

2001

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Recommended Citation

Qualls, Karl D. "Local-Outsider Negotiations in Postwar Sevastopol's Reconstruction, 1944-53." In *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917-1953*, edited by Donald J. Raleigh, 276-98. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001.

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Local-Outsider Negotiations in Postwar Sevastopol's Reconstruction, 1944–53

KARL D. QUALLS

WITH THE exception of new research on Soviet science, historians have largely neglected life in the Soviet Union in the postwar years.¹ Access to provincial archives provides us with the opportunity to broaden our field of vision beyond Moscow to shed light on the beleaguered cities far from the locus of power and to examine the process of center-periphery dynamics. Unlike much of the literature from the cold war period that presupposed a monolithic, top-down process of decision making, this chapter emphasizes negotiated decision making, thereby complementing other recent research on the 1945–53 period. In the rubble and chaos of the postwar period, uncertainty plagued many ordinary citizens who hoped for the continuation of wartime liberalization. Some local officials, moreover, took advantage of the chaos in their war-ravaged cities to carve out a “little corner of freedom” in their relationship with the Center.² Although both groups would ultimately become disappointed, for a brief period after the war local officials were able to exert their influence more broadly. This chapter focuses on the dynamic relationship between municipal leaders in Sevastopol, who claimed to speak in the name of the city's residents, and central officials in Moscow. The ten years under investigation reveal a startling amount of ebb and flow of authority and directives

between center and periphery that resulted in Sevastopol regaining its unique, prerevolutionary identity within the Soviet empire.

The stalwart defense against Hitler's month-long bombardment in June 1942 and the nearly two-year German occupation had left the vital Black Sea port of Sevastopol in ruins. Of the 110,000 prewar residents, only 3,000 remained at the time of the city's liberation.³ The war had also created a more Slavic city; Crimean Tatars had been deported en masse for alleged collaboration with the Germans, and Karaite Jews suffered like most European Jews did under Hitler. Thus, postwar planners did not have to give special consideration to Sevastopol's multiethnic heritage in reconstructing the city and its image.

Sevastopol was not alone in its misery. The ravages of Operation Barbarossa had laid waste to much of the western reaches of the USSR. The territory overrun so quickly by the Nazi blitzkrieg contained not only millions of people, but also the heart of Soviet grain and industrial production.⁴ The war left thousands of towns and villages razed, twenty-five million people homeless, factories debilitated, and one-third of the USSR's prewar capital stock wrecked.⁵ In meeting the needs of the population during the war, Moscow had sought efficiency by centralizing urban planning in the Committee of Architectural Affairs (*Komitet po delam arkhitektury*, hereafter KA), but it failed because the level of destruction in the USSR was too vast for the rapid rebuilding envisioned. Moreover, the paucity of resources and information led to competition rather than coordination among ministries. Furthermore, the government's obsession with centralization and creating norms for planning often led it to dismiss local input; architects received few directives regarding scale and aesthetics. The Soviet Union, in short, was left in a precarious position for postwar reconstruction.

While officials in Moscow tried to rebuild its damaged infrastructure and cities and to make things more efficient through centralization, local leaders in Sevastopol and other cities sought to preserve tradition in hopes of creating an urban identity for which the population would be willing to sacrifice. With the country's infrastructure destroyed, its consumer and construction industries retooled, and much of its labor pool in uniform (dead, alive, or imprisoned), postwar reconstruction required as much sacrifice as the war itself.⁶ Local residents and officials realized that the government's renewed emphasis on heavy industry limited the possibility of rapid municipal reconstruction and, therefore, wanted more control over reconstruction plans. In addition to providing

central planners with data and anecdotes on local misery, Sevastopol's leaders "spoke Bolshevik," that is, appropriated the regime's rhetorical strategies to get from the Soviet system what they wanted.⁷ Eventually, Soviet officials in Moscow came to see postwar reconstruction as the new touchstone of progress, just like the grand construction projects of industrialization in the 1930s. They realized that rapid reconstruction that *accommodated* local concerns could create a sense of community, which could then be redirected toward a larger Soviet identity.⁸

What Did It Mean to Be "Local"?

Party, government, and artistic communities in Moscow had begun, during the war, to use national and regional identity to spark patriotism and support for the war effort. The Russian Orthodox Church was allowed to operate openly, new medals were minted in the name of historical military heroes (Aleksandr Nevskii, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov), and kremlins, churches, and other historical sites were protected. Architects combined this renewed emphasis on Russia rather than the USSR to transform the definition of politically correct aesthetics. "National in form, socialist in content" was one of the most well-known definitions of socialist realism, the official cultural policy since the early 1930s. As architects began to set about replanning war-ravaged cities, national often gave way to local in an effort to hasten reconstruction through a stronger tie to a hometown (*rodnoi gorod*).⁹ If someone gained pride of place, an emotional attachment to the city, it was thought that he or she would work harder (and sacrifice more) to see it rebuilt. Sevastopol's leaders, particularly postwar chief architect Iurii Trautman, used this to his advantage.

Moscow's architectural administrators, moreover, reminded architects to always consider local conditions of geography, topography, construction materials, style, and even history. Local officials in effect had a tool with which to diminish Moscow's monopoly on planning. As one writer on Stalingrad put it, postwar plans sought "to develop a series of architectural-planning tasks in connection with [the city's] *historical* and *social* significance."¹⁰ Thus, the city's place in history (urban biography), its dimensions, function (e.g., administrative, industrial, and resort), natural environment, resources, local building materials, and the condition of the housing fund—the number of residences—all influenced draft plans and the final design of the city.¹¹ Rather than take a "formalist" approach to rebuilding in which each city would resemble the next, architects often consulted historians and longtime residents to develop a

better understanding of its unique characteristics. It was more important to create the "individual" city in form, rather than simply to reproduce a "rational" prototype; the content still had to be socialist. For architects, current city planning was supposed to yield a more livable environment for urban dwellers: "It is not the comfort of the machine, but the comfort of the person that interests us. . . . [to] give maximal comfort."¹² Rostov-on-the-Don's plan, for example, simply stated that planning created a "more comfortable, healthy, and beautiful" city.¹³ "The beauty of a city is not the sum of beautiful facades," announced the journal of the Union of Architects, "but first and foremost the proportionality of all elements of the city organism, of its 'humanity,' of its harmonious connection with nature."¹⁴ However, the emphasis on local individuality over the formalist methods potentially undermined the very base of the Soviet system, which was rational, planned, and centralized. This tension continued to be a problem throughout the postwar decade.

Local conditions had to be championed by someone. But what did it mean to be a local official in postwar Sevastopol? Most of the prominent municipal leaders after the war were, in fact, appointed to the city administration from such diverse places as Leningrad, Moscow, Bashkiria, and Simferopol. Thus, becoming local meant that a person—either a native Sevastopolian or someone from elsewhere—collected and used knowledge of the city's condition and the concerns of its residents to influence the central planning process for the city. While not native Sevastopolians, outsiders (*inogorodtsy*) supported Moscow against local officials who were trying to preserve traditions. Why did some people "become local" while others remained outsiders? By not fulfilling promises for support and ensuring that ministries met their distribution targets for Sevastopol, Moscow inadvertently created many locals. Generally, new appointees came as outsiders, but life amid the rubble with little help from Moscow created sympathy for the local population and its plight. The local population, however, did not always view Sevastopol's leaders as local, even if Moscow did. Opposition to central dictates was enough for the municipal and national elite to consider the deviations local, even if residents demanded unyielding attention to their daily needs.

Lacking sufficient biographical information on Sevastopol's local officials, it is impossible to say whether their attempts to distinguish themselves from Moscow were based on generational or patronage conflicts. We know, for example, that Trautman studied architecture in Leningrad in the late 1930s while culture chief Andrei Zhdanov ran the city. It is probable that his downfall between 1948 and 1950 was a result of the Georgii Malenkov–Lavrentii

Beria clique's attempts to reign in the Leningrad group after Zhdanov's death.¹⁵ It is also possible that he was consumed by the antic cosmopolitanism campaign (a none-too-subtle code for anti-Semitism) that raged in the architectural community in 1948.¹⁶ For other key locals, we have even less information.

Overview, 1944–53 in Sevastopol

As the homeport of the Black Sea Fleet, Sevastopol was one of the most important cities in the Soviet Union. The destruction of the city was near total when the Red Army finally liberated it in early May 1944. Even before liberation, however, architects in Moscow had begun designing the new city as they had done in most of the other fifteen priority cities of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR).¹⁷ For maximum efficiency, planning was centralized under a single architectural workshop. Prominent Moscow architects Moisei Ginzburg (representing the Academy of Architecture) and Grigorii Barkhin (employed at this time by the navy) presented their competing proposals for Sevastopol's restoration in February 1945, but the latter won the commission because he provided a level of detail far greater than Ginzburg. With naval interests as his primary objective, Barkhin set out to redesign and resurrect the city.

For the twelve months between the city's liberation and the end of the war in Europe, Sevastopol slowly returned to life, but with little direction. Naval construction brigades furiously started rebuilding the ports and docks of the fleet. Distracted by war on the western front, officials in Moscow watched the protracted efforts of Barkhin to redesign the city. Municipal leaders and the population, however, resented slow central planning and began haphazard construction, trying to meet needs for shelter, food, health care, and more. Most residents remained oblivious to Moscow's grandiose blueprints for the new face of the city; Sevastopolians met their own daily needs even if doing so conflicted with official plans for the future. People rebuilt their homes where they once stood, not knowing or caring that the lot was now reserved for an apartment, hospital, school, or factory. The unguided construction in the early years after liberation thus hampered Moscow's ability to rebuild according to Barkhin's plan.

Seeing that Sevastopol had been languishing for two years, municipal architect Iurii Trautman began his transformation to becoming a local official, mediating between rigid central planning and chaotic individual construction. After a February–April 1946 planning review in Moscow at which Trautman

criticized Barkhin's inattention and won jurisdiction for designing the new Sevastopol, the city entered a period of relative autonomy in planning and rebuilding in which reconstruction was preferred to razing and building anew. Having realized that a city needs a sense of tradition and that the faltering economies and industries of Sevastopol and the USSR could not supply money, labor, or materials for a complete redesign, Trautman and his local team created a plan that preserved the essence of the city center while eliminating, adding, and redesigning buildings to fit the needs of the population and fleet. The new locals worked to protect Sevastopol's unique heritage from the grandiose plans of outsiders who would have destroyed local tradition and history.

A turning point for postwar Sevastopol came in October 1948 when Stalin and the Council of Ministers decreed that the city would be rebuilt in "three to four years."¹⁸ This simple decree put into place a whole series of changes that eliminated local autonomy but also increased the probability that Sevastopol would be raised from the ruins. Before the decree, little of significance had been erected. Temporary shelters, individual homes, and makeshift clinics and stores rose from the debris, yet the city streets remained surrounded by rubble rather than massive architectural symbols of Soviet power. The 1948 decree created, among other things, the Directorate for the Restoration of Sevastopol (*Upravlenie po vosstanovleniiu Sevastopolia*, hereafter UVS), an organ of the Council of Ministers. This new body was charged with coordinating all ministries and building trusts with interests in Sevastopol. The reorganization brought new administrators, long-awaited resources and labor, and an increased budget from Moscow (not from the provincial capital in Simferopol) to the city. The UVS was designed to bring ministries together and thereby reduce the amount of competition for resources by making each responsible for fulfilling its plans. With the recentralization of 1948, Trautman received the first indication that his position was superfluous. Although his ouster was over a year away, he knew that he had lost overall authority for the city's new face.¹⁹

Between 1948 and 1950, the UVS created the organizational and material base necessary for rapid reconstruction: the 1950s brought beautiful and imposing buildings to the city center. Although many of the projects were developed in the workshops of Moscow and Leningrad, local architects had enough input to create Corinthian facades that mirrored the ruins of the ancient Greek city of Khersones just to the west of the city center. Ministerial coordination guided by the UVS led to new and grandiose neoclassical hospitals, banks, theaters, hotels, and more. Sevastopol, on the other hand, got to

preserve its heritage and tradition in architectural styles, monuments, and street names.

Locals and outsiders negotiated nearly every aspect of Sevastopol's future. In essence, there was confrontation at every turn of construction: central officials in Moscow and the outsiders (like Barkhin) working on their behalf wanted a naval city that glorified Stalin and the Soviet Union; much of the local population and its spokespeople desired a city that would meet human needs and preserve the prerevolutionary heritage. Barkhin's insistence on satisfying the navy and Stalin's megalomania led to a less-than-adequate plan for meeting the population's daily needs. An investigation of three cases will show how someone could become local and how these officials negotiated the new face of Sevastopol. Representing local interests, or at least appearing to, was a way of resisting central control; yet, by appropriating central dictates for local variation, new locals "spoke Bolshevik" and were protected from purges, for a time.

Tradition: Russian or Soviet?

Iurii Trautman became the leader of the fight for local customs and traditions. As mentioned, the city's new architectural style was based on the nearby ruin of Khersones, a 2,500-year-old Greek city. Like Barkhin, Trautman sought to highlight Sevastopol's naval heritage, but he wanted it extended to the city's past achievements, not just its activity in the latest war. Most of all, Trautman and his staff wanted to eliminate plans for grandiose monuments and memorials to Stalin and others who had no direct connection to the city and its history. Restoration of Sevastopol's monuments to past heroes—Crimean War leaders E. I. Totleben, V. I. Istomin, V. A. Kornilov, and P. S. Nakhimov—took precedence over erecting new memorials to current leaders, and the ancient Greek styles rooted the city's identity in something much older and awe-inspiring. Ultimately, Trautman's vision outlived his tenure as chief architect. The neoclassical style, devoid of most High-Stalinist stylizations, survived the change in leadership because it represented Sevastopol in a way that could also aid the Soviet Union's quest to be perceived as powerful, industrious, and stable. Trautman and his sense of proportion won out over Barkhin.

Problems of scale had haunted Barkhin well beyond his initial plan. In the first peer reviews of March 1945, experts focused on the size of Barkhin's city squares. Prompted by complaints from Trautman's predecessor (a real local), the brigade of experts in Moscow noted that the museum that Barkhin had

planned for the Square of Parades was out of scale with neighboring buildings.²⁰ In particular, the experts complained that the naval headquarters (*Morflot*), the buildings of naval organizations, and the new Panorama of the Great Patriotic War were much too large.²¹ Barkhin attempted to follow contemporary trends of monumental architecture, not knowing that it would be his downfall. The joint conclusion of three architects went as far as to say that “even if one takes into account [Sevastopol’s] significance as a hero-city, a city of two defenses,” the scale of Barkhin’s plan for the city center was much too large.²²

Since Sevastopol’s identity was grounded in its history as a naval port, and because Barkhin worked for the navy, he believed that structures highlighting the city’s naval character or its feats in wartime deserved additional importance. Thus, Barkhin created inordinately large buildings for agitational purposes.²³ Barkhin’s Glory (*Slava*) monument was one such piece of massive architecture that brought numerous complaints. Originally designed at over 100 meters (300 feet) high, this tower would have dominated the Square of Parades at the ancient seaside entrance to the city. The square stretched along the sea and included the oldest pier (*Grafskaia pristan’*) and part of the oldest street (*Michmanskii bul’var*) in the city. Barkhin designed Glory to overpower all other structures and command the attention of passersby. Because the monument did not conform to the existing scale of construction, the brigade of experts saw it as a hideous eyesore in one of the most important and beautiful regions of the city.²⁴ Moreover, for a square designed for parades and demonstrations, the base of such a high tower would have been quite an obstacle.

On the former Square of the Third International, Barkhin unleashed all of his talent for symbolic architecture. On this site where residents enjoyed strolling, Barkhin designed a complex of naval buildings and a military monument. Over the entire square and in front of the Forum garden park with memorials to the heroes, he proposed an enormous statue of Stalin—“the great organizer and inspiration for victory.”²⁵ But even Stalin was to be no match for the 110-meter tower of war—four triumphal arches adorned with heroic sculptures. To illustrate the effect of his plan, Barkhin included a description of a parade route that began on Karl Marx Street, continued along Frunze Street, flowed into the square and past monuments and the memorial to Stalin, and finally emerged onto Lenin Street to South Bay or down the incline to Grafskaia pristan to the sea.

For balance and symmetry, Barkhin planned another equally impressive

square on the opposite side of the central hill. He designed Commune Square, as it was called at this stage of planning, to serve not only as a traffic circle for roads coming from the outlying settlements into the center, but also as the administrative hub of the city with headquarters for both party and government. Traffic flowing into the center would have to pass the two institutions most important to the regulation of civilian life. The square also served as the entrance to Historical Boulevard—the site of the legendary defense of Sevastopol during the Crimean War, the destroyed Panorama, and an enormous new statue to Lenin.

Barkhin added a third point to the east of the city as a center for memorials and monuments. With complexes celebrating the latest defense of the city centered on the statues of Lenin and Stalin, Barkhin designed Malakhov Kurgan to become the center of Crimean War memorials; this was the only of his three proposals to be fulfilled in part. He proposed to relocate the Panorama from Historical Boulevard and rebuild it on Malakhov Kurgan, a key battle site during the Crimean War on which admirals and heroes died, and to this day a place of reverence and respect. Moreover, the headless statue of Totleben on Historical Boulevard would have been restored and placed alongside new memorials to Admirals Kornilov, Istomin, and Nakhimov on Malakhov Kurgan. His tampering with local sites of remembrance and homage, however, did not withstand local scrutiny. Totleben and the Panorama remained on Historical Boulevard, thanks to Trautman and other locals.

Barkhin designed the central hill at the heart of his three points to be the focus of the first stage of construction and detailed what he considered to be the most important buildings. Understanding that naval support was essential in Sevastopol, Barkhin gave the navy the most attention in the latest plans: the House of the Navy, an officers' club, a naval complex, a museum, and the navy's own library. Elaborate administrative buildings for the local organs of both government and party encouraged additional official support in Moscow.²⁶

Trautman, Sevastopol's new chief architect,²⁷ emerged from the November 1945 planning review in Moscow as the bearer of a new vision for the city, which openly confronted Barkhin's plan. At the beginning of 1946, Trautman used this opportunity to present his counterplan, "A Short Consideration for the Experts on the Draft of the Plan of Sevastopol's Center," rather than support his newfound rival.²⁸ At a time when political trends in Moscow sought to eliminate personal fiefdoms, Trautman, never before having lived in Sevastopol, highlighted the city's history and unique qualities to differentiate him-

self from his foe, the outsider, in Moscow. Trautman objected, as one would expect from the city's architectural leader, that Barkhin neither knew nor incorporated "local conditions and traditions" in his plan.²⁹ He condemned Barkhin for planning as if Sevastopol was a completely destroyed tabula rasa on which he could create without consideration for existing buildings, streets, and landmarks. Barkhin's reduction of Primorskii and Michmanskii Boulevards (the "traditional places of rest for the citizens of Sevastopol and sailors") for his massive Square of Parades stood out as the ultimate expression of his lack of interest in local tradition.³⁰ Trying to preserve the familiar buildings of the city and to reduce the cost of reconstruction, Trautman admonished Barkhin for proposing the city's party and government buildings on Commune Square and for widening main traffic arteries. Barkhin, he suggested, preferred to raze structures and build anew rather than to restore. Restoration would have created additional housing more quickly to serve local needs.

Trautman's skillful use of culture chief Andrei Zhdanov's language sealed the fate of Barkhin's plan. In his concluding paragraphs of his counterplan, Trautman made it clear to his audience that Barkhin's "abstract academism" did not answer the "real needs of the city" and therefore must not be implemented.³¹ Trautman urged, on the other hand, that he and his staff "rework the draft of the center on the basis of the *new general directives* and more favorable *initial qualities*," thereby combining the new cultural turn initiated by Zhdanov with Trautman's desire to preserve the city's past.³² The "new general directives" referred to a November 1945 Council of People's Commissars decree "On Measures for the Restoration of RSFSR Cities Destroyed by German Invaders" that called for rapid reconstruction of architecturally valuable structures, city centers, housing, and the "improvement of the everyday conditions of the population of cities."³³ Either because Trautman presented a superior plan or because it conformed to the latest wave of official cultural policy, or both, the experts accepted most of his counterplan as the basis for their latest criticism of Barkhin.

Once the local team had stated its case and couched it in the proper language of cultural criticism, a number of men who reviewed the plan began to focus on architectural matters of scale, aesthetics, and symbolism. In April 1946, Architect A. Velikanov, while noting the "academic and abstract" characteristics of the plan, also expressed concern for the destruction of Sevastopol's tradition and history. He pointed out that construction of the Square of Parades would encroach on 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 destroy it fully, to make a new city, a different city, a city not having a continuous connection with the old Sevastopol.³⁴

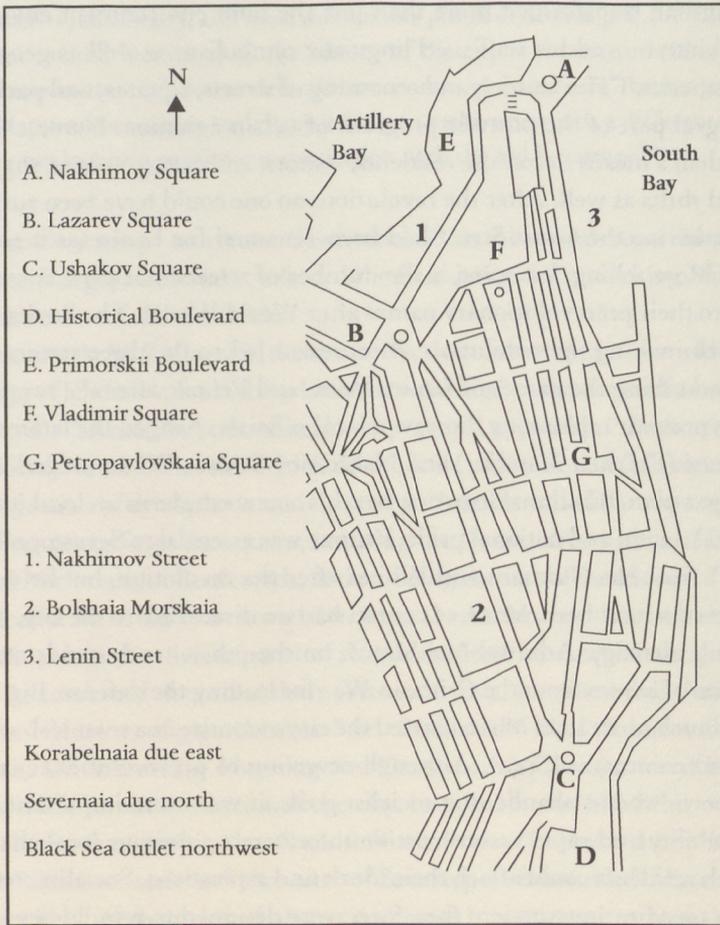
Velikanov's attempt to return Sevastopol to its historical roots buttressed Trautman's arguments and reinforced the foundation for reworking Barkhin's schemes to meet local demands.

Architect A. M. Zaslavskii, the most effective of the experts in wielding the language of Zhdanov, faulted Barkhin for working "in the name of an abstract idea" and a "formalistic, out-of-scale, impractical approach."³⁵ Both architects I. N. Sobolev and Zaslavskii criticized the scale of the Square of Parades and the congestion of symbols on and around it. Sobolev called for removing the 100-meter tower from the square, restoring the former dimensions of Primorskii and Michmanskii Boulevards, and reducing the size of the House of Sailors and Morflot Building so as not to dominate the Panorama and theater.³⁶

That spring, the review panel of the Committee on Architectural Affairs (the KA) combined the evaluations of its individual members and demanded that the "elements of gigantomania" be eliminated.³⁷ V. V. Baburov (head of the Main Directorate for Planning and Constructing Cities) praised Barkhin for his work on the aesthetics of the city, but then brandished the sword of cultural criticism, noting that Barkhin's work was "connected neither with the traditions nor scale and character of Sevastopol's ensemble." Moreover, he had "deviated to the point of abstraction" and his proposal carried the "imprint of abstract academism."³⁸ Such charges from an influential group ended Barkhin's chances for carrying out his design. Unfortunately for Barkhin, but not surprisingly, the KA echoed, nearly word for word at times, the sentiments of Baburov's organ—the KA's own administration. The KA's authority, however, extended beyond criticism. It officially rejected Barkhin's proposal and called for further elaboration by mid-November 1946, seven months later.³⁹ The battle initiated by local architects and taken up by prominent colleagues in Moscow brought Sevastopol's demands to the fore. Trautman was able to use official rhetoric espousing individuality (antiformalism) to justify his recalcitrance to Barkhin's ill-informed planning. Likewise, speaking in the name of the population, if not always directly on their behalf, he secured a place for himself in history as the architect of a hero city.⁴⁰

Trautman transformed more than just the built environment envisioned by Barkhin; he and his staff used linguistic symbolism as well as geography and aesthetics.⁴¹ The naming and renaming of streets, squares, and parks was an integral part of the postwar program of urban agitation. Name changes, rather than a means to confuse residents, visitors, and cartographers, suggested political shifts as well. After the revolution, no one could have been surprised that Catherine the Great Street had been renamed for Lenin (as it remains today). More telling, however, is the number of streets that permanently reverted to their prerevolutionary names after World War II. 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 after the revolution. During postwar replanning, however, local officials changed the latter two to Big Naval (*Bol'shaia Morskaiia*) and Nakhimov Streets. When judged as part of a larger plan, this transformation heralds a new emphasis on local identity, 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 to its ruling ideology. Admiral Nakhimov, on the other hand, stands atop the pantheon of heroes from the Crimean War for leading the defense. Big Naval Street, much more than Marx, carried the city's identity as a seaside, both military and commercial, port. Although reverting to prerevolutionary names could be viewed as abandoning socialist goals, it was more important to the city's stability and rapid reconstruction to resurrect a unique, local character to which residents could attach their ideals and aspirations. Socialist competitions to speed reconstruction, therefore, were designed to rebuild Sevastopol—the hometown—more than socialism, not unlike similar retreats to Russian identity during the war (Map 11).

The names of the city's central squares also went through a radical transformation. As in the renaming of Nakhimov Square from Catherine and Lenin, local planners transformed Commune Square (the prerevolutionary *Novoselskaia*) to Ushakov, another of the city's admiral heroes. Cathedral Square, also known as Vladimir before 1917, has yet to find a new identity. Like Nakhimov, it was alternately named Lenin and Stalin, depending on whose statue was designated for the spot. To this day, however, locals still refer to it as Central (*Tsentral'naia*) or simply hillock (*gor'ka*). With the reopening of St. Vladimir Cathedral, some present-day residents have reverted to tsarist names. Whole regions also changed. With the Tatar population forced from



Map 11. Sevastopol's city center

the city for allegedly collaborating with the Germans, the Tatar Settlement (*Tatarskaia slobodka*) became known as Green Hillock (*Zelënaia gor'ka*). Buildings also changed. The *kenasa*, a Karaite Jewish prayer hall, became the Spartak sports club; the mosque, with minarets removed and the facade "erased" of Koranic inscriptions, became the naval archive, despite one construction unit's request for the building for its new club. Reversion to tradition meant a Russian ethnic identity wrapped in a Greek architectural façade, yet devoid of all hints of competing identities. Local unity demanded visual unity. Tension remained, however, between civil and military interests.

Cities Are for People

From September to December 1946, the local group headed by chief architect Iurii Trautman and the City Planning Commission (*Gorplan*) head Tamara Alëshina, the latter appointed from Bashkiria, developed a plan to counter what they viewed as an unrealistic proposal created in faraway Moscow. Alëshina's superiors in Moscow had anticipated a population of 80,000 by 1950, but with a population already at 60,000 in late 1946 (an increase of 50,000 people in just thirty months), Sevastopol's planners suggested a more likely 112,000 target. Moreover, with central ministries unable or unwilling to deliver materials and labor, the local plan realized that "in the first period of construction stone from destroyed buildings will be utilized."⁴² Among the documents prepared to bolster their counterplan was an analysis showing that Barkhin's idea for a grandiose naval complex on the central hill would have razed twenty-seven buildings, including ten that had suffered no damage.⁴³ For all of Barkhin's attention to architectural detail, he failed to show equal concern for living conditions and the desperate need for immediate housing, the true mark of an outsider.

Although much of the first order of construction remained the same, the local group redesigned the plan, they argued, to meet Sevastopol's needs better. To attract more food to the hungry city (exacerbated by the 1946–47 famine), they planned to erect the House of Collective Farm Workers as temporary living and storage for people bringing agricultural goods to market. The plan also provided for theaters, cinemas, libraries, and clubs for the "service of the population of all regions."⁴⁴ Health care remained a priority with hospitals, clinics, and water-treatment plants added. Department stores in all three regions of the city were expected to accommodate the consumer demands of the population. Stores were to be filled by a variety of local industries: fish and meat processing, clothing and shoe manufacturing, and beverage distilleries. Transportation and sewage systems, street networks, and even laundry services were important enough to be included in the detailed local plan. Barkhin, not living in the city, met few of these everyday needs of the local population.

Trautman's revised construction agenda also sought to meet transportation, medical, educational, and other needs. With little commercial activity in the city's outskirts, workers and their families had to make their way to the city center for most goods. To reduce the burden of this trek, the revised plan set forth guidelines for the development of bus, trolley, and cutter traffic. Bus

routes were designed to connect the city center with outlying settlements as well as the cities of Yalta, Balaklava, and Simferopol. Trolley lines were to extend to the two principal settlements at Matiushenko Hill and Ship Side (*Korabel'naia storona*) and around the central ring road. Because several bays separated key residential and industrial areas in Sevastopol, planners hoped to reduce pressure on streets still under construction by setting fixed routes for cutters between the center and other important regions. During the summer months, cutters were also to transport families to one of the most popular beaches.⁴⁵

Propositions for medical care and education attempted to provide services central to the USSR's social welfare program. The city's infirm were to be accommodated in 1,200 hospital, clinic, and maternity home beds. In addition, four bathhouses, an epidemic center, and a malaria-prevention complex were added to meet general and specific medical needs.⁴⁶ Planning for education followed the general prescript of "rational planning." Having determined that in four years the city's population would reach 112,000, the planning commission assumed that 20 percent would be school-age children. With a target of 22,400 children in school by 1950, Gorplan designed eighteen schools with a capacity of 8,720 students.⁴⁷ Although this seems like a planned deficit, it merely continued the trend toward multiple shifts during each school day. If by 1950 most schools still operated in three shifts, it was an improvement over the immediate postwar years during which many schools served four sets of students each day.⁴⁸

Trautman and Alëshina's 1947 revised five-year plan for construction also provided for the entertainment and comfort of residents and visitors. A total of 500 hotel rooms and 100 rooms for collective-farm workers were planned for the first order of construction. Farmers could then sell their goods at newly planned regional markets. The proposal also included a new, enclosed central market to replace chaotic, open-air stalls. In addition, up to three new department stores in the city center would allow people to buy commercial goods, when available. Two shopping complexes planned for the Ship Side and North Side (*Severnaia storona*) regions encouraged more commerce without having to travel to the center. A yacht club, stadium, and sports club provided venues for "physical culture" beyond the schools and beaches of the city. The restoration of seventy-four hectares, and construction of another twenty-two hectares, of tree-lined boulevards, parks, and even cemeteries provided nature amid a built environment. Other entertainment and relaxation could be found in the drama theater, concert hall, and three cinemas. For the warmer summer

months, two outdoor theaters and two open-air cinemas were also planned.⁴⁹ In short, Barkhin, by not living in Sevastopol, proved ignorant of local conditions, which made it impossible for him to plan accordingly. Comfort, then, became the domain of local leaders; outsiders were too preoccupied with monuments to Stalin and centralized efficiency. But, as Trautman soon found out, plans were not production. Only when local knowledge of conditions and needs combined with the Center's economic resources would Sevastopol rise from the rubble. Once supposed local concerns are incorporated into central planning, however, what does it mean to be local?

Redefining Local Leaders

By 1946, Trautman had succeeded in discrediting Barkhin by using the dominant rhetorical categories of the Center regarding antiformalism and the individual and unique aesthetic approach to each city. Trautman now focused on the needs of Sevastopol and its residents. For two years, speaking for local concerns had given architects in Sevastopol a degree of autonomy. When conditions failed to improve owing to a lack of construction materials and labor, Stalin and the Council of Ministers decreed that Sevastopol would be rebuilt quickly and under a new centralized administration. Trautman's foes began to stress the need for efficiency and teamwork. Thus, collective replaced individual work as Sevastopol rebuilt. For example, once Trautman's team had identified the needs of new construction, much of the architectural and engineering design took place in Leningrad and Moscow workshops where specialists would adapt standardized blueprints to Sevastopol's seismic needs, limiting the role of local officials.

With the plan in hand by 1947, tensions between center and periphery did not end, because pressure on ministries to implement the plan created more friction. The local divisions of national organs began to shift blame, trying to prove that inadequate reconstruction was not their fault. Organizations in Moscow did not want to take the blame for noncompliance, so they chastised local officials. Conversely, the men and women in Sevastopol saw Moscow and its ministries trying to enforce rules on paper without a clear understanding of local conditions.

No one knew better than the residents of Sevastopol that much construction was inadequate and ill-planned. The city's inhabitants had been complaining about housing deficits, rotten (or unavailable) food, infectious trash heaps, and a lack of everyday services since the first months after liberation in 1944.

After construction was recentralized in October 1948, though, the local media began to print articles that not only condemned poor-quality construction but also criticized Trautman and his plan. There was one common denominator in the press attacks against the local architect: they raised local concerns—Trautman's own strategy. "We Will Rebuild Hometown (*rodnoi*) Sevastopol in 3–4 Years," the title of the column in which many of the critiques (and even Trautman's explanations) appeared, signaled a return to local as the basis for criticism. In *Slava Sevastopolia* (Glory of Sevastopol), the official party and government newspaper, anonymous and signed articles appeared criticizing Sevastopol's architects for not working hard enough, for not providing and receiving enough political instruction, and for not preparing living space for arriving workers.⁵⁰ One critic wrote that concentrating on main roads, to the detriment of stairways and inclines over and around the city's hills and ravines, threatened "to break the legs" of residents.

The most contentious issue, however, was the location of the grandiose drama theater—the new centerpiece of the city. One month after the October 1948 decree to build the city in three to four years, Trautman first told the population that he had designed the theater for the central hill.⁵¹ The local population countered, noting that the theater would only serve the needs of the population if it was accessible. Both the theater administration and audience were enlisted to level criticism against the planned location.⁵² The published letters echoed much of the sentiment from the unpublished: building must take place near a central square with trolleybus stops so as to eliminate the dangerous winter climb up stairs to the hilltop. Unpublished letters from the workers and administrators at the State Khersones Museum wanted the theater placed near its prewar location on Primorskii Boulevard. Moreover, they provided sketches of a new facade that represented a style closer to south-shore Crimean traditions.⁵³ The amount of detail in the unpublished letters surely excluded them from *Slava Sevastopolia* because they countered the new policy of centralism. Moreover, the drawings challenged prevailing aesthetic trends, taking localism too much to heart.⁵⁴

The press attacks against Trautman were merely the prelude for what was to come. In the next two years, the chief municipal architect would be demoted and eventually removed from the city, all with the population's best interests in mind, according to his critics. Chief municipal building inspector Mikhail Amelchenko, appointed from Moscow, and his superiors in the State Architectural-Construction Inspectorate (*Glavnoe upravlenie gosudarstvennogo arkhitekturno-stroitel'nogo kontroliia*, hereafter GASK) became the leading pro-

ponents of renewed “collectivism” because they were most responsible for *quality* construction, which was rare in the city. GASK officials inspected buildings and documents to ensure that they conformed to building codes. Responsibility for any accidents, such as collapsed roofs or walls, fell solely on the shoulders of inspectors. Therefore, they had the most to lose by allowing Trautman and new chief architect A. V. Arefiev (a Stalin Prize laureate from the capital) to continue ignoring unplanned, or “self-willed,” construction. The architects, however, saw Amelchenko and GASK as merely more outsiders coming to Sevastopol with plans, but little understanding of the problem. This disagreement encapsulates the essence of local-outsider battles in Sevastopol—central officials, often well intentioned, had too little information from which to plan. Local officials, knowing the condition of their friends and neighbors, saw the uninformed dictates as roadblocks to a more thoughtful reconstruction task, but had little power to set the agenda. Trautman, Arefiev, and others (often the creative leaders, not real bureaucrats) had the health and welfare of the local population at heart; any housing, no matter how ramshackle, was better than none. Moscow planners saw only numbers and disembodied reports from their local plenipotentiaries who feared blame for poor-quality or ill-organized construction. With so few trips into the devastated city, Moscow officials really could have acted in no other way.

The rebuilding of Sevastopol, as in most other cities, had fallen far behind goals and expectations. To correct planning and construction failures, the entire Sevastopol rebuilding project came under review by several central agencies. On 14 February 1950, the heads of GASK from Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow, Sevastopol, and seven Soviet republics submitted reports on planning and building during 1949 to the Ministry of City Building (*Mingorstroï*). Amelchenko, representing Sevastopol’s inspectorate, presented a scathing analysis. His complaints showed how and why, at least in his eyes, Sevastopol had failed so miserably in 1949. Although some of his personal attacks and tirades were illustrative, he could not place blame in the proper place; he was not foolish enough to enumerate the failures of the Council of Ministers’ hasty and imprecise speed-up resolution of October 1948 to complete rebuilding in Sevastopol in three to four years.

Amelchenko charged that Trautman and other local leaders, including city executive committee chairman V. I. Filippov, were “violating construction legislation.”⁵⁵ He accused the two men of repeatedly approving construction violations in direct opposition to written building codes. Their lack of control of building and infrequent consultation led to “misunderstandings” with

GASK. Moreover, Trautman in particular was so slow in providing building permits that many residents began construction hoping that it would be approved *ex post facto*. More than once, Trautman's "delay in the formation of necessary documents" prevented the resettlement of workers from tent cities.⁵⁶ The inspector's appeal to Moscow in the name of the health and welfare of the local population was precisely the same formulation that Trautman had used in 1946 to secure the commission over Barkhin. Although the central tasks had changed, from individual and local to collective and centralized construction, the rhetorical device for stating the proper course had not—the comfort of the local population was manifest.

Local officials, when called to defend themselves, responded with the only language they thought might be useful. Obviously, there were problems in city administration and the performance of planning and construction units, but to use this as a defense would have been counterproductive. The blame for Sevastopol falling behind targets lay with the inability of ministries and state agencies to provide labor, capital, and materials. Finding fault with central planning was still taboo: one could criticize individuals and lower divisions of ministries, but there was still an unwritten code forbidding accusations of the elite. Thus, Trautman and others, instead of wasting time explaining how the rapid increase in work had not been met with an even marginal increase in staffing, argued that the "self-willed" construction outside of building codes was a mistake, but one that had the best interests of the workers at heart. Rather than ignore all responsibility to their workers, many local construction trusts had sponsored illegal residential and recreational facilities in the city's outskirts. For example, the chairperson of a factory in the Inkerman region not only built a club for her workers without consent, but she also violated building codes by using expensive stone from the nearby quarry.⁵⁷ Many other factory managers and even municipal agencies had raised temporary barracks for their workers because housing was at a premium. To abide by codes and regulations would have meant that their workers would remain in tents or mud huts. Managers responsible for meeting construction deadlines and output targets realized that a worker without a roof would produce less than one with adequate, if not optimal, shelter and food.

With Moscow providing so little attention to local demands during 1949, Amelchenko's scathing report to Mingorstroi in February 1950 seems bitter, vindictive, and unwilling to address the real problem of overzealous dictates from Moscow. He disparaged nearly all public officials in the city, in particular the head of construction trusts. The increase of work under GASK review

from 193 buildings in 1948 to 595 in 1949 necessitated better worker training, material supply, and supervision, none of which was forthcoming. With only Amelchenko and three senior inspectors, GASK could review each site only once every eight months. To avoid pointing the finger of fault at Moscow, yet knowing that quality construction was lacking and that he would be blamed, he found equally culpable foes in Sevastopol. Amelchenko, through the party machinery, had Trautman removed from his post, and replaced by Arefiev, in February 1950.

Less than two full weeks after presenting reports and recommendations to Mingerstroï, Amelchenko had to defend much of his work at a series of meetings of the Directorate of Deputy Ministers of the Russian Federation and the Interdepartmental Commission for the Examination of Projects for Construction in Sevastopol. Twice each day for one week, the leading architectural officials from Moscow met in Sevastopol with local leaders to discuss the pace and quality of construction. Some officials showed their ignorance by suggesting further wooden construction. Their counterparts from Sevastopol reminded them that there was no timber near the city and that numerous laws had long since banned anything but stone construction in the city center.

At the meetings, Moscow and Sevastopol also quarreled over history. Monuments, memorials, and tradition were centerpieces in the city, yet central authorities often wanted to change areas against local desires. The new head of Sevastopol's government, Sergei Sosnitskii from the Crimean Oblast government, submitted a modest request that the planning for Primorskii Boulevard, one of the oldest places in the city, not be changed because the "citizens of Sevastopol are very accustomed to the present layout, they love [it] and will be thankful if it remains in its present condition."⁵⁸ When B. A. Shkvarikov, head of the Directorate of Architecture, suggested that more advisers from Moscow take part, Alëshina argued that the "boulevard must preserve its historically complex arrangement."⁵⁹ That included replanting chestnut trees destroyed during the war. If plans changed again, she reminded them, Sevastopol would lose one million rubles in funding. Both Alëshina and the new Sosnitskii defended their work as benefiting local residents.

Having assumed his post as chief municipal architect only a few months earlier, Arefiev launched a heated campaign against all outsiders at a Moscow meeting in April 1951. He lambasted that "odious figure" Amelchenko and questioned not only his ability to perform his duties, but even his qualifications for the post. In a bold move, perhaps relying on his prominence as a Stalin Prize recipient, he unleashed a stinging rebuke of nearly all the top officials

of the Russian Federation's architectural administration for not fulfilling their obligations to support planning and construction brigades in Sevastopol. Furthermore, he demanded that the government remove architects who submitted drawings from workshops in Leningrad and Moscow from Sevastopol's planning teams, truly redefining the term *inogorodtsy*. As Arefiev must have anticipated, V. Tsingalenok (chairman of GASK) defended Amelchenko and the local GASK organ and attacked Arefiev's administrative abilities, character, and principles.⁶⁰

The Moscow officials shot back. Architect Aleksandr Kuznetsov called Arefiev's planning agency a "completely undisciplined organization" and also demanded that the main architect reform himself as well as the organs responsible to him.⁶¹ Some officials even suggested that a case of sabotage was at hand. Two prominent architects on the review board, Valentin Golli and Aleksandr Kuznetsov, admonished Arefiev's tactics. Golli, using the new language, condemned him for doing little better than his predecessors and for trying to rebuild the city alone rather than "work[ing] with the collective."⁶² Individualism could no longer be tolerated; Trautman's rhetoric against formalism had come full circle. Kuznetsov, however, while chiding Arefiev, pointed to the real locus of the problem: "After the resolution of the Council of Ministers about the economics of construction," it became clear that all the general plans and drafts of city centers throughout the USSR had "serious mistakes."⁶³ In other words, much of what had already been approved once and considered correct had to be changed to conform to the *ex post facto* norms from the Council of Ministers.

Conclusion

Although historians often viewed High Stalinism as a period of stultifying centralization, more recent research has corrected that perspective. In Sevastopol, there was a great deal of negotiation, and there is no reason to believe that the situation there was unique. With the country's infrastructure destroyed, its consumer and construction industries retooled for war, and much of its labor pool dead, imprisoned, or still in uniform, postwar rebuilding required coordinated effort to maximize the speed of reconstruction and the amelioration of horrible conditions in destroyed cities. Lacking resources and information, central planners had to hope for postwar sacrifice equal to that of wartime. But even the sacrifices of wartime had to be stimulated by appealing to Russian history and nationalism. In a similar way, the Center gave in to many of

Sevastopol's demands for historical preservation and restoration of the city's architectural landmarks. Accommodation, then, functioned as a strategy in Soviet political life during the period under examination.

Even officials assigned to the city from Moscow, Leningrad, and other places soon realized that a phoenix could not rise by itself from the ashes of Sevastopol. Enforcing strict building codes meant little to the newly local officials who saw their construction workers sleeping in tents and crowded wooden barracks during cold winters. Sevastopol's party-state elite and urban planners believed that it would be healthier for workers and better, in the long run, to the health of Sevastopol if a factory manager built stone housing without permission and all the proper documents rather than erecting more temporary barracks and tents.

In the decade following the liberation of Sevastopol, central planning gave way to local autonomy that in turn reverted to central authority. As the initial attempts by the Committee of Architectural Affairs to centralize planning failed under the burden of so many destroyed cities, Trautman and others seized on the prevailing rhetoric of recognizing local conditions. Only local officials, they argued, had the information at hand to preserve tradition, utilize local resources properly, and plan the appropriate facilities for a growing population. In an era that was punctuated with expressions of Stalin's care and concern (*zabota*) for his children⁶⁴ and decrees urging the use of local resources, arguing for accommodating the local population was an effective weapon. In fact, outsiders like Amelchenko eventually turned the rhetoric of accommodation against locals in an effort to reassert central control. Thus, both those arguing for local autonomy and those arguing for centralized control insisted that accommodating the local population was essential. Much of this concern was genuine, as in the case of factory managers who ignored construction laws to house their workers. Other expressions of concern, as in the bureaucratic squabble between Amelchenko and Arefiev, were likely feigned to gain power, control, or prestige. Regardless, local meant something in postwar Sevastopol, and anyone who failed to recognize this fact was soon out of favor.

In one sense, the two competing visions of centralization and localism both had the best interests of the population in mind. Party-state elites in Moscow, for example, wanted centralization for efficiency's sake. By becoming more efficient, the entire economy would improve and therefore the national wealth and power would increase. Local spokespersons, however, sought to defend the urban biography. Within the parameters of the city, both geographic and historical, a unique identity had developed that provided residents with their

own "center"—a place where they could define themselves as "us." These two visions for the future face of Sevastopol were not mutually exclusive. Moreover, the quest for centralization did not mean a complete abandonment of variation within the system, at least when it came to some cultural issues, even during the period of High Stalinism. Lenin himself realized in the months immediately following the revolution that cultural symbols and the historic past were essential elements that needed to be preserved against the iconoclasts.⁶⁵ The combination of historical memory and centralized order remained after World War II, and rapid reconstruction came only after a negotiated settlement between Sevastopol and Moscow.