
Making the Soviet Memory

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*„Those who control the past, control the future” –
George Orwell*



European Network
Remembrance
and Solidarity



**Hi-story
Lessons**
Teaching & learning about
20th-century European History

How do societies remember wars?

1.



Image 1. source:
http://www.azermarka.az/pl/2010.php?subaction=showfull&id=1271756321&archive=&start_from=&ucat=39&#

2.



3.



Image 2. and 3. source:
http://www.cbr.ru/press/PR.aspx?file=24032015_185851coins2015-03-24T18_51_11.htm

- What is propaganda?
- What is artificial/constructed memory?
- What is the role of monuments, rituals, and official narratives in shaping memory?

Architecture of Soviet Propaganda

1. Hero-centered narratives
2. Master plot templates
3. Symbols and rituals
4. Institutional repetition
5. Emotional appeal
6. Historical simplification



[Click here and listen](#)

The Sacred War (Священная война) - one of the most famous Soviet songs of World War II written in 1941.



The iconic "Raising a flag over the Reichstag" photo by Yevgeny Khaldei.
Image source:
Internet portal of the [Ministry of Defense of Russia](#) [mil.ru](#) [archive](#)

Schematic Narrative Templates: How Propaganda Feels “Natural”

- Repeated plot structures normalize ideas
- They reduce complexity to emotional clarity
- Propaganda uses these to suggest moral certainties

Example:

Poor soldier joins Red Army → brave battle → defeats fascism → returns as national hero.

Constructing Heroes – The Case of Meliton Kantaria

- When was this photo really taken?
- What emotions does it evoke?
- Who took the photo, and why?



The iconic "Raising a flag over the Reichstag" photo by Yevgeny Khaldei.
Image source:
Internet portal of the [Ministry of Defense of Russia mil.ru](#) archive



Emotional Storytelling

1. Choose a symbolic moment (flag over Reichstag)
2. Select a fitting “ideal” character
3. Simplify & emotionalize the narrative
4. Repeat via media and institutions
5. Link to patriotism
6. Silence alternatives

Memory Politics Before the WWII in Soviet Georgia

“A year ago, the workers and peasants of Georgia, with the help and support of the Red Army of the Red Worker-Peasant Russia, or better yet, the international revolutionary proletariat, greeted the Menshevik garbage from Red Tbilisi with steel rods and drove it out to the winds of Western imperialists.”

“Famine, poverty, strife and hostility among brotherly nations, economic and cultural decline—this is what characterized the Menshevik rule in Georgia”

“The working people of Georgia could no longer bear such suffering, and on February 25, 1921, they overthrew the Menshevik government, replacing it with the rule of workers and peasants”

Newspaper „Kommunist” - 1922 February

Reflection: History is not just about what happened—but how it is told"

- Who controls the past?
- How is history remembered?
- Who decides what's told or hidden?
- Why should we study how memory is built?
- Does propaganda shapes memory even today?