

Digital Archive of Soldiers' Legacy of the Socialist Period

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The study is devoted to the conscription during socialism in Bulgaria and presents the digitization of materials and the researches for the conscription and the ideas for creating a digital archive of soldiers' legacy of the socialist period.

The digitalized materials and all other results of the study of the ethno-cultural portrayal of Bulgarian conscription during socialism in [2] will be used for creating of digital archive of soldiers' legacy of the socialist period.

The content of the archive will include various materials of type: text, audio and photo – recordings of interviews, stories, memories, photos, letters, records, books, documents and etc stored in private collections and archives of former soldiers and their relatives, funds of military archives, libraries and museums. The objects at the digital archive will be used for ethnographic analysis and research professionals and create collections for soldiers' legacy.

The investigations for creating of model of digital archive are joint with experts from Institute of mathematics and informatics (IMI-BAS)¹. For creating of digital archive will be used the digitized materials of the ethno-cultural researches of the author for the portrayal of Bulgarian conscription during socialism and the experience of the scientists from IMI-BAS [1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7].

Digital Archive of Soldiers' Legacy of the Socialist Period follows the ideas and structure of the book “Youth Passions, Men's Times” [2] and covers the regular, i.e. mandatory (conscription) military service, as well as other forms of community service work regulated by the law. The chronological boundaries of the survey include the period between 1949 and 1990. The object of the study is the military community of conscripted soldiers, nowadays mature men, who completed their service during the socialist period. The main aim of the study is to disclose specifics of the conscription from ethno-cultural point of view by examining the whole process of formation of soldier community. In other words, the study makes an attempt to create ethno-cultural portrayal of the conscription in the socialism.

The digital archive is structured according to the main ideas developed in the book “Youth Passions, Men's Times” and consist of three main parts.

The part “The conscription – government policy and public perceptions” examines the national legislation system which regulates the conscription during the surveyed period and analyzes the attitude towards the conscription formed on the basis of the public perceptions of the Bulgarians.

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The part “When the boy became a man – ethno-cultural transitional rituals” is associated with the conscription” seeks answer to the important question: when the boy really becomes man according to the traditional understanding of the Bulgarians in socialist period. It is discuss the role of military medical commissions; the custom ‘Dispatch of a soldier’ in our ritual system; soldier's oath as a military and family tradition; dismissal and welcoming back home of the soldier.

The part “Daily dimensions of soldier`s life during the conscription” focuses on everyday life and briefly comments on army`s statutes, which actually set and control the rules in military life, cultural and psychological adaptation of young people in their first days in the army, on problems connected with the process of building a team, as well as on some specific informal power relations within the team. Some manifestations of soldier informal culture are discussed as well.

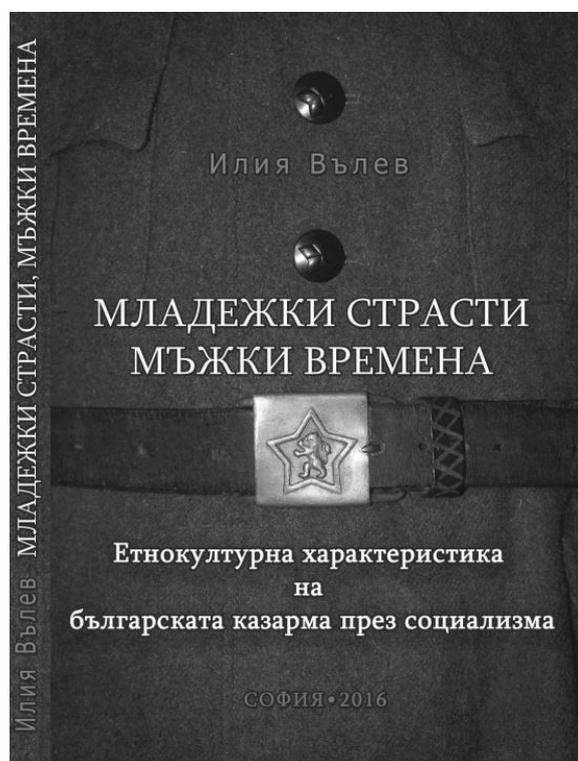


Fig. 1. The book “YOUTH PASSIONS, MEN'S TIMES”

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