

### Decommunization of the Mind: The case of Mariupol

### "Decommunization" laws

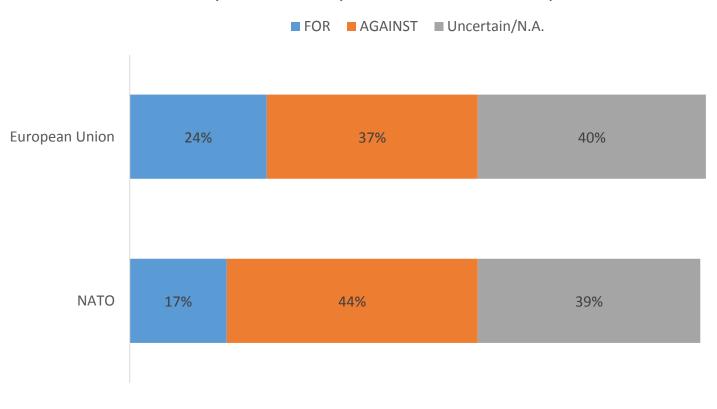
- no. 2538 "on the legal status and honoring the memory of participants in the struggle for the independence of Ukraine in the twentieth century"
- no. 2558 "on the condemnation of the communist and national-socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes and the prohibition of propagating their symbols"
- no. 2540 "on access to the archives of the repressive organs of the communist totalitarian regime, 1917-1991"
- no. 2539 "on the perpetuation of the victory over Nazism in the Second World War"

# Symbolic measures triggered by the law

- the removal of Soviet monuments from the public space
- the erasure of Soviet toponyms from public space
- the reform of Ukrainian state holiday calendar

### Pro-European preferences among the Mariupol population

Fourth Annual Ukrainian Municipal Survey
20 January – 10 February, 2018, International Republican Institute



# How decommunization laws work in the East Ukrainian context?

- How top-down legislation will affect local memory constructions and daily rituals?
- How residents of an East Ukrainian city interpret, negotiate and subvert the symbolic meanings related to the Soviet past?
- How spatial and temporal forms of Soviet legacy are reinterpreted in a period of political crisis and social transformation?

### Mariupol

- Population: 450,000 people
- Name between 1948-1989: Zhdanov
- New administrative centre of Donetsk Oblast since 2014
- 2014 April-June: occupied by Russian-backed separatist groups
- Metallurgy industry
- Port city
- Multicultural heritage, Greek community





**Azovstal Steel Plant, Mariupol** 



Former city hall burnt down by separatist forces

## Urban transformation in Mariupol

- New administrative role as a regional centre
- Decentralization in Ukraine
- Presence of humanitarian organizations since 2014
- New local leadership since 2016
- Mariupol as a symbol of Ukrainian independence
- Cultural projects from Ukraine and abroad
- Local cultural initiatives since 2015
- Decommunization

#### **Fieldwork**

- First visit to Mariupol: 2015 summer, in the framework of the residency program ACHITECTURE UKRAINE organized by Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives
- Shorter field visits: 2016 summer
- One year fieldwork: 2017 September 2018 August

#### Field sites

- Platforma TЮ contemporary art centre, opened in 2016
- Social centre of retired factory workers
- Culture houses (former Soviet Palaces of Culture)
- Ecology movement
- Urban development policy (little access)



"Here was Lenin"

Graffiti on the bust of a dismantled Lenin statue in Ilycha district, Mariupol



Dismantling the main Lenin statue of Mariupol, 2015 December



Svyatoslav the Brave in the place of Lenin









Covering the Lenin relief on the wall of the local history museum in the summer of 2015



Discarded Lenin in the backyard of the Mariupol city museum





### **DECOM Picnic**, 2016



Valdemart Klyuzko: Marinated Lenin Платформа ТЮ, 2018



Komsomolskiy / Morsky Boulevard



**Ilych Factory Museum** 



**Ilych Factory Museum** 



**Zot Ilych Nekrasov** 



Palace of Metallurgistst of Ilych Plant, new name: Ukrainian House

#### Константин



Поздравляю всех с Днём великой Победы! Пусть перевернутся в гробу все те, кому этот праздник поперёк горла!

#### Едуард













"More Than Wives" demonstration in Mariupol, 8.3.2018