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The Fiftieth Anniversary of the October Revolution (1967) – a Generational Turnover and the Politics of Memory of the USSR*

Zarys treści: Obchody 50. rocznicy rewolucji październikowej zademonstrowały istotne zmiany polityki historycznej KPZS. Wydarzenia, które rozegrały się w Piotrogradzie, i wokół których koncentrowała się pamięć społeczna przez ostatnie półwiecze, nie posiadały w latach sześćdziesiątych tak silnego wymiaru symbolicznego, zdolnego mobilizować społeczeństwo do realizacji celów stawianych przez partię komunistyczną, takich jak Wielka Wojna Ojczyźniana. Rewolucja październikowa w chwili reaktywacji oficjalnego święta Dnia Zwycięstwa w 1965 r. zaczęła tracić swój centralny status w pamięci społecznej w Związku Sowieckim.

Outline of content: The celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution revealed significant changes in politics of memory of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The events which took place in Petrograd and on which social memory had focused for last fifty years, did not have in the 1960s such a strong symbolic impact, being able to mobilise the people to achieve goals set by the Communist Party as the Great Patriotic War. From the time of reactivation of the official celebrations of the Victory Day in 1965 the October Revolution began gradually to diminish in importance and lose its central place in collective memory of the Soviet people.

Słowa kluczowe: rewolucja październikowa 1917, Leonid Breżniew, radziecka polityka historyczna, KPZS, Wielka Wojna Ojczyźniana

Keywords: October Revolution 1917, Leonid Brezhnev, Soviet politics of history, Communist Part of the Soviet Union, Great Patriotic War

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Until the mid-1960s, the most important occasion in the Soviet Union was the Great October Socialist Revolution Day.¹ The collective memory² of the Bolsheviks taking over in 1917, which was also when the implementation of the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels began with a view to establishing a classless society in Russia, was meant by the authorities to become an important component of the identity of the Communist Party members as well as the citizens of the new state.³ The successive leaders of the USSR: Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev shaped this memory over the first fifty years of the state, in accordance with the demands of the current policy and their own experience, thus legitimising their position and the authority of the Communist Party.⁴

At the same time, the symbolic significance of the revolution day went far beyond the territory of the USSR. The Marxism-Leninism ideology had a universal dimension to it and was an inherent part of the story of the first victorious socialist revolution in the world, as promoted by the Bolsheviks. The Communist Party used the capital of this celebration most of all to underline its leading role among communist countries (after 1945) and to motivate the followers of the idea of Marx and Engels.

The abovementioned objectives of politics of memory related to the celebration of 7 November – legitimisation of the authority inside the country and of the status of *primus inter pares* on the international stage as well as shaping the citizens' identity – remained unchanged throughout the era of Soviet Russia and USSR. What was subject to change was the content and ongoing political challenges, as well as – what is particularly important from the memory perspective

¹ In the 1930s, the name was subject changed several times. In 1934, the celebrations referred to the anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution. See *Правда*, 7 October 1934, p. 1. The next anniversary celebrated the Great Proletarian Revolution. See “Да здравствует Великая Пролетарская Революция! Да здравствует советская власть во всем мире! Воззвание Исполнительного Комитета Коммунистического Интернационала”, *Правда*, 7 November 1935, p. 1. And in 1936 the name of the “October Socialist Revolution” came back yet again, see “XIX годовщина Октябрьской Социалистической Революции. Доклад тов. Калинина на торжественном заседании Московского Совета в Большом театре Союза ССР 6 ноября 1936 года”, *Правда*, 10 November 1936, p. 1.

² The bulk of literature related to the very name and definition of the phenomenon is enormous. Relating to each one of the terms considerably exceeds the scope of this article. This is why I will only allow myself to note that my understanding of the term “social memory” will be concurrent with the definition presented by Barbara Szacka. See B. Szacka, *Czas przeszły, pamięć, mit*, Warszawa, 2006, pp. 44–45. Whenever I refer to “memory”, I mean “collective memory”.

³ For memory and identity, see *ibid.*, pp. 48–51; and A. Assmann, *Między historią a pamięcią. Antologia*, Warszawa, 2013, p. 55.

⁴ The celebration of the October Revolution over the first ten years was the subject matter of the research conducted by Frederick C. Corney, see F.C. Corney, *Telling the October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution*, Cornell University Press, 2004. See also M. Рольф, *Советские массовые праздники*, Москва, 2009.

– the generations, which significantly influenced the status of the day itself and the ideological objectives that were pursued on this occasion.

The preparation and progress of the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolsheviks seizure of power are the best examples of the evolution of the politics of memory of the USSR, whose beginnings can be traced back to 1964. As far as ideology is concerned, the celebrations were dominated by de-Stalinisation, stopped by Nikita Khrushchev's successor, Leonid Brezhnev, the Moscow–Beijing conflict as well as the growing new left movement in western Europe.

Still, the generational change in 1964 had the greatest impact on the content of the memory of the October Revolution was. Khrushchev's successor was the first Soviet leader representing the generation that did not take part in the 1917 revolution and the 1917–1922 civil war. Brezhnev was born on 19 December 1906⁵ in Kamenskoye (now: Kamianske in Ukraine) and he was ten years old when Lenin and his party took power in Russia. This is why the new First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party viewed the past from a different perspective than that of his predecessor.

The generation of the Great Patriotic War and the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution

Khrushchev did not see the 47th anniversary of the October Revolution as the First Secretary of the party. On 14 October 1964, at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the opposition gathered around Brezhnev – whom Khrushchev himself promoted to the Praesidium of the Committee⁶ – forced him to resign. Although the precise progress of the “October revolt”, as ironically referred to by Rudolf Pikhoya,⁷ is rather impossible to reconstruct, its root causes are no secret. The chaotic and inefficient internal policy of the then First Secretary of the Communist Party which resulted in the introduction of food ration cards in 1962–1963, the plans of administration reform in agriculture, inefficient communication with his subordinates and the intelligentsia, resistance among some of the party officials against the de-Stalinisation, conviction of his own infallibility, the Cuban and Berlin crises, which strongly undermined the authority of the USSR on the international stage and considerably worsened its relations with the West and with China, the second

⁵ In scholarly works we will find at least three birth dates of Brezhnev: 1 January 1906, 19 December 1906, and 1 January 1907. I will opt for 19 December 1906, following the editors of the notes made by the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. See *Леонид Брежнев. Рабочие и дневниковые записи 1964–1982*, ed. С. Кудряшов, Москва, 2016, p. 1161.

⁶ More about the relations between Khrushchev and Brezhnev, see Р. Медведев, *Личность и эпоха. Политический портрет Л.И. Брежнева*, Москва, 1991, pp. 72–101.

⁷ R. Pichoja, *Historia władzy w Związku Radzieckim 1945–1991*, Warszawa, 2011, pp. 253–274.

most powerful communist country – all this contributed to the growing dissatisfaction with Khrushchev's policy.⁸

The new leadership immediately started withdrawing the reforms implemented by the predecessor and introduced their own solutions instead.⁹ The changes observable at first sight blurred the more significant one, which dominated the politics of memory¹⁰ of the Communist Party until the mid-1980s: as Brezhnev took over, a generational change took place.

The biography of the new leader of the Communist Party is characteristic of the careers of many of his contemporaries: in 1923 Brezhnev joined the Komsomol, then in the 1930s he served in the army and worked at the factory in Dneprodzerzhinsk;¹¹ then, in 1939 he became the secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk District Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine for propaganda and agitation. During the war with Germany he held the function of i.a. head of the political department of the 18th Army.¹² In the post-war period, he held i.a. the position of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova and the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Thanks to Khrushchev's patronage, in 1957 he became a member of the Praesidium of the Central Committee.

Brezhnev belonged to the generation that completed most of its education in the USSR.¹³ The October Revolution created opportunities for promotion he would probably not have had in Tsarist Russia. He was undoubtedly a beneficiary of Stalin's reforms in the 1930s – a so-called *vidvizhenec*.¹⁴ At that time, he

⁸ See *ibid.*; V. Zubok, *Nieudane imperium. Związek Radziecki okresu zimnej wojny, od Stalina do Gorbaczowa*, Kraków, 2010, pp. 178–186; S. Pons, *The Global Revolution. A History of the International Communism 1917–1991*, Oxford University Press 2014, pp. 236–237; W. Taubman, *Chruszczow. Człowiek i epoka*, Wrocław, 2012, pp. 650–694.

⁹ About Kosygin's reform, see N. Chernyschova, *Soviet Consumer Culture in the Brezhnev Era*, New York, 2013, pp. 17–31; Pichoja, *Historia władzy*, pp. 281–284.

¹⁰ I understand politics of memory as an interpretation of historical events considering the current political situation and promoting this interpretation in the public domain. When addressed to the citizens, it is mostly aimed at shaping the identity and the idea of the past as well as legitimising the state system and the current authorities. It also happens that in international relations one of the parties offers arguments based on historical events, so as to justify a particular viewpoint or thesis. This is also an example of politics of memory. The proposed version is a modification of the definition offered by J. Andrychowicz-Skrzeba. See J. Andrychowicz-Skrzeba, *Polityka historyczna w Polsce i Niemczech po roku 1989 w wystąpieniach publicznych oraz publikacjach polityków polskich i niemieckich*, Gdańsk, 2014, pp. 17–37.

¹¹ The name of Dneprodzerzhinsk was applicable in the years 1936–2016. In 2016 the name of Kamianske was resumed.

¹² For the full progress of his military career during World War II, see Леонид Брежнев. *Рабочие и дневниковые*, pp. 1165–1166.

¹³ Brezhnev spent at least two years learning in a preparatory class at the grammar school for boys in Kamenskoye (1915–1917). See *ibid.*, p. 1161.

¹⁴ See S. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, Oxford University Press 2000, p. 85.

did not hold a prominent position, though – not as high as to be responsible for passing death sentences in the period of the Great Purge, like his predecessor. He was rather a representative of the generation that benefited from this period.¹⁵

The experience that shaped Brezhnev and his generation and was significant enough to be considered a generational experience was undoubtedly the war with Germany.¹⁶ It is around this event that the memory of this generation focused. It is here that one should look for the sources of Brezhnev's attitude to the Stalinist era and to the October Revolution.¹⁷

This is why Khrushchev's successor stopped the discussion about the past that was going on in his country, yet it would be wrong to say that his policy was completely new in this respect. Presenting the 1930s as a magnificent period in the history of the USSR – as Khrushchev said at a meeting of the Central Committee with the intelligentsia in 1963¹⁸ – fully corresponded to Brezhnev's memory. There was a difference, though: whereas in Khrushchev's era it was allowed to criticise Stalin openly, the new leaders ceased to tolerate this kind of publications (especially those presenting the first years of the Great Patriotic War as a series of failures). However, it was not tantamount to the return to Stalin's cult from before 1956. The Party chose to remain silent in this respect and to focus on the positive aspects of the Stalinist era.

The key aspect was the memory of the war with Germany. On 9 May 1965, the USSR celebrated the 20th anniversary of signing the unconditional surrender by Germany – it was the first time since 1947 that a parade was organised on Red Square and 9 May was proclaimed a public holiday.¹⁹ By reactivating the Victory Day, Brezhnev tried to obliterate all the bad experience from the Stalinist period,

¹⁵ P. Kenez, *Odkłamana historia Związku Radzieckiego*, Warszawa, 2008, p. 250; and Э. Модсли, С. Уайт, *Советская элита от Ленина до Горбачева. Центральный комитет и его члены. 1917–1991 годы*, Москва, 2011, p. 13.

¹⁶ “A historical event, as noted before, has a chance to become a generational experience (and thus to form a distinct generation) only among those who experience this event when they are in a specific phase of development – when they are young. This is a period of utmost mental sensitivity to social situation, when a person starts to define their attitude to the world and, as Erik Erikson claims, when ‘individual story crosses paths with History’” – this is how Karl Mannheim defines a generational experience. As cited in: K. Mannheim, “Problem pokoleni”, translated into Polish by A. Mizińska-Kleczkowska, *Colloquia Communia*, 1992/1993, no. 1/12, p. 160.

¹⁷ Polly Jones overlooks this aspect of Brezhnev's attitude to history. See P. Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953–70*, Yale, 2013, pp. 212–257.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 152–153.

¹⁹ The anniversary of signing the surrender by the Third Reich, celebrated on 9 May in the USSR, was not forgotten in 1947–1965 – each year articles and memoirs on the topic appeared in the major papers in the USSR. However, no impressive celebrations were held and there was no parade on Red Square. According to the decree issued by the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated 23 December 1947, 9 May became a working day once again, which significantly impacted the status of the Victory Day. See Г.А. Бордюгов, *Октябрь. Сталин. Победа. Культ юбилеев в пространстве памяти*, Москва, 2010, pp. 170–183.

which were related and discussed during the period of the Khrushchev Thaw. As an active participant of these events, the First Secretary felt a particular connection to the memories from that period. Twenty years after the end of the conflict, which took the lives of 27 million Soviet citizens and turned Moscow into a superpower, the Victory Day regained its official, public status. The party standing for the state – just like in the case of the October Revolution Day – became the guardian of the memory of this event and got to decide on how the story about the years 1941–1945 would be told. By keeping silent about the Stalinist period, Brezhnev tried to build – inefficiently and towards the end of his term bordering on the grotesque – his own cult of personality using the history of the Great Patriotic War.²⁰

The memory of the war with Germany – as a result of the change of generations at the top – started to be of increasing importance in the public space in the USSR. It is difficult to answer the question on the relationship between the Victory Day and the Great October Socialist Revolution Day. In other words: which day was more important, for whom and why? The Revolution – even if we were to treat this notion broadly, so as to include the civil war defending the “October achievements” – can in no way be equal to the Great Patriotic War in terms of scale. In the 1960s, there was no family in the USSR that did not lose a relative in this conflict. Furthermore, the vicinity of this event in time and the fact that most of the Soviet citizens still remembered the 1941–1945 period, also determined the need to commemorate it and work it through. This is also shown in a number of movies produced in the post-war period, including the classics such as *Letyat zhuravli* (The Cranes are Flying) and *Ballada o soldate* (Ballad of a Soldier).²¹ For the Communist Party, the war with Germany became a confirmation of the right policy that made the USSR a superpower on the international arena. Also as regards the personal experience of the party’s politicians and their individual contribution in the victory over Adolf Hitler, the memory of the Great Patriotic War produced much more emotions than the October Revolution.

At the same time, the occasion celebrated each year on 7 November was related to the essence of the USSR and its existence. This is when the Party officials reminded everybody of the basic ideas and principles and presented the picture of how the Soviet Union changed since 1917. On this occasion, it was possible to expand the discourse of the October events by including stories related to another period of the working class and peasant state. Just like Stalin in fact transformed the Great October Socialist Revolution Day into a celebration of the 1930s, so did the Brezhnev’s era start to focus particularly on the Great Patriotic War each year on 7 November, as I am going to show later in the text. Apart from the emotional

²⁰ His war memoirs titled *Small Land*, written most likely by ghost-writers, were reprinted in millions of copies. More about this and Brezhnev’s cult of personality, see A. Nolan, “Shitting Medals”: *L.I. Brezhnev, the Great Patriotic War, and the Failure of the Personality Cult, 1965–1982*, Chapel Hill, 2008 (M.A. thesis at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill).

²¹ J. Wojnicka, *Dzieci XX Zjazdu. Film w kulturze sowieckiej lat 1956–1968*, Kraków, 2012, pp. 57–60.

appeal, which left no Soviet citizen neutral, this event has a special educational value: it is easier to teach the young generation patriotism and the love of one's own country on the example of the Red Army fighting with the Germans than to draw on the example of the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in 1917.

One indicator and partially an answer to the question of which day was more important from the perspective of the Party and Brezhnev himself is the decision of the Central Committee of 10 November 1966 on the construction of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the north-east wall of the Kremlin, by the entrance to the Alexander Garden.²² To this end, the obelisk dedicated to "the outstanding thinkers and activists fighting for the emancipation of the working classes" erected back in 1918 had to be moved deeper into the garden. The official unveiling of the monument took place on 8 May 1967 – a day before the 22th anniversary of the end of the war.²³ The eternal fire was lit by Brezhnev, who was at that time the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR.²⁴ The unveiling of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier a few months before the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution in the place where the obelisk dedicated to the revolutionists used to stand also symbolically pointed to a specific transformation in the sphere of memory. The Victory Day was nearly equal to the status of 7 November as the most important occasion in the USSR. The fire that was lit near the Kremlin wall was taken from the Field of Mars in Leningrad,²⁵ the tomb of those who died during the February Revolution, the Yaroslavl Revolt (6–21 July 1918) and during the defence of Petrograd against the army of general Nikolai Yudenich.²⁶

Apart from the generational change, what impacted the jubilee and the related politics of memory of the party, was the deteriorating relation with China, to which Khrushchev significantly contributed.²⁷ During his rule, despite the common

²² See "Постановление ЦК КПСС о сооружении в Москве памятника «Могила Неизвестного Солдата» с вечным огнем славы", in: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях съездов, конференции и пленумов ЦК (1966–1970)*, vol. 11, Москва, 1986, p. 104. The first discussions on this topic commenced in the Politburo in the second half of the 1965. The idea to build the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, presented by the Moscow City Committee and the Moscow City Executive Committee of the CPSU on 13 November 1965, was rejected five days later by the Praesidium of the Central Committee, for unknown reasons. See Леонид Брежнев. *Рабочие и дневниковые*, p. 92, and fn. 68 on p. 123.

²³ "Сияй в веках, огонь славы! Открытие памятника 'Могила Неизвестного Солдата'", *Правда*, 9 May 1967, p. 1.

²⁴ The name of the position held by Brezhnev was changed on 8 April 1966. This is how the leader of the USSR decided to make a reference to Stalin.

²⁵ In 1918–1944 the field was called the Square of Victims of the Revolution.

²⁶ Not all the people who are buried there are known by their names today. Boris Kolonitskii and Orlando Figes point out that in 1918, when funerals were organised, the issue of identification was secondary. What mattered was the symbolism and ritual. See B. Kolonitskii, O. Figes, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution. The Language and Symbols of 1917*, Yale, 1999, p. 47.

²⁷ See S. Radchenko, "The Sino-Soviet split", in: *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 2, eds. M.P. Leffler, O.A. Westad, Oxford University Press 2010, pp. 362–363. See also: Zubok, *Nieudane imperium*, pp. 188–189.

ideology, both countries were already heading in different directions: Moscow towards a détente with Washington, whereas Beijing was striving for further radicalisation.²⁸ This radicalisation was soon included in the planned policy. After resuming political activity, Mao Zedong commenced another campaign, which became a threatening ideological challenge for the USSR. The planned objective of the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution (1966–1969) he initiated was the uprooting of all the traditions existing in the Chinese society and destroying all the remnants of the bourgeoisie class – according to the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, public offices were the place to start.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution also had an anti-Soviet dimension to it – on this occasion, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party openly stated that the USSR is a “social imperialist” state ruled by a class of bureaucrats, who are a genuine threat to the global revolution.²⁹ The first place among Mao’s foreign enemies was Moscow, and Mao’s greatest domestic rival, Liu Shaoqi, the leader of the People’s Republic of China in 1959–1968, was referred to as “the Chinese Khrushchev” by the Maoist propaganda.³⁰

The Chinese revolution aimed against the USSR and against Mao’s internal ideological enemies was supposed to be an example of an alternative way towards communism, both for the communist countries and for the Third World. By rejecting the path of progress shown by the USSR, which was to be a model for communists around the world, Beijing in fact rejected the primacy of Moscow as the authority on Marxism and Leninism. What is more, Mao levelled the most serious accusation at the Soviet authorities: there was nothing worse for a communist country than to be charged with betraying the ideals and the revolution itself. From the perspective of Beijing, the genuine communist ideology was Maoism, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was intended by the Chinese to replace the Great October Socialist Revolution as a model and inspiration of all the revolutionary movements. This is why the topic of the “Chinese dissenters” (*раскольников*) – as the Soviet propaganda would have it – occupied a significant place in the discussions among the Eastern Bloc politicians. The USSR found China so disturbing that towards the end of 1967 Interkit was established – an analytical centre for the Eastern Bloc countries, whose task was to prepare expertises concerning the actions of Beijing and the internal situation of Communist China.³¹

²⁸ Donald J. Raleigh notes that Brezhnev’s personal experience from 1941–1945 greatly influenced his vision of relations with the United States. See D.J. Raleigh, “Soviet’ Man of Peace Leonid Il’ich Brezhnev and His Diaries”, *Kritika Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 2016, no. 4, pp. 837–868.

²⁹ Pons, *The Global Revolution*, p. 248.

³⁰ E. Perry, *Anyuan. Mining China’s Revolutionary Tradition*, University of California Press 2002, pp. 223–224.

³¹ See the report of the GDR representatives from the first Interkit conference organised in Moscow on 14–21 December 1967: *East German Report on First Interkit Meeting in Moscow, December*

These issues were of interest not only to politicians: Mao managed to make his way to the imagination of ordinary Soviet citizens. In 1967 Vladimir Vysotsky, a songwriter, wrote a song about Mao – the songs of this artist can be treated as a barometer of social emotions and interests.³²

Preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the revolution

In the period of three years before the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution, the key trends of the state propaganda were manifested, shaping the collective memory about the past, the present and the future of the Soviet state.

In the beginning of 1965 it was thirty years since the party officially announced the end of the building stage of socialism. For the past three decades, the USSR was therefore – according to the Marxist-Leninist theory – in the final stage of historical progress, which was to end in the existence of communism. The Communist Party officially declared it in its third programme adopted in 1961: „Ныне Коммунистическая партия Советского Союза (КПСС) принимает свою третью Программу – программу построения коммунистического общества”.³³ If the next Soviet leaders were to keep silent about this promise, this might have had adverse consequences for the authority of the Communist Party.

On 9 January 1965, in *Pravda* an article appeared discussing the issue of challenges facing Soviet artists and writers with regard to the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. The author of the article criticised the decadent, pessimistic works created by the bourgeoisie part of the world, at the same time summoning the artists to draw on the party and folk principles in their work. In practice, it meant showing only the positive aspects of life. All those who showed the reality of the USSR in a negative way were therefore disavowed: “Нельзя поэтому признать правильной позицию тех, кто поднимает на щит повести, фильмы, пьесы и картины, где односторонне изображена советская действительность, а критика недостатков подменяется критиканством, способным лишь посеять уныние”.³⁴ The allusion to the recent publications written during the de-Stalinisation period was all too obvious. The author criticised dealing with the past and condemned it as reactionary and contradicting communist ideas: “Нет и не может быть мирного сосуществования между идеями развития человечества к светлому будущему и идеями реакции,

1967, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113287> (28 July 1967), Wilson Centre Digital Archive (access: 7 November 2017).

³² В. Высоцкий, “Мао Цзедун – большой шалун...”, in: id., *Собрание сочинений в одном томе*, Москва, 2012, pp. 119–120.

³³ “Программа Коммунистической партии Советского Союза”, in: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях съездов*, vol. 10, p. 83.

³⁴ “Достоинно отображать величие дел советского”, *Правда*, 9 January 1965, p. 2.

обращенными в прошлое, стремящимися обезоружить народы в их борьбе за свободу, мир и социализм”.³⁵ According to the author, each artist should focus only on positive aspects of life in his work, at the same time allowing the past, with its episodes or terror, to be forgotten. That was the requirement for all the artists who wanted “достойно встретить 50-летие Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции”.³⁶

However, not all elements from the bulk of the USSR history deserved to be forgotten. There were some “glorious revolutionary and working-class traditions” in the Soviet nation. The long way towards the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution started a few months before the 47th anniversary of the October, when the First Secretary of the Communist Party was still Khrushchev. Half a year before the abovementioned article was published, on 12 May 1964, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a decree concerning the improvement of the activity of museums; one of the tasks assigned to them was communist education of the working class. This is why it was recommended that each museum (except for the memorial ones) should establish a separate department devoted to the Soviet period in history – from the October Revolution until the current times. Such section were supposed to present “успехи коммунистического строительства в СССР, победу ленинского курса Коммунистической партии, борьбу советского народа за осуществление программы КПСС”.³⁷

Following this decree, on 23 September 1964 the Soviet Ministry of Culture and the Praesidium of the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Cultural Workers for Moscow issued a shared decision to commence an all-union museum review, related to the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. A central institution coordinating this action was the Organisational Committee set up in Moscow, whose chairman was the deputy minister of culture I. I. Tsvetkov. The museums were divided into four categories: the first one included the major institutions such as: the Central Lenin Museum in Moscow, the State Museum of the October Revolution in Moscow, but also the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad or the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow; the second group included: the museums of the union republics, tourist museums in autonomous districts, republics, states and oblasts; the third group included the museum of national raions, regional and municipal museums; and the last group included art museums. Each of these institutions was obliged to organise an exhibition presenting: the leading role of the Communist Party, friendship among the Soviet nations, successful stage of building communism in the area of national economy, science, culture and art. The exposition was also supposed to include revolutionary, military and

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Постановление ЦК КПСС о повышении роли музеев в коммунистическом воспитании трудящихся. 12 мая 1964 г.”, in: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях*, vol. 10, p. 416.

working-class traditions of the Communist Party and of the Soviet nation. The document also emphasised that the special role of the people and the class conflict should be reflected in the exhibition as the basic factor in the evolution of society. Furthermore, each of the museums had to collect physical and spiritual mementoes from the period of the three revolutions. The purpose of such actions – as stated in the document signed by the Soviet minister of culture, Ekaterina Furtseva and T.G. Kalinnikov, the head of the Central Committee of the art workers' trade union – was as follows: to shape a materialistic view of the world among the Soviet citizens and to eradicate all religion-related anachronisms. This is also why it was recommended to emphasise the atheist “direction” of the exhibition.³⁸

Interestingly, it was recommended that buildings and works of art related to the Orthodox Church should also be used to shape the materialistic views among the citizens and to encourage them to take pride in their country. The guidelines of the Soviet Ministry of Culture distributed in May 1964 among the ministries of culture of individual republics and among organisations (such as e.g. the Komsomol) noted that special interpretation was required to this end, so as to avoid promoting the greatness of the Orthodox Church: “Троица Андрея Рублёва, соборы Московского Кремля и многие другие произведения такого же плана по праву вошли в сокровищницу мирового искусства, как произведения, где полную силу торжествует высокое гуманистическое начало, торжествует гении человека, не бога”.³⁹ What is more, during one of the meetings in 1965 held in the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, chaired by Yuri Torsuyev, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, one of the participants, Peskov, observed: “Если человек не понимает значения Василия Блаженного, то не будет уважать могилу Героев Сталинграда”.⁴⁰ The function of the buildings that used to be owned by the Orthodox Church, which were supposed to be destroyed or, at best, forgotten and marginalised, considerably evolved in the 1960s; the Communist Party wanted to use these buildings – apart from promoting their ideology – to foster respect for the Soviet heritage.

According to the principle from the 1930s, each approaching celebration was an opportunity for the provincial areas to send various requests to the central authority and hope for a positive decision.⁴¹ This practice did not change in the 1960s.

³⁸ Постановление коллеги Министерства культуры и президиума ЦК профсоюза работников культуры г. Москвы ‘О Всесоюзном смотре работы музеев посвященном 50-летию Советской власти’ от 23 сентября 1964 г.; and the appendix Положение о Всесоюзном смотре работы музеев, посвященном подготовке к 50-летию Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции can be found in: Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории (hereafter: РГАСПИ), f. М-1, op. 32, d. 1152, l. 84–93.

³⁹ О некоторых формах использования исторических памятников и идеологической работе (методическая справка), РГАСПИ, f. М-1, op. 32, d. 1152, l. 114.

⁴⁰ РГАСПИ, f. М-1, op. 32, d. 1193, l. 11.

⁴¹ R. Malte, “A Hall of Mirrors: Sovietizing Culture under Stalinism”, *Slavic Review*, 2009, no. 3, p. 626.

The campaign of reviewing museums and restoration of historical monuments provided the regional branches of the Party or state institutions with yet another argument: a proper preparation of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution – which would meet the expectations of Moscow – required relevant expenditure and the funds were distributed by the central authorities. This is why the bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic⁴² was literally flooded with letters concerning financial matters in 1965–1966. On 24 March 1965 the Krasnoyarsk Krai Committee asked for the funds for the renovation and preparation of an exhibition in the buildings in a village called Yermakovskoye, where Lenin and his comrades wrote *A Protest by Russian Social Democrats*⁴³ in 1899. A similar issue – the renovation of the museum of Lenin’s house in Kazan – was mentioned in a letter from the Tartar Oblast Committee,⁴⁴ while the Dagestan Oblast Committee was asking for one thousand roubles for the annual award for the best literary and art works;⁴⁵ the Kabardino-Balkaria Oblast Committee requested the allocation of extra funds due to the increased frequency of issuing the *Elbrus* magazine and the *Friendship* almanac;⁴⁶ the Stavropol Oblast Committee wished to obtain the money to finish the Lenin and “Friendship” monuments.⁴⁷ All of these requests were justified with the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

The Stalinist mode of preparations for public celebrations was maintained also in the form of accepted obligations to exceed production plans in public-owned factories, enterprises and kolkhozes as well as putting public buildings to use. As early as 4 February 1965, a school built especially for the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution was opened near Lviv.⁴⁸ Two months later, on 25 April 1965, *Pravda* informed that the workers from the Tashkent Cable Factory declared they would exceed the planned production volume.⁴⁹ Also the transport employees in Kiev were encouraged to be ready for the jubilee.⁵⁰ At the ceremonial

⁴² The Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic existed in the years 1956–1966.

⁴³ РГАСПИ, ф. 556, оп. 15, д. 116, л. 82–83. Vladimir Dolgich, the head of the Central Lenin Museum in Shushenskoye also wrote on that subject. See *ibid.*, л. 84–85. In 1897–1900 Lenin stayed in this region (in the village of Shushenskoye), where he was banished for his activity in the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class.

⁴⁴ РГАСПИ, ф. 556, оп. 15, д. 116, л. 142.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, д. 124, л. 81.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, л. 170.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, д. 126, л. 107. In the archive unit no. 126, which includes 198 files, there are only such requests.

⁴⁸ Д. Шумский, “Почин Сокальцев поддержан”, *Правда*, 4 February 1965, p. 4.

⁴⁹ “Достоинно встретим 50-летие Великого Октября. Социалистические обязательства рабочих, инженерно-технических работников и служащих Ташкентского Кабельного Завода”, *Правда*, 25 April 1965, p. 1.

⁵⁰ “Грузам семилетки – ‘зеленую улицу’”, *Правда*, 23 March 1965, p. 4.

meeting of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party on 17 July, the chairman of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Anastas Mikoyan encouraged further effort related to the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution: “Эта знаменательная дата несомненно будет отмечена новыми достижениями и трудовыми подвигами”.⁵¹ In September, a correspondent from *Pravda* wrote about the preparations for the jubilee in the “Arsenal” factory, known from Alexander Dovzhenko’s film about the so called Kiev Bolshevik Uprising against the Central Council of Ukraine in 1918.⁵² Promises were also made by the local party members. On 30 August 1965, the secretary of the Khabarovsk Krai Committee of the Communist Party, A. Shitkov, informed that on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, a renovation was planned of 76 buildings of cultural institutions.⁵³ Similar declarations followed from the workers from the Kursk, Kirov, Rostov and Sverdlovsk oblasts.⁵⁴ As summed up in the decision issued by the bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on 21 March 1966, approving such initiatives, there was a plan to build a total of 9258 clubs and culture centres, as well 1847 libraries and to complete 12 439 total renovations in the RSFSR.⁵⁵

In the second half of 1965 the campaign of renovating monuments and preparing museums was beginning to take shape. On 21 July the Central Committee of the Communist Party received a letter from the Artists’ Union of the USSR, the Architects’ Union of the USSR and the USSR Academy of Arts, to which a shared request was appended for the approval of the Central Committee; the request formulated by these organisations was titled: “Объединим усилия в деле сохранения и пропаганды памятников нашей великой многонациональной культуры”. The authors emphasised that not only the monuments related to the Soviet era deserved to be preserved, but also those that testified to “centuries-old culture”.⁵⁶ This multinational heritage – this was the wording used in the document – should be the source of ideological and educational work, related to the approaching jubilee of the October Revolution. The authors divided this kind of memorial places into four categories: culture monuments, revolution monuments, places related to Lenin and war glory memorials. The artists’ appeal was addressed to the whole country: “Задача всех, кому дорого великое культурное наследие народов нашей страны, ее героическое прошлое, – создать массовые республиканские

⁵¹ “Речь товарища А.И. Микояна”, *Правда*, 18 July 1965, p. 4.

⁵² Д. Прикордонный, “Школа Василия Корженкова”, *Правда*, 23 November 1965, p. 2.

⁵³ РГАСПИ, f. 556, op. 15, d. 120, l. 132.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 173.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 177.

⁵⁶ “Текст обращения ко всем деятелям культуры ‘Объединим усилия в деле сохранения и пропаганды памятников нашей великой многонациональной культуры’”, in: *Аппарат ЦК КПСС и культура. 1965–1972. Документы*, ed. Н.Г. Томилина, Москва, 2009, p. 70.

общества и их местные отделения”.⁵⁷ In each school and kolkhoz there should be organisations responsible for taking care of “the multinational heritage” of the USSR. Besides, the organisations should gather as much information as possible about such places. Specific actions were also proposed as regards the abovementioned ideological and educational work: “Проводите в исторических местах дни памяти героев, павших в борьбе за свободу Родины, дни революционных традиций, митинги, встречи молодежи с ветеранами революции, Гражданской и Великой Отечественной Войн”.⁵⁸ Fostering the past symbolically enclosed in memorial places and monuments was supposed – as the authors had planned – to foster further fight for the shaping of communism.⁵⁹

The discussions that were previously limited to the party and the ministries soon became public: on 30 November 1965, Vyacheslav Kochemasov, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, published an article in *Pravda*, titled “Памятники отечества”, where he shared the party’s plans related to the October jubilee. Other than the great campaign of renovating monuments, defined by the author as in the abovementioned documents, the most interesting part of the article was the historic reasoning behind such actions. Kochemasov referred to the first years of Bolshevik Russia and Lenin:

Известно, с какой заботой относился к сохранению памятников истории Ленин, какую роль отводил им в патриотическом воспитании трудящихся [...]. **Ленинские идеи о национальной гордости рабочего класса** [emphasis mine – BG] всегда были и остаются для нашей партии, всех советских людей незабываемой основой, определяющей отношение к событиям и памятникам истории. [...] **Одним из первых декретов Советского государства был декрет 1918 года об учете и охране памятников искусства и страны** [emphasis mine – BG].⁶⁰

If we analyse this fragment of the article from the perspective of “purity” of Leninist ideas and the actions of the first Bolshevik leader, the deputy chairman was guilty of a manipulation or – and this is much more precise – he adjusted history to the current needs. After all, it is difficult to find a text by Lenin, where he emphasised the national pride of the working class. It is true that the leader of the Revolution prioritised Russian revolutionists,⁶¹ but he was rather far from the type of concepts ascribed to him by Kochemasov. This fragment of the article

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 71.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 72.

⁵⁹ The authors asked the Central Committee of the Communist Party to publish the text of the letter in *Izvestia* or *Pravda*. Unfortunately, I was unable to find that press publication.

⁶⁰ В. Кочемасов, “Памятники отечества”, *Правда*, 30 November 1965, p. 2.

⁶¹ See an article by Lenin of 12 December 1914: *О национальной гордости великороссов*: В.И. Ленин, *Полное собрание сочинений*, vol. 26, Москва, 1973, pp. 106–110.

reflected the Stalinist intellectual heritage, when the Russian working class was referred to as the first among the equals.⁶²

Furthermore, the decree from 1918 on protecting monuments mentioned by the author was primarily related to removing the remnants of the Tsarist Epoch from the public space “не представляющие интереса ни с исторической, ни с художественной стороны”.⁶³ Those that were left were supposed to be marginalised and forgotten. This is what the October Revolution entailed for the collective memory – it was a sudden, symbolic detachment from the past. Fifty years later, the myth of October was intended to protect all historical places – not only those originated during the Soviet period. What is more, the works of Andrei Rublov and Orthodox churches were meant to incite materialistic perspective among Soviet citizens.

Despite the advanced discussion in the propaganda departments of the Communist Party and the Komsomol, the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution did not get special attention at the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR (29 March – 8 April 1966). The first congress after the deposition of Khrushchev essentially had to focus on indicating the errors of the previous leader of the Party and the decisions to rectify these errors.⁶⁴ In Brezhnev’s speeches there was no mention of the approaching jubilee.

The first one to refer to the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution at the 23rd Congress was Nikolai Podgorny. The chairman of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR emphasised the special role of the Soviet nation, which had been building a new life for nearly fifty years. This is how he justified the symbolic primacy of Moscow over the revolutionary movements around the world.⁶⁵ For the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Vali Akhnudov, the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, which started a new era, was inextricably connected to Lenin’s name.⁶⁶ Yulia Filinova, the First Secretary of the Volsk district committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, was more specific when she mentioned the increased production volumes in kolkhozes and sovkhoses before the jubilee.⁶⁷ Just like Akhnudov, Anatoliy Kochylov,

⁶² See “Великая Октябрьская Социалистическая Революция – источник силы нашей Родины”, *Исторический Журнал*, 1943, no. 10, p. 7; and Б. Гайос, “Призрак царской России? 26-я годовщина Октябрьской революции в СССР (1943)”, in: *Сборник статей: работы победителей Девятого открытого конкурса студенческих и аспирантских работ ‘Актуальная наука’ (Советский Союз, Польша и другие страны Центральной и Восточной Европы в мировой политике XX века) памяти О.Н. Кена*, Санкт-Петербург, 2017, pp. 75–88.

⁶³ *Декрет о памятниках республики*, in: *Декреты Советской Власти*, vol. 2, Москва, 1957, pp. 95–97.

⁶⁴ Pichoja, *Historia władzy*, pp. 284–285.

⁶⁵ *XXIII Съезд Коммунистической Партии Советского Союза. 29 марта–8 апреля 1966 года. Стенографический отчет*, vol. 1, Москва, 1966, p. 236.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

the First Secretary of the Ulyanovsk Oblast Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, prioritised Lenin when speaking of the October jubilee. According to Kochylov, a special memorial zone devoted to Lenin was to be established in the town where the first Bolshevik leader was born.⁶⁸ Nikolai Rodionov, the First Secretary of the Chelyabinsk Oblast Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, complained that in the USSR there were still not enough monuments commemorating the October Revolution and the victory of the Red Army over the Third Reich. The most urgent issue, however, in his opinion, was the construction of Lenin's monument in Moscow. "Трудно понять, почему до сих пор не создан в нашей столице, в Москве, памятник Владимиру Ильичу Ленину".⁶⁹ Rodionov was wrong in this respect – by 1966 there were at least fourteen monuments of the first Bolshevik leader in the capital of the USSR.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the wish of the First Secretary from Chelyabinsk was soon granted: on 21 April 1966, the TASS agency informed in *Pravda* that the next Lenin monument would be unveiled in Kremlin on the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. To this end, the Soviet Ministry of Culture organised a special contest, which was, however, not finished on time, because "ни одному из участников конкурса не удалось с должной полнотой и убедительностью раскрыть образ В.И. Ленина".⁷¹ The authors of the works qualified for the second stage of the contest were supposed to improve their designs.

The presentation of Lenin was a serious issue for the top authorities before the October jubilee. On 10 April 1967, at the conference of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, of the oblast and national committees and the union republics, Ekaterina Furtseva expressed her anxiety in this respect: "А образ Владимира Ильича в искусстве? В ЦК обсуждался этот вопрос и у нас в Министерстве. В былое время было строго: каждое произведение с образом Ленина выходило с разрешения ЦК. Сейчас отпали эти переговоры и появился образ Ленина в искусстве очень упрощенный. И в кино трактовка – кто как желает".⁷² On the other hand, at the plenum of the Moscow oblast committee in February 1967, the chairman of the Moscow Oblast Committee of the Artists' Union, Titov, wanted to present the first Bolshevik leader in his exhibition in three versions: as a thinker, as the leader of the Revolution and as "the most human

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 585–587.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 603.

⁷⁰ The works were displayed in the following places: in front of the "House of the Russian Nations" pavilion within the premises of the Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy (ВДНХ); within the premises of the Vladimir Ilyich Lenin factory; near the Pervovskaya Street; near the Prospect of the 60. Anniversary of the October; near the Peace Prospect; in front of the Luzhniki Stadium; near the Moscow-Oktyabrskaya station; on the Tversky Square; in 1-ya Kuryanovskaya Street; in 1905 Street; in Avtozavodskaya Street; in Godovikova Street; in Kedrova Street and in Novozavodskaya Street.

⁷¹ "Проекты памятника В.И. Ленину в Кремле", *Правда*, 21 April 1966, p. 4.

⁷² РГАСПИ, ф. М-1, оп. 34, д. 81, л. 114.

of all men” (“самый человеческий из людей”), close to the issues and worries of the nation.⁷³

The memory of the Communist Party of the USSR as regards the October Revolution was personified and focused on Lenin. This is why the Party strived for the monopoly as regards setting the models that the artists should follow. Any freedom in this respect could – as the members of the Party understood – have an adverse effect on Lenin’s authority and consequently also on the authority of the Party.

An important element of the preparation for the fiftieth anniversary of the jubilee was the publishing plans – the press and books were still among the most important sources of information. The main purpose was to highlight the history of the USSR, the Party and the Komsomol. Over the course of de-Stalinisation the *Short Course of History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)* was discredited; also the propagandists noticed faults in this respect – at the meeting in May 1965 in the propaganda and agitation department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, a man by the name of Ivankovich complained about a lack of universal textbooks on the history of the Party.⁷⁴ The participants of the debate reached a common conclusion that such a book needs to be prepared so as to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution.

On 8 January 1967, on the front page of *Pravda*, a decision issued four days before by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR was printed. Its title was: *О подготовке к 50-летию Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции*.⁷⁵ Although the name might suggest it referred only to practical issues related to the preparations, it was in fact the first manifesto of the post-Khrushchev leaders, where the party elite summarised its view on the past, present and future of the USSR.

The vision of the past years did not differ substantially from the one formed in Stalin’s era. The authors reminded the people that the October Revolution was the beginning of the first socialist state in the history of mankind.⁷⁶ By taking over, the Bolsheviks confirmed the legitimacy of Marx’s and Lenin’s teachings. Just like in Khrushchev’s times, among the elements of these teachings also industrialisation of the state was mentioned and “socialist transformation of agriculture”.⁷⁷ “October achievements” (“завоевания Октября”) were defined as: overcoming illiteracy, the onset of socialist democracy, friendship among the USSR nations,

⁷³ РГАСПИ, f. 17, op. 103, d. 647, l. 68.

⁷⁴ Ivankovich also noted that *Krótki kurs istorii WKP(b)* had its merits (*достоинства*); РГАСПИ, f. 556, op. 15, d. 118, l. 117–118.

⁷⁵ «О подготовке к 50-летию Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции. ЦК КПСС от 4 января 1967 года», *Правда*, 8 January 1967, pp. 1–2. I am using the reprinted document from the collection: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях*, vol. 11, pp. 123–139.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 126–127.

higher quality of life and – the most important – joining the group of the best developed countries in the world.⁷⁸

The period of special importance for Brezhnev's generation was presented in a romantic and heroic manner: the first five-year plan and the Great Patriotic War. Stalin, however, was not mentioned. During the five-year period: "Советские люди не жалели ни сил, ни средств, сознательно шли на лишения, упорно трудились, показывая образцы мужества во имя преодоления отсталости страны и превращения её в могучую социалистическую державу".⁷⁹ The war with the Third Reich confirmed the legitimacy of the chosen concept for the development of the country, and the victory made it possible to introduce socialist reforms in the European and Asian states. In other words, the Soviet leaders emphasised their authority – whether symbolic or actual – over all sorts of revolutionary movements.

There was also a hidden mention of Stalinism: "За 50 лет пройденного пути партия и народ познали как радость больших побед, так и горечь утрат, временных неудач и ошибок. Из всех испытаний наша партия выходила еще более закаленной, более сильной, с непоколебимым революционным оптимизмом и уверенностью в победе великого коммунистического дела".⁸⁰ The crimes from the Stalinist period, selectively condemned in Khrushchev's times, were thus reduced to momentary errors and failures.

By referring to the peace decree, the USSR authorities wanted to legitimise their position of a country opposing wars. This argumentation was addressed primarily to foreign recipients. Bearing in mind the adverse effect of the intervention in Hungary, the USSR now strived to regain its position on the international arena. The authors underlined that one of the principles following from the peace decree is "refraining from intervention in internal business".⁸¹ There was no mention of the land decree, though, whose provisions were a complete contradiction of the Party's policy in the Stalinist era. Politics of memory, therefore, did not change a bit as compared to the previous period.

The Communist Party did not fail to see the fact that Western Europe witnessed a growing popularity of Marxism,⁸² which significantly differed from the Soviet ideology. This phenomenon was perceived in a negative light and even rejected, on the basis of fifty years of Soviet experience: "Опыт демонстрирует, что успеха добиваются те коммунистические партии, которые неуклонно руководствуются марксизмом-ленинизмом, что какая либо ревизия марксизма-ленинизма и любая попытка подменить марксизм-ленинизм псевдореволюционной фразеологией и догмами неизбежно терпят крах".⁸³

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 125.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 125.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 129.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 130–131.

⁸² T. Judd, *Powojnie. Historia Europy od 1945 roku*, Poznań, 2016, p. 476.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 132.

The Communist Party saw the fascination of the western youth with revolutionary ideas as a threat to its own authority, and thus offered the young generation a choice: either accept the interpretation provided by Moscow, or be perceived as enemies. There was nothing in between. Although the document did not mention China, with which the USSR had a very bad relation at that time, the above comments were also intended as a warning for Mao.

The decision also included specific guidelines as regards the preparation for the approaching celebration. The recommendations included i.a. further expansion of “socialist rivalry”, educating the youth on revolutionary traditions and publishing articles summarising the achievements of the USSR over the past fifty years. Initiatives of the local soviets and worker collectives, who undertook to decorate city streets, were also praised.

However, no considerable attention was devoted to the vision of the future. The USSR – according to the authors – was currently in the phase of “развернутого строительства коммунизма”.⁸⁴ There was no reference to the party’s third programme, in which a promise was made that the present generation would be living in the communist system. Instead, vague assurances were made: “Осмысливая прошлое, мы глубоко сознаем, что перед нами встают новые задачи коммунистического строительства”.⁸⁵ The utopian project for the future, commenced on 25 October 1917, started to be marginalised half a century later, to be replaced with what the party’s elite regarded as its achievements.

The decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of 4 January 1967 closed the first stage of the preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. The guidelines and interpretations included in the documents set the direction for the propaganda activities undertaken over the past nine months.

Half a century of the Soviet revolution

The next key stage of the preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution started on 21 June 1967, when the June Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR defined the ideological manifesto titled “50 years of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Theses of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR”.⁸⁶ The text was published in *Pravda* three days later.⁸⁷ The first part of the document described the vision of

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 134.

⁸⁶ “50 лет Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции. Тезисы Центрального Комитета КПСС”, in: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях*, vol. 11, pp. 181–234.

⁸⁷ “50 лет Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции. Тезисы Центрального Комитета КПСС”, *Правда*, 25 June 1967, pp. 1–5.

the history of the USSR, the second part presented a view of the current situation and formulated goals for the future, while the third one referred to the impact of the October Revolution on the global revolutionary movement.

On 25 October 1917, according to the authors, as a result of an armed uprising of workers, peasants, soldiers and sailors led by Lenin, the socialist revolution succeeded.⁸⁸ On the one hand, the party elite understood the October Revolution as the occasion when the Bolsheviks seized power – which is also how Lenin saw it, but on the other hand, by adding the epithet “socialist”, they took up the narration created by Stalin. It was the crowning of the historical process that included also the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution of 1905.⁸⁹ This formulation, however, did not involve a return to the stories from the first years of the Soviet rule, when the October Revolution was presented as one of the focal points of the global revolutionary movement. It was emphasised that thanks to “objective conditions” and “subjective premises” Russia became the centre of global revolutionary organisations. Furthermore, it was also underlined that the revolution was led by the “Russian proletariat” most hardened in battle.⁹⁰

Not much attention was given to the evaluation of the February Revolution, which was described as a bourgeoisie movement and thus incapable of satisfying the key needs of workers and peasants. However, a polemical note could be traced in the fragment that was designed as a reply to the charge of conspiracy: “Социалистическая революция – не заговор, не верхушечный переворот, совершаемый группой «активных революционеров», а движение и борьба миллионов во главе с рабочим классом, руководимых марксистско-ленинской партией”.⁹¹ Thus, legitimising the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, the authors argued it was a mass movement enjoying considerable support at the time. The thesis of the necessity for such an event resulting from the logic of history was not developed, as mentioned by Lenin back in 1917, in his speech titled *On the Tasks of the Soviet Power*.

The peace decree was yet again recalled as a great achievement of the Soviet authority. The evaluation of the “social and historical” significance of the October Revolution included in the manifesto reveals that the party elite did realise the attractiveness of the event, which offered social development methods other than before.⁹² This argument proved particularly appealing to the Third World countries. For them, liberalism and capitalism were tantamount to the colonial system.

The civil war was described as a defensive war, aimed at saving the “October achievements”. Not a word was said about the hopes and plans to start a global

⁸⁸ “50 лет Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции. Тезисы Центрального Комитета КПСС”, in: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях*, vol. 11, pp. 182–183.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 183–184.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

revolution by the authorities at that time. Overcoming the interveners' troops made it possible to focus the forces on "решении главной задачи революции – строительстве социалистического общества".⁹³ Although de-Stalinisation was stopped, the authors did not venture to change the Khrushchev's dogma, according to which the industrialisation of the country, collectivisation and cultural revolution were the result of implementing Lenin's concept.⁹⁴ Stalin was not mentioned in the fragment describing how Trotsky and his followers were crushed. The Georgian was erased, but his argumentation remained: "троцкисты пытались лишить партию и народ перспективы успешного строительства социализма в СССР".⁹⁵

The outcome of the nearly twenty-five year existence of the new type of state was enormous modernisation. The Stalinist dogma was present also in the evaluation of the collectivisation, which made it possible to eliminate the most numerous class of exploiters. The authors emphasised the special role of these activities undertaken by the party in the ultimate victory over the Third Reich.⁹⁶

A more important interpretation – from the point of view of the current interests – referred to the development of the backward nations of the USSR. The authors claimed the October Revolution allowed them to make a giant leap forward: "народы, находившиеся до революции на стадии феодального и даже патриархально-родового строя, пришли к социализму, минуя капитализм".⁹⁷ Considering the national liberation movements in Africa and Asia, which were then on a similar level of advancement, the fact that the major authority in the communist world recognised the possibility of switching from feudalism to socialism was mutually beneficial. The USSR adjusted the history and ideology to the present times, which ensured its ideological supremacy over those countries, at the same time providing symbolic support, which was usually translated into specific, material aid.⁹⁸ Therefore, paradoxically, as far as ideology was concerned, the time needed to adopt socialism was reduced in Africa and Asia, whereas in the USSR it was quite the contrary – the path from socialism to communism was extending.

The years 1939–1941 and the war with Germany was presented according to the Stalinist guidelines included in the book titled *Falsifiers of History*.⁹⁹ The intention of the Munich arrangements was, according to the authors of the theses,

⁹³ Ibid., p. 188.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 188–189.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 189.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 190–191.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 192.

⁹⁸ The possibility of switching from feudalism straight to socialism was an actual problem studied by social sciences in the USSR. This issue seems abstract from today's perspective. See А.М. Румянцев, "Октябрь и экономическая наука", in: *Октябрь и научный прогресс*, vol. 2, ed. М.В. Келдыш, Москва, 1967, p. 423.

⁹⁹ *Фальсификаторы истории*, Москва, 1948. More about how the brochure was created, see G. Roberts, "Stalin, the Pact with Nazi-Germany, and the Origins of Postwar Soviet Diplomatic Historiography", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 2002, no. 4, pp. 93–103.

to push Hitler to the east. Knowing that the conflict with the Third Reich was inevitable, the authorities of the USSR wished to prolong the period of peace and use it to prepare for the war. This is why they decided to enter into a pact with Germany.¹⁰⁰ For the purpose of the current policy, the conflict with Hitler was described as a battle between the forces of socialism and imperialism, at the same time suggesting that the current countries defined by the USSR as imperialist in fact belonged to the same group as the Third Reich. Initial defeats during the war were ascribed not to the inefficient leadership, but to the considerable advantage of Wehrmacht in terms of numbers, weapons and experience. The authors – contrary to the previous manifesto – mentioned Stalin as the leader of the State Defense Committee. The defeat of Germany confirmed the supremacy of socialist ideology over imperialism.¹⁰¹ This is how the authors rendered the comparison to the Cold War easily comprehensible for the contemporaries.

When characterising the post-war period, the authors focused on emphasising the enormous effort taken to rebuild the country. They underlined how the party cared for increasing the people's wellbeing, which showed a significant change in the way of thinking among those who ruled the USSR.¹⁰² What is particularly interesting, there was a mention of the arrangements made during the 20th Congress of the Party: "партия на XX съезде решительно осудила культ личности Сталина, который выражался в чуждом духу марксизма-ленинизма вовлечений роли одного человека".¹⁰³ The fact that this fragment was included may indicate that Brezhnev and his closest associates still did not develop a specific plan on how to present the figure of Stalin, at the same time addressing de-Stalinisation, the results of which the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR regarded as negative.¹⁰⁴ According to the authors, the USSR was at that time laying the material and technical foundations for communism. Again, the promise included in the third programme of the party was not recalled. Khrushchev and his agricultural policy was condemned.¹⁰⁵ The vision of the future presented in the theses of the Central Committee did not go beyond the chronological limits of the adopted five-year plan (1966–1970). A change in the ideological thinking among the USSR leaders in the 1960s can be seen in the significance

¹⁰⁰ "50 лет Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции. Тезисы Центрального Комитета КПСС", in: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях*, vol. 11, p. 194.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ See Brezhnev's statement of 10 September 1966: "С 1956 года – мы против антикоммунизма как бы в обороне. Надо вести свою наступательную пропаганду. 10тилетием – велась пропаганда против Совет. власти против коллективиз. и других соц. мерах. Ведь из этого что то осталось в умах – это все надо и в историческом так и в практическом плане показать правильно из позиции классовой борьбы"; Леонид Брежнев. *Рабочие и дневниковые записи*, p. 160.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 205.

attached to ensuring the wellbeing of the citizens. The authors claimed it was a great success that “Советские люди стали лучше питаться и одеваться, богаче и разностороннее стала духовая жизнь”.¹⁰⁶ One of the key tasks of the five-year plan was ensuring balance between production in the light and heavy industry and in the food industry. The word ‘richness’ – one of the most criticised concepts of the capitalist world, which was supposed to have a demoralising effect on people – started losing its negative connotation.

The significance of the October Revolution on the international arena was reduced to the thesis of the supremacy of Moscow over all the other global revolutionary movements. Furthermore, the authors emphasised the uniqueness of the revolution started by the Bolsheviks in Russia, in extremely unfavourable conditions. At the moment, each organisation that would like to commence such actions can count on the friendship and support of the USSR – like for example Vietnam.¹⁰⁷

The third section of the theses elaborated by the Central Committee focused on Mao’s policy; Mao himself was accused of betraying the Marxist-Leninist ideas and the interest of the global socialist camp: “Группа Мао Цзэдуна стала осуществлять линию, в которой слились мелкобуржуазный авантюризм и великодержавный шовинизм, прикрываемые «левой» фразой, открыто вступила на путь подрыва единства социалистического содружества, раскола мирового коммунистического движения”.¹⁰⁸ When China challenged the authority of the USSR in the communist camp, it faced condemnation. That is why the policy of Beijing – the closer it was to the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution and the more heated the relations between the two countries were – was criticised all the more frequently and fervently. In the September issue of *Molodoy Kommunist*, B. Korolyev presented Mao as a dissenter (*раскольника*).¹⁰⁹ Fedor Konstantinov ridiculed the views of the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, who believed war was an essential condition for a socialist revolution,¹¹⁰ yet the key historian of that period, Isaac Mintz claimed in the first of his three volumes dedicated to the October Revolution and published on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution, that the revolution in Russia would not have been successful, had it been not for the civil war.¹¹¹

Summing up, the theses of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR prove that the then leadership did not share Khrushchev’s excessive optimism as regards the achievement of the ultimate goal of the October Revolution – the introduction of communism. The path towards utopia started to be postponed

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 207.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 222.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁰⁹ В. Королев, “Октябрь и международное коммунистическое движение”, *Молодой Коммунист*, 1967, по. 9, р. 7.

¹¹⁰ Ф.В. Константинов, “Октябрь и социология”, in: *Октябрь и научный прогресс*, р. 485.

¹¹¹ И.И. Минц, *История Великого Октября*, vol. 1, Москва, 1967, р. 11.

and extended. The affirmation in the third programme of the party was replaced with an observation about a “general perspective of building communism”.¹¹²

In September the preparations for the Revolution Day entered their final phase. On 15 September 1967, at the meeting of the Moscow City Committee, the “Plan of organisational actions related to the celebration of the fiftieth jubilee of the Great October Socialist Revolution” was adopted. The actions recommended in the plan included: organising meetings for factory workers, where the materials prepared by the party for the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution were to be explained; organising mass manifestations of the youth, parades and meetings with the veterans of the October Revolution, the civil war, the Great Patriotic War; organising a solemn guard at monuments of Lenin and the heroes of the Revolution, near the obelisks and tombs.¹¹³ Those who did not fulfil their obligations in a satisfactory manner were criticised, e.g. the Ramensky¹¹⁴ branch of the party.¹¹⁵ The result of the socialist rivalry were summarised on this occasion: at the meeting of the Moscow Municipal Committee on 20 October 1967 it was announced that the plan was exceeded by 8% in the third quarter, as compared to the previous year.¹¹⁶

The official celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution started on 2 November 1967, when Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR unveiled the monument of Lenin in Kremlin, in the Taynitsky Garden (*Тайницкий сад*), where a monument of Tsar Alexander II used to stand. The winner of the contest was the design prepared by Veniamin Pinchuk and Sergey Speransky. The former offered an interpretation of their work in *Pravda*:

Я решил показать вождя сидящим в раздумье вот так просто, среди нас. Чтобы зрителям хотелось постоять возле памятника, вроде как побеседовать с Ильичом. В то же время в фигуре сидящего Ильича я стремился передать напряженное предощущение движения. Мы знаем В. И. Ильича и по кинодокументам, и по воспоминаниям, как человека очень живого и подвижного. Потому-то я его изобразил, если говорить точнее, не сидящим, а присевшим, готовым уже в следующие мгновение встать и вновь окунуться в кипучую деятельность.¹¹⁷

¹¹² “50 лет Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции. Тезисы Центрального Комитета КПСС”, in: *КПСС в резолюциях и решениях*, vol. 11, p. 220. See Brezhnev’s statement of 10 November 1966: “До – 75 года – строить социализм – мы не будем говорить о стр-ве ком-зма”. See: *Леонид Брежнев. Рабочие и дневниковые записи*, p. 154. The sentence written by the general secretary contradicts the ideological interpretation mandatory after 1936. The introduction of socialism in the USSR was officially declared in the constitution adopted at the time.

¹¹³ РГАСПИ, ф. 17, оп. 103, д. 653, л. 82–84.

¹¹⁴ The Ramensky District is the south-eastern part of Moscow.

¹¹⁵ РГАСПИ, ф. 17, оп. 103, д. 653, л. 82–84.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, d. 654, l. 29.

¹¹⁷ “Памятник В.И. Ленину в Кремле”, *Правда*, 23 June 1967, p. 2.

Lenin was the central figure of the memory of the October Revolution. The Communist Party of the USSR did not promote any other hero of those times. At the Third Republican Art Exhibition “Soviet Russia”, dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary, included 88 works devoted to the first Bolshevik leader.¹¹⁸ In his speech, Brezhnev did not deviate from the generally accepted convention and praised Lenin for his genius, which made the victory of socialism possible.¹¹⁹ A similar note was present in the speeches delivered by Sergey Minaev, a hero of socialist work, Konstantin Ostrovitianov, a participant of revolutionary battles in Moscow in 1917 and Irina Alymova, a student of the Lenin Public University of Educational Sciences.¹²⁰ In this symbolic manner, by gathering the representatives of three generations: of the Revolution, the 1930s and the Great Patriotic War, and the post-war generation, the Communist Party wanted to focus the memory of all Soviet citizens on Lenin. Six thousand people participated in the celebration.¹²¹

In his speech delivered the next day, on 3 November 1967 in the Palace of Congresses, Brezhnev did not exceed the scope defined before the fiftieth anniversary as far as the content and symbolism are concerned. The commemoration of the October Revolution became something like an independence day: the party focused on the past and its positive aspects. The future, understood as implementing the utopia, which was central to the event from half a century before, was marginalised. In 1967, the Communist Party of the USSR justified its right to hold the power not by the fact that equipped with the Marxist and Leninist teachings it became familiar with the history and will therefore lead the citizens of the USSR towards communism. A more important legitimising argument was not what the party can ensure in the future, but what it had already achieved in the past. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR focused on three issues: the growth of the USSR, improving the quality of life in the USSR and the conflict with China along with Mao’s “apostasy”. According to Brezhnev, the Soviet Union had a mature socialist society. The differences between peasants, workers and intelligentsia started to fade away. It was similar with life in the city and in the country. This is why – the general secretary claimed – one could see the dawning of a new society. These achievements, according to Brezhnev, were due to the implementation of the provisions of the third programme of the party. The leader of the USSR also expressed the hope that the USSR – the homeland of socialism – will soon become the birthplace of communism. Contrary to

¹¹⁸ See *Третья Республиканская художественная выставка «Советская Россия» 20 сентября–20 октября 1967. Каталог. Живопись, скульптура, графика, монументальное и театрально-декорационное искусство*, ed. Л.В. Новикова, Москва, 1967.

¹¹⁹ “Речь Л.И. Брежнева”, *Правда*, 3 November 1967, p. 1.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹²¹ The script of the celebrations was preserved. See РГАСПИ, f. 17, op. 103, d. 666, l. 251.

Khrushchev, he never mentioned any specific time frame in which this promise would be fulfilled.

Brezhnev underlined that currently, an important element of policy was guaranteeing the wellbeing of the Soviet citizens. As he praised Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) and his ideological flexibility, he probably alluded to Alexei Kosygin's reform, criticised by Marxist-Leninist theoreticians.¹²² In this way he used history to legitimise his current actions.

Finally, he attacked Mao by recalling the fact that the October Revolution was the first event of this type in the history of the modern world. He claimed that the October Revolution was a model for other revolutionists and all other movements of this sort in the contemporary world had drawn inspiration from it. According to Brezhnev, China stood in opposition to the revolutionary principles, as it pursued a chauvinist policy. Once again the general secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR proved that Moscow had the exclusive right to interpret the revolutionary principles.¹²³

Brezhnev recapitulated the theses that could be found in the two documents prepared by the Central Committee in the previous year. He did not mention Stalin, however, whose name appeared in the June manifesto. The decision to skip Lenin's successor in the jubilee speech was made at the meeting of the Politburo, which was held one week before, on 27 October.¹²⁴ This omission proves that the party elite still had not decided on a relevant policy as regards de-Stalinisation, despite being faced with such demands.¹²⁵

Furthermore, from the perspective of a Soviet citizen, a noticeable difference was the fact that during the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution the intensity of propaganda reached its peak. On 5 November *Pravda* published an appeal issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, including the same statements.¹²⁶ The Central Statistical Office of the USSR informed that grain was harvested ahead of time as planned.¹²⁷ On 6 November 1967 the party officials placed wreaths in Lenin's Mausoleum and on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.¹²⁸ Next day, a traditional military parade took place on

¹²² In his article published in *Molodoj Kommunist*, G. Lisitschkin, doctor of economy, claimed that the current reform and the NEP have many common points. See Г. Лисичкин, "Ленинские принципы хозяйственного строительства", *Молодой Коммунист*, 1967, no. 1, p. 35.

¹²³ Full text of Brezhnev's speech: "Пятьдесят лет великих побед социализма. Доклад Генерального секретаря ЦК КПСС Л.И. Брежнева", *Правда*, 4 November 1967, pp. 2–6.

¹²⁴ See Леонид Брежнев. *Рабочие и дневниковые записи*, p. 246 and fn. 257 on p. 287.

¹²⁵ See fn. 104.

¹²⁶ "К советскому народу, ко всем трудящимся Союза Советских Социалистических Республик", *Правда*, 5 November 1967, p. 1.

¹²⁷ "План заготовок зерна выполнен", *Правда*, 4 November 1967, p. 1.

¹²⁸ "Возложение венков к Мавзолею В.И. Ленина и могиле Неизвестного солдата", *Правда*, 7 November 1967.

Red Square.¹²⁹ And on 11 November, in the Palace of Congresses, the last grand celebration in Moscow was held: a meeting of the Komsomol youth.¹³⁰

* * *

The process of consolidating the party and the whole society around the anniversary of 9 May, and at the same time pushing the October revolution Day into the background, was slow and was did not finish in 1965 or in 1967. However, there is no doubt that the generational change in the 1960s entailed also a change in identity – people who had the power hadn't grown up in the cult of the nineteenth century organisation *Narodnaya Volya* [People's Will] and Lenin's favourite book titled *What Is To Be Done?* by Nikolai Chernyshevsky. Rather than the European revolutionary traditions, those people valued the country in which they grew up, which they built in the 1930s and which turned out victorious after the greatest challenge – the war with Germany. It was those people in the 1960s that influenced the shape of the utopia project, which materialized in the form of a state in October 1917. This is why their main goal was at least to maintain the *status quo* both in the country and on the international stage. Therefore the leaders of the USSR started putting off the implementation of the ultimate goal of the October Revolution, mentioned a few years before by Khrushchev, to an unspecified time in the future.

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the October Revolution (1967) – a Generational Turnover and the Politics of Memory of the USSR

Abstract

Celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution revealed important changes in the politics of memory pursued by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. With the use of methodology of research on memory, in the article I put forward the thesis that the utopian project began on 7 November 1917 (N.S.) and faith in the final achievement of its goal set by Lenin's party began to be overshadowed. The events which took place in Petrograd and on which collective memory had focused for last fifty years, did not have in the 1960s such a strong symbolic impact, being able to mobilise the people to achieve goals set by the Communist Party as the Great Patriotic War. From the time of reactivation of the official celebrations of the Victory Day in 1965 the October Revolution began gradually to diminish in importance and lose its central place in social memory of the Soviet people.

The most important cause of this process of evolution of collective memory is, in my opinion, a generational change of the sixties. I also indicate some other significant factors that contributed to the politics of memory of the Communist Party: the problem of attitude towards the Stalinist period, conflict with China, and relations with the Western states.

¹²⁹ “Победоносным ленинским курсом. Военный парад и демонстрация трудящихся на Красной Площади в Москве”, *Правда*, 8 November 1967, p. 1.

¹³⁰ “Клятва верности делу коммунизма. Торжественный митинг молодёжи”, *Правда*, 12 November 1967, pp. 1–2.

50-я годовщина Октябрьской революции (1967) - генерационный сдвиг и историческая политика СССР

Аннотация

Празднование 50-й годовщины Октябрьской революции продемонстрировало существенные изменения в исторической политике КПСС. Пользуясь методологией исследований памяти, в статье я выдвигаю тезис, что утопическому проекту, начавшемуся 7 ноября 1917 года (н.ст.) и вере в конечное осуществление цели, определенной тогда партией Ленина, перестали придавать большое значение. События в Петрограде, на которых за последние полвека сосредоточивалась общественная память, в 60-х гг. не обладали настолько сильным символическим измерением, способным мобилизовать общество к осуществлению целей, поставленных коммунистической партией, как Великая Отечественная война. Октябрьская революция, в момент возрождения официального праздника Дня Победы в 1965 году, стала терять свой главенствующий статус в общественной памяти в Советском Союзе.

Самой важной причиной этого процесса эволюции общественной памяти я считаю генерационный сдвиг 60-х гг. Я также указываю на другие факторы, которые существенным образом повлияли на историческую политику компартии: проблему отношения к сталинским временам, конфликт с Китаем, а также отношения с западными государствами.

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