

Memorialisation of the Military conflict in Donbass in the monuments

Memória do conflito militar em Donbass em seus monumentos

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ABSTRACT

In the article the author reconstructs and analyzes the processes of memorialization of the military conflict in Donbass, namely on the territory of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republics and Lugansk People's Republics. The article is based on the material of the author's own observations of commemorative practices in Donbass and analysis of open sources (media, social networks, blogs, etc.). The author systemizes memory places locations according to temporal characteristics and spatial localization. Due to political, economic and social isolation of Donbass, the commemorative function is exclusively assigned to the local community, and the community fixes the fact of the event creating memorial visual objects. According to the overview of the visual objects-symbols that arose on the territory of Donbass in the period 2014-2020 those are memorial plaques, commemorative signs, monuments and memorial complexes. Memorials do not depend on the status of the deceased, age group or the number of dead. The determining factor is the fact of violent or tragic death. Spontaneous memorialization is temporally short and practically unrepresented due to the danger of pilgrimage to the place of tragedy.

Keywords: Donbass, spontaneous and institutional memorialization, commemorative practices, monuments and memorials, a place of memory, tragic death.

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RESUMO

No artigo a autora reconstrói e analisa os processos de memorialização do conflito militar em Donbass, nomeadamente no território das autoproclamadas Repúblicas Populares de Donetsk e das Repúblicas Populares de Lugansk. O artigo baseia-se no material de observações da própria autora sobre práticas comemorativas no Donbass e análise de fontes abertas (mídia, redes sociais, blogs, etc.). A autora sistematiza as localizações dos lugares de memória de acordo com características temporais e localização espacial. Devido ao isolamento político, econômico e social do Donbass, a função comemorativa é atribuída exclusivamente à comunidade local, e a comunidade corrige o fato do evento criar objetos visuais memoriais. De acordo com a visão geral dos objetos-símbolos visuais que surgiram no território de Donbass no período 2014-2020, são placas memoriais, sinais comemorativos, monumentos e complexos memoriais. Os memoriais não dependem do estado do falecido, da faixa etária ou do número de mortos. O fator determinante é o fato da morte violenta ou trágica. A memorialização espontânea é temporalmente curta e praticamente não representada devido ao perigo da peregrinação ao local da tragédia.

Palavras-chave: Donbass, memorialização espontânea e institucional, práticas comemorativas, monumentos e memoriais, lugar de memória, morte trágica.

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Prehistory

Donbass is a historical, cultural, and economic region in eastern Ukraine and southwestern Russia. The historical coal mining region also included areas in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast and Southern Russia (Rostov Oblast). While other regions of Ukraine were settled due to territorial disputes and conquests, the growth of Donbass is linked to the discovery in 1720 of Europe's largest coal basin, and the rise of local industry. Until quite recently, the two regions of Donetsk and Lugansk contributed nearly 16% of Ukraine's Gross Domestic Product, and as much as a quarter of its industrial output.

Another specificity of this region is its periodic uprisings. For Ukrainian nationalists, however, Donbass is also one of the most “Soviet” and therefore ‘alien’ regions of Ukraine. Bohdan Chervak, the chairman of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, calls it “not Ukrainian territory by content”, and even former Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko recently referred to both Crimea and Donbass as regions “where our language practically does not exist, where our memory is nonexistent, where our church is absent, where our culture is absent... utterly foreign lands” of which, he insists, “not a single clump of earth” may ever be surrendered. The solution most often proposed to this conundrum is to re-educate the local population into a proper appreciation of their ostensibly suppressed Ukrainian identity, a process that Donetsk University professor Elena Styazhkina euphemistically calls “positive, peaceful colonization” (Nicolai N. Petro 2015).

As a result, one part of the society wants to align with the European Union and the other with Russia. The 2014 Ukrainian revolution resulted in the removal of the government, concurrent Anti-Maidan and pro-Russian protests in some southern and south-eastern regions of Ukraine. In Donbass, local pro-Russian rebels, who didn't agree with the new Ukrainian government, escalated independent movement in the region (in some sources they are called ‘separatists’). The conflict between the rebels and the newly formed Ukrainian government escalated into open warfare. Two self-declared states were formed in the region: Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic.

On April 6, 2014, an armed conflict began in the east of Ukraine. According to the assessment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the total number of human losses associated with the conflict in Ukraine (from April 14, 2014 to February 15, 2020) is 41-44 thousand: 13-12.3 thousand dead (at least 3,350 civilians, approximately 9,750 thousand combatants) and 29-31 thousand wounded (about 7-9 thousand civilians, 9.5-10.5 thousand Ukrainian soldiers and approximately 22-24 thousand combatants) (Report of OUNHCHR 2020).

Due to the geopolitical situation and the isolation of the territory of the conflict for 7 years, in this article we reconstruct and analyze the processes of memorialization of the military conflict in Donbass, namely on the territory of the self-proclaimed DPR and LPR (Short for Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic).

War and Memory in Donbass

Today we think about death as a natural physiological process. From a mystical field, it has become an object of scientific research, requiring special researches, medical, philosophical, psychological and anthropological analysis. At the same time we still react to the loss. The thoughts and feelings of the person who suffered from the loss are individual, exclusive and unique. With it, more and more often loss from a purely individual act becomes public, especially in the memorialization of sudden, spontaneous, tragic death or death of a group of people. Memorialization processes turn into performances, one of the goals of which is to create a memorial place by perpetuating memory in a material object - a memorial sculpture.

Researchers have long been interested in memorialization, and memorials themselves were researched as objects of artistic heritage, as a sociocultural component, as an element of nation-building, as a semiotic object or as an element of mourning ritual (Alderman 2009; Rowlands 1998; Santino 2006; Zittoun 2004; Bogdanovskaya 2013; Gong 2018; Sokolova 2014; Hanney 2016).

The war causes two new groups of people whose interests are reflected in the memorialization process: a group of comrades and relatives of the victims and both of these groups directly want to participate in the memorialization. At the same time, this process of cherishing purely individual memory moves into the process of constructing collective memory with unified content. In recent decades, the memorialization of traumatic death has moved into the public sphere; not only the fact of death is widely publicized, but also commemorative events held on this occasion are covered by the press. The media are of great importance now, they can scale the event to the entire planet regardless of its location, then people around the world can join the commemoration process, expressing sympathy for the victims and support for their relatives. But in Donbass, when the conflict situation is controversial and the international media do not have constant access to the conflict zone, and an entrance with an exit to the territory are strictly regulated, the facts of the tragic deaths do not receive such attention and the commemorative practices are carried out only by the local communities.

Due to the geopolitical situation and the isolation of the territory of the conflict for 7 years, in this article memorialization of the military conflict in Donbass is reconstructed and analyzed on the territory of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR). Officially, the total number of human losses is nearly 41–44 thousand. The article is based on the material of the author's personal observations of commemorative practices in Donbass and analysis of open sources (media, social networks, blogs, etc.). During the period 2014–2020, more than 100 memorial objects as memorial plaques, memorial signs, monuments and memorial complexes appeared on the territory of Donbass (unrecognized republics of the DPR and LPR). The laws enacted in the republics have a strong influence on the

development of new commemorative practices. In the DPR, the Law “On perpetuating the memory of prominent figures, distinguished persons, historical events and memorable dates”, enacted on December 26, 2014, perpetuates the memory of:

- a) the deceased from the hostilities, in the course of official duties protecting the Fatherland;
- b) the deceased in the course of military duties in the territories of other states;
- c) the deceased from wounds, shell shocks, mutilations or diseases received during the defense of the Fatherland, regardless of the time of the onset of the indicated consequences, as well as missing persons during military operations, in the course of other military tasks or official duties;
- d) the deceased in captivity, in which they ended up due to the prevailing military situation, but who did not lose their honor and dignity, who did not commit high treason (Law of the DPR 2014).

A separate paragraph emphasizes that the memory of deceased foreign citizens defending the Donetsk People's Republic is also honored. In addition, the memory of associations, formations and institutions is perpetuated, also places of war are memorialize as symbols of heroism, courage and steadfastness of the people.

Thus, the law reflects all vectors of commemorative policy, which led to the emergence of a large number of new monuments, new memorial places and reorganization of complexes. The main goal of the state is to perpetuate memory with an emphasis on patriotism, identity and continuity of generations. A similar trend can be seen in other laws: “On Perpetuating the Memory of Prominent Figures, Distinguished Persons, Historical Events and Memorable Dates”, DPR August 7, 2015, “On Culture” of the DPR December 25, 2015, “On Perpetuating the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945 years” LPR February 21, 2019.

The memorial culture of war exists as a combination of symbols and practices that form the meaning of memorialized events. Visual memorialization is the creation of symbolic objects that supports memories of something (we will call them memorial places).

Memorial places (according to temporality)

The temporary nature of the memorial place directly depends on the public or personal perception of it and can be divided into acts of spontaneous and institutional memorialization, depending on the dynamics and characteristics of commemorative practices. As one of the systematizing characteristics we will use the division of memorialization into spontaneous and institutional.

Spontaneous memorialization

Spontaneous memorialization is an act of individual sorrow that is open to public demonstration. According to Peter Jan Margri and Cristina Sanchez-Carretero,

spontaneous memorialization is understood as an act in which groups of people or individuals create memorials (impromptu and temporary) to change or improve a specific situation (Margry, Sánchez-Carretero 2011:2). In the war zone, spontaneous memorialization is not at the opposition to the state official position. The traditionally public component of this ritual includes pilgrimage to places of death.

Due to the fact, that such a pilgrimage is very dangerous, spontaneous memorialization is short or absent as such (Figure 1). If there is a resonance and the community (comrades, caring residents, sympathizers) creates a temporary memorial, then in most cases it develops into a memorial sign, monument or memorial (at the place of the tragedy, a place that is associated with the deceased or a socially significant place) (Figure 2).

The American folklorist Jack Santino, describing spontaneous memorials, introduces the term “shrine”, based on the fact that they “have a secular or vernacular (if religious or spiritual) quality to them; they are a kind of folk shrine”. (Santino 2006; Santino 2011: 98). Traditionally, the mourners lay memorial objects at these places. The objects can be thematically relevant with the age category of the deceased, their gender and occupation: if we are talking about children – toys, if we are talking about military men – shells, military attributes, personal notes or a public appeal in the form of an open message, which is characterized by laconicism and emotionality: “We are orphaned without you, but we have no right to betray you”, “We love you and are immensely proud of you”, “Batya, we are orphaned. Our hearts are with you. Petrovka mourns”, “With your pure heart, you have paved the way for us, so you leave so early yourself, without chattering and not having lived ...”. Universal are flowers and religious objects: altar lamps and icons.

There is a certain psychological readiness for victims. This is tragedy and the attributiveness of the tragedy is saved (sorrow, rejection, universal involvement in what is happening - when personal tragedy becomes public). In the case of a spontaneous tragic death in peacetime, the manifestation of sorrow is difficult, as it is mixed with a certain sense of guilt (Rando 1993). Here, in the case of death from hostilities, sorrow from the category of a personal tragedy becomes the tragedy of society and the ritual as a whole turns into a public, socially approved. Society, reacting to events, tries on tragedy that have happened with the participants (emotional component).

Institutional long-term memorialization

Spontaneous memorials either change or disappear. When they disappear, it means that they no longer have a public load, the public interest has faded away and the resonance of the event has subsided. In most cases, spontaneous memorialization gives way to institutional. Firstly, due to the fact, that some objects are far away and it is not possible to get to them, or it is dangerous and then the memorial sign is installed in a safer place. Secondly, even if the objects are located in the city center, then these

memorial places are updated by the authorities (the opinion of state bodies is mainly based on public opinion = innocent victims, victims of war, etc.). Public opinion on certain socially unfair issues is becoming the basis for public policy.

So, at the death place of the head of the DPR A.V.Zakharchenko (August 31, 2018), where people spontaneously took flowers, religious items and notes, a memorial stone was placed in month, in September 2018 (Figure 3).

Spontaneous “shrines” can be quickly dismantled, but if the tragedy affected the architecture of the city, then this tragic place becomes sacred: for example, the cafe “Separ” was preserved after the explosion and memorial shields were placed. In the future the building will be dismantled and a new memorial complex will be built (Novosti Donbassa 2019). If damage is insignificant or conservation is economically unreasonable, the building will be renovated and it continues to function. For example, it happened with apartment buildings, bus stops, schools, hospitals, which were partially destroyed of the shelling and there were victims. The place of the tragedy is still symbolically marked: visually or geographically. Geographical marking suggests to rename streets, squares, alleys, boulevards, avenues, alleys, neighborhoods, other territories in memory of a person or a historical event.

According to the law, visual objects-symbols include a) a plaque - a plate, usually made of durable material, perpetuating the memory of an outstanding personality or historical event; b) a commemorative sign - a sculptural or architectural work (or in combination) created to perpetuate the memory of an outstanding personality or historical event (sculpture, architectural and sculptural composition, obelisk, memorial stone, etc.); c) a monument - an object of cultural heritage that is listed in the “State Register of Monuments, Memorials, Plaques and Memorial Signs of the Donetsk People's Republic” (Law of the DPR 2014).

A memorial plaque

A plaque can perpetuate the memory of a person, an event, or a place. The obligatory component of the memorial plaque is an explanatory inscription; the addition is a profile, bust, bas-relief or high relief. In the republics, in most cases, memorial plaques are installed to the military at educational institutions where the deceased person studied (Figure 4.), or on the house where he/she lived. There are special cases, such as the Doctor Lisa memorial plaque, which was installed in memory of a public figure, epy member of the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights, Elizabeth Glinka, known as Doctor Lisa. The plaque was installed on the building of the Republican Children's Clinical Hospital, from here E. Glinka took the seriously ill children of Donbass for treatment to the Russian Federation (Donetskoye agentstvo novostey 2017).

In some cases, the location does not matter, but the person or group that is the object of memorialization is important. For example, a memorial plaque “To the Donbass Children” (in memory of the children who deceased from the hostilities in

Kirov DPR) (Figure 5). In 2017, in Donetsk, a memorial plaque was opened on the housing and communal services building in honor of the deceased workers, it lists the names of 12 workers (Figure 6). In total, during the military operations in the DPR in the course of official duties, more than 30 employees of utility companies were killed or wounded.

There are examples when the building itself is an information translator, and the inscription on the memorial plaque creates a narrative context. A memorial plaque in Gorlovka, DPR in memory of the Bulaevs: “The Bulaevs tragically died in this house of the shelling on November 14, 2014: Tatyana Vladimirovna 34 years, Oleg Alexandrovich 35 years, Danil 9 years, Sofia 4 years” (Figure 7).

A memorial sign

Along with plaques, a common form of visualization is a memorial sign in the form of a sculpture, obelisk, memorial stone, etc.: a generalized group of people (militiamen; military; journalists, miners, civilians; children who died of the conflict) or personified monument. For example, the monument “To the Innocent Victims of an Undeclared War” (in memory of city residents who died from the hostilities in 2014), Gorlovka, DPR (Figure 8; Figure 9); the monument “To Brothers and Sisters who Gave Their Lives for the Liberation of Debaltseve from Ukrainian Punishers”, Debaltseve, DPR (Figure 10); the monument “To the Perished Citizens of the DPR”, Donetsk, DPR (Figure 11); the monument “They Defended the Homeland” - a monument dedicated to volunteers - participants of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, Lugansk LPR (Figure 12); the monument to the journalists of the Rossiya TV channel Anton Voloshin and Igor Kornelyuk who died near Lugansk on June 17, 2014, Lugansk, LPR (Figure 13); the monument “To the Heroes-miners who Gave Their Lives for Freedom and Independence of the Lugansk People’s Republic”, Anthracite, LPR (Figure 14).

A personified (individual) monument has a dualistic nature: on the one hand it is a kind of fine art (monumental sculpture) that has an author, and on the other it is a testimony of someone's life. Memorials serve both for historical fixing of the existence of those whom we loved, and for the purpose of telling a personal story using artistic images, messages and symbols displayed on the memorial. They are places of remembrance for future generations to visit, remember and pay their respects.

So far, there is only one individual monument - this is a monument to the first head of the Donetsk People's Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko. On August 31, 2018, A. Zakharchenko was killed, on the anniversary of his death two memorials were placed: one in the cemetery and it is a memorial complex with a grave cross and a full-length monument, and the second is a bust placed in the Lenin Komsomol Park (Figure 15; Figure 16).

A tombstone is also a sculpture, which is placed on the grave to perpetuate memories of someone or something. Traditionally, tombstones were placed in

cemeteries, often reproducing the symbols of the religion of the deceased (for example, a cross in Christianity). At the end of the twentieth century, with the new materials and the development of technical capabilities, tombstones turned not only into business, but into a separate type of art with its own laws, trends, fashion and psychology of consumption.

One of the distinguishing features of tombstones in post-Soviet countries is the pretentiousness of forms, aesthetic beauty and material value of tombstones. There are several basic arguments of relatives who install tombstones: “you need to install an expensive monument, otherwise they (neighbors, friends or someone) will think that we are poor”, “the relatives will not understand us as if we didn’t love the deceased”, “it was the last will of the deceased”, etc. Thus, the beauty and expensiveness of the tombstone directly proportionally conveys the level of love, respect and material wealth of the relatives who install the tombstone. The latest trend in the world of funeral services is the black gravestone installation, of course, there are exceptions, it depends on the consumer desire. The same applies to decorations and epitaphs. An epitaph can contain one or several lines, be concise (“remember, love,” “with love”) or a quote (“So much has gone when you’re gone, so much of yours are still with us” – an epitaph on the tombstone of the commander Motorola). The main distinguishing feature of the monument is a photography, so all the tombstones are personified. Even on a temporary tombstone, there is a photo of the deceased on it. Religious symbols are optional, sometimes can be present on monuments, sometimes not. But all the ritual actions, as well as the burial process will be carried out according to the belief system of the deceased. If during the lifetime the deceased was not religious, then according to the public tradition, a Christian symbol (most often an ordinary cross) will be placed on a tombstone (Figure 17). So, in Donetsk, the DPR, on the territory of the cemetery “Donetsk Sea” was organized “Walk of Fame” for the military who died from the conflict. Among the most recognizable tombstones, the monument to Givi (Mikhail Tolstykh) – the commander of the “Somalia” battalion and Motorola (Arsen Pavlov) – the commander of the anti-tank special unit “Sparta” (Figure 18; Figure 19).

A memorial complex

The memorial complex is characterized by the presence of a certain territory and monumental architectural structures. The memorial complex is a park with a design and wide alleys. The creation of memorial complexes is a very intensive process, which implies a separate significant territory with a certain set of monumental architectural structures located on it. Due to resource consumption, there are not so many memorial complexes on the territory of the DPR and LPR. In 2016, on the territory of the LPR in Krasnodon, a separate memorial complex “In Memory of the Deceased Militia and Fighters of the LPR People’s Police” was organized, covering more than 950 square meters. (Figure 20).

In the DPR, there is no separate national memorial complex associated with modern military events. However, there is a memorial complex Saur-Mogila (Savur-Mohyla) – is a strategic height in the Donets ridge near the city of Snizhne, located about 5 km from the border between Ukraine and Russia's Rostov Oblast. During World War II, Saur-Mogila was the focal point of intense fighting, when Soviet troops managed to retake control of the height from German forces in August 1943. In 1963, a memorial complex was unveiled on the top of the hill to honour the fallen soldiers, comprising an obelisk with a steel-and-concrete statue of a Soviet soldier, four steel-and-concrete sculptures built along the slope leading up to the obelisk (each memorializing infantrymen, tankmen, artillerymen and airmen involved in the battle), and walls inscribing the names of fallen soldiers in the battle. Every year on May 9, there are celebrations dedicated to Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War (Tvoi Novosti 2014) (Figure 21).

In 2014, during the first months of the military conflict between the DPR supporters and Ukrainian troops, the memorial complex received significant damage. On 21 August 2014, the memorial's obelisk collapsed after enduring weeks of heavy shelling. The complex remained under the control of DPR supporters.

DPR planned to restore the complex, adding some thematic objects about the events of 2014. Later, the leadership of the DPR decided not to restore the memorial, but to spend money on the construction of a monument to those who died during the military conflict in Donbass (Federal'noye agentstvo novostey 2015). As a result, on April 6, 2015, a bell was installed on the Saur-Mogila and they planned to build a chapel. On the territory of the complex, celebrations dedicated to Victory Day continue every year (Figure 22) (Krasnoe TV 2015; Donetsk Afisha.RU 2019).

The sacred significance of the place was preserved, supplemented and intensified by new meanings: “Saur-Mogila is a holy place for Donbass”, “Saur-Mogila for us is a sacred place, it is a mound that is watered with blood of our ancestors and our contemporaries. We are aware of the price of the feat. This feat determined whether Donbass will live or not, in 1943 and in 2014” (Veprev 2019). According to E.Durheim, Saur-Mogila is an example of implicit commemoration when, through a pilgrimage ritual to a certain memorial place, performed once a year, a connection with the past is made. A physical stay in a given place, a change of localization gives a powerful impetus to an emotional outburst (you can observe the tears of participants), through which a person establishes a spiritual connection with the past, involvement in events.

A particularly significant commemorative object of the DPR is the memorial complex “Alley of Angels” - a complex in memory of children who deceased from the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. According to UNICEF published in October 2018, during the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine since 2014, at least 140 children died or were wounded as a result of a mine rupture on the territory of the DPR (Morozova 2018). The complex is located in Donetsk in the Lenin Komsomol park. It was opened on May 5, 2015 with the installation of a memorial sign, and on June 2, 2017, the

monument “The Donbass Children” was added to the composition. The memorial complex consists of 3 components: 1) a forged arch 2 meters high at the entrance, consists of roses (the symbol of Donetsk), between the roses are machine gun casings and pigeons as a symbol of peace. 2) Under the arch there is a granite slab, where the names of the deceased children and their age are listed in alphabetical order. 3) The monument “The Donbass Children” was designed as part of the project “Peace to the World”, in which the children of Russia and Europe drew sketches of the monument. Based on these sketches, the sculptor Denis Seleznev has created a sculptural group (Figure 23; Figure 24).

Memorial places (according to localization)

A monument is a three-dimensional structure that supports memories of something. Monuments perform an objective historical, sometimes political function and at the same artistic, being the subject of art. Creating a monument, the artist uses artistic means (visual elements and artistic techniques) to express the content. These are composition, perspective, proportions, chiaroscuro, color, stroke, texture, etc. Thus, the monuments’ functionality is increased: besides their direct functions (historical continuity of social experience (information), ideological, epistemological, communicative, compensatory, educational, regulatory or utilitarian) memorial objects also perform ideological, artistic and decorative functions.

Thanks to the artistic features, the memorial sculpture is able to architecturally and aesthetically correct the space around it or create an architectural environment where it occupies a dominant position (for example, the memorial complex “Saur-Mogila”).

Memorial in urban space

In most cases, the memorial object is a fragment of the urban space. The city, according to the Charter of Living Cities, “is much more than just a population, buildings and technologies,” the city has its own unique fate in the life of the country in which it appeared (was born), with which it is connected through spiritual and material connections. The city lives in a specific cultural and country environment for its region. But it must also live for the citizens and through the citizens”(Living cities). Thus, placing a memorial object in the certain location, it is necessary to take into account the possibility of its perception.

Doctor of Art, researcher of design creativity and architectural heritage V.L. Glazychev put forward his own theory of space perception, according to which the perception of the environment can be divided into two types: contemplative and passive (Glazychev 2011). Contemplative perception involves the object examination, memory fixation or photo fixation, which is common for tourists. In

other cases, we are talking about passive perception, when the architectural changes in space in everyday contemplation do not attract attention.

A symbolically chosen place that has a number of characteristics (a frequently visited, passage place (park, alley) without reference to another memorial object).

Traditionally, this is the city center, which is associated with history – full of museums, squares, alleys and is the cultural past repository. The city center is also associated with activities, walks, mass entertainment events, meetings with friends: “Go to the city” - this is what residents of ordinary dormitory suburb usually say, “city” equals the center.

For example, in the Kommunarov Square in Gorlovka, where was no hostilities, there is a mechanized infantry combat vehicle (MICV)-1 and a commemorative sign with the inscription “They Defended to the Death in the Name of Life. To the Heroic Defenders of Gorlovka” (Figure 25). The monument “To the Victims of the Airstrike of the Ukrainian Air Force, June 2, 2014”, Lugansk, LPR, was placed in memory of 8 dead and 30 wounded. The monument is installed at the crossroads of Oboronnaya Street and Sovetskaya Street, near the children's hospital. The place of the tragedy itself is a few kilometers from the monument, but this place is more advantageous, more passable than the tragic place.

“Monument on the blood”

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The choice of the place of tragedy, the place of “blood” as a memorial place is associated with a high emotional content of the place. Initially, such tragic places become the object of spontaneous memorialization. Spontaneous memorialization as a reaction of society to injustice is an example of social cohesion. If spontaneous memorialization is incorporated in the political context and the official authorities take part in it, then in time, spontaneous memorialization turns into an institutional one. And in places that were not previously considered for architectural development or holding public services, demonstrations and other unauthorized actions, memorial objects appear. In the DPR and LPR sudden death is considered one of the most unfair, therefore 90% of the memorials are installed precisely on the occasion of death.

During the first assault of the Donetsk airport on May 26, 2014, a truck with military volunteers was shot down, several dozen people died on the spot. Right here a memorial sign was installed, in the form of a cross with a sign “Eternal Memory to the Fallen Defenders of the Airport” (Figure 26). Gorlovka: The monument “Sorrow and Sadness” was installed on May 7, 2016 at the place where in July 2014 a young girl with a child (Kira and Kristina Zhuk) died of shelling. According to the authorities, “the two semi-arches symbolize the parents’ hands protecting their children from war, and the black bell is a symbol of sorrow and sadness for everyone who died in this war. Flowers made from cartridges symbolize the continuation of life”. (Figure 27).

The place of hostilities

The memorial object is installed where military operations were taken place and this place was of tactical or strategic importance. As a result of these operations there were significant human losses from both military and civilians. The monument is installed in the community, which is the closest to the place. For example, the memorial sign “To the Deceased Residents of Chernukhino” (Debal’tsevsko-Chernukhinskaya offensive operation), Chernukhino, LPR (Figure 28).

Closeness to another memorial

Some memorial objects, which are dedicated to the victims of the conflict in Donbass, are located close to the monuments of the Great Patriotic War. This phenomenon has nothing to do with the lack of free space or the place of tragedy. In this decision, we can observe several subtexts.

“Places of memory” and memorial objects exist by constant emotions; they need reminders through the collective memory formed by social institutions and groups (Nora 2005). The reason is the temporal and spatial memory limitations, its changeability and selectivity. One of the brightest examples of actualized memory is the celebration of Victory Day, the date is moving away and there is a fear that the youth will forget about this important commemorative date. Thus, having two memorial objects close to each other, the emotional background intensifies, and an additional reason for visiting this place is created.

Placing a new memorial close to the Great Patriotic War monument, a rethinking of the existing object also takes place and new meanings are added. A new temporary sequence of events is formed - the past flows into the present and becomes the future, which can be seen from the inscriptions on the memorial objects. For example, the inscription on the monument “To the Lost Fellows” Artemovsk LPR: “Eternal memory to the heroes who fell in battle, defending the honor and memory of our veterans” (Figure 29). The monument is located in the city center on the territory of the memorial complex of the Great Patriotic War “The Grieving Mother”. We are talking about a war of memories, the text seems to say that although the Great Patriotic War is over, but the war for memory of it is still ongoing. The original meaning of the monument – to perpetuate the memory of everyone who contributed to the victory, the feat of the people, the memory of deceased, etc. – pushed into the background and the monument itself becomes the object of protection. The original meaning of the monument – to perpetuate the memory of everyone who contributed to the victory, the feat of the people, and the memory of deceased – is pushed to the margins and the monument becomes the object of protection.

The similar situation is with the monument “Militias who Deceased Near Ilovaisk”, Mnogopol’ye, DPR – on the right is a mass grave of those who died during the Great Patriotic War. In Donetsk, the monument to “Dying Citizens of the DPR”

became a part of the memorial complex “To Donbass Liberators” (dedicated to the memory of all military units and formations that liberated Donbass during the Great Patriotic War (World War II) (Figure 30).

Conclusions

If we talk about the ongoing processes of memorialization in Donbass public space, it becomes obvious that memorials do not depend on the status of the deceased, age or number of victims. The determining factor is the violent or tragic death. The deceased are victims and at some memorials it is actualized that the “other side” is guilty. Spontaneous memorialization is temporally short and practically unrepresented due to the danger of pilgrimage to the place of tragedy. Commemorative practices are reflected in official memorials. The ritual-religious component is present at all stages of commemoration, from the creation of a spontaneous memorial to annual commemorative practices. In visual memorialization, the most religiously distant are memorial plaques: they practically have no religious elements.

In socially and economically stable societies, the mediation of tragic deaths and commemorative practices is aimed to draw attention to the tragedy and prevent it in future. Cause of Donbass isolation the commemoration is assigned only to the local community, and the community confirms the tragedy through the creation of tangible visual objects.

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FIGURES

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Figure 1. A spontaneous monument to the fallen soldiers of the “Hooligan” battalion, October 2014, the area of the village of Smeloe LPR. (Photo by unknown, resource: <https://yadocent.livejournal.com/904935.html>)

Figure 2. Place of death of the head of the DPR A. Zakharchenko, August 31, 2018, Donetsk DPR (Photo by Nikita Makarenkov, resource: <https://www.donetsk.kp.ru/daily/26878.4/3921296/>)

Figure 3. Memorial stone at the death place of the Head of the DPR, Alexander Zakharchenko, in the city center, September 08, 2018, Donetsk DPR (Photo by Donetsk News Agency, resource: <https://dan-news.info/obschestvo/pamyatnyj-kamen-ustanovlen-u-mesta-gibeli-glavy-dnr-aleksandra-zaxarchenko-v-centre-donecka.html>)

Figure 4. The memorial plaque to R. Nyrkov at the school building in the village Larino DNR, March 16, 2018 (Photo by: Press service of the OD “Donetsk Republic”, resource: <https://dan-news.info/obschestvo/imya-pogibshego-geroya-dnr-romana-nyrkova-uvekovecheno-na-zdanii-shkoly-v-doneckom-poselke-larino.html>)

Figure 5. The memorial plaque “To the Children of Donbass”, November 2016, Kirov DPR (Photo by: Donetsk News Agency, resource: <https://dan-news.info/obschestvo/v-kirovskom-na-severe-vostoke-dnr-uvekovechili-pamyat-detej-pogibshix-pri-obstrelax-goroda-v-2014.html>)

Figure 6. The memorial plaque “To the Workers of the DPR housing and communal services died at a work post from shelling of the Ukrainian Air Force in 2014-2015”, March 15, 2017, Donetsk DPR (Author photo: Council of Ministers of the DPR, resource: <http://smdnr.ru/v-donecke-otkryta-memorialnaya-doska-v-chest-pogibshix-rabotnikov-sfery-zhkh/>)

Figure 7. The memorial plaque “To the Bulaevs”, November 14, 2019, Gorlovka DPR (Photo by Gorlovka City Administration, resource: <https://admin-gorlovka.ru/news/32594-otkryta-memorialnaya-doska-pamyati-pogibshej-semi-bulaevykh-i-anny-epishevoj>)

Figure 8. The foundation stone “To the Innocent Victims of the Undeclared War”, July 29, 2016, Gorlovka DNR (Photo by Public movement “Free Donbass”, resource: <http://www.odsd.ru/news/miting-rekviem-v-pamyat-o-pogibshikh-v-gorlovke-mirnykh-zhitelyakh>)

Figure 9. The monument “To the Innocent Victims of the Undeclared War”, July 29, 2016, Gorlovka DNR (Photo by Public movement “Free Donbass”, resource: <http://www.odsd.ru/news/miting-rekviem-v-pamyat-o-pogibshikh-v-gorlovke-mirnykh-zhitelyakh>)

Figure 10. Monument “To brothers and sisters who gave their lives for the liberation of Debaltseve from Ukrainian punitive expedition”, November 4, 2015, Debaltseve DPR (Photo by Donetsk News Agency, resource: <https://dan-news.info/obschestvo/pamyatnik-pogibshim-v-debalcevo-mirnym-zhitelyam-i-opolchencam-otkryt-v-gorode-geroe.html>)

Figure 11. Monument to “To the Perished Citizens of the DPR”, August 28, 2015, Donetsk DPR (Photo by Ministry of Culture of the DPR, resource: <http://mincult.govdnr.ru/news/v-centre-donecka-otkryli-pamyatnik-pogibshim-grazhdanam-doneckoy-narodnoy-respubliki>)

Figure 12. Monument “They Defended the Homeland”, May 12, 2016, Lugansk LPR (M. Sulimenko / Lugansk Information Center, resource: <http://lug->

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Figure 14. Monument “To the Heroes-Miners Who Gave Their Lives for Freedom and Independence of the Lugansk People's Republic”, Anthracite LPR (Photo by newspaper “XXI century”, resource: <https://xxiveklr.su/novosti/2459-zhiteli-antracita-v-godovschinu-aviaudara-vsu-otkryli-pamyatnik-pogibshim-shahteram.html>)

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Figure 17. Monuments to the military on the “Alley of Glory”, 2017, Donetsk DNR (Photo by Donetsk News, resource: <https://dnews.dn.ua/news/735994>)

Figure 18. Monument of A.S. Pavlov “Motorola”, 2017, Donetsk DPR (Photo by Komsomolskaya Pravda, resource: <https://www.donetsk.kp.ru/daily/26745/3773611/>)

Figure 19. Monument of M.S. Tolstoy “Givi”, 2017, Donetsk DNR (Photo by Komsomolskaya Pravda, resource: <https://www.donetsk.kp.ru/daily/26745/3773611/>).

Figure 20. The memorial complex “In memory of the dead soldiers and fighters of the People’s Police of the LPR”, September 15, 2016, Krasnodon LPR (Photo by LuganskInformCenter, resource: <http://lug-info.com/news/one/zhiteli-krasnodona-otkryli-memorial-pamyati-pogibshim-zaschitnikam-goroda-foto-17213>)

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Figure 23. The memorial complex "Alley of Angels", a forged arch and a granite slab with the names of perished children, September 1, 2015, Donetsk DNR (Photo by Andrey Butko, resource: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/2015-11-18._Аллея_ангелов_в_Донецке_01.jpg)

Figure 24. Memorial complex "Alley of Angels", a monument "To the Children of Donbass", June 1, 2017, Donetsk DNR (Photo by Donetsk News Agency, resource: <https://dan-news.info/obschestvo/ombudsmen-dnr-i-pisatel'nica-iz-italii-otkryli-v-stolice-dnr-pamyatnik-detyam-vojny-v-donbasse.html>)

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Figure 26. Memorial sign "Eternal memory to the fallen defenders of the airport", March 21, 2015, Donetsk DNR (Photo by Valentin Sprinchak / TASS, resource: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/pjat-let-na-linii-ognja-kak-vyzhivajut-v-rajone-doneckogo-ajeroporta_200961)

Figure 27. Monument to fallen civilians in Gorlovka "Sorrow and Sadness", May 7, 2016, Gorlovka DPR (Photo by Gorlovka.Today, resource: <https://Gorlovka.today/news/5045-otkrytie-pamyatnika-zhertvam-neob-yavlennoj-vojny-na-donbasse-skorb-i-pechal>)

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Figure 30. Monument “To the Perished Citizens of the DPR” is a part of the memorial complex “To Your Liberators, Donbass”, August 28, 2015, Donetsk DPR (Photo by the Ministry of Culture of the DPR, resource: <http://mincult.govdnr.ru/news/v-centre-donecka-otkryli-pamyatnik-pogibshim-grazhdanam-doneckoy-narodnoy-respubliki>)

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