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Mythologization of the History of the 1920-30s Festivities

Abstract

The article discusses techniques and methods used by the Soviet government to formulate the historical myth of the revolutionary movement in Russia and of the 1917 revolution. Holidays in Soviet Russia and later in the Soviet Union were not just days of relaxation. They served educational function, formed new spiritual values, instilled a sense of engagement with the events of 1917. As one of the ways to influence the mass consciousness, the festive events of the first decades of the Soviet power formed public opinion and influenced perception of historical and current events by the population. Popularization of the emerging official history of the new socialist state, which had begun in 1917, was especially effective during celebrations

owing to their inherent emotional component. The use of historical plots in various dramatizations, mass actions, political processions, carnivals, and demonstrations of workers created an appearance of the new government's legitimacy, contributed to the formation of the collective memory of the revolutionary days within the frameworks of their official interpretation. The article uses archival materials of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the RCP (B.), which testify to the importance that the party authorities attached to the scenarios of the festive events. Memoirs of the direct participants in the events played their role in creating heroic myth of the revolution. An obligatory element of the celebration of the anniversaries was meetings with workers revolutionaries and witnesses of the revolutionary events that were arranged at the enterprises. Participation in these "evenings of remembrance" became a way of "self-identification" of an individual in new, socialist society, for speakers, as well as listeners. During these festive meetings, appearance of belonging, not only to the heroic past, but also to the epic present, was created. Specifics and ideological implications of the 1920s–30s memoirs contributed to the use of the "memorial boom" in the forming official narrative of the revolution.

Keywords

Sources, historical memory, myth, October revolution of 1917, holidays, memoirs of the participants, revolution, revolutionary movement.

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