Anti-War Activists Stage 'Guerrilla' Protests on Victory Day

May 09, 2022

Anti-war graffiti in the southern Russian city of Volgograd. **philippenzo / Instagram**

Russians opposed to the invasion of Ukraine staged a series of protests Monday as the country marked Victory Day, the anniversary of the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany.

Some of the anonymous protests included anti-war messages on the homepage of a pro-Kremlin online news website, graffiti in the southern Russia city of Volgograd, and hackers who targeted Russia's television listings.

Victory Day is one of Russia's most popular holidays and is traditionally marked by military parades in cities across the country. In recent years, the celebrations have been promoted by the Kremlin as a way to rally support for the Armed Forces and foster patriotism.

Embed:

A series of anti-war articles appeared on pro-Kremlin news website Lenta.ru on Monday
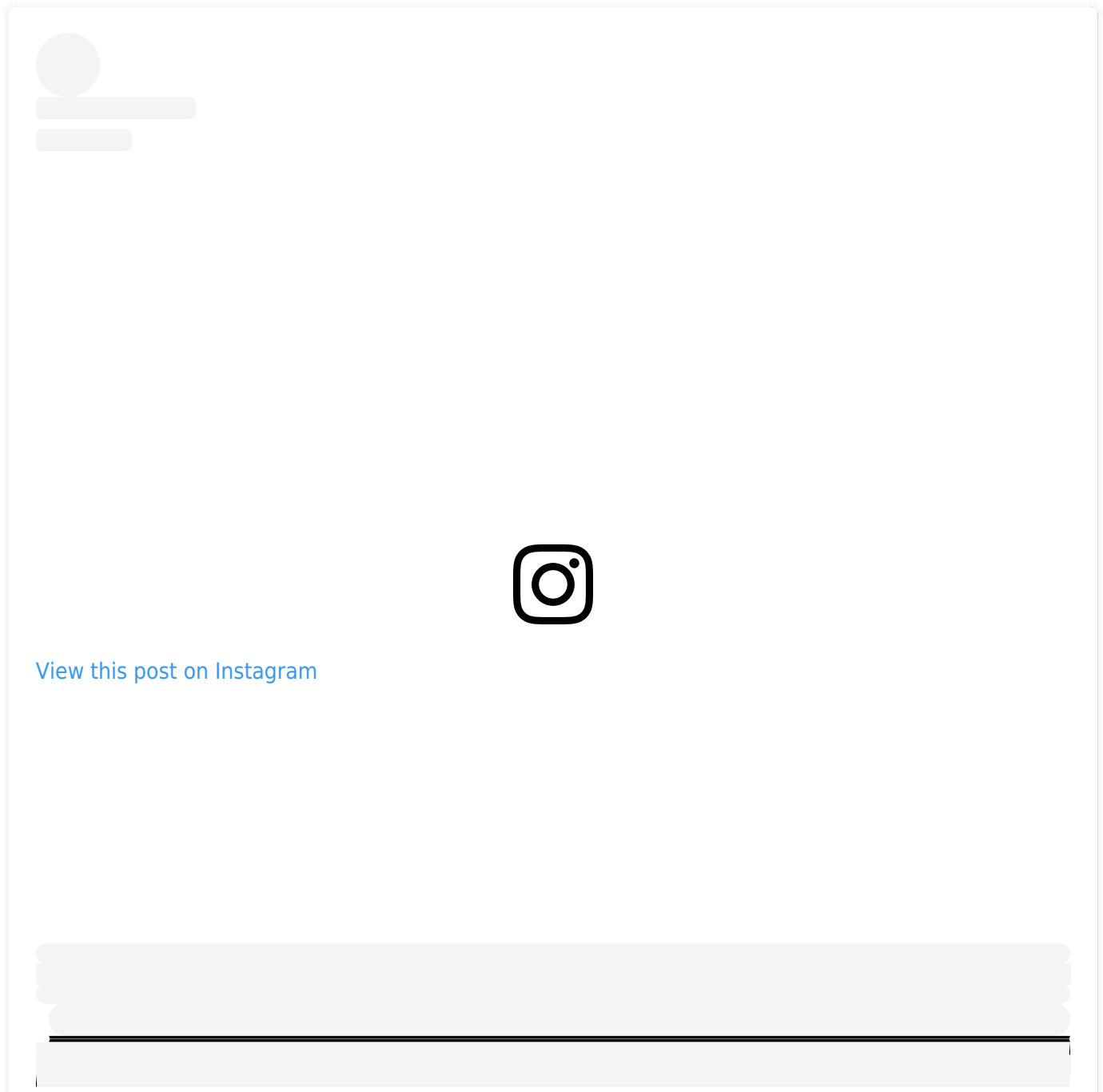
morning, including one with the headline "Vladimir Putin has became a pathetic dictator and paranoic".

Two members of staff, Yegor Polyakov and Alexander Miroshnikov, later [said](#) they were responsible for the stunt, and that they had been fired as a result of their actions.

A crackdown by the Russian authorities on any expression of opposition to the war in Ukraine means that activists have been forced to find increasingly more inventive ways of expressing dissent.

A few hours before the homepage of Lenta.ru was altered, satellite TV users noticed that the listings for 9 May had been [changed](#) to read "the blood of thousands of Ukrainians and hundreds of their murdered children are on your hands".

Embed:

View this post on Instagram

And anti-war graffiti appeared overnight in the southern city of Volgograd that – under its Soviet-era name of Stalingrad – saw some of the most bloody fighting of World War II.

The street [artwork](#) showed dozens of coffins, and the slogan "Zinc is ours!" – a reference to the metal traditionally used in the containers for deceased military personnel.

Russian President Vladimir Putin [made](#) a direct link between the sacrifice of Soviet soldiers in World War II and Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine on Monday when he addressed the troops taking part in a military parade on Red Square in central Moscow.

Embed:

Several protesters were arrested at so-called Immortal Regiment marches, which take place in Russian cities on Victory Day in remembrance of the 27 million Soviet citizens who died in the war.

A man was detained in St. Petersburg for carrying a placard with the photo of a Holocaust survivor killed during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, [according](#) to media outlet Fontanka.ru.

And in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, local Vladimir Saltevsky was [detained](#) for carrying a banner at an Immortal Regiment march that read "We're ashamed of you, grandchildren. We fought for peace, but you chose war."

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