Yuri Trautman – Coastal Cities Head Architect and Urban Planner. The Beginning

N Vassiliev¹, E Ovsyannikova²

¹Moscow National Research University of Civil Engineering, 129337, Russia, Moscow, Yaroslavskoe highway, 26
²Soviet and Modern Foreign Architecture Chair, Moscow Architecture Institute (State Academy), 107031, Russia, Moscow, Rozhdestvenka, 11, Postcode,

E-mail: n.vassiliev@docomomo.ru

Abstract. A paper is focused on relatively unknown professional biography of architect and Urban Planner Yuri Trautman. Trautman is known mostly for his later career when he was a Vladivostok city Head Architect. Authors recent findings in the Sevastopol City Archive reveals a new facts of his earlier work on post-war city restoration where he have received a first chance to work as a urban planner as well as an architect. Together with his friend and also Leningrad Engineering and Construction Institute alumni Valentin Artyukhov he leads a Sevastopol General Plan development and participated in public buildings project design process, one of it, Hotel Sevastopol usually mentioned as his solo work. Despite it, new facts shows much more complicated and interesting picture.

1. Introduction
A prominent Soviet architect Juri Andrejevitch Trautman (1909-1986), well-known in Vladivostok as its chief architect (1961-1971), started his professional activities as the principal architect of Sevastopol in the period of 1945-1948. He graduated from Leningrad Institute of Civil Engineering, was a postgraduate and taught at the same Institute before the World War II; later he served in the army, and in 1945 was assigned the leading city architect of Sevastopol together with his fellow-student V. M. Artyuhov, who later became his deputy.

Figure 1. Sevastopol General Plan, 1949.
“From 1948 the restoration of Sevastopol has been speeding up, – Artyuhov wrote. – Thousands of new builders have arrived; a lot of professionals – architects, engineers and technicians – among them. The state-of-the-art equipment has been received. Large design contractors were created on the basis of small local design bureaus. It was planned to carry out adjustment of a general layout developed by a creative group of G. B. Barkhin. The Committee for Architecture under the Council of Ministers of the USSR has put in charge the labor collective of Sevastopol Gorproject (City project) of this large and important work”[1]. This organization was headed by Trautman.

Figure 2. Yu. A. Trautman.

“The windows of the club where Gorproject (City project) was temporarily located were lit long after midnight. Every minute counted, and there were dozens of complicated problems constantly arising. One of those was complete absence of any topo geodesic survey of the city as well as reference data as to housing development of the municipal infrastructure. All the information was lost during the Great Patriotic War. All the employees of Gorplan (City planning committee) and Gorispolkom (Executive Committee of the City Soviet of People’s Deputies) were involved in collecting the necessary data. Great help and support to design engineers came from Gorispolkom employees – Sevastopol residents: the chairlady of the city planning committee T. A. Aleshina, an engineer-economist A. M. Zaichenko, the principal engineer of the public works department A. G. Soshnikov, a planner engineer of aboveground pipelines and underground utility system I. D. Uspenskaya”[1].

2. **Trautman’s Role as known nowadays**

As the head of the architect’s office under the Office of the Chief Architect of Sevastopol according to his position (during that period headed by the architect B.Ya. Mitnik) Trautman was responsible for the survey of the city to determine the possibility of its reconstruction. The basic workload was carried out by V.M. Artyukhov, who had been a head of the Separate sapper battalion in 1942-1945, which
had been preparing the offensive of the Soviet troops for a breach of a blockade of Leningrad, and then had got through almost the whole of Europe. The principal architect is a position requiring a continuous presence in the office and at the formal events of municipal administration. Therefore, as can be assumed from the memoirs of his contemporaries, the main aim of Trautman was the argumentation of a detailed engineering examination and topographic survey of the city for the approval of a key urban decision – to bring to reality the Sevastopol city master plan, developed by the metropolitan academician of architecture G. B. Barkhin and approved in 1945. It concerned the ability proved by Trautman and Artyukhov to use pre-war engineering communications, preserved during deep laying, as well as basements and semi-basement floors of many buildings in the city center. All this huge work was to be finished until January, 15, 1949. “Experienced professionals from Moscow and Leningrad were called for help to assist Sevastopol design engineers: among them the architects Salishchev and Chernokozov, an economist Professor Hoffman, transport workers and plumbers, –so it was described by the chief construction site supervisor of the most important construction objects S. D. Almazova. They were headed by I. K. Zhilko: the chief engineer of General Directorate of Urban Planning and Development of the Committee for Architecture under the Council of Ministers of the USSR. Along with adjustment of the master plan it was necessary to develop a draft of the first phase of construction arrangement for the period until 1955 and the site planning of the city center”[2]. It was actually that official documentation approved at the government level that Trautman was dealing with.

![Figure 3. Hotel "Sevastopol" at present times (Photo by N. Vassiliev).](image)

The main city hotel, always referred to as Trautman's work and called “Sevastopol”, is located in the most prestigious place, in Nakhimov Avenue. It is also facing the Kornilov Embankment, that is, has a waterfront; formerly an open gallery was facing it. The gallery was overlooking the sea. Later it was glazed as a part of the restaurant.
Figure 4. Sevastopol detailed plan fragment showing both Hotel and Theatre (Sevastopol City Archive).

It is one of the most richly finished buildings in the city, three-storeyed, with a semi-basement floor and a large basement courtyard. The façade from the side of the Nakhimov Avenue is decorated with three porticoes with elegant Corinthian columns. Their capitals have five-point stars instead of rosaces. The central portico is arranged in front of the main entrance. Two side porticos situated in the corners emphasize entrances into public spaces from the side elevations. North-eastern corner of the building which faces the sea and the Drama Theatre named after A. V. Lunacharsky is rounded. On this side, according to the unrealized part of the same project, it was planned to attach a round rotunda with a diameter of more than 10 meters with six columns.

Figure 5. Hotel central part plan (1949) with Trautman and other architect’s signatures (Sevastopol City Archive).
3. New discoveries

According to archival records which were never published before, it is clear that in 1946 it was Trautman who originally worked on that hotel both as the author of its design and the head of the architectural workshop under the city government. This hotel was planned for 150 persons. It was supposed to be much more modest as compared to the actual building finished in the early 1950s. Almost all the rooms in the hotel were shown without toilet facilities, with men’s and women's shower rooms, ladies’ and gents lavatories situated in opposite ends of the corridor near side staircases. And only two rooms (‘de luxe’ suites) situated near the central staircase would have bathrooms. This can be accounted for desperate housing conditions and extreme overcrowding of a post-war city which was well described in the letters of V. P. Melik-Parsadanov[3]. Trautman’s suggestion to cut the building height was taken into consideration. Thus, Melik-Parsadanov wrote on December 9, 1949: “There was a very long meeting till 2 a.m. yesterday. Among other things I was reporting my sections for the South (…). Today Morskaya will also be discussed. They (Trautman, to be exact) want to cut the building height down to three floors, which again means the alteration of the project, we are going to fiercely defend our project, we’ll see what happens”[4].

And furthermore, on February, 2, 1949: “The Stalin Prize winner Lichtenberg has come here; today he has met Trautman. I have been fiercely defending my drafts”. And on February, 12, 1949, after the meeting concerning the development project in city district №26 in Bolshaya Morskaya street he wrote: “For the central part I had the decision with a frame of pompous porticos, it was decided to remove them. I have offered the option emphasizing the center with three enclosed balconies in a good tempo, and I was insisting. Trautman did not agree with me and imposed an option with dressing the center with light décor which absolutely fails to match the perception from a 20-25 distance. I was arguing heavily…”[5].

In the completed project of the hotel from 1951 which was also never published, there were more accommodations with bathrooms though a number of them, mostly the ones facing the inner yard, had only sinks and toilet facilities in the corridor. The hotel got to be more comfortable and exteriorly much more impressive.

Figure 6. Unrealized corner rotunda part of the hotel (Sevastopol City Archive).
Among the authors of the hotel project of 1951 the architect E. G. Stavinsky is listed together with Trautman in the column “authors of the project”; his name was not mentioned in the first version of the project and his creative activity is unknown. None of the local history experts mentioned any other Trautman’s co-authors. However, in all the drawings of 1951, the name of L. A. Stukachev – one more architect – is listed. From the recently published materials one can learn about this architect and hereinafter we give information about him [6].

The conclusion suggests itself that the hotel’s completed project was carried out with the active participation of Stukachev as an advanced practitioner. By that time, he had already been the author of a number of buildings, mainly the buildings intended for public use. Most likely, the name of this architect, who completed the 1951 hotel project, ceased to be mentioned. The reason for this was his difficult biography. Stukachev, a student of the Moscow Architectural Institute, was arrested in 1935. Therefore, even after he had returned from the labor camps on the Amur, his name could not “adorn” publications in the eyes of journalists and their censors.

Figure 7. Hotel drawings fragment showing Trautman’ name and position but no signature (Sevastopol City Archive).

It is also interesting to note that the main architect of Gosinzhgorproekt (State Engineering City Project) was Y. V. Zimarev who created several planning designs of Sevastopol residential districts during the 1940-1950ss. And it was not without reason that the oldest living architect of the city A.L. Schaeffer who saw this architect in the city, mentioned him in his memoirs as the architect of this hotel [7].

The story of the change in the team of authors who were working on this project is apprehensible from the biography of Trautman who as far as is known, was transferred to Ashkhabad which was in
ruins after the earthquake of 1948. But the architect was in town till at least the middle of February 1949 as is clearly seen from the correspondence of the Melik-Parsadanovs.

And that is why Trautman had never signed the drawings of the hotel of 1951, neither did his wife, the architect M.K. Ushakova (she checked and signed the drawings of the first version of the 1946 project). However, Trautman is among the authors of the project because it was most probably him who did the initial architectural design of the hotel.

“The hotel «Sevastopol», – the chief construction site supervisor S. D. Almazova wrote. We started laying its foundation in 1950. The authors of the hotel architectural design were the first postwar city principal architect, the talented Juri Andrejevitch Trautman and E. G. Stavinsky.

This object was a priority that is why construction activities went on at an accelerating pace, on all fronts simultaneously. It was planned to decorate the building façades with more than a hundred columns and composite entablements, with cornices with big overhang and a complex profile. And besides, the columns of the main portico were aligned: the slightest deviation from the drawing would lead to a collapse of the whole ensemble (That means, the possibility to see the whole line of columns as a single outline profile, then it is possible to notice any deviation from the required standard.).

To avoid it we have applied the most elementary method: we have erected full-height column plaster templates. To cut a round column by a template is, of course, not easy, it is a very meticulous work. Therefore, when we took scaffolding down from the main building, I had a feeling of deep satisfaction. Each column, aligned, accurately repeated the profile of the others. No less satisfied were the facing workers from the working teams of Smagin and Nazarov. After all, it was a creation of their own.

The commission of the first stage of the hotel was scheduled for 1952, for the USSR Navy Day – Sevastopol was expecting numerous guests; they needed to be received and accommodated. /…/ Also there was one more serious problem. Due to inconsistency in the project documents the road workers laid asphalt to the hotel considering the level marks which were half meter higher than the data in our project. Out of seven steps of the hotel entrance staircase there were only three incomplete steps left. The building did not look the way it had been planned. For several days I was racking my brains trying to find the way out of this problem. Finally I got the idea to make a broad porch with a kerbline rounded on either side in front of the entrance staircase not at the sidewalk level but from the streetway side. That conferred the possibility to gain 25 – 30 cm of height. I went with this suggestion to the main city architect Valentin Mikhaylovich Artyukhov (The fact that at that moment Artyukhov was acting on behalf of Trautman is indicative of the departure of the latter). He endorsed my idea. We started both advocating this option. And we received authorization but there was only one day left before the holiday”[2].

4. Conclusion
The above given information does not reduce the significance of Trautman’s activities who has made an invaluable contribution into rebirth of Sevastopol. These were not some particular architectural decisions but development of a general planning concept of the city master plan and a detailed planning of the most important parts of the city together with V. M. Artyukhov. “In October 1947 the All-Russian Conference on Housing Construction and Urban Redevelopment of RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic) took place in Stalingrad. The representatives from Leningrad, Voronezh, Kursk, Novorossiysk, Orel, Sevastopol, Smolensk, Novgorod and other cities gathered to share their experience of restoration works”. The chief architect of Sevastopol Y. A. Trautman reported that more than 120 thousand square meters of living space had been rebuilt; that the building efforts had been mainly focused on the revival of the central part of the city, and that all industrial enterprises had been restored and functioning”[1].

---

1 Some sources of regional history literature [9] mention that it took place in 1947 though the earthquake happened in the night from October 5 to October 6, 1948. Other reference sources indicate 1948 as the start date of Trautman’s employment in Ashkhabad.
He was certainly following all the construction works concerning municipal buildings in Nakhimov Avenue. And it is probably not a coincidence that Trautman was mentioned in some sources of regional literature as the architect who had participated in construction of “Pobeda”, a cinema with two halls designed by the architect A. N. Ivanov (1912-1977) in 1945. This all was mentioned in the memoirs of S. D. Almazova, a supervisor of the most important construction objects who remembered Trautman visiting that construction site.

So, it all pictures Yuri Trautman not as an architect planning residential and public buildings, and not exactly an “architect-planner” involved in urban planning – though this division was basic for the USSR in 1940 – 1980ss. He was more of an architect- manager teaming with other practical workers not only in the field of project work but also in engineering (starting with mine clearance in Sevastopol and debris handling after the earthquake in Ashkhabad in 1948) and management – both in design bureaus and institutes and within municipal infrastructure. Trautman’s quick career progress in the very beginning of his professional life is no coincidence – in the situation of postwar shortage of professional personnel many prominent architects literally from their student benches found themselves in positions of extreme responsibility. The lack of experience was balanced out by the grandeur of tasks he was facing – reconstruction of thousands ruined towns and cities, among which such significant as Sevastopol, though having no status of a regional or republican capital it attracted attention of the country's leadership.

References
[1] Artyukhov V M, Bagley A I 1982 Facing the sea Reconstruction of Sevastopol Collected papers Compiled by Kuz'mina V G (Simferopol) pp 41-56
[2] Almazova S D 1982 Storeys and people Reconstruction of Sevastopol Collection of works (Simferopol) pp 93-105
[3] Sevastopolskie Izvestiya 2019 2-11
[4] Sevastopolskie Izvestiya of February 23, 2019 7 pp 11
[5] Sevastopolskie Izvestiya of March 2 2019 8 p 11
[6] https://www.gzt-sv.ru/news/18813-svobodnyj-sudbe-znamenitogo-architekta-leonida
[7] Sheffer A L 2016 Time to remember the past (Sevastopol: LLC Scientific production center «EKOSI-gidrofizika») p 25
[8] Sevastopolskie Izvestiya 2019 2-11
[9] Chikin A M 2008 Sevastopol Historical and literary book of reference (Sevastopol: «Veber» publishers) p524