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The Crimean War of 1853–1856 in the Memory Space of Russia and France

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Abstract: On the example of commemoration of various wars and key historical events, it is possible to reconstruct and comprehend the value orientations of states at certain phases of their development. In this article, we propose to turn to the Crimean War of 1853–1856, which was reflected in the historical memory of the two participating countries – Russia and France. With such a comparative approach, attention is drawn to different levels of commemoration of this event: we are talking about scientific research on the Crimean campaign, about the people's memory of generations, about state and political practices. The authors analyze these aspects and identify which of them are most widespread in Russia and Europe, so that the memory of the Crimean War is preserved in modern society. The authors analyze the phenomenon of the “forgotten war” – a term that has entered the scientific lexicon of the French community and is used to describe the campaign of 1854–1856. The study of the problem makes it possible to answer an important question: why do certain traditions of memory exist, whether they help to form a certain consciousness, value attitudes.

Keywords: Crimean War, historical memory, commemorations, Russian-French relations, military history

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Крымская война 1853–1856 гг. в пространстве памяти России и Франции

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Аннотация: На примере меморизации различных войн и ключевых исторических событий представляется возможным реконструировать и осмыслить ценностные ориентиры государств на определенных этапах развития. В настоящей статье предлагается обратиться к истории Крымской войны 1853–1856 гг., которая нашла свое отражение в исторической памяти двух стран-участниц – России и Франции. При подобном компаративном подходе авторы обращают внимание на различ-



ные уровни коммеморации данного события: речь идет о научных изысканиях, посвященных Крымской кампании, о народной памяти поколений, о государственных и политических практиках по увековечиванию героев и событий войны. Авторы анализируют данные аспекты и выявляют, какие из них получили наибольшее распространение в России и Европе, благодаря чему память о Крымской войне сохраняется в современном обществе. При этом анализируется феномен «забытой войны» – термина, вошедшего в научный лексикон французского сообщества и употребляемый для описания кампании 1854–1856 гг. Исследование проблемы дает возможность ответить на немаловажный вопрос: для чего существуют те или иные традиции памяти, помогают ли они формированию общественного сознания и ценностных установок.

Ключевые слова: Крымская война, историческая память, коммеморации, российско-французские отношения, военная история

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Introduction

The seeds for this article were planted during an archaeological expedition in October 2020 by the *Foundation for the Development of Russian-French Historical Initiatives (Fond razvitiya russko-frantsuzkikh istoricheskikh iniciativ)*. In what would prove to be the first major Franco-Russian research project of its kind in Crimea, archaeologists discovered the remains of Russian, French and British soldiers who died in the Battles of Alma and Inkerman as well as the siege of Sevastopol. This was not the only initiative of this kind undertaken by the Foundation, which is headed by the French historian and public figure Pierre Malinowski. The Foundation's projects include archaeological excavations near Viazma, to look for artifacts of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, searches for the bodies of soldiers killed in World War I, and there are plans for digs in Stalingrad, Courcy, Kamchatka.¹

These initiatives always attract the attention of the media in France and Russia, generating discussions about the need for such projects, their objectives, reception in society, the involvement of the government, etc. Yet despite the inevitable controversies, one thing remains clear: there is demand in both countries for preserving their historical memory, and for memorializing important events not only in the past of individual states, but also that of all Europe. These certainly include the Crimean war of 1853–56.

Commemorations of historical events are aimed both at presenting and evaluating the past. They have important educational, political and social functions by supporting the government's ambitions, meeting social needs, and contributing to the nation's self-identification.

This is the side of memory with which we consciously restore images of the past, choosing what suits of our current needs.²

The aim of this article is to identify, analyze and reconstruct the methods and results of commemorating the Crimean War in Russian and French society. Combining historical-comparative and historical-anthropological methods, as well as the principle of historicism formed its methodological basis. They enabled us to carry out a comparative analysis, distinguish between the features of commemorative practices, evaluate the results of their application at the state level, in addition to identifying stereotypes and how they were formed.

¹ Foundation for the Development of Russian-French Historical Initiatives, accessed December 4, 2020, <https://french-russia-historical-fund.com/future>

² P.Kh. Khatton, *Istoriya kak iskusstvo pamyati* (St. Petersburg: Vladimir Dal' Publ., 2003), 23.

We chose the Crimean War for a study of a space of memory because traditions associated with World War II and the struggle with Napoleon of 1812 are already well established. There are similar tendencies in France related to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 and World War I. However, the Crimean War, which is often overshadowed by other conflicts, also had a significant impact on Europe. The conflict helped destroy congress system of international relations, was seen by Napoleon III as revenge for the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte, weakened Russia's southern borders and, at the same time, promoted new geopolitical and economic leaders, like Prussia. Indeed, this war was the first experience of confrontation between Russia and a combination of European powers that involved both a military alliance (Great Britain, France, Sardinia) and a diplomatic partnership (Austria, which joined the European bloc). Some historians have even described the struggle as “World War Zero” or the “pre-World War.”

The historiography of the war in Crimea began right after it was declared. In this period scholarship focused on various documentary materials and examined not only the course of the fighting³, but also its causes,⁴ the diplomacy,⁵ and creating a chronology.

As for the war's historiography, both French and Russian scholars studied such aspects as creating memorial places and celebrating anniversaries.⁶ They also touched on the nature of commemorations⁷ and their social orientation, often without singling it out as a separate topic.⁸ According to Patrick Hutton, the interest of historians in the problem of memory was largely inspired by their French colleagues – Pierre Nora, Philippe Ariès, Marc Bloch Lucien Fèvre, Jacques Le Goff, etc.

It originates in the works on the history of collective mentalities, which revived French historiography in the 60s.⁹

³ M.I. Bogdanovich, *Krymskaya voyna 1853–1856 gg.* (Moscow: Eksmo Publ., 2014); I.V. Bestuzhev, *Krymskaya voyna 1853–1856 gg.* (Moscow: Akademiya nauk SSSR Publ., 1956); N.F. Dubrovin, *349-dnevnaya zashchita Sevastopolya* (St. Petersburg: Russkaya simfoniya Publ., 2005); N.F. Dubrovin, *Vostochnaya voyna 1853–1856 godov. Obzor sobytij po povodu sochineniya M.I. Bogdanovicha sostavil N. Dubrovin* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Imperatorskoy Akademii nauk Publ., 1878); N.V. Skitskiy, *Krymskaya voyna 1853–1856 gody* (Moscow: Veche Publ., 2006).

⁴ C.L. Bazancourt, *La marine française dans la Mer noire et la Baltique: chroniques maritimes de la guerre d'Orient* (Paris: [N.s.], 1856–1857); C.L. Bazancourt, *L'expédition de Crimée jusqu'à la prise de Sébastopol: chroniques de la guerre d'Orient* (Paris: Amyot, 1856); M. Ferbalier, *Histoire de la campagne de Crimée et du siège de Sébastopol par M. de Ferbalier, officier d'état-major* (Paris: [N.s.], 1854); H. de Giustiniani, *Commentaire sur les opérations militaires en Crimée* (Paris: [N.s.], 1857); J.-J.-E. Roy, *Histoire du siège et de la prise de Sébastopol précédée d'une notice sur la Crimée et sur les causes et les principaux événements de la guerre d'Orient* (Tours: Mame, 1856); *Siège de Sébastopol et guerre de Crimée* (Paris: [N.s.], 1856).

⁵ M.P. Pogodin, *Istoriko-politicheskie pis'ma i zapiski v prodolzhenie Krymskoy voyny (1853–1856)* (Moscow: Tipografiya V.M. Frish Publ., 1874); S.S. Tatishchev, *Russkaya diplomatiya, staraya i novaya. Yevropa nakanune Vostochnoy voyny 1853–1856 godov. Polemicheskie stat'i o diplomatii* (Moscow: LENAND Publ., 2017); R.A. Fadeyev, *Mnenie o vostochnom voprose. Po povodu poslednikh resheniy na 'Vooruzhennyye sily Rossii'* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Departamenta udelov Publ., 1870); R.A. Fadeev, *Chernomorskiy voennyi teatr. Po povodu Krymskoy zheleznoy dorogi* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Vulfa Publ., 1870); B.N. Chicherin, *Vostochnyy vopros s russkoy tochki zreniya* (Moscow: [N.s.], 1860).

⁶ A.V. Gladyshev, “Velikie srazheniya v istoricheskoy pamyati ili Pochemu mashut kulakami posle draki,” in *Istoriya i istoricheskaya pamyat'* (Saratov: Saratovskiy universitet Publ., 2019): 167–182.

⁷ T.A. Bulygina, “Modeli istoricheskoy pamyati v vospominaniyakh o voyne,” in *Istoriya i istoricheskaya pamyat'* (Saratov: Saratovskiy universitet Publ., 2010): 5–19.

⁸ V.E. Bagdasaryan, *K 160-letiyu nachala Krymskoy voyny: vzglyad cherez prizmu teorii bor'by tsivilizatsiy*, <http://vbagdasaryan.ru/k-160-letiyu-nachala-krymskoy-voynyi-vzglyad-cherez-prizmu-teorii-borby-tsvivilizatsiy/>

⁹ P.Kh. Khatton, *Istoriya kak iskusstvo pamyati*, 33–34.

Moreover, Hutton concludes that historical knowledge in the modern era became directly connected with the policy of commemoration, which made it possible “...to identify and describe those events, ideas or personalities of the past that are chosen by the authorities power to store in memory.” The space of memory is the area where “studies of cultures-anthropologists, psychologists, literary critics and specialists in oral tradition-intersect...”¹⁰ Thus, commemoration becomes a tradition on which, according to Eric Hobsbawm, both society and the state rely. The world transforms, forcing people to look for new points of support, while the state seeks new symbols and staples. And the memory of the heroic past performs such functions in a changing world well.

As the historian T.A. Bulygina rightly noted,

...the direct dependence of historical memory on the social needs of modernity and its instrumental nature in the process of interpreting the historical fate and prospects of a particular society is obvious.¹¹

In many ways, the symbol of the Crimean War became a fulcrum, a means of knowing yourself, your identity in the face of change.

Shaping the Image of the Crimean War in Russia and France

Both in Russia and France, creating the historical memory of the Crimean campaign already began in 1854. The appeal to different experiences of commemorating this war is one interesting question. As the historian A.V. Gladyshev pointed out, “different national narratives form different images about the same event in the historical memory of their people.”¹² Of course, the events of 1853–56 attracted the increased attention both in the 19th century and in the modern era not only of its participants and witnesses, but also of a multinational audience. Yet, despite the significance and scale of the Crimean War, in academe and in the public consciousness, this war has long been overshadowed by the World War I and World War II, the Napoleonic Wars, and the confrontation between France and Germany in 1870–71. On the one hand, the battles in Crimea are immortalized in the names of the boulevards and streets of French cities, and in Russia Sevastopol traditionally symbolized the country’s heroic past. On the other hand, studies of the war’s history, as well as commemorative practices, were often episodic in nature and did not attract the attention paid to the aforementioned clashes.

The image of the Crimean War already began to coalesce in the minds of the Russians and the French shortly after the combatants had lain down their arms. Its main creators were those who had participated in the fighting. Soldiers, military engineers, and doctors, among other, shared their most vivid impressions about the events in the Crimea and their own experiences. Moreover, this kind of literature continued to appear up to the turn of the 20th century, i.e. when war veterans were still alive. Of course, these memoirs were not necessarily objective. Over the years many lost their credibility or were supplemented by reflections and conclusions that came to the author much later, sometime under the influence of official propaganda. This interaction between history and memory, and the memory that is being transformed in the public consciousness, is particularly intriguing.

¹⁰ P.Kh. Khatton, *Istoriya kak iskusstvo pamyati*, 33.

¹¹ T.A. Bulygina, “Modeli istoricheskoy pamyati,” 7.

¹² A.V. Gladyshev, “Velikiye srazheniya v istoricheskoy pamyati ili Pochemu mashut kulakami posle draki,” in *Istoriya i istoricheskaya pamyat'* (Saratov: Saratovskiy universitet Publ., 2019): 167.

The recollections of the military became an important source for creating the image of the war, and, therefore, influenced the construction of a collective identity. This was the case in Russia in the second half of the 19th century, and there was a similar process in France.

According to the historian O.V. Pavlenko, “this identity was created by the state to counter the separatism of national minorities in imperial states, radicalism among young people and *raznochintsy* (lit. people of no class; typically lower middle class), and worker discontent.”¹³ The distinguished French historian Philippe Ariès, noted that the memorialization of wars originated precisely in the second half of the 19th century:

Never in the West did the various classes know so little about each other as in the second half of the 19th century, as people tried to close themselves in the world of their own neighborhood and family, without coming into contact with neighboring worlds. When the universal movement dragged people, regardless of their position in society, into the hellish maelstrom of war and revolution, these conservative communities were forced to look beyond their own limits...¹⁴

Commemorations of wars can create a bond between various social strata. Might the practice of glorifying the historical past be a tool for the state to solve its own internal economic, social and political challenges?

The historical experience of Russia’s wars has generally been a powerful mechanism for unifying society, as it repeats the exploits of its ancestors to motivate it, as well as being a basis for patriotic education. The Crimean War was an important moment not only in the history of Russia, but also that of the other combatants – Britain, France, Turkey and Sardinia – and its consequences helped Prussia unify Germany. As a result, the events of 1854–56 found a lively response throughout Europe and the press actively reported on the situation in the Middle East and the Balkans, as well as the causes of the conflict.

The Crimean campaign proved to be the first European war that was widely covered in the media of all participants. Throughout much of the continent, newspapers published military chronicles, reports, and photos from the battlefields, from Alma to Sevastopol. It is no coincidence that the Crimean campaign was so carefully followed not only among Russians, on whose territory military operations were conducted, but also among the British and the French. Meanwhile, interest in the events in the Crimea did not fade after the war, and later served as the basis for commemorations of the war’s battles. Therefore, calls to memorialize the conflict came not just from the state but the public as well.

Mechanisms for Memorializing the Crimean War

Already during the war, the French began to perpetuate the memories of their most significant victories by bestowing their names on landmarks throughout their capital. The ink on the Treaty of Paris had barely dried when, in April 1856, one of the main monuments of the Second Empire dedicated to the war was built in the city’s center – the Alma Bridge across the Seine, adorned with statues of a French Zouave, infantryman, artilleryman and grenadier, the main participants of the campaign of 1854–56. Others included including Alma Square, Sevastopol Boulevard, Malakoff Avenue, as well as Crimea and Evpatoria Streets. The war was of great importance to Emperor Napoleon III,

¹³ O.V. Pavlenko, “Crimean War in the historical memory of the Russian Empire at the turn of the XX–XX centuries,” *RGGU Journal. International Relations. Foreign Regional Studies*, no. 18 (2014): 9.

¹⁴ F. Ar’yes, *Vremya istorii* (Moscow: OGI Publ., 2011), 49.

who saw it as a way to strengthen the Second Empire, compensate to the defeats of his uncle, Napoleon I, and weaken the Concert System that had been created in Vienna in their wake.

There was much interest among the French in the memoirs of the Crimean War's participants immediately after the fighting. This led to the beginning of the French historiographical tradition of the campaign, which quickly became a field of military history, so popular in France. However, by the 1870s the heroes and their struggle began to be supplanted by the war with Prussia, colonial conflicts, and, less than half a century later, by the World War I. In the 1920s, interest in the military declined and gave way to social and economic topics. If in Russia it was the pages of the military past that helped unify its people (a trend that continued up to the early 20th century), in France the Revolution of 1789–94 played this role and helped strengthen national identity. Nevertheless, in France historians do not ignore the Crimean War¹⁵ and it also attracts the attention of those who seek to preserve the memory of their ancestors.

By contrast, Russian society has always been keenly interested in military history. Furthermore, the fighting and its results also became a measure of the effectiveness of the autocracy's domestic and foreign policy. And, if the Russian army's victories against Napoleon I were seen, among other, as the result of competent leadership, as proof of a certain superiority of Russia and its government, military and spiritual traditions, then defeat in the Crimea provoked a wave of criticism among both conservative and liberal Russians. The latter was deliberately consigned to oblivion, while the Great Reforms of the 1860s took the spotlight away from matters military. The public's growing attention to domestic matters was understandable, while abroad, the Polish question took pride of place, as well as the events in Central Asia.¹⁶

This did not mean that Russians ignored the Crimean catastrophe, and they too began to memorialize the conflict even as it raged. The war, and especially besieged Sevastopol became symbols of the army's heroism in the best traditions of the brilliant Catherine era. The historian and publicist M.P. Pogodin, spoke for many when he wrote that, "Sevastopol showed everything that is beautiful and sublime in the Russian character in all its splendor."¹⁷ The real glorification of Sevastopol's defenders began somewhat later, and was the result not only of the public's interest and patriotism, but was also promoted by the state to appeal to its loyalty in the early 20th century.

Due to important developments abroad in the 1870s, especially with regard to the Eastern Question, Crimea became topical again. The publicist M.N. Katkov argued that the new struggle with the Turks in 1877–78 was merely a continuation of the Crimean War, whose causes had not in the least been resolved by the peace treaty of 1856. He declared that the fighting that had halted in that year really only ended in 1878, "...after a twenty-two-year truce!"¹⁸

It is no coincidence that glorifying the siege of Sevastopol and raising monuments to the Crimean War began in the 1870s and lasted right up to 1914. During these years in

¹⁵ An example is the international conference organized by the University of Paris Pantheon Sorbonne on November 7–9, 2019. "La guerre de Crimée, première guerre moderne?" https://www.musee-armee.fr/fileadmin/user_upload/Documents/Colloques___conferences/Programme_colloque_Crime__e.pdf

¹⁶ R.A. Arslanov, A.L. Klimashin, "Russian periodicals at the turn of the 19th – 20th centuries on Russian migrants' sociocultural adaptation in central Asia," *RUDN Journal of Russian History* 16, no. 3 (2017): 347–363.

¹⁷ M.P. Pogodin, "Pribytiya gosudarya imperatora v Moskvu," *Moskvityanin* 5, no. 17, 18 (1855): 5.

¹⁸ M.N. Katkov, *Sobraniye peredovykh statey Moskovskikh vedomostey* (Moscow: Izdaniye S.P. Katkovoy Publ., 1897–1898), 64.

Russia, as in France, many memoirs and literary works devoted to its battles were published, beginning a historiographical tradition in studying the causes, course and results of the war. Certain geopolitical concepts matured, in which an analysis of the international situation in the 1850s occupies a significant place.¹⁹ At the same time, from the 1870s to the early 20th century, the Crimean War became an important element not only of public, but also of state commemorative policy. Medals were minted in memory of the war,²⁰ the first monumental complexes were erected, and heroes were glorified.

In 1905, a monument to sunken ships and a Museum of the Defense of Sevastopol were built to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the siege. Indeed, the quinquennial was widely celebrated in the Russian Empire. Headed by Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, a committee was established to restore the monuments of Sevastopol's defense. Arguably, the museum's centerpiece was the famous panorama, which was painted by the pioneer of this form of military art in Russia, François Roubaud (Franz Alekseevich Rubo). Seven years earlier, when Emperor Nicholas II had visited the port, monuments to P.S. Nakhimov, E.I. Totleben and S.A. Khrulev were inaugurated.

The heroic image of Sevastopol persisted in Soviet Russia. The fortress city repeatedly demonstrated its heroism during the World War II, when its defenders proved themselves worthy successors of their predecessors nearly a hundred years earlier. This historical parallel can be traced in, among other, the V.I. Pudovkin's film of 1946, "Admiral Nakhimov." In Russia, the 11-month defense of Sevastopol during the earlier war joined the ranks of such great "moral victories" as the battles of Kulikovo in 1380 and Borodino in 1812. Sevastopol also held an important symbolic meaning for the French, who celebrated the heroism and perseverance of the soldiers who took it. In their eyes, Sevastopol became an image of their victory in the Crimean War, while for Russians it represented heroism and perseverance.

This trend has been fully maintained to today. As for France, the historian Alain Gouttman remarked:

The glory of Sevastopol was fleeting. The shame of Sedan still taints the legacy of the Second Empire and of Napoleon III.²¹

Nevertheless, the campaign of 1854–55 remains an example of the ambition of the French, a symbol of the policy that returned their nation to a leading place on the European stage. A hundred years after the Crimean War, General Charles De Gaulle declared that "the spring of the development of the nation is ambition,"²² which was so clearly manifested in the actions of the French emperor in the middle of the 19th century.

Thus, the Crimean War became the source of many symbols that were later used by the Russian government to help unify its people in subsequent wars. Moreover, in the Russian consciousness of the middle of the 19th century, the conflict played an important role in understanding one's own position in the world, in self-identification, and it "opened ...eyes to many things, exposed false friends and pointed out the true ones."²³

¹⁹ M.N. Katkov, *Sobraniye peredovykh statey Moskovskikh vedomostey* (Moscow: Izdaniye S.P. Katkovoy Publ., 1897–1898), 97–99, 385, 437, 594.

²⁰ A. Kuznetsov, "Medals in memory of the Eastern (Crimean) War of 1853–1856," *Journal of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, no. 2 (2009): 76–77.

²¹ A. Gouttman, *La guerre de Crimée 1853–1856. La première guerre modern* (Paris: Perrin, 2003), 401.

²² *Ibid.*, 398.

²³ K.S. Aksakov, *Estetika i literaturnaya kritika* (Moscow: Iskustvo Publ., 1995), 389.

Throughout the 19th century Russia's public generally had a lively interest in both domestic and foreign policy. In many ways, this distinguished it from France. The historian A.V. Fenenko rightly pointed out that among the French, discussions of foreign policy issues acquired sharpness and importance only after their defeat in the war with Prussia in 1871.²⁴ He attributes this to the “exceptionally favorable position that Paris had occupied in the European concert,” as well as “the absence of immediate military danger on the borders, ...[and] the presence of one of the most powerful land armies.”²⁵ But in Russia, no matter how powerful its army, no matter how successful it is, no matter how effectively diplomats perform their duties, what happens beyond its borders has always been the focus of both conservative and liberal discourse. Moreover, it was the Crimean War that provoked the emergence of a new topic for reflection: the nature of war, its deep meaning and its transformation.

The Crimean campaign and discussions about its causes led to reflections on wars throughout Russian history, their significance, as well as the geopolitical and historiographical foundations of domestic and foreign policy. This phenomenon is not unique to pre-revolutionary Russia. Commemorative practices often lead not only to reflections on preventing the repetition of destructive military conflicts (as is the case with commemorations of World War I in France), but also to debates about the country's military history and the historical fate of the state that defended the right to national identity and sovereignty in the clash of civilizations. For Russia, the Crimean War and the memory of it became an opportunity to assess the country's history in a military context. For example, domestic conservatives perceived the events of 1853–56 in the spirit of the Napoleonic Wars and associated them a certain “purification,” a “renewal,” an impulse to develop country.

In the middle of the 19th century the idea that war was the only possible way to solve inter-state and inter-bloc conflicts, as well as realizing a country's own foreign policy ambitions, has not yet lost its force. At the same time, no effective mechanisms for preventing armed confrontation had emerged in the international sphere, even the Congress System devised in Vienna in 1815 had demonstrated its failure. Only a state with a strong army and navy, and most important, the ability to mobilize society for common goals, could be sufficiently confident in defending its interests.

Recognizing that “war...is a phenomenon contrary to the essence of the human spirit, and shows the imperfection of its moral state”, the Russian thinker K.S. Aksakov noted that

war is often a necessity and even a duty for the state. At the same time, by demanding a variety of extraordinary efforts from the people, it awakens both moral and physical forces in them and often renews their being.²⁶

Recalling the Crimean War, K.S. Aksakov averred that

humanity is still far from such perfection, and therefore it still needed war. Let the war, by pulling people out of their rut and putting them in an extraordinary state and attitude towards each other, make them know both themselves and each other,²⁷

²⁴ A.V. Fenenko, “Classical nationalism” and foreign policy views of the French conservatives of the 20th century,” *Voronezh State University Journal. Humanities*, no. 1 (2002): 184–185.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁶ K.S. Aksakov, *Estetika i literaturnaya kritika* (Moscow: Iskustvo Publ., 1995), 389.

and contribute to the consolidation of society. By the same token, the memory of the war is a unifying element as well.

Finally, another component of the memorialization of wars, which was also manifested in response to the Crimean campaign, is the reconstruction of the past. Preserving the memory of the war, thinking about its nature, carrying out academic research on battles and everyday life on the front lines all contribute to one's immersion in history. Philippe Ariès, urges the historian to

psychoanalyze documents, as Marc Bloch and Lucien Fèvre psychoanalyzed medieval and Renaissance evidence, to identify the mentality inherent in these periods – the very one that was invisible to contemporaries and seems surprising to us.²⁸

By preserving the memory of the past, reconstructing it, analyzing individual events and phenomena, the researcher is immersed in it. In his famous work on the problem of commemorations Philippe Ariès insisted that “the historian of modernity must leave the present to rely on the referential past.”²⁹

Conclusions

The memorialization of wars, in particular the Crimean, is important in academic, social and political terms. First, through commemorative practices, the process of studying the source base and historiographical tradition is carried out and the image of the war is reconstructed in the view of participants and eyewitnesses. Moreover, these practices make it possible to see how the image of the war changed, what role various institutions of memory (archives, museums, etc.) played in this process, as well as the change of generations and values. As Patrick Hutton noted, “history is the art of memory...” and “recollection is connected with our attempts in the present to awaken the past.”³⁰

Sevastopol and Crimea are places of memory for both Russia and France, a “memorial territory,”³¹ the presence of which largely characterizes the modern era, as the French historian Pierre Nora pointed out. He noted that the modern world is distinguished by a certain “obsession with memory.” With regard to the French, Nora, and then Pierre Ricœur, wrote that the French tend toward such a historical memory, with which it seeks a point of support and unity, because “the self-identity of the French was identified with the history of the formation of the nation-state.”³²

Studying the ideas about the Crimean War in modern Russia and France raises a question about the relevance of this event's historical memory. This question can be answered positively for Russians, taking into account their special attitude to the Crimea and Sevastopol, which was formed by their historical memory rather than political propaganda. As far as the French are concerned, their scholars clearly have an interest in this military campaign, which they study both from the point of view of the Second Empire's strategy and from that of military-historical anthropology. In 2019, an international congress titled “La Guerre de Crimée: première guerre moderne?” was held in Paris and

²⁷ K.S. Aksakov, *Estetika i literaturnaya kritika* (Moscow: Iskusstvo Publ., 1995), 389.

²⁸ F. Ar'yes, *Vremya istorii* (Moscow: OGI Publ., 2011), 243.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

³⁰ P.Kh. Khatton, *Istoriya kak iskusstvo pamyati* (St. Petersburg: «Vladimir Dal'» Publ., 2003), 23.

³¹ L. De Meaux, “La Crimée, territoire mémoriel: mémoire de la guerre, d'hier à aujourd'hui, dans l'espace Criméen” is a report at the International Congress “La Guerre de Crimée: première guerre moderne?” passed 7-9 November 2019.

³² P. Rikor, *Pamyat', istoriya, zabveniy* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo gumanitarnoy literatury Publ., 2004), 131.

the variety of paper topics indicated that many aspects in the study of the Crimean War still await their researcher.

Finally, recent archaeological excavations in Crimea also suggest that there is a certain demand among both Russians and the French not only to study the conflict itself, but also to preserve the memory of it and its soldiers. And this desire is not an artificially driven by state,³³ but, on the contrary, demonstrates the wish to overcome the contradictions that divided Russia and France in the middle of the 19th century and, thanks to their common historical memory, create conditions for a dialogue between the two countries.

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³³ Due to the official position of France on Crimea, no official representative of France was present during the ceremony of reburial of French soldiers. See: *Le Figaro*, accessed December 10, 2020, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/a-sebastopol-l-hommage-russe-aux-soldats-de-napoleon-iii-tombes-en-crimee-20201004>.

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