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The Crimean War's Long Shadow: Urban Biography and the Reconstruction of Sevastopol after World War II

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Abstract

The Crimean War brought destruction to Russia's Black Sea peninsula, but, like Napoleon's invasion fifty years earlier, the war also became a central event in Russia's national history. In his *The Origins of the Crimean War* (1994), David Goldfrank introduced readers to the complex diplomatic wrangling that led to the Crimean War. This article seeks to explain how and why the Crimean War (or "first great defense") rivals only World War II (the "second great defense") in the Sevastopol's urban biography. Because of the work of writers, filmmakers, sculptors, and architects who during and after World War II began to link the "first great defense" with the second and used images similar to Lev Tolstoy's a century earlier, Sevastopol retains its close connection to its pre-Revolutionary military history. Even in the Soviet period Sevastopol's urban biography relied less on the Bolshevik Revolution and Civil War than it did on the Crimean War because of the narrative reframing during the 1940s.

Keywords

Crimean War, Sevastopol, Russia, Soviet Union, urban biography, historical narratives, Lev Tolstoy

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.

Lev Tolstoy, *Sevastopol Tales*¹

¹Lev Tolstoy, *Sevastopol Tales* (Moscow: Progress, 1982), 34.

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.

Vice-Admiral F. S. Oktiabrskii²

Lev Tolstoy's *Sevastopol Tales*, along with Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," brought the Crimean War to an international audience. Tolstoy captured the desperation and valor of the war in which Nicholas I's forces lacked everything from "staff, maps, construction tools, sufficient powder and the means of keeping his fleet functional."³ Yet, for 349 days, the Russian forces held off the combined forces of France, the Ottoman Empire, and England, the shelling from which destroyed much of Sevastopol's city center and led to a half-century of rebuilding. In the decades following the 1856 Treaty of Paris, the Crimean War became known for great sacrifice and suffering. Nearly a century later, Soviet mythmakers during and after World War II borrowed from Tolstoy's portrayal. They adapted his special Sevastopol spirit of heroism, along with a willingness to fight to the death for Russia, and established a narrative understanding of the "second great defense" against the Nazis. As he alluded to in the 1942 epigraph above, Admiral Oktiabrskii realized and promoted the connection between the Crimean War and World War II just months after the Nazi invasion, and he and other local officials initiated a decade-long project to fuse the two great defenses in Sevastopol's urban biography.

² *The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1942), 12.

³ David Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War* (New York: Longman, 2004), 287.

Thanks to David Goldfrank's *The Origins of the Crimean War* (1994), readers now know about the complex diplomatic wrangling that led to the Crimean War. What few understand, however, is the importance of the nineteenth-century battles to Sevastopol's Soviet and post-Soviet urban biography. Goldfrank, in his final chapter, notes that nationalism and imperialism were victorious following the Crimean War. In Sevastopol, the connection between the war and both national and local identity lingered to the end of the Soviet Union and beyond.⁴ The events surrounding the Bolshevik Revolution, Civil War, and World War II caused the local narratives of many Soviet cities to shift, but Sevastopol retained its close connection to its pre-Revolutionary military history. In fact, immediately after Nazi Germany bombed Sevastopol on 22 June 1941, national and local mythmakers (e.g. writers, filmmakers, sculptors, architects) began to link the "first great defense" of the Crimean War with the "second great defense" against Nazi Germany.

Although honoring war heroes was nothing new in Russia, Tolstoy's reporting from the front during the Crimean War provided a model for Soviet mythmakers. His attention to the common hero, the man in the trench, and the military leader found resonance a century later as Soviet writers and filmmakers tried to rally the population and allies against Hitler. In Sevastopol and other frontline cities, writers and journalists descended with pen in hand to seek out stories of the extraordinary and to chronicle the plight of individuals and groups. In doing so, they—like Tolstoy before—humanized the war and brought it closer for their readers. Sevastopol again became a city of heroes, prepared to die, fighting honorably for their country, and acting as

⁴ For post-Soviet changes in Sevastopol's urban biography, see Karl Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Sevastopol after World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), chapter 5.

examples for others. “The selfless struggle of Sevastopoltsy,” Joseph Stalin wrote in a telegram to the city, “serves as an example of heroism for all the Red Army and Soviet people. It is certain that the glorious defenders of Sevastopol fulfilled their debt to the Motherland with dignity and honor.”⁵ Stalin sought to reassure people that sacrificial acts were not in vain and, as Tolstoy noted a century earlier, that their fight for Russia would become a major event in history and would inspire future generations.

During World War II and the rebuilding of Sevastopol, home of the Black Sea Fleet, the Soviet propaganda machine used various media to create a mythic image of the city and a narrative of its heroic defense and re-conquest in order to assure the population of eventual victory. In the postwar period the repetition of heroic images provided a sense of belonging for the new population that came from all corners of the Soviet Union to help in the rebuilding process (97% of the city had been destroyed). It provided hope for progress if the postwar population could sacrifice once again as it had during the war. Wartime filmmakers and writers echoed the Crimean War reporting of Lev Tolstoy instead of Soviet ideology from the Revolution and Civil War.⁶ Sevastopol’s naval past became usable to city planners seeking to inculcate local identification in a 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

⁵ Quoted in Zakhar Chebaniuk, *Sevastopol: istoricheskie mesta i pamiatniki* (Simferopol: Krymizdat, 1955), 27.

⁶ On the problematic and contested rehabilitation of Tolstoy as a Soviet hero in 1928, see Kevin Platt and David Brandenberger, *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), chapters 1-2.

and sought to justify the sacrifices both of the war and the postwar rebuilding period. In elevating Sevastopol's past, the mythmakers created a sense of place for the newly arrived or disaffected. The city had seen no greater struggle than the Crimean War battle for Sevastopol, and that event became a touchstone nearly a century later. The "first defense" of Sevastopol, as the Crimean War became known during the "second defense" of World War II, provided a sense of purpose, place, and motivation; and writers, filmmakers, and city planners all embedded the Crimean War into the postwar urban biography and landscape.

The young soldier-journalist Lev Tolstoy became the first to define a character for Sevastopol and its inhabitants, and in doing so he formed the foundation for twentieth-century mythmakers. In the epigraph above, Tolstoy's subjects were ready to die for their country, and he foresaw the influence their actions could have on future generations. Here Tolstoy established the equation that a battle for Sevastopol was a battle for Russia. He also limited the importance of political and military leaders and instead focused on the everyday heroes. For Tolstoy, heroic examples could be effective in catalyzing similar behavior in others: "[A]fter reading in the newspapers and in private letters about the exploits of the heroes of Sevastopol, his former comrades, [a cowardly officer] suddenly became fired with ambition and to a larger extent with patriotism."⁷ The persuasive power of heroism was central to World War II and postwar reportage, too. However, even Tolstoy was 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 images of stalwart defense, personal agency, collective effort, and the impossibility of the enemy ever taking and holding Sevastopol found resonance a century later as mythmakers

⁷Tolstoy, *Sevastopol Tales*, 104.

tried to rally the city and country during the Soviet Union's darkest hours. From the time the first German bombs fell on Sevastopol, through the 250-day siege and two-year occupation, film, literature, and journalism evoked confidence in an ultimate victory and hope for a better future. Wartime film and reporting prepared viewers not only for victory, but also for the nation's resurrection. The themes of heroism, valor, self-sacrifice, and unity against a common enemy all foreshadowed postwar Soviet policies of quota-busting, "volunteer" labor, and battles against speculation. Building on a prewar tradition of memorializing military events in the city, writers and newsreel producers focused on individual and collective acts of heroism that inspired the postwar construction workers who had to sacrifice their health and welfare while living in the ruins.⁸

After the lightning-quick and highly destructive Nazi offensive against Sevastopol in November and December 1941, the Soviet press began to link defense against the Nazis to the failure of the Crimean War that Tolstoy had recast as a victory of the local spirit.⁹ The connection between the two defenses heralded a particular urban biography, which often usurped the prominence of the Bolshevik revolution and the establishment of Soviet power. As Vice-Admiral F. S. Oktiabrskii, commander in charge of Sevastopol's defense, reminded his readers in

⁸ For more on daily life in Sevastopol's rubble after World War II, see Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction*, chapter 3.

⁹ 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; 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*.

1942, “in 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.”¹⁰ Oktiabrskii, like Tolstoy earlier, saw into the future and realized that generations to come would erect great myths of the war in order to create a sense of place, belonging, and identification. Oktiabrskii’s epigraph above shows that Crimean War battles were vital to the city’s image. As commander of the defense, Oktiabrskii had reason to point to a long tradition of resisting invasion.¹¹ As he was putting pen to paper in 1942, German forces were sweeping Soviet power off the Crimean Peninsula. Oktiabrskii needed to show that his troops had fought hard and that, as during the Crimean War, the invaders would be repelled. The losses in both defenses were extraordinary, and this history soon became ingrained in Sevastopol’s urban biography.

Sevastopol’s reflection on its past continued long after the Red Army liberated the city in May 1944. The first issues of the local party/government newspaper, *Slava Sevastopolia* (*Glory of Sevastopol*), carried an occasional column entitled “From the History of Sevastopol” that presented local history, as well as accounts of past military glory. Each day after the war residents read about the glory of Sevastopol in the “Glory of Sevastopol” newspaper, thus

¹⁰ *The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol*, 14.

¹¹ Matthew Gallagher argues that military men in the field rejected much of the theoretical musings of military theorists. This seems to fit well with Oktiabrskii’s writings, which are filled with emotion and feeling instead of abstractions. Matthew P. Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II: Myths, Memories, and Realities* (New York: Greenwood, 1963), 74-78, 179.

locating their city and selves in a symbolically honorific place within the larger Soviet Union.¹² Most of the earliest postwar columns in *Slava Sevastopolia* and *Za Rodinu!*, the underground partisan newspaper during the war, touched on tales from the Crimean War, linking the present battle against Nazi Germany to the heroic defense a century earlier.¹³ On the day before liberation, the newspaper of the Black Sea Fleet, *Krasnyi Chernomorets* (Red Black Sea Sailor), ran an article simply entitled “Sevastopol.” It detailed the fierce fighting in and around the city, but it also retold the city’s ancient Greek and Turkic origins and the importance of Prince Potemkin-Tavricheskii in selecting the site for the base of Catherine the Great’s Black Sea naval port.¹⁴

During the war it was necessary to show the domestic audience of soldiers and partisans that they were part of a long tradition, and also that they were fighting for more than meaningless buildings and streets. Homes, families, traditions, and a way of life had to be defended. In the days following liberation, as the first sailors and residents made their way back to the city, the naval newspaper described the “glory of the Russian soul” by combining the stories of Crimean War heroes like admirals P. S. Nakhimov and V. A. Kornilov, sailor and quartermaster Petr

¹²This is similar to Richard Wortman’s understanding of how Russian imperial sovereigns created a higher place for themselves over their subjects. Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3-4.

¹³See, for example, “Pamiatnik zatoplennym korabliam,” *Slava Sevastopolia* (27 September 1944): 2; “Chetvertyi Bastion,” *Slava Sevastopolia* (4 October 1944): 2; “Sevastopol—gorod slavy,” *Za Rodinu!* (11 May 1944): 2; “Sevastopol: istoricheskaiia spravka,” *Za Rodinu!* (11 May 1944): 3; G. Troitskii, “Lektsiia o pervoi oborone Sevastopolia,” *Za Rodinu!* (23 May 1944): 2.

¹⁴ “Sevastopol,” *Krasnyi Chernomorets* (8 May 1944): 1.

Koshka, and field nurse Dasha Sevastopolskaia (the Russian equivalent of Florence Nightingale) with the new heroes of the second defense: Ivan Golubets, the Five Black Sea Men, Ludmilla Pavlichenko, and more.¹⁵ Thus, even if the population had not heard about the heroic defense while in the rear, which is highly unlikely because of national newspaper and radio coverage, official remembrance marked their return to the city. The effort to educate people about the distant and recent past of the city continued well into 1945 and beyond. For example, the fleet held a lecture entitled “The Historical Past of Sevastopol” for the families of new and returning servicemen. The docudrama film, *Battle for Sevastopol*, followed the lecture.¹⁶ By devoting so much attention to the past, mythmakers suggested that war valor was a tradition, but also that one must defend and preserve that tradition with valor.

Journalist and playwright Boris Voitekhov remained adamant about portraying the “extraordinary heroism in everyday routine, to the amazingly vivid facts and episodes which without a doubt will,” as Tolstoy and Oktiabrskii also foresaw, “in the future serve as the cornerstone for the new Sevastopol epic.”¹⁷ From the unnamed man who jumped overboard from an evacuating ship and swam to Sevastopol because he did not want to leave the port city, to a

¹⁵ Petr Sazhin and G. Pozhenian, “Solntse nad Sevastopolem,” *Krasnyi Chernomorets* (12 May 1944): 1. Their feats are recounted and mythologized in *The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol and Sevastopol: November, 1941-July, 1942*.

¹⁶ “Segodnia,” *Krasnyi Chernomorets* (21 February 1945): 4. *Battle for Sevastopol* can be viewed at the National Archives, Washington, D.C. as *Russian News*, no. 3A (1944), Motion Picture 208-RN-59, Records of the Office of War Information, Record Group 208.

¹⁷ *The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol*, 104. See also Boris Voitekhov, *The Last Days of Sevastopol* trans. Ralph Parker and V. M. Greene (New York: Knopf, 1943).

woman who extinguished a fire that threatened to engulf a municipal food depot, tales of everyday feats of bravery became inspiration for a worldwide reading audience.

Celluloid also reinforced the Tolstoyan image of a city fighting to the death in defense of the nation. *Battle for Sevastopol* (1944), which chronicled the liberation of the Crimean Peninsula and the city, benefited from the powerful narrator and radio personality Iurii Levitan, who began the film by describing Sevastopol as a “City of ancient glory; Sevastopol, the legendary city; A city of Russian glory; A hero city.”¹⁸ He repeated the same phrases throughout the thirty-five-minute chronicle, interspersed with exhortations of: “Our Sevastopol.” The most symbolic scenes occurred at the end of the film. After violent fighting amidst the rubble, a Soviet soldier climbed the Panorama of the Defense of 1854-1855 building (dedicated to the Crimean War), where in 1942 the Nazis had raised their flag, and “on the cupola was raised the flag of [Soviet] victory,” according to Levitan. Quickly after, the audience saw Soviet military men standing atop the neo-classical gates to 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 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 and builders of Sevastopol’s present, thereby creating an unbroken chain of heroism. In one of the final scenes of *Battle for Sevastopol*, sailors and soldiers, standing near dead Germans and a Nazi flag floating offshore, removed their hats as the waters of the Black Sea lapped the coast and the ships of the fleet once again dropped anchor in Sevastopol’s bays. The headless statue of General Eduard Ivanovich Totleben, the designer of the city’s defenses during the Crimean War, once again guarded the city as the camera panned down to the

¹⁸ *Russian News*, no. 3A (1944).

inscription at its base which read, “Defense of Sevastopol.” The visual connection of Sevastopol’s liberation with the heroic past of the city, as symbolized in Totleben, continued in the visions of postwar architects.

Even before the war was over, the government’s Committee on Architectural Affairs in Moscow sponsored a closed competition between prominent architects, Moisei Ginzburg and Grigorii Barkhin, to design a new city from the rubble of Sevastopol. Starting with the first draft plans of Ginzburg and Barkhin, agitational spaces that helped to define the city and its place in history had been a prominent part of Sevastopol’s new look. The challenges facing Sevastopol and the importance of the city were clear. In order to create a stable and content population in one of the USSR’s most important military cities, residents needed to identify with it and feel a sense of place, especially because accommodation plans for housing, hospitals, shops, and consumer goods often failed. Ginzburg’s draft envisioned a grand outdoor museum throughout Sevastopol honoring its past and present victories. Barkhin’s winning design centralized and focused Sevastopol’s biography in the present.

In Barkhin’s 1945 revision, he triangulated the focal point of the central hill. Three monuments to the Crimean War—Historical Boulevard in the Central Region, Malakhov Kurgan in the Shippside Region, and the Fraternal Cemetery in the Northern Region—created the vertices of the triangle and framed the central hill. Utilizing one of the oldest concepts in urban design, Barkhin planned the most important buildings and monuments on hills and squares and at the junctions of important streets where they could be seen from many places. Various iterations placed statues of Lenin or Stalin or a war museum at the peak of the central hill on the square of Vladimir Cathedral. Naval clubs, libraries, party and government buildings, and the naval staff were all to be located at the intersections of the city’s three main streets around the central hill.

Unlike Ginzburg's plan for integrating historical monuments throughout the city, Barkhin's design marginalized the Crimean War to the vertices of his triangle, which surrounded his centerpiece—the Soviet institutions. He proposed to relocate the Crimean War Panorama from Historical Boulevard and rebuild it on Malakhov Kurgan, a key battle site during the Crimean War on which admirals and heroes died. This idea came from his competitor and fellow Moscow architect and professor, Moisei Ginzburg, who stated in early 1945 that the “most honorable task in the reconstruction of Sevastopol must be the reflection of the heroic spirit [*geroika*] of the city by the monumental means of architecture and sculpture.”¹⁹ The headless statue of Totleben on Historical Boulevard would have been restored and placed alongside new memorials to admirals V. A. Kornilov, V. I. Istomin, and P. S. Nakhimov on Malakhov Kurgan. Barkhin's tampering with local sites of remembrance and homage, however, did not withstand local scrutiny. He pushed the city's pre-Soviet history to the periphery and brought the political present to the central hill. Identification in Sevastopol was to be Soviet rather than Russian for Barkhin.

A. N. Ivanov and G. A. Lomagin, respectively the heads of the oblast and city architectural administrations, rejected Barkhin's plan in March 1945, which led V. A. Shkvarikov, head of the Russian architectural administration, days later to direct Lomagin to work on a new scheme with Barkhin.²⁰ Two separate commissions, following the lead of local and regional officials, also rejected Barkhin's general plan because it did not account for the

¹⁹ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomiki, *Russian State Archive of the Economy (RGAE)*, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243, ll. 9-11.

²⁰ *RGAE* f. 9432, op. 1, d. 242, ll. 93-93ob; Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv goroda Sevastopolia, *State Archives of the City of Sevastopol (GAGS)*, f. R-308, op. 1, d. 10, l. 12.

“significance and the natural conditions of the territory.”²¹ An expert review commission again criticized much of Barkhin’s reworked proposal in early April 1945, noting that he “ignored the specifics of the city.”²²

Barkhin continued to modify his proposal throughout the summer and autumn, but Lomagin in July and again in October criticized Barkhin’s plan for Malakhov Kurgan. In his latter critique, he suggested that Barkhin preserve the traditional location of existing memorials and monuments and spread new ones throughout the city to mark historical places. Lomagin refused to accept one large outdoor museum and memorial park.²³ Each heroic feat needed its own symbol and each city region needed monuments to keep the images and messages fresh in viewers’ minds. Lomagin believed that his local comrades wanted and needed the reminders all around them and not in a central location like a market, although the latter option would have made sightseeing easier. At the same October meeting, one Kvochkin from the Engineering Department of the fleet criticized numerous plans for monuments and advised Barkhin to consult the Political Directorate of the fleet for all questions regarding the panorama and memorials. Three days later a naval commission headed by Admiral Oktiabrskii argued that all Crimean War memorials should be preserved in their original locations. Furthermore, the admiral and the commission advised “the naming of squares and main streets of Sevastopol take into account the

²¹ *RGAE f. 9432, op. 1, d. 154, ll. 148-149.*

²² *RGAE f. 9432, op. 1, d. 33, l. 154.* Barkhin’s second variation on the plan, that was supposed to have addressed comments of the review committee, was presented to the Committee on Architectural Affairs on 5 May 1945. *RGAE f. 9432, op. 1, d. 33, l. 1.*

²³ *GAGS f. R-79, op. 2, d. 31, ll. 41-44; GAGS f. R-308, op. 1, d. 7, ll. 6-9ob.*

historical events and names of the organizers and heroes of the two defenses of Sevastopol.”²⁴ Thus, local architectural and naval officials destroyed plans previously approved by the Committee on Architectural Affairs Moscow’s plans for a completely new form of commemoration. The local team sought to preserve traditional sites of remembrance associated with the Crimean War and add new monuments to honor the latest sacrifices in World War II. The fleet understood how closely its history was bound up with the city and made sure to seize supervisory control over any plans to alter the memorial sites of the city that would have significantly altered Sevastopol’s urban biography.

In late 1945, in another show of local influence, the Crimean architectural authority finally issued a list of structures to be protected and preserved.²⁵ Although the archival trail is incomplete, one can surmise that the city administration and chief architect heeded a November 1944 request from Ivanov and sent a list of structures to the oblast capital. What was added and deleted we may never know, but in March 1946, when *Slava Sevastopolia* published the oblast committee’s decision, four new sites appeared on the list that were not in the original draft. The four new structures—Vladimir Cathedral, St. Michael’s Admiralty Church and the adjacent military-historical museum, and the Monument to Scuttled Ships of the Crimean War—were recognized for their architectural and historic importance.²⁶ Although the latter three are clearly tied to the Crimean War and therefore important symbols of the city’s history, Vladimir

²⁴ Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, *State Archive of the Russian Federation* (GARF) f. A-259, op. 5, d. 279, ll. 16-18.

²⁵ GAGS f. R-308, op. 1, d. 11, l. 5.

²⁶ “Okhrana istoriko-arkhitekturnykh pamiatnikov Sevastopolia,” *Slava Sevastopolia* (17 March 1946): 2.

Cathedral on the central hill was no doubt added because the bodies of Crimean War leaders E. I. Totleben, V. I. Istomin, V. A. Kornilov, and P. S. Nakhimov are interred in the vault below the sanctuary. The unseen crypt made the cathedral historically important. Somewhere in the chain of decision-making, likely from the debates over the city's reconstruction, it must have been noted that these additional structures were essential to the city's image and heritage and that therefore even the two churches had to be restored.

The struggle over the fate of the Vladimir Cathedral reveals the contested meanings that can be embedded in built space. Barkhin, working for the fleet, planned an outdoor museum that would have razed all the buildings on the central hill, including Vladimir Cathedral, to make way for a new ensemble of buildings for the navy.²⁷ A local review committee composed of naval and civilian representatives that included architects, engineers, a physician, the head of the city planning bureau, air defense, and fire control met at the end of 1945 and argued vehemently against Barkhin's plan. The local committee stated that the Cathedral should be restored and, moreover, that the entire scale of his project was out of line with the city's character.²⁸ The first plan to preserve Vladimir Cathedral came from the local committee after its initiation in October 1945. Although over one-third of the committee membership came from the navy, it rejected Barkhin's plan to enlarge a naval complex on the central hill at the expense of the Vladimir Cathedral.²⁹ Local naval and civilian officials were able to alter the plan of the Moscow architect selected to redesign Sevastopol and promote a mutually shared image of the city as a long-time

²⁷ G. Barkhin, "Proekt budushchego: pochetnoe zadanie," *Slava Sevastopolia* (18 May 1945): 1; *GAGS f. R-79, op. 2, d. 30-a*.

²⁸ *GARF f. A-150, op. 2, d. 52, ll. 1-10*.

²⁹ *GARF f. A-150, op. 2, d. 52, ll. 32-35*.

naval bastion. The image of a heroic city was more important to the navy than expanding its own administrative facilities.

After local architects seized control from Barkhin, they rooted the city's Crimean War heroes, and much less often Soviet notables, in the names of city landmarks and thereby wrote the past into built space. New municipal chief architect Iurii Trautman and his team set about re-naming the city's most prominent streets and squares, likely taking Oktiabrskii's recommendations into account. The naming and renaming of streets, squares, and parks was an integral part of the postwar program of urban agitation and identification, but it was unique neither to Sevastopol nor the USSR.³⁰ Name changes suggested political shifts. After the revolution, no one should have been surprised that Catherine the Great had her street renamed for Lenin (as it remains today). The Soviet obsession with making the revolution omnipresent led to the three streets of the ring road taking the names of Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx, and Mikhail Frunze. During postwar re-planning, however, the latter two reverted to Bol'shaia Morskaia (Big Naval) Street and Nakhimov Prospect. When judged as part of a larger plan, this transformation heralded a new emphasis on local identity, historical depth, and national pride. Frunze had been

³⁰ The study of meanings embedded in built space is not new. 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*, 10-15. John J. Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis, Blair A. 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 toponymy were often central.

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 port, both military and commercial. Although reverting to prerevolutionary names could be viewed as abandoning socialist goals, 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. The lessons of the Crimean War were quite instructive and supported prevalent Soviet ideals of duty, sacrifice, and fighting against all odds for the Motherland. Therefore, 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.

The names of the city's central squares also went through a radical transformation that likewise promoted the city's nineteenth-century heritage over the Communist Party or more recent events. 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 prerevolutionary Novoselskaia) reverted to the name of the eighteenth-century naval hero and supervisor over the construction of the original Russian naval base in Sevastopol, Admiral F. F. 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. The nomenclature of Sevastopol's streets and squares

highlighted the city's prerevolutionary tradition. These most prominent locations in the city center served as hubs for transportation, government and party administration, celebrations and leisure. Residents going about their normal routine had to pass by these places and give directions using place names. Thus, the new nomenclature became part of their reality and their everyday lives. When one read about the signified events in the newspaper, heard lectures on the radio, took field trips and then walked the streets, it surely created an air of familiarity and a sense of understanding and belonging. New residents from throughout the USSR would not require much time to understand the history of Sevastopol that had been scripted for them through place names.

Twenty years ago David Goldfrank showed how fundamental the Crimean War was to nineteenth-century diplomacy in Europe. The scars of war on the city and the collective imagination of its inhabitants and other Russians also lasted long past the signing of the Treaty of Paris. When Nazi forces bombarded Sevastopol in 1941, the first frame of reference that appeared to military men, journalists, and filmmakers was the Crimean War nearly ninety years earlier. Local architects and city planners after World War II realized the importance of re-forging a clear local historical narrative for the population of newly-arrived sailors and construction workers. The two great defenses became joined and embedded into the fabric of the city's squares, streets, and monumental ensembles, and when the diorama at Sapun Gora—the site of the 7 May 1944 bloody uphill battle that was decisive for defeating the Nazis two days later—opened in 1959, its eternal flame was lit from that at Malakhov Kurgan, thereby “symbolizing the continuity of glorious combat traditions.”³¹

³¹ Emiliia Nikolaevna Doronina and Tamara Ivanovna Iakovleva, *Pamiatniki Sevastopolia* (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1978), 123.