

Abstract

This Bachelor thesis aims to reveal the roots of the positive interpretations of Stalin in Russia under Putin's presidency (2000-2008). At the beginning of the new millennium we witnessed an increase in popularity and uncritical perception of this Soviet leader in the eyes of the Russian public. The thesis examines on which grounds this nostalgia for the Stalin era is based. It explains how during the 1990s the country was facing a difficult post-communist transition to liberal democracy, which contributed to fostering this sentiment. The thesis also analyzes the results of public survey polls to determine which achievements and values of the Stalin era are appreciated by the citizens of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, it touches upon publications by the Russian academic community in order to explore their interpretation of Joseph Stalin's rule and how they might contribute to his positive assessment by the public. It also shows how the political elite succeeding to power in 2000 deliberately supported and fomented this sentiment of nostalgia; what its concrete steps are; and their motivations and implications. The thesis concludes that the period of chaos under President Boris Yeltsin, when the public felt a decline in the living standards and prestige of the country, had a large influence on the growth of uncritical perception of Stalin. These failures led the public to review its past and to misrepresent it. President Putin effectively supports these positive perceptions of the past in order to strengthen national pride and cohesion, and also to justify his authoritarian tendencies.