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Image on the cover: Pierre Reymond workshop, "January" plate, around 1570-1580, The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum of Arts, Kyiv, inv. 151 BR

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THE VOIDS OF MARIUPOL'S MEMORY

Mykhailo Zubar, Natalia Afanasieva

*Пустоти пам'яті Маріуполя**Михайло Зубар, Наталія Афанасьєва*

Повномасштабне вторгнення Росії в Україну у 2022 році перетворило деякі українські міста на руїни. Окуповані російськими військами населені пункти стали своєрідними полігонами деукраїнізації та полями битв за пам'ять, де окупанти намагаються створити домінуючі наративи. Автори цієї статті намагаються дослідити ці процеси через міський ландшафт пам'яті Маріуполя. Цей ландшафт розглядається як частина культурної пам'яті, що зберігається та актуалізується через матеріальні носії, зокрема архітектурний вигляд міста. Міський простір та його трансформації розглядаються як послідовні шари пам'яті. Такий підхід демонструє певну ієрархію пам'яті в ландшафті Маріуполя в різні періоди. Також звертається увага на характер прийняття рішень міською владою щодо розвитку міста протягом останніх ста років. Ці рішення формували не лише міський ландшафт та його взаємодію з мешканцями, але й бачення владою образу міста та його вплив на формування колективної пам'яті. Трансформації Маріуполя впродовж XX і XXI століть ілюструють, як він став полем битви пам'ятей, місцем примусового забуття. У тексті висвітлено, як забуття і замовчування історії стали механізмами маніпулювання колективною пам'яттю. Ці процеси відображаються на міському просторі та ідентичності його мешканців. Також представлено огляд зміни ландшафту пам'яті між 2016 і 2022 роками. У контексті формування колективної пам'яті текст демонструє зміни ландшафту під час окупації міста у 2022 році, зокрема процеси імперативної зміни міського ландшафту пам'яті та спроби окупаційної влади створити візуальні образи і наративи, які формують новий ландшафт пам'яті.

Ключові слова: *Маріуполь, культурна пам'ять, колективна пам'ять, ландшафт пам'яті, архітектура, ідентичність.*

It is not by chance that the title of this article refers to an article by Andreas Hüssen, well-known in memory studies. In his work, the researcher focused on the study of Berlin's space in the 90s of the last century. This period was, on one hand, the years of rapid reconstruction of the new and old German capital, and on the other hand, a time of reflection on the city's memory. It was a period of searching for and attempting to preserve its traces in the urban space, as well as a time of heated discussions about the desired appearance of urban space and how the city is perceived by its inhabitants.

To some extent, what is happening today in the discussions around the future of Mariupol, which was significantly damaged during the siege in March 2022 and became a place of tragedy and death for thousands, gives rise to associations with the situation in Berlin. Let us say at once that we are only talking about associations, not comparing two incomparable experiences.

Mariupol and its survivors are now trying to remember and reflect on what their city was to them, what its landscape of memory was, and wondering what it will be like in the future, and if it will be. As a result of the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops in 2022, Mariupol ceased to be a dynamic city, an industrial centre that at various times in its history

generated up to 12% of Ukraine's foreign exchange earnings, and became the cultural capital of Ukraine in 2021. The city, which in the years before the full-scale aggression of Russia, was actively searching for its identity, and trying to broadcast and emphasize it in the urban space, has actually turned into ruins, or, returning to the terminology of Andreas Hüssen – voids.

Andreas Hüssen wrote his text about Berlin at a time when there was a discussion about what the new Berlin would be like after German reunification, referring to the previous experience of the German capital as erased, rewritten throughout the turbulent century. Its legibility for the researcher lay in the visible signs of the built-up space, in images and memories displaced and tainted by traumatic events. «Architecture has always been deeply involved in the formation of political and national identity, and the reconstruction of Berlin as the capital of Germany gives us important clues about the state of the German nation after the fall of the wall and how Germans perceive their own future» (Huyssen 2018, p. 121).

In addressing the urban space of Mariupol, we attempt the following: A. Hussen's recommendation is to read what remains of it as if it were parchment. However, access to the city, which is still under Russian occupation, continues to be limited. For obvious reasons, we will not specify some information sources. Given the conditions where a significant portion of Mariupol's residents have either left the city or perished during its siege, those who remain have little opportunity for open, unrestricted discussion about their city's future, nor can they fully influence its eventual appearance. Nonetheless, it is vital to document the ongoing changes in Mariupol's urban space and to analyze how the occupation authorities envision its future. Considering the significant destruction of the city, which cannot be objectively assessed due to the lack of access, we find it essential to record its most notable aspects. We aim to consider these in the context of Mariupol's complex history in the past and early present centuries, which has been studied in fragments and is incompletely reflected in historiography.

It is worth emphasizing that in Mariupol, as in many post-Soviet cities that were part of the USSR, architecture only sometimes reflects society's views on time and change (Seungkoo Jo, 2003, p. 232). Instead, it often reflected the authorities' views and the ideology of the leading communist party, dictating how society should perceive reality and what messages this reality should convey to its members. We consider architectural forms, their placement in urban space, and their transformations as successive layers of memory overlapping each other (Bałus, 2014, p. 56) as part of cultural memory consolidated in material carriers, notably architecture (Assman, 2013, p. 54). Given the unilateral nature of decision-making on urban development "from above", as dictated by the authorities, we aim to demonstrate the presence of a particular hierarchy of memory in Mariupol's landscapes. Retrospectively, through these transformations, we also want to illustrate how Mariupol became a battleground of memories, a place of forced forgetting, and how the silencing of history revealed mechanisms of manipulation of collective memory, and how these processes are reflected in the urban space and the identity of its citizens.

This is particularly relevant today, during the Russian-Ukrainian war when some of Ukraine's cities lie in ruins, and the settlements occupied by Russian troops become testing grounds for de-Ukrainianisation and the creation of imperative narratives of memory by the occupiers. We observe striking similarities with the depolonisation and Germanisation programs developed by German occupation authorities during World War II (Chwalba, 2022, p. 15). There is also a notable resemblance to the Sovietisation of Central and Eastern European cities after the Second World War, especially in the redefinition of urban space, the destruction of old symbols, and their replacement with new ones, along with the interaction of citizens with urban spaces under new conditions, overlaid with population migration processes. As Chris Tilley emphasizes, the memories associated with the physical experience of being in certain places enable cities to «exert a silent influence on us» (Macdonald, 2021, p. 150). Paul Connerton called this the «memory of place»,

comprising two components: place (locus) and memory (memorial). Thus, each city vista becomes instantly recognizable and evocative, making the visual environment an integral part of life, as people are bound by strong ties of historical and personal perception (Lynch, 2011, p. 7).

As a result of the Russian Federation's attack on Ukraine, the residents of many cities in the East and South of Ukraine experienced a physical separation of two key components: memory and place. Cities like Bakhmut, Volnovakha, Kupyansk, Izium, Schastia, Vugledar, Avdiivka, and Mariupol are notable examples, though this list could be extended. Some of the surviving residents of these towns have access only to memory/remembrance, without access to the place itself. In Mariupol, quite a few residents who remained in the city for various reasons have the opportunity to observe and be affected by its transformation, involuntarily becoming participants in these changes. In contrast, internally displaced persons (IDPs) strive to preserve their cities in their memories through online platforms, social networks, cultural «community» centres, meetings, exhibitions, and discussions. They create an image of a «virtual city», a «golden age», a «memory cast», while discussing how they will restore it and carry out «cultural de-occupation».

It should be noted that researchers dealing with the history of the Ukrainian Donbas often generalize the experience of urbanization in its territory. For instance, the study of the creation and functioning of monocities in Donbas has recently become a popular topic, attracting attention from scholars like Hiroaki Kuromiya, Volodymyr Kulikov, Irina Skolkina, Tatyana Portnova, Gennady Korzhov, and others (Kulikov, Skolkina, 2018; Portnova, 2018; Korzhov, 2006; Kuromiia, 2002). This has led to some misconceptions about the Ukrainian Donbass being exclusively a territory of single-industry towns, emerging and developing with industrialization in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. Summarizing the experience of urbanization in this area, for example, V. Korzhov notes the regional identity of Donbass, stating that unlike European urban formations, Donbass did not experience an «urban renaissance». He describes the cities in Donbass as products of belated modernization under conditions of exaggerated industrialization, differing little from villages and settlements externally, with a lifestyle intermediate between urban and rural. This, according to Korzhov, points to the incompleteness of the modernization processes: «The society could not adapt to the very rapid changes in the process of industrialization, did not have time to form and strengthen institutions, behavioral patterns, and systems of social norms that would correspond to the mature stage of modernization. In other words, modernization in Donbas remained incomplete, incomplete and emasculated in its internal content. Donbas is as if stuck in the twentieth century in terms of socio-normative and value orientations, life orientations, and way of life» (Korzhov 2006, p. 45).

Speaking about Mariupol, we refer to a somewhat different urban experience. Unlike Yuzovka (Donetsk), where all the land belonged to John Hughes' company and was completely managed by it, Mariupol, at the time of industrialization in the second half of the 20th century, already had a city council as a local government body, which decided on the allocation of land to metallurgical enterprises. In the first report on the activities of the Nikopol-Mariupol Mining Metallurgical Society in Mariupol, it is noted that «in view of the large size of the proposed plant, the Board took great care in selecting the site of construction and settled on a land plot of 200 dessiatinas, near the city of Mariupol» (Otchet Nykopol-Maryupolskoho Hornoho Metallurhycheskoho Obshchestva za 1896-97 hod, 1897), and not in the city itself. This gave rise to the urban legend that before deciding on the location, the builders of the plant conducted research on the wind rose, and the decision was made so that the emissions of enterprises would not affect the air quality in the city. Although no confirmation of this legend has been found, the Ilyich Iron and Steel Works (which after 1917 united «Nikopol» and «Russian Providence») was an active promoter of this version. Such a legend could well have been generated by the need to appease the public's concern about the ecological situation in the city.

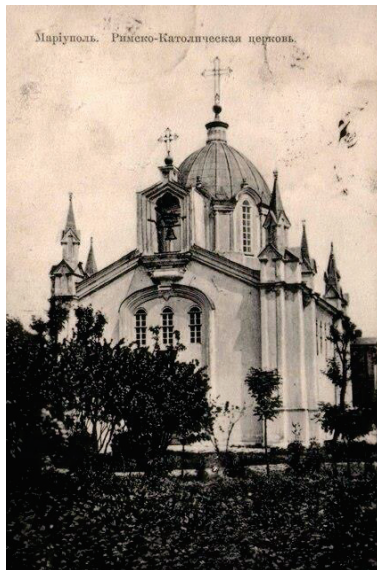


Fig. 1. Postcard with a view of the Roman Catholic Church, edition of the Mariupol Zemstvo Bookshop, photo by M. Ulakhov



Fig. 3. The former mansion of Evan Bremer, modern address: 67 Italiyskaya Str.



Fig.5. Postcard "Corner of Ekaterininskaya and Continental Hotel", 1904, from the archive of N. Afanasieva

European business, which was actively developing in Mariupol during the 19th century, especially in its second half, brought new architectural trends and significantly influenced the creation of the city landscape. Buildings erected at the expense of and according to the projects of foreigners were architecturally distinctive and incorporated elements not typical for Mariupol's urban development. This was particularly evident in sacral architecture: the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, built with funds from Italian residents in Mariupol, is a prominent example (Namolennye mesta Maryupolia. Kostel Uspenya Presviatoi Devy Maryy 2013). Another example is the Mariupol Choral Synagogue, financed by Jewish entrepreneurs (Shovchko), as well as the buildings of European consulates. The two-story mansions of vice-consuls were notable not only for their height but also for their elaborate decoration and unique structural elements. For instance, the mansion of British Vice-Consul William Walton, included in the Mariupol tourist route in 2019 (Shvetsova, 2019), the house of German Consul Evan Bremer in the historicist style, and the mansion of Italian Vice-Consul Emmanuel Di Pollone.

Prominent and well-known among citizens were the residential houses of Europeans. For example, the mansion of the Italian Tomaso family (later the Continental Hotel) or the house of the city doctor, the German-born Friedrich Gamper, which was the only mansion in Mariupol built in the Gothic style.

As can be seen, in the urban landscape of what was essentially a provincial city, there were visible traces of the presence of Jews, Greeks, Germans, Italians, and other Europeans who actively



Fig. 2. Postcard "Synagogue", published by the Goldrin Brothers, Mariupol

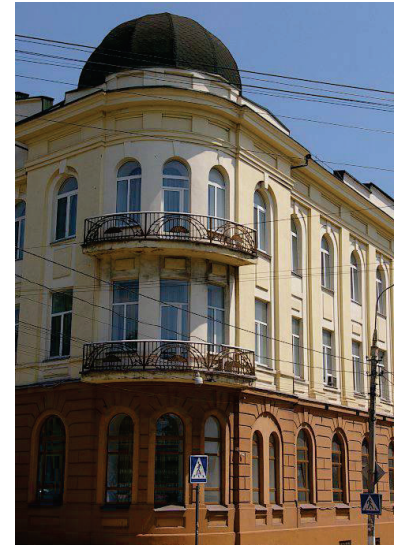


Fig. 4. Former building of the Italian Consulate in Mariupol, the mansion of Vice-Consul Emmanuel Di Pollone, modern address: 13 Harlampivskaia Str.



Fig.6. Former Gumper's mansion, residential building at 45 Zemskaya Street, April 2021, from N. Afanasieva's archive

participated in its development. It is worth recalling that in the 19th century, Mariupol hosted 9 foreign European consulates (Mariupol. Konsulstva), and various joint and European enterprises were actively emerging and developing. At the same time, the city was still governed on behalf of its residents by the City Duma, which was elected by the citizens and made decisions on the city's development.

A new period in forming the urban landscape of memory in Mariupol began after 1918, when the Soviet authorities initiated large-scale collectivization, industrialization, and consequent urbanization. This era marked the city's first crisis of memorial continuity, triggered by two types of

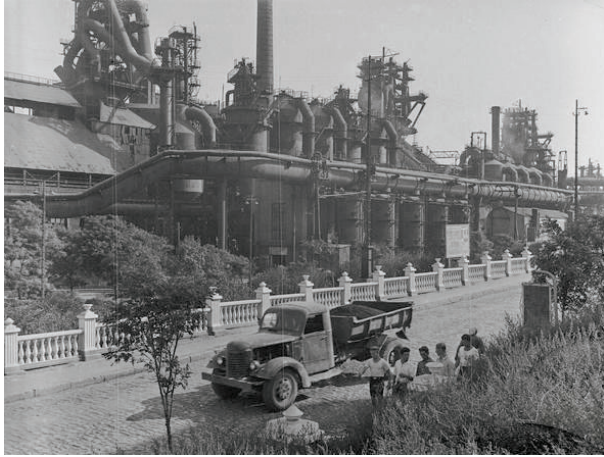


Fig. 7. View of "Azovstal" from the embankment of the Kalmius River, 1957, photo by P. Kashkel

forgetting: repressive erasure and constitutive forgetting in forming a new identity (Connerton, 2014). According to the policy of the Soviet government, actively enforced in these territories, the pre-Soviet past was to be rejected and forgotten. Remembering it, especially for members of the so-called «hostile classes», was often dangerous. A new type of person was envisioned to emerge in the USSR, «unshackled by former prejudices» (Slepukhin 2017. P. 605). However, the collective and individual memories preserved in the city greatly hindered this transformation. The new objectives rebuilt the city; its spaces were re-identified and filled with new visual information. At that time, the slogan «art to

the street» gained popularity in the Soviet state. In a speech at the opening of the Petrograd Free Art and Training Workshops in 1918, A. V. Lunacharsky described it as the need to "modify the appearance of these cities as soon as possible, to express new experiences, to discard the mass of things offensive to popular feeling, to create new things in the form of monumental buildings, monumental monuments..." (Nikitina, 2013). In the 1930s, in contrast to two plants built by American ("Nikopol") and Belgian ("Russian Providence") entrepreneurs and later united into the "Ilyich Iron and Steel Works", the "Azovstal" plant was constructed. This became a new symbol of industrialization and the city (Istoriia. Metinvest). Today, it has become a symbol of resistance, fortitude, and heroism for Ukraine and, undoubtedly, a place of remembrance. This is evidenced by several initiatives aimed at preserving the plant's (Tse Azovstal) and its defenders' memory (Memorializatsiia pamiati...).

Industrialization and related migration, including as a result of collectivization and mass starvation organized in rural regions of the country, significantly changed the composition of the city's population. This led to a massive influx of "new townspeople", contributing to the erosion of collective memory on the one hand and the development, increase, and change of urban space on the other.

As part of the creation of a new identity, the sacred architecture of the city was destroyed, marking a shift from a historically Christian image to a socialist one (Nikitina, 2013). The city center was relocated westward, where a new architectural image emerged, shaping a new landscape of memory dominated by constructivist architecture and later by Stalinist neoclassicism. The worker, particularly the metallurgist-proletarian (Kalinkin, 2017), became the city's symbol for an extended period. To visually consolidate this image, a 14-meter sculpture of a steelworker (Skulptura "Stalevar", 2019), commissioned by the Art Fund of the USSR for Mariupol, was placed at the city's entrance. This symbol firmly embedded the industrial image in the citizens' minds as Mariupol's central representation.

Over the next 20 years, Mariupol's population composition changed dramatically due to World War II, evacuation, German occupation, and the subsequent city reconstruction. This period was marked by mass migrations, destruction, and reconstruction of urban space, leading to a second phase of "forgetting" within a short span. Consequently, the Soviet authorities made another attempt to re-identify the space, changing Mariupol's historical name to Zhdanov in honor of a Soviet party figure (Koroleva) and reconstructing the new city center in the style of Stalinist neo-constructivism. During this period, we witnessed the construction of the now-infamous Drama Theatre, which was later bombed, resulting in casualties among Mariupol residents who sought shelter there. It was built in the new city center on a German military cemetery site from World War II. In the early 1950s, as part of the city center complex and its central axis, the so-called houses with spires and the building of the regional party committee were built. These structures were meant to dominate the new city center, completing the ensemble of Theatre Square.

By the early 1960s, creating a unified ensemble for the new city center was complete. Interestingly, the pre-Soviet layout was generally preserved but filled with new objects. The central building became the Drama Above Theatre, effectively replacing the Church of Mary Magdalene, consecrated in 1897 and destroyed during the anti-religious campaign of the 1930s. The one-story building was replaced by "Stalinist" buildings, and the recreation area with a pre-Soviet fountain and green spaces were supplemented with Soviet visual elements and a monument to Zhdanov, after whom the city was renamed.

This area became ideologically central to the city: demonstrations, rallies, and other mass events were held here (Kashkel, 1953). Mass marches in honor of all-Union holidays and memorable dates were directed towards the city square and, notably, the Zhdanov monument (Kashkel, 1954). Thus, it remained in the memory of several generations as a place associated not only with ideological processions but also with gatherings and, albeit in a peculiar way, leisure time.

The objects of the central square began to be depicted inseparably from each other in local and all-Union periodicals and on postcards, thus consolidating the main "approved" symbols of the city of that time in public consciousness.

Interviews conducted in 2018-2019 by specialists from the Centre "Port of



Fig. 8. The burial place of German and Romanian soldiers in Mariupol, modern Theatre Square



Fig. 9. Postcard "Central City Square, Zhdanov", 1985



Fig. 10. Postcard "Bust of A. Zhdanov, Zhdanov", 1985

Culture" among Mariupol residents revealed that almost all interviewees associated the so-called "houses with spires" with Moscow's architecture after their construction. "It felt like we were seeing Moscow with our own eyes," recalled one interviewee (Archive of "Port of Cultures").

However, the "total regime of forced memory" did not last long enough to change the city dwellers' identity completely. With the weakening of state censorship in the 1980s and the emergence of alternative sources of information, the historical name was returned to the city. This change occurred in 1989, initiated by citizens through the mass public movement "For Mariupol" (Mariupol 1989, 2019).



Fig. 11. City Day celebrations on Teatralnaya Square, 1987

The restoration of Ukrainian statehood in 1991 did not bring radical changes to Mariupol's urban space, a mass emergence of new "places of memory," or even widespread street renaming. New objects did appear in the city space, including those intended to form a new founding myth. One such object was the monument to the Kalmiuska Palanka (Pamiatnyk Kalmiuskoi palanky), from which the city's founding was proposed to be counted. However, this version opposed another narrative about the city's founding by Greek settlers from Crimea, resettled by the decree of Catherine the Great in 1778.

This dispute became one of the main

mnemonic battles in the city. The new monument's location in the old city center, away from the new one, was historically justified but could have been more visible and interactive for citizens.

The city's large and influential Greek community, defending the narrative of the city's founding by Greek immigrants from Crimea, eventually prevailed. This version also tied the city to the Russian imperial memory structure, as it was based on support from the Russian Empress. The Greek community's greater institutional capacity played a role in this outcome. For a long time, they have been active actors in the city, partly relying on the traditional, often uncritical exposition of the Mariupol Museum of Local Lore, which presented both Catherine the Great's charter to the Crimean Greeks and artifacts related to the Greek settlers' leader, Metropolitan Ignatius. In contrast, objects related to other versions of the city's founding were almost absent in the museum's visual space. The installation of a monument to Metropolitan Ignatius, the leader of the Greek migrants from Crimea (Pamiatnyk mytropolytu Yhnatyiu №2 v Maryupole, 2013), and the establishment of the City Day on the anniversary of the arrival of the first settlers from Crimea (Pamiatnyk Mytropolytu Ihnatiu, 2022) marked the symbolic victory of the "Greek" version. This was in contrast to the Soviet City Day, celebrated on Mariupol's liberation from German troops during World War II.

The onset of Russian aggression in Donbas in 2014 catalyzed accelerating changes in Mariupol's urban space. This was partly due to the need to broadly legitimize Ukrainian power, identity, and European belonging in the city's public opinion, countering the still-pervasive Soviet and Russian imperial ideological constructs in the city's symbolic space.

Firstly, the newly elected city authorities in 2016 initiated a renaming of the urban space. References to the communist period and associated figures were removed from the city's toponymy. Until 2016, for example, streets in Mariupol bore names like Lenin, Frunze, and Ordzhonikidze and were named after various anniversaries of the USSR. Some city streets were restored to their historical names (such as Troitskaya and Sobornaya), while others were renamed

to reflect a broader Ukrainian context (Hrushevskyi, Franko). Notably, Greek toponymy was also introduced, such as Grecheskaya Street, Meotida Boulevard, and Kuindzhi Lane, marking for the first time in 100 years the presence of the Greek ethnic group in the symbolic space of the city (U Mariupoli pereimenuvaly 75 vulyts i ploshch, 2016).

During this period, new memorial spaces began to emerge, along with institutions that worked on supporting memory (Assman, 2013, p. 56), including those present in the city's architectural landscape. An example is the establishment of the Vezha Centre by public activists, with support from city authorities, in the restored building of an early twentieth-century water tower. Symbolically, this building became a representation of the city's modernization: it was Mariupol's tallest building at the time (33 meters), and its construction and the launch of the water supply system brought drinking water to 2/3 of the city's residents.

After its restoration and public opening, Vezha became not just an attractive architectural object and tourist attraction, reminding of Mariupol's pre-Soviet history as a multicultural and world-open city but also a center of citizen activity. The center's employees and volunteers conducted tours, lectures, and master classes, discussing the "pre-Soviet" history of the city and touring Mariupol's preserved pre-Soviet monuments. This helped create a public discourse necessary for institutionalizing collective memory, allowing guided tours to uncover a history that the city's contemporary functions had little touched upon amidst significant environmental changes (Lynch, 2011. P.158-159).

In 2018, a multifunctional center for urban history, "Port of Cultures", was established by a working group of Polish and Ukrainian specialists. The center began to collect and study the memory and history of the city, working on creating a new modern institution, which was supposed to include a contemporary museum exhibition dedicated to the history and memory sites of the city (Concept of "Port of Cultures").

According to the curators' concept, it was to be located in the Mariupol City Department of Internal Affairs building, which was destroyed during the attempted capture of Mariupol by armed formations of the so-called DPR in 2014. Thus, by creating a new type of institution, the core of which was to be a modern narrative exhibition based, among other things, on a collection of oral memory and a public program, an attempt was made to solve the problem of the so-called dichotomy between collective and counter-memories (Land, 2023) that existed in the city regarding these events. The city authorities tried this approach of synthesizing memories and counter-memories to transform the urban space as a whole. Architectural competitions were held and planned, with the help of which it was planned (Loughran, Kevin, Gary Alan Fine, and Marcus Anthony Hunter. 2015. P. 193-204) to update the historical construction and the city planning system of the pre-Soviet period in the urban landscape. In doing so, they tried to address the past



Fig. 12. Postal card with a view of the Bazaar Square, published by the Goldrin Brothers, posted in 1915, an archive of N. Afanasieva

as a basis for civic belonging and local planning and to create a new standard of dialogue with citizens to create and function in the urban landscape. The city authorities tried to fill the place with new associations through architectural competitions: the Cossack presence in the Azov region and the seaside was a central milestone in the city's development. For example, an architectural competition was held for the reconstruction and conceptualization of the old center - as a place where Cossacks lived even before the Greek resettlement and as the most vibrant

multicultural place where, after their arrival, the Bazaar was established – a square for trade and communication between Greeks, Italians, Germans, Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians (Peremozhitsi Mizhnarodnoho vidkrytoho arkhitekturnoho konkursu idei im. Viktora Nilsena, 2020). In addition, to update the memory of the old city center and its history, a project of a tourist triangle was developed, which gradually reminded of the Cossack myth of the origin of Mariupol, as well as its status as a multinational city open to the world.

Indeed, the latest initiatives responded to the findings of the comprehensive sociological study 'Mariupol: A Portrait of the City' by the Rating Group in 2019. It demonstrated that the city's image in its residents' minds was almost entirely associated with industry – giant industrial enterprises. Factories, metallurgy, and industry were the top answers when residents were asked about what they were proud of in their city. At the same time, when asked about the city's symbols, most respondents mentioned these factories: the Steelworker Monument, Metallurgy, and the sea. Speaking of the architectural symbols of the city, Mariupol residents most often mentioned the Drama Theater, post-war neo-constructivist style houses (so-called 'Stalinkas'), the Steelworker Monument, and the Water Tower, which became a symbol of the new Mariupol.

It is worth noting that the study was conducted in 2019 – before the complete reconstruction of Freedom Square – a space in the city center filled with visual symbols, convenient and functional for the citizens, which after 2020 became one of the main urban magnets and symbols of the new Mariupol, appearing in most of the city's visual materials. The critical visual image of the square's space became pigeons as a symbol of peace, which was the most relevant theme for Mariupol, a former frontline city since 2014 when there were hostilities in the city, 2015 it was shelled by Russian troops using Grad multiple rocket launchers. The 25 pigeons were meant to symbolize all regions of Ukraine along with Crimea and demonstrate the country's unity. Also, in the memorial space of the square, a monument to the victims of the Holodomor of the 1930s and a memorial sign in honor of the Ukrainian soldiers who died in 2014 were installed, symbolically anchoring the urban space in the national memory system. Additionally, the complex of the square included the Milan mural, dedicated to a girl who survived the shelling of Mariupol by Russian troops in 2015, thanks to her mother, who sacrificed her life by covering her with her body. The shelling of the Eastern Microdistrict, by the way, was named by most respondents as the most tragic event in the city's history in the 2019 sociological research (Rating. Sociology group, 2019). The memorial space was connected with a modern park area and a children's recreation area, and every evening, there was a laser show on the square. This space also became a new attraction for citizens, symbolizing a new standard of relations between the city and its residents, forming a new format of memory space in the urban landscape, not as a place of passive consumption of memorials but as a place where the public interacts with the urban space it occupies and derives meaning from it (Land, 2023).



Fig. 13. The building of the former Water Tower, 2021.

After the occupation of Mariupol, Freedom Square, and its symbolic memorial space became some of the first victims of the occupiers. The monuments to the fallen Ukrainian soldiers and the memorial sign dedicated to the Holodomor in Ukraine, which were central themes in Ukrainian historical policy and memory politics of the last 10-15 years, were demolished first. The “Milana”

mural was destroyed under the pretext of reconstructing a house. All visual symbols related to Ukraine were removed from the square, and a monument to Alexander Nevsky was erected, which has recently occupied a central, even sacred place in Russia's historical policy; despite having no connection to the territory of Ukraine, the Azov region, or Donbas.

Overall, the symbolic space of the square has been reinterpreted for the time being, attempting to give the symbols new meanings. Thus, the peace doves became white cranes, which in the so-called DPR are associated with a memorial action in honor of fallen soldiers (Belye Zhuravly).

One of the first "victims" of the occupational authorities in the symbolic space of the city was its toponymy. In March 2022, a decree was issued by the so-called head of the DPR about renaming, according to which all new territories that the DPR would occupy would return to the toponymy that existed there before 2014. Based on this document, the new occupational authorities of Mariupol, in September 2022, issued their order to rename streets, reverting to the toponymy of the USSR period. Flags and visual agitation were hung throughout the city, screens were installed, and broadcasts of Russian news and propaganda clips began. Initially, this was done in places of mass gathering of people – that is, at points of distribution of humanitarian aid or hygiene points, where residents of the destroyed city could get food or bathe. Over time, mobile screens were replaced with stationary ones.

Immediately after the occupation began, the Ukrainian language disappeared from the public space, and all remaining symbols were de-Ukrainized. Among the new monuments in the city, it is worth noting the repair and restoration of monuments dedicated to World War II and the fight against Nazism, which has become a central theme of Russian propaganda and founding myth. Also, the city day celebration on the day of liberation from German troops was reinstated. It should be noted that almost all public memory rituals in the city are now related to the memory of World War II and the fight against Nazism, which is intended to support the Russian propagandist myth about the fight against mythical Ukrainian nationalists and Nazis from whose hands, and not from the Russian army, Mariupol allegedly suffered the most in 2022. The migration policy of the occupational authorities, which encourages the arrival of Russians and new residents while gradually complicating and minimizing the arrival of Mariupol residents with Ukrainian citizenship, also contributes to the support and dissemination of this myth. For instance, in October 2023, Ukrainian citizens were prohibited from entering the Russian Federation by land at all control points (Kuhel, 2023). Moreover, those who flew through the remaining point (Ridnyi Mariupol, 2023) at Sheremetyevo airport often received denials of entry or non-grata status (Valeryia Volonter Mariupol).

There is a kind of economic segregation - incoming workers receive salaries three times higher than locals. Thus, the composition of the population is blurred once again, and accordingly, the landscape of urban memory changes and deforms.

In addition, the occupational authorities actively use images associated with the city's industrial past, thus playing on the nostalgic sentiments of Mariupol residents. At the same time, reconstructing in the memory of the citizens the images of industrial Mariupol (for example, restoring the Steelworker Monument, the bust of Makar Mazai, or even holding a 'concert' on the Day of the Metallurgist), they openly state plans not to engage in the restoration of factories (the restoration of factories is unlikely to take place).

Undoubtedly, the occupational authorities had to start a new housing construction program. New districts named Nevsky, which should refer both to Alexander as mentioned above Nevsky and to St. Petersburg, which took over the patronage of the restoration of Mariupol, are being built slightly outside the city in an open field near the exit in the western direction. They have already become a symbol of the city's restoration for propaganda, as they look pretty sterile, being not

surrounded by ruins. Moreover, patriotic Russian music, specifically the Russian anthem before 2000, plays in the background in the elevators of the new buildings.

Also, it is evident that the central street – Prospekt Mira, designed in the Stalinist Empire style and where the so-called Houses with Spires partially survived, will be restored, apparently very aesthetically and mentally close to the occupational authorities. However, the nature and direction of the city's reconstruction allow us to assume that the occupational authorities might want to shift the city center again, moving the destroyed Drama Theater to the periphery, trying to erase the memory of its destruction by Russian aviation and the victims. Moreover, as reported by Russian media, 'the concept of the master plan for the development of Mariupol is developed taking into account the norms of urban planning similar to those of Rostov-on-Don and Taganrog.' Obviously, in such conditions, there can be no talk of preserving the features of the local landscape or significant spaces of memory for the city.

During 2022–2023, through objects of urban space, the occupational authorities promote Russian narratives about the 'liberation' of Mariupol, the rescue and humanitarian support of 'the peoples of Donbas', and the restoration of the region, supposedly destroyed by Ukrainian nationalists. For instance, in the summer of 2023, a monument to R. Kutuzov, who participated in capturing the city, was installed in Mariupol (Kravchenko 2023). It is unlikely that out of the thousands of unnamed Russian soldiers who died there, it was a coincidence to choose for commemoration a namesake of the hero of the war with Napoleon in 1812, Marshal Kutuzov. This memorial sign is probably meant to appeal to the memory of the imperial myth of the 'Patriotic War' and heroic resistance to invaders from the West. Also, the occupational authorities have established a gallery for the 'assistance' of Russian volunteers and the course of the so-called 'liberation' of the city.

In places where the so-called 'restoration', which is a cover-up of the crimes of the Russian army in Mariupol, is taking place, informational stands are installed, similar to those that were spread in cities of pre-revolutionary Russia, including pre-revolutionary Mariupol. They display photographs of destroyed objects and plans for reconstruction. It is hard to say how long they will last, but judging by their appearance, they are stationary and, according to the plan of the occupational authorities, should remain as long as possible. In this sense, the duration of Mariupol's occupation plays a crucial role, as such visual objects serve Russian propaganda, creating in the urban space an image of a city destroyed by Ukraine and 'rebuilt' by Russia.

In conclusion, we have tried to focus on the most visible and significant changes in the urban space. Their consideration and comparison over time allow us to determine how the city authorities



Fig. 14. Exhibition of propagandist stands in occupied Mariupol, September 2023



Fig. 15. Information stands on the progress of the so-called 'restoration' in occupied Mariupol near the city hospital, October 2023

wanted to see the city during the existence of the USSR and how they saw the hierarchy of memory transmitted through visual urban spaces. Based on the study, it can be noted that unified symbols characteristic of most urban spaces of industrial cities of the Soviet Union dominated the urban space. It is also worth noting the almost complete oblivion to which pre-Soviet architectural forms and objects that survived from that period were consigned. To a large extent, if we proceed from what Sharon MacDonald wrote, that memory as a collection of memories can become a defining factor for identity, and compare it with Paul Connerton's words about the memory of place, we can conclude, partially confirmed by sociological studies of 2019, that the architectural appearance of the city played an essential role in shaping the identity (Macdonald, 2021. P 26-27) of its residents. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account that the architectural landscape and memory landscape of Mariupol were created imperatively 'from above', which influenced the formation of the collective memory of the citizens more than it reflected their view of the vision of their city and the hierarchy of memory.

It should also be noted that, since 2016, the situation has begun to change. Over the seven years before the full-scale war, processes of rethinking and updating memory began, involving the city's community and creating a new public interaction process for the city. The latter is significant since the urban memory landscape in Mariupol was a complex and multi-level construct, including many unprocessed traumas that significantly influenced the formation of collective memory and the identity of the citizens. This is evidenced, in particular, by the data from the sociological studies cited in the article.

Indeed, we all hope that the city and the remaining Ukrainian citizens there will return to Ukraine. After that, much work will be done regarding the restoration and memorialization of urban spaces. Those who will carry out this work, which is already being planned within the framework of the Mariupol Reborn program, will face the complex task of not only trying to preserve the remnants of the unique memory landscape of previous times but also synthesizing different memories—of people who temporarily left Mariupol and those who stayed and survived the occupation. It is unlikely that the occupational authorities will show respect or pay attention, for example, to the places where the residents of Mariupol were forced to bury their loved ones during the siege, where they tried to get food, standing in lines for 5-8 hours, preserving the memory of the roads and routes by which people escaped from the city, and much more.

At the same time, considering the total character of the destruction of the urban space, the significant migration of the population, the influx of 'new citizens', and the 'reconstructions' carried out by the occupational authorities, it can be assumed that within the next few years, if the city is not liberated and returned to Ukraine, the urban memory landscape may change drastically. It is precisely this that is an argument for further active efforts to study and record the memory landscape of Mariupol, attempts to collect remaining memories, documents, and visual materials, as well as careful, as far as possible, documentation of everything happening in the urban space today.

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The Voids of Mariupol's Memory

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has turned some Ukrainian cities into ruins. The settlements occupied by Russian troops have become peculiar testing grounds for de-Ukrainianization and battlegrounds of memory, where the occupiers are attempting to create dominant narratives. The authors of this article attempt to study these processes through the urban memory landscape of Mariupol. This landscape is considered a part of cultural memory, preserved and actualized through material carriers, including the city's architectural appearance. Urban space and its transformations are seen as successive layers of memory. This approach demonstrates a particular memory hierarchy in Mariupol's landscape across different periods. Attention is also drawn to the decision-making nature of the city authorities regarding urban development over the last hundred years. These decisions have shaped not only the urban landscape and its interaction with citizens but also the authorities' vision of the city's image and its impact on the formation of collective memory. The transformations in Mariupol throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries illustrate how it has become a battleground of memories, a place of forced forgetting. The text highlights how the forgetting and silencing of history have become mechanisms for manipulating collective memory. These processes are reflected in the urban space and the identity of its citizens. An overview of the changing landscape of memory between 2016 and 2022 is also provided. Regarding the formation of collective memory, the text demonstrates the changes in the landscape during the city's occupation in 2022, particularly the processes of imperative change in the urban memory landscape and the attempts of the occupation authorities to create visual images and narratives that form a new memory landscape.

Key words: *Mariupol, cultural memory, collective memory, memory landscape, architecture, identity.*

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