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# **'EAGLETS CEMETERY' DEBATE IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINE'S POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

## **Abstract**

In this paper, the author presents her analysis of the discourse regarding the 'Eaglets' Cemetery that took place in the years 1997–2018 in Ukraine, and identifies its four waves that are related to political processes in the country. She proves that the political discourse, which gained its relevance during the time of the elections or during the crisis of political power in Ukraine, expanded the field of interpretation to the discourse of historical memory. But instead of generating values, the discourse brought out the postponed conflicts. The author demonstrates that the political elite uses the politics of memory as a symbolic capital, in order to influence and control the political processes in the country. Hence, the 'traces of history' that were embedded in the political discourse shattered even further the historical memory, leading not to mutual understanding, but to frozen conflicts. The study analyses forms of attitudes to political reality with regards to the discourse around the 'Eaglets' Cemetery. The author uses a structuralist approach, with reference to the theories of Y. Lotman and C. Lévi Strauss.

## **Keywords**

Political elite, political discourse, symbols, meaning, 'Eaglets' Cemetery.

Symbolic language, which is used in political discourses, consists of arguments, metaphors, phonologies, language, communication and normative acts. It is applied through stories that are told via the news in the media. This is a condition for the functioning of discourse, through which meaning is developed which shapes a political reality. Official political discourse creates a regulation that points to the official text. It is related to topics that are included in the public space. Topics that society should reflect on become a challenge for the political authorities. Therefore, the carriers of political discourse are both the political elite and political institutions, as well as society, which, at the community level, is able to have an impact on the change or adjustment of political discourse. History is the most vulnerable and painful topic in political discourse. The interpretation of historical facts, where some are silenced and others acquire a new meaning, is done by political actors in the public space. Through interpretation, it is possible not only to establish a mechanism for introducing certain values into society, but also to predict the stability/instability of the development of the political system. When the values transmitted through political discourse acquire their own antitheses, the system undergoes internal fluctuations caused by value conflicts.

The problems of national memory related to the above-mentioned discourse in modern Ukraine are addressed by such Ukrainian researchers as I. Bulkina, A. Veselova, A. Gritsenko, Y. Zerniy, G. Kasyanov, L. Nagorna, or M. Ryabchuk, whose attention is primarily focused on the Ukrainian context. The works of J. Assmann,<sup>1</sup> R. Koselleck,<sup>2</sup> P. Nora,<sup>3</sup>

1. Я. Ассман, *Культурная память: Письмо, память о прошлом и политическая идентичность в высоких культурах древности* [Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination] (Москва: Языки славянской культуры, 2004).

2. Р. Козеллек, и др., “Пространство опыта и горизонт ожиданий – две исторические категории” [‘Space of experience’ and ‘horizon of expectations’ are two historical categories], *Социология власти*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2016).

3. П. Нора, *Проблематика мест памяти* [Problems of memory places], accessed June 8, 2018, <http://ec-dejavu.ru/m-2/Memory-Nora.html>.

J. Rancière,<sup>4</sup> P. Ricœur,<sup>5</sup> or M. Halbwachs<sup>6</sup> allow us to understand that there is a field for interpretation when it comes to historical discourse upon which the strategy of shaping the national memory is officially built.

There are different forms of collective memory: national, cultural (J. Assmann), communicative (M. Halbwachs, P. Nora), or historical (P. Ricœur). Its main substance is historical events. Emphasizing some and silencing other events leads to a situation in which some fragments are represented in public space. P. Ricœur calls these fragments 'traces of history'. Thus, the scholar dilutes the concepts of 'history' and 'memory'. History, in his opinion, puts events in a single logic, while memory sees only fragments. Thus, national, cultural, communicative, and historical memories need constant support from the authorities. If the 'traces of history' are not included in the official political discourse, not only the connection with the past is destroyed, but we also lose the national identification of the present. Therefore, historical memory can be understood as a practice used by political institutions, which – through a set of historical knowledge, ideas and values – establishes common codes, and influences the unification of the nation by means of a particular discourse.

In this study, we will rely on a structuralist approach, where the focus is not on the political reality, but on the attitudes toward the political reality. Therefore, the matter of this research is not the subject of political reality, but the form of attitude towards political reality. In this study, the form of attitude is represented through the 'Eaglets' Cemetery discourse. The systemic approach, based on Yuri Lotman's theory, allows to analyse the role of the subject on the periphery of the political system as a principle of (un)restraining

4. Ж. Рансьер, *На краю политического* [On the Shores of Politics] (Москва: Праксис, 2006).

5. П. Рикер, *Память, история, забвение* [Memory, History, Forgetting] (Москва: Издательство гуманитарной литературы, 2004).

6. М. Хальбвакс, *Социальные рамки памяти* [The Social Frameworks of Memory] (Москва: Новое издательство, 2007).

the development of the system in accordance with its centre. If we think of the subject as an actor of discourse, it is possible to trace its interactive role in creating myths and distorting myths. Claude Lévi-Strauss introduced the concept of ‘cold societies’, i.e. the societies which, with the help of special institutions, stop the influence of historical factors that threaten the balance and stability of the system. The main weapon used by such societies is the creation of myths. Therefore, historical memory, according to C. Lévi Strauss, has a mythologized form. According to the scholar, the ‘freezing of facts’, typical of a cold culture, is the wisdom that allows the system to evolve linearly during internal non-linear processes. Myth is not understood here as a fictional story, but as a narrative of fundamental significance, passed down from generation to generation.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the construction of a memorial began at the Lychakiv Cemetery in Lviv, where participants of the Ukrainian-Polish battles for Lviv in 1918 were buried, and then reburied in a separate cemetery (known under the unofficial name of the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery). After 1918, participants of the Ukrainian-Polish war of 1920 began to be buried there. “According to Polish sources, a total of 6,022 people – the military and volunteers – were involved in the fightings in Lviv on the Polish side. 1,421 of them were under 18 at that time, and 2,650 people were under the age of 25. 439 participants, including 120 schoolchildren and 76 students, died as a result of their injuries”.<sup>7</sup> Among Polish people, the prevailing opinion is that it was mostly young Polish high school students that were buried at the cemetery (the youngest, Antoni Petrykiewicz, was 13 years old). According to Lyubomyr Khakhula, who carried out a research project on the Polish and Ukrainian press (including such titles as “Vysokiy Zamok”, “Postup”, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, “Rzeczpospolita”, “Polityka”, and some online publications), “in the early 2000s, some Polish newspapers reported

7. “Цвинтар орлят” [Eaglets Cemetery], *Саїм “Varianty”*, accessed June 11, 2018, <https://varianty.lviv.ua/51842-tsvyntar-orliat>.

that the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery “was home mainly to Polish students who died in the fightings against the Ukrainians for Lviv in 1918–1919”<sup>8</sup> In his painting entitled Lviv ‘Eaglets’ during the defence of the cemetery in Lviv (1926), a Polish artist Wojciech Kossak visualized the Eaglets themselves. This image influenced the Polish way of thinking about the participants in the Ukrainian-Polish battles for Lviv in 1918. The painting shows young men holding rifles in their hands, defending the cemetery.

There is also a monument at the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery bearing an inscription “Tomb of the Polish Unknown Soldier”, which is believed to be a grave of Ukrainian Sich riflemen. The cemetery is also home to the graves of “volunteer pilots from the United States and military advisers from the French Mission who were part of the Polish troops.”<sup>9</sup>

Over time, at the beginning of World War II, all those who took part on the Polish side and died during the hostilities (both military staff and civilians, as well as veterans) began to be buried there. After World War II, a wave of true vandalism began at the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery: the tombs were deliberately destroyed and used for the construction of the streets of Lviv. In 1971, the cemetery was razed to the ground.

The analysis of the discourse regarding the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery allowed to identify four waves of the debate that coincide with the political processes that took place in Ukraine.

## 2002 – The first wave of the debate

In May 2002, during the restoration (some scholars use the term ‘reconstruction’) of the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery, which was carried

8. Л. Хахула, “Проблема відновлення польського військового меморіалу у Львові в польській та українській пресі кінця ХХ – початку ХХІ століття” [The problem of restoring the Polish military memorial in Lviv in the Polish and Ukrainian press of the late 20th and early 21st centuries], *Україна-Польща: історична спадщина і суспільна свідомість*, no. 7 (2014), 120.

9. Л. Петренко, “Цвинтарний детектив Міста Лева” [Detective of the Lions from the City Cemetery], *Zaxid.net*, December 29, 2015, accessed March 10, 2017, [https://zaxid.net/tsvintarniy\\_detektiv\\_mista\\_leva\\_n1378004](https://zaxid.net/tsvintarniy_detektiv_mista_leva_n1378004).

out in the years 1997–2005, Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski cancelled a meeting with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, scheduled for May 21 in Lviv. On that day, a memorial plaque was to be unveiled in Lviv. The meeting was scheduled so as to coincide with the opening of the cemetery to mark the fifth anniversary of the signing of the *Ukrainian-Polish declaration of mutual understanding and unity*. The reason for the cancellation of the visit was the decision of the Lviv City Council, which agreed to open the cemetery to Polish soldiers, but refused to approve the inscription proposed by the Polish side which was to be placed on the monument. According to the decision, the inscription on the mass grave at the cemetery was supposed to be: “Unknown Polish soldiers who died for Poland in 1918–1920” – without the words “heroically” and “independence”, upon which the Polish side insisted.

Later, in 2005, under Viktor Yushchenko’s presidency, the conflict was resolved: the plaque was installed in the central part of the monument with an inscription reading in Polish: “Here lies a Polish soldier who died for the Homeland” [Tu leży żołnierz polski poległy za Ojczyznę]. Another memorial sign was installed in front of the entrance to the memorial, with an inscription in both Polish and Ukrainian: “Ukrainian and Polish soldiers who died during the Ukrainian-Polish war of 1918–1919 are buried here”. But the discussions around the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery did not end there. For example, even then a Ukrainian politician Oleh Tyahnybok opposed to the Polish inscription on the said plaque (“Here lies a Polish soldier who died for the Homeland”), arguing that this was a violation of Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which defines the Ukrainian language as the only official language in Ukraine.<sup>10</sup>

If the Ukrainian media discourse spread fear that Lviv would return to Poland, then the Polish media discourse formed a framework of indignation, which generally produced mutual hostility

10. “Цвинтар під загрозою” [Cemetery under threat], *Львівська газета*, June 22, 2005.

between the two nations. Under these conditions, the Ukrainian political elite split: one part of it, including most of the former party officials of the country and the region, tried to avoid public discussion on this topic, because it was inconvenient to them; the others linked the theme of the 'Eaglets' Cemetery to the issue of the UPA soldiers' memorial in the Przemyśl province. Let me remind you that in 1991, the Polish episcopate decided "to hand over the Carmelite Church in Przemyśl to the Greek Catholics for the period of 5 years until they build their own church. Before 1946, this church had been a Greek Catholic cathedral, *the seat of the Ukrainian church hierarchs*".<sup>11</sup> Another story is related to the exhumation of the remains of UPA soldiers in the Polish city of Bircza. In 1946, the 26th division of the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) "Lemko" attacked the city, in which the NKVD troops and Polish military personnel were deployed. After the defeat of the UPA, the defenders of the city and the civilians who died in fighting were buried in the cemetery, while 23 UPA soldiers were thrown into a pit. As Lyubomyr Khakhula writes: "Neither the deputies nor the public agreed to a decent reburial of the remains of the UPA fighters, because they never forgot the murders committed by this formation, and were afraid of the return of the UPA legend".<sup>12</sup> The search for their remains, and then the reburial negotiations took as many as 10 years. Only in 2000, the remains of the soldiers were reburied and crosses were installed with an inscription reading: "Here rest the Ukrainian insurgents who died in the struggle for an independent Ukraine".

The newly elected mayor of Lviv Lyubomyr Bunyak and the president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma shared a common position

11. Ю. З. Павлів, *Депортації українців із польсько-українського прикордоння 1944–1951 рр. у регіональній пам'яті України* [Deportations of Ukrainians from the Polish-Ukrainian border in 1944–1951 in the regional memory of Ukraine], Кваліфікаційна наукова праця на правах рукопису, Спеціальність: 07.00.01 – історія України, Львів, 2018, р. 180, accessed September 11, 2019, <http://www.inst-ukr.lviv.ua/download.php?downloadid=448>.

12. Л. Хахула, *op. cit.*, 129.

on this contentious issue. During two May sessions of the city council, Lyubomyr Bunyak tried to persuade the deputies to make a compromise. He gave examples of inscriptions on Ukrainian burials in Poland, and called for understanding. Even a letter from the OUP (Association of Ukrainians in Poland), which talked about “negative stereotypes and prejudices about the common historical past”, did not manage to convince the deputies. “We appeal to you to come up with a balanced decision regarding the opening of the Polish military cemetery, which is scheduled for May 21 this year, remembering that maintaining a positive image of Ukraine and the fate of Ukraine’s aspirations for integration with Europe will depend on this”, the letter said.<sup>13</sup> Leonid Kuchma, with his authoritarian approach to government, for the first time faced opposition from the community of Western Ukraine, supported by the local authorities. The political changes associated with the parliamentary elections of March 31, 2002, led to a redistribution of struggles between regional elites. The activation of the counter-elite (represented by V. Yushchenko), which was a consequence of the loss of power by the Communist Party of Ukraine in 2002, brought the Galician and Kharkiv elites to the arena of struggle. In autumn 2002, on the second anniversary of G. Gongadze’s disappearance, a new protest action “Uprising, Ukraine!” began, demanding the impeachment of the president. Added to this are a number of international scandals including accusations concerning the president’s involvement in the illegal sale of the ‘Kolchuga’ system to Iraq. All this influenced the fact that Leonid Kuchma was interested in supporting Poland. Aleksander Kwasniewski served as a mediator between Ukraine and Eastern Europe when it was necessary to reconcile the two sides. Yet, the president was unable to influence the decision of the local council.

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13. *Об’єднання українців у Польщі. Депутатам Львівської міської Ради* [Association of Ukrainians in Poland. Deputies of the Lviv City Council], accessed March 21, 2017, <http://www.ji-magazine.lviv.ua/inform/orlata/zuwp1405.htm>.



## 2005 – The second wave of the debate

On June 25, 2005, when the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery was finally opened, emotions did not subside in the Ukrainian media. In the centre of the discourse regarding this issue, a new topic emerged: the ‘Szczerebiec’ sword, whose image is placed on the Tomb of the Five Unknown Soldiers, in front of the Monument of Glory. The tombstone bears an inscription: “Unknown heroes who died in the defence of Lviv and the South-Eastern Land”. After the opening of the Cemetery, a rumour began to spread that the sword symbolizes the conquest of Ukraine by Poland. The military burials committee at the Lviv City Council “recognized that the ‘Szczerebiec’ sword on the central plate can be considered a military symbol”, and that this “infringes the decision of the city council, according to which the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery should have no signs that could be interpreted in terms of conquest”, as the newspaper “Vysokyi Zamok” wrote in 2005.<sup>14</sup>

At that time, Oleh Tyahnybok, a People’s Deputy to the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council), and the chairman of the Svoboda Party, said in a comment to “Press Time”: “I believe that yesterday [June 24, the opening day of the Cemetery – I.M.] was a day of national shame. (...) We need to divide this matter into two separate issues. The first one is the opening of the Cemetery and honouring the fallen soldiers. I am in favour of this being done. The second question concerns monumental symbols and inscriptions. Even the Poles admitted that they were taking advantage of the submissiveness of the Ukrainian authorities, and they even violated the protocol that was signed between the two presidents. According to this treaty, it was forbidden to install any monumental military symbols. And yet, the ‘Szczerebiec’ sword, which symbolizes the

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14. “«Поховані» на «Цвинтарі орлят» суперечки воскрешають?» [‘Buried’ in the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery disputes resurrect?], *Високий Замок*, November 17, 2005, no. 211 (3222), accessed February 21, 2010, <http://www.ji-magazine.lviv.ua/inform/orlata/arhiv2005.htm#13>.

victory of Polish weapons over Ukraine, over Kiev – we have it in the cemetery”.<sup>15</sup>

There was a public debate about the significance of the sword: some considered it a symbol of conquest, others did not. Based on the conclusion of the military burials committee of the Lviv City Council, on June 13, 2005 the City Council adopted decision no. 2553 on dismantling the sword. Paragraph 4 of this document was formulated as follows:

“(…) to consider unacceptable the installation of sculptures, architectural elements and military symbols. (…) Therefore, we can assume that, in the opinion of the members of the committee, the Polish side did not take into account the instructions of the Lviv City authorities during the construction of the complex in the Lychakiv Cemetery, and crossed the line set by the deputies, who still consider the decision to be a great compromise”<sup>16</sup>

Let me remind you that the opening of the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery by V. Yushchenko took place after pressure from his administration was exerted on the local authorities of the city. Therefore, during the country’s political crisis of 2005, related to the conflict between President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, the president was accused of betraying the national interests of Ukraine. On September 8, 2005, the Cabinet of Ministers, headed by Yulia Tymoshenko, was dissolved by the decision of the president, and the debate around the ‘Szczerbiec’ sword began to subside.

15. “Відкриття, Цвинтаря Орлят є національною ганьбою – Тягнибок” [Opening of “the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery is a national shame” – Тягнибок], Інтернет видання *lviv.proua*, June 25, 2005, accessed June 27, 2006, <http://lviv.proua.com/news/2005/06/25/162340.html>.

16. “Дамоклів меч-щербець” [Damocles Sword-Szczerbiec], *Львівська газета*, July 19, 2005, no. 125 (691), accessed July 15, 2018, <http://www.ji-magazine.lviv.ua/inform/orlata/arhiv2005.htm#12>.

## 2015 – The third wave of the debate

The third wave of the discourse regarding the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery concerns the statues of two lions, about which it is necessary to give a small historical digression. In 1934, during the construction of the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery, two sculptures of lions were built as part of a memorial complex (made by the Polish sculptor Józef Starzyński). They stood at both arches of the Monument of Glory, with their front paws resting on shields bearing Polish inscriptions: “Always faithful” (*Zawsze wierni*) and “For you, Poland” (*Tobie Polsko*). However, the Soviet authorities decided to remove the statues in 1967 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution (one was installed on the Lviv–Vynnyky road, and the other was moved several times around the city, and was finally installed in Kulparkov (Kulparkiv), near a psychiatric clinic).

On June 13, 2005, in line with already mentioned Paragraph 4, the city council decided “to consider unacceptable the installation of sculptures, architectural elements and military symbols that are not approved by the decisions of the Lviv City Council”.<sup>17</sup> However, on December 16, 2015, without the approval of the Lviv City Council, the Lions were installed in the Cemetery (previously covered with wooden shields with the sign “Restoration”). This date is not accidental, since the day before, on December 15, Polish President Andrzej Duda visited Ukraine. The Polish side tried to symbolically support the Ukrainians during the Revolution of Dignity. But the topic of lions acquired a political connotation in the context of the country’s internal regional policy.

Only one week after the installation of the Lions, on December 24, 2015, Maryan Batyuk, a deputy from the Svoboda party, reported a criminal offence – the disappearance of the lions that had stood

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17. “Відновлення Цвинтаря орлят було можливе лише без левів – документ” [Restoration of the Eagles Cemetery was possible only without lions – a document], *Європейська правда*, October 30, 2018, accessed January 11, 2019, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2018/10/30/7088780/>.

at the entrance to the city from the city of Vynnyky, and at 95 Kulparkovskaya (Kulparkivska) Street. At that session, Valeriy Veremchuk, the head of the People's Control faction, also supported Svoboda, and explained that the missing lions were already standing in the Lychakiv Cemetery without the permission of the Lviv City Council. Later, a statement was issued by the People's Movement of Ukraine, saying that the case was qualified not just as a criminal act, but treason: "Unauthorized installation of monumental sculptures of stone lions on December 16–17, 2015 at the Polish memorial is a planned pro Moscow provocation by the Lviv city authorities and personally by the mayor, A. Sadovy. We are convinced that this provocation is designed to upset the public and ignite a new conflict with Ukraine's ally".<sup>18</sup>

In early 2016, a statement was published by Svoboda deputies in the Lviv Regional Council, who stated that the return of lion sculptures to the 'Eaglets' Cemetery could have serious consequences:

Such structures, in the original context of their installation, carried unambiguous symbolism, which, together with other existing military symbols, e.g. the Szczerbiec sword, created and will now create a context that may carry an anti-Ukrainian meaning, symbolize the occupation of Ukrainian lands, and offend the national feelings of Ukrainians.<sup>19</sup>

In early December 2015, a meeting of the Scientific Advisory Council at the Department of Historic Environment Protection of the Lviv City Council was held. During the meeting, the Polish side

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18. Л. Петренко, "Цвинтарний детектив Міста Лева" [Detective of the Lions from the City Cemetery], *op. cit.*

19. "Львівські депутати вважають, що леви на польському цвинтарі символізують окупацію" [Lviv deputies believe that lions in a Polish cemetery symbolize the occupation], *Високий замок*, January 27, 2016, accessed April 17, 2016, <https://wz.lviv.ua/news/157884-l-vivs-ki-deputati-vvazhayut-shcho-levi-na-pol-s-komu-tsvintari-simvolizuyut-okupatsiyu>.

did not insist on restoring the inscriptions “Always faithful” (Zawsze wierni) and “For you, Poland” (Tobie Polsko), as, in their opinion, they were inappropriate. It was decided that the shields would simply have the coat of arms of Lviv.<sup>20</sup> However, Poland received a key message from Ukraine that the restored Lions were “a symbol of the Polish occupation of Lviv”, and were related to the “military”, which has worsened the relations between the two countries.

When it comes to the political developments in Ukraine, it should be recalled that on October 25, 2015, local elections were held in Ukraine. The City Council included 7 political parties, most of which were radical:

- PP<sup>21</sup> “Samopomich” – 24 seats
- Petro Poroshenko’s “Solidarity” Bloc Party – 10 seats
- WO “Svoboda” – 8 seats
- PP “Hromadyans’ka pozytsiya” – 7 seats
- PP “Hromads’kyy rukh Narodnyy kontrol” – 6 seats
- PP “Ukrayins’ke ob’yednannya patriotiv – ukrop” (Ukrainian Association of Patriots – Ukrop) – 5 seats
- PP “Ukrayins’ka Halyts’ka partiya” – 4 seats

Among 11 candidates for mayor, Andriy Sadovy, the leader of the largest faction in Lviv, won in the second round. And it was after the elections that the newly elected parties which did not agree with the choice of a new mayor started to issue their public statements. Today, the debate does not subside, and there is still a threat that it may be used in new political confrontations.

## 2017 – The fourth wave of the debate

A new conflict around the ‘Eagles’ Cemetery arose in 2017, when the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration of Poland, Mariusz Błaszczak, announced the campaign “Design with us the

20. Л. Петренко, “Цвинтарний детектив Міста Лева” [Detective of the Lions from the City Cemetery], *op. cit.*

21. Political Party {ad. translator}.

passport of Poland 2018”. One of the propositions included placing images of the rotunda from the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery on the pages of Polish passports. Thus, Ukraine was faced with the prospect of its territory being depicted in foreign passports. In early August 2017, Polish Ambassador Jan Piekło was handed a note of protest from the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The protest was also joined by the Polish intellectuals, who called on Minister Błaszczak to abandon such a controversial decision (the letter was signed by 122 representatives of journalists, artists, experts, and public figures). After that, the topic was closed. “On the new passport, instead of the image of the Gate of Dawn (a monument located on the territory of modern Lithuania), the image of the Tomb of Maria Piłsudska will appear, and instead of the image of the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery in Lviv, the figure of Anton Petrykiewicz will appear”, Mariusz Błaszczak announced at the end of the social campaign “Design with us the passport of Poland 2018”.<sup>22</sup>

Over the following years, there were a number of provocations around the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery:

- On March 14, 2018, an explosion occurred at the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery, and although nothing was damaged, a provocation was recorded;

- On July 28, 2018, a group of unknown people of athletic appearance damaged the shields around the lion sculptures;

- On November 4, 2018, Polish football fans staged a ‘fire show’ at the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery (this is how they celebrated the 100th anniversary of the struggle of Poles against the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic);

- On December 15, 2018, three unknown persons, being on the territory of Lychakiv Cemetery, specifically at the Polish Mili-

22. “Польські паспорти будуть без Цвинтаря орлят і острої брами” [Polish passports will be without the Eaglets Cemetery and the Sharp Gate], *PolUkr*, accessed July 12, 2020, [http://www.polukr.net/uk/blog/2017/09/polski-pasporti-budut-bez-cvintaryya-orlyat-ostroyi-brami/?fbclid=IwAR128j-YUER-w14h641SYBmWUfMbgaSmCBonT\\_QS4Dr-VFAzPWDZHV3d0w3M](http://www.polukr.net/uk/blog/2017/09/polski-pasporti-budut-bez-cvintaryya-orlyat-ostroyi-brami/?fbclid=IwAR128j-YUER-w14h641SYBmWUfMbgaSmCBonT_QS4Dr-VFAzPWDZHV3d0w3M).

tary 'Eaglets' Cemetery, committed acts aimed at inciting national hatred, namely: tore the plywood sheets of scaffolding (fencing), which covered two sculptures of concrete lions installed on both sides of the Monument of Glory.

– On October 25, 2018, the Lviv Regional Council adopted a statement on the illegal presence of lions on the territory of the cemetery. The deputies' joint statement "refers to the illegal installation of lion sculptures on the territory of the Lychakiv Cemetery, which were previously part of the Polish military-propaganda memorial complex and are becoming a factor of probable provocations in Lviv".<sup>23</sup> But, just like the issue of the Szczerbiec Sword, the question of the lions remains in a state of a postponed conflict, which could at any time become the subject of political struggle in the new election campaign in Ukraine.

To date, the Polish side has limited itself to a request, addressed to the Lviv local council, for some cosmetic work. Poland is not yet ready to talk to the Cabinet of Ministers about the construction or restoration of the Memorial.

Thus, the discourse of the 'Eaglets' Cemetery is one of the important pages of Ukrainian-Polish relations. The involvement of the political elite, which used this discourse in the struggle for power, turned historical memory into a mechanism of manipulation. Having certain media resources, the regional political elite had an influence on either resolving or postponing controversial issues, which they created themselves, generating new 'agendas' in order to attract attention during the election campaign or political confrontations. The question of reconciliation and formation of a common historical memory on the part of Ukraine was quite controversial.

The confrontation of the two countries with regards to the discourse of the 'Eaglets' Cemetery took place through the following

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23. "У місті Лева – знову скандал із левами" [In the city of Lviv – again a scandal with lions], *Високий замок*, October 31, 2018, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://wz.lviv.ua/article/379834-u-misti-leva-znovu-skandal-iz-levami>.

two discourses, held on a domestic level, which were outlined separately for Ukrainians, and separately for Poles:

– Ukrainian discourse: “Pantheon of Polish weapons”. It was based on the ideas of betrayal (“Fallen for Poland in Lviv is treason”), shame (“How many times will we bend our necks, because the Poles wanted to”), and insult (“What will we tell our children who come to the cemetery and ask: with whom did the Poles fight so heroically?”).<sup>24</sup>

– Polish discourse: “Memorial of Polish defenders of the Kresy capital”. It was formed around the concept of persecution of Poles, an attack on the Catholic faith (“Their graves are built on our graves”), or justice (“Let’s rebuild the cemetery according to the Inrush project” /Rudolf Inrush being the author-architect of the Memorial/).<sup>25</sup>

The common denominator for the two sides was the fact that both Ukraine and Poland had political forces interested in either prolonging the conflict or resolving it as soon as possible. In addition, the general public from both countries was involved in this political discourse, participating in the debate and decision-making. Political discourse also led to the development of the everyday life discourse, which reflected certain prejudices between Ukrainians and Poles. While rumours were being spread in Ukraine that Poland was seeking to reclaim the Kresy territory, Poland talked of the threats for Poles in Lviv: “In particular, representatives of the Lviv public warned the youth of Krakow not to visit the Lychakiv Cemetery, except in large groups, as otherwise no one would be able to guarantee their safety”.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the debate around the ‘Eaglets’ Cemetery demonstrated the ability of the local community to develop its own political discourse, which may not be in line with the national discourse, or may even be in conflict with the official political discourse of the

24. Л. Хахула, *op. cit.*, 126.

25. *Ibid.*, 128.

26. *Ibid.*, 133.



country. This would be a sign of hybrid democracy (in the context of Kuchma's authoritarian rule).

Another factor is that when the political system is in a state of fluctuation caused by internal impulses, it begins to be affected by foreign policy discourses in order to influence border actors, which (according to the theory of Yuri Lotman) may threaten to shift the centre of the system towards the periphery (i.e. Kresy from the point of view of Poland). The situation with the Lviv lions and the Polish passports shows that when the domestic political discourse is unstable, when it is unable to produce values that stabilize the political system, the system receives external impulses from the discourses of other countries, which further affect its internal instability. In the discourse of the 'Eaglets' Cemetery, the centre of the political system was weak, therefore, on the periphery, the "traces of history" (as defined by Paul Ricœur) were used by the political elite, not as a strategy of memory, but as a symbolic capital aimed at influencing and controlling political processes in the country.

*Translated by Zbigniew Landowski*

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