HEALING THE WOUNDS: COMMEMORATIONS, MYTHS, AND THE RESTORATION OF LENINGRAD’S IMPERIAL HERITAGE, 1941-1950

By

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Dissertation Abstract

“Healing the Wounds: Commemorations, Myths, and the Restoration of Leningrad’s Imperial Heritage, 1941-1950.”

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This dissertation is a study of Leningrad during World War II and the period of postwar restoration (1941-1950). Leningrad was besieged by the Germans for nearly nine-hundred days. As hundreds of thousands of people died from bombings, shelling, cold, and starvation, local authorities surprisingly instituted measures to ensure that the city’s historic monuments be safeguarded from destruction. When Leningrad was liberated in January 1944, a concerted effort was put into place to breath life into these damaged and destroyed monuments and to heal the wounds inflicted on the city. Instead of using the damage to modernize the city, Leningrad and Soviet authorities opted to privilege the country’s tsarist heritage. In the postwar period, municipal authorities proclaimed that restored monuments commemorate the determination and heroism shown by the people of Leningrad during the war. The memory of the blockade, it was argued, was a “red thread” that must run through and be inscribed in all restoration works.

Although this dissertation is a local study of war and postwar restoration, it speaks to broader trends within the Soviet Union before, during, and after World War II. I argue that the care shown for Leningrad’s imperial monuments was the result of an ideological shift that began in the mid-1930s away from iconoclasm toward rehabilitating and respecting certain events and characters from the past. With international tensions rising in the 1930s, this turn to the past acted as a unifying force that had a tremendous influence on the patriotism shown during the war with the Nazis. In the postwar period,
as the Soviet state began to redefine its image based on the myth of war and the country’s tsarist heritage, this patriotism was further promoted, resulting in a flurry of work throughout the Soviet Union to restore the vessels of the country’s past. Like many other modernizing states, the Soviet Union looked to its past to create a united and patriotic citizenry.
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Introduction

On 9 May 2005, thousands of people, young and old, gathered in the centre of St. Petersburg to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Soviet Union’s victory in the Second World War, or the Great Patriotic War as it is known in Russian. As dusk fell over the city, an impressive fireworks show began, which lasted more than half an hour against the backdrop of St. Petersburg’s historic core. Cheers and shouts of “hurrah” were almost deafening as hundreds of explosions illuminated the Peter and Paul Fortress, the Winter Palace, the Admiralty, and other historic monuments along the banks of the Neva. For the entire length of this fireworks display music roared from speakers set up in front of the palace. The people gathered there did not hear the Soviet national anthem (again in fashion under the Putin administration), nor patriotic songs reflecting the battle of all Soviet people during the war. Instead, at this event celebrating the victory of the Soviet Union over the Germans during the Second World War, fireworks were accompanied by Shostakovich’s Seventh (“Leningrad”) Symphony, written during the first months of the nine-hundred day blockade to commemorate the suffering and heroism of Leningraders.

These fireworks were set against a cityscape which demands praise, admiration, awe, and respect. The people of St. Petersburg – which was renamed Petrograd in 1914 and Leningrad in 1924 – have traditionally shown a deep connection to the city’s historic monuments and landmarks. Inspired by the majestic landscape which appeared out of the marshes, many writers and artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries made the city’s wide avenues, grand palaces, rivers, canals, and golden spires dominating the
skyline the focus of their creative talents. St. Petersburg’s monuments are central in the stories and poems written about the city. They have been portrayed as living characters in famous works, and people have masqueraded through the night in costumes depicting landmarks from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This devotion to the city’s monuments led to the development of a preservation movement in the early twentieth century which aimed to save the historic landscape at all costs.

The Great Patriotic War proved the ultimate test for Leningrad’s preservationists. When the war spilled onto Soviet territory on 21 June 1941, Soviet authorities ordered the protection of imperial artifacts and monuments throughout the country. The treasures of Leningrad were no exception. Within days, trains were loaded with priceless works of art from the country’s main museums and shipped to the east for protection. Over the course of the blockade, which lasted from 9 September 1941 until 27 January 1944, city authorities and preservationists instituted measures to protect imperial monuments from enemy bombardment. During this period, nearly one million people died from bombings, extreme cold in the winters, and Hitler’s policy of starving the city into submission. As

1 For more on the connection of writers to St. Petersburg’s landscape, especially during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Anna Lisa Crone and Jennifer Day, *My Petersburg/Myself: Mental Architecture and Imaginative Space in Modern Russian Letters* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2004). Not all depictions of the city’s beautiful vistas, however, were positive. Nikolai Gogol’, for example, described St. Petersburg as deceitful and not at all the beautiful city it seems to be at first glance. See his “Nevsky Prospekt” in *Plays and Petersburg Tales*, trans. Christopher English (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

2 Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin animated the statue of Peter the Great and had it chase the hero of his poem, “The Bronze Horseman” through the streets of the city. Andrei Bely, picking up on this imagery, used the bronze statue of Peter as a character in his novel, *Petersburg*, trans. Robert A. Maguire and John E. Malmsad (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978).

3 Parades of this type have been described by Svetlana Boym. See *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001). One such “carnivalesque affair” took place on 21 June 1997.

bombs rained down on the city and dystrophy began to affect all people trapped within the blockade ring, Leningraders risked their lives to camouflage golden spires, evacuate museum exhibits from areas threatened with German occupation, take measurements of monuments for future restoration, assess damage, and provide emergency conservation where possible.

The attention and care given to historic monuments and landmarks did not cease once the siege ended. In fact, throughout the first postwar years the restoration of Leningrad’s historic monuments was one of the top priorities occupying the city’s party and soviet authorities, architects, and cultural community. Instead of making use of war damage to modernize the city and create new structures, the authorities privileged Leningrad’s history and aesthetic appearance by concentrating first and foremost on the restoration of monuments from the imperial period. Both in the centre of the city, where the restoration of historic monuments progressed relatively smoothly, and in the suburbs, where near total destruction made the process much more problematic, preservationists launched efforts to bring history back to life and repair the damage inflicted during the blockade. Leningraders realized that the destruction of monuments would mean the loss of irreplaceable witnesses to a bygone age. The actions to protect and restore during and after the blockade were driven by an intense desire to save history and memory and preserve it for future generations.

The present work explores the relationship between war, the memory of the blockade of Leningrad, and the city’s historic monuments. Throughout history, buildings and monuments which connote identity, nationality, and community have been destroyed
or damaged during wartime.\textsuperscript{5} Opposing forces target historic monuments and landmarks of this sort as a means of wiping out the culture of the enemy and erasing the history and memory embodied in them.\textsuperscript{6} Art historians Margaret Olin and Robert Nelson write that “because a monument can achieve a powerful symbolic agency, to damage it, much less to obliterate it, constitutes a personal and communal violation with serious consequences.” They argue that “while the destruction of mere things is commonplace in our takeout and throwaway world, attacking a monument threatens a society's sense of itself and its past.”\textsuperscript{7} Once damage is done to a monument, the meaning of it, and the memories it represents, are altered. Studies of iconoclasm suggest that destruction meant to deface, deform, or obliterate objects treasured by cultures, often results in the transformation of the object’s meaning, as extra layers of memory are attached to it.\textsuperscript{8} “What were once unintentional monuments…” writes historian Robert Bevan, “by their rebuilding can become new, intentional monuments to the events which caused their destruction.”\textsuperscript{9} In Leningrad, the city’s historic monuments came to symbolize both the destruction of war and the will of Leningraders to rescue their city’s landscape and history from oblivion.


\textsuperscript{8} Adrian A. Bantjes, for example, argues that “Iconoclastic attacks are seldom successful in achieving their purpose, which is not just the physical elimination of the image but its relegation to a state of oblivion. Recent research…suggests that iconoclasm, far from annihilating the icon, actually can have a ‘positive’ impact, transforming instead of obliterating the object and its meaning(s).” See “Making Sense of Iconoclasm: Popular Responses to the Destruction of Religious Images in Revolutionary Mexico,” in Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay, eds., *Iconoclasm: Contested Objects, Contested Terms* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 171.

\textsuperscript{9} Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory*, 176.
This dissertation argues that the restoration of historic monuments in Leningrad was intimately connected with the memory of war and the nine-hundred day siege of the city. The memory of the blockade was omnipresent in Leningrad in the postwar years – it was everywhere and it guided everything. City authorities presented the process of restoration as a commemoration of the events experienced in the city. Through healing the wounds, the authorities argued, Leningraders were writing the blockade into the city’s great historic narrative. Rather than leaving the city’s historic monuments in ruins, the local party and soviet officials urged Leningraders to continue the “battle” on the restoration front to see their city and its history arise like a phoenix from the ashes. This process was fueled by more traditional commemorations, including yearly celebrations of the lifting of the siege and the tremendously popular Museum of the Defence of Leningrad, founded and organized during the blockade itself. Such commemorative sites and events mythologized the blockade, provided places of memory and mourning, and served as a reminder of loss. They were also venues which socialized migrants to Leningrad, encouraged civic pride, and mobilized people to restore the city.\textsuperscript{10} During the war and immediate postwar period, therefore, the restoration of historic monuments and commemorations of the blockade served similar purposes and were mutually reinforcing.

This is primarily a story about Leningrad in the 1940s. The core of the dissertation covers the period of the Second World War on Soviet territory, starting in June 1941, and the first postwar five-year plan, ending in 1950. The events discussed

\textsuperscript{10} As T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper have pointed out, “The politics of war memory and commemoration always has to engage with mourning and with attempts to make good the psychological and physical damage of war; and wherever people undertake the tasks of mourning and reparation, a politics is always at work.” See their “The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics,” in Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, eds., The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration (New York: Routledge, 2000), 9.
here take place against the background of war and postwar reconstruction as experienced by the Soviet Union as a whole. This period deserves special attention, for the cataclysm of war became the central event in the lives of Soviet citizens. They had been told for years – since the October Revolution – that war was imminent. The people of Stalin’s Soviet Union were instructed to be vigilant, to prepare themselves for an attack from the “capitalist enemies” surrounding the country.\footnote{On the War Scare of 1927, see John P. Sontag, “The Soviet War Scare of 1926-1927,” \textit{Russian Review} 34, no. 1 (January 1975): 66-77. See also, Olga Velikanova, “The Myth of the ‘Besieged Fortress.’ Soviet Mass Perception in the 1920s-1930s” (working paper no.7, The Stalin-Era Research and Archives Project, University of Toronto, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, 2002).} The Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 temporarily staved off war, but in less than two years Hitler broke the agreement and invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. The invasion stunned the Soviet leadership and people, all of whom had been lulled into a false sense of security.\footnote{Note that Stalin was well-informed of Hitler’s intentions to attack the USSR, but refused to believe that he would break the pact. See A.P. Belozerov, ed., \textit{Sekrety Gitlera na stole u Stalina. Razvedka i kontrrazvedka o podgotovke germanskoi agressii protiv SSSR, mart-iun; 1941 g. Dokumenty iz tsentral’nogo arkhiva FSB Rossii} (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo ob”edineniiia Mosgorakhiv, 1995). See also Gabriel Gorodetsky, \textit{Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).} When the Wehrmacht crossed the border, the Soviet forces were caught unprepared, resulting in relatively easy victories for the Germans in the first months of the war.\footnote{For a good discussion of how the war on Soviet territory played out, see Richard Overy, \textit{Russia’s War. A History of the Soviet War Effort: 1941-1945} (New York: Penguin, 1997) and John Erikson, \textit{The Road to Stalingrad: Stalin’s War with Germany} (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984).}

Every family and individual in the Soviet Union was involved in and traumatized by the Great Patriotic War. When the war finally ended on 9 May 1945, Soviet citizens faced the gargantuan task of reconstructing their homes, industries, farms, villages, cities, and lives. Over the course of four years, approximately 26 million people were killed, 25 million were left homeless, and 37 million people were separated from their families and
homes due to deportation, conscription, and evacuation.\textsuperscript{14} Because of the levels of destruction, the postwar period was hardly one of peace and rest.\textsuperscript{15} Civilians and returning soldiers moved onto the “labour front” and the Soviet leadership expected them to continue making sacrifices for the country’s restoration. It is against this background of total war and harsh postwar conditions that this dissertation is set.

Given the destruction caused by the war, the fact that Leningrad’s historic monuments became the object of such attention is, at first glance, surprising. Throughout the country there was a lack of suitable housing, a severe shortage of materials for the reconstruction of infrastructure, and the state’s economy was in utter shambles. Why then were resources and manpower used to protect and restore monuments from the imperial period in the world’s first socialist state? Why was the restoration of imperial relics not set aside until a time when it would be more economically feasible? The answer is to be found in the Stalinist state’s “turn to the past” in the mid-1930s and the newfound importance of a thousand years of Russian history.\textsuperscript{16} In promoting the past, the Stalinist leadership presented strong, powerful, and important state-building figures as predecessors to the Soviet state. Without rehabilitating the more negative aspects of the tsarist and imperial systems, and still emphasizing the supremacy of socialism over the exploitative nature of the bourgeoisie and autocracy, the party leadership used the past as


a tool to mould, transform, and create a citizenry conscious of its roots and “glorious”
heritage (however polished and embellished). The emphasis on restoring touchstones of
the past exemplifies the social engineering project in which the Stalinist leadership was
engaged.

With international tensions rising in the 1930s, this turn to the past had a
significant effect on increasing patriotic feeling and mobilizing people for war with Nazi
Germany. In the postwar period, as the Soviet state began to redefine its image based on
the myth of war and the country’s tsarist heritage, the Stalinist leadership further
promoted this patriotism, resulting in a flurry of work throughout the Soviet Union to
restore the monuments of the country’s past. The authorities continued to draw upon a
select group of heroic individuals and events from the past to steel the population against
external enemies. The state engaged in what historian Rudy Koshar has called “building
pasts.” He argues that buildings – monuments and landmarks – have pasts which tell
stories about certain time periods. But he also stresses how states use monuments and
landmarks to build and create pasts which emphasize what is desired, while suppressing
all that runs contradictory to the state’s narratives and goals. Historic monuments,
therefore, were stone documents – sites at which the party’s ideology was reified and
found reflection.

Leningrad and the monuments populating it were especially important to the
regime’s new ideological focus. The city embodied the history of Russia since Peter the
Great. It was the capital of the Russian Empire from 1709 until the fall of the autocracy in 1917. It was the stage for three revolutions. It was the home of famous Russian generals, poets, and cultural figures. Its significance in Stalinist historical memory was rivaled by Moscow alone. The city’s monuments were, in Pierre Nora’s formulation, *lieux de mémoire*, or sites where “memory crystallizes and secretes itself,” serving as a reminder to later generations.¹⁹ These historic monuments, in the words of a pre-revolutionary Russian preservationist, are places at which “the spirit of the age and the shadows of the past linger in the air.”²⁰ Because Leningrad’s monuments were central to both local identity and the creation of Soviet identity throughout the 1940s, their protection and restoration was of utmost importance and received support from local and central authorities.

Although historic monuments continued to be restored in Leningrad, and elsewhere in the Soviet Union throughout the period, commemorations of the blockade suffered a different fate. The Stalinist leadership increasingly believed that these commemorations presented the history of Leningrad “in isolation” from the all-Union battle against the Germans. As scholars have pointed out, local events and the commemoration of them often have a more significant impact on shaping the identity of a particular community than their national counterparts.²¹ With the beginning of the Cold War from 1946 onwards – and the ideological rigidity that arose because of it – Stalin began to frown upon particularistic histories of the war for competing with all-Union

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Soviet patriotism.\textsuperscript{22} When the Leningrad leadership came under attack as a result of factional fighting in the Politburo, commemorations of the blockade which did not emphasize a unified Soviet people and conflicted with the emerging myth of war were used as evidence of Leningraders’ disloyalty.\textsuperscript{23} The Leningrad Affair – as the purge came to be known – involved thousands of people who had lived and worked in city during the war. As the city came under attack between 1949-1953, the mythology of the blockade that the Leningrad party and soviet officials had promoted resulted in a purge of people and institutions who articulated the uniqueness of the city’s wartime experiences. From 1949 onwards, therefore, the restoration of Leningrad’s historic monuments was stripped of its official connection to the memory of the blockade.

Given their importance in shaping the contours of the Soviet system and the everyday life of Soviet citizens, scholars in the West have devoted very little attention to the experience of war and postwar restoration. If compared with the work done on the same period in Europe, the study of the Soviet Union is grossly underrepresented.\textsuperscript{24} Even in comparison with other periods in Soviet history, including the October Revolution, the Civil War, industrialization and collectivization, Stalinist terror, and the Cold War, the


war and postwar have been seriously neglected. What was written about the war before the Soviet archives opened in the 1990s tended to be either journalistic accounts, works on diplomacy, or studies of military campaigns and the strategies of Soviet military commanders. The focus of historians and political scientists writing on the postwar period was also quite narrow and often confined to high politics, disputes within the Stalinist leadership, as well as industrial and agrarian policies. Due in part to the lack of sources, as well as the influence of Cold War ideology, historians were unable, or unwilling, to paint a much broader, more nuanced picture of the war and postwar periods. With the notable exception of Vera Dunham’s study of postwar changes in Soviet manners, attitudes, and values, and Sheila Fitzpatrick’s article questioning the possibility of a return to “normalcy” in Soviet society, the war and postwar as experienced by Soviet citizens remained a relative blank spot in the study of the Soviet Union.

Recently, however, historians have turned their attention to the 1940s. Several new works focus on the ways in which the war was experienced by Soviet citizens in general. John Barber and Mark Harrison’s work on the Soviet home front during the war opened up avenues of study previously neglected. They convincingly illustrate the importance of the work accomplished on the home front in the victory over the

Germans. Others have stressed the importance of studying the war as a “people’s war,” rather than presenting it merely as a battle between “totalitarian” dictators and their regimes. In doing so, recent research has focused on average citizens and their reactions to the war, wartime culture, as well as the experience of soldiers at the front. New research has also taken a less centre-focused approach by studying the war in different areas of the country, offering micro-histories of the conflict.

During the past decade historians have also begun to devote much more attention to the postwar years in the Soviet Union. The new literature on this period stresses the creation of a myth of the Soviet Union’s experience in the war, its importance in legitimizing the regime, and how that myth became a pillar of official Soviet patriotism. Much of the recent research focuses on the regime’s efforts in the postwar period to reassert economic, social, political and ideological control over a population hoping for liberalizing reforms. The Stalinist regime, facing major economic and demographic problems due to the destruction caused by the war, used repressive measures as a means of dealing with societal discontent, suppressing criticism from below, mobilizing the population, and maintaining wartime tempos in industrial production as the Cold War began. Local studies of the period, likewise, stress these developments while discussing

centre-periphery relations and variations in how the war and postwar reconstruction was experienced in different areas.  

Recent studies of Leningrad’s experience during the war and postwar years have followed these trends in the historiography. Several studies of the siege of Leningrad focus on the attitudes of the city’s residents during the war, and emphasize the evolution of political mood as the situation in the city changed. Other historians have written about different aspects of the siege, including the city’s workforce and medical institutions during the nine-hundred days. Especially relevant to this dissertation is Lisa Kirschenbaum’s work on the memory and legacy of the war in Leningrad, which traces the evolution of the myth of the blockade throughout the Soviet period. Kirschenbaum argues that the individual memories and experiences of Leningraders helped to shape official narratives of the blockade, even as these narratives sanitized and co-opted personal stories. Survivors internalized the myth of the blockade, she argues, as a way of coping with the painful memories. For her, the memory of the blockade was as much

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33 The fact that most of the existing studies of cities in the war and postwar period are recently defended dissertations is quite telling. See Martin Blackwell, “Regime City of First Category: The Experience of the Return of Soviet Power to Kyiv, Ukraine, 1943-1946” (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 2005); Jeffrey W. Jones, “‘In My Opinion this is all a Fraud!’: Concrete, Culture, and Class in the ‘Reconstruction’ of Rostov-on-Don, 1943-1948” (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000); Karl Qualls, “Raised from Ruins: Restoring Popular Allegiance Through City Planning in Sevastopol, 1943-1954” (PhD dissertation, Georgetown University, 1998).  


about forgetting as it was about remembering.\textsuperscript{36} I agree with Kirschenbaum that the authorities used and manipulated individual memories to create a myth of the blockade and to erase many of the most traumatic and dark sides of the nine-hundred days (theft, cannibalism, defeatism). However, while Kirschenbaum argues that removing war damage to historic monuments was a means of erasing the memory of the war, this dissertation argues that the restoration of historic monuments was less an act of erasing blockade memory than it was of restoring the city’s past while adding new memories to the city’s historic landscape.\textsuperscript{37}

Central to the city’s narrative and people’s sense of themselves, Leningrad’s historic monuments and landmarks had to be protected and restored. Campaigns in the media, which praised the activities of architects and preservationists who worked to raise the city’s history from ruins accompanied restoration in Leningrad. Officials set up exhibits on the work of preservationists during the blockade while bombs were still falling on the city, and in the postwar period these exhibits served to commemorate the blockade and acts of preservation.\textsuperscript{38} Likewise, in some severely damaged monuments, such as the eighteenth-century suburban palaces, museum workers developed exhibits detailing the palaces’ history, the destruction done to them, and the restoration process taking place. Rather than erasing the memory of the blockade from the city’s streets and facades, the restoration of historic monuments was celebrated as a victory over

\textsuperscript{37} For Kirschenbaum’s discussion of historic restoration and the erasure of war memory, see \textit{The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad}, chapter 4.
destruction. In celebrating that victory, the memory of the blockade was continuously invoked as people were summoned to remember the devastation inflicted on the city. This dissertation, therefore, aims to show how preservation and restoration became component parts of the blockade story during and after the war.

Because the present work focuses on both historic restoration and commemorations of the blockade, it develops chronologically and thematically. The first chapter sets the stage for the war and postwar period by analyzing the development of St. Petersburg from the eighteenth century and preservation movements in the first decades of the twentieth century. The chapter further discusses the treatment of historic monuments during the early Soviet period and the ideological uses of them on the eve of war. Chapter two analyzes the methods employed to preserve and restore Leningrad’s cityscape and imperial artifacts during the siege. It argues that the protection of the city’s monuments was the result of their newfound ideological significance in the Stalinist historical narrative combined with the connection that Leningraders had to the city.

The dissertation then turns to restoration activities and commemorations in the postwar period. Chapter three traces the restoration of historic monuments in the city centre, depicting both the astounding amount of work completed in conditions of postwar shortages as well as the difficulties that restorers and preservationists faced. The chapter discusses the symbolic importance of restoration and the ways in which the memory of the blockade informed all restoration activities. Chapter four focuses on the restoration efforts in the suburbs of Leningrad. During the war, the Germans almost completely destroyed the imperial suburban palaces and parks. This chapter examines the response to the destruction, the debates about restoration, and the ultimate problems hindering the
restoration work. It argues that in the process of restoration, these imperial monuments came to symbolize not only the glorious imperial past, but the war on the Leningrad front.

Chapter five of the dissertation examines official commemorations of the blockade. It traces the development of the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad from its creation during the final stages of the blockade through to 1949 and discusses its layout, museological narrative, and educational function. Likewise, yearly anniversary celebrations of the lifting of the siege are analyzed to show how they were used to socialize the residents of Leningrad and inculcate a sense of civic identity. The final chapter centers around the development of Soviet patriotism in the context of the Cold War and examines the effects that postwar patriotism had on commemorations and restoration in Leningrad. Although these six chapters focus on Leningrad, the dissertation as a whole makes a larger argument about the evolution of Soviet ideology, the importance of the historic narratives and memory in shaping and moulding the population, and the development of local identity in Stalin’s Soviet Union.

**A Note on Sources**

The present study is the result of research in thirteen Russian archives. The vast majority of my research was carried out in the archives of St. Petersburg. The Central State Archive of Historico-Political Documents (TsGAIPD SPb) provided party documentation on commemorations in Leningrad during the postwar years, as well as on repression during the Leningrad Affair. The Central State Archive of St. Petersburg (TsGA SPb) yielded files from the city soviet and planning administration on the
restoration of the city after the siege was lifted. At the Central State Archive of Literature and Art (TsGALI SPb), I worked primarily with files from the Department for Cultural-Enlightenment Work, the Administration for Artistic Affairs under the executive committee of the city soviet, and files from the Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Architects. At the Central State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation (TsGANTD SPb), I used files from Leningrad’s Architectural Planning Administration. The holdings of the Archive of the Committee for State Control, Use, and Preservation of Monuments of History and Culture of St. Petersburg (KGIOP) proved to be invaluable. At KGIOP, I worked with reviews of damage, restoration, and preservation of the city’s historic monuments, among other things, during and after the war. The documents at the archive of the State Museum of City Sculpture (GMGS) and the archive of the Pavlovsk Palace (GMZ Pavlovsk) cast light on the specific aspects of monument protection and restoration during the 1940s. At the archive of the State Memorial Museum of the Defence and Blockade of Leningrad (GMMOBL) I worked with documents pertaining to the establishment of the museum, as well as diaries written during the blockade. Finally, I consulted personal files and memoirs at the Manuscript Division of the Russian National Library (RNB OR), and the archive of the St. Petersburg branch of Memorial.

In Moscow, I worked in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), the Russian State Archive of the Economy (RGAE), and The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). At RGASPI, my research focused for the most part on documents from the party’s Central Committee, especially the Department of Propaganda and Agitation. At RGAE, I used files from the Committee for Architectural Affairs under the USSR Soviet of Ministers, as well as documents from the State Administration for
the Protection of Monuments under its purview. My work in GARF focused on
documents from the State Committee for Construction and Architectural Affairs under
the Russian Republic’s Soviet of Ministers. The documents from these central archives
provided an all-Union context for the study and helped to answer some of the questions
that St. Petersburg’s archives could not.
In 1903, Alois Riegl, a prominent Austrian art historian, wrote an essay on what he called the “modern cult of monuments.” Riegl put pen to paper at a time when European intellectuals were becoming increasingly interested in locating their country’s past in historic monuments. His article focused on the way people assign meaning and value to the built environment. He argued that there are essentially two types of monuments – deliberate and unintentional. Deliberate monuments are those sculptures, statues, buildings, and other forms of expression that are meant from the moment of their creation to mark an occasion or preserve the memory of a person or event. Unintentional monuments, on the other hand, are those buildings, parks, places, or things which are attributed value as monuments by viewers at a later date. The commemorative value is assigned to them only after they are created. While unintentional monuments are not built to commemorate, they nevertheless have historical value as witnesses to a bygone age, event, or individual. Such places are infused with meaning by later generations and become “stone documents” which tell a certain story.¹

The city of St. Petersburg has hundreds of deliberate and unintentional monuments. From its very founding in 1703, the creation of Peter the Great was constructed as a city of monumental beauty. The city is often described as a victory over nature – a magnificent creation arising out of the marshy Neva River delta. In little more than a century, St. Petersburg developed into a masterpiece of baroque and neoclassical

ensembles, the splendor of which testified to the prominence of Russia in Europe, the country’s imperial glory, and its military might. For the intellectuals in Russia’s imperial capital caught up in Riegl’s “cult of monuments,” the rigidly planned city stood as a monument to Peter’s transformation of Russia. Peter and subsequent rulers erected numerous monuments in the city to commemorate military victories over the Swedes, the Turks, and the French. Every street corner, palace, and architectural ensemble told a story of triumphs on the battlefield, brilliant poets, and great leaders. It was for this reason that preservationists struggled in the early 1900s to save the old centre of the city – the very embodiment of imperial glory – from the ravages of modernization and industrialization. Throughout the early 1900s, preservation-minded intellectuals took it upon themselves to protect the historic monuments in St Petersburg.

When the 1917 revolutions occurred in Petrograd – the name given to the city in 1914 to make it sound less German – preservationists grasped the opportunity to play a greater role in the protection of the country’s historic and artistic monuments. In many ways their goals coincided with those of the Bolshevik leadership, who saw the need for selectively saving monuments for the creation of a socialist society. With the exception of the period of the first Five-Year Plan (1928-1932), when the interests of modernization trumped all else, the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Stalin concentrated a great deal of energy and resources on preserving the country’s pre-Revolutionary heritage. During the 1930s, when the leadership sought to find a useable past to mobilize the population and create a sense of patriotism and community, many of the great heroes and events from the “thousand years of Russian history” were rehabilitated. As a result, the protection of historic, artistic, and cultural monuments – both deliberate and unintentional – received
greater priority. More than ever, the country’s monuments were seen as witnesses to a bygone age – stone documents used to illustrate the state’s propaganda campaigns and mould the population. This turn to the past invested historic monuments with unprecedented significance. They were sites at which the state’s glorification of the country’s history was made tangible. All over the country attempts were made to strengthen preservation activities. This was especially true in Leningrad, where a long tradition of preservation and praise of the cityscape, combined with the new-found respect for the country’s past had a major impact on the actions taken to protect the city’s historic monuments during and after World War II.

Creating a Monumental City

The Neva River delta was an unlikely site to begin the construction of a city, let alone the future capital of the Russian Empire. Located in the northwest corner of Russia, the area where the Neva flows into the Gulf of Finland was extreme in all senses of the word. The land there is marshy and unsuitable for agriculture. The harsh, damp climate provides very little sunlight during the winter months, and foggy, rainy weather during the other seasons. Due to its northern location, the Neva – the city’s main artery – is choked with ice for nearly six months out of the year. Were it not for Peter the Great’s desire to revolutionize Russia and create a Window to the West, the city that was constructed on this inhospitable site would likely not exist. Yet within a century, Peter’s city became one of the most magnificent architectural creations in Europe, whose

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monumental buildings, statuary, and general aesthetics spoke of Russia’s growing power and place in the world.

The first stones of the future city were laid in May 1703, after Peter conquered the land from the Swedes. Looking to defend the area, especially the entrance up the Neva, the city started out as a military outpost on Hare Island, the present day site of the Peter and Paul Fortress. One year later, on the opposite shore of the river, Peter began construction of the Admiralty wharves. Almost immediately this barren, marshy land was transformed into a site of feverish construction, as Peter brought thousands of serfs to the Neva River delta to begin the imposing task of creating a city. Nearly twenty thousand people worked on the construction of the Peter and Paul Fortress in the summer of 1703—a figure that did not include the thousands of workers felling trees for the job. Between 1703 and 1725, as many as ten to thirty thousand workerslaboured annually in St. Petersburg.³

Peter forced not only serfs and workers to make the move to the new construction site. The emperor made it obligatory for members of the royal court, aristocrats, artisans, merchants, and skilled workers to take up residence on the Neva and begin building homes, stores, and workshops in European architectural styles. As the city grew and expanded over the years, it continued to be the hub of the Russian military – serving as the home to the country’s major regiments and its naval base – but it also became the political and commercial capital of the empire. As early as 1704, Peter began to refer to

³ Provincial officials were required to send a total of forty-four thousand workers annually, in three shifts of two months, to work on the construction of the city. Because of chronic problems in labour conscription, vast distances to travel, unsanitary conditions, and other problems, the actual number of people arriving in St. Petersburg fell short of the quotas. See James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 176-178.
the construction site as the capital of the Russian Empire, and it is possible that he was already planning to move the throne to St. Petersburg.⁴

Following the victory over the Swedes in the Great Northern War at Poltava in 1709, Peter began the process of moving the empire’s administrative apparatus to St. Petersburg, and by 1712 the transfer was complete.⁵ During this time the city continued to grow at a dramatic pace. In 1710, for example, the new city was home to a permanent population of approximately eight thousand people, and thousands more seasonal migrants.⁶ Due to its importance as a military base, harbour port, administrative centre and imperial capital, Peter pushed for the city to grow more quickly. To facilitate this, he devoted nearly five percent of the state budget to constructing government buildings on the banks of the Neva and Vasilevskii Island.⁷

Before the capital moved to St. Petersburg, there had been very little control over the construction of the city. Peter, of course, was devoted to creating a European city that would be the antithesis of backward, chaotic Moscow, but military matters proved to be more important for the time being. The merchants, nobles, and artisans, whom Peter had forced to take up residence in the city built structures in the ways they saw fit in the areas they desired. It was not until the victory at Poltava, and the subsequent transfer of the capital, that the city began to develop along the lines of rigid planning.⁸ From this point onwards, the state would play a major role in the architectural and aesthetic shaping of

The emperor began to issue a series of decrees which strictly outlined the structure of future planning, the duties of individuals in the construction of the city, and the life of all residents in the capital. He demanded, for example, that stone be used for important buildings instead of wood, that structures on the river’s edge be built in a certain style, and that buildings be aesthetically pleasing.

Peter wanted the city to develop along a European model and for this reason employed hundreds of architects from the West to practice their trade on the blank slate of St. Petersburg. Peter’s official residence in the Summer Gardens and other structures built during this period exemplified the shift away from traditional Russian architecture and a move towards a more monumental style of construction. Many of the buildings in the capital, including the palace of Prince Menshikov located on the southern shore of Vasilievskii Island, were grandiose structures which spoke to the startling beauty of St. Petersburg. It was at Menshikov’s palace, for example, where Peter would hold official court gatherings and greet visiting delegates from abroad. Drawing on architectural designs from Europe, the majority of the monumental buildings constructed under Peter, including his “curiosity cabinet” – the Kunstkamera – the Twelve Colleges (the seat of government), and the Alexander Nevskii Monastery were built in the style of Petrine baroque. Peter was fully aware of the use of the baroque visual arts in Europe to express power and glorify society’s rulers. By the 1720s, the main quality of the city had been established: St. Petersburg was a city of magnificent monuments on a grand scale.

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11 Cracraft, The Petrine Revolution, 155-156.
12 Cracraft, The Revolution of Peter the Great, 89.
13 Lincoln, Sunlight at Midnight, 31.
structures, including the Cathedral of Peter and Paul in the fortress, painted to resemble stone and brick.\textsuperscript{14}

As the new capital of the Russian Empire and the “Window onto Europe,” St. Petersburg was from the very beginning meant to be a prestigious city with all the artistic, architectural, and aesthetic marvels that could be found in European capitals. The element of prestige was key in the planning of the city. Peter knew that visitors to his new capital, especially those from Europe, would spread the word about St. Petersburg’s phenomenal growth and splendor upon return to their homelands. The architecture of the city, therefore, served a political purpose.\textsuperscript{15} The tsar was concerned with the image of Russia both at home and in the West. Indeed, the planning of St. Petersburg worked to express the power of the monarch, the wealth of the nation, and the strength of the military. In constructing grandiose buildings, bridges, sculptures, and providing a uniform layout of the city streets – creating an architectural and aesthetic masterpiece, that is – Peter set a pattern for successive rulers who worked on the development of the city as a symbol of the majesty of the Romanov dynasty.\textsuperscript{16} The historian Richard Wortman notes that “The sumptuous, highly ritualized presentations of the Russian monarchy produced at enormous cost of resources and time, indicate that Russian rulers and their advisers considered the symbolic sphere of ceremonies and imagery intrinsic to their exercise of power.”\textsuperscript{17} The external appearance of St. Petersburg, therefore, acted as a visual display of the power and glory of the Russian state under Peter the Great. Having

\textsuperscript{14} Brumfield, \textit{A History of Russian Architecture}, 205.
\textsuperscript{15} Egorov, \textit{The Architectural Planning of St. Petersburg}, 11.
defeated King Charles XII of Sweden in the Great Northern War, Peter turned Russia into a dominant European military and political power. The form that the city would take over the next two hundred years was a reflection of that new stature.  

Not long after Peter the Great died in 1725, the court transferred the capital back to Moscow (1728), and the majority of the nobility followed suit. Upon assuming the Russian throne in 1730, empress Anna returned the capital to the Neva in 1732 where it would remain until 1918. Continuing the work of her uncle, the new Empress set out to increase the beauty and grandeur of St. Petersburg, and concentrated on creating a sumptuous court life. Anna and the Russian rulers who followed her continued to devote nearly limitless funds to beautify and increase the imperial magnificence of the city. Under the new empress efforts were made to purge the city’s central districts of undesirable structures, which contributed negatively to the capital’s aesthetic appearance. After a series of fires in 1736-37 burned down the majority of wooden buildings between the Neva and the Moika (the central, or Admiralty, district), Anna set down a series of new laws meant to control the development of the city. She decreed that wooden structures in the Admiralty district were to be removed and that new structures must be built using stone, making it impossible for many tradesmen to build there because of the high cost of materials. As a result, these people were forced to move to the outlying districts of the city. Anna also forbade members of the royal court to take up residence in the imperial palace, which spurred the building of a considerable number of palaces and

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18 James Cracraft and Daniel Rowland, for example, note that Russian rulers “used architecture not merely to project an image of state power, but to define and legitimize that power.” See James Cracraft and Daniel Rowland, “Introduction,” in Cracraft and Rowland, eds., Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2.
19 Bater, St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change, 27.
mansions in the Admiralty district.\textsuperscript{21} To reinforce the decision to control the development of the city, especially its centre, in 1737 Anna created the Commission for the Orderly Development of St. Petersburg.\textsuperscript{22} Throughout the eighteenth century, Russian rulers held firm to the need for control over urban development and continued to push slums to the outskirts in order to develop the grandeur of the city’s centre.\textsuperscript{23}

Each successive Russian ruler followed the guidelines set by Peter in creating a magnificent city whose architectural wonders displayed the might of the state. When Elizabeth took the throne after Anna’s death in 1740, she sought to further develop the magnificence of the empire’s capital and did so using the Italian born architect, Bartolomeo Rastrelli, who created the Winter Palace, Smolnyi Cathedral, the Catherine Palace in Tsarskoe Selo and many other baroque architectural masterpieces.

It was under Catherine the Great and Alexander I, however, that St. Petersburg came of age and developed its imposing imperial appearance. Almost immediately after her coronation in 1762, Catherine began to work at perfecting the aesthetic beauty and magnificence of the empire’s capital and moved away from the extravagant tastes of the baroque in style during Elizabeth’s reign.\textsuperscript{24} She announced an architectural planning competition in 1763 meant to set new goals and bestow further grandeur and dignity on the city.\textsuperscript{25} The new plans for St. Petersburg stressed the ensemble principle, in which continuous facades would line the streets and granite embankments would clothe the rivers and canals, making for an urban organic whole. The geographer James Bater notes

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Egorov, \textit{The Architectural Planning of St. Petersburg}, 30.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Bater, \textit{St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change}, 28.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Lincoln, \textit{Sunlight at Midnight}, 91. Lincoln notes that in comparison with other capital cities such as London, Paris, and Vienna, St. Petersburg had few back streets and alleys because of the tendency to relegate slums to areas outside of the centre.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Brumfield, \textit{A History of Russian Architecture}, 261.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Egorov, \textit{The Architectural Planning of St. Petersburg}, 43.
\end{itemize}
that two basic principles for the planned development of St. Petersburg were witnessed during Catherine’s reign: “The first was that the city should be made as magnificent as possible and to this end huge squares, monumental buildings and unparalleled vistas were created. The second was that there should be harmonious, continuous facades along the principal streets and to achieve this exacting controls over the architectural and planning detail were required.”26 The Neva’s embankment, stretching from the Winter Palace upriver to the Summer Garden, is a good example of how both of these principles came together in architectural perfection. The desire to create harmoniously continuous facades throughout the city proved, however, logistically impossible. As an antidote, the city planning authorities under Catherine and later Alexander focused on placing freestanding monumental buildings at various points throughout the developing city. “These grand-scale edifices,” notes the scholar, Julie Buckler, “visually unified the spaces of the city along the perspectives of avenues and embankments, and lessened the impact of the ‘gray areas’ in between them.”27 Indeed, the city layout and the buildings constructed in its centre were devised to create an organic whole, connecting ensemble to ensemble in harmonious splendor.

The period between Catherine’s reign and the first part of Nicholas I’s marked the height of organized, rigid planning – a period during which the ruler became one of the most important arbiters of cityscape aesthetics. The Masonry Construction Commission was established by Catherine, for example, to oversee all development in the capital.28 Alexander I continued his grandmother’s policies of control over urban development by

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26 Bater, St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change, 35.
28 This commission was dissolved after Catherine’s death in 1796. Brumfield, A History of Russian Architecture, 348.
creating a number of organizations and committees to supervise and scrutinize building in the city, and later throughout the empire. The Committee of Construction and Hydraulic Works (established in 1816) was meant to bring the capital to “aesthetic perfection.” Like Peter the Great, Alexander was determined that the seat of Russian government should be second to none and serve as a reflection of the Russian nation and its military might.29

In order to transform the empire’s capital into a city exuding power and magnificence, Catherine, and to a greater extent Alexander, turned to classical architecture. The neoclassical style expressed the grand goals of the Alexandrine period. Alexander wanted to shape the centre of the city to reflect the “new seriousness of state power.”30 Both Catherine and Alexander filled the centre of the city with monumental buildings in the neoclassical style, creating whole ensembles linked by great squares and parade grounds. The buildings and ensembles constructed during this period expressed state power on a monumental scale comparable to that of Imperial Rome.31

The pinnacle of neoclassical monumentalism in city planning came during the empire’s rise to prominence in world affairs surrounding Russia’s victory in the Patriotic War against Napoleon in 1812. It was during the first third of the nineteenth century that St. Petersburg was shaped into the harmonious and severe architectural gem for which it has received praise as one of the most beautiful cities in the world.32 Throughout this period one sees the construction of elegant neoclassical buildings by a number of architects, including Andrei Voronikhin (the Cathedral of the Kazan Mother of God, the

31 Lincoln, Sunlight at Midnight, 82.
Mining Institute), Thomas de Thomon (the Stock Exchange), Andrian Zakharov (third and final reconstruction of the Admiralty), and Vasilii Stasov (Barracks of the Pavlovskii Regiment). More than any other architect, it was Carlo Rossi’s architectural designs for such buildings as the Mikhailovskii Palace, the Senate and Synod, the building of the General Staff on Palace Square, and the Alexandrine Theatre on Nevskii Prospekt, which completed the neoclassical monumentalism of the capital. All of these buildings were painted in yellow, representing imperial gold, and lined with white columns, linking the city to the great traditions of ancient Rome and expressing the power and might of the Russian empire. In a description of one of his projects, Rossi suggested the significance of his work and the overall character of Petersburg’s architectural form by writing: “The dimensions of my proposed project…surpasses those which the Romans considered sufficient for their monuments. Should we fear rivaling them in magnificence? The goal is not elaborate decoration, but grandeur of form, noble proportions and permanence. This monument must stand for eternity.”

By the early 1830s, the monumental style of building was coming to an end. Over the course of a hundred and thirty years Russian rulers had sculpted a city out of the Neva River delta which matched, or surpassed, many of the most beautiful and elegant cities in Western Europe, exactly as Peter had intended. The river and canal embankments in the centre of the city were now lined with buildings connecting the architectural ensembles. The massive parade grounds which populated the city gave the impression of a powerful state. The space between the building of the Senate and Synod

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33 Quoted in G.G. Grimm, M.A. Il’in, Iu. A. Egorov, “K.I. Rossi,” in Grabar’, ed., Istoriia russkogo iskusstva, 129. Bruce Lincoln, discussing Rossi, argues “No other builder ever linked modern Russia and Ancient Rome more closely, for Rossi saw in the heritage of Rome a means for expressing the full grandeur of Russia’s destiny. And in doing so, he transformed St. Petersburg into an imperial metropolis that had no rival in the modern world.” See Sunlight at Midnight, 112.
and the Winter Palace, for example, was a series of squares designed to be nothing other than a space to display Russia’s military might. The product of intense building and aesthetic perfection, by the end of Alexander I’s reign St. Petersburg’s built environment reflected the consolidation of Russia’s status as an imperial power.

Shortly after Alexander’s death in 1825, the architectural development of the city generally shifted toward a more utilitarian approach. During the reign of Nicholas I, the state relaxed control over what could be built and where. The rate of urban growth outpaced the capacity of officials to supervise and regulate construction. The onset of industrialization over the next several decades had severe consequences for a city that was rigidly planned as an expression of “imperial munificence.”\(^34\) As the city’s population grew to nearly half a million by the 1850s, and over nine-hundred thousand in the 1890s, the need for housing, administrative buildings, and office space stimulated construction on a much less monumental scale and increasingly encroached on the capital’s celebrated cityscape.

Although grand palaces continued to be built in the city, there was a general turn away from creating neoclassical ensembles toward individual structures built in the eclectic style by an emerging middle class composed primarily of industrialists, merchants, and entrepreneurs.\(^35\) Here, as in the other major cities of the Russian empire, architects turned to pseudo-Gothic, neo-Renaissance, and a mixture of various styles with lavish façade detail, which many found to be vulgar, distasteful and inappropriate for the capital of the Russian empire.\(^36\) The second half of the nineteenth century also saw the


\(^{36}\) In chapter one of Julie Buckler’s *Mapping St Petersburg*, she discusses the reactions to the new style of architecture that began to dominate the Petersburg landscape during the period of capitalist development,
beginnings of a national revival in architecture – quite in line with Nicholas’s policy of Official Nationality and the admiration for Muscovy seen during the conservative and nationalistic reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II – as Eastern-style cupolas and bell towers began to dot the Petersburg cityscape. The transition away from neoclassical architecture to a mix of styles led to criticism from the artistic and cultural enthusiasts in the capital. Many people viewed the St. Petersburg of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – “Old Petersburg” – as an architectural masterpiece, whose harmonious and stern ensembles stood as a monument to Peter’s transformation of Russia and the power of the empire. The development of industry, the influx of people to the city, and the resulting changes to the cityscape during the last fifty years of the nineteenth century threatened this monument and sparked a movement to preserve the city’s artistic and historic heritage.

**History, Aesthetics, and Preservation**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, groups of people began to protest the developmental trends in St. Petersburg and attempted to prevent further construction in the architectural styles of eclecticism and national revival, which they believed to be distorting the external appearance of the imperial capital. Advocates for the preservation of the city’s aesthetic appearance called for an end to indiscriminate construction in the city centre, a return to the neoclassicism of Catherine’s and especially after the Great Reforms. She quite rightly notes that what was thought of as distasteful during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century is now very much appreciated as a characteristic feature of the city’s architectural layout.

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37 Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg*, 44; Brumfield notes that the Russian revival style was comparatively muted in St. Petersburg, where other eclectic styles dominated. See *A History of Russian Architecture*, 419; On the conservatism of Nicholas I’s regime, see Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

Alexander’s reigns, and they sought to prevent the destruction of monuments in the capital and throughout the empire. As elsewhere in Europe around the turn of the century, a growing number of people in Russia, and especially in St. Petersburg, became increasingly concerned with both the aesthetic value of historic monuments, as well as the past they represented. They made great efforts to protect the country’s cultural heritage found in the built environment.39

The state had shown some interest in developing a system of monument preservation in Russia. Throughout the nineteenth century, officials began to question what exactly should be considered a monument and how a system of protection could be devised.40 In 1898 the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Imperial Archeological Commission began to work out a project to create a list of monuments throughout the country and to draft legislation for their protection.41 Although the idea was well-intentioned, the deliberations about the form of the legislation dragged on for years. In attempting to draft sufficient legislation, the parties involved tried to accommodate a number of conflicting interest groups, which resulted in chaos. When a draft finally reached the Duma in 1912, prominent preservationists rejected it because they believed it would actually hinder the protection of the country’s historic monuments.42 The lack of action by the state to provide decisive legislation led preservationists to believe that the

39 Rudy Koshar notes that between the 1890s and the outbreak of WWI, historic preservation became an important public activity in Germany. See Germany’s Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 17.
41 Zhukov, Stanovlenie i deiatel’nost, 26-27.
tsarist authorities were ambivalent about the preservation of monuments throughout the empire and in the capital itself.

In the absence of any real attempts to save the country’s historic and artistic monuments, the initiative fell to society to provide mechanisms of protection. The preservation movement which developed was centered in the capital. In the years leading up to 1917, one of the movement’s major goals was the preservation of St. Petersburg itself, especially “Old Petersburg,” a term which served as a “rallying cry for historic preservation.”

Calls for improved treatment of monuments came from a group of influential artists and intellectuals, including Sergei Diaghilev, Alexander Benois, Dmitrii Filosofov, Igor Grabar’, Giorgii Lukomskii, Petr Veiner, Nikolai Vrangel’, Petr Stolpianskii and others. The members of this “cult of Old Petersburg,” as Katerina Clark describes it, were devoted to preserving the city’s monumental architecture and made their opinions known in a series of important journals devoted to art and antiquity, including *World of Art* (*Mir Iskusstva* – 1899-1904), and *Bygone Years* (*Starye gody* – 1907-1917).

These journals, and the people involved with them, played an extremely influential role in bringing the necessity for preservation to public attention. As a platform for popularizing the need to preserve monuments, the journals offered discussions of all sorts of architecture and art, and invoked people to preserve and protect the valuable treasures of Russian history and heritage. One of the preservationists’ goals

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43 Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself*, 43. The term was first popularized by Mikhail Pyliaev in his nineteenth century book *Staryi Peterburg* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo A.S. Suvorina, 1887).
44 Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 59. *Bygone Years*, according to some sources, was the most popular journal in Europe at the time. The number of subscribers to the journal between 1907 and 1914 grew from one thousand to five thousand, and that number continued to grow during World War I. See Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself*, 65.
was to advocate for a greater appreciation of St. Petersburg as a work of art. The capital had become the subject of negative descriptions during the period of industrial development, no doubt due to the squalid conditions which could be found there and the cold bureaucratic atmosphere that reigned since Nicholas I’s reign. In an important article from 1902 in *World of Art*, Alexander Benois (a constant advocate for preservation) called for a reappraisal of the empire’s capital and its cityscape. He noted that the city had been disfigured by urban development over the proceeding fifty years, and that contemporaries heaped unfair scorn and insults on the city. He argued, however, that St. Petersburg was not deserving of the negative image it had received during that period and summoned readers to appreciate, preserve and protect the beautiful city:

One wants artists to fall in love with Petersburg, and, having sanctified and promoted its beauty, save it from ruin, prevent barbarous distortions of it, protect its beauty from the encroachment of crude ignoramuses who treat it with such incredible disregard due largely to the lack of protesting voices, voices of defence, and voices of delight.

Benois and other preservationists believed it necessary to promote preservation because the government was doing precious little to help in this matter, and in certain cases, was guilty of facilitating destruction. They hoped to rally support for their cause by stressing the possible destruction of St. Petersburg as an irreplaceable historic and artistic monument.

Although the aesthetic appearance of the city was a key element in their thinking, preservationists realized, and emphasized to the public, that the monuments populating the city embodied the history of St. Petersburg and Imperial Russia. Deliberate

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45 Johnson notes that preservationists involved in the journals believed that before the middle of the nineteenth century, when eclecticism spoiled the city’s classical appearance, St. Petersburg was a successful work of art. *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself*, 48

monuments built throughout the city commemorated the country’s heroes and the empire’s might. Peter’s Summer Palace, for example, was not only his residence, but a monument to victory over the Swedes. The emperor had the facades of the modest palace decorated with allegorical depictions of the military triumph. Statues and triumphal arcs were placed throughout the city as a reminder for future generations of the empire’s military prowess. The victory over Napoleon was particularly well represented in monuments such as the Alexander Column on Palace Square, the building of the General Staff designed in honour of the victory, the Narva and Moscow Gates erected to greet the returning soldiers, as well as statues of Mikhail Kutuzov and Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly in front of the Kazan Cathedral (itself a monument to victory over Napoleon). Unintentional monuments likewise served as reminders of the past. The Admiralty and the Peter and Paul Fortress were monuments to Peter’s resolve to create a city on the banks of the Neva. The Winter Palace called to mind both the glory and tyranny of the Russian monarchy. Building number twelve on the Moika Canal was revered as the final residence of Russia’s greatest poet, A.S. Pushkin. Preservationists discussed all such monuments as mirrors reflecting the city’s history. When the journal *Bygone Years* was first published in 1907, its editors claimed that it was “devoted to the memory of the past.”47 Contributors to the journal exclaimed that the historic monuments of the city are places at which “the spirit of the age and the shadows of the past linger in the air,” and that these monuments narrate the city’s history.48 The destruction or distortion of the monuments, therefore, signified a loss of not just an aesthetic masterpiece, but a living witness to a glorious age.

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Nearly each issue of *Bygone Years* included articles devoted to monuments that were threatened with destruction in the capital and throughout the country.\(^{49}\) Articles on “vandalism” committed by establishments and governmental departments (mis-)using and renovating buildings brought public attention to the destruction of historic monuments, and shamed individuals and institutions into addressing the problem and rethinking their actions. In an article entitled “Recurrent Acts of Vandalism by Governmental Departments,” for example, the author discussed how a certain ministry damaged, “with a clear conscious,” the building in which it was located because of the need for additional space. In a pointed criticism of the authorities, the author wrote: “If we should expect from anyone the most cultured attitude to one’s property, as well as a small material concession for the sake of preserving works of art, then should we not expect it namely from the department controlling the property of the first proprietors in Russia – the tsarist family?”\(^{50}\) As such, the contributors to preservation journals acted as watchdogs over Russia’s historic monuments and moral authorities when it came to relics of the past. Preservationists used such exposés of vandalism and destruction to urge the tsarist authorities to play a larger role in the protection of the country’s heritage.

The people involved with these journals, especially *Bygone Years*, set up organizations and commissions to focus on the matter of preservation. In 1907, the capital’s preservationists established the *Commission for the Study and Description of Old St. Petersburg*, which was initially headed by Benois. The commission had no legal power to punish individuals and institutions for damaging the city’s monuments through

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\(^{50}\) P.V., “Ocherednye vandalizmy vedomstv,” *Starye gody*, January 1913: 49. The article does not give the author’s surname.
renovation or demolition, but like *Bygone Years*, it acted through media campaigns designed to influence public opinion and expose the vandalism caused by property owners, thereby shaming them into preserving the premises they occupied.\(^{51}\) Two years later, in 1909, contributors to the journal formed the *Society for the Defence and Protection of Monuments of Art and Antiquity in Russia*. The society’s goal was the “logical development of the ideas” promoted by the editors of *Bygone Years*: “‘To impede destruction, support and assist in the protection of all monuments in Russia which have artistic or historic value, irrespective of the era in which they were created.”\(^{52}\) Yet another institution, the Museum of Old Petersburg was created in 1907 and run by preservationists. Although it received some small subsidies from the government, as did most privately-run cultural institutions, the museum’s main support came from individuals sympathetic to its cause.\(^{53}\) Indeed, these initiatives were able to operate and become as influential as they did because wealthy individuals – who in many cases were members of the imperial family or held high positions in the tsarist bureaucracy – backed their goals ideologically and financially.\(^{54}\)

Preservationists continued to voice their complaints and concerns about the lack of attention paid to the destruction of the past by the government and private individuals throughout the late imperial period. And they had good reason to do this. Many of the city’s historic monuments were threatened with demolition, had lost their artistic detail and original form through renovations, or had been destroyed altogether in the interests

\(^{51}\) Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself*, 68.


\(^{54}\) Zhukov, *Stanovlenie i deiatel’nost*, 36; Clark notes that the movement for Old Petersburg depended largely on the patronage of the imperial family and upper nobility. See *Petersburg*, 64.
of creating new structures. An historian involved in the preservation movement, G.K. Lukomskii lamented the loss of not only “tens of buildings” during the first fifteen years of the twentieth century, but also the hundreds of small places (corners, building entrances, signs, gates, balconies, pavilions, doors, etc.) which gave character to Old Petersburg.\textsuperscript{55} He expressed his frustration with the lack of progress to change people’s attitudes to the city’s history and built environment, and the authorities’ unwillingness to provide for the protection of monuments by stating: “So much has been written in journals and newspapers, so much has been said in meetings on this topic, but the opportunities for such acts of vandalism remain the same.”\textsuperscript{56} Like many other people at the time, Lukomskii was incensed by the lack of progress made in official circles to have historic monuments put under protection by the state. Preservationists continued to be frustrated by the disregard shown to historic and artistic monuments until the very end of the tsarist regime. Only with the February Revolution were preservationists offered the opportunity to carry out their goals of protecting the historic and artistic monuments in the city and throughout the country.

\textit{Revolution and Preservation}

When the Revolution came in February 1917, preservationists began to fear for the fate of the palaces, mansions, statues, and valuable property that had been associated with the privileged classes. There was good reason for anxiety. The example of the French Revolution had shown that the “masses” attacked, burned, pulled down, and

\textsuperscript{55} G.K. Lukomskii, \textit{Staryi Peterburg. Progulki po starinnym kvartalam stolitsy} (St. Petersburg: Kolo, 2002), 6. This book was originally published in 1917 by the publishing company “Svobodnoe iskusstvo.”

\textsuperscript{56} Lukomskii, \textit{Staryi Peterburg}, 30.
destroyed many of the monuments associated with the Ancien Régime. The people’s rage with the old order had found expression in the destruction and defacing of objects which symbolized the monarchy and its supporters. Petrograd’s preservationists believed that Russia’s treasures would be submitted to the same treatment. But the French Revolution also provided an example of how the idea of the people’s heritage—*patrimoine*—came into being and how this idea led to the nationalization and protection of many culturally valuable objects. A similar situation developed in Russia after February 1917. Just as in the French case, during and after the Russian revolutions there were attempts both to destroy the symbols of the tsarist regime and to create a system for their protection.

Immediately after the February Revolution began, iconoclasm was witnessed throughout the country, but it was especially pronounced in the capital which exuded the very essence of empire and autocracy. Historians Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii argue that by destroying imperial symbols, people were attacking the old regime itself. Iconoclasm, they note “was a central part of February.” During the February revolution there were attacks on tsarist symbols, such as the double-headed imperial eagle, destruction or veiling of imperial statues with red banners, and as was the case with the Bastille, attacks on imperial prisons. The situation could have been much worse in


60 Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution*, 48-57; Richard Stites makes the comparison between the attack on the Bastille as a symbol of the old regime in France with attacks on certain buildings in Russia. See “Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past,” in
respect to the city’s historic monuments. There was some looting of mansions and palaces, as well as acts of desecration, but overall the majority of people restrained themselves from indiscriminate destruction of cultural property (in the capital, at least). In April, Alexander Benois expressed his surprise and astonishment that more had not been destroyed. “Of all the miracles of this fantastic moment that we have lived through (and which is far from over),” he wrote, “what astounds me most is the almost complete absence of excesses of vandalism.”

The relative lack of damage to historic and artistic monuments was in part due to the actions taken by the Petrograd preservationists and several others in the city’s cultural community – actions which found support in the new structures of power. Shortly after the abdication of the tsar, the capital’s cultural activists met at Maxim Gorky’s apartment to discuss the issues facing the country’s built heritage. They decided to lobby the new government for the creation of a ministry of arts, which would give them a voice in the cultural development of the country. The “Gorky Commission,” as it came to be called, set as one of its main goals the protection of national treasures. Over the course of the first two months following the Revolution, the commission worked diligently to impress upon people the need to preserve the heritage they inherited from the old regime, and to safeguard monuments of the past by creating a series of museums out of the imperial palaces and mansions.

62 Clark, Petersburg, 65.
Representatives of the commission reached out to the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet and received official sanction from both.⁶³ In an appeal written by the Gorky Commission⁶⁴ and made by the Petrograd Soviet, the Russian people were summoned to protect the “inheritance” left to them by the “former owners,” for the paintings, statues and buildings are, according to the appeal, “embodiments of your spiritual strengths and those of your forefathers.” The appeal concluded by stressing the usefulness of monuments for building a new culture: “Citizens, do not touch a single brick, protect monuments, buildings, old things, documents – all of this is your history, your pride. Remember that this is the soil from which your new national art will grow.”⁶⁵ The authorities clearly shared the commission’s belief that the country’s heritage was in danger, and stressed the need to preserve all of the cultural riches left in the hands of the masses.

The Gorky Commission, however, was short-lived. Due to a number of problems between members, including ideological cleavages and allegations of dictatorship over arts, the commission broke apart.⁶⁶ It was succeeded by a series of other commissions, which throughout the spring and summer of 1917 continued the work started by the Gorky Commission. Some of their main activities included protecting the suburban palaces from looting, providing an inventory and catalog of the city’s moveable

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⁶⁴ Benois discusses one of the first meetings of the Gorky Commission at which a text of the “Appeal to the Masses” was composed. See *Moi dnevnik*, 153.


⁶⁶ Richard Stites discusses the problems that existed between people who advocated for the preservation of historic monuments, such as Benois, Gorky, and Nikolai Rerikh, and those who believed that “over-protection” would inhibit innovative art, including Maiakovskii, Meyerhold and Nikolai Punin. See *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 76.
“treasures,” and further advocating for the preservation of the country’s historic monuments. From the very beginning of the Revolution, therefore, activists had a much greater say in the politics of cultural protection than during the late imperial period.67

The October Revolution signified a radical departure in almost all respects from the policies employed by the tsarist bureaucracy, the Provisional Government, and the Petrograd Soviet. The Bolsheviks came to power vowing to create a radically new system and society on the ruins of the old. One would expect the attitudes of the Bolsheviks to imperial heritage to be decidedly negative, but that was not quite the case. To be sure, from the moment of the Bolshevik Revolution a contradictory and uneasy relationship to the monuments of the past came into effect. On the one hand, certain influential groups, such as Futurists and Proletkult, called for the complete destruction of the past and the creation of something entirely new.68 On the other, many of the leading Bolsheviks held much less radical positions and called for using the past to build a new future.69 As with several of the other policies followed by the Bolsheviks in their first years in power, quite

67 It is clear that the preservationists wanted to attain some form of power and control over the fate of monuments. According to Johnson, preservationists in Petrograd welcomed the position offered to them by the February Revolution, for they no longer felt as if they were outside of the system. See How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself, 74; Clark goes further than Johnson in discussing the preservationists’ motivations. For her, preservationists had a utopian streak and their calls for neoclassical revival represent a desire for “power and control.” “The movement to revive Empire style in St. Petersburg can be read as an instructive chapter in the story of intellectuals ‘reach for power’ at about this time. The Preservationists sought greater control over the ways the arts were administered by the state.” See Clark, Petersburg, 64.


69 Katarina Clark and Evgenyi Dobrenko with Andrei Artizov and Oleg Naumov, eds., Soviet Culture and Power: A History in Documents, 1917-1953 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 4; Sheila Fitzpatrick, among others, has noted the problem of reducing the Bolshevik Party and Russian intelligentsia into “monolithic entities.” She notes that a “variety of all values and opinions on cultural policy were represented within the Bolshevik Party.” Most notable was the split between Old Bolsheviks, such as the moderate Anatoli Lunacharskii, whose views resembled those of the non-Bolshevik Russian intelligentsia, and the militant communists, who favoured forcible politicization of culture. The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 3; Kendall Bailes argues that Lenin himself was, in many ways, a traditional Russian intellectual who defended the interests of the intelligentsia against the radicals on the far left who set out to destroy the old culture. Technology and Society Under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technological Intelligentsia, 1917-1941 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 47.
often there were instances in which the leadership was willing to compromise strict ideological adherence to meet the needs of the new state.\textsuperscript{70}

Illustrative of the initial contradictory policies of the Bolsheviks toward the monuments of the past are the public pronouncements made shortly after the Revolution. Within the first six months after October, the authorities called on people to save the country’s cultural heritage \textit{and} to tear down reminders of the past. In the first instance, the Commissar of Enlightenment, Anatolii Lunacharskii called on the citizens of Russia to “take care of the people’s property.” In his November 1917 appeal (which is reminiscent of the one made by the Petrograd Soviet earlier), he exclaimed that the “labouring people” inherited not only “natural riches,” but “vast cultural riches: buildings of stunning beauty, museums full of beautiful and rare objects, instructive and ennobling of the soul, libraries preserving enormous spiritual valuables, etc. All of this now truly belongs to the people.” Calling for the preservation of “our common treasure,” Lunacharskii emphasized the educational function of the “inheritance,” stating that “even the most benighted, who have been held in ignorance by oppression, will become enlightened and understand what a source of joy, strength and wisdom artistic works can be.”\textsuperscript{71} Appeals of this sort were accompanied by actions designed to protect monuments. Immediately after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks assigned soldiers to guard the imperial palaces in Petrograd and other cities to prevent destruction and looting.\textsuperscript{72} The People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment also employed the commissions set up after the

\textsuperscript{70}The use of “old specialists” is a particularly good example of how the Bolsheviks were willing to compromise for the greater good. See Bailes, \textit{Technology and Society}, chapter 2 especially.


\textsuperscript{72}Stites, \textit{Revolutionary Dreams}, 76.
February Revolution in their work, encouraging them to continue their activities in cataloguing and preserving the relics of the past.\textsuperscript{73}

While the Bolsheviks urged people to preserve the embodiments of the past, they also called for the demolition of monuments which symbolized the monarchy. But even as they did this, they made the demolition selective. If monuments erected in honour of the tsars and their servants did not possess historic or artistic interest, according to a decree from April 1918, they were to be removed from the streets, squares, and other public places and squirreled away in warehouses or “turned to some socially useful purpose.” Several of the “more ugly idols,” the authorities suggested, were to be removed by 1 May 1918 and replaced by new socialist monuments.\textsuperscript{74} The Bolshevik leadership, therefore, was unwilling to deem the entire tsarist heritage unworthy of a place in socialist culture. Lenin, who was against the indiscriminate destruction of monuments from the past, believed that a new socialist culture could not appear out of thin air, but that it needed a base from which to grow.\textsuperscript{75} Although some tsarist monuments and symbols became victims of revolutionary iconoclasm, many others continued to play a role in the cultural landscape of the socialist society. Thus, because the orders were selective, famous monuments which dotted the Petrograd cityscape, such as the Bronze Horseman, were spared destruction during the first revolutionary years. Even certain

\textsuperscript{73} G.A. Boguslavskii, “Kul’turnoe nasledie i khudozhestvennyi mir Petrograda v 1918-1920 godakh,” in T.A. Slavina, et.al, eds., 


\textsuperscript{74} “Dekret o pamiatnikakh respubliki. 12 aprelia 1918,” in Anisimov, \textit{Okhrana pamiatnikov}, 15-16. The decree stipulated that specialists in Moscow and Petrograd would decide on what should be demolished.

\textsuperscript{75} Stites, “Iconoclastic currents in the Russian Revolution,” 17.
statues symbolizing the most tyrannical and conservative periods of tsarist rule, including the monument to Nicholas I on St. Isaac Square were not destroyed.\(^{76}\)

Over the course of the 1920s, Bolshevik policies toward monuments of the country’s past were oriented as much to safeguarding as they were to destruction. Religious symbols and structures may have been targeted and victimized fairly regularly, but the new authorities attempted to carry out a policy of preserving secular buildings and cultural treasures in the cities and countryside.\(^{77}\) The majority of preservationists’ work during this period involved the creation of museums out of the imperial palaces and mansions of the “former classes” and “disenfranchised.”\(^{78}\) In June, 1918, for example, the palaces of Tsarskoe Selo, one of the suburban residences of the tsars outside of Petrograd, were turned into museums for the people. By 1920 the other imperial suburban residences at Peterhoff, Gatchina, and Pavlovsk had also become museums, as had many of the grand private palaces in the city’s centre (Stroganov, Usupov, and Sheremetev Palaces).\(^{79}\) Residences of famous cultural figures were converted into museums during this period, as was the case with Lev Tolstoy’s Moscow home and his former country estate, *Iasnaia Poliana*.\(^{80}\) When the civil war ended in 1921, a network of museums was fully operational throughout the country. Between 1918 and 1920, following a Soviet government decree calling for the registration of all monuments of art

\(^{76}\) N.B. Lebina and A.N. Chistikov argue that the lack of funding during the Civil War slowed the destruction of certain monuments in Petrograd. See Obyvatel’ i reformy. Kartiny povednevoi zhizni gorozhan (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), 20.

\(^{77}\) During NEP, many churches and other religious buildings and sites suffered. For a listing of destructive acts against religious monuments in Ukraine, see Volodymyr Sichynsky, *Destruction of Ukrainian Monuments of Art and Culture Under the Soviet Russian Administration Between 1917-1957* (New York: The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, 1958), 6-7.

\(^{78}\) Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself*, 79.


\(^{80}\) See the decrees about nationalizing Tolstoy’s residences in April 1920 (Moscow home) and June 1921 (*Iasnaia Poliana*). “O natsionalizatsii doma L’va Tolstogo v Moskve,” in Anisimov, ed., *Okhrana pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury*, 26; “O natsionalizatsii usad’by ‘Iasnaia Poliana,’” *Ibid*, 28-30.
and antiquity, over five-hundred and fifty old mansions, nearly a thousand private art collections, and over two-hundred separate pieces of art had been accounted for by the Museum Section of Narkompros.\textsuperscript{81} The Soviet authorities continued to create museums and use them for educating the masses and raising their cultural level throughout the period of the New Economic Policy.\textsuperscript{82}

Much of the work to create museums and preserve monuments was carried out by voluntary organizations. The early period of Soviet rule – especially the relatively “liberal” period of the NEP – saw the promotion of local studies (\textit{kraevedenie}) and voluntary organizations devoted to studying the regions of the country. In Petrograd, the \textit{Society for the Study, Popularization, and Artistic Protection of Old Petersburg and its Surroundings} (better know as the \textit{Society for Old Petersburg}) was created to carry out the preservation of the city’s monuments. The society was formed and directed by many of the same individuals who called for preservation under the last tsar, and who worked under the Provisional Government to save monuments from destruction.\textsuperscript{83} The society’s goal was to study the historic and artistic monuments of the former imperial capital, provide for their protection and preservation (especially in the context of new development under the Soviet state), and popularize cultural heritage to the people.\textsuperscript{84} It carried out excursions, created museums in the former capital – including a museum to

\textsuperscript{81} See “Dekret Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov o registratsii, prieme na uchet i okhranenii pamiatnikov iskusstva i stariny, nakhodashchikhsia vo vladenii chastnykh lits, obshechestv i ucherezhdenii ot 10.10.1918,” in Anisimov, \textit{Okhrana pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury}, 22-24; For the decree and instructions for carrying it out, see N.M. Serapina, ed., \textit{Ermitazh, kotoryi my poteriali: Dokumenty 1920-1930 godov} (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Zhurnal Neva, 2002), 18-22; See also Stites, \textit{Revolutionary Dreams}, 77.


\textsuperscript{83} See \textit{Obshchestvo Staryi Peterburg, 1921-1923} (Petrograd, 1923), 10-11.

Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin in his last place of residence on the Moika Canal – and organized lectures and musical shows which exhibited the culture of Old Petersburg. All of the society’s activities were designed to further the preservationists’ cause and guard the centre of the city (Old Petersburg), as if it was a “nature preserve.”

Throughout the early years of Soviet rule, the Bolsheviks used the past to create a future. One society did not wholly eclipse the other. As monuments to Karl Marx, Lenin, and other revolutionary heroes were being constructed, selected elements from the past were used for building a new culture. In preserving monuments and creating museums, the Bolsheviks reinvested the symbols of the old order with new political meanings. No longer were palaces and imperial treasures just symbols of oppression. They were now the people’s property, earned during the upheavals of revolution. The new status of museums, statues, palaces and mansions as belonging to the people symbolized the end of tyranny, oppression, and inequality. Rather than creating a culture out of thin air based entirely on overthrowing the past, the October Revolution signified the beginnings of a new society which borrowed heavily from the old.

Stalinism and Historic Monuments

The official policy toward monuments from the past underwent a dramatic change in the late 1920s. This was a period of revolutionary transformation from above, as the architects of the Five-Year Plan sought to rapidly industrialize the Soviet Union and transform the countryside through the collectivization of the peasantry. Between 1928-

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85 *Obshchestvo Staryi Peterburg*, 9.
86 Carol Duncan asserts that this was the case in the creation of the Louvre after the French Revolution. See “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship,” in Ivan Karp and Stephen Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 93.
1932 the country industrialized at alarming speeds, using the grain confiscated from newly formed collective farms to buy materials needed for industrial construction.\(^87\) With the growth of industry, the construction of new towns and the re-planning of existing cities, the protection and preservation of monuments became much less of a concern for the authorities. Indeed, plans to modernize the country were often drawn up without any consideration of the effects they would have on monuments.\(^88\) This period also witnessed a cultural revolution, the hallmarks of which included radical revolutionary rhetoric and actions, iconoclastic trends in all spheres of life, and ultra left-wing policies. In the rapid drive to industrialize and catch up with the West, preservationists’ calls fell on deaf ears.

During this period, vandalism and iconoclasm became widespread phenomena, as many physical reminders of the past, especially religious structures in the countryside and cities were destroyed for ideological and practical reasons.\(^89\) Leningrad’s appearance was dramatically affected by this, as a vast number of the city’s church buildings were demolished or re-fashioned for other uses.\(^90\) Moscow, the centre of the world socialist movement, lost much of its former landscape, as modernization and anti-religious sentiment spelled disaster for historic sites and religious structures.\(^91\) “The demonumentalization of the 1930s,” notes Stites, “far surpassed that of the revolutionary 

\(^{87}\) The art collections of several of the country’s museums also suffered during this period, as industrial growth was partially financed by the sale of artistic monuments from the tsarist era at organized auctions in Western Europe. On this, see M.B. Piotrovskii, ed., *Gosudarstvenny Ermitazh. Muzeinye rasprodazhi 1928-1929 godov. Arkhivnye dokumenty* (St. Petersburg: State Hermitage, 2006) and N.M. Serapina, ed., *Ermitazh, kotoryi my poteriialt.*


\(^{89}\) Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 227.

\(^{90}\) Lebina and Chistikov note that Leningrad’s physical appearance changed dramatically due to the destruction of churches. *Obyvatel’ i reformy*, 15; For a listing of the churches and other buildings destroyed in Leningrad during this period, see V.V. Antonov and A.V. Kobak, eds., *Utrachennye pamiatniki arkhitektury Peterburga-Lenigrada. Katalog vystavki* (Leningrad: Khudoznik RSFSR, 1988).

During this “Great Leap Forward” the state made few considerations to relics of a bygone and oppressive age. Many of those preservationists who voiced their discontent with the destruction of the historic landscape found themselves the victims of the Cultural Revolution accompanying the Five-Year Plan. Their efforts to protect monuments in the face of industrialization earned preservationists the label of “obstructionists,” and they were attacked just as viciously as “bourgeois specialists.”

With the end of the Five-Year Plan, there was a gradual return to rational and sober planning, a general demilitarization of labour and life, and a move away from revolutionary rhetoric and appeals. In comparison to the period between 1928-1932, the rest of the decade can be seen as a one of consolidation of the gains made. Indeed, throughout the 1930s there was a general shift toward state practices reflective of pre- Revolutionary values and principles. The Stalinist leadership renounced its mistrust of the family unit, prohibited abortions, promoted pro-natal policies, changed its approach to education and discipline, and in many ways departed from the line followed since 1917. One striking feature of this shift – which had a profound effect on the treatment of historic monuments and landmarks – was the rehabilitation of many figures, events, and sites from Russia’s national past. By the mid-1930s, legendary leaders like Alexander Nevskii, Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and cultural icons such as Alexander Pushkin and Lev Tolstoy were lauded as exemplars of Russia’s great past. The party began to valorize national heroes from the other Soviet republics in the mid- to late-1930s.

92 Stites, Revolutionary Dreams, 227.
93 Many of the local studies organizations that developed during the NEP were disbanded and the Academy of Sciences, which administered the Central Kraevedenie Bureau, was purged. See Johnson, How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself, 87, 172-176. For more on purges of the Academy of Sciences, see A.S. Shechenkov, “Kratkaia kharakteristika obschekul’turnoi situatsii,” in A.S. Shchenkov, Pamiatniki arkhitektury, 11-12; For attacks on old specialists during the five-year plan and cultural revolution, see Bailes, Technology and Society, chapters 3-6.
Shevchenko, Bohdan Khmelnyskii, and other individuals from the Ukrainian past, for example, were rehabilitated in 1938-39. The Stalinist authorities turned to pre-Revolutionary heroes, great cultural figures and their works to create common roots and mobilize the population for the possibility of an upcoming war. They actively sought out a “useable past” to bind people together, create a sense of community, and promote Soviet patriotism.

This shift in cultural policies, and especially the rehabilitation of the past, has been interpreted in different ways. The émigré Russian sociologist, Nicholas Timasheff argued that these changes represented a “Great Retreat” away from revolutionary values and Soviet socialism. Others see the changes as reflective of modern politics of the inter-war period. According to historian David Hoffmann, the Stalinist policies of the 1930s were mobilizational strategies common to all modern states threatened with war. With socialism proclaimed to be achieved by 1934, the Soviet authorities could relax their revolutionary policies and use traditional institutions and culture to support and legitimize the state. “Monumentalist art and architecture, formerly instruments of the old order,” argues Hoffmann, “now helped legitimate the new socialist order and symbolized its accomplishments. Patriotic appeals, elsewhere used to foment bourgeois nationalism,

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94 Serhy Yekelchyk, Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 19; For more on the creation and support of national cultures in the 1930s, see Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” Slavic Review 53, no.2 (Summer 1994): 445-447.
96 See chapter 2 in Brandenberger, National Bolshevism.
in the Soviet Union inspired defense of the socialist motherland.”

He quite rightly suggests that there never was a blueprint for socialist culture, and as a consequence, there was room for considerable debate about the form that culture should take. Rather than a retreat, notes Hoffmann, “we see a tilt toward certain pre-existing strands within the cultural ecosystem.”

Since the October Revolution, the Bolshevik authorities had shown an interest in selectively preserving historic and artistic monuments from the past. Until the First Five-Year Plan, when the need to create an industrial base became the overwhelming priority, legislation and actions to protect tsarist heritage were an important part of the country’s cultural development. With the turn to the past, the authorities began to pay even greater attention to the plight of historic monuments – invaluable stone documents – in which the state’s new heroes found reflection.

Throughout the 1930s an attempt was made to create a viable governmental system of monument protection. Due in part to a desire to prevent the reoccurrence of the First Five-Year Plan’s destruction of monuments, the state sought to establish new legislation and institutions to deal specifically with the issue of preserving historic monuments. In 1932 the central authorities created an “Interdepartmental Committee for the Protection of Monuments of the Revolution, Art, and Culture.” The goal of the Committee was to ensure that earlier decrees about the protection and preservation of monuments were implemented. The commission was to compile a list of monuments to be placed under state protection, deal with questions regarding the use, renovation, and

100 Hoffmann, “Was There a ‘Great Retreat’ from Soviet Socialism?,” 654; Idem, Stalinist Values, 6.
restoration of monuments, and handle budgetary issues. These steps were meant to ensure that more attention would be paid to monuments than had been previously shown. Even though the central authorities had on a number of occasions called for the safeguarding of relics from the past, many of the country’s monuments were left unattended to or were not provided with the required protection. The creation of the committee was followed a year later by a law stipulating the need for increased vigilance in the protection of historic monuments. This law called for the end to the abuse, demolition, alteration, and the negligent use of buildings with historical significance by local authorities throughout the country.

While the Stalinist leadership celebrated pre-revolutionary heroes from all areas of the Soviet Union and offered them as patriotic examples for citizens to model themselves on, they continued to push for increased security over historic monuments and cultural landmarks. Monuments were treated as sites that could teach Soviet citizens about heroes from the past and great events in the country’s history. As embodiments of the past, monuments had to be preserved and protected. While the state staged impressive celebrations to commemorate the poet Alexander Pushkin on the hundredth anniversary of his death in 1937, it also set about reinforcing and improving measures for preservation. At this time, control over historic monuments was transferred to the newly created All-Union Committee for Artistic Affairs, and soon after a Department for

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101 “Postanovlenie Vserossiiskogo tsentral’nogo ispolnitel’nogo Komiteta ot 20 avgusta 1932, ‘Ob utverzhdenie polozenia o mezhdvuedomstvennom Komitete po okhrane pamiatnikov revoljutsii, iskusstva i kul’tury pri Prezidiume VTsIK,” in Anisimov, Okhrana pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury, 58-59.
102 “Ob ohrane istoricheskix pamiatnikov. Postanovlenie VTsIK i SNK RSFSR ot 10 avgusta 1933.” Arkhiv Komiteta po gosudarstvennomu kontroliu, ispol’zovaniu i okhrane pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury (KGIOP), f.950.III, d.N-3353, l.2.
the Protection of Monuments was created under the purview of the Russian Administration of Artistic Affairs.\textsuperscript{104} Step by step, the Soviet authorities attempted to centralize and more efficiently coordinate the preservation system.

Although central organs had been created for the first time to work exclusively on the protection of the country’s historic monuments, the problem of local compliance with decrees and providing consistent oversight had to be contended with. For this reason, local Departments for the Protection of Monuments were organized in regions and large centres throughout the Soviet Union, including Leningrad in 1938.\textsuperscript{105} The Stalinist leadership’s embrace of the past had particular resonance in the former imperial capital. This city, more than any other in the country, was intimately connected with the history of the Russian empire since the time of Peter the Great. Leningrad’s cityscape was filled with monumental reminders of imperial glory, heroic leaders, and great cultural traditions. Its ensembles and neoclassical appearance emphasized the power and authority that the Stalinist state wanted to project. The city itself became a physical compliment to the state’s new ideological focus. Monument protection had been more successful here than elsewhere throughout the first twenty years of Soviet rule. With the state’s rehabilitation of history in the mid-1930s, Leningrad’s preservationists were provided with a governmental organ devoted solely to protecting, preserving, and restoring historic and artistic monuments in the city. Leningrad’s long tradition of

\textsuperscript{104} Iu.N. Zhukov, \textit{Kogda gremeli pushki. Spasenie pamiatnikov zodchestva v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny} (Moscow: Obshchestvo 'Znanie' RSFSR, 1990), 8.

\textsuperscript{105} Zhukov, \textit{Kogda gremeli pushki}, 11; Leningrad’s Department for the Protection of Monuments was created in November, 1938. KGIOP, f.950.III, d.N-3353, l.6.
preservation activism, coupled with the all-Union turn to the past, provided for a powerful system of monument protection on the eve of World War II.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{106} Zhukov notes that the regional organ for monument protection in Leningrad had remained in tact under different names and guises since 1917. \textit{Kogda gremeli pushki}, 6-11.
Chapter 2: “These Monuments Must be Protected!”: Leningrad’s Imperial Landscape at War.

But the Fascists, with their damned pedantry continued to shell and bomb our city. And when the rust-coloured clouds of brick dust disperse, everyone of us, with unbearable pain in our hearts, will see how new wounds appear on the beautiful walls of the Admiralty and the Russian Museum, the Tauride and Mariinskii palaces, the Hermitage and the Kirov theatre…

--- N.V. Baranov (Chief Architect of Leningrad during and after the war)¹

On 22 June 1941, Hitler broke the non-aggression treaty signed in 1939 and invaded the Soviet Union. Catching the Soviet government, people, and armed forces unaware, the Wehrmacht rolled eastward, meeting little significant resistance. Driven by National-Socialist ideology, which saw the Soviet Union as “living-space” (Lebensraum) for Germanic peoples, the war in the East was one of extermination and enslavement.² Hitler’s forces seemed unstoppable as they captured city after city, occupied and exploited territories, and committed countless atrocities against Soviet civilians. Only after the victory in the battle of Stalingrad in February 1943 did Soviet forces go on the offensive and eventually drive German troops from Soviet territory in 1944.

Less than three months after the invasion, German forces met up with Finnish troops on the outskirts of Leningrad, and after several attempts to take it by storm, Hitler ordered his troops to blockade the city and terrorize the population into surrender. For nearly nine-hundred days, starting on 8 September, the Germans held their position and formed an “iron ring” around the city. Over the course of the blockade, the city’s

residents experienced unrelenting horrors. Hardly a day went by when Leningraders were not subjected to enemy fire. Hitler’s Luftwaffe dropped 107,000 bombs on Leningrad, and his troops entrenched on the city’s outskirts fired 150,000 shells at military and civilian targets. The German forces ensured the destruction of food supply depots in Leningrad in the first weeks of the siege, and they did their best to prevent the transportation of materials and provisions into the city. As a result of bombings and food shortages, combined with the catastrophic living and material conditions in the city, approximately one million people died over the course of the blockade.

From the moment of the invasion until the lifting of the blockade on 27 January 1944, Leningrad’s preservationists, architects, artists, and authorities instituted a series of measures to protect the city’s historic monuments and imperial landmarks. Constantly under fire and weak from the effects of malnutrition, Leningraders worked feverishly to bury statues, camouflage historic sites, and conserve the magnificent imperial palaces and mansions in preparation for a time when restoration could begin. The protection of Leningrad’s historic monuments was not something that was sporadically attempted by art lovers and history enthusiasts. Rather, saving the imperial landscape was of utmost importance to the local and central authorities. Throughout the blockade, the city’s authorities prioritized the protection of monuments, diverted manpower and resources from defence needs, allocated the highest bread rations to people working to preserve the imperial landscape, and continuously risked human lives to save symbols of the “glorious

past” from destruction. “Preserving architecture when architects’ and preservationists’ lives are at risk is very difficult,” wrote the Leningrad preservationist L.A. Il’in, “but it is a task that demands fulfilling.” This task had ideological underpinnings and reflected the desire of Leningraders and their fellow countrymen to see the city’s imperial relics saved from the ravages of war.

The preservation of Leningrad’s historic monuments and landmarks was part of an all-Union drive to save the embodiments of the nation’s past from destruction. During the war architects, preservationists, party and state authorities, and others throughout the country made efforts to preserve historic and cultural artifacts. Within a few days of the invasion, the Union of Soviet Architects circulated a letter to all republic-, provincial-, and municipal-level union branches with instructions for wartime activities. Among other high priority actions to be taken, architects were ordered to work with local party and soviet organs to ensure the protection of the country’s “outstanding monuments of architecture and the repositories of cultural valuables from destruction caused by bombings.” When certain regions of the country were liberated towards the end of 1941, and the extent of vandalism became known, the government created the Commission for the Registration and Protection of Monuments of Art to account for damage, provide leadership in preservation, and prepare monuments for restoration. Discussions about the destruction of historic monuments centered on the Germans’ intentions to “degrade” the Soviet people, “tear away from them the memory of their great past,” and destroy

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5 Tsentral’nyi Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva Sankt-Peterburga (TsGALI SPb), f.341, op.1, d.76, l.65-66. The letter is dated 27 June 1941.
6 The Commission was created under the purview of the Soviet government’s Committee for Artistic Affairs in July 1942. Pamiatniki zodchestva razrushennye ili povrezhdennye nemetskimi zakhvatchikami. Dokumenty i materialy. Vypusk I (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe arkhitekturnoe izdatel’stvo Akademii arkhitektury SSSR, 1942), 36.
Anxieties about loosing touchstones of the tsarist past influenced official attempts to save the country’s monuments.

The protection of historic monuments in Leningrad during the blockade was further driven by the deep connection many of the city’s residents had with the imperial landscape. According to scholars Lisa Crone and Jennifer Day, Leningraders “bolster their sense of identity by affixing it to place.” Because the city is located on a swamp with no solid land beneath it, they argue, residents “chose to identify with the man-made buildings and squares of the northern capital instead of the barren landscape.” The director of the USSR Academy of Science archives, Georgi Knyazev, for example, ruminated about the importance of the two sphinxes on the University Embankment one month after the invasion. “How much for me is associated with those sphinxes, how many thoughts and images connected with the past and future,” wrote Knyazev. After the bombing began in September he wrote “As I go out through the front door the first thing I do is to make sure the sphinxes are still whole, that St. Isaac’s is whole, and the Admiralty spire, and the angel with a cross on top of the Alexander Column.”

The renowned artist, Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva expressed similar feelings when her friends tried to convince her to evacuate the city after the blockade had begun: “To leave the city and perhaps never see it again! Not see its white nights! Its canals…, the Neva, the spire of the fortress, the tower of the Admiralty and the monument to Peter the Great! I simply

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7 Pamiatniki zodchestva razrushenny ili povrezhdennye, 3.
9 Parts of Knyazev’s diary have been reproduced in Ales Adamovich and Danil Granin, eds., A Book of the Blockade, trans. Hilda Perham (Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1983), 138, 255.
can not do it!”10 For many, especially preservationists, the connection with their beloved city strengthened their resolve to protect it. Animated by both ideological demands and the connection with the landscape, city authorities and preservationists prioritized monument protection and risked lives to ensure the survival of embodiments of the past. What started as a series of prophylactic measures once the war began, turned into an all-out battle to protect and conserve historic monuments as the blockade wore on.

**Prewar Preparations**

The unexpectedness of the German invasion meant that measures had not been taken to protect the country’s historic monuments from danger. However, preservationists, architects, and governmental organs had discussed what should be done if the Soviet Union was involved in a war, and in some cases had even devised plans for protection. In the mid-1930s, for example, the Soviet authorities worked out measures to evacuate many of the country’s historic and artistic valuables from museums in areas that could be threatened in the event of an attack. In Leningrad, plans to ship “moveable” monuments from the suburban palaces and museums in the city were in place since 1936.11 But what was to be done with those historic monuments that could not be sent off to the east for protection – statues too big to move, monasteries, churches, palaces and mansions?

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10 Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka, otdel rukopisei (RNB OR), f.1015 (A.P. Ostrounova-Lebedeva), d.57, l.150. Diary entry from 30 November 1941.
The country’s late entrance into the war gave preservationists the opportunity to observe the cultural destruction in Western Europe and build on those experiences to better protect the Soviet Union’s monuments. Before the conflict spilled over onto Soviet territory, a senior Leningrad preservationist, V.K. Marakov, wrote a lengthy report summarizing the effects of military actions on historic monuments in the West. Making extensive use of West European journals, Makarov’s report provided information on the latest methods for concealing buildings, statues, and other landmarks from the destruction of war.\textsuperscript{12} Makarov insisted that contemporary warfare presented two main dangers to the Soviet Union’s historic monuments: theft in the event that territory was occupied, and destruction caused by modern weaponry, especially air raids, bombings, and shelling.\textsuperscript{13} This study signaled the need to develop methods of protection in Leningrad and throughout the Soviet Union, and it served as a guide for the extensive work to be carried out during the blockade.\textsuperscript{14}

L.A. Il’in, a professor of architecture and long-time Petersburg-Leningrad preservation activist, likewise stressed the significance of learning from other countries’ wartime experiences. Six months into the war with Germany, he noted that the experience of monument destruction during the First World War in Europe, as well as the loss of heritage sites during the Civil War in Spain had an important impact on the way Leningrad’s architects thought about monument protection. The war in Spain had

\textsuperscript{12} Arkhiv Komiteta po gosudarstvennomu kontroliu, ispol’zovaniu i okhrane pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury (KGIOP), f.950-VI-2, d.N.128, l.2(ob).
\textsuperscript{14} Makarov’s report, it was later noted, “played a role in the more contemporary, and one could say, more scientific organization of the entire complex of work in the defence of the artistic treasures of Leningrad.” See A.G. Raskin, “Sokhranenie arkhitektturno-khudozhestvennykh pamiatnikov Leningrada v nachale voiny i period blokady (iun’ 1941 – ianvar’ 1944),” Pamiatniki istorii kul’tury Sankt-Peterburga. Kraevedcheskie zapiski. Issledovaniia i materialy, 2004, no.9: 15.
especially prompted preservationists to think about what could happen in the Soviet Union if the country was invaded. “The experience of protection during this war,” said Il’in, “gave fresher examples, more corresponding to modern warfare, that all countries – including the Soviet Union – should know and study.”

Finally, there had been some discussion in the Architectural Planning Administration of the Leningrad city soviet before the war broke out, which focused on more specific tasks. Leningrad’s chief architect, Nikolai Baranov, noted that as early as 1940, the municipal authorities entrusted the administration with the task of planning to camouflage strategic points in the city. A draft project was worked out that summer, but it was only after the conflict spilled onto Soviet soil that they would begin to develop concrete plans for camouflaging strategic industrial sites, governmental buildings and architectural monuments.

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15 KGIOP, f.950-VI-2, d.N-131, l.1. Nicola Lambourne notes that the Civil War in Spain also gave “prior practical warning of the danger to historic monuments” in Western countries during WWII. See War Damage in Western Europe: The Destruction of Historic Monuments During the Second World War (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 36.

16 Baranov, Silueti blokady, 15-16.

17 Elena Kochina, for example, writes: “Infected by the general panic, we rushed into the city. At the dacha everything was instantly bleak and full of anxiety.” Blockade diary, trans. Samuel C. Ramer (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990), 32.
announcement of war, 100,000 Leningraders not subjected to mobilization volunteered for service, and by the end of the first week the number had risen to 210,000.18 Others enlisted into units to dig anti-tank trenches outside the city to prevent the Germans from reaching Leningrad. Over the next few months nearly 500,000 people took part in digging trenches, on average 133,000 Leningraders were engaged in this work each day.19 In a very short period of time, Leningrad’s party and soviet leadership mobilized almost the entire population in some form or another to carry out defence activities. The artist, Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva, who was seventy years old in 1941, confided in her diary her feelings of helpless in the war effort: “I so would like to defend my beloved city, defend it with my body, lay down my life for the cause. I say this honestly…because I love my city, and would happily die for it.”20 As elsewhere in the country, the announcement of war produced an upswing in patriotic sentiment, which compelled many to do their part for the war effort.21

As the Germans advanced toward Leningrad over the course of the summer, municipal authorities relied on the city’s architectural organizations and preservationists to implement measures to protect historic monuments. The prewar discussions and planning proved invaluable in executing work on a scale never before seen. This work began almost immediately after the invasion. “It makes sense that the attention of the party and soviet leaders of Leningrad focused on defence matters,” writes Baranov. “But what is more important to note is that even during this difficult period, the care for

artistic heritage was not put on the backburner." Within three days of the German attack, the city soviet issued orders to protect many of the city’s statues, and to camouflage historic and strategic sites throughout the city. From the very beginning of the war, efforts to protect Leningrad’s historic monuments became a component part of the city’s defense.

On 26 June, Baranov was summoned to party headquarters at Smolnyi, where he was greeted by Leningrad’s second party secretary, Aleksei Kuznetsov. They discussed the dangers posed by German air raids and agreed that measures had to be taken to secure the city’s “vitally important” buildings and strategic sites. Kuznetsov instructed Baranov to begin implementing plans to camouflage the Smolnyi palace and grounds surrounding it. Not only was Smolnyi the headquarters of the Leningrad military command, the city’s party committee, and soviet during the war, it was valued for its architectural and historic significance. The palace and monastery adjoining it were built by two of St. Petersburg’s famous architects (Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli and Giacomo Quarenghi) during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Catherine the Great used the complex to house Russia’s first school for girls. Smolnyi was also the headquarters for the Bolshevik Party during the Revolution. Its importance for the Leningrad party organization was not only strategic. Smolnyi was a physical embodiment of the powerful reign of Catherine the Great and the October Revolution, and therefore had meaning for both the imperial and Soviet historical narratives. Within days of the meeting, Baranov’s

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22 Baranov, Siluety blokady, 23.
23 Gosudarstvennyi muzei gorodskoi skul’putry (GMGS), f. Otdel pamiatnikov i memorial’nykh dosok, d.48, ch.1, l.36. Leningrad city soviet executive committee decision, 25 June 1941; N.V. Baranov, Arkhitektura i stroitel’stvo Leningrada (Leningrad: Leningradskoe gazetno-zhurnal'noe i knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1948), 47.
24 Baranov, Siluety blokady, 15.
team of architects from the Architectural Planning Administration worked out and executed specific plans to conceal Smolnyi. Camouflage nets speckled with brown, green, and gray paint were spread out over the entire complex.\(^{25}\) This was the first of hundreds of sites throughout the city to be camouflaged in a process that continued for the entire period of the war.\(^{26}\)

The city’s preservationists were soon involved in this work. Throughout Leningrad a number of structures from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had golden domes, spires and cupolas that dominated the city’s skyline. These could be used as orientation points for German artillery. The city soviet charged the Department for the Protection of Monuments, under the leadership of N.N. Belekhov, with devising plans to protect these monuments and take away the advantage they offered to Germans. By 1 July, Belekhov’s team of preservationists proposed to have the golden spires and domes of the city either painted with a dark substance, or covered with a thick, dark fabric, thereby making them difficult for German pilots to detect during air raids. St. Isaac’s Cathedral on the southern bank of the Neva was the first to be worked on. In the second week of July a group of workers under the supervision of the alpinist, Aloiz Zemba, painted the four belfries and the massive dome of the gigantic cathedral gray.\(^{27}\) The paint drastically changed the appearance of the Cathedral, noted the chief curator of the Peterhof palace-museum, M. Tikhonova, who found it “especially gloomy and lifeless.”\(^{28}\)

\(^{25}\) Harrison Salisbury notes that when Lieutenant General A.V. Sukhomlin arrived at Smolnyi for a meeting he was disoriented and could not tell if he had made it to the building or not. See The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad (New York: De Capo Press, 1969), 145.


Attributing human characteristics to the cathedral, another commentator wrote “His [Isaac’s] golden head is covered with a gray protective cap [shapka]. In my opinion he has become even more severe.”  

Yet it was only in the fall, after the Germans besieged the city and started bombing it that the necessary plans and preparations for camouflage work on the other historic monuments with golden spires and domes began.

While one may argue that camouflaging sites throughout Leningrad was first and foremost a strategic rather than a historically conscious action, the authorities’ decision to conceal the city’s statues and artistic decorations adorning landmarks was motivated solely by a desire to preserve the embodiments of the imperial past. In the last week of June, the city soviet ordered Belekhov’s Department for the Protection of Monuments to supervise activities to ensure the protection of famous statues from the previous two and a half centuries. The original order to protect monuments involved eleven of the city’s more famous statues from the imperial and Soviet periods. Under the guidance of preservationists, workers took statues and monuments that were small enough down from their pedestals and buried them in nearby gardens and parks, as was the case with the marble statues of the Summer Gardens, the Dioscuri at the entrance to the Cavalry Manège near St. Isaac’s Cathedral, Rastrelli’s statue of Peter I at the Mikhailovskii Castle and others. Larger statues, such as the Bronze Horseman, the statue of Nicholas I on St. Isaac’s Square, and the monument to Lenin at Finland Station were covered with sand and then encased in wooden structures. At this point statues were not directly threatened, but the study of the effects of war on monuments in the West made

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30 GMGS, f. Otdel pamiatnikov i memorial’nykh dosok, d.48, ch.1, ll.37-38.
destruction seem possible, prompting the authorities to take a proactive stance in the matter. This work was exceptionally labour-intensive and involved a tremendous amount of resources, time, and manpower from several of the city’s establishments. During the first weeks of the war, when the enemy seemed unstoppable, Leningrad’s authorities diverted precious resources to protect monuments of the imperial past. The city soviet assigned at least twelve separate organizations work to deliver sand, dig holes, construct wooden coverings, and perform other tasks to facilitate monument protection. Each monument was provided with a brigade of experts made up of an architect, sculptor, and a construction specialist to oversee the job. District soviets allocated workers to carry out the more arduous tasks involved. The shortage of available manpower in the city to do the work meant that the labourers assigned to protect the city’s statues were excused from digging anti-tank trenches and constructing barriers outside the city. When extra hands were needed, the authorities were forced to locate workers elsewhere. At some places district authorities mobilized school children for work, as was the case with the future author, O. Shestinskii, who was sent along with his classmates to help cover the Bronze Horseman with sand. Because the work began in July, at the height of the White Nights, these brigades worked around the clock in order to secure the monuments from harm as quickly as possible.

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31 See I.V. Krestovskii, “Ukrytiia i okhrana pamiatnikov Leningrada v gody blokady (1941-44).” KGIOP, f.950-VI-2, d.N1233, l.2. This document was originally written in 1962 but has recently been reproduced in Zabveniui ne podlezhit. Stat’i, vospominaniia,dokumenty 7 (2006): 5-14.
32 KGIOP, f.950-VI-2, d.N1233, l.2.
34 Krestovskii also notes that once the shelling and bombing began, those working on the monuments were often forced to run for shelter. KGIOP, f.950-VI-2, d.N1233, l.10
Throughout the summer work continued on the city’s statuary. Several monumental statues not listed in the original order were also protected. The bronze statue of Anna Ioannovna (empress of Russia from 1730-1740), which was too large to be evacuated with the rest of the exhibits from the Russian Museum, was buried in front of the Mikhailovskii Palace. Similarly, the four equestrian statues adorning the Anichkov Bridge on Nevskii Prospekt were removed from their pedestals and buried in the nearby Garden of Rest. I.V. Krestovskii, the preservationist assigned the task of overseeing the protection of statues, noted that many people had gathered to watch the four horses and their tamers as they moved along the street. “The conveyance of the four magnificent equestrian groups presented a curious sight,” he wrote. “They moved along Nevskii slowly, hoisted onto special wooden platforms, lying on rollers, towed by tractors. Many people gathered. Everyone accompanied the beloved sculptures to their prepared ‘graves’ with great curiosity.” These prophylactic measures taken to secure the city’s imperial monuments must have made quite an impression on Leningraders. On the one hand, the actions signaled to them the care and respect shown by the authorities to the embodiments of the past. On the other, the change in the city’s landscape certainly impressed upon people the reality of war and the possible threat to the city itself.

In the meantime, the situation in the country continued to deteriorate. The Wehrmacht defeated the Red Army time and again, forcing the disorganized Soviet forces to retreat further and further eastward. The Germans captured and occupied vast

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36 KGIOP, f.950-VI-2, d.N1233, lI.6-7. Video of this can be seen in the recent documentary film *Blokada*. See Sergei Loznitsa, dir., *Blokada* (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Documentary Film Studio, 2006).
stretches of the country’s Western territory, including important cities such as Minsk, Odessa, Kharkov, Kiev, and Sevastopol, the major grain producing areas of Ukraine, and a number of industrial centres. The Stalinist leadership had led its people to believe that the Soviet army was invincible – that it would easily defeat any invading foe.\(^{38}\) Hitler’s strategy of Blitzkrieg, or Lightning War, however, disoriented the Red Army, forcing it to wage a war of defence, for which it had little training.\(^{39}\)

During the first months after the invasion, Leningrad’s position became more and more precarious. As the summer wore on, the sense that something ominous was about to occur was in the air. Evacuations of industrial machinery, workers, nonworking dependants, children and others began in July and continued – in a disorganized fashion – until early September. The local authorities evacuated approximately 636,000 people out of the city’s prewar population of 3.3 million before the start of the blockade.\(^{40}\) Food rationing had been introduced less than a month into the war. The Leningrad academic, Dmitrii Likhachev, noted in his memoirs that even in July and August he felt that famine would soon strike the residents of Leningrad.\(^{41}\) By the middle of August Leningraders sensed that military action directly threatened their city. A letter from the authorities which was published in *Leningradskaia pravda* on 21 August confirmed the fears. It informed the city’s residents that the Germans were closing in and could try to besiege the city.\(^{42}\) Within a few weeks of this announcement the invading forces cut the last

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\(^{38}\) On this, see Barber, “Popular Reactions to the German Invasion,” 5-18.


\(^{42}\) Bidlack, “The political Mood in Leningrad,” 100.
railway line out of Leningrad. On 8 September the Germans laid siege to the city and subjected it to nine-hundred days of terror. At the time no one expected that the city would be subjected to the longest siege in modern history.\textsuperscript{43} The actions taken during the summer of 1941 were exceptionally important in the preservation of monuments during the war. Much more work had to be done, however, as it became clear that monuments themselves were often the target of German artillery and bombing raids.

\textit{The Blockade}

When the Germans reached the outskirts of Leningrad they began a relentless bombing campaign. In the month of September alone, there were twenty-three major raids on the city and two hundred shellings. Some days more than two hundred German planes were involved in the attack.\textsuperscript{44} “Bombing raids started, and there was talk of nothing else,” writes Likhachev. “Every day they began, always at the same time, but as the enemy was so close that there was no chance of giving warning of the approach of aircraft the air-raid sirens were only heard when bombs were already falling on the city.”\textsuperscript{45} The author Vera Inber, who worked as a radio broadcaster during the siege, echoed these sentiments when she wrote in her diary that “it dawned on me that there is nothing anyone can do to be safe…it’s all a matter of chance. We can try to avoid standing near windows, but that’s about all.”\textsuperscript{46} Bombing and shelling continued to be a daily occurrence in Leningrad throughout the fall of 1941, resulting in major damage to city infrastructure and the loss of thousands of lives.

\textsuperscript{44} Salisbury, \textit{The 900 Days}, 298.
\textsuperscript{45} Likhachev, \textit{Reflections on the Russian Soul}, 222.
While these raids were taking place, Leningrad’s authorities, realizing that the
city’s historic monuments could very easily be destroyed, strengthened their resolve to
protect and preserve these windows onto the past. Over the course of the summer,
Belekhov’s team of preservationists made the necessary preparations to continue
camouflaging the golden spires and cupolas of the city. Several suggestions were made
on how to pursue this task. Some argued that scaffolding should be built around the
spires and cupolas, which would allow workers to cover or paint them with relative ease.
This, however, was problematic because there was neither enough time nor people to
erect them, and the wooden scaffolds themselves could catch fire during bombings and
shelling.\textsuperscript{47} Several “hotheads” suggested that the spires and cupolas be disassembled.
“This opinion was rejected immediately…” wrote Baranov, “for we simply were not able
to destroy these outstanding architectural and artistic treasures with our own hands!”\textsuperscript{48}
After much discussion, the Architectural Planning Administration and the Department for
the Protection of Monuments decided that alpinists would be used to camouflage the
spires and domes, and during the first weeks of September a small team was organized
and trained.\textsuperscript{49} The day after the worst bombing raid on 27 September, city authorities
ordered Belekhov’s preservation department to conceal the spires of the Admiralty, the
Peter and Paul Fortress, and the Mikhailovskii Castle.\textsuperscript{50} The threat posed by the attacks
spurred the authorities into action. Seeing no end to the bombing in sight, and by

\textsuperscript{47} B.I. Zagurskii, “Iskusstvo,” \textit{Ocherki istorii Leningrad}, 604. Zagurskii was the head of the Leningrad
Administration for Artistic Affairs during the 1940s.
\textsuperscript{48} Baranov, \textit{Siluety blokady}, 43; Bobrov, \textit{Khraniteli angela}, 23.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga} (TsGA SPb), f.7384, op.17, d.598, l.24 (An
abridged version of this report is in \textit{Leningrad v osade. Sborniki dokumentov o geroicheskoj oborone
Rossii, 1995), 522-527.
\textsuperscript{50} TsGALI SPb, f.333, op.3, d.3, l.44. Several days prior to this, representatives from the Department for
the Protection of Monuments had visited some of the monuments to make preparations. See, for example,
KGIOP, f.P.50, d.p-70, l.231.
extension the destruction of historic monuments, local authorities were compelled to implement the plans.

Starting with the Admiralty, alpinists worked throughout the fall as the situation in the city continued to worsen.\(^{51}\) Their work was complicated by the stormy, windy, wet, and extremely cold weather characteristic of Leningrad in the fall. The bombing raids made their tasks extremely dangerous. One of the alpinists, Mikhail Bobrov, noted in his diary that he had never been as close to exploding bombs as he was while camouflaging spires. “Aloiz and I stood on the bell tower below the spire [of the Mikhailovskii Castle] and were deafened by the whistling and explosions of the bombs.” Two small bombs even landed in the courtyard of the Castle while they worked.\(^{52}\) By December, the alpinists had camouflaged all three spires, despite the decrease in food rations, bombings, and cold. For now this work ended, but by late 1942, ten more golden orientation points were camouflaged in a similar manner.\(^{53}\)

Several months into the war it became clear that Hitler’s policy towards monuments in Western Europe was fundamentally different than in the East. While cultural and historic monuments were damaged in the West, the German leadership generally respected and admired the monuments of countries they considered to be part of the same “European cultural club.” In the East, however, monuments were not only pillaged, but systematically destroyed.\(^{54}\) “At the time we did not know about the barbarism of the fascists in relation to cultural valuables,” wrote Baranov, “and for that

\(^{51}\) The work to cover the spire of the admiralty with thick fabric was completed on 3 October. The castle’s spire was covered by the middle of October, and the spire of the fortress was painted during the first weeks of December. For the Admiralty, see KGIOP, f.P.50, d.p-70, l.229. For the others, see Bobrov, *Khrititel angela*, 66-67, 83-84.

\(^{52}\) Bobrov, *Khrititel angela*, 67.

\(^{53}\) RNB OR, f.1117 (B.I. Zagurskii), op.1ch, d.157, l.1(ob).

\(^{54}\) Nicola Lambourne, *War Damage in Western Europe*, 2.
reason did not assume that the magnificent monuments of architecture, not having any
military significance, such as the Admiralty, Winter Palace, Hermitage, St. Isaac’s
cathedral, the Russian Museum and the suburban palaces, could become targets of
bombings.” According to Soviet sources, Hitler’s Field Marshall Von Leeb informed
his troops that all cultural valuables in the East “‘have no [artistic] significance,” and
ordered their destruction.

No matter how much was done to conceal and camouflage buildings, spires, and
statues, preservationists realized that the bombs and shells dropped on, and fired at the
city daily could destroy the majority of Leningrad’s historic monuments. When they
began to check the archives at the Department for the Protection of Monuments after the
invasion, preservationists suddenly discovered that there were few plans, drawings, and
measurements for several of Leningrad’s historic monuments. Although
preservationists had measured and documented the statues that they concealed in the
months before the blockade, it was only after the heavy bombing began in September and
October that they realized the acute need to document the size, shape and details of the
majority of the city’s architectural monuments. On advice from the preservationists, city
authorities issued an order in mid-October to begin compiling documentation on
architectural monuments of “great artistic and historic importance that are now…in
danger of destruction.” Since bombs were damaging many of the city’s monuments,

55 Baranov, Siluety blokady, 20.
56 V. Lavrov, “Neotlozhnye voprosy vosstanovlenia pamiatnikov russkogo zodchestva,” Arkhitektura
57 Baranov, Glavnyi arkhitektor goroda. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatel'nost (Moscow: Stroizdat,
1979), 16.
58 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.81, l.13.
there was an urgent need to provide documentation in order to facilitate restoration in the future.

The Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Architects appointed fifty-five of its members to work with Belekhov’s department in early November. Each architect was assigned to a brigade working on one of the twenty-three historic monuments originally slated for study. Over the course of the next few months as many as two hundred architects were involved in this proactive work. Their task was to provide as much information on the monument as possible. The architects produced detailed drawings of the artistic and architectural decorations of the interiors and facades of buildings, took measurements of all dimensions, and photographed as much detail as they could.

Due to the importance of providing documentation for the city’s monuments, Leningrad’s authorities gave architects involved in this work “first-category” ration cards. Since the middle of the summer the amount of food rationed to various categories of residents decreased monthly. In the middle of November the food supply situation in Leningrad reached crisis proportions. On 19 November it was announced that workers in heavy industry supplying armaments to the front would receive two hundred and fifty grams of bread per day. Everyone else received a mere one hundred and twenty-five grams. By working in brigades to provide documentation for historic monuments,

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59 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.81, l.18-22.
61 For illustrations of the measurements and drawings produced during this period see the catalogue of an exhibit organized by the St. Petersburg City History Museum and the State Inspectorate for the Preservation of Monuments in 2005. Arkhitektory blokadnogo Leningrada (St. Petersburg: PN-Print, 2005) 62 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.81, l.13; TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.91, l.15.
63 “Postanovlenie Voennogo soveta Leningradskogo fronta o snizhenii norm khleba,” Leningrad v osade, 194-195. I.I. Zhilinskii notes that Leningraders began to receive the “starvation ration” of 125 grams since
therefore, many architects and preservationists were saved from the slow death by starvation that took the lives of so many others. “Measurement workers are given workers’ ration cards,” exclaimed the architect E. Levina in January 1942. “Now, when there are so few products, the Leningrad soviet does not forget about architecture.”

Increased rations were contingent, however, on the fulfillment of work. When brigades failed to compile the necessary documentation for whatever reason, they were denied the extra rations. Others were warned that the extra rations could be rescinded if work was not completed. This, noted Belekhov, was done with the aim of “stimulating further work.” The Department for the Protection of Monuments also stepped in to prevent architects working in documentation brigades from being evacuated. The leader of the brigade working on the Admiralty, for example, was not allowed to leave the city until documentation was completed. Clearly the impulse to preserve the city’s historic monuments took precedence over the lives of people working to protect them. By denying increased rations, and not permitting architects to leave the city for the safety of the “mainland” (bol’shaia zemlia) – the term used to describe Soviet territory outside of the blockaded city – the authorities were gambling with people’s lives. These tactics, although cruel, resulted in a significant amount of work being accomplished. In the first year of the blockade, preservationists and architects provided more than fifty of Leningrad’s historic monuments with detailed documentation.

1 November. He also notes that the workers’ ration, although much better, cannot be considered anything but a “starvation ration” (gołodnyi paek). See “Blokadnyi dnevnik,” Voprosy Istorii, nos.5-6 (1996): 7.

64 E. Levina, “Pis’ma k drugu,” in Leningradtsy v dni blokady. Sbornik (Leningrad: Leningradskoe gazetno-zhurnal’noe izdatel’stvo, 1947), 200.

65 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.81, l.13; TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.91, l.5.

66 KGIOP, f. p.50, d. p-70, l.208. Belekhov would later accuse the Architectural-Planning Administration and the Union of Architects of allowing “many needed architects” to be evacuated. See TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.598, l.41.

67 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.598, l.29.
Starting in November, if not earlier, the food supply problems became the major preoccupation of nearly every resident of Leningrad. When the German forces failed to take the city by storm in early September, Hitler ordered that Leningraders be starved into submission. The effects of the blockade and the dwindling food supplies began to take hold during the late fall. By mid-December literally thousands of people were dying each day. In the first twenty-five days of that month, 39,073 people died from starvation. 68 The situation was much worse during the first three months of 1942. In January, 96,751 people died, in February the number decreased slightly to 96,015, and to 81,507 in March. 69 Starvation was the primary cause of death in the first three months of 1942. 70 “My husband and I survived the famine in Leningrad between 1919 and 1921,” wrote Ostroumova-Lebedeva. “But that famine had nothing in common with the present one. Back then some sort of food could always be found in the city.”71 Vsevolod Vishnevskii wrote that “Long-time residents of Leningrad say that the hungry years between 1918-1920 [golodnye gody] were ‘child’s play’ [детскими игрушками] in comparison with the siege of Leningrad.”72 Given this situation, most Leningraders could do little more than seek out food and fuel for themselves and their families. 73

The catastrophic conditions in the fall of 1941 and the winter of 1942 had a significant effect on the amount of work that could be done to preserve historic

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68 N.A. Lomagin, ed., V tiskakh goloda: Blokada Leningrada v dokumentakh germanskikh spetsialuzh sb i NKVD (St. Petersburg, Evropeiskii dom, 2000), 178. During the pre-war period, on average 3,500 people died per month in the city.
69 Leningrad v osade, 298.
70 Leningrad v osade, 295.
73 See A.N. Boldyrev, Osadnaia zapis’: Blokadnyi dnevnik (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 1998). Boldyrev worked at the Hermitage in the Eastern Civilizations Department and taught at the University. When the blockade began, he became the chief of the anti-aircraft defence brigade at the Hermitage. In his diaries, however, the central focus is his constant search for food.
monuments. In late November, for example, the city soviet called on architects and preservationists to continue the work begun in the summer to protect the statues and monuments of Leningrad. The soviet ordered that nineteen monuments, including the statues of Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Catherine the Great, the sphinxes on the University Embankment, and the Alexander Column on Palace Square be concealed, buried, or protected with sand and wooden structures. These monuments, however, were left unprotected for the remainder of 1941, and in some cases were left standing until the end of the war, in spite of complaints, without any form of protection. While visiting Leningrad in 1943, the British war correspondent Alexander Werth interviewed Baranov, who told him that once the “‘starving winter’” began they were “‘just too weak and too hungry’” to finish concealing monuments, and that later, when the food supply got better, they “‘had more important things to do.’”

Given the difficulties, in the winter of 1942 city authorities opted to leave monuments to the famous imperial war heroes Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Barclay de Tolly in place to inspire patriotism in the city’s residents and the troops visiting from the front.

During the worst winter of the blockade preservationists could do little more than provide documentation, monitor the city’s monuments, make detailed reports about their condition after bombings and artillery attacks, and attempt emergency repairs. As early as September, the executive committee of the Leningrad soviet called upon district authorities to keep account of the damage inflicted during bombing raids on the city’s

74 KGIOP, Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.43, (unpaginated).
76 KGIOP, Fond Belekhova, d.48. (unpaginated); Bobrov, Khraniteli angela, 22. Werth was told during his trip to Leningrad in 1943 that: “…the authorities were going to sandbag Suvorov, but the soldiers of the Leningrad front asked that this should not be done as they liked to visit the Suvorov statue when on leave.” Werth, Leningrad, 30. Iu.Iu. Bakhareva notes that the idea of protecting these monuments continued to be raised throughout the war. See Iu.Iu. Bakhareva, “Arkhiitekurnaia zhizn’ Leningrada v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny,” in Arkhiitektory blokadnogo Leningrada, 9.
buildings, with the goal of devising means to repair the damage.\textsuperscript{77} This work was particularly important during the winter. Germans continued to bomb and shell the city, increasing the amount of damage done to historic monuments. Left unattended to, climactic conditions compounded the damage. “The severe winter,” writes Baranov, “worsened the heavy wounds on the city organism.”\textsuperscript{78} Bombs and shock waves shattered most windows in nearly all buildings under state protection as historic and architectural monuments. Artillery fire penetrated roofs, leaving gaping holes in the lofts and ceilings of architectural monuments like the Winter Palace, Admiralty and Mikhailovskii Palace. As a result, wind, rain, snow and frost entered these monuments and wreaked havoc on their artistic and architectural details.\textsuperscript{79} The everyday duties of preservationists, architects and people working in buildings under state protection, therefore, were concentrated on elemental conservation and accounting for the damage to be attended to when the situation improved.\textsuperscript{80}

Conditions gradually began to improve in the city towards the end of the winter. In late 1941 the authorities opened the thirty mile “Road of Life” across the frozen Lake Ladoga. Each day hundreds of trucks travelled to Leningrad from the mainland with food, fuel, and other needed supplies. On the way back across the treacherous ice road, trucks transported military supplies still being produced in the blockaded city. More

\textsuperscript{77} TsGALI SPb, f.333, op.3, d.3, l.63. Whenever a building was hit by bombs and shells, or damaged by shrapnel, representatives from the historic monument in question, from the Department for the Protection of Monuments, and the district architect drew up a report about the damage done, the materials needed to repair it, the costs, the progress of emergency restoration work, and anything else that seemed pertinent at the time. The files of correspondence for each monument in the archive of KGIOP are overflowing with these reports.

\textsuperscript{78} Baranov, \textit{Arkhitектура и строительство Ленинграда}, 50.

\textsuperscript{79} Boris Zagurskii wrote about the Mikhailovskii Palace and how it stood without windows, had no electricity, and was not heated due to the lack of fuel. RNB OR, f.1117, d.158, l.2.

\textsuperscript{80} “Sokhranenie khudozhestvennykh pamiatnikov Leningrada,” \textit{Literatura i iskusstvo}, 25 December 1943. As early as January, 1942, the city authorities had included buildings in “the old architectural styles” on the main streets to be included in lists of places slated for “first-order” restoration. See KGIOP, Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.43 (no pages listed).
importantly, the Road of Life was used to evacuate people from Leningrad. Between January and April 1942, 554,186 people left the city over Lake Ladoga. With fewer mouths to feed and more available supplies, local authorities were in a much better position to sustain those remaining in the city. By March and April, the number of deaths each month from malnutrition began to decline.

The improved situation in Leningrad reflected developments on other fronts in the war. The Soviet leadership overcame some of the problems faced in 1941, began to enforce strict discipline, and made wiser strategic decisions. By the beginning of 1942, Hitler’s forces were no longer advancing at the same pace as in the summer of 1941. The first major victory over the Germans came in January 1942 when Soviet forces repelled them from the capital. Following the battle for Moscow, the Stalinist leadership devised offensive plans and the Great Patriotic War developed into a long, brutal war of attrition.

With these overall changes for the better, Leningrad’s preservationists began conservation work to prevent further destruction to historic monuments. Throughout the spring and summer of 1942 – and until the blockade was lifted – the city and central authorities provided funding to protect monuments and supported the preservationists’ drive to preserve Leningrad’s imperial cityscape. In April, for example, the city soviet allocated three quarters of a million roubles for emergency restoration work on fourteen buildings, including the Winter Palace, Smolnyi, Peter I’s Cottage, and the

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Kunstkamera. Later in the year local authorities petitioned the central government for help in conserving historic monuments, and received an additional half million roubles.

At stake here was not simply the loss of beautiful buildings and decorations, but rather a piece of the city’s, and country’s history and culture. Construction organizations were assigned to buildings to carry out conservation work, including roof repairs, restoration of walls, boarding up windows, and securing artistic details. Restricted by the conditions in which they found themselves, many of the organizations were unable to accomplish all of the tasks assigned to them. They faced a litany of problems: an insufficient supply of workers, a lack of funding and materials, and repeated bombings which caused more damage than organizations could keep up with. “Everything humanly possible was done to patch over the rents in the roofs with burlap and sacking, but the moment one hole was plugged up, another would appear somewhere else,” write historians Boris Rest and Sergei Varshavsky about the Hermitage. In many cases, all of these reasons played a part in the continuing deterioration of Leningrad’s historic treasures. Although damage had been repaired to varying degrees at many monuments, conservation at others was delayed, interrupted, or not begun at all.

Over the course of the blockade the authorities continuously bemoaned the problems encountered in preservation. After reviewing the conservation work carried out

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83 KGIOP, Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.41 (No pages listed).
84 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.598, ll.14-15, 44.
86 These problems persisted throughout the period of the blockade and into the postwar years. See TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.101, ll.1-2. At the Russian Museum, for example, the director complained that during 1942 very little was accomplished and the plans for conservation and restoration in 1943 had not been drawn up. See KGIOP, f.166-1, d.p-867, 1,256.
87 Conditions at the Mikhailovskii Castle, for example, remained dire throughout the blockade and into the postwar period. On several occasions the Department for the Protection of Monuments wrote reports stating that absolutely nothing was getting done in terms of conservation work. See the documents in KGIOP, f.167, d. Inzhenernyi Zamok (unpaginated).
on monuments during the summer of 1942, and finding that much of the work had not been completed, or simply executed poorly, Baranov complained to the city party committee and soviet. He pointed out the problems and urged that more be done to preserve the city’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings: “By decisively carrying out conservation, we will prevent serious damage to buildings, avoid a great deal of major repairs, and most importantly, preserve for the country and for Leningrad these unique monuments of art and architecture” [underline in original]. Baranov argued for the need to privilege historic monuments in the conservation and restoration work taking place throughout the city. “It would be easier to consent to the loss of tens of residential buildings…,” he wrote, “than to the heavy destruction of these unique masterpieces of art, the restoration of which may not always be possible.”88 Less than a year later these sentiments were echoed in a report compiled by the Leningrad Union of Architects. Noting the continuing preservation problems, the report stated that “considering the unique historical, cultural, and artistic significance of these buildings to our city and our national culture,” all problems, whether financial, material, or organizational needed to be solved immediately if these monuments were to be saved.89

In spite of all these problems, as well as complaints made by the authorities, much work was in fact accomplished. Numerous reports compiled by Belekhov’s staff throughout the blockade attest to successes in preservation, whether elemental conservation or major repairs. By November 1942, for example, preservationists had completed a considerable amount of this work. Out of thirty-six buildings damaged to a “significant degree” during the first year of the blockade, twelve were partially repaired

88 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.598, ll.38-39. Underline in the original.
89 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.101, ll.1-2.
and six had damage “completely liquidated.” Out of eighty-eight which had less damage, thirty-eight were fully repaired and forty-one were restored to varying amounts.\textsuperscript{90}

While conservation work was taking place, Leningraders began making plans to restore historic monuments in anticipation of the city’s liberation from the siege. As early as March 1942, preservationists and architectural organizations actively began planning for the city’s “resurrection” (\textit{vozrozhdenie}). “It had become clear to us,” writes Baranov, “that the time had come not only to defend the city, but to begin intensive preparation for its restoration.”\textsuperscript{91} Over the course of the year, the Union of Architects held several architectural competitions to plan for the restoration of historic buildings, including the eighteenth-century shopping arcade, Gostinyi Dvor, on Nevskii Prospekt.\textsuperscript{92} Other buildings in the historic centre that had been destroyed were also the subject of architectural competitions. “Even during the starving winter, the most difficult weeks of the blockade,” wrote the author Vera Ketlinskaia, “architects confronted the task of preserving the external appearance of besieged Leningrad for history, and prepared for restoration work.”\textsuperscript{93} Throughout the blockade, Leningrad’s preservationists and architects held on to the idea that the city would eventually be liberated. This would have an important impact on the speed of restoration in the postwar period.

\textsuperscript{90} RNB OR, f.1117 (B.I. Zagurskii), op.1, d.157, l.1(ob)
\textsuperscript{93} Vera Ketlinskaia, “Eto i est’ Leningrad!,” \textit{Literaturnaia gazeta}, 3 February 1945.
The most serious plans for Leningrad’s restoration came as the Soviet Union’s fortunes in the war began to change. In 1943, the Red Army defeated the Germans in a number of important battles, and over the course of the year the belief in Soviet victory increased. 94 The Germans’ defeat at Stalingrad in February is often seen as the turning point in the war. Indeed, following Stalingrad Soviet forces began to push the Germans from occupied territories. In the middle of August the Germans were defeated in the largest tank battle ever at Kursk. Soviet forces soon recaptured some of the countries major cities, including Kharkov, Smolensk, and in November Soviet forces liberated Kiev and large stretches of Ukraine. 95 But for Leningrad, an important victory was achieved on 18 January 1943, when troops on the Leningrad front met with troops from the Volkhov front at the Shlisselburg fortress and broke the German blockade. A railroad connection to Leningrad was finally re-established, but the situation remained precarious. Over the next year, the Germans bombed and cut the railroad line twelve hundred times. 96 Bombing raids and shelling were also more intense than ever during 1943. 97

In combination with the changing situation on all fronts throughout 1943, the break in the blockade had an important effect on plans to restore Leningrad’s historic monuments. As early as 21 January, for example, just three days after the blockade ring was pierced, the Leningrad city soviet overturned a government decree from the beginning of the war which made it possible to transfer workers to jobs not in their

94 Richard Overy argues that the Red Army began to win during 1943 not because of German errors or Soviet resources, but because of a “profound transformation” in the way war was fought. See Russia’s War, 187.
96 Salisbury, The 900 Days, 551.
97 Vsevolod Vishnevskii wrote in his diary that the increased artillery attacks after 18 January were likely the Germans’ way of seeking revenge. See Leningrad. Dnevniky voennykh let. 1 janvaria 1943 goda - 28 sentiabria 1944 goda; 1-9 maia 1945 goda. Kniga vtoraja (Moscow: Voenizdat, 2002), 29.
specialty. The soviet ordered all non-architectural establishments in the city employing architects to transfer them to the Department for the Protection of Monuments or to the Architectural-Planning Administration to facilitate preservation and planning for restoration.98

Some of the most significant work in preparing for restoration, however, took place in the latter half of 1943. Towards the end of the summer, the Leningrad Union of Architects made plans to provide courses to engineers and architects, as well as party and soviet officials in preparation for restoration. From August until the end of the year, the Union set up several courses to raise the qualifications of the city’s architects and other professionals in preparation for peacetime, when restoration of the city’s monuments could begin in earnest. The leadership of the Union believed that seminars about Leningrad’s architectural culture were needed given the extraordinary amount of work facing the city.99 “The greatest amount of the upcoming work involves the most valuable – in the architectural sense – central regions of the city,” noted a report to the city party committee from the Union of Architects. Therefore, “party and soviet workers must familiarize themselves with the history of the creation of Leningrad and its magnificent architectural riches.”100 The ultimate goal of the courses, therefore, was to facilitate restoration by “arming” party and soviet workers with the necessary knowledge about the city’s history and its construction, its architectural richness and monuments, “without which competent leadership and execution of restoration work in … Leningrad is

98 “Ob ispolzovanii arkhitektorov goroda Leningrada po svoei spetsial’nosti (reshenie ispol’nitelnogo komiteta leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta ot 21 Jan 1943 N.38, p.45),” Bbulten’ leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia, 1943, nos.3-4: 9-10. Leningrad’s Union of Architects had earlier petitioned the city soviet to have architects transferred to the Department for the Protection of Monuments or to the Architectural-Planning Administration. See TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.90, l.41. Letter was dated 7 December 1942.
99 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.96, l.42.
100 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.100, l.30.
impossible.” These party and soviet officials were to guide restoration in their districts by emphasizing the importance of monuments as sites where the glorious past could be seen and touched. Their job was to mobilize the population for restoration and create in them a connection to the past found in the built environment.

Teaching officials, engineers, and others about the historical significance of Leningrad’s landscape was not enough to heal the wounds on historic monuments and bring them back to life. The restoration of the city’s monuments and landmarks required professional restorers trained in all fields (marble, redwood, parquet, artistic decoration, painting, etc.). At the end of 1943, Leningrad did not have a pool of restorers. Prior to the war, restoration workshops existed and a number of specialists worked at preservation. The majority of these specialists, however, succumbed to starvation, were killed by bombs, or left for the front never to be heard from again. The colossal amount of work that faced preservationists required a solution. At the same time as courses were proposed to teach authorities about the city’s architecture, the Leningrad branch of the Union of Architects proposed the creation of a college to train teenagers to become master restorers.

City authorities and the central government agreed that a college should be established for restoration purposes. In the early fall, the Leningrad party leadership summoned the head of the Union of Architects, V.D. Golli, and the preservationist I.A. Vaks to Smolnyi and assigned them the task of creating a curriculum and making

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101 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.100, l.30.
102 Baranov, Siluety blokady, 116.
103 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.96, l.39.
104 TsGALI SPb, f.266, op.1, d.22, ll.2, 4.
arrangements for establishing the college. The Union began preparations for the selection of prospective students, most of whom would have to leave the mainland and come to besieged Leningrad. It held a competition among young Leningraders in evacuation to decide who had the necessary talent to work at artistic and historic restoration. The Union selected one hundred and seventy eight people between the ages of fourteen and seventeen to come to Leningrad and begin their training. The college was scheduled to begin operation on 1 January 1944, and the students arrived in Leningrad in late November.

Regardless of the Red Army’s successes throughout 1943, in the fall of that year there was no guarantee that the German blockade of the city would be completely lifted in the coming months. The fact that the Leningrad authorities were willing to transport young people from the relative safety of evacuation in the Urals to the still-blockaded city undergoing heavy bombing and artillery fire reflects the importance of historic monuments to Leningrad and the country as a whole. Within days of the students’ arrival, the danger of bringing them to the city became clear. On 3 December, a German shell exploded in the courtyard of the college on Nevskii Prospekt, killing six of the students and injuring eleven others. One other female student succumbed to injuries later and died in the hospital. Nikolai Baranov, who played a major role in the decision to bring the students to Leningrad instead of setting up a college somewhere in the East, questioned the wisdom of this in the wake of the tragedy. Later, in his memoirs of the period he

106 Baranov, Siluety blokady, 117.
107 The Leningrad city soviet had envisioned a much greater number of students to be enrolled in the new college. Instead of 178 people, the original decision about the creation of the college called for 350-400 students. TsGALI SPb, f.266, op.1, d.22, l.2. For more details on how the students were to be trained and the courses they were to take, see I.A. Vaks, “Podgotovka masterov khudozhestvennoi otdelki zdani,” Arkhitektura Leningrada, 1944, nos.1-2: 24-25.
wrote: “Now when re-reading that page in my diary, I question whether or not we did the right thing. And although the history of the college began so dramatically, none of us – neither adults nor adolescents – renounced our intentions. The duty to Leningrad convinced us of the righteousness of our actions.”

_**Conclusion**_

The actions taken to protect Leningrad’s imperial landscape and historic monuments during the horrors of the blockade would have been inconceivable before the mid-1930s. Even though there had been a tradition of admiration for the cityscape, and a preservation movement had developed in the city, the state’s position on history and historic monuments was crucial to the actions taken in Leningrad during the blockade. The selective rehabilitation of “great events” and heroic individuals from the tsarist period endowed monuments with ideological significance as windows onto the past. As a result of this ideological turn, Leningrad’s monuments became sites of memory which represented the image and past that the state wanted to project. This new-found significance, combined with Leningraders’ deep connection with the imperial cityscape, made the preservation, conservation, and restoration of monuments and landmarks possible, even necessary during the blockade.

Over the course of the 900-day siege, despite the cold, starvation, and bombings, Leningraders worked to secure the city’s monuments from destruction. Preservation was not something that could be held off until conditions in the city improved. The city’s authorities and preservationists made the protection of monuments such a priority that they diverted resources from the war effort and continuously put peoples’ lives at risk.

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109 The page from Baranov’s diary is reprinted in his memoirs. See _Siluety blokady_, 118-119.
These measures represent an almost utopian desire to preserve touchstones of the past at all costs. The importance of Leningrad’s historic monuments as embodiments of nearly two and a half centuries of imperial and Soviet history demanded that they be protected, even in a state of total war.

On 27 January 1944, Leningraders celebrated the lifting of the German siege of the city. For nearly nine-hundred days they had been gripped with terror. Approximately one million people died as a result of shortages in the food supply and a constant campaign of shelling and bombing. The inhuman deprivations that Leningraders suffered and the heroism they displayed would work to create a powerful mythology of the siege experience. With the city liberated from the blockade, Leningraders began the painstaking work to bring their home town back into order. Just as during the blockade, Leningraders privileged historic monuments and landmarks in the postwar period as the “battle” moved on to the restoration front.

After the liberation of Leningrad from the siege, Soviet forces continued to better the Germans in battle after battle. The Red Army recaptured Sevastopol and forced the Germans to flee the Crimean Peninsula in May 1944. By July, Stalin’s troops had liberated Minsk from occupation and chased Hitler’s armies from Soviet territory. When the Germans were driven out of the Soviet Union altogether, the regime was faced with the enormous problem of rebuilding the economy, housing and feeding its population, and returning some form of normalcy to everyday life. During the war, twenty-five percent of the Soviet Union’s physical assets had been destroyed, and fourteen percent of its population was lost to death and emigration. The shortages in housing that were commonplace before the war were drastically intensified in the postwar period. In many places where battles were fought military actions either fully destroyed or rendered uninhabitable the majority of homes.

Leningrad had not been razed to the ground as had other cities like Stalingrad and Sevastopol, where intense fighting took place on city streets. Nevertheless, when the city was liberated on 27 January 1944, Leningraders were faced with the problem of restoring its industry and providing housing for people living in the city, those returning from evacuation, and the new migrants who took the place of those who died during the war. Thousands of buildings were badly damaged or destroyed due to bombings and fire.

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2 See Karl Qualls’ discussion of postwar Sevastopol, “Raised from Ruins: Restoring Popular Allegiance Through City Planning in Sevastopol, 1943-1954” (PhD dissertation, Georgetown University, 1998), 31-32. The situation was only gradually improved throughout the first postwar years, and by 1949, even though much was restored, many residential buildings in urban centres remained in ruins. See E.Iu. Zubkova, ed., Sovetskaia zhizn’ 1945-1953 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 168-169.
arising from enemy attacks. In total, 205 brick residential buildings and more than 1,900 wooden buildings were destroyed. Leningrad’s industry was not spared the war’s destruction. The overall damage inflicted upon the city’s economy amounted to thirty-eight billion rubles (1961 prices), which included 840 destroyed, and a further 3,090 damaged industrial buildings. It was in this situation of immense damage, massive shortages in materials and manpower, and an acute need to rebuild industry and housing that Leningraders set out to restore the city’s historic monuments and prewar appearance.

At the April 1944 plenum of the Leningrad party committee, first secretary Andrei Aleksandrovich Zhdanov addressed the audience about Leningrad’s restoration. This plenum took place just over two months after Soviet forces had completely liberated Leningrad from the German blockade, and only a few weeks after the State Defence Committee decreed that the conditions for restoration of Leningrad’s industry and the city economy had been attained. Although the war had not yet ended, and fierce fighting continued until the capture of Berlin on 9 May 1945, Leningrad was not given the luxury of waiting for peacetime, but rather was to begin restoration immediately.

“Now our task is not reconstruction [rekonstruktsiia],” proclaimed Zhdanov, “but

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3 A.V. Karasev, “Vozrozhdenie goroda-geroia,” Istoriia SSSR 5, no.3 (1961): 116. During the blockade, more than 3,300,000 metres of living space were completely destroyed, and another 2,200,000 metres were significantly damaged. See Chrezvychainaia godudarstvennaia komissiia po ustanovlenii i rassledovaniu zloadiansii nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov i ikh soobshchnikov, Akt Leningradskoi gorodskoi komissii o prednamerennom istreblenii nemetsko-fashistskimi varvarami mirnykh zhitelei Leningrada i ushcherbe, nanesennom khoziaistvu i kul’turo-istoricheskim pamiatnikam goroda za period voiny i blokady (Leningrad: Ogiz-Gospolitizdat, 1945), 28. Many wooden structures were also disassembled and used for fuel during the blockade as a means of saving the trees in the historic parks of Leningrad. See N.V. Baranov, Silueti blokady. Zapiski glavnogo arkhitekta goroda (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1982), 54.


5 AKT leningradskoi gorodskoi komissii, 33.

restoration [vosstanovlenie] of the city, restoration of Leningrad in the appearance that it had.”7 New construction was not the priority. City authorities opted for an approach to postwar restoration that differed from other war-torn cities in Europe and the USSR.

City planners could have taken advantage of the massive amounts of destruction to build newer, more modern structures. In Leningrad, however, the goals of the first postwar years were oriented towards privileging the city’s imperial heritage. Restoring Leningrad’s external appearance, its beauty, magnificence, and historic landscape was one of the main components of the postwar restoration plan in Leningrad. The city was to be restored completely, and even improved in places where that was now possible. With the memory of the blockade and war fresh in their minds, Leningraders set out to restore their beloved city and “make it more beautiful and magnificent” than it was before the war.8

Local party and soviet authorities expected that the city centre and all of its historic monuments would be restored to their prewar appearance by the end of the first postwar five-year plan in 1950. The city was to have its “former glory” returned to it through the work of architects, preservationists, builders, and ordinary citizens who were called upon to labour as hard and enthusiastically in resurrecting the city as they had in defending it. The restoration efforts would be a monument to the blockade and a tribute to Leningraders’ heroism, argued the authorities. Leningraders saw the phoenix arising from the ashes as a testament to their determination and victory over the Germans during

7 Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f.77, op.1, d.793, l.41.
the blockade. “We defended you, Leningrad,” went the slogan of the day, “We’ll restore you!”

In a lecture delivered to the city’s architectural community in 1949 five years after Zhdanov’s address, the head of the State Inspectorate for the Preservation of Monuments (hereafter Preservation Inspectorate), Belekhov, extolled the successes made in restoring the city’s monuments. Since 1945, 324,000,000 rubles had been allocated and spent on historic monuments and landmarks, a staggering figure in light of the damages that needed to be repaired in other branches of the Soviet economy. The majority of the city’s historic buildings, statues, and other commemorative structures had been completely restored, and the damage to the city was, for the most part, repaired. There were problems, however, in the restoration process. Although gigantic strides had been made in restoring Leningrad’s imperial monuments since the lifting of the blockade, several were left unattended to or deemed to be insufficiently restored by the end of the postwar restoration period. Why were all the monuments not restored completely? Why did the authorities spend so much money restoring monuments of imperial heritage when many other things needed to be done? How did the memory of the war and blockade affect this process?

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10 The Department for the Preservation of Monuments was transferred to the Administration for Architectural Affairs from the Administration for Artistic Affairs in 1944 and turned into a State Inspectorate.
11 Archiv Komiteta po gosudarstvennomu kontroli, ispol’zovaniu i okhrane pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury (KGIOP), f.950.VI-1, d.N-393, l.6. Belekhov noted further that in 1938 only 9 million was spent on architectural monuments. In 1945, following the victory over the Germans, 39,000,000 was spent on monuments. In 1946 the amount rose to 60,000,000, in 1947 almost 80,000,000, and in 1948 84,000,000.
12 Vakser, *Leningrad poslevoennyi*, 75.


Restoration as Commemoration

Once the blockade was lifted, the memory of the nine-hundred days informed almost all events in Leningrad. It became the focal point around which life revolved. Books were written about the experience, a museum was dedicated to it, and local authorities and architects projected the creation of war memorials to commemorate the city’s experience. In Leningrad, though, the authorities did not believe it necessary to leave ruins in the city as a means to memorialize the blockade. Unlike some cities in Western Europe, whose authorities chose to leave certain historic monuments in ruins as a commemoration of wartime events, the Leningrad party and soviet leadership presented the actions taken to overcome the devastation of war as a fitting commemoration of the blockade.

Some people made suggestions to leave selective, minor damage as a reminder of the war. In planning the restoration of the Rostral Columns on the Spit of Vasilievskii Island, for example, some architects – including Baranov – argued that a few indentations from shrapnel should be left un-repaired as a reminder of the heroic days of the blockade. At a few other places in the city, including the Anichkov bridge, the Church of the Spilt Blood, and St. Isaac’s Cathedral small amounts of damage were left to commemorate the wartime events. The official attitude on leaving whole buildings in ruins, however, was the exact opposite. Most of the country’s architectural community – with the exception of a very small minority – argued for the need to conserve, repair

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13 For more on commemorations of the blockade, see chapters 5 and 6.
15 Gosudarstvennyi muzej gorodskoi skul’ptury (GMGS), f. Otdel pamiatnikov i memorial’nykh dosok, d. 36-37, ch.II, l.112b.
16 The damage is now commemorated by plaques that attribute the destruction to German shells and bombs.
and restore as many historic monuments as possible. Ruins were regarded as unsightly representations of loss and its acceptance, and the authorities believed them to be limited in their use for propaganda purposes. The local authorities could have used images of destroyed monuments and ruins to portray the attacks on Russian and Soviet culture, but they felt that restored monuments suggested a powerful, victorious people. An article published in the newspaper, Vechernii Leningrad (Evening Leningrad), articulated this sentiment, arguing that removing the damage done by the war was not an act of forgetting, or wiping the events from memory. Rather, restoration represented a monument to the war and blockade, for the experiences which the Soviet people lived through “cannot be embodied by destruction inflicted by the enemy. Only life can embody it, blooming in the place of destruction.”

The author of the article emphasized the interconnection between restoration and commemoration by writing:

I have met people who maintained that it is necessary to leave a few destroyed buildings in an inviolable appearance as monuments to the heroic years of the blockade of our city. I think the naiveté of this suggestion does not need commentary...Through the centuries the blockade, the feats of the people who remained in the besieged city, and the valour of the builders returning the city’s unique magnificence, will be inseparable.

After living through the nine-hundred day blockade, and having stood victorious in spite of all the damage inflicted, to not restore the essence of the city – its historic monuments and landmarks – would have meant conceding to the Germans. As in other places that

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17 For more on this, see my discussion of the suburban palaces and parks in chapter 4.
21 Another article in Vechernii Leningrad stated the following: “Our glorious city is taking on its beautiful appearance anew. On the place of ruins beautiful buildings were raised in the shortest time. Leningraders are restoring the maimed residential buildings, destroyed by the enemy.” Vechernii Leningrad, 17 December 1945.
had been damaged in the Second World War, the restoration of cities – historic monuments and landmarks included – worked to lift morale and provide proof of the power of the authorities, the state, and the common people.\footnote{Lambourne, War Damage in Western Europe, 96.}

For Leningraders, the city’s monuments and landmarks were important reminders of the past. The glorious imperial history was reflected in the magnificent buildings, statues, and obelisks created by Rastrelli, Rossi, Quarenghi and other great masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These monuments played a special role during the blockade and defence of the city. They inspired people to defend Leningrad and save it from the Germans. “It needs to be remembered,” wrote Baranov,

that during the difficult days of the ordeal, in the period of the heroic defence of Leningrad, the architectural appearance of the city promoted the steadfastness and determination of its defenders, who were determined to die rather than allow the iron [kovanyi] boot of the German fascist onto the beautiful squares, streets and avenues of the city.\footnote{N.V. Baranov, “Zadachi leningradskikh arkhitекторov v realizatsii piatiletnego plana vosstanovleniia i razvitiia g. Leningrada i oblasti,” Arkhitektura i stroitel’stvo Leningrada (November 1946): 4.}

Of particular importance in this respect was the Admiralty. Over the years it had become one of the most prominent symbols of Petersburg/Leningrad, representing Peter the Great’s vision and the imperial might of the city. In the postwar period, the Admiralty was commemorated on the medal “For the Defence of Leningrad.” As such, the Admiralty symbolized the heroic and steadfast Leningraders who, exclaimed the postwar press, “defended their beloved city in the deadly encounter with the enemy and are now restoring it.”\footnote{KGIOP, f. p.50, d. p-70, l.144. See also l.58 where it is stated that “The Building of the Main Admiralty is a monument of architecture of world significance and since the days of the Great Patriotic War has become a symbol of the city of Leningrad.” An article from Vechernii Leningrad also discusses the spire as a symbol of the blockade: “Whenever there is talk of Leningrad, whatever is read about the city, you always hear about the Admiralty Needle [igla]. Minted on the medal ‘For the Defence of Leningrad’ - it is a symbol of our heroic city.” See “Admiralteiskaia igla,” Vechernii Leningrad, 27 March 1946.} Following the war, it was no longer simply a symbol of Petersburg, but
had been transformed into a monument to the blockade; a positive reminder of victory in the face of colossal adversity. Once again dominating the skyline of the city’s centre, the Admiralty spire proclaimed the passing, once and for all, of the “Hitlerite horde.”

By restoring the Admiralty and other symbols of the city, Leningraders, argued the city’s party and soviet leadership, were acknowledging the role played by monuments during the nine-hundred days. They were inscribing the events of the blockade into the city chronicle, as well as physically and symbolically healing the wounds inflicted upon Leningrad during the war. The acts of restoration themselves became commemorative events.

Restoration was presented by the authorities, and indeed, perceived by ordinary Leningraders to be a long-awaited and victorious moment. Work to save the city’s monuments during the blockade dramatically changed the face of the city. Throughout the war, for example, people lamented the loss of the famous equestrian group – created in the mid-1800s by the sculptor, Peter Klodt – on the Anichkov Bridge to its burial place in the garden near the Pioneers’ Palace.

The architect, E. Levina wrote during the blockade that “We walk along Nevskii and dream of the day when Klodt’s horses will clamber up onto their pedestals on the Anichkov bridge.” These statues were one of the very symbols of the city, and for most people it was difficult to imagine Leningrad without them.

When the statues were returned to their rightful place on the Anichkov bridge during the night of 2 June 1945, there was a feeling of jubilation among all in

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27 “Anichkov most 2 Iiunia,” Leningradkaia pravda, 3 June 1945.
attendance. “It was,” wrote one commentator, “a moment of true exaltation for Leningraders.” Their return was a visual representation of the end of the blockade and war. In a very meaningful way, this signified a return to peacetime, and the opportunity to lead a normal life.

Inscribing the blockade into the restoration efforts, and indeed, into new creations, was a topic often discussed in the immediate postwar period in Leningrad. At a 1946 meeting of the city’s cultural-enlightenment workers, participants reviewed the details of the plans to restore Leningrad. The need to have the restoration of the city informed by the memory of the blockade was a prominent theme. Leningrad’s deputy chief architect, A.I. Naumov argued that, like the Fatherland War of 1812, which is commemorated in ensembles such as Palace Square, Kazan Cathedral and other prominent monuments, the blockade should and must be represented in the architectural work of the postwar period. “We must now, and not only in the future,” he stated “reflect the historic events of the period of the defence of Leningrad. This red thread must run through the measures that we take.” Although monuments to the blockade were being planned at the time, Naumov was referring more to overall work in restoration: “Our fundamental thesis here is not to create some sort of objective, but in the process of restoration, it [the ‘great epoch’] must be reflected in every event, it must find reflection in the ensembles that will be created over the course of the decade.”

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28 The statues were returned to their pedestals on the bridge by the same organization that removed them in 1941, thirteen days ahead of schedule. See Tsentral’niy gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga (TsGA SPb), f. 7384, op.17, d.1447, l.39.
30 TsGA SPb, f.2076, op.5, d.43, l.112(ob).
31 TsGA SPb, f.2076, op.5, d.43, l.146.
to imprint it into architecture, would encourage people to work harder at making Leningrad “even more beautiful than it was before the war.”

The memory of the blockade was sometimes imprinted into the restorative process in very simple ways. The uncovering of the Bronze Horseman in May 1945, for example, inspired an article published in *Leningradskia pravda*, which elucidated some of the feelings and emotions connected with the resurrection of the city’s aesthetic. It also suggests a link between the city’s monumental statues, the victory in the blockade, and restoration. In the article, the author relates a conversation he had with an elderly Leningrader. The old man discussed the importance of the Bronze Horseman to Leningraders, as well as his great desire to be present when it was finally uncovered. After walking past Decembrist Square every day to see if work had begun, he found out that it would be uncovered at night. That May evening he prepared for the event, went to bed early, but because of anxiety awoke only at dawn. Cursing himself all the way to the square, he arrived to see Peter and the horse “standing in all their beauty.” Although he explained how upset he was with himself for not getting there on time, he went on to say that “joy was stronger than shame as I walked around this horse, unable to take my eyes off of it.” The old man finished his account by describing what young children from the neighbouring courtyard had drawn on the monument immediately after it was uncovered: “I took a glance at Peter’s chest and saw, [drawn] in chalk, childlike, large and clear, according to all the rules, a giant medal – ‘For the Defence of Leningrad.’”

The old man’s story, however embellished, shows the significance of the city’s monuments to ordinary Leningraders, not just the architectural community and the

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authorities. It underlines the importance of art and architecture in inspiring and educating people about the city’s history, its heroes, and importance in the postwar period, just as it had during the blockade. The uncovered Bronze Horseman, having stood protected, was now a symbol of, and monument to Leningrad’s defiance and unwillingness to surrender. In describing how the medal “For the Defence of Leningrad” was displayed on Peter the Great’s chest, the article emphasized how the restoration of the monument was intimately linked to memories and commemorations of the blockade. It is a story of success in the Leningraders’ work to resurrect their city. These were signs of a city returning to life.

The language of restoration frequently conjured memories of the heroism of the blockade, and encouraged Leningraders to repair the damage inflicted on the city. Using militaristic language, the Leningrad authorities linked the events of restoration to the war. Images of a phoenix rising from the ashes, or resurrection, were often invoked when connecting the struggles of restoration with wartime heroism. “Just as the warrior cleans the marks of a hot battle from his face,” went one call to workers, “so the city-victor arises anew in the beauty and magnificence of its prospects and squares, buildings and parks.” The authorities, using tropes that were employed since the days of the Civil War, often referred to restoration of the city as a “battle” in which people were summoned to participate. They were called upon to fight for the restoration of their

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34 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.26, d.57, l.4. In the plan for the development and restoration of Leningrad, delivered by Baranov on 25 December 1945, he wrote: “The external appearance of Leningrad unwittingly educates… To this you may add the patriotic feelings of the population. It is no secret that Leningraders loved their city very much in the days of the Defence of Leningrad, which many of us lived through. In that great epic… Leningrad’s external appearance played a well-known role.”


36 Tsentr'al’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov Sankt Peterburga (TsGAIPD SPb), f.25, op.10, d.431, l.1.
glorious city, sparing no energies, just as they had fought during the war. On the first
anniversary of the liberation of Leningrad, for example, the following was printed in an
article commemorating the blockade: “The widely unfolding restoration works have
opened a new page in the heroic battle of Leningraders. With love and pride
Leningraders work at resurrecting their native city.” 37 This battle, much like the “red
thread” of the blockade, became a part of the city’s heroic chronicle. 38 Bringing the
beauty and magnificence back to their beloved city, the Leningraders working at
restoration, proclaimed local authorities, “piously preserve the memory of the great
events of the Patriotic War.” 39

**Leningrad’s Postwar Restoration Plan**

The Great Patriotic War solidified and completed the prewar ideological
rehabilitation of the Russian past. The press, literature, official pronouncements, and the
authorities themselves used heroic events from the tsarist past to encourage steadfastness
and a connection to the homeland. 40 War, and the damage that it caused, heightened the
significance of the country’s heritage for the authorities. Reflecting on the treatment of
historic monuments during the war, Belekhov stated that the preservationist community’s
position was strengthened due to the damage, and that during the war the higher
authorities began to pay more attention to the preservationists and the needs of

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37 “Godovshchina velikoi pobedy Krasnoi Armii pod Leningradom. (Material dla dokladchikov i
besedchikov),” Bloknot agitatora, 1945, no.2: 32.
39 “Trekhletie so dnia pobedy sovetskikh voisk pod Leningradom,” 18.
40 Eileen Rambow, for example, discusses the use of Leningrad’s imperial past in mobilizing people to
overcome the problems encountered during the blockade. See “The Siege of Leningrad: Wartime
Literature and Ideological Change,” in Thurston, Robert W. and Bernd Bonwetsch, eds., *The People's War:
Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000). See also
monuments. As soon as territories were liberated from German occupation, and siege in Leningrad’s case, architects began the painstaking work of conserving and then restoring monuments which embodied the people’s history, and formed crucial elements of the country’s landscape.

Leningrad’s authorities and architects were not unique in their desire to restore embodiments of the country’s past. Throughout the Soviet Union there was a growing concern over the state of historic monuments. At the end of February 1944, the Soviet government created the Main Administration for the Protection of Monuments under the Committee for Architectural Affairs as the central organization to head up all restoration efforts. Preservation, conservation and restoration works began to unfold throughout the USSR. Leningrad stands out, however, due to the success it had in preserving and restoring its historic monuments during and after the war. In Leningrad there was a higher concentration of architectural monuments making up the city’s core than in any other urban centre in the Soviet Union. All of these monuments represented certain aspects of the city’s history. Because of the number of monuments in Leningrad, and their significance in the city’s historical narrative, a strong preservation movement developed in the city. By the postwar period, therefore, a tradition of activism to protect the city’s architectural and historic monuments had existed for some time.

During the blockade, Leningrad authorities and architects began to rethink the prewar plans to shift the administrative centre of the city to the south. The 1938 plan had

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41 KGIOP, f.950-II-2, d.N-3349/1, l.3(ob)
42 See, for example, V. Lavrov’s article which discusses the “urgent need” to restore monuments contributing to the architectural ensembles of cities and towns. “Neotlozhnye voprosy vosstanovleniya pamiatnikov Russkogo zodchestva,” Arkhitektura SSSR, 1944, no.8: 24-30.
envisioned development of a new city centre, the focal point of which would be the recently built House of Soviets on Moskovskii Prospekt. With the extensive amount of damage inflicted upon the city, local authorities decided in 1943 to discard this plan, focus restoration actions on the historic centre, and retain it as the social, administrative, and governmental heart of Leningrad. Instead of constructing new buildings in areas that had yet to be fully developed, Leningrad’s city planners argued for a need to rebuild first the historic areas of the city which had suffered damage. Restoration of Leningrad’s “architectural wonders” – “the city’s business card” – became the main subject of attention. Many of the buildings in the historic centre were used for residential purposes, meaning that their restoration would provide the city’s residents with badly needed living space. At the same time, this focus on the centre was an expression of the authorities’ desire to preserve the historic landscape as a window onto the past. There were, therefore, practical, aesthetic, and commemorative motives behind the plans to restore Leningrad’s city centre.

The authorities and architects in many of the destroyed German, English and French cities saw the destruction of city centres as an opportunity to create new, more modern buildings and structures, and to improve cities as a whole. “Almost everywhere,” writes Jeffry Diefendorf in reference to Western Europe, “town planners viewed the bombing as an unprecedented opportunity to introduce radically modernising
changes in the urban fabric on a scale that had been almost impossible in existing, built-up cities.”

Similar situations arose in Soviet cities that suffered colossal damage as a result of wartime battles. The architects who worked out the 1943 plan for rebuilding Stalingrad, for example, saw the city for what it was – a blank slate upon which to develop “a new type of city.” In rebuilding Sevastopol, architects from the region came into conflict with authorities in Moscow about the image the city was to take during its period of rebirth. Whereas the Moscow authorities saw the need to create a new “Soviet” style Sevastopol, local architects preferred to privilege the city’s history in the reconstruction. In Leningrad a similar process of asserting the city’s history and identity occurred, although there seems to have been very little, if any, disagreement from the centre about the form the city should take. Certainly this is partially due to the fact that the amount of damage done was not nearly as calamitous as in some of the country’s other cities. But the desire to retain the city’s powerful imperial appearance also played a major role. Once restoration of the historic centre had made great strides, only then would development of the newer districts and new construction begin in full force.

In the postwar plan for Leningrad, the city’s architectural organizations did not believe it necessary to restore absolutely everything that was destroyed by the war. Postwar slogans argued that Leningrad should be made “more beautiful, and better” than it was before the blockade. According to the city’s chief architect, Baranov, this meant that restoration must not be a “mechanical reproduction” of what existed before the

Although there was no question about the restoration of monuments that were listed under state protection, certain places in the city that were seen to be out of sync with the surroundings, or were simply the result of poor planning and had been badly damaged during the war, were to be replaced by more fitting constructions. Indeed, “not everything in the city was suitable and beautiful.”

In certain parts of the city, for example, the damage allowed architects to improve buildings, and whole areas, thereby making the surroundings more harmonious. At the corner of Fontanka and Nevskii Prospekt, the building which would house the Kuibyshevskii district soviet was transformed from a building, which the city’s architects considered to be of no special artistic value, into one which better fit into the surroundings. The architects made use of the destruction of a building at the corner of Pestel’ Street and Solanoi Lane. On the site of the heavily damaged structure, planners created a small square and a monumental composition on the façade of a building opposite the church.

This was the case with a handful of other buildings and areas in the historic centre, including the area surrounding the Finland Station, the alley leading to the Engineers’ Castle, and the squares at Smolnyi.

As a general principle, restoration efforts in Leningrad focused first and foremost on buildings and structures which contributed to the city’s aesthetic. In restoring the city, architects, city planners, and preservationists prioritized the older, historic buildings with artistic or architectural value. After the blockade was lifted, thousands of buildings in

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51 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.26, d.57, l.2.
52 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.26, d.57, l.2.
54 See “Leningrad stanet eshche nariadnee: beseda s glavnym inzhenerom stroitel’nogo upravleniia Lengorispolkoma, D.M. Trofimkinym,” in Vechernii Leningrad, 5 April 1946. In this article the author discusses façade work and notes that the Birzha, Ethnographic Museum of the Academy of Science,
the city, residential and otherwise, were in need of capital restoration. The authorities gave preference in the restoration process to all buildings located on the main streets, squares, and embankments of the centre, especially the most impressive and valuable historic monuments located there.\footnote{TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1108, l.12(ob).} Into this grouping fell buildings and complexes such as the State Hermitage, Smolnyi, the Admiralty, the Mariinskii Palace, the Engineer’s Castle and many other architectural marvels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Likewise, the authorities wanted to restore the city’s monumental statues as quickly as possible. The inclusion of sculptures into the architectural composition of ensembles was one of Leningrad’s important city planning traditions. They formed “an inalienable link in the landscape of the city.”\footnote{N.V. Baranov, “O plane vosstanovleniia Leningrada,” 8.} These monuments and ensembles all played a major role in the overall appearance of the city, and it was this “wholeness” (tsel’nost’), or integrity, that Leningraders sought to restore in the period after the blockade. In the postwar Soviet Union, the integrity and interconnection of architectural ensembles was important in the restoration of cities.\footnote{See Lavrov, “Neotlozhnye voprosy vosstanovleniia pamiatnikov,” 26.} In Leningrad, as in other places, the role of architectural ensembles in the formation of the city was crucial. Baranov described the situation in Leningrad as follows:

The fundamental architectural peculiarity of our city, which produces an exceptionally strong impression, is the ensemble principle of building. The streets, squares, and embankments of Leningrad do not present a mechanical collection of buildings, but rather an organic system, in which every building is an element of a single whole.\footnote{N. Baranov, “Arkhitekturnyi oblik Leningrada,” Vechernii Leningrad, 20 April 1946; See also Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv nauchno-tekhnicheskikh dokumentov Sankt-Peterburga (TsGANTD SPb), f.17, op.2-1, d.2, l.76.}
In the ensemble principle, every building plays a part in the composition of the city, like organs in a human body all play a part dependant on the others. To lose a link in the chain, therefore, would mean losing architectural-organic harmony. It would also mean the loss of an important piece of history. It was in this sense that the head of Preservation Inspectorate, Belekhov said that “We are like doctors, we battle with illnesses found in our monuments with the goal of prolonging their long-lasting service.”

Although the famous buildings of the previous centuries were the jewels of the city – the vital organs of the city organism – the buildings linking these monuments were of no less importance in the architectural plans of the post-blockade period. The residential buildings, offices, and other structures connecting the palaces and monuments were essential elements in the cityscape. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, St. Petersburg’s city planners and architects realized the need to minimize the empty spaces between important architectural ensembles. The planners and construction organizations in the imperial period devoted their energies to placing freestanding monumental buildings at key locations throughout the city, which linked the grandiose palaces and complexes. The result of this was the development of a city centre, whose baroque and neo-classical buildings dominating the landscape, were joined together by eclectic, highly-decorative structures, forming an organic whole.

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59 KGIOP, f.950.VI-I, d.N-393, l.3; V.M. Makarov expressed similar feelings in an appeal to Leningrad’s artistic community to restore the suburban palaces. He wrote: “When they place a wounded soldier on the operation table, the surgeon does not throw up his hands in despair, but quickly and capably begins the rewarding work of returning life and meaning to this maimed, but once beautiful organism. This is how we must act!” See Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka, otdel rukopisei (RNB OR), f.1135, op.1, d.24, l.5.

60 See, for example, V.A. Kamenskii, “Zhiloi dom v ensemble goroda,” Arkhitektura i stroitel’stvo Leningrada,” (November 1946): 16.

61 Buckler, Mapping St. Petersburg, 1-3.

62 Ia.O. Rubanchik discussed this in an article on the restoration of Nevskii Prospekt. “A number of labour-intensive reconstruction and restoration works, which at first glance are not given great significance, play a
Throughout the postwar period, much of the planning and work of Leningrad’s architects was oriented towards preserving and restoring not just individual buildings, but all elements of the organic whole. Because of the important role which monuments of architecture played in the city ensemble, the question of their restoration was unavoidable.63 Officials frequently invoked the need to restore certain buildings because of the role they played in the city “organism.” In calling for work to be started on the Admiralty and the former Stock Exchange, two buildings which were part of the city’s core ensemble on both banks of the Neva, for example, Baranov argued that the need for restoration was due to the “exceptionally important role” that the buildings played in Leningrad’s external appearance.64 Demands were often made to contracting organizations and tenants of architectural monuments to take decisive measures in bringing monuments into order. Poor work at certain places, the argument went, was destroying the organic integrity of the city landscape. Given that the restoration of the city organism was considered to be a monument to the nine-hundred days, unsuccessful restoration projects were not acceptable.65

**Restoration of Leningrad’s Monuments in Practice**

Over the course of the first postwar years, Leningrad’s architects, preservationists and workers made significant progress in the restoration of the city’s built environment. By the late 1940s the vast majority of Leningrad’s historic monuments had been

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63 KGIOP, f.950-II-2, d.N-3349/1, l.14(ob).
64 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1108, l.1. This letter was from 1944. In 1948 Baranov again called for work to be done on the Admiralty and placed a great deal of importance on the ensemble principle: “Considering the significance of the stated building in the ensemble of our city…” See KGIOP, f.p.50, d.p-71, l.253.
65 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.30, l.177.
“resurrected” (vozhrozhdeny) or were in the process of being restored to their former appearance. Central authorities commended the city’s preservationists for their efforts, noting that more work had been done in Leningrad than anywhere else in the Soviet Union. In 1948, for example, the head of the Main Administration for the Protection of Monuments, Sh.E. Ratiia, after reviewing the work taking place in Leningrad, noted that “there is hardly a monument under state protection in the city that is either not restored, or not undergoing restoration.” He went on to state that the restoration was “exceptional in both its range and quality.”

Nevertheless, restoration was not a seamless effort. The postwar period was characterized by chronic shortages, insufficient amounts of manpower, and disorganization in the planning system. The authorities sought to repair all the damage done to the city’s historic monuments, and undo the destruction caused during the blockade. However, due to postwar conditions, the desire to restore and re-establish architectural integrity in the city organism could not be entirely realized. Although the majority of monuments were restored, there were historic sites in the city where restoration was taking place much too slowly for the authorities, and indeed places where work did not get done at all. This was very often due to the lack of work carried out by the occupants of building-monuments, as well as other problems. Parts of the city, then, were left in disrepair well into the 1950s.

The attention which Leningrad’s historic monuments received from city planners, architects, preservationists, and authorities since the mid-1930s proved to be a great advantage in the postwar years. There were organizations in the city capable of preservation activities and repairing damage. Prewar artistic workshops continued to

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66 Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomiki (RGAE), f.9588, op.1, d.67, ll.192-193.
carry out restoration during the postwar period. Created just before the war, the Museum of City Sculpture also worked at restoring the city’s monumental statues and sculptures. But towards the end of the war and after, Leningrad’s monuments benefited from the creation of other institutions which dealt specifically with their restoration. Two architectural-artistic trade colleges were opened, the students of which were to play important roles in the city’s restoration. In the years after the war, these students trained in trade colleges and at the same time gained practical experience working with seasoned preservationists and master restorers on the facades and interiors of the city’s historic monuments and landmarks.  

In 1945, the city soviet created the Leningrad Architectural Restoration Workshop and it soon began activities under the Administration for Architectural Affairs. The goal of the workshop was to carry out many of the most important restoration projects in the city and suburbs, conduct research, and compile projects for restoration.  

The workshop quickly grew into a large association of restorers performing work at an impressive number of sites. In the first year and a half of its existence, the staff of the workshop grew from 163 people to 347, an increase of 213%. During this period the workshop was responsible for restoration in twenty-two of the city’s architectural monuments, including the Russian Museum, the Stroganov and Sheremetevskii palaces,
as well as the Leningrad Philharmonic.\footnote{TsGANTD SPb, f.386, op.1-4, d.24, l.20.} In the late 1940s, the workshop was engaged in restoration activity at over fifty of the city’s architectural and historic monuments.\footnote{TsGANTD SPb, f.386, op.1-4, d.66, ll.20-22.}

By the early postwar period, then, Leningrad was becoming more and more equipped and able to restore its historic monuments and landmarks. Architects and preservationists laid out plans that prioritized the restoration of relics from the past. Some of the city’s architectural and artistic organizations and institutions had prior experience in preserving and restoring. Furthermore, the experience of architects during the blockade had provided practical and scientific knowledge that would be helpful in the postwar restoration. Once the opportunity arose to restore, Leningrad had developed a solid base from which to begin.

Any steps to return the landscape of Leningrad’s city centre to its prewar appearance involved work that would reverse the prophylactic measures taken throughout the blockade. Especially important in this respect was the restoration of the city’s decorative statues and symbols. When the war began, preservationists camouflaged the city’s golden spires, and concealed the statues that contributed to the organic integrity of Leningrad.\footnote{See chapter 2 of this dissertation.} Once the threat of war to the city had been completely neutralized, the city soviet issued orders to have the statues put back in place and the spires and cupolas uncovered.

Although the authorities sought to accomplish these tasks as quickly as possible, strategic imperatives led them to delay certain restorative actions. The slim chance that the Germans might somehow regain tactical advantage and again go on the offensive, pushed the Leningrad authorities to demand that the camouflage on the city’s spires and
cupolas be repaired between May and August, 1944.\textsuperscript{73} The golden heights of Leningrad’s skyline remained camouflaged well into 1945. In the first days following the capitulation of the Germans, Leningrad’s alpinists – some of the very same people who risked their lives to camouflage the spires and cupolas in 1941 – removed the covering from the Engineers’ Castle, Predtechenskaia Church, and St. Nicholas Cathedral.\textsuperscript{74}

Meanwhile, work began on the restoration of the city’s monumental sculptures and statues. In April 1945, instructions were sent out to various organizations, stipulating a timeline for monuments to be returned to their rightful place or uncovered.\textsuperscript{75} Given that summer was close at hand and Leningraders would soon be enjoying the city’s beauty and charm in their leisure time, the authorities planned to have all statues back in their place by mid-June (see Table 1).\textsuperscript{76} This was not an easy task. It involved the coordination of many construction organizations and governmental branches at the local level. Work at removing statues from the ground and uncovering much larger statues like the Bronze Horseman required many workers and long hours. Returning statues to their rightful places was especially arduous and time consuming in the Summer Garden, where marble statues and pedestals had been buried in more than a hundred places.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} KGIOP, f. p.50, d. p-70, l.160, l.153.
\textsuperscript{74} The Admiralty was worked on a little earlier on 30 April. See M.M. Bobrov, Khraniteli angela. Zapiski blokadnogo al’pinista (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo SPb Gumanitarnogo universiteta profsoiuzov, 1998), 101. See also TsGANTD SPb, f.386, op.1-4, d.18, l.18.
\textsuperscript{75} GMGS, f. Otdel pamiatnikov i memorial’nykh dosok, d. 48, chast’ I. (unpaginated).
\textsuperscript{76} GMGS, f. Otdel pamiatnikov i memorial’nykh dosok, d. 48, chast’ I. (unpaginated).
\textsuperscript{77} For the plan to remove the sculptures from the ground, see Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva Sankt Peterburga (TsGALI SPb), f.277, op.1, d.85, l.11. On 6 May 1945, for example, 85 people from Leningrad’s military divisions worked at removing statues from their places of rest. After labouring from 9:30 in the morning until 2:00 in the afternoon, several statues and pedestals had been successfully exhumed, but much more work lay ahead to complete the task. See TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.1.
Table 1. Appendix to Decision N.143-14-b, of the Leningrad Soviet Executive Committee from 9 April 1945 – “On removing defensive covering from the city’s monuments”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Organization doing work</th>
<th>Date of completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Dismantling protective covering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Monument to Nicholas I</td>
<td>Isaac’s Square</td>
<td>October district soviet</td>
<td>01.05.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Monument to Peter I</td>
<td>Decembrist Square</td>
<td>October district soviet</td>
<td>01.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Improvement of public garden</td>
<td>Decembrist Square</td>
<td>October district soviet</td>
<td>01.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Monument to Lenin</td>
<td>Finland Station</td>
<td>Kravnogvardeiskii district soviet</td>
<td>01.05.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Egyptian sphinxes</td>
<td>University Embankment 17. (Academy of Artists)</td>
<td>Vasilioostrovskii district soviet</td>
<td>01.05.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Monument to Kruzenstern</td>
<td>Lieutenant Shmidt Embankment (near Morskoi Korpus)</td>
<td>Vasilioostrovskii district soviet</td>
<td>01.05.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Returning statues to their place</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Anichkov sculptural group</td>
<td>Anichkov Bridge</td>
<td>Stal’konstruktsiia</td>
<td>15.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Monument to Peter I (Rastrelli)</td>
<td>Engineers’ Castle</td>
<td>Stal’konstruktsiia</td>
<td>15.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Dioscurs</td>
<td>Maket on Prosoiuz boulevard</td>
<td>Monument Sculpture</td>
<td>01.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Manchurian Lions</td>
<td>Neva Embankment near Peter I’s cottage</td>
<td>Monument Sculpture</td>
<td>15.05.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Sculptures of the Summer Garden</td>
<td>Summer Garden</td>
<td>Dzerzhinskii district soviet</td>
<td>15.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Unmasking of spires and cupolas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Admiralty spire</td>
<td>Admiralty proezd</td>
<td>Preservation Inspectorate</td>
<td>01.05.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Cupola of St. Nicholas Cathedral</td>
<td>Kommunar Square</td>
<td>Preservation Inspectorate</td>
<td>01.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Cupola and spire of Pretechenskaia Church</td>
<td>Ligovskiaia Street at Obvodnyi Canal</td>
<td>Preservation Inspectorate</td>
<td>01.07.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Spire of the Engineers’ Castle</td>
<td>2 Sadovaia Street</td>
<td>Preservation Inspectorate</td>
<td>15.06.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Spire and cupola of the Peter and Paul Fortress</td>
<td>Peter and Paul Fortress</td>
<td>Preservation Inspectorate</td>
<td>01.05.1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Cupola of St. Isaac’s Cathedral</td>
<td>Isaac Square</td>
<td>Preservation Inspectorate</td>
<td>01.07.1945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Machinery was often needed to hoist the heavy statues from the ground once they were uncovered. In her description of the restoration of Rastrelli’s monument to Peter I in front of the Engineers’ Castle, for example, the artist Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva discusses an intricate system of wires, pullies and lifting devices used to raise Peter from

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78 GMGS, f. Otdel pamiatnikov i memorial’nykh dosok, d.48, chast’ I. (unpaginated).
his temporary grave back onto his pedestal.\textsuperscript{79} Not only did work on the city’s statues draw manpower and machinery away from other jobs, but construction materials, which were in drastically short supply, had to be used to complete the work. Ironically, work at uncovering statues sometimes allowed for a recycling of construction materials. After dismantling the protective covering from the monument to Nicholas I on Isaac Square, for example, the material that had been employed for the covering was itself to be used as required by the October district soviet for restoration.\textsuperscript{80}

The removal of the protective covering from the city’s monuments were events which people waited for with baited breath. These events were concrete, positive examples of Leningrad’s “resurrection” after the blockade. In her diary, Ostroumova-Lebedeva wrote about the restoration of the monument to Peter I to its pedestal, noting that she “was very happy to have been there at one of the most joyful episodes in the restoration of our dear city.”\textsuperscript{81} Although the work at some specific monumental statues was delayed or passed on to other organizations – as was the case with the Manchurian Lions near Peter I’s cottage – all projects to restore statues to their rightful places were fulfilled by the end of the construction season in 1945.\textsuperscript{82}

The work to resurrect the city’s statues and remove covering from the golden heights of the city was much less complicated than restoration projects which sought to

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{79} RNB OR, f.1015, d.61, ll.11-13. Diary entry from 15 August 1945.
    \item \textsuperscript{80} TsGA SPb, f. 7384, op.17, d.1447, l.21. A Leningrad city soviet executive committee decision from 1944, for example, ordered that materials from destroyed buildings be gathered and used for construction where needed. The decision also included instructions for how to properly disassemble and gather the construction materials. See Biulleten’ leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchixsia, 1994, nos.3-4: 8-12.
    \item \textsuperscript{81} RNB OR, f.1015, d.61, l.13.
    \item \textsuperscript{82} The work to be performed on the Manchurian Lions was refused by the organization “Monumentskulptura” because it did not possess the necessary hoisting machinery. This task was passed on to “Stal’konstruktsiia,” the very same organization which carried out the restoration of the monument to Peter I at the Engineers’ Castle. See TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1447, l.84.
\end{itemize}
repair damages to palaces, mansions, and architectural symbols of the city. The amount of work needed to be carried out on statues and spires was infinitely small in comparison to the restoration of the city’s building-monuments. Integrity of the city organism was the goal and work was to be performed first and foremost on main streets, squares and embankments. After the blockade was lifted, however, the city’s authorities had to decide which jewels in the imperial crown and which parts of the city body would be restored first and at what pace.

One factor in deciding priorities was the amount of damage suffered by the building. Immediately after the blockade was lifted, Baranov suggested that one of the first things to be done was to restore all buildings with the least amount of damage in the city. 83 This was done to increase the amount of useable living space, but the logic of it applied to historic monuments and landmarks as well. When materials and workers were in short supply in the early postwar period, small-scale works were often the easiest, least expensive, and most successful. At the Summer Palace of Peter I in the Summer Gardens, for example, restoration began immediately after the war because it was one of the few “well preserved” monuments. 84

What the building was used for and who was using it also frequently affected the pace and success of restoration. Premises which housed some of the more important governmental offices were among those at the top of this list. Smolnyi, the Tauride Palace, and the Mariinskii Palace, for example, were all buildings used by the city party committee and the Leningrad soviet. Although the Tauride Palace (which housed the State Duma after the 1905 revolution, and later the Provisional Government following

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83 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1108, l.12(ob)  
84 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.167, l.4.
the February Revolution), had sustained a significant level of damage during the war, the
city soviet decreed that it was to be completely restored by 1 September 1945, and
allocated one million rubles for this work.\textsuperscript{85} The plan, however, turned out to be much
too ambitious. Indeed, with the amount of work needed to be done in the city, very few
building-monuments were actually restored that quickly. Nevertheless, the authorities
aimed to have the interiors and facades restored not only at the Tauride Palace, but at the
other monuments housing the party committee and soviet by the end of 1947 at a cost of
nearly seven million rubles.\textsuperscript{86} These plans were for the most part met.

No less important were the grand imperial Petersburg palaces, which housed
museums of all-Union significance: the Winter Palace (State Hermitage) and the
Mikhailovskii Palace (State Russian Museum). These two buildings were given special
attention during the blockade. In peacetime, they were again to become magnificent
monuments and repositories of some of the country’s greatest art collections.
Immediately after the blockade was lifted, architects and preservationists began
restoration work on the facades and interiors of both museums. The city soviet even
went so far as to have a special commission set up in November 1945 that would check
and verify the work on the restoration of these monument complexes.\textsuperscript{87}

In resurrecting Leningrad, the city was again to become one of the Union’s most
important cultural capitals, and the city’s museums played an important role in its
“culturedness.” The authorities aimed to return the Hermitage and Russian Museum,
among others, to their normal functions as quickly as possible. In order to do this, the

\textsuperscript{85} KGIOP, f.p.157, d.p-781, l.103, l.95.
\textsuperscript{86} TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.29, d.174, l.97.
\textsuperscript{87} KGIOP, f.p.163, d.p-187, l.73. The commission was composed of Baranov, Belekhov, the chief of the
Administration of Construction, A.A. Khodyrev, and the chief of the State Architectural-Construction
Control, A.M. Shabrov.
exhibition halls had to be restored to their former appearance before visitors could be allowed into the palaces. The Russian Museum opened its doors to visitors on 9 May 1946, the first anniversary of Victory Day. The event was hailed in the press as a great “feat” [podvig] of restoration. Because the opening coincided with the anniversary of Victory Day, it symbolized a triumph in restoration and Leningraders’ ability to overcome adversity. Announcing the opening of the museum, an article in Vechernii Leningrad reminded its readers of the number of bombs and shells that hit the building, the amount of damage inflicted, and the fact that much of the interior was now painstakingly restored thanks to the energy and care shown by the city’s residents.

Because these palaces housed two of the country’s most important museums, they were well funded by the Soviet government, the Ministry for Artistic Affairs, the Leningrad authorities, and the city’s Preservation Inspectorate. In April 1947, for example, the city Soviet evaluated the results of restoration work at the Hermitage, noting that five million rubles had been spent on restoration work in 1946, and another 1.28 million in the first quarter of 1947. Considering it necessary to complete the restoration of the building by the thirtieth anniversary of October, the Leningrad soviet sent a petition to the central government for funding in the amount of 7.8 million. The government approved the request (although not the full amount), and ordered the allocation of six million rubles from its reserve fund to the Committee for Artistic Affairs

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88 See the director of the museum, P.K. Baltun’s, account of the restoration in the early postwar years. Russkii Musei – evakuatsiya, blokada, vosstanovlenie (iz vospominanii museinogo rabotnika) (Moscow: ‘Izobrazitel’noe iskusstvo, 1981), 86.
89 “Prazdnik iskusstva: zavtra otkryvaetsia Gosudarstvennyi Russkii Muzei,” Vechernii Leningrad, 8 May 1946.
90 KGIOP, f.p.163, d.p.-818, l.224-224(ob).
to carry out the work. As a result of the funding, major work was carried out in the complex of the State Hermitage, and by 1948, 152 exhibition halls had been returned to their prewar state and the facades were completely restored.

A building’s significance in the history of the city and state was another important factor in decisions to restore. Not only did the buildings mentioned above house governmental offices and museums, but like other monuments in the city, they were symbols of the country’s imperial heritage and revolutionary history. Whereas the Winter Palace conjured up images of imperial power and might, Smolnyi and the Tauride Palace symbolized the celebrated days of 1917. To have left them in disrepair would have been tantamount to a denial of their importance in history. Similarly, monuments such as the Admiralty and the Peter and Paul Fortress were symbols of the Petrine epoch and the glorious founding of the city. Other famous monuments told the story of emperors and empresses who followed Peter. After the war the authorities emphasized that Hitler had attempted to erase their history by destroying the city’s architectural monuments. “They would have liked to destroy our history,” wrote the author, Konstantin Fedin in 1944, “to erase the deeds and the glory of our fathers from the memory of our people.”

Local authorities urged the city’s residents to resurrect these embodiments of their imperial past in the shortest possible time. The meaning of these symbols in the city’s narrative, then, along with their roles in the city’s ensembles, gave them priority in the restoration process.

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91 KGIOP, f.p.163, d.p.-818, l.220. This Soviet government order from 27 May 1947 was signed by the Stalin.
92 Kedrinskii, Vosstanovlenie pamiatnikov arkhitektury Leningrada, 190.
The city gradually took on its prewar appearance. In the place of ruins whole sections of buildings were restored, as was the case at the Lenergo building where the Moika meets the Field of Mars. Façade work on most buildings began immediately after the blockade. Almost all of the buildings in the city, especially in the centre, bore the traces of war. A demobilized soldier described what he saw after returning from the front: “We drove over the wounded bridges of Leningrad streets, past ruins, along buildings where glass rarely shone among embrasures, covered by plywood on facades that were badly scratched by shrapnel.”

Many of the buildings were under state protection as monuments of architecture, or were valued for the role they played as links in the architectural ensembles of Leningrad. The local press promoted restoration by stressing that it was “shameful” to see destruction on the facades of monuments, and sculptures adorning the city. Officials likewise emphasized that the restoration of the centre’s facades was one of the most important activities to be carried out. The authorities, building occupants, architects, construction organizations, and indeed all Leningraders were faced with this colossal task.

Considerable steps were taken during the first postwar years to return many of the facades to their original beauty. From the very beginning of the restoration period in 1944, architects and preservationists lauded the impressive repairs at places like the

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94 I.Z. Maseev, “Pervye tipovye,” in V.A. Kutuzov and E.G. Levina eds. Vozrozhdenie: vospominaniia, ocherk i dokumenty o vosstanovlenii Leningrada (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1977), 236. It was suggested that in the interests of architectural harmony all windows without glass on the main streets be covered with plywood and painted the same colour as the façade of the building. See “O meropriiatiiakh po uluchsheniu vneshnego blagoustroistvo goroda Leningrada (Reshenie ispolnitel’nogo komiteta leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia ot 15 avgusta 1944, N.119, p.3-z),” Biulleten’ leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia, 1944, no.16: 2.


96 See, for example, “O meropriiatiiakh po uluchsheniu vneshnego blagoustroistvo goroda Leningrada. (Reshenie ispolnitel’nogo komiteta leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia ot 19 aprelia 1945, N.144, p.3),” Biulleten’ leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia, 1945, no.9: 5-6.
Kirov Theatre and the Theatre of Musical Comedy, as well as on the facades of residential buildings lining the main streets. In 1945 there were over one hundred and forty restoration projects completed on the façades of imperial monuments. As time went by, the city’s construction organizations accomplished more and more restoration work. In August, 1946, for example, façade restoration was taking place at three hundred buildings on the streets of Leningrad, including Nevskii, Suvorovskii and Mezhdunarodnyi prospeks. A few months later, the scaffolding was taken down from the Mariinskii Palace, the new home of the city soviet’s executive committee. Freshly restored, the façade of the palace bore the symbol for the Order of Lenin, awarded to Leningrad for courage, discipline and heroism during the blockade.

The situation with Leningrad’s historic monuments continued to improve throughout the period as the economic situation began to stabilize and show signs of growth. However, there were certain places in the city centre that at one point or another were not undergoing restoration, or were not restored quickly enough for the authorities’ liking. Up until 1947, at least, the Leningrad authorities complained that work to bring the architectural whole back to its prewar state was unsatisfactory and progressing too slowly. In 1946, for example, plans for architectural monuments housing state ministries

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98 TsGANTD SPb, f.386, op.1-4, d.67, l.18.
99 “Na fasadakh leningradskih zdanii,” Vechernii Leningrad, 10 August 1946.
100 “Fasad dvortsa,” Vechernii Leningrad, 20 October 1946.
and other governmental institutions fell far short of what the city soviet had planned, as only 41% of the work was accomplished.  

The Leningrad authorities blamed several construction organizations and building occupants for the slow progress, claiming that they continued to drag out the process of repairs and painting, leaving several buildings either partially completed or not worked on at all. By July 1947, for example, members of the executive committee of the city soviet were in a rage. Out of the sixty-six buildings under state protection intended to have façade work completed in that year, work had not started at thirty-five, including the Pushkin Theatre on Ostrovskia Square and the Philharmonic.  

“The most important tasks in the restoration of Leningrad’s most prominent ensembles and its main streets,” declared one city soviet decision, “are under threat of not being met [sryv].” This angered the authorities and drove them to take measures to insure facades were restored.  

In order to induce faster results, the city’s authorities confronted the construction organizations and institutions occupying historic buildings and demanded that they discuss and justify their shortcomings in façade work. In July 1946, for example, at a city soviet meeting convened to discuss the restoration of facades, several organizations explained that there were too few workers on hand to complete the assigned tasks. Some had enough workers, but no materials. Others argued that they had yet to receive funding


102 “O khode rabot po remontu i okraske fasadov vedomstvennykh zdani. (Reshenie ispolnitel'nogo komiteta leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiaschikhisa ot 7 iulia 1947, N.242, p.1-b),” Biulleten’ leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiaschikhisa, 1947, no.15: 5. Work had begun at these monuments of architecture before, however. In July 1946, it was believed that the Pushkin Theatre was one of the objectives that was on track to be completed on time. See also TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.30, l.178.

103 This decision listed the following places in the city: the Spit of Vasilievskii Island, Art Square, Ostrovskii Square, the square at Smolnyi, Nevskii Prospekt, Sennaia Square, the square at the Chemical-Technological Institute, Moscow Highway at the monument to Chernyshevskii and others. See “O khode rabot po remontu i okraske fasadov vedomstvennykh zdani,” 5.
sufficient to carry out the work, or stated that the contractors assigned to the monuments were overworked.\textsuperscript{104}

At the meeting, individuals and organizations responsible for restoration were warned and threatened with consequences if work was not completed as scheduled. Explaining that historic monuments play crucial roles in the ensembles of the city, chief architect Baranov threatened that if progress on facades was not taken more seriously, certain buildings (he cited the Stock Exchange on the Spit of Vasilievskii Island as an example) could be passed on to different organizations.\textsuperscript{105} In typical Soviet fashion, the authorities used punitive measures if work was not completed as planned. Vice-chairman of the city soviet, Galkin gave a stern warning to all in attendance, saying “We demand the fulfillment of the executive committee’s decision. Subjective and objective reasons will not be accepted by the executive committee, nor will it sort out who is guilty. We will not allow you to push blame onto contractors \textit{[ne prinimaem ssylki na podriadchikov].}”\textsuperscript{106} Organizations were warned, somewhat unreasonably, that no work was to begin on the interiors of buildings until façades were restored, and that the buildings could not be fully utilized until this was completed: “I warn you now,” said Galkin, “that without painting the facades, we will not allow buildings to be occupied. I ask that you take this into account.”\textsuperscript{107} The authorities showed a growing concern for the state of the city’s external appearance, and were unwilling to listen to what they understood as excuses. Work as planned and ordered was to be completed in a timely fashion.

\textsuperscript{104} See the stenographic report of this meeting. TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.30, l.l.175-187.  
\textsuperscript{105} TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.30, l.l.177.  
\textsuperscript{106} TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.30, l.l.186.  
\textsuperscript{107} TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.30, l.l.187.
By the construction season of 1947, Leningrad’s party and soviet leaders had become incensed by the poor results of certain organizations and construction trusts in carrying out the executive committee’s decisions about facades. At a meeting in July, the chairman of the Leningrad soviet, P.G. Lazutin, chastised people for underfulfilling plans, warning them that there would be consequences to pay.108 The year 1947 was especially important to the authorities because in November, Leningrad and the entire country was to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution. “The facades must be done,” argued Lazutin, “because we want the city to look better by the thirtieth anniversary of October, because we gave our word to the country that we would make Leningrad better, more beautiful.”109 All strengths of the institutions occupying buildings of historic value were to be oriented on façade restoration.

The authorities were unwilling to listen to explanations. They wanted work done and they wanted it done immediately. Making clear the position of the city soviet, Lazutin stated: “If you do not fulfill the decisions, then we will treat you differently. Do not forget that this is the Leningrad soviet – not a rural soviet, not the Pskov nor the Novgorod soviet, but Leningrad’s, where the revolution was made…We will fight for the decisions of the Leningrad soviet.”110 Officials and institutions deemed to have not fulfilled their restoration tasks became the subject of scapegoating and shaming in the press. As early as 1945, for example, the Leningrad press reported on poor work in the restoration of facades on historic buildings housing state institutions. Individuals

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108 See the stenographic report of the meeting. TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.245, l.69-81.
109 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.245, l.78.
110 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.245, l.78.
responsible were named, as were their failings, and they were compared to others who were successfully carrying out work as planned.\textsuperscript{111}

The problem was that even two years after the war chaos reigned in the planning system. Literally thousands of restoration projects (industrial, residential and architectural) were taking place in the city, all of which were in need of manpower and materials. There were other problems frequently encountered as well, including improper preparation for large-scale restoration projects, and insufficient organization of labour.\textsuperscript{112} Throughout the Soviet Union in the first postwar years there was a drastic shortage of all materials needed to repair the colossal amount of damage inflicted by the Germans. The war dealt the country’s workforce a tremendous blow, as nearly twenty-seven million people lost their lives. The problems hampering the restoration of Leningrad’s historic monuments and landmarks were indicative of the situation in the country as a whole. Organizations complaining about these problems were not deceiving the authorities. They were simply stating the limitations of the situation in which they were working. These problems were faced by organizations at most, if not all restoration projects during the postwar period.

Over time, especially after 1947, there had been a general improvement in the conditions effecting restoration. This was in large part due to a gradual return of qualified workers from the Red Army, people acquiring the skills needed to restore facades and architectural monuments, and a constant improvement in the supply of

\textsuperscript{111} The poor work on facades of departmental buildings was discussed in \textit{Leningradskai\a pravda}. One article noted that work was very unsatisfactory, that restoration of the prewar appearance was in danger of not becoming a reality, and that several named people were at fault. See “V Ispolkome Lengorsoveta,” \textit{Leningradskai\a pravda}, 9 June 1945.

\textsuperscript{112} TsGAIPD SPb, f.3401, op.1, d.5, l.22.
Nevertheless, by the late 1940s, certain buildings, even some which played key roles in the city’s ensembles and historical narrative, had very little if any restoration work carried out since the end of the war. Given the circumstances of the postwar period, this should not be surprising.

The postwar problems of shortage and disorganization were compounded by other mitigating factors which slowed the pace of restoration. At places where little if anything was done, the institution occupying the premises was frequently deemed the main reason for inaction. This was a problem that plagued historic monuments and landmarks since the Revolution. The laws on historic preservation from the 1930s, for example, were in part aimed at local authorities and building occupants who were inadequately caring for the monuments. Reports from the postwar period quite frequently cite unreliable occupants to be the main problem hindering restoration activities throughout the Soviet Union. Whereas the Hermitage Museum occupying the Winter Palace was reliable and well-funded, this was not the case at some other architectural monuments. Several organizations and institutions did not have the necessary means and were thus unable to carry out all the restoration work on the facades and interiors of the premises they occupied. At the palace housing the Herzen Pedagogical Institute on the Moika embankment, for example, very little restoration had taken place between 1944 and 1949. Although the institute received funding specifically for restoration of the building, reports compiled by the Preservation Inspectorate indicate that much of the money was used for other purposes. According to the report, the matter had gotten so bad there that the upper

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114 The documents from the Main Administration for the Protection of Monuments in Moscow and the State Inspectorate for the Protection of Monuments in Leningrad often discuss occupants and the difficulties they present. See, for example, RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.40, ll.27-30, 188-190;
115 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.245, ll.8-10.
floors of the palace could no longer be used. The situation at one of Leningrad’s major historic symbols, the Peter and Paul Fortress, was apparently not much better: “This is a black spot on the background of Leningrad’s monuments,” stated Belekhov at a meeting to discuss the work of the Preservation Inspectorate in 1949. “In the past few years we have been trying to carry out even elemental improvements [blagoustroistvo], but nevertheless, the occupants of this monument complex refuse in every way possible to improve its condition.”

The Engineers’ Castle is perhaps the best example of a major city monument, where postwar shortages in combination with an unreliable occupant prevented significant repairs well into the 1950s. Built in the late 1790s by Catherine the Great’s son Paul and used for only a few months before the emperor was assassinated in his chambers, the castle was converted by the tsarist government into an engineering college in the 1820s. During the early Soviet and postwar periods, a military-engineering college used the castle, although a military hospital occupied it during the war. The Engineers’ Castle played a crucial role in the historic ensemble surrounding the Field of Mars. The Germans bombed and shelled it several times, resulting in the destruction of one of its walls on the courtyard side, exposing much of the interior to the elements. Once the war was over, Leningrad’s authorities and architects planned to have the castle restored fully. An article in Leningradskaya pravda in April, 1945, for example, stated rather optimistically that the castle would be restored to its former appearance by the fall of that year. Throughout the postwar period, however, the college, the contracting organization, and the military administration did hardly anything to improve the

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116 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.245, l.8; RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.69, l.77-78.
117 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.245, l.8(ob).
situation, despite repeated appeals and warnings from the Preservation Inspectorate and the city soviet. Due to prolonged neglect, the castle’s condition continued to worsen. A commission made up of architects and restorers commented on this situation in February 1948 noting that: “In spite of the significant destruction inflicted on the Mikhailovskii [Engineers’] Castle during the Great Patriotic War, restoration work has still not unfolded in the amount needed to provide for even minimal preservation of the monument’s architecture, the technical condition of which worsens with every year.”

The commission went on to note that the state of the castle’s exterior mirrored that on the inside, as decorative details of the facades and interiors were being destroyed by weather and improper use of the building.

The major problem at the castle was a common one in the first years after the war; materials and restoration workers were in short supply. But when a neglectful occupant was added into the mix, the situation in regards to restoration became catastrophic.

Before the war, the building was used properly, but after the blockade, the military college was either unable or unwilling (or perhaps both), to spend the necessary time and resources on restoration. The central preservation administration in Moscow proclaimed that the Ministry of the Armed Forces, under whose purview the castle was ultimately located, was the “worst transgressor in the use of funding allocated for restoration on building-monuments” throughout the USSR. The Leningrad authorities, however, were unable to find a new institution which would treat the monument with respect. One

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119 See the documents in KGIOP, f.167, d.Inzhenernyi zamok (no delo number and unpaginated). The documents in this delo mainly discuss the catastrophic problems at the castle between 1944-1949. The documents are compiled chronologically.
120 KGIOP, f.167, d.Inzhenernyi zamok (no delo number and unpaginated). The report is dated 12 February 1948.
121 RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.67, l.161.
observer, a certain Almazov, wrote a letter to the press about the situation at the castle. The letter was never published, but because it raised concerns, it was forwarded to the Preservation Inspectorate. In his letter, Almazov commented on the problems of the organization occupying the premises, and went on to discuss the difficulty with finding a new institution which would properly care for the monument. “The organization currently using the castle,” wrote Almazov, “has been trying for three years to dump the premises off on another and receive a better building, but the trouble is that as soon as the castle is looked over and the means to repair it estimated, nobody agrees [to accept the building].”

Given the amount of damage done to it during the war, it is not surprising that other organizations were unwilling to make it their home. The Preservation Inspectorate suggested that the castle be given to the Public Library, but because the library did not have a contracting-construction organization, the search continued. By 1949 a successful replacement had not been found. Due to an unreliable occupant, combined with the problems and shortages of the postwar period, this monument from the beginning of the nineteenth century would remain in a dilapidated state until restoration work began in 1952.

The shortcomings encountered in the restoration of Leningrad’s monuments stuck out like a sore thumb among the multitude of successful restoration projects in the postwar years. The poor quality which sometimes characterized work – especially in the immediate postwar period – and the lack of activity at certain places aroused the ire not

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122 KGIOP, f.167, d.Inzhenernyi zamok (no delo number and unpaginated). The letter was sent to Izvestiia in 1949.
123 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.245, ll.9-10; In 1950 it was proposed that the building be used as the Leningrad Museum of the Revolution (which was housed in part of the Winter Palace until 1944). The Leningrad party leadership petitioned the central government for fifteen million rubles in order to restore the premises, but the request was turned down. See RGASPI, f.17, op.132, d.440, l.6.
124 Kedrinskii, Vosstanovlenie pamiatnikov arkhitektury Leningrada, 233.
only of the authorities, but also of ordinary Leningraders who were anxious to see their city returned to its prewar state. Some of these concerned citizens, like comrade Almazov, wrote to the press and the authorities to express their dissatisfaction about the state of the city’s treasures and to demand that work be done to return the city’s former glory.

According to published and unpublished letters, many Leningraders felt that the lack of work done to restore some of the monuments was unfitting of a city that just withstood the German onslaught for almost nine-hundred days. One letter printed in *Vechernii Leningrad* in early 1946, for example, described the situation as “disappointing.” Citing the Kushlevskaia Dacha and the Sampsonievskii Cathedral as two examples of monuments where work had yet to begin, the author of the letter expressed his hopes that the monuments would be restored in the coming construction season.\(^\text{125}\) The head of Leningrad’s Administration for Artistic Affairs, B.I. Zagurskii, was forwarded one such letter from a concerned citizen writing to the press. After reading the letter about the shameful state of the monument to the Victims of the Revolution on the Field of Mars, Zagurskii petitioned the executive committee of the city soviet to allocate 350,000 rubles for its restoration. “The condition of this granite grave monument,” noted Zagurskii, “has provoked the righteous indignation of the residents of Leningrad, who have even written directly to I.V. Stalin about this matter.”\(^\text{126}\) Another letter-writer, having seen the poor quality of work carried out on the Winter Palace, used

\(^{125}\) “Ne beregut pamiatnikov proshlogo,” *Vechernii Leningrad*, 22 February 1946; Another letter sent to the press evoked the ensemble principle in complaining about the lack of work carried out on the Rostral Columns on the spit of Vasilievskii Island. Noting that the Stock Exchange (the Naval Museum) behind the columns was under restoration, the author complained that “unfortunately, they have forgotten other elements of the ensemble.” See “U Rostral’nnykh kollon,” *Vechernii Leningrad*, 3 June 1946.

\(^{126}\) TsGALI SPb, f.333, op.1, d.342, ll.8-9.
the Stalinist language of denunciation to express his feelings. The author of this unpublished letter exclaimed that the poor work was the result of “vandalism” (varvarstvo) and “wrecking” (vreditel’stvo). Ending his letter, he demanded answers to four questions: “1) Who is the main scoundrel who carried out the work on the Winter Palace (his surname)?; 2) Is he still walking on our Leningrad soil, or is he sitting in prison. If he is not in prison, then why not?; 3) Who accepted work done so criminally on the palace?; 4) Does the Leningrad soviet know about this crying shame [vopiiushchem bezobrazil]?”

Clearly those letters published in the Leningrad press were meant to scapegoat and humiliate organizations and individuals for the lack of work being carried out on valuable historic stone documents. These letters, however, and especially unpublished ones, also suggest a genuine discontent with the condition of historic monuments among certain residents of Leningrad. These concerned citizens could not understand what was taking the authorities so long to restore Leningrad’s monuments, the embodiments of the city’s history. They wanted to live in a well-ordered city, where one could be proud of the physical surroundings. For many Leningraders, having monuments restored provided a sense of pride in the city. Like the authorities, these people saw in the restored city a monument to the events lived through during the blockade. In ruins and unfinished work, however, they saw shame and vandalism.

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127 KGlOP, f.p.163, d.p-818, l.207. This letter is reminiscent of another sent to Agitprop of the party’s Central Committee from the director of the History of Religion Museum located in the former Kazan Cathedral. The director was enraged at the lack of work done on the cathedral, which was built as a memorial to the Patriotic War and in which the body of Field Marshall Kutuzov was interned. In the letter he railed against the contracting organization supposed to be doing the work, and like the letter-writer commenting on the Winter Palace, used typically Stalinist language: “Lenakademstroii [the contractor] is an absolutely worthless organization, and in my opinion, clearly an organization of wreckers.” See RGASPI, f.17, op.132, d.98, l.29(ob).
Conclusion

During Leningrad’s first postwar years, history, memory and commemoration were the driving forces behind the restoration of the city’s monuments. The Leningrad authorities cast the restoration of the city as a memorial to the nine-hundred-day siege. Having defended Leningrad and shown their determination to care for its cultural and historic heritage, it was only fitting that Leningraders should work just as hard to resurrect the city. “The memory of the heroic and heavy days, survived by Leningrad,” wrote the director of the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad in 1945, “inspires the warriors and labourers to new feats in work, to new strengths in the matter of restoring their native city.”

Restoration was a symbolic victory for the authorities and ordinary Leningraders – it represented a “new page” in the “battle” of the heroic city.

Leningrad benefited from a tradition of activism in preservation, as well as organizations with practical knowledge and experience in restoration. Hundreds of millions of rubles were spent on resurrecting monuments from ruins throughout the period from 1944-1950, with several positive results. The vast majority of the city’s monuments arose from the ashes like the proverbial phoenix. By 1950, most of the damage had been restored, especially that inflicted on major imperial palaces. Being a key monument in the cityscape, as Leningrad’s grand palaces certainly were, however, did not always guarantee success in restoration. Even though the authorities expected and demanded that restoration be carried out at certain places, the combination of postwar shortages and inaction on the side of organizations occupying the buildings left certain monuments in a dilapidated state. As was often the case in the Soviet Union,

plans deviated from reality. Arousing the exasperation of local authorities and ordinary Leningraders, these black spots on the background of Leningrad’s restoration represented failures in the new battle. More time, resources and attention were needed for the restorer-doctors to heal all of the city’s wounds.

The story of Leningrad’s restoration speaks to larger trends in the Soviet Union at the time. Everywhere in the country the emerging myth of the war – and the mythology surrounding local wartime experiences – was inspiring people to new achievements in restoration. At the same time the rehabilitation of pre-revolutionary heroes that began in the 1930s reached new heights. These two processes merged in Leningrad, where the memory of the blockade was used to propel the restoration of the city’s history embodied in imperial monuments. Through restoration of historic monuments, Leningraders were writing the history of the blockade into the city narrative.
Chapter 4: “When Ivan Comes, There Will be Nothing Left!”: Rebuilding and Reimagining the Historic Monuments in Leningrad’s Suburbs.

The restoration of the imperial palaces and parks surrounding the city was a key element in Leningrad’s postwar restoration. The Germans had occupied Gatchina, Pavlovsk, Peterhof, and Pushkin. During the occupation they systematically pillaged, defiled, and partially destroyed all the historic monuments in these suburbs. When the Germans were forced to retreat from their positions, they burned and blew up much of what remained of the eighteenth-century landmarks. After the Soviet forces captured the suburbs in mid-January 1944, what they found could be summed up in what Richard Wurf, a rank-and-file German soldier, wrote on the wall of the Gatchina Palace: “We were here, but can stay no longer. When Ivan comes there will be nothing left.”

Preservationists, municipal authorities, party leaders, and others valued the historic monuments in the suburbs as examples of Russian culture and art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These sites reflected the image of Russian power, imperial might, and were reminders of a “glorious past,” quite in line with the state’s ideological focus since the mid-1930s. Because of the palaces’ importance in the Stalinist historical narrative as symbols of Russian heritage and culture, the country’s cultural elite approached their restoration as enthusiastically as the restoration of imperial monuments in the city centre. Immediately after the suburbs were liberated, preservationists and architectural authorities from Leningrad and Moscow held meetings and conferences to...

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1 S.N. Balaeva, Zapiski khranitelia Gatchinskogo dvortsa, 1924-1956. Dnevni i. Stat’i, ed. N.S. Batenin (St. Petersburg, Iskusstvo Rossii, 2005), 159. An example of this can be found in the Great War as well. When the Germans withdrew from the town of Péronne to the Hindenburg Line in March 1917, they razed the town and hung a sign on the ruins of the town hall, which read “Nicht ärger, nur wundern” (“Don’t be angry, just be amazed!”). The sign is now on display in the Museum of the Great War. See J.M. Winter and Blain Baggett, 1914-1918: The Great War and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century (London: BBC Books, 1996).
discuss the possibility of restoration, the form palaces should take, and what they would be used for. Although their vision of almost complete restoration conflicted with the central authorities’ early plans to have the palaces and parks restored only partially, a compromise was eventually found and all suburban monuments were slated for restoration to one extent or another.

Over the course of the postwar period a commitment was made to restoring the imperial monuments in Leningrad’s suburbs. But that commitment was in certain respects inadequate. Although advocates of preservation made loud cries about the immediate need to restore palaces to their prewar grandeur, these buildings did not house hospitals, governmental organs, colleges, nor other essential services as did many of the historic monuments in the city itself. The condition of these suburban monuments, combined with postwar shortages, moreover, mitigated the amount of work that could be done. Nevertheless, a series of conservation and restoration activities began which laid the basis for nearly complete restoration in the coming decades. The fact that the suburban palaces and parks were worked on at all, given the disastrous economic situation facing the country, highlights the importance of imperial monuments to the Stalinist system as examples of a rehabilitated and glorified past.

In the first postwar years, and even until the present day, the suburban palaces and parks came to symbolize more than imperial power, exuberance, and might, although this continued to be a key narrative in the cultural events held in restored rooms and halls. The discussions and reports about the palaces and parks, the exhibits which took place in them, and the physical destruction itself all worked to add new layers of meaning to these monuments. They came to symbolize the destruction of war itself, but particularly the
attack on Russian history and culture perpetrated by the Germans. As restoration took place, efforts were made to impress on visitors the narratives of imperial glory and the Great Patriotic War. During restoration, therefore, the suburbs became unique venues for inculcating Soviet patriotism and promoting the postwar ideological program.\textsuperscript{2}

\textit{Suburban Palaces and Occupation}

Before the Germans attacked the Soviet Union and occupied the region around Leningrad, the city’s residents were drawn to the suburban palaces and parks to enjoy holidays, weekends, and days off work. The world-famous palaces and parks had been used almost exclusively by royalty until 1917. The emperors and empresses constructed the palaces and parks of Gatchina, Lomonosov, Pavlovsk, Peterhof, and Pushkin in the eighteenth century as retreats for the imperial family and court. Peterhof – later known as Petrodvorets – was founded by the first Russian emperor on the shores of the Gulf of Finland to the southwest of the city. Designed by the French architect Jean Le Blond on the model of Versailles, the park immediately became famous for its opulent fountain system gilded with classical allegorical statues. In the decades after Peter’s death, Rastrelli transformed the modest palace into a sumptuous baroque masterpiece. The Italian-born architect also built the baroque Catherine Palace in Tsarskoe Selo – later named Pushkin – during Elizabeth’s reign (1741-1762). The park surrounding the palace in Pushkin was designed during Catherine the Great’s rule as an English Garden, replete

\textsuperscript{2} Anne Gorsuch argues that postwar Soviet tourism was used to reinforce patriotic Soviet identity in reaction to the developing Cold War. See “‘There's No Place Like Home’: Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism,” \textit{Slavic Review} 62, no.4 (Winter 2003): 760-785. This type of tourism was used by other regimes at around the same time. See Sandie Holguin’s discussion of battlefield tourism, and the narratives expressed through it, during the Civil War in Spain. “‘National Spain Invites You’: Battlefield Tourism during the Spanish Civil War,” \textit{The American Historical Review} 110, no.5 (December 2005): 1399-1426.
with man-made ponds and ruins. Both Pavlovsk and Gatchina were closely associated with Catherine’s son, Paul. In the late 1700s, the Scottish architect Charles Cameron designed and built the neo-classical palace in Pavlovsk for the heir to the throne. Although the castle-like palace at Gatchina was used by Paul as a large-scale military camp to drill his soldiers, it was originally built and owned by Catherine’s lover, Count Grigorii Orlov in the 1770s and 1780s. Like the architectural marvels in the city centre, these magnificent palaces on the outskirts of the city spoke to the images of wealth and power that Russia’s rulers wished to portray.

The small towns surrounding the imperial residences were a popular destination of the upper and middle classes throughout the imperial period.³ As in Britain and other industrializing nations during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, suburbs were places in which the upper classes could spend time away from the overcrowded, unhealthy urban environment. As time went by, more and more people began to make use of these greener, fresher environments for rest and relaxation.⁴ In St. Petersburg, the suburbs became the most popular and fashionable places of rest for the city’s residents.⁵

After the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks brought the palaces and parks under the control of the Commissariat of Enlightenment as the “people’s property.” The commissariat then turned them into museums and places of rest and entertainment.⁶ The parks, with their ponds, fountains, forest paths, and pavilions provided a relaxing

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atmosphere with clean air, which proved to be a welcome retreat from the congested and dirty industrial areas of the city. In the suburban parks people could rent row boats, play tennis, ski in the winter, and take part in any number of cultural entertainments and sports. These opulent marvels of art, architecture, and landscape design offered a glimpse of the country’s history and cultural heritage. The founder of Leningrad’s Puppet Theatre, Lyubov Shaporina recorded her impressions of a visit to Peterhof in her diary in September 1936, emphasizing how the surroundings created a connection with the past. “It is so beautiful here,” she remarked. “A fairy tale frozen in time, la belle au bois dormant [the sleeping beauty]. Here things don’t seem to belong, it’s a vision of the past… And the sea! It may be just a puddle, but still it’s the sea, and of course the spirit of Peter lives on in these parts.”

Up to the outbreak of the war, Leningraders filled the suburban palace-park complexes to rest and encounter the past. Thousands of people streamed to the suburbs to enjoy their days off away from the hustle and bustle of the city. More than 100,000 people visited the Pavlovsk Palace-Museum per year in the period leading up to the war, and as many as 150,000 people visited Peterhof, the suburb famous for its fountains based on the design at Versailles, on weekends. Almost all Leningraders, including high-level officials, used the suburban palace-park complexes as a retreat throughout the 1930s. The city’s chief architect, Nikolai Baranov and his family, for example, often

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visited the suburbs to relax. They made the trip to Peterhof on the day that the Germans invaded. Baranov noted how the park was packed with well-dressed people admiring the fountains and the sea-side vista.11 This would be one of the last days that the suburban palaces and parks were open to visitors for over three years.

Four days after the war was announced, the city’s authorities and museum workers began to implement plans to save the treasures of Leningrad’s suburbs from destruction. These plans were developed in the mid-1930s, especially after the damage to artistic and historic monuments in the Spanish civil war had become known.12 Leningrad’s party and soviet leadership ordered all palace-museums to close their doors to the public and instructed directors to begin measures to conserve the buildings, exhibits, sculptures, and fountains.13 Just as in the city itself during the first days of the war, museum workers and others laboured frantically to protect the historic and artistic monuments through any and all means possible.14 “These were days of unbelievable haste,” wrote the director of the Pavlovsk Palace, Anna Zelenova, in her reminiscences of the period.15 It did not take long for the Germans to make their way east to the territory surrounding Leningrad. Before the suburbs were occupied, the enemy had begun firing on Soviet positions in and around the towns near the city.16 In these conditions, the staff

14 See chapter 2 of this dissertation for a detailed discussion of the activities implemented by the Leningrad authorities to protect the city’s landscape from wartime damage.
of the suburban palaces and parks had to move quickly in order to protect the monuments from destruction.

A key component of the plans to save the city’s artistic and cultural heritage was evacuation. Valuables from areas threatened with destruction, including Leningrad’s suburbs, were sent to the East almost immediately after the Germans declared war.\textsuperscript{17} Museum workers packed many of the moveable valuables from the suburbs into storage boxes and shipped them by train to Novosibirsk and Sarapul.\textsuperscript{18} Although hundreds of the most valuable treasures were evacuated, many historic and unique museum pieces remained in the palaces, including some of the larger exhibits, furniture, and statues in the parks. With the time they had before the Germans occupied the area, museum workers did whatever possible to hide the suburbs’ treasures. Ia.I. Shurygin, one of the museum workers of the Peterhof Palace (and postwar director), noted that it would have been impossible to evacuate the statues. In all of the suburbs, as in the centre of the city, several statues were taken down from their pedestals and buried in the grounds of the parks to protect them from the “tornado of war.”\textsuperscript{19} In other cases, museum workers used their intimate knowledge of the palaces to their advantage. In Peterhof, for instance, some of the bronze statues decorating the main fountain ensemble, the Great Cascade, were removed from their positions and hidden in a gallery under the palace.\textsuperscript{20} In Pavlovsk, the museum workers hid many of the exhibits in a secure cellar underneath the palace. They


\textsuperscript{18} Zelenova, \textit{Dvorets v Pavlovke}, 5.


\textsuperscript{20} Shurygin, \textit{Petrogof}, 76.
then sealed the cellar with bricks made to look old and dirty in order to camouflage the hiding place.\textsuperscript{21}

The plans that Leningrad’s museum workers had drawn up to protect the suburbs in the mid-1930s did not take into account the possibility of occupation.\textsuperscript{22} Soviet authorities had assured the people that the Red Army was invincible, and that if war should break out, it would take place on foreign soil.\textsuperscript{23} Indeed, the museum workers themselves did not expect that the suburbs would fall into German hands and that the palaces and parks would be left unprotected. Even the director of the Pavlovsk Palace was still working on the evacuation of valuables when the Germans entered the park.\textsuperscript{24} By early September, military activities forced all museum workers to leave the palaces and move what they could for storage to St. Isaac’s Cathedral in the centre of Leningrad.\textsuperscript{25} When the enemy occupied the suburbs, there was nothing that could be done to protect the monuments, for even the Red Army was forced to take up a position closer to the city itself.

News of the occupation of the suburbs was not taken well in the city. When the artist Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva, for example, heard from an acquaintance on 15 September that the Germans had occupied the town of Pushkin, she was quite troubled, writing only “what a disgrace! What anguish!” in her diary.\textsuperscript{26} In March 1942, art historian Anna Petrovna Chubova wrote to friends on the “mainland” (a term

\begin{footnotesize}
\bibitem{21} Zelenova, “Snariady rvutsia v Pavlovske,” 20.
\bibitem{23} See John Barber, “Popular Reactions in Moscow to the German Invasion,” Soviet Union/Union Soviétique 18, nos.1-3 (1991): 5-18.
\bibitem{24} Zelenova, Dvorets v Pavlovskie, 6.
\bibitem{25} E.L. Turova describes how shells damaged the Catherine Palace and some of the pavilions in Pushkin from 14 September onwards. See “Snariady rvutsia v Pushkine. Iz dnevnika khranitelia Ekaterininskogo parka, Evgenii Leonidovny Turovoi,” in Podvig veka, 18.
\bibitem{26} Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka, Otdel rukopisei (RNB OR), f.1015, d.57, l.86.
\end{footnotesize}
Leningraders used for the Soviet Union beyond the German ring around the city), noting that she was “unable to write calmly about the destruction of our poor palaces.”

The palaces and parks of the suburbs were very dear to many Leningraders, and the idea that the invading forces had destroyed them was not taken lightly.

From the moment the suburbs were occupied until the time they were liberated in January 1944, Leningrad’s cultural community worried about the fate of the famous palaces and parks. During the two-and-a-half year occupation of the suburbs, very scant information about the state of the palaces and parks reached the city. Rumours circulated that the Germans had completely wiped them off the face of the earth.

“Detskoe Selo [Pushkin] no longer exists,” wrote Ostroumova-Lebedeva on 20 September 1941, “It burned and the train station was blown up.” Although she later learned that the situation at that point was not as bad as she had heard, as the blockade and war progressed more and more information reached the city about the destruction in the suburbs. News from soldiers on the Leningrad front was particularly disheartening.

The future author and blockade chronicler, Daniil Granin, who was stationed in Pushkin before the occupation, had the opportunity to observe the palaces from a vantage point between the suburb and the city. “Through the binoculars,” he noted, “one could see how the palace had turned black and was going to ruins...One day a fire started in the palace. We watched as the black column of smoke rose into the frosty air.”

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27 For the letter, see Podvig Veka, 19.
29 RNB OR, f.1015, d.57, l.89(ob).
30 Daniil Granin, “Vstupitel’noe slovo,” in Vozrozhdenye iz pepla. Petrodvorets, Pushkin, Pavlovsk: Al’’bom (Leningrad: Avrora, 1989), 14. In September 2007, I spoke with Granin at a conference in St. Petersburg on the blockade. He told me that on New Year’s eve 1941, the Germans occupying Pushkin gathered in the Catherine Palace to celebrate. The Soviet forces could have fired on the palace and taken the lives of several Germans, including high commanders, but Granin said that they simply could not bring themselves to do it.
the other side of the city, the British war correspondent, Alexander Werth spoke with a
Red Army captain while peering out over a lookout post. Gesturing in the direction of
Peterhof, the captain told him about the condition of the monuments in that suburb,
noting that “The palace is burned; the park destroyed, the fountains either sent as scrap to
Germany, or mixed up with the earth. I was there not long ago. It's a horrible sight.”31 To
be sure, the country was appalled by a picture of the Great Palace in ruins that Soviet
forces confiscated from a German prisoner in 1943 and circulated in the press.32

These stories of devastation in the suburbs were supplemented by accounts in the
press of German destruction of cultural-historic monuments in all the areas they
occupied. Once the Red Army liberated regions from occupation, specialists from the
Academy of Architecture published reports of the senseless damage inflicted on the
country’s monuments.33 Accounts of the destruction of New Jerusalem in Istra, Lev
Tolstoy’s estate at Iasnaia Poliana, the historic monuments in Kalinin, and many others
made Leningraders expect the worst about the fate of the suburban palaces and parks.34

With the liberation of the area surrounding Leningrad in mid- to late-January 1944, the
people’s fears proved to be a reality. Of the grand imperial playgrounds, there was almost
nothing left.

33 See, for example, Akademiia arkhitektury SSSR, Soobshchenie Komissii po okhrane i vosstanovleniiu
arkhitekturnykh pamiatnikov. Pamiatniki zodchestva, razrushennye ili povrezhdennye nemetskimi
zakhvatichikami. Dokumenty i materialy, 1942, no.1.
34 See, for example, “Gitlerovskim vandalam-gromilam ne udastia skryt’ svoikh prestuplenii v Iasnoi
Poliane,” Literatura i iskusstvo, 13 January 1942.
Assessing the Destruction

When the Red Army recaptured the suburbs from the Germans, the extent of the destruction to the palaces and parks became known. The level of damage suffered by individual monuments in the suburbs differed, but in every case the destruction was significant, if not total. Once Soviet sappers had the opportunity to de-mine parts of the palaces and parks surrounding them, a series of groups travelled to the suburbs to review the damage and provide the necessary details to the appropriate governmental departments and the public. “Traces of war and death” were everywhere in the once lively suburbs.35 One could walk for hours, noted the director of the Peterhof palace-park complex, and find only “despondent, lifeless places marked with destruction and theft.”36 “We knew that the Hitlerites plundered and maimed a great deal,” wrote the director of the Pavlovsk Palace, “but what we had occasion to see after the banishment of the fascist invaders from Petrodvorets, Gatchina, Pushkin and Pavlovsk, exceeded our worst expectations.”37 The destruction became the subject of numerous accounts in the press, all of which presented the damage as deliberate acts of barbarism meant to erase Russian culture, memory, and identity.

Of all the destruction reviewed in the weeks following the liberation of the suburbs, the grand palaces provided the clearest examples of attacks against Russian heritage. The Germans stripped the palaces and parks bare and robbed any valuables that could be salvaged. They shipped furniture, paintings, statues, and all other valuable

35 Baranov, Siluety blokady, 149.
36 Shurygin, Petergof, 60.
37 Zelenova, Dvorets v Pavlovske, 7.
moveable property back to Germany.\textsuperscript{38} The Amber Room from the Catherine Palace in Pushkin is perhaps the most famous example of this theft of cultural property.\textsuperscript{39}

Although it has recently been reconstructed, the fate of the stolen amber walls is still the subject of considerable debate and research.\textsuperscript{40}

Of the five major suburban palaces that were occupied, the Germans did the least amount of damage to the Alexander Palace in Pushkin. The neighbouring Catherine Palace suffered the opposite fate. When specialists arrived in Pushkin to review its condition, they found a shell of the former tsarist residence. Shells, bullets, and fire had severely damaged the facades of the palace.\textsuperscript{41} The artistic valuables of the palace interiors, such as the parquet floors, which the occupiers had not stolen and taken back to Germany, were used as fuel for warmth.\textsuperscript{42} Due to a fire that the Germans set in the first days of the occupation, much of the palace’s decoration was destroyed, and the building itself stood without a roof over a large part of it for more than two years. “All that was preserved by the great roof of the palace disappeared,” wrote the author Konstantin Fedin, “as did the roof itself.”\textsuperscript{43} Indeed, the damage to the palace made it very difficult for people to see its former magnificence. The city’s chief architect likened the shell of

\textsuperscript{38} For a detailed account of German theft of cultural valuables from the Soviet Union, see M.A. Boitsov and T.A. Vasil’eva, eds., \textit{Kartoteka ‘Z’ operativnogo shtaba ‘Reikhsliaiter Rozenberg.’ Tsennosti kul’tury na okupirovannykh territoriakh Rossii, Ukrainy Belorusii, 1941-1942} (Moscow: Izdatel’svo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1998); M.S. Zinich, \textit{Pokhishchennye sokrovishcha: vyvoz natsistami rossiiskikh kul’turnykh tsennostei} (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii, RAN, 2003). Several reports and articles published about the destruction in the suburbs emphasize that there was a special commission set up in Germany to process and catalogue valuables taken from occupied regions.

\textsuperscript{39} For a popular history of the search for the amber room, see Catherine Scott-Clark and Andrew Levy, \textit{The Amber Room: The Fate of the World’s Greatest Lost Treasure} (New York: Berkley Books, 2005).

\textsuperscript{40} In 2000, Russia’s deputy minister of culture, Pavel V. Khoroshilov stated that “…the Amber Room has always represented the most painful, the most poignant of our losses.” Quoted in Celestine Bohlen, “Arts Abroad: A Homecoming for Treasures Looted in War,” \textit{New York Times}, 27 April 2000.

\textsuperscript{41} For a detailed review of the condition of the Catherine Palace at the beginning of February, 1944, see E.P. Turova’s report to the head of the Administration for Artistic Affairs, B.I. Zagurskii. RNB OR, f.1117, d.223, ll. 1-5.

\textsuperscript{42} RNB OR, f.1117, d.223, l.2.

the palace to a “skeleton,” as did Fedin, who noted that the semi-circular wings of the palace reminded him of “the curved arms of a skeleton, still hugging the parade courtyard.”\footnote{Baranov, \textit{Siluety blokady}, 147; Fedin, “Svidanie s Leningradom,” 48.} What had once been an architectural “fairy tale,” was reduced to a “mournful, devastated cemetery of architecture, painting, and sculpture covered in snow.”\footnote{Baranov, \textit{Siluety blokady}, 147. Baranov also noted that the palace had been turned into a “vile cave” by the German “degenerates.” 148.} However, the Catherine Palace escaped the full extent of the damage planned for it. When the Germans were forced to retreat, they placed eleven high-explosive bombs of up to three tonnes in the basement. Soviet troops found and disarmed them before they could explode.\footnote{See “Soobshchenie Chrezvychainoi Gosudarstvennoi Komissii,” 19.}

Much the same was encountered in the other suburbs occupied by the Germans. In Pavlovsk, the occupying forces set fire to the palace just as the town was liberated, resulting in an inferno which lasted for five days. As a result of the occupation and fire, the palace was left without a roof, many of its interiors were destroyed, and the frescoes and details decorating the monument from the beginning of the nineteenth century were severely damaged.\footnote{For a detailed review of the condition of the Pavlovsk Palace at the beginning of February, 1944, see A.I. Zelenova’s report to the head of the Administration for Artistic Affairs, B.I. Zagurskii. RNB OR, f.1117, d.222, ll.1-3.} In a similar act of criminality against culture, the Germans set fire to the palace in Gatchina before being driven out by the Red Army. According to reports, they doused the interiors with gasoline and set the palace ablaze as they left.\footnote{D. Rudnev and M. Sivolobov, “V Gatchine,” \textit{Pravda}, 28 January 1944. See also Vera Inber’s account in her \textit{Leningrad Diary}, trans. Serge M. Wolff and Rachel Grieve (London: Hutchinson of London, 1971), 184-185.} When the first group of museum workers came to review the palace on 1 February, from far off it appeared as if it remained in decent shape. When they approached the monument,
however, they realized that the destruction was near total.\textsuperscript{49} Not long after the fire, the palace was visited by Fedin, who described the damage. Standing on one of the palace’s towers looking over its layout, he noted how “inside the walls, where all the valuable contents of the historic palace were, my eye could find nothing except chaotic mounds of metal rubbish, bent steel rails and stone fragments.”\textsuperscript{50}

Of all the monuments of Russian imperial power in the suburbs of Leningrad, the worst damage was inflicted upon the Great Palace of Peterhof. Standing atop a cascade of fountains, looking out over the Lower Park and the Gulf of Finland, this palace was a symbol of Petrine Russia. When the Germans captured Peterhof, shelling caused the Great Palace to catch on fire. Museum workers who had not managed to leave the suburb witnessed the catastrophe and were forced at gun-point to watch as it burned. They pleaded with the Germans to let them extinguish the fire, explaining the significance and value of the palace, but “they would not allow it,” noted one of the workers. “We cried.”\textsuperscript{51} The palace not only burned, but the Germans also blew up its central section and part of the cascade of fountains in front of it both to desecrate this embodiment of Russian culture and to fortify their position against Soviet tanks.\textsuperscript{52} A report in the central press about Peterhof after its liberation discussed the state of the Great Palace, noting that “the Peterhof Palace is destroyed, burned. This sight is so cruel, so terrible, that at first it


\textsuperscript{50} Fedin, “Svidanie s Leningradom,” 49.

\textsuperscript{51} This account is from one of the future restorers, A.P. Udalenkov and is found in Shurygin, \textit{Petrogof}, 28. See Shurygin for a much more detailed account of the damage. Tikhomirova also includes a great deal of information in her recollections of the period. See \textit{Pamiatniki, liudi, sobytiia}, 51-60.

seems unreal. Only deformed cells of walls with gaping windows look onto the seaside.”

The parks, pavilions, and smaller palaces of the suburbs fared no better.

Discussions of German destruction in the suburbs of Leningrad emphasized the historic importance of these places, as well as their role in narrating the country’s past. Particularly important in this respect was the notion that historic monuments could tell the history of modern Russia. A newspaper article written on the day that Leningrad was liberated proclaimed that the suburbs “were always connected to the history of the motherland by the Russian people…There were many monuments of antiquity here, through which one could visually follow the history of the state for more than two hundred years.”

The report of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Crimes of the German-Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices echoed this notion that monuments were stone texts of the country’s past. Before detailing the damage done to the suburbs, the report outlined the history of the palaces and parks, noting especially that the monuments themselves embody the history of modern Russia. Peterhof, for example, is a symbol of Peter’s maritime reorientation of Russia and the defeat of the Swedes in the Great Northern War. The monuments in Pushkin, likewise, “are tightly connected to several important events in the history of Russia,” including the victory over the Turks in 1770.

The presentation of destruction, therefore, was almost always prefaced by a discussion of the historical significance of the monuments in question.

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53 “My otomstim za tebia, Petergof!,” Pravda, 28 January 1944.

54 Preservation movements in other countries during this period also recognized the importance of historical monuments in telling the story of the nation. See Rudy Kosher, Germany’s Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 224; See also Johnson, How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself.


56 “Soobshchenie Chrezvychanoi Gosudarstvennoi Kommissii,” 16.
The palaces may not have represented the most positive aspects of Russia’s past, but they nevertheless served as windows through which the past could be seen and re-enacted. The Gatchina Palace, for example, was one of the favourite residences of the Romanovs during the “most gloomy period” of the dynasty, the 19th century. “No other emperor’s palace contained so much autocratic essence of the Russian monarchy,” wrote Fedin, “and for that reason, the Gatchina castle was an irreplaceable material monument of our history.” The fact that the palaces played such an important role in the country’s culture and heritage made it particularly alarming that elements of it were erased during the war. A Red Army captain discussed the loss of the country’s heritage to a British journalist: “You cannot imagine with what reverence our young people tip-toed along the parquet floors of the [Great Peterhof] palace…There was no reverence for the wicked old Tsars in this tip-toeing. But there was reverence for this great piece of our national heritage. It belonged to us, to our culture, don’t you see, and now, now there's nothing but rubble; and it's the same everywhere.” The author Nikolai Tikhonov also commented on the Germans’ attack on Russian history in Peterhof by writing “That living piece of our history is dead, it has been killed.”

It was clear that the damage in the suburbs of Leningrad did not result from unavoidable military actions, but was deliberately inflicted by the Germans over the entire course of the occupation. Vandalism, destruction, and theft were “intrinsic elements” of German operations, all of which had the goal of erasing the culture of the

57 Fedin, “Svidanie s Leningradom,” 49.
58 Werth, Leningrad, 42.
enemy. The authorities quickly circulated accounts of this deliberate damage to the Soviet people, and used the exposes to “publicly prosecute” the Germans for their crimes against Russian heritage, to mobilize a sense of hatred for the enemy, and to show a higher level of culture (or love for culture), in the Soviet Union. This use of cultural destruction for the purposes of propaganda, notes historian Nicola Lambourne, was a common practice used by all belligerent countries during the Second World War. It was employed by states to both manipulate feelings and mobilize the population. “Each side encouraged hatred of the enemy by characterizing the other as barbarians, not destroying architecture thoughtlessly and accidentally,” writes Lambourne, “but rather intentionally and systematically.”

By presenting the Germans’ actions in the suburbs as deliberate acts employed to erase Russian history and culture, the Soviet authorities invested the palaces and parks with wartime and blockade significance. The monuments were no longer just symbols of the imperial Russian past. Rather, they were wartime targets and now stood as examples of German barbarity. The understanding of historic monuments changed

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60 See Robert Bevan’s discussion of the destruction of architecture during war as a deliberate policy to annihilate opposing cultures. The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 28. During the war there were discussions of the Germans’ treatment of historic monuments in Western Europe and elsewhere in the Soviet press. See, for example, I. Matsa, “Gitlerovskie vandaly,” Literatura i iskusstva, 29 May 1943.


63 It should be noted that the Leningrad authorities also discussed the destruction of monuments in the city itself as acts deliberately meant to destroy historic monuments and erase Russian culture. See Chrezvychainaa Gosudarstvennaia Komissiia po ustanovleniiu i rassledovaniu zlodeianii nemetskogo-fashistskikh zakhvatichkov i ikh soobshchnikov, Akt leningradskoi gorodskoi komissii o prednamerennom istreblenii nemetskogo-fashistskimi varvarami mirnykh zhitelei Leningrada i ushcherbe, nanesennom khoziaistvu i kul’turo-istoricheskim pamiatnikam goroda za period voiny i blokady (Leningrad: OGIZ-Gospolitizdat, 1945).
throughout Europe during the Second World War, argues Lambourne. They came to mean something different, “whether it was an exaggerated or jingoistic version of their earlier significance or a new revised version, taking account of bomb damage.”

Historian Adrian Bantjes argues that iconoclasm and deliberate destruction rarely achieve their purpose of relegating an image to oblivion. “Far from annihilating the icon,” he writes, “[iconoclasm] actually can have a ‘positive’ impact, transforming instead of obliterating the object and its meaning(s).” The meaning of the suburbs was indeed altered to reflect the nine-hundred days of suffering and destruction of the war and blockade. No longer could people visit, talk about, or think of the palaces and parks without recalling the cruel acts that the Germans committed against them.

Because the meaning of these suburbs as historic monuments and places of rest was so great, the accounts of destruction presented to the public called forth hatred of the Germans for the crimes committed against Russian and Soviet heritage. Newspaper articles bearing the titles “We will avenge you, Peterhof,” and “The Stones of Peterhof Call for Revenge,” for example, made promises that the loss of the magnificent examples of Russian architecture would not go unpunished. Implicit in these calls for vengeance was a desire to resurrect that which had been destroyed during the war. The author of

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64 Lambourne, War Damage in Western Europe, 121.
66 Yekelchiky notes that the destruction of a historic area in Kiev was blamed on the Nazis and used to incite hatred and feelings of vengeance. See “The Civic Duty to Hate,” 534. An article in the press noted the following in regards to hatred and vengeance: “The ashes of Peterhof burn the hearts of our warriors, calling for them to advance more quickly, and beat the enemy with more force.” See A. Mikhailov and V. Vasilevskii, “Pepel Petergofa,” Krasnaia zvezda, 21 January 1944.
68 Tret’iakov argues that the hate summoned up by the destruction of the palaces made people want to restore the palaces. The restoration, therefore, took on a political character. See “Spasenie istoriko-kul’turnyk pamiatnikov,” 177.
the later article, for example, proclaimed: “We will restore all that the German barbarians destroyed, and the new Peterhof will shine with the light of victory, in which our past will merge with our great future.” Many other articles and reports in the press stressed the future restoration of the suburban palace-park complexes. “In spite of the enormous mutilations…” stated one report, “they will be restored.”

What to do with the Suburban Palaces?

Although the press optimistically called for the restoration of the suburban palaces, the level of destruction and the conditions faced by the country as a whole certainly made it seem that restoration would be difficult, if not impossible. Some people felt that it would be best to leave the ruins as a monument to the events experienced by the country during the Great Patriotic War. The writer and Soviet war correspondent, Il’ia Ehrenburg, for example, wrote that “the external appearance of the palace in Pushkin can perhaps be preserved, but the palace in Peterhof is incurable [neizlechim]; it would be best to leave it as magnificent ruins, like the ruins of the Acropolis, reminding future generations of architectural genius and the barbarity of the fascists.” The war correspondent, Harrison Salisbury, agreed with this and noted that most of the surviving

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69 Tikhonov, “Kamni Petergofa vzvyaiut o mshchenii,” p 3. Tikhonov wrote elsewhere that “The ruins of Peterhof, Pavlovsk, Pushkino and Gatchina appeared before the victorious Leningrad forces, calling for vengeance with all the heartrending tragedy of their ruins, shell holes and charred and crumbling walls. Even those of the men who had never before seen their splendour in peacetime could not help being moved at the sight of what the barbarians had done to this heritage of our past.” See “Victory. Leningrad in January 1944,” Heroic Leningrad: Documents, Sketches and Stories of its Siege and Relief, trans. J. Fineberg, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1945), 149.


Leningrad intelligentsia felt the same way.\textsuperscript{72} There is also evidence to suggest that some members of the local and central authorities felt that the palaces could not be restored when they viewed them immediately after they were liberated.\textsuperscript{73} The documents, however, paint a different picture. Although there were some voices which did not call for full-scale restoration, the resolve to restore among preservationists, architectural authorities, and many members of the country’s cultural elite was firm.\textsuperscript{74}

Many believed that if they did not work at restoring the suburban palaces and parks, they “would be unworthy sons of the motherland and our beautiful city!”\textsuperscript{75} The preservationist, V.K. Makarov, for example, in his “Appeal about the Restoration of Leningrad’s Suburbs” addressed to the artistic workers of the city, wrote: “Future generations will not forgive us if we – people who have known, seen, and felt the cultural heritage of the Great Motherland that is now in danger – do not take all measures to restore the artistic monuments of Peterhof, Pushkin, Pavlovsk, and Gatchina.”\textsuperscript{76} This task, however, would not be easy. There were a number of problems facing the planners and authorities in the first months after the war. Even if it was possible, how much should be restored? What would the palaces be used for? From where should the process begin?

\textsuperscript{73} Susan Massie, for example, states that P.S. Popkov – chairman of the city soviet – said that the ruins should be razed to the ground when he saw them first. See \textit{Pavlovsk: The Life of a Russian Palace} (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 277.
\textsuperscript{74} Rudy Koshar discusses the debates surrounding ruined monuments in Germany after WWII. He notes that although there was some sentiment to have ruins preserved, in general there was an “allergy to ruins” making people want to see them removed or restored to their former appearance. See \textit{From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990} (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 153-154.
\textsuperscript{75} E.I. Katonin stated that this was how he felt when he returned to the city from evacuation shortly after the blockade was lifted. He made this statement at a 29 March 1946 meeting to discuss the work of Leningrad’s Preservation Inspectorate. The stenographic report notes applause from the audience. See \textit{Arkhiv Komiteta po gosudarstvennomu kontroliu, ispolzovaniu i okhrane pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury (KGIOP)}, f.950-II-2, d.N-3349/1, l.16.
\textsuperscript{76} RNB OR, f.1135, op.1, d.24, l.l.4(ob)-5.
These questions and others plagued the authorities. What would eventually become of the suburbs resulted from the debates and discussions of this period.

The fate of the suburbs was a question that concerned many people. The most insistent voice for restoration came from the artistic community in Leningrad, especially from the staff of the suburban palace-museums, the city’s architects and artists, and from Leningrad’s State Inspectorate for the Preservation of Monuments (formerly the Department for the Protection of Monuments). The Preservation Inspectorate insisted immediately after the suburbs were liberated that restoration was possible and began petitioning the authorities in Moscow and Leningrad to provide for the conservation of the palaces before restoration could begin.77 In addition to this, a series of meetings were held to decide what exactly should be done with the “skeletons” in the towns surrounding Leningrad. On 18 February, one such meeting was held in the Leningrad House of Architects, the main speaker of which was the head of the Inspectorate, Belekhov. At the meeting the “infamy” of the Germans was stressed as speakers called for the need to mobilize the public for restoration.78 F.F. Oleinik, a young restorer fighting on the Leningrad front, attended the meeting and voiced his opinion about the need to restore. He argued that leaving the palaces in ruins as “monuments to fascism” was unacceptable. “Beauty was created here,” exclaimed Oleinik, “and the loss of this beauty makes all humanity feel poorer. We must reconstruct it. Our beautiful palaces are wounded, they are waiting for us.”79 A participant of this meeting, M. Tikhomirova (the chief curator of the Peterhof Palace-Museum) noted that all in attendance felt this way and expressed

77 KGIOP, f.226-G, d.p-1024, ll. 92, 93, 94, 96.
78 Iz istorii sovetskoï arkhiitektury, 128-129.
79 This quote comes from Zelenova’s account of the meeting. See “Vozrozhdenie,” 334. Shortly after the meeting Oleinik was released from the Red Army and began work as the head restorer in Pavlovsk.
their desire and enthusiasm to see the palaces and parks restored. The level of damage, however, made it clear to the audience that priorities must be set and compromises made. Restoration would not be complete, but rather would have to be carried out “to various degrees.”

Those attending the meeting agreed that a special commission of preservation experts should be convened to assess the damage and discuss the possibility of restoration.

On 21 and 22 March, museum workers met again for a conference to discuss the commission’s findings and attempt to set goals to be reached in the restoration of the palaces. The theme of Russian culture, and the loss of it, was at the centre of people’s attention. Professor A.P. Udalenkov, an important figure in Leningrad’s restoration, made the point that cultures need landmarks from which to grow, and that the suburban palaces were just such landmarks. Due to their significance to Russian culture, he argued, they must be restored: “We cannot say that these two centuries [eighteenth and nineteenth] do not interest us and that we can pass them by. I suggest that we are obliged to preserve, to the best of our abilities, all that remains, to strain all of our energy, our minds, in order to search out genuine documentation for the restoration of all that was lost.”

These restored palaces, noted many in attendance, should be used as museum premises which would reflect the history of imperial Russia. Peterhof’s palace, for example, would be the home of an exhibition about the Petrine period. The Pavlovsk Palace, it was suggested, could be a museum reflecting the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries (the periods of Paul, Alexander I, and Nicholas I).

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80 Tikhomirova, Pamiatniki, liudi, sobytia, 58. Zelenova also discusses this meeting. See “Vozrozhdenie,” 336-337.
81 Gosudarstvennyi muzei-zapovednik Pavlovsk (GMZ Pavlovsk), Nauchno-vospomogatel’ny fond. Inv. 11708/3, chast’ I, l.60.
82 KGIOP, f.226-G, d.p-1024, l.71(ob).
The Catherine Palace in Pushkin, participants argued, must be used as a museum of Russian art of the post-Petrine era. In Gatchina, it was suggested that the palace become a museum of “Russian glory.”83 Even though the Germans had attempted to erase the history embodied in these monuments, the cultural activists in Leningrad after the blockade were determined to rescue the history of the nation from oblivion and present it to Soviet citizens in a structured, chronological manner. The central parts of the palaces, it was agreed, should be restored to their original historic appearance and used for these purposes.84

The participants of the conference also emphasized the necessity of using the palaces and parks as places of rest. After years of war and deprivation, citizens wanted an easier life.85 The authorities, for their part, were interested in cultivating a healthy, cultured body politic.86 In Leningrad, this struck a special chord, given the disastrous effects of the blockade on the health and morale of the population.87 The municipal authorities were intent on providing the people of the city the opportunity to enjoy their free time and recuperate in healthy surroundings.88 With this in mind, the majority of conference participants agreed that those parts of the palaces and parks which were too badly damaged to repair immediately, or had never before been used as museum

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83 The discussion of creating historic and artistic museums in the palaces came up at a number of points during the conference. See KGIOP, f.226-G, d.p-1024, ll. 54-54, 61(ob), 67(ob)-68, 72-74, 77, 79. See also Balaeva, Zapiski khranitelia Gatchinskogo dvortsa, 146.
84 GMZ Pavlovsk, Nauchno-vospomogatel'ny fond. Inv. 11708/3, , chast’ I, l.61.
86 For a discussion of the need to create a healthy and patriotic citizenship for the needs of the modern state, see David L. Hoffmann, Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941 (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2003).
87 For more on this, see John Barber and Andrei Dzeniskevich, eds., Life and Death in Besieged Leningrad (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
88 See, for example, the articles “O letnem otdeyke trudiashchikhsia,” and “Vosstanovim zdorov’e leningradtcov,” Leningradskaiia pravda, 1 June 1945.
premises, were to be employed for such “contemporary needs.” Much of the space on the first floor of the Peterhof and Catherine palaces, for example, were to serve the needs of the people visiting the parks and museums on the upper floors. The director of the Pavlovsk Palace, Zelenova, proposed that its wings could be used as houses of rest. She also suggested that certain areas of the park be used for sport, including tennis courts which could be constructed on the “grave of Fritzes.” As the plans for restoration of the suburbs developed over the next year, a great deal of emphasis was placed on the use of the suburban parks and palaces as places of culture and rest for the people of Leningrad.

The arguments for restoring the palaces did not simply stem from the desires of cultural enthusiasts who wanted to see Leningrad’s landscape and history restored, although this certainly played a key role. Even though destruction had been thorough, specialists argued that enough fragments and documentation remained that would allow for restorative work and not just clumsy replicas of that which was destroyed. In Pavlovsk, for example, all the halls could “easily be restored” because, in spite of the fire that lasted a number of days, much of the moulded adornment remained on the walls. A

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89 Due to the level of damage in Peterhof, most of the interior was to be used for more contemporary purposes. In 1948 Nikolai Baranov wrote that alongside exhibition halls there would be a concert hall, a restaurant, and a library. See Arkhitektura i storitel’stvo Leningrada, (Leningrad: Leningradskoe gazetno-zhurnal’noe i knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1948), 70.

90 KGIOP, f.226-G, d.p-1024, ll.61-62. The chief curator of the Gatchina Palace, S.N. Balaeva, however, argued that the parks should not be used for sport because one could “freely play in other places. We must care not only for the present, but also the future…We must not forget that we are preserving monuments of an epoch…” GMZ Pavlovsk, Nauchno-vospomogatel’nyy fond. Inv. 11708/3, chast’ 1, l.63.

91 Preservationists and architects stressed that that palaces be restored as close to the original as possible and that falsifications should be avoided at all costs. See the project for the restoration of the Pavlovsk Palace. Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv nauchno-tekhnicheskikh dokumentatsii Sankt-Peterburga, (TsGANTD SPb), f.386, op.1-4, d.21, l.54. Likewise, the Leningrad Architectural-Restoration Workshops refused to use imitations in their work. For example, see Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva Sankt-Peterburga (TsGALI SPb), f.277, op.1, d.566, l.9.
great deal was damaged, but according to reports “the appearance of the rooms was not lost.”

Other than the decorations that remained in the palaces, plans, drawings, blueprints, measurements and photos – the necessary information – existed that would facilitate the restoration process. The collection of these materials began even before the suburbs were liberated. In August 1942, for example, the Committee for the Registration and Preservation of Monuments of Art instructed the Leningrad Administration for Artistic Affairs to begin collecting materials that had been removed from the suburbs for future work on the palaces. This work continued throughout the war and had an impact on conservation work after the suburbs were liberated. In April 1944, the Leningrad authorities circulated orders for all museum property and decoration in the suburbs to be collected to facilitate the process of conservation and restoration. Furthermore, the evacuation of museum property and valuables during the war proved to be indispensable. Because so much had been kept out of harm’s way, the possibilities for accurate restoration were greatly increased.

The idea of restoring the palaces to their original appearance for use as museum premises was supported by a special commission of experts sent from Moscow to review the ruins in May 1944. The commission was composed of representatives from the Committee for Architectural Affairs, and the Committee for Artistic Affairs. “After attentively reviewing the damage,” stated the chairman of the Committee for

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92 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.82, l.5(ob).
93 Piliavskii, “Razrusheniia prigorodov Leningrada,” 23. Oleinik, in his address to the participants of the meeting in which restoration was discussed, also noted that there was indeed enough documentary material in Leningrad to allow for restoration.
94 KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.49, (unpaginated); See Tikhomirova’s discussion of the activities of suburban palace-museum workers throughout the blockade. Pamiatniki, liudi, sobyttia, 7-50.
95 KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.58, (unpaginated).
Architectural Affairs, Arkady Mordvinov, “we came to the conclusion that we can restore these magnificent works of architecture of our motherland in all their former brilliance and greatness.”  

Needless to say, this conclusion of Moscow-based experts had an important impact on the desires of those who argued for the resurrection of the suburban parks and palaces. By the summer of 1944, for example, more than thirty thousand unsolicited rubles had been donated to the cause of restoring the suburban monuments.

Restoration, however, came up against a powerful obstacle which threatened to derail preservationists’ plans to restore the historic monuments. At the April 1944 Leningrad party plenum, party leader Zhdanov briefly discussed the State Defence Committee’s designs for the suburbs of Leningrad. Rather than expressing enthusiasm for the restoration of historic monuments as museums in ways envisioned by Leningrad’s architectural and museum community, he announced that the suburbs would merely be used as places of rest. He noted that the suburbs and their monuments had “fallen into the death zone, and had experienced the greatest destruction and barbarity of the enemy.…” In calling for the restoration of suburbs as places of rest, he singled out Peterhof and Pavlovsk because their parks were preserved better than others. Nothing was mentioned about the restoration of the palaces.

It became clear in the middle of June that Zhdanov would not support, in his capacity as the Leningrad party first secretary, draft resolutions to the central government from the city soviet calling for the restoration of suburban palace-museums. Rather, he

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96 “Vosstanovlenie leningradskikh dvortsov,” Literatura i iskusstvo, 27 May 1944. See also Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitектury, 129-130. Suzanne Massie writes that the committee from Moscow arrived in March before the conference discussed above. The documents and press coverage, however, discuss only the May visit. See Pavlovsk, 280.

97 KGIOP, f.226-G, d.p-1024, l.50(ob); f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.61, (unpaginated).

98 Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f.77, op.1, d.793, l.45.
reaffirmed the State Defence Committee’s decision to restore the parks in the suburbs without restoration of the palaces. It seems likely that Zhdanov was unwilling to put himself on the line by contradicting the orders set down by the State Defence Committee. It is also quite possible that the image of the palaces in ruins made him believe that they could never be restored in spite of the commission’s recommendation. The idea that the palaces might never be restored sent many members of the Soviet Union’s cultural community into a state of panic. In response to this, Belekhov sent several letters to “allies” in Moscow to try to get Zhdanov’s decision overturned. For the advocates of restoration, the idea of simply providing places of rest without cultural establishments was problematic. In making their case for the restoration of the palaces, they argued that places of rest need museums and exhibitions to entertain and provide “recreational learning” [poznavatel’nyi otdek] to the labourers of Leningrad. The restored palaces and pavilions, and the exhibits to be held in them, would provide that function.

The proponents of restoration emphasized the fact that a commission of experts had proclaimed that the suburbs could indeed be restored to their former appearance. Zhdanov’s callous attitude toward Leningrad’s monuments of history was “especially offensive,” given that it was “technically absolutely possible” to resurrect the beloved palaces. Invoking precedents for restoration of palaces on a large scale, Belekhov pointed to the fact that some of these suburban palaces had burned and were restored in the past. He went on to discuss examples from the West, where historic monuments had been restored at various points throughout history. If these palaces in imperial Russia and

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99 Massie, Pavlovsk, 280.
100 KGIOP, f.226-G, d.P-1024, l.50(ob).
101 KGIOP, f.226-G, d.P-1024, l.50(ob).
in Western countries could be restored, went the argument, certainly monuments of history in the Soviet Union could be raised from the ashes.\textsuperscript{102}

The advocates of restoration pleaded for preservationists in Moscow to organize public opinion among the leaders of “society” to support the resurrection of the suburban palaces. Several prominent people, including the author Alexei Tolstoi, members of Moscow Theatre of Arts, a number of academics, and Metropolitan Nikolai, for example, had already “promised their participation in the battle for the restoration of the suburbs.”\textsuperscript{103} Belekhov asked the preservationists in Moscow to press the chairmen of the Committee for Architectural Affairs (Mordvinov) and Artistic Affairs (Khrapchenko) to present the Soviet government with projects for restoring the suburbs. “The fate of one of the most magnificent pages in the history of the culture of our country,” wrote Belekhov to A.I. Shchusev (a member of the commission which recommended the restoration of the palaces), “depends on how comrades Mordvinov and Khrapchenko will respond.”\textsuperscript{104}

Although the details of exactly how the projects for restoration finally were approved is unclear, what is certain is that Khrapchenko and Mordvinov advocated for the restoration of the suburban palaces and parks. They headed up the commission of

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\textsuperscript{102} KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.61, (unpaginated). Others made the connection between the restoration of historic monuments in the West and in Russia. E.I. Katonin discussed this at a meeting in 1946: “The restoration of the Cathedral in Reims after the barbarous bombardment of German artillery comes to mind, and we have to believe that we will restore our suburbs, since the task that confronted the French was a much more difficult task than the one before us.” See KGIOP, f.950-II-2, d. N-3349/1, l.16.

\textsuperscript{103} See Belekhov’s letter to the chairman of the Committee for Artistic Affairs, M.B. Khrapchenko. KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.61, (unpaginated). Preservationists in the USSR in the postwar period depended on support from the public, and especially the intelligentsia, in the work to save historic monuments that were either damaged by the Germans or had fallen into disrepair. See M.I. Rzianin’s (head of the Main Administration for the Protection and Restoration of Monuments) speech at the All-Union gathering of leading workers from the republican administrations for architectural affairs in December 1944. Iu.L. Kosenkova, Sovetskii gorod 1940-x – pervoi poloviny 1950-x godov. Ot tvorcheskikh poiskov k praktike stroitel’stva (Moscow: URSS, 2000), 257-258.

\textsuperscript{104} See N.N. Belekhov’s letter to A.I. Shchusev (a member of the commission which recommended the restoration of the palaces), KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.61, (unpaginated). See also, KGIOP, f.226-G, d.P-1024, l.50(ob).
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experts which concluded that restoration was possible and desirable. They continued to call for measures to be taken to protect, preserve, and restore what remained after the liberation.\footnote{In November 1944, for example, Khrapchenko and Mordvinov wrote to Molotov asking for help in preserving the suburban palaces. See Rossiiski gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomii (RGAE), f.9342, op.1, d.2, l.90.} Discussions also continued to take place in the Leningrad soviet about the need to restore. One of the leading figures in the palaces’ restoration, A.M. Kuchumov, notes that several meetings were held at Baranov’s office in May and June about the suburbs. Those in attendance supported the Moscow commission’s decision to restore the palaces, as well as the outcome of the March conference, which called for historic museums to be located in them.\footnote{Letter from 17 June 1944. A.M. Kuchumov, Stat’i, vospominaniiia, pis’ma, ed. N.S. Tret’iakov (St. Petersburg: Art-Palas, 2004), 123.} Stalin himself appears to have played a role in having the suburbs restored. Belekhov’s Preservation Inspectorate forwarded information to him demonstrating the possibility of restoration.\footnote{Massie, Pavlovsk, 280-281.} V.K. Makarov notes that at the end of May 1944, the prominent cultural activist, I.E. Grabar’ had approached him to take a leading role in restoration. According to Makarov, Grabar’ had a copy of a decree from Stalin stating that the palaces were to be restored and that funding would be allotted. “In the past few days,” he wrote, “one senses a great breakthrough in the relationship to the suburban palaces.”\footnote{See Makarov’s diary entry from 27 May in Tret’iakov, “‘My…dolzhny schitat’ sebia mobilizovannymi,” 96.} In the end, these and other efforts to have the decision overturned met with success.

What eventually evolved out of these discussions and disputes over the future of the suburban palaces and parks was a mixture of historic restoration and cultural-enlightenment work aimed at providing the labourers of Leningrad with places of rest. Control over the palaces and parks themselves, for example, was transferred from the
Leningrad Administration for Artistic Affairs to the newly created Department of Cultural-Enlightenment Work of the Leningrad city soviet. The restoration of the suburban palaces and parks was “one of the main, and most difficult, goals” of the five-year plan of the Department of Cultural-Enlightenment Work. The Leningrad authorities called for partial restoration of the Catherine and Alexander palaces in Pushkin, the Pavlovsk Palace, and several of the smaller palaces and pavilions in all suburbs by 1950. The Great Palace in Peterhof was to have its exterior restored to complement the fountain and park ensemble. The Gatchina Palace was not slated for restoration during this period because of the level of destruction and the lack of authentic detail remaining to facilitate the process. “The restoration of the suburbs and their cultural-historic valuables,” announced the press, “is a testimony to the exceptional care of the Soviet government for monuments of culture, as well as for the rest and relaxation of labourers.”

**Restoration**

Once given the opportunity to begin restoration, the country’s preservationists approached the task with the Bolshevik mindset of storming a fortress. The planners in the Department of Cultural-Enlightenment Work and at the State Inspectorate for the

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110 Tsentral’niy gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga (TsGA SPb), f.2076, op.5, d.43, l.64.

111 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.29, d.48, l.2; TsGA, f.2076, op.5, d.43, l.65; “O piatiletnem plane vosstanovleniiia i razvitiia gorodskogo khoziaistva Leningrada na 1946-1950 gg. Reshenie XIII sessii leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiaschikhkhsia ot 17 Ianvaria 1947 g.” Vechernii Leningrad, 1 February 1947.

Preservation of Monuments had the utopian idea that the palaces could be raised from the ruins in just a few years. Leningrad’s restoration practice in the period immediately after the war was oriented, like many Soviet projects, towards the complete restoration of destroyed monuments. The process in the suburbs, however, would prove to be frustrating, chaotic, poorly-supplied, under-funded and ever-changing. Several “advances” were made in the “battle for restoration” during the period under discussion, but much more work remained to be done in the years following the first postwar five-year plan.

The first stage of restoration involved conserving what was left of the monuments as quickly as possible to prevent further damage from the elements. While the disputes, disagreements, and discussions continued about what to do with the palaces and parks, efforts to clear the rubble, perform landscaping tasks, collect valuable decorative fragments, and preserve the ruins had begun. Shurygin, the director of the Peterhof palace, noted that museum workers, realizing the massive amount of destruction and the money needed for restoration, believed that it was “necessary to take care of all that managed to be preserved during the war and resurrect it after victory.” In April 1944, orders were circulated to begin work immediately to conserve the palaces and bring the surrounding areas, including the parks, into “elementary order.” Research was to be carried out and plans for construction work in each of the suburbs were to be presented to the Leningrad city soviet no later than June of that year. Conservation work was slated to continue until the end of 1945. By that time, all artistic detail was to be protected by

114 Shurygin, Petergof, 10.
115 KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.58, (unpaginated).
constructing roofs over the palaces and sealing off window openings and door frames, and the parks were to be opened to the public.\footnote{116}{TsGA SPb, f.2076, op.5, d.43, ll.126-126(об). The parks in Pushkin and Pavlovsk, it was believed, would be restored completely by 1947.}

With the onset of spring in 1944, many of the city’s workers were sent to the suburban parks to help preserve what remained of the historic landscapes. The authorities had no illusions about restoring the parks by the summer of 1944, but they were intent on having them in order and opened to the public in the spring of 1945. During the summer of 1944, for example, Leningrad authorities assigned one hundred people to the Administration of Palaces and Parks in Pushkin to clear rubble and fallen trees from alleys and open spaces, to repair and clear the park’s paths, and to fill trenches and craters.\footnote{117}{TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1180, l.51; TsGALI SPb, f.411, op.2, d.4, l.3.}

Similar measures were taken in other parks. Much of the work to be carried out was done during voskresniki and subbotniki – weekend days during which ordinary workers were recruited to labour in their off-time at restoration projects. “Several times we went to the parks of Pushkin, Pavlovsk and Petrodvorets [which were] mutilated by the fascists on voskresniki,” noted a former worker of the Kirov factory.\footnote{118}{N.V. Kukushkin, “Vesnoi 1944 goda…,” Vozrozhdenie, 29.}

People arrived in the suburbs from all districts of the city on specified days to bring the parks into order and perform other tasks. During one voskresnik in Peterhof on 16 July 1944, for example, 1,368 people took part and managed to perform a great deal of work over the course of the day.\footnote{119}{Tsentral’niy gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov Sankt-Peterburga (TsGAIPD SPb), f.25, op.10, d.431, ll.8-9. See A.A. Kedrinskii et. al., Letopis’ vozrozhdeniia. Vostanovlenie pamiatnikov arkhitektury Leningrada i prigorodov, razrushennykh v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny nemetsko-fashistskimi zakhvatschikami (Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo literature po stroitel’stvu, 1971), 53.}

In May 1945, the Leningrad soviet obliged the city’s Komsomol to organize mass voskresniki to prepare the Pushkin parks for their opening in June. The soviet also dispatched a thousand soldiers to the parks for seven days to ensure the work was
accomplished.\textsuperscript{120} These voskresniki and subbotniki proved to be an exceptionally important source of manpower during a period when few people were available to work full-time in the suburbs. Without the use of these labourers, the conservation and restoration work in the suburbs would have been much more difficult and time-consuming, if not impossible.\textsuperscript{121}

Museum directors were often left to their own devices to carry out the necessary work on both the palaces and parks. They were sometimes forced to look for alternative means to ensure that tasks were accomplished. Because Pavlovsk was not technically one of Leningrad’s districts, for example, there were fewer workers available for voskresniki in this suburb. To overcome this disadvantage, Zelenova, the director of the palace, made agreements with several organizations, which, in return for work to preserve the park, would be given all the deadwood that they cleared to use for fuel.\textsuperscript{122} The director of the Peterhof Palace, made a similar agreement with a military college located in the suburb.\textsuperscript{123} He also found other means to accomplish preservation and restoration tasks when the regular channels proved insufficient. A few days before the opening in 1945, the city authorities reviewed the state of the park and demanded that certain extra tasks be carried out. Given that the needed amount of manpower was not available, Shurygin turned to a prisoner-of-war camp located not far from the palace for assistance. During the evening and night of 20 June 1945, two hundred German prisoners carried out the necessary work.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{120} KGIOP, f.226-G, d. P-1037, ll.123-124.
\textsuperscript{121} Zelenova, “Iz vospominaniia direktora Pavlovska,” Vozrozhdenie, 340.
\textsuperscript{122} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.82, l.5. Because Pavlovsk was officially part of Leningrad province, the people that were available for voskresniki there were, for the most part, sent to work at restoring agriculture.
\textsuperscript{123} Shurygin, Petergof, 93-94.
\textsuperscript{124} Shurygin, Petergof, 100-102.
Initiatives like these, as well as the use of the city’s population on their days off, allowed for a tremendous amount of work to be done at a very low cost. Because much of the work in the parks did not demand skilled labourers, the authorities were able to draw on a large pool of workers to meet their needs. This type of labour would carry on throughout the period under discussion. With each year more and more work was successfully completed in the suburban parks, and the prospects of seeing them restored to their prewar appearance by 1950 became a real possibility.\(^\text{125}\)

The situation with the suburb’s historic monuments, however, proved to be much more troublesome than the work in the parks. From the very beginning, restoration was plagued with problems. Because of the massive amount of work to be done in the city centre, most of the city’s construction agencies were otherwise occupied with rebuilding and restoration projects. The lack of able-bodied and skilled workers in Leningrad further complicated the matter.\(^\text{126}\) In response to this, the city’s authorities reached out to state institutions in an attempt to facilitate the conservation and restoration process. In June, 1944, for example, the chairman of the city Soviet, P.S. Popkov, wrote the commander of the Leningrad front, Marshal L.A. Govorov, to request that the Military-Construction Administration help in building roofs over the palaces in order to protect what remained.\(^\text{127}\) Govorov, according to Baranov, had earlier promised to provide any help necessary in the restoration of Leningrad’s historic monuments.\(^\text{128}\) An agreement was

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\(^{125}\) See, for example, the discussion of the work done in the Catherine Park by 1948. It was estimated that the park would soon be completely restored to its former appearance. TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.566, l.31.

\(^{126}\) During the first year of restoration, the lack of skilled workers was acutely felt by all industries and establishments in the city. The city soviet and party committee were actively engaged in recruiting workers from all over the Soviet Union, especially Leningraders who had been evacuated. This recruitment process concerned the suburban palaces as well. See TsGA SPb, f. 7384, op.17, d. 1207, ll.2, 3, 43, 69.

\(^{127}\) TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1180, l.32.

\(^{128}\) Baranov, *Silueti blokady*, 158.
made about the measures to be taken to preserve the palaces, but more than a month later, the work had not begun because of the lack of available manpower.¹²⁹

With the fall quickly approaching, the authorities turned to the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) for assistance. Emphasizing the importance of the palaces to “our national pride,” and the need to “preserve the artistic treasures for the culture of the peoples of the Soviet Union,” Belekhov petitioned the head of the country’s security apparatus, L.P. Beria for one thousand German POWs to work at conservation. This, according to Belekhov, “is our last hope to carry out the emergency work needed for preserving the palace-museums during the fall and winter.”¹³⁰ Much to the disappointment of the Leningrad authorities, this request was denied because the NKVD could not spare the officers needed to guard the prisoners.¹³¹

Not all requests, however, were turned down. In late 1944 and the beginning of 1945, the Leningrad city soviet and party committee petitioned the State Administration for Aviation Construction of the NKVD to take on the responsibility for preserving the Pavlovsk Palace from further destruction. An agreement was reached which stipulated that the organization was to restore the roof over the palace and carry out other more specialized construction activities.¹³² German POWs were also used in Pavlovsk, despite Beria’s original refusal. Until at least May 1947, one hundred and eighty prisoners carried out conservation and restoration work at the palace.¹³³ The palaces of Pushkin and

¹²⁹ KGIOP, f.226-G, d.p-1024, l.49.
¹³⁰ See KGIOP, f.226-G, d.p-1024, l.43-46 for the letter to Beria, as well as letters to Grabar’, Mordvinov and Khrapchenko asking them to support the request. See also KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.61 (unpaginated).
¹³¹ See the reply to Belekhov from the deputy people’s commissar of the NKVD, Chernyshov, dated 25 October 1944. KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.59 (unpaginated).
¹³² KGIOP, f. Fond Belekhova, op.1, d.61 (unpaginated); TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1447, ll.7, 14. Requests were made in November 1944 and January 1945.
¹³³ KGIOP, f. p.246-1, d. P-1079, l.33.
Peterhof were also provided with construction organizations to facilitate their preservation.134 “Armed” with skilled workers, it seemed as if the “battle” to bring history back to life could begin.

Conservation and restoration, however, was mired in other problems. Even when Leningrad’s authorities provided workers and construction agencies, they were unable to work because they had nothing to work with. The massive restoration projects taking place in the city and throughout the country meant that resources for construction were very slim. The construction organizations in Pushkin and Peterhof, for example, complained that they were not allocated the necessary materials to do the conservation work assigned to them. “The Sixth Trust could provide an additional 50-60 workers for the restoration of the roofs on the Catherine and Alexander palaces,” noted its head engineer, “but because of the absence of round and sawn lumber, nothing can be done.”135

The problem with materials was acute for the first years after the liberation of the suburbs. At each location the lack of metal, wood, and other materials necessary for conservation and the beginnings of restoration prevented meaningful work from being accomplished. At a meeting of the directors of the suburban palace-museums in May 1945 the problem with material supply was reviewed. The director of the Pavlovsk Palace, Zelenova, discussed the situation in regard to the NKVD organization working there, noting that they do not even have enough material to allow for the construction of scaffolding. “Three hundred workers are here in Pavlovsk,” exclaimed Zelenova, “highly qualified, forged, real roof workers, real carpenters, plasterers, bricklayers and stove-

134 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1447, ll.40, 44. Work on the palaces in Peterhof and Pushkin was assigned to Construction Trust 6 in March 1945.
135 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1447, l.44; TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1446, l.30.
setters. Three hundred people sit without work and nobody will allow me to hold them any longer.” Zelenova was forced to give the workers menial tasks to keep them occupied so that they would not be taken away and included in work at other places in the city.\footnote{TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.82, ll.7-9. In March 1946 Pavlovsk remained very poorly supplied with lumber. To overcome this obstacle, Zelenova wrote N.V. Baranov and asked that a wood-cutting area be allotted to the administration of the Pavlovsk Palace-Museum. TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.78, l.47.} To make matters worse, a representative from the central Committee for Cultural-Enlightenment Establishments in Moscow made it clear that, at least for the near future, Leningrad could not count on a supply of materials. Because of the lack of materials, therefore, the palaces in Pushkin, Pavlovsk and Peterhof had three construction organizations working at thirty-five percent of their capacity.\footnote{TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.82, ll.24-25(ob).} The supply of construction materials gradually increased as the industries producing them were restored, but the problem continued to hinder restoration throughout the period, albeit to a lesser extent.\footnote{A.V. Karasev, “Vozrozhdenie goroda-geroia,” \textit{Istoriia SSSR} 5, no.3 (1961): 122. G.T. Kedrov, a participant in the restoration efforts in the city, noted that “In the first years of restoration, there was a sharp deficiency in the work force, production equipment, engineers … without which normal work was impossible.” See “Istoki Rosta,” \textit{Vozrozhdenie}, 35.}

Nevertheless, just as in the city centre, the situation continued to improve as postwar life slowly began to return to normalcy.\footnote{Normalcy and stability, according to Sheila Fitzpatrick, remained elusive at least until Stalin’s death in 1953. I use the term here to denote a general improvement in the economic system during the postwar years. See "Postwar Soviet Society: The 'Return to Normalcy', 1945-1953," in Susan J. Linz, ed., \textit{The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union} (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers, 1985), 129.} More and more progress was seen and celebrated in the restoration of the suburban palaces and parks. With the announcement of the five-year plan in 1946, the prospects for the monuments and parks began to look much better, at least for the foreseeable future. The plan allotted twenty-seven million rubles for restoration. This amount was clearly insufficient for complete restoration, but it would allow for the beginnings of conservation and restoration in the immediate postwar
After the first couple years of mixed results, it now seemed as if restoration was possible. Although problems continued to hamper the efforts, and ideas of complete restoration by 1950 were soon dispelled, a significant amount of restoration work was completed.

In the face of massive shortages and problems, those tasks which were performed successfully were symbolically important. As each year went by, the directors of the suburban museum complexes could claim more and more “advances on the restoration front.” Particularly important in this respect was the restoration of the fountain system in Peterhof. Planners argued that the fountains of the upper and lower gardens would decide the fate of the entire palace-park complex, and therefore devoted tremendous resources to their restoration. With the fountains in working order, there was a better chance of having the facades of the Great Palace restored because, without them it was argued, the palace-park ensemble would not be complete. Although the process of restoring the entire hydraulic system took the best part of the postwar five-year plan, the Great Cascade and the fountains lining the alley leading to the Gulf of Finland were restored by the end of the summer in 1947.

Progress was made in the other suburbs as well. In Pushkin, the famous Cameron Gallery of the Catherine Palace was restored in 1948 by the Leningrad Architectural-Restoration Workshops, and was again used as an exhibition hall. Other rooms of the Catherine Palace had also been brought back into order and were used for exhibits as

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140 As would become clear, twenty-seven million rubles was obviously not enough money for the task at hand. See TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.167, ll.19-20.
141 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.256, l.3.
142 TsGA SPb, f.2076, op.5, d.43, l.127(ob). When Popkov appealed to central government in 1948 to have the Great Palace in Peterhof restored as a base of cultural-enlightenment work, he made the argument that the façade of the palace was a “component part of the Great Cascade fountains.” TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.562, l.9.
well. In the three years since the end of the war, the restorers in Pavlovsk had made significant achievements in the restoration of the palace. Restorers had repaired much of the structural elements of the monument, and had begun to work on the decorations in its halls. The press noted that “among those who are raising the riches of Leningrad’s suburbs from ruins, the restorers of Pavlovsk are in first place.” As a result of significant progress in restoration, the city soviet awarded the suburbs extra funding that was taken from other city projects, including housing, to help out the process. In September 1947, for example, 3.4 million rubles were allocated in varying amounts to the various suburbs. A year later another top-up of 1.5 million rubles was given to restoration projects in the suburbs.

By the middle of 1948, however, the prospects again began to look much bleaker than the previous years. Funding became the main problem in the restoration of the suburbs. Although the Leningrad authorities were active in petitioning Moscow to increase the funds, there was simply no way to come up with the vast amount of money needed to get all the work done during the first postwar five-year plan. Indeed, by 1948 the funding allocated for the restoration of the suburban palaces and parks had been exhausted. At a meeting to discuss the restoration of the palaces and parks in Pushkin, for example, a district party representative commented on the goals and possibilities in

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143 TsGALI SPb, op.1, d.554, l.80. In fact, by 1950 a total of 26 halls were used for exhibits in the Catherine Palace. RGASPI, f.17, op.132, d.440, l.15.
144 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.566, l.8.
145 “Pavlovskii dvorets vosstanavlivaetsia,” Leningradskia pravda, 9 October 1946.
146 400,000 rubles were assigned for Pushkin, 1.8 million for Petrodvorets, and the remaining 1.2 million was to be shared by Pavlovsk, Gatchina and Oranienbaum. The decision to raise the funding was approved by the Soviet government. The funding was taken from other places in the city, including a construction project of a residential building on Moskovskoe shosse. See TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.328, l.73. For the extra funds in 1948, see TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.552, l.113. As in 1947, the money came partially from residential projects on Moskovskoe shosse.
147 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.245, l.12.
restoration, noting that the museum workers “have huge appetites, they want to restore the old museum, they see it in their dreams, but they do not have the wherewithal to achieve it [a vozmozhnosti u nikh drugie].” 148

The municipal and central authorities attempted to alleviate the funding problems throughout the period. Because the funds for the plan had run out in 1948, the central Committee for Cultural-Enlightenment Establishments in Moscow stepped in to provide support. In the interests of seeing work continue uninterrupted, it allocated funding from the first year of the next five-year plan to the Catherine and Pavlovsk palaces. 149 Orders to carry out certain projects also came from Stalin and V.M. Molotov. In 1948 the Leningrad party and soviet petitioned the Soviet government to pass a decree ordering the restoration of the Great Palace in Peterhof as an architectural-historic monument. 150 Moscow agreed wholeheartedly with the requests from Leningrad and decreed that the facades, several of the palace’s rooms, halls, and parade staircases be restored to their former appearance by 1950. 151

Although official sanction for the restoration of the Great Palace suggested a moment of victory, that victory proved illusive as funding continued to be the main source of conflict into the 1950s. Only one million roubles was allocated for work on all of the suburbs in 1949, when officials estimated that 6.3 million was needed to do the assigned work on the Great Palace in that year alone. 152 In spite of all efforts to have the palaces restored by the end of the first postwar five-year plan, by 1950 workers had not begun to restore the Great Palace in Peterhof and the Catherine Palace in Pushkin stood

148 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.658, l.21.
149 TsGALI SPb, f.341, op.1, d.245, ll.12-13.
150 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.562, ll.6-7, 9, 18-19.
151 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.552, ll.150-151.
152 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.811, ll.9-10.
under the open sky without a roof over much of the building.\textsuperscript{153} Out of all the palaces that were severely damaged during the war, only Pavlovsk’s could claim to have completed conservation and moved on to full-scale restoration on the interiors.

\textit{Exhibiting the Imperial Past, Wartime Destruction, and Postwar Restoration}

During this period of mixed results in restoration, the commitment to providing cultured places of rest and “recreational learning” never waned. The authorities invited the public to visit the suburbs, marvel at the work being done to breathe life back into the parks and monuments, and enjoy their days off in a healthy, relaxing environment. The Department for Cultural-Enlightenment Work used the ruined monuments undergoing restoration to promote narratives which bolstered state ideology and instilled postwar Soviet values, including respect for cultural heritage, pride in Soviet victory, and a belief in the state’s ability to restore the country.

Throughout the postwar period a large and diverse number of cultural events were employed by the authorities to introduce Soviet citizens to the history embodied in the suburban monuments. As soon as parks opened in June 1945, excursions and exhibits began with the aim of narrating the history of the suburbs and emphasizing an ideal vision of Russia’s past. The cultural activities summoned up memories of great leaders (Peter I, Catherine II, Alexander I) as well as famous individuals, such as Alexander Pushkin, who was closely connected to the historic monuments in the town bearing his name.\textsuperscript{154} Many events focused on the military victories of the imperial state throughout

\textsuperscript{153} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.813, l.2; TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.1079, ll.46, 48.

\textsuperscript{154} An exhibit devoted to Pushkin was opened in 1945 in the Lyceum. TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.29, d.174, l.34.
the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\(^{155}\) Excursions in Peterhof, for example, presented the complex as a monument to the victory over the Swedes in the Great Northern War. In Pushkin an exhibit was devoted to the victory over the Turks at Cheseme under Catherine the Great. In Gatchina exhibits devoted to the history of Russian arms reflected the might of the Russian military under the leadership of Alexander I.\(^{156}\)

The goal of all of the exhibits and excursions on the history of the suburbs was to instill in people a connection to that past and to have them feel pride in their heritage. They proved to be an important physical and visual link to the official propaganda about the tsarist past. In visiting the suburbs, people were invited to take part in the reliving of history as they walked from monument to monument, exhibit to exhibit, in a way becoming historical actors themselves. One of the most interesting things about cultural events in the suburbs is that they called upon visitors to experience the country’s past through the lens of war and destruction. In narrating the history of the suburbs, guides and museum workers used the ruins of monuments to discuss the importance of the war and its impact on the Soviet Union. According to the director of the Peterhof Palace and parks, destruction became a major focus of all excursions in the postwar years, and one that was quite popular. Guides led visitors through the parks, showed destroyed monuments, discussed their historical significance, and presented images depicting the palaces before the Germans arrived to emphasize exactly what had been lost.\(^{157}\)

Similarly, exhibits in all of the suburbs on the history of the palaces included large

\(^{155}\) “V prigorodakh Leningrada,” Vechernii Leningrad, 8 April 1946.

\(^{156}\) See Balaeva, Zapiski khranitelia Gatchinskogo dvortsa.

\(^{157}\) I.A. Shurygin, Petergof, 103.
sections devoted specifically to the destruction.\textsuperscript{158} Often the exhibits were held in the partially destroyed eighteenth century buildings, thereby making the message all the more explicit. An exhibit in the restored sections of the Catherine Palace devoted to its history, for example, included “several items demonstrating the barbarity of the German vandals, who destroyed the magnificent cultural valuables of the Russian people, in particular the Catherine and Alexander palaces.”\textsuperscript{159} Any visit to the suburban palaces and parks, therefore, put the vandalism and iconoclasm of the Germans on display for all to see, keeping the memory of the war fresh in the visitors’ minds. The narrative of war was a key element in the history of the palaces and parks, an element that was to be remembered and recalled during and after the restoration.

The restoration of the suburbs was also the subject of exhibits which celebrated the will to overcome the devastation of the war. A Leningrad academic, P.V. Preis, stressed the need to “imprint the vandalism of fascism” in the restoration of the suburbs. He suggested creating two models of equal size for each of the monuments being restored – one to depict the monument before the destruction, and the other to show it during the restoration.\textsuperscript{160} This idea was implemented in a number of exhibits organized in the suburbs so that people could see the destruction caused by the Germans and be awed by the plans to resurrect them. Not long after the restoration began in Pavlovsk, for example, an exhibit entitled “Pavlovsk after the German Occupation and the Battle for its Restoration” was opened on site.\textsuperscript{161} The exhibit entitled “The Restoration of the Palace-

\textsuperscript{158} See, for example, “Vystavka v Aleksandrovlkom dvortse,” \textit{Bolshevistskoe slovo}, 6 June 1946; E. Gladkova, “Pushkinskaia vystavka v Litsee,” \textit{Bolshevistskoe slovo}, 9 June 1946.
\textsuperscript{160} KGIOP, f. Fond Belékova, op.1, d.61 (unpaginated). “Dokladnaia zapiska professoora P.V. Preis ‘O vosstanovlenii architekturnykh pamiatnikov razrushennykh fashistami.’”
\textsuperscript{161} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.71, l.2(ob).
Park Complex of Peterhof” had several hundred objects on display, including models of restored fountains and pictures depicting the palaces and parks in ruins.\textsuperscript{162} Such exhibits, like the one in the Catherine Palace, it was noted, “present indisputable interest because they convincingly show the results of the creative work of the Soviet people at the restoration of this most valuable monument of Russian culture…”\textsuperscript{163} The exhibits and excursions glorified the restoration activities and presented them as a victory over the intentional destruction caused by the German “barbarians.” They portrayed a victorious Soviet people rescuing their history from oblivion through painstaking, dedicated work. In doing so, they added an extra layer of narrative about the war and blockade into the story of these monuments of Russian culture and heritage.

\textit{Conclusion}

With the end of the five-year plan the dreams of Leningrad’s museum workers, cultural activists, architects and others had only partially come true. Their goal was to ensure that the suburban monuments of the eighteenth century, which embodied and exuded the power of imperial Russia, would be restored to the greatest extent possible. They were unwilling to accept the loss of such valuable historic and cultural monuments and fought to have them included in plans for Leningrad’s restoration. The major problem in the restoration of the suburban palace-park complexes, therefore, was not the will to resurrect the city’s heritage. To be sure, Leningrad’s preservation activists, central state and party organs, and even Stalin advocated for restoration. Rather, the economic

\textsuperscript{162} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.554, l.67.
\textsuperscript{163} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.813, l.13. Efforts to restore the suburban palaces and parks were also the subject of an exhibit in the House of Architects in 1946. Images of the destroyed palaces, restoration work, and plans to restore the palaces further were put on display. See “V Soiuze Arkhitektorov (khronika 1946 g.),” \textit{Arkhiitektura i stroitel’stva Leningrada. Sbornik} (November 1946): 70.
situation of the immediate postwar period limited the amount of work that could be done on projects that were not of vital importance. On top of this, the level of damage was so catastrophic that any plans for restoration were bound to be prone to obstacles and difficulties. Although several important projects had been successfully realized, the limited funding available for historic restoration in the suburbs, as well as the continuing problems with materials, proved to be an insurmountable obstacle.

The problems which disrupted the restoration of the suburban palaces and parks did not discourage the state’s use of these historic monuments as discursive instruments to condemn the devastation caused by the Germans, to stress the importance of national history, and to put on display the will to bring history back to life. In the postwar period, these historic monuments symbolized more than just the imperial past. The discussions in the press about iconoclasm and destruction, the cultural events held in and around partially destroyed palaces, pavilions, and parks all worked to impress upon people what exactly was lost, how it was lost, and what measures were underway to retrieve the past by restoring the embodiments of it. Even while these monuments were being restored, the state took great efforts to ensure that the memory of the war and blockade would not be erased. During the postwar period, that memory became a central part of the city’s historic narrative and was harnessed by the Leningrad authorities to promote civic pride and restoration.

It is quiet in Leningrad. It seems too wonderful to be true. And when one remembers that this is not the deceitful sinister silence that prevailed during the intervals between bombardments, the silence that did not soothe, but harrowed one’s nerves still more, one wants to laugh and cry with joy and do some real good deed.¹

Olga Bergholz, 1945.

In postwar Leningrad, the memory of the blockade informed all aspects of life. Leningrad’s party and soviet leadership, ordinary citizens, and all else who suffered the horrors of the nine-hundred days felt the desire to commemorate the blockade and preserve the memory of it. For the people who lived through the blockade – the blokadniki – it became the cornerstone of their identity.² No longer would they understand their surroundings through prewar lenses. Rather, the blockade became the formative experience through which the world was viewed.³ The magnitude of the siege, the mark it left on the city and its residents, as well as its significance in the immediate postwar period, necessitated its commemoration and memorialization.

² Joseph Brodsky notes that it was only after the siege that city residents adopted the name Leningrad as a legitimate title for the city. See “A Guide to a Renamed City,” in Less that One: Selected Essays (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1986), 91.
³ Frederick Corney argues that “The most potent foundation narrative so deeply informs that an individual’s very identity, experiences, and memories are inextricably bound up with it.” This was certainly the case for Leningraders who lived through the blockade. Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 1; Amir Weiner makes a similar argument about how the war became a prism through which the world was viewed and how the myth of war became a central part of people’s identity. See Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 17-20.
Plans to commemorate the blockade of Leningrad began during the event itself. Leningraders went to great lengths to preserve the story of the blockade. Thousands of individuals kept diaries during the siege to bear witness to the events for the historical, and indeed, personal record. The blockade became the subject of numerous publications, and articles about it filled the local newspapers. Commemorations became more and more important in preserving the memory of Leningrad’s epic and fashioning a foundational narrative of the city during the war.

Leningrad’s party and soviet leadership devoted a great deal of energy and resources to creating and staging commemorations. Official commemorative sites and events were meant to glorify the defence of Leningrad and to ensure that the memories of the blockade would never fade. They were – or were intended to be – sites where people could mourn their losses and celebrate their victories. Official commemorations and personal recollections of the blockade were complementary. The official story drew on personal trauma to establish “emotional authenticity” of the event, while individuals used the state’s narrative to “invest their wartime experiences with historic significance.” In the period immediately following the liberation of the city from the Germans, the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad and the commemorative events surrounding the

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4 This point is made by Lisa Kirschenbaum. She writes: “Understood as a ‘historic event’ even as it occurred, the siege rapidly became the subject of commemorations.” See “Commemorations of the Siege of Leningrad: A Catastrophe in Memory and Myth,” in Gray, Peter and Kendrick Oliver, eds., The Memory of Catastrophe (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 106.


anniversary of the lifting of the blockade were instrumental in fulfilling the state’s goals. Providing a somewhat sanitized view of the Leningrad experience, these official commemorations emphasized the heroic suffering and steadfast determination of the population, which, according to the Leningrad leadership was “tempered” by the traditions of the great city of Peter and Lenin. The people of Leningrad, argued the authorities, were able to withstand the siege heroically and selflessly, making numerous sacrifices, because of the glorious military, revolutionary, and labour traditions which the city’s history had instilled in them. Official commemorations mythologized the city and the Leningrader, both of which became what the historian Elena Seniavskiaia has described as “heroic symbols” – the sacrifices and actions of which were meant to be emulated.  

The Soviet leadership was no stranger to using the official memory of events to meet its needs and secure its goals. Because the restoration of the city – its industry, housing, infrastructure and historic landscape – was the most pressing issue once the blockade was lifted, the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad and anniversary celebrations were used as socializing agents to instill a sense of civic pride into the city’s residents and mobilize the population for restoration work. These official commemorations were mobilizational tools par excellence. Intent on keeping the enthusiasm and patriotism for Leningrad that was shown during the blockade alive, while at the same time inculcating these traits in the fast growing population (most of whom

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9 For a recent study of the ways in which the Soviet state shaped memory for its own purposes, see Corney, *Telling October*.
10 Nina Tumarkin, likewise, notes how the Victory Day celebrations were used by the central leadership to promote restoration after the war. See *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 103-105.
had not experienced the blockade and many were not native Leningraders), these commemorations were intended to provide positive examples for the city’s restoration. Through offering the Leningrad identity to newcomers, and stressing the importance of the hometown (*rodnoi gorod*), Leningrad’s authorities sought to create a “sense of attachment to the city,” which would make people sacrifice more to restore it. The commemorations told a story of heroism, they provided sites of mourning and celebration, and they offered residents of the city a place in the community of heroes – the *blokadniki* – through emulation.

**The Audience for Blockade Commemorations**

By 27 January 1944, Leningrad’s population had undergone a dramatic change since the outbreak of the war. The commemorations that occurred in Leningrad once the siege was lifted had to take into account the fact that the number of people who lived through the blockade was quickly becoming a minority. Approximately one million people died during the siege as a result of enemy bombardment, starvation, cold and other causes, and nearly a million had been evacuated from the city. The majority of evacuees left before the blockade began in September 1941, while others were able to escape famine during the winter over the frozen Lake Ladoga (Road of Life), and still more left following the first devastating winter in the spring 1942.

11 Karl Qualls has shown how the authorities in Sevastopol attempted to inculcate a sense of civic identity among residents, noting that “If someone gained pride of place, and emotional attachment to the city, it was thought that he or she would work harder (and sacrifice more) to see it rebuilt.” See “Local- Outsider Negotiations in Postwar Sevastopol's Reconstruction, 1944-53,” in Donald Raleigh, ed., *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917-1953* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2001), 278.
By September 1945, however, Leningrad’s wartime population doubled as a result of in-migration, the return of demobilized soldiers, and re-evacuations from the east.\textsuperscript{12} Between 1944 and 1946 the population of the city grew by at least 1.3 million as a result of migration.\textsuperscript{13} The Germans devastated many of the villages and towns in Leningrad province. As a result, peasants, unskilled labourers, and people looking for work, housing, and a better life in the aftermath of the war flooded into the city.\textsuperscript{14} Local authorities felt the need to work with, and control, migrants entering Leningrad. The need to educate the population about the blockade and prepare them for life in the city became evident once people began to arrive from evacuation and liberated areas following the victories outside Leningrad.

The destruction caused during the blockade had to be worked on as soon as possible, for which a reliable, dedicated work force was needed. Officials urged Leningraders to continue the “heroic work” that they had performed throughout the blockade. According to the official rendition of Leningraders’ heroism, nothing could break their steadfastness and courage. At the Leningrad party plenum in April 1944, Zhdanov proclaimed that the residents of the city would not falter from the tasks that lay ahead of them. Reflecting the mythology of the heroic Leningrader, he argued that they “do not abhor any type of labour, including heavy/dirty work [\textit{chernovaia}],” and they showed this to be true during the blockade.\textsuperscript{15} Zhdanov proclaimed that he had no doubt that Leningraders would continue to work as hard at restoration as they did at defence.

\textsuperscript{13} A.Z. Vakser, \textit{Leningrad poslevoennyi, 1945-1982} (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo “Ostrov”, 2005), 7; Ruble notes that the highly skilled workforce, which the Leningrad authorities had been so proud of, “had been swamped by yet another wave of migrants from the countryside.” See “The Leningrad Affair and the Provincialization of Leningrad,” \textit{Russian Review} 42, no.3 (1983): 308.
\textsuperscript{14} Ruble, \textit{Leningrad}, 51.
\textsuperscript{15} Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi archiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f.77, op.1, d.793, l.71.
but in the eyes of Leningrad’s officials, migrants and re-evacuees might not be as willing to make sacrifices and struggle for the restoration of the city as would *blokadniki*. Zhdanov made it clear that the patriotism and care for the city shown by Leningraders during the blockade must be taught to the people coming to the city: “We must inculcate in migrants, and our own people, that no type of work is disgraceful if it serves to provide us with success in our affairs.”\(^\text{16}\) The Leningrad leadership wanted to work with, socialize, and educate new arrivals and migrants to labour as heroically as *blokadniki* had. Much like the attempts to inculcate Soviet values and shape the identities of migrants who came to Soviet cities in the 1930s, the Leningrad authorities wanted new arrivals to work, in the words of the Orientalist A.N. Boldyrev, “in the Leningrad style, the blockade style. [po leningradski, po-blokadnomu].”\(^\text{17}\)

According to mood (*svodki*) reports compiled by workers in the Leningrad party’s Department of Agitation and Propaganda, there was indeed a perceived gap between the *blokadniki* and arrivals’ desire to work at restoration. One needs to be wary of mood reports produced by the secret police, party activists, and informants. The individuals compiling the reports sought out troublesome information, and as a result, these documents have a tendency to skew the reality of the situation. Nevertheless, the reports, however biased, had an important impact on the policies and programs implemented by Leningrad officials in the postwar period.\(^\text{18}\) Party activists in a number of the city’s

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\(^{16}\) RGASPI, f.77, op.1, d.793, l.72.


\(^{18}\) For a discussion of state surveillance and the compilation of *svodki*, see Peter Holquist, “‘Information is the Alpha and Omega of our Work’: Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context,” *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no.3 (September 1997): 415-450; See also Sarah Davies’ study of public opinion in
districts noted that, in certain cases, non-blokadniki were less willing to carry out the tasks assigned to them. One activist reported that although several of the returnees and migrants settled into restoration work well, “in their level of consciousness, and organization, new workers differ sharply from those who worked in Leningrad during the period of the blockade.” As these reports show, in certain places there was a feeling among party activists that those arriving in Leningrad were lazy, that they tried to get set up at very easy jobs, that they had a high rate of absenteeism, and that they related to assigned tasks “without making much effort.” Party workers attributed these “unhealthy moods” among migrants and re-evacuees to that fact that they “judge and react to circumstances as they did before the war [po dovennomu].” In stark contrast to the mythologized image of the blokadniki, who lived and worked in the worst possible circumstances, some of the newcomers, it was said, “do not feel the war [malo chustvuiut voitu].” In light of this, district party committees gave orders to the secretaries of party organizations to carry out political work with those people returning to Leningrad from evacuation, and those coming for the first time.

The perceived differences between evacuees and migrants arriving in the city in the early post-blockade period, and blokadniki, led to tensions and hostilities. According to party mood reports, blokadniki often voiced complaints that returnees and migrants did not want to work at the restoration of the city. One agitator’s report from May 1944 cast doubt on the newcomers’ intentions, stating that “they arrived just to land in Leningrad,

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19 Tsentr’al’niy gosudarstvenniy arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov Sankt-Peterburga (TsGAIPD SPb), f.25, op.10, d.434, l.44-45.

20 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.454, l.70.

21 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.454, l.70.

22 See, for example, TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.431, l.24.
not to work.” “We need to have conversations with them,” the report continued, for “our
workers do not like such people.”

A worker from a factory in the Vasilievskii Island
district voiced her complaints to a party activist about people coming to Leningrad after
the blockade:

Many people have returned to Leningrad from evacuation, but very few of them
came to work. They do not work at establishments, at construction sites, nor at
the procurement of timber, rather, our teenagers do this work, to the detriment
of their studies. All of those people who arrive set themselves up in kiosks or
trade at the market. But invalids of the Fatherland War should be working in
kiosks. How did this situation come about?

Party activists’ reports suggest that complaints about people arriving in the city
and their lack of desire to work at restoration were widespread. For many blokadniki and
officials who lived in Leningrad during the blockade, the restoration of the city was a
sacred duty that was itself seen as a commemoration to Leningraders’ heroism. Certainly,
many considered inaction on the side of newcomers and re-evacuees to be signs of
disrespect. Such complaints and accusations were even more pointed and emotional
because many felt that evacuees turned their backs on Leningrad and left to find shelter
in the east when the situation became difficult. The “cowards,” it was argued, were the
first to leave the city, and now when good workers are in demand those same people who

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23 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.453, l.47.
24 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.454, ll.9-10.
25 The architect, E. Levina, who stayed in the city and worked to save historic monuments, for example,
was upset with people who wanted to be evacuated in the spring of 1942. She recorded the following in her
diary: “The second party of architects are leaving by train to Ladoga, by truck across the lake, and then by
train to Vologda, and then further depending on what it says on the evacuation permit they have in hand. I
do not go to the Union so that I will not see. I know that it is not right, and I know that this is saving many
lives, that the city needs only those on their feet. I know that they will work there [in evacuation], and after
the war come back. But some sort of demon makes me avoid those leaving so that I will not curse at them
[kakoi-to bes zastavliaet menia izbegat' uezzhaiushchix, chtoby ne skazat' im grubost'].” “Pis’ma k drugu,”
in Leningradtsy v dni blokady. Sbornik, eds. E. Korol’chuk and A. Volkova (Leningrad: Leningradskoe
gazetno-zhurnal’noe i knizhnoe izdatel’svo, 1947), 202-203.
left Leningrad in its time of need “return before everyone else.”26 One worker expressed her desire, and that of her neighbours, to restore their building, but stated “we do not want our labour to be used by the cowards and idlers who ran away from Leningrad, thinking only of how to save themselves.”27 “In general,” went another report, “at the establishments of the [Volodarskii] district, there is a malevolent attitude felt towards those people who, in the difficult days, left Leningrad, and now are returning or are asking factories and plants to summon them.”28 At the Plastmass factory, for example, agitators noted that some workers were disturbed by the demands made by evacuees to be returned to the city. Feelings of spite and betrayal were evident in some of their comments, including one which stated: “When it was difficult here nobody wrote, but now they are all asking to be returned. They shouldn’t be allowed back.”29

Returning evacuees also levelled accusations against blokadniki, which upset not only the average citizen but the authorities as well. This illustrates a divide between those who stayed and those who left, leading to opposing interpretations of the blockade experience. The art scholar Nikolai Punin, who had been in evacuation himself, noted that one could hear the following conversation between people who remained and those

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26 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.442, l.59. Although there may have been people who took advantage of the evacuations to “save their skins”, many people were given no choice. Even if given the choice, the decision to stay or go was often very difficult, for many did not want to leave their beloved city, friends, homes. A large contingent of workers were evacuated with their disassembled factories to work in the rear. Once the blockade and war ended, many of these workers were not allowed to leave their places of evacuation, which caused enormous discontent. See Elena Zubkova, ed. Sovetskaia zhizn’, 1945-1953 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 276-278. See also Elizabeth White, “After the War Was Over: The Civilian Return to Leningrad,” Europe-Asia Studies 59, no.7 (November 2007): 1145-1161.

27 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.453, l.207.
28 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.453, l.13(ob). Rebecca Manley notes that the fact that being in evacuation could become a mark of shame, as was the case with Tatiana Borisovna Lozinskaia, who wrote to a fellow Leningrader soon after her return to the city that “those who had lived through the blockade had a ‘stern and severe expression in their eyes. And I always feel somewhat ashamed in front of them.’” See “The Evacuation and Survival of Soviet Civilians, 1941-1946” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2004), 268.
29 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.442, l.60.
who were evacuated: “‘So, you sat it out in the rear?’ – They respond: ‘And you were waiting for the Germans?’” Boldyrev noted in his diary a conversation at a party during the summer of 1944, in which a certain professor stated that the people who remained in Leningrad were “defeatists, who saved their personal property,” or did not succeed in leaving because of “weakness or blunders.” Others proclaimed that those who remained in the city did so not only because they wanted to stay with the Germans, but so that they would have the opportunity to loot the apartments of those who were evacuated: “We thought that you suffered,” stated a returnee, but “you stayed for easy profit – you looted everything.” A mood report compiled by party activists in the Moscow district cited comments made by people returning from evacuation, which downplayed the enormity of the blockade. A party agitator from the district noted that “Among certain people returning to the city from the rear, there are statements that they suffered greater hardships than Leningraders, that the period of the blockade was short, but they all [evacuees] lived for two years in conditions of deprivation.” Such attitudes and sentiments – however inflated and manipulated by Soviet organs of surveillance – were antithetical to the official story of heroism, determination, and personal sacrifice of all Leningraders during the blockade, and as such, had to be dispelled.

These sorts of tensions between blokadniki, evacuees and migrants clearly posed a problem in mobilizing people to restore the city and in mythologizing the blockade experience. Because two of the most pressing issues in post-blockade Leningrad were

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31 Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis’*, 333.
32 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.442, l.76.
33 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.453, l.208.
34 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.453, l.151.
the restoration of the city and the preservation of the memory of the blockade, the Leningrad party leadership assigned agitators to work with the people arriving in Leningrad and “inculcate” in them the traits of a “Leningrader” [blokadinik/blokadinitsa]. As a solution to some of the tensions and supposed lack of desire on the part of returnees and migrants to work at restoration, Leningrad officials sought to instill a sense of civic identity and pride, and teach people to act as “Leningraders” would.

Leningrad’s authorities employed commemorations for this purpose. There can be no denying the power of commemorative sites and events in forming identities, mobilizing populations, and instilling values and norms in citizens. Acts of remembering are crucial to any group’s identity. The presentations and representations of a group’s past play a powerful role in shaping its members’ conception of who they are and their significance in the larger scheme of things. Without the “assistance of mechanical reminders, souvenirs and memory sites,” writes the historian John Gillis, we are often unable to fulfill the “enormous obligation to remember” our past.35 These sites, including archives, anniversary celebrations, festivals, cemeteries, museums, books, and a whole host of other objects and events allow us to remember and make use of a past that is fading away.36 Such memory sites and commemorations are always political and have some agenda behind them.37 They embrace certain aspects of the past which glorify a nation, a group, or an individual. In more cases than not, commemorations are selective, and encourage forgetting as much as remembering in their attempts to shape

memories, identities, and actions. In this process, the state is often the “major producer and choreographer of commemoration.” Through commemorations, the state’s agents articulate a vision or an interpretation of an event and invites the viewer to participate in the commemorative activity. In the case of the Soviet Union, and Leningrad in particular, the memory of the war was widely employed to suit the needs of the regime, but “these acts of remembrance,” notes the historian Catherine Merridale, “were not fake.” The goals of the state in official commemorations often resonate with the desires of the population.

Leningrad’s officials and party activists realized the utility of commemorations in overcoming the difficulties that faced them in restoration. As soon as the opportunity arose to use the memory of the blockade as a mobilizational tool, the authorities attempted to reach as many people as possible. At certain factories, agitation work with newcomers and re-evacuees involved special gatherings and conversations about how people lived during the blockade, as well as discussions about the tasks standing before them in the period of restoration. The large number of people coming to Leningrad, and the reports compiled by party activists, made it particularly “urgent” that all agitators strive to socialize newcomers in “the spirit of Leningrad traditions.”

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40 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.434, l.65.
41 Some establishments in dire need of workers for restoration petitioned the authorities for the right to re-evacuate people, stipulating that the re-evacuees would be Leningraders. See Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga (TsGA SPb), f.7384, op.17, d.1207, l.43.
preserving and developing the methods of work from the period of the blockade.\textsuperscript{42}

After noting the poor work of many returnees and migrants, as well as the tensions that were evident between workers, one agitator stated that “We want to take the newcomers to the exhibition ‘The Heroic Defence of Leningrad’ – then they will certainly relate differently to the assigned work.”\textsuperscript{43} Through exposure to the monuments and memories of the blockade, therefore, it was believed that Leningraders and migrants alike would be inspired to work harder at restoring the city to its prewar state.

\textbf{The Museum of the Defence of Leningrad}

In the period following the blockade, the exhibition entitled “The Heroic Defence of Leningrad” (which later became the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad), was the most important monument to the events experienced by the city and its residents during the war. Bringing together personal documents, photographs, military equipment, and other reminders of the war, the museum chronicled the events of the nine-hundred days and told the official version of the blockade story. Its materials, noted an article in the Leningrad press, “clearly reflect the unprecedented-in-history epic of the nine-hundred day fight of the besieged city against the enemy.”\textsuperscript{44} It invited its visitors to take part in the ritualized performance of experiencing the blockade through the exhibits on display.\textsuperscript{45}

As an official commemoration of the siege, the museum offered citizens a mythologized

\textsuperscript{42} TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.434, l.10. Some of the themes included in teaching qualities of Leningraders in the Kirov district included “Women of the factory in the days of the Great Patriotic War,” “Patriotism of Leningraders – Kirovtsy,” “Leningrad – the Most Outstanding Cultural Centre,” as well as the “Revolutionary Tradition of the Kirov Factory,” among others. TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.434, l.27(ob).
\textsuperscript{43} TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.453, l.47.
\textsuperscript{44} “Pamiatniki bor'by i pobedy: muzei oborony goroda za god posetilo 800 tysiach chelovek,” \textit{Vechernii Leningrad}, 18 January 1947.
representation of the blockade at which survivors could re-live the heroism and tragedy of their experience. It also acted as an educational and mobilizational tool, which sought both to inculcate love for the city and a desire to restore it.

The museum had humble origins but soon became a monument that captured the attention of Leningraders and all those who came to the city. What would become the exhibition “The Heroic Defence of Leningrad,” developed out of a smaller one entitled “The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People against German Fascism.” Leningrad authorities opened this exhibition, which occupied one hall in the Leningrad House of the Red Army, in the fall of 1941. It was made up of trophy armaments taken from fallen German soldiers, as well as artwork depicting battles and events in the war outside Leningrad. The exhibition had three sections: the Crushing Defeat of the Predecessors of Fascism – the Livonian and Teutonic Knights; the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People Against German Fascism; and Fascism is Hunger, Fascism is War. Obviously used as a mobilizational tool to cultivate hatred of fascism and to galvanize public opinion against the invaders who threatened to destroy their city, the exhibit enjoyed some popularity. After the break in the blockade in January 1943, interest in the small exhibition grew exponentially. By the fall of that year, 94,500 visitors had come to view the exhibition. R.S. Bogorad, one of the guides, noted that she led 500 excursions between November 1941 and December 1943. Even before the blockade had come to an end Leningraders were interested in seeing themselves and their experiences.

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46 See the short description of the exhibit written by one of its guides, Raisa Solomonovna Bogorad. Gosudarstvennyi memorial’nyi muzei oborony i blokady Leningrada, (GMMOBL), f.RDF, op.1r, d.75, AKT 468-90(1), ll.1-4.


48 GMMOBL, f.RDF, op.1r, d.75, AKT 468-90(1), ll.1-4.
historicized in a museum setting. Official attempts to commemorate the war and blockade, therefore, were consistent with the desire on the part of the city’s residents to have their epic memorialized.

As the blockade wore on, the tide began to turn in the course of the war, and the popularity of the exhibition grew. Leningrad’s leaders initiated plans to open a new exhibition that would commemorate the heroism of the city’s defenders. Under the initiative of Leningrad’s second party secretary A.A. Kuznetsov and Marshal L.A. Govorov, on 4 December 1943 the city party committee and the military soviet of the Leningrad front decided to organize the exhibition into one based on the “Heroic Defence of Leningrad.”

“This was an excellent and opportune idea,” noted a contemporary, for “everything was still fresh in memory, and a great quantity of…impressive exhibits were preserved.” Work immediately began on the construction of the exhibition in the buildings of the former Museum of Socialist Agriculture on Solianoi Pereulok. The city’s party leadership established a commission of people from the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the city party committee, the Union of Soviet Artists, and the Administration for Artistic Affairs to organize the exhibition. The commission formed a brigade of experienced specialists from various museums and research establishments throughout the city, including the Institute for the History of the Party, to

49 GMMOBL, f.RDF, op.1r, d.75, AKT 226-90(2); Tsentralnyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva Sankt Peterburga (TsGALI SPb), f.277, op.1, d.691, l.1.
50 M.B. Rabinovitch, Vospominaniia dolgoi zhizni (St. Petersburg, Evropeiskii Dom, 1996), 234.
51 GMMOBL, f.RDF, op.1r, d.75, AKT 226-90(2). The exhibition to the Heroic Defence of Leningrad was administered by the Administration for Artistic Affairs. In 1945, when the Department of Cultural-Enlightenment Work was established under the Executive Committee of the city Soviet, the exhibition was transferred to its authority. See “Ob organizatsii otdelov kul’turo-prosvetitel’noi raboty pri ispolnitel’nom komitete leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta i ispolkomakh raisovetov deputatov trudiashchikh. (Reshenie ispolnitel’nego komiteta leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhia ot 22 fevralia 1945, N.138, p.10-b),” Biuleten’ leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhia, 1945, no.4: 8-9.
plan and construct the exhibition. “Enemy shells were still exploding over the city, when preparations for the exhibition ‘The Heroic Defence of Leningrad’ began in Solianoi Gorodok,” stated a contemporary about the creation of the exhibition. In typical socialist realist fashion, faith in victory was so great that the largest halls in the exhibition told of the defeat of the Germans outside Leningrad before the event happened.

In order to organize the exhibition, which was being constructed at a time of intensified German shelling, a tremendous amount of work was needed. Workers first had to restore the buildings in which it would be held, as well as collect the enormous amount of materials to be put on display. N.D. Khudiakova, a member of the organizing brigade who worked at the exhibition and museum throughout the postwar period, described the process of collecting and systematizing materials for the exhibition, noting that “the entire city took part.” Local party committees and soviets, industrial establishments, social organizations, research institutes, military detachments and other groups all played a role in restoring the building and donating materials. Even individual blokadniki participated in their own historicization. When the news about the creation of the exhibition spread throughout the city, “residents themselves came to us,” bringing photos, documents, family and military relics.

Leningraders brought their personal effects to the exhibition, wrote Khudiakova in a diary entry from 17 January 1944,

54 Khudiakova, “K 60-letiiu osnovania Muzeia obrony Leningrada,” 10. See also TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.195, l.2.
because “they were interested in the portrayal of their own work, their lives and their battle in the besieged city.”

Local artists also played an important part in contributing to the exhibition. Many pieces of art produced during the blockade, especially those reflecting life in the city and battles at the front, found a place in the exhibition’s layout. Given the good fortune experienced in collecting materials, and the energetic work put into the organization by all involved, the organizers created the exhibition in a very short period of time and presented it to city officials in its first variant at the end of February, 1944.

By the end of April, the exhibition was ready to be opened to the public. From the time the decision was taken to create the exhibition in December 1943, organizers managed to collect 7,382 separate exhibits and documents. Out of these, 5,839 would find a place in the exhibition, which was spread out in twenty-six separate halls, and took up nine thousand square metres of floor space. The massive exhibition opened its doors to an invited group of one thousand people, including high-ranking military officials from the Leningrad front, and the leading personnel of the city, districts and industry, on 30 April. This festive event began with a review of the exhibits, followed by a meeting dedicated to the exhibition’s opening. In the days that followed, the exhibition’s guides

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58 Rossiiskaia natsionalnaia biblioteka otdel rukopisei (RNB OR), f.1117, op.1-aia chast’, d.157, l.49. For the plan presented to the Party committee for approval in February, as well as notes on its shortcomings see TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.467a, ll.1-11.
59 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.195, l.2.
60 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.468, l.2.
organized excursions for people invited from local establishments. On 7 May the
exhibition was opened for public attendance.61

Even before the exhibition was completed, Leningrad officials, realizing the
importance of the exhibits to the memory of the city’s ordeal and the blockade’s place in
the city narrative, petitioned to have it turned into a museum of republican stature (as
opposed to local stature).62 If the exhibition became a museum it would have the
advantages of allowing more serious research and popularization work, providing for the
creation of positions for senior researchers, and facilitating the creation of a staff of
workers corresponding to the real needs of the museum.63 After numerous petitions from
Leningrad’s authorities to Moscow, the Soviet government granted their request, and on
5 October 1945 decreed that the exhibition be turned into a museum of second-category
republican stature.64 Following this, the exhibition closed its doors to allow for
reconstruction of the layout, which was completed by the second anniversary of the
lifting of the blockade on 27 January 1946. When the Museum of the Defence of
Leningrad opened, its organizers had added eleven new halls and significantly increased
its size and scope.65

61 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.468, l.2.
62 See party secretary A.I. Makhanov’s letter to Zhdanov, Kuznetsov, Ia.F. Kapustin about the need to turn
the exhibition into a museum. He argued that it would only be natural to transform it into a museum, given
that such a tremendous amount of materials had been collected. TsGAIPD, f.25, op.10, d.468, l.38.
Reports about the work of the exhibition throughout 1945 emphasized that one of the main goals was to
have it turned into a museum. TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.110, l.53
63 TsGALI SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1446, l.65 (ob).
64 For the decree see TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.1, l.10 and 18. For the corresponding Leningrad city
soviet decision, see TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.18, d.1688, l.147. Even after the exhibition had been turned into
a republic-level museum of second category stature, Leningrad authorities continued to petition to have it
given first category stature. See the party committee’s project decree from 1947. TsGA SPb, f.7384,
op.29, d.296, l.51-52.
65 When the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad opened, its layout had increased by almost two times
that of the exhibition, and the number of exhibits on display increased by over a thousand. See TsGAIPD
SPb, f.25, op.18, d.195, l.2.
The museum was conceived of as a “political-educational and research establishment,” which would study, popularize, and visually present the history of the “unprecedented” battle of Leningraders on the front as well as in the city. The blockade, according to the narrative of the exhibition, and later of the museum, became the culmination of the city’s great history. Like the war for the Soviet Union as a whole, the blockade was presented as the defining moment in the history of Petersburg/Leningrad. Victory in the blockade was attributed to the great revolutionary and military traditions of the city, and the museum was now to pass these traditions on through Bolshevik propaganda. “Walk through the halls of the museum,” stated an article in the Leningrad press, “and you will see how the glorious traditions of the Petrograd workers multiplied and became stronger, how our beautiful city grew and matured.” The museum, therefore, offered its viewers the opportunity to participate in the ritualistic re-enactment of the blockade, and to accept the city’s history and identity as their own.

The museum painted a truly heroic picture of the defence of Leningrad throughout the siege. The exhibits displayed a “systematic history” of the war as experienced by Leningrad. Both exhibition and museum discussed the blockade as bookended by the city’s history of greatness and the “new page” in Leningrad’s battle, that of restoration. The introductory hall, for example, emphasized Leningrad’s “fighting revolutionary traditions,” its status as an “impenetrable fortress,” and the “military glory of the Russian people” tightly connected with the city. It developed a story of Leningrad’s exceptionalism by presenting it as a city of monuments, of great cultural

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66 See Weiner, Making Sense of War.
figures, of scientific and artistic achievements, and as one of the country’s most important industrial centres.\textsuperscript{69} It also emphasized the work which lay ahead in the restoration of the city. Pictures of the suburban palaces before and after the German destruction, for instance, provided a poignant illustration of both the city’s history and the tasks faced by all Leningraders in the immediate future.\textsuperscript{70} One of the museum’s guides discussed the use of such photographs in its layout: “We say that Leningrad is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, famous for its suburbs. Using the photographs for support, we say that we have presented the suburbs, and when we come to the Victory hall, we show the suburbs after the Fascist barbarians had been there, and people leave with a definite impression.”\textsuperscript{71} Museum workers created a narrative to show that in the wake of the war, the city of Lenin “is in the avantgarde of socialist construction in the USSR [and is] successfully healing the wounds inflicted by the war.”\textsuperscript{72} The museum’s educational value, therefore, had a much wider scope than just the war as experienced by Leningrad. Indeed, as an educational tool, it attempted to inculcate the history of the city in people, and have them accept it as their own, driving them to make sacrifices and restore their “hometown” (rodnoi gorod).

The museum mythologized Leningraders as a steadfast and courageous people who made sacrifices for the good of the front, the country, and city. The museological narrative made it clear that in the face of the German attempts to storm Leningrad, the city’s residents held their positions. Through the period of the “starving blockade” (to

\textsuperscript{70} See Vystavka ‘Geroicheskaia oborona Leningrada, 10.
\textsuperscript{71} TsGALI SPb, f. 277, op.1, d.692, l.23.
\textsuperscript{72} Muzei oborony Leningrada. Putevoditel’, 7, 196.
which three halls were devoted), Leningraders continued to produce armaments for the
front and the country as a whole, and due to their heroic efforts, people in the city and at
the front were able to decisively defeat the Germans in the month of January 1944.73 The
museum, like other official commemorations, in the words of historian Lisa
Kirschenbaum, “celebrated individual acts of heroism and invited Leningraders to
recognize themselves as actors in the Leningrad ‘epic.’”74 Such commemorations also
invited newcomers, as well as Leningraders who had been in evacuation, to use the
blokadniki and their sacrifice as examples to follow in the restoration of the city.

What had been created by the Leningrad authorities was what they called a
“museum of a new type, the layout of which is based on genuinely scientific elaboration
and possesses great interests and impressionability (obladaet bol’shim interesom i
vpechatliaemost’iu).”75 Embellishing the museum’s uniqueness and importance, its
organizers proclaimed it to be “the only historical museum in the world, whose visitors
are both contemporaries and participants of the events eternalized in it.”76 For both
organizers and visitors, the exhibits in the museum stirred up emotions, and for those
who lived through the war in Leningrad, the materials brought them back to the time of
the blockade. The documents, photos, maps, military equipment, and artwork all had the
effect of resurrecting in people’s memory the great days of defence.77 Nikolai Tikhonov,
the future head of the Union of Writers, wrote in the museum’s guest book that “with a
feeling of gratitude I walked through the halls…and the not so distant past stood before

73 Refer to Muzei oborony Leningrada. Putevoditel’ for more information on the holdings of each hall.
75 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.135, l. 5.
76 “Pamiat’ o velikoi bitve: slava goroda-geroia,” Vechernii Leningrad, 26 January 1946.
77 “Relikvii velikoi pobedy: novye zaly v Muzei Oborony Leningrada,” Leningradskaiia pravda, 20
January 1949.
me in its magnificent essence.” These impressions were echoed by Vera Inber, who recalled a visit to the exhibition with her husband: “I.D. and I talked very little - a nod of the head, a gesture, a word, and we understood each other. Nearly three years of our lives passed before us.” One of the museum’s great strengths, according to its first director, L.L. Rakov, was the ability to show not only the “external” side of the events on the front and in the city, but also “the feelings and thoughts which possessed the defenders of the great city of Lenin.” The exhibition and museum “completely illuminates the heroic days of Leningrad,” wrote a group of students in the visitors’ book. “This inspires us to restore our beloved hometown [rodnoi gorod]. And we will do this.”

The museum had tremendous political-propaganda significance for labourers in the city and for soldiers at the front. But even more importantly, the exhibition and museum played a very influential role in instilling “the greatest of Leningrad’s traditions among youth and newcomers to Leningrad.” After walking through the museum’s halls, a group of children (rebiata) wrote their impressions in the visitors’ book. What they wrote is particularly interesting, for it represented two of the goals of the museum and suggests that the purpose of the museum was understood and met with enthusiasm: “At the exhibition it was as if we were reliving the years of the blockade of our beloved city. The exhibition reminded us of Leningrad’s battle with the fascist monsters, who

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78 “Pamiatnik bor’by i pobedy: muzei oborony goroda za god posetilo 800 tysiat chelovek.”
81 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.468, l.59.
82 TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1446, l.111; GMMOB, f.RDF, op.1r, d.75, AKT 120-91(3).
tormented the city during the two-year [sic] blockade. Those children who were in evacuation learned about…Leningrad in the days of its difficult life.”

Realizing the potential of the museum as a socializing agent, Leningrad’s authorities sought to expand the museum’s size and funding allotted to it. Indeed, further expansion of the museum was listed as one of the goals in Leningrad’s postwar five-year plan. The Department of Cultural-Enlightenment Work of the city soviet funded the museum very well. Out of all the establishments under the purview of this department – including individual suburban palaces, parks throughout the city, and other museums and libraries – the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad consistently received a large share of the overall budget.

Using the funding provided, organizers added halls and exhibits to develop the story of the blockade. They created new exhibits on the restoration of the city in the postwar Five-Year Plan, on partisan activity, and the local anti-aircraft defence, among others. Expansion was not confined to the walls of the already enormous system of buildings in which the exhibits were displayed. The museum used the territory surrounding its buildings as exhibition space to display the military technology and artillery employed by both sides in the battles for the city. Reaching even further than the territory surrounding the museum, the Department for Cultural-Enlightenment Work

83 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.468, l.59.
85 See TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.135, l.12; TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.328, l.2 and l.8.
86 For the creation of the exhibit devoted to postwar restoration, see TsGAIPD SPb, f.4440, op.1, d.16, l.2. For plans to create the others, see TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.110, l.28.
87 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.100, l.28; TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.613a, l.6. The territory given to the museum to display military technology was formerly the private plot of the Museum of Socialist Agriculture. In 1945 the plot was transferred to the Museum of Defence, paved, and used as a display ground. See TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.2, d.5371, l.15.
planned to open an affiliated exhibition in the Kirov Central Park of Culture and Rest.\footnote{TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.86, l.5.}

They even planned to create mobile and temporary exhibits that could be taken to establishments throughout the city, as well as the collective farms and towns of Leningrad province.\footnote{TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.689, l.5; GMMOBL, f.RDF, op.1r, d.75, AKT 63-93.}

The expansion and development of new displays, halls and exhibits was facilitated by the collection of new materials, documents and artefacts from the city and areas in the Leningrad province – a process that continued throughout the period under discussion. Museum workers made extensive field trips to areas where battles took place in search of materials to be put on display.\footnote{Trips were made to places where especially fierce battles took place, including Nevskia Dubrovka, Siniavinskie Vysoty, Pulkovo, Krasnoe Selo, Pushkin, Petrokrepost’, the Karelian Peninsula among others. See TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.457, l.3; TsGALI SPb, op.1, d.245, l.1.} Personal documents belonging to a soldier from an infantry regiment were found, for example, on Siniavinskie Heights and were presented to the museum.\footnote{V. Andrianova, “Dar trudiashchikhsia muzeiu: novye eksponaty v Muzee oborony Leningrada,” \textit{Vechernii Leningrad}, 18 May 1946.} “The museum is carrying out large-scale works in the collection of new documents, exhibits, and memoirs,” announced the Leningrad press. “Materials on the people’s militia, the destruction of cultural monuments, and the work of Leningrad radio during the blockade are being collected. The city’s workers provide great help in this matter to the museum.”\footnote{Andrianova, “Dar trudiashchikhsia muzeiu.”} Through announcements over the radio and ads placed in factory newspapers, the museum continued to receive many valuable exhibits from citizens and organizations throughout the city during the postwar period. A large collection of materials on the People’s Militia (\textit{Narodnoe opolchen’e}), was donated, which included approximately three hundred valuable diaries of participants in the
The alpinists who concealed the city’s spires, cupolas and industrial sites, donated a photo album as an exhibit to display their service in the defence of the city and its historic landscape. Donations of this sort took place on a mass scale. In the first three months of 1949 alone, for example, Leningraders donated around one thousand new documents, photos and other artefacts reflecting various aspects of the blockade. Leningraders’ interest in seeing themselves and their actions memorialized in the museum, therefore, had not waned in the five years since it was opened. Their participation in the expansion of the museum suggests the extent to which the official commemorative goals resonated with the city’s residents.

Museum workers cooperated with research establishments and individuals wishing to study the history of Leningrad’s defence by offering them access to their holdings and providing archival services. Researchers employed at the museum also used the archival holdings to write histories of various facets of the defence of Leningrad, life in the city, and other themes pertaining to the blockade. One of the main goals assigned to museum staff involved the publication of works that would cast light on aspects of the siege and glorify the actions of individual Leningraders. “Work on writing articles, brochures, monographs is tightly connected with the work in collecting new exhibits,” stated the director of the museum, V.P. Kovalev, at a meeting to discuss the work of the museum. “This work is especially important,” he continued, “since with every day the number of materials of the wartime become fewer, and the number of

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93 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.457, l.3.
95 “1,000 novykh dokumentov,” Leningradskaia pravda, 26 March 1949.
96 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.689, l.5; GMMOBL, f.RDF, op.1r, d.75, AKT 63-93.
participants in the heroic epic thin out.”97 Throughout the early postwar period, the
museum published a large number of leaflets, articles and papers. The topics and themes
of these works varied from purely military matters to issues such as “The Destruction of
Artistic and Architectural Monuments by Fascist Barbarians,” “The Work of Leningrad’s
Doctors During the Blockade,” and “The Women of Leningrad in the Defence of the
City,” among others.98 These publications, like the museum itself, were meant to
illuminate a number of perspectives of the blockade narrative.

Workers from the museum actively sought to propagandize and popularize the
museum’s message throughout Leningrad, to interest people in the history of the city and
blockade, and to draw people into the museum itself. They used a widespread program
of advertising for this purpose, including radio announcements, mass-produced leaflets,
advertising space on street cars (tramvaiki), and posters. Museum workers dispersed
these advertisements throughout the city in factories, establishments of all sorts,
institutes, movie theatres and elsewhere.99 The local press also spread the word about the
museum to keep the public informed of any changes in its status, its exhibits, and events
taking place there. Furthermore, Leningrad’s newspapers published at least seventy-one
articles about the exhibition and museum between 1944 and 1948.100

The museum also attempted to spread the message through close contact with the
organizations in the city. Museum workers organized lectures and talks with the city’s
residents both on and off the premises. On orders from party authorities, researchers and

97 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.692, l.5. Kovalev replaced Rakov as director of the museum in May 1947.
98 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.195, ll.3-5.
99 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.245, l.4; TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.613a, l.5. In the first half of 1948, for
example, more than 60,000 copies of posters, leaflets and the like were produced and dispersed throughout
the city. See TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.92, l.7.
100 “Materialy po istorii Gosudarstvennogo memorial’nego muzeia oborony i blokady Leningrada,”
workers delivered free talks at factories, organizations, military divisions, schools and other establishments with the goal of inspiring workers through stories of Leningraders’ heroism during the blockade. 101 Each year the number of talks given outside the museum increased. From 1946 to 1949 alone, the museum conducted 670 talks and lectures at various places throughout the city. 102

The city party committee played a very influential role in promoting greater attendance at the museum, and thereby, a more widespread dissemination of the city and blockade narrative. City officials understood that the blockade message of sacrifice for the city could best be inculcated in migrants, and Leningraders themselves, through attending the museum. In light of this, party activists organized group excursions from most, if not all of the city’s places of work. Official publications summoned agitators to make wide use of the exhibition and museum. In calling for agitators to organize excursions, the press noted that the exhibition offers the “richest” of materials for both “working on oneself in preparing for talks,” as well as “mass agitational work among the labourers of Leningrad.” 103 Such calls were well received by agitators throughout the city, who saw the benefits of exposing people who did not live through the war in Leningrad to the realities of the city’s experience. At times when it was felt that museum attendance had declined in certain districts, both the museum and Department of Agitation and Propaganda pushed for more work to be carried out by agitators in those districts. The parties involved noticed a higher number of people attending the museum

101 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.92, l.7.
102 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.195, l.3.
from areas in which agitation work on the blockade was carried out daily.\textsuperscript{104} As can be seen in table below, agitators played a very important role in organizing numerous excursions to the museum from a significant number of the districts’ establishments.\textsuperscript{105} According to party activists’ reports, these excursions, created “great impressions” on people and provided a “new flood of strength” among workers.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{Table 1. Comparative data for 1948 on attendance of the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad from city districts organized by the Departments of Agitation and Propaganda.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of organizations and establishments visiting museum</th>
<th>Number of excursions</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Oktiabrskii</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>7,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Frunzenskii</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>4,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Dzerzhinskii</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Kuibyshevskii</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Petrogradskii</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Nevskii</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Vyborgskii</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Moskovskii</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Kirovskii</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Vasileoostrvoskii</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Kalininskii</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Leninskii</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Zhdanovskii</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Smol’ninskii</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Sverdlovskii</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,071</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,437</strong></td>
<td><strong>57,480</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source: TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.92, l.13.}

\textsuperscript{104} TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.195, l.1.
\textsuperscript{105} Although the data in the table suggests success in attracting people from factories, plants and other places of work, certain documents suggest that this work, especially at the largest factories, was “weak.” A November 1948 order from the Department of Cultural-Enlightenment Work stipulated that work in organization of excursions from the biggest factories be intensified. See TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.689, ll.1-3.
\textsuperscript{106} See TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.434, L.16; and TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.453, l50.
Throughout the early postwar period – until mid-1949 – the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad was the second most popular museum in the city, second only to the State Hermitage. By May, 1949, five years after it first opened, the exhibition and the museum together had been visited by 1,565,300 people, a truly astounding number given that the museum had been closed for certain periods of time to allow for reconstruction of halls and exhibits. Although the attendance record was impressive, there was most certainly an element of coercion involved here. Organized excursions were likely mandatory, meaning that people could receive reprimands at their places of work if they did not attend the museum with their co-workers. The party leadership wanted to see the number of people attending the museum increase. By spreading the story of Leningrad’s wartime experience to as many people as possible, the authorities attempted to ensure that the memory of the blockade would never fade away, and that it would become a central part of people’s lives in the postwar period and beyond. As an established monument, the museum provided a place of pilgrimage, learning, and propaganda that could be visited year round.

**Yearly Commemoration Rituals around 27 January**

Each year residents of Leningrad celebrated the complete lifting of the blockade on 27 January. Hundreds of events took place throughout the city to mark the “unforgettable date” and provide a forum at which the blockade could be remembered, celebrated, and taught to the people living in Leningrad. The historian Karen Petrone has argued that the state used Soviet celebrations of the 1930s to create ideal Soviet people. The celebrations themselves, according to her, were templates used to form and inculcate

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107 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.195, l.3.
this identity. A very similar process took place in Leningrad in the postwar period, one which attempted to teach and mould the residents of the city into ideal Leningrad citizens based on the mythologized image of the heroic and selfless blokadniki. The celebrations mixed memories of loss together with images of heroic steadfastness, all of which served as reminders (and examples to follow), of sacrifice and victories on the military and labour fronts. Like the events commemorating Victory Day during the postwar years, those marking the liberation of Leningrad involved all people in the city and were carefully scripted by the local party and soviet leadership.

The memory of the blockade became the focus of the entire city in the days before the anniversary date. Although major celebrations and commemorative events took place on 27 January, the city authorities stressed the need to begin preparations weeks in advance, providing an educational lead-up to the great date. Throughout the city party agitators and Leningrad’s defenders worked to spread the word and stress the importance of the blockade in the history of the city and in the unfolding restoration. Preparations for the anniversary celebrations often began as early as 10 January with meetings involving the directors of houses of culture, agitators, and cultural-enlightenment workers. Leningrad’s party leadership provided agitators with instructions on how to carry out propaganda work surrounding the blockade anniversary properly. In 1947, for example, the authorities asked the director of the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad to deliver a lecture on the liberation of Leningrad to the leading workers of cultural-enlightenment establishments of the city, which would allow them to

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109 For a brief discussion of Victory Day celebrations, see Tumarkin, The Living and the Dead, 103-104.
110 TsGALI SPb, f.411, op.2, d.4, l.152
organize events at their places of work and provide a succinct official version of the blockade story.\textsuperscript{111} Articles in the party publication, \textit{Bloknot agitatora}, aimed at party activists, also provided materials to be used in discussions about the blockade, its implications, and the tasks facing all Leningraders.\textsuperscript{112}

Events which reached the general population began soon after the preparation meetings. In the Vasilievskii Island district, for example, commemorative events connected with the 1947 anniversary were scheduled to begin on the 12\textsuperscript{th} and last until 30\textsuperscript{th} of January.\textsuperscript{113} Cultural-enlightenment workers organized lectures, discussions, and readings on the blockade at agitpoints, red corners, libraries, dormitories and factories in all districts of the city leading up to 27 January.\textsuperscript{114} They also set up exhibits about the defence of the city and showed films reflecting the life and battles of the Leningraders. During the days before the anniversary date, city and district officials organized group tours to the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad, meetings with participants in the defence, and organized excursions to battle sites outside the city.\textsuperscript{115} The city party committee recruited hundreds of generals and officers from military establishments each year to give talks, lectures and presentations about the blockade.\textsuperscript{116}

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\textsuperscript{111} TsGALI SPb, f.411, op.2, d.4, l.152.
\textsuperscript{113} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.492, l.3(ob).
\textsuperscript{114} TsGALI SPb, f.411, op.2, d.4, l.152; TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.492, l.5(ob). As 27 Januarys drew closer, agitation work was intensified. A report from the Primorskii district notes that agitators carried out discussions and lectures at all establishments, factories, educational institutes etc. from 26 January onwards. See TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.539, l.26(ob).
\textsuperscript{115} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.492, ll.3-5(ob).
\textsuperscript{116} In 1945, for example, the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the city party committee sent 184 lecturers to organizations and establishments to give talks on the significance of the blockade and defence of the city. See TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.539, l.4. The political administration of the Leningrad Military District also allocated people to give lectures and talks to gatherings of workers. In 1946, for instance, it assigned 150 people who participated in the battles outside Leningrad to deliver talks to
All of these events provided city officials with an opportunity to reach as many people as possible, to spread the story and memory of the blockade and stress the importance of using the examples of Leningraders to work harder in the restoration of the city. “The anniversary of the enemy’s blockade of Leningrad,” stated a party report about the events in the Dzerzhinskii district, “was carried out under the banner of mobilizing the labourers for the restoration of the district, and a desire to completely resurrect the former glory of the beloved city, to make it more beautiful than it was before the war.”117 Given the importance of restoration, hundreds of events took place to mark the anniversary. The number of events could vary from year to year, but there is evidence to suggest that the anniversary of the blockade was one of the most widely celebrated red calendar dates each year. According to a Leningrad party report, in 1945 the anniversary of the lifting of the blockade had more events devoted to it (196) than all others listed, including the anniversary of Lenin’s death (123) and Red Army Day (122).118

The anniversary celebrations provided the opportunity for people who experienced the blockade to come together and carry out rituals of mourning and commemoration. Thousands of blokadniki visited the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad and symbolically relived the experiences of the war.119 Others made

workers. See “Rasskazy o Velikoi Pobedy,” Vechernii Leningrad, 26 January 1946. Lecturers from the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad were also sent out to establishments in the city to give talks on the victory outside Leningrad during this period. See “Vstrechi s geroiami, lektii, ekskursii,” Leningradskiaia pravda, 26 January 1949.
117 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.539, l.29.
118 The celebrations surrounding the October Revolution were not listed in this report. See TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.530, l.25.
pilgrimages to battle sites, to places where soldiers were buried, and to the mass graves of Leningraders, who died in the city from starvation, cold and enemy weaponry. District party organizations organized workers into delegations and made trips to these sites. Party and soviet officials held funeral meetings at the graves, followed by the ceremonial laying of wreaths to the sounds of funeral melodies. Even at these sites of memory and mourning, Leningrad’s authorities used the memory of the blockade to promote the restoration of the city. Commenting on Armistice Day celebrations in London, historian Mark Connely has noted that “It was not just an occasion of grief and consolation; it was also a day of pride and of re-dedication to a set of ideals.” This was also the case in Leningrad. At a grave-site meeting of more than 2,000 people in the Volodarskii district on 27 January, 1947, for example, the party and soviet officials leading the meeting called on those gathered to “honour the memory of the heroes of the defence of the hometown through new successes on the labour front, to restore Leningrad and make it more beautiful and better.” In Leningrad, mourning and memory were harnessed, shaped, and used for productive and socially useful work.

The anniversary of the lifting of the blockade was not only a time of mourning and remembering the sacrifices made. It was also a period of celebration – it marked one of the most joyous occasions in the lives of those who lived in Leningrad through the blockade. As such, officials aimed to entertain the population in ways that were both educational and festive. To mark the anniversary each year, Leningrad’s authorities held
celebrations throughout the city at houses of culture, involving, for the most part, “the best people” of each district – the most active party, soviet, Komsomol, military and union leaders.\textsuperscript{123} Soviet celebrations, according to Petrone, most often took the form of mass meetings, followed by entertainment and refreshments.\textsuperscript{124} The anniversary celebrations followed this form in Leningrad. To mark these celebrations, the first and second secretaries of the respective district, as well as participants in the defence, gave speeches devoted to the memory of the blockade and the tasks facing the city in the period of restoration.\textsuperscript{125}

The main official celebration, however, was held at the recently restored Kirov Theatre (the theatre had been badly damaged during the blockade). Each year the city’s “most important” representatives – including the very top brass of the Leningrad governmental and party organizations, all of whom were bearers of the medal “For the Defence of Leningrad” – packed the theatre to commemorate the blockade, reflect on victory, and discuss the challenges facing the city in the present and years to come. These festive meetings were followed by large concerts, featuring some of the Soviet Union’s most accomplished artists.\textsuperscript{126}

The “festive gathering” at the theatre to commemorate the anniversary of the lifting of the blockade in 1945 was especially important. Being the first anniversary celebration, it provided a precedent and a model for those in the years to come. At this meeting, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, M.I. Kalinin presented Leningrad with the

\textsuperscript{124} Petrone, \textit{Life has Become More Joyous, Comrades}, p 15.
\textsuperscript{125} TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.539, l.3.
\textsuperscript{126} For examples of concert programs for 1945 and 1949, see RNB OR, f.1117, d.388, ll.11-16. For more detailed plans for the evening at the Kirov theatre in 1949, see TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.178, ll.8-14.
Order of Lenin – the Soviet Union’s highest honour – for the “outstanding services of the labourers of Leningrad to the Motherland, for courage and heroism, discipline and steadfastness shown in the fight with German invaders in the difficult conditions of the blockade.” In his speech to Leningrad’s “best people,” Kalinin stressed the importance of the lifting of the blockade to the Leningraders and the entire country. Like the Museum of Defence, Kalinin emphasized the revolutionary qualities of the city and its people, and noted that it was these qualities which allowed the Leningraders to defend themselves and defeat the Germans. In the postwar period, these qualities, he argued, would allow for the quick restoration of the city. The Chairman of the Leningrad city soviet, P.S. Popkov, made similar connections with the city’s past, the blockade and restoration, by stating that Leningrad had “preserved and multiplied the glorious traditions of revolutionary Petrograd.” Echoing Kalinin’s remarks, Popkov argued that it was the “centuries-old history of our magnificent city [which] prepared it to fulfill the great role [during the blockade].” Those Leningrad qualities which were so evident during the blockade, he exclaimed, were to be used in the “conscious labour of restoring the city’s industry, economy, and culture.” This became the dominant message proclaimed in the press and at all subsequent celebrations of the lifting of the blockade.

Finally, yearly anniversary celebrations were meant to reflect the joy and happiness felt by Leningraders when the news was announced that the Germans had been driven from the walls of the city. Whereas celebrations and concerts in the Kirov and

127 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.539, l.1; “Ukaz Preziduma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR. O nagrazhdennii goroda Leningrada ordenom Lenina,” Bloknot agitatora, 1945, no.3: 1.
128 RGASPI, f.78, op.1, d.1040, ll.1-3.
130 Each of the speeches given in subsequent years at the Kirov theatre told the story of the blockade, stressed the importance of the city’s traditions, then emphasized the need for restoration. See, for example, the speeches from 1947-1949 in TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.238, ll.1-38; TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.475, ll.1-26; TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d. 745, ll.1-35.
other venues targeted mainly party and soviet officials, festivals [narodnoe guliane] were held at various locations in the city for the public in general. Designed to be inclusive, these celebrations invited everyone to share in the memories of liberation, to celebrate the feats of Leningraders, and to take part in the festivities. In every district of the city, main squares and parks became the venues for games, dances, speeches and general merry-making. All of the events in the city were accompanied by the music of brass orchestras, accordions, and singing which went until midnight. Camp fires were lit at a number of the venues in the city to fend off the cold.131

The highlight of the anniversary celebrations in Leningrad was the symbolic re-enactment of the salute, which signified the end of the blockade. Each year fireworks were set off in the evening over the Neva in the centre of the city near the Field of Mars, the Stock Exchange, Revolution Square, the Peter and Paul Fortress, and the Bronze Horseman.132 A party report on the events from 1945 noted that “On the evening of 27 January, great anticipation prevailed: hundreds of thousands of workers watched the explosion [sozhzenie] of holiday fireworks.”133 Describing the fireworks that took place on 27 January 1949, the Leningrad press wrote:

By 8 o’clock yesterday, thousands of people were drawn to the banks of the Neva. Here, five years ago, the powerful volleys from 324 cannons [orudiia] proclaimed to the world the brilliant victory of the soldiers from the Leningrad front, who completely liberated the city from the enemy blockade. And yesterday the thunder of 20 volleys and the fires of the salute illuminated the Leningrad sky, resurrecting in memory that unforgettable day.134

Like the all-city festivals which brought blokadniki together with evacuees and newcomers, the fireworks, and the joyous moment they symbolized offered an

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131 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.18, d.178, ll.6-7.
132 For example, see the plan for 1946. TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.25, d.63, l.42.
133 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.10, d.539, l.6.
opportunity to both reflect on the horrors, triumphs, and heroism of the nine-hundred
days, and instill in people the meaning of the blockade. These anniversary celebrations
as a whole, then, provided a powerful supplement to the commemorative services offered
by the museum. By concentrating hundreds of events in the weeks leading up to the
anniversary, the actual date of the lifting of the siege was invested with unprecedented
significance for the city and its residents.

**Conclusion**

In a poem written in January 1943, a young Leningrad woman mused about the
significance of the blockade, the need to commemorate it, and the will to restore the city.
For her, and certainly many others, the blockade was a formative experience. The
“falling walls,” “hunger,” and the sounds “which seemed to destroy the stars in the sky,”
were things that could never be forgotten. But those who “ran away” from the city’s
tortures, wrote the woman, “will never understand what the Leningrad blockade
means.” Indeed, for someone who did not experience the blockade – its horrors,
heroism, and victory – the very meaning of the nine-hundred days could be something
distant and impersonal. Official commemorations of the blockade sought to address
these issues. They were employed by the city’s authorities to provide sites of mourning
and memory for those who lived through the blockade. They were also used to create a
sense of civic identity for all of the city’s residents, but especially for those who did not
experience the siege. For all groups, whether they lived through the war in Leningrad or
not, official commemorations – such as the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad and the

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135 GMMOBL, f.RDF, op.1k, d.10(p.25), l.1. The poem was written by Tat’iana Bulakh on 20 January 1943.
anniversary celebration – were used to preserve the memory of the blockade and mobilize people for the restoration of the city.

There is indeed reason to suspect that commemorations had an effect on the successful restoration of the city. By the late 1940s the authorities proclaimed that the country’s economy had been officially restored to prewar levels. The majority of the historic monuments in the city’s centre were restored, as were some of the monuments in the suburbs. Although damage still remained in certain places, many of the most important restoration activities had been carried out. This suggests the extent (while one cannot say with any degree of certainty) to which the memory of the blockade and commemorations served their purposes.

Through blockade commemorations, Leningrad’s authorities were able to reach a large audience. Hundreds of thousands of people were exposed to lectures on the siege, the historical significance of the city, and the tasks facing them in Leningrad’s postwar restoration. The official commemorations offered residents a ritualistic re-enactment of the blockade. By actively engaging with the city’s population through commemorations, Leningrad’s authorities provided a model to follow and encouraged people to become “heroic Leningraders” through their labour in the restoration of the glorious city. The commemorations mythologized the blockade and Leningrad’s wartime experience. They created and perpetuated a story of Leningrad’s – and Leningraders’ – uniqueness. In 1949 blockade commemorations would come under attack for the particularistic history of the war that they espoused.

Throughout the period of postwar restoration a number of political developments took place which affected nearly every aspect of Soviet life. This was a period of dramatic change during which the former allies in World War II rapidly separated into two opposing hostile camps as a new conflict, the Cold War, began in earnest. Although international tensions significantly affected the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, they also had a tremendous impact on the internal workings of Soviet politics and everyday life. The developing conflict with the West manifested itself in the ideological dictates of the postwar Stalin regime.\(^1\) With the Cold War in full swing by late 1946, Moscow was intent on imposing ideological conformity on the Soviet population, hoping to ensure loyalty and unity in the new battle with the West.

A key component of postwar Stalinist ideology was an emphasis on teaching and inculcating Soviet patriotism in the citizens of Stalin’s empire. By the spring of 1947, this emphasis on patriotism dominated all aspects of internal affairs.\(^2\) The Soviet patriotism of the postwar period, like the patriotism fostered since the mid-1930s, promoted love for the motherland and its past (which was increasingly identified as Russia and Russia’s past). It was also guided by the emerging myth of the Great Patriotic War, which hailed the heroic Soviet people, the Soviet state, and above all, Stalin as the

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saviours of humanity from fascism. These two pillars of Soviet patriotism and postwar ideology had an important impact on the commemorations of the blockade in Leningrad and the restoration of the city’s imperial monuments and landmarks.

Due to the emphasis on the Russian past in creating a unified, patriotic community of people over the course of the postwar period, Soviet authorities strengthened their commitment to preserving the embodiments of the country’s history. In a series of new laws, the Soviet government passed decrees which outlined the need for improving preservation and restoration activities, as well as rules to be followed in all areas of the Soviet Union. From late 1948 onwards, those organizations and people who had fought to preserve the country’s historic monuments received further encouragement to protect the architectural and artistic gems which told the history of the motherland. Although problems continued to exist in the process of preservation and restoration, the Stalinist state confirmed its commitment to restoring the past and attempted to improve the conditions of historic sites through the new laws.

Commemorations of the blockade and Leningrad’s experience in the war, however, were rather adversely affected by the ideological demands of the period. As the conflict with the West intensified, the central authorities became more and more intolerant of local particularistic mythologies that did not focus on the all-Union heroism of the Soviet people. When Leningrad’s leaders came under attack in 1949 – largely due to factional fighting in the top leadership – those people and institutions in the city who fervently stressed the importance of the blockade experience and memory were wrapped up in Stalin’s most vicious postwar purge. Leningraders’ cultivation of mythologies of the blockade that conflicted with the all-Union myth of the war must be understood as a
contributing factor in what came to be known as the Leningrad Affair. Once the Leningrad party organization was scrutinized in the wake of the purge, the narrative of the blockade offered by commemorative sites in Leningrad was seen as perverting the history of the Great Patriotic War. The particularistic myth of the blockade was used as evidence of Leningrad’s disloyalty and added fuel to the purge of the city’s party and government organizations.

In early 1949, therefore, the situation that had been witnessed from 1944 onwards – the meshing and interaction of commemorations and restoration of the city’s historic monuments – changed radically. Restoration in Leningrad would continue, and indeed, achieve more and more positive results in bringing the country’s history back to life. But it would continue without, at least officially, the portrayal of it as a commemoration to the blockade of Leningrad. The year 1949 represents a parting of the ways – a time when the particularistic memory of the blockade was quashed, while the embodiments of the past which could be used for Soviet patriotism continued to be restored. The interconnection between commemorations and restoration in Leningrad became a victim of the postwar Stalinist ideological clampdown.

_Tightening the Ideological Reins_

The Soviet Union won the war against Nazi Germany, but soon after became embroiled in a conflict with its former allies that would last until the fall of communism in 1991. In May 1945, Stalin had become the ruler of a Soviet Empire whose territory had expanded into Eastern Europe, and whose influence had reached new heights.
Stalin’s goal at the time was for the Soviet Union to be a world power “second to none.” Soviet foreign policy, which aimed at security through expansion, the beginnings of the arms race, and other international factors brought tensions between the West and the Soviet Union to a new level. As relations between the two camps worsened and the iron curtain descended, the Soviet Union again, as in the 1920s and 1930s, found itself isolated and besieged.

As a consequence of the new threat from abroad, the Soviet leadership endeavored to revive strict ideological orthodoxy and cultivate a sense of devotion to the socialist motherland. The circumstances of the war compelled the party leadership to offer certain freedoms in order for the system to operate efficiently, which meant that ideological control was not always strictly observed. Certain areas of the country were completely out of Moscow’s reach for extended periods. The loyalty of people in the regions that were occupied, as well as soldiers who had been taken captive, worried Soviet leaders in the aftermath of the war. While cut off from Moscow for much of the war, Leningrad had shown a high degree of local autonomy and independence in the decision making process during the siege, which ultimately led to the development of tensions between Stalin and the Leningrad leadership. Leningrad’s intelligentsia also

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5 Nikita Lomagin has recently noted that “in connection with the worsening situation at the front, until the middle of August 1941 Leningrad was in many ways left to its own devices. The traditional hierarchy of relations, in which Leningrad relied on the directives of Moscow was broken for a certain period of time, which in the end led to serious frictions between Stalin and the Leningrad leadership.” *Neizvestnaia blokada. Pervaia kniga*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg: Neva, 2004), 547.
focused more on Leningrad patriotism and the history of the city than on Soviet patriotism in fiction and propaganda during the siege.\footnote{On this, see Aileen G. Rambow, “The Siege of Leningrad: Wartime Literature and Ideological Change,” in Robert W. Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch, eds., \textit{The People's War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union} (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).}

During the immediate postwar period the authorities were intent on regaining control over the population and reasserting Moscow’s primacy in centre-periphery relations.\footnote{See, for example, Donald Filtzer’s study of labour in the postwar period. He discusses the government’s repressive control over society and the need to restore the economy as quickly as possible. \textit{Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism}; Sheila Fitzpatrick also notes the regime’s desire to reassert control over society after the war. See “Postwar Soviet Society: The 'Return to Normalcy', 1945-1953,” in Susan J. Linz, ed., \textit{The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union} (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers, 1985), 130; See also Elena Zubkova, \textit{Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957}, trans. Hugh Ragsdale (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).} This called for action to be taken in a number of areas. The usual procedural methods for training and screening new party members, for example, had not been followed during the war, when millions of civilians and soldiers flooded the ranks of the party.\footnote{Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, \textit{Cold Peace}, 31-32.} In response to the influx of people into the party between 1941 and 1945, the authorities worried about new members’ level of “partymindedness” and ideological commitment to the cause.\footnote{Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, \textit{Cold Peace}, 31-32.} In April 1946 Andrei Zhdanov was entrusted with increasing vigilance among new party members, the intelligentsia, and the population as a whole to ensure ideological conformity.\footnote{Botterbloem, \textit{The Life and Times of Andrei Zhdanov}, 256, 270.} What resulted from this was an ideological campaign that was scripted and closely monitored by Stalin – the \textit{Zhdanovshchina} – which aimed at eliminating what the leadership saw as a pro-Western orientation among the intelligentsia, and increasing the level of Soviet patriotism among the population as a whole.

\textit{Iz stenogrammy vystupleniia sekretaria TsK VKP(b) A.A. Zhdanova na soveshchaniia v Agitprope TsK po voprosam propagandy,”} in \textit{Stalin i kosmopolitzm}, 46-50.
From late 1946, all cultural and scientific matters were employed to inculcate Soviet patriotism. Literature, music, all other art forms, as well as the sciences were to conform to the new ideological demands. Those who did not live up to the state’s new line were repressed, scapegoated, and severely criticized. The ideological crackdown targeted works that the party saw to have no political relevance and could not be used to create a loyal citizenry. Famous Leningrad writers such as Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko, for example, were attacked in a speech written by Stalin and delivered by Zhdanov for the “anti-Soviet” and “individualistic” themes in their work. Scientists also came under attack for their connections with, and “kowtowing” to the West, as happened with professors Kliueva and Roskin, whose famous case marked the inauguration of “courts of honour.” These courts were intended to eliminate servility to the West and “reeducate the workers of state institutions in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and devotion to the Soviet state’s interests.” The Stalinist leadership used nearly all propaganda avenues and channels to steel the population against the Soviet Union’s ideological enemies.

11 Botterbloem, The Life and Times of Andrei Zhdanov, 277; Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, Cold Peace, 34.
12 At the beginning of the Zhdanovshchina two Leningrad journals were attacked for their “mistakes.” The editors of both Zvezda and Leningrad were accused of printing the works of Akhmatova and Zoshchenko, and for being “apolitical,” a serious crime when journals were to be a medium of “education for Soviet people.” See “Proekt postanovljeniia Orgbiuro TsK VKP(b) ‘O zhurnalakh ‘Zvezda’ i ‘Leningrad’ s pravkoi I.V. Stalina. 14 avgusta 1946,’” in Stalin i kosmopolitizm, 66-69; Serhy Yekelchyk, “Celebrating the Soviet Present: The Zhdanovshchina Campaign in Ukrainian Literature and Arts,” in Donald Raleigh, ed., Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917-1953 (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2001), 256. The archival record shows that Stalin was indeed the author and driving force behind this campaign and others. For a discussion of Stalin’s role, see Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, Cold Peace.
13 Krementsov, The Cure, 111; See “Zakrytoe pis’mo TsK VKP(b) o dele profesorov Kliuevoi i Roskina. 16 iulia 1947,” in Stalin i kosmopolitizm, 123-127; See also Ethan Pollock, Stalin and the Soviet Science Wars.
Soviet patriotism became the ultimate tool to be used in crafting a loyal population.\textsuperscript{14} In propagandizing Soviet patriotism, the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee (Agitprop) instructed its activists to focus on the achievements of the Soviet system and its superiority over the West. The emerging all-Union myth of war became one of the key elements used in professing Soviet supremacy and uniting the people, and consequently, Agitprop ordered that special attention be paid to the war in agitation work:

In all political work it is necessary to persistently emphasize that there is no other people who could have made such great services to humanity, as the Soviet people has. It needs to be shown that the Soviet people, who opened a new epoch in the history of humanity – the epoch of socialist society, which saved world civilization from the fascist barbarians – is the leading, creative people.\textsuperscript{15}

The myth of war fostered cohesion and unity among the population. “The supraclass, cross-ethnic aspect of the myth,” notes Amir Weiner, “provided the polity with a previously absent integrating theme and folded into the body politic large groups that previously had been excluded.”\textsuperscript{16}

Focusing on the superiority of the Soviet system, the myth of war offered a feeling of belonging, and a sense of pride in the socialist motherland and its achievements.

The glory of Russia’s past was the other crucial element in the construction of Soviet patriotism. Soviet citizens were expected to learn about the history of selected events and heroes throughout the thousand years of the Russian state’s existence. Like the myth of war, the Russian past was to act as a unifier and anchor for Soviet identity.

\textsuperscript{15}“Plan meropriiatii,” 110-111, 114.
“In presenting the magnificence of our socialist motherland, of the heroic Soviet people,” Agitprop instructed, “it is necessary to explain that our people is right to be proud of its great historic past.”¹⁷ Agitprop workers were to emphasize the accomplishments of the Russian people in the period before the revolution. They were instructed to discuss the military victories over the Mongol-Tatar Yoke, the defeat of Napoleon, and how these events contributed to the development of European civilization. Special attention was to be paid to Russia’s contribution to world culture, music, literature, science, and all other spheres of influence.¹⁸ The non-Russian peoples of the other Soviet republics were also instructed to respect their national pasts and feel pride in national accomplishments. In the postwar period, though, ideological workers in the republics had to present their national histories in connection with Russia’s imperial past. Republican history had to complement and not undermine Russia’s.¹⁹

The need to rebuild the country and to be on guard in the Cold War with the West demanded a unified population with a common past, common goals, and a common identity. Postwar ideology, which stressed Soviet patriotism, then, was guided by two distinct lines: one concentrating on the Soviet experience in the Great Patriotic War, the other on the country’s past. “It would be precise to think of Soviet ideology during these years as characterized by a double axis,” argues David Brandenberger. “On the one hand, the Soviet myth of war became the quintessential legitimation of Soviet power. On

¹⁷ “Plan meropriiatii,” 112.
¹⁸ “Plan meropriiatii,” 112 - 113. In light of the international situation, the party organization of the Leningrad Department of Cultural-Enlightenment Work noted that talks should be held among the labourers of Leningrad to discuss international developments. It also noted that in further educational work the “glorious history of our motherland,” the heroism of the Soviet people during the war, and the history of the party (as well as Lenin and Stalin), should be emphasized. See Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov Sankt-Peterburga (TsGAIPD SPb), f.2853, op.2, d.10, ll.57-58.
¹⁹ For a fascinating discussion of how the past was presented in the Ukraine during the postwar period, see Serhy Yekelchyk, Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 11.
the other hand, a thousand years of prerevolutionary history continued to serve - as it had since 1937 - as another source of authority and legitimacy.²⁰ Soviet patriotism was based on the accomplishments of the heroes and heritage of the tsarist period and the myth of war. These two pillars of Soviet patriotism worked to foster a common culture and identity during the postwar years.²¹

Committing to the Past

Throughout the postwar period, as we have seen in previous chapters, the authorities were quite concerned with restoring the embodiments of the country’s past. Historian Serhy Yekelchyk, for example, has noted that in postwar Ukraine authorities attempted to distance themselves from the prewar Ukrainian leadership, which destroyed many of the republic’s most famous religious monuments for ideological and urban planning purposes.²² These monuments provided a tangible connection to the people’s heritage. Given that the Russian past became one of the main components of postwar ideology, this connection to heritage was not only desired, but necessary. Historic, artistic, and architectural monuments were sites in which the past, and the professed ideology, were reified.

²¹ David Hoffman discusses the use of Russia’s past in the prewar period as a means to provide a common heritage for the entire Soviet population. See Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 159-162; For further discussion of the rehabilitation of Russia’s past, see Brandenberger, National Bolshevism; David Brandenberger and Kevin M.F. Platt, eds., Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006). For the classic argument that sees the rehabilitation as a betrayal of socialism, see Nicholas S. Timasheff, The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946).
²² Yekelchyk, Stalin’s Empire of Memory, 123.
During the war, architects and preservationists acknowledged the need to create new legislation to protect the country’s historic monuments. As soon as the country was liberated from the German forces, architectural organizations, especially the recently formed Committee for Architectural Affairs at the Council of Ministers (USSR) and the Main Administration for the Protection of Monuments of Architecture under its purview, began to lobby for laws designed to guarantee the protection of the country’s heritage. The destruction of historic monuments during the war heightened people’s awareness of the fact that monuments were unique artifacts through which the narrative of the motherland is told. With this in mind, in December 1944 the participants at an all-Union conference of architects discussed the need for higher authorities to exercise control over the country’s historic monuments and ensure their “proper maintenance and protection.” New legislation, argued conference participants, must provide for leadership, control and help in the preservation of monuments “from above.” Responsibility for, and the actual organization of monument preservation needed to be placed on local organs of authority and the administration for architectural affairs in the given location. Leningrad’s Administration for Architectural Affairs was held up as a positive example in this regard.

During the first postwar years a number of problems became evident in the efforts to preserve and restore Leningrad’s monuments. Given that the situation in Leningrad was considered to be the best in the country, one can only imagine the difficulties faced

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24 Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomii (RGAE), f.9432, op.1, d.12, l.53.
25 RGAE, f.9432, op.1, d.14, l.89.
26 RGAE, f.9432, op.1, d.14, l.87.
elsewhere. The problem of building occupants not carrying out the work assigned to them in leases, continuing troubles with funding, as well as the lack of control over certain monuments were some of the main issues to be dealt with in drawing up legislation. Efforts to draft new laws for the protection of monuments was, in fact, a means of providing a system of organization that would allow for the long-term stability of the country’s heritage. Due to the lack of appropriate legislation, a solution was needed. Creating new legislation that would protect the country’s historic, cultural, and artistic monuments was, in light of the circumstances, the ideologically correct step to take.

From mid-1947 onwards, the postwar efforts of preservationists, architects, and those in the artistic community to get legislation passed came to fruition. In late 1946, the Administration for the Protection of Monuments of Architecture submitted a draft to the Soviet government calling for legislation to assure the protection of the country’s architectural heritage. The law, “On the protection of architectural monuments,” was passed by the government of the Russian republic on 22 May 1947. Limiting its scope to architectural monuments and confining its reach to the RSFSR, this law proclaimed the works of ancient-Russian architecture “to be the inviolable historical-artistic legacy of

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27 Several documents present Leningrad as the front-runner in the restoration of monuments, noting that in 1948 all the monuments under state protection were either restored or in the process of restoration. See RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.40, l.48; RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.67, l.192-195.
28 RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.21, l.11(ob); RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.40, l.27-30.
29 Even though the Main Administration for the Protection of Monuments of Architecture had been created under the authority of the Committee for Architectural Affairs, it was still a relatively young organization which began its duties only in 1944. Throughout the 1930s there had been a series of administrations which began work, but shortly after were shut down or transferred to other institutions. RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.38, l.100-102.
30 RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.38, l.102.
the national culture and the property of the republic."31 Echoing the ideological turn toward the Russian past, this law laid out a system of rules concerning the protection, use, and upkeep of architectural monuments. The law stipulated that the Administration for Architectural Affairs in each locality, as well as local governmental organs, were to take responsibility for ensuring the preservation and proper use of monuments and landmarks. It specified that occupants were to sign agreements with the local administration, and if the terms of the agreement were broken they could be evicted. Local governments (city and regional soviet executive committees, for example), were placed in charge of executing restoration, repairs, and other such work on monuments. The funding for this was to come from local budgets and from the money provided by building/monument occupants. Finally, the law ordered that instructions about the use of monuments be compiled and confirmed in June of that year, and that a list of monuments under state protection be presented by December.32

This legislation was the first significant attempt to centralize the management of preservation of architectural monuments in the Russian republic since the 1930s. It clearly outlined the responsibilities of various parties, and made infractions of these obligations punishable by law.33 Although the legislation stipulated that infractions could lead to premises being taken away from the institutions and organizations occupying them, there were obvious problems with this. Depending on exactly who the occupant

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32 “Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov RSFSR ot 22 maia 1947 g., N.389 ‘Ob okhrane pamiatnikov arkhitekteury.’”
33 One of the points in the law suggested that the procurator of the Russian republic order the local procuracies to “intensify the battle with those who break the laws on the protection of architectural monuments.” “Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov RSFSR ot 22 maia 1947 g., N.389 ‘Ob okhrane pamiatnikov arkhitekteury,’” 55.
was, the matter could become quite complicated. In March 1948, for example, the president of the Committee for Architectural Affairs of the USSR wrote K.E. Voroshilov to ask for his help in transferring the Constantine Palace outside Leningrad from the Ministry of Armed Forces to the Ministry of Higher Education. Basing the request on the 1947 law, the president argued that the Ministry of Armed Forces had done nothing to restore the palace since the end of the war and was therefore subject to eviction. The ministry, however, refused to move. The fact that a petition had to be sent to the vice-president of the Soviet government suggests that, at least in some cases, there were difficulties with the implementation of the new law. In the meantime, the Committee for Architectural Affairs worked out and submitted a draft of a new law to the Soviet government that would be all-encompassing, focusing on the entire Union, not just the Russian republic.

Unlike the 1947 RSFSR legislation, which addressed the preservation of architectural monuments, the all-Union decree of 14 October 1948 took into account all monuments of culture (broadly defined, monuments of culture included architectural, artistic, archeological, and historic monuments). The legislation itself was a response to the “serious insufficiencies” plaguing the protection of the country’s monuments. The decree opened by laying out the situation that existed at the time in the Soviet Union with respect to heritage. “Control over the preservation of historical and archeological monuments does not exist,” stated the decree. “Leadership over the protection and restoration of monuments of architecture and art by the Committee for Architectural Affairs and the Committee for Artistic Affairs of the Soviet government,” continued the

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34 RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.67, l.43.
35 RGAE, f.9432, op.1, d.34, l.17.
decree, “is being carried out unsatisfactorily.” It was further proclaimed that institutions occupying the monuments were not providing for their preservation, nor were the local soviet executive committees showing the “appropriate care” for monuments of culture. In presenting the problems in the system, the Soviet leadership was taking a stand, proclaiming that the current situation was unacceptable and stating its position on the country’s heritage.

The new legislation was far-reaching in its ambitions to provide for the preservation of history embodied in monuments. It laid the responsibility for the protection and supervision of the monuments’ condition on the governments of the various republics and on the soviet executive committees in the localities. It called for the registration of all monuments in the Soviet Union, ordered that scientific-restoration workshops be opened in all areas with a high concentration of monuments, and that a scientific-methodological council be created under the purview of the Academy of Sciences. A further eight pages of instructions and stipulations were appended to the October legislation, emphasizing the necessity for protecting and preserving the country’s heritage. The outcome of the new legislation was, therefore, a bifurcated system of preservation which saw the oversight of monuments shared by local and central governmental organs.

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36 This law was signed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (USSR), I. Stalin. “Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov SSSR ot 14 October 1948 g., N.3898, ‘O merakh uluchshenia okhrany pamiatnikov kul’tury,’” in Okhrana pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury, 57-59.
37 See the appendix to the above law, “Polozhenie ob okhrane pamiatnikov kul’tury,” in Okhrana pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury, 59-67.
38 John Farrell discusses these new laws briefly in the context of the post-Stalin period when preservation activists were calling for an all-Union voluntary society to oversee preservation in the Soviet Union. See “If These Stones Could Only Speak: Historical and Cultural Preservation in a Soviet Context, 1955-1966” (PhD dissertation, University of California, Davis, 2004), 27-28, 99-102.
Preservationists were enthusiastic about the law of 1948. At last there was a
detailed all-Union document meant to provide for the protection of the country’s
heritage.\textsuperscript{39} The architectural and preservation authorities in Moscow were interested in
disseminating the 1948 law as quickly and widely as possible and bringing specialists
together to discuss its implications. Soon after the announcement of the legislation, the
Main Administration for the Protection of Monuments of Architecture got permission to
print and distribute copies of it to architects and planners throughout the country.\textsuperscript{40} The
law was made widely known to the public with the hope that the problems encountered in
preserving monuments of culture and history would soon be overcome. The Committee
for Architectural Affairs also received permission from the party’s Central Committee to
bring specialists from all regions of the Soviet Union to Moscow in the second quarter of
1949 to discuss the principal questions concerning the 1948 law.\textsuperscript{41}

The importance of these new laws is difficult to overstate. At the very least, they
gave preservationists legal grounds to demand that restoration, repairs, and conservation
be carried out by occupants in a timely fashion. Local and central governmental organs
used the law frequently in its correspondence with ministries, organizations and
institutions using buildings under state protection. The Committee for Architectural
Affairs, for example, cited the law when writing to the Leningrad city soviet in early
1949, requesting that the executive committee spend nearly thirty-one million rubles on

\textsuperscript{39} The fact that preservation was now considered an all-Union matter was a point that Belekhov
emphasized at a meeting of architects in Leningrad in 1949. \textit{Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury
i iskusstva Sankt-Peterburga} (TsGALI SPb), f.341, op.1, d.245, l.4.
\textsuperscript{40} RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.40, l.22.
\textsuperscript{41} Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskikh istorii (RGASPI), f.17, op.132, d.248, ll.22,
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fifty-two monuments housing organizations under its purview. The head of Leningrad’s Preservation Inspectorate, Belekhov, also invoked the new law when demanding that restoration be carried out on an architectural monument in the suburb of Pushkin. Noting the lack of work, Belekhov wrote:

Seeing in this a direct violation of the Soviet government’s decree from 14.10.1948 (N.3898)…as well as the instructions published by the Committee for Architectural Affairs…for the execution of the law, the Inspectorate categorically insists on taking immediate steps to conserve this monument in the current year, in order to prevent further destructive actions during the fall and winter.

The 1948 decree was a document that could also be cited by local governing bodies when petitioning Moscow for funding to provide for restoration, or for confirming the use of monuments. The new laws, then, provided a basis for grievances to be made about the state of the country’s monuments, as well as demands that actions be taken to protect them from further harm.

Perhaps more importantly, the new laws – and especially the October 1948 legislation – underlined the party’s position on relics of the past. The country’s monuments were physical manifestations of the tsarist and imperial historical narrative that was central to Soviet identity. Increasingly, the postwar period witnessed “a desire for total ideological control over historic sites” by the party. The laws, then, represent the party’s commitment to embodiments of the past, to those monuments which tell the story of the fatherland. As the drive to inculcate Soviet patriotism in the consciousness of the country’s population grew, so too did the official endorsement of the restoration of

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42 RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.68, l.17. In late 1948 and early 1949, the Committee for Architectural Affairs sent a flurry of such letters to various organizations demanding that work be carried out on the basis of the October 1948 decree. For further examples from Leningrad see, RGAE, f.9588, op.1, d.68, ll.8, 9, 10, 12.
43 TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.813, l.40.
44 See, for example, RGASPI, f.17, op.132, d.440, l.22.
45 Yekelchyk, Stalin’s Empire of Memory, 120.
architectural, artistic, historic, and cultural monuments. The party’s attitude to monuments, as it developed in the years following the victory in the war both excited people working to better the condition of monuments in the country and supported their goals. Preservationists welcomed the ideological turn because it bolstered their endeavors to restore relics of the past and save history for future generations.

**Ideology and Commemorations of the Blockade**

While the postwar ideological line promoted the restoration of the country’s architectural, artistic and historic monuments, its slowly silenced blockade commemorations. Restoration of the country’s heritage was utilized by the authorities to create common roots and a common past for the population to rally around. Commemorations of the blockade, as Stalin eventually saw them, did the opposite. Instead of presenting a united Soviet population defeating the fascists in a battle for the Soviet Union, the commemorations in Leningrad were increasingly seen by Moscow to contradict the official line, and in doing so, to threaten Soviet patriotism. When the Leningrad Affair began in 1949, Moscow argued that the Leningrad commemorations presented a history of the blockade in isolation from the battle of the entire Soviet Union. Blockade commemorations, in emphasizing the heroism of Leningraders, did exactly the opposite of what was intended by the postwar ideological line: they created a particularistic myth of the blockade, which competed with the all-Union myth of war, and as such had to be silenced.

The mythology surrounding the blockade began to develop from the very first days of the German advance on the country’s northern capital. What Leningraders
endured during the nine-hundred days – the bombings, starvation, material deprivations, and cold – immediately became the subject of mythmaking.\textsuperscript{46} The mythology that developed focused on the extremely difficult situations experienced by the people living in the besieged city and their resilience in the face of hardship.\textsuperscript{47} At the same time, however, the mythology emphasized the unique fate of Leningrad, the heroic feats executed by the city’s residents on the front and in their everyday surroundings, as well as the “labour heroism” of those who continued to work in the city’s factories and industries. This myth offered Leningraders an identity that was rooted in, but yet transcended the experience and narrative offered by the Soviet state.\textsuperscript{48} It allowed Leningraders to share in the victory of the Soviet Union and feel united as one people, but it also provided a space in which the particularistic story of the blockade could be remembered and memorialized.

Mythologies of the blockade were articulated in a number of ways and by a multitude of actors. The Museum of the Defense of Leningrad and the anniversary celebrations of the lifting of the blockade worked to promote civic identity as a tool for mobilizing the city’s long-term residents and newcomers to restore Leningrad. These became the cornerstones of the blockade myth and provided for its articulation.\textsuperscript{49} Other vehicles of mythmaking, of course, included the numerous works of literature written by

\textsuperscript{47} A number of historians have noted that Soviet myths about the war, and about the blockade in particular, left out elements of suffering and, in Leningrad’s case, starvation. This is, to a certain degree, true. However, the Museum of the Defense of Leningrad, and the exhibit which preceded it, made a point of emphasizing the fact that 125 grams of bread per day was not enough to live off. Hence, a major section of three halls in the museum was devoted to what was called “The Starving Winter.” See \textit{Muzei oborony Leningrada. Putevoditel’} (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo ‘Iskusstvo’, 1948).
\textsuperscript{48} Kirschenbaum, \textit{The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad}, 14.
\textsuperscript{49} See Chapter 5 of this dissertation for a lengthy discussion about the museum and the anniversary celebrations.
people who survived the blockade horrors, including Ol’ga Berggol’ts, Nikolai Tikhonov, and Vera Inber, just to name a few. Perhaps the most consistent and vocal articulators of the blockade myth were the party and soviet authorities who experienced the siege first hand. It was people like the Leningrad party boss, Kuznetsov, and Popkov, the chairman of the city soviet (and party boss after Kuznetsov’s promotion and move to Moscow in March 1946), who pushed for the creation of the museum, scripted the anniversary celebrations, and sponsored the publication of works which glorified Leningrad’s wartime experience. “The entire initiative behind publishing document collections on the history of the defense of Leningrad,” notes Russian historian Andrei Dzeniskevich, “came from the city’s party leadership. These people really wanted to immortalize the feat of Leningraders, and they acted without waiting for orders and permission from above.”

Although Leningraders were able to make use of the museum and anniversary celebrations to articulate the city’s epic, they felt the need to express the heroism of the blockade in stone. Local authorities envisioned erecting a massive monumental ensemble to the defenders of the city immediately after the blockade was lifted. The party’s city

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50 For a good example of this type of literature from a number of different authors, see A.V. Amsterdam and M.M. Smirnov, eds., Deviat’ot dnei. Literaturno-khudozhestvennyi sbornik (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1948). This is a compilation of articles and stories published in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the lifting of the blockade.

51 During the war, for example, the party leadership raised the idea of compiling a chronicle of Leningrad and Leningrad region during the war. This work was carried out under the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Leningrad party city committee. Work continued after the war ended. See TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.2, d.5287, ll.1a-2.


53 This point has been overlooked by historians. Lisa Kirschenbaum, for example, states that “Building victory monuments did not become part of the immediate postwar effort to repair and revitalize the city. Until the mid-1950s, planners largely followed the prescription for the city articulated by the architect Valentin Kamenskii in 1945: ‘Quickly heal the wounds inflicted by the German-fascist barbarians.’” The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 115. She does note, however, that there were architectural plans and competitions during the war, and that architects continued to discuss plans after the war. Nevertheless, she
committee established a commission to plan a new monument to the defenders of Leningrad in November 1944. The commission decided that the monument should be built on Moscow Prospect near the House of Soviets, where it would become the centre of an area devoted entirely to the blockade. Nikolai Baranov discussed the construction of this monument in a paper delivered at a meeting of the city soviet’s executive committee in December 1945. He argued that although a series of monuments were planned for areas outside the city, a large monument must be constructed in Leningrad itself to commemorate the events experienced by Leningraders during the blockade. The planning for the monument entitled “To the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad” was to begin in 1946. Due to the centrality of the blockade in the city’s narrative and its importance in Leningrad identity, this monumental structure, Baranov emphasized, must surpass the monument to the victory in the war of 1812 (the Alexander Column on Palace Square):

The events that we experienced have much greater significance, and therefore, we do not have the right to make a lesser monument, but rather it must be more impressive; we must not erect just one monument, but create an architectural ensemble, in which the monument will be the main element.

The commission’s decision to erect the monument near the House of Soviets made sense, argued Baranov, because “the entire ensemble of the square would be nothing other than

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54 TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.2, d.5066, l.2.
55 For the party decision to have the monument erected, see TsGAIPD SPb, f.25, op.2, d.5371, l.34.
a monument, which would immortalize the events that Leningrad lived through." After a series of petitions and requests to build the monument were sent to the Central Committee of the party in Moscow, it seems that permission was granted and construction was slated to begin during the first postwar five-year plan. Indeed, the official plan for the reconstruction and development of Leningrad in the new five-year plan stipulated that construction of this monumental ensemble, along with monuments at mass graves, would commence.

This idea resonated with many of the people living in Leningrad after the blockade. A worker at the Kirov factory, for example, expressed his desire to see the epic commemorated in the age-old fashion. “I would erect a huge monument on the most crucial and nearest border of the defense of the city,” he wrote in his memoirs, “which would reflect the unprecedented heroism of Leningraders. A monument, in memory of those heroes who died in defense of Leningrad, and those heroic Leningraders who died of hunger.” Similar thoughts were echoed by a young woman in a poem about the destruction of the city and the experience of the siege. “We’ll gather together the Rastrelli granite/ Destroyed at the hands of defilers/ And we’ll erect a monument and let

56 See Baranov’s paper delivered on 25 December 1945 to the executive committee of the Leningrad city soviet. Tsentr’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga (TsGA SPb), f.7384, op.26, d.57, ll.31-32. See also Baranov’s discussion of the monument. TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.17, d.1447, ll.3-13.
57 For correspondence between the Leningrad authorities and the Central Committee in Moscow, see RGASPI, f.17, op.125, d.368, ll.108-109; RGASPI f.17, op.125, d.471, l.29; TsGA SPb, f.7384, op.29, d.174, l.32. In the draft decree about Leningrad’s “General Plan” in the postwar period, a series of monuments reflecting the defence of Leningrad and the war were planned. See RGAE, f.9432, op.1, d.216, l.14.; The outline of the five-year plan for Leningrad’s restoration can be found in Vechernii Leningrad. See “O piatiletnom plane vosstanovleniia i razvitiia gorodskogo khoziaistva Leningrada na 1946-1950 gg.: Reshenie XIII sessii Leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiaiashchikhsia ot 17 Jan 1947 g.,” Vechernii Leningrad, 1 February 1947.
58 See the memoirs of Aleksei Andreevich Gonchukov. TsGAIPD SPb, f.4000, op.18, d.333, l.57.
the centuries preserve/ The proud story of Leningraders’ glory."\(^{59}\) Bringing together images of the city’s historic architecture and expressing the need to eternalize the Leningrad epic in stone, these memoir and diary entries suggest that the blockade was important in Leningraders’ understanding of their own identities and the history of the city.\(^{60}\) Average Leningraders, like the city’s authorities, were producers, carriers, and articulators of the myth.

Throughout the first postwar years, then, Leningraders were determined to tell and glorify their story. Although a new monumental ensemble was meant to supplement the commemorations that already existed and to immortalize the history of the blockade in stone, the increased ideological stringency accompanying the Cold War prevented its construction and led to imposed amnesia about the Leningraders’ struggles.\(^{61}\) At precisely the same time that the government was expressing its commitment to preserving heritage, a change began in the narration of Leningrad’s wartime experience.

The first changes started to take place in early 1948. At this time, the official story of the blockade began to focus more on the struggle of the entire country with the Germans in the Great Patriotic War and the victory outside Leningrad was increasingly attributed to Stalin. The press coverage surrounding the anniversary celebrations of the lifting of the blockade began to emphasize Stalin’s role in saving Leningrad. The accent

\(^{59}\) Gosudarstvennyi memorial’nyi muzei oborony i blokady Leningrada (GMMOBL), RDF, op.1K, d. 10(p.25), l.39. Poem written by Tat’iana Bulakh in her diary on 20.01.1943. Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli was one of the most famous St. Petersburg architects of the eighteenth century.

\(^{60}\) The connection between the city’s historic architecture and commemorations of the blockade can also be seen in certain projects for constructing monuments to the heroic defence. B.R. Rubanenko’s and I.I. Fomin’s plan for the reconstruction of Gostiny Dvor, for example, envisioned a monument to the heroic defence of Leningrad in the building’s central courtyard. See Iu.Iu. Bakhareva, “Arkhitekteurnye konkursy v blokadnom Leningrade. Gostinyi dvor,” Relikviia 1, no. 8 (2005): 30-35.

\(^{61}\) Other authors have noted the destruction of the blockade memory with the onset of the Leningrad Affair. Harrison Salisbury was perhaps the first to discuss it in *The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad*, (Cambridge MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 581. Most recently, Lisa Kirschenbaum has argued, quite correctly, that the Leningrad Affair was in part an attempt to extinguish local loyalties that had developed out of the blockade. See *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad*, 143-147.
on the city’s unique experience was shifted to Stalin’s greatness and the help given to the besieged city from the entire country. No longer, for example, was the idea of creating the “Road of Life” across Lake Ladoga attributed to Zhdanov and the Leningrad party. Stalin was now hailed as the initiator of all activities which alleviated the plight of Leningraders in the city and at the front. This change in the narrative of the blockade was also reflected in the plans for the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad. Like the coverage in the press, the museum staff was instructed to begin reworking several of the exhibits in order to portray the experience of war on all fronts, not just in Leningrad. In his report for 1948, the director of the Museum, Kovalev, noted the new ideological line:

The battle of Leningraders and warriors at the front outside Leningrad with the German-Fascist invaders must not be portrayed in isolation [оттормано] from the general battle of the Soviet people with the Hitlerite monsters, and for this reason, the museum must develop exhibits, which clearly characterize the most important victories attained by the soldiers of the Red Army on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War.⁶³

Just as the victory in the war was proclaimed to be secured by Stalin, the credit for his heroic defense of Leningrad was increasingly taken away from those who articulated the particularistic myth.⁶⁴ At this point the blockade and the struggles on the Leningrad front were still hailed as one of the greatest events in the country’s war. But, over the course of 1948 and 1949, the significance of the blockade was decreased, as it became less a story unto itself and more of a component part of the all-Union war. The ways in which Leningraders had presented the city’s wartime experience impinged on the official

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⁶³ TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.694, l.1.
⁶⁴ For a discussion of press coverage of the war and Stalin’s role in it, see Jeffery Brooks, Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), chapters 7 and 8.
promotion of Soviet patriotism through its challenge to the myth of the Great Patriotic War as a unified accomplishment.

The decisive change came in the wake of the fifth anniversary of Leningrad’s liberation in January 1949. Less than a month after the anniversary celebrations, the Politburo accused two of Leningrad’s wartime heroes – Kuznetsov and Popkov – of a host of crimes, including squandering state funds on a wholesale trade fair in Leningrad that was not approved by the Soviet government, as well as promoting themselves as “special defenders of Leningrad’s interests.”

A few days later Georgii Malenkov traveled to Leningrad with an entourage of nearly two hundred officials to speak at a united city and regional party plenum. At the plenum he stated the accusations of the Politburo, proclaimed that the Leningrad leadership was attempting to distance itself from the Central Committee of the party, and argued that their actions had “set them down an anti-party path.” Not only were Kuznetsov and Popkov suddenly turned into anti-party enemies, but the “plague” quickly spread to other members of the Leningrad leadership, including the two other top officials in the city’s administration, Ia.F. Kapustin and P.G. Lazutin.

On 1 October 1950, a military board of the Supreme Court of the USSR sentenced them and two other highly placed officials with connections to

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65 See “Postanovlenie Politbiuro o sniati s dolzhnosti A.A. Kuznetsova, M.I. Rodionova, P.S. Popkova,” from 15 February 1949, in O.V. Khlevniuk et.al, eds., Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) i Sovet Ministrov SSSR, 1945-1953 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), 66-68.
66 Arkhiv ‘Memorial’ SPb, f.5 (Neopublikovannaiia memuaristika), ed.khr., Mishkevich, Grigoriia Iosifovicha, l.64.
67 “Postanovlenie ob”edinennogo plenuma Leningradskogo obkoma i gorkoma VKP(b) po itogam obsuzhdeniia postanovleniia Politbiuro ‘ob antipartiinykh deistviakh’ A.A. Kuznetsova, M.I. Rodionova i P.S. Popkova,” from 22 February 1949, in V.V. Denisov et.al. eds., TsK VKP(b) i regional’nye partiinye komitety, 1945-1953 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 185-189. See also V.V. Sadovin’s recollections of the meeting. TsGAIPD SPb, f.4000, op.18, d.585, ll.2-5.
68 Nadezhda Mandelstam first used the term “the plague” to discuss how enemies of the people “infected” all those they came in contact with during the terror of 1937-38. See Hope Against Hope: A Memoir, trans. Max Hayward (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), 197; Sheila Fitzpatrick also uses the term to show how family, friends and acquaintances of an accused person were affected by the terror. See Everyday Stalinism: Extraordinary Life in Extraordinary Times; Soviet Russia in the 1930s (New York, 1999), 199.
Leningrad (Politburo member and vice Chairman of the Soviet government – N.A. Voznesenskii, and M.I. Rodionov – member of the Orgburo and Chairman of the RSFSR government), to death. Several others were sentenced to long-term prison sentences. Over the course of the next few years, many of the people who had been in positions of authority in Leningrad during the blockade, as well as their families were swallowed up in a bloody political purge known as the Leningrad Affair. On 15 August 1952 alone, for example, fifty people who worked as district party committee and soviet executive committee members during the blockade were arrested and sentenced to long prison sentences.

Most historians agree that the purge resulted from a battle for power that developed in the early postwar years between two factions in the top party leadership. When the war ended, Zhdanov was recalled to Moscow to oversee ideological matters and gradually rose to become Stalin’s most trusted underling. Shortly after taking his position in Moscow, Zhdanov arranged to have Kuznetsov promoted to become Secretary of the party’s Central Committee in the spring of 1946. The promotion of Zhdanov and Kuznetsov came at the expense of Malenkov and Lavrentii Beria. With Zhdanov in control of Agitprop, Kuzentsov took over Malenkov’s former position of supervising party cadres and Beria’s leadership of state security apparatus. The Leningraders then

70 V.I. Demidov and V.A. Kutuzov note that the those people affected by the purge had lived and worked (or their bosses had) in Leningrad during the 1940s, including the period of the blockade. See “Leningradskoe delo” (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990), 7; Iakovlev, Reabilitatsii, 318-319; A letter to N.S. Khrushchev in 1954 about the Leningrad Affair notes that even elderly and extended family members of the accused were subject to imprisonment and exile. See “Spravka ob osuzhdenykh po ‘leningradskomu delu,’” in Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) i Sovet Ministrov, 1945-1953, 306-307.
71 TsGAIPD SPb, f.4000, op.18, d.585, ll.7-8. The author of these recollections of the Leningrad Affair was one of the fifty arrested on 15 August 1952. It should further be noted that a significant number of party officials in Leningrad during the postwar period had lived through the blockade. In 1948, 4 out of every 5 people in the Leningrad party organization were “members of the heroic defence of Leningrad.” See Mironenko, Z.S. and V.A. Ezhov et al., eds., Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS. Tom III - 1945-1985 (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1985), 18.
promoted former associates, mainly from Leningrad, into influential positions in Moscow and throughout the USSR. Malenkov and Beria’s waning power motivated them to collaborate in a struggle against Zhdanov and the Leningraders. According to the traditional narrative, when Zhdanov died in August 1948, Malenkov and Beria seized the opportunity to defeat their opponents (left defenceless with the death of their patron in the Politburo), and regain Stalin’s favour by raising his suspicions about the Leningraders.  

Recently historians have nuanced the factional fighting argument. While acknowledging the importance of tensions between the factions, some historians have argued that the Leningrad leadership was purged for violating the principles of governmental and party discipline. Others see the purge as an attempt to “uproot” a patronage network in the party elite, or to destroy a “Leningrad cabal,” which Stalin no longer had faith in. Another interpretation argues that the root of the purge lies in attempts to promote RSFSR autonomy within the USSR by creating a Russian Communist Party centered in Leningrad. Certainly no one reason can be located to explain this final Stalinist purge, and the Leningrad Affair most definitely developed out of a combination of factors. But given the tightening of the ideological line as the Cold War gathered momentum, the promotion of local identity and the particularistic myth of

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73 Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, Cold Peace, chapter 3.
76 David Brandenberger stresses the ideological factors in bringing on the purge of Leningraders. He argues that Leningrad had overstepped the limits of permissibility in their calls for the creation of a Communist Party for the Russian Republic to be centered in Leningrad. See “Stalin, the Leningrad Affair and the Limits of Postwar Russocentrism,” Russian Review 63, no.2 (2004): 241-255.
Leningrad’s wartime experience were surely contributing factors in the attack on Leningrad’s leadership and the memory of the blockade. Malenkov and Beria most certainly used the particularistic myth of the blockade as evidence of disloyalty in their efforts to have Stalin attack Leningrad. And – more importantly – the story of the blockade and Leningraders’ heroism became an additional victim of the purge.

Amir Weiner has argued that in the postwar period promoting narratives of war and wartime suffering that did not fit into or that challenged the official myth of war could and did lead to the “collective exclusion” of certain groups of people. The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, for example, became the object of persecution, in part because it attempted to document the suffering of the Jewish people during the war and expressed “Jewish particularism.” Between 1941-1945, the committee was used to mobilize support from Jews outside the Soviet Union in the battle against fascism. In the postwar period, the party leadership believed that the committee’s continuing activities, including the publication of the *Black Book*, which told of Jewish suffering at the hands of the Nazis, presented the history of the Jews in the Great Patriotic War and early postwar period “in isolation” from the rest of the Soviet people. When the war ended, the

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77 Kirschenbaum takes this position as well. She argues, quite correctly, that the purge “operated against local identities, putting an end to the wartime tolerance of local loyalties in general and of Leningraders’ insistence on the uniqueness of their experiences in particular.” See *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad*, 143-144.


79 Joshua Rubenstein “Introduction: Night of the Murdered Poets,” in Joshua Rubenstein and Oleg Naumov, eds., *Stalin’s Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 25. This case of course is much more complicated. It must be seen in light of the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign of the postwar period, and the increase in anti-Semitism, especially after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Nevertheless, the fact that Jews were persecuted for expressing the Jewish experience in the war is similar to the persecution of Leningraders for their particularistic myth.

80 See “Dokladaia zapiska G.F. Aleksandrova i zaveduiushchego Otdelom vneshnei politiki TsK VKP(b) M.A. Suslova V.M. Molotovu i sekretariu TsK VKP(b) A.A. Kuznetsovu s predlozhением prekratit’ deiatel’nost’ Antifashistskogo Komiteta sovetskikh uchenkh i Evreiskogo Antifashistskogo Komiteta v SSSR,” in *Stalin i kozmopolitizm*, 98-101. See also “Dokladaia zapiska Agitpropa TsK A.A. Zhdanovu
committee was no longer needed to mobilize support against the Nazis. In exactly the same way, by 1949 the memory of the blockade, in Moscow’s opinion, had outlived its usefulness as a mobilizing force to restore the second most important city in the country. Now that the economy had been restored to its prewar levels, and the central government felt itself to be on solid financial ground again, it was no longer willing to tolerate the powerful myth of the Northern capital’s wartime experience.

Leningrad and the memory of the blockade came under attack following Malenkov’s visit. The central leadership was intent on bringing the memory of the war in Leningrad back under the state’s ideological program and subjecting the city’s leadership to strict control from above. Those Leningrad leaders purged over the course of the Leningrad Affair were replaced by Stalin’s people sent from the centre.81 In the months that followed the February meeting, several commissions were dispatched from Moscow to scrutinize the work of the Leningrad party organization and document their findings for the Central Committee. The results of the reviews, given the postwar insistence on Soviet patriotism, are not surprising. Reports sent to Agitprop noted that Leningrad party organizations focused too much on the city itself, to the detriment of the country as a whole. A review of the House of the Party Activists (Dom Partaktiv), for example, noted that the material prepared by the Leningrad party organization for the Short Course of the History of the Party “is one-sided and impresses on the readers an

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81 V.A. Kutuzov discusses how the purged Leningraders were replaced by people sent from Moscow, and how these new leaders of the Leningrad party and soviet organizations continued to decimate the former leadership. The new party boss, V.A. Andrianov (a close associate of Malenkov), for example began to purge people under the following principle, “the more, the better.” See “’Leningradskoe delo’: sud’by ispolnitel’ei,” in M.V. Khodiakov, et al., eds., Rossiiskaiia gosudarstvennost’: istoriia i sovremennost’ (St. Petersburg: Znamenitye Universanty, 2003), 614. The Orgbiuro confirmed Andrianov’s position as First Secretary of the Leningrad party on 7 March 1949. RGASPI, f.17, op.116, d.420, l.7.
incorrect presentation about the special, supposedly decisive role of Leningrad and the Leningrad party organization in the life of the country.” The report went on to state that the Great Patriotic War, as experienced in Leningrad, was also presented in a one-sided fashion, leaving out battles on other fronts.\textsuperscript{82} Another report noted that agitation work and the city’s cultural-enlightenment establishments were not living up to the tasks set by the central leadership. Leningrad’s propaganda organs, it was argued, needed to expand their focus to include all-Union matters. Party journals, including \textit{Bloknот agitatorа}, as well as Leningrad’s radio stations were accused of devoting very little attention to the Union as a whole.\textsuperscript{83} The Leningrad Affair, therefore, opened the party organization up to increased scrutiny and provided a pretext for the Central Committee to find faults and lay blame. The reviews showed the Stalinist leadership that a cult of Leningrad was being created by local authorities based on the city’s unique history and the mythology of the blockade.

Soon after the purge began in Leningrad, the changes in the blockade narrative that were witnessed in 1948 were greatly intensified. Indeed, over the course of 1949 and the years leading up to Stalin’s death, all mention of Leningrad’s wartime experience ceased. Books focusing on the blockade that were published during and after the war were pulled from the shelves of bookstores and libraries throughout the country.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{82} RGAPSI, f.17, op.132, d.103, l.75.
\textsuperscript{83} See the report entitled “\textit{O nekotorykh nedostatkakh i merakh uluchsheniia agitatsionno-massovoi i kul’turно-prosvetitel’noi raboty v leningradskoi partiinoi organizatsii}.” RGAPSI, f.17, op.132, d.114, ll.159-163.
\textsuperscript{84} Arlen Blum notes that some of these books were put back into circulation once the Leningrad Affair was deemed to be a falsified crime during the early Khrushechev period. Others, however, remained in special repositories until Perestroika. See “\textit{Blokadnaia tema v tsenzurnoi blokade: po arkhivnym dokumentam glavlita SSSR},” \textit{Neva}, 2004, no.1: 239. Many of the books were blacklisted because they presented Kuznetsov and the other Leningrad leaders in a positive light, or because they were mentioned at all. One book was taken out of circulation, for example, because Kuznetsov was mentioned along with other leaders of the party. RGAPSI, f.17, op.132, d.319, l.209. A commission sent to Leningrad to carry out a
Between 1949 and Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization of the mid 1950s very little, if anything, was published about the “heroic nine-hundred-day struggle.” At the same time, the discussion of the blockade was curtailed in the press. Although an article or two appeared each subsequent year on the anniversary of the lifting of the siege, the coverage in Leningrad shrank significantly. In the first five years following the city’s liberation, Leningrad newspapers devoted three to four pages to the blockade every 27 January. In 1950 only one article appeared on page two of Leningradskaja pravda, and any mention of the anniversary completely disappeared from the central newspapers. From this time onwards much more attention was given to the other major battles during the war (e.g., Stalingrad), and the victory outside Leningrad was presented as the result of the work of the entire Soviet people, and especially Stalin. Not only did reports of the anniversary vanish from the press, but the popular celebrations also ceased. Moscow, in fact, silenced all forms of local celebrations that broke away from the ideological line by presenting Leningrad as a special victim of the Great Patriotic War. By attacking the institutions which propagated the uniqueness of Leningrad’s wartime experience, the Stalin leadership intended to place more stress on the all-Union myth of war in an effort to further promote Soviet patriotism.

verification of the party membership also noted that in the first half of 1949, five thousand books and journals were taken from the libraries of the Leningrad University because they included materials written by enemies of the people. RGASPI, f.17, op.132, d.103, l.76.
86 See, for example, “Velikaia pobeda pod Leningradom (k shestiletiiu razgroma nemetskofashistskikh zakhvatchikov pod Leningradom),” Leningradskaja pravda, 27 January 1950. See also Kalendarova, “Formiruia pamiat’,” 285.
87 Each year around 27 January there were a number of articles outlining the celebrations taking place throughout Leningrad. From 1950 onwards there are no reports of this at all. The archives also reveal no trace of preparations, speeches, or events as they do for the years between 1944 and 1949.
The most vital blow to the Leningraders’ memory of the blockade struck the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad. Soon after the Leningrad Affair began, the museum was closed “temporarily” to reorganize parts of the layout. At first there was nothing strange in this; the museum had been closed temporarily to renovate and update exhibits in the past. This time, however, the museum never reopened. Ever since 1948 the museum had come under increasing pressure to present the defence and blockade of Leningrad in a way which emphasized the connection with the rest of the country and the assistance provided to Leningrad by the Soviet people. Like other institutions in Leningrad following the purge, the museum was closely scrutinized by representatives of the central party leadership and found to be seriously lacking in several respects. Malenkov, for example, reviewed the museum’s guide book (published in 1948) during his stay in the city and “screamed” that the museum was full of anti-Soviet exhibits, that it had “perverted Stalin’s role in the defence of Leningrad, that only the suffering of Leningraders is emphasized in the museum, and that the role of the Central Committee of the party in the defence of Leningrad is not presented, etc., etc…” In effect, Malenkov accused the museum of creating a special myth of Leningrad’s fate during the blockade. Following this, Agitprop sent commissions to Leningrad to review and assess the museum, as well as provide guidelines for restructuring the exhibits and museological narrative.

88 Arkhiv 'Memorial' SPb, f.5 (Neopublikovannaia memuaristika), ed.khr., GrigoriI Iosifovich Mishkevich, l.65. This information comes from G.I. Mishkevich (one of the sub-directors of the museum), who heard it from the former director, L.L. Rakov. V.A. Kutuzov, who interviewed Mishkevich, notes these accusations as well.
90 In September, for example, the Orgburo of the Central Committee decided to send two instructors from Agitprop to Leningrad for twenty days to review the work of the museum. RGASPI, f.17, op.116, d.460, l.9. A gathering of the Museum’s party organization on 19 October 1949 noted that a commission from the Central Committee provided a plan to help in the reconstruction of the museum’s layout and narrative.
The museum became a lightening rod for the memory of the blockade as a whole, as well as for those who articulated that memory. The changes seen in the museum’s narrative reflect the overall change in the limits of presenting exceptional events which could offer a sense of identity other than that proposed by the central leadership. A meeting of the museum’s party organization in October 1949 echoed Malenkov’s comments by noting that the museum’s greatest fault was that it “perverted the historic events of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union and in its content carried an anti-party character.” Its layout, the gathering continued, “conducted an anti-party line of artificial separation of the battle of Leningraders from the general battle of the entire Soviet people, setting Leningrad off from the rest of the Soviet country.”

Those very same Leningrad party and soviet leaders who were purged during the Leningrad Affair were now accused of using the museum for their own purposes – to split Leningrad off from the Central Committee, to acclaim their “sham contributions” in the defence of Leningrad at the expense of Stalin’s, and to minimize the role of the entire country in saving the city. The tasks of the museum’s party organization in late 1949, then, were many. Two of the most important, however, were to concentrate on the ideological content in the new layout, and to uncover all the evidence of the former leaders’ “enemy activities” and “tear them out by the roots.”

Over the next couple of years museum workers – those who had not been removed from their positions and imprisoned for perverting the history of the war –

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91 See the “Postanovlenie Obscheego zakrytogo partiinogo sobrania chlenov i kandidatov partiinoi partorganizatsii Muzeia oborony Leningrada ot 19 oktiabria 1949,” TsGAIPD SPb, f.4440, op.2, d.11, l.13.
92 See the discussion of the Zakrytoe partiinoe sobranie partiinoi organizatsii Muzeia oborony Leningrada ot 18 noiabria 1949 goda, TsGAIPD, f.4440, op.2, d.11, l.16-25.
93 TsGAIPD SPb, f.4440, op.2, d.11, l.22.
worked furiously at correcting the “mistakes” and “anti-Soviet” elements that had poisoned the layout of the institution.\textsuperscript{94} Much of their work concentrated on providing a narrative of the blockade that presented it as a component part of the Great Patriotic War instead of a unique event of significant importance in and of itself. Workers were sent to regions and cities as far away as Odessa to search for materials with the goal of showing that Leningrad was supported continuously by the entire country throughout the siege, and that Stalin had personally saved the city and its residents. At the museum’s request, the central party committees of Kazakhstan, Tadzhikistan, Uzbekistan, Georgia and other regions sent materials to show the help offered to Leningrad.\textsuperscript{95} By 1951, the newly proposed layout of the museum bore very little resemblance to the museum as it existed until the summer of 1949. In order to fulfill the ideological demands of Moscow, the museum’s layout, in the words of its new director, L.A. Dubinin (appointed by the Central Committee), “is undergoing a fundamental change.”\textsuperscript{96}

Try as the museum workers might, there was very little that could be done to present Leningrad’s wartime experience as anything but exceptional. No matter how the layout of the museum was changed, no matter how many images of Stalin were added to its walls, the museum could not but “bear witness” to the experience and heroism of

\textsuperscript{94} Soon after the Leningrad Affair began, the museum’s second director, Lev L’vovich Rakov, who had become synonymous with the museum, was arrested and sentenced under article 58 to twenty-five years imprisonment. Not long after that, another museum worker, Grigorii Iosifovich Mishkevich was arrested for being part of the “anti-Soviet centre” that was the museum. See his account of his arrest and interrogation in \textit{Arkhiv ‘Memorial’ SPb}, f.5 (Neopenlikovannyia memuaristika), ed.khr., Mishkevich, Grigoria Iosifovicha, ll.36-74.

\textsuperscript{95} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.1198, ll.13-14; TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.1384, ll.2-5.

\textsuperscript{96} TsGALI SPb, f.277, op.1, d.1198, 1.11. Following the purge of Leningrad’s leaders and the arrest of several museum workers, including the director, Kovalev, L.A. Dubinin was appointed to be the new director. He was one of the propagandists sent from Moscow to Leningrad in August 1949 to provide guidance for the Leningrad party organization in propaganda work. RGASPI, f.17, op.116, d.452, l.7.
Leningraders during the siege.\textsuperscript{97} After closing in August 1949, the museum, contrary to the hopes of its workers and the people of Leningrad, never reopened.\textsuperscript{98} On 18 February, 1953, after more than three years of work to turn the museum into something it was never meant to be, the Leningrad city soviet ordered that it be liquidated and its exhibits distributed to other museums throughout the city.\textsuperscript{99} As was the case with other sites, events, institutions and, indeed, people who promoted the memory of the blockade, the museum, in offering a particularistic history of the Great Patriotic War, had become ideologically dangerous.

### Conclusion

With the beginnings of the Cold War, the Stalinist leadership saw the need to create a loyal and unified population by inculcating a feeling of Soviet patriotism in its citizens. The new ideological stance as expressed by Soviet patriotism stood on two pillars: a connection with the country’s heritage, and the myth of the Great Patriotic War. In the words of David Brandenberger, “If Lenin's formula in the early 1920s had been ‘communism equals Soviet power plus electrification,’ by the late 1940s, Stalin's corollary apparently held that ‘Soviet power equals the history of the Russian people plus the myth of war.’”\textsuperscript{100}

Given the emphasis placed on the thousand years of Russian history, the Stalinist leadership enacted laws to protect the embodiments of the country’s past. By late 1948,
historic and cultural monuments throughout the USSR were guaranteed protection in a series of new laws which sought to save them from destruction and abuse. The new legislation was part of the party’s commitment to heritage. The country’s monuments were employed to unify the population through presenting a common, heroic past. Restoration of cultural monuments, then, was not only desirable, but ideologically useful.

Commemorations of the blockade, however, had the opposite effect. Instead of being accessible to all, the myth of the blockade offered a particularistic history of the war in Leningrad and on the Leningrad front. Throughout 1948, the central leadership in Moscow attempted to lessen the attention paid to the siege as a unique event which took place in isolation from the war on other fronts. When the Leningrad Affair began in February 1949, the city’s wartime narrative and those who articulated it were exposed to scrutiny from the centre. Their story was found to be heresy. As a consequence, the city’s leadership and institutions of memory came under attack. By the late 1940s, memories that challenged the all-Union myth of the war as a pillar of Soviet patriotism were quashed to assure adherence to the postwar ideological line.

In 1949 the processes of restoration and commemoration in Leningrad, which had been intimately connected throughout the immediate postwar period, diverged. The restoration of Leningrad’s imperial monuments continued, but during Stalin’s final years it was not hailed as a commemoration of the events which Leningraders lived through. Nor was the memory of the blockade used to fuel restoration. This parting of ways between restoration and commemoration can best be understood in the context of the increasing ideological stringency of the postwar period.
Conclusion

The Return of Memory

“Nothing is forgotten, no one is forgotten.” These words are inscribed on the centerpiece of the Piskarevskoe Memorial Cemetery, one of the mass graves where hundreds of thousands of Leningraders were unceremoniously buried during the siege. Construction began on the memorial complex in 1956 and it was unveiled on 9 May 1960, just over sixteen years after the liberation of the city in January 1944. As a monument to the victims of the blockade, this somber, yet powerful complex speaks to the pain and suffering experienced by Leningraders during the nine-hundred days. It also emphasizes the tremendous will to remember and commemorate the event that more than anything else defined the identity of the city and its residents in the postwar years. But how is it possible that a monument such as this was constructed given Stalin’s attempts to erase the blockade narrative starting in 1949? How could Leningraders express themselves and their experiences without impinging on the all-Union myth of war promoted by the centre?

The answer is to be found in the political, cultural, and social developments of the post-Stalin period. Stalin died from a massive brain hemorrhage on 5 March 1953. Almost immediately, several members of the Politburo began to jockey for power, ultimately resulting in N.S. Khrushchev bettering his political opponents. “After the seemingly eternal freeze of Stalinism,” notes historian Stephen Bittner, “the Soviet Union had begun to ‘Thaw.’”¹ The Khrushchev era witnessed dramatic changes in the system.

The Thaw offered freedoms in the cultural sphere that were previously lacking. The party allowed for a certain degree of criticism of Soviet life and bureaucracy, it gave intellectuals the chance to express themselves more openly, and it began a process of de-Stalinization that had long-term consequences for the system as a whole. During this period of hesitant de-Stalinization, the new leadership deemed many of the criminal allegations made against the Soviet people to be fabrications and attributed them to Stalin’s “cult of personality” or his henchmen. Soviet newspapers announced that the Doctor’s Plot – a supposed conspiracy of Jewish doctors who allegedly conspired to murder members of the top party leadership – was a falsification. The post-Stalin leadership quickly announced a mass amnesty of Gulag prisoners sentenced for non-political crimes and later dismantled the system. More importantly for Leningrad and the blockade narrative, the new leadership rehabilitated the Leningraders purged and executed between 1949-1953, announcing in December 1954 that Beria had concocted the Leningrad Affair at the behest of Stalin.

The rehabilitation of Leningraders, in combination with the somewhat sporadic freedoms offered by Khrushchev’s Thaw, had a profound effect on the reemergence of the blockade story. Khrushchev denounced many of Stalin’s crimes in a “Secret Speech” that lasted for over three hours at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. The news of the speech soon spread and opened a floodgate of expression. Khrushchev decided to allow the Soviet public to produce war stories which did not attribute victory solely to Stalin; a

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decision that was upheld by his successors. Shortly after the speech, Leningraders once again began to celebrate the heroism and tragedy of the blockade story. Participants in the battles outside Leningrad, intellectuals who lived in the city, and others began to publish books, memoirs, and semi-fictional accounts about their experiences during the war. The importance of the blockade narrative to the city and its residents demanded that it be expressed as triumphantly as it had been in the years before Stalin attacked it.

Over the next several decades the story of the blockade became an important part of the burgeoning war cult, which began under Khrushchev and flourished during the Brezhnev regime. It goes without saying that the party was interested in using the memory of the blockade for its political needs. According to historian Lisa Kirschenbaum, the authorities sought to bolster national cohesion by using war stories “in an overarching narrative of the unity of the party and the people.” Nevertheless, Leningraders took this opportunity to tell their personal stories in ways which did not always confirm the party’s guiding role in the war.

The freedoms of the post-Stalin period and the war cult permitted the articulation of the blockade narrative in numerous forms. Leningraders continued the process of writing their story into the cityscape. They expressed their wartime experiences in stone throughout the city in ways that were not permissible during Stalin’s last years. The Piskarevskoe memorial was only one of a series of monuments constructed in and around Leningrad between the 1960s and 1980s to commemorate the siege. During this period,

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the Leningrad leadership established hundreds of memorial plaques on buildings in the city to memorialize events that took place during the blockade. Some of these plaques identified damage done by bombs and shells, many marked places where people died from bombardment, while others were reproductions of signs which warned citizens that “this side of the street is more dangerous during artillery raids.” On 9 May 1975, the massive monument to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad – located at the southern edge of the city on Victory Square at the end of Moskovskii Prospekt – was opened to the public. Leningraders themselves funded the construction of this monument through donations.\(^8\)

The blockade story also became the subject of new museum exhibits. On 27 January 1964, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the lifting of the blockade, local authorities opened a permanent exhibition consisting of thirteen halls in the State Museum of the History of Leningrad.\(^9\) Several years later, a grass-roots movement successfully petitioned to have the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad recreated. In 1989, at the height of Glasnost’, the famous museum reopened in the same building in which it was formerly located. Although the organizers of the movement to reopen the museum called for all thirty-seven halls occupied by the old museum on Solianoi Pereulok, the resurrected museum was allocated only one hall.\(^10\) The memory of the blockade, therefore, did not disappear. Rather, over the course of the post-Stalin period it

\(^{8}\) For a complete listing of plaques established in the city since the Khrushchev period, along with illustrations, see V.N. Timofeev, E.N. Poretskina, and N.N. Efremov, Memorial’nye doski Sankt-Peterburga. Spravochnik (St. Petersburg: Art-Buro, 1999), 522-563.

\(^{9}\) P.M. Bulushev and V.I. Ganshin, Podvigu tvoeu, Leningrad: Monument героicheskim zashchitnikam goroda (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1980), 13.


grew stronger and more resilient. It became part of a growing cult of war that was much more open to personal tragedy and suffering than Stalin’s myth had ever been.

**The Blockade and Historic Restoration**

In this dissertation I have discussed how the memory of the blockade both informed the restoration of Leningrad and was symbolically inscribed in the city’s historic landscape. In doing so, I have argued that the preservation and restoration activities that took place between 1941 and 1950 would not have been possible without the ideological changes of the 1930s. Because the Stalinist leadership came to see historic monuments and landmarks as embodiments of the recently rehabilitated past, there was an ideological need to protect them. In keeping with these national prerogatives, Leningrad’s monuments – like those in other cities and towns – reflected the nation’s history and told a newly-fashioned Stalinist story of the motherland. In light of this, the Soviet government attempted to create an official organ to monitor and protect monuments throughout the USSR. The central leadership used these monuments to inspire patriotism and a sense of community with deep roots in a common past. When the Germans invaded, war threatened to obliterate the touchstones of that past.

Beginning in June 1941, the Stalinist leadership implemented measures to protect the country’s monuments from wartime destruction. Nowhere were these measures implemented so fully and diligently as in Leningrad, where the monumental landscape was the object of admiration and respect. The city had a long tradition of preservation movements which developed before and after the Revolution, and the local preservationists met the impetus from the centre to protect monuments with enthusiasm.
As hundreds of thousands of people suffered the terrors and deprivations caused by the blockade, municipal authorities risked lives and diverted resources from defence needs to preserve the city’s monuments. When the city was liberated in January 1944, local authorities privileged the imperial landscape by ordering the historic areas of the city be restored before all else. Leningrad’s party and soviet leadership hailed the restoration process as a commemoration of the events suffered by the city’s residents during the war. In the process of restoring the historic landscape, architects, preservationists, and other Leningraders symbolically inscribed the blockade narrative into the city’s fabric.

Although this emphasis on restoring the cityscape stemmed largely from the desires of preservationists to save historic monuments and overcome the wounds of the blockade, it was also due to Stalinist ideological imperatives. Once again embroiled in conflict – this time with the country’s erstwhile allies – the Stalinist leadership sought to mould a patriotic community of people. The leadership, continuing to draw on a thousand years of Russian history to inculcate devotion to the motherland, also used the newly forged myth of war as a tool to unite the Soviet people around a state-sponsored collective memory of heroism and victory.

In the meantime, the Leningrad party and state leadership used the memory of the blockade to further promote the restoration of the city. One of the fundamental arguments of this dissertation has been that the blockade was the central event in the memory and lives of Leningraders. The city’s party and soviet officials mythologized the blockade and the heroism of the people who lived through it. They offered the blockade story to people moving to Leningrad in the postwar period, hoping that the newcomers would embrace the narrative and be inspired to restore the city. Commemorations of the
blockade focused almost exclusively on the Leningrad front and the hardships faced by civilians living in the besieged city. As the Cold War developed, and the party leadership began to attribute all victories to Stalin, Leningrad’s self-congratulatory mythologizing was increasingly seen as a perversion of the Great Patriotic War which denied Stalin’s role in the defence of the city. The blockade narrative conflicted with the all-Union myth of war espoused by the centre. When the city’s leadership came under attack in 1949 during the Leningrad Affair, so too did the blockade story. The Stalinist leadership attempted to erase the memory of the blockade and bring the story of Leningrad’s particular wartime experience into line with the national narrative of war. Although Stalin destroyed the institutions of memory and imprisoned many of those people who articulated the importance of the blockade, neither he, nor the people he sent to oversee the city’s party and soviet institutions in the wake of the purge could quash the individual memories of the event. The national memory forged by the state was not powerful enough to erase the personal memories so embedded in Leningraders’ identification with their city. A battle between types of memory and history had occurred. After the death of Stalin, Leningrad’s wartime story reemerged to exist alongside the state’s myth of war.

The rehabilitation of Leningrad’s wartime narrative in the post-Stalin years allowed for a reconnection of blockade memory with the city’s historic landscape. With the revival of the blockade story, museum workers, preservationists, and historians published monographs and personal accounts about the battle to protect the city’s monuments during the war and restore them in the postwar period. This process

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continues to the present day, as more and more diaries, memoirs, and document collections recount the efforts of Leningraders to save the city’s historic monuments and the history embodied in them. The historic landscape of the city figures prominently in the wartime narratives produced by the state and individuals who lived through the blockade. The city was not simply the setting for the blockade, but rather a character in the tragedy that played out for nearly nine-hundred days. One might not find many physical traces of the war on the buildings, statues, and streets of the city, but each monument has a story to tell about the war, and those stories are eagerly told by museum workers and preservationists, and commemorated by memorial plaques and exhibits. The restored cityscape stands as a commemoration of Leningraders’ determination to protect the city, to overcome the destruction of war, and to preserve its imperial heritage.


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