

Daria Chuprasova

**SITES OF MEMORY, HERITAGE SITES:
THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN KALININGRAD REGION OF RUSSIA**

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.

Central European University Private University

Vienna

June 2025

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Daria Chuprasova

(Russia)

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Vienna, 27 May 2025

Daria Chuprasova

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the cultural heritage and historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region of Russia. This war is often referred to as the ‘forgotten war’ in Russian historiography, yet Kaliningrad is where the fighting occurred and still holds evidence of the war.

Until 1945, Kaliningrad was German Königsberg. After the Second World War, it became a site for the formation of a new Soviet memory. Despite Soviet efforts to suppress the First World War memory, Kaliningrad has retained tangible remains that create a complex and largely neglected memorial environment. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, including a survey of the population and interviews with experts, this research explores public awareness and attitudes towards these sites.

The thesis finds that, unlike the rest of Russia, the memory of the First World War is preserved more effectively in Kaliningrad, but remains fragmented, insufficiently realized, and disconnected from the main national historical narrative.

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INTRODUCTION

*Yes, East Prussia is gone, but it has historical value,
and people come to see the remnants of East Prussia,
a culture that is unusual for us.*

(Vasily Plitin, Head of the volunteer movement
Keepers of Ruins¹)

In 2023, UNESCO inscribed in the World Heritage List the *Funerary and memorial sites of the First World War* (graves, cemeteries and monuments) in Belgium and France, recognizing Outstanding Universal Value of these sites. Also, in many countries, the First World War is referred to as the Great War. Its memory is crucial to the formation of nations that emerged from the collapse of empires (Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman) and for those like Australia and New Zealand, where the war fostered national identity.

In turn, the First World War in Russia is commonly referred to as the ‘forgotten war,’ although it was also called the Great War or the Second Patriotic War (the first was the war with Napoleon). This is confirmed by the results of all-Russian surveys,² which show that Russians³ know very little about the events of the First World War.

¹ “Hraniteli ruin: Zabota o pamyatnikah dolzhna byt' kak nacional'naya ideya [Keepers of Ruins: Taking Care of Monuments Should Be Like a National Idea].” *Kaliningrad RBC*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://kaliningrad.rbc.ru/kaliningrad/20/01/2022/61e6ac569a794799aa6d8c2f>

² E.g., “Rossiya v Pervoj Mirovoj Vojne [Russia in the First World War].” *WCIOM*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/rossiya-v-pervoj-mirovoj-vojne>.

³ It can be difficult to translate, as both *русский* (as a nation) and *россиянин* (as a citizen of the Russian Empire/Russia) are translated in English as *Russian*. This is not a major issue for my research, as the titular nation in current Kaliningrad is Russian. However, it's important to recognize that the army of the Russian Empire was highly multinational; a tombstone that says *Russian soldier* could refer to a Russian, Tatar, Pole or many other nations. Here I am talking about Russian citizens who participated in a nationwide survey.

This is one of the reasons why I do research on the historical memory of the First World War in Russia. My interest began in 2015 when I was choosing a topic for my BA thesis. It was the anniversary years of the First World War, when the whole world, and even Russia, was remembering it. Later, in 2019-2021, in my first MA thesis at Charles University in Prague, I was focusing on the reasons why the memory of the First World War is shaped in this particular way in Russia, as well as the events that took place during the anniversary years. My previous research led to conclusions about the current shape of this historical memory⁴.

First of all, it is important to keep in mind the powerful Soviet memory policy. The Soviet government diligently erased the First World War from the public eye because it was seen as an ‘imperialist’, ‘foreign’ war. The significant emigration, repression, and deaths during the Civil War and Revolution also had a major impact. A considerable part of the ‘white’ population⁵ (officers, aristocrats, intellectuals), for whom the First World War was a significant event, was forced to leave the country or died. Many scholarly works on the First World War were published outside Russia (in France, Belgium, Germany, etc.) by representatives of the white emigration.⁶

Moreover, the country faced many significant historical and traumatic events in the aftermath of the First World War: the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the execution of the royal family, the collapse of the Russian Empire, the Civil War, and the Second World War (the Great Patriotic War in Russian history & memory canon). There was a bias towards the study, comprehension and “propaganda” of the history and narratives of the Second World War in the later years of

⁴ Daria Chuprasova, *Historical Memory of the First World War in Russia in 2014-2018*. Diplomová práce, vedoucí Marková, Alena. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta humanitních studií, Program Historická sociologie, 2021.

⁵ By *whites*, I mean not only representatives of the White Guard movement (opponents of the Bolsheviks, or Reds, during the Russian Civil War) but also anyone who opposed the new government, fought on the side of the Whites, or left the country.

⁶ L.P. Muromceva, “Pervaya mirovaya vojna v pamyati rossijskoj emigracii [The First World War in the Memory of the Russian Emigration]”. *Rossiya i sovremennyy mir*, no. 4 (85), 2014: 158.

the Soviet Union and modern Russia. According to the 2020 poll,⁷ 95 percent of Russians consider the victory in the Great Patriotic War to be the most significant event of the 20th century.

The first attempt of the First World War memorialization took place in 1950 when the Council of Ministers of the Belarusian Soviet Republic included three mass graves in the Myadel district of the Minsk Region in the List of Historical Monuments of Republican Significance. In 1976, a memorial plaque was unveiled in the ruins of the White Palace of the Brest Fortress. In 1982, in the town of Lyakhovichi (Brest Region), which had been on the front line since 1915, an obelisk was erected in memory of Russian soldiers who fell during the First World War. Two years later, a memorial plaque was placed at the mass grave near the village of Skrobovo, near Baranovichi.⁸ This was primarily due to the fact that the Eastern Front of the First World War passed through the territory of present-day Belarus, although the front did not reach Moscow or other territories of present-day Russia.

Only in 2004, on the 90th anniversary of the beginning of the war, a memorial park complex with a memorial sign in the form of a stylized tombstone was opened in Moscow (Fig. 1). The process of memorialization of the First World War was particularly active during the anniversary years (2014-2018): a fictional film was made⁹, monuments were unveiled¹⁰, events were held¹¹, books were published¹², and much more. However, the results of nationwide

⁷ “Velikaya pobeda — glavnoe sobytie v istorii nashej strany v XX veke [The Great Victory is the Main Event in the History of our Country in the XX Century].” *WCIOM*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/velikaya-pobeda-glavnoe-sobytie-v-istorii-nashej-strany-v-xx-veke>.

⁸ Muromceva, *Pervaya mirovaya vojna*, p. 157.

⁹ The only First World War film released during the anniversary years is *Battalion* (2015).

¹⁰ For example, the Monument to the Heroes of the First World War in Moscow (2014), Kaliningrad (2014), and Krasnodar (2016).

¹¹ “Plan osnovnykh meropriyatii, svyazannykh so 100-letiem nachala Pervoi mirovoi voyny [Plan of main events related to the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I].” *Government of the Russian Federation*, 2013. PDF file. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.xn--blazcy.xn--plai/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/013.pdf>

¹² For example, editions and reprints of fiction: Sebastian Faulks, *I peli ptitsy...* [Birdsong]. Moscow: Eksmo, 2020.

surveys show¹³ that the qualitative historical memory of Russians regarding the First World War has not changed over the years, despite the increased number of events and media coverage.



Figure 1. Memorial sign at the entrance to the Memorial and Park Complex of the Heroes of the First World War in Moscow.

Photo by Andreykor for Wikimedia Commons. This file is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 licence.

Scientific publications: Sergej Bazanov, *Pervaja mirovaja. Ot 'vojny do pobednogo konca' k 'miru lyboj cenoj'* [The First World War: From a 'War to the Victorious End' to 'Peace at Any Price']. Moscow: Akademicheskij projekt, 2017.

¹³ "Pervaya Mirovaya v Istoricheskoy Pamyati Rossiyan [World War I in the Historical Memory of Russians]." *WCIOM*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/pervaya-mirovaya-v-istoricheskoy-pamyati-rossiyan>

Kaliningrad Region, like Belarus, was a battlefield of the First World War. For this reason, there are many monuments and burial sites from this period. These sites are integrated into the contemporary memorial landscape of Kaliningrad.

This thesis explores the contemporary experience of dealing with materiality and immateriality of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region in two aspects:

1. The historical memory of the war, which was initially formed in the German context and only later transferred to the Soviet context.
2. The military heritage of the war, also transferred from Germany to the Soviet Union in 1946.

In **Chapter 1**, this thesis covers the history of the Kaliningrad Region from Königsberg to the present day. This provides context for readers unfamiliar with the specifics of the region. The chapter addresses the transition from the German to the Soviet context and the Kaliningrad Question of territorial and national belonging.

In **Chapter 2**, I examine the historical memory of the First World War in Russia and Kaliningrad. I compare my quantitative research results from respondents in the Kaliningrad region with all-Russian surveys from 2014 and 2018. I also analyze funeral sites and monuments as potential sites of memory in Kaliningrad.

In **Chapter 3**, I examine the First World War heritage sites in the region, focusing on their preservation history and current condition. To do that I interviewed academics and volunteers involved in the study and conservation of these sites.

Thus, my thesis contributes to the study of historical memory and uses of cultural heritage of the First World War in Russia by exploring the unique case of the Kaliningrad region, Russia's

semi-exclave on the Baltic Sea. The thesis sheds light on European transit zones where memory migrated from one state and/or national context to another while remaining within the same territory. I specifically focus on the relationship between historical memory and cultural heritage in present-day conditions in order to explain the influence of the state of memory on the current state of heritage objects. So, my Master's thesis fills a gap in research on the First World War memory and heritage in the post-Soviet space, opening a new direction for further exploring regional differences in historical memory and approaches to military and funerary heritage.

Methodology

This thesis examines the Kaliningrad Region of Russia's present-day experience in understanding the First World War, which included battles fought on the territory of the present-day region. It also explores the adaptation and preservation of the cultural heritage of WWI within the region.

The Kaliningrad region is Russia's westernmost enclave in Europe with no direct border to the Russian mainland (Fig. 2), distancing it from the all-Russian context. Additionally, Kaliningrad was the German city of Königsberg until 1945, where the memory of the First World War and its cultural heritage was formed in a German context for decades.



Figure 2. Map of Russia with Kaliningrad Region from go-kaliningrad.ru

The thesis takes a broad time frame from 1917 (the year the First World War ended in Russia) to 2025. In a narrower context, it focuses on the period from 1945 to 2025, when Kaliningrad became a Soviet and then a Russian city.

The main objective of this thesis is to study the historical memory and cultural heritage of the First World War in Russia, particularly in the Kaliningrad region. The historical memory of the First World War in Russia has been influenced by the Soviet government's efforts to obscure its significance and the subsequent emigration of the 'Whites'. In the years following the Second World War, historical memory in Kaliningrad was shaped in a German context, contributing to its unique historical landscape. The transformation of Königsberg into Kaliningrad created a more complex memorial landscape as most Germans left the region, and the city was settled by Soviet laborers from various regions, who generally held a dismissive attitude towards the First World War.

Despite these complexities, the presence of numerous war memorials in Kaliningrad, ranging from well-maintained sites to neglected graves, prompts a study into the local population's awareness, attitudes, and preservation efforts concerning these remnants. This thesis aims to explore how the local memory of the First World War in Kaliningrad compares to the broader Russian narrative, examining the extent to which residents identify with the war and its material legacies, and how they interpret these legacies and material traces of the past war.

The thesis also aims to demonstrate the relationship between attitudes towards sites (memory) and their contemporary condition. While many factors influence heritage preservation (e.g., funding, responsible actors), the thesis highlights the complex links between perceptions of heritage and its preservation.

I want to investigate how historical memory of the First World War has evolved in the Kaliningrad region and how it influences the preservation, oblivion, or reinterpretation of memorial sites, particularly in relation to the broader Russian narrative. I also want to address a few more questions: What is the current state of historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad region, and how does it differ from all-Russian memory? What is the attitude of regional authorities and residents toward the First World War memorial sites in the region? Can any of the First World War memorial sites be considered regional or national sites of memory?

As a theoretical framework, I draw on the ideas of Pierre Nora¹⁴ (*sites of memory*¹⁵). Sites of memory can change. Some may be forgotten or deliberately displaced from public memory; some may be recalled after a period of oblivion; and others remain relevant throughout a

¹⁴ Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. Columbia University Press, 1996.

¹⁵ Although the official English translation of *lieu de mémoire* is *realms of memory* (according to the 1998 edition), I chose to translate it as *sites of memory*. In my opinion, this better reflects the complexities of the term as both a material and symbolic object. Besides, most studies use this translation.

nation's history. The first two types are particularly pertinent in the context of the historical memory of the First World War in Russia, while the third type may be more applicable to the Kaliningrad Region, as I suggest that there the First World War represents a more living memory. I consider individual sites related to the First World War as sites of memory for Kaliningraders (as part of my quantitative research), such as cemeteries, monuments, buildings, people, and events.

In this thesis, I use mixed research methods, both quantitative and qualitative. I study academic papers, media publications, and official documents related to the topic. An online survey on the historical memory of the First World War was conducted with 100 participants, all aged 18 or older and residing in the Kaliningrad Region. I analyze this data using RStudio. Additionally, I hold expert consultations with specialists on the First World War in the Kaliningrad region, involving personal communication and correspondence via email and social media. I use comparative analysis to understand the historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region and how it differs from the all-Russian perspective. All research (quantitative and qualitative) was conducted in Russian. Translation to English of quotations and answers was done by me.

All the research takes place online, as it is currently not possible to travel to Kaliningrad and conduct the research onsite. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has complicated travel to Russia and research efforts. New laws, such as those targeting undesirable organizations (including CEU) and historical falsification, have hindered research that does not align with the official government agenda. However, this is not a significant limitation: it is easier and faster to conduct the survey online than to try to find people in the region; all expert consultations also take place online, as all experts live in different cities. Another limitation is

that most government websites are not accessible from outside Russia. This is addressed with the help of a Russian VPN.

There is no systematic scholarly discussion of the First World War in general, and historical memory and cultural heritage in particular, on the territory of the Kaliningrad Region. Even the largest university in the region, Kant Baltic Federal University (BFU), does not have centers or departments that focus on this issue. In 2026, the university will launch a master's program in cultural heritage restoration, but it will concentrate on metal, wood, and stone objects, without any specialization in the First World War or military or German heritage in general.¹⁶

Another limitation is that the State Archive of the Kaliningrad Region states¹⁷ that it does not possess any documents related to the period of the First World War. However, according to statements and publications by other researchers, it appears that the archive does have documents related to the First World War and its heritage.¹⁸¹⁹ It doesn't affect the thesis, but it shows that local historians and researchers have limited resources. As a result, materials about the First World War do not enter public space.

All these limitations do not appear to be crucial and do not hinder the study.

Literature Review

This study draws on the works of researchers in history, memory, and heritage. The literature review does not consider the work of classical memory researchers (Halbwachs, Assmann, etc.) as the theoretical framework of the study focuses on the intersection of war, memory, and

¹⁶ Director of the Graduate School of Communications and Creative Industries at BFU, e-mail message to author, February 20, 2025.

¹⁷ Official response to the author's enquiry, February 10, 2025.

¹⁸ Konstantin Pahalyuk, in discussion with the author, 20 February 2025.

¹⁹ K.A. Pahalyuk, "Zahoroneniya i pamyatniki Pervoj mirovoj vojny na territorii Kaliningradskoj oblasti [World War I Burials and Monuments on the Territory of the Kaliningrad Region]." *Voennaya arheologiya*, no. 6, 2011: 52-59.

heritage. This study considers the work of specialists related to military history or the First World War.

Historical Memory of the First World War

Most relevant to this work is the historian Jay Winter, whose constant focus is the First World War. In addition to his work on the history of the First World War,²⁰ Jay Winter also examines the historical memory of the Great War. For example, in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (co-edited with Emmanuel Sivan),²¹ he examines the First World War alongside other wars of the 20th century (World War II, the Spanish Civil War, the Algerian War) and explores public forms of remembrance, such as museums and various forms of media (films and literature). In *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century*,²² Winter broadens the scope of the study and examines not only museums, films, and literature but also monuments, letters, photographs, and other media that interact with memory. Later, he also addresses the First World War in his work *War Beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present*,²³ where he takes the Great War as a point of departure in the formation of modern war memory. In general, the media he examines remain the same, but he categorizes them under new headings: Configuring War, Photographing War, Filming War, Writing War.

Apart from J. Winter's work, one of the best-known works on the topic is Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*,²⁴ but it seems inapplicable to this study as it is a literary

²⁰ Jay Winter (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume 1, Global War*. Cambridge University Press., 2014.

²¹ Jay Winter, and Emmanuel Sivan, eds, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Vol. 5. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

²² Jay Winter, *Remembering war: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*. Yale University Press, 2006.

²³ Jay Winter, *War beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

²⁴ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 2009.

criticism. The focus on the aesthetic perception of war fits well within the framework of historical memory studies, but is of little interest in cultural heritage studies.

Works on various aspects of the historical memory of the First World War also seem significant. For example, Alan Kramer, in his article *The First World War and German Memory*,²⁵ examines the specific German memory of the war, which seems partly applicable to this paper, as the initial stages of the formation of the memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region took place in 1918-1945, when the territory was German.

Belinda Devis, in her article *Experience, Identity, and Memory: the Legacy of World War I*,²⁶ explores the consequences of World War I in the development of national identities around the world. While the significance of the First World War in the formation of Australian and New Zealand identities has been studied many times, one should not forget the collapse of empires that led to the emergence of new states (such as the Weimar Republic and Soviet Russia, later the Soviet Union).

Equally important for this paper are the studies dedicated to the anniversary years 2014-2018 (one hundred years since the beginning and end of the First World War), such as Joan Beaumont's *The Politics of Memory: Commemorating the Centenary of the First World War*²⁷ or *Assessing the Centenary of the First World War*²⁸ from *Reflections on the Commemoration of the First World War*. Although the centenary of the First World War in the Kaliningrad

²⁵ Alan Kramer, "The First World War and German Memory." *Memory 1918*, 2008: 39.

²⁶ Belinda Davis, "Experience, Identity, and Memory: The Legacy of World War I." *The Journal of Modern History*, no. 75.1, 2003: 111-131.

²⁷ Joan Beaumont, "The Politics of Memory: Commemorating the Centenary of the First World War." *Australian Journal of Political Science*, no. 50.3, 2015: 529-535.

²⁸ David Monger and Sarah Murray, "Introduction: Assessing the Centenary of the First World War." *Reflections on the Commemoration of the First World War*. Routledge, 2020: 1-17.

Region has not been studied specifically, it is clear that most of the memory and heritage preservation work funded by businesses or the state took place during this period.

Historical Memory of the First World War in Russia

Historical memory of the First World War in Russia has been studied primarily in Russia and the post-Soviet space. One of the leading researchers on this topic is Konstantin Pakhalyuk. In his articles, such as *Discursive Bases of World War I Anniversary Commemoration in Contemporary Russia*²⁹ or *The First World War and its Memory in Modern Russia*,³⁰ he examines specific aspects of the formation of the memory of the Great War in Russia. In 2020, he contributed to the monograph *War, Politics, Memory: The Napoleonic Wars and the First World War in the Space of Anniversaries*.³¹ This monograph examines the First World War in the context of memory formation during the interwar and postwar (post-World War II) periods, with a specific focus on anniversaries.

Elena Sinyavskaya also highlights the peculiarities of memory formation in her article *Historical Memory of the First World War: Peculiarities of Formation in Russia and the West*.³² She outlines clear differences in the historical process of memory formation throughout almost the entire 20th century, comparing the Russian situation primarily with the German one.

²⁹ K.A. Pakhalyuk, "Diskursivnye osnovaniya yubilejnoj kommemoracii Pervoj mirovoj vojny v sovremennoj Rossii [Discursive Bases of World War I Anniversary Commemoration in contemporary Russia]." *PolitBook*, no. 4, 2016: 109-131.

³⁰ K.A. Pakhalyuk, "Pervaya mirovaya vojna i pamyat' o nej v sovremennoj Rossii [The First World War and its Memory in Modern Russia]." *Neprikosnovennyj zapas. Debaty o politike i kul'ture*, no. 1, 2017: 106-128.

³¹ N.N. Baranov, et al, *Vojna, politika, pamyat': Napoleonovskie vojny i Pervaya mirovaya vojna v prostranstve yubileev* [War, Politics, Memory: The Napoleonic Wars and the First World War in the space of anniversaries]. Avtonomnaya nekommercheskaya organizaciya "Izdatel'stvo" Politicheskaya enciklopediya", 2020.

³² E.S. Sinyavskaya, "Istoricheskaya pamyat' o Pervoj mirovoj vojne: osobennosti formirovaniya v Rossii i na Zapade [Historical Memory of the First World War: Peculiarities of Formation in Russia and the West]." *Vestnik MGIMO universiteta*, no. 2, 2009: 31-37.

In 2014, a three-volume edition of *The First World War: Historiographical Myths and Historical Memory*³³ was prepared and published. The first volume explores the historical memory of the First World War among the peoples of the Russian Empire (including Poland and Finland). Cinema and historical reconstruction are treated separately as aspects of historical memory.

It is also important to remember that for a long time in Russian historiography, the First World War has been referred to as the ‘forgotten war’.³⁴ Examples of this include articles and interviews: *The Forgotten Tragedy: Russia in the First World War*,³⁵ *The ‘Forgotten War’? The Politics of Memory, Russian Culture of the First World War Era and Cultural Memory*³⁶ or *The First World War is Lost, We Don't Have it in Our Memory*.³⁷ However, some researchers dispute this notion, such as V. Gorsky in his article *Was the ‘Forgotten War’ Forgotten in the USSR?*³⁸. Although Gorsky provides a number of examples to demonstrate that the First World War was not ‘forgotten’ by the Soviet historical (and not only) scientific community, he does not provide any examples to show that the war was not forgotten by the public.

One of the best-known works in English on this topic is *The Great War in Russian Memory*³⁹ by Karen Petrone. However, despite the focus on ‘Russian memory,’ Petrone primarily

³³ I.V. Borodin, et al, *Pervaya mirovaya vojna: istoriograficheskie mify i istoricheskaya pamyat'* [The First World War: Historiographical Myths and Historical Memory]. Federal'noe gosudarstvennoe byudzhethoe uchrezhdenie "Rossijskij institut strategicheskikh issledovanij", 2014.

³⁴ The *forgotten war* is a term in Russian historiography that describes the lack of historical memory of the First World War in Russia. It is popular in both academia and the media, reinforcing the belief among Russians that they know little about the war.

³⁵ A.I. Utkin, *Zabytaya tragediya: Rossiya v pervoj mirovoj vojne* [The Forgotten Tragedy: Russia in the First World War]. Rusich, 2000.

³⁶ B.I. Kolonickij, “«Zabytaya vojna»? Politika pamyati, rossijskaya kul'tura epohi Pervoj mirovoj vojny i kul'turnaya pamyat' [‘The Forgotten War’? The Politics of Memory, Russian Culture of the First World War Era and Cultural Memory].” *Nashe proshloe: nostal'gicheskie*, no. 27.2, 2014: 318.

³⁷ Ivar Maksudov, “Pervaya Mirovaya Vojna Poteryana, u Nas Net Ee v Pamyati [The First World War is Lost, We Don't Have it in Our Memory].” *PostNauka*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://postnauka.ru/talks/24062>.

³⁸ V.V. Gorskij, “Byla li zabyta v SSSR «zabytaya vojna»? [Was the ‘Forgotten War’ Forgotten in the USSR?].” *Klyuchevskie chteniya – 2014. Rossiya i Russkij mir pered licom global'nyh ugroz: materialy vserossijskoj nauchnoj konferencii. Sbornik nauchnyh trudov*, 2014: 266–271.

³⁹ Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.

addresses the historical memory of the First World War during the Soviet period. This is relevant to my thesis but not central to it.

Sites of Memory

Foremost, sites of memory are the theoretical framework proposed by Pierre Nora⁴⁰. However, the further development of this term in relation to different countries and periods is equally important.

The historian Jay Winter, mentioned above, in his work *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*,⁴¹ considers the First World War as a specific site of memory in European history. The title of this study (*Sites of Memory, Heritage Sites*) is a reference to his work in honor of Winter's contribution to the topic of historical memory of the First World War.

Interestingly, in an article *The Concept of 'Sites of Memory': Towards a Question of Russian Historical Consciousness*,⁴² proposing sites of memory for Russia, none of them are related to the First World War.

Cultural Heritage of the First World War

The cultural heritage of the First World War is not a popular area of research in either English or Russian. However, the following works (in English) are worth highlighting: Jerzy Holzer's *The Heritage of the First World War*⁴³ and Jezernik & Fikfak's *Cultural Heritage of the Great*

⁴⁰ Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 1996.

⁴¹ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

⁴² G.A. Bykovskaya, Zlobin A.N., and I.V. Inozemcev, "Koncepciya «Mest pamyati»: k voprosu o russkom istoricheskom soznanii [The Concept of 'Sites of Memory': Towards a Question of Russian Historical Consciousness]." *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istorija*, no. 1 (13), 2011: 150-157.

⁴³ Jerzy Holzer, "The Heritage of the First World War." *Authoritarianism and Democracy in Europe, 1919–39: Comparative Analyses*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2002: 7-19.

War.⁴⁴ Both works consider the cultural heritage of the First World War in general, without delving into national (or any other) specifics. Also of interest and relevance to this study is the illustrated book *Great War Archeology*,⁴⁵ devoted to the archeology of the Western Front.

In Russian, due to the almost complete absence of actual battlefield sites in Russia, the topic of cultural heritage from the First World War is often transformed into discussions about losses of cultural heritage during the war: *Preservation of Crimean Cultural Heritage in the First World War: Activities of the Tavriscan Academic Archival Commission*⁴⁶ or *Irreplaceable Losses of the First World War - Destroyed and Lost Historical and Cultural Heritage*.⁴⁷

Military cemeteries and burial heritage interest researchers from various fields, including historians, epigraphers, biographers, and anthropologists. However, studies often overlook the First World War, focusing instead on battle sites and trenches, which are less studied in Russia compared to Europe. Notably, Professor Tim Grady's recently published work, *Burying the Enemy: The Story of Those Who Cared for the Dead in Two World Wars*,⁴⁸ discusses the burial and memorialization of enemies during both world wars, which is relevant to this thesis.

The First World War in Kaliningrad Region: Memory and Heritage

As noted earlier, there is no systematic scholarly discussion of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region. However, this does not mean that there are no thematic studies at all.

⁴⁴ Božidar Jezernik and Jurij Fikfak, "Cultural Heritage of the Great War." *Traditiones*, no. 47.1, 2018: 7-32.

⁴⁵ Yves Desfossés, Alain Jacques, and Gilles Prilau, *Great War Archaeology*. Éd. "Ouest-France", 2009.

⁴⁶ A.V. Shamanaev, "Sohranenie kul'turnogo naslediya Kryma v usloviyah Pervoj mirovoj vojny: deyatel'nost' Tavricheskoj uchenoj arhivnoj komissii [Preservation of Crimean Cultural Heritage in the First World War: Activities of the Tavriscan Academic Archival Commission]." *Nauchnyj dialog*, no. 11.3, 2022: 494-513.

⁴⁷ S.V. Basov, G.M. Kachanovskaya, and V.Yu. Pilipovich, "Nevospolnimye poteri Pervoj mirovoj vojny – razrushennoe i utrachennoe istoriko-kul'turnoe nasledie [Irreplaceable Losses of the First World War - Destroyed and Lost Historical and Cultural Heritage]." *Velikaya evropejskaya vojna. Stoletie : sbornik dokladov 5 nauchno-praktičeskoj konferencii*. Brest: BrGTU, 2018: 21-25.

⁴⁸ Tim Grady, *Burying the Enemy: The Story of Those who Cared for the Dead in Two World Wars*. Yale University Press, 2025.

Konstantin Pahalyuk, in his article *World War I Burials and Monuments on the Territory of the Kaliningrad Region*,⁴⁹ explores archival data to describe as fully as possible the process of formation and maintenance of the cultural heritage of the First World War in the region. A few years later, an article on a similar topic is written by A. Kazennov, *State of Burials and Monuments of the First World War on the Territory of the Kaliningrad Region*,⁵⁰ which examines the state of memorial sites and volunteer activities in this area.

Other researchers focus on narrower topics: Y. Shepel, in his article *Monuments of the First World War on the Territory of the Kaliningrad Region: Experience of Creating a Database*,⁵¹ discusses the experience of creating technical information databases, while A. Zhironov, in his article *Creation of a Geoinformation System 'Monumental Memory of the First World War in East Prussia*,⁵² also contributes to this field.

The article *Foreign Heritage in the Memorial Landscape of the Kaliningrad Region*,⁵³ in which the researchers also rely on *sites of memory* and formulate the significance of these sites for the formation of Kaliningrad identity, should be singled out. Russian and German burials from the two world wars are identified by the authors as sites of memory in the region.

History of Kaliningrad and Kaliningrad Question

⁴⁹ Pahalyuk, "Zahoroneniya i pamyatniki," 52-59.

⁵⁰ A.S. Kazennov, "Sostoyanie zahoronenij i pamyatnikov Pervoj mirovoj na territorii Kaliningradskoj oblasti [State of Burial Sites and Monuments of the First World War on the Territory of the Kaliningrad Region]." *Velikaya vojna: sto let*, 2014.

⁵¹ Ya.G. Shepel', "Pamyatniki Pervoj mirovoj vojny na territorii Kaliningradskoj oblasti: opyt sozdaniya bazy dannyh [Monuments of the First World War on the Territory of the Kaliningrad Region: Experience of Creating a Database]." *CHetvertaya zimnyaya shkola po gumanitarnoj informatike*, 2020.

⁵² A.A. Zhironov, "Sozdanie geoinformacionnoj sistemy "Monumental'naya pamyat' o Pervoj mirovoj vojne v Vostochnoj Prussii [Creation of a Geoinformation System 'Monumental Memory of the First World War in East Prussia']." *Informacionnyj byulleten' associacii Istoriya i komp'yuter*, no. 44, 2015: 69-71.

⁵³ D.V. Mankevich and M. E. Megem, "Inostrannoe nasledie v memorial'nom landshafte Kaliningradskoj oblasti [Foreign Heritage in the Memorial Landscape of the Kaliningrad Region]." *Baltiyskij region*, no. 15.2, 2023: 139-155.

There are numerous publications and books devoted to the history of Kaliningrad, mostly in Russian, German, and English.

For example, among German publications, one can highlight Brodersen's *The City in the West. How Königsberg Became Kaliningrad*.⁵⁴ Brodersen focuses on new aspects of reconfiguring Königsberg's urban space and territory, such as the renaming of places, the canonization of the city's history, and the treatment of German cultural heritage.

The most notable English work is Nicole Eaton's *German Blood, Slavic Soil: How Nazi Königsberg Became Soviet Kaliningrad*.⁵⁵ Eaton explores the history of Königsberg and then elaborates on the period between 1945 and 1948, drawing on a wealth of sources from the Soviet side.

Among Russian studies, alongside tourist and scientific publications on the history of the Kaliningrad Region, one can highlight the book by Alexander Etkind *Internal Colonization. Russia's Imperial Experience*,⁵⁶ in which the process of the 'sovietisation' of Kaliningrad and its cultural heritage (the German philosopher Immanuel Kant is considered a separate example) is regarded as colonisation.

In the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, numerous studies on Kaliningrad's history were published, including V.I. Galtsov's *East Prussia: From Ancient Times to the End of the Second World War*,⁵⁷ Fritz Gause's *Königsberg in Prussia: The History of a European*

⁵⁴ Per Brodersen, *Die Stadt im Westen. Wie Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde. Mit einem Vorwort von Haug von Kuenheim* [The City in the West. How Königsberg Became Kaliningrad]. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008.

⁵⁵ Nicole Eaton, *German Blood, Slavic Soil: How Nazi Königsberg Became Soviet Kaliningrad*. Cornell University Press, 2023.

⁵⁶ Alexander Etkind, *Vnutrennyaya kolonizaciya. Imperskij opyt Rossii* [Internal Colonization. Russia's Imperial Experience]. Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2022.

⁵⁷ V.I. Gal'cov, et al, *Vostochnaya Prussiya: S drevnejshih vremen do konca Vtoroj mirovoj vojny* [East Prussia: From Ancient Times to the End of the Second World War]. Kaliningrad: Kaliningradskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1996.

City,⁵⁸ and Glinski G. and Vyorster P.'s *Königsberg. Conigsberg – Königsberg – Kaliningrad: Past and Modernity*.⁵⁹ These works describe the history of Königsberg and Kaliningrad, featuring extensive supplementary materials such as photographs, maps, and paintings. In 2024, Liana Minasyan's *Kaliningrad. Full History of the City*⁶⁰ was published, targeting a broader audience and building on these earlier studies.

Elena Baranova's *The Soviet People in the Extreme West of Russia (1945–1991): Theory and Practice of the Formation of a New Historical Community in the Kaliningrad Region*⁶¹ focuses on the period from 1945 to 1991, examining the formation of a new regional identity following the departure of Germans.

Bert Hoppe's *Struggling Against the Enemy Past: Königsberg/Kaliningrad as a Site of Memory in the Postwar USSR*⁶² analyzes Kaliningrad as a postwar Soviet site of memory, emphasizing the intentional construction of memory rather than an organically emerging phenomenon. In his turn, V. Kretinin, in his article *Kaliningrad Land is a Site of Memory for Russians*,⁶³ considers the entire Kaliningrad Region a national site of memory.

⁵⁸ Fric Gauze, *Kyonigsberg v Prussii. Istoriya odnogo evropejskogo goroda* [Königsberg in Prussia. The History of a European City]. Reklinghauzen: izdatel'stvo Bitger, 1994.

⁵⁹ G. Glinski and P. Vyorster, *Königsberg. Conigsberg - Königsberg - Kaliningrad: Proshloe i sovremennost'* [Königsberg. Conigsberg - Königsberg - Kaliningrad: Past and Modernity]. Berlin/Bonn: Bad Myunsterajfel', 1996.

⁶⁰ Liana Minasyan, *Kaliningrad. Polnaya istoriya goroda* [Kaliningrad. Full History of the City]. ACT, 2024.

⁶¹ E.V. Baranova, et al, *Sovetskij narod na krajnem zapade Rossii (1945-1991): teoriya i praktika formirovaniya novoj istoricheskoy obshchnosti v Kaliningradskoj oblasti* [The Soviet People in the Extreme West of Russia (1945-1991): Theory and Practice of the Formation of a New Historical Community in the Kaliningrad Region]. Kaliningrad: Izdatel'stvo Baltijskogo federal'nogo universiteta im. Immanuila Kanta, 2022.

⁶² Bert Hoppe and K. Levinsona, "Bor'ba protiv vrazheskogo proshlogo: Kyonigsberg/Kaliningrad kak mesto pamyati v poslevoennom SSSR [Struggling Against the Enemy Past: Königsberg/Kaliningrad as a Site of Memory in the Postwar USSR]." *Ab Imperio*, no. 2004.2, 2004: 237-268.

⁶³ G.V. Kretinin, "Kaliningradsкая земля-место памяти россиян [Kaliningrad Land is a Site of Memory of the Russians]." *Vestnik Baltijskogo federal'nogo universiteta im. I. Kanta. Seriya: Gumanitarnye i obshchestvennye nauki*, no. 4, 2021: 86-94.

The Kaliningrad question⁶⁴ appears in various ways in a number of studies on the Kaliningrad Region (even if it is not formulated with a specific term). In English historiography, Richard Krickus' book, *The Kaliningrad Question*,⁶⁵ stands out. Krickus, an American scholar and specialist in international relations, views the Kaliningrad Region as a point of conflict between Russia and the United States/Europe regarding military security. In Russian historiography, the term Kaliningrad Question hardly appears, as the term is clearly not relevant.

⁶⁴ The Kaliningrad question refers to geopolitical, cultural, and historical issues surrounding the Kaliningrad Region. Historically known as Königsberg, Kaliningrad was part of Germany until 1945, when it was ceded to the Soviet Union after World War II. Since then, questions of identity, historical memory, and governance have emerged, particularly regarding its German past, Soviet legacy, and current status as a Russian exclave.

⁶⁵ Richard J. Krickus, *The Kaliningrad Question*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

CHAPTER 1. HISTORY OF KALININGRAD REGION

1.1. Königsberg 1256-1945

1.1.1. Königsberg before the First World War

The first mention of Königsberg dates back to 1256. During the Prussian Crusades, the Crusaders destroyed the Prussian fortress of Twangste. In its place, the fortress of Königsberg (King's Mountain) was founded (Fig. 3).⁶⁶



Figure 3. Part of the Map of the monastic state of the Teutonic Knights, 1260.

Made by S. Bollmann for Wikimedia Commons. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported, 2.5 Generic, 2.0 Generic and 1.0 Generic license.

⁶⁶ Minasyan, *Kaliningrad*, 9.

In 1263, during the Great Prussian Uprising, the castle was destroyed but was soon rebuilt. By 1283, a town of the same name began to develop around the castle. In 1286, it was granted the status of a town under the Kulm Law.⁶⁷ In 1340, the town became a member of the Hanseatic League.⁶⁸

After the Thirteen Years' War (1454-1466), the Teutonic Order recognized itself as a Polish vassal and moved its capital to Königsberg.⁶⁹ Until 1724, Königsberg was not a single administrative city, comprising Altstadt, Löbenicht, and Kneiphof (Fig. 4). Each of these districts had its own town hall, court, burgomaster, etc.; although it was essentially one city. In 1724, the districts, castle, towns, and suburbs were united into the city of Königsberg.⁷⁰ In the same year, 1724, the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant was born, and he still remains an important symbol of the city.⁷¹

⁶⁷ R.Yu. Kachanov, "Gorodskoe pravo ordenskih gorodov [Urban Law of the Order's Cities]". *Problemy istochnikovedeniya i istoriografii*, 1999: 12.

⁶⁸ A.V. Ignatenko, "Pravovoj status i istoricheskaya rol' Ganzejskogo soyuza (odin iz rannih opytov protokonfederacii v Evrope) [Legal Status and Historical Role of the Hansa Union (One of the Earliest Protocofedeartions in Europe)]". *Rossijskij yuridicheskij zhurnal*, no. 3 (47), 2005: 135.

⁶⁹ V.I. Gal'cov, N.G. Babenko, and Yu.A. Shkurkina, "Kaliningrad. Rossijskij gorod s nemeckoj istoriej [Kaliningrad. A Russian City with a German History]". *Mir russkogo slova*, no. 4, 2008: 108.

⁷⁰ Gauze, *Kyonigsberg v Prussii*, 79.

⁷¹ V.O. Ushakova, "Pamyatnye mesta Immanuila Kanta v Kalinigrade [Memorial Places of Immanuel Kant in Kalinigrad]". *Istoricheskij put' Rossii: iz proshlogo v budushchee*, 2021: 574.

DIE STÄDTE KÖNIGSBERGS vor ihrer Vereinigung 1724

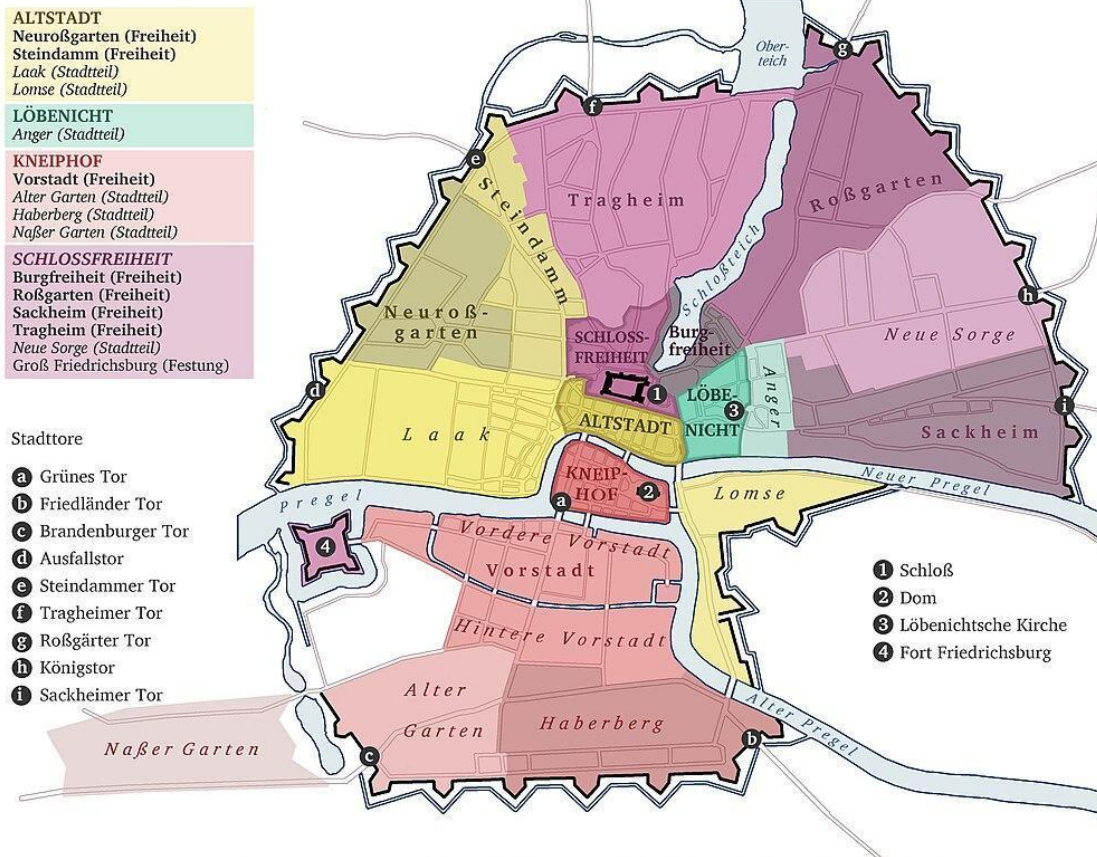


Figure 4. The independent cities making up Königsberg (Prussia) in 1626.

Made by Hergeberge08 for Wikimedia Commons. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

During the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), Königsberg was occupied by the troops of the Russian Empire. The local estates swore allegiance to Empress Catherine II, allowing life and commerce in the city to continue as before.⁷² As a result of the Peace Treaty of 1762 (Peter III's Treaty of Petersburg), Königsberg was returned to Prussia.⁷³

During the Napoleonic Wars, Kaliningrad suffered greatly. Initially, the neighborhood of Königsberg became a zone of flight and retreat for the Prussian army defeated in the battles of

⁷² Glinski, Vyorster, *Kyonigsberg*, 43.

⁷³ Gauze, *Kyonigsberg v Prussii*, 91.

Jena and Auerstedt, but by June 1807, Napoleon's troops entered the city. He imposed a contribution to the city, the actual payment of which lasted until 1901.⁷⁴

Despite this, during the 19th century, the town was actively developing and growing (Fig. 5). Many bastions, ravelins, and defense ramparts were built, most of which have been preserved to this day. In 1857, the railway appeared in Königsberg; in 1881, the first horse-drawn railway was opened; and in 1895, the first trams appeared. After the First World War, in 1919, Königsberg had one of the first airports in Europe, and new railway stations were built.⁷⁵



Figure 5. City map of Königsberg in Prussia, 1905.

Made by Furfur for Wikimedia Commons. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 103.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 132.

1.1.2. Königsberg 1914-1945

During the First World War, Prussia was part of the Eastern Front, the main battleground of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies against the Russian Empire. In August-September 1914, Russia undertook an offensive operation (the East Prussian operation), during which battles took place at Stallupönen (the easternmost town of the present Kaliningrad Region, near the border crossing to Lithuania), at Gumbinnen (present-day Gusev), at Tannenberg (present-day Stembark in Poland), and on the Masurian Lakes (northeast of modern Poland).⁷⁶ At the Battle of Tannenberg, the Russian army suffered a defeat that allowed Germany to later use this victory as a political and memorial weapon.⁷⁷

The East Prussian operation, although a defeat for the Russian army, played a major tactical role by drawing away German troops. It allowed the French to win the Battle of the Marne and enabled Russian forces to defeat Austria-Hungary in Galicia.⁷⁸

In 1915, the German army launched the August Operation (Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes), in which the German Empire emerged victorious. However, Germany did not achieve its original goal of completely defeating the Russian army on the Eastern Front.⁷⁹ After that, there were no battles in East Prussia during the First World War .

The territory of East Prussia was significantly devastated as a result of the First World War. The total damage amounted to 1.5 billion German marks. Thirty-nine towns and 1,900 villages

⁷⁶ I.I. Vacetis, *Boevye dejstviya v Vostochnoj Prussii v iyule, avguste i v nachale sentyabrya 1914 g.* [Battles in East Prussia in July, August and early September 1914]. Moskva: Vysshij voennyj redakcionnyj sovet, 1923: 90.

⁷⁷ "Tannenberg Myth." 1914–1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Accessed May 23, 2025. https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/pdf/1914-1918-Online-tannenberg_myth-2017-12-21.pdf

⁷⁸ K.A. Pahalyuk, "Vostochno-prusskaya katastrofa 1914 goda [The East Prussian Catastrophe of 1914]." *Voenno-istoricheskij zhurnal*, no. 2, 2011: 15.

⁷⁹ A.K. Kolenkovskij, *Zimnyaya operaciya v Vostochnoj Prussii v 1915 godu* [Winter Operation in East Prussia in 1915]. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo. Otdel voennoj literatury, 1927: 152.

and hamlets were affected.⁸⁰ After the war, the territory of East Prussia was reduced in favor of Poland and Lithuania (Fig. 6). Königsberg remained German but was separated from German territory by the Polish Corridor (Fig. 7), which would later be one of the reasons for the outbreak of the Second World War.



Figure 6. Map of East Prussia after the First World War.

From Eaton, Nicole. *German Blood, Slavic Soil: How Nazi Königsberg Became Soviet Kaliningrad*. Cornell University Press, 2023, p.10.

⁸⁰ Gal'cov, *Vostochnaya Prussiya*, 377.



Figure 7. The Polish Corridor in 1923-1939.

From *The Polish Corridor and the Pact of Steel*, BBC Bitesize.

In 1924, a memorial was erected in Tannenberg to commemorate the victory in the 1914 Battles of Tannenberg and the defeat at the Battle of Grunewald in 1410. The patriotic memorial at Tannenberg became a national gathering place for opponents of the Treaty of Versailles. On 7 August 1934, Paul von Hindenburg was ceremonially buried in the crypt of the memorial, emphasizing his role in the victory over the Russian forces at the Battle of Tannenberg. In January 1945, the memorial was blown up by German troops as they retreated.⁸¹

In the post-war period, Königsberg continued to develop despite the general crisis of the Weimar Republic. Inflation allowed the magistrate to acquire a considerable amount of land and material goods. Inflationary money was also used to expand the seaport and airport, build

⁸¹ "Tannenberg-Nationaldenkmal [National Monument Tannenberg]." *Tannenberg-Nationaldenkmal*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <http://tannenberg-nationaldenkmal.andreasspringer.de/index.html>

the Trade Centre and roads, and much more.⁸² Due to its favorable maritime location and airport, Königsberg traded with Soviet Russia and nearby countries.

Nevertheless, the crisis also affected Königsberg. From 1929 to 1931, 513 companies and firms went bankrupt in Königsberg, and 33,000 people were unemployed. By the beginning of 1933, Königsberg was on the verge of financial collapse.⁸³

The elections to the Königsberg parliamentary assembly on 5 March 1933 gave an absolute majority to the National Socialists (54% of the vote).⁸⁴ Researchers of German Nazism attribute this outcome to the crisis that the Weimar Republic, particularly East Prussia, was experiencing.⁸⁵

In November 1938, during the Night of Broken Glass (November pogroms), the Old and New Synagogues of Königsberg were set on fire, and the Israel Asylum was completely destroyed. Many newspapers ceased publication, except for two pro-Nazi newspapers. Albertina University initially tried not to support the Nazis, although it lost all of its non-Aryan staff. The schools, for their part, could not resist: almost all the principals were removed from their posts and replaced by party officials.⁸⁶

On 1 September 1939, the Second World War began: Nazi Germany invaded Poland. During the first (Polish) phase of the war, Königsberg and the surrounding area served as a staging ground for sending troops, but later, with the opening of the Western front, Königsberg became

⁸² Gauze, *Kyonigsberg v Prussii*, 149.

⁸³ M.V. Vinogradov and G.V. Kretinin, “Vostochnaya Prussiya pod vlast'yu nacional-socialistov [East Prussia Under the Control of National Socialists]”. *Nauka. Obščestvo. Oborona*, no. 10(4), 2022: 29.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 30.

⁸⁵ P.I. Shihatov, “Ekonomika Germanii 1920-1930 godov XX veka. Pauza mezhdru vojnami [The German Economy of the 1920s-1930s of the 20th Century. The Pause Between the Wars].” *Vestnik Mezhdunarodnogo instituta ekonomiki i prava*, no. 2 (7), 2012: 31.

⁸⁶ Gauze, *Kyonigsberg v Prussii*, 157-158.

an arsenal and training ground for soldiers.⁸⁷ With the outbreak of war with the USSR in 1941, two troop groups marched from Königsberg. In response, on 23-24 June, the Soviet Air Force bombed Königsberg and surrounding towns; there were civilian deaths and injuries, and houses were destroyed.⁸⁸ During the war, the region was home to concentration camps, labor camps, and POW camps.⁸⁹

Only in 1944 the war returned to the territory of Königsberg. On July 20, 1944, an assassination attempt on Hitler was made in Wolf's Lair (Hitler's main headquarters in East Prussia), mostly organized by German officers. However, civilian Königsbergers also took part in the plot: the former burgomaster of Königsberg, Karl Gördeler, his brother, Fritz Gördeler, the magistrate's advisor on building matters, Walter Schwartz, and his nephew, the watchmaker Arnold Bistrikk.⁹⁰

At the end of August 1944, Königsberg was heavily bombed by the British Air Force. According to statistics from the RAF Bomber Command, two sorties destroyed 20% of industrial facilities and 41% of houses in Königsberg.⁹¹ The royal castle, cathedral, and university buildings were heavily damaged.

At the same time, the Soviet Army reached the borders of East Prussia. However, it was only in the second half of October that the Soviet army managed to advance deep into the territory

⁸⁷ Ibid, 161.

⁸⁸ Gal'cov, *Vostochnaya Prussiya*, 411.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 415.

⁹⁰ Glinski, Vyorster, *Kyonigsberg*, 102.

⁹¹ "Campaign Diary. August 1944." *The National Archives*. Accessed May 23, 2025.

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20070706054833/http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/au44.html>

during the Goldap-Gumbinnen Operation. The Soviet army did not achieve significant success in this operation, so for a long time, this stage was not studied by Soviet researchers.⁹²

From 13 January to 25 April 1945, the East Prussian offensive operation of the Soviet army lasted. Despite this, fighting on the Frische Nehrung Spit continued until 9 May.⁹³ During the operation, the Soviet troops broke through the German defense, reached the Baltic Sea, and eliminated the main forces of the enemy, occupying East Prussia and liberating the northern part of Poland.

The question of the post-war status of the East Prussian territories (whether they would belong to the Soviet Union or to Poland) was raised repeatedly during the war, in 1941, 1943, and 1945.⁹⁴ Already in July 1944, the Soviet-Polish border treaty was signed, in which the parties agreed that "the northern part of the territory of East Prussia, along with the city and port of Königsberg, is ceded to the Soviet Union, while the rest of East Prussia, as well as the Danzig region with the city and port of Danzig, is ceded to Poland" (Fig. 8).⁹⁵ This was confirmed during the Potsdam Conference.⁹⁶

⁹² G.V. Kretinin, "Stereotipy v ocenke Gumbinnenskoj operacii 3-go Belorusskogo fronta [Stereotypes in the Assessment of the Gumbinnen Operation of the 3rd Belorussian Front]". *Kaliningradskie arhivy*, no. 11, 2014: 92.

⁹³ Gal'cov, *Vostochnaya Prussiya*, 439.

⁹⁴ Minasyan, *Kaliningrad*, 256-257.

⁹⁵ "Soglasenie mezhdru pravitel'stvom Soyuzu Sovetskikh Socialisticheskikh Respublik i Pol'skim Komitetom Nacional'nogo Osvobozhdeniya o sovetsko-pol'skoj granice. Moskva, 27 iyulya 1944 g. [Agreement Between the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Polish Committee for National Liberation on the Soviet-Polish Border. Moscow, 27 July 1944]". *Dokumenty i materialy po istorii sovetsko-pol'skih otnoshenij. T. VIII. Yanvar' 1944 g.-dekabr' 1945 g.* M.: Nauka, 1974.

⁹⁶ "Potsdamskaya konferenciya [The Potsdam Conference]". *Istoriya diplomatii*. Pod red. A. A. Gromyko, I. N. Zemskova, V. A. Zorina, V. S. Semyonova, M. A. Harlamova. M.: Politizdat, 1975: 674.



Figure 8. Map of the Eastern (Soviet) Bloc countries after the Second World War. USSR with annexed Königsberg.

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1.2. Kaliningrad 1946-2025

1.2.1. Kaliningrad since 1946

Königsberg was severely damaged as a result of the war. Many local inhabitants died, and soon disease, hunger, and violence ensued. According to various researchers, of the 110 thousand people in Königsberg at the time of surrender, by June 1945, 73 thousand were still alive. The population dropped to 25 thousand after the winter illnesses of 1945-1946.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Gauze, *Kyonigsberg v Prussii*, 166.

By the end of the war, up to 90% of industrial, residential, and administrative buildings in the region had been destroyed. Nevertheless, almost immediately, the city began to rebuild. Historians studying the region's history distinguish several stages of the city's reconstruction:

1. Restoration construction (1945 - mid-1950s)
2. Mass standard industrial construction (mid-1950s - 1991)
3. Modern development (since 1991).⁹⁸

By 1948, 1.5 million m² of the 6 million m² of pre-war living space in Königsberg had been preserved, restored, or put to use; 2.5 million m² were to be restored; and about 2 million m² were to be demolished as unsuitable for restoration. By the time the architectural and construction control, geodetic sector, and technical archive were organized, work had begun on approving projects and issuing planning assignments to developers. However, disorderliness and spontaneity were not eradicated immediately. Many engineering communications and well-preserved but unprotected buildings were dismantled for construction materials.⁹⁹

According to the plans of the Soviet government, it was not enough "to change the names of streets, squares, and even towns; it was necessary to change the appearance, to find forms worthy of socialist content, and to eliminate the corrosive influence of Germanness."¹⁰⁰ On 4 July 1946, the city of Königsberg was renamed as Kaliningrad¹⁰¹, and from September 1946, the process of renaming other towns in the region began. Scholars note that there are several

⁹⁸ E.S. Mitina, "Vosstanovitel'nyj period v istorii gradostroitel'stva v Kaliningradskoj oblasti (1945 sredina 1950-h godov) [The Restoration Period in the History of Urban Planning in the Kaliningrad Region (1945 mid-1950s)]." *Vestnik Baltijskogo federal'nogo universiteta im. I. Kanta. Seriya: Gumanitarnye i obshchestvennye nauki*, no. 12, 2010: 71.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 72.

¹⁰⁰ V.V. Shcherbakov, *Stalinskaya programma hoz'yajstvennogo i kul'turnogo stroitel'stva Kaliningradskoj oblasti* [Stalin's Programme of Economic and Cultural Construction of the Kaliningrad Region]. Kaliningrad: Tipografiya izd-va "Sovetskaya Litva", 1947: 24.

¹⁰¹ Kaliningrad is not a translation of the name Königsberg (King's Mountain). The city is named in honor of the Soviet statesman Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin. The name scheme is like Leningrad and Stalingrad: Kalinin (person) + grad (city).

methods of renaming (e.g., full translation, association, allusion, etc.), but most of the renames in the Kaliningrad Region had little connection to past names. Often, new settlers named towns after those that existed in their home regions. Names of significant historical figures (e.g., Napoleon War, Second World War), natural objects names, positive adjectives, communist terms, etc., were also selected to be the new town's names.¹⁰² At the same time, natural objects' names were mostly translated.¹⁰³

In 1988-1993, the discussion about renaming cities in the Kaliningrad Region re-emerged. During the Perestroika era and the collapse of the Soviet Union, many cities were returned to their pre-Soviet names (e.g., Leningrad became St. Petersburg again).¹⁰⁴ In the case of the renaming of Kaliningrad, a public debate arose because the city's pre-Soviet past was German. Among the new names, different variants were proposed: Tsargrad (the city of the Tsar, most likely a reference to Constantinople), Knyazhgorod (the city of the Prince), Zapadnorossiysk (Western Russia), and others.¹⁰⁵ Due to the intensity of the public debate, it was decided to retain the city's existing name.

The issue of renaming Kaliningrad arose again during Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine. Poland's Committee on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland recommended renaming Kaliningrad to Królewiec, which met with a negative reaction from the Russian government.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² M. Langenfeld, "Process pereimenovaniy v Kaliningradskoj oblasti [The Process of Renaming in the Kaliningrad Region]." *Kaliningradskie arhiv*, no. 9, 2011: 163-164.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 167.

¹⁰⁴ E.M. Pospelov, "Oreshkek ili Shlissel'burg? (Problemy vosstanovleniya istoricheskikh nazvaniy) [Oreshkek or Shlisselburg? (Problems of Restoring Historical Names)]." *Russkaya rech'*, no. 4, 1990: 112.

¹⁰⁵ A.V. Saenko, "Diskussiya o pereimenovanii Kaliningrada: opyt kontent-analiza regional'noj pressy [Discussion on Renaming Kaliningrad: the Experience of Content Analysis of the Regional Press]." *Estestvennonauchnye metody v cifrovoj gumanitarnoj srede*, 2018: 59.

¹⁰⁶ "Kaliningrad: Russia Fury as Poland Body Recommends Renaming Exclave." *BBC*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65545636>

In addition to renaming, the process of Russification (or Sovietisation) of the Kaliningrad Region was carried out through population resettlement. In 1947-1948, the Soviet government resettled the German population of Kaliningrad to the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany.¹⁰⁷ A few Germans remained in the Kaliningrad Region, either having left the Soviet Union later or having assimilated (e.g., if they were young children who had been placed in orphanages during the war).¹⁰⁸

In their place, the Soviet government systematically resettled people from other regions. From 1950 to 1990 the population of Kaliningrad grew from 139 thousand to 413 thousand people.¹⁰⁹ From 1959 to 1987 the national composition was approximately the same: 77 to 78 percent Russians, 9 to 9.7 percent Belarusians, 7.7 to 8 percent Ukrainians, and 5 to 5.5 percent other nationalities.¹¹⁰

Those moving to the Kaliningrad Region were promised significant benefits, work, and assistance with the move: payment of travel costs and transportation of belongings/livestock, cash allowances, tax exemptions, discounts on grain, etc.¹¹¹ At the same time, the idea of the Kaliningrad Region as an "outpost of the USSR in the west" emerged.¹¹² During the Soviet period, this narrative was actively used to explain why the Kaliningrad Region was bound to become part of the USSR.¹¹³

All of this (renaming, resettlement, introduction of new historical narratives) was actively employed by the Soviet government to create a new site of memory on the location of the

¹⁰⁷ Gauze, *Kyonigsberg v Prussii*, 166.

¹⁰⁸ Glinski, Vyorster, *Kyonigsberg*, 115.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 121.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 126.

¹¹¹ K.V. Polyakov, "Pereselency [Resettlers]." *Kaliningradskie arhiv*, no.9, 2011: 210-211.

¹¹² Baranova, *Sovetskij narod*, 204.

¹¹³ Ibid, 194.

former German town.¹¹⁴ The German population had mostly departed, while the Soviet population had yet to forge new memories. Thus, the new Kaliningrad Region became not only an ‘outpost of the USSR in the West’ but also a venue for memory politics and a testing ground for the new post-war ideology.¹¹⁵

1.2.2. Kaliningrad Question

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kaliningrad Region became an enclave of the Russian Federation. This raised questions about the region's territoriality, which is now separated from Russia by the territories of Lithuania and Belarus.

As early as 1941, there were discussions about handing Königsberg over to the Soviet Union as compensation for 20 years. This, according to historians, led to the emergence of “a myth about the temporariness of the Kaliningrad Region's status as part of Russia.”¹¹⁶

Former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev proposed transferring it from Russia to the Lithuanian SSR. However, Lithuanian national-communists, led by Lithuanian Communist Party leader Antanas Sniechkus, refused, not wanting to alter the ethnic composition of Lithuania by settling about a million Russians in the republic.¹¹⁷ According to unconfirmed information, in 1990 this issue was raised again when the Mikhail Gorbachev proposed giving this territory to Germany as a free economic zone. Subsequently, the issue was supported by Boris Yeltsin, the first president of Russia, but no deal was reached.¹¹⁸ From 1993 to 2003, there was the Baltic

¹¹⁴ Levinsona Hoppe, “*Bor'ba protiv vrazheskogo proshlogo*,” 240.

¹¹⁵ Eaton, *German Blood, Slavic Soil*, 256.

¹¹⁶ A.V. Zolov, “Kaliningradsкая oblast' — slavyj trofej Velikoj vojny [Kaliningrad Region - a Glorious Trophy of the Great War].” *Virtual'naya nauchno-prakticheskaya konferenciya. V boyah za Vostochnuyu Prussiyu: 75 let Velikoj Pobede*, 2020, p. 4

¹¹⁷ “Senā Prūsijas zeme: Karalauči-Kēnigsberga-Kaļiņingrada [The Ancient Land of Prussia: Karalauce-Königsberg-Kaliningrad].” *Jauns*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://jauns.lv/raksts/arzemes/509611-krievijai-no-kaliningradas-bija-jaizvacas-jau-1995-gada-foto>

¹¹⁸ “Should Kant's Home Once Again be German?” *The Guardian*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210206033943/https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jul/31/kaliningrad-kant-home-return-german>

Republican Party, whose main idea was the independence of the Kaliningrad Region as the Baltic Republic. The party was banned by Vladimir Putin and transformed into the Kaliningrad Public Movement - Republic. In 2024, the organization was recognized as a terrorist organization by the current Russian government.¹¹⁹

The Kaliningrad issue arose again in the 2000s when the European Union was expanding. The issue of Lithuanian visas was raised during the negotiations, as Lithuania was preparing to join the Schengen zone. In 2002, it was decided that travel through the territory of Lithuania (without leaving the train in the territory of the EU) would require transit visas.¹²⁰ As of November 2024, the simplified travel scheme was still in force.¹²¹

Also in 2002, the American political scientist Richard Krickus stated in his book *The Kaliningrad Question* that the Kaliningrad Region reflects the state of the whole of Russia in transition and serves as an important factor in international politics, involving Russia in complex relations with the EU, NATO, and neighboring countries. He sees the region as a “laboratory” for potential cooperation between the US, EU, and Russia.¹²²

In 2022, the internet meme Královec Region (Královecký Kraj) emerged, suggesting that the Czech Republic annexed the Kaliningrad Region in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Fig. 9).

¹¹⁹ “«Forum svobodnyh gosudarstv postRossii» i 172 ego strukturnykh podrazdeleniya priznany terroristicheskimi organizაციyami [‘Forum of Free States of Post-Russia’ and 172 of its Structural Subdivisions are Recognised as Terrorist Organisations].” *General'naya prokuratura Rossijskoj Federacii*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/gprf/mass-media/news?item=99255941>

¹²⁰ V.A. Smirnov, “Dva vzglyada na «Kaliningradskij vopros» [Two Views on the ‘Kaliningrad Question’].” *Baltijskij region*, no. 2, 2010: 2.

¹²¹ “Uproshchennyj proezdnoj dokument na zheleznoj doroze (UPD-ZHD) [Simplified Railway Travel Document (SRTD Railway)].” *Posol'stvo Litovskoj Respubliki v Rossijskoj Federacii*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://ru.mfa.lt/ru/uproshchennye-tranzitnye-dokumenty/uproshchennyj-proezdnoj-dokument-na-zheleznoy-doroze-upd-zhd/184>

¹²² Krickus, *The Kaliningrad Question*, 4.



Figure 9. Kaliningrad (Královec) is mentioned in the weather forecast on Czech TV Nova as part of the Czech Republic.

Screenshot made by author from Bude Královec patřit Česku? | Televizní noviny | Nova, TV Nova YouTube channel.

Thus, the history of the Kaliningrad Region demonstrates a complex transformation from the medieval German city of Königsberg to the Soviet and then Russian Kaliningrad. Founded as an outpost of the Teutonic Order, Königsberg developed over the centuries as an important intellectual, economic and military centre of East Prussia. In the 20th century, it found itself at the centre of global transformations: from imperial province to symbol of Soviet victory, and from isolated enclave to a focal point of international diplomacy.

After the Second World War, Kaliningrad became a territory where a new identity was actively shaped through renaming, resettlement, and the rewriting of memory. In the post-Soviet period, the region came back into focus as Russia's geopolitical enclave surrounded by EU and NATO

countries. The Kaliningrad question, particularly hotly debated in the early 2000s, reflects not only international tensions but also the internal contradictions of Russian identity and memory.

In the next chapter, I will examine the specifics of the historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region.

CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR: EUROPE, RUSSIA, KALININGRAD

2.1. Historical Memory of the First World War in Europe

The historical memory of the First World War is an important part of European identity. Different European countries use various approaches to interpreting war events and consequences. The status of the First World War in the nation's history and memory is directly related to how well the sites related to the conflict are financed and looked after. It is possible to identify several common trends in the formation of the historical memory of the First World War.

The First World War is perceived as one of the most tragic pages in European history. It is associated with immense losses, destruction, and suffering. Therefore, the historical memory of the war aims to preserve the memory of its victims and heroes. Many countries in Europe have monuments and memorials dedicated to war events. These not only serve as reminders that the war must not be repeated, but also represent a 'monumental turn' from heroic generals on horseback to commemorative silence around the fallen soldiers.¹²³

Secondly, the First World War is being interpreted as an important episode for the making of modern Europe. It led to the collapse of empires, the formation of new national states, and the establishment of new political boundaries. The war created conditions for the emergence of new international organizations, such as the League of Nations, which sought to prevent future conflicts. In addition, the historical memory of the First World War is linked to the formation of national identities in European (and not only) countries. Each European country has its own

¹²³ Bill Niven, "War Memorials at the Intersection of Politics, Culture and Memory." *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, no. 1 (1), 2007: 40.

traditions and customs related to the memory of the war. For example, in France, the Armistice Day (11 November) is a bank holiday celebrated with great fanfare.¹²⁴ The UK the Armistice Day through various events to honor the war dead.

The historical memory of the First World War includes analysis of its causes and consequences. Many historians and researchers believe that the war resulted from a clash of complex international relations, economic interests, and political ambitions. They also emphasize that the war consequences had a profound impact on the development of Europe and the world. For example, the Treaty of Versailles, signed after the war, was one of the factors leading to the Second World War.

Changes in the political situation can affect historical memory. These may not only reshape the consensus over the reasons and outcomes of the First World War, but also bring in new perspectives about this historical event. For example, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, some countries in Eastern Europe began to study their history more actively and to form new historical memories, which may differ from the traditional European historical memory of the war.

The historical memory of the First World War is not always unambiguous and historical memory of the First World War can change over time. New research and discoveries can lead to a rethinking of war events and their consequences. Some countries have different perspectives on war events and their interpretation. For example, in Germany, the historical memory of the war is associated with feelings of guilt and responsibility for its outbreak and

¹²⁴ Rémi Dalisson, "Remembrance Day: 11 November 1918-Today (France)." *1914-1918 online*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/remembrance-day-11-november-1918-today-france/>.

consequences.¹²⁵ At the same time, in other countries, such as the UK and France, the historical memory of the war may be more positive, associated with heroism and patriotism.¹²⁶

Thus, European countries can be roughly divided into two “memorial camps”. This divide almost certainly lies along the line between the winning and losing sides.

Countries of Victory and Remembrance—Great Britain, France and Belgium are examples of such countries. For these countries, an incentive to financially support and boost measures to commemorate the First World War have been dictated by a strong link to identity matters and the role these countries are set to be playing in the history of the entire continent.

In 2012, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that £50 million would be allocated to commemorate the Great War in the year of remembrance. He also outlined one of the reasons why the money should be allocated for remembrance: 'the impact that the war had on the development of Britain and indeed the world as it is today'.¹²⁷

In 2018, Belgium and France submitted a joint application to UNESCO for the inscription of 139 the First World War memorial sites on the UNESCO Cultural Heritage List. In 2023, the First World War Burial and Commemoration Sites (Western Front) were inscribed under criteria III (bear unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilisation that is living or nearly extinct), IV (be an outstanding example of a building type, architectural or technological group or landscape illustrating a significant period or periods in human history) and VI (be directly or tangibly linked to events or living traditions, to ideas, beliefs or

¹²⁵ Aleida Assmann, "European Commemorations of the First World War—From National to Transnational Memory Cultures." *European Commemoration: Locating World War I*, 2014: 55.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.58.

¹²⁷ “Speech at Imperial War Museum on First World War Centenary Plans.” *GOV.UK*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-at-imperial-war-museum-on-first-world-war-centenary-plans>.

artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance).¹²⁸ By doing so, UNESCO recognises the outstanding universal value of these sites (and similar ones in other countries).

Countries of Defeat and Guilt/Oblivion—include countries such as Germany, Austria, and Russia.

Aleida Assmann notes that for Germany, the memory of the Great War is fading further into the past, beyond even family memory. However, this is relevant for all countries, unless it is primarily the government that invests in the commemoration of the First World War.¹²⁹

In Austria, as in Germany, the historical memory of the First World War has been firmly overshadowed by the Holocaust and the Second World War. The question of guilt for the outbreak of the First World War has been addressed in Austrian historiography only marginally, compared to Germany.¹³⁰

These two countries can be categorized as 'guilt', while Russia is categorized as purposeful 'oblivion'. The formation of historical memory of the First World War in the Soviet Union and Russia differs slightly from the examples of Germany and Austria and will be discussed further below.

¹²⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, “Funerary and Memory Sites of the First World War (Western Front).” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1567/>.

¹²⁹ Assmann, “European Commemorations,” 57.

¹³⁰ Andrea Stangl, “The First World War as a ‘Site of Memory.’” *Der Erste Weltkrieg*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://ww1.habsburger.net/en/chapters/first-world-war-site-memory>.

2.2. Historical Memory of the First World War in USSR and Russia

The historical memory of the First World War in Russia (here I am referring to both modern Russia and the Soviet Union, as well as Soviet Russia before 1922) was formed in the same historical context (revolutions and the collapse of empires) as in Europe, yet it had its own local specificity.

Of course, the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and the Civil War in Russia that followed the First World war significantly shifted the focus of public attention, and the process of ‘forgetting’ began almost immediately¹³¹. As a result, the First World War (and not only it) now exists in the overpowering shadow of the Second World War.

This was primarily influenced by the deliberate policy of remembrance pursued by the new Soviet government. For the Bolsheviks, the First World War was an ‘imperialist’ war¹³²—a conflict fought by the Russian Empire and the Tsar, who ultimately lost, both the war and their power. During and after the Civil War, many ‘white’ officers (heirs of the Tsar's army and participants in the First World War) were killed, left the country, or abandoned their past to survive. This latter factor is crucial to the current material ‘family’ legacy of the First World War: many people keep material evidence of family history, but not everyone possesses (or knows they possess) objects related to the First World War.

It is also increasingly significant that all military operations on the Eastern Front took place on the territory of present-day Baltic States, Ukraine, and Belarus. At the time when the war took place, these were part of the Russian Empire and later the USSR, but of all current Russian territories, only the Kaliningrad Region (formerly German territory) has a ‘living’ experience

¹³¹ Petrone, *The Great War*, 14.

¹³² Ibid, 5.

of the First World War. It is there where the actual sites of the First World War remembrance are located—burial grounds, cemeteries, buildings and monuments.

All this has led to the fact that the First World War is referred to as the ‘Forgotten War’ in Russian historiography¹³³. This term has been disputed by contemporary researchers¹³⁴, as the First World War has appeared time and again in various historical studies throughout Soviet history. Additionally, the experience of the First World War was studied during the Second World War, though more as propaganda than in terms of its technical or military aspects.¹³⁵ While education certainly shapes historical memory,¹³⁶ the above examples of highly specialized historical knowledge are not part of the popular discourse that could significantly influence Russian perceptions of the war. Other researchers note that the First World War left no lasting heroic symbols, significantly influenced by both the upheaval of future historical events and state propaganda.¹³⁷

In 2014, when the world commemorated the one hundred anniversary of the beginning of the war, various research centers in Russia conducted public opinion polls on the First World War. The All-Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (WCIOM) focused more on questions about whether Russia won or lost the First World War and whether the country should have taken part in it. One-third of respondents believed Russia was the winner (34%), while a similar proportion (35%) said Russia lost the war. A quarter of respondents (24%) found it difficult to

¹³³ Ibid, 8.

¹³⁴ I.R. Chikalova, *(Ne)zabytaya vojna: Pervaya mirovaya vojna v dokumentah, publicistike, vospominaniyah i issledovaniyah sovremennikov (1914–1941)* [The (Not) Forgotten War: World War I in Documents, Journalism, Memoirs and Research of Contemporaries (1914–1941)]. Minsk: Belaruskaya navuka, 2024.

¹³⁵ S. Markov, *Zverstva nemcev v Pervuyu Mirovuyu vojnu* [German Atrocities in World War I]. Moscow: Voenizdat NKO, 1941.

¹³⁶ O.O. Dmitrieva, “Istoricheskaya pamyat' i mekhanizmy ee formirovaniya: analiz istoriograficheskikh koncepcij v otechestvennoj nauke [Historical Memory and Mechanisms of its Formation: Analysis of Historiographical Concepts in Russian Science].” *Vestnik CHelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, no. 6 (361), 2015: 132–137.

¹³⁷ Senyavskaya, “Istoricheskaya pamyat',” 31–37.

answer the question.¹³⁸ This means that more than half of respondents (58%) were either mistaken or chose not to answer, which can be interpreted as ignorance, which resulted in the above-mentioned state memory policies and absence of material heritage of the war on the most of Russia's territory.

Similar questions were asked by the Levada Centre, but with slightly different results. The three questions posed (Who is to blame for unleashing the war? Should Russia have entered the war? Was the government right to sign the Brest-Litovsk treaty?) found that 40-50 percent of the 1600 respondents struggled to answer.¹³⁹

The Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) questionnaire was broader.¹⁴⁰ It included questions on knowledge (e.g.: What year did the First World War end?), family history (e.g.: Did any of your ancestors take part in the First World War? Did any of your ancestors take part in the First World War?) and the media image of the war (e.g.: Have you read any books or watched any films, plays about the First World War?). For example, 49% of respondents found the question 'In what year did the First World War end?' difficult to answer, while 36% answered correctly (15% for 1917 and 21% for 1918). The rest of the responses varied from 1915 to the 1920s.

Separately, it is worth noting that at the start of the survey it was mentioned that the First World War 'started 100 years ago' (for 2014). Perhaps this served as a reminder or clue that the war could not have started earlier than 1914.

Interesting statistics emerged from the 'family' questions. For example, when asked 'Did any of your ancestors take part in the First World War?', 39% found it difficult to answer, 32%

¹³⁸ "Rossiya v Pervoj Mirovoj Vojne." *WCIOM*.

¹³⁹ "Pervaya Mirovaya Vojna [The First World War]." *Levada center*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.levada.ru/2014/07/28/pervaya-mirovaya-vojna/>.

¹⁴⁰ "Obraz Pervoj Mirovoj [The Image of the First World War]." *FOM MEDIA*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://fom.ru/Proshloe/11637>.

answered negatively and 29% positively. To the question ‘Do you keep in your family any letters, documents, photos, relics, memorabilia related to your ancestors' participation in the First World War?’, 66% of those who stated that their ancestors took part in the war answered that their family does not keep such objects.

The questions ‘Please name any work of fiction (book, film or play) about the First World War that you remember, that made an impression on you’ and ‘Please name any events, battles, military operations of the First World War’ confirm E. Sinyavskaya's thesis about the lack of stable images of the First World War in the minds of Russians. Sinyavskaya's thesis highlights the absence of stable images of the First World War in the consciousness of Russians. 36% found it difficult to answer the first question, while the rest named a variety of works, often unrelated or indirectly related to the First World War: *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy (the war with Napoleon), *Turkish Gambit* by Boris Akunin (the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878), *The White Guard* by Mikhail Bulgakov (the Civil War), and others.

Only 16% of respondents were asked about famous events of the war. 5% of respondents named battles and events from other wars (including those that did not take place in the 20th century). 5% named the Brusilov Breakthrough, 2% mentioned chemical weapons and 1% each named the Battle of Baranovichi, the Brest Treaty and others.

In 2014-2018, Russia joined the official celebration of the centenary of the First World War. Several films dedicated to the First World War were released in cinemas (previously, there were almost no such films, or if they existed, the theme of the war was only a backdrop or mention): *Battalion*¹⁴¹ (2015, dir. Dmitrij Meskhiev), *The Heritage Of Love*¹⁴² (2016, dir. Yurij

¹⁴¹ The film was produced with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Russian Military Historical Society and the Russian Geographical Society.

¹⁴² The film was produced with the support of the Russian Military Historical Society, the Saint Basil the Great Foundation, and state support from the Cinema Fund and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

Vasiljev), and *A Russian Youth*¹⁴³ (pitched in 2017, released internationally in 2019 and in Russian distribution in 2020, dir. Aleksandr Zolotuhin). These films belong to the category of historical pictures that ‘depict fictionalized images of the past, but with the backdrop of a believable depiction of historical times’.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, these films should be perceived (in this study) not in terms of the authenticity of historical facts, but as a channel for broadcasting the collective memory of the past.¹⁴⁵

The Russian Historical Society supervised the government project ‘100 Years of the First World War’. Under their aegis, projects included Images of the Great War (an online collection of photographs, letters, and images kept in Russian families¹⁴⁶), an online map of losses on the fronts of the First World War, and events to rebury in Russia the ashes of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov (1856-1929), Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all land and sea forces of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the First World War, and his wife Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna.

Also on 1 August 2014, a monument to the heroes of the First World War was officially opened in Moscow (the Russian Military Historical Society, or RMHS was the initiator of the monument's installation). A little earlier, in May 2014, a monument dedicated to the First World War was opened in Kaliningrad. According to estimates from the Russian Military Historical Society, more than 30 local monuments have been installed throughout Russia¹⁴⁷. It

¹⁴³ The film was produced with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Government of the City of St. Petersburg.

¹⁴⁴ E.V. Volkov and E.V. Ponomareva, “Igrovoe kino kak istoricheskij istochnik dlya izucheniya kul'turnoj pamyati [Fictional Cinema as a Historical Source for the Study of Cultural Memory].” *Vestnik YUzhno-Ural'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, no. 10 (269), 2012: 23.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 24.

¹⁴⁶ At the moment, only the project *Images of War*, dedicated to the Second World War, can be found on request on the Internet. Presumably, the project is no longer active.

¹⁴⁷ “Bol'she Ne Zabytaya’. Kak Vspominali 100-Letie Okonchaniya Pervoj mirovoj Vojny [‘No Longer Forgotten’. How the 100th Anniversary of the End of the First World War Was Remembered].” *Istoriya*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://histrf.ru/read/articles/bolshie-nie-zabytaia-kak-vspominali-100-lietie-okonchaniia-piervoi-mirovoi-voiny>.

is important to note that these were not the first monuments dedicated to the First World War in Russia. However, those that had been erected earlier were mostly dedicated to honouring local heroes, such as the monument dedicated to the soldiers of the 209th Bogorodsky Infantry Regiment, who fell in the First World War (2009, Noginsk).

By the centenary of the First World War, the territory of the former Bratsk cemetery for the victims of the First World War (opened in 1915 and closed in 1932) was restored in Moscow. The park is now called the Memorial and Park Complex of the Heroes of the First World War. It contains the Chapel of the Transfiguration of the Saviour (the ashes of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov and his wife were reburied here), the obelisk ‘To the Fallen in the World War of 1914-1918’, the monument to the Russian Sisters of Mercy, the grave of S.A. Shlichter (the only surviving original tombstone from the Bratsk cemetery), and others.

Many public institutions (such as libraries, museums, schools, etc.) held their own events dedicated to the First World War. For example, in 2014-2015 the State Historical Museum in Moscow held a large international exhibition titled ‘the First World War. The Last Battle of the Russian Empire’. The Nekrasov Library in Moscow prepared four bibliographic indexes based on its own library (all but fiction about the First World War were in the library's collection at the time).¹⁴⁸

Entertainment organisers were not left out either. The historical festival ‘Times and Epochs’ (held in Moscow from 2011 to 2019) chose the First World War as its theme in 2014. The central events were the demonstrations ‘Brusilov Breakthrough’, ‘Attack of the Dead’, and ‘Nivel's Meat Grinder’ by historical re-enactors (more than 2100 people from 14 countries).¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ *Mir i vojna : bibliogr. ukazateli : k 100-letiyu nachala Pervoj mirovoj vojny* [Peace and War : Bibliographical Indexes : for the 100th Anniversary of the Outbreak of the First World War]. Moskva: GBUK g. Moskvyy CUNB im. N. A. Nekrasova, 2014.

¹⁴⁹ “Vremena i Epohi. 1914/2014”: *Mir i Vojna v Kolomenskom* [‘Times and Epochs. 1914/2014”: Peace and War in Kolomenskoye].” *Russkaya liniya*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=66455>.

In 2017, the festival was no longer held in one park but spread throughout Moscow. The Memorial and Park Complex of Heroes was the site for the First World War. In 2018 and 2019, the festival followed the same format, with sites dedicated to the early 20th century.

Thus, by 2018, there were quite a large number of events (exhibitions, lectures, book publications, film releases, advertisements, special issues of newspapers, and others) that could have an impact on historical memory. The relatively high number of commemorative events signal that in today's Russia, the First World war is not totally wiped out from the public consciousness, yet these initiatives were not enough to shift the prevalence of WWII as the country's cornerstone military conflict.

WCIOM and FOM also conducted surveys following the anniversary years. WCIOM's questions remained the same, focusing on the need for war and knowledge of whether Russia won or lost the war. 49% of respondents answered that Russia won the war (34% in 2014). The number of those who answered negatively remained the same (33% and 35% in 2014), while 11% found it difficult to answer. Thus, the number of those who answered incorrectly or abstained increased by 2% from 2014.¹⁵⁰

FOM also conducted the same questionnaire as in 2014. They provided a comprehensive analysis and comparison of the results. For most questions, the statistics remained the same (see Fig. 10). For the question about the year in which the First World War ended, the percentage of those who found it difficult to answer also remained the same, at 49%.

¹⁵⁰ "Pervaya Mirovaya." *WCIOM*.

	25 мая 2014	4 ноября 2018
в 1915 г.	2	3
в 1916 г.	6	5
в 1917 г.	15	15
в 1918 г.	21	19
в 1919 г.	2	2
в 1920 г.	2	2
позже 1920 г.	3	4
Затрудняюсь ответить	49	49

Figure 10. Comparison of answers to the question ‘In what year did the First World War end?’

First column: on 25 May 2014, second column: on 4 November 2018. Data from FOM MEDIA

The main events of the First World War that respondents could recall were the Brusilov Breakthrough (5%) and the use of chemical weapons (3%).¹⁵¹ At the same time, a more memorable name (‘Attack of the Dead’), which has been attempted to be recreated in recent years, was not mentioned.

Thus, based on the comparison of the results of public opinion polls in 2014 and 2018, one can conclude that past events did not have a significant impact on the current state of historical memory concerning the First World War in Russia.

¹⁵¹ “Образ Первой Мировой.” *FOM MEDIA*.

2.3. Historical Memory of the First World War in Kaliningrad

Region: Survey Results

The historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region has never been specifically studied, except for studies of local practices: tourist,¹⁵² patriotic,¹⁵³ and cultural heritage preservation.¹⁵⁴ This sub-chapter summarises the results of a survey conducted by me in October 2024 specifically for this thesis. There were two requirements for the respondents: they had to be over 18 years old and to have permanent residence in Kaliningrad or any city in the Kaliningrad Region.

A total of 100 people completed the survey. The age of respondents ranged from 17 to 70 years, with the majority (64%) holding higher education degrees (at least at the bachelor's level). Most respondents (75%) live in Kaliningrad, while others reside in the cities of Baltiysk¹⁵⁵, Guryev¹⁵⁶, Gusev¹⁵⁷, Neman¹⁵⁸, Chernyakhovsk¹⁵⁹, and others (all in Kaliningrad Region). Half of the respondents have lived in Kaliningrad/Kaliningrad Region their entire lives — these respondents answered the question about how long their ancestors had lived in the Kaliningrad Region.

The survey questionnaire was based on the surveys conducted by FOM in 2014 and 2018 and included the following sections (see Appendix 1):

¹⁵² A.A. Saburina, “Prioritetnye, s tochki zreniya prostranstvennogo razvitiya vostoka Kaliningradskoj oblasti, vidy turizma [Priority Types of Tourism from the Point of View of Spatial Development of the East of the Kaliningrad Region].” *Problemy razvitiya industrii turizma*, 2021: 62-66.

¹⁵³ M.G. Badamshin, “Voenno-istoricheskie marshruty Kluba vyhodnogo dnya Kaliningradskogo oblastnogo istoriko-hudozhestvennogo muzeya [Military-historical Routes of the Weekend Club of the Kaliningrad Regional Historical and Art Museum].” *Vremya Muzeya*, 2019: 459-469.

¹⁵⁴ Kazennov, “Sostoyanie zahoroneni i pamyatnikov,” 271-274.

¹⁵⁵ Former Pillau.

¹⁵⁶ Former Neuhausen.

¹⁵⁷ Former Gumbinnen.

¹⁵⁸ Former Ragnit.

¹⁵⁹ Former Insterburg.

Knowledge questions. General questions on historical knowledge: dates of the First World War, who won, who was Russia's ally, and famous events or battles. These questions help to understand the basic knowledge of the First World War, regardless of the source of that knowledge.

Questions about the formation of the media image of the First World War. Respondents named films or books (authors) about the First World War that they remember, have read, or have watched. Art and media are one of the mechanisms for the formation of historical memory.¹⁶⁰ This issue has been repeatedly studied by Memory studies researchers.¹⁶¹

Questions about personal and family experience. In this section, only two questions were taken from the FOM questionnaire: about the participation of the respondent's ancestors in the First World War and about the presence of memorial objects related to the First World War. The rest of the questions were directly related to the Kaliningrad Region: whether respondents are aware of the presence of First World War memorial sites in the region, whether they have visited these sites, and whether they have attended cultural/educational events (lectures, exhibitions, etc.) about the First World War. There were also questions related to the preservation of these places: whether these memorial sites should be preserved, who should be responsible for this, and who should finance the preservation. These questions help assess not only the presence of family memory of the First World War but also personal attitudes and positions regarding the preservation of memorial sites and responsibility for this.

Socio-demographic questions also partially repeated the questions from the FOM questionnaire: questions about age and level of education. Specific questions included: city of

¹⁶⁰ L.N. Mazur, "Obraz proshlogo: formirovanie istoricheskoy pamyati [The Image of the Past: Historical Memory Formation]." *Izvestiya Ural'skogo federal'nogo universiteta. Ser. 2, Gumanitarnye nauki*, no. 3 (117), 2013: 247.

¹⁶¹ Aleida Assmann, "Transnational Memory and the Construction of History Through Mass Media." *Memory unbound: Tracing the dynamics of memory studies*, 2017: 65-80.

residence, how long the respondent has lived in the Kaliningrad Region, and if they have lived there their entire lives, when their ancestors began to live in the Kaliningrad Region (if known). These questions, firstly, helped to filter out those who do not live in the required region and also to collect information on how long the respondent's family has lived in the region. This helps to determine how long the sense of personal belonging to this territory has been formed.

2.3.1. Results of the Survey. Historical Knowledge

The first question (Name the dates of the First World War) helps to determine the extent to which respondents understand this historical event. 67% gave the correct answer. Both options were counted: 1914-1918 and 1914-1917 (since Russia withdrew from the war in March 1917 and did not participate further). 13% of respondents gave an incorrect answer: either the dates provided were between 1914 and 1918 or did not correspond to reality at all (for example: 1812, 1939, etc.). 20% got one of the dates wrong or provided only one date (e.g., 1914, 1914-1920, etc.). This response can be considered 'incomplete' as respondents at least demonstrate an understanding of the time frame of the event.

When asked who won the First World War, 44% of respondents gave the correct answer (from the proposed options: France, USA, Great Britain). The incorrect answer was given by 56%. 44% believe that Russia won the First World War (Fig. 11). When asked who was Russia's ally in the First World War (from the proposed options: France, USA, Great Britain), 81% of respondents gave the correct answer.

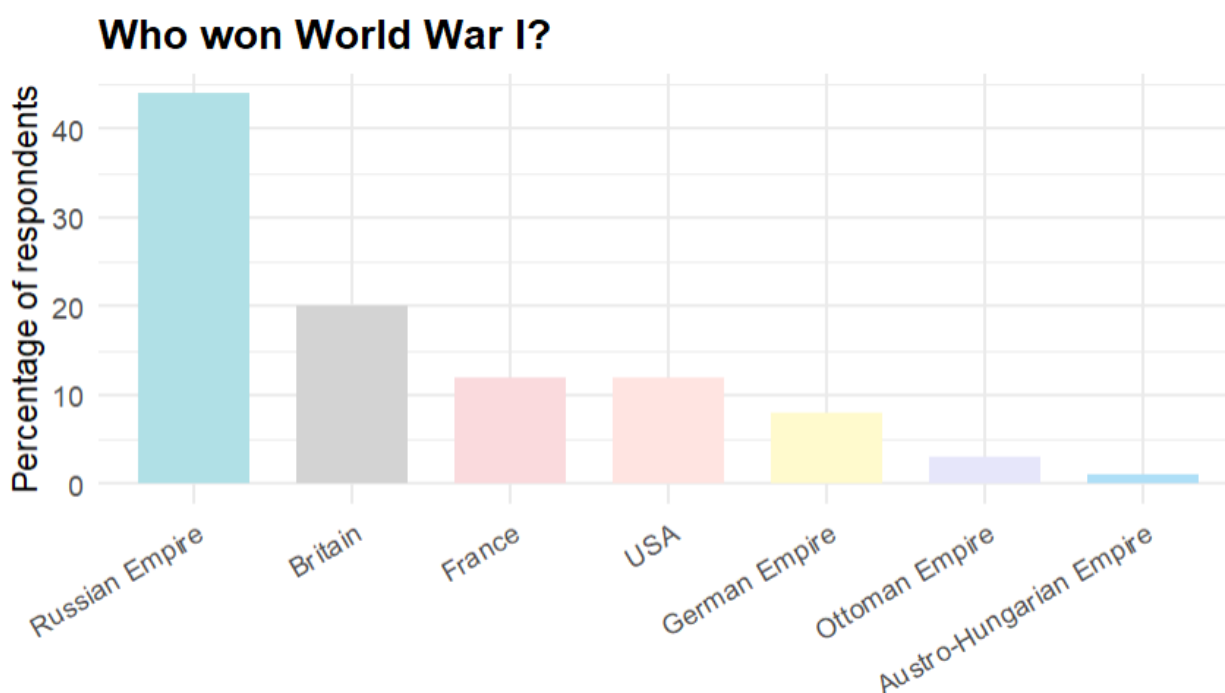


Figure 11. *Who won the First World War?* bar chart.

Made by the author using RStudio.

Question 4 (Name the events or battles of the First World War; you can provide any number of answers) helped to gain a deeper understanding of the historical knowledge about the First World War among Kaliningrad residents. 28% of respondents answered that they did not know or could not name any events. 10% named events not related to the First World War—for example, the siege of Leningrad (1941-44). Among the most frequent answers were: the Brusilov Breakthrough (17% of respondents), the Sarajevo Assassination (10%), and the Battle of Gumbinnen¹⁶² (9%). A large number of other battles were also named (the Battle of Ypres, the Miracle on the Marne, the Dardanelles, the Somme, etc.), which were included in the analysis under ‘Others’ because they were not mentioned often enough (Fig. 12).

¹⁶² Gumbinnen is the present-day town of Gusev in the Kaliningrad Region.

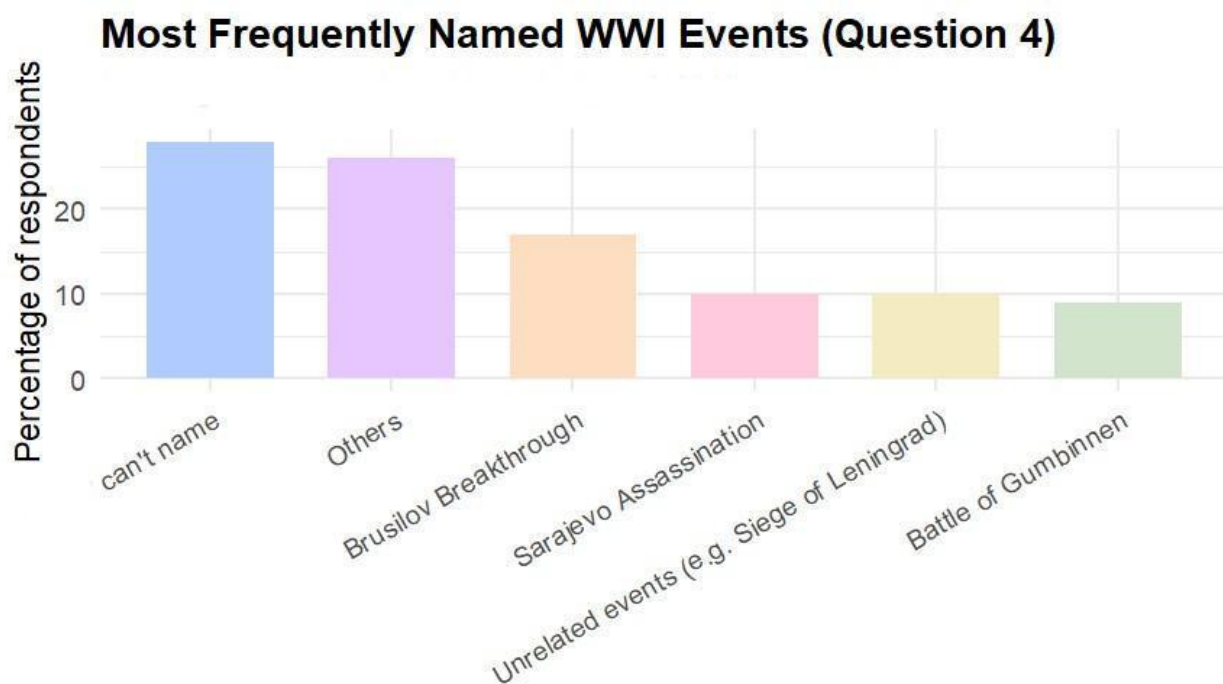


Figure 12. *Name the events or battles of the First World War* bar chart.

Made by the author using RStudio.

At the same time, the correlation between knowledge of dates and knowledge of events is as follows: 50% of those who correctly named the dates of the First World War answered that they did not know or could not name the events of the war. At the same time, of those who identified the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty as an event of the First World War, none correctly named the dates of the war. Only those who named the dates of the First World War correctly or almost correctly could identify the Brusilov Breakthrough. Among those who attempted but failed to name the events of the First World War were only those who named the dates incorrectly or almost correctly.

The same question was posed to respondents in the FOM survey.¹⁶³ Only 16% of respondents were willing to name the events of the First World War. Of these, the largest percentage (5%) named the Brusilov Breakthrough, similar to the case in Kaliningrad. In second place (3%) was

¹⁶³ "Образ Первой Мировой." *FOM MEDIA*.

the use of chemical weapons, which received 8% of responses in the Kaliningrad Region. The participation of Crimea in the war also appeared in the FOM poll results, but in Kaliningrad, this answer was not mentioned at all. It can be assumed that this is due to the fact that the Crimean agenda in 2024 is not as relevant for Russians (Kaliningrad residents) as it was in 2014.

FOM did not ask whether Russia won or lost the First World War. Therefore, the comparison here was made with the VCIOM poll.¹⁶⁴ 49% of Russians and 44% of Kaliningrad residents believe that Russia won the First World War.

2.3.2. Results of the Survey. The War in Media

Some researchers believe that the current revival of interest in the First World War is associated with the activity of the media space, the so-called ‘popular culture of memory’.¹⁶⁵ It can be assumed that in the Russian context the media space also has a significant impact on historical memory (including the First World War).

In this section, respondents were asked two questions: to name the films and books (or authors) about the First World War that they could remember.

Thirty-five percent of respondents could not name a single film about the First World War, while 14% named films unrelated to this war. The most popular correct answers included *1917* (2019, dir. Sam Mendes) (16%), *All Quiet on the Western Front* (2022, dir. Edward Berger) (13%), and *Battalion* (5%). Despite the large number of irrelevant answers, some respondents named several films at once, including those not included in the list of the most popular

¹⁶⁴ “Pervaya Mirovaya v Istoricheskoy Pamyati.” *VCIOM*.

¹⁶⁵ N.N. Baranov, “Pervaya mirovaya vojna v populyarnoy kul'ture pamyati [The First World War in the Popular Culture of Memory].” *Vestnik Permskogo universiteta*, no. 4 (43), 2018: 34.

answers: *The Red Baron* (2008, dir. Nikolai Müllerschön), *Flyboys* (2006, dir. Tony Bill), *Paths of Glory* (1957, dir. Stanley Kubrick), and others (Fig. 13).

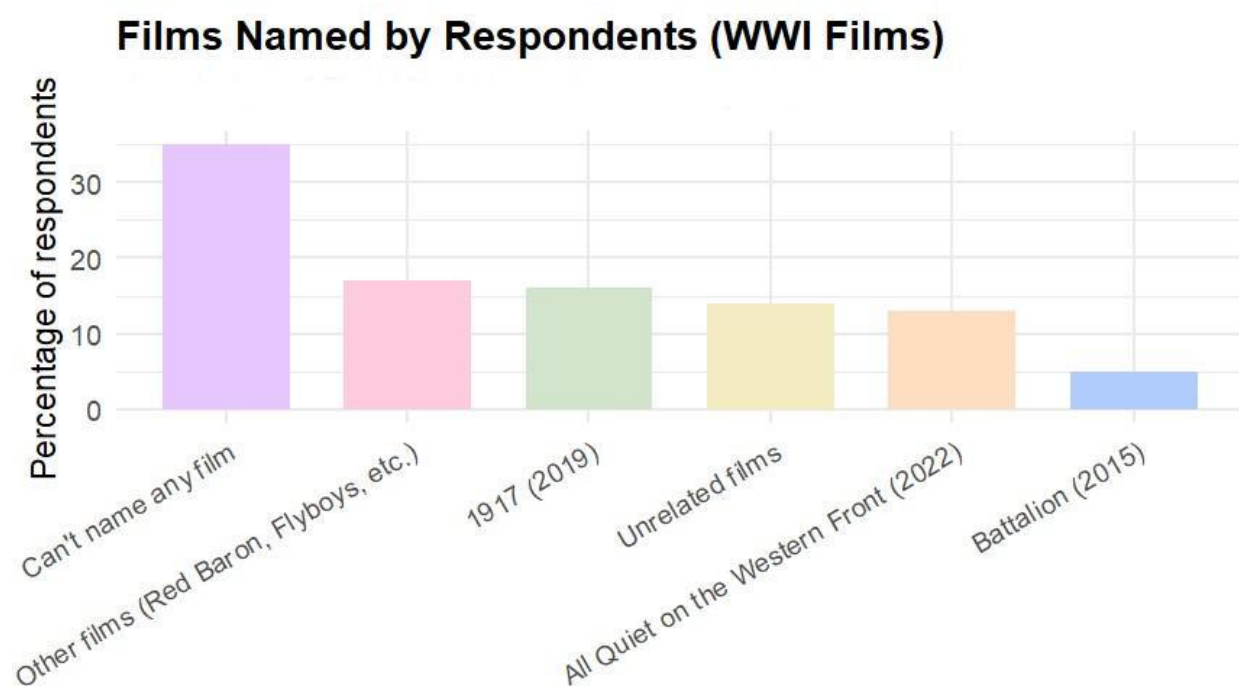


Figure 13. Name the films about the First World War bar chart.

Made by the author using RStudio.

Additionally, 34% of respondents could not name a single book about the First World War, and 5% named works incorrectly. Erich Maria Remarque (both the author's name and *All Quiet on the Western Front* were accepted) received 23%, while Ernest Hemingway (both the author and his works, such as *A Farewell to Arms*) received 8%. Valentin Pikul¹⁶⁶ received 6%. Among the rarer responses were other members of the lost generation, including Henri Barbusse's *Under Fire* and Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*. Additionally, 8% of respondents named scientific and popular science books (for example, A.M. Zayonchkovsky's *The World War* or Barbara Tuchman's *August Guns*) (Fig. 14).

¹⁶⁶ A Soviet writer and author of historical novels, some of which take place during the First World War.

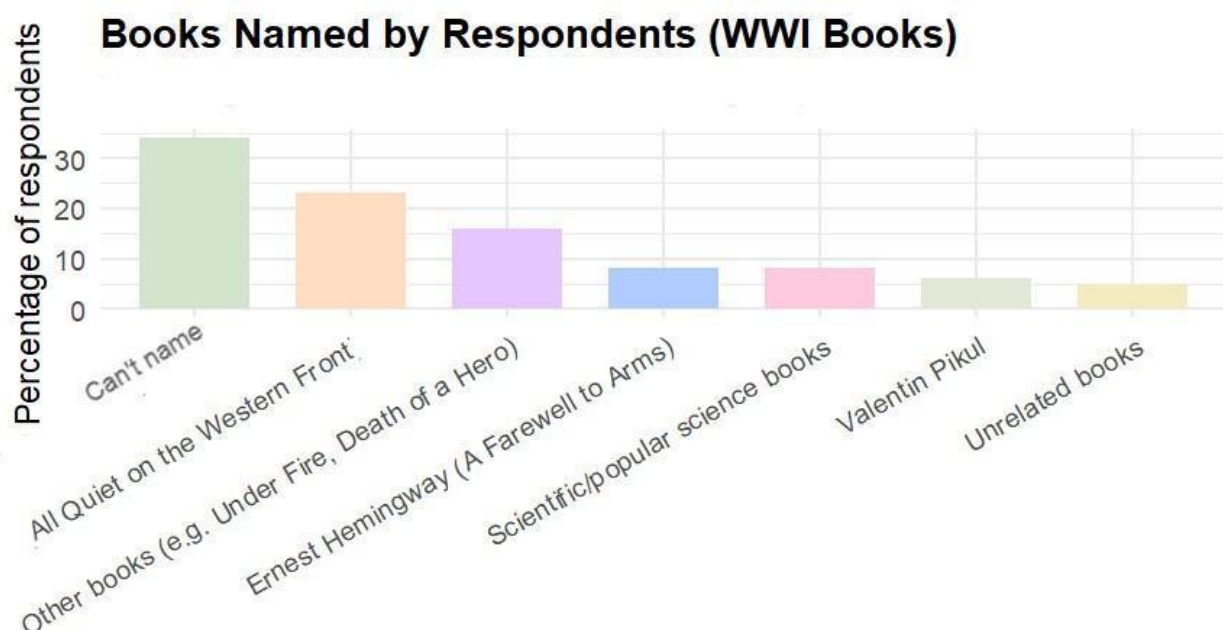


Figure 14. *Name the books about the First World War* bar chart.

Made by the author using RStudio.

In the FOM survey, this question was combined into one, and 35% of respondents could not answer it. In this case, it is difficult to separate books and films (as the wording of the question included both, as well as plays). However, *Battalion* was among the frequent answers, while *1917* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* had not yet been released in 2014-2018. Other, rarer responses (film *The Admiral* (2008, dir. Andrej Kravchuk), books *The White Guard*, *The Road to Calvary*, which are categorized in this thesis as ‘partly related to the First World War’) appeared in the results of both surveys.

2.3.2. Results of the Survey. Personal Experience and Family Memory

The first two questions of the survey coincide with the FOM poll: Did any of your ancestors take part in the First World War, and do you keep any memorabilia in your family related to their participation in the First World War? These questions are categorized as ‘family memory.’

29 and 33% of Russians (and 18% of Kaliningrad residents) answered that one of their ancestors took part in military actions. Of these, only 8 and 11% of families keep memorable objects. The same response was given by 11% of Kaliningrad residents. Among the listed objects, photographs (6%) and awards (3%) were mentioned most often. Among those who could name the dates of the First World War correctly, 87% answered that their ancestors took part in the war. 12% of those who claimed their ancestors participated in the war got the dates wrong. The following questions are categorized as ‘personal experiences and opinions of residents of the Kaliningrad Region.’

The first question focused on the awareness of Kaliningrad residents regarding First World War memorial sites: do they know about their presence in the region? 62% of respondents answered positively.

The next two questions focused on experiences engaging with memorial sites and information about the First World War in general. When asked if they had visited First World War memorial sites (and if so, which ones), 36% of all respondents said that they had visited various monuments (24%), burial grounds (4%), and war-related towns (3%). When asked if they had attended any events (lectures, exhibitions, festivals, etc.), 19% of all respondents said that they had visited museums, exhibitions, and lectures (7%) as well as festivals and re-enactment events (5%).

The next section of questions included personal attitudes towards First World War memorial sites. When asked whether such places should be preserved, 91% of respondents answered in the affirmative. When asked who should be responsible for the preservation (maintenance, reconstruction, cleaning, etc.) of these places, the most frequent answers were the government of the Kaliningrad Region (43%), the state (36,4%), and volunteers (14%). Less common answers included residents of the region (5,6%) and businesses (1%). When asked who should

finance the preservation of places of memory, the respondents named the state (74%), the government of the region (19%), and volunteer organizations (7%) (Fig. 15-16). For the last two questions, respondents provided open answers and could name several responsible parties.

Who Should Be Responsible for Preservation?

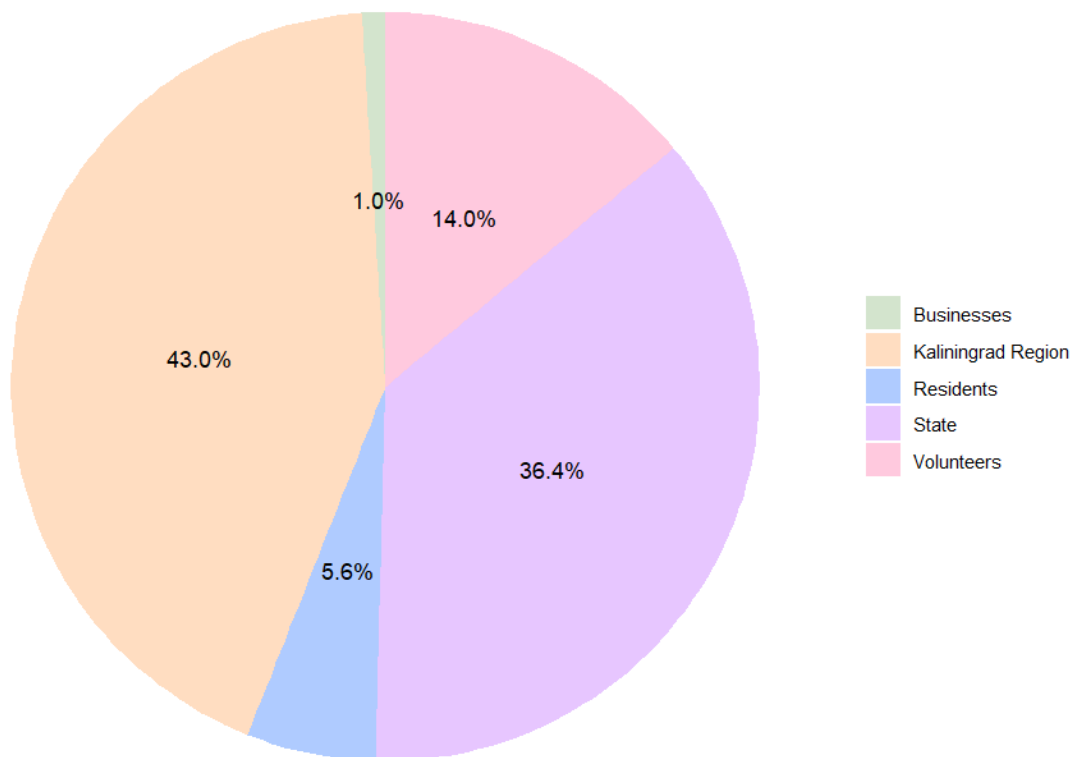


Figure 15. *Who should be responsible for preservation of the First World War heritage objects?* pie chart. Made by the author using RStudio.

Who Should Finance Preservation?

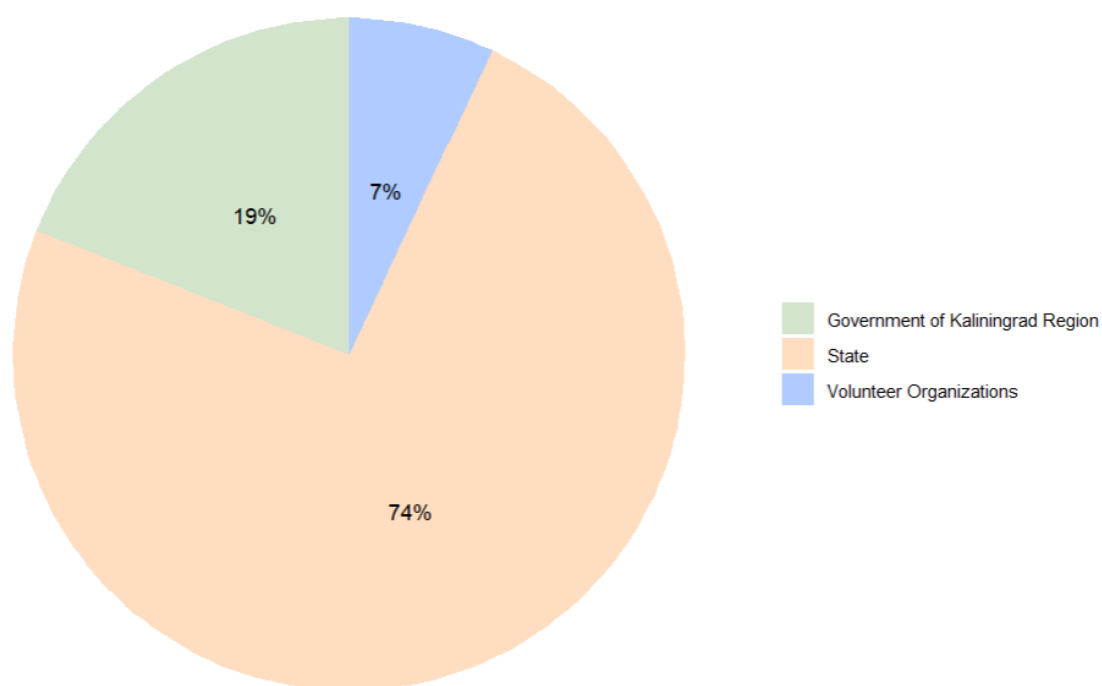


Figure 16. *Who should finance preservation?* pie chart.

Made by the author using RStudio.

37.5% of those who answered that memorial sites should be preserved identified the state and the regional government as the main bodies responsible for preserving these sites. Among those who responded ‘don't know’ to this question, 40% identified volunteers as responsible for preserving First World War memorial sites.

2.3.4. Results of the Survey. Socio-demographic Characteristics

Socio-demographic questions included two sections: general (age, level of education) and Kaliningrad-related (city of residence, duration of residence in the region, duration of ancestors' residence in the region).

Among those whose ancestors have lived in the Kaliningrad Region since before the war (1900-1941), 60% of respondents believe that it is necessary to preserve places of memory from the First World War. Among those whose ancestors moved to the Kaliningrad Region immediately

after the Second World War (1945-1950), 75% believe that it is necessary to preserve these places. Additionally, 66% of respondents whose ancestors moved to Kaliningrad in the 50s and 60s of the 20th century say that it is necessary to preserve memorial sites.

Furthermore, the largest percentage (37%) of respondents who believe that First World War memorial sites should be preserved have lived in Kaliningrad all their lives. A significant percentage (31%) is also shown by those who have lived in the region for 5 to 10 years. Among those who have lived in Kaliningrad or the region for less than 5 years or for 11 years or more, the percentage is smaller: 14-17%. Among those who responded that First World War memorial sites should not be preserved, the highest percentage (31%) is found among those who have lived in the region for less than 5 years.

2.3.5. Results of the Survey. Current State of the Historical Memory

The historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region has its own peculiarities and differs from the all-Russian perspective. First of all, the Kaliningrad Region, formerly East Prussia, was directly involved in the events of the war, creating an additional layer of historical memory at the local level. This is manifested in greater knowledge and attention to individual events and memorial sites related to the First World War. Unlike other Russian regions, Kaliningrad has memorial sites and objects directly related to the war, such as memorials and mass graves, making the First World War theme more tangible for local residents.

According to the survey, 67% of Kaliningrad residents were able to correctly name the dates of the war, indicating a fairly high level of basic knowledge. Moreover, 67% were able to name significant events of the war, which is very different from the results of all-Russian polls, where the memory of the First World War is significantly inferior to that of the Second World War (only 16% were ready to answer this question). However, there are also significant gaps: 56%

of respondents mistakenly believe that Russia won the war, indicating a lack of awareness of the conflict's outcome.

Interest in the First World War in Kaliningrad (as in Russia as a whole) is largely shaped through the media: films, books, and cultural events available to all Russians. Nevertheless, 35% of respondents could not recall a single film about the war, indicating a weak influence of mass culture on the preservation of historical memory in the region and lack of local cultural production about the war. At the same time, a significant proportion of respondents support the need to preserve memorial sites, with 91% believing that such places should be properly maintained.

Thus, the historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region differs from the Russian one due to the presence of local memorial sites and the region's involvement in the war events. However, knowledge of Kaliningrad residents about the war remains to be fragmented and requires further strengthening through educational and cultural projects, including visiting memorial sites.

2.3.6. The First World War Sites of Memory in the Kaliningrad Region

Pierre Nora's famous work considers sites of memory as objects or physical spaces that have simultaneously material, symbolic, and functional significance.¹⁶⁷ Although many of the objects described in the publication are not physical (e.g., festivals or songs), here I consider physical objects that may have symbolic significance, mainly monuments and burials.

¹⁶⁷ Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 14.

The theoretical framework of sites of memory was later extended to other countries: for example, Polish-German¹⁶⁸ or Russian¹⁶⁹ sites of memory (this, interestingly enough, was not translated from French into Russian). Georges Nivat, in his work, refers to various cities, Siberia as a region, the Hermitage Museum, Cossacks as part of the army, monasteries, cemeteries, and theatres as sites of memory for Russians.

In Russia, the concept of sites of memory as a historical and patriotic term is currently being formed separately from Pierre Nora's term. For example, the Sites of Memory project refers specifically to sites of military-historical heritage from the Great Patriotic War (Second World War)¹⁷⁰. The project aims to collect and preserve memorial places not only in Russia but also abroad. Anyone can contribute data about the sites.

Researchers Bykovskaya, Zlobin, and Inozemcev¹⁷¹ proposed their list of sites of memory (in Pierre Nora's terms) for further discussion. They suggested nine categories (statesmen, events, heroes, science, literature, music, painting, memorial places, natural monuments) and several names in each (e.g., the Kremlin as a memorial place, the first human space flight as a significant event, Lake Baikal as a natural monument). The presented list does not include places, events, or persons connected with the First World War (see fig. 17).

¹⁶⁸ Kornelia Kończal, "Polish-German Realms of Memory. A new paradigm?" *Acta Poloniae Historica*, no. 106, 2012: 155–167.

¹⁶⁹ Georges Nivat, *Les sites de la mémoire russe: Géographie de la mémoire russe* [Sites of Russian Memory: Geography of Russian Memory]. Fayard, 2007.

¹⁷⁰ "Mesto Pamyati [Site of Memory]." Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://xn--80ajknckhoje6l.xn--p1ai/>

¹⁷¹ Bykovskaya et al, "Concept of Sites of Memory," 155.

«Места памяти» России

Государственные деятели	Владимир Святой	Иван III	Пётр I	Александр II	Б.Н. Ельцин
Великие события	Ледовое побоище Невская битва	Стояние на Угре	Отечественная война 1812 года	Великая Отечественная война 1941–1945 годов	Первый полёт человека в космос
Герои	Александр Невский	Дмитрий Донской	Суворов	Кутузов	Жуков
Наука	Ломоносов	Менделеев	Сахаров	Лобачевский	Лихачёв
Литература	Пушкин	Толстой	Достоевский	Тургенев	Чехов
Музыка	Чайковский	Мусоргский	Римский-Корсаков	Глинка	Рахманинов
Живопись	Андрей Рублёв	Репин	Брюллов	Суриков	Шишкин
Памятные места	Кремль	Мамаев курган	Бородинское поле	Эрмитаж	Храм Христа Спасителя
Памятники природы	Озеро Байкал	Кавказские минеральные воды	Карельские озера	Долина гейзеров	Река Волга
Великие события	Принятие христианства	Куликовская битва	Индустриализация	Битва за Москву	Август 1991 г.
Герои	Князь Игорь Переяславский	Воевода Хабар	Денис Давыдов	Скобелев	Гагарин
Наука	Вавилов	Иоффе	Алфёров	Ковалевская	Королёв
Литература	«Слово о Полку Игореве», «Задонщина»	«Война и мир»	Булгаков	Платонов	Бунин
Музыка	Бородин	Свиридов	Шостакович	Прокофьев	Шаляпин
Живопись	Симон Ушаков	Рерих	Врубель	Левитан	Саврасов
Памятные места	Золотое кольцо России	Памятник тысячелетия России	Ясная Поляна	Могила неизвестного солдата	ВДНХ
Памятники природы	Река Дон	Субтропики района Сочи	Река Енисей	Река Ангара	Ледовитый океан
Государственные деятели	Рюрик	Борис и Глеб	Василий III	Ярослав Мудрый	Михаил Фёдорович
Великие события	Освобождение Москвы от поляков в 1712 г.	Присоединение Сибири	Северная война	Отмена крепостного права	Победа над Японией
Герои	Нахимов	Талалихин	Маринеско	Рокоссовский	Конев
Наука	Фёдоров	Мечников	Соловьёв	Павлов	Карамзин
Литература	Лермонтов	Ахматова	Цветаева	Горький	Солженицын
Музыка	«Евгений Онегин»	«Лебединое озеро»	«Князь Игорь»	«Руслан и Людмила»	2-я симфония Рахманинова
Живопись	«Бурлаки на Волге»	«Грачи прилетели»	«Последний день Помпеи»	«Девочка с персиками»	«Московский дворик»
Памятные места	Спасское-Лутовиново	Прохоровское поле	Воробьевы горы	Тарханы	Троице-Сергиева лавра
Памятники природы	Красноярские столбы	Васюганское болото	Приокский заповедник	Горный Алтай	Курильские острова

Figure 17. Table from *The Concept of 'Sites of Memory': Towards a Question of Russian Historical Consciousness*, in which no First World War sites of memory are proposed.

In general, sites of memory (according to Nora) are the objects of scholarly rather than public discussion in Russia. Most often, the term is used as a theoretical framework for highly specialized studies (e.g., sites of memory of the Afghan war¹⁷²). There have been no major

¹⁷² Anna Strel'nikova, "Kollektivnaya pamyat' v gorodskom prostranstve: mesta pamyati ob Afganskoj vojne [Collective Memory in Urban Space: Places of Memory of the Afghan War]." *Interakciya. Interv'yul. Interpretaciya*, no. 6, 2011: 118-125.

studies of Russia's sites of memory, except for the polls *Name of Russia*¹⁷³ (concerning only significant personalities) and *Great Names of Russia*¹⁷⁴ (also only significant personalities, this project was created to select names for Russian airports, but its sample is also quite indicative). However, these polls were not scientific and did not consider sites of memory as a theoretical framework.

No research has been conducted on the First World War sites in the Kaliningrad region as sites of memory. However, based on the results of the study, it can be said that no site carries sufficient symbolic significance to be considered at least a regional site of memory.

In the next chapter, I will explore the current condition of the First World War memorial sites in the Kaliningrad region, examining how they are preserved and considering expert opinions on their conservation and significance.

¹⁷³ At the time of writing this thesis, the project website is down.

¹⁷⁴ The website is also down.

CHAPTER 3. CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN KALININGRAD REGION OF RUSSIA: HISTORY AND CURRENT STATE

3.1. The First World War Heritage in Kaliningrad Region

Three types of the First World War cultural heritage sites can be distinguished, which are included in the lists of cultural heritage of regional and federal level in the Kaliningrad Region:

1. War graves and cemeteries
2. Memorials and monuments
3. Buildings

The first type of sites registered in the region includes war graves and cemeteries from the First World War. Local historians estimate that there are over a thousand of them. They range from the largest burial ground in Kaliningrad, where about three thousand soldiers are buried, to individual graves located throughout the region.¹⁷⁵ There are 84 funerary objects (of federal,¹⁷⁶ regional,¹⁷⁷ and local¹⁷⁸ significance) on the state register.

¹⁷⁵ “Karta Pamyati: O Kaliningradskom Nasledii Pervoj Mirovoj 100 Let Spustya [Memory Map: On Kaliningrad's World War I Heritage 100 Years Later].” *Novyy Kaliningrad.Ru*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/community/20965116-karta-pamyati-o-kaliningradskom-nasledii-pervoy-mirovoy-100-let-spustya.html>.

¹⁷⁶ “Ob”ekty federal'nogo znacheniya [Objects of Federal Significance].” *Pravitel'stvo Kaliningradskoj oblasti*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://gov39.ru/vlast/sluzhby/gookn/obekty-federalnogo-znacheniya.php>.

¹⁷⁷ “Ob”ekty kul'turnogo naslediya regional'nogo znacheniya, nahodyashchiesya na territorii municipal'nogo obrazovaniya gorodskoj okrug «gorod Kaliningrad» [Objects of Cultural Heritage of Regional Significance Located on the Territory of the Municipality of the Urban District ‘City of Kaliningrad’].” *Kaliningrad*. Accessed May 23, 2025. https://www.klgd.ru/activity/social/culture/memory/reg_2409.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ “Ob”ekty kul'turnogo naslediya mestnogo (municipal'nogo) znacheniya, nahodyashchiesya na territorii municipal'nogo obrazovaniya gorodskoj okrug «gorod Kaliningrad» [Objects of Cultural Heritage of Local (Municipal) Significance, Located on the Territory of the Municipality of the Urban District ‘City of Kaliningrad’].” *Kaliningrad*. Accessed May 23, 2025. https://www.klgd.ru/activity/social/culture/memory/mectnie_2409.pdf

The inhabitants of East Prussia treated both their fallen soldiers and enemy soldiers with equal respect. Russian soldiers were buried in about half of all burials. Differences in the burial rites of 'native' and 'foreign' soldiers are more likely related to the shape of tombstones than to any other aspects.

There is another type of object: monuments and memorial signs, with no remains of soldiers beneath them. These are quite different memorials—ranging from large to very small, such as the one that was erected in honor of the residents of the vicinity of the village of Schrombehen, who did not return from the war. It was destroyed during the Soviet years, found accidentally by local schoolchildren, and recently restored by local historians and volunteers.¹⁷⁹ The lists of federal and regional significance include 45 monuments and memorial signs, but in fact, there are many more.

The third type of objects is buildings, which are the least represented category in the lists of federal, regional, and local significance. This category includes buildings that were constructed before the First World War but are considered significant in the context of the war for various reasons. For example: the Kronprinz Barracks (Kaliningrad), the barracks of the dragoon regiment Prince Albert of Prussia (Sovetsk¹⁸⁰), and the church with a memorial plaque to soldiers killed during the First World War on its facade (Turgenevo¹⁸¹).

¹⁷⁹ “Pamyatnik pamyati: kraevedy vosstanovili znak pavshim v Pervoj mirovoj [Monument to Memory: Local Historians Restored a Sign to the Fallen in the First World War].” *Novyj Kaliningrad.Ru*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/community/20500441-pamyati-pamyati-kraevedy-vosstanovili-znak-pavshim-v-pervoy-mirovoy-.html>.

¹⁸⁰ Former Tilsit.

¹⁸¹ Former Adlig Legitten.

3.2. The First World War Heritage Protection in Kaliningrad Region

In the second half of the 19th century, burials from the 13th to the 15th centuries were investigated in Königsberg.¹⁸² At that time, however, the focus was not on the preservation of cultural and historical tangible heritage. These were archaeological excavations aimed at studying burial sites and objects, which were later transferred to museums.

After the First World War, Germany faced the collapse of the empire, revolution, and the crisis of the Weimar Republic. Most burial sites at the time had the usual state-funded crosses placed on them. But there were exceptions, such as the burial place of 95 Russian soldiers, located about a kilometer from the village of Ushakovo¹⁸³ in the Ozersk municipal district. Here there is a tombstone of an unusual kind: it is a granite boulder that was brought from somewhere specifically for this purpose, trimmed, and inscribed with quite detailed inscriptions (see Fig. 18).

¹⁸² F. Biermann, C. Hergheligi, H. Voigt, M. Bentz, and O. Blum, “Das Gräberfeld Des 13. Bis 15. Jahrhunderts von Stangenwalde Bei Rossitten Auf Der Kurischen Nehrung–Auswertung Der Materialien Im Berliner Bestand Der Prussia-Sammlung (Ehemals Königsberg/Ostpreußen) [The 13th to 15th Century Cemetery of Stangenwalde Near Rossitten on the Curonian Spit - Evaluation of the Materials in the Berlin Holdings of the Prussia Collection (Formerly Königsberg/East Prussia)].” *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica*, no. 43, 2011: 215–345.

¹⁸³ Former Ströpken.



Figure 18. Memorial stone at the burial site of 95 Russian soldiers, located near the village of Ushakovo in the Ozersk municipal district.

Photo by Alexandr Panfilov, reproduced with permission of the author.

In 1919, the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge) was founded as a private charity. The main duties of the Commission were the preservation and maintenance of German war graves in accordance with the war graves provisions of Article 225 of the Treaty of Versailles.¹⁸⁴ The Commission maintains German cemeteries around the world. Three of them are located in Russia but have no connection to the First World War. As of 1939, there were nearly 2,200 mass and individual graves in East Prussia, which were cared for until the Second World War.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ “Über uns [About Us].” *Volksbund*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.volksbund.de/ueber-uns>

¹⁸⁵ M. Debben and W. Raschdorff, *Heldenfriedhöfe in Ostpreußen. Königsberg* [Heroes' cemeteries in East Prussia, Königsberg], 1939: 8.

During the Second World War (1941-1945), Königsberg was significantly destroyed by bombing and assaults. No information about First World War cemeteries at this time, if any, was preserved. In the following years, when Königsberg became part of the Soviet Union, the city was rapidly rebuilt without any attempt to preserve its authentic German style.¹⁸⁶ Later, during the Soviet period, there was no work on preserving the material heritage of the First World War in the region. It was only by the 1980s that enthusiasts emerged in public discourse with a proposal to identify and preserve the tangible heritage of the First World War.¹⁸⁷

In the modern (post-Soviet) Kaliningrad Region, efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of the First World War are carried out unsystematically (most often for significant historical dates) and are often undertaken not by the government but by volunteers or volunteer organizations.

In the period until 2014 (annexation of Crimea), international involvement in the identification and preservation of the First World War burials was permitted in the region. Until the end of the TACIS (Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States) program in 2007, the EU allocated 25 million euros for a separate project in the Kaliningrad Region,¹⁸⁸ including 270 thousand euros for the reconstruction of 14 First World War monuments.¹⁸⁹ Under this grant, work was also carried out to identify and catalog graves and memorial sites, but subsequently, the Kaliningrad Region government was unable to utilize these results.¹⁹⁰

In 2011, the Lithuanian NGO Military Heritage Institute (Karo paveldo institutas) approached the government of the Kaliningrad Region with a proposal to establish an archival search and

¹⁸⁶ Mitina, "Vosstanovitel'nyj period," 72.

¹⁸⁷ Pahalyuk, "Zahoroneniya i pamyatniki," 53.

¹⁸⁸ Krystyna Gomółka, "The Russian Federation in European Union Programmes." *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, sectio K–Politologia*, no. 24.1, 2017: 30

¹⁸⁹ Pahalyuk, "Zahoroneniya i pamyatniki," 59.

¹⁹⁰ "Na nemeckie zahoroneniya Pervoj mirovoj deneg ne hvatilo [There Was Not Enough Money for the German Burials of the First World War]." *Komsomol'skaya pravda*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.kaliningrad.kp.ru/daily/26023/2943360/>

restoration center to preserve the memory of Russian soldiers who died in the First World War.¹⁹¹ It is not known whether this project was implemented. It is also unclear whether the organization is currently active, as the domain of their website is no longer maintained, and according to data from the Rekvizitai website, the organization's income for 2023 was 0 euros.¹⁹² The ‘internationality’ of the organization is also questionable, as its head is Jurijus Trakšelis, an honorary member of the Academy of Military Sciences of the Russian Federation and a military pensioner of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.¹⁹³

The most important achievement in the field of preserving the cultural heritage of the First World War is the inclusion of several sites in the lists of cultural heritage of federal, regional, and local significance.

In the modern Kaliningrad Region, cultural objects can be officially protected by the state and the region in two ways. The first method is through Federal Law No. 73 ‘On Objects of Cultural Heritage’.¹⁹⁴ This is managed by the regional Monument Protection Service. According to this law, nearly all objects related to the First World War are included in the list of objects of local significance.

¹⁹¹ “Litva predlagaet sozdat' v Kaliningrade restavracionnyj centr po sohraneniyu pamyatnikov russkim voenam [Lithuania Proposes to Establish a Restoration Centre in Kaliningrad to Preserve Monuments to Russian Soldiers].” *KGD.ru*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://kgd.ru/news/society/item/9876-litva-predlagaet-sozdat-v-kaliningrade-restavracionnyj-centr-po-sohraneniyu-pamyatnikov-russkih-voinov>

¹⁹² “Karo paveldo institutas, VšĮ [War Heritage Institute, Public Institution].” *Rekvizitai*. Accessed May 23, 2025. https://rekvizitai.vz.lt/imone/viesoji_istaiga_karo_paveldo_institutas/

¹⁹³ “Trakšelis Jurijus”. *Enciklopedicheskij slovar' biografij sovremennikov «Vsyta Rossiya - XXI vek»*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://dsvf.ru/docs/trakselis.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ “Federal'nyj zakon "Ob ob"ektah kul'turnogo naslediya (pamyatnikah istorii i kul'tury) narodov Rossijskoj Federacii" ot 25.06.2002 N 73-FZ (poslednyaya redakciya) [Federal Law ‘On Objects of Cultural Heritage (Monuments of History and Culture) of the peoples of the Russian Federation’ from 25.06.2002 N 73-FZ (last edition)].” *Konsul'tant Plyus*. Accessed May 23, 2025. https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_37318/

The second method of accounting for such objects is the ‘Law on Commemorating the Memory of Those Who Died in the Defence of the Fatherland’.¹⁹⁵ The Ministry of Defence is responsible in this case. This law applies only to the burials of Russian soldiers. Monuments are not covered by this law, nor are purely German burials. A burial can be accounted for in both ways: by the Monument Protection Service and by the Ministry of Defence. However, monuments are exclusively on the ‘civilian’ register, just like the burials of German soldiers.

It is important to bear in mind that the municipal government cannot finance the conservation or restoration of sites listed as regional and federal heritage, as this would be considered as an embezzlement. Specialists also note that registering a site is costly, and most municipalities or regions are not prepared to allocate large sums of money for this.¹⁹⁶

3.3. Current State of the First World War Heritage in Kaliningrad Region

The negative attitude towards the ‘imperialist war’ under the Soviet Union had a significant impact on the monuments of the First World War. In some places, they were simply not preserved, and in others, they were deliberately destroyed. For example, on the site of one of the graves in the town of Gusev, there is now an apartment block.¹⁹⁷

As a result, the condition of the monuments that are currently registered (and in theory protected by the state) varies considerably. Some of them are in excellent condition, despite apparent neglect. Others are in very poor condition, despite recent repairs (Fig. 19). For

¹⁹⁵ “Zakon RF ot 14 yanvarya 1993 g. N 4292-1 "Ob uvekovechenii pamyati pogibshih pri zashchite Otechestva" (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami) [Law of the Russian Federation of 14 January 1993, N 4292-1 ‘On Commemoration of Those Who Died in Defence of the Fatherland’ (Amended and Supplemented)].” *Garant*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://base.garant.ru/1583840/>

¹⁹⁶ Konstantin Pahalyuk, in discussion with the author, 20 February 2025.

¹⁹⁷ Pahalyuk, “Zahoroneniya i pamyatniki,” 53.

example, the burial ground located about four kilometers from the village of Sovkhoznoye¹⁹⁸ was renovated for the jubilee year of 2014. Six months later, a hurricane brought down trees that damaged the fence and the cross. After some time, minimal additional restoration was performed, as the municipalities could not allocate funds for a full restoration.¹⁹⁹



Figure 19. The burial site of 19 Russian and 30 German soldiers is located about four kilometers from the village of Sovkhoznoe (after the hurricane and before the second restoration).

Photo by Alexandr Panfilov, reproduced with permission of the author.

In 2014, the whole world celebrated the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. In the Kaliningrad Region, this significant anniversary was actively commemorated with flower laying, visits from federal officials, the opening of three new monuments, and a reenactment of the Battle of Gumbinnen. At that time, the regional budget allocated 18 million roubles²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Former Grünweitschen.

¹⁹⁹ Alexander Panfilov, in discussion with the author, 24 February 2025.

²⁰⁰ ~200.000 euros at the exchange rate on 15.05.2025.

for the repair of 23 monuments as part of the Kaliningrad Region's targeted program *Preservation, Use, Promotion and State Protection of Cultural Heritage Objects (2013-2015)*.²⁰¹ Meanwhile, the total estimate for the project was calculated at 48.7 million roubles.²⁰²²⁰³

Evgeny Maslov, deputy head of the regional state service for the protection of cultural heritage, reporting to the deputies of the regional Duma, said that they had planned two activities: the identification of First World War graves and restoration. However, due to budget constraints, only Russian and Russian-German graves will be restored.²⁰⁴

The official status is no guarantee that the object is in good condition, says local historian Alexandr Panfilov. If the monument is registered, there are better chances that money will be allocated for its repair. But this is not always the case. A striking example is the burial of one Russian and 12 German soldiers one and a half kilometers from the village of Olkhovatka²⁰⁵ in the Gusev municipal district (Fig. 20). “This burial is in terrible condition. It is simply excavated; fragments of monuments and pieces of bones with vertebrae stick out of the ground. It's unclear how it was even put on the register. Apparently, nobody ever went there at all. They

²⁰¹ “Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva Kaliningradskoj oblasti ot 30 oktyabrya 2012 g. N 826 “O celevoj programme Kaliningradskoj oblasti “Sohranenie, ispol'zovanie, populyarizaciya i gosudarstvennaya ohrana ob"ektov kul'turnogo naslediya (2013-2015 gody)” (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami) (utratiло silu) [Resolution of the Government of the Kaliningrad Region of 30 October 2012 N 826 ‘On the Target Programme of the Kaliningrad Region “Preservation, Use, Promotion and State Protection of Cultural Heritage Objects (2013-2015)” (amended and supplemented) (no longer valid)].” *Garant*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://base.garant.ru/9772202/>

²⁰² ~539.000 euros at the exchange rate on 15.05.2025.

²⁰³ “Na rekonstrukciyu ob"ektov Pervoj mirovoj vojny vydeleno bolee 18 mln. rublej [Over 18 Million Roubles Have Been Allocated for the Reconstruction of World War I Sites].” *FGBUK “Agentstvo po upravleniyu i ispol'zovaniyu pamyatnikov istorii i kul'tury”*. Accessed May 23, 2025. https://auiipik.ru/news/na-rekonstrukciyu-obektov-pervoj-mirovoj-vojny-vydeleno-bolee-18-mln-rublej/?special_version=Y

²⁰⁴ “V Kaliningradskoj oblasti otremoniruyut pamyatniki vremen Pervoj mirovoj vojny [World War I Monuments Will Be Repaired in the Kaliningrad Region].” *KLOPS*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://klops.ru/news/obschestvo/65115-v-kaliningradskoy-oblasti-otremontiruyut-pamyatniki-vremen-pervoy-mirovoy-voyny>

²⁰⁵ Former Großwaltersdorf.

just made a description, sent it to the Ministry of Defence, and that was the end”.²⁰⁶ However, after some time, the burial ground was designated as a heritage site.²⁰⁷



Figure 20. The burial of one Russian soldier and 12 German soldiers near the village of Olkhovatka in the Gusev municipal district.

Photo by Alexandr Panfilov, reproduced with permission of the author.

3.3.1. Actors Involved in Preservation of the Heritage

In the modern Kaliningrad Region, three main actors can be distinguished that are involved in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the First World War:

1. The regional government (including local municipalities and cultural state organisations)

²⁰⁶ “Karta Pamyati”, *Novyj Kaliningrad.Ru*.

²⁰⁷ Alexander Panfilov, in discussion with the author, 24 February 2025.

2. Volunteers and volunteer organisations, local historians
3. Innovation cluster 'Technopolis GS' (business).

The government of the Kaliningrad Region pays some attention to the preservation of monuments and burial sites related to the First World War. An important role in this work is played by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the region, as well as regional and municipal authorities which coordinate projects for the preservation of cultural heritage objects.

The regional government supports programs for the restoration of monuments and war graves. These programs include work to restore memorials, improve the condition of cemeteries, and enhance the areas where the burials of First World War soldiers are located. Municipalities, in turn, maintain local order by caring for war memorials.

From 2021 to 2023, there was a program to bring cultural heritage objects into economic turnover. Loans were provided for up to 15 years on a non-interest basis. The funds could be spent on both design and construction work. During the first five years of project implementation, up to half of the loan amount was written off. The main idea of the program was that the state provides the money, and the cultural heritage object itself starts to generate profit later. A total of 4 billion roubles²⁰⁸ was allocated during the period of the program.²⁰⁹

Volunteers also play a significant role in preserving the cultural heritage of the First World War. These activists organize themselves into groups, often cooperating with historical societies, local administrations, and international foundations. Their efforts focus on preserving and restoring monuments, war graves, and other historical sites related to the events of the war.

²⁰⁸ ~44.25 million euros at the exchange rate on 15.05.2025.

²⁰⁹ “«Vernut', uspet', spasti»: pochemu Kaliningradskoj oblasti nuzhna programma po vosstanovleniyu pamyatnikov [“To Return, to Have Time, to Save”: Why the Kaliningrad Region Needs a Programme to Restore Monuments].” *KGD.RU*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://kgd.ru/news/society/item/109825-vernut-uspet-spasti-pochemu-kaliningradskoj-oblasti-nuzhna-programma-po-vosstanovleniyu-pamyatnikov>

Volunteers participate in restoration work, cleaning of territories, and the installation of memorial plaques and information boards. They often conduct expeditions to search for forgotten or abandoned military cemeteries, restoring historical justice and drawing public attention to these sites. Importantly, volunteers also engage in research activities, collecting archival data to better understand the fates of soldiers and the historical contexts of burial sites.

For example, in 2018, volunteers (including local historians, re-enactors, and concerned citizens) restored the First World War memorial sign that had been installed in the mid-1920s in the village of Moskovskoye in the Bagrationovsk municipal district.²¹⁰ Local residents believe that the memorial sign was destroyed (shot and then broken into four parts) in the 1970s. Volunteers excavated and restored the sign and initiated the process of including the site in the regional heritage lists (see Fig. 21).²¹¹ The site was subsequently listed as a protected heritage site.²¹²

²¹⁰ Former Partheinen.

²¹¹ “Pamyatnik pamyati”, *Novyj Kaliningrad.Ru*.

²¹² Alexander Panfilov, in discussion with the author, 24 February 2025.



Figure 21. A memorial sign restored by volunteers in the village of Moskovskoye in the Bagrationovsk municipal district.

Photo made by Olga Voyt for KGD.RU.

At the moment, the most visible volunteer movement in the region is the Keepers of Ruins, founded in 2020. Their main focus is on ruined churches and castles, as “expressive ruins are a highlight of the region, and we aim to preserve them and give them a 'second life' as aesthetic and landscaped historical parks and event venues.”²¹³

Vasily Plitin, the leader of the movement, defines the main function of their organization: “The state has neither the resources nor the desire to engage in the full restoration of many sites, and the interest of local residents in the restoration of these sites is not very high either. This all has legitimate reasons. [...] You drive around the region and see that some sites have simply been

²¹³ Ibid.

turned into rubbish dumps. And that is why even if we currently only remove rubbish from some sites, everything changes for the better. We focus on the sites that are the most interesting from a historical point of view. Yes, East Prussia is gone, but it has historical value, and people come to see the remnants of East Prussia, a culture that is unusual for us.”²¹⁴ The First World War is not the focus of the organization’s work²¹⁵.

The Council for Culture under the Governor of the Kaliningrad Region was attempting to bring together the government and volunteers/local historians to create a common agenda. The Council, which still exists, includes the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Kaliningrad Region, the Minister of Sport, museum directors, university rectors, professors, writers, and honored residents of the region. In the agenda of the Council's meetings for 2014, three out of twelve tasks pertain to the First World War (discussion of the installation of monuments), while in 2015, there is no mention of the war in any of the materials.²¹⁶

The innovation cluster Technopolis GS (Gusev, Kaliningrad Region) stands apart from government and volunteer organisations as a representative of private business. The main areas of production are microelectronics and consumer electronics. GS Technopolis develops and manufactures Russian SSDs, microprocessors, LEDs, and solutions for smart homes and smart cities. At the same time, the cluster has an educational centre, a modern residential area, infrastructure, a creative environment, a comprehensive educational programme, and a developed volunteer movement.

²¹⁴ “«Hraniteli ruin»: Zabota o pamyatnikah dolzhna byt' kak nacional'naya ideya [Keepers of Ruins: Taking Care of Monuments Should Be Like a National Idea].” *Kaliningrad RBC*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://kaliningrad.rbc.ru/kaliningrad/20/01/2022/61e6ac569a794799aa6d8c2f>

²¹⁵ Keepers of Ruins’ staff member, private message to author, 14 March 2025.

²¹⁶ “Sovet po kul'ture pri gubernatore [Governor's Council for Culture].” *Pravitel'stvo Kaliningradskoj oblasti*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://cultura.gov39.ru/ministerstvo/sovet-po-kulture-pri-gubernatore.php>

Preservation of cultural heritage is one of the main ‘side’ activities of the cluster. Among the projects implemented or financed by the cluster are the historical and cultural project ‘Thousands Names’ (research and registration of First World War burial sites), improvement of military burial sites from the First World War, the creation of a Guide to the Traces of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region, the establishment of a memorial park dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the victory of Russian arms in the Battle of Gumbinnen, and the opening of the monument To the Memory of the Forgotten War that Changed the Course of History.²¹⁷ Otherwise, businesses of any type show no interest in the region's cultural heritage.

3.3.2. New Monuments and Projects (2014-2024)

There are quite many the First World War monuments in the Kaliningrad Region. Some of them were installed immediately after the Great War. For example, the monument to those who died during the First World War in the town of Neman was erected in 1924 with funds from local residents. After 1945, it was demolished and restored only in 1991.²¹⁸ A similar fate had other monuments: in the Novo-Moskovskoe settlement²¹⁹ (it was not restored),²²⁰ in the Pyatidorozhnoe settlement²²¹ (restored in 2007, included in the list of municipal heritage)²²², in the Pogranichny settlement²²³ (restored in the 1990s),²²⁴ and others.

²¹⁷ “Sohranenie kul'turnogo naslediya [Preservation of Cultural Heritage].” *Technopolis GS*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://technopolis.gs/creative-space/cultural-heritage/>

²¹⁸ “Pamyatnik pogibshim v gody Pervoj mirovoj vojny [Monument to Those Who Died during the First World War].” *Prussia39*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.prussia39.ru/sight/index.php?sid=226>

²¹⁹ Former Poplitten.

²²⁰ “Pamyatnik voynam, pogibshim v gody Pervoj mirovoj vojny [Monument to Soldiers Who Died During the First World War].” *Prussia39*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.prussia39.ru/sight/index.php?sid=18>

²²¹ Former Bladiu.

²²² “Pamyatnik voynam, pogibshim v gody Pervoj mirovoj vojny [Monument to Soldiers Who Died During the First World War].” *Prussia39*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.prussia39.ru/sight/index.php?sid=22>

²²³ Former Germsdorf.

²²⁴ “Pamyatnik voynam, pogibshim v gody Pervoj mirovoj vojny [Monument to Soldiers Who Died During the First World War].” *Prussia39*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.prussia39.ru/sight/index.php?sid=29>

The ‘renaissance’ of the monuments of the First World War took place in the anniversary year of 2014, when most of the new monuments were opened. On 30 May 2014, a monument to the heroes of the First World War was unveiled in Kaliningrad (Fig. 22). The 11-meter-high monument depicts three types of soldiers of the Russian Empire who took part in the fighting: a noble officer (in the center with a rifle in his hands), a peasant, and a *raznochinets*.²²⁵ They personify the united contribution of the people in defense of Russia's interests in the ‘forgotten war.’

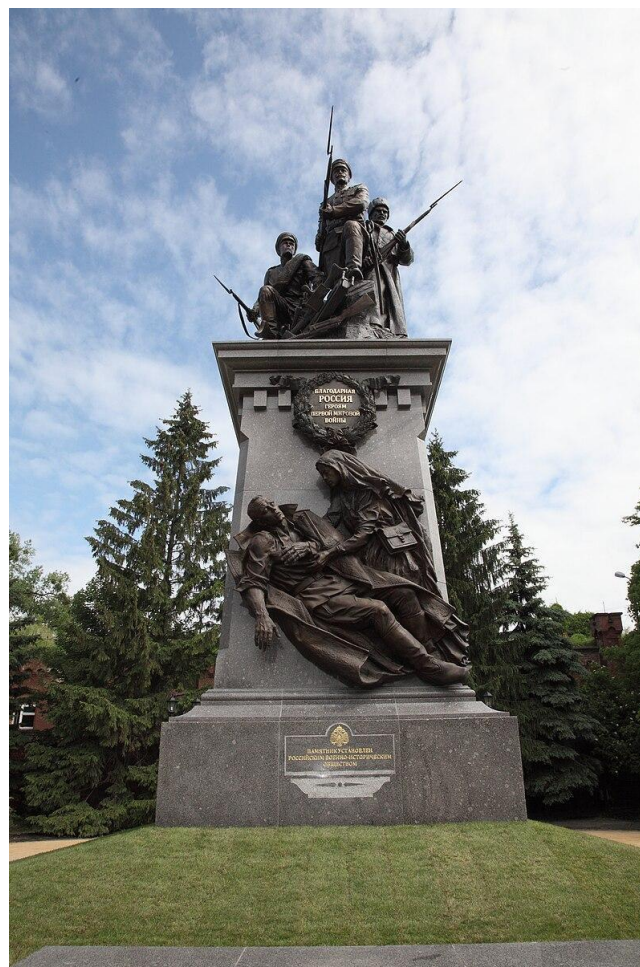


Figure 22. Monument to the heroes of the First World War in Kaliningrad.

Photo by LunniyMalchik for Wikimedia Commons. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons ‘With attribution - With conditions’ 4.0 International licence.

²²⁵ In the Russian Empire, *raznochinets* was a person who did not belong to any of the established estates.

On 24 August 2014, a memorial park dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the victory in the Battle of Gumbinnen was inaugurated on the territory of GS Technopolis (Gusev). The monument To the Memory of the Forgotten War that Changed the Course of History (Fig. 23) was installed in the park. The concept of the composition reflects the social tragedy of the First World War. The universal catastrophe is expressed through a soldier crucified on the 'wheel of fate' and two women stretching out their hands to him—a widow and a mother. The pedestal of the monument is designed in the form of cabinets destroyed during the bombing, in the wreckage of which are embedded photographs, maps, and military documentation from that time. Next to the monument are stands with historical references to the events of the First World War.

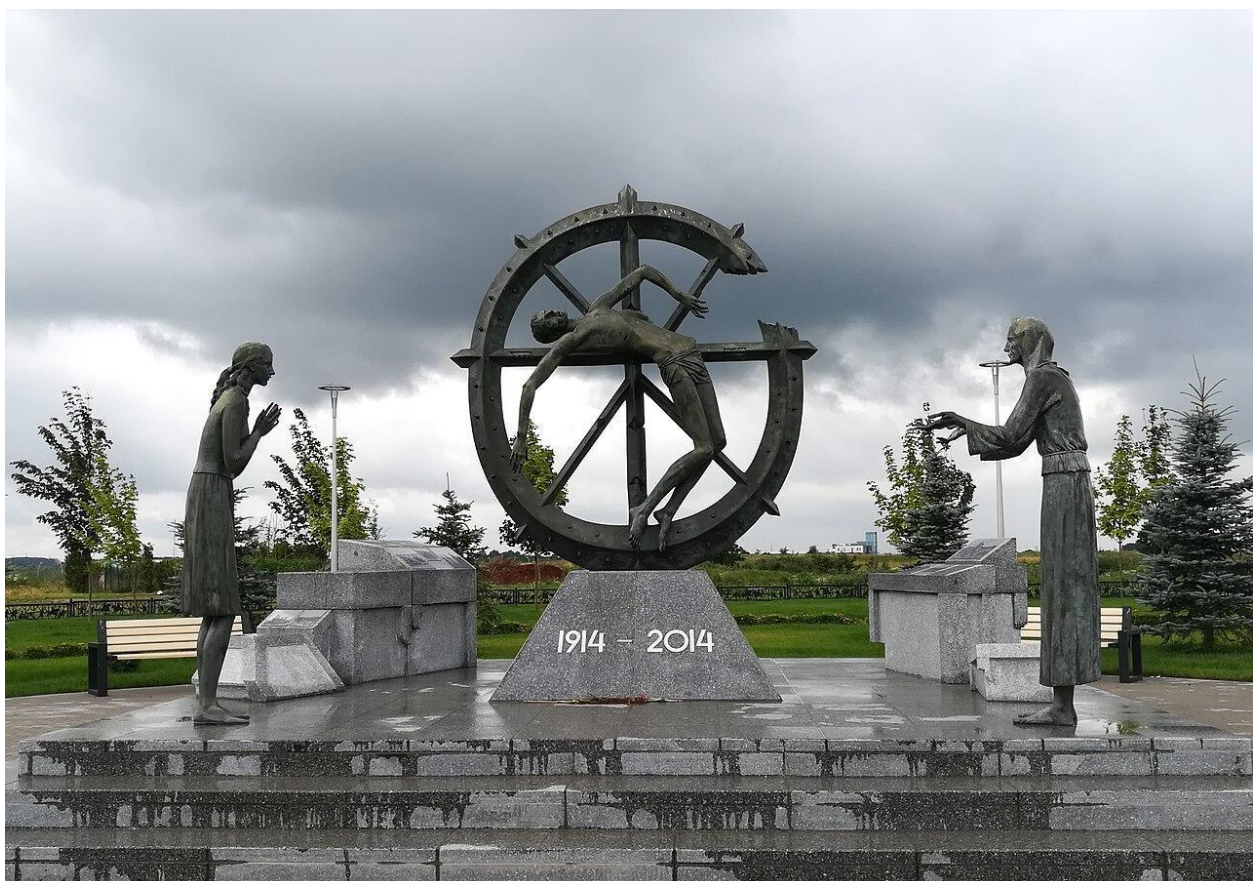


Figure 23. Monument To the Memory of the Forgotten War that Changed the Course of History in Gusev. Photo by Ekaterina Tikun for Wikimedia Commons. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

On the same day, another monument was unveiled in Gusev: Bayonet Attack, dedicated to the Battle of Gumbinnen in 1914. The monument is a sculpture of a Russian soldier running towards enemy positions with a bayonet fixed to his rifle (Fig. 24).



Figure 24. Bayonet Attack Monument in Gusev.

Photo from Prussia39.ru

In 2024, a new monument was erected in Gusev as part of the historical festival *The First World War: Fate of Russia and the World*. It is a glass pyramid, inside which exhibits dedicated to the Battle of Gumbinnen are displayed: a rusty helmet, shell casings, bayonets, and other artifacts from the First World War (Fig. 25).



Figure 25. Glass pyramid with artefacts of the First World War in Gusev.

Photo by Igor Vishnyakov for kaskad.tv.

A number of other projects were also realized during the anniversary years. Among them, one can highlight maps and guidebooks, tourist routes, and databases. Alexander Panfilov compiled a map *The First World War I Heritage* (Fig. 26). He included all the First World War memorial sites listed in the region's cultural heritage lists (monuments, graves, commemorative plaques). To create this map, Panfilov independently conducted research, visited, and photographed these places, without being part of any organization and using his own funds, with the help of friends. He explains the necessity of such a project with the words ‘better this way than no way’²²⁶ (referring to the lack of realized projects of this kind at that time).

²²⁶ Alexander Panfilov, in discussion with the author, 24 February 2025.

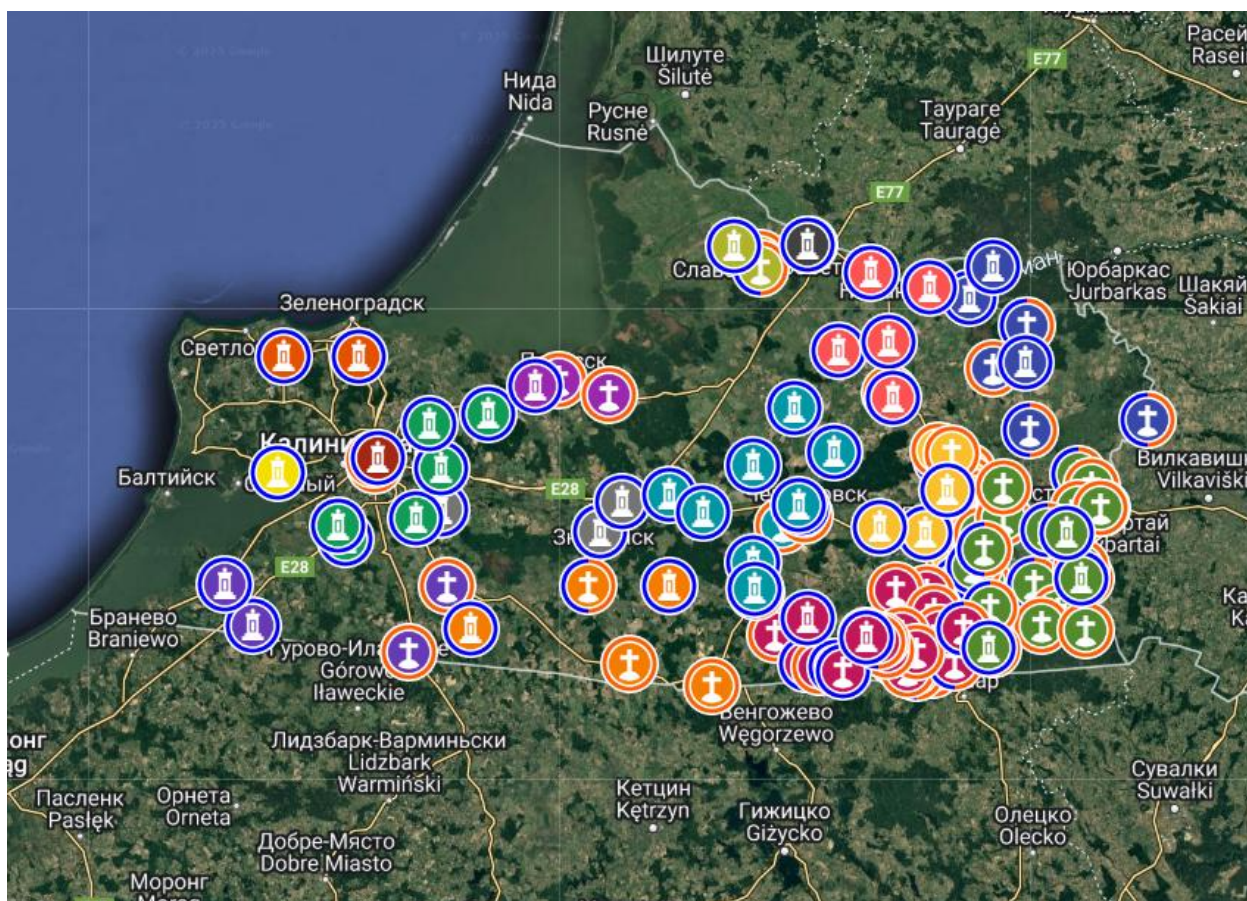


Figure 26. *The First World War Heritage map* made by Alexander Panfilov.

Screenshot made by the author from Google My Maps.

A similar project is *Guide to the Traces of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region*²²⁷, funded and developed by Technopolis GS and the Kaliningrad Museum of History and Art. The guide also includes a map (Fig. 27) which features 89 objects, fewer than those on Panfilov's map. The objects are categorized into monuments, burials, and buildings. All these objects, along with photos, descriptions, and routes, can also be found on the site.

Another important section of the site is Routes. One can choose the mode of travel (on foot, by car, by bicycle, or by bus), duration (several hours, one day, or several days), and territory (Kaliningrad, Kaliningrad Region, Gusev, etc.). For example, route No. 2 offers a walking or

²²⁷ "Putevoditel' po sledam Pervoj mirovoj vojny v Kaliningradskoj oblasti [A Guide to the Traces of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region]." Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://fww-explore.com/>

cycling tour to the sites associated with the Battle of Gumbinnen-Goldap on 20 August 1914.²²⁸

All stops related to the First World War are listed within the route.

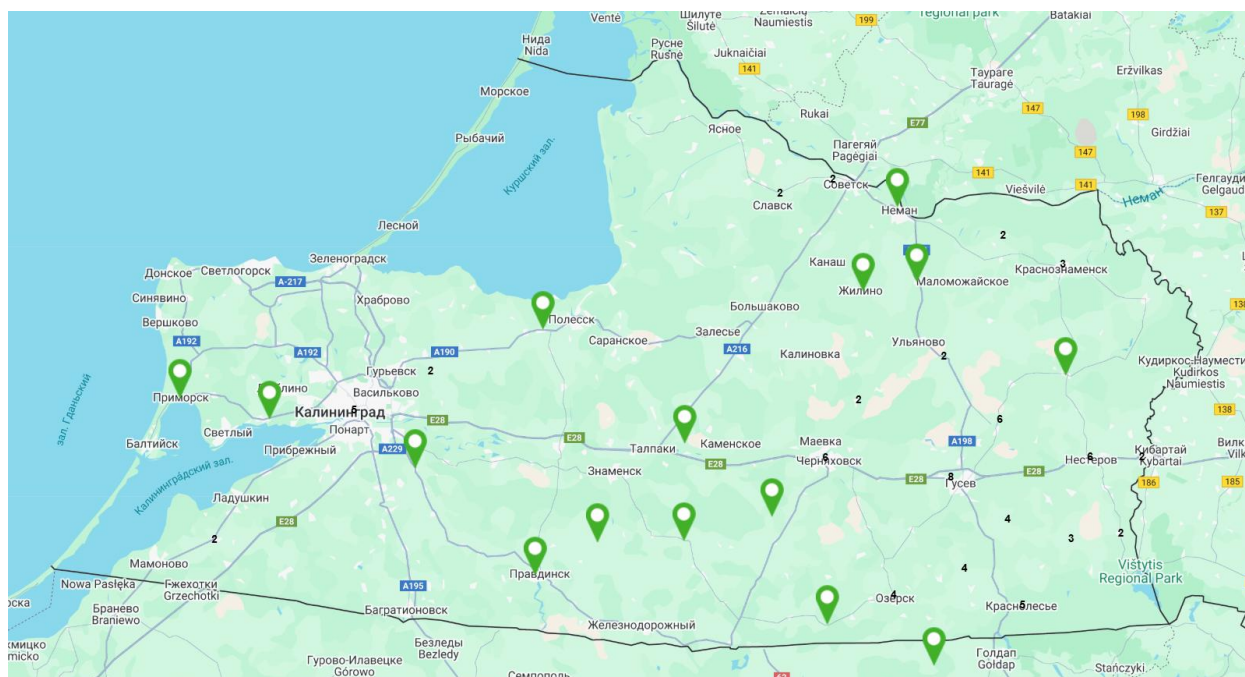


Figure 27. Map of the First World War memorial sites made by Technopolis GS and the Kaliningrad Museum of History and Art.

Screenshot made by the author from fww-explore.com.

The Kaliningrad Museum of History and Art has extensive experience in developing tourist routes to historical sites. Mikhail Badamshin, a researcher at the museum and head of the Azimut tourist club, implemented the project *Front Roads of Grandfathers and Fathers, Tourist Routes of Sons and Grandsons* dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gumbinnen and the 70th anniversary of the East Prussian Offensive Operation.²²⁹ The project

²²⁸ “Marshrut № 2 peshego ili velosipednogo pohoda po mestam, svyazannym s Gumbinnen-Gol’dapskim srazheniem 20 avgusta 1914 g. [Route No. 2 of a Walking or Cycling Tour of Places Connected with the Battle of Gumbinnen-Goldap on 20 August 1914].” *Putevoditel’ po sledam Pervoj mirovoj vojny v Kaliningradskoj oblasti*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://fww-explore.com/routes/route-2/>

²²⁹ Badamshin, “Voenno-istoricheskie marshruty,” 461.

was partially financed by the government of the Kaliningrad Region in the amount of 90 thousand roubles.²³⁰

In 2014, a collection of *Military Historical Routes of Russia*²³¹ was published. The Kaliningrad Region is represented by two routes, one of which is related to the First World War: *Roads of the First World War*.²³² The route includes 14 stops, starting from the Russian-German cemetery in the village of Pushkino to the monument to Russian heroes and soldiers who fell during the First World War in Kaliningrad. Also mentioned in the itinerary are re-enactment festivals that regularly take place in the region, but in 2024, the reconstruction of the Battle of Gumbinnen was cancelled. According to the festival organizers, "due to the current situation,²³³ holding such emotional events may adversely affect both participants and spectators."²³⁴

In 2015, A.A. Zhiron from Baltic Federal University created the Geoinformation System *Monumental Memory of the First World War in East Prussia*.²³⁵ The aim of the project was to identify the maximum number of lost First World War monuments and memorials within the borders of East Prussia.

In 2020, Y.G. Shepel from Baltic Federal University also created a database in Microsoft Access to systematise information (history of creation, description, current state, sources of information) about the monuments of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region. All

²³⁰ ~995 euros at the exchange rate on 15.05.2025.

²³¹ O.P. Safonov, M.Yu. Myagkov, Korlev, N.V., and Konovalova, Yu.E., "Voenno-istoricheskie marshruty Rossii [Military-historical Routes of Russia]." *Istoriya.rf*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://histrf.ru/read/articles/voienno-istoricheskie-marshruty-rossii>

²³² "Dorogami Pervoj mirovoj vojny [The Roads of the First World War]." *Istoriya.rf*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://histrf.ru/uploads/media/default/0001/21/223476d0ba8669d86714a23900d2719525664f89.pdf>

²³³ Meaning the current Special Military Operation and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

²³⁴ "Rekonstrukciyu PMV v Guseve otmenili iz-za «neblagotvornogo vliyaniya na zritelej» [Reconstruction of WWI in Gusev Cancelled due to 'Adverse Effect on Spectators']." *Novyj Kaliningrad*. Accessed May 23, 2025. <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/afisha/festival/news/24096406-rekonstruktsiyu-pmv-v-guseve-otmenili-iz-za-neblagotvornogo-vliyaniya-na-zriteley.html>

²³⁵ Zhiron, "Sozдание geoinformacionnoj sistemy."

objects are divided into the following groups: lost and preserved war monuments, modern monuments, war graves, and memorial plaques.²³⁶

Thus, it can be seen that the cultural heritage of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region remains an important aspect of regional policy. At the same time, there are problems related to its preservation. Despite the presence of a significant number of cultural heritage sites, including war graves, memorials, and buildings, the region faces many challenges in their protection. One of the key problems is the lack of systematic efforts to preserve these sites, which often leaves the initiative in the hands of volunteers and local enthusiasts. Many monuments and burial sites are in poor condition or were destroyed during the Soviet period, when attitudes towards the ‘imperialist war’ were negative.

Financial and legal barriers also make heritage preservation difficult. Municipal authorities cannot finance the restoration of monuments of federal or regional significance, and the process of inscribing sites on the cultural heritage register requires substantial funds. Nevertheless, certain steps have been taken, such as the allocation of funds for the restoration and installation of monuments for the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014.

International co-operation in this field, which stopped after 2014 due to political changes, is also important. This resulted in many initiatives on identification and restoration of monuments remaining unfinished.

Thus, despite the existence of significant cultural heritage of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region, its preservation and restoration remain problematic and require more active involvement of the state and the international community.

²³⁶ Shepel', “Pamyatniki Pervoj mirovoj vojny.”

CONCLUSION

As this thesis has demonstrated, the historical memory of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region is a specific phenomenon formed at the intersection of several historical, political, and cultural layers. While the First World War occupies a marginal place in official Russian memory, in the Kaliningrad Region, this memory is more visible through the landscape, monuments, war cemeteries, and rare acts of memorialization. However, this memory remains fragmented and often depends on initiatives from the grassroots, as well as limited interest from the regional authorities (and, consequently, funding). The results of the survey, designed and conducted within this thesis, indicate that Kaliningrad residents believe the regional government should preserve heritage sites, while in reality this is primarily done by volunteers. Thus, volunteering at these sites appears to be a 'safe' form of social activity for Russians, with the preservation of First World War heritage sites being more of a personal interest for volunteers than a regional focus.

This research was limited for a number of reasons. First, the research had to be conducted entirely online. The successful completion of the research demonstrates how research on Russia can be conducted by researchers abroad in the current circumstances that limit access to fieldwork and primary sources, i.e archival, to certain categories of researchers. Online research requires a smaller budget, offers greater anonymity for respondents, and ensures researchers' safety outside Russia, if this is the objective. Secondly, historical memory is a dynamic, multi-layered phenomenon, and its analysis is impossible without taking into account the current political situation and the changing international environment, especially in Russian-European relations (and related territories).

In answering the main research question, it can be argued that Kaliningrad's memory of the First World War is largely 'passive.' It exists mainly in the form of tangible heritage (Russian-German war cemeteries, monuments, buildings) and rare reflections about it but is rarely part of an active memorial policy on local or regional level. The appearance of new First World War monuments in the region seems less about memorization designed to further help local residents understand and appropriate the First World War as part of their collective memory and more about fostering a new wave of mnemonic patriotism.

Regarding the attitude of regional authorities and residents toward the monuments of the First World War, we can say that it is ambivalent. There are some measures to preserve certain objects. However, many burial sites are in poor condition. Residents, especially young people, tend not to recognize the importance of these sites. Meanwhile, cultural activists, local historians, and researchers are actively engaged in the important work of preserving this memory by developing alternative, more inclusive narratives.

Here, it is reasonable to refer to the concept of care without conservation (curated decay²³⁷). Such objects can be preserved for a long time with minimal intervention, but this does not mean they should be left untouched. Minimal cleaning and monitoring of burial sites would be an improvement over current practices at most sites.

To answer the question whether one of the First World War memorial sites in the area could be considered another regional or national site of memory (according to Pierre Nora), it should be noted that this is unlikely in their current state. While some sites (e.g., the Monument to the Memory of the Forgotten War that Changed the Course of History in Gusev or the Battle of Gumbinnen) may well become such sites in the future, they do not yet function as symbolic

²³⁷ Caitlin DeSilvey, *Curated Decay, Heritage Beyond Saving*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

‘anchors’ of collective memory. The institutionalization of such sites is limited by the absence of state or regional memory policies, weak inclusion in educational and tourist practices, and a general distrust of German heritage in the post-Soviet space, which prevents these sites from becoming meaningful sites of memory for local communities. However, this particular region, as a space of multinational memory, can stimulate the rethinking of individual sites as ‘bridges’ between different historical layers.

In the future, this topic could be further developed: for example, as a comprehensive comparative study of the memory and heritage of the First World War in various former parts of Germany and Austria-Hungary, which today belong to Russia and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It would also be useful to study cross-national projects for the preservation of war cemeteries and monuments and their impact on the formation of transnational memory. Kaliningrad is a unique territory for analyzing how memory can function beyond a homogeneous national narrative under highly restrictive memory regime, and therefore it requires a deeper and more comprehensive study.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Questionnaire (originally in Russian)

1. General Knowledge

1.1 Please name the dates of the First World War

[open answer]

1.2. Select from the list all the countries that won the First World War:

Russian Empire

German Empire

British Empire

Ottoman Empire

United States of America

Austro-Hungarian Empire

France

1.3. Select from the list all the countries that were allied with Russia in the First World War:

German Empire

British Empire

Ottoman Empire

United States

Austro-Hungarian Empire

France

1.4. Name one or more events of the First World War that you know:

[open answer].

2. Media Image of the War

2.1 Name the films about the First World War that you have seen or can recall:

[open response]

2.2. Name the books (or authors who wrote) about the First World War that you have read or that you can recall:

[open response]

3. Personal Experience

3.1 Did any of your ancestors participate in the First World War?

Yes

No

Don't know

3.2. Does your family keep any memorabilia (uniforms, letters, photographs, awards, etc.) about the First World War? If yes, which ones?

[open answer]

3.3. Do you know if there are any memorial places (monuments, burials, etc.) of the First World War in the Kaliningrad Region?

Yes

No

3.4. Have you visited any of these places? If yes, which ones?

[open answer]

3.5. In total, there are more than 100 memorial sites (burials, memorials and commemorative plaques) of the First World War in the Kaliningrad region. In your opinion, is it necessary to preserve these memorial sites?

Yes

No

Don't know

3.6. If you think these memorial sites should be preserved, who do you think should be responsible for cleaning/restoration/preservation?

[open response]

3.7. Who do you think should fund projects to preserve WWI memorial sites?

[open response]

3.8. Have you attended exhibitions, lectures and other events in Kaliningrad Region dedicated to the First World War? If yes, which ones?

[open answer].

4. Socio-demographic Characteristics

4.1. Indicate your age

4.2. Indicate the highest level of education you have received:

Secondary (school)

Secondary vocational (college)

Higher (bachelor's degree)

Higher (master's degree and above)

4.3. Name the city where you live (have lived) in the Kaliningrad Region:

[open answer]

4.4. How long have you lived in Kaliningrad region:

All your life

10 years and more

5 years and more

1-4 years

Less than a year

4.5. If you have lived in the Kaliningrad Region all your life, please indicate, if known, how long your ancestors have lived in the Kaliningrad Region:

[open answer]

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