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Abstract

*The work *The Soviet-afghan War (1979–1989). Study of oral history. Perceptions. Documents* is part of the historical hermeneutic dimension, particularly significant for the history of the present time, to make from memories a form of justice. The importance of this issue is significant also due to the fact that it is made exclusively for the recent history, an attempt to address a dim issue through multidisciplinary approach. It represents an expansion trend of the historical discourse regarding the studied and analyzed theme by discussion of new and even nonacademic aspects.*

Keywords

Review, Soviet-afghan War (1979–1989), Ion Xenofontov, oral history, historiography

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Introduction

The volume includes, exclusively for national historiography of Moldova Republic, an applied and theoretical study on oral history at the perimeter of military history. In a paper published in 2010, *Afghanistan War (1979-1989)* the author Ion Xenofontov treats in detail the theme of war in Afghanistan, analyzed in terms of history theory in the area of immediate history (Xenofontov, 2010). If in the previous volume the author gives a modified image of the military scourge- analyzed through the complex research approach of the war, with obvious emphasis from testimony of direct participants or the war perceived by the researcher- in this volume, the focus is on the actor directly and indirectly participating in the event, being allowed to narrate within the perimeter of documents of that era or the war as perceived by the witness. The paper includes original documents on the war in Afghanistan from private archives and from funds of the National Army Museum of Moldova Republic.

Through oral testimony the author is witness to the realization of an alternative to official and hegemonic memory imposed by totalitarian regimes, diversifying in fact the development of historical narrative through methodological mixing. The use of interview together with the four basic and consubstantial methods for empirical investigation of the universe (document analysis, experiment, observation and investigation) contributes to the democratization of the discourse of recent history (Xenofontov, 2009, pp: 101-106).

The present review aims at presenting the volume *The Soviet-afghan War (1979–1989)* of Ion Xenofontov, volume whose content is eponymous to the title and which is addressed to the public interested in national history of Moldova seen through the eyes of direct participants in the war. The volume represents a novelty element and plus knowledge to the studied field.

Literature Review

The Soviet-afghan War (1979–1989) is the largest military conflict in the history of the Soviet Union. To keep Afghanistan under its influence, the Kremlin had to involve about 90,000 men. 12,500 soldiers have

attended this military conflict in Moldova Republic, of whom 301 have died, 4 are missing and 700 were left disabled.

The universe of knowledge of this military scourge is amply and quite interesting for human experience in emergencies, and its actors are from a relatively near past and can provide direct perception. This paper aims at removing the anonymity of witnesses of an important, historical and recurrent act of the twentieth century and putting into scientific circulation genuine living archives of experienced and narrated memory.

Starting a complex narrative process, the witness reviews the facts and events from his experience, passing them through their emotions. In the context of exploitation of historical sources, recent history specialists capture a series of impediments to develop complex historiographic approach. Classical, conventional sources represented by archival material, undiscovered documents, memoirs, discourses, media, sets out a certain type of historical facts and events.

Oral information, exposed through interview and questionnaire, issues a strong subjective discourse, relevant aspect which distances the approach of historians in selecting historical sources. Therefore, interviews with participants coming from Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic in the war of Afghanistan represent sources generating diversified information. Observations- findings of former participants in the war, though sometimes fragmented and excessively subjective, seen as a whole they extend the image of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, marking at the same time, original contributions in the field of polemology, of understanding the phenomenon of war and its consequences, of promotion for its avoidance in social life, and deliberate acceptance of the values of peaceful coexistence.

Through instruments of oral history, the connection between individual destinies and history takes place. The story of those involved in the Soviet-Afghan armed conflict described by the author as "the small ones", who represent the human sacrifice for satisfying political ideas, is one of the dimensions discussed with great interest in historiography research. The active dialogue with witnesses in order to create the great history, as the sample of scientific research, supports a transformation from being a participant in becoming the narrators and, implicitly, the authors in the development of historiography discourse.

For the scientific start of the research, Ion Xenofontov turned primarily to oral investigation, that is the interview, which allowed an interaction between researcher as interviewer and respondent as direct witness to the Soviet-Afghan war. The interventions of the operator were applied according to the principle of non-directing over fund and direction of form (Iluț, 2001, p. 12). A fundamental desideratum engaged in the approach of oral historical sources is the validation epistemic used resources and the application of diversity of methods and techniques.

Thus, in developing research, the author has applied as a technique the semi-structured individual interview, the semi-structured group interview technique that, unlike individual semi-structured interview, is an extension of the qualitative method because it includes the interaction of participants in the debate opened on the same topic. An important aspect in the development of the studied theme was the Delphy technique (Iluț, 2001, p 12) which follows the desideratum to find solution to a problem with the help of experts. In the case of this research review, as it was about means and possibilities of family and social reintegration of ex-combatants, the author turned to interviewing medical specialists, who participated as well in the war in Afghanistan.

The volume of *The Soviet-afghan War (1979–1989)* was based on a diverse methodology, a series of research methods and techniques, set up in terms of general questions - regarding information about witnesses, opinion - reveals the informant's opinion about the topic under investigation or recovers an indirect information and performance questions – the intervention of the researcher with open questions on the form of the subject, to extract the essential from the historic act.

The percentage is represented by direct witness to the historical analyzed event. The period of executing military service, military functions and levels of these witnesses cover practically the whole dynamic of the war, most military activities and higher ranks of the Soviet army in Afghanistan, reason which allows an approach as a whole of the topic investigated. Military situation of the combatants has evolved during the military service, depending on the context of war, military operations, transgression of regulation etc.

Conclusions

Variety of information sources allowed their duplication and confrontation, generating development of different criteria and scientific scenarios, conceptual justified constructions, their explanation and validation, testing assumptions and perspectives, aspects completed with enlarging interpretative range, producing a beneficial phenomenon not only for the observer in particular, but a real social benefit by combining these results (Pop, 2010, p. 20).

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