volhynian massacres and the Ukrainian nationalist insurgence turned into a “memory war.” The uniting potential of memory about the professors is still significant. Likewise, the idea that “in the face of science, like in the face of God, everyone is equal” did not lose its appeal among elites. Nevertheless, sad news about the defilement of the monument came out on March 10, 2017. The official monument that, as some Poles and Ukrainians maintain, symbolizes nothing more than a sanitized consensual approach, was suddenly turned into a new front line of the Polish-Ukrainian “memory war.”<sup>85</sup>

### **Conclusion: Translocal Memorialization as an Alternative to Confrontational Grammars of Polish-Ukrainian Memory Politics?**

Over several postwar decades, commemoration of the academic intelligentsia executed in 1941 on the Wulecki Hills developed quite autonomously on each side of the Polish-Ukrainian border. In the Polish People's Republic and in the Soviet Ukraine strategies of commemoration took different directions. In the Polish context, particularly in Wrocław, the professors were honored as national heroes and martyrs, while Soviet efforts to use this same group to create ideological capital were inconsistent and eventually futile.

With the collapse of the Soviet system, when negotiations around building an official monument in L'viv were resumed, the difference in attitudes and positions was prominent. Nevertheless, due to the efforts of academics and politicians on both sides, a consensual commemorative formula was adopted by 2011. It avoided national-patriotic overtones, and instead elevated three components equally important for Polish and Ukrainian memory politics. The normative component laid emphasis on the moral imperatives of religious (in particular, Christian) ethics; the historical component stressed the crucial importance of the shared experience of Stalinism and Nazism; and, finally, the political component focused on the present-day democratic

84. Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, “Commemorating a Difficult Past: Yitzhak Rabin's Memorials,” *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 1 (February 2002), 32.

85. Under such circumstances, the visit of Rafał Dutkiewicz to L'viv in July 2017 was a well-timed political move. The mayor of Wrocław not only took part in the annual commemoration on the Wulecki Hills, but also left a generous donation in support of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland, see [www.polukr.net/uk/blog/2017/07/prezident-vroclava-peredav-50-tisyach-yevro-fondu-ukrayina/](http://www.polukr.net/uk/blog/2017/07/prezident-vroclava-peredav-50-tisyach-yevro-fondu-ukrayina/) (accessed February 10, 2020).



path of both societies and their orientation toward Europe. Notably, both sides were engaged in a type of horizontal—translocal—cooperation, where instead of national institutions charged with the task of boosting national memories, the lead was taken by “smaller” actors like municipalities, academic circles, relatives and disciples of the victims, local cultural activists and clergy. Largely because of their involvement, the commemorative project was successfully realized.

The achieved consensus and shared commemorative formula notwithstanding, the Polish and Ukrainian sides added their own touch to the scheme. For the Polish participants, it was important to stress the moral obligation to remember fellow nationals buried outside the present-day borders of the country, to underscore the high cultural status of the dead, and to bring to the fore the special relation between L'viv and Wrocław. In contrast, the Ukrainian side placed an accent on justice, called for reciprocity in Polish-Ukrainian commemorations, and focused on the experiences of totalitarianism that, in turn, allowed a smooth introduction to the issue of national liberation. All of this indicates that, despite the consensus, the Polish and Ukrainian actors invested the translocal memory event with quite different truth, originality, and identity claims.

As the previous analysis indicates, it makes sense to talk about the translocal quality of a memory event referring to the murdered professors. In this case, we may discern capillary links transgressing the Polish-(Soviet) Ukrainian national border and existing under the radar of national institutions and policies. Locality—may it be a special milieu, city, or region—sticks out as the producer of its own genealogies; as the narrator of its own stories that often diverge quite radically from the national historical narratives and, most importantly, as the incubator of mobilized memory actors with their own priorities and leverages.

Polish-Ukrainian commemorative grammars are capable of producing uniting messages, but local grievances, priorities and interests may modify them. Multivocal forms of commemoration may gradually give place to fractured memory regimes in which homogeneous groups convey unnuanced messages to their audiences. With hindsight, it has to be admitted that the limelight directed on only one specific group of victims left in darkness the complexity of the wartime situation of L'viv, where extermination of several groups, the largest of them Jews, took place simultaneously. To break the encapsulation of national memory politics, it makes sense to lay a more pronounced emphasis on entanglements between local genealogies, religious values, and European models of dealing with difficult pasts. This might create a dense supranational context in which non-confrontational and knowledgeable local actors could orchestrate complex mnemonic initiatives on the basis of mutual respect and parity of status.