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Life Scenarios of A. N. Derzhavin: Materials of a Personal Diary of the Period of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45

Abstract

The article studies a personal provenance source, that is, the diary of the front-line soldier A. N. Derzhavin. The analysis of the diary can contribute to the development of history of everyday life, biographical studies, history of the Soviet intelligentsia; to showcase the emotions of rear

areas citizens in the days of the Great Patriotic War. The popularity of the history of everyday life is beyond dispute. In recent decades, Russian scientists N. L. Pushkareva, S. V. Zhuravlev, Yu. A. Polyakov, I. V. Narskii, V. I. Isaev and foreign scholars M. Blok, K. Ginzburg, Sh. Fitzpatrick have been studying the everyday existence of man in different eras. Of particular interest is studying everyday life at junction with peculiarities of human emotional states. The history of emotions has been actively researched by historians W. Reddy, P. Stearns, J. Plumper, Sh. Shahadat; however, everyday life in conjunction with emotionality have not so far become a subject of special attention of historians. The exception is a publication of historian A. Yu. Rozhkov. A unique opportunity to study everyday life and emotionality is provided by sources of personal provenance, in particular, by A. N. Derzhavin's diaries. The events of 1941–45 were a large-scale phenomenon in the life of the population of the USSR as a whole and of every single citizen in particular. Far in the rear, people waged their personal wars of survival. The official discourse contributed to acceptance of the war as a given. The diaries provide a unique opportunity to look at the war from the “little man’s” eye, to reconstruct numerous aspects of the wartime life, to show the evolution of human behavior and the emotional transformation under extreme conditions. Studying the network of social ties, the correlation between individual world views and social processes within phenomenological tradition of studying everyday life, referencing the “Ulikova paradigm” and hermeneutics of reading between the lines have allowed the author to draw the following conclusions: pragmatism of behavioral strategies was characteristic of Magnitogorsk citizens during the war; the author of the diary used official and unofficial and yet common in the society behavior standards. The study of this document can contribute to studying the mechanisms of diary creation and to understanding of the diary-writers’ motivation. In addition, the content of these diary records provides an opportunity to clarify on a concrete example the real impact of change of peace- and wartime eras.

## Keywords

Historical source, ego documents, history of everyday life, personal diary, local history, the Great Patriotic war of 1941–45, USSR, Magnitogorsk.

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