The Second World War and Future Monuments to the Ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War in Kryvyi Rih

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Kryvyi Rih is a large industrial city in southern Ukraine with over 600,000 inhabitants (the eighth largest in the country), located in the Dnipropetrovsk region. In Soviet times, Kryvyi Rih rapidly developed as the centre of iron ore mining and ferrous metallurgy. Its urban space was largely formed after the Second World War, with most of its neighbourhoods comprising of standardised buildings from the second half of the 1940s and 1950s and high-rise panel buildings from the 1960s to the 1980s. The city does not have a distinct centre, stretching over 60 kilometres along the ore deposits. In general, the city has characteristics that sociological surveys before 24 February 2022 identified with the south of Ukraine: the dominance of the Russian language and a strong presence of Soviet nostalgia.[1]

The most prominent place in the memorial space of Kryvyi Rih is occupied by monuments[2] commemorating the Second World War – or, rather, the 'Great Patriotic War' (GPW), considering that they were erected in the Soviet era. The first of them began to be installed on the sites of mass graves of Soviet soldiers in the second half of the 1940s (Figs. 36–37). But they filled the city space massively from the 1960s to the 1980s, often taking up places on the main streets of districts or in parks (Figs. 38–39).[3] In this respect, the Kryvyi Rih experience did not differ from other Soviet localities.[4] Thus, the World War II memorial space so familiar to Kryvyi Rih

1 More context on the historical background of the city and its political landscape can be found in the following article that I wrote: Denys Shatalov, "Intertwined Memories of Kryvyi Rih: The ATO, Second World War, And The Cossacks", *Etnografia Polska* (*Polish Ethnography*) 67/1–2, 2023, 71–93. It also describes the general trends in local memory politics in relation to the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) and World War II commemoration in 2013–2022.

2 In this text, I refer to the notion of 'WWII monuments' in a broad sense, meaning both monuments and memorials, including those on mass graves, located in the city.

3 Kryvyi Rih's war monuments have not yet been the subject of detailed scholarly research. I base my information about them on the amateur work of Oleksandr Stepanenko. Alexandr V. Stepanenko, *Pamyatniki Krivorozh'ya* (*Monuments of the Krivyi Rih region*), Vol. 1, Krivyi Rih, 2021, 78–127, 256–302, 310–346.

4 Natal'ya Konradova and Anna Ryleeva, "Geroi i zhertvy. Memorialy Velikoy Otechestvennoy" ("Heroes and Victims: Memorials to the Great Patriotic War") in: Michail Gabovitch (ed.), *Pa-*

residents today is a product of the activity of postwar generations and was formed 20–40 years after the war ended. The existence of these monuments was a means of Soviet monumental propaganda[5]; they served as 'sites of memory' associated with the creation of the late-Soviet historical myth. But they also commemorated the war, which affected almost every family, and in this way, they were connected to a personal or familial experience.

myat' o voyne 60 let spustya: Rossiya, Germaniya, Yevropa (*The Memory of the War 60 Years Later: Russia, Germany, Europe*), Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2005, 241–261, here 243–249; Svitlana Kalibovets', "Memorialy Velykoyi Vitchyznyanoyi viyny u mistakh-heroyakh Ukrayiny ta polityka pam"yati (1942–1980-kh rr.)" ("Memorials to the Great Patriotic War in Ukrainian Hero-Cities and the Politics of Memory (1942–1980s)"), *Naukovi zapysky* [*Natsional'noho pedahohichnoho universytetu im. M.P. Drahomanova*] (*Scientific Notes [of the M.P. Drahomanov National Pedagogical University]*), *Seriya: Pedahohichni ta istorychni nauky* (*The Pedagiogical and Historical Sciences Series*), 103, 2012, 246–259; Aleksandr V. Antoshchenko, Valentina V. Volokhova, and Irina S. Shtykova, "War Memorials in Karelia: A Place of Sorrow or Glory?", in: Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko (eds.), *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 465–493, here 469–475; and Ekaterina Makhotina and Philipp Bürger, "Making (Monumental) Sense of War: Memorials of the 'Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union and in Post-Soviet Russia'", in: Guido Hausmann and Iryna Sklokina (eds.), *The Political Cult of the Dead in Ukraine: Traditions and Dimensions from Soviet Times to Today*, Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2021, 197–222.

5 Alyaksyey Lastovs'kyy, "Misto yak monument Peremohy: Kyyiv i Mins'k" ("The City as a Monument to the Victory: Kyiv and Minsk"), *Skhid-Zakhid: Istoryko-kul'turolohichnyy zbirnyk* (*East–West: Historical and Cultural Collection of Papers*), 15, 2011, 125–144; and Halyna Denysenko, *Kul'turna spadshchyna u formuvanni istorychnoyi pam"yati* (*Cultural Heritage in the Shaping of Historical Memory*), Kyiv: Instytut istoriyi Ukrayiny NAN Ukrayiny, 2018, 62–68.

Figure 36: Memorial on Sviatomykolayivska Street on the grave of sixty-eight Soviet soldiers fallen in 1944, built in 1958, restored in 1974 and 2015

Image by author, 2024.

Figure 37: Memorial on the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in the square near the Saksaganskyi Palace of Culture, built in 1953, restored in 1979

Image by author, 2023.

Figure 38: Memorial in Honour of the Soldiers-Rescuers of the KRES Dam of 1944, built in 1977

Image by WDKeeper. Wikimedia Commons, 27 September 2014, file under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license, https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Файл:Пам'ятник_воїнам_-_рятівникам_КРЕСу_02.JPG

Figure 39: Soviet T-34 tank, installed as the Monument to the Tankmen-Liberators of Kryvyi Rih, built in 1972

Image by author, 2024.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, no dismantling of Soviet monuments took place in the city, as in almost all of southern and eastern Ukraine. All monuments directly related to Soviet ideology disappeared from Kryvyi Rih's space only during the 'Leninfall' of 2014–2015.[6] Following this, only a few 'neutral'[7] Soviet-era monuments

6 M.P. Nikytenko, "Kryvoriz'ki pam'yatnyky, yaki ne pidlyahayut' zanesennyu do derzhavnoho reyestru nerukhomykh pam'yatok Ukrayiny" ("Kryvyi Rih Monuments Not Subject to Inclusion in the State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine"), in: Shaykan Valentyna et al. (eds.), *Materialy Druhykh Istoryko-krayeznavchykh chytan' "Kryvorizhzhya: pohlyad u mynule…"* (*Materials of the Second Historical and Local History Readings "Kryvyi Rih Region: A Look into the Past…"*), Kryvyi Rih, 2016, 26–30, here 26–28.

7 Here, with 'neutrality' I mean the absence of political meanings attributed to the monument in everyday perceptions. As Oleksandra Haydai has shown, before 2013, Lenin monuments

to cultural figures remained in the city space, as well as the WWII memorials. The latter were repaired and restored throughout the period of independence, even after the outbreak of the full-scale Russo–Ukrainian War.[8] Moreover, several new WWII monuments were installed in the first decade of the 2000s and the early 2010s. Currently, the city has more than 70 monuments related to WWII commemoration.[9]

The local authorities, represented by members of the Party of Regions headed by Viktor Yanukovych since the mid-2000s,[10] have consistently declared preserving the memory of victory among their priorities, annually organising numerous commemorative events on Victory Day and the Day of the Liberation of the City from the Nazis. For this reason, local WWII memorials have also been reconstructed. The situation did not change even after the fall of the Yanukovych regime as a result of the Revolution of Dignity, the Russian occupation of Crimea, or the outbreak of the war in the Donbas. In 2014–2015, governmental institutions initiated changes in official WWII commemorations, aimed at breaking with Russia-promoted traditions.[11] In

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(this could also be applied to other monuments of Soviet activists) were also 'neutral' in everyday perception, as they simply became a usual element of the landscape. However, during the Maidan protests, they became one of the objects of controversy, and the wave of their demolition turned into a significant symbolic event. Oleksandra Haydai, *Kam'yanyy hist'. Lenin y Tsentral'niy Ukrayini* (*The Stone Guest: Lenin in the Central Ukraine*), Kyiv: K.I.C., 2018. Similarly, the neutral interpretation of monuments dedicated to Russian cultural figures, who were well-known due to Soviet education, was undermined after 24 February 2022, when in the perception of Ukrainians, they transformed from simply familiar monuments to a poet, writer, or artist into an enemy's cultural markers.

8 *Pershyi Mis'kyi* (*First City*), "Oleksandr Vilkul: 'U Kryvomu Rozi pryvely do ladu pam'yatnyky soldatam Druhoyi svitovoyi viynydo Dnia Peremohy, yakyi sviatkuvatymet'sia u misti 8 travnia'" ("Oleksandr Vilkul: 'In Kryvyi Rih, Monuments to World War II Soldiers Have Been Ordered for Victory Day, Which Will Be Celebrated in the City on 8 May'"), 06 May 2022, https://one.kr.ua/news/41018 [accessed: 04.07.2023]; and Olena Smolina, "Skil'ky koshtuye remont monumenta 'Peremoha' u Kryvomu Rozi" ("How Much Does it Cost to Repair the 'Victory' Monument in Kryvyi Rih?"), *Pershyi Kryvorizikyi* (*First Kryvyi Rih*), 26 April 2023, https://1kr.ua/ua/news-80041.html [accessed: 04.07.2023].

9 These estimations are from Stepanenko, *Pamyatniki Krivorozh'ya*, Vol. 1, 78–128, 256–302, and 309–346.

10 For a brief overview of the use of the topic of WWII/GPW in the history politics during Viktor Yanukovych's presidency, see: Ararat L. Osipian and Alexandr L. Osipian, "Regional Diversity and Divided Memories in Ukraine: Contested Past as Electoral Resource, 2004–2010", *East European Politics and Societies* 26/3, 2012, 616–642; and Alexandr Osipian, "War II Memory Politics in Russia and Ukraine and Their Uses During the Conflict in the Donbas (Spring–Summer 2014)", in: Korine Amacher, Andrii Portnov, and Victoriia Serhienko (eds.), *Official History in Eastern Europe*, Osnabrück: Fibre, 2020, 267–290, here 275–282.

11 On the changes in discourse, see: Oleksandr Hrytsenko, *Dekomunizatsiya v Ukrayini yak derzhavna polityka i yak sotsiokul'turne yavyshche* (*Decommunisation in Ukraine as a Public Policy and as a Cultural Phenomenon*), Kyiv: Instytut politychnykh i etnonatsional'nykh doslidzhen' im. I.F. Kurasa NAN Ukrayiny and Instytut kul'turolohiyi NAM Ukrayiny, 2019, 138–169;

Kryvyi Rih, there was no change of political elites after the Revolution of Dignity, and the city authorities continued to be dominated by figures associated with the Party of Regions and its political heirs. For them, the continuation of the earlier style of commemorating WWII (or rather the GPW) was also a means of demonstrating their opposition to the new post-Maidan central government and a means of mobilising their own electorate.[12]

The Russo–Ukrainian War, which has been happening in the format of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) in the Donbas since the spring of 2014, is much more limited in the Kryvyi Rih public monumental space. Between 2014 and February 2022, three memorials related to the ATO were erected in the city. Two of them, the Memorial Cross in Honour of the Fallen ATO Soldiers (built in 2016, Fig. 40) and the Ilovaysk Cross (built in 2020, Fig. 41), were placed a few metres apart, next to the Soviet 'Victory' Monument (built in 1968), which is in fact the city's central WWII memorial (Fig. 42). They formed a common commemorative space in the Heroes' Square, which includes monuments to the ATO, WWII, as well as to participants in the Soviet–Afghan War (built in 1987) and liquidators of the Chernobyl disaster (built in 2019).[13]

Lina Klymenko, "The Changed Paradigm of World War II Commemoration in Ukraine After Crimea's Annexation", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 33/4, 2020, 517–520; and Teyiana Pastushenko, Dmytro Tytarenko, and Olena Cheban, "9 travnya 2014–2015 rr. v Ukrayini: stari tradytsiyi – novi tseremoniyi vidznachennya" ("9 May 2014–2015 in Ukraine: Old Traditions – New Commemorative Ceremonies"), *Ukrayins'kyy istorychnyy zhurnal* (*Ukrainian Historical Journal*) 3, 2016, 106–124, here 111–124.

12 See, for example, statements by Oleksandr Vilkul, the most prominent former Party of Regions politician associated with Kryvyi Rih. *Korrespondent.net*, "Vilkul nazval tsinichnymi rekomendatsii instituta natsional'noy pamyati" ("Vilkul Called the Recommendations of the Institute of National Remembrance Cynical"), 24 October 2015, https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/3435857-vylkul-nazval-tsynychnymy-rekomendatsyy-ynstytuta-natsyonalnoi-pamiaty [accessed: 04.07.2023]; and *MOST-Dnepr* (*MOST-Dnipro*), "Spustya 69 let posle pobedy nad fashistami, prazdnovaniye etogo svyatogo dnya postavleno pod ugrozu, – Aleksandr Vilkul" ("69 Years After the Victory Over the Fascists, the Celebration of This Holy Day is Under Threat – Aleksandr Vilkul"), 06 May 2014, https://most-dnepr.info/news/society/103390_spustya_69_let_posle_pobedi_nad.htm [accessed: 04.07.2023].

13 For more information, see: Denys Shatalov, "Merging in Space: The Ongoing War and Previous Wars in Ukraine", *TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research*, 17 January 2023, https://trafo.hypotheses.org/44335 [accessed: 04.07.2023].

Figure 40: Memorial Cross in Honour of Fallen Kryvyi Rih ATO Soldiers, built in 2016

Image by author, 2024.

Figure 41: The Ilovaysk Cross, built in 2020

Image by author, 2024.

Figure 42: The 'Victory' Monument, a memorial to the Soviet liberators of Kryvyi Rih, built in 1968

Image by WDKeeper, Wikimedia Commons, 17 September 2014, file under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Монумент_Перемога_07.JPG

In March 2016, in the Sevgok residential area[14] in the northern part of the city, another monument was erected to the fallen ATO soldiers (Fig. 43). This was the first actual monument to this topic in all of Ukraine. There, a monument with the figure of a Ukrainian soldier as its main element occupies a central place in the square in front of the Palace of Culture. The Soviet WWII memorial (built in 1959), whose central figure is a simple grey stele, is two blocks away (Fig. 44). Therefore, in this case, the memory of the two wars does not overlap in space.

14 The vernacular name Sevgok for this area comes from the Russian abbreviation of SevGOK, which stands for Northern Mining and Processing Plant (PGZK in Ukrainian). SevGOK is the main local enterprise.

Figure 43: Memorial in the Sevgok residential area to fallen Kryvyi Rih ATO Soldiers, built in 2016

Image by Artem Nagornyi, Wikipedia, 10 July 2019, file under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license, https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Файл:Кривий_Ріг,_пам%27ятник_Героям_АТО.jpg

Despite the participation of Kryvyi Rih units and the fallen city residents, the ATO was considered 'out there', far away, and did not directly affect everyone's everyday life. If you wanted, you could simply ignore it. In March 2022, however, the Armed Forces of Ukraine stopped the Russian Army just about 40 kilometres from the city. So it became impossible to ignore the war – it has touched every citizen of Kryvyi Rih, albeit in different ways.

Figure 44: Memorial in the Sevgok residential area on the mass grave of Soviet soldiers, built in 1959

Image by Anton Sribnyi, Wikimedia Commons, 8 January 2010, file under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Кривий_Ріг._Меморіал_на_вул._І.Сірка.jpg

It is already clear that for the contemporary generation of Ukrainians, the Russian invasion will occupy a place comparable to that of WWII for the Soviet generations. The residents of Kryvyi Rih know the example of Soviet monumental war commemoration. To what extent, however, does this well-known model influence expectations for the monumental commemoration of the ongoing war? And to what extent has the ongoing war affected the attitude of citizens to the presentation of WWII in the city space and the changes expected in it? I discussed the expectations for future monumental memorialisation of the Russo–Ukrainian War in semi-structured interviews with permanent residents of Kryvyi Rih between the end of November 2022 and the end of April 2023. I recorded 13 interviews, and two other respondents gave their answers in writing. The respondents were selected using a nonrepresentative

sampling technique combined with a snowball sampling method.[15] The respondents represent the first, second, and third post-WWII generations (30–70 years old).

On the one hand, this chapter falls within the paradigm of collective memory studies, as defined by the ideas of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, and Jan Assmann,[16] relying on the concepts of the relations of places, material objects, and memory formulated in their works. On the other hand, I place this text in the context of studies of memory politics and memorial culture in Ukraine. Usually, when regarding WWII, the researchers' attention in such studies is mainly focused either on the national level[17] or on the space of the largest cities and their Victory Day commemorations.[18] The controversy around the commemoration of WWII is usually presented through the dichotomy of (post-)Soviet and nationalist approaches,[19] while the issue of grassroots-level perception of the war by Ukrainians, which lies

15 Initially, I invited respondents from the local Facebook group Kryvoriz'hka Starovyna (Kryvyi Rih Antiquities). This is a group where I usually publish materials on local history, so members were familiar with me as a historian, making establishing contact easier. I asked for interviews from people of different ages, social roles, and political positions. Later, respondents also recommended others. But such sampling, although presenting a variety of ideas, does not necessarily cover all local social strata and groups.

16 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 245; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memorie", *Representations* 26, 1989, 7–24; and Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

17 Wilfried Jilge, "The Politics of History and the Second World War in Post-Communist Ukraine (1986/1991–2004/2005)", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* (*Yearbook of Eastern European History*) 54/1, 2006, 50–81; and Georgiy Kasianov, *Memory Crash: The Politics of History in and around Ukraine 1980s–2010s*, Budapest: Central European University Press, 2022.

18 Georgiy Kasianov (ed.), *Polityka i pam"yat'. Dnipro – Zaporizhzhya – Odesa – Kharkiv. Vid 1990-kh do s'ohodni* (*Politics and Memory: Dnipro – Zaporizhzhia – Odesa – Kharkiv, from the 1990s to Today*), Lviv: FOP Shumylovych, 2018, 240; Pastushenko, Tytarenko and Cheban, "9 travnya 2014–2015 rr."; and Jochen Hellbeck and Dmytro Tytarenko, "'My pobedim, kak pobedili 70 let nazad nashi dedy i pradedy'. Ukraina: prazdnovaniye Dnya Pobedy v teni novoy voyny" ("'We Will Win, as Our Grandfathers and Great-Grandfathers Won 70 Years ago'. Ukraine: Victory Day Celebrations in the Shadow of the New War") *Neprikosnovennyy zapas* (*Untouchable Reserve*) 108/4, 2016, http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2016/4/my-pobedim-kak-pobedili-70-let-nazad-nashi-dedy-i-pradedy.html [accessed: 04.07.2023].

19 Yuliya Yurchuk, "Reclaiming the Past, Confronting the Past: OUN–UPA Memory Politics and Nation Building in Ukraine (1991–2016)", in: Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko (eds.), *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 107–137; Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "Legislating Historical Memory in Post-Soviet Ukraine", in: Elazar Barkan and Ariella Lang (eds.), *Memory Laws and Historical Justice*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022, 97–130; and Yana Primachenko, "Sovetskoye vs. natsionalisticheskoye: protivostoyaniye diskursov i praktik v postsovetskoy Ukraine" ("Soviet vs. Nationalist: The Confrontation of Discourses and Practices in Post-Soviet Ukraine"), *Studia Universitatis Moldaviae* 110/10, 2017, 267–278.

outside these two positions, remains virtually unaddressed by researchers. At the same time, there are some valuable works related to the issues of war memorials in Ukraine. For instance, Iryna Sklokina concentrates on problems of the monumental legacy of WWII in Ukraine,[20] while Anna Glew produces detailed analyses of the practices of ATO memorialisation.[21] Additionally, Mischa Gabowitsch considers the fate of Soviet war monuments in the ongoing war.[22]

This paper is a specific regional example, demonstrating how the Soviet WWII memorial landscape is perceived in a city in southern Ukraine three decades after the collapse of the USSR and a year after the outbreak of the full-scale Russo–Ukrainian War. I examine the situation from a grassroots perspective to explore the expectations from a memorial space by its 'consumers'. I hypothesised that the familiarity of the respondents with the Soviet practice of monumental commemoration of WWII, which they encounter in Kryvyi Rih, would in some way shape their expectations of commemorating the ongoing war. Therefore, during the interviews, I asked about the attitudes of Kryvyi Rih residents towards the existing memorials of WWII in the city space and their expectations for future monuments to the Russo–Ukrainian War. Additionally, I aimed to understand whether the residents feel a symbolic connection between the past and present wars, given that the mythology of WWII is actively involved in the discourse of the ongoing war.

A Sacred Memory

Attitudes towards WWII and its commemoration in Ukrainian society are currently very fragmented (which is also reflected in the positions towards monuments discussed in this paper). It seems to me that the position of one of the respondents, Tetiana N. (aged 45), represents well the arguments of those who still respect the legacy of WWII. Additionally, her position seems to be indicative of the influence of personal experience on the perception of the WWII monuments and (potential) monuments to the ongoing war. Tetiana N. suggests that for the next generations, the ongoing Russo–Ukrainian War will completely replace WWII in their memories,

20 Iryna Sklokina, "Commemorating the Glorious Past, Dreaming of the Happy Future: WWII Burial Places and Monuments as Public Places in the Postwar Ukraine", in: Guido Hausmann and Iryna Sklokina (eds.), *The Political Cult of the Dead in Ukraine: Traditions and Dimensions from Soviet Times to Today*, Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2021, 69–96.

21 Anna Glew, *The Commemorative Activity of Ordinary People in Central Ukraine after the Euromaidan*, PhD dissertation, Manchester, University of Manchester, 2021; and Anna Glew, "Path Dependent: Positioning Ukrainian War Memorials in a Post-Soviet Landscape", *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 63/1–2, 2021, 229–247.

22 Mischa Gabowitsch, "Monuments in Times of War", *Eurozine*, 06 April 2023, https://www.eurozine.com/monuments-in-times-of-war [accessed: 04.07.2023].

and then the monuments associated with WWII will be removed from the city space. However, she does not see this as a near future, because for the current generation, WWII is still "our own" due to their family backgrounds: "Now they are not all going to be demolished, because, well, we're still a generation that, our grandfathers, someone's mothers have been in the war".[23] It seems that with the outbreak of the full-scale Russo–Ukrainian War, WWII has become even closer to Tetiana N., due to her own experience: "I understand that people have experienced the same. We're going through it now".[24] This perception is also transferred to the monuments of WWII; Tetiana N. claims they should remain in the city space because "these people have gone through exactly the same hell as we now. Maybe even worse".[25]

Tetiana N. describes the memory of WWII as pain, and for her the monuments are a reminder of it. Even the Soviet tank on the pedestal is a symbol of the challenges and pain that the WWII generation went through: "It must be remembered. It should be honoured [...] it's a feat. People laid down their lives because of it, we live, our children, grandchildren [...]. And the tank is, well, it's a pain, a vital pain".[26] Tetiana N. also characterises the ongoing war through the feeling of pain: "I want to scream in pain, how much is possible, how many more people have to die [...]. But it does not stop".[27] Therefore, the monuments dedicated to this war should first of all be monuments to fallen combatants. But at the same time,

> [A] single monument could be made [...] to the killed children, old persons, women, just to civilians. [...] The next generation should understand that not only soldiers died in this war, but also many regular civilians were exterminated.[28]

Nevertheless, the function of the monument is much more important than its form: "whatever monument may stand, you know, well, what's the point? That is not the issue. Whatever monument may stand, it's a person [...] who comes, puts down flowers, stands there, is in pain".[29] It is up to specialists, sculptors, and architects to design the monuments, while "it is up to us, the people, to come to honour this memory".[30] In this aspect, monuments acquire an importance almost comparable to sacred objects, which Tetiana N. emphasises through a comparison with churches. A church is a place for prayer, but you can also pray at home – similarly, for her, a monument is a place of honouring war victims, although it is not only here that we can

23 Tetiana N., aged 45, manager, interview with the author, in person, 17 February 2023.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.

remember them. The main thing is the sincerity of one's feelings, not the perception of the monument as an object: "it should come from the heart, not [whether] you like the memorial or not".[31]

However, the sites of future monuments are important. While the Soviet monuments placed along the streets became an invisible part of the urban landscape, as Tetiana N. explains, the new ones should attract attention and be the subject of interaction. This can be achieved by placing them in parks, for example:

> It's a crowded place. A child runs up "Mum, who's the man?". Hop, and you tell the child the story of what man is standing [there]. Otherwise, you pull him by the arm, you run past the monument […] Well, in crowded places like this. Maybe near a church […] [you] prayed here, went out, honoured a soldier, a tankman, a pilot.[32]

Like Tetiana N., another respondent, Roman K. (aged 39), perceives the monuments of WWII through the experience of the generation of its participants, and due to his respect for them, he does not support the idea of dismantling these monuments. He believes that monuments to Soviet political figures can be removed, but not monuments that reflect people's bravery and the trials they endured, "the feat of a people who just selflessly. . . [fought]".[33] This is especially so now that "we can hear and imagine how it is and how difficult it all is".[34]

"So, Well, False, Not from the Heart"

Tetiana N.'s parents survived WWII in their early childhood, and Roman K.'s great-grandfather went missing in action in 1941. The other respondents have generally similar family experiences, representing the first through third postwar generations whose parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents survived WWII (or perished) at different ages and in various roles. However, unlike Tetiana N. and Roman K., not all of my informants demonstrated a sense of connection between family stories and, more broadly, the WWII generation and the monuments to that war. There is another position that is noticeable: the perception of these monuments primarily as symbols of the Soviet era and reflections of the ideology of that time. Therefore, from this perspective, there is no need to continue to preserve all the monuments dedicated to WWII, and reformatting the memorial space of that war is acceptable.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Roman K., aged 39, engineer, interview with the author, in person, 02 March 2023.

34 Ibid.

One of the motives for the rejection of the Soviet monumental heritage of WWII may be primarily aesthetic. For example, for Natalia S. (aged 56), Soviet monuments are too pompous, and "we have too many of them; they are too huge".[35] In her opinion, the Soviet practice of massively installing monuments led to the devaluation of their role:

> No, I'm already sick of it. You don't even notice it anymore. It's like decor. You just don't notice it. […] And when they are placed on all, on every corner, it just becomes blurry [*zamulialos*], no one looks at it, no one is interested in it.[36]

In addition, these monuments are "false". Natalia S. refers to the experience of the artistic associations in Soviet times, for whom making such monuments, mass-produced using standard models, was just a way to make money, and therefore, "it was so, well, false [*ne spravzhni*], not from the heart".[37]

Additionally, for her, the problem with most Soviet monuments is their quality. Most of them are cement, and they simply decay over time. Therefore, she suggests that some of them can already be removed "quietly, slowly, slowly, where possible, not all at once. Well, what? Well, history will demolish it anyway. Should we wait for it to fall apart on its own?"[38] However, Natalia S. takes into account the position of those who still care about WWII monuments, so she suggests that the process of dismantling them should not be publicised or that it even be conditioned by a socially significant goal, such as building housing for internally displaced persons, those who lost their homes due to the ongoing war, and veterans. Another acceptable option for her is to "replace [the monument] with a small stone on which to inscribe what it is", reconstruct the space, and make "a normal square around it", but "remove these, remove the excess".[39] Given the "wiping out" of WWII in the public memory, Natalia S. believes that only those monuments that have "some artistic value" will remain in the future. For example, the Victory Monument: "It is definitely a very beautiful monument. It has become a symbol of the city. So, it should stand and continue to stand", although it may need to be somehow complemented.[40] Monuments should also remain on the WWII Soviet soldiers' mass graves around the city. Natalia S.'s attitude to them is in line with the common mortuary tradition: "If these are really buried people, there should be a monument. Because it is a grave".[41]

35 Natalia S., aged 56, artist, interview with the author, phone call, 23 January 2023.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.

The Soviet Counterexample

Other respondents also tend towards one of the two poles in their attitudes to the WWII Soviet memorial space, represented by the positions of Tetiana N. and Roman K. on the one hand and Natalia S. on the other. Some of them, such as Yuriy P. (aged 63), do not consider it appropriate to interfere with the WWII memorial space; "it is better not to touch the old memorials".[42] The intermediate position, presented by Vira H. (aged 73), is a passive expectation of change, although at the same time a readiness for it: "[Let them] stand, they will crumble after a while anyway, they are not eternal".[43] Some of the other respondents, such as Maksym P. (aged 40), see the reframing of these monuments as appropriate, as the Soviet monuments "are an anachronism now".[44] Meanwhile, Maksym P. (aged 37) believes that the place of WWII is "overabundant" in the city memorial space, especially considering that Soviet monuments occupy central streets,[45] so it is necessary "to smooth it out, relocate it [. . .] somewhere to a certain place, to streamline it. But on the central streets these symbols are definitely not [needed]".[46] Liana Zh. (aged 32) expresses a similar position. For her, "a monument for commemoration should be a must", but Soviet memorials already need to be reformatted.[47] However, she is aware that this is a "painful topic for many people" – and therefore does not have any ready answer as to the direction of this reformatting.[48]

Another respondent, Denys Ch. (aged 40), states that "we can leave the mass graves, but we can change the ideology".[49] Serhii P. (aged 58) presents a similar idea, but in more detail. He, like Natalia S., is convinced that any grave should have a sign above it. But the Soviet monuments that are now placed on them are outdated in this role, both ideologically and physically:

> Let it not be a soldier standing with a submachine gun. It has already, let's say, outlived maybe its aesthetics and [. . .] well, its contribution, because the time was

42 Yuriy P., aged 63, IT engineer, interview with the author, in writing, 21 November 2022. A similar position was shared by Oleksandr Sh., aged 50+, lecturer, interview with the author, in person, 05 January 2023; and Oleksandr P., aged 32, designer, interview with the author, in person, 05 December 2022.

43 Vira H., aged 73, pensioner with a construction work and librarian background, interview with the author, in person, 28 November 2022.

44 Maksym P., aged 40, office worker, interview with the author, in person, 29 December 2022.

45 It is interesting that, as mentioned above, Tetiana and Natalia, on the contrary, see the monuments' locations as causes for their 'invisibility'..

46 Maksym P., aged 37, land surveyor, interview with the author, in person, 18 January 2023.

47 Liana Zh., aged 32, financier-economist, interview with the author, online, 31 January 2023. Oleksandr Sh. shares a similar view.

48 Ibid.

49 Denys Ch., aged 40, electrician, interview with the author, in person, 21 February 2023.

> such [...]. But mostly these monuments are not cast, or are not carved from granite, they are cast from something, they have been painted for almost a hundred years [...] What is left of them? It's more paint [than the monument itself], it's all rusted, rotten.[50]

Therefore, according to him, old Soviet monuments from mass graves should be replaced; "it can be a sort of cross, it can be a certain memorial plate, it can be a kind of stone", but the graves themselves should not be destroyed.[51]

Generally, this position shows us, first of all, a 'political reading' of old WWII monuments – in other words, overall, they are perceived as products of Soviet ideology and means of monumental propaganda. Moreover, a big share of them still contains Soviet symbols, but their aesthetics can also be perceived as 'Sovietism'. These also include several pieces of Soviet military equipment, tanks, and guns mounted on pedestals. The positioning on this type of monument is the most established. Liana Zh. is convinced that "these tanks and guns, well, they're [...] just a vestige".[52] Serhii P. perceives the tradition of installing equipment as monuments as a means of Soviet propaganda: "When [any] person drove by and saw a gun – he felt the majesty of the army, the power of armaments and the like".[53] But for him "the technique is just an attempt to show power. Not an attempt to memorialise something".[54]

Two other respondents, in a similar vein, perceive military equipment as a symbol of militarisation and war as such. For Denys Ch.,

> [T]his is the concept of militarisation, that's it. This is the Soviet Union's concept: "We are warriors, the best in the world" [...]. I think this is an outdated idea, and it [equipment] should be removed. There should be peace in the world.[55]

Valentyna O. (aged approx. 70) expresses a similar view of equipment on pedestals as a symbol of war: "We'll remove the tank. [...] No. No *tachankas*... [...] No aircrafts – precisely peace". Instead of equipment, she proposes an anthropologised memory: "I see only humans [...] of course there should be a human [...]. It is a human who wants peace [...]. We will not have [a memory] just about the war, but a thirst for life".[56] Three other respondents (Natalia S., Maksym P., aged 40, and Serhii P.) state

50 Serhii P., aged 58, mobilised army officer with mining engineer background and ATO veteran, interview with the author, in person, 29 April 2023.

51 Ibid.

52 Liana Zh., interview.

53 Serhii P., interview.

54 Ibid.

55 Denys Ch., interview. Maksym P. (aged 37) shares a similar position.

56 Valentyna O., aged approx. 70, pensioner with engineering background, interview with the author, in person, 17 January 2023.

that this equipment from pedestals could be relocated to museum sites.[57] Their argumentation shows that they do not consider military equipment as a monument, a memorial object. For them, it is primarily an artefact of the past war with its own characteristics and history.

At the same time, there is an opposite position regarding military equipment, which is related to another 'reading' of the semantics of these monuments. For Tetiana N., for example, the essence of and reason for the monument are more important than its form, and the old tanks are also a symbol of the trials that the WWII generation went through.[58] Three other respondents (Oleksandr P., Roman K., and Vira H.) express similar attitudes. For them, Soviet-style monuments to Soviet soldiers do not raise any objections. But if for Tetiana N. it is acceptable to use military equipment for monuments to the ongoing war, for them the commemoration of this war by reproducing Soviet forms (as tanks on pedestals are perceived) is not acceptable, and other forms need to be found.[59] Talking about the potential monument to Ukrainian tank crews, Vira H. notes: "Not a tank should be placed, but something like [...] a tankman's helmet, something like this [...]. So that they are different. So that there wouldn't be a Soviet cliché".[60]

Finally, I should mention one more position, that of Maksym V. (aged 42). He advocates for the dismantling of Soviet monuments in the form of equipment. But at the same time, he accepts military equipment as a monument to the ongoing war, in particular as a sign of respect for the allies, to commemorate their transfer of tanks to Ukraine.[61]

Obviously, the question of the expected design of future monuments in honour of the ongoing Russo–Ukrainian War is difficult. Therefore, some respondents, referring to their own lack of expertise, prefer to leave the task of determining their appearance to experts. Also, two people (Olena K., aged 47, and Oleksandr Sh.) consider this issue premature – they prefer to wait until the war is over and only then think about erecting monuments.[62]

Those who are ready to discuss future memorials are no longer satisfied with the monumental aesthetics of the 'era of developed socialism'. Therefore, new war monuments are expected to be "not just an analogue of the monuments of WWII or just, well, a cross with names", as Liana Zh. states.[63] Instead, for her, it should be "a decent

57 Natalia S., interview; Maksym P. (aged 40), interview; and Serhii P., interview.

58 Tetiana N., interview.

59 Oleksandr P., interview; Roman K., interview; and Vira H., interview.

60 Vira H., interview.

61 Maksym V., aged 42, locomotive driver's assistant and ATO veteran, interview with the author, in person, 04 February 2023.

62 Olena K., aged 47, financial officer, interview with the author, in writing, 08 January 2023; and Oleksandr Sh., interview.

63 Liana Zh., interview.

option. Well, it should be something that [. . .] touches people".[64] Maxim P. (aged 37) also expects "that it should be somehow more aesthetical, it should not be graves in the middle of the city [. . .], not just a stele, a pennant".[65] As a suitable example, he refers to the monument to soldiers killed in the ATO in the Sevgok residential area: "At least [it] already looks aesthetic [. . .] it is already some kind of warrior image".[66]

Serhii P.'s proposal is diametrically opposed in its aesthetic:

> I think it would be best to put some kind of stone, such as in the form of a plate, maybe a trident, maybe even a map of all of Ukraine [. . .]. The very image of a soldier – again, it's a return to the old. [. . .] I believe that after this war our Ukrainian society should fundamentally move away from Sovietism and the like [*ot sovetshchiny, sovdepovshchiny i tomu podobnogo*].[67]

But in fact, both respondents say the same thing: the new monument to this war should be different from the Soviet monuments to WWII. The seemingly paradoxical gap between the two requirements can be explained by looking at these respondents' surroundings. For Maksym P. (aged 37), it is the north of the city, where there is a Soviet memorial in the form of a simple stele and the ATO monument with a figure of a soldier. Serhii P., on the other hand, mentions several times during the conversation the Soviet Victory Monument as an example, the main element of which is the figure of a Soviet soldier, and the figures of soldiers installed on mass graves.

The Soviet tradition serves as a counterexample also for Natalia S.:

> But what do I not want? I don't want pomp. These raised arms and legs, these 'Motherland is calling' [style monuments]. All this is nice, but it's all so not from the heart [. . .]. That is, a monument can be more like a modest stele, that is, a monument [. . .] a memory [of], not a story about, it's not theatre.[68]

For her, a good option for placing new monuments is the burial places of those killed in the ongoing war.[69] Tetiana N. compares the "functioning" of monuments to a

64 Ibid.

65 Maksym P., (aged 37), interview.

66 Ibid.

67 Serhii P., interview.

68 Natalia S., interview.

69 I would like to note that this idea was realised in Kryvyi Rih in July 2022, when a Cossack Cross was installed on the Alley of Honourable Graves at the Central Cemetery in honour of all the soldiers who gave their lives for Ukraine. *Rudana*, "U Kryvomu Rozi vidkryly pam"yatnyy znak – kam"yanyy Kozats'kyy Khrest na chest' polehlykh voyiniv" ("A Memorial Sign Was Unveiled in Kryvyi Rih – A Stone Cossack Cross in Honour of the Fallen Soldiers"), 16 July 2022, https://rudana.com.ua/news/u-kryvomu-rozi-vidkryly-pamyatnyy-znak-kamyanyy-kozackyy-hrest-na-chest-poleglyh-voyiniv [accessed: 04.07.2023].

place for prayer.[70] Natalia S., referring to the European commemorative practices she knows, sees a "temple-monument", an ecumenical memorial church located in urban space, as a suitable form of commemorating the fallen.[71]

Respondents' positions therefore show that future monuments to the ongoing war should attract attention and be a subject of interaction. In this request, we can also see a rejection of the present-day perception of Soviet monuments, which have become an invisible part of the city's landscape, as Tatiana N. and Natalia S. view it. Tatiana N.'s idea of placing new monuments in parks and other public places was already mentioned above. Valentyna O. has a similar idea; given the uncertain shape of the future monument, she is concerned with its aesthetics: "Flowers would be [...] very beautiful, I don't know".[72] According to her, some kind of attraction should complement monuments in a park:

> Here's a nice script for this park's needs, to come with the kids [...] to be attracted – to not just see the monument, but to have something alive. [...] Why would I take my kid and come [here]? Just to show [it to] him – he'll be bored.[73]

Denys Ch. was the most conceptual about the idea of future monuments. He also supports them being interactive. He believes that shape or form are the means to achieve this. A simple sculpture does not provoke questions:

> Well, I mean, when there is something clear, [when] there is an apple standing, you see [it] – it is an apple. Well, I mean, there is no other meaning, there is an apple. A soldier is standing [... and] I see a soldier with a submachine gun running, shouting "Attack!", everything is clear.[74]

Instead, as a concept, he proposes reproducing in the form of a monument the destroyed building in Mariupol, widely known from photographs:

> It would show a lot of things. I mean, what the war can cause, and those who are alive now know who did it, so. And future generations, they will look and see what war does. That it is not very good, to put it mildly, yes. And so on. They will ask their parents: "Why is there such a monument? What is it?" Their parents will answer.[75]

70 Tetiana N., interview.
71 Natalia S., interview.
72 Valentyna O., interview.
73 Ibid.
74 Denys Ch., interview.
75 Ibid.

It seems that the dissatisfaction with the Soviet memorial space is caused by two factors: the 'political reading' of the monuments and the inconsistency of their aesthetics with the respondents' tastes, although the balance of these motives is different for each respondent. Moreover, the remark about the 'invisibility' of Soviet war monuments and the wish for future ones to be visible and interactive reflects a subconscious aspect of general expectations regarding attention to the memory of this war, experienced by my informants.

An Adjacency of the Two Wars

The respondents unequivocally named 2014 as the beginning of the ongoing war and February 2022 as just its transition to another phase. The ATO monuments already located in the city space are now perceived as monuments to those who died in the first stage of the war. It is noteworthy that the common space of the Heroes' Square is a conscious initiative of the local authorities. Unveiling the Cross in Honour of the Fallen ATO soldiers in 2016, the mayor, Yuriy Vilkul, commented on the choice of the place: "It is very important that it will appear here – next to the monument to the heroes of the Great Patriotic War and the monument to Kryvyi Rih residents who fought in Afghanistan".[76] But this case of combining objects related to the memory of combatants in Afghanistan, liquidators of Chernobyl, and those fallen in the ATO near the WWII monument as a semantic centre is not unique; it is consistent with Ukrainian and, more broadly, post-Soviet vernacular practices.[77] However, only one of the respondents 'reads' this symbolic adjacency. For Oleksandr P. (aged 32), the example of the shared space of the Heroes' Square "is a good idea".[78] For him, symbolism is important; it is a demonstration of the continuity of generations of Ukrainian combatants. In the future, he sees no problem with a monument "where there will be a Red Army warrior, a UPA [Ukrainian Insurgent Army] warrior, [and] a warrior of today's Russo–Ukrainian War" or with supplementing the old monuments with new thematic elements.[79] Another respondent, Yuriy P., supports the idea of potential adjacency without going into detail: "Placing new memorials next to the old ones

76 Ofitsiynyy vebsayt Kryvoriz'koyi mis'koyi rady ta yiyi vykonavchoho komitetu (Official website of the Kryvyi Rih City Council and its Executive Committee), "V Krivom Roge v seredine iyunya budet otkryt memorial'nyy krest boytsam ATO" ("Memorial Cross to ATO Fighters Will Be Opened in Kryvyi Rih in Mid-June"), 31 May 2016, https://kr.gov.ua/ua/news/pg/31051659 4290801_n/ [accessed: 04.07.2023].

77 Kasianov, *Polityka i pam"yat'*, 140–141; Konradova and Ryleva, "Geroi i zhertvy", 249–253; and Glew, "Path Dependent", 229–247.

78 Oleksandr P., interview.

79 Ibid.

may be a not bad idea".[80] Tetiana N. also accepts the idea of monuments to the ongoing war possibly standing next to WWII monuments because of the similar experiences of previous generations: "Because, well, there was a war then. That generation went through a rough war. Our generation is now also going through [a war]".[81]

Two other respondents also accept the adjacency, but without giving it special symbolism. Maksym V., an ATO veteran, is ready to "treat with understanding" the potential neighbourhood of monuments to the two wars.[82] This position is based on his respect for the experience of those to whom they are dedicated: "Now, that war and this war are two big differences. But I respect those warriors, and everybody respects them. Well, those who've actually been in combat respect them, because they know what it's like".[83] Similarly, for Maksym P. (aged 40), the ongoing war is already in the foreground. He previously labelled the Soviet WWII monuments in the city space as "archaism".[84] The present situation in the Heroes' Square is acceptable to him; "the fact that the monuments are there together does not bother me personally", but he does not give any special symbolism to this adjacency either.[85] He perceives the WWII monument more as a backdrop, especially since it is "politically indifferent: a soldier with a PPSh [submachine gun], no Lenin near him", so it is acceptable as a reminder of another page of Ukraine's past.[86] At the same time, this position reminds us that WWII monuments can be 'read' first 'politically' and only secondly 'historically', as discussed above.

Several respondents, however, refer to the space of the Heroes' Square as an unsuccessful example. For Natalia S., the "cluster" of monuments in the park "looks like there's [...] a cemetery".[87] For Liana Zh., combining the monuments in space is also not a good option because of the diversity of events to which the monuments are dedicated.[88] The concentration of memorials next to one another leads to the impossibility of commemorating each single event with a decent sense of dignity.[89] Oleksandr Sh. believes that the idea of potentially placing monuments to the ongoing war beside the WWII memorials is unacceptable because "this way the losses of this war are erased".[90] Rather, he thinks that new monuments would be better lo-

80 Yuriy P., interview.
81 Tetiana N., interview.
82 Maksym V., interview.
83 Ibid.
84 Maksym P. (aged 40), interview.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Natalia S., interview. Maksym P. (aged 37) holds a similar opinion.
88 Liana Zh., interview.
89 Olena K., interview.
90 Oleksandr Sh., interview.

cated apart from the old ones.[91] Valentyna O. also suggests looking for separate sites for the new monuments, although she does not explain the need for this in detail.[92] Vira H. expresses her opinion in more depth. For her, this war and the former one should not overlap in space as "they are different" and the monuments should stand separately because "those [the people to whom the old monuments are dedicated] defended the Soviet Union, and there will be, the [Soviet] psychology will be near a such monument".[93] She mentions the Sevgok residential area as a good example, where the monuments to the ATO and WWII are relatively close to each other, but "[t]hey are in very different places. The ATO monument is right next to the park, you can see it as you drive by. And [the one to WWII] is in a completely different place [...] across the road in the park".[94] Serhii P. speaks in the same vein: "Each period of history should have its own places and commemorative dates, and perhaps they should not even overlap and entangle".[95]

In contrast to the several dozen monuments to WWII in the city, the mere two memorials dedicated to the ATO seem modest. However, no one of the respondents claims the need for a large number of future monuments to the ongoing war. Natalia S., as mentioned above, states that a large number of monuments only leads to their invisibility, turning them into an everyday part of the landscape. In contrast to the numerous pompous WWII monuments erected during the Soviet era, Natalia S. says that "the monument should be small, but very heartfelt. And only one".[96]

However, there is another important circumstance. The massive number of WWII monuments in the city space of Kryvyi Rih is a product of the late postwar period, from the 1960s to the 1980s. Immediately after the war, monuments were erected only on mass graves scattered around the city. They paid honour primarily to military victims. As we can see, now, like in the early post-WWII period, the first stage of commemoration includes only the honouring of war victims but not the general 'heroism of the nation'. During the eight years of the ATO in Ukraine, only monuments to fallen Ukrainian soldiers were erected. In Kryvyi Rih, in addition to the above-mentioned monuments in public space, four small memorials in honour of those who were killed in the defence of Ukraine were placed on the territory of enterprises or educational institutions, one grassroots memorial with portraits of the fallen emerged, and 119 memorial plaques dedicated to specific soldiers were installed.[97]

91 Ibid.
92 Valentyna O., interview.
93 Vira H., interview.
94 Ibid.
95 Serhii P., interview.
96 Natalia S., interview.
97 Alexandr V. Stepanenko, *Pamyatniki Krivorozh'ya* (*Monuments of the Krivyi Rih region*), Vol. 2, Krivyi Rih, 2021, 106–138.

Ukrainian society is currently at the most painful stage of commemorating the war. The position of Maksym V. explains why this stage does not require massive monument erection. For him, monuments are a reminder to the families of those lost, a painful memory. That is why there should not be many monuments: "What is the reason to remind [someone] of this pain at every turn?"[98] Remembering war victims is undoubtedly important, but it is necessary "not to overdo [it] with this memory".[99]

Most respondents expect that future monuments to this war should be monuments to the victims of the war, both military and civilian. Directly or indirectly, during the conversation, they primarily named soldiers as the heroes of future monuments. But several respondents, like Tetiana N., also mentioned a second group that should be commemorated by monuments: civilian victims of the war.[100] But some think the monuments should be separate. Oleksandr Sh. states that they "separately should mention civilians and honour their memory, and separately the military".[101] Liana Zh. shares a similar opinion. For her, too, monuments dedicated to fallen soldiers should be separated from the memory of civilian victims. But at the same time, "perhaps it can be somehow combined if it is a certain memorial complex".[102]

Two respondents support the broadest view of whom the monuments should be erected to in the future. Liana Zh. believes that they should be "to everyone who was affected by the war".[103] Oleksandr P. elaborates on this, saying that it's important

> [T]o memorialise not only those at the battlefront but also a more extended group – volunteers, medics, even specialists who set up electricity and utilities. It is thanks to them that hospitals work, that children's heart surgeries are performed there.[104]

Oleksandr P.'s position can be interpreted as an emphasis on commemorating heroism rather than victims. Roman K. also directly expresses such a request. He is not a supporter of the self-victimisation of the Ukrainian nation, the concentration of historical memory on suffering. Instead, he refers to the example of the Jewish model of memory (as he sees it) as a worthy example to follow. Despite the many victims,

> [P]eople don't walk grieving, they're evolving, there's no anchor, you know. They remember, but it's not so much [...] let's say an anchor, just not so much that it's

98 Maksym V., interview.
99 Ibid.
100 Tetiana N., interview.
101 Oleksandr Sh., interview.
102 Liana Zh., interview.
103 Olena K., interview.
104 Oleksandr P., interview.

> constantly burdening. And we just, you know, get pushed back to it […]. Well, it happened – it happened, yeah, but what, what to do [about it]. Let's keep evolving. Or we'll be sad and grieve for another 235 years. That is all.[105]

Therefore, an acceptable option for him is to focus the commemoration not on suffering, but on heroism: "[monuments] should be made to something positive".[106]

It is worth noting that the context of the interviews always refers to collective monuments dedicated to certain groups. There is no mention of the idea of commemorating someone's individual feat or loss, or of erecting a monument in honour of a single hero. Moreover, Maksym V. explicitly states that the monument should not be dedicated to a specific person; it should be "just a general, somewhat abstract memorial, specifically to this particular brigade or to this TRO [Territorial Defence Forces]".[107]

Conclusions

Kryvyi Rih respondents have a polyphony of ideas regarding old Soviet war monuments and expectations for new ones. The general attitude towards the city's existing Soviet-era memorial space of WWII and hopes for its reformatting are determined by one of two positions. In the first, these monuments are perceived as a symbol of the trials that previous generations of Ukrainians went through during WWII, and, out of respect for them, no interference with the existing space is needed. The personal experience of living through a war has also made the experiences of the WWII generation more understandable. The second position views the WWII monuments as Soviet 'sites of memory', primarily due to when they were erected; they are seen as objects associated with the Soviet period and ideology. Therefore, the old memorial space needs to be reformatted, although the memory of WWII is important regardless. However, as we can see from the respondents' reactions, most do not consider it significant to have any symbolic intersection of the two generations of Ukraine's defenders (during WWII and the ongoing war). This is reflected in the expectation of having a separate memorial space for the two wars.

At the same time, regardless of their position on the memorial space of WWII, respondents who are ready to comment on future monuments to the ongoing Russo–Ukrainian War want to see them represented differently from the previous tradition. In this sense, the familiar Soviet practice serves as a counterexample. Unlike the Soviet monuments, the new monuments should be 'visible'. However,

105 Roman K., interview.

106 Ibid.

107 Maksym V., interview.

this requirement is not so much an aesthetic expectation as one by the generations living through the ongoing war that the memory of it will be honoured and that their experiences will not become an invisible part of the city landscape, as happened with the old memorials to WWII. But in addition to the general aesthetic and ideological motives, the discrepancy between the Soviet monumental tradition and the expectations for the commemoration of this war can also be explained through temporal distances. That is, one war ended decades ago, and the other is ongoing. Similarly, the monumental landscape of WWII currently present in the city was mainly created a few decades after that war ended, during the activities of the post-war generations and the promotion of the heroic myth. Meanwhile, my interviews show the expectations of commemorating the current Russo–Ukrainian War by the generation that is living through it. Therefore, people now focus primarily on commemorating war victims, not on heroism itself, similar to the first stages of the WWII memorial commemoration in the 1940s and 1950s.

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