

Title: Who Makes Local Memories?: The Case of Sevastopol after World War II

Keywords: Sevastopol; World War II; Crimean War; monuments; memorials; city planning; localism; local identification

Abstract:

Sevastopol, since becoming a part of independent Ukraine in 1991 (and part of the Ukrainian SSSR for decades before) has consistently and overwhelmingly voted for pro-Russian candidates in each national election. While many political commentators have noted the demographics of predominately Russian speakers and the presence of the Russian fleet in the ports to explain recent voting patterns, we must also take note of postwar myth creation. Although since 1917 Sevastopol has been juridically Soviet or Ukrainian, residents and outsiders alike usually view Sevastopol as a Russian city. The development of local identification after World War II by the military, local officials, and guidebook authors helps to explain how Sevastopol so easily shed its identification with the Soviet Union while also avoiding identification with Ukraine.

In 1997, during a bitter struggle between Ukraine and Russia for control over the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, a city resident supported the intervention of and financial support from then Moscow mayor Iurii Luzhkov because “Sevastopol is a historic military city of Russia. All its major events and achievements are important chapters in Russian history.”¹ Sevastopol, since becoming a part of independent Ukraine in 1991 (and part of the Ukrainian SSSR for decades before), has consistently and overwhelmingly voted for pro-Russia candidates in each national election. While many political commentators have noted the demographics of predominately Russian speakers and the presence of the Russian fleet in the ports to explain recent voting patterns, we must also take note of postwar myth creation and its elevation of Sevastopol’s pre-Revolutionary Russian naval heritage.² Although since 1917 Sevastopol has been juridically Soviet or Ukrainian, residents and outsiders alike usually view Sevastopol as a Russian city. The development of local identification after World War II by the military, local officials, and guidebook authors helps to explain how Sevastopol so easily marginalized its identification with the Soviet Union while also avoiding identification with Ukraine.

World War II brought a lengthy siege and occupation, 97 percent destruction, and inhumane living conditions to the city, but this period of war and its aftermath laid the

¹ Carol J. Williams, “Ribbon Cut on a New Crimean War: An Apartment House, Built by Moscow’s Mayor, Opens in Sevastopol. And as Russians Move in, So Enters a New Jab at Black Sea Fleet Deal,” Los Angeles Times, 5 October 1997, 13.

² I follow Liebman and Don-Yehiya’s definition of myth as “a story that evokes strong sentiments, and transmits and reinforces basic societal values.” This definition does not mean that a myth is false. See C. S. Liebman and E. Don-Yehiya, Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 7.

foundation for today's Russian-focused city. Sevastopol's vital naval infrastructure made it an essential target, not only for Nazi forces, but also for Soviet agitators and urban planners. Sevastopol's naval past became usable to city planners seeking to inculcate local identification in a postwar population that as often as not came from outside the region. The hagiographies developed during and after the war located the population in a city that was imperative to the very survival of the country. The past gave meaning and purpose to the future and sought to justify the sacrifices both of the war and the postwar rebuilding period.

Sevastopol has a long history of monuments to local military history, but when central authorities tried to recast the city's urban biography as an exemplary Soviet city, it ran afoul of municipal and naval officials who chose to highlight a deeper Russian history and thereby forge a localized mythology. How this happened is the point of this article.

Creating Meaning from Sevastopol's Past

The near endless tales of heroes were important for the path of urban reconstruction after the war, but they had precedents in the previous century. The young soldier-journalist Lev Tolstoy described the character of the city and its residents during the Crimean War (1853-56):

The chief thing is the happy conviction that you carry away with you—the conviction that Sevastopol cannot be taken, and not only that it cannot be taken, but that it is impossible to shake the spirit of the Russian people anywhere—and you have seen this impossibility not in the numerous traverses of breastworks, and winding trenches, mines, and guns piled one upon the other without rhyme or reason, as it seemed to you, but in the eyes, the speech, the mannerisms, and in what is termed the spirit of the defenders of Sevastopol.³

³ Lev Tolstoy, Sevastopol Tales (Moscow: Progress, 1982), 34.

People, not military preparations, counted most. Here Tolstoy established the equation that a battle for Sevastopol was a battle for Russia. He also marginalized the importance of political and military leaders and instead focused on the everyday heroes who would become examples to future generations. For Tolstoy, heroic examples could be effective in catalyzing similar behavior in others. Tolstoy was somewhat derivative because the city's first monument, erected in 1839 to honor Captain A.I. Kazarskii's miraculous defeat of the Turkish fleet ten years earlier, states eloquently and simply on its pedestal that his feats were "An Example for Posterity."

The past was replete with examples of military heroism, but Soviet mythmakers redefined heroism. Soviet hero stories, much like the saints' lives that were the central texts of Russian Orthodoxy, educated readers about proper behavior and the ability to overcome obstacles. The new Soviet man and woman of socialist realism could only succeed with the intervention and guidance of the Party, much as the holy spirit aided pre-Revolutionary believers. Soviet mythmakers in the 1930s created a new pantheon of secular saints to emulate. Workers were to fashion their behavior after master coal hewer Aleksei Stakhanov.⁴ Children were supposed to show loyalty to the state and Party as modeled by Pavlik Morozov, who denounced his parents as enemies of the people and thus made himself an orphan and then martyr for Soviet progress.⁵ The individual feats and great sacrifices of Stakhanov, Morozov and countless others like mountain climbers and arctic explorers were motivated, we were told, by their party mindedness and a love for the larger political

⁴ Katerina Clark, The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), chapter 1; Lewis Siegelbaum, Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935–1941 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). See especially chapter 6.

⁵ Catriona Kelly, Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero (London: Granta, 2005).

community and “great family.” These “symbolic heroes” were everyday people who were low- or semi-skilled and not highly political, and their stories were deployed to create a “society of the extraordinary.”⁶

Wartime mythmakers thus drew on a long tradition of writing exalted stories of individuals. Most of the elements of Soviet hagiographies continued in Sevastopol’s war stories; however, the role of the Party no longer dominated each and every transformation to heroism as it had in the 1930s. Of course, political commissars’ articles focused on the Bolsheviks’ leading role in inspiring heroic feats, but just as many writers subsumed Party influence to the need to act as Sevastopoltsy always had in times of conflict. Sevastopol soon had its own pantheon of heroes to join the well-known examples of the Panfilov men and Zoia Kosmodemianskaia who martyred themselves in defiance of the Nazi invasion.⁷ Most importantly, wartime reportage blended Russian pre-Revolutionary heroism, which was nearly always martial, with 1930s symbolic heroes who were conquering labor, enemies of the people, flight, and the vast stretches of the arctic. Everyone had the potential to be a hero in wartime.

Writing, Filming, and Sculpting: Military Mythmaking in Wartime

After the lightning-quick and highly destructive Nazi offensive against Sevastopol in November and December 1941, mythmakers in the Soviet press began to link defense against

⁶ Clark, The Soviet Novel, 120-121. Emphasis in original.

⁷ Rosalinde Sartorti, “On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints” in Richard Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 176–93.

the Nazis to that of the Crimean War.⁸ The connection between the two defenses heralded a particular urban biography, which often usurped the prominence of the Bolshevik revolution and the establishing of Soviet power. Connections between the “Second Great Defense” (World War II) and the first (Crimean War) emerged from the pens of journalists, writers, and military political officers in the days of the siege. As Vice-Admiral F. S. Oktiabrskii, commander in charge of Sevastopol’s defense, reminded his readers in 1942, “To the glorious deeds of heroism performed by our fathers in the battles of Chesma, Sinope and Ochakov during the first defense of Sevastopol we have added the feats of the champions of this heroic epoch, which we call the Second defense of Sevastopol....[I]n good time will these deeds of the numberless heroes of the Second defense of Sevastopol be woven into a brilliant fabric of legend, poem, verse and song by the Soviet people and its poets.”⁹ Oktiabrskii, like Tolstoy earlier, realized that generations to come would erect great myths of the war in order to create a sense of place, belonging, and identification. Military men like Oktiabrskii initiated the mythmaking and cited both military valor and extraordinary feats by civilians, thus blending pre-Revolutionary and Soviet conceptions of heroism.

⁸ The most accessible source of press material in the West on the battles for Sevastopol remains the collection of articles translated for foreign consumption. See The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing, 1942); Sevastopol: November, 1941-July, 1942: Articles, Stories and Eye-Witness Accounts by Soviet War Correspondents (London, Hutchinson, 1943). Most of the articles are translations from Soviet newspapers like Pravda and Krasnaia Zvezda.

⁹ The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol, 12, 14. On military writing during the war see Matthew P. Gallagher, The Soviet History of World War II: Myths, Memories, and Realities (New York: Praeger, 1963), 74-78, 179. On the wartime press more generally see also Jeffrey Brooks, “Pravda Goes to War” in Stites, Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, 9-27.

During the Second World War, newsreels and newspapers served as transmitters of the day's news, and their creators became key mythmakers. In the course of the war, correspondents and filmmakers—who were more often than not political commissars, officers, and artists now working for the military—began the task of memorializing the city and constructing a distinct urban biography, which recalled past trials and tribulations as inspirations for a population that was facing privation and sacrifice in order to survive and rebuild their devastated lives. From Ivan the Terrible to Pushkin, heroes of the Russian past, whose images had been revived in the 1930s in an attempt to place Russia atop the hierarchy of the Soviet brotherhood of peoples, now served to emphasize Russia's culture and ability to overcome hardships.¹⁰ The military found the heroes of its own past (e.g. Aleksandr Nevskii, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov) minted on new decorations for heroism and outstanding military service. Sevastopol's mythmakers followed the lead.

Heroism, resistance, and self-sacrifice became synonymous with Sevastopol. Political officers and war-correspondents related stories about suicide bombers, snipers, and civilians who refused to abandon their posts. Sevastopol's newspapers also reminded their readers consistently, both during and after the war, of the city's heroic history and tradition. On the day before liberation in May 1944, Krasnyi Chernomorets, the newspaper of the Black Sea Fleet, ran an article entitled simply "Sevastopol." It not only detailed the fierce fighting in and around the city, but also retold the city's ancient Greek and Turkic origins and dwelt on the importance of Prince Potemkin-Tavricheskii's selecting the city as the site of Catherine

¹⁰ David Brandenberger, National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) and Karen Petrone, Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) both discuss increasing "Russianness" in the 1930s.

the Great's Black Sea port.¹¹ In the days following liberation, as the first sailors and residents made their way back to the rubble of the city, the fleet's newspaper described Sevastopol as the "glory of the Russian soul." It fused stories of Crimean War heroes, including admirals P. S. Nakhimov and V. A. Kornilov, the valiant sailor Petr Koshka, and nurse Dasha Sevastopolskaia—the Russian counterpart to Florence Nightingale—with the new heroes of the second defense.¹²

Soldiers, sailors, and civilians became heroes. The "Five Black Sea Men" and private Devitiarov threw themselves (armed with grenades and bottles of gasoline) under advancing tanks, and Ivan Bogatyr and his crew in pill-box No. 11 refused to surrender when overwhelmed. As his crew mates fled their burning ship moored in Sevastopol's harbor, Ivan Golubets risked his life to throw bombs overboard before they exploded in the fire and wreaked havoc on the Soviet ships docked nearby. Maria Baida transformed herself from nurse to soldier after she saw the suffering of the men to whom she tended. The tale of the "Russian" hero Bogdan Khmel'nitsky inspired the sniper Liudmilla Pavlichenko's great feats.¹³ A woman who refused to abandon the city and instead carried flowers to her husband's grave each day amidst the bombardment became a "symbol of the faithfulness of

¹¹ "Sevastopol," Krasnyi Chernomorets, 8 May 1944, 1.

¹² Petr Sazhin and G. Pozhenian, "Solntse nad Sevastopolem," Krasnyi Chernomorets, 12 May 1944, 1.

¹³ The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol, 89–93. Serhy Yekelchuk, "Diktat and Dialogue in Stalinist Culture: Staging Patriotic Historical Opera in Soviet Ukraine, 1936–1954," Slavic Review 59, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 597–624 shows how central officials in Moscow wanted to brand Khmel'nitsky as the uniter of Russia and Ukraine. But viewers of the opera about Khmel'nitsky often saw him as a Ukrainian national figure.

[soldiers'] wives, of the friendship of their sisters, of the solicitude of their mothers.”¹⁴ A store manager who tried to save her burning store, caught on fire, and then exclaimed, “Are you crazy! What are you doing?! That water is for emergencies only!” when a group of cart drivers tried to douse her with a barrel of water.¹⁵ Duty to fellow citizens, soldiers, and the city—not party-mindedness—motivated this new breed of wartime heroes.

Newsreels of the era moved the heroic images of the war correspondents from paper to celluloid. Soviet filmmakers honored the heroes and martyrs who later became immortalized in city planning and showed the destruction of the city’s monuments, as well as the serenity and sacrifice of its soldiers and sailors. Common sailors and soldiers were cast in the central roles. Whereas military personnel often wrote about the war, we know less about their direct influence on newsreels and films. In some cases, for example in Battle for Sevastopol (1944), a military consultant was listed.¹⁶ Major-General S.P. Platonov supervised the film shot by frontline film crews because the staging and filming of massive battle scenes and the shots of real wartime demanded the commitment of military resources.¹⁷ Thus, even if the military did not conceive all similar projects, it helped to shape and to deliver the final form.

Radio personality Iurii Levitan narrated Battle for Sevastopol and began the film by describing Sevastopol as a “City of ancient glory; Sevastopol, the legendary city; A city of

¹⁴ The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol, 105-107.

¹⁵ The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol, 108.

¹⁶ Russian News (1944, No. 3A); Motion Picture 208-RN-59; Records of the Office of War Information, Record Group 208; National Archives, Washington, DC.

¹⁷ All frontline camera crews were placed under supervision of the local military headquarters. See Peter Kenez, Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917-1953 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chapter 9.

Russian glory; A hero city.” He repeated the same phrases throughout the thirty-five- minute chronicle, interspersed with exhortations of: “Our Sevastopol.” Thus, he equated “our” Sevastopol with Russia, heroism, and a long tradition of sacrifice. Near the end of the film, the audience saw Soviet fighters standing atop the neo-classical gates of Count’s Wharf firing guns in celebration. This alone would have been symbolic enough, but the soldiers stood directly above the inscription “1846,” the date of the wharf’s construction. The scenes atop the Crimean War Panorama and Count’s Wharf linked the heroes of Sevastopol’s past, the “ancient glory” of the “legendary city” mentioned by Levitan, and the great defenders of Sevastopol’s present, thereby creating an unbroken chain of heroism. As late as 1948, the local newspaper still reminded its readers of the glorious history of the city and its heroes in articles entitled “The Glorious Revolutionary Tradition of Sevastopoltsy and Black Sea Sailors” and “City of Russian Glory,” both of which linked the present with pre-1917 heroes.¹⁸

Just as writers and filmmakers took their cue from Tolstoy, Sevastopol’s sculptors, architects, and city planners had Kazarskii’s “Example for Posterity” and Crimean War memorials to provide guidance. The military again set the agenda in the early days of monument building by raising new sites of memory to stand alongside those dedicated to the Crimean War. Sevastopol had long been a city of memorials and monuments, and maintaining that tradition became paramount in the postwar period in order to create visible connections

¹⁸ “Agitator, provedi besedu na etu temu: Slavnye revoliutsionnye traditsii sevastopol’tsev i moriakov-chernomortsev,” Slava Sevastopolia, 7 December 1948, 1-2; “Agitator, provedi besedu na etu temu: gorod russkii slavy,” Slava Sevastopolia, 10 December 1948, 1.

between past and present.¹⁹ Future generations could learn visually about their city's heritage from the countless monuments and memorials throughout the city.

Architects, sculptors, and military engineers, taking their cue from over one hundred years of memorializing war heroes, executed an extraordinary number of statues, plaques, and obelisks in the months after liberation from the Nazis. Just a matter of days after the German forces had fled the city in May 1944, naval architects and engineers raised the first monuments to commemorate heroic feats.²⁰ Throughout 1944, more obelisks commissioned from the military began to dot the horizon, marking sites of battle for reverence and pilgrimage. In July soldiers and military engineers constructed an obelisk on a common grave in honor of the Second Guards Army. Four months a 2.5 meter monument rose on the spot where many of the defenders of the Konstantinovskii Ravelin were killed. Fifteen years later, after urban reconstruction neared completion and more abundant resources allowed large memorials and monuments to be built, Sevastopol opened a new diorama and museum at Sapun Gora to make the collective feats of World War II as visible as the Panorama of the Great Defense of 1854-1855. The eternal flame lit at the diorama's opening came from that at the Crimean War site of Malakhov Kurgan, thereby "symbolizing the continuity of glorious combat traditions."²¹

¹⁹ George Mosse also pointed to the importance of past traditions of memorialization before World War I. See especially Mosse, Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), chapters 2–3.

²⁰ Information on these monuments can be found in Sevastopol': entsiklopedicheskii spravochnik (Sevastopol: Museum of the Heroic Defense and Liberation of Sevastopol, 2000).

²¹ Emiliia Nikolaevna Doronina and Tamara Ivanovna Iakovleva, Pamiatniki Sevastopolia (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1978), 123.

Agitational spaces were only the classroom for educating the public about the city's history and traditions; people had to be instructed in how to "read" and understand the museums and memorials. As early as November 1944, A. N. Ivanov of the Crimean Administration for Architectural Affairs instructed all municipal architects to give lectures, reports, excursions, and radio and newspaper interviews on the significance of monuments and memorials.²² Local newspapers were filled with the articles of chief architect Iurii Trautman, stories on the city's history, and coverage of lectures by city officials. Moreover, school-age children took trips to sites as part of the regular curriculum. Veterans, local historians, and educators in Pioneer camps enlightened them further.²³ Sevastopol's streets, most of which are named for people and events in the city's history, demonstrate that Oktiabrskii's prediction that the "numberless heroes of the Second defense of Sevastopol [would] be woven into a brilliant fabric of legend" came true.²⁴

The military and local officials took the lead in crafting a myth of Soviet Sevastopol and its citizens as an extension of the great Russian defenders of the Motherland who sacrificed everything for a greater good. Tolstoy had already offered up Russia as the Motherland for which Sevastopol fought. Propaganda in the 1930s stretched heroism to include nearly any civilian sacrifice that led to greater progress as defined by the Party. Sevastopol's wartime mythmakers blended these and lauded military and civilian sacrifices that served the greater good and promoted the strength and interests of the Motherland. In other words, the war augmented the 1930s' "symbolic heroes" with local wartime heroes. The party and its ideology were less conspicuous than in the 1930s. Heroes during the war were now more often motivated by their duties to their fellow citizens and their country or city.

²² Municipal Archive of Sevastopol (hereafter, GAGS) f. R-308, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 3-3ob.

²³ GAGS f. R-79, op. 2, d. 25, l. 51; GAGS f. R-79, op. 2, d. 63, ll. 64-65ob.

²⁴ The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol, 14.

This continued the “great family” narrative of the 1930s but without the presence of the Party as the agent of change.

Building on a pre-Revolutionary tradition of memorializing military events in the city, writers, newsreel producers, and sculptors focused on individual and collective acts of heroism that became examples for the postwar construction workers who had to sacrifice their health and welfare while living in the ruins. It was now up to local planners and architects to rebuild.

Ascribing Meaning to Urban Space: Local Planners Take Charge

Although the navy consulted on many local planning decisions, most of the local mythology embedded in the urban fabric resulted from the efforts of municipal officials. Because of its status as the base of the Black Sea Fleet, Sevastopol’s resurrection was of the utmost importance. In 1943 Sovnarkom created the Committee on Architectural Affairs to supervise the reconstruction of important military, industrial, and population centers. For Sevastopol, this meant a competition between two of Moscow’s most prominent architects—Moisei Ginzburg and Grigorii Barkhin—for Sevastopol’s new visage. Ginzburg, who represented the Academy of Architecture, created an outdoor museum to war and revolutionary heroes. Barkhin represented the navy in the competition. His sycophantic monumentalism honoring Stalin and powerful institutions like the navy won the competition, but local leaders and even the navy for which Barkhin worked fought back. Frustrated with both men’s lack of attention to local needs for housing and tradition, municipal leaders set out to challenge centrally constructed narratives and instead promoted a city that resembled its pre-Soviet aesthetic. Naval officials attacked Barkhin’s design for a new naval complex on the central hill that would have destroyed a church in the crypt of which four prominent pre-Revolutionary admirals remained. Professional review boards, informed by local officials,

eventually realized that Barkhin and Ginzburg lacked the specialized knowledge that only local officials could bring. States may make things legible, but locals make things intelligible by providing the local knowledge necessary for effective planning.²⁵

Local architects and officials adapted the renewed emphasis on Russia and its past that had arisen since the 1930s in order to transform the definition of politically-correct aesthetics. Socialist realism, the official cultural policy since the 1930s that is often defined as “national in form, socialist in content,” presented challenges and opportunities for postwar planners. The war created fluid populations and ravaged many markers of local space. Architects, therefore, began to focus on crafting a “local” form rather than something that was inherently “national.” If new residents could gain a stronger tie to a “hometown” (rodnoi gorod), they could develop an emotional attachment to the city and might be willing to work harder (and sacrifice more) to see it rebuilt. Sevastopol’s leaders, particularly successive postwar chief architects Georgii Lomagin and Iurii Trautman, used this to their advantage.

During a planning review in Moscow in late 1945, Sevastopol’s new chief architect, Iurii Trautman, provided a local alternative and openly opposed many key elements of Barkhin’s plan. Trautman issued an alternative plan in which he highlighted the city’s history and unique qualities.²⁶ Trautman decried the fact that the outsider Barkhin neither knew nor

²⁵ James Scott defined “legibility” as the state’s destruction and regulation of the complexities in society. In Sevastopol, officials had to provide local knowledge and then translate central directives, thus making central plans intelligible to constituents. See James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), chapter 6.

²⁶ Russian State Archive of the Economy (hereafter, RGAE), f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, ll. 52-58; GAGS, f. R-308, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 9-14.

incorporated “local conditions and traditions” in his plan.²⁷ Barkhin’s tabula rasa approach, argued Trautman, destroyed the “traditional places of rest for the citizens of Sevastopol and sailors” and was proof that he cared little for the traditions of the hero-city Sevastopol that had defended the Motherland for more than a century.²⁸ The local architect argued for reconstruction rather than Barkhin’s project that destroyed the city’s history in favor of erecting new, grandiose Party and government buildings. Barkhin’s project, Trautman argued, would be both an aesthetic mistake and a waste of precious resources in a war-ravaged country. By contrast, restoration would create additional housing more quickly and place fewer strains on scarce resources and labor.

At some point in Trautman’s education, he had learned how to use the regime’s discourse against itself in order to fight homogenization. Trautman skillfully used the language of a November 1945 Sovnarkom directive. The decree demanded rapid reconstruction of city centers, housing, and even valuable architecture.²⁹ Trautman condemned Barkhin’s “abstract academism” that failed to accommodate the “real needs of the city” and suggested that the local team “rework the draft of the center on the basis of the new general directives and more favorable initial qualities.”³⁰ His “new general directives” referred to the November decree, and “initial qualities” suggested that planners should start by understanding Sevastopol, its traditions, and its remaining built environment. Trautman had carefully parsed Moscow’s directives on tradition and local conditions and added an

²⁷ RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, l. 52.

²⁸ Ibid., l. 55.

²⁹ State Archive of the Russian Federation (hereafter, GARF), f. A-150, op. 2, d. 20, l. 1. “On Measures for the Restoration of RSFSR Cities Destroyed by German Invaders”

³⁰ RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, l. 57, 52 (emphasis added).

economic justification for repairing rather than building completely anew because he understood that Moscow was also concerned about budget savings.

Review panels soon agreed with Trautman and followed his lead in denouncing Barkhin in much the same language. Architect A. Velikanov noted the “academic and abstract” characteristics of the Barkhin plan and lamented the destruction of Sevastopol’s tradition, history and the “distinctive, customary and most memorable places of Sevastopol. . . . These places entered literature, all the history of the city is connected with these places, even the city’s heroic defenses are connected with them. To change the city’s appearance means to fully destroy it, to make a new city, a different city, a city not having a continuous connection with the old Sevastopol.”³¹ Velikanov noted the importance, as did wartime writers, of keeping the city connected with its past and developing a sense of place and identification. To “change the city’s appearance” would mean that the historic Sevastopol and its sacrifice for the Motherland so important to Russian history would cease to exist. V. V. Baburov, head of the Main Directorate for Planning and Constructing Cities, noted that Barkhin’s work was “connected with neither the traditions nor the scale and character of Sevastopol’s ensemble.”³² Speaking in the name of the population, if not always directly on its behalf, Trautman convinced Moscow’s architectural elite who had previously supported

³¹ Ibid., ll. 5-8; GAGS, f. R-308, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 28-31. Quotes from RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, ll. 8, 7. Note his use of the plural “defenses” to link World War II with the Crimean War.

³² RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243, ll. 106-10; GAGS, f. R-308, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 55-59; RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 154, ll. 159-63.

Barkhin that localism was the proper way forward. In doing so he secured a place for himself in history as the architect of a hero-city.³³

Trautman soon turned Vice Admiral Oktiabrskii's recommendation for "the naming of squares and main streets of Sevastopol [to] take into account the historical events and names of the organizers and heroes of the two defenses of Sevastopol" into a reality.³⁴ Oktiabrskii and urban planners understood that place names helped to ascribe meaning to urban space and create identifications and promote remembrance. For Oktiabrskii and local officials, recasting the city's urban biography by highlighting the city's Russianness, military feats, and unique Greek architectural heritage had to find form in Sevastopol's agitational spaces. During the planning and reconstruction of the postwar decade, municipal and naval officials successfully challenged Moscow's plans for a Stalinist city and instead crafted a renewal of the city's nineteenth-century Russian past. Casting Sevastopol as more than merely a World War II hero city allowed both men and their plan to survive the 1946 relegation of the military to the service of the Party.

The naming and renaming of streets, squares, and parks was an integral part of the postwar program of urban agitation and identification.³⁵ Name changes suggested political

³³ Barkhin's daughter continued to argue into the 1980s that her father was the true architect of Sevastopol. A. G. Barkhina, G. B. Barkhin (Moscow: Stroizdat, 1981), 115-18, 164.

³⁴ GARF f. A-259, op. 5, d. 279, ll. 16-18.

³⁵ Study of meanings embedded in built space is not new nor limited to Sevastopol or the USSR. Richard Wortman has shown the importance of symbolic uses of space and names in the imperial period, and John Murray has documented a similar phenomenon at the end of the Soviet period. John Murray, Politics and Place-Names: Changing Names in the Late Soviet Period (Birmingham: Birmingham Slavonic Monographs, 2000); Wortman, Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

shifts. The Soviet obsession with making the revolution omnipresent led to the three streets of the ring road taking the names of Lenin, Marx, and Frunze. During postwar replanning, however, Trautman changed the latter two to Bol'shaia Morskaia Street and Nakhimov Prospect. This transformation heralded a new emphasis on local identification, historical depth, and national pride. Frunze was essential to Sevastopol's "liberation" from the Germans and Whites after the revolution, but he was not considered a "local" hero. Marx, of course, had no direct link to the city, only its ruling ideology. Admiral Nakhimov, on the other hand, stood atop the pantheon of heroes from the Crimean War. Bol'shaia Morskaia, much more than Marx, carried the city's image as a naval, both military and commercial, port. Everywhere the military and naval traditions of the city took precedent, as the "territorialization of memory" proceeded in one of the USSR's "sacred places."³⁶

Trautman similarly promoted the city's nineteenth-century heritage over Party or more recent events when he renamed central squares. Nakhimov Square replaced the Square of the Third International, which Barkhin had tentatively called Parade Square. Neither an institution of world socialism nor the martial and functional nature of the square was acceptable; only the name of the city's greatest admiral could adorn the square closest to the sea. Commune Square (the pre-Revolutionary Novoselskaia) reverted to the name of another

1995), 10-15. John Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis, Blair Ruble, eds., Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) presents case studies in post-communist Eastern European cities in which changes in toponyms were often central.

³⁶ Serhii Plokhyy, "The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology," Journal of Contemporary History, 35 (2000): 369-83. For example, Plokhyy notes that Nakhimov, one of the most venerated figures in the city's history, was really a secondary figure. The public, however, created its own understanding.

naval hero, Admiral Ushakov. Even the Great October Revolution fell victim to the desire to make Sevastopol's naval history ever-present. After World War II, Revolutionary Square took the name of M. P. Lazarev, the commander of the Black Sea Fleet at the end of the eighteenth century.

Although reverting to pre-Revolutionary names could be viewed as abandoning socialist goals, Trautman realized the city needed stability and rapid reconstruction. Resurrecting a unique, local character to which residents could attach their ideals and aspirations became one strategy of identification. An emphasis on local and categorical traits did not necessarily undermine a relational identification with the Soviet Union, which had become more identified with Russia since the late-1930s, because fighting for the Motherland included Soviet ideals of sacrifice, duty, and patriotism.³⁷ Sevastopol, Russia, and the USSR were never fully decoupled. Lenin's statue and street remains as does Soviet Street, for example. But Soviet events unconnected to the city became increasingly marginalized in the postwar decade.

Embedding the Narratives: Beyond Soviet Controls

As time passed and new generations were born with no first-hand knowledge of war, it was important to transmit the mythic images of Sevastopol's past to residents and visitors alike. Since the end of World War II, embedding social remembrance has taken many forms,

³⁷ Rogers and Cooper convincingly argued for the more accurate and multidimensional term "identifications" instead of "identity." Identifications can be derived from the one's relation to other things or people as well as the numerous categories of which it is a part. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," Theory and Society 29, no. 1 (February 2000), 1-47.

most clearly in guidebooks.³⁸ Local historians and writers put in print what city residents could see in stone. Guidebooks could provide readers with the “correct” understanding of the city’s past and its role in Russian and Soviet history.³⁹ Like guidebooks everywhere, authors prescribed and proscribed meaning when deciding what merited attention. As the Soviet Union collapsed and opportunities for tourism increased, subtle shifts occurred in the prioritization and presentation of the past in guidebooks. Throughout, travel guidebooks have remained one of the chief media for introducing and explaining the importance of Sevastopol’s place names and 2000 memorials.

Sevastopol’s guidebooks maintained a focus on the city’s military history, but the relative weight given to the Crimean War, the October Revolution and Civil War, and World War II shifted given the contemporary concern of the authors and the societies of which they were a part. In addressing the Turkish Wars and the Crimean War, authors across the decades remained relatively consistent in the types of sites they highlighted and the language they

³⁸ A sampling of historical uses of travel guidebooks can be found in Mosse, Fallen Soldiers; Jay Winter and Sivan Emmanuel, eds., War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Rudy Koshar, German Travel Cultures (New York: Berg, 2000); Koshar, “‘What Ought to be Seen’: Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe,” Journal of Contemporary History 33, no. 3 (July 1998): 323-340; Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

³⁹ To date I have found no evidence that central authorities dictated to local writers, but the similarities among Soviet writers across time and place—I have also surveyed guidebooks for Novgorod and Smolensk—suggests that Moscow had sent signals to guidebook writers in various cities. No doubt the editorial process also created greater homogeneity.

used to describe the themes of heroism and sacrifice. However, coverage of the revolutionary period and World War II varied dramatically among guidebooks over time.

Unlike the Crimean War, the city's revolutionary heritage played a remarkably minor role in guidebooks despite the centrality of many local events to the Soviet revolutionary mythology. During the political interregnum of the mid-1950s, local guidebook authors were uncertain about how to describe Sevastopol's revolutionary past given that Stalin, now dead, had rewritten that chapter in history. Blaming "Menshevik ringleaders" for the failures in 1905 was one safe interpretation.⁴⁰ Author Emiliia Doronina, writing in 1978 after Stalin's version of history had been overturned, gave considerably more attention to the revolutionary period, but it was still quite brief in the larger scope of her guidebook (only 23 of 143 total pages).⁴¹ In post-Soviet Ukraine authors further marginalized the revolutionary tradition, which had lost most of its importance. Aleksandr Dobry lamented that children in 2001 knew little about the revolutionary movement. By devoting only three pages to the revolution, however, Dobry contributed further to its marginalization.⁴² Other post-Soviet authors rejected the revolutionary past entirely noting how it ushered in "one of the most excruciating periods" of Russian history—the Soviet Union.⁴³ Another author went further and called the 1917 Revolution and Civil War "A microscopic, laughable segment of time in the scale of history. ...Horrible!.. Bloody!..Destructive!"⁴⁴ The author tried to minimize both the time and

⁴⁰ Zakhar Chebaniuk, Sevastopol: istoricheskie mesta i pamiatniki (Simferopol: Krymizdat, 1957), 98–101.

⁴¹ Doronina and Iakovleva, Pamiatniki Sevastopolia, 65.

⁴² Aleksandr Dobry and Irina Borisova, Welcome to Sevastopol (Simferopol: Tavriia, 2001).

⁴³ V. Khapaev and M. Zolotarev, Legendarnyi Sevastopol': uvlekatel'nyi putevoditel' (Sevastopol: Fuji-Krym, 2002), 42.

⁴⁴ Sevastopol': putevoditel' (Simferopol: Svit, 2004), 22.

importance of the revolution and thereby show that it had little effect on the longer history of Sevastopol. By casting the revolution as short-lived (and not three-quarters of a century), the author also suggested that this was grossly out of character with Sevastopol's heroic image and past. In many cities, this type of re-scripting may have been more difficult. But because mythmakers in the 1940s and 1950s—be they writers, filmmakers, or city planners—had already promoted Sevastopol's Russian heroism over its Sovietness, a new localism that ignored or despised the Soviet period was possible.

Although the relative importance of World War II in Sevastopol's history shifted over time, it certainly did not disappear in the post-Soviet guidebooks. Not surprisingly after a cataclysmic event like World War II, postwar guidebooks placed relatively greater emphasis on the second defense of the city. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, author Zakhar Chebaniuk focused on individual heroes and thereby personalized the war for his audience. In the first days of the 1941-1942 defense, Chebaniuk noted, five members of the naval infantry initiated an “unparalleled dual” as they destroyed sixteen tanks by themselves. In Chebaniuk's favorite phrase, they “fulfilled their debt” to the USSR as they fought to their death.⁴⁵ Doronina, writing in the 1970s, also recounted the feats of the “five daring Black Sea sailors” and their ability to twice repel the German advance. Both Chebaniuk and Doronina highlighted a fighters' oath, but Doronina distilled it to its three main points: “Under no condition surrender to captivity. Fight the enemy the Black Sea way, to the last drop of blood. Be brave, masculine to the end.”⁴⁶ She conveniently omitted point one of the oath which repeated Stalin's infamous directive to take “not one step back.” She aided the remembrance of what she viewed as positive, but she omitted reference to Stalin and his order to shoot any Soviet soldier who tried to retreat. Doronina aided the process of forgetting fear and Stalin's brutal

⁴⁵ Chebaniuk, *Sevastopol*, 113–14.

⁴⁶ Doronina and Iakovleva, *Pamiatniki Sevastopolia*, 103–04.

repression. She also conveniently “forgot” that some people did run away from the fight and had to be kept fighting by threats. This is but one example of numerous hagiographies of heroes and martyrs in postwar guidebooks.

Unlike their Soviet counterparts, post-Soviet guidebooks placed World War II exploits in context as one of many moments of valor and started to cater to a new audience. The change to profit-driven publication decreased greatly the length of guidebooks, which necessitated a more selective portrayal of the past and inclusion of entertainment and recreation opportunities. With the opening of the previously closed military city in 1996 came a need for guidebooks to tell non-residents about transportation, accommodations, and leisure. In 2004 city officials began the process of demilitarizing Balaklava, the site of much Crimean War tourism, and cleaning up ordinance and other ecological dangers “for further development of Balaklava as a resort-recreation zone.”⁴⁷ Here is one way in which the old and new Sevastopol merged. The city government became actively engaged in marketing Sevastopol’s historical past for consumption by domestic and foreign tourists. Recruiting foreign tourists meant less attention to the revolution and more attention to the Crimean War and World War II, both of which attract well-paying European visitors. Promoting natural beauty was another tactic. As one local guidebook noted, “Sevastopol is neither only a fleet nor only a museum. It is an incomparably beautiful and affable city, welcoming guests with its glow....where each stone is history”⁴⁸ Not wasting a chance for hyperbole, another author concluded that “Sevastopol is one of the most beautiful cities in the world....It is right to consider Crimea the most museum-like region of Ukraine, and in Crimea it is Sevastopol.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “Demilitarizatsiia Balaklavskoi bukhty uspeshno vypolniaetsia,” Sevastopol’skaia gazeta 44 (2004): 3.

⁴⁸ Khapaev and Zolotarev, Legendarnyi Sevastopol’, 3, 1.

⁴⁹ Sevastopol’: putevoditel’, 26.

This type of boosterism was imperative as Sevastopol fought for tourist dollars. “Sevastopol,” lamented one guidebook, “is almost unknown to the wider resort public.” Most view it as a “military city, the great port of Crimea, a city of ships and sailors. Not more than two of 100 people identify Sevastopol as a resort.” The author even tried to personify the city, asking the reader to “feel its pulse, its vibration, its breathing.”⁵⁰ The authors recognized the success of postwar memorialization of the city’s military heritage that had come to dominate people’s understanding of the city. In their view, the city now had to struggle against past perceptions in order to gain a larger tourist audience. They also seemed to suggest that the draw of an historical city could not compete with the pure leisure travel offered by resorts like nearby Yalta. Blending history with pleasure appears to be the city’s new niche.

Without clear evidence on how guidebooks were received and understood, we cannot know how thoroughly the “correct” reading of history reached its audience. However, given that so many processes and media constructed a similar master narrative, official representations and their ritualized deployment likely had great resilience. For example, in 2004 Sevastopol’s mayor presented the St. Vladimir Cathedral, on the site where Kievan Prince Vladimir the Great is said to have been baptized, to the Moscow patriarchate because Russian Orthodoxy was the “largest confession in the region.”⁵¹ During the Ukrainian presidential campaign of the same year, pro-Moscow candidate Viktor Yanukovich made appearances at war memorials to praise the city and its heroes and promised 10 million hryven from the central Ukrainian budget for a new war memorial and museum.⁵² Although Yanukovich overwhelmingly won the election in Sevastopol, Viktor Yushchenko became

⁵⁰ Sevastopol’: putevoditel’, 76, 26.

⁵¹ “Vladimirskoi sobor peredan tserkvi,” Sevastopol’skaia gazeta, 5 November 2004, 3.

⁵² “Blagodaren sevastopoltsam za to, chto segodnia veriat vlasti,” Slava Sevastopolia, October 29, 2004.

president. When Yushchenko later raised the issue of removing Soviet monuments, one resident responded: “it is impossible to touch the monuments. They are signs of our history.”⁵³ A local Ukrainian representative, Volodymyr Arabadzhy, encapsulated the post-Soviet dilemma: “If we [Ukraine] go towards NATO, the Russian fleet will have to leave Sevastopol. If the Russian Fleet is in Sevastopol, Ukraine cannot be in NATO....Our people in Sevastopol have many traditions - mostly close to the naval fleet, because Sevastopol was born as a naval base 225 years ago.”⁵⁴ As the resident who opened this article understood, “Sevastopol is a historic military city of Russia. All its major events and achievements are important chapters in Russian history.”⁵⁵ Statements like these reveal the power of the postwar rebuilding process in creating a stronger identification with Moscow and Sevastopol’s naval history.

Conclusion

This brief sketch has sought to show an evolution that, in general, moved from 1) the military reflecting on its past in monuments, journalism, and film to 2) local city planning that changed the topography and toponyms of Sevastopol that hearkened back to pre-Revolutionary heroism to 3) local guidebook authors who wrote for a local, national, and now international audience and thereby disseminated the myth of Sevastopol more broadly. Although some elements have changed over time, the various mythmakers focused on the myth of Sevastopol as a Russian and naval city and highlighted the city’s local heroes and contributions to the national narrative of strength, sacrifice, and fortitude.

⁵³ Klim Kostner, “Mazepa? Velikii? Nam put; ozarit?” Slava Sevastopolia, 21 May 2008.

⁵⁴ “Fleet Gives Russia Crimean Clout”, BBC News, 12 February 2008.

⁵⁵ Williams, “Ribbon Cut on a New Crimean War,” 13.

Although it might appear to be counter-intuitive, local identification and the construction of myths also were strategies of re-imposing central authority. Disoriented and homeless citizens needed somewhere to root themselves after a traumatic era so that they could contribute to the Soviet state in a controlled and organized manner. As long as an urban biography showed the unique local role in service to the state, then the process of local identification posed little threat to the central regime. With the Soviet Union forming a Russocentric identification, Sevastopol was free to reach back to its nineteenth-century heritage to construct a mythology that marginalized even the October Revolution.

Mythmakers in Sevastopol consciously created a relational web with the city and its population serving as defenders of the Russian Motherland. As one of the first designated “hero-cities,” Sevastopol carried a categorical identification shared initially only with Leningrad, Stalingrad, and Odessa. Because the categorical, but especially the relational, mode of identification tied Sevastopol to Russia, the city’s incorporation into the post-Soviet independent state of Ukraine has been fraught with conflict. Moreover, promoting the city as a resort and reintroducing the city’s Jewish, Tatar, and Greek heritage all pose significant challenges to the dominant narrative. Tourism and its elevation of Sevastopol as a resort may dilute the image of the hero-city as visitors simply look for sun and fun. With a more diverse set of images defining the city and a less ritualized presentation of the “city of glory” narrative, we should expect changes in coming decades. If the Russian fleet leaves when its lease expires in 2042, then the city’s Russianness will surely be challenged. By that time a third generation of residents will have been educated as Ukrainian citizens too.

The “city of glory” was not a community that appeared organically. Instead, it was carefully crafted and created into an “imagined” or “invented” community whose mythology could easily merge national and local identifications. Sevastopol serves as a reminder that imagined communities can be both local and national at the same time. Local mythologies are

also made and remade.