

Abstract

This dissertation thesis focuses on a topic that is of growing interest among scholars, and for which there is still plenty of room for analysis and interpretation, namely the role of the Ukrainian Sixtiers during the Khrushchev Thaw in the USSR in the period 1956–1964. This cultural phenomenon is analysed within a broader socio-cultural context with the help of the approach of colonial studies. The key research question is “How did the worldview of the Sixtiers develop during the Khrushchev Thaw (1956–1964) from the point of view of colonial studies and how was this reflected in their literary works?” The first chapter describes the historical, political and cultural context of this period. It includes an analysis of the circumstances surrounding the proclamations made in Khrushchev’s secret speech in 1956, the beginning of the policy of de-Stalinization, and its impact on the political and cultural life in Soviet Ukraine. Particular attention is paid to the development of the official discourse of socialist realism as an official and dominant cultural concept, which was to be applied in artistic and literary works. The main principle of socialist realism, so-called “internationalism”, is analysed in terms of its role as an element of colonial discourse. The second chapter focuses on the theoretical framework of the notion of “generation” and the delimitation of the Ukrainian Sixtiers as a cultural phenomenon and cultural generation. In following chapters, the gradual development of the Sixtiers’ worldview is mapped, as is the way in which this development was reflected in their literary works. Subsequent sections are dedicated to specific topics that help to explain what influences helped to turn the Sixtiers into a cultural phenomenon. These particular topics are analysed on the basis of the methodology of collective biography. The third chapter deals with the childhoods of the Sixtiers and the factors that shaped their personalities at an early age. It mainly concentrates on their traumatic war experiences and the way that the Sixtiers grew up in their families. The fourth chapter chronologically refers to the previous chapter of the dissertation and maps the periods of study at higher education institutions. The fifth chapter is focused on the topic of the engagement of the Sixtiers in the communist party’s organizations and their general understanding and perception of the Soviet system. The sixth chapter traces the cultural activities of the Sixtiers. The last chapter of this thesis looks at the issue of identity and the self-identification of the Sixtiers between two general concepts, namely that of the national, Ukrainian identity, and the supranational, Soviet one.