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## Section: REVIEWS

### STAYING TRUE TO ONESELF

OLEKSANDR LYSENKO

*Velykochyi, V., Zhernokleiev, O., Monolatiy, I. et al. (Eds). (2022). Oleksandr Karpenko: the road to himself. Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University.*

2022 has become the year of the Russian-Ukrainian war that has quite naturally seeped into every cleft of the Ukrainianness perception in the emotional plane. This year has been rich in events, and one of them was the centenary of the birth of famous Ukrainian scientist, professor Oleksandr Karpenko.

There exists a golden rule to remember only good things about the scholar, especially during his jubilee year. There is a quite famous saying that one should refrain from speaking ill of someone late or keep silence. However, this rule is obsolete when we come to the personality of Oleksandr Karpenko, the one worth all the praise. Therefore, it is time to remind younger generations of the scientific contribution of this scholar and researcher. To the 100th birthday of Oleksander Karpenko, his students have compiled a collective monograph to celebrate their Teacher's accomplishments, their scientific papers are dedicated to the personality of the professor and those problems he had been working on for years, they have also edited the paper.

It is worth mentioning that this monograph is not the first publication about the scientist. Back in 2001, scientific journal "Halychyna" dedicated to one of its sections to the 80th anniversary of Oleksander Karpenko. At the moment it was quite an unusual phenomenon in the Ukrainian post-Soviet historiography as students and colleagues honoured the scholar who was still working with them; while for the Soviet science it was customary to pay tributes only to the late researchers. There have been several equally important factors contributing to the publication of the monograph. We have already mentioned the enthusiasm of professor O. Karpenko's students and colleagues. Then, there is a great role of Ukrainian publisher Vasyl Ivanochko who associated with professor O. Karpenko closely, and tried to make the latter's scholarly contribution widely known; his efforts resulted in a published collection of documents and materials on the history of the West Ukrainian People's Republic in 5 volumes.

The scientific research of Oleksandr Karpenko was deeply analytical, consistent and comprehensive. At a fairly young age, being a war veteran, he went to work in Lviv in the west of Ukraine, where at that time there continued the liberation struggle of the UPA against the Soviet regime. While working in the Academy of Sciences institutions, he defended his thesis and started his work on the period we would now call the Ukrainian revolution of the first decades of the XX century in the Western Ukrainian lands. His main topic under study was the West Ukrainian People's Republic.

In the mid-50s of the last century, during the reign of the communist Soviet ideology, one could talk about the national liberation struggle only to a certain extent, it was obligatory to emphasize its “proletarian” essence and class basis according to the Marxist-Leninist dogmas. Young O. Karpenko dared to focus on the issue of the national liberation struggle in the Western Ukrainian lands at the end of the World War I as an absolutely natural and rightful phenomenon, probably being a pioneer in his approach. Moreover, he was bold enough to point out that the Ukrainian social and national liberation struggle from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire had its historical place in the wider, pan-European process of the time. The scientist claimed that the Ukrainians of Galicia (Halychyna), Bukovyna and Transcarpathia, that had been temporarily under the Habsburg Empire rule, were ready to build their own state in the same way as their former compatriots: Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins, Bosnians, and Albanians. In the end, this approach matched the postulates of the then methodology of the Soviet historical science regarding the so-called “bourgeois-democratic revolutions” among stateless nations. It might seem that the historian fitted his people’s history of into a pan-European context and thus proved the thesis concerning the dialectical development of society laws, the ones the theorists of the “formational-class approach” of philosophy were so proud of.

Yet, the young Ukrainian historian failed to take into account certain peculiarities of the Soviet ideological system. Namely, it was a privilege of the recognized authorities from the capitals to express new ideas, while a newly graduate provincial scientist could not even fathom about it. On the top of it, one could study the national liberation struggle in Ukraine as long as it was Soviet Ukraine, but the approach could not have been through the bourgeois-democratic prism, only through the “proletarian revolution” one. That was where the liberties of the Ukrainian people under the domination of the Soviet communist ideology ended.

The final point was the fact that the mid-50s of the XX century were marked by a bloody suppression of the resistance of the OUN-UPA (Ukrainian Nationalists Organisation – Ukrainian Insurgent Army) on Western Ukrainian lands. The state had just witnessed the end of mass terrorist attacks against the Soviet government representatives. Local population was still sensitive holding on to the memories of their relatives who had been fighting with weapons in hands for the spiritual value of their people, for freedom. And there came this “easterner”, a communist, a war veteran who started to write and come up with scientific evidence of the causes and prerequisites of such a struggle. From the point of view of the Soviet ideological machine, especially in the days of the “post Khrushchev thaw”, it was seen as “stabbing in the back” from a “one of them”. Naturally, the actions of the historian triggered fast reaction. Oleksandr Karpenko was subjected to obstruction and ostracism by both party and scientific circles. Due to that, he was forced to change the place of work several times, and had to seek for support from academician I. Mints, he had to partially give up on his own approaches and postulates while working on his doctoral thesis and preparing to its defense.

Having changed three places work in Lviv, Oleksandr Karpenko moved to Ivano-Frankivsk in the mid-70s. He reached his career peak at the local pedagogical institute where his scientific creativity could find its application: he became a professor, organized a number of international conferences, and founded his own research school. It is worth mentioning that the professor returned to his work on the the subject of ZUNR (a.k.a WUPR - West Ukrainian People’s Republic) only after Ukraine gained its independence and with the support on the part of the then rector of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian University Vitaliy Kononenko.

The professor compiled and became the editor-in-chief of the first scientific history work on the ZUNR (WUPR), he was the editor-in-chief of the already mentioned 5-volume collection of historical documents and materials, which in itself became a unique phenomenon of historical science. Thanks to his previous work experience with academic institutions, Oleksandr Karpenko

managed to establish cooperation between institutions, namely a joint department with the Institute of Political and Ethnic Relations of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine within the structure of the university. They were the employees of the department that took on the responsibility for gathering and studying materials, compiling scientific miscellanies and working on the above-mentioned scientific studios on the history of the ZUNR.

The subject of the West Ukrainian People's Republic turned out to be not only the most prominent in the work of the scientist, but also his "swan song". It was because of O. Karpenko that the national historical science started using the term "November national democratic revolution in the Western Ukrainian lands of 1918" (although, according to the study of his student V. Velykochiy, the name was created by chance rather than by choice). All in all, having been studying documents and materials on the history of the Western Ukrainian state of the early XX century thoroughly and comprehensively, the scientist managed to leave Soviet paradigms behind and developed his own concept of the history of ZUNR, the one that fit perfectly into the methodology of the Ukrainian historical school.

The collective monograph in question focuses on all of the above-mentioned events and accomplishments, and we have tried to present our perception of it. One should mention that the work is well-structured; it is divided into three parts and the content of each of them fully conveys the main idea— "Oleksander Karpenko – the road to himself".

The personality of the scientist, difficult stages of his life and work find their portrayal in the works by S. Kobuta, namely in the papers on the professor's work in Lviv from 1949 to 1978; the same period is described by Yuriy Slyvka, one of the few close friends of Oleksander Karpenko. The articles by V. Velykochiy and O. Zhernokleiev deal with the Ivano-Frankivsk period of the scientist's life and work. All of these materials make up the first part of the collective monograph along with an interesting study by O. Zhernokleiev regarding O. Karpenko's date of birth. The second part starts with M. Kuhutiak's article on the significance of O. Karpenko's scientific heritage. Other papers of this part focus on the research subjects O. Karpenko himself studied. The majority of the authors contributing to the second part are the "graduates" of the professor's scientific school. Therefore, all the works bear the mark of O. Karpenko's ways and approaches, them being as bold and unconventional as their mentor's works. More than that, some of them reach beyond the existing national concept regarding the history of the ZUNR, its place and role in the coordinates of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1914-1923.

Primarily, we mean the research papers of S. Adamovych, V. Velykochiy, and I. Monolatiy. Using methods and approaches of O. Karpenko as their basis, scientists offer a fresh interpretation of the phenomena and processes that took place during the Ukrainian revolution, and sometimes they have a different connotation from the one previously suggested. In this sense, one should single out the work of I. Monolatiy "November Breakdown (November Action)" of 1918: a revolution or a military coup?". Each of the research papers emphasizes the significance of O. Karpenko's scientific heritage, shows the importance of its place and role in Ukrainian historical science. The authors write about their mentor's achievements with great piety and respect. However, they do not shy away from their own opinions, they strive to present their own concepts and ideas, some of which do not coincide with the ones proposed by Oleksandr Yukhymovych. We argue that this fact in itself is a scientific and theoretical phenomenon as authors adhere to the basic principles of creation of historical research that should combine the objectivity and regularity of processes with personal, subjective approaches to them. Their objective is to go beyond stating what has already been determined by previous researchers, albeit teachers, to complete and enrich the studied phenomena and processes. And it seems to me, the authors have accomplished their tasks brilliantly.

Scientific studies of I. Raikivskyi, M. Vitenko, and V. Dybenko provide a deeper understanding of the socio-political phenomena that took place in the ZUNR, they introduce new scientific

sources, thus proving the statement that one cannot exhaust certain scientific topics of research once and for all.

There is a separate part of the collective monograph devoted to numerous documents related to Oleksandr Karpenko's life: they provide information of the adversities the researcher faced when he had had courage to introduce his own ideas and approaches challenging the prevailing Soviet ideological and party system. We are in a full agreement with the monograph authors stating that this is "only a fragment of a memorial monument for a researcher, a historian who went against the system and did not break down, did not become a scientific conformist".

We should also add that a monograph celebrating memory of a mentor and a colleague is not only a good example of the gratitude of students, but it also shows how a scientific school relying on the objectivity and devotion of a scholar can thrive even after the departure of the founder, how it contributes to the development of national historical science. The monographic work about Oleksandr Karpenko has become a phenomenon of national historiography in itself.

Oleksandr Lysenko, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Military and Historical Research of the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine.

**ORCID ID:** 0000-0002-4003-6433

**Address:** Oleksandr Lysenko, Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 4 Hrushevskoho St., Kyiv, 01001 Ukraine.

**E-mail:** ukr2ww@ukr.net

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