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Today's Travel through Sevastopol's Past: Post-Communist Continuity in a 'Ukrainian' Cityscape

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Abstract

Based on interviews, a review of the press, personal observations, and previous research, this paper seeks to understand how the predominately Russian city of Sevastopol within Ukraine is redefining itself in the post-Soviet period. As the recent Ukrainian presidential elections have shown, Sevastopol, like much of eastern and southern Ukraine, identify more with Moscow than Kiev.

This paper suggests that the relative continuity in Sevastopol's built environment is a result of the deep-seated development of a local identity after World War II that was easily adapted to the post-Soviet transformation. This local identity transcended the Soviet Union and continues to frustrate attempts to develop a Ukrainian identity. Moreover, because the Russian Black Sea Fleet is still based in the city and most of the sites of memory created in the twentieth-century highlighted the contribution of Russians, political affinities tend toward Moscow rather than Kiev.