

УДК 94(47)

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-2-550-563

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New Materials for Studying Preparation and Staging of the 6th World Festival of Youth and
Students in 1957

Abstract

The article assesses archival materials on the festival movement in the Soviet Union in 1950s, including its peak, the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students held in 1957 in Moscow. Even now the Moscow festival is seen in the context of international cultural politics of the Cold War and as a unique event for the Soviet Union. The article is to put the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in the context of other youth festivals held in the Soviet Union. The festivals of 1950s provided a field for political, social, and cultural experiments. They also have been the

Written by Daniel Sawert

Wednesday, 19 May 2021 06:08

crucible of a new way of communication and a new language of design. Furthermore, festivals reflected the new (although relative) liberalism in the Soviet Union. This liberalism, first of all, was expressed in the fact that festivals were organized by the Komsomol and other Soviet public and cultural organisations. Taking the role of these organisations into consideration, the research draws on the documents of the Ministry of culture, the All-Russian Stage Society, as well as personal documents of the artists. Furthermore, the author has gained access to new archive materials, which have until now been part of no research, such as documents of the N. Krupskaya Central Culture and Art Center and of the central committees of various artistic trade unions. These documents confirm the hypothesis that the festivals provided the Komsomol and the Communist party with a means to solve various social, educational, and cultural problems. For instance, in Central Asia with its patriarchal society, the festivals focused on female emancipation. In rural Central Asia, as well as in other non-Russian parts of the Soviet Union, there co-existed different ways of celebrating. Local traditions intermingled with cultural standards prescribed by Moscow. At the first glance, the modernisation of the Soviet society was successful. The youth acquired political and cultural level that allowed the Soviet state to compete with the West during the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students. During the festival, however, it became apparent, that the Soviet cultural scheme no longer met the dictates of times. Archival documents show that after the Festival cultural and party officials agreed to ease off dogmatism and to tolerate some of the foreign cultural phenomena.



Keywords

Archival materials, sources, history of festival movement, World Festival of Youth and Students,

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Wednesday, 19 May 2021 06:08

All-Union Festival of Soviet Youth, festival.

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Written by Daniel Sawert
Wednesday, 19 May 2021 06:08

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Submitted 9.12.2017, published:

SAWERT, D. Novye materialy k izucheniyu podgotovki i provedeniya VI Vsemirnogo festivalya molodezhi i studentov 1957 g. [New Materials for Studying Preparation and Staging of the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in 1957. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2018, no. 2, pp. 550-563. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-2-550-563

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Wednesday, 19 May 2021 06:08

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