

THE INVENTED TRADITIONS: THE CALENDAR OF FESTIVE DAYS AND FAMILY CUSTOMS IN THE LATVIAN SSR

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The representatives of the Communist regime (1940–1941; 1944/45–1991) used newly invented festive and remembrance days, as well as celebratory traditions and family customs adjusted to the Marxist-Leninist ideology as instruments to legitimise power and its representative institutions, to strengthen the prevalent ideology and to assimilate societies. Although in the first years of the occupation regime this area was not very much addressed, in the 1970s a special infrastructure to invent traditions and the monitoring mechanism for this process were established. The aim of this article is to provide a preliminary assessment of the invention process of the Soviet festive and family customs in the Latvian SSR.

Key words: the Communist regime, the invented (replaced) traditions, the socialist content in the national framework.

INTRODUCTION

When examining the calendar of festive days and family customs of the so-called *Latvian socialist nation* living in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – the Latvian SSR), one must address it as part of the creation of a bigger ethnic entity – *the Soviet nation* – and of the educational process. The representatives of the Communist regime used the newly invented and replaced traditions of common festive and remembrance days, as well as celebratory traditions and family customs adjusted to the Marxist-Leninist ideology as instruments to legitimise power and

its representative institutions, to strengthen the prevalent ideology and to assimilate society.

According to the temporal and spatial context, especially when it is a result of social collisions, each society *invents*, introduces or changes traditions, festivities and rituals. *The invented traditions* is a term which gained recognition in 1983 from a book with a similar title¹, and the authors of the book defined such traditions as many specially organized and mutually interacting social practices, which include strict instructions, regulations, rituals and symbols. As noted by historian Eric Hobsbawm, the aim of invented traditions, with their repetitive character, is to introduce, instil and maintain values and behaviour whose meaning is based on the historical past. This process leads to a situation where the invented traditions become part of the collective (social, ethnic) and individual identities. Sociologists Émile Durkheim² and Peter L. Berger³, politologists George Schöpflin⁴ and Jeffrey C. Alexander⁵ and others have drawn attention to the potential of rituals and traditions to renew and strengthen social ties and solidarity among members of society over various historical periods.

The case of Soviet (= socialist) traditions⁶ is different. In the context of the domestic customs of the Latvian SSR a more suitable term would be the *replaced traditions*⁷. The traditional customs, including the related religious rituals, were replaced with the Soviet equivalent, which used a recognizable framework for the new content: folklore and ethnographic elements including crafts and the ceremonies of the Christian church. The initiators of traditions were not the elite of the local community, but the hierarchically highest representatives of the occupation regime in Moscow; the elaborators were the representatives of the local authorities, who also attracted the local representatives of the culture and science elite. The unification and invention of traditions took place gradually under strict control, allowing other customs to be practiced in parallel.

The aim of this article is to provide a preliminary assessment of the invention process of the Soviet festive and family customs in the Latvian SSR. The research is based on documents and correspondence revealing the decree of the Council of Ministers

(hereinafter – the CM) on the implementation of the improvement measures in the invention of Soviet traditions⁸ and the materials documenting the new traditions such as photographs, descriptions of events, the issued documents, etc.⁹ found at the Repository of Ethnographic Materials (hereinafter – the REM) at the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia. These materials were accumulated in the period from 1963 to the first half of the 1980s. The sources also include methodological publications¹⁰, calendars¹¹, as well as the statements provided in academic publications by ethnographers and folklore scholars regarding the theoretical and practical side of the invention of traditions.¹²

This subject matter is seldom in Latvian historiography. Researchers in humanities and social sciences only started to address the question of culture in the Latvian SSR at the beginning of the 21st century. After the renewal of the independence of Latvia, historians revised the historiography of this historical period in their assessment of the Soviet occupation, and it became dominated by the denial of the regime's positive impact on the development of Latvian people, release of new facts and analysis. Socialist traditions in Latvian post-Soviet historiography have been assessed only in some works, for example, in Laura Uzule and Vita Zelče's study of Latvian cemetery festivities,¹³ as well as in the work by Inta Rasa¹⁴ and articles by Rita Treija¹⁵, Sergejs Kruks¹⁶ and Daina Bleiere.¹⁷

A similar situation in the research of Soviet traditions can be observed in the neighbouring countries. The compilations of documents and works that have been dedicated to the analysis of the subject matter have only been written in the last few years.¹⁸

THE INITIATIVE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET TRADITIONS, ITS JUSTIFICATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The ideologists of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (hereinafter – the CC CPSU) were well-aware of the importance of common festivities and memo-

rial rituals in the ideological education and integration of society, although their establishment and introduction took more than a decade¹⁹ of experimenting with the form and content of the invented traditions, as well as trying to eradicate religious rituals from the daily life of inhabitants living in the vast country. According to the available documents and the statistics on the participation of citizens in various religious rituals²⁰, the latter was an impossible task.

More extensive and crucial was the instruction of new traditions which strengthened the Communist ideology and moral values, and corresponded to the requirements of the socialist economic order.²¹ This took place in the mid-1950s and early 1960s.²² It was affected by several circumstances: 1) economic – prevention of devastation caused by warfare, and the stabilization of the economic system; 2) ideological – only in the period when Nikita Khrushchev was the General Secretary of the CC CPSU (1953–1964), did the functionaries of the Communist Party realise that an alternative – the Soviet domestic traditions – was necessary to fight against the impact of religion on society. As noted by historian Daina Bleiere, in this context a crucial role was played by the optimism over the advantages of the Soviet lifestyle and Soviet culture, which emerged after the XX Congress of the CPSU. In the 1950s many post-revolution Soviet ideas and practices experienced a renaissance. These ideas and practices at least partially were transferred or were attempted to be transferred to national republics too, while taking into account the local specifics.

To implement this project, serious work was undertaken involving the ideologists and propaganda officials of the Party, as well as the representatives of the state, republic and the local administrative apparatus, and academics and practitioners. In the whole of the USSR, the Baltic republics, including the Latvian SSR, were the leaders in this process.²³

Up to the early 1960s, as noted by the ethnographers and researchers of traditions, the creation of festivities and the elaboration of their order “was based on the creative work of certain enthusiasts (individuals and collectives)”.²⁴ The 1963 decrees of

the Ideological Commission of the CC CPSU were the stimulus for the creation and introduction of the Soviet traditions, but the inspiration for the content and form of the new traditions was provided by two seminars on Soviet festivities and customs. The first took place in May 1964 in Moscow, the second in October 1978 in Kiev. Already in the first All-Union seminar the infrastructure of this process was defined, stipulating that the elaboration and strengthening of the new Soviet festivities and customs was the task of the Party and the state. This task had to be implemented while attracting and uniting the representatives of the Party, unions, trade unions and the Young Communist League, as well as academics and specialists in customs. The outcome of the Second All-Union seminar was the publication of recommendations for the event organisers.²⁵ This publication has often been used as reference in the works of Latvian ethnographers and researchers studying socialist traditions. Another outcome of the seminar in Kiev was a publication dedicated to the Decree of the CC CPSU “On Further Improvements in the Ideological and Political Education Work” (1979), where it was emphasised that “festivities and customs are part of the ideological work, which is related to collective activities (..) that have wide opportunities to demonstrate the greatness of the Communist ideals, the tireless productive work of the CPSU in raising the well-being of the nation and strengthening of the mightiness of the Soviet Homeland, revealing the essence of the Soviet lifestyle and the achievements of the socialist society”.²⁶

Reacting to the decrees of the CC CPSU, Congresses and Seminars, similar regulations were adopted in the Latvian SSR. For example, the 1963 joint decree issued by the Latvian Leninist Young Communist League (hereinafter – the LLYCL) CC bureau, the Executive Council of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR (hereinafter – the SC) and the panel of the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR “On the Condition and Measures to Introduce Soviet Traditions in the Domestic Lives of the Proletariat of the Republic” and the “Regulation on the Commissions Monitoring the Introduction of Soviet Domestic Traditions and the Law on

Religious Cults”²⁷ approved on 6th June 1964 by the CM of the Latvian SSR, stipulated the establishment of commissions in the Soviet executive committees in cities, regions and villages. The representatives of the Communist Party, local executive power, trade union and Young Communist League had to be included among other members of these commissions.

From the early 1960s, when the establishment and introduction of the new Soviet traditions as part of the daily life was regarded as one of the top priorities of the Communist Party and the Soviet executive power at the level of the state and republics, the respective commissions, committees, cabinets and unions were created based on the structures of the SC and the CM. In 1960 in the Latvian SSR work was undertaken by the LLYCL CC *Commission of the Soviet Domestic Traditions (1960–1963)*²⁸; its work was continued by the sector for Soviet domestic traditions of the Republican Atheist Council of the Society of Information of the Latvian SSR. One of the first institutions that monitored the creation and invention process of the new traditions in the Latvian SSR was the *Commission Monitoring the Introduction of the Soviet Domestic Traditions and the Law on Religious Cults of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR*, established on 6th June 1964, which on 9th October 1979, according to the new guidelines created by the Second All-Union Seminar and the official regulations was changed into the *Commission Facilitating the Soviet Traditions, Festivities, Rituals and the Law on Religious Cults of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR*. Representatives from various institutions worked in the Commission and it was not an area that was of concern only to the Ministry of Culture. As mentioned before, commissions with analogous titles operated under the executive councils of the proletariat unions in regions, cities, towns and villages. According to the materials of the AEM, the representatives of various professions were involved in the work of these local commissions – librarians, teachers, club leaders, farmers from the collective farms, the best readers of the books available at the libraries, the secretaries of the village councils and executive councils, animal husbandry experts, chairs of the

collective farms.²⁹ Pursuant to the regulations, four sections were introduced as part of the commissions: 1) the section of children's festivities; 2) the section of the passport issuing ceremonies and majority festivities; 3) the section of marriage ceremonies and birth certificate issuing; 4) the section of funeral ceremonies.

The activities of these commissions and their satellite organizations in the Latvian SSR created solid infrastructure, which served as the grounds for organisational, propaganda and research work. They cooperated with *the Academic and Methodological Cabinet in the Activities of Clubs* of the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR and *People's House of Art of E. Melngailis*³⁰ (hereinafter – the PHA), which had the biggest significance in the invention and implementation process of the new Soviet traditions. The task of the PHA was to introduce the decisions of the abovementioned commissions as concrete proposals, recommendations and methodological tools, to ensure their availability in the methodological cabinets of the houses of culture subordinated to the *Academic and Methodological Cabinet in the Activities of Clubs*, which passed this information further to community centres, clubs and houses of culture.

In 1976 the *Methodological Society of Socialist Traditions* (hereinafter – the Society) started working as part of the *Academic and Methodological Cabinet in the Activities of Clubs*, with members from the Party, councils, and the Young Communist League, as well as institutions of culture, education and academic research. Among them, there were also the ethnographers of the Institute of History of the Academy of Science (hereinafter – the AS) of the Latvian SSR, whose direct duties in this Society were related to the creation of festivities and customs, their improvement, monitoring, and elaboration of proposals for event improvements.³¹ In the mid-1970s, marking further activities of the ethnographic sector, “the contemporary lifestyle and culture of the rural and city dwellers of Soviet Latvia” was mentioned as one of the most important research directions, “drawing special attention to the proletariat family, Soviet labour and domestic customs and the clarification of the development of folk art”³².

The Society was responsible for: elaboration of the recommendations for ceremonies; listening to the reports of the regional commissions of traditions and analysing them; participating in the organisation and jury work of various seminars, shows and competitions; provision of corresponding instructions and consultations; preparation of academic and popular science publications; giving speeches in scientific and practical science conferences on various issues of festivities and customs; preparation of information releases to press, radio and TV.³³

As it can be seen, the PHA was responsible for the unification of traditions and the elaboration and offer of instruments to be used in the process of implementation. In the course of its actions the following work was accomplished: methodological tools and recommendations in the form of published brochures³⁴ and compilations of articles³⁵ were provided; conferences, seminars, lectures, and training were organised providing not only theoretical, but also practical direction (for example, how to prepare the hosts of funeral ceremonies)³⁶; publications in the republican press and local regional press were issued, and information disseminated with the help of other public media. The many methodological means published in the 1960s–1970s were a handbook for the practitioners, where the structure of the festive event was described in a very detailed manner starting from the decorations, props and scenography and ending with poetry and audio material that could be used for artistic amateur activities, as well as the clothing of the host and other nuances.

In the process of tradition implementation, according to the evidence provided by the materials at the Latvian State Archive³⁷, sociological studies, as well as pilot projects of various parts of ceremonies were organised. Later, these projects were carefully analysed, evaluating whether the respective element was corresponding and appropriate for the ceremony, how it contributed to the event etc., which ensured that many exaggerations and occurrences of *tastelessness* were avoided.

The feedback – information on the process of the implementation of traditions and the success – was provided by several

mechanisms of control: round-up reports which were submitted by the methodological cabinets at the regional houses of culture, shows (sort of socialist competitions) where the festivities and events were assessed by special commissions and the analysis of the materials (surveys, observations and interviews) obtained in the ethnographic expeditions of the Institute of History of the Academy of Science of the Latvian SSR.³⁸ All this information was discussed and carefully addressed both in the Society and the Commission under the CM of the Latvian SSR.

FESTIVITIES: THE CONTENT, FORM AND SOURCES

When examining the USSR calendar of festive and remembrance days, the ethnographers of the time categorised them in the following way: 1) The state and revolutionary festivities and festive days; 2) Labour festivities and customs; 3) Domestic festivities and customs, including the family.³⁹ In contemporary historiography a different perspective is provided, grouping the Soviet festivities and customs in the following way: historical, professional, folkloristic and others.⁴⁰ The introduction of the fourth group, “others”, is justified by many festive days on the Soviet calendar – for example, the International Day for Protection of Children (1st of June), the International UN Day (24th of October), etc., which cannot be included in the three categories provided by the contemporaries. Later in the article the author has provided an insight into the national holidays and labour festivities, as well as family customs, keeping the titles of categories given by the contemporaries.

1. NATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND REMEMBRANCE DAYS

The task of these festivities (see Table No 1⁴¹ on page 131) is to create collective memory, the sense of belonging to the state and feelings of patriotism. In this category, a crucial element is the idea of continuity – the young generation must remember, honour and protect what the older generation fought and sacrificed their lives for. In 1945 the calendar included the Remembrance Day of

Table No 1

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND REMEMBRANCE DAYS CELEBRATED AT THE LATVIAN SSR IN 1975

<p>January</p> <p>1. The New Year's Day 21. The Anniversary of Lenin's Death 22. The Beginning of the First Russian Revolution</p>	<p>April</p> <p>11. The International Release Day of the Prisoners in the Fascist Concentration Camps 22. V. Lenin's Birthday 24. The International Youth Solidarity Day 25. The RSDLP III Congress 25. The World's City Friendship Day</p>	<p>July</p> <p>21. The Foundation Day of the Latvian SSR 25. The USSR Navy Day</p>	<p>October</p> <p>24. The International UN Day 29. The Foundation Day of Russian Communist Youth League</p>
<p>February</p> <p>18. Birthday of the SC USSR Chairman Nikolai Podgorny 21. Birthday of the CM USSR Chairman Aleksey Kosygin 23. The Day of Soviet Army and Navy</p>	<p>May</p> <p>1. The International Workers' Day 5. K. Marx's Birthday 9. The Victory Festivity 25. The Liberalisation Day of Africa</p>	<p>August</p> <p>5. F. Engels's Day of Death 5. The Latvian SSR incorporated in the USSR 18. The Day of the USSR Air Fleet</p>	<p>November</p> <p>7. The Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution 10. The World's Youth Day 19. The Day of Missile Army and Artillery 28. F. Engels's Birthday</p>
<p>March</p> <p>8. The International Women's Day 12. The February Bourgeois Democratic Revolution in Russia (1917) 14. K. Marx's Day of Death 18. The Day of Paris Commune 29. CP(b)R IX Congress 30. CPSU XXIV Congress</p>	<p>June</p> <p>1. The International Day for Protection of Children 22. The Beginning of the Great Patriotic War 27. The Day of Soviet Youth</p>	<p>September</p>	<p>December</p> <p>5. The USSR Constitution Day 18. C(b)P XIV Congress 19. Birthday of the CC CPSU General Secretary 30. Foundation of the USSR</p>

Lenin (22nd of January, later – 21st of January), the Foundation Day of the Latvian SSR (21st of July), the Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution (7th and 8th of November, later – 7th of November), Stalin's (later – the USSR) Day of Constitution (5th of December)⁴², while starting with the 1960s the range of the festive days was crucially extended in the calendar. This extension was done by ideologically appropriate Congresses of the Communist Party, as well as by Russian and Latvian Social Democratic labour parties etc., new dates added included birthdays and death days of the regime ideologists K. Marx, and F. Engels, and V. Lenin, as well as of Latvian revolutionaries (P. Stučka, F. Rozītis-Āzis and others), and birthdays of the current General Secretaries of the CC CPSU. Many of these festive days were not kept in the calendar longer than for 10 years. From the 1950s onwards a stable tradition was the Army Day and the Navy Day (23rd of February), the Victory Day (9th of May) and also International Women's Day (8th of March). The general public knew these festivities under other names, for example, the *Men's Day* (23rd of February) was analogous to the *Women's Day* (8th of March). Consequently, these festive days were imbued with another meaning.

National and revolutionary festivities contributed to the myth surrounding the creation and creators of the state. The Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the beginning of the 1905 Revolution, the USSR (in 1945 – Stalin's) Constitution Day, the Victory Day and the USSR Foundation Day were the most important points of departure in the USSR calendar of festive days. In the context of the Latvian SSR, the following events were crucial and thus enduring in the calendar of the festive days – the Foundation Day of the Latvian SSR (21st July; in the calendar from 1945 up to 1990), and the incorporation of Latvia into the USSR (5th August). Although the scenarios for celebrations were prepared for most of the national holidays⁴³, not all of them were implemented in real life. As already mentioned above, the idea of continuity was an essential part of such national holidays as the Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolu-

tion and the Victory Day, therefore, a crucial and integral element of the festive ritual was the meeting of generations, which was organised in the places corresponding to the semiotics of festivities⁴⁴ – the Lenin monument and the Cemetery of the Brethren where Little Octobrists and Pioneers met with the participants of the Revolution and the veterans of the Great Patriotic War (Soviet name for World War II). The procession to the memorial site, the festive meeting, a lecture, a concert – all these were important elements of the celebrations.

The pantheon of heroes was also significant in the category of these festivities – the authors of Marxist-Leninist ideology (Marx, Engels, Lenin) and those who implemented these ideas in real life, including the local revolutionaries of Latvian origin, the current General Secretaries of the CC CPSU and certain representatives of the politburo. Besides, the military mightiness of the USSR had to be celebrated as well and there were many festive days for the army and its parts.

2. LABOUR FESTIVITIES AND CUSTOMS

Examining the calendars issued at the respective times and the organisational tools for the festivities, one must agree with the conclusion provided by Estonian scholar Tiiu Kreegipuu, namely, that the group of Soviet festivities dedicated to labour and professions (see Table No 2 on page 134) increased rapidly through the years. It can be justified on the grounds of the USSR ideology: “Work is the key content of life of a Soviet individual, which manifests his attitude towards society and the socialist homeland.”⁴⁵ The International Workers’ Day celebrated on 1st May was one of the most significant national holidays in the USSR remaining in the calendar of festive and remembrance days of the Latvian SSR from 1945 to 1990.

The group of Soviet festivities was classified in the following subgroups: 1) days of professions (for example, the Teachers’ Day, the Fishermen’s Day, the Builders’ Day and others in the calendar since the 1960s); 2) Celebrations of work collectives or certain members of the collective (for example, the anniversaries of

Table No 2

PROFESSIONAL FESTIVITIES IN 1975

January	April 6. The Day of Geologists 7. The World's Health Day 12. The Space Industry Day. The World's Aviation and Space Industry Day	July 5. The International Day of Cooperation 13. The Day of Fishermen 20. The Day of Metallurgists 27. The Day of Trade Assistants	October 5. The Day of Teachers 12. The All-Union Agricultural Workers' Day 19. The Day of Food Industry Workers
February	May 5. The Day of Press 7. The Day of Radio 25. The Day of Chemists 28. The Day of Border Guards	August 3. The All-Union Railroad Workers' Day 9. The All-Union Sports Teachers' Day 10. The Day of Builders 31. The Day of Coalminers	November 10. The Soviet Militiysa Day 17. The International Students' Day
March 27. The International Theatre Day	June 8. The Day of Light Industry Workers 15. The Day of Medical Workers	September 7. The All-Union Oil and Gas Industry Workers' Day 8. The International Solidarity Day of Journalists 12. The Day of Tank Drivers 21. The Day of Forest Workers 28. The Day of Car Constructors	December 22. The Day of Power Industry Workers

enterprises, retirement celebrations, etc.); 3) a group of events dedicated to the commencement or end of agricultural, construction or other works (for example, the First Furrow Day, confirming the utilization of a building, etc)⁴⁶. It is significant that the Midsummer Solstice (Jāņi and Līgo) Day, which could be found among the festive days until the early 1960s, was included in the category of labour festivities as the end of works in the spring season.

These festivities were organised to honour the most outstanding employees, to organise competitions and demonstrate professional mastery, to meet well-known and public figures, and to organise various mass events both in individual work collectives and in the general masses.

In the context of this group of festivities, special attention must be drawn to the day when a member of society started to work and joined the work collective which from then on, pursuant to the Soviet ideology⁴⁷ and irrespective of the subject's will, had to become an integral part of their private life.

3. DOMESTIC TRADITIONS

Irrespective of the political system in which an individual lives, there are also numerous events related to the cycle of life and local culture which are celebrated with the help of tradition, including the customs which use religious rituals or an alternative. Despite the fact that in the entire territory of the USSR a decree on the separation of the church from the state was adopted, annulling the birth, death and marriage acts registered in the church, this was the area where the material world competed with the object of abatement – religion – most.⁴⁸ To demonstrate to the external world that the freedom of faith and choice existed in the USSR, the involvement of church in family traditions and remembrance events was accepted, although carefully controlled and criticized. To create emotional and spectacular rituals which could outlive the rituals offered by the religious tradition was the greatest challenge for the creators of Soviet traditions. It was not easy to find an alternative for the christening of a child for

instance. After long quests, including such comic episodes as christening (giving the name) in the Pioneers' circle⁴⁹, the issuing of a birth certificate with a corresponding ritual and visual arrangement became an official event to be celebrated in the local civil registry office (see Figure 1).

Long debates and numerous pilot projects introduced the Festivity of Childhood⁵⁰ (see Figure 2) – the initiating ritual of a child into a collective – and ensured that this festivity became an integral part of the agenda of the local executive authorities. The next cycle of life in the system of invented Soviet traditions was the Festivity of Majority (see Figure 3), whose origins can already be observed in the Latvian SSR in the mid-1950s. It had to become an alternative for the Christening of the Lutheran Church. In the 1960s, as attested by the materials of the REM, the Festivity of Majority was celebrated in the entire territory of the Latvian SSR. The ritual of this festivity included the following elements: a pre-festive cycle of seminars, procession to the local Lenin



Figure 1. Issuing the birth certificate in the district of Daugavpils / Krāslava in 1983. E 57 156.

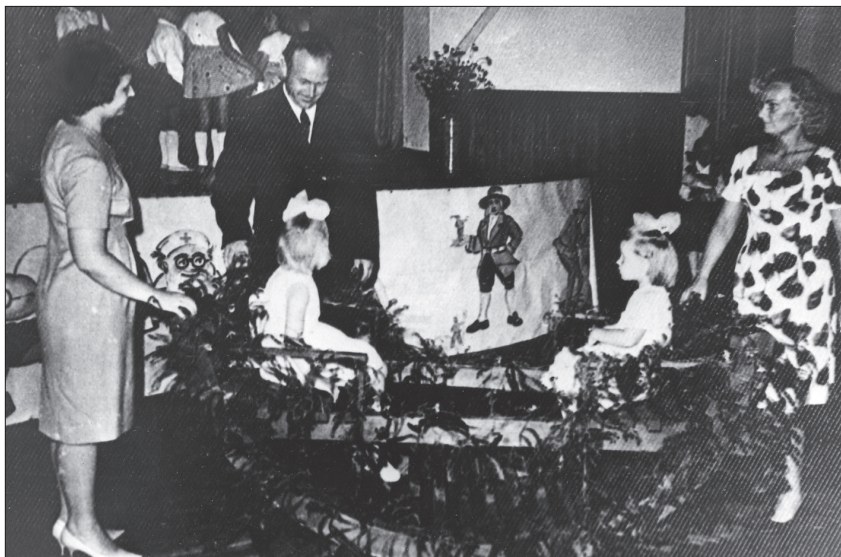


Figure 2. The Festivity of Childhood in the district of Daugavpils/Preiļi in 1968. E 35 1007.



Figure 3. The Festivity of Majority in the Council of Bērze Village in 1964. E 28 10236.

monument or the Cemetery of the Brethren, official speeches given by the members of the local Communist Party, executive committee or village council and work collectives, issuing of the certificate of majority and a concert which was respectively arranged in terms of content and visual decorations. An alternative for a marriage ritual was also sought, foreseeing such forms as *public wedding* or *the wedding of Young Communists*. The work collective where one, or both, of the newlyweds worked, took care of the organisation of the ceremony and costs.⁵¹ It must be noted that the registration of civil status outside the Church was a well-known practice in Latvia before the Soviet occupation, too.

“How was he buried – with an orchestra or a priest?” – this was a popular question in Latvian Soviet reality and it was asked to find out whether the funeral was organised as a religious ritual or according to the Soviet traditions. In this field religion demonstrated considerable resistance. An administrative support mechanism for the funeral organisation was introduced, with funeral services operated under the supervision of communal institutions. In rural areas there were special sections of the Soviet tradition commissions which had the representatives of the village councils and workplace as chairs who were responsible for the content and form of the funeral ceremonies.

During the Soviet occupation years, special attention was drawn to the outrival of the representatives of the Church from such events as cemetery festivities, remembrance days of the deceased or the eve of candles, which were very important to the Latvian cultural tradition. It can be stated that the musical accompaniment, emotional saturation and personal attitude which was manifested by calling the names of the people who had died in the particular year according to age groups, offered as part of the Soviet tradition in the 1970s–1980s, provided a crucial counter-action to the religious equivalent in the fight for public recognition.

Similar turns took place against Easter and Christmas, replacing the latter with the widely celebrated New Year's Eve celebrations.

A fundamental part of the Soviet domestic traditions was played by a continuous involvement of work collectives, because “attitudes in the family were not only a personal issue of the members of the family, they were subjected to the moral principles and values of the Communist society. Therefore, genuine interest of society and participation in the most important events of family life was ensured. It can be particularly observed in three family celebrations related to starting a family, birth of children and the end of work and life – death and funeral”.⁵² Besides, “giving birth and raising children must not be considered a personal issue of a woman, but it is a nationally crucial social function”⁵³, and to implement it the work collective provided moral and material support. It congratulated on the wedding, was present at the moment the birth certificate was issued, brought presents at the Festivity of Childhood, graduation, and the Festivity of Majority, as well as taking part in the colleague’s and their relatives’ funerals.

The agendas of the commissions and societies of the tradition implementation initially included questions on how to make the new Soviet traditions recognisable and acceptable to the local society. A crucial resource for the family customs of the Latvian SSR was the presence of codes and symbols provided by the traditional culture in terms of the content and the visual arrangement of festivities.

Up until the late 1980s, discussion focused on the international and national (ethnic) component in the context of Soviet traditions.⁵⁴ In order to make the socialist content of the new traditions recognisable to the local society, pursuant to the recommendations provided by the commission and societies of the CM, folklore – folk songs and melodies – was used as well as ethnography – the traditional customs, clothing and applied folk art. The works created by local writers, poets and composers also ensured crucial support. Furthermore, the event plans created by the local practitioners were used in the recommendations issued by the PHA. The structure and external elements of the form of certain Church rituals were necessary to compete with the

religious ritual. One example is the Festivity of Majority, which included such elements as: 1) target audience of the festivity – youth that had attained their majority; 2) courses and seminars for those who had attained their majority – delivering training that had to be undertaken before the majority event; 3) clothing – the white dresses for young women, etc.

The information was disseminated in accordance with the specialists of the ideological and propaganda work of the Communist Party, who were engaged in the commissions and societies.

CONCLUSIONS

The invention of the new Soviet traditions, which can be viewed as a complex part of anti-religion policies (as such they were often discussed at the CPSU congresses), laid grounds for the implementation of the following tasks: 1) creation of the sense of belonging to the big Homeland and the Soviet people; 2) popularisation of the materialistic world view and turning against religion; 3) creation of the collective story of the past and making an individual belong to the country; 4) raising public awareness of the USSR as the country of the proletariat; 5) using recognisable cultural and religious rites and symbols of the traditional culture, the state ideology was approximated with the materialistic world view (it was made understandable); 6) creation and strengthening of the ties between an individual and the masses – collective, society, socialist nation, Soviet people – and a corresponding decrease of the private sphere.

The new traditions of the Latvian SSR were invented from positions of power, elaborating a complex institutional infrastructure for the invention of tradition and monitoring of the process. The specialists of the Communist party in ideological and propaganda work, the representatives of the authorities and executive power at the local and republican level, academics, cultural workers, practitioners and others participated in the invention and implementation process of the traditions. At the same

time, the process of the invention of traditions was monitored, studied and analyzed. The academics engaged in the process provided valuable suggestions for a successful implementation, and after the renewal of the independence of the Latvian state they received reproaches and invitations to public confession.⁵⁵ Many traditions did not spread roots; however, those traditions which the general public accepted and still continue to follow nowadays, must be noted. Here one must mention the secular funeral ritual, as well as the Festivities of Childhood and Majority, where the organisers put great efforts to find the right content and form. These festivities can still be found in the calendars of certain Latvian districts.⁵⁶ Also, the festivities of *Women's Days*⁵⁷, or *Men's Days* (more rarely) are still celebrated by some parts of Latvian society.

The invention and implementation of the Soviet festivities and traditions were based on the proposals provided by the CC CPSU and the CM USSR, the transfer of the good practice and local traditions of other republics (the Ukrainian SSR, the Lithuanian SSR), as well as on the monitoring and analysis of this process, and elaboration of recommendations, including the preparation and training of the respective specialists.

In the framework of the article, the author did not attempt to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the tradition invention process, but has rather tried to map the research field for further studies, which would be essential to analyse the mechanisms and resources that were involved in the implementation of this intention. Also, it would be crucial to examine the memories of the people who were involved in the invention of the traditions, such as ideologists, practitioners and their target audiences.

ABBREVIATIONS

The SC – the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR

The CC CPSU – the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

The REM – the Repository of Ethnographic Materials of the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia

E – specific archives at the REM

The RSDLP – the Russian Social Democratic Labour's Party

The LSDLP – the Latvian Social Democratic Labour's Party

The Latvian SSR – the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic

The LLYCL – Latvian Leninist Young Communist League

The ILH UL – the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia

The CM – the Council of Ministers

The CPSU – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

The USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The PHA – People's House of Art of E. Melngailis

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- ⁶ The terms *Soviet traditions* and *Socialist traditions* have been used as synonyms in the examined sources and the historiography of the Communist regime. Definition: the element of the social and cultural heritage, which has been established historically within a certain group of people, has been appropriated from the previous generations and has been transferred further. The processes of Soviet festivities and customs manifest a materialistic worldview, demonstrate the socialist lifestyle and reflect the care that the Soviet country shows for an individual. *Latvijas Padomju enciklopēdija*. Vol. 9, Rīga: Galvenā enciklopēdiju redakcija, 1987, p. 698.
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- ⁵⁶ These festivities are still popular in many municipalities of Latvia, attested by the information that can be found in 2016 on the websites of the districts of Daugavpils, Liepāja, Ludza, Mālpils, Viļaka, Ventspils and others.
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IEVIESTĀS TRADĪCIJAS: SVĒTKU KALENDĀRS UN ĢIMENES IERAŽAS LATVIJAS PSR

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova

Dr. hist., Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas vēstures institūts, pētniece. Zinātniskās intereses: etniskā identitāte un stereotipi, mazākumtautību vēsture Latvijā, komunistiskā režīma (kultūras) mantojums.

Kā vienu no līdzekļiem varas un to pārstāvošo institūciju leģitimēšanai, dominējošās ideoloģijas nostiprināšanai un sabiedrības saliedēšanai komunistiskā režīma (1940–1941; 1944/45–1991) pārstāvji izmantoja jaunievietas svētku un atceres dienas, to atzīmēšanas tradīcijas un atbilstoši marksistiski-ļeņiniskajai paradīgam pielāgotas ģimenes ieražas. Lai arī okupācijas režīma pirmajos gados šai jomai pievērsta neliela uzmanība, 20. gs. 70. gados var runāt par sazarotu tradīciju ieviešanas atbalsta infrastruktūru un šī procesa monitoringu. Raksta mērķis – sniegt sākotnēju izvērtējumu padomju svētku un ģimenes ieražu ieviešanas procesam Latvijas PSR.

Atslēgas vārdi: komunistiskais režīms, ieviestās (aizstātās) tradīcijas, ieviešanas mehānisms, sociālistisks saturs nacionālā ietvarā.

Kopsavilkums

Vērtējot Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas (LPSR) un tajā dzīvojošās, tā laika terminoloģijā, *latviešu sociālistiskās nācijas* svētku kalendāru un ģimenes ieražas, jārūnā par to kā lielāka, pāretniska kopuma – *padomju tautas* – veidošanas un audzināšanas procesa sastāvdaļu. Viens no komunistiskā režīma pārstāvju izmantotajiem līdzekļiem varas un to pārstāvošo institūciju leģitimēšanai, ideoloģijas nostiprināšanai un sabiedrības saliedēšanai bija kopīgo svētku un atceres dienu tradīciju, kā arī marksistiski-ļeņiniskajai paradīgmai pielāgoto ģimenes ieražu ieviešana un pārveidošana.

Pētījumā izmantotais jēdziens *ieviestās tradīcijas* savu atpazīstamību guva 1983. gadā no grāmatas ar analogu nosaukumu, kuras autori to definēja kā daudzas īpaši organizētas mijiedarbībā esošas sociālās prakses, kas ietver stingrus priekšrakstus, noteikumus, rituālus un simbolus. Ieviesto tradīciju mērķis ir – ar tradīcijai piemītošo regulāro atkārtoto iedibināt, ieaudzināt un uzturēt sabiedrībā noteiktas vērtības un uzvedību, kuras jēga balstīta vēsturiskajā pagātnē un sasaistē ar to. Šis process noved pie situācijas, kurā ieviestās tradīcijas kļūst arī par kolektīvo (sociālo, etnisko) un individuālo identitāšu daļu.

Sociālistisko tradīciju ieviešanas gadījums ir atšķirīgs no klasiskajiem piemēriem. LPSR sadzīves ieražu kontekstā dažkārt atbilstošāks jēdziens būtu *aizstātās tradīcijas*. Tradicionālās ieražas, t.sk. ar tām saistītie reliģiskie rituāli, tika aizstātas ar padomju ekvivalentu, kas to jaunajam saturam izmantoja sabiedrībā atpazīstamu ietvaru – folkloru, etnogrāfiskos elementus, t.sk. tautas daiļamata meistarū izstrādājumus, kristīgās baznīcas atbilstošo ceremoniju kārtību u.tml. Tradīciju ieviešanas iniciatori bija okupācijas režīma varas pārstāvji Maskavā, to izstrādātāji – LPSR vietvaras pārstāvji, piesaistot lokālās kultūras un zinātnes elites pārstāvjus. Tradīciju unificēšana un ieviešana notika pakāpeniski, stingrā uzraudzībā, paralēli pieļaujot arī citu ieražu prakšu piekopšanu.

Šī pētījuma mērķis – sniegt sākotnēju izvērtējumu padomju svētku un ģimenes ieražu ieviešanas procesam LPSR. Pētījumu avotu bāze balstīta dokumentos un sarakstē, kas atspoguļo Ministru padomes (MP) rīkojumu par padomju tradīciju ieviešanas darba uzlabošanu izpildī, un LU Latvijas vēstures institūta Etnogrāfisko materiālu krātuvē (EMK) esošajos jaunas tradīcijas fiksētajos materiālos – fotogrāfijās, norīšu aprakstos, izsniedzamajos dokumentos u.tml., kas uzkrāti laika posmā no 1963. gada līdz 80. gadu pirmajai pusei. Uz avotu grupu attiecināmi arī metodisko krājumu izdevumi, kalendāri, kā arī laikabiedru – etnogrāfu

un folkloristu – zinātniskās publikācijās iestrādātas atziņas par tradīciju ieviešanas teorētisko un praktisko pusi.

Tēmas aktualitāti nosaka vairāki apstākļi: pirmkārt, Latvijas historio-grāfijā šī ir mazpētīta tēma (Latvijas humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu pārstāvju darbos tā kļūst aktuāla 21. gs. sākumā, līdzīga aina padomju tradīciju izpētē fiksējama arī kaimiņvalstīs); otrkārt, zinātnieku uzmanības vērtam jābūt ne tikai unificējamu tradīciju saturam un *uzpotēšanas* iemesliem, bet arī mehānismam un resursiem, kas iesaistīti šīs ieceres īstenošanā.

Komunistiskā režīma ideologi proponēja sabiedrībai modernu dzīvesveidu bez sabiedrības noslāņošanās. Viņu piedāvājums bija kolektīvā identitāte, kas pielīdzināma pilsoniskajai – nacionālajai identitātei. Tā tika būvēta uz tādiem pilāriem kā kopīga pieredze, kopīgi mērķi, un tas ir nozīmīgs veids, kā cilvēki identificē sevi un savas attiecības ar varu.

Jaunās padomju tradīcijas tika ieviestas no varas pozīcijām, izstrādājot sazarotu institucionālu infrastruktūru tradīciju ieviešanai un šī procesa uzraudzībai. Tradīciju veidošanā tika iesaistīti komunistiskās partijas ideoloģiskā un propagandas darba speciālisti, republikas un lokālās lēmējvaras un izpildvaras pārstāvji, zinātnieki, kultūras darbinieki, praktiķi u.c. Tradīciju ieviešanas process vienlaikus tika arī monitorēts, pētīts un analizēts. Procesam piesaistītie zinātnieki sniedza vērtīgus ieteikumus tā sekmīgai norisei, par ko pēc Latvijas valstiskās neatkarības atjaunošanas saņēma pārmetumus un aicinājumus uz publisku grēksūdzi. Daudzas tradīcijas neiedzīvojās, bet fiksējamas arī tādas, kuras sabiedrība ir akceptējusi un turpina kopt arī mūsdienās. Kā piemēri pieminamas Bērņības un Pilngadības svētku prakses, kuru izveidei, satura un formas meklējumiem tika pieliktas vislielākās pūles un kuras joprojām atrodamas atsevišķu Latvijas novadu kalendārā. Tāpat zināmā Latvijas sabiedrības daļā aktualitāti nav zaudējušas *sieviešu dienas* (8. marts), retāk arī *vīriešu dienas* (23. februāris) svinības.

Padomju svētku un tradīciju ieviešanas veidi balstījās uz Padomju Savienības Komunistiskās partijas (PSKP) Centrālās komitejas un PSRS MP rosināto tradīciju ieviešanas komisiju ieteikumiem, citu republiku un lokālo tradīciju ieviešanu pieredzes pārņemšanu (Ukrainas PSR, Lietuvas PSR), šī procesa monitoringu, analīzi un rekomendāciju izstrādi, kā arī atbilstošu speciālistu sagatavošanu.

Jauno padomju tradīciju ieviešana, kas skatāma kā pret reliģiju vērstā pasākumu kompleksa daļa (kā tāda tā arī visbiežāk parādījās PSKP kongresos aktualizēto jautājumu kontekstā), realizēja šādus uzdevumus: 1) piederības jūtu veidošana lielajai Dzimtenei un padomju tautai;

2) materiālistiskā pasaules uzskata vērtību popularizēšana un vēršanās pret reliģiju; 3) kolektīvā stāsta par pagātņi un indivīda piederības valstij veidošana; 4) PSRS kā darbaļaužu valsts tēla aktualizēšana; 5) izmantojot atpazīstamus tradicionālās kultūras un reliģijas ritus un simbolus, valsts ideoloģijas, materiālistiskā pasaules uzskata tuvināšana (darīta saprotama); 6) cilvēka saikņu ar masu – kolektīvu, sabiedrību, sociālistisko nāciju, padomju tautu – veidošana un stiprināšana, privātās sfēras mazināšana.

Raksta ietvaros ir iezīmēts darbības lauks turpmākajiem pētījumiem, kuros būtisks papildinājums būtu tradīciju uzpotēšanas, ieviešanas procesā iesaistīto cilvēku – ideologu, praktiķu, mērķauditorijas – atmiņas.

ATTĒLU SARAKSTS

1. att. Svinīgā dzimšanas apliecības izsniegšana Daugavpils / Krāslavas rajonā 1983. gadā. E 57 156.
2. att. Bērnības svētki Daugavpils/Preiļu rajonā 1968. gadā. E 35 1007.
3. att. Pilngadības svētki Bērzes ciema padomē 1964. gadā. E 28 10236.