This thesis argues that the creation of the myth about Chapaev was not only a cultural and propagandistic blueprint, but also a memory project, which established a mnemonic pattern for the commemoration of the Civil War. “The chapaevization of memory” consisted of retrofitting the past to the demands of Stalinism and creating a pattern for introducing similar personalities into the pantheon of Civil War heroes. Soviet history absorbed the fictional image of Chapaev and later of others like him as a means to commemorate the Civil War and effecting erase of the Great War. The transition of Chapaev from a figure in popular culture to one in official historical narration paved the way for the advancement of other fallen revolutionaries, such as Nikolai Shchors, Aleksandr Parkhomenko, and Grigorii Kotovskii. The chapaevization of memory became a mnemonic project, which strengthened Stalinism by creating a “proper” memory of the glorious war past.
This thesis titled

THE CHAPAEVIZATION OF SOVIET CIVIL WAR MEMORY, 1922-1941

by

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Introduction

Vasilii Chapaev is arguably the most prominent and well-examined figure of both the Russian Civil War and socialist realism. Chapaev was a real life Red Army commander in the fronts of the Civil War, who was fictionalized by Soviet artists and became an embodiment of Stalinist culture and patriotism. The popularity of the 1934 film Chapaev ensured that its hero would be associated with the 1930s and the period of “high” Stalinism. However, recent research has examined Chapaev as a phenomenon not just limited to the 1930s and revaluated its significance. This thesis aims to build on this recent research and demonstrate that the Soviet state engaged in a memory project that longed to turn the Civil War (1918-1922) into a foundation event for a Soviet nation while relegating the Great War to the dustbin of historical remembrance. To do so, artists, writers, and filmmakers created a pantheon of dead heroes who could serve as exemplars for Soviet citizens. Vasilii Chapaev became the first in a production line of mythical figures that formed a part of a Soviet memory project that I term the “chapaevization” of Soviet remembrance.

Katerina Clark suggests that 1923 novel Chapaev by Dmitrii Furmanov was one of the texts that established Stalinist social realist literature tradition. In her study The Soviet Novel: History as a Ritual, Clark discusses the spontaneity-consciousness paradigm as a modus operandi for creation of social realist hero plot. Examining such classics of social realist literature as Gorkii’s Mat’ and Chapaev by Furmanov, she demonstrates that the key element of heroes’ development was evolvement of the character from spontaneous, uncontrolled, and almost barbaric behavior to the triumph of Bolshevik class consciousness. Clark argues that movement from a state of spontaneity to the party controlled class consciousness was a structuring force of socialist realist literature. The author applies spontaneity-consciousness framework to Furmanov’s Vasilii Chapaev and demonstrates that the Red Commander became an exemplary hero only under the control of a party commissar, who imbued Chapaev proper thoughts and manners. However, Clark does not focus on Chapaev a lot and discusses development of the spontaneity-consciousness paradigm on the example of Mat’, thus leaving many questions regarding promotion of Chapaev as an exemplary Civil War hero.¹

In her study of Chapaev’s role in Soviet culture, Angela Brintlinger extends Clark’s argument and suggests that the Red Commander became an embodiment of patriotism and courage, which gave birth to a model for the socialist realist hero. Brintlinger argues that Chapaev, created first on the pages of Dmitrii Furmanov’s 1923 novel and then in the 1934 film, helped to provide meaning to the term “podvig,” which might best be defined as a passionate act of audaciousness that had a reasonable aim behind it. Podvig became a canonic attribute of Soviet heroism, one that came to be used for a range of Soviet fictional heroes from Chapaev to Ivan Chonkin, a character of Vladimir Voinovich’s novels. Brintlinger shows that the myth about the Red Commander created a heroic pattern that was inculcated to Soviet citizens through popular culture. Brintlinger does not focus just on Chapaev, and instead centers her research on the Red Commander’s cultural legacy, which survived the Soviet experiment itself.

In contrast to Brintlinger’s approach, David Brandenberger has studied the propagandistic aspects of Chapaev’s figure. From Brandenberger’s perspective, the fictional Chapaev played a significant role in a shift in Soviet propaganda to a more nationalistic form under Stalinism. Stalinist propaganda absorbed the fictional Chapaev, who could transmit the Party’s important messages to Soviet citizens in a very accessible and simple way. Brandenberger suggests that the image of Chapaev played a significant role in the mobilization of Soviet society and in the establishment of a Russocentric etatism under Stalinism. Chapaev thus earned a place in the pantheon of Great Russians alongside Pushkin, Tchaikovsky, and Peter the Great.

Brandenberger’s research presents the interwar USSR as a propaganda state in crisis. In their 2007 book, Mikhail Veller and Andrei Burovskii develop this vision of the USSR in the 1930s, suggesting that the heroic image of Chapaev emerged as a fulfillment of an empty pantheon of heroes. In that period, most prominent revolutionaries were either engaged in undercover activity or presented a latent threat for Stalin, so that the Chief of Nations decided to fulfill the pantheon of Civil War heroes with dead Red Commanders. The authors offer the example of Mate Zalke, a Red Commander who fought against Kolchak and Makhno during the Civil War and was a Soviet instructor of kemalists in the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-

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4 Ibid.
1922. After the creation of the USSR, he officially became a Soviet diplomat, and later, in 1936, under the name of General Lukach, he headed the 12th International Division in Spanish Civil War. This Red Commander was a Soviet agent until his death in 1937, so that his figure could not be iconized. According to Veller and Burovskii, the absence of “usable” heroes encouraged the Soviet leadership to promote new ones and saved Chapaev from vanishing from history. As Veller and Burovskii argue, Chapaev’s actual military deeds are insignificant in comparison with many other Civil War commanders. His longevity in Soviet culture is the direct result of the strong propagandistic effort that mythologized him.⁵

Despite minor disagreements, the scholarly literature unequivocally acknowledges the prominence of Chapaev’s figure in the development of Soviet culture. This research showed that the image of the Red Commander had a strong influence on Soviet society, one that extended beyond the Stalinist era. In its treatment of Chapaev as an instrument of propaganda, a reflection of socialist realism, and a blueprint for Stalinist patriotic culture, modern scholarship has not examined Chapaev as a memory project. The longevity of the myth about Chapaev encourages studying its mnemonic structure and the ways in which Soviet officials instrumentalized this memory in commemorating the Civil War. This thesis argues that the creation of the myth about Chapaev was not only a cultural and propagandistic blueprint, but also a memory project, which established a new mnemonic pattern for the commemoration of the Civil War. The main aim of this project, which I call “the chapaevization of memory,” consisted of retrofitting the past to the demands of Stalinism and creating a pattern for introducing similar personalities into the pantheon of Civil War heroes. Soviet history absorbed the fictional image of Chapaev and later of others like him as a means to commemorate the Civil War and to erase that of the Great War. The transition of Chapaev from a figure in popular culture to one in official historical narration paved the way for the similar advancement of other fallen revolutionaries, such as Nikolai Shchors, Aleksandr Parkhomenko, and Grigorii Kotovskii. Similar to the process of what George Mosse has called the “nationalization of death,” the cultural phenomenon of creating a cult of the fallen soldier in the post-Great War Europe, the chapaevization of memory became a mnemonic project, which strengthened Stalinism by creating a “proper” memory of the glorious war past, complete with a pantheon of dead heroes.

The following discussion examines the ways in which Vasilii Chapaev was fictionalized by Soviets artists and then elevated from the level of popular culture to official

historical narrative. I will first discuss the formation of Chapaev’s popular image in Dmitrii Furmanov’s novel *Chapaev* (1923), Matvei Manizer’s 1932 monument to the Red Commander, and the film *Chapaev* by the Vasil’ev brothers. I will then consider the ways in which official history absorbed Chapaev’s fictionalized image in an effort to reshape the Soviet war past and provide a new model for commemorating the Civil War
Vasilii Chapaev became a significant element in early Soviet culture after the publication of a popular 1923 novel by Dmitriy Furmanov (1891-1926). Before his fictional life in Furmanov’s *Chapaev*, the future great Red commander, born in 1887 to a peasant family, was a woodworker in the village of Budaika. During the First World War, he earned the rank of Feldwebel (sergeant-major) and was decorated with three different Saint George Crosses. Following the October Revolution, Chapaev fluctuated between the anarchists and socialists before embracing the Bolshevik cause. He became a divisional commander of the Red Army and fought in the fronts of the Civil War until September 1919, when he died escaping the Whites. During the night of September 5, the Whites attacked the quarters of Chapaev’s regiment in Libisensk. During the attack, Chapaev was badly wounded in his stomach and could not walk, so his soldiers carried him to the banks of the Ural River, which they crossed on a handmade raft. Chapaev died from blood loss on the opposite bank.

Seven months prior to Chapaev’s death, in February 1919, the Party sent a commissar, Dmitrii Furmanov, to the Red commander’s regiment. Having witnessed Chapaev’s last days, Furmanov decided to write a heroic novel about the Red commander. He narrated the story of Chapaev under a pseudonym, Fedor Klychkov, a commissar of the 25th Chapaev division. Describing the figure of Chapaev, the author did not hesitate to address either his illiteracy or his past service as a tsarist officer. Furmanov not only acknowledged Chapaev’s World War One exploits, he also stressed his officer-like appearance, emphasizing his “clean-shaved chin and voluminous feldwebel moustache.”

Despite his humble background, Furmanov believed that the Red commander was politically

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6 “We were born to make a fairytale come true” was the first line of a famous Soviet song “The Aviators’ March” (1922), which was popularized in 1933 as the hymn of Soviet Air Force.


backward and the author needed, as he put it, “to take him into spiritual captivity.” Chapaev’s backwardness did not diminish Furmanov’s admiration of the Red commander. The young commissar was clearly fascinated with Chapaev’s vigor, his speeches, and his unique talent of electrifying the atmosphere around him. Furmanov described Chapaev as the embodiment of the proletariat, its heart and soul. In his novel, he focused on these passionate qualities as a means to immortalize Chapaev. Furmanov romanticized Chapaev in part, but also pointed to more problematic aspects of his character that the author apparently encountered during his service. The author showed Chapaev to be authoritarian minded, ready to destroy anybody who disputed his authority. Furmanov further noted that Chapaev was naïve enough to believe in fables such as “birds are passing typhus; sugar grows in heads; and horses become unworkable without beating.” Chapaev did not respect Soviet headquarters, believing that they are corrupted and filled with the Whites, knew nothing about socialism, and defended anarchists. However, Furmanov had enough influence on Chapaev to enlighten the Red commander and to help Chapaev to grow from these drawbacks. In the end, in order to cement his varnished Chapaev, Furmanov substituted Chapaev’s inglorious death with a story of how he was shot in his back while swimming across the Ural. Furmanov’s Chapaev combined anarchical disorder and charming revolutionary fervor, a mix of elements that appeals to have had broad appeal. This fictional image of Chapaev became a foundation for the future “historical” character of the Red commander.

Appearance of Chapaev on the “hardware” of Soviet memory: the Creation of a Monument of the Red commander

The popularity of Furmanov’s novel led to the construction of a 1931 monument to the Red commander in the Russian city of Samara. Using Alexander Etkind’s terms, it was a point when Chapaev was transferred from the “software” of memory to its “hardware.” In other words, after the establishment of this monument, Chapaev existed not only at the level of popular culture, but also in the realm of state-recognized memory.

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11 Ibid., p. 105.
The monument to Chapaev was built on money raised by former soldiers of the 25th division and by Alexander Chapaev, the Red commander’s son. Ivan Kutiakov, Chapaev’s successor as commander, and former soldiers of Chapaev’s regiment, chapaevtsy, opened an account in the State Bank and started to accumulate people’s donations from all regions of the Soviet Union. Considering Kutiakov’s membership in the Central Party Committee, the fact that chapaevtsy collected money and held tender in a period from 1929 to 1931 is hardly surprising. The creation of the monument was assigned to Matvei Manizer, a Leningrad architect who offered to embody the memory of Chapaev into one of the biggest monuments in the USSR. It was decided to place the new monument in Samara, the region where Chapaev conducted his last battles and was killed. Manizer was given only eight months to finish his creation because the monument’s supporters wanted to dedicate it on November 6, the eve of the October Revolution anniversary. Manizer met the deadline. His 12-ton monument to Chapaev, rested on a foundation of 56 to 72 feet and was 32 feet high.

Figure 1: Pictures of Manizer’s Monument in Samara (Alexei Shakirov, 2013)

This monument gave material form to Lenin’s famous metaphor of the revolution as a growing wave. Chapaev on a horse with his unsheathed shashka (cavalry sword) is on the peak of the wave, encouraging the people to rise up. The commissar leads people forward, thus directing the revolutionary wave, imparting courageous emotions to the composition by appealing to others to advance. The composition captures the concept of podvig described by Angela Brintlinger. The monument clearly captured the distinction between the roles of the Red commander, Chapaev, and the commissar, Furmanov, located on the front line of the

monument. This subordinate positioning became lodged in cultural memory and was further developed in the movie *Chapaev*, discussed below. In the monument, the people around Chapaev represent an idealized image of *chapaevtsy*. Mazurin depicted all the nationalities of the region where the 25\textsuperscript{th} division conducted its battles. A Bashkir fighter rises from the ground, a peasant-partisan looks at Chapaev, an old dockworker in a greatcoat stares ahead, a woman weaver from an Ivanovoznesenskaya factory stands ready, and a Red soldier runs behind her. Chapaev, in this monumentalized version of his story, does not just command his actual forces, he effectively leads all Soviet citizens into battle. Mazurin used real descendants of Povolzh’e in order to surround Chapaev with lively looking characters.\textsuperscript{17} In 1931, the secretary of the Leningrad Party Regional Committee, Sergei Kirov, visited Mazurin and praised the Chapaev monument. He liked it so much that he assigned the architect to make a copy of it for Leningrad. Kirov wanted to open the monument in 1934, but his assassination postponed it to 1942.\textsuperscript{18} Ironically, the man who theoretically could speed up the process of the Leningrad copy was none other than Ivan Kutiakov, but he was arrested and shot during the purges.

The monument’s *chapaevtsy*, despite changes in the way they are described in the novel, still behave as if they just leaped from Furmanov’s pages. The fact that a member of the Central Party Committee, Kutiakov, was a patron of this project, while the money for it came from popular donations, illustrates how Chapaev was a significant figure both for the state and for its citizens. The monument fixed in stone two important features of the fictional Chapaev. First, he occupies the role of a man who can inspire the people, but not necessarily lead them. As is seen from the monument composition, the leading role is assigned to the commissar, a representative of the Party. This depiction is based on Furmanov’s *Chapaev*, but lacks the complexity of the relationship between these people. In the novel, Furmanov was charmed by the Red commander and even felt his inferiority to Chapaev. Second, the monument depicts the Red commander on a horse with an unsheathed *shashka*. This visualization of courage served as the foundation for future works of memory about the Red commander, in particular the 1934 film *Chapaev*.

*The Crystallization of Chapaev’s Exemplarity in Cinema*


“Where should the commander be? In the front, on his dashing steed!” exclaimed Chapaev in the Vasil’ev “brothers” 1934 film. Chapaev smashed all box-office records and began to infiltrate into Soviet culture so deeply that images of this movie still occupy a significant place in contemporary Russian culture. For instance, the characters of the movie became protagonists for the 1996 novel Chapaev and Void by Viktor Pelevin. Georgiy and Sergei Vasil’ev based their script on Furmanov’s Chapaev. After Furmanov’s death in 1926, his wife, Anna Furmanova, revived previously failed attempts of her husband to promote his novel to Lenfilm. In the 1920s, Soviet filmmakers rejected Furmanov’s screenplay as unreasonably focused on a single person, but by the early 1930s, cultural attitudes had changed significantly.

The Vasil’ev brothers started to work on A. Furmanova’s movie script in 1932. In their notes they say: “It was necessary to brighten Chapaev’s image, to make it legendary, to make viewers believe him.” The screenplay that moviemakers rejected as unfashionably hero-oriented in the 1920s was not idolatrous enough for directors who worked in the frame of the emerging Stalinist cultural landscape, later codified as socialist realism. Aiming at refining Chapaev’s figure, the Vasil’evs cut a lot of secondary heroes from Furmanov’s Chapaev, thus getting rid of anything that could overshadow the significance of the Red commander. The Vasilievs’ Chapaev was no longer prone to anarchism and compensated for his illiteracy with a revolutionary sagacity. The directors also substituted the commissar Klychkov, an intelligent, but pedantic young man, with a patient and wise Furmanov, a man who was guided by a deep understanding of revolutionary aims. Following Manizer’s vivid cast, the Vasil’evs distinguished the roles of Chapaev and Furmanov, giving the former the function of encouraging the people and imbuing the latter with a tactful sense of guidance. In addition to this similarity, the image of the Red commander in Chapaev recalls his heroic

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19 The Vasil’ev “brothers” is an artistic pseudonym of two namesake directors, Georgii and Sergei Vasil’evs. They shared the same surname, but were unrelated.
depiction in the monument: in the most rousing scene of the film Chapaev appears on horse with a *shashka* in his hand.

Arguably the most exciting scene in the Vasil’evs’ film is the attack of one of the White regiments, Kappel’s forces. With drums beating, the Whites are marching towards the *chapaevsty* without shooting, scaring the Red fighters with their audaciousness. Anka, a woman machinegunner, is running out of ammo when the White Cossacks commenced a second wave of attack. Accompanied by stirring music, the camera focuses on the oncoming Cossack horde, when suddenly the Red cavalry storm into the shot, making the enemy retreat.

![Figure 2: A Film Frame from Chapaev (Source: Ukrkino, 2015)](image)

Chapaev on a white horse with an unsheathed *shashka* is on the frontline of this attack. The battle itself is less impressive than the appearance of Chapaev, whom the Vasil’evs depicted in identical fashion as Manizer’s monument. This powerful scene in many ways serves as the perfect culmination to the development of a memory culture devoted to Chapaev and his heroism. The Vasil’ev brothers cemented Chapaev’s audacious image at the end of the film. Following the demands of the socialist realist genre, Chapaev sacrifices his life in the name of the Revolution. In order to kill the Red commander gloriously, the directors took Furmanov’s romantic and sacrificial depiction of Chapaev’s death. Escaping the White Cossack, Chapaev skirmished with the enemy on the bank of the Ural and then tried to swim across it, but was struck by a stray bullet. The main Soviet critic, Joseph Stalin, appreciated Vasil’evs’ decision to make the death of Chapaev the acme of his heroism.\(^\text{25}\) This powerful end of the movie emphasized Chapaev’s courage and strengthened his heroic image.

Even Chapaev’s former comrades attested to the historical “truth” of the film. “What is the real power of *Chapaev*? First of all, the Vasil’evs worked a lot on the material and were

able to stay faithful to the historical truth, which they externalized into highly artistic piece of art. In *Chapaev* they showed real, live people with all their weaknesses and disadvantages,” wrote Ivan Kutiakov.\(^\text{26}\) Despite the fact that Chapaev and Kutiakov started their officer careers in the frontlines of the Great War, neither the film nor Kutiakov’s writings touch upon this topic: the *chapaevization* of Soviet memory also served as a means to forget this earlier war. As distinct from Furmanov’s novel, the Vasil’evs’ silence Chapaev’s Great War service, making him a purely Civil War hero. As is seen from Kutiakov’s response to the film, for him *Chapaev* was almost a documentary, which conveniently excluded the complexity of the Red commander’s figure and his historical background. As Karen Petrone has demonstrated in her research on Great War memory in the Soviet Union, the fact that Chapaev’s World War One background was now blacked out seems hardly surprising.\(^\text{27}\) However, it is crucial to stress the vanishing of Chapaev’s Great War service as an essential element to the *chapaevization* of Civil War memory. Before proceeding to a discussion of the constituencies of *chapaevization*, it is necessary to discuss how the popular image of the Red commander became a widely recognized recollection of the war past.

The development of Chapaev’s image in Soviet popular culture in some degree resembles Plato’s concept of mimesis, which says that art mimics mimicries, deviating a created image from its real nature. This kind of mimesis happened with the figure of Chapaev: Furmanov’s novel imitated the real Red commander; Manizer’s monument mimicked Furmanov’s fictional Chapaev of; the Vasil’evs’ movie emulated both of the previously copied Chapaevs. As a result of this mimesis, Soviet culture created a pure model of an exemplary hero, whose image had little commonality with the real Chapaev, but was treated as a true historical character. The fictional Chapaev became a part of history.

The fictional narration of Chapaev’s life became a source for studying the figure of the Red commander. This trend is well seen from the document *Chapaev: Pamiatnik V.I. Chapaevu v Samare, Postavlenyi v 1932 g.* Although the exact date of its publication is not known, the document most likely appeared in one of the cities of Povolzh’e between 1934 and 1938. It is a collection of 60 slides that narrate Chapaev’s history using personal letters and photos of the Red Commander. The document also references the Vasiliev brothers’ film as a source.\(^\text{28}\)

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\(^\text{26}\) Kutiakov, Ivan. "O Fil'me Chapaev." In *Chapaev. O Fil'me.* Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1936, p. 47.


Discussing Chapaev’s comrades, slide № 32 says that the adjutant of the commander, Petr Isaev, heroically died together with Chapaev, referencing to the movie *Chapaev* as a primary source. This publication therefore presents *Chapaev* as not just a movie, but also a reliable historical source. Besides this direct acknowledgment of the absorption of the fictional Chapaev within history, the document follows other lines of the plot about life of the Red commander.

![Figure 3: Photos of Slides which Narrates Chapaev’s history. (Special Collections of Miami University Libraries, 1932.)](image)

In its discussion of Chapaev’s pre-revolutionary past, the only thing that the source says about his WWI service is that “Chapaev did not want to go back to the war.”\textsuperscript{29} The Soviet historians who authored this source accompanied the narration about Chapaev’s pre-1917 life with photos of the Red commander with family members. In particular, they put a photo of Chapaev, dressed in military uniform with three Saint George’s Crosses on his chest, with his mother. Because Chapaev’s Great War service had already largely disappeared from his official story, the authors simply ignored Chapaev’s decoration and officer uniform and accompanied his WWI photo with insignificant comments about his unwillingness to go back to the front. Soviet historians used the ideologically improper photo because it was the only picture that depicts Chapaev with his mother. Another interesting feature of the narration in the document is the way in which the authors forged Chapaev’s exemplarity. According to the document, Chapaev’s irascibility and precipitancy were expressions of his class hatred to the enemy, which did not pervade the commander’s behavior in peaceful life. The slides go beyond the popular narration of Chapaev’s military history and discuss his relationship with family. Soviet historians presented the Red commander as a teetotaler and nonsmoker, who never allowed his temper to overcome his sobriety. Chapaev appeared to be not only an exemplary fighter, but also a good family man. However, this deviation from the plot was no more than a local instrumentalization of

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid. Slide №4.
Chapaev’s image in public history. The grand historical narrative followed the main plot and paid no attention to Chapaev’s life beyond the revolutionary battlefield. In order to illustrate how Chapaev transformed from a fictional figment of an actual person into a historical figure of the official historical grand narrative, I turn next to Chapaev’s representation in two significant historical sources of the Stalinist era, History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course and The Great Soviet Encyclopedia.

**Chapaev’s Transformation into a Part of Soviet History**

Chapaev had always been popular, but had never been a part of the official Soviet state historical memory. His story existed at the level of folklore, oral history, fiction, and film, but official historical narration did not include his name until the mid-1930s. Neither the widely-used 1926 school history textbook by Mikhail Kovalevskii nor the 18th volume of The Great Soviet Encyclopedia for 1930, which treats the Civil War, mentions the Red commander. However, in 1939 and 1940, the latter source, already in need of an update to reflect the violence of Stalin’s time, discusses Chapaev as a prominent Civil War figure. Here I argue that after the tremendous success of the Vasil’evs’ *Chapaev*, Soviet official historical narration absorbed the image of the Red commander. This process occurred along with the strengthening of Stalin’s quasi-nationalistic regime, which created a new historical foundation for the Soviet Union.

In his book, *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941*, David Brandenberger argues that in the mid-1930s the Soviet Union shifted from dialectical materialism to a new nationalistic concept of interpreting history. From that period on, Soviet historians stopped following Marxist rules of making history and started to narrate it premised on the needs of propaganda. The author states that the major source of the new historical thinking was *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course*, which first appeared in 1938 and which served as the official narrative of Soviet history.31

Brandenberger stresses Stalin’s personal involvement in editing this textbook. He mentions that Stalin personally rewrote the chapter about the formation of the Bolshevik

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party. His main aim was to emphasize the significance of dialectical materialism in the study of history; Stalin joined this theoretical approach to history to the narrative about the creation of the Bolshevik party. He simplified the ideas of Marx and Lenin and proposed them as the blueprint for historical studies. As a result of this intervention the Short Course stressed “grand dynamics, themes…treatment of historical causality with a “dehisteriosized” assembly of crude postulates.”

The Short Course was a purely ideological project, which did not aim at achieving Marxist historical objectivity. Rather, it used for propagandistic needs. Not surprisingly, this source plotted Chapaev into its historical narrative. In the summary for the chapter about the Civil War, the authors of the textbook classify the importance of different factors that help the Reds to win: “The Red Army won because: A) It forged commanders of a new type such as Frunze, Voroshilov, Budennyi, and others. B) Self-made heroes such as Kotovskii, Chapaev, Lazo, Shchors, Parkomenko, Rudnev, and others fought for the Red Army.”

In 1938, the version of Chapaev created by Furmanov, Manizer, and the Vasil’evs appeared as a real historical figure, recognized by official history. Due to its inclusivity, The Short Course did not discuss particularities, but rather defined important points of Soviet history and explained how to interpret them. The quotation above not only references Chapaev, it also acts as an instruction to include his figure into future historical narrations. In other words, any source that discussed the Civil War must integrate Chapaev’s history into its narration.

The Great Soviet Encyclopedia was one of the sources of official historical narration affected by The Short Course. The project of The Great Soviet Encyclopedia first appeared in 1925, soon after the end of the Civil War. It was a significant part of the new Soviet enlightenment policy, which pretended to establish a fresh intellectual foundation for all spheres of scientific and social knowledge. The first edition of the encyclopedia was developed from 1926 to 1947, so that this source is specifically interesting in terms of studying the ways in which it reflected significant political changes in the Soviet state. The shift from dialectical materialism to Stalinism caused a structural change in the editorial board of The Great Soviet Encyclopedia. In the 1920s-early 1930s, there was a special editorial commission, which shaped the philosophical framework of the first volume.

32 Ibid. p. 206.
“Philosophy, Logic, and Dialectical Materialism.” However, in the 33rd volume for 1938 one can find two new editorial commissions, “Philosophy” and “History of the ACP(b) and Leninism,” instead of “Philosophy, Logic, and Dialectical Materialism.” The implementation of the discipline, “History of the ACP(b) and Leninism,” was directly related to the newly emerged history concept outlined in History of the ACP(b): The Short Course. The structural change in the editorial board inevitably caused the alteration of the content, in particular the integration of Chapaev into the official historical narration.

The 18th volume of the first edition The Great Soviet Encyclopedia for 1930 contains a twenty-page article, “The Civil War,” which does not mention Chapaev’s name at all. However, in 1939, the 44th volume of the encyclopedia discussed Chapaev’s heroism in an article, seemingly unrelated to the Red commander entitled, “The Guerilla Fighters Movement.” Since Chapaev was never a guerilla fighter, his appearance in the article was conditioned by the new historical doctrine. The text of the piece on Chapaev starts with repeating a previously cited statement from The Short Course: “During the Civil War, a guerilla movement promoted many self-made heroes such as Chapaev, Shchors, Kotovskii, Parkomenko, Lazo, Rudnev, and et al.” The following text states that Chapaev had true proletarian origins and “from childhood experienced deep hardship and then the indignity of tsarist army service and three years of trench life during the imperialist war.” It is the only sentence dedicated to Chapaev’s pre-revolutionary life. There is nothing about his background in the officer corps or the decorations that he earned in his Great War service. The author goes on to state that Chapaev became a communist in 1917 and almost immediately became a prominent commander, the commissar of Nikolaevsk, and “the organizer of the Red guard.” The text adds that Chapaev battled kolchakovshina in the Southeastern front and “the White Cossacks took revenge on him for their defeat: in the night of 5 September 1919, Chapaev, mortally wounded, drowned in the Ural River.” Avoiding all controversial questions surrounding Chapaev’s biography, such as his fluctuation between anarchists and Bolsheviks, the text repeats a fictional story of an exemplary hero. The usage

35 Abbreviation ACP(b) means “All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)”
38 Ibid., p. 278.
39 Ibid., p. 279.
of Chapaev’s story from popular culture to Soviet historical encyclopedia is evident in the narration of his death: it is impossible to understand what happened to him without knowing the plots of the novel and the movie. The version that Chapaev drowned in the Ural River is fictional: the historical narration of the Red commander’s death reflects the vision of his biography created by popular culture.

In 1940, Chapaev and his revolutionary comrades again appeared in The Great Soviet Encyclopedia. The 47th volume of the first edition contains an article “The Worker-Peasants’ Red Army,” which examines the history of this military force from 1917 to 1939, promoting living heroes, such as Stalin and Budennyi, and omitting recently purged Red commanders such as Mikhail Tukhachevskii, Vasilii Bliukher, and Aleksandr Egorov. It is worth noting that in order to emphasize the significance of the Civil War, the authors call it “the Great Patriotic War.” Every source that treated the Civil War now had to mention the names of “self-made heroes.” The article states: “The Party gave to the army thousands of talented politicians and commanders. Self-made heroes, who fought in the Red Army and sacrificed their lives for the sake of communism, such as Parkhomenko, Chapaev, Kotovskii, Shchors, Lazo, Rudnev, and others, were faithful sons of the Bolshevik party.”

Even though the topic and content of the article does not immediately necessitate mentioning Chapaev and his comrades, the author repeats the dogma of The Short Course without giving any more description to Chapaev in the text. However, the author expresses his attitude to Chapaev in the endnote. I will quote an excerpt from the endnote: “Heroes of the Civil War in the USSR. Chapaev, Shchors, Lazo, Fabritsius, Parkhomenko, Rudnev, Dundich, M. 1938; Vasilii Ivanovich Chapaev, M. 1938; Borgene V., V. Chapaev, M. 1938 (Library of a red soldier series).” For readers, the endnote is intended to highlight Chapaev’s prominence and his heroic past. For researchers, it indicates that in 1938 there was a whole industry for the production of intellectual literature about Chapaev.

The Red commander made a long journey from real life to popular culture to Soviet official history. In 1938, Soviet culture had absorbed the fictional image of Chapaev into the narration of the Civil War history and created a mechanism of transforming popular images into historical narrative. The integration of the fictional Chapaev into official history became

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an essential part of the *chapaevisation* of the Civil War memory, which also erased memories of the Great War. Using the words of a popular Soviet song, it was a point at which the fairytale came true. Since that period, Chapaev’s newly-fashioned image shaped the memory of the Civil War. The analysis of *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): the Short Course* and *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* shows that Chapaev was always surrounded by other, slightly less popular, revolutionaries like him. The next part of this thesis will examine their role in the *chapaevization* of memory of the Civil War, arguing that the figures of Shchors, Kotovskii, and Parkhomenko, followed the pattern of Chapaev’s transition from popular culture into official historical narrative.
Creation of New Heroes

Creating a “Ukrainian Chapaev:” Evocation of Forgotten Red Commander, Nikolai Shchors

In 1935, Soviet officials accelerated the process of the *chapaevization* of Civil War memory. Following the successful elevation of dead Red Commanders to the pantheon of Civil War heroes, the authorities started to expand the biographies of other fallen revolutionaries. Right after the first wave of *Chapaev’s* stunning successes, Stalin became personally involved in the myth-making and launched a project dedicated to commemoration of another Civil War hero, Nikolai Shchors.

Nikolay Shchors (1895-1919) grew up in a family of workers in the rural town of Snovsk, a small settlement in the Chernigovskaia Oblast’ of Eastern Ukraine. In 1914, Shchors graduated from the military-paramedic school in Kiev and continued his career of an army doctor in the Tsarist military forces. The future revolutionary was a talented person, which is seen in his rapid career growth during the First World War service. In 1915, the twenty-year-old Shchors became a private and in 1917 received the rank of *Podporutchik* or *Shtabs-captain*, which is equivalent to the modern rank of lieutenant. In order to illustrate his significance in the military, it should be mentioned that Shchors outranked his contemporary, *Feldfebel* Chapaev, by two ranks. In 1917, Shchors came down with tuberculosis and was under medical treatment in the Crimean city of Simferopol’, where he became acquainted with revolutionary ideas and started to support the leftist Socialist Revolutionaries. After the October Revolution, Shchors was demobilized and returned to his native town of Snovsk. He got involved in the Civil War as the result of German occupation of his homeland, which followed the defeat of the Russian Empire in the First World War. In 1918, Shchors founded a guerilla fighter platoon, which fought against the Germans from March to May and then withdrew to Soviet territory, where he first was interned by the authorities and later accepted in the Red Army. As Mikhail Veller puts it, the Soviets “made him an offer he could not refuse,” implying that Shchors either could be labeled a counterrevolutionary or start

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collaborating with the Reds.\textsuperscript{45} Considering Shchors’ guerilla experience, the Soviets sent him to command insurgent troops in Eastern Ukraine. In autumn of 1918, Shchors joined the Bolshevik party and started his Soviet military career in Ukraine. In 1919, still only 23, he became a commandant of Kiev and was rewarded with a golden gun. However, his skyrocketing career was interrupted in August 1919. Shchors died during a battle with Denikin’s troops. The exact details of the Red Commander’s death are still shrouded in mystery. On 30 August 1919, Shchors, his deputy Ivan Dubovoi, a commander of Bogunsk regiment Kazimir Kviatek, and the political inspector of the 12\textsuperscript{th} Ukrainian Red Army, Pavel Tankhil-Tankhilevich, were blocked by enemy machinegun fire on the frontline of the Red regiments. After the investigation the Soviets stick with the version that Denikin’s machinegunner killed Schors because all three commanders, who were near him, all later stated they saw Shchors with a bullet hole in his head.\textsuperscript{46} However, later medical expertise revealed that the bullet hole in the back of commander’s head was smaller than the one on his temple i.e. the wound in the temple was the exit wound. Therefore, it is possible that Shchors was shot down by someone from behind. The first account of Shchors’ death was described by his deputy, Ivan Dubovoi, who became a kind of personal historian for Shchors, just like Furmanov served in the same role for Chapaev.

On 27 February 1935, during the decoration of Soviet director Alexander Dovzhenko with the Order of Lenin, Stalin made a jesting remark that “He [Dovzhenko] has a debt – ‘Ukrainian Chapaev’.”\textsuperscript{47} Half a year before this occasion, in his congratulating address to directors, dedicated to the 15\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Soviet cinematography, Stalin appealed to movie-makers to create “new films, such as Chapaev, that will glorify greatness of historical deeds of workers’ and peasants’ fight for power and will mobilize people for achieving new goals.”\textsuperscript{48} Following Stalin’s obsession with Chapaev, Dovzhenko promised to make a movie about the Ukrainian colleague of the Red Commander, Nikolai Shchors.

The choice of the protagonist for a new propagandistic piece of art as well as of the director is hardly accidental. On 17 November 1918, the Revolutionary Military Council created the Special Military Group of Kursk Direction for fighting with the counter-

\textsuperscript{46} George M. Farion, Korosten: Mykola Shchors’s Last Battle. Journal of Ukrainian Studies 28, no. 1 (Summer 2003)
revolution in Ukraine and assigned Stalin to a position at its general headquarters. Therefore, the Chief of People was familiar with Shchors’s feats. In the 1930s, Alexander Dovzhenko was the most prominent director of Ukrainian origin, who made films about wars in his home region. Stalin was familiar with his art and chose Dovzhenko for creation of Shchors.

The same year when Dovzhenko was assigned to create a “Ukrainian Chapaev,” Ivan Dubovoi published his book, My recollections about Shchors. From the opening paragraph, Dubovoi let readers understand that he was the “second Furmanov,” writing a story of a “new” Chapaev. Dubovoi starts his narration saying that “All Ukraine, Ukrainian party organizations, and Ukrainian civil society [obshchestvennost’] were assigned to create a film about a Ukrainian Chapaev. This person was Nikolai Ivanovich Shchors, who died in 1919 on the front.” Continuing narration with the representation of himself as a chronicler of Shchors, Dubovoi acknowledges that his writing appeared in terms of the popularization of the fallen Red Commander. Thus, in order to produce a credible narrative about Shchors Soviet propagandists assigned Dubovoi the role of Furmanov for Shchors. However, Dubovoi was a military man without a taste for writing, so he dedicated the major part of his book to the description of battles and the numbers of troops. Hence, his book did not create a well-rounded image of Shchors, but established several core elements to his image, which could be traced through out the process of chapaevization of the Red Commander.

One of the major elements of the narrative is the representation of Shchors as a military genius who entirely relies on the Party. Dubovoi describes Shchors as a self-made genius with an ideal proletarian background. Such an exemplary hero as Dubovoi’s Shchors could not serve in the tsarist army on the fronts of the imperialist war, so there is nothing about his World War service and military education. Describing his phenomenal commander’s qualities, Dubovoi writes: “[Ukrainian] Red squads lacked people and were disorganized. [The Soviet state] needed a person who would organize; it was necessary to find a strong person with an iron fist, who would create a military machine [from the Red squads]. This was Nikolai Shchors.” Dubovoi’s explanation of Shchors’ successful fulfilling the mission for creating an ultimate “military machine” from Ukrainian insurgents

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starts with the words “being a Bolshevik.” The author mentions that Shchors followed the Party line, created a political core of communists within his regiments, and started a military school, which turned peasants into “the best military cadres.” As a result of these actions, the Red Commander created the invincible Bogunsk regiment, which fought against all counter-revolutionary forces in Ukraine. Dubovoi clearly presented Shchors as a commander of a new type. Distinct from Chapaev, he built up a perfect regiment, which was militarily and politically educated. This image of Shchors laid the foundation for his image in popular culture, which would later crystalize in the film about the Red Commander.

The creation of a special military school within the Bogunsk regiment became a significant element in the construction of the myth about Shchors. Later representations of Shchors referenced his military school as an acme of Soviet exemplarity. It is worth mentioning that Dubovoi’s description of this school was employed in detail by Soviet propaganda even after the author was purged. For instance, Dubovoi argued that Shchors valued his “brainchild” so much that he struggled against the decision of his superiors to send officers of this school to the front, saying that they are needed to establish new, strong regiments. Since Dubovoi did not mention names of the “superiors,” Soviet propaganda started to insist that it was a secret plan of Trotskii to destroy the newly-emerged elite of the Soviet army. Additionally, Shchors’ military school vividly drew a line between him and Chapaev. The main purpose of this school was the creation of new effective commander, who would replace “previously assigned commanding fighters, [who] were illiterate and badly prepared for managing troops.” Therefore, Shchors created an institute for the replacement of Chapaevs with commanders of a new type. Using the story with the military school, Dubovoi presents Shchors as an evolved version of the Red Commander from a bumpkin guy to a disciplined officer. The distinction between the two Red Commanders was also vividly presented in Dovzhenko’s film. Moreover, multiple memoirs and interviews of the director point at the possible origin of the distinction between Shchors and Chapaev.

In his interviews, Dovzhenko acknowledged that Stalin entirely controlled the process of script writing and imbued the project with his personal vision of Shchors in Soviet history. Dovzhenko stated that “he [Stalin] revealed for me a great difference between Shehors and Chapaev, the different circumstances in which both protagonists fought, and, consequently,

52 Ibid., p. 13.
53 Ibid., p. 29.
54 This account will be discussed in details in the next section of the chapter.
the difference in the artistic goals that are assigned for the creation of Shchors.”⁵⁶ Therefore, Stalin could personally order the filmmakers to draw a vivid distinction between Shchors and Chapaev, which was previously discussed in terms of Dubovoi’s book. Additionally, the director noted that Stalin insisted upon the usage of Ukrainian national folklore in the film, particularly music. Stalin even presented Dovzhenko with a vinyl record containing national songs that should be used in the film. From Stalin’s perspective, Shchors should appear on Soviet screens surrounded by Ukrainian national coloring. ⁵⁷

Music played a significant role in the construction of Shchors’ heroic image. In 1936, while Dovzhenko was working on the film about the “Ukrainian Chapaev,” the Soviet poet Mikhail Golodnyi and composer Maksim Blanter created a song that is still alive in Russian culture, *Song about Shchors*. In 1935, the Soviet newspaper, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, also furthered the growing popularization of Shchors. It published a song about the funerals of the Red Commander and then conducted a competition for the best song about Shchors. Golodnyi and a composer Ivan Shikhov won this competition, but their *Song about Shchors* did not immediately become popular. In 1936, Golodnyi showed his lyrics to Blanter, who accompanied the words with music that is still being an object of remakes.⁵⁸ This Soviet super hit steeped Shchors with a romantic image of a wounded Red Commander. The first couplet of the song became a depiction of Shchors’ heroic image.

The squad was marching along the bank,
The platoon was marching from far away,
Under the Red flag,
The Commander was marching.
His head is bound,
Blood on his sleeve,
The bloody track is tracing,
On the wet grass.

Following this description of Shchors, the Soviet publishing house IZOGIZ printed what is arguably the most famous picture of the Red Commander, which would appear on Soviet stamps and post-cards.

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⁵⁷ Ibid.
A wounded Shchors under the Red flag therefore became a symbol within Soviet culture even before the appearance of Dovzhenko’s film. Along with the popularization of Shchors, the Soviet authorities also revised his “real” history similar to the way Chapaev had been appropriated.

In 1936, it appeared that nobody knew where the great Red commander was buried. Recreating the chain of events, the Soviets authorities figured out that in order to prevent contamination of Shchors’ grave his comrades sent his body to his wife’s family in Samara. Shchors was buried in a public Vsekhsviatskoe cemetery. In 1926, the cemetery was closed and all relatives were allowed to remove the remains of their loved ones. In 1935, the cemetery was rebuilt into a park. It appeared that no one had claimed Shchors’s remains and interred them elsewhere. Furthermore, the gravestone with his name, established by his comrades, did not stop the authorities form destroying it, which means that no one knew who Shchors was. The Red Commander got lost in Samara’s dirt without any marking of where he was buried. However absurd it sounds, the reemergence of Shchors as an important Stalinist cultural figure launched a search for his body: his zinc coffin was found only in 1949. The whole process of the glorification of Shchors was therefore conducted even without knowledge of where he was buried. Applying the newly created image of Shchors to the blueprint of chapaevization, Soviet propagandists literally removed the Red Commander from the abyss of oblivion and placed him atop a shiny pedestal of a Civil War hero.

In 1937, along with the accelerated process of looking for Shchors’ remains, the NKVD launched an investigation into his death. As previously discussed, Dubovoi provided the only description of Shchors’ death, but the NKVD suspected him in assassinating the Red Commander. Other witnesses of Shchors’s death proved NKVD suspicions and provided

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evidence that the bullet hit the head of the commander from the back, not the temple, as Dubovoi initially described, and that Dubovoi bent Shchors’ head and did not let the nurse change the bandage.\textsuperscript{61} Additionally, according to the new testimony, Dubovoi behaved extremely strange after the accident, actively trying to allude that the political inspector of the 12\textsuperscript{th} Ukrainian Red Army, Pavel Tankhil-Tankhilevich had shot behind his back.\textsuperscript{62} In 1937, Dubovoi was arrested, tortured, signed confessionary statements, and was shot in 1938. In 1949, when the Soviets finally exhumed the body of Shchors, physical examination proved that the bullet canal went from his forehead towards the left temple, therefore it appeared that Dubovoi lied. In the 1960s, another expert proved that Dubovoi had a kind of weapon of different caliber, thus the man who killed Shchors was most likely Tankhil-Tankhilevich. The mystery over the death continues: contemporary independent investigators have suggested that a ricochet killed Shchors, but Dubovoi and Tankhil-Tankhilevich decided to lie about Shchors’ death because they knew that nobody would believe them otherwise.\textsuperscript{63} However, back in 1938, Dubovoi’s guilt was indisputable and affected the creation of Shchors’ popular image, significant part of which was a narrative that a traitor killed the Red Commander.

The director, Aleksandr Dovzhenko, recollected that the work on this film was a version of hell on earth for him because of the increasing number of political repressions that occurred while filming it and subsequent drastic changes in values forced him to rewrite the script several times and postpone the release of the movie from 1937 to 1939. In 1937, after the arrest of Dubovoi, who was a hero and a friend of Shchors in Dovzhenko’s original screenplay, the director reshot almost the entire film, trying to black out the newly-purged commander. Dovzhenko himself felt under threat of being accused of political unreliability if he did not follow the new line on Dubovoi’s fate.\textsuperscript{64} In 1939 the director wrote to his friend: “I completed Shchors. It was a very difficult film to make and took me a good five years of health from me. And I have still not got over it.”\textsuperscript{65}

Shchors emerged on Soviet screens as the second hero molded with the pattern established by Chapaev. In 1939, Dovzhenko finished his film about the “Ukrainian Chapaev,” which was released under the name \textit{Shchors}. This film narrated a story of

\textsuperscript{61} This version was proved by all witnesses and later by an expertise of Shchors’ body.


Shchors’s feats on Ukrainian land, reconstructing the major battles and events in which the protagonist participated. Later on, the Soviet producers started to use more pompous slogans such as “historical saga,” which aimed to maintain Shchors’s near-documentary status.

Figure 4: Poster of Dovzhenko’s film Shchors (Soviet Posters, 2012)

The screenplay for Shchors was based on two periods of the Red Commander’s Civil War service: his guerilla attacks on Germans and his battles against Semyon Petliura, a statesman leader of the Ukrainian nationalist organization.

Since this film had nothing to do with an objective historical narration, the script avoided all unfavorable aspects of the relationship between the Soviet state and Shchors. The Red Commander appeared to be a devoted Bolshevik, who had always been faithful to the Revolution. Dovzhenko, like the Vasiliev brothers before him, hid Shchors’ Great War service. Dovzhenko derided the significance of Shchors’s pre-revolutionary past by presenting his army past as nonsense. In one of the scenes, Dovzhenko shows how extremely backwards Petliura’s flunkies argued that the Red Commander had been a tsarist general, thus he could not be a true revolutionary. Several times the director concentrated on presenting this idea as counter-revolutionary nonsense, emphasizing the scenes in which the protagonists call accusations of him in loyalty to the Tsar nothing else but Petliura’s provocations. “I’m not a Tsarist General, I’m from ordinary workers, as well as you are!” proclaimed Shchors. The only thing that could possibly point at Shchors’ World War One past was his outstanding military education and intelligence. Describing his bookishness, Denise Youngblood calls Shchors “Civil-War-hero-as-professor.” Shchors always writes, reads, and edifies people around him, looking more as teacher rather than a fighter.66 Despite his brilliant knowledge of military, psychology, rhetorical skills, and proficiency in art,

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Shchors is always on the same page with his soldiers. In personal conversations with his soldiers, Shchors uses colloquialisms and switches from pure Russian to a mix of Russian and Ukrainian. This inherent mixture of high intelligence and simplicity of character inspires Shchors' audacious and accurately reasoned actions such as fraternization with German soldiers in Ukrainian front. Presenting this fictional act, Dovzhenko shows a disarmed Soviet demonstration headed by Shchors, which moved towards German fortification with songs and greetings. Under the accompaniment of the accordion, soldiers start to hug each other, and share their anti-bourgeois sentiments, which results in a German revolt against the officers. The initial image of Shchors significantly differs from the image of Chapaev, which Soviet viewers encountered in the first scenes of the Vasil’ev Brothers film. In distinction from the story of Chapaev, who was enlightened during the film, the narration about Shchors skips the topic of backwardness and goes directly to the exemplarity of Soviet commanders. From this perspective, Shchors appears to be a continuation of forging Soviet exemplarity that started with Chapaev. Shchors appeared to be similar to the Vasil’ev brothers’ Furmanov, but with the difference that Shchors was a brilliant commander. Even though Dovzhenko’s “Ukrainian Chapaev” had a few commonalities with the Vasil’ev’s Red Commander, the director preserved the conflict between the wisdom of the Party and the spontaneity of the ordinary people who needed guidance to awaken their revolutionary souls. Dovzhenko presented this conflict in the example of relationship between Shchors and one of his division commanders, the Ukrainian self-made, victorious fighter, bat’ko (father) Vasilii Bozhenko. This man, who was a real figure, recalls Chapaev because of his uninhibited emotions, lack of formal education, and anarchist streak. Dovzhenko vividly highlighted all of these characteristics. Bozhenko always shouts at his subordinates and immediately becomes anxious when someone speaks about enemies of the Revolution or tries to argue his authority. As Furmanov did in Chapaev, Shchors always asks Bozhenko to button up and follow military etiquette. The Red Commander attempts to turn Bozhenko to military science and explain the significance of maps, but the talented bumpkin-commander ignores it, saying that the only real military science is a fight. Ba’tko always tries to solve the “bourgeois question” in an extrajudicial way, but Shchors stops him, saying that this anarchical behavior is unworthy for a Bolshevik. Similar to Chapaev, Bozhenko has changed by the film’s end and started to button up, order his subordinates to follow discipline, and tried to work with
maps. Following this roleplaying, Dovzhenko kills Bozhenko in the end of the film, but kept Shchors alive. As it happened in reality, Bozhenko dies from a sudden sickness.67

The director decided not to show a scene of Shchors’ inglorious death. Dovzhenko instead employed Dubovoi’s image of Shchors’ military schools and included a scene of troops marching in the Soviet uniform of the late 1930s. He called the marching soldiers “students of Shchors’ military academy, the proud future of the USSR.” This imaginative academy was a dream of Shchors the civilizer, who wanted to enlighten the Red Army. This scene is accompanied by a sudden inspection, sent by Trotsky. In previous scenes, soldiers of Shchors’ army recognized Polish agents amongst Trotsky’s inspectors, and in the last shots these people appeared again, insisting that Shchors must send his students into a massacre. Following Dubovoi’s narrative, Dovzhenko shows that Shchors refuses this order, arguing that he listens to Lenin, not Trotsky, and added that these soldiers are the future of the Soviet power. The end is therefore a happy one and one that fit within the climate of 1939: nobody follows the orders of a traitor, Trotsky, Shchors is alive, and his heritage is with us.

The film did not match Chapaev in its popularity, but definitely became a blockbuster. In the very first reviews, Pravda emphasized that Stalin suggested how to shape the plot of the film.68 A year later, the film received Stalin’s Award of the First Class.69 In 1940, the success of the film also affected the wife of Shchors, Fruma Rostova-Shchors, who received an apartment in a newly built Moscow apartment complex famous under the name “dom na naberezhnoi.”70

The success of Shchors furthered the process of chapaevization. Shchors, like Chapaev, moved from the software to the hardware of memory in the city of Samara, where he was buried. A monument was established there even before his body was found.71 In early 1941, the Kuibyshev Regional Party Committee72 enacted a competition for the best monument to Nikolai Shchors, which should be established in Samara. Prominent Soviet architects of that period such as Matvei Manizer, Vera Mukhina, and the tandem of Leon

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67 Allegedly, it was caused by poisoning Bozhenko by the NKVD
70 Khalatnikov, Isaak. Dau, Kentavr i Drugie. Moscow: FIZMATLIT, 2007; This building was constructed for the Soviet top elites.
72 In 1935, Samara was renamed in honor of the revolutionary Valerian Kuibyshev.
Murav’ in and Mikhail Lysenko participated in the competition. Some sculptors submitted stone depictions of scenes from the film. For instance, the architect Georgii Kepinov put a movie scene of fraternization between Russians and Germans on the frontline of the monument. Another architect, Aleskei Izmalkov, presented Schors with his favorite film weapon: the American-made Lewis machinegun. These evident improprieties prevented the projects of being materialized.  

Manizer and tandem of Murav’ in and Lysenko appeared to be the finalist and major counterparts of the competition. Manizer, famous for his Chapaev monument, presented a monument, which vividly repeated major features of his Chapaev: pedestal, gestures of the Red Commander, look of the subordinates, and other minor features revealed that his project was a compilation of elements of Chapaev’s monument.

![Figure 5: Project of Manizer’s Monument to Shchors. (Rashkin, 2014)](image)

Members of the jury and most prominent Soviet architect (especially Vera Mukhina) bashed Manizer’s repetitiveness, thus giving favor to his opponents. After several rounds of discussions the jury approved the work of two architects, Leon Murav’in and Mikhail Lysenko.

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However, disapproval of Manizer’s project did not mean that the jury was going to reject Stalin’s assignment for the creation of a “Ukrainian Chapaev.” Leon Murav’in and Mikhail Lysenko’s monument clearly captures the image of a Red Commander on a horse, popularized by the state’s promotion of Chapaev. As well as the monument to Chapaev, Shchors’ “hardware” depiction was installed on a massive, high pedestal. The monument to Shchors repeats the directions that Manizer gave to his Chapaev. The half-turned body of Shchors with a raised arm, stretches the monument up, delivering a feeling of an appeal to rise in attack. This effect is emphasized with a prancing horse, which rises off the ground, following the appeal of the commander. The posture of Shchors and the message that the monument delivers are similar to the ideas of Manizer, embodied in the statue of Chapaev.

Even thought the monument to Shchors is incomparably less grandiose then Chapaev’s one, the Soviets spent half million rubles on this depiction of the Red Commander. They tried to dedicate its establishment to the 24th anniversary of the Revolution, but the beginning of the Great Patriotic War ruined the plans of the Kuibyshev administration. The monument was established only in 1954 in recovering Kiev.

Following the script of chapaevization, Soviet propagandists and artists resurrected Nikolai Shchors from obviousness and created the image of him as a prominent Red Commander. As well as Chapaev, Shchors appeared to be the protagonist of memoir-novel, film, monument, and rooted in popular culture along with songs about him. As this thesis argues, the second important stage of chapaevization was the implementation of the fictional image in official historiography and making it a part of historical memory. The following section discusses emergence of Shchors in Soviet history.

Appearance in official history.

Until 1935, Shchors was not considered to be a significant part of the Soviet historical narrative. Much like Chapaev, Shchors first appeared on the pages of intellectual sources that constituted Soviet fundamental knowledge, such as the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, along with publishing of *The Short Course*. Neither the Great Soviet Encyclopedia article “The Civil War” for 1930, nor the 1933 volumes, which discusses phenomena and events that start with the letter “shch,” mention the name of the Red Commander. His name first appeared in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia only in 1939. The factual first mentioning of his name was in volume 43, in the article “Opera,” in which the authors mentioned an opera “Shchors” without any description of it. However, in the 44th volume (1939) examines the figure of the Rad Commander in terms of the previously discussed article “The Guerilla Fighters Movement.”

It is worth mentioning that the same article promoted Chapaev’s image, created by the film, and repeated the dogmas of *The Short Course*, literally reprinting the paragraphs from the Stalinist history textbook.

The article narrates a story of Shchors similarly to the script of the film. It says that in 1918, the legendary twenty-three-year-old Shchors, suffering from tuberculosis, “organized a guerilla fighter squad to protect the motherland and Soviet power with weapons in arms.” The narration skips Shchors’ officer background, devotion to the left SRs, and absence of any connection between him and the Bolshevik party. As well as in the film, from the very beginning Shchors appears to be an exemplary Bolshevik and revolutionary. Discussing the 1918 history of Shchors’ regiment, the BSE amplifies the intensity of the narration, saying that the Germans severely mauled the guerillas, but the latter “fired point-back” at the former. According to the BSE, in late 1918, Lenin called Shchors for a report in Moscow. This interpretation of Shchors’ retreat from Ukraine overshadows the actual reasons of his movement from Ukraine to Soviet territory and accurately repeats the screenplay of the film, which follows the same interpretation of Shchors’ departure. After his visit to Moscow, the protagonist of the film supported his arguments with a deliberately repeated phrase “This is what Lenin told me!” Dovzhenko intentionally emphasized this falsified aspect of Shchors’ biography and this accent on the personal relationship between Lenin and Shchors was reflected in the subsequent official history. The main body of the paragraph broadly discusses

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77 Ibid., p. 279.
Shchors as a Red Commander genius, focusing on his political, educational, and other “enlightening work” (prosvetitel’skaya rabota) amongst partisan regiments. Interestingly, his death is described in one sentence, which says “30/VIII 1919 a bullet of the petliurovstsy interrupted the life of the Bolshevik Shchors.” Despite the 1937 process over Dubovoi, the authors stuck with an ambiguous and more convenient interpretation of the death of the Red Commander, blaming Ukrainian nationalists for Shchors’ murder. In contrast to Dovzhenko, they could not just end the narration without mentioning the death of Shchors, so that the authors wrapped up the story of the great Bolshevik with a sentence, the content of which explains the end of Shchors in simplified way equal to the phrase “and then he died.”

The article “The Guerilla Fighters Movement” was the only one that gave a detailed description of Nikolai Shchors in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia during the interwar period. All subsequent volumes repeated The Short Course mantra about “self-made heroes,” without significant discussions of who they were. However, later volumes represent the significance of Shchors in the Soviet revolutionary heroic epos. In the 1940 article “The Workers-Peasants’ Red Army”, the Red Commander was mentioned as one of the greatest Soviet heroes. This phrase was cited with two sources, Krikun U.P, Geroi Grazhdanskoi Voiny v SSSR. Chapaev, Shchors, Lazo, Kotovskii, Fabritsius, Rudnev, Dundich. M.:1938 and Gerasimov E. and Erlikh M., Nikolai Aleksandrovich Schors. Boevoi Put’. M.:1937. This deliberately over-cited statement shows that the image of Shchors was constructed in the same manner, time, and “fabric” as other Civil War heroes, beginning with Chapaev. Like Chapaev, Shchors had plenty of biographies produced in the period of 1937-1940. Following the script of chapaevization, Soviet writers and historians strengthened the façade of Shchors’ fictional history with numerous biographies, which presented the script about the Red Commander as a historical fact.

Minor mentioning of Shchors’ significance in Soviet history took place in the BSE until the end of the interwar period. In the 45th volume for 1940, in the article “Song,” the authors exemplifies songs about Shchors as an illustration of people’s art and love for the great “self-made hero.” The last mention of Shchors in the the interwar period appeared in the 1941 49th volume. In the article “RSFSR,” the authors briefly mention Shchors as a

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fighter against foreign invasion, who inspired the guerilla movement in Ukraine and started “the liberating patriotic war.”82 In the oncoming world war, the Soviets employed the image of Shchors to mobilize people against foreign enemies, specifically Germans. By the time of the Great Patriotic War, in short, Nikolai Shchors had gone from being a largely forgotten Red Army fighter, symbolized by his lost corpse, to a monumental Soviet hero cast in the mold of Chapaev and ready to be mobilized to fight the Germans once more.

Thus Soviet historiography absorbed a fictional image of Shchors, completing the circle of chapaevization and fixing an ideologically proper commemoration of the Red Commander and the Civil War in historical memory. However, there were significant deviations from the script of Chapaev’s promotion. For instance, the Great Purges, the struggle against Trotsky, and other propagandist agendas heavily affected the creation of Shchors, changing some script aspects. This fact points at another quality of chapaevization: flexibility of the myth and its adaption to the contemporary demands. In order to demonstrate these qualities of chapaevization and describe other Civil War heroes created under the script, the next section will discuss figures of Grigorii Kotovskii and Aleksandr Parkhomenko, the two revolutionaries mentioned in The Short Course and constructed under the pressure of the Great Purges and Great Patriotic war.

Overshadowed by the war: creation of Kotovskii and Parkhomenko

Chapaev provided the mold for remembering Soviet heroes and Shchors was the first to be cast from it, but others would soon follow. After the success of Chapaev and Shchors, the Soviet state started an assembly line production of new Civil War heroes, who did not enjoy the personal attention of Stalin and were a product of propagandists assigned to create more mobilizing myths. Since the creation of new heroes felt in between the Great Purges and the beginning of the Second World War, scripts of their production differed from the initial Chapaev blueprint, but preserved core elements of chapaevization. The following section discusses the promotion of two other Civil War heroes, Grigorii Kotovskii and Aleksandr Parkhomenko, emphasizing changes in the process of chapaevization and demonstrating its inclusivity to demands of propaganda.

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Grigorii Kotovskii (1881-1925) was born in the village of Gencheshty, in the Bessarabian province of the Russian Empire. In 1904, at the age of 23, Kotovskii became a leader of the Bessarabian underground, becoming known for his robberies that sought to redress social injustices. In 1906, he was arrested and landed in prison, from which he escaped in 1913. After the escape, Kotovskii raised the ante and established a criminal group of bank robbers, which became a nightmare for the authorities in Odessa and Bessarabia. In 1916, his gang was caught and Kotovskii was sentenced to death. However, Kotovskii tried a shot in the dark and wrote a letter to the wife of the Russian general, Aleksei Brusilov, with a petition to engage him in military service. His request was approved and in 1916 Kotovskii was sent to the front. During his short service, Kotovskii was decorated with a St. George’s Cross for bravery, became a warrant officer, and headed one of the frontline Soldiers’ Committees. After the demobilization that followed the October Revolution, Kotovskii moved back to Odessa and continued to rob along with another legend of the criminal underground, Mishka Yaponchik. It is worth mentioning that in 1917-1920, the political situation in Odessa was very volatile because during this period the power in the city changed hands 12 times. Odessa was ruled by the Soviets, Germans, French, Ukrainian nationalists, and Romanians. Kotovskii and Yaponchik enjoyed this period of instability, which allowed them to conduct criminal operations. However, in 1919, in the period of the second Soviet reign in Odessa, Kotovskii’s decided to join the Soviets and started his career as a Red Commander. Due to the absence of credible sources, there is no consolidating explanation of why Kotovskii decided to join the Reds. Viktor Savchenko, biographer of Kotovskii, suggests that he leaned towards the Bolsheviks because they supported his independent activity for destabilization of the political situation in Odessa, which included racketeering and terror. When the Soviets took over the Odessa, Kotovskii appeared to be in a situation similar to Shchors’: he could either cooperate or die like his fellows who attempted to maintain their independent status under the Soviets.

After being recruited by the Bolsheviks, Kotovskii participated in various battles all over the fronts of the Civil War, including the defense of Petrograd in 1919. Kotovskii mobilized Odessa criminals, who were formed in the 54th Lenin’s Revolutionary Division commanded by his criminal fellow Mishka Yaponchik. After the very first battle with Petliura’s nationalist regiments, the criminals dropped their weapons and hijacked a train to get back to Odessa. Kotovskii’s cavalry stopped the train and killed almost everybody on it.

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including Yaponchik. However, the adjutant of a murdered criminal boss, Maier Zaider, escaped. Kotovskii owed Zaider from the time he was the owner of a prestigious Odessa brothel and hid the robber from police. With the tables now turned, Zaider asked the Red Commander in 1922 to employ him as the head of factory security. Kotovskii paid Zaider back and satisfied his demand: Zaider worked as the head of the Peregovovskii sugar plant security for three years and then, according to the widely recognized version, assassinated Kotovskii for betraying Mishka Yaponchik. After the assassination, a tearful Zaider allegedly visited Kotovskii’s wife and confessed to the crime. He was arrested and released in 1930. In 1925, Kotovskii was assigned to be a deputy of the legendary military commander Mikhail Fruzne, but the assassination prevented this from happening. In 1930, a vengeful bullet found Meier Zaider, who was killed by Kotovskii’s associates.

The process of commemorating Kotovskii differs in part from the Shchors case. In contrast to the “Ukrainian Chapaev,” Kotovskii was praised right after his death. The Ukrainian Party Committee organized a pompous funeral, which was visited by such prominent figures as Semen Budennyi and Alexander Egorov. Even Stalin mentioned Kotovskii’s death in his writings from 1926, praising the bravery of the Red Commander, whom he personally knew. In keeping with the best Soviet political traditions of commemoration of great revolutionaries, Kotovskii was embalmed and placed in a tomb bearing his name along with all his decorations and a jewel-encrusted cavalry sword. For ten years the tomb in his home town of Birluza (at present Kotovsk) served as a regular monument, but in 1934, when the process of Chapaevization began, Kotovskii’s tomb was modified with a marble superstructure that recalled the one on Lenin’s mausoleum, but with a dominating monument in the center of it. Kotovskii’s tomb became a place of pilgrimage for Pioneers ready to take their oath, a site for military parades, and for other ceremonies dedicated to affirm loyalty to the Soviet regime.

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This massive construction in the Ukrainian provincial town of Birluza, at present Kotovsk, was destroyed by Romanian troops in 1941 and restored by the Soviets in 1965.

Despite Kotovskii’s significance, the Soviet leadership did not intensify his commemoration for long time after his death. Kotovskii was commemorated sporadically in the few years, but did not become a central figure of the Civil War narrative. However, in 1934, Nikolai Ostrovskii included him in his famous socialist realist novel, How the Steel was Tempered. The protagonist, Pavel Korchagin, served in the division named after Kotovskii, whom Pavel briefly describes as a brave hero. The Red Commander does not appear in the novel, but his name chases the reader along with the narration of Korchagin’s military service. In 1936-1937, Kotovskii became a central figure in two literary pieces: a historiographical novel Kotovskii by Vladimir Shmerling and a screenplay for a film about the Red Commander by Alexei Tolstoi. In 1936, the magazine Iskusstvo Kino published an article which mentioned that Alexei Tolstoi had started to work on a screenplay for a film Kotovskii. It is known that the author of the actual adopted screenplay for the film was Aleksei Kapler, but the existing literature does not clarify at what stage the script writing was shifted from Tolstoi to Kapler. However, it is known that Kapler based his screenplay on Shmerling’s 1937 novel Kotovskii.

Kotovskii is a novel about an exemplary superhero whose personal qualities could be easily compared with those of modern superheroes in comic books. The book, which heavily cites The Short Course and Stalin’s writings as a means to prove its veracity, starts with a description of Kotovskii and his life, emphasizing his honesty and tremendous physical power. According to the narration, as a toddler, Kotovskii was able to hold five of

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his counterparts on his outstretched arms.\textsuperscript{91} Shmerling explains Kotovskii’s prison terms as part of his supposed struggle with the bourgeoisie. The author argues that Kotovskii was haunted by a group of landlords who used their power to imprison the great revolutionary in 1904. According to Shmerling, Kotovskii escaped and organized an anti-bourgeois movement of avengers, who burnt down the houses of the landlords and passed out their money to pay for the debts of poor peasants in Bessarabia. Moreover, in this retelling, Kotovskii donated a significant part of the landlords’ money to the Red Cross.\textsuperscript{92} The Red Robin Hood Kotovskii was frequently caught by the police, but always escaped and continued his glorious feats. Shmerling replaces the prosaic criminal life of Kotovskii with a fairytale and spy novel mash up. Narrating Kotovskii’s Odessa period of 1913-1916, the author insists that the Red Commander was not robbing banks, but fulfilled the secret tasks of the Party. Frequently changing his appearance by using different wigs and make-up, Kotovskii infiltrated enemy circles and fished for information. Once he was discovered and surrounded by police near a theater, Shmerling writes, Kotosvkii immediately entered and joined the actors of the play, therefore confusing the policemen, who searched for him in the hall.\textsuperscript{93} Shmerling uses these stories to replace the “improper” pages of Kotovskii’s biography, including his World War One service.

Kotovskii’s life as an audacious revolutionary drastically changed after acquaintance with the commissar Khristoforov. The Party assigned Khristoforov to Kotovskii’s regiment; therefore the story of their mutual admiration directly follows the plot of the Vasil’ev’s brothers Chapaev. Khristoforov, it should be mentioned, was purely a fictional creation of Shmerling’s imagination. The narration of Kotovskii’s biography pays special attention to the death of the Red Commander. Shmerling proposes a very contemporary ideological version that Kotovskii’s murderers were “Trotskii’s bastards – spies of foreign intelligence.”\textsuperscript{94} Neither the name of Meier Zaider nor any Kotovskii’s relations to the criminal world of Odessa are mentioned in the text. Instead, nameless “bastards” working for Trotskii ended the life of the great Kotovskii. In order to improve the “veracity” of his account, Shmerling concluded by quoting the mantra of The Short Course: “The name of Kotovskii is written in the immortal book – “History of the All-Soviet Party of

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 64.
Bolsheviks,” “The Short Course” – amongst the names of the most glorious self-made heroes of the Civil War.”95

In 1942, the film Kotovskii, directed by Aleksander Faintsimmer, was released. The first mentioning of the film appeared on the pages of Iskusstvo Kino in 1936, when the magazine published the information that Tolstoi was working on a screenplay for it.96 In a 1939 issue, Iskusstvo Kino stated that the film was expected in 1940, but it was postponed for two more years.97 Most likely, the delay was caused by censorship, the problem of which will be discussed in the next section.

The film’s reliance on Shmerling’s novel is evident from the very first scene. A good-natured Kotovskii, dressed in a white Moldavian embroidered shirt [vyshivanka], is driving the cart of a bourgeois, when suddenly the protagonist encounters a group of peasants shedding tears over the corpse of an old man. Kotovskii learns that the dead man’s landlord whipped him to death, and the protagonist rushes into the murderer’s villa. Kotovskii enters a room where the greedy-looking landlord is having a good time. In a white vyshivanka covered with blood, Kotovskii throws the bourgeois out of the window. This episode clearly repeats the narration of the previously discussed novel, using the same expressions that Shmerling offered in his text. However, Faintsimmer avoided adaptation of the most extravagant episodes of Kotovskii’s story such as his disappearance on the stage of the theater. The director substituted them with tricks and action scenes that are usual for what would later be used in so-called Soviet Easterns, an adventure film genre sometimes derided as a “borsch-Western.”

In contrast to the novel, Faintsimmer called the fiction commissar Kharitonov98 and arranged his first meeting with the protagonist in the prison cell, where the latter was serving a life sentence for the promotion of Bolshevism. Kotovskii escaped and met Kharitonov the second time only after the revolution, when the Bolshevik Kharitonov released the Bessarabian Robin Hood from yet another prison and recruited him for service in the Civil War. In the film narration of Kotovskii’s life, the Bolshevik bandit therefore spent the duration of the Great War in prison, not at the front. Acting according to the socialist realist plot, Kharitonov tries to evolve Kotovskii’s spontaneity into consciousness and explains him that he is a good person, but that he is ineffective because he is not related to the great Party

95 Ibid., p. 66.
98 In the novel he was called Khristoforov.
of Lenin, “the Party that forges good people.” Here the director repeats the conflict between a wise commissar and a burning, talented revolutionary soul, which was firstly brought up by Chapaev. Kharitonov teaches Kotovskii how to behave on the battlefield, repeating Furmanov’s dogmas such as that a commander should think before making decisions and should not rush into the frontlines of attacking troops. Faintsimmer’s conflict between the two can be illustrated by following expressions of the commissar: if Kharitonov wants to shame Kotovskii, he says: “This [military science] is not eating cabbage soup with a bast shoe!” (Eto tebe ne schi laptem khlebat’!); if the commissar is satisfied with the Red Commander, he compares him to the genius of strategy, Aleksandr Suvorov. The emergence of Suvorov, a film about whom was released a year before, points at the direct effect of the development of Russo-centric etatism, which was going on simultaneously with chapaevization. As well as mentioning Trotsky as a major enemy, this detail shows the inclusivity of the Stalinist Civil War myth.

In the same time, Faintsimmer strictly follows the core script of chapaevization. Just like that of Chapaev and Furmanov, the relationship between Kotovskii and Kharitonov results in the reeducation of the former, who starts citing Suvorov in the end of the film. However, following the rules of spontaneity-consciousness paradigm and the engagement of Party wisdom with a revolutionary soul is not the only resemblance with Chapaev. Near the end of the movie, Kotovskii’s regiments are suppressed while attacking Germans near Odessa. They are about to run, but suddenly Kotovskii appears on a white horse with an unsheathed shashka in his hand. The soldiers are encouraged after the commissar Kharitonov screams “after me!” and rushes forward in attack. This scene recalls both the episode of Chapaev’s appearance on the battlefield in the Vasil’ev’s brothers’ movie and Manizer’s monument, which depicted how the Red Commander inspired his people, while the commissar leads them in attack.

Kotovskii was initially ignored in the Soviet press because of the ongoing war. Kotovskii was firstly discussed by critics of Iskusstvo Kino only in the period of the Thaw. In 1957, the film was mentioned in the nostalgic article “Always with the People” by R. Iurenev. The author describes Kotovskii as one of the movies that “served for the spiritual mobilization of the people.” The 1969 article “Realism with Wings” is imbued with the similar nostalgic sentiments, missing the times when Kotovskii kept landlords in fear. The

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100Ibid., p. 26.
author praises the film, using pompous Soviet language for describing the monumental figure of Kotovskii. Discussing the episode with defenestration of the landlord, the author writes: “Six landlord’s bodyguards were trying to hold Kotovskii, but he, like a Laocoon, entangled with snakes, proudly towers over them”\textsuperscript{102} Continuing to heap praise on \textit{Kotovskii}, the author states that the image of revolutionaries such as Chapaev and Kotovskii greatly inspired the “sons and grandsons” of the heroes, who fought against the fascists on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War. Kotovskii was a superhero not only on the screen, but also for the people who fought the war against Nazis. The same description of \textit{Kotovskii} as a bright and nostalgic commemoration of childhood was expressed by A. Medvedev in his 1972 article about the remake of \textit{Kotovskii} by Valerii Gazhiu.\textsuperscript{103} The author confidently states that new interpretations of \textit{Kotovskii} would never overshadow “that film and that image, firmly burned into the complex system of childhood recollections.”\textsuperscript{104}

In the late 1930s-early 1940s, Soviet propagandists and artists forged a new image of Kotovskii, which, according to \textit{Iskusstvo Kino}, successfully impacted the imagination of the audience through Faintsimmer’s film. The director cemented the visual image of Kotovskii following the narration of Shmerling’s novel, major script elements of created by Vasil’evs’ \textit{Chapaev}, and adopting the needs of contemporary propaganda. This film was initially created as entertaining one, so the deliberateness of ideological parallels and impact of new agendas are not as vivid as in the case of Aleksandr Parkhomenko, which will be discussed in the next section. It took eight years to accomplish the first stage of \textit{chapaevization}. This delay was caused by the external circumstances such as harsh ideological control and the beginning of the Second World War. The delay in releasing the film caused a slight change in the sequence of \textit{chapaevization}: if in previous cases Soviet history absorbed new images after the releasing of films, than in Kotovskii’s case it happened after the approval of the script, but before Soviet citizens saw the movie.

\textit{In official history}

Like the treatment of Chapaev and Shchors before him, Kotovskii’s story initially was not part of early Soviet historical narration. In 1927, soon after Kotovskii’s assassination, when the memory of about him was still “hot,” the BSE dedicated twenty-one pages to the discussion of Bessarabia, paying special attention to its revolutionary history. The authors described battles in which Kotovskii participated but say nothing about him. There is plenty

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., p. 96.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., p. 188.
of information about other commanders and guerilla resistance to the Romanians, but nothing about Kotovskii. By 1937, however, the Great Soviet Encyclopedia included a full entry for Kotovskii.\footnote{Schmidt, Otto. Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsyklopedia. 1. Vol. 34. Moscow: Mospoligraph, 1937. p. 483.} Following the narration reflected in the novel and later in the film, the BSE briefly tells the life story of the Red Commander. According to this source, Kotovskii’s first arrest was caused by the revolt against the landlord. Discussing his imprisonments, the authors mention one in 1906 and another one in 1916. The source argues that the last sentence of Kotovskii was the death penalty, but he was saved by the revolution. The article asserts that the Red Commander never served in the tsarist army during the First World War because he was imprisoned. It also does not mention any details of Kotovskii’s criminal cases, viewing them instead as part of the class struggle. In accordance with the script, the BSE presents Kotovskii’s 1918-1919 activities in Odessa as service in the Bolshevik underground. After admitting his significance in the series of battles, the text says “Kotovskii was deceitfully killed in the state farm of Chebanka.”\footnote{Schmidt, Otto. Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsyklopedia. 1. Vol. 34. Moscow: Mospoligraph, 1937. p. 483.} There are no specificities about the circumstances of his death. The Soviets deliberately kept Zeider hidden from this memory making because he could disabuse the now-popular myth about Kotovskii. In 1939, the BSE also included Kotovskii in its article about the Guerilla Fighters Movement. This article contains the same plot, but employs renewed Soviet language, which became rich with cursing enemies and glorification of chiefs, and receded from the impersonal interpretation of Kotovskii’s death, insisting that “enemy’s assassin” killed the “great fledgling child of Lenin’s-Stalin’s Party,” Grigorii Kotovskii. This version makes the general script of the BSE even closer to the narration of Shmerling’s text, which laid the foundation for creating new Kotovskii.

The Red Commander Grigorii Kotovskii went through the entire cycle of chapaevization and emerged in Soviet historiography as an exemplary hero. Being produced during the Great Purges, Kotovskii’s legend adopted new ideological dogmas and language, which sometimes are not very vivid because of the preference of light genre of his promotion and transitional for the ideology period of 1936-1941 when Soviet propaganda revoked his image. Creation of Kotovskii shows how the Soviet state continued to employ chapaevization and made it more flexible for changes. The next “chapaevized” Civil War hero, Aleksandr Parkhomenko, was created after the acme of the Purges, when the ideological agenda became
more stable, so his promotion demonstrates all the tendencies that Soviet propaganda introduced in Kotovskii, but in a more emphasized way.

Aleksandr Parkhomenko

The first elements of the script about Aleksandr Parkhomenko were published in 1939, so the building of the myth occurred in a less unpredictable political situation. In distinction to Kotovskii’s legend, the Soviet state gave an assignment to construct Parkhomenko’s image to more prominent specialists, so there are more details about the creation of this image that have reached us through numerous interviews, memoirs, and research by the people who created Parkhomenko. This section will present how Soviet propaganda crystalized tendencies towards adoption of chapaevization to contemporary ideological agendas without changes of the core script on the example of Aleksandr Parkhomenko.

The script first spelled out in The Short Course listed six new heroes forged by the Civil War. The fifth in this new Soviet pantheon was Aleksandr Parkhomenko (1886-1921), who was born in a village of Makarov Iar, now located in the present-day Lugansk oblast’ of Ukraine. He grew up in a large family of workers. Parkhomenko had five siblings, two brothers and three sisters, one of whom he appeared to be on opposing sides after the Revolution. In 1900, Aleksandr Parkhomenko followed his brother Ivan and became a worker in Gartman’s locomotive factory, which was famous for its strong Bolshevik cell, headed by Kliment Voroshilov. Both Parkhomenkos became active Bolsheviks. They participated in the First Russian Revolution of 1905, were arrested, and in 1915 headed the Lugansk regional party committee, which supported a massive workers strike in 1916. The authorities punished the brothers for their activity: Ivan was sent to a Siberian labor camp and Aleksandr was recruited into World War One service. The younger Parkhomenko served in a Voronezh reserve battalion stationed in the south of Russia. In contrast to the previously discussed revolutionaries, he did not reveal any commander talents, but gained some military experience that he employed in 1917 when he joined the 5th Ukrainian Army of Voroshilov. This army participated in many significant battles in Civil War Ukraine. In particular, in 1918, it fought for Tsaritsyn, a town where Parkhomenko became acquainted with the Chairman of the Northern-Caucasian region military council, Joseph Stalin. In 1919, he

participated in the strangling of ataman Grigor’ev’s insurrection, during which Parkhomenko personally killed Artem Maksiuta, a good friend of Nestor Makhno and commander of the anarchist military regiment that joined Grigor’ev’s revolt. The crushing of the insurrection and Maksiuta’s murder made Parkhomenko an archenemy of Makhno and his younger brother Artem, who fought with the anarchist against the Reds. Parkhomenko nearly perished a year before his actual death. In 1920, the Soviet Revolutionary Tribunal sentenced him to death. After conquering Rostov, Parkhomenko was assigned to be the commandant of this city. Under his reign the Red Army veered out of control and, as one of the witnesses later noted, started “to slaughter all officers and decently dressed people. However, the glorious red fighters slaughtered people in passing because their main aim was making their way to the wine cellars.” The city sank into drunken debauchery and Parkhomenko could do nothing about it, leading to his sentence. Basing on complaints of Rostov citizens and accounts of witnesses including commanders, Revolutionary Tribunal of the First Cavalry Army found Parkhomenko guilty in criminal negligence and sentenced him to capital punishment. His life was saved by two of his colleagues: Stalin and Voroshilov, who used their authority to release Parkhomenko.

After this occasion, his career continued a rapid growth. Parkhomenko was decorated with two Orders of the Red Banner, which separates him from other revolutionaries in the 1930s pantheon of heroes, who did not have such honorable decorations. In 1921, chasing Makhno anarchist regiments, Parkhomnko made a tactical mistake, leaving his headquarters without cover. Makhno used this blunder and captured all the commanders of Parkhomenko’s 14th division, including the Red Commander. In his memoirs, one of Makno’s commanders, Viktor Belash, writes that Parkhomenko prayed to save his life and told the anarchists about the locations of the Red regiments. In addition, he showed them a letter from his brother Artem, in which he persuades Aleksandr to join anarchists, saying that he should not stick with military regalia and follow Makhno who has support of thousands of peasants. It is worth mentioning that this text by Belash was partly

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110 Lur’e, Lev. "Imeni Komdiva." Gorodskoe Obozrenie. November 2012; [«красноармейцы резали и убивали граждан прямо на ростовских улицах, в подъездах, в трамваях. Убивали всех офицеров и просто прилично одетых людей. Впрочем, делалось это мимоходом, ибо доблестные красные конники спешили к винным складам».]
111 Ibid.
published in magazines *Istpart*\(^{113}\) (1928) and *Letopis’ Revoliutsii* (1928). The entire memoir was prepared for publishing in 1930, but it has never been released. The fact that Soviet historians did not fight such interpretations of Parkhomenko’s death shows that they were not interested in employing his image to construction of the Civil War memory. In addition, the Soviet state did not honor Parkhomenko in bathetic funeral scenes and Soviet artists did not write pompous panegyrics to him. Parkhomenko’s significance did not extend beyond paragraphs in professional literature for military specialists. A long lapse in memory about Parkhomenko ended only in 1939, when Soviet propagandists decided to *chapaevize* his image.

*Depiction in popular culture*

Vsevolod Ivanov’s 1939 novel *Aleksandr Parkhomenko* became the first significant depiction of the Red Commander in Soviet popular culture. Katerina Clark mentions that *Aleksandr Parkhomenko* is a good example of what she calls crystalized social realist biographical writing.\(^{114}\) As she suggests, the novel by Ivanov was a combination of fiction and historical narratives, which constituted a biography, perfectly suiting the mythologized patterns of socialist realism. Clark argues that socialist realism biographies were of two types. The first one narrated stories of “fathers” such as Lenin and Stalin, while the second one told histories of “sons” such as Parkhomenko. In order to emphasize the “son-like” qualities of a protagonist, Soviet biographers labeled them with clichés such as the “faithful son of the Party” and “fledgling children of Stalin.”\(^{115}\) Ivanov’s Parkhomenko invoked these labels. Ivanov’s hero also furthered the process of forging a Soviet memory of the Civil War through a new pantheon of dead heroes who became the sacrificial sons of Lenin and Stalin.

Ivanov’s massive, 600-page account starts with a description of Parkhomenko’s childhood and his feats during the First Russian Revolution of 1905. Parkhomenko appears to be an exemplary citizen with a proper working class background. Embellishing the youth of the Red Commander, the author manages to avoid any discussions of his younger brother Artem, who joined the anarchists. Ivanov also stressed that Parkhomenko always fought the right enemies, beginning with the Black Hundreds and Union of Michael the Archangel.

\(^{113}\) Magazine *Istpart* (ab. from *History of the Party*) was the major Soviet history magazine in the interwar period.


Besides bringing a new enemy into context, the author openly discusses the protagonist’s World War One service. Relying on actual facts, Ivanov describes Parkhomenko’s conscription to the army and the exile of his brother Ivan. Serving in the Voronezh reserve unit, Parkhomenko uses pacifist Bolshevik rhetoric to organize a revolt in it.

The central topic of the novel is the battle for Tsaritsyn, which is presented as the most important in the history of the Civil War. The author specifically emphasizes the cooperation between Parkhomenko and Stalin during the operation in Tsaritsyn as the major event in the former’s development as a great Red Commander. In fact, the author put Stalin on the pantheon of heroes together with Parkhomenko, making him a Civil War super-star. Ivanov dedicates a whole chapter to describe how the news about Stalin’s arrival shocked everybody in Voroshilov’s regiment, including the commander. Ivanov presents Stalin as a father: he never interrupts the emotional but reasonable proclamations of Parhomenko, but listens to the end and then points out a mistake; he always speaks quietly because he knows that “life is not clay, but a stone” and “you should think twice before crafting it.” He is also a genius of strategy, who teaches the talented, self-made hero Parhomenko to fight properly. Together they win all battles and strengthen the Revolution. Stalin’s aggrandized image entirely replaces Lenin, who became the arch-father rather than an edifier. To do so, Ivanov employs the clichés Clark identified: “son of a Party of Lenin” on “fledgling children of Stalin,” which is used by Ivanov to refer to Parkhomenko. As one can mention, Stalin was added to the pantheon of heroes along with Parkhomenko, embodying Party wisdom, which was previously presented by commissars.

Along with recounting the story of Stalin and Parkhomenko’s acquaintance, the author describes the intricacies of alleged German-Trotsky-Makhno’s agents inside of the Red Army in Tsaritsyn. The spies imbued the military apparatus and even had access to Stalin. The struggle between Parkhomenko and the flunkies of counter-revolutionary forces became a secondary plot of the novel. The main anti-hero of this struggle became an “intelligent with a military bearing” Bykov, a spy of Trostki’s who worked as a secretary in Stalin’s headhunters. This feature of the narration together with substitution of Lenin with Stalin show that the plot of chapaevization was changing along with the growth of Stalinism: it preserved the core, but replaced figures and protagonists.

Using the contemporary anti-spy agenda, Ivanov carefully substituted the story of Parkhomenko’s arrest with a narration of a struggle between the Red Commander and

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Trotsky’s flunkies. According to the text he was arrested and sentenced to the death penalty not because of the massacre perpetrated by his soldiers, but the result of a provocation by Bykov and his friend, the head of the Rostov revolutionary committee, but the cruel cabal of Trotskyists was broken up by Stalin, who saved Parhomenko’s life.

The last significant episode of the narration is the death of Parkhomenko. Ivanov explains that Parkhomenko’s platoon detached from the Second Army and was attacked by Makhno’s forces, headed by Bat’ko. Parkhomenko was the only survivor when the enemy cavalry surrounded him. Makho is described as a short man with crutches, who tries to humiliate Parkhomenko, but the Red Commander ordered him to surrender after what Makhno cowardly shot him down. A minute later, the Second Army cavalry came to the battlefield and slaughtered all the anarchists. The last lines of Parkhomenko’s biography says that the Red Commander heroically died, but fulfilled his order to eliminate Makhno’s gang.

Parkhomenko was created, edited, and evolved into a play by Ivanov. In 1939, Pravda critics praised Parkhomenko the theater play. Ivanov’s play focused specifically on the episode of the battle for Tsaritsyn, which had already become the most prominent fight in socialist realist Civil War imaginary. Viewers started their acquaintance with Parkhomenko at the point when his regiments suffered from betrayals and lack of ammunition under Tsaritsyn. The second scene introduced Stalin on the Ukrainian front and depicted him as a savior, showing a sincere happiness of soldiers when they heard the news that Stalin came and brought them provision.

The play, which was a condensed version of the novel, became a master-plot for the film version of Parkhomenko’s life and death. The 1942 film Parkhomenko by Leonid Lukov, much like the films of Shchors and Kotovskii, was released many years after the project was launched. The reason for this delay was similar – suppression by censors. In 1939, Ivanov wrote in his diary: “A play Parkhomenko was changed fifteen times. The editors were changing, empires were collapsing, a half of London was destroyed, but Parkhomenko has still been in progress.” In the same year the screenplay was finally approved. The director Lukov started to work with Ivanov on a film, but even the beginning shooting did not prevent from censors’ interference. The turning point in making Aleksandr Parkhomenko occurred in 1941. Immediately after the beginning of the war with Germany, officials from Glavrepertkom [censors in the sphere of performing arts] called Ivanov to

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discuss changes that should be introduced into the screenplay. It is worth mentioning that Ivanov found it problematic to alter the screenplay because the protagonist was a historical figure, thus it was difficult to manipulate his character. Lukov expressed the essence of the proposed changes in a private talk with the film editor, Nadezhda Ratmanskaya, answering her question about why they were making a film about the Civil War during the growing conflict with the Nazis: “You know that the fascists are rushing towards Stalingrad, that is why I want to relate our film to a similar situation of 1918, when it was necessary to defend Tsaritsyn. The goal is to ensure the viewers in the invincibility of our people, their heroism, and the film should inculcate the assurance in our victory. You understand, Nadya, Parkhomenko is needed in order not to surrender Stalingrad.” This quote illustrates how historical remembrance was constantly evolving in the 1930s-1940s, thus *chapaevization* had to be flexible enough to keep up with the state’s view on them.

*Glavrepertkom* wanted to idealize the image of Parkhomenko and make him a superhero. The changes of script were significant enough to cause amusement among the actors and crew, who had already been working on the film for a year and a half. Ratmanskaya wrote that Lukov was creating a “wonderful fairytale” about Parkhomenko, but the film’s editor wondered “where is the historical truth?” The second director, Boris Kanevskii made caustic comments in regards to the historical adequacy of Ivanov’s biographical novel. He wrote to Ratmanskaya that Ivanov “went against historical truth both in the screenplay and novel” especially in the deliberate attempts to humiliate Makhno, who was initially praised by the Soviets and respected by the prominent revolutionaries Dybenko and Kollontai.

Lukov’s film was a response to the demands of Glavrepertkom, based on Ivanov’s narration of Parkhomenko’s life. The picture starts with a scene where Parkhomneco accidentally finds out that Stalin is in Tsaritsyn and, together with other soldiers who heard this news, is excited. The opening scene is followed by various Kotovskii-like adventures: the

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119 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
viewers see Parkhomenko alone disarming a train full of anarchists, holding a grenade in his hand; and the Red Commander dressed in a Cossack uniform gaining intelligence from a White regiment, among other episodes.

The film operates with what was a rarely used term at that time in Soviet history: “russkie.” Coming back to the concept of Russocentric etatism by Brandenberger, it is worth mentioning that usage of this word points at addressing to nationalist sentiments in Soviet propaganda under Stalin. Lukov imbued the first significant battle scene of the film, in which Parkhomenko’s regiments fight with the Germans under Tsaritsyn, with contemporary ideological messages of Stalin’s nationalism. Repeating the emotionally strong scene of Kappel’s troops physiological attack from Chapaev, Lukov presents Germans ceremoniously moving to the “Hindenburg March” towards Soviet fortifications. Copying the plot of Chapaev, the director shows that Red soldiers are almost ready to run under the pressure of a physiological attack; one of the commanders comes to Parkhomenko, asking him to retreat. In Chapaev the Red Commander shouted to his subordinate and led people in attack. However, Parkhomenko behaves differently: as if he has read the order 227, which appeared the same year with the film, he shoots the officer without showing any emotions, remarking that no one should retreat. The next shot of the battle scene reflects a phenomenon of Russification of propaganda, which Brandenberg called “Russocentric etatism.” Staying on the frontline of defense, a soldier of the Red Army shouts: “Brothers! We are Russians, aren’t we?!” |a, nu bratsy! Russkie my ili ne Russkie?!| After hearing these words, the Reds rush in attack. The Germans suppress the Soviets, and suddenly Parkhomenko rushes into the shot on a horse with an unsheathed shashka in his hand. In order not to be too repetitive, Lukov garnished a typical Chapaev scene by putting the camera on the ground, under the horses’ legs. This battle scene represents new features of socialist realist cinematography: intolerance to fear, extensive violence, Russianness, and artificial heroism, which claimed that nothing is impossible.

The film preserved the major patterns of Ivanov’s original novel. First, the battle for Tsaritsyn and appearance of Stalin as a messiah is the general line of the plot. Second, Stalin becomes the fatherly substitute for Lenin, leaving the former leader a role of a wise ancestor. Lukov explicitly showed it in the scene of acquaintance of Parkhomenko and Stalin. In the film the Red Commander at first does not recognize Stalin and speaks with him relatively

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123 Order 227 is known under a popular name “No one step back!”, According to these order, all soldiers retreating from the battle field must be immediately shot dead.

rude, but the latter does not react because he is wise enough to understand the burning soul of Parkhomenko. Such kind of occasions used to happen with the image of Lenin, when he was placed on the same level as regular people such as in a scene when he pours tea in a poor kitchen in front of a soldier in Romm’s Lenin v Oktjabre (1937). This humanity was now transferred to Stalin, who also behaves like a father for Parkhomenko, thus following the novel’s plot. Thirdly, the film uses the same explanations of improper occasions in Parkhomenko’s life. For example, it repeats the narration of cabal against the Red Commander organized by Trotsky’s flunky Bykov, which almost resulted in Parkhomenko’s death.

The section above demonstrates that chapaevization was flexible enough to reflect contemporary messages of propaganda. It adopted new mobilizing messages, applying them to the core script what is seen from repetitive usage of images inherited from Chapaev and similar means of Parkhomenko’s promotion. According to the Soviet press, these messages were successfully delivered. Just like Faintsimmer’s Kotovskii, Aleksander Parkhomenko did not get significant coverage in the Soviet press due to the ongoing war; Iskusstvo Kino mentioned Lukov’s film for the first time only in 1957, in the previously discussed nostalgic article “Always with the People.” The author mentions that Aleksandr Parkhomenko was one of the most significant mobilizing films, but he does not go into a detailed description of the picture.

Besides delivering specific information to viewers, the creators of Aleksandr Parkhomenko substituted wise commissar and Lenin with Stalin, making the latter the edifying father. This fact once again points at the preservation of the core script, a conflict between Party wisdom and revolutionary soul, but replaces some elements of the narration. Another article in Iskusstvo Kino addresses this core script of Lukov’s interpretation of the Civil War. In 1960, Iskusstvo Kino published an article dedicated to the development of Lukov’s art. It interpreted Aleksandr Parkhomenko as an artistic foundation for further praised films by the director such as Two Fighters, Oleko Dundich, and Sailor Aleksandr Matrosov. In particular, the author emphasizes how Aleksandr Parkhomenko established themes that were transferred to a movie about another revolutionary and “self-made hero,” Oleko Dundich (1958). Thus, chapaevization constituted Lukov’s later interpretation of the Civil War.

Like the Civil War heroes discussed previously, Parkhomenko was cemented not only at the layer of public memory, but also was commemorated in Soviet historical memory. The next section will present in which ways Soviet historiography eternalized Parkhomenko’s fictional image, therefore accomplishing the second stage of chapaevization.

In official history

Distinctly from other revolutionaries, the Great Soviet Encyclopedia briefly mentions Parkhomenko before the appearance of “self-made heroes” mantra. In 1937, the name of the Red Commander was mentioned in an article dedicated to Budennyi’s 2nd Cavalry Army, in which Parkhomenko served.127 Stalin loved this regiment and later in 1939 was praised as a founder of the 2nd Cavalry Army.128 The glorification of this army rose along with the cult of personality, absorbing all possible heroic images, including the revolutionary death of its commanders. The article mentions Parkhomenko’s name in a list of “murdered heroes-commanders” without giving any specific information about him or his death. The next time Parkhomenko appeared in the already discussed 1939 article about guerilla fighters.129 However, the article dedicates only a small paragraph to Parkhomenko, mentioning the Red Commander’s origins in a poor family of peasants, how he fought with Voroshilov in the Civil War, and how he died in a battle with Makhno’s troops. The briefness of the description is explained by a presence of the article Aleksandr Parkhomenko, entirely dedicated to the Red Commander.130 The article reads like a summary of Ivanov’s novel because it step by step lists the events described in the book. It starts with mentioning Parkhomenko’s proper peasant roots, then goes to a list of Parkhomenko’s prerevolutionary feats, which constitutes approximately one third of Ivanov’s novel. The article does not hesitate to mention Parkhomenko’s World War One service. It exactly follows the plot of the novel, showing no glory in his military service, but emphasizing that Parkhomenko worked within the ranks to bring about the demise of tsarism. The description of Parkhomenko fascinates with the amount of listed facts: almost each third sentence in the two page starts a new topic. It is worth mentioning that among the discussions of battles and appointments of Parkhomenko one can find facts that would unlikely be a part of a constrained historical narration of an

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130 Ibid., p. 301.
encyclopedia. For instance, the article emphasizes that “[Parkhomenko] was sent to Moscow to Lenin by Stalin to get ammo for the defenders of Tsaritsyn.”\textsuperscript{131} Evidently, there was no need to meet with Lenin in order to fix the problems with ammo supply. Additionally, this episode does not suit the narration in its entity because it focuses exclusively on major events without getting into details.

Another example of employing fictional narration from popular culture is a statement “[Parkhomenko] disarmed anarchist.”\textsuperscript{132} There is no explanation whom, when, and where did he disarmed, but it vividly recalls the scene of the film, in which Parkhomenko encourages anarchist on a train to disarm, holding a grenade in his arm. The BSE depicts the death of the Red Commander identically to the Ivanov’s script: “…he was surrounded by a gang [of Makhno] and heroically died, fighting till the end.”\textsuperscript{133} However, there is one significant deviation from the script, which is the absence of any mentioning of Parkhomenko’s arrest by the Revolutionary Tribunal.

The second chapter presents how the Soviet state employed \textit{chapaevization} over the 1930s - early1940s. Examining creation of images of Civil War heroes mentioned in \textit{The Short Course}, this chapter demonstrates that Soviet propaganda a) accurately followed the \textit{chapaevization} means of promotion of new heroes, implementing them through literature and cinema and after repeating the produced script in official history; b) adopted \textit{chapaevization} to the contemporary needs and ideological concepts; c) succeed in usage of \textit{chapaevization} for cementing Party messages in Soviet memory. This phenomenon developed over time and was treated as a beneficial propaganda strategy, which is evident from numerous state assignments for producing new images of heroes. In addition to this, the second chapter shows that \textit{chapaevization} frequently interfered with other Soviet ideological phenomena such as Russocentric etatism. In order to describe the significance of \textit{chapaevization} in terms of contemporary framework of Stalinism, the following chapter will conceptualize this phenomenon and place it into the existing literature.

Another fascinating quality of \textit{chapaevization} presented in the second chapter is how it put different people such as Chaapaev, Shchors, Kotovskii, and Parkhomenko together on the pantheon of Civil war heroes, blurring their diverse histories into one universal image of a Red Commander on a white horse. The complex ideological mechanism of \textit{chapaevization}

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 302.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 303.
forged a bumpkin, a well-educated army officer, a criminal, and a worker into one generalized character, which framed the culture of commemoration of the Civil War. Being supported by the official history, chapaevization erased the difference between popular culture and historical memory; therefore, Soviet citizens recollected the war through movies, novels and cultural riots that surrounded these pieces of art. Angela Brintlinger writes that the emergence of pieces of art such as Chapaev inspired children to play “Reds and Whites,” equivalent to “Indians and the Americans,” based on movies about the Civil War heroes. Another example of such riots are songs about these heroes, which became very popular amongst Soviet people and were taught in schools. Developing the point about impact of chapaevization in Soviet culture, the next chapter of this thesis will argue that this phenomenon constructed not just a universal image of an exemplary Civil War hero, but constituted the ways in which post-Stalin USSR recollected the Civil War and established a strong cultural pattern for commemorating the Civil War through the images of created Civil War heroes.

Placing Chapaev in history.

Previous chapters presented the structure of chapaevization, its main aspects, and its aims. The last chapter of this thesis discusses the process of chapaevization in a broader context, focusing not on its “technical” aspects, but on the legacy and development of this process within Soviet culture and history. The first section places chapaevization within the already developed theoretical framework of Soviet studies and argues that this phenomenon is needed to fully understand Stalinist culture and construction of Soviet historical memory. The second, and final, section of the chapter discusses the historical and cultural transition of chapaevization from the epoch of Stalinism to the Thaw, Brezhnev’s period, and contemporary Russia.

Chapaevization in theory

While Chapaev’s popular image evolved across the Soviet century, the process of chapaevization, which consisted of a memory project designed to make Chapaev into the

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symbol of the Civil War, was directed by the state. In his study of group recollections, Maurice Halbwachs determines that a construction of collective memory rests upon an experience that is of concern to a majority of a group and that this experience is always articulated in collective recollections. In the process of forging a mutually-agreed upon past, a group longs to find a harmony, which is obtained by emphasizing mutual experience and liquidating details that are out of their interest. A group shapes its goals, determines its interests, and commemorates its relevancy in close connection with the values of the system in which the group lives. Like other socialist realist projects, Chapaevization was a phenomenon that encompassed a significant experience of Soviet citizens, wiped out unsuitable ideological details, and crystalized the Party’s messages about what Soviet history was.

Soviet authorities used chapaevization to combat other commemorations that did not serve the purpose of Stalinist nationalization and building socialism in one state. In particular, chapaevization aimed at abandoning the official memory of the Great War that had developed in the 1920s. In her recent book on Russian Great War memory, Karen Petrone demonstrates that the Bolsheviks were not going to forget the imperialist war, but longed to reshape the frame of its recollection. The Bolsheviks employed the memory of the war in their ideology, proclaiming a slogan “from the World War to World Revolution!” The state initially planned to build Moscow Military History Museum, dedicated to commemoration of the Great War, but abandoned the idea. Petrone also argues that Soviet citizens treated the imperialist war as one of the most shameful and disgusting events in history, basing their memory on the recollection of horrors of war. The author proves it with various representations of the Great War in Soviet culture and appreciation of Erich Remarque’s novel All Quiet on the Western Front. Under Stalin, the pacifist message of Remarque and was no longer acceptable because it was of demobilizing nature. Since Stalin’s propagandists had never found the Great War a fruitful field for ideological work, they preferred to abandon it. As Brandenberger demonstrates, Stalinist propaganda was no longer concerned with dialectic materialism, so there was no need to construct an anti-thesis, but was well enough to produce a myth that would exclude narration about the imperialist war from public

memory.\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Chapaevizaiton} emerged in terms of this mnemonic policy. This memory project replaced the sufferings of the proletariat in the Great War and Civil War with a glorious story of a single person involved in forging the new system through war, therefore making war experience attractive and romantic. The phenomenon of \textit{chapaevization} helped to separate the October Revolution and the Civil War from the Great War and presented the Civil War as the foundation for building “socialism in one state” rather then a means of enflaming the World Revolution.

Along with the reconstruction early Soviet memory of the Great War, \textit{chapaevization} introduced new frames of recollecting the Civil War. Frederick Corney demonstrates that it took ten years for the Bolsheviks to establish the proper framework for the official remembrance of the October Revolution. This period included the creation of academic knowledge, visual representation in popular culture, and a state-led unification of commemorations in order to settle on the dramatic story of the storming of the Winter Palace.\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Chapaevizaion} went through a similar process of gradual construction of one unified memory of the war.

As some historians argue, the Soviets started to commemorate the Civil War in 1922, right after the Bolshevik victory. In one of his articles, Igor Narskii suggests that this year was marked by not only the Bolshevik victory, but also by a good harvest, which allowed the Soviets to switch from the martial rule to a more “normal” political life.\textsuperscript{139} In a short period people delved into peaceful living, thus turning the Civil War into “the past.” Along with these developments, the Soviet state began to inculcate the myth of the Civil War by making memorial evenings, festivals, and other celebrations of the glorious, recent past. The war memory in the late 1920s, however, was decentralized and dispersed. After the end of the war the Reds, the rest of the Whites, peasants, and declassified elements became the one Soviet nation, but all these social entities had different recollections of recent history. For instance, people in different regions perceived new Civil War heroes in opposite ways. One such hero was Musa Murtazin, who became well-known for the inconstancy of his political views. In February of 1919 Murtazin and his cavalry regiment went over to the Whites. In April of the same year he changed the side one more time and conducted several victorious battles against


the Reds. In August of 1919 Murtazin and his cavalry came over to the Reds again. It was his last flip-flop, after which Murtazin made a career of a Soviet commander. However, people remembered him as a traitor and used his figure for critiquing the Soviets. The name of the commander became a curse word and was used to brand traitors and cowards. Being implemented in the state where excited hundreds of accounts such as the one described, *chapaevization* was one of the policy that aimed at bringing an end to the diversity of recollections about the Civil War, leaving only one proper perception of this historical event.

The perspective of this memory project was narrow and individually oriented. As it was mentioned previously, Furmanov’s novel *Chapaev* was ignored by screenplay writers for nearly ten years after it was first published because it was too individualistic in focus and did not discuss the history of the proletariat. However, this frame of thinking about the past was adopted by socialist realism. It is worth mentioning that the personification of Civil War narratives also brought Stalin to the pantheon of Civil War heroes. As it was demonstrated with the example of Parkomenko, Stalin replaced Lenin in the narration of the Civil War, presenting the chief of the October Revolution more as an invisible edifier, who stands in one line with Marx and Engels, rather then an actual participant of the war events.

The process of *chapaevization* of Civil War memory also produced a Soviet version of what George Mosse has called the “nationalization of death.” Discussing the process of nation building in the post-World War One Europe, Mosse emphasizes the widespread use of images of fallen soldiers, who sacrificed their lives in the name of nation. Their deaths constituted a significant part of post-war nationalisms. However, this process did not initially occur in the USSR. The 1929 film *Merchants of Glory* (also known as *The Fallen Never Come Back*) by Dmitrii Obolenskii, helps to illustrate why the process took longer to develop in the USSR. The movie narrates the story of a French soldier, who was considered dead after an injury until he returned back home. Politicians had already glorified his sacrificial bravery, but their plans to use his image as a hero failed because the soldier was alive. He publicly demanded the government to stop using his image for the justification of their actions on the fronts of an unjust, imperialist war. For this activity the authorities put him in a prison, where he gained proletariat consciousness and started to fight for the world

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revolution. This film vividly demonstrates that the Soviet state deliberately denied nationalization of death, which was going on in Europe.

The emergence of “National Bolshevism,” as discussed by David Brandenberger, made it possible to “nationalize” death in the USSR. Substituting the notion of “nation” with “class,” Stalin’s ideological concept employed some elements of nationalism, including the process of “nationalization of death.” In the 1930s, Soviet propaganda picked up several names of fallen Red Commanders, some of whom were entirely forgotten, and employed them in the way that Europeans did twenty years before: converted them into national myths, which represented the sacrifices in the name of the nation/class. This process started with the sky-rocketing success of Chapaev, a mnemonic project that cemented a blueprint for the creation of Civil War heroes. From 1934 to the late 1930s, writers, artists, historians, and filmmakers created a pantheon of Civil War heroes modeled on Chapaev that turned dead soldiers of Russia’s wars into Soviet archetypes who helped to found the new system. The vigor for the creation of new Chapaevs, however, diminished in the late 1930s. The purges first forced film directors to revise their scripts dozens of times in order to make them politically acceptable. However, there is one more factor that could possibly decelerate chapaevization, which is Brandenberger’s concept of Russocentric etatism. According to the author, this phenomenon is characterized by reintroducing ancien regime heroes, such as the 18th Century general Aleksandr Suvorov, in terms of new nationalism and reestablishing Russianness as a core concept for the Soviet nation. This process complemented chapaevization because its acme matched the temporary decline of the new Chapaevs’ creation. In the late 1930s, Soviet cinema produced the key films of Russocentric etatism such as Aleksandr Nevskii by Sergei Eisenstein (1938) and Aleksandr Suvorov by Vsevolod Pudovkin (1940). It is worth mentioning that emergence of Russocentric etatism affected chapaevization, what is evident from the 1942 films Parkhomenko and Kotovskii. In one of the scenes of the former film, a Red soldier who is staying on the frontline defense shouts: “Brothers! We are Russians, aren’t we?!” [a, nu bratsy! Russkie my ili ne Russkie?!!]. In the later film, the director often addressed Suvorov as an exemplary hero. The commissar, Kharitonov, praises Kotovskii as strategy genius comparing him with Suvorov, while the Red Commander uses a book about Suvorov to teach his subordinates. Analyzing some pieces of

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143 “Russkie” – signifies ethnic Russians
Soviet propaganda, one can mention that sometimes Russocentric etatism and *chapaevization* coalesced.

**Figure 8: 1941 Poster by Kukryniksy. (Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, 2011)**

The famous 1941 poster by a cartoonist group Kukryniksy depicts the coalescing of the two discussed phenomena into one propaganda image. In the picture one can see a line of prominent heroes, Aleksandr Nevskii, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Vasilii Chapaev, leading Soviet soldiers forward. Chapaev is depicted exactly as he appeared on the movie posters. The relationship between the commanders and soldiers is strengthened by the slogan “As grandchildren of Suvorov and children of Chapaev, we put up a great fight!”

This section demonstrates that *chapaevization* went hand-in-hand with other processes for understanding Stalinism such as National Bolshevism. Being developed in terms of constructing proper memory for Stalin’s USSR, *chapaevization* evolved into a phenomenon, which elaborated complicated system of Stalinist myth creation. In order to develop this argument further, I would like address the longevity of this phenomenon. Research on Stalinist ideological and cultural projects illustrates that legacies of significant ones lasted longer than Stalinism itself. The next section briefly examines the development of *chapaevization* after Stalin, demonstrating the evolution of this phenomenon over time.

*Chapaevization in the post-Stalin USSR*

The script of *chapaevization* was preserved in the Soviet historical literature for many years after the epoch of high Stalinism. This succession is represented in the five-volume
edition *The History of the Civil War in the USSR*, published from 1935 to 1960. The first volume discussed the pre-revolutionary history of the Bolshevik Party, therefore it was focused on the “founding fathers” of the October Revolution. The second volume (1943) described the October Revolution and the first steps of the Red Army formation, paying special attention to the second rank revolutionaries such as Kliment Voroshilov, Semen Budennyi, and Mikhail Frunze. However, the third (1958), fourth (1959), and fifth (1960) volumes concentrated on the people’s heroes, including Chapaev, Shchors, Kotovskii, and Parkhomenko. These three volumes present the de-Stalinization of the existing narratives and simultaneous preservation of *chapaevization*’s core-script. This process could be illustrated by a quotation from the fifth volume: “The Red Army had a lot of talented military leaders. During the Civil War self-made commanders, people’s heroes such as V.N Bozhenko, O.I. Gorodovikov, G.P. Kotovskii, S.G. Lazo, A.Ia. Parkhomenko, V.P. Chapaev, N.A. Shehors and many others glorified their names. The battles with the interventionists and the Whites forged cadres of prominent military leaders such as V.K. Bliukher, S.M. Budennyi, K.E. Voroshilov, I.V. Stalin, C.K. Timoshenko, M.N. Tukhachevskii, Ia. F. Fabrikins, I.F. Fed’ko, M.V. Fruenze, I.E. Iakir. Many prominent military specialists of the old Russian [russkoi] army- V.M. Gittis, A.I. Egorov, S.S. Kamenev, A.I. Kork, F.F. Novitskii, B.M. Shaposhnikov and others fought shoulder to shoulder with them [previously mentioned revolutionaries], they fought together for the Soviet power, for honor, and for the independence of the Motherland.”

The Thaw and emergence of Post-Stalin Soviet language changed the phrasing of the script, what is well seen from using the word “commanders” instead of “heroes” in the “self-made heroes” mantra. Additionally, one could mention two new last names – Bozhenko and Gorodovikov. The former was the adjutant of Shchors, and the latter glorified his name during the Great Patriotic War, and was added to the pantheon of Civil War heroes post factum. Gorodovikov fought in the first Budennyi Cavalry Army, which served as a production line for the Civil War heroes during the epoch of socialist realism. The second significant change in the script is de-Stalinization, which made it possible to mention purged Iakir, Bliukher, Tukhachevskii, Gittis, Egorov, Kork, and Sergei Kamenev together with Stalin amongst Civil War heroes. Another important feature of the text is emphasizing that a number of these heroes came from “the old Russian army.” The script became

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inclusive to the First Imperialist War history, implementing it into the narration about the Civil War heroes such as Chapaev.

Differing slightly from the master script, the narration of *The History of the Civil War in the USSR* says that the “people’s hero, talented self-made commander Vasilii Ivanovich Chapaev” during “the first world war service was decorated with [St.] George’s crosses and was made in podpraporschik [Sergeant Major].”145 Passing the introduction, the reader encounters the very same narrative of Chapaev’s life offered in Stalinist-era biographies: he joined the Party in 1917, was a commander of a new type with a revolutionary, burning soul, won everyone and everywhere, and etc. Besides these broad commonalities between Chapaev’s popular image and official history, the text discusses details that were represented only in the Vasil’ev Brothers film. For example, the authors repeat the screenplay of *Chapaev*, arguing that the Red Commander learned about a forthcoming White counterattack from a deserter-worker who came to Chapaev asking to join the Red Army.146 Another significant resemblance with the film is the description of Kappel’s “psychological attack,” which entirely recalls the screenplay.147 The narration employs Furmanov’s novel as a primary source, heavily citing some excerpts.148 However, the text does not follow the script for Chapaev’s death. There is no cursing towards the Whites or any details of his death, but a cliché, emerged during the Great Patriotic War, which says “Chapaev died gamely” [pal smert’iu khrabrykh].149

In the third volume of *History of the Civil War in the USSR*, the narration about Shchors also starts with a Great Patriotic War cliché. The narration starts with Shchors’s fight against German occupants and his protection of “every square of Soviet land” [piad’ zemli], even though the Ukrainian land in that period did not belong to the Soviet Union.150 Pointing out the significance of Shchors, the authors goes to his brief biography, which contains information about his World War One service: “During the imperialist war he [Shchors] was conscripted to the army, in 1915 graduated from praporschchik school and was sent to the

145 *Institut Marksizma-Leninizma. Istoriiia Grazhdanskoj Voiny v SSSR*. Vol. 3. Moscow: Politicheskaia Literatura, 1960. p. 396. ; The authors did not use Prussian or old Russian name for his rank, but named it in the contemporary manner.
147 Ibid., p. 116.
148 The narration heavily cites Furmanov personal accounts, such as crowds of people were crying because of being liberated by Chapaev. p. 129.
The description of his officer’s past does not go further, being the only significant deviation from the core script established earlier, which became possible in the light of deliberate acknowledgement of the Great War and its relation to the Civil War. The following narration is similar to the frequently repeated story of Shchors, but sometimes even more explicitly refers to his image in popular culture then its actual socialist realist blueprint. The narration argues that from the very first battles Shchors was acting under the command of the Bolshevik Party. It is interesting to mention that the text emphasizes that: “the Ukrainian people were able to obtain freedom only with help Russian people [russkogo naroda]. For many years Russian people were courageous and altruistic defenders of the Ukrainian people.”

This sentence points at the ongoing influence of National Bolshevism and Russocentric etatism, which were developed in the 1930s and employed in construction of the Second World War myth. Following that, the authors describe the urgency of delivering Russian help to Ukrainians in the light of German and bourgeois atrocities in the region. The solution for this problem was the formation of the Bogun regiment, commanded by Shchors. The regiment is described as an exemplary army, presented in the last scene of Dovzhenko’s film. The authors of the third volume wrote: “the Bogun regiment was known for iron military discipline and organization. It was exemplary for other regiments.”

According to the narration, the exemplarity was achieved due to Shchors’s personal prominence and intelligence. Another resemblance with the popular image of Shchors is the narration of fraternization with Germans in Ukraine. As well as the fictional Red Commander, the Shchors from *History of the Civil War in the USSR* walked in the head of the column of disarmed Red troops towards armed Germans, stationed in fortifications, and together with his soldiers sang songs under accordion accompaniment. The text also repeats minor points of the fictional narration such as the statement that Shchors’s regiment entered the battle of Bordianka right from the wagons on which they arrived, which clearly resembles the movie scene in which the Red Commander with Lewis machinegun and his comrades jump into the fight right from the wagons. The fourth volume of *History of the Civil War* also discusses Shchors’s death. Using a previously discussed cliché the text states: “On August 30, nearby the village of Beloschitsy, in fights, a people’s hero of Ukraine, Nikolai Shchors, died.

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151 Ibid., p. 455.
153 Ibid., p. 460.
As well as in the Shchors’ popular culture representation, the authors do not mention any circumstances of his death, leaving the details beyond the phrase “fell with the death of brave.” However, the following sentence adds “after N.A. Shchors’s death, I.A. Dubovoi was appointed the commander of the division.” The Thaw and destalinization brought Dubovoi, who was arrested and shot during the purges, back to the narrative about Shchors. But his reappearance is not accompanied by any information about him or his possible involvement in killing Shchors, therefore the mentioning of him is perfunctory. *History of the Civil War in the USSR* demonstrates that in 1958 Soviet historians were still stick to *chapaevization*, which was slightly adopted to the contemporary ideological needs.

The same general pattern can be seen in how *History of the Civil War in the USSR* starts the narration about Kotovskii with the discussion of his activity in Odessa during the Austro-German occupation of 1919. The narration repeats axioms of Kotovskii’s popular image, glorifying him for conduction of the most dangerous operations assigned by the Bolshevik Party in Odessa. He worked there as a Bolshevik spy, fighting against Germans and other counterrevolutionary elements. In 1919 the interventionists offered a great reward for Kotovskii’s head, but enemy spies could not find him because the Red Commander was protected by “the love of Odessa workers.” The text does not specify any of the operations in which Kotovskii participated, thus clearly repeating the script produced by the 1939 novel and 1941 film. Following Shmerling’s way of substituting Kotovskii’s criminal past with underground activity, the authors of *History of the Civil War in the USSR* interpret his being in Odessa as part of a secret spy operation. However, the fourth volume of *History of the Civil War in the USSR* brings new details to the narration about Kotovskii such as the name of his comrade, purged in 1937, Iona Iakir. Much like the rehabilitation of other comrades in the scripts associated with others, the text argues that the “talented commander” Iakir “fought shoulder to shoulder” with the legendary Kotovskii. Despite the fact that the volume brought up the name of Kotovskii, it focuses on the actions of his division, paying less attention to the figure of the commander. The fact that the authors put the Red Commander out of focus demonstrates a significant difference compared to the histories of Chapaev, Shchors and

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Kotovskii. The latter Red Commander was much more popular than the former two while was alive, but lost popularity because was not promoted as heavily as Chapaev and Shchors.

The fifth volume continues a de-personified discussion of Kotovskii’s biography, emphasizing the significance of the battles in which his regiments participated, while only occasionally praising the military genius of the Red Commander. The mild, tactics-oriented narration leads the reader to the Short Course mantra, which is used as a conclusion for the history of the Civil War: “The Red Army had a lot of talented military leaders. During the Civil War self-made commanders, people’s heroes such as V.N Bozhenko, O.I. Gorodovikov, G.P. Kotovskii, S.G. Lazo, A.Ia. Parkhomenko, V.P. Chapaev, N.A. Shchors and many others glorified their names.”

The post-Stalinist narration of the “chapaevized” Civil War hero Kotovskii demonstrates the same trends as the two previously discussed cases: the core script was preserved while current ideological changes were applied. History of the Civil War in the USSR presents a limited narration about Kotovskii as a Civil War hero, instead focusing attention to the broader events and phenomena that happened in the Southern fronts of the Civil War. Arguably, this de-personification of the narration was the result of the failure to promote Kotovskii’s popular image as heavily as Soviet propagandists did with Chapaev and Shchors. As it was previously discussed, the significance of Faintsimmer’s Kotovskii was reduced to the ongoing war, which swept the film out of the newspapers, leaving it without reviews. According to the more nostalgic reviews of Iskusstvo Kino authors, the film affected the audience, but became no more than a part of “complex childhood recollections.” A similar trend of forgetting due to constrained promotion affected the narration about another revolutionary, Aleksandr Parkhomenko, narrative of whom also became de-personified.

Parkhomenko, who twice received the Red Order, was almost abandoned in History of the Civil War in the USSR. His name was only nominally mentioned in the narration about the fights in the Southern fronts of the Civil War. The second volume mentions Parkhomenko’s name only in one sentence, saying that Voroshilov appointed an authoritative revolutionary (Parkhomenko) as his deputy. The third volume of History of the Civil War in the USSR mentions his name amongst a list of other “talented commanders,” which

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includes purged Red Commanders such as Timoshenko.\footnote{Institut Marksizma-Leninizma. *Istoriia Grazhdanskoi Voiny v SSSR.* Vol. 3. Moscow: Politicheskaia Literatura, 1958. p. 424.} The third volume does not mention any specific information about Parkhomenko’s biography or any details about the battles that he fought. It is worth mentioning that the volume focuses on Budennyi’s army, in which Parkhomenko fought, emphasizing the significance of the former commander, who was once again glorified during the Great Patriotic War. The fourth volume mentions the revolutionary only once, naming him a talented deputy of Voroshilov.\footnote{Institut Marksizma-Leninizma. *Istoriia Grazhdanskoi Voiny v SSSR.* Vol. 4. Moscow: Politicheskaia Literatura, 1939. p.177.} Parkhomenko only appears once more, in the list of self-made heroes, which concludes the narration of about the Civil War.\footnote{Institut Marksizma-Leninizma. *Istoriia Grazhdanskoi Voiny v SSSR.* Vol. 5. Moscow: Politicheskaia Literatura, 1960.}

Despite the fact that during his life Parkhomenko was the most respectful revolutionary, decorated with the highest Civil War orders, he was abandoned by *History of the Civil War in the USSR*. The text does not employ any elements of his biography. This feature of the texts once again points at correlation between the representation of revolutionaries in the popular culture and discussion of them in official history. Distinctly to Shchors, who was revived from obliviousness and got good coverage in the media and popular culture, Parkhomenko was dropped off the information realm during the Second World War.

As the analysis of the *History if the Civil War in the USSR* shows, the script of *chapaevization* was absorbed within post-Stalinist Soviet historiography. The post-Stalinist script contains several significant ideological changes, which however did not change its core elements. *Chapaevization* in the Khrushchev era absorbed major features of de-Stalinization period, such as introducing the names of purged commanders in historical narratives and the usage of the Second World War patriotism. Moreover, it mentions the Great War, which was abandoned by historians under Stalin. Even though post-Stalinist *chapaevization* did not provide significant accounts on the Great War, it stopped abandoning it. Using Karen Petrone’s metaphor that in the 1930s “the memory of the Great War was arrested,” one can say that in the 1950s it was rehabilitated. Thus, *chapaevization* after 1953 has lost one its initial aim, abandoning imperialist war, the memory of which negatively affected on people’s mobilization. Since the role of the Great War memory during and after the Thaw is understudied, explanations of why it has actualized within *chapaevization* will not expand the
scope of speculations, therefore this issue will remain open. However, the significant changes in the process of chapaevization neither eliminated the fictional biographies of Civil War heroes created in the epoch of socialist realism nor prevented development of this phenomenon in the USSR.

Soviet historiography did not stop at reproducing preexisting narratives about the revolutionaries, but employed the chapaevization blueprint in the construction of new personalities for the pantheon of Civil War heroes. From the late 1950s to the early 1970s, the Soviet state resumed financing films and artistic depictions of Civil War heroes. In 1958, Leonid Lukov released Oleko Dundich, a film which Iskusstvo Kino called a repetition of Aleksandr Parhomenko. Lukov based his film on the script by Aleksandr Rzheshchevskii and Mikhail Kats. These authors started to work on the image of Dundich, who was a commander in The First Cavalry Army of Budennyi, under Stalin, but finished the play about the Civil War hero only in 1942. The socialist realist play was revived by Lukov and shaped the popular image of Oleko Dundich, which has already been discussed as a artistic copy of Parhomenko. In 1958, Mikhail Tsekhnovskii released Skaz o Chapaevе, a film that suggests what would have happened if Chapaev never died. In 1959 and 1968, Soviet architects depicted another previously mentioned revolutionary, Nikolai Rudnev, in two monuments, the first of which was established in Stalingrad and the second one in Kharkov. In 1968, Aleksandr Gordin shot Sergei Lazo, a film about the revolutionary who fought in the Far East and whose name was first mentioned in the Short Course alongside Chapaev.

The process of the chapaevization of Civil War memory inevitably affected Soviet culture, even becoming the source of humor (Brezhnev-era anekdoty) and parody. Besides postmodernist interpretations of great revolutionaries’ biographies, such as Viktor Pelevein’s 1996 novel-bestseller Chapaev i Pustota (Chapaev and Void), there are many examples of the persistent employment of this Soviet mnemonic template within contemporary popular culture. One example is a football chant of St. Petersburg soccer ultras, dedicated to their confrontation with soccer fans of Moscow team “Spartak,” which is usually treated as a civil war. Using motive of Song about Shchors, St. Petersburg fans describe their war against Moscow opponents in the following way:

“The squad was marching along the bank,

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Was marching from far away,
Under the Red flag, (color of Spartak)
Were marching fans of Spartak.
Their heads are bounded,
Blood on their sleeves,
There were too few of them,
Who came to the city on Neva River.”

However, no revolutionary can match Chapaev in popularity. As Seth Graham argues, Chapaev infiltrated every sphere of contemporary Russian folklore, especially affecting the culture of anecdotes. Graham suggests that Chapaev jokes embody illiteracy, alcoholism, and presents an image of a bumpkin with sordid desires. Since the majority of anecdotes contain unprintable words, I will use the one that does not entirely represents the usage of Chapaev’s image, but generally demonstrates how is it used nowadays:

“Pet'ka sees Vasilii Ivanovich sitting by the campfire, chewing, and asks him
‘Where’d you get the American chewing gum?’,
and Chapaev replies,
‘It’s not gum, Pet'ka; I’m washing my socks.’”

This anecdote of the period of the USSR collapse presents Chapaev as an exemplary idiot. This image was part of the original socialist realist plot, overshadowed by the feats of Chapaev. However, at some point the great revolutionary lost the glorious part of narration about him, preserving only his “bumpkinness.” It is worth noting that another significant feature of socialist realist Chapaev was his sagacity, which, as it is evident from the anecdote, has preserved as a part the Red Commander’s image.

This section demonstrates that chapaevization survived Stalinism and affected the structure of the Soviet memory of the Civil War for at least a decade after Stalin’s death. During Brezhnev’s period chapaevization not just repeated already exciting myths, but started to produce new Civil War heroes such as Oleko Dundich and Sergei Lazo. However, closer to the period of the USSR collapse, chapaevization started to decline, leaving a great scent in popular culture.

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Conclusion

The development of Chapaev’s image in Soviet culture went beyond the narrow framework of propaganda and evolved into a mnemonic project, which aimed at retrofitting the Civil War to the demands of Stalinism. After the stunning success of the film *Chapaev*, the Soviet state designed a blueprint for the promotion of forgotten Civil War heroes, later putting them into the center of historical narration about the Civil War. First mentioned in *the Short Course*, Chapaev, Shchors, Kotovskii, and Parkhomenko composed the pantheon of Civil
War heroes, which became a way for commemorating the war. Since all of the newly-promoted heroes had already been dead long before the Soviets launched the process of \textit{chapaevization}, the use of their images was convenient for Stalinism because fallen heroes were not a subject of purges and did not threaten Stalin’s power. At the first stage of \textit{chapaevization}, Soviet artists forged narratives and images of the selected Red Commanders within the frame of socialist realism. At the second stage, Soviet history absorbed scripts about the Red Commanders that had been created by artists, making them an essential part of the historical narrative about the Civil War. Using popular images of Chapaev, Shchors, Kotovskii, and Parkhomenko, Soviet historians created a significant layer of knowledge about the Red Commanders, which was reflected in the major intellectual sources such as the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.

Being the major way of commemorating the Civil War, “chapaevized” heroes reshaped early Soviet interpretation of the war’s history, based on dialectic materialism, and introduced the type of narrative, which suited the demands of Stalinism. One of the most significant elements of this narrative was the elimination of any relationship between the Great War and Civil War, followed by the utter vanishing of the Great War memory. Distinct to the early Soviet ideology, Stalinism could not accept the maintenance of inconvenient memory of the Great War, substituting it with heroic narratives of the Civil War, simultaneously removing any mentioning of the imperialist war from history. This trend is well seen from the biographies of the discussed Civil War heroes, almost all of whom were in the Great War service. If pre-Stalinist and post-Stalinist ideologies allowed space for their Great War past in official history, then Stalinism eliminated any notion of the imperialist war service from popular and official narratives. Conduction of this mnemonic policy by the means of \textit{chapaevization}, enabled Soviet state to create a “usable past,” which constituted a significant part of Stalinism’s legitimacy.

\textit{Chapaevization} also served to support the contemporary ideological and political needs of the regime, justifying different agendas with historical premises. For instance, in 1939, at the height of Stalinism, \textit{chapaevization} vividly started to promote Stalin along with other Civil War heroes, presenting him as a messiah who won the war against counter-revolution. Soviet propaganda also used \textit{chapaevization} to reveal the crimes of the enemies of the regime such as Trotsky. \textit{Chapaevization} heavily employed a negative image of Trotsky and transmitted it to official historical narration, thus eternalizing this disgraced politician as a “people’s enemy.”
The phenomenon of *chapaevization* was developed in a tight relationship with other significant Soviet projects such as Russocentric etatism. The flexible structure of the former phenomenon made it possible to bridge it with other ideological frameworks, enabling an exchange of images and ideas between different projects. Therefore, *chapaevization* was deeply incorporated into the Soviet ideological machine and accompanied other significant phenomena. The feature of flexibility also guaranteed the longevity of *chapaevization*. Being adjustable to changes of ideology, it survived Stalinism and continued to shape the “usable” history of the Civil War under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Due to its long life under the Soviet regime, *chapaevization* left an indelible trace in post-Soviet culture. Despite the fact that almost a century has passed since *Chapaev* appeared on the screens, the majority of former Soviet citizens still remember that the “Red Commander should be in the front, on his dashing steed!”
Bibliography


