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"Release 10 Billion": On the Issue of Financing Soviet Holidays and Anniversaries

Abstract

The article, based on the materials of the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History and the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, explores the history of financing Soviet state holidays, beginning with the first anniversaries of the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks, realizing the importance of public holidays as an effective tool for legitimizing Soviet power and promoting new spiritual values, allocated significant amounts for their organization even during the economically difficult period of the Civil War. In the early years of the Soviet power, the decoration of cities and demonstrations was rather ascetic, and the money allocated for the holidays was to be used to maintain the authority among the Red Army soldiers. Later, the

decoration of cities for the festivities on November 7 and May 1 became more varied. Preparation began in advance, decoration of cities and columns of workers was paid for by the city and district party organizations and by the trade unions. In 1925, among the anniversaries that were planned on a grand scale, was the 20th anniversary of the 1905 Revolution. The article shows how the issue of its financing was resolved. Subsequently, the economic support of festive events, primarily on November 7 and May 1, was assigned to the enterprises. At the same time, the question of expediency of such significant expenses on decorating cities, holiday stands, and columns of workers has been repeatedly raised not only by the holiday organizers, but also by the demonstrations participants. They said that some institutions and senior executives got carried away by enthusiasm for anniversaries, ceremonies, and banquets. The Decree of the Politburo of the Central Committee "On Anniversaries" (1928) peremptorily prohibited organization of anniversaries and celebrations without special permission. In 1938, the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks "On Prevention of Spending Unnecessary Funds in Celebrating May 1, 1938" finally determined the procedure and sources of financing of the Soviet state holidays. This Decision became the basis for all subsequent decisions on financing holiday events.

Keywords

Historical sources, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), Soviet holidays, financing of holidays, economic situation, attitude of the population, Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee "On Anniversaries".

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