

# Damaged in 2022

## Memorials in Kharkiv

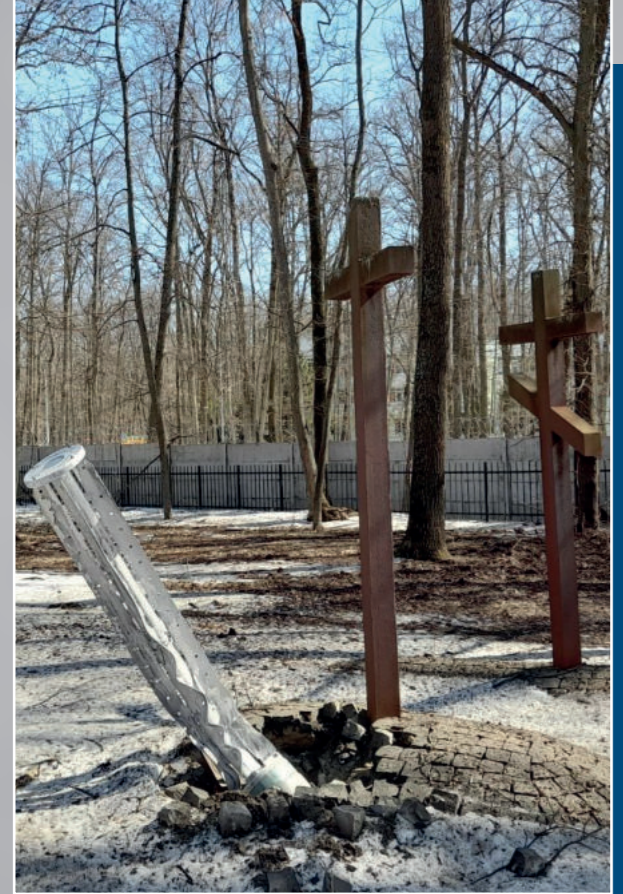
Having gained independence in 1991, Ukraine adopted some aspects of World War Two memory culture from the previous Soviet Era. This particularly applies to the "Great Patriotic War", albeit with a slightly different emphasis.

Significant changes took place with the beginning of Russian aggression in 2014. The state tried to separate itself from the Soviet legacy associated with the aggressor country. This was reflected in the legislation, in the celebration of Victory Day and other important dates, the aesthetics of the celebration, as well as the representation of the war on the pages of textbooks, etc.

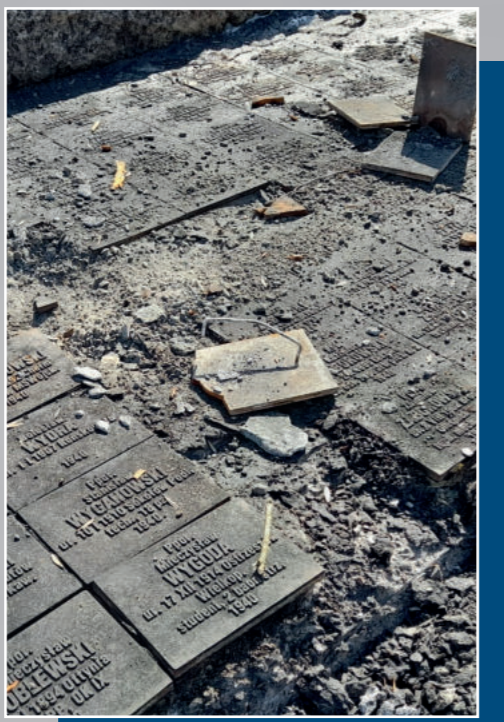
The full-scale invasion in 2022 has already made many changes to the politics of World War II memory in Ukraine, and will continue to do so.



**Drobytskyi Yar**  
<https://cdn4.suspilne.media/images/resize/952x178/ed54d3f15187f7f.jpg>



**Ukrainian-Polish memorial**  
[https://maidan.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/20220323\\_114707.jpg](https://maidan.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/20220323_114707.jpg)



**Ukrainian-Polish memorial**  
[https://2day.kh.ua/sites/default/files/inline-images/277294656\\_10158641165903148\\_3929214247579679680\\_n.jpg](https://2day.kh.ua/sites/default/files/inline-images/277294656_10158641165903148_3929214247579679680_n.jpg)

### Soviet heritage and post-Soviet realities

# «Great Patriotic War» vs World War II



**Victory day celebration aesthetics in Kyiv 2010**  
<https://bn.ua/ukrayna/den-peremogi-v-ukrayni-vsi-podrobici-foto-video-293576.html>

Soviet historiography was characterized by the use of the term "Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People 1941-1945" to denote the events of the Soviet-German war. According to this approach, victory in the war was achieved through the unity of the Communist Party and the Soviet people.

In the post-Soviet narrative, the concept of the "**Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)**" continued to be used for a long time, yet with a modified emphasis of honoring the achievements of "ordinary people" rather than the party or the Soviet leadership. At the same time, the term "World War II" was also used. In particular, the textbooks stated that during its first stage of war, from September 1939 to June 1941, the USSR was the aggressor.

After the Revolution of Dignity (2014), the term "Great Patriotic War" completely disappeared from textbooks, official rhetoric at state level, and legislative acts.



**Victory day celebration aesthetics in Kyiv 2018**  
[https://images.unian.net/photos/2018\\_05/1525866836-6402.jpg?0.0521420584865703](https://images.unian.net/photos/2018_05/1525866836-6402.jpg?0.0521420584865703)

# From honoring the heroism of the soldiers to commemorating ordinary people



**Soviet symbols are prohibited**  
[https://rferl.org/content/news/02-04-2019-ukrayna-0330-prodovzhen\\_101174705\\_03b0f01-4ff-4caf-86db-e8101c4d372.jpg.webp](https://rferl.org/content/news/02-04-2019-ukrayna-0330-prodovzhen_101174705_03b0f01-4ff-4caf-86db-e8101c4d372.jpg.webp)

In independent Ukraine, **Victory Day on May 9th** remained a public commemoration day, as it was in Soviet Era. In the first decades of Ukrainian independence, the celebration of Victory Day followed Soviet tradition. There were mass events at the state level, parades which were sometimes accompanied by military equipment and veteran marches.

Victory Day was actively used by some political parties to mobilize their electorate, the holidays were held with the appropriate party symbols. Events to commemorate the victims were also held on this day. The events of 2014, namely the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the war in eastern Ukraine caused a shift in emphasis from honoring the heroism of soldiers to commemorate the tragedy of ordinary people and from the Soviet tradition to the European one. In 2015, the celebration of **May 8th – the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation** was launched, while May 9th remained a holiday and was renamed **Day of Victory over the Nazis in World War II**. The symbol of these commemorations are the remembrance poppy and the slogans «1939 – 1945 We honor. We honor. We prevail ». and «Never Again».



**New Symbolism**  
[https://old.lmp.gov.ua/sites/default/files/userupload/fb1\\_1.jpg](https://old.lmp.gov.ua/sites/default/files/userupload/fb1_1.jpg)



# New realities after 2014



**New gender accents** <https://uinp.gov.ua/storage/app/public/images/1657/image/1/max/dMCUJ1552902146HH1Qv.jpeg>

# Remembering the victims of war



**Drobytskyi Yar in Kharkiv - a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust** <https://planetofhotels.com/sites/default/files/attachment-images/50181975.jpg>

In Soviet historical and commemorative discourse, the genocide of the Jewish people during World War II - **the Holocaust** - was silenced. If monuments were erected at the places where Jewish communities were shot, they did not contain any mention of Jews, who were not singled out from the general mass of "Soviet citizens who were victims of fascism." In the 1990s, significant changes took place, places associated with the Holocaust gradually appeared on the maps of Ukrainian cities. Today, the places of mass executions of the Jewish population are indicated in cities across Ukraine, memorial complexes and monuments are built in Jewish ghettos, and Righteous Among the Nations, who saved victims, are also noted. Another tragedy of the Second World War period - **the mass shooting of captured Polish officers in 1940** by the Soviet totalitarian regime - was also reflected in the memorial landscape. In Kharkiv, there is a "Memorial to the Victims of Totalitarianism" dedicated to the murdered Polish officers and Soviet citizens.

# World War II memory politics in Ukraine

A short introduction by  
Don't forget! Kharkiv project



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DONTFORGET KHARKIV

ВОЙНУ - ОСВОБОДИТЕЛЮ