

## Foremost Examples of Urban Ensembles of Socialist Realism in the Ukraine

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Three absolutely different city ensembles represent the period of Socialist Realism in the Ukraine most clearly.

**Dzerzhinsky Square** (now Freedom Square) in Kharkiv is a unique example of simultaneous enmity and coexistence of two adversarial styles – Constructivism and Socialist Realism – in a single ensemble (fig. 1). It was founded in the 1920s as a new administrative centre of the capital city of the new Ukrainian Republic and was intended as a proving ground for the implementation of revolutionary ideas (the author of the idea of a concave rounded end was architect V. Trotsenko who proposed the scheme of a master plan of that area in 1924).

The ensemble of the square was not created as a single project. It was gradually formed in the 1920s–1930s by a sequential process of building: by large multi-storey constructions in the course of a competitive selection for each project: Gosprom (the House of the State Industry – 350 000 m<sup>2</sup>), the House of Cooperation (about 250 000 m<sup>2</sup>), the House of Projects (250 000 m<sup>2</sup>). On the side opposite Gosprom, the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CC CPU) was a successful example of reconstruction in the modern style. The building of the Hotel “International” which served as a transitive link from the round part of Dzerzhinsky Square to the rectangular part began to be erected in the 1930s. Each of these buildings was designed

*Fig. 1a: Kharkiv. Dzerzhinsky Square, since 1991 Freedom Square, Gosprom (arch. S. Serafimov, S. Kravets, V. Felger, 1925–28), 2013*

*Abb. 1a: Charkiw. Dzerzhinsky-Platz, seit 1991 Unabhängigkeitsplatz bzw. Freiheitsplatz, Derschprom-Gebäude Gosprom (Arch: S. Serafimow, S. Krawetz, V. Felger, 1925–28), 2013*



in the style of Constructivism and was innovative in terms of size, construction and architectural parameters.

However, a violent variation of styles after 1932 caused a dramatic change of their facades. The House of Cooperation, which had been designed to complete the modern ensemble of the round part of Dzerzhinsky Square, did not benefit from the original architects' ideas. The revised project became an adaptation, developed for the needs of the Kharkiv Military-Economic Academy in the 1930s, in the Socialist Realism style, and then in the 1950s it was eventually finished.

Post-war reconstruction essentially changed the style of both the Hotel “International” and the House of Projects (which was handed over to Kharkiv University). The new building of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party (fig. 2) was built to replace CC CPU, which had been destroyed during World War II and was later demolished. The rectangular part of the square was complemented by two new buildings for research and design establishments. In the 1950s the complete complex of Dzerzhinsky Square was finally given a Socialist Realism appearance. Only the main building – Gosprom – has retained its constructivist authenticity. Today the complex needs protection against modern intervention.

The mature period of the Socialist Realism style (1940s–1950s) is represented by the ensemble of **Khreschatyk – the main avenue of Kyiv**. The first round of the All-Soviet Union competition on Khreschatyk was announced immediately after the liberation of the city from occupation in 1944, when World War II was not yet finished. The best ideas were embodied in 1949 in the definitive project developed by Kiev architects under the direction of A. Vlasov.

The whole artery more than 1 km in length was built upwards in a common comprehensive fashion, integrating residential, public and administrative buildings in a single ensemble (fig. 3). The width of Khreschatyk Avenue was more than doubled – up to 75 m (its earlier width was 34 m).

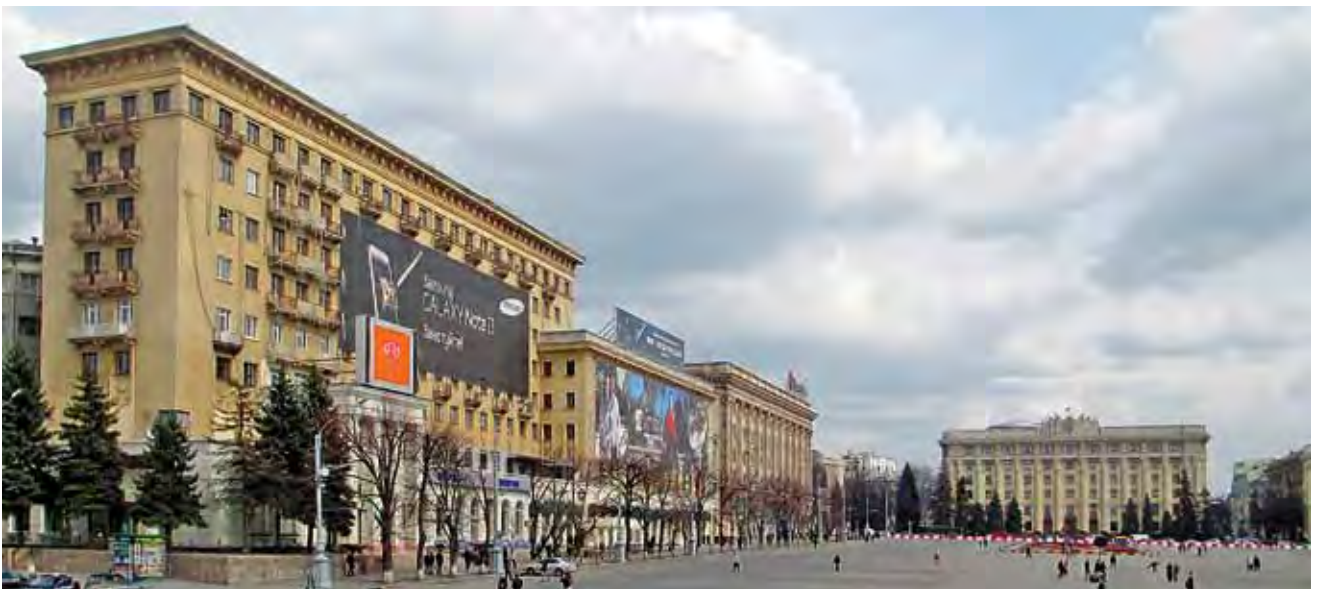
The originality of the ensemble has been contained in the functional and spatial division. On one side is a front of monumental facades of the ministries and establishments. On the other side is a picturesque composition consisting mainly of a residential area with a refinement of the existing relief and with opening perspectives towards the Pechersky hills.

Two main transverse axes enriched the composition of the street. The first axis – from Kalinin Square (now Maidan Nezalezhnosti) along Khreschatyk – was completed by the high-rise Hotel “Moscow” (now “Ukraine”) crowning the hill. In the project of architect A. Dobrowolsky the hotel had



*Fig. 1: Kharkiv. Dzerzhinsky Square. Panorama, 1999*

*Abb. 1: Charkiw. Dzerzhinsky-Platz. Panorama, 1999*



*Fig. 2: Kharkiv. The rectangular part of Dzerzhinsky Square, 2013*

*Abb. 2: Charkiw, rechteckiger Teil des Dzerzhinsky-Platzes, 2013*

a tower with a spire. The spire was not implemented subsequently. The second axis was Lenin Street (now Bogdan Khmelnytsky St.). On the opposite higher side of Khreschatyk it was marked by a group of residential buildings: two symmetrical 11-storey houses and a 14-storey building with a tower in depth between them. Wide terraces and steps formed the approach.

Engels Street (now Lutheran St.) passed through the large arch of the house, which closed the gable-end surfaces of the old pre-war buildings. The landscaping of Khreschatyk emphasizes its integrity. Search for a national identity characterising the period found its most vivid expression here in a luxurious ceramic decoration of the facades (technology

and patterns of ceramics with Ukrainian folk motifs were designed especially for Khreschatyk, fig. 4).

The historical and basic plan of the centre of Kyiv was further developed in 2009–2012 by the Institute of Monument Protection Research (Kyiv) and passed the stage of approval. The ensemble of Khreschatyk Street is allocated there as a surviving monument to town planning. Its boundaries are now being clarified.

**“The City Ring” of Sevastopol** – some main streets and squares – form an ensemble where planning, architecture and landscaping together constitute a complex composition in the Socialist Realism style, which has retained its authenticity on a scale to be found nowhere else in the Ukraine.



*Fig. 3a: Kyiv. Khreschatyk. The side of the residential area. Photo: Мезенцева Г., Мезенцев И. Киев. Фотоальбом. – Киев, „Будівельник“, 1981*

*Abb. 3a: Kiew. Chreschtschatschyk. Postkarte mit Wohnblöcken. Foto: Мезенцева Г., Мезенцев И. Киев. Фотоальбом. – Киев, „Будівельник“, 1981*

*Fig. 3: Kyiv. Khreschatyk, 1947–1957. Architects A. Vlasov, A. Dobrovolsky, V. Elizarov, B. Priymak, A. Malinowski, A. Zavarov. Panorama, 1957*

*Abb. 3: Kiew, Chreschtschatschyk, 1947–1957. Architekten A. Vlasov, A. Dobrovolsky, V. Elizarov, B. Priymak, A. Malinowski, A. Zavarov. Panorama, 1957*



Sevastopol was founded in the late 18th century as a Russian naval base on the Black Sea. Conservatism of the military, the special conditions of the order and discipline that prevailed in the city, and its status allowed it to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the ensemble. Even during the struggle with the “excesses” of Socialist Realism in the late 1950s, when the simpler elements of street furniture and decoration were the first to disappear elsewhere in Soviet cities, they were maintained in their original form in Sevastopol, as were the facades of buildings.

The city centre was actually recreated after World War II, as Sevastopol lay in ruins. In 1943–45 the Moscow group under the direction of Prof. G. Barhin proposed a redevelopment master plan. But the idea for the city centre was too ambitious. It was judged to be unrealistic economically. Therefore, the project of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the city centre was developed by Sevastopol architects led by V. Artyukhov, Y. Trautman and engineer I. Zhilko. The project provided for the expansion of streets, the clearing of a coastal zone and the creation of composite accents – the buildings dominating the panorama of the city.

One of the main dominants is the tower of the Sailors’ Club at Ushakov Square (fig. 5). It is clearly visible from the entrance to the city (from the train station). It closes the prospects of two principal streets: Bolshaya Morskaya and Lenin. Nakhimov Avenue is the third line forming “the City Ring” on which squares and parks are strung (Nakhimov Sq., Primorsky Boulevard, Lazarev Sq. etc). “The City Ring” surrounds the Central Hill where buildings climb the steep slope. Significant constructions of the ensemble are: the cinema “Victory” in Bolshaya Morskaya Street, the office building “Chernomorets” (Lazarev Sq.); the Hotel “Sevastopol” and the drama theatre (Nakhimov Av.); the City Council building and the cinema “Ukraine” in Lenin Str., etc.

All buildings of “the City Ring” share general stylistic techniques. Mostly three to four-storey apartment houses are arranged in small blocks with cozy landscaped courtyards. Banisters of numerous steps and terraces of the central hill perfectly complement the colonnade and balcony railings on the facades of residential and public buildings. Loggias, balconies, oriel windows and galleries, result in a play of light and shadow on the snow-white walls made of Inkerman stone under the bright southern sun (fig. 6).

Post-war victory symbols are widespread characteristics of the ensemble, present in the decor of facades, cast-iron decorative details, etc.

*Fig. 4: Kyiv. Khreschatyk, 23. A luxurious ceramic decoration of facades with Ukrainian folk motifs, 2012*

*Abb. 4: Kiew. Chreschtschatyk, 23. Luxuriöse Keramikdekoration mit ukrainischen Folkloremotiven, 2012*

*Fig. 5: Sevastopol. Sailors’ Club on Ushakov Square. Architects N. Bogdanov and L. Kireev (1954), 2012*  
*Abb. 5: Sewastopol, Seemannsklub am Ushakov-Platz. Architekten: N. Bogdanov und L. Kireev (1954), 2012*

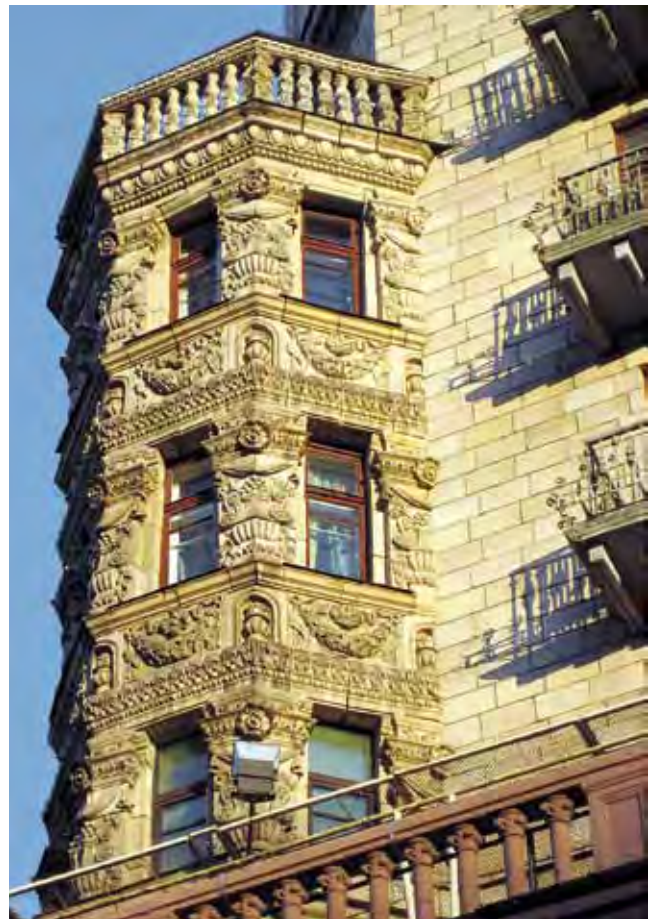




Fig. 6: Sevastopol. Nakhimov Avenue. Water-color, V. Yezhov, 1956  
 Abb. 6: Sewastopol, Nakhimov-Allee, Aquarell, V. Yezhov, 1956

Sevastopol Socialist Realism has distinctive features and a large scale that make it unique.

In 2005, the last general plan of Sevastopol was confirmed. It included the historical and basic plan and the project of zones of protection whereby “the City Ring” is designated a security zone for monuments of history, architecture and town-planning. Now the State Scientific Research Institute of Urban Development (Kyiv) is working on a general plan development, including the designation of “the City Ring” as an urban heritage territory.

It is necessary to record with regret that at present throughout the Ukraine, the State Register of Buildings and Monuments of National Value does not include a single ensemble or building in the Socialist Realism style.

## Zusammenfassung

### **Bedeutende Beispiele für Stadtensembles des sozialistischen Realismus in der Ukraine**

Dieser Beitrag befasst sich mit drei vollkommen unterschiedlichen Stadtensembles, die für den sozialistischen Realismus in der Ukraine stehen. Der Dzerzhinsky-Platz (heute Platz der Freiheit) in Charkiw ist ein einzigartiges Beispiel für die gleichzeitige Feindschaft und Koexistenz von zwei gegen-

sätzlichen Stilen, dem Konstruktivismus und dem sozialistischen Realismus, in einem einzigen Ensemble. Es wurde in den 1920er Jahren als neues administratives Zentrum der Hauptstadt der neuen Ukrainischen Republik gegründet und war als Versuchsgelände für die Umsetzung revolutionärer Ideen geplant. Wettbewerbe für die ganze Sowjetunion wurden für jedes Gebäude des Ensembles angekündigt. Die besten Projekte im Stil des Konstruktivismus wurden zum Bau ausgewählt. Jedes dieser Gebäude war innovativ hinsichtlich der Größe, der Konstruktion und der architektonischen Parameter. Allerdings begann in den dreißiger Jahren eine große Variation von Stilen, die zu einer dramatischen Veränderung der Fassaden der bereits errichteten Gebäude führte. Beim Wiederaufbau des Dzerzhinsky-Platzes nach dem Krieg erhielt dieser ein Erscheinungsbild im Sinn des sozialistischen Realismus. Nur das Hauptgebäude – Gosprom – hat seine konstruktivistische Authentizität erhalten. Heutzutage benötigt der Komplex Schutz vor modernen Eingriffen.

Die reife Periode des Stils des sozialistischen Realismus (1940er/1950er Jahre) wird durch das Ensemble von Chreschtschatyk vertreten, der wichtigsten Straße von Kiew. Die erste Runde des gesamtsovietischen Wettbewerbs für Chreschtschatyk wurde unmittelbar nach der Befreiung der Stadt von der Besatzung 1944 angekündigt, also noch Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs. Die besten Ideen kamen im definitiven, von den Kiewer Architekten entwickelten Projekt zum Ausdruck. Auf der Suche nach einer nationalen Identität, die die Epoche charakterisiert, drückte sich dies am lebhaftesten

in einer aufwendigen Keramikdekoration der Fassaden aus (die Technik und Muster der Keramiken mit ukrainischen volkstümlichen Motiven wurden speziell für Chreschtschatyk entworfen). Auf der einen Seite findet man eine Front monumentaler Fassaden der Ministerien und Einrichtungen, auf der anderen eine malerische Komposition, hauptsächlich bestehend aus Wohnbauten, die durch Reliefs veredelt werden und Ausblicke auf die Pechersky Hügel bieten. Die Einbeziehung der Landschaftsgestaltung von Chreschtschatyk betont seine Integrität. Der historische und der heutige Bebauungsplan des Zentrums wurden 2012 weiterentwickelt und genehmigt. Das Ensemble der Chreschtschatyk-Straße wird dort als erhaltenes Denkmal der Stadtplanung benannt.

Der Stadtring von Sewastopol – einige Hauptstraßen und Plätze – stellt ein Ensemble dar, bei dem Planung, Architektur und Landschaftsgestaltung zusammen eine komplexe Komposition im Stil des sozialistischen Realismus bilden und das seine Authentizität in einem Umfang bewahrt hat, wie es sonst nicht anzutreffen ist. Das Stadtzentrum wurde tatsächlich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg neu erschaffen, da Sewastopol in Trümmern lag. Die Architekten von Sewastopol entwickelten einen neuen Plan, der auf dem alten Grundriss basierte, berücksichtigten aber die Vorzüge der Topographie und des Meeres. Der Plan sah eine Erweiterung der Straßen vor, eine Freiräumung der Küstenzone und eine Schaffung von gemischten Akzenten – Gebäude, die das Panorama der Stadt beherrschen (Seefahrerklub mit Turm usw.). Alle Gebäude wurden durch ihre allgemeinen stilistischen Formen miteinander verbunden. Die Geländer zahlreicher Treppen und Terrassen des zentralen Hügels ergänzen auf perfekte Art und Weise die Kolonnaden und Balkonbrüstungen an den Fassaden der Wohnbauten und öffentlichen Bauten. Loggien, Balkone, Erker, Galerien führen unter der hellen südlichen Sonne zu einem Spiel aus Licht und Schat-

ten auf den schneeweißen Wänden aus Inkerman-Stein. Siegesymbole aus der Nachkriegszeit sind weit verbreitete Elemente des sowjetischen Realismus in Sewastopol, anzutreffen im Dekor der Fassaden, in gusseisernen dekorativen Details usw. Der sozialistische Realismus von Sewastopol weist Besonderheiten auf, die ihn einzigartig machen.

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