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THE SOVIET PLACES OF MEMORY OF THE POSTWAR PERIOD IN THE SYMBOLIC SPACE OF THE SOUTHERN BESSARABIAN CITIES

Abstract: This paper focuses on creating places of memory in the cities of the Izmail district in the post-war period as a component of the Soviet politics of memory in the region. The author identifies the importance of the ideological factor in the construction of places of memory in the “late Stalinist” period, such as the monument of Alexander Suvorov and the Historical Museum in Izmail, the memorial to the Tatarbunary Rebellion, and others. Particular attention is paid to the memorialization of World War II heroes and victims in the first post-war decade. Based on the analysis of materials of modern mass media, the role of these Soviet places of memory in commemorative practices of independent Ukraine and their position in the symbolic space are considered. It is emphasized that despite decommunization in the country, the places of memory, which were a component of the Soviet ideological discourse, have been preserved in the south of the Odesa region.

Keywords: politics of memory, places of memory, Southern Bessarabia, post-war period, Stalinism.

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Introduction

The historical memory as part of collective memory directly impacts identity formation. At the same time, researchers point to the state’s dominant role in shaping historical memory to consolidate society around a particular ideology. The Soviet regime, which recognized the existence of only one Marxist-Leninist doctrine, monopolized the tools for forming historical memory and created images of the past following its political goals and interests. An especial interest for studying the Soviet politics of memory is the USSR’s territories annexed during the Second World War, particularly Southern Bessarabia, which became part of the Ukrainian SSR as the Izmail region (*Izmailskaya oblast*). The Soviet propaganda constructed a new historical memory for the population of these territories, based on myths and outright falsifications of the history. The images of the past, created by

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the official politics of memory, required fixation on spatial objects, such as monuments, memorials, museums, streets, and geographical locations. The Stalinist regime prioritized constructing new memory places to preserve Soviet narratives in the collective memory.

There are various approaches to the study of places of memory. The French historian P. Nora first proposed “realms of memory” (*Lieux de Mémoire*), considering it in three senses – material, functional and symbolic.¹ He tended to regard them as intersection points where society’s collective memory had crystallized. They can be spatial and geographical objects and events, people, things, traditions, etc. A. Assmann considered the following places of memory: places of generations, places of memories, sacred sites and mythical landscapes; ruin; graves and gravestones; traumatic places.² Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott used “memory places” and indicated that some places (museums, preservation sites, battlefields, memorials) profoundly affected public memory.³ Possessing powerful symbolic potential, they can construct a preferred public identity for visitors, create a lasting sense of community for them, and form a connection between the past and the present. That is why they have essential historical, cultural, and political significance.

The study of Soviet “places of memory” is carried out by modern researchers mainly in their influence on post-Soviet identity and the making of the memory politics of post-Soviet states, including Ukraine. The creation of “places of memory” in the annexed territories during the late Stalinist period is reflected in the works of S. Yekelchyk, V. Sereda, and S. Kattago.⁴

The article aims to analyze the processes of creating material places of memory (monuments, museums) in the post-war period (1945-1953), which served as instruments of the Soviet politics of memory in Southern Bessarabia. The author

¹ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 19.

² Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, translated into Ukrainian by Ksenia Dmytrenko, Larysa Doronicheva, Oleksandr Yudin (Kyiv: Nika-tsentr, 2012), 317-59.

³ Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott, “Introduction: Rhetoric/Memory/Place” in *Places of public memory: the rhetoric of museums and memorials*, ed. Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2010), 24-5.

⁴ Serhy Yekelchyk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory. Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination*, translated into Ukrainian by Mykola Klymchuk and Hrustyna Chushan (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2008), 204-17; Viktoria Sereda, “Misto yak lieu de memoire: spilna chy podilena pam’iat? Pryklad Lvova,” *Visnyk Lvivskoho universytetu. Seriia sotsiologichna*, no. 2 (2008): 73-99; Siobhan Kattago, “War memorials and the politics of memory: The Soviet war memorial in Tallinn,” *Constellations*, no. 16.1 (2009): 150-66.

focuses on those places of memory that have retained a dominant role in the modern symbolic space of cities in the south of the Odessa region.

Monument to Alexander Suvorov and the Soviet project of a new historical memory about Izmail

In the mid-1930s, a “great turn” occurred in the Soviet ideology towards National-Bolshevism. Along with the class struggle, the ideas of Russo-centrism and “the friendship of peoples” were actualized. The Stalinist regime appropriated the historical heritage of the Russian Empire and introduced heroes of Russian political, cultural, and military personalities into its pantheon. Among them was A. Suvorov, whose glorification began actively during World War II (the foundation of the Order of Suvorov in 1942, the opening of the Suvorov schools in 1943). Under these conditions, the connection between the history of Izmail and the Russian commander successfully fit into the new ideology. The assault of the Izmail fortress, which was glorified in the Russian imperial and Soviet public discourse, was a symbol of pride for the people, promoted better identification with the new state, and acted as an instrument of patriotic education. Thus, the myth of Izmail as “the city of the glory of Russian weapon” became a central component in constructing the historical memory of the newly-annexed region’s population.⁵

Undoubtedly, the monument to Suvorov is one of the central memory places for the inhabitants of Izmail. For the first time, the decision to build a memorial to the famous commander was made only on the eve of the First World War. Although Eduards made the sculpture of Suvorov in 1913, the monument was not erected due to the outbreak of World War I. The finished sculpture stood in Eduard’s former studio until the mid-1930s, when it was installed in front of the entrance to the Odessa Art Museum. In Izmail, nearly the same place where the monument to Suvorov was to be built, the Romanian authorities made a memorial to King Ferdinand in 1937.

The idea of erecting a monument to the commander came to the Soviet authorities immediately after the annexing of Southern Bessarabia. On July 12, 1940, the correspondent of the central party newspaper “Pravda” reported that the sculpture of Suvorov was going to be delivered from Odessa for installing on a pedestal.⁶ The author pointed out that Romanian authorities had used this pedestal, which citizens had built for the monument to Suvorov in 1916, to install a Ferdinand sculpture. With the arrival of Soviet troops, residents of the city demolished the

⁵ Viktor Drozdov, “Stvorennia radianskoho mifu pro Izmail yak “misto rosiiskoi boiovoi slavy” v povienni period,” *Scientific Bulletin of the Izmail State University of Humanities. Section “Historical sciences”*, no. 52 (2021): 54-64.

⁶ “Pamjatnik A. V. Suvorovu v Izmaile,” *Pravda*, July 12, 1940, 2.

monument to the “hated Romanian king” and took the initiative to erect a monument to Suvorov. The information in the newspaper did not correspond to reality. Firstly, the memorial to Ferdinand was not located in the same place where the monument to Suvorov was planned to build. Secondly, the memorial to Ferdinand was evacuated to Tulcha before the entry of Soviet troops. It was returned to Izmail in 1942 and was stayed there until the arrival of Soviet forces in August 1944. However, the monument to Suvorov was not erected in Izmail during 1940-1941, as earlier before World War I.

After returning Soviet power to the region in August 1944, the central leadership finally decided to convert their idea into a fact. The Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR adopted a decree “On the transfer of the monument to A. V. Suvorov from Odesa to Izmail” on February 9, 1945.⁷ The monument’s construction progressed rapidly because the authorities had scheduled the unveiling of the memorial for the symbolic date of August 26, 1946, the first anniversary of “the liberation of Izmail from the fascist invaders.” On July 4, the Izmail regional executive committee signed a contract for building the monument with the construction crew No. 12 of the Danube flotilla’s engineering department. According to the agreement, the contractor had to prepare installation drawings and a general estimate by July 20 and complete construction by August 20. The estimated cost of work on constructing the monument was 1.3 million rubles.⁸ However, according to the Office of Architecture Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, the costs amounted to 1 million rubles. Moreover, the Office allocated 560 thousand rubles from their funds “due to the high urgency of the work and the lack of transfers from the customer.”⁹ Subsequently, the government demanded to return the Office’s funds from the regional budget. The regional newspaper *Pridunayskaya Pravda* reported that only eight days were allotted for the assemblage of the monument. On August 22, a memorial plaque with the engraving “Worthy descendants to the great ancestor” was lowered into the pedestal depths.¹⁰ On August 24, the builders carried out the last finishing work, and they handed the monument over by the scheduled date. All the staff who participated in the monument’s construction received gratitude from the Council of People’s Commissars “for urgent and high-quality construction.”¹¹ Thus, the vast funds and building pace have demonstrated the essential symbolic significance of

⁷ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 7, file 2094, p. 88.

⁸ KUIA, fund R-419, description 1, file 5, p. 22.

⁹ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 7, file 3939, pp. 151, 162.

¹⁰ “Na stroitel’stve pamjatnika Suvorovu,” *Pridunajskaja Pravda*, August 24, 1945, 4.

¹¹ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 7, file 1938, p. 128.

the monument, which was supposed to show the historical connection of Suvorov's military glory with the glory of the Soviet troops that liberated Izmail.

Along with the heads of local executive bodies and party organizations and honored guests, the deputy head of the government of the Ukrainian SSR, L. Korniyets, also attended the unveiling of a monument. This event was accompanied by a pyrotechnic effect and volleys of artillery fireworks for more fabulous entertainment. The press reflected the unveiling, called it "a universal celebration for the Soviet Union peoples," and emphasized the connection between the history of Izmail and "the unsurpassed power of Russian weapons."¹²

The monument to Suvorov became the main symbol of Izmail during the Soviet period. The city's historical image was being directly associated with the military glory of A. Suvorov. However, the storming of the Izmail fortress did not affect the creation of the city. In 1948, the monument to Suvorov was included in the "List of monumental sculpture memorials of all-Union significance."¹³ The document indicated the memorial was located in Central Square, which was the main symbolic space of Izmail in the first post-war years.

The central memory place of the commander was the Regional Suvorov Historical Museum. The regional press mentioned intentions to establish a museum on the eve of the monument unveiling, but the authorities made an official decision in August 1946. According to the resolution of the Izmail Regional Executive Committee, the museum aimed at "promoting the historical past of our Motherland, the glory of Russian weapons and military exploits of the great commander."¹⁴ Ironically, the museum was located in the building of the former palace of Prince Tuchkov, who had founded the town in 1812 – the current historical center of Izmail. The historical and art museums of the USSR, libraries, theaters, and private persons donated exhibits for the museum. Like the monument to Suvorov, the authorities officially opened the historical museum on a symbolic date, on the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution (November 7, 1947). The museum narrated about Suvorov's life and military art. However, it made the instant connection between the military glory of the ancestors and the Soviet army's military successes. Museum employee E. Martsul wrote in *Pridunayskaya Pravda* that the museum's exposition in 1948 included three halls: 1) Suvorov's childhood, the beginning of soldier's service and military leadership (1780–1789); 2) the assault of the Izmail fortress in 1790; 3) Suvorov's life and activity after the assault. The exposition ended with a stand "Suvorov in our days" with the words of the Soviet statesman M. Kalinin that "Soviet patriotism is the immediate heir to the creative deeds of our

¹² "Torzhestvo osvobodennogo naroda," *Pridunajskaja Pravda*, August 29, 1945, 3-4.

¹³ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 8, file 4508, p. 95.

¹⁴ KUIA, fund R-470, description 1, file 107, p. 11.

ancestors, who moved the development of our people forward.”¹⁵ The museum’s exposition was constantly supplemented with new sections, and the number of elements that reflected the Soviet era steadily increased. In 1950 it included fourteen chapters, of which only one had an ideological character (“I. V. Stalin about the Russian commanders”).¹⁶ Next year, the number of sections increased to twenty-four, and most of them belonged to the Soviet era.¹⁷

In 1950, the Soviet government commemorated the 150th anniversary of the death of A. Suvorov at the all-Union level. The authorities decided to identify historical sites associated with the commander’s life and military activity and install appropriate memorial plaques. One of these sites was the *Turbayevsky Kurgan*, located 5 km from Izmail. In 1790, the Russian army command used it to set up an army tent where A. Suvorov worked out a plan for storming the Izmail fortress.¹⁸

However, the local authorities could not embody all the initiatives to commemorate the storming of the Izmail fortress. *Pridunayskaya Pravda* wrote about the plan to establish a historical park in the area of the former citadel in 1945. It would include a cyclorama of the fortress storming, a museum, a Suvorov school, monuments to Kutuzov, heroes of the storming, and heroes of the Great Patriotic War.¹⁹ Like many other projects of the post-war period, the historical park was not built due to a lack of funds. In 1950, the local authorities proposed erecting an obelisk on the former fortress territory to perpetuate the memory of its storming in 1790. It had to mark the time of the assault and contain a brief description of it. Its unveiling was timed to the 160th anniversary of the assault. They explain its construction’s necessity because another obelisk, built by the Romanian authorities in 1937 on the fortress territory, did not relate to the fortress history and misled many visitors. The Ukrainian SSR Committee for Arts endorsed its construction and passed the budget for its building at 150 thousand rubles. However, the Council of Ministers rejected the decision to allocate funds for the construction.²⁰ As a result, the project was also not realized. Much later, in 1973, another city’s symbolic memory place became the diorama “Storming the Izmail fortress by Russian troops in 1790”, which was located in the building of the Small Mosque – an architectural monument of the 16th century.

¹⁵ “Po zalam Izmail’skogo Suvorovskogo muzeja,” *Pridunajskaja Pravda*, July 6, 1948, 4.

¹⁶ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 4762, description 1, file 450, pp. 46-47.

¹⁷ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 4762, description 1, file 561, pp. 3-4.

¹⁸ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 8, file 2042, p. 126.

¹⁹ “Na meste kreposti Izmail”, *Pridunajskaja Pravda*, September 19, 1945, 4.

²⁰ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 8, file 2041, pp. 135-137.

Monument to victims or heroes: the problem of memorializing the Tatarbunary uprising of 1924

The entry of the Soviet army into Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in June 1940 was accompanied by ideological propaganda that used the myth of the “liberation of fraternal peoples” to legitimize the Soviet aggressive policy. One of its mythologemes was the constant struggle of the working population against the “Romanian boyars.” The propagandists characterized the Khotyn uprising of 1919 and the Tatarbunary uprising of 1924 as examples of this struggle. The commemoration of the Tatarbunary uprising’s heroes in the post-war period has demonstrated the Soviet model of collective memory construction.

The Regional Architectural Commission recommended including the Tatarbunary uprising’s memorial in the city’s general plan project in 1947.²¹ In August 1949, the Regional Executive Committee adopted the resolution “On the construction of a monument on the mass grave of the Tatarbunary uprising’s heroes” with the 25th anniversary of the rebellion.²² In addition, the local authorities decided to move the remains of the executed insurgents to the center of Tatarbunary.

Archival documents have shown that the central party powers initialized the monument’s construction. So, in June 1949, the 1st Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) N. Khrushchov petitioned the Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) G. Malenkov for permission to commemorate the Tatarbunary uprising. The explanatory note substantiated the ideological importance of this uprising as an image of the struggle “for the Soviet power establishment” of the Izmail region’s workers and peasants.²³ The Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR adopted an appropriate decree after the approval of the USSR’s highest party leadership. However, the regional initiative was mentioned as the reason for constructing the monument in that decree.²⁴

Local authorities demolished several residential buildings and other structures to build the memorial in the center of the village, set up a square, transferred the rebels’ remains and erected a temporary obelisk. Nevertheless, the construction process was blocked. In December 1949, the Regional Architectural Commission rejected the first draft of the monument because it “did not meet the requirements.” The author of the project represented the peasant nature of the uprising (the figure of a peasant in a Bulgarian hat), the desire for reunification with

²¹ KUIA, fund R-419, description 1, file 16, p. 4.

²² KUIA, fund R-470, description 1, file 223, p. 135.

²³ TsDAHO Ukrainy, fund 1, description 23, file 5656, pp. 1-3.

²⁴ TsDAHO Ukrainy, fund 1, description 70, file 1761, p. 72.

the Soviet state (the peasant's hand raised towards Moscow), and grief for the dead (the figures of two girls with the wreaths and an urn). However, the commission members pointed out the lack of ideology of the composition, which did not reflect the heroism and revolutionary spirit of the insurgents. "There is not enough dynamics and grandeur in the sculpture of a peasant. The revolutionary struggle of the oppressed people for their liberation is poorly reflected, and there is no link with our Soviet modern reality," this is how G. Pivovarov, the chairman of the Commission, characterized the project.²⁵ In September 1950, the Commission considered the second draft of the monument, in which its authors corrected the previous weaknesses. The Commission recommended this project but made new proposals. Among them were recommendations of an ideological nature: to concretize the plot of the bas-reliefs and provide for the panel "Reunification of Bessarabia with Soviet Ukraine" instead of the bas-relief "peasant with a scythe"; to represent the peasant's figure with a weapon in his hands for more extraordinary revolutionist image.²⁶ Although the Regional Executive Committee approved the project, the central powers did not support it. The sculptors-laureates of the Stalin Prize A. Oleinik and M. Vronsky and the architect I. Shevchenko developed the third project. The sculpture of the last project contained a composition with three figures of a worker, a collective farmer, and a sailor with a red flag, which symbolized a historical event – "a revolutionary uprising against the Romanian-boyar invaders." The authors depicted the inscription "To the Heroes of the Tatarbunary Uprising" on the pedestal's pediment.²⁷ The Committee for Arts under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR approved this project in August 1952. Thus, the Soviet government did not plan to commemorate the peasant insurgents. The original version of the monument to the victims, whose remains were reburied in the center of Tatarbunary, did not correspond to Soviet ideologues. Therefore, the mythical image of "heroes" (worker, collective farmer, sailor) appeared instead of the peasant's figure. The monument symbolized the Bessarabian people's struggle against the Romanian occupation, but the uprising was not of this nature. The memorial received its modern appearance after the reconstruction in 1974, with the 50th anniversary of the rebellion. Also, another monument was erected at the place of rebels' execution in Tatarbunary. The Soviet authorities installed memorials on the graves of the Tatarbunary uprising's participants in other settlements (Vylkove, Shevchenkove, Strumok, Bilolissya, etc.), which emphasizes the importance of this event in the construction of historical memory.

²⁵ KUIA, fund R-419, description 1, file 28, p. 79.

²⁶ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 8, file 2041, pp. 152-153.

²⁷ TsDAVO Ukrainy, fund 2, description 8, file 7119, p. 77.

The memory of the soldiers of the “Great Patriotic War” in the post-war decade

The memorialization of World War II heroes, which was called the “Great Patriotic War” in Soviet historical discourse, was a constituent element of the official politics of memory in the post-war period. However, the initiative to commemorate soldiers in the early post-war years came from the local authorities and citizens in the Izmail region.

On August 26, 1945, on the same day of the Suvorov monument’s unveiling, another memorial was opened in Izmail – an obelisk to the heroes-fellow countrymen who fell on the war fronts. The citizens raised funds for its construction and erected the obelisk in Kopana Balka. *Pridunayskaya Pravda* reported the memorial laying had been held on June 12, and more than 200 people had participated in its construction.²⁸ The Secretary of the city committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party attended the monument’s unveiling, which indicated the locality of the event in contrast to the Suvorov monument’s unveiling.

In 1946, the local authorities of Kiliya proposed to build an obelisk for commemorating the paratroopers who died in the village Galiteshty. However, the Regional Executive Committee did not approve the obelisk project since it “did not represent any architectural value and did not reflect the heroic epic of the Patriotic War...”²⁹ In the same year, residents of Bolgrad received approval to erect an obelisk to the heroes fallen in the Great Patriotic War in the park on 28 June street.³⁰ However, plans to erect monuments to the fallen soldiers and Lenin in 1948 in the city center were unsuccessful. In Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, the memorial to the war heroes was unveiled only in 1948, and the “Arch of Peace” was erected in 1951 at the entrance to Victory Park, which became one of the main symbolic city places. According to archival documents, the local authorities of Izmail did not pay enough attention to monumentalizing the soldiers of World War II: they did not implement the resolutions of the central powers, did not set up tombstones for all soldiers’ graves, and did not install a single monument at the military cemetery. In 1949, the city executive committee decided to move several graves to one of the city squares and build a mass grave and a monument to soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War.³¹ The memorial was unveiled in 1952 in the new city’s central square. The

²⁸ I. Grishyn, “Pamjatnik gerojam-zemljakam,” *Pridunajskaja Pravda*, August 29, 1945, 4.

²⁹ KUIA, fund R-419, description 1, file 5, p. 17.

³⁰ KUIA, fund R-881, description 1, file 12, p. 19.

³¹ Arkhiv vykonavchoho komitetu Izmailskoi miskoi rady, fund 56, description 2, file 5, p. 9.

central symbolic space was moved from the Suvorov monument to Victory Square, which is the main square of the city today.

The Soviet places of memory in the modern symbolic space

The processes of decommunization, which began in Ukraine in 2015, contributed to a change in the symbolic space of Southern Bessarabia. However, the farewell to the Soviet past in the region was rather painful. Local authorities delayed the dismantling of Lenin monuments and communist symbols and the renaming of streets and sometimes sabotaged decommunization. At the same time, monuments that preserve Soviet grand narratives continue to play a central role in the modern symbolic space of cities.

The Suvorov monument in Izmail remains one of the city's symbols. The central avenue of the city and one of the schools are also named after the commander. The monument was included in the List of cultural heritage sites of national importance. However, the official document contains an error since it does not indicate the date of its construction (1945), but the date of the sculpture manufacture (1913), which has distorted the present symbolic meaning of the monument.³² The monument was reconstructed in 2012. Interestingly, in the same year, an identical monument was erected in Odessa, which caused sharp criticism from the residents of Izmail.

In 2015, local authorities celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Suvorov monument's installation, which has demonstrated the preservation of Russian and Soviet narratives in the collective memory of Izmail residents, despite the aggression of the Russian Federation in the east of Ukraine. Although A. Suvorov had nothing to do with the foundation of the city of Izmail, the laying of flowers at his monument is a commemorative practice of the City Foundation Day.

A similar situation is in Tatarbunary, where the monument to the Heroes of the Tatarbunary Uprising is considered his "calling card." Commemoration of the Tatarbunary uprising, which the Soviet communists initiated in Bessarabia to destabilize the region, continues in the modern period. The local political elite and the general public have articulated Soviet mythologemes about the nature of the uprising. Moreover, the narratives about the Tatarbunary uprising are mainly based on Soviet historical materials in the Ukrainian scientific discourse.

Memorials to the fallen soldiers of World War II demonstrate the tragedy of the war and the victims that it brought. At the same time, the myth of the "Great Patriotic War" is strongly preserved in the collective memory of the Southern Bessarabian

³² "Perelik ob'iektiv kulturnoi spadshchyny natsionalnoho znachennia, yaki zanosiat'sia do Derzhavnogo reiestru nerukhomykh pam'iatok Ukrainy", *Governmental portal*, accessed December 19, 2021, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/239966145>

population. An illustrative example is public celebrations of the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation (May 8) and the Day of Victory over Nazism (May 9). The first holiday, recently adopted in Ukraine as a common European tradition, has been very formally introduced into commemorative practices at the local level. In turn, the Day of Victory over Nazism, which echoes the Soviet commemorative tradition, is celebrated more extensively and is accompanied by meetings, processions, concerts, and “field cuisine.” What is more, the Izmail local authorities have chosen different places of memory for these holidays to commemorate the heroes and victims of World War II. As a rule, the central city’s memory places (Victory Square, a monument to the fallen soldiers, a memorial to the Danube sailors) have been set aside for celebration on May 9.

Conclusions

The construction of the historical memory of the Southern Bessarabian population in the early post-war years included the creation of new places of memory that had to show the historical connection of the region with the Soviet (as well as Russian) past and the people’s struggle for reunification with the Soviet state. The erection of the Suvorov monument in record time and its unveiling on the anniversary of the Izmail liberation by Soviet troops indicates the motives of the Soviet government to draw parallels between the storming of the Izmail fortress and Soviet military exploits and to fixate the myth of the military glory of Russian weapons in the collective memory. The image of the Tatarbunary Uprising’s heroes was used to form an idea of the population’s struggle against Romanian oppression and for reunification with the USSR. The approval process of the monument project demonstrates that the central authorities tried to emphasize the symbolism of the uprising and not commemorate the victims. At the same time, the memorialization of the heroes and victims of World War II was realized as the local initiative in the post-war period.

As a result of decommunization in Ukraine, objects directly related to the communist regime disappeared in Southern Bessarabia. However, the memory places of the post-war period, which were part of the constructed Soviet historical memory, continue to play a significant role in the symbolic space of Southern Bessarabian cities. Further research of such places in the context of the Soviet memory policy is up-and-coming since it will contribute to the deconstruction of stereotypes about the region’s past, which are firmly rooted in regional identity.

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