

Description for the general public

The homicide of the minister of internal affairs Bronisław Pieracki in 1934 was one of the most serious actions carried out by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) against the Second Polish Republic.. When the Czechoslovak intelligence passed the so-called Senyk's Archive, containing letters exchanged by the Ukrainian nationalists, to the Polish authorities in 1933, by it was too late to prevent the tragedy. Nevertheless, the Archive became the basis for bringing indictments against Stepan Bandera and other members of the OUN engaged in terrorist activities against the Polish state. It quickly turned out that the so called Senyk's Archive was an extremely valuable material permitting to gain a better understanding of the OUN's activity. The collection, consisting of about 400 letters, exchanged between members of the OUN Board on emigration, is still considered missing. However, the author of this project found it in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv.

The aim of the project is to present the picture behind the scenes of operation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in 1929–1938, hence from the moment the OUN was founded until the death of its leader, Jewhen Konowalec. It will be analysed in the light of letters from the Senyk's Archive, as well as other correspondence of the members, dispersed in various countries (including the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Great Britain, Canada). First of all, it will be possible to, at least partially, reconstruct the web of different relations within the OUN itself. Secondly, the project will elucidate the mechanisms of the OUN's activity, which until now, without access to internal documentation, was possible only to a very limited extent. Furthermore, the Archive allow us to discover individual opinions and beliefs of the OUN's activists. Then, it facilitates grasping relations between the emigration and the structures of the organization operating in Eastern Galicia, which were dominated by numerous conflicts, both personal and ideological. Lastly, the quantitative and qualitative social network analysis will allow to understand the interpersonal, organizational and political connections both inside of the OUN and in its relations with the outside world.

Certainly, the discovery of the so-called Senyk's Archive raises huge expectations, as it gives hopes that answering the questions that until now remained mysteries will be finally possible. Moreover, the analysis of the letters will fill in the lacunas with regard to knowledge of the functioning of the OUN, but also the ones concerning Polish-Ukrainian relations in the interwar period. It will also become an important contribution to our understanding of the formation of nationalist ideology in the 1930s throughout Europe. In addition, the Senyk's Archive constitutes the only such extensive collection of correspondence of the most important Ukrainian nationalists (primarily the leader Jewhen Konowalec). Owing to the fact that the aforementioned issues have been studied so far on the basis of propaganda materials, distorted memories, as well as observations conducted by states, where the OUN was present, the specificity of the source corpora allows to adopt a completely new approach to the subject. Furthermore, the international context is equally important. Lastly, letters of the OUN's members give a better insight not only into internal mechanisms of their members, but also into their lobbying: in the neighbour countries of Poland (Germany, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania), as well as in Western Europe (Great Britain, Italy), Canada and the United States, where the Ukrainian diaspora had a strong position.