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[Рец. на]: “І слова стали чином живим...” Боротьба ОУН та УПА крізь призму людських доль та стосунків. Збірник біографічних нарисів / [відп. ред. О. Стасюк]; НАН України. Інститут українознавства ім. І. Крип’якевича. – Львів, 2014. – 216 с.

What uses do oral history and autobiographies have in history? That is a question that has been asked and debated within the broader historical context for many years. However, this work proves the invaluable nature of human sources. The personal recollections of some of the participants in the Ukrainian liberation struggle show the complex and divergent nature of the underground itself. This work is important today in comprehending not only the personal motivations of these participants but also the dynamic of the OUN and UPA during its most active years.

Most of the biographies of the members of the OUN and UPA do not fit the typical Soviet narrative of heroism and optimism which glorifies certain people but also has an uncomfortable silence about others (p.3). This particular work does not examine the main and leading figures of the underground but rather the intermediaries that have at times been forgotten by historians, and this includes women in general. This work shows how complex the political war was but, as the introduction points out, it also humanizes the individuals in the insurgency (p. 5) and by extension humanizes the nationalist liberation movement.

Certain elements of the life stories of the OUN-UPA members are similar: Mykhailo Kolodzynsky and Hryhoriy Fayda, for example, both demonstrate the internationalism of the OUN (p. 10, 19, 25, 40–41). The influence of social activities during the interwar years also appears in a large number of the biographies: Fayda and Mykhailo Diachenko’s participation in Plast (p. 33, 119), Yulia Hanuschak’s role in the OUN Youth Branch (p. 190–191) and the influence of the Prosvita society on Volodymyr Frajt (p. 202) are only a few of the instances on how cultural activism was a clear signal to national consciousness among western Ukrainian youths.

Furthermore, this work delves into many unknown aspects of the liberation movement and touches upon some unpleasant aspects of ideology, gender relations and personality clashes. For instances, Kolodzninskyj, as the OUN’s war theorist wanted Ukrainian expansion eastward (p. 12) while also took a very strong anti-Polish stance, even though he himself was half-Polish (p. 18, 21). However, Petro Fedun’s life story clearly illustrates the differences in opinions on ideology – Fedun was in staunch disagreement with Dmytro Dontsov (p. 52). Furthermore, the interesting life of Daria Rebet is a clear example of the individualism in the OUN – she shows it was possible to disagree with the OUN leaders while still be an active member (p. 155, 165, 167).

One of the most important aspects of this work is the focus on women and gender relations – both between women and between the sexes. The biographies give a colourful insight

into the personal affairs of some of the leading members of the underground. Diakchenko, for example, had to stay in a bunker with his wife and his mistress and his life story examines how this threesome affected his underground work and relations (pp. 139, 140). The analysis of Maria Savchyn's biography expands on the complexity of being a wife, a mother and an insurgent (p. 103) but also illustrates the loneliness that many women felt while in the underground (p. 105). Daria Rebet echoes this complexity of "mother insurgent" but also expands on her increased work within the organization after her husband was arrested (p. 153). One of the most fascinated aspects of the women in this work is that of Maria Tsok – a Polish communist agent whose motivations are examined through the different perspectives of some of the insurgents she captured and archival reports (pp. 180, 183).

Every one of these stories include difficulties and emotions that are connected with the individual's time in the underground. Overall, one can clearly grasp the importance of their voices and see that for most of them, all of the suffering and death around them was for the service of Ukraine. This heroism and bravery of every one of the individuals that is explored within this work should not be taken for granted and added to the other more well-known voices of the OUN and UPA.