УДК 930.2:329.78+94(47)

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-1-72-86

Roman V. Rybakov

Omsk State Technical University, Omsk, Russian Federation

Socio-Political Identity of Youth in the 1920s Epistolary Heritage

Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of studying Soviet identity in the 1920s. The object of the research is letters of youth from the fonds of the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI). Epistolary heritage is an important source for studying daily life of the young generation, their inner world. The content of the letters with their assessments and characteristics of the moment allows scientific understanding of socio-political identity of the young people, their value orientations and moral ideals, and also answer the question of the effectiveness of identification processes in the 1920s. There is great discrepancy in terminology and approaches, when discussing “identity” in modern humanities. The author proceeds from

classical understanding of “identity” as awareness of unity, of “identification” as a set of mechanisms and means of consolidation. In the 1920s the authorities used traditional means of printed and oral propaganda to form Soviet identity. Susceptibility of the youth to the official ideology was higher than that of the adult population, which facilitated nurturing of the generation of loyal Bolsheviks supporters united in a single organization, the Komsomol. The found sources confirm that the youth readily assumed the role of the main builder of the socialist society. However, most letters in addition to devotion to the propagated ideals offered some alternative assessments and opinions. The 1920s everyday life was wrought with socio-economic contradictions. According to the author, the subjectively experienced identity often did not coincide with that propagandized officially. Individual identity of the young was built gradually through dialectical interaction of external identification imposed by the authorities and self-identification rising from personal experience. Discrepancy between realities and expectations brought disappointment and resulted in a crisis of the emerging socio-political identity.

Keywords

Historical sources, Komsomol, Russian Young Communist League, Russian Leninist Young Communist League, All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, Soviet everyday life, youth non-conformism, Soviet identity, identification, epistolary heritage.

Download the article: [rybakov_doi](#)

References

AKSYUTIN, Yu. M. "Novaya istoricheskaya obshchnost'": osnovaniya i sodержanie sovetskoi nadetnicheskoi identichnosti ["The new historical community": Basis and content of the Soviet supra-ethnic identity. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik Khakasskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. N. F. Katanova [Bulletin of the N. F. Katanov Khakass State University], 2017, no. 22, pp. 124–126.

BAKSHT, D. A. Chastnye pis'ma sibirskikh ssyl'nykh o "Turukhanskom bunte": 1908– 1912 [Private letters of Siberian exiles about the 'Turukhansk revolt': 1908–1912. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2018, no. 2, pp. 508–521.

BELOVA, I. B. "Neobkhodimo naiti skoree vykhod iz sozdavshegosya tupika, chtoby ne unichtozhit' okonchatel'no Russkii narod". "Otkrovennoe zayavlenie" vo vlast' zhitelya uezdnogo Kozel'ska v marte 1919 g. ['It is necessary to find a way out soon, or the Russian people shall be destroyed': A 'plain-speaking petition' to authority of a Kozelsk citizen in March 1919. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2018, no. 1, pp. 123–134. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-1-123-134

GUDKOVA, V. V. Rozhdenie sovetskikh syuzhetov: Tipologiya otechestvennoi dramy 1920-kh – nachala 1930-h godov [The birth of Soviet plots: Typology of the national drama of the 1920s - early 1930s. In Russ.]. Moscow, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie publ., 2008, 453 p.

ELISEEVA, N. V. Pis'ma sovetskikh grazhdan v sredstva massovoi informatsii kak istochnik po izucheniyu global'noi transformatsii Sovetskogo Soyuza i Rossii v kontse 1980 – nachale 1990-kh gg. po dokumentam Tsentral'nogo arkhiva obshchestvennykh dvizhenii Moskvyy [Letters of Soviet citizens in mass media as a source for studying global transformations in the Soviet Union and Russia in the late 1980s and early 1990s: Documents from the Central Archive of Social Movements in Moscow. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2012, no 4, pp. 95–113.

MAIOFIS, M. L., KUKULIN, I. V. Sovetskaya sistema obrazovaniya i proizvodstvo sotsial'nykh identichnostei v 1920-e – nachale 1940-kh godov [Soviet education system and production of social identities in the 1920s – early 1940s. In Russ.]. IN: Shagi-Steps, 2015, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 40–45.

MALAKHOV, V. S. “Skromnoe obayanie rasizma” i drugie stat’i [“The discreet charm of racism” and other articles. In Russ.]. Moscow, Modest Kolerov i “Dom intellektual'noi knigi” publ, 2001, 176 p.

MARTYNENKO, T. S. Sovetskie prazdniki kak sposob konstruirovaniya novoi sotsial'noi identichnosti [Soviet holidays as a means of constructing a new social identity. In Russ.] IN: Chelovek v mire kul'tury, 2017, no. 2–3, pp. 111–115.

PUNANOVA, N. S. Otechestvennaya moda v kontekste formirovaniya “sovetskoi identichnosti” v 20-e gody XX veka [National fashion in the context of formation of “Soviet identity” in the 1920s. In Russ.] IN: Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta kul'tury i iskusstv [Bulletin of the Moscow State University of Culture and Arts], 2016, no. 2 (70), pp. 125–133.

SINYAVSKII, A. D. Osnovy sovetskoi tsivilizatsii [The basis of the Soviet civilization. In Russ.]. Moscow, Agraf publ, 2002, 464 p..

SUKHOVA, O. A. V poiskakh sotsial'noi identichnosti: sovetskoe obshchestvo v zerkale epistolyarnogo naslediya epokhi [Searching for Soviet identity: Soviet society as reflected in the epistolary heritage of the era. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2017, no. 4, pp. 101–110.

KHARKHORDIN, O. V. Oblichat' i litsemerit': genealogiya rossiiskoi lichnosti [Denounce and dissimulate: The genealogy of Russian personality. In Russ.]. St. Petersburg – Moscow. Evropeiskii universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, Letnii sad publ, 2002, 511 p.

About author

Rybakov Roman Valerievich, PhD in History, associate professor, Omsk State Technical

University, department of history, philosophy, and social communications, associate professor,
Omsk, Russian Federation, +7-903-982-83-88, roman-rybkov@mail.ru

Grant information

This article has been prepared with financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) and the Ministry of Education of the Omsk Region (research project no 18-49-550004).

Submitted 13.02.2019, published (for citation):

RYBAKOV, R. V. Sotsial'no-politicheskaya identichnost' molodezhi v epistolyarnom nasledii 1920-kh gg. [Socio-Political Identity of Youth in the 1920s Epistolary Heritage. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2020, no. 1, pp. 72-86. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-1-72-86

You can read completely article in the russian historic-archival magazine “The Herald of an Archivist”. Read more about terms of subscription [here](#) .

Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .