

Yana Barinova

«BABI YAR» IN CONTEMPORARY MEMORY POLITICS: PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL ASPECTS

The article is considered to implementation of the project of Memorial Center for Holocaust victims “Babi Yar” which will not only change the historical consciousness of Ukraine, but, given the great interest and attention in the world to the problems of the Babi Yar, and it will become one of the significant events in the life of the international community .

Keywords: *Babi Yar, the Holocaust, historical memory, politics of memory.*

COMMON FUTURE PROJECT

Surprisingly the past makes us think about who we are and what kind of world we would like to live in. Seventy-five years ago the tragedy of Babi Yar took away up to one hundred thousand lives. One of the most terrible pages in the history of the Second World War, the prologue to a Europe-wide disaster of the Jewish people, the beginning of the terrible occupation of Kiev. A lot was spoken of and written about Babi Yar during the last few months. Years go by, but the shadow of tragedy does not become more transparent, the injury does not become easier to overcome. On the contrary, even a simple look at the ways of Babi Yar remembrance demonstrates the diversified approach to commemorate the horrors at this place – there are twenty-nine monuments at Babi Yar site at the moment. What can this diversity be the evidence of: the desire to thoroughly capture the memory of what happened or readiness to defend the memory of only “own” victims, belonging to a particular group? I think this big problem is the vision of our own identity by our contemporaries.

Who are we? I look at the mirror of this far gone tragedy trying to answer that question. Surprisingly the question why we remember the tragedy, answers the already asked question – “Who are we?”. Why do I need to remember Babi Yar? It is not enough to say: “So that it will never happen again.”

Standing at the site of Babi Yar I struggle to answer another question: “Who am I?” I am Ukrainian, born in 1989, in a critical year for the whole Europe, on the verge of the Independency of Ukraine. I have Jewish roots and being in Babi Yar, I think of the terrible fate of those who were killed only because of their nationality. I have a daughter and it is important for me that she lives in a country with high moral standarts and values. I recall a speech by Ivan Dziuba on the day of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the tragedy at Babi Yar, “Babi Yar – a tragedy of all humanity, but it was accomplished on Ukrainian soil. And that is why Ukrainians have no right to forget about it as well as Jews. Babi Yar – is our common tragedy, and for one it is the tragedy of both Jewish and Ukrainian people,” – said Dziuba. In his speech, distributed in hundreds of underground press materials, he defined the most important things for us.

Twenty-nine monuments at Babi Yar – it is not just the result of having multiple private initiatives to perpetuate the memory of victims. Monuments were placed here to various victims.

Specifically detached to Jews, Ukrainians, Romes... At Babi Yar everyone was seeking their own “historical justice”, but not a common vision of justice. Topography of Babi Yar – is a topography of searching modern Ukrainian identity. I do realize how hard it is to talk of a new perspective to remember Babi Yar after all those years of inconsistent politics of memory in our country. But today it is a vital matter for the Ukrainian society. Our awareness of the past is a mirror of the future vision. Therefore, I take my job at the Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Center not just as a participation in an interesting project, but also as a contribution to the development of Ukraine, headed by the values of human life and dignity. I really hope that we will be able to enclose the center with a space of public debates and a joint search for ways to implement our responsibility for the past. Babi Yar can become a place of a new “social agreement” created around the memory of a common tragedy.

BABIYAR HAS TO SPEAK

Few people know that the Israeli national memorial to the victims of the Holocaust - Yad Vashem is the second place in the country in terms of attendance and tourist attraction - after the famous Wailing Wall.

This indicates both the quality of the institution and the importance of the topic: the memory of the Holocaust remains a universal value, as long as people remain humans.

By the will of history, Ukraine has a place that has become one of the main symbols of the Holocaust - Babi Yar, where, during the Nazi occupation and with the help of local collaborators, up to 200 000 people were killed by various counts. The massacres started by the shooting of Kiev Jews on September 28-29, 1941, when more than 33 000 people, mostly elderly, women and children, were guilty because they were born Jews. During the following months, until the fall of 1943, representatives of other groups were also killed here: the mentally ill, Roma, prisoners of war, priests, resistance fighters.

Despite the world fame, Babi Yar still does not have a memorial complex that would centralize and unite the work on perpetuating the memory of the victims. Today, 75 years after the tragedy and 25 years of state independence of Ukraine, Babi Yar is a park zone in different corners of which there are almost three dozen monuments and commemorative signs. They were installed at different times, they are associated with various groups of victims and individual personalities. They reflect the torn memory, fix a jealous dimension - whose victims prevail, whose pain is stronger. Perhaps most importantly, the

only thing uniting them is that people pass by them indifferently without thinking about the events that are connected with them.

Such a situation can no longer be tolerated. Ukraine, where during the Second World War there was killed a quarter of all Holocaust victims in the world, should take responsibility and recreate the systematic memory of the Babi Yar. We have no right to oblivion. No wonder the Nobel laureate, writer Elias Canetti said: “It’s passed - it does not mean forgotten.”

In the world, today there are more than 200 memorials and museums of the Holocaust, including those in countries where there was no Nazi occupation. And in Ukraine there are some small museums in the Dnieper, Kharkov and Odessa, but there is still no center that would combine the functions of the memorial, research institution and educational platform. Such a center that would become a kind of communication channel, through which Kyiv and Ukraine broadcast “messages” from the past, addressed to the present and future generations.

This is the goal which stands before the Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Center, which is planned to be built and opened for the 80th anniversary of the tragedy in 2021. The future Center intends on creatively embodying the best world practices, and is going to be more than museum, research and education. It’s not just about creating a memory capsule - a repository of knowledge about past events, but a constantly evolving interactive site. A platform for interethnic dialogue and harmony, to discuss issues of tolerance, justice, respect and mutual understanding between nations and cultures.

Why is it actual, important and necessary? After all, today many voices are heard from different sides against taking historical wounds and reanimating mutual claims - be it the Volyn massacre, the Holodomor, or the deportation of the Crimean Tatars. But ignorance and oblivion of the past inevitably doom to the repetition of problems in the present. Unfortunately, today’s Ukraine does not need to follow examples beyond the Crimea and the Donbass.

There is one more important point - it is a painful problem of collaborationism and indifference, without which memory cannot be complete and correct. The national “we” is still being viewed from the point of success, victory, from the point of view of resistance fighters and passive victims and this perspective is still very widespread and popular. And anything that casts doubt on national pride, courage or identity of the national victim, is either denied or hushed up.

Therefore Babi Yar must speak. To speak openly, honestly and objectively - for us it is an opportunity to talk about our own faults too. It is a discourse of responsibility. It is appropriate to recall the words of the philosopher Hannah Arendt: “We must openly look into the past’s eyes, we must bear this burden, which was laid on us by the past centuries.” It was the unwillingness to appear

in an unfavourable light, to give objective assessments, to repent, all these things, among other reasons, prevented the creation of a memorial center in Babi Yar.

This is the special purpose of the Center: with proper implementation, it can become a creative institution building a new society, it can form a new paradigm of historical memory around the tragedy of Babi Yar. Let’s give a rest to all the manipulative attempts to hide collaborators behind the backs of the righteous. It’s time to really face the European level of commemoration (keeping the memory of the significant events of the past in the public consciousness) of the war and the Holocaust, including at the state level. At the moment we are really just making our first steps in the direction of interethnic dialogue, genuine agreement and mutual understanding, in the direction of implementing serious commemorative practices (like commemorative events in the Baltic countries; or in China, where the events of the Maoist era were thought through; or international actions towards the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide).

I am sure that the implementation of the BYHMC project will not only change the historical consciousness of Ukraine, but, given the great interest and attention in the world to the problems of the Babi Yar, it will undoubtedly become one of the significant events in the life of the international community.

Ahead of us - is a painstaking systematic work. To carry out this job and make Babi Yar a constantly acting powerful communicator with the country and the world is our duty.

In conclusion, I would like to quote historian Aleida Assmann, the author of the book “The Long Shadow of the Past”: “Traumatic memories are no longer considered to be a dead past, on the contrary - the dead from the past call us and charge us for what was done to them.”

This bill cannot be left unpaid.

BABIYAR. MEMORY REBOOT

Babi Yar tragedy holds a strange place in the memory policy of Ukraine. One of the most tragic Holocaust episodes Babi Yar remains one of the most unclaimed places of memory existing in Ukraine.

Why is this happening?

Post-Soviet memory holds the knowledge that it is not necessary to go there. New generation, on the contrary - rebels and demands to release them from policy to which we, who were born many decades later, have no regard.

Reflecting on the site of Babi Yar in Ukraine’s historical memory, we find ourselves at an impasse - the absolute transparency of the evil committed there, is displaced to the marginalia of public debate - not now, this is clear, why do we endlessly procrastinate old and well-known...

At the same time, we have a profound conviction that it is a reboot of Babi Yar memory that will enable Ukraine to formulate very important questions for the country. The questions relating not only to historical memory, but also to the future project.

Why do we need a reboot?

In 2016 the Foundation “Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Center” was created and in five years, to the eightieth anniversary of the tragedy, the Foundation plans to present a new strategy for the commemoration. The project has immediately called serious suspicion, so it is necessary to clarify what involves the activity of a memorial center. Now Babi Yar site has the status of National Historical and Memorial Preserve, where we can see a large number of monuments, mostly created in the post-Soviet period by various non-governmental organizations. Actually, not “post-Soviet” monument is only one - the famous monument of 1967, dedicated to the memory of the Soviet citizens died here. But there is still no single center, which would unite the efforts to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust in Ukraine, existing.

Why Babi Yar Holocaust?

Why are we outlined as Holocaust Memorial Center? Since the establishment of the center, we have heard dissatisfaction that the word “Holocaust” in the center of the title, so only one aspect of the Babi Yar tragedy is allocated here - namely, the extermination of the Jews in 1941. At the same time, there were destroyed Roma, Ukrainians, Russians, patients of psychiatric hospital and many others who clamored against the establishment of Nazi rule in Kyiv. We would like to emphasize that in the last decade, the concept of the Holocaust in memory policy of the European states acquires a broader meaning, encompassing all those whose existence was considered incompatible with the existence of the Nazi state.

We have to recall that in the tradition of the historical memory, various nations have specific Holocaust titles established. Thus, Jewish genocide is called the Shoah, the genocide of the Roma - Porrajmos. The unifying name for the misanthropic practices of the Nazi state is the concept of the Holocaust.

The memory of Babi Yar requires serious consideration of the past and visions of the future formation. Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Center is focused on the remembrance of all those who were destroyed by the inhuman machine of Nazism, as well as those who sought the memorialization of the tragedy in the Soviet and post-Soviet times. Our concept is built on the values of human rights and human dignity - because there are hundreds of thousands of people who have been denied a fundamental human right - the right to life, and later - and the right to memory and mourning. It is not surprising that the requirement to preserve the memory of the tragedy united people of different nationalities,

but with a common vision of the concept of dignity - they simply could not afford to destroy the memory of the people, who can no longer testify for themselves. Thus, it is up to us, to the living ones.

How to avoid mistakes?

The concept of the Center is already being discussed with an international team of experts in the fields of history, historical memory, of museums, exhibition design, etc. The content side of the project will be develop with Ukrainian experts, taking into account not only the understanding of the facts, but also the internal relationship with the tradition of the past. This collaboration with leading experts from the existing Holocaust museums will take into account existing international experience and will help to avoid the mistakes of our predecessors. Memorial center also plans to run educational programs in order to help Ukrainians find the place of the Babi Yar tragedy and postwar commemoration in our own identification.

We hope that our project becomes the place of public research to study the difficult past - the project aims not to broadcast a certain truth, but to reconcile the conflicting memories of our country in general conversation, joint development of historical problems and collective efforts.

WHY WE BELIEVE IN SUCCESS

On March 19, the Supervisory Board of the Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Center was established in Kyiv. After a long-lasting meeting, the Board was presented to the public at a press conference. Journalists were interested not only in the specific parameters of the project (the location of the center, the architectural decision, the budget, the timetable, etc.), but also asked questions related to the history and public perception of the project. The essence of those questions boiled down to the thesis: why do you think that you will succeed in creating a memorial center in the Babi Yar, if a number of previous attempts failed? In addition, Ukrainian media already had materials of a skeptical and negative nature. It makes sense to answer this question in detail and most publicly, which was simply not possible during the press conference.

So, why do we believe in success and talk about the opening of the Center to the 80th anniversary of the tragedy in Babi Yar (October 2021). First of all, we are talking about a serious, systematic approach, competent management and full transparency.

All previous attempts to create something in the Babi Yar, in fact, came down to declarations and laying stones. Initiative groups of social activists worked and nothing more. We, for the first time, created a structure in the status of a legal entity - the Project Development Foundation with a full-

fledged office and a professional team. I would like to emphasize that the BYHMC was officially registered in October 2016 - after a year of careful preparatory work. The legal design of the fund was developed with the help of consultants from Ernst&Young, selected on a tender basis from the Big Four companies. As a result, there was created a structure that combined a charitable foundation and a public organization. I want to note that this is very important for attracting participants and funds, and also in order not to be affiliated with any other organizations that previously engaged in projects related to the Babi Yar.

In parallel with the development of the legal design, the work was carried out in two directions - the content of the project activity and the organizational development of the project. That is, experts were attracted to solve tasks on the work of the Center on three levels: research, exhibition and education. At the same time, office with profile departments (PR, IT, legal, financial) and a competent team was created. Today, there are 12 people selected on the basis of a strict interview, who work in the office at: 100 A, Velyka Vasylkivska str. (building of the business center "Toronto"). An important point is the launch of a fully operational web site in three languages, which will function till the 76th anniversary of Babi Yar (September 2017). This approach significantly distinguishes us from all the predecessors, when there were enthusiastic social activists, freelancers and part-timers engaged in the work.

Why is this important and what is it for? Firstly, it is fully transparent, secondly - the financial potential, and thirdly - the reputation and weight in the society. No one can say that we are introvertive. Any citizen and any organization can become a member of the Foundation. You just need to be out of the international wanted list. All our contacts are available on the web page in the public domain. As for organizations, there are about 14 000 officially registered NGOs in Ukraine. The number of international NGOs that operate in Ukraine is about 700. As we can see, the potential is huge. This open model is a key, defining element in the project implementation process.

Let's now go through the concrete components of the BYHMC project. The essential public interest is mostly focused on the questions of place, form, content and budget.

The process of choosing a site for the construction of the Center is objectively complex and subjectively painful. The first part deals with the solution of cadastral, legal and, especially, halachic (Jewish tradition, the problem of construction with respect to burial places of people) issues. The second - the problems of ideological, psychological, political, with which one has to face and reckon. The site of the Center will be determined within six months and will be officially announced at the next meeting of the Supervisory Board - October 19, 2017. Perhaps due to some circumstances it will not be the actual Babi Yar.

Although the concept of the "Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Center" on the outskirts of the city seems paradoxical.

The expected budget of the project was announced last year. It amounts to about \$ 100 million, which can fluctuate depending on the design decisions. We are talking about voluntary contributions from private individuals and organizations, without attracting budgetary funds. However, we are ready for the support of the state and we hope that it will appear at the certain stage of the project. Our resources are formed from voluntary contributions. At the end of the year, an audit will be conducted, the report will be available to everyone on the website. This is an international humanitarian project aimed at perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust and so that this might never happen again. The question of the content of the Center is solved in the same systematic and consistent manner, with the same attention to details as all other areas of the project. First of all, there is a constant study of the international experience - both in the organization of museum and expository work, and in the study and presentation of the history of the Holocaust. Over the past year I have visited about 20 centers and museums of the Holocaust in different countries, established contacts, collected information. We are forming a group of international experts who meet every two months, and a scientific council. The task of experts is to develop a substantial part of the Center's activities, for which an architectural competition and visual and technical solutions will be carried out.

The architectural competition is planned to be announced at the end of 2017 and will be held during 2018, so that we could calmly carry out the construction and filling of the Center in three years. Unlike previous competitions with their not always understandable jury structure and questionable legitimacy, we strive to ensure that the decision of our competition would be recognized by the international community. Therefore, all the positions of the competition (conditions, jury, participants, projects) will be absolutely public, its course will be regularly covered on the Center's website.

And in conclusion, I want to recall the Supervisory Board, which now includes 11 members. They are: Natan Sharansky, head of the Jewish agency Sokhnut (head of the Supervisory Board); chief Rabbi of Ukraine Yaakov dov Bleich; musician and social activist Svyatoslav Vakarchuk; ex-president of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski; sportsman and philanthropist, Volodymyr Klitschko; USA ex-senator Joe Lieberman; businessmen and philanthropists Victor Pinchuk, German Khan (deputy head of Supervisory Board), Mikhail Fridman and Pavel Fuks; ex-minister of international affairs of Germany Joschka Fischer. CEO of the Center former vice-president of the European Parliament, Marek Siwiec (Poland). I also want to recall that the project received full support

from the supreme authorities of Ukraine in the person of the President Petro Poroshenko and the Prime Minister Vladimir Groysman, as well as from the Kiev mayor Vitali Klitschko, who personally announced this at a press conference on March 19.

The synergy of such support and authority, social weight and economic opportunities of a team like this - from the legendary dissident to the legendary sportsman - is also one of the factors that inspire optimism and confidence in the successful implementation of the project.

Яна Барінова

**«БАБИН ЯР» В СУЧАСНІЙ ПОЛІТИЦІ ПАМ'ЯТІ:
ФІЛОСОФСЬКО-ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ**

Розглядається як реалізація проекту Меморіального центру жертв Голокосту «Бабин Яр» не тільки змінить історичну свідомість України, але, з урахуванням великого інтересу й уваги в світі до проблематики Бабиного Яру, безсумнівно, стане одним із значущих подій життя міжнародного співтовариства ..

Ключові слова: *Бабин Яр, Голокост, історична пам'ять, політика пам'яті.*

Яна Барінова

**«БАБИЙ ЯР» В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ ПАМЯТИ:
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Ключевые слова: *Бабий Яр, Холокост, историческая память, политика памяти.*

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