

CONTENTS

STUDIES AND ARTICLES

- Grzegorz Jawor, COMMENTARY BY JAN ZAMOYSKI, THE ROYAL SECRETARY, ON LEGAL CUSTOMS OF THE VLACHS OF SAMBIR FROM 1568..... 7
- Nguyen Van Sang, Piotr Robak, Nguyen Duy Phuong, Luu Trang, STRUGGLE OF THE RIGHT ON THE SEA IN THE BRITISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS: THE CASE OF THE CREOLE SLAVES REVOLT (1841)23
- Alexandru Ionicescu, A UTILITY RECLAIMED BY OUR CENTURY'S CIVILIZATION. THE METRIC SYSTEM (1872-1875).....37
- Stoica Lascu, COMPONENTS OF THE MODERNIZATION OF DOBRUDJA WITHIN THE ROMANIAN STATE (1878-1916) (I).....47
- Marilena Rizescu, PROPAGANDA OF TRANSYLVANIANS IN AMERICA FOR THE RECOGNITION OF THE ROMANIAN CAUSE61
- Mihaela Ilie, THE IDEOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL RENAISSANCE FRONT IN PRO-CARLIST CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS 79
- Larisa F. Malyutina, Aleksandr G. Gryaznukhin, Lyudmila V. Belgorodskaya, Tatiana V. Gryaznukhina, Elena E. Kushnarenko, CONTRIBUTION OF MASTERS OF INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES OF THE KRASNOYARSK TERRITORY TO THE VICTORY OVER FASCIST GERMANY.....91
- Vasyl Ilnytskyi, Mykola Haliv, THE STRUGGLE OF SOVIET REPRESSIVE AND PUNITIVE ORGANS AGAINST FORMER ROMANIAN INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE STRUCTURES IN UKRAINE (1944-1951).....103
- Tetiana Tsymbal, UKRAINIAN EMIGRATION TO CANADA AT THE END OF THE XIXTH AND BEGINNING OF THE XXTH CENTURY: HISTORIOSOPHY ASPECT119
- Alexandra Porumbescu, AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY TRANSFORMATIONS IN ROMANIA AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM129
- Marina Shpakovskaya, Natalia Ivkina, Andreea Gavrilă, THE PROBLEM OF A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL REALISM IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF RUSSIA139
- Vira I. Dodonova, Roman A. Dodonov, Olena S. Aleksandrova, Olena V. Popovich, Yurii V. Omelchenko, STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF BEHAVIOUR OF SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA.....153

BOOK REVIEWS

- Ioan Pelivan, *Corespondență. Memorii* [Correspondence. Memories]. Ediție îngrijită, prefață și notă asupra ediției de Ion Constantin, Ion Negrei, Gheorghe Negru, Știința (Colecția *Pagini despre Basarabia*), Chișinău, 2019, 436 pp. ISBN 978-9975-85-180-0 (*Stoica Lascu*)165

STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF BEHAVIOUR OF SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA

*Vira I. Dodonova**, *Roman A. Dodonov***, *Olena S. Aleksandrova****,
*Olena V. Popovich*****, *Yurii V. Omelchenko******

Abstract

The aim of this article is a socio-philosophical generalisation of the leading strategies of behaviour of actors of historical trauma to achieve tolerant relations between social groups, societies and states. The basic methodological premise of the research is the thesis of the discursive nature of historical trauma, thus, the main method is the method of discourse analysis. These theoretical generalisations were made on the basis of comparative analysis of socio-political discourse of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Ukraine. A tangible place in this discourse belongs to the thematisation of the Holocaust, the Holodomor, Stalin's repression and the like. The authors came to the conclusion that it was necessary to differentiate the behaviour of subjects and objects of a historical trauma. If the first (subjects) choose denial of guilt, self-justification, awareness of responsibility, repentance as the main strategies of their behavior, the latter (objects) can choose strategies of oblivion (silence), manifestation, forgiveness. At the same time, the strategy of manifestation is divided into several tactics, among which the tactics of "telling the truth", "restoring justice", "revenge" and "justifying by the victims of the actions of their offenders" are described. The strategies of overcoming the historical trauma should contribute to the restoration of social and spiritual health of the society. The most effective strategies in this regard are repentance and forgiveness. At the same time, forgiveness is the prerogative of the victims just like repentance is the prerogative of the guilty.

Key words: *victims, repression, guilt, repentance, forgiveness*

Introduction

In XXI century, it is very difficult to find a people who has lived a flourishing and even life, full of ups and victories, a life devoid of terrible tragedies and cataclysms. Historical traumas caused by two world and numerous local wars, repression, deportations, "purges", conflicts and the like are known to almost every social community no matter if it is an ethnic group, a nation or another social group. The ruthless Moloch of history collected a bloody sacrifice from XX century the memory of which is still alive nowadays.

* PhD, Department of Philosophy, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, 13b Marshal Timoshenko Str., Kyiv, Ukraine, Phone: +380662995636, Email: dodonovav@gmail.com

** PhD, Department of Philosophy, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, 13b Marshal Timoshenko Str., Kyiv, Ukraine, Phone: +380662995616, Email: kardodonovr68@gmail.com

*** PhD, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, 13b Marshal Timoshenko Str., Kyiv, Ukraine, Phone: +380667078736, Email: dolena.aleksandrova@yahoo.com

**** PhD, Department of Philosophy and Sociology, Mariupol State University, 129a Budevnykiv Ave., Mariupol, Ukraine, Phone: +380503483856, Email: pscphs@mdu.in.ua

***** PhD, Department of Philosophy, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, 13b Marshal Timoshenko Str., Kyiv, Ukraine, Phone: +380505266612, Email: yvo0306@gmail.com

In many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, historical traumas are a significant factor of the socio-cultural landscape, they affect the value orientation and spiritual atmosphere of the society as well as determine the vector of its political development. In some of them, it is even possible to notice an excessive enthusiasm for traumatic experience of the past, psycho-emotional concentration on the wounds inflicted on grandfathers and great-grandfathers, desire to restore justice, to return from oblivion the names of the victims, painful desire to change something, to correct in history, to live it again in the alternative way, albeit in the virtual state. According to Aleida Assmann, “the society is now going through a ‘post-traumatic era’ in which memorial practices are closely intertwined with memorial theories (Assmann, 2012: 61).

Tragic events in the history of Ukraine of XX century make themselves felt today. The consequences of historical trauma, in particular, the devastating famine of 1932-33, are inherited as behavioural patterns and survival algorithms. Among them O. Zinchenko singles out changes in childbearing behaviour (“one should not give birth to more children than one can feed»), limitation of life perspective (“There will be a day, there will be some food”), pessimism (“One should leave here because nothing good will be here”) and distrust of power, etc. (Zinchenko, 2018: 2). Today, there is a problem of transgenerational transmission of traumas to the younger generation that can have undesirable consequences.

The problem of historical trauma as a social phenomenon in modern humanitarianism has not yet obtained a single vision. The theoretical and methodological roots of the problem of collective trauma reach the second half of the XIX – early XX century and are based on the research works of F. Nietzsche, A. Eulenburg, J. Breuer, S. Freud, P. Janet and J.-M. Charcot, the concept itself appears in the book *Everything at One's Way* by K. Erikson which is dedicated to the catastrophic flood in West Virginia in 1972 (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008: 141).

For today, there are two main approaches to studying a trauma as a collective phenomenon: psychological and sociological-oriented concepts. In the framework of the first approach, the injury is considered as individually experienced by a certain person. Its collective status is explained by the fact that traumatic experience concerns a large number of people. This approach makes it possible to understand that the collective trauma was in the past, the bearers of the trauma are witnesses and victims, but not the whole society. In the framework of this approach there is work O. Astashov, R. Kliuher, P. Konerton and L. Langer (Miller 2006: 15-16).

The sociological-oriented approach is presented in the research works of J. Alexander where is accentuated the process of trauma formation as a marker of identity for the society. This idea is developed by A. Kiuner, M. Brunner, P. Sztompka, O. Kamenskykh and O. Chupyra. The latter approach includes a popular nowadays postcolonial discourse in which a historical trauma is considered as a product of colonisation and cultural oppression of indigenous non-European peoples. Such understanding is presented in the research works of A. Assmann, P. Nora, J.-F. Lyotard, D. Chakrabarty, etc. However, Dipesh Chakrabarty insists on the need to distinguish between such concepts as “historical trauma” and “historical fact”. This reflects a conflict between two interested parties: on the one hand, a caste of

professional historians, and on the other hand, groups focused on a new politics of identity. So, historical traumas are the interaction of history and memory, but historians are annoyed by this combination because they consider it necessary to separate these two components in the name of historical justice and truth (Chakrabarty, 2000: 201).

In the book *The Long Shadow of the Past. Memorial Culture and Historical Policy* A. Assmann comes to the conclusion that the concept of “historical trauma” was introduced to demonstrate the importance of memory in overcoming the legacy left from colonialism and slave trade (Assmann, 2014: 72-73). T. Hundorova (2013) made an attempt to go beyond the Freudian psychoanalysis and present “decolonised theory of trauma” (Hundorova, 2013: 115).

In general, in the scientific literature there is an understanding of what is a historical trauma. The vast majority of publications are dedicated to applied aspects of post-traumatic syndrome (mental disorders, drug addiction, social maladjustment, marginalisation, etc.). At the same time, much less attention is paid to typical behavioral strategies to overcome the consequences of historical trauma – at the societal and individual levels.

So, the aim of our article is the socio-philosophical generalisation of the leading strategies and tactics of behaviour of each of the actors of a historical trauma in order to achieve tolerant relations between social groups, societies and states.

Materials and Methods

The basic methodological premise of our research is the thesis of the discursive nature of a historical trauma. Traditionally, a historical trauma is considered in two dimensions: 1) as specific negative events that happened in the real world and which are recognised by an individual and society as “traumatic”, they are experienced as “traumatic state” or “traumatic situation”; 2) as pathological consequences of these events which, by extrapolation to the past, are considered to be caused by an experienced trauma. Thus, a historical trauma is understood as both a traumatic event and the process of developing the memory of a trauma.

However, at the individual level, the trauma experienced by a person resembles an “unexploded ball in the human body” while at the societal level, a historical trauma tells on the descendants of the victims, that is, those who do not directly have a traumatic experience, but sincerely worry about the violation of the rights and dignity of their group. The information on the trauma is transmitted verbally, and the traumatising events themselves acquire symbolic meaning. It means that a historical trauma is presented to a researcher approximately like the literary text to a reader, literary critic or hermeneut.

“Socio-Cultural Reality is a Text” postmodern metaphor means that, first, sociocultural reality is a product of interaction of the immense variety of discursive practices, and second, this reality is the being that can be read, interpreted and understood. The attempt of descendants to feel what their predecessors really experienced is nothing but an attempt of symbolic deconstruction of history.

Unlike the facts about certain historical events reliably recorded in the archives, traumatic experience has a discursive nature, it is characterised by the presence of

generalisations and emotional connection with identity, it is a part of the historical narrative and requires social recognition. Therefore, a historical trauma is characterised by a dialogical element based on contractual principles.

Based on this, we believe that the most appropriate method of studying historical traumas and ways to overcome them is the method of discourse analysis. It is clear that in this context it is necessary “to move away” from narrowly linguistic interpretation of discourse, in particular, to its reducing to the procedure of content analysis. Reasoning on the sociocultural reality in all its totality, a discourse analyst asks himself: what is the meaning revealed to me in the sociocultural reality? What is its meaning? What does it mean? Trying to give an answer to the question of the discourse content, we have to answer him with the help of the other discourse that should serve as its meaning, and there is no other way to answer this question.

Thus, we consider discourse as verbally articulated form of objectification of the content of consciousness, and the method of discourse analysis used to describe the existing discursive practices of overcoming the consequences of historical traumas will allow to evaluate the effectiveness and prospectiveness of specific steps in this direction.

The theoretical generalisations given in this article were made on the basis of the comparative analysis of socio-political discourse of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Ukraine. A tangible place in this discourse belongs to the thematisation of the Holocaust, the Holodomor, Stalin’s repression and the like.

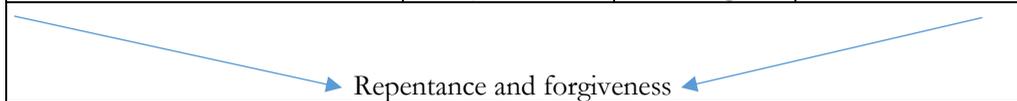
Results and Discussion

Moving on to the presentation of the results of our research, we should make a certain methodological remark regarding the understanding of the object and subject of a historical trauma. The subject is the one who causes a trauma, the object is the one who suffers from a trauma, namely, a victim. Overcoming the historical trauma and therefore, the moral improvement of the society, stipulates an effective social dialogue that leads to the recognition of the commission of injustice. At the same time, it is important that such a dialogue should be initiated by the perpetrators of a historical trauma, and they should confess their guilt within the confines of the repentance policy (Smoliar, 2009: 81-83).

The task of overcoming a historical trauma is much easier if the state has a clear policy of post-traumatic rehabilitation. But very often it happens that at the state level the very fact of traumatic impact is denied, and historians feel confused because of the lack of archives. In this case, it is more correct to speak not about a purposeful policy of overcoming negative experience, but about the leading strategies of post-traumatic behaviour of subjects and objects of historical traumas (Ohienko, 2013: 149-150).

In the result of the discourse analysis it was found that possible strategies of behaviour of subjects and objects of a historical trauma tended to such options (Table 1):

Table 1. Leading strategies of behaviour of subjects and objects of historical trauma

Historical trauma			
Subjects (violators)	Objects (victims)		
Denial of guilt	Oblivion (silence)		
Self-justification	Manifestation		
Awareness of responsibility	Restoration of justice	Thirst for revenge	Justification of abusers
			

Guilt denial

One of the most common strategies of behaviour of the subjects of a historical trauma is the complete denial of the act of committing a crime or one's own involvement in crimes. Denial is an attempt to replace the memory of complicity in a crime. Here again it is possible to observe the analogy with an individual trauma and with an understandable desire to forget, not to recognise and not to remember (Rosental, 2008: 52).

Thus, in particular, in the Soviet Union, the subject of the Holodomor belonged to the number of taboo topics. While in the West, scientists collected and analysed the testimony of victims who were lucky to survive, in the USSR one could not write or talk about it. The policy of silence lasted for decades. Even today, the Russian Federation denies the Holodomor as an act of conscious destruction of the Ukrainian people. The very fact of hunger is recognised, but its artificial nature is not. The argument in this regard is the reference to the victims of hunger in Volga Region, Kazakhstan, Kuban and the like. So to say, if the forced withdrawal of food concerned only the Ukrainians, how is it possible explain the famine outside Ukraine? The famine of 1932-33 is interpreted in Russia as an instrument of class struggle with the peasantry. Some authors are inclined to believe that the famine was an unplanned consequence of the kulak resistance to the policy of forced requisitions. By this logic, the explanation of the causes of famine due to the class struggle does not imply the existence of the other causes, including the purposeful genocide (Lopez, 2011: 303-305).

In the Soviet Union until the last days of its existence the scale of repression was also denied, including the era of pre-war Great Terror. The published figures of the shot and convicted shocked, prompting a conclusion on the anti-national nature of the Soviet power. After all, hundreds of thousands and millions of victims of Stalin Regime cannot be accounted for by any specific "affairs" against spies, saboteurs-engineers, doctors, military men and intellectuals (Manokha & Sobchuk, 2017: 161).

The prisoners of Nazi concentration camps were very oppressed by the idea that humanity would not know about the horrors they had to go through. Simon Wiesenthal, a researcher of the Holocaust, says in his book *Murderers Among Us* about the SS men that cynically stated, "No matter what way this war will end, we have already won; none of us will remain to testify, but even if someone survived, the

world would not believe him. Perhaps, there will be some doubts, discussions, research of historians, but there will be no certainty because by destroying you we eliminate the evidence. But even if some evidence is preserved, people will say that these facts are too savage to be true: they will talk about the fiction of the Soviet propaganda and they will believe us, but not you, and we will deny everything. It is we who will dictate the history of concentration camps” (Wiesenthal, 1967: 39-42).

Self-justification

Along with the strategy of denial, the subjects of historical traumas actively use the technics of self-justification, abrogating responsibility for the committed crimes. The most well-known formula which was adhered to by the Nazi military is “I was following the order” (Lawrence, 1991: 200). In this case, the criminal nature of the actions seems to be recognised by a subject, he does not justify the regime any more, but, at the same time, he explains his actions by the lack of alternatives and the inefficiency of the protest. In the system where every person reduced to the status of a “screw” of a giant social machine performed certain functions. The refusal to follow the order automatically led to the replacement of the rebel by another one, more obedient “screw”, and the inevitable punishment of the violator up to execution (Chechel & Konoplyov, 2013: 182). This is a convenient ethical position, resulting in the individual subject withering away in the collective subject-system.

But in addition to such a position of self-justification, among the executors of orders there was also confidence in the expediency of their own actions, their necessity and validity by the highest interests. The deportation of the Chechens and the Crimean Tatars was justified by their “treason” (the guilt of some collaborators is transferred to the whole nation). In the similar way the destroying and deportation of the Armenians and the Greeks become quite legitimate means for the Turkish officials and soldiers to fight with separatists and traitors in the conditions of war. A similar form of self-justification is the accusation from the side of the enemy, namely, the removal of any argument with the help of a universal rhetorical formula “but they...” (Kühner, 2007: 97).

Awareness of guilt and responsibility

Only a small number of perpetrators of criminal acts are able to realise their guilt and responsibility. A frank avowal of guilt is the first step towards repentance, that is, recognition and condemnation of the past and, at the same disengagement from it. According to Manfred Deselaers, an employee of the Center for Dialogue and Prayer in Auschwitz, “Nowadays, when the Germans come to visit Auschwitz, they do it not to commemorate the memory of their countrymen and stay loyal to them. On the contrary, they emphasise that they are not Nazis, they are other Germans, and if they came here to remember and honor someone, then only victims” (Wiesenthal, 1967: 58).

Repentance is the most effective form of memory on the part of those who are directly or indirectly responsible for the evil they have done.

Oblivion (silence)

Let us move on to possible strategies for mastering the historical traumas of the victims. As already mentioned, they act as objects of violent actions and in this state are often devoid of subjectivity unlike the other actors of the historical process. A person brought to the state of an animal is easier to control physically, it is easy to

break his will, nothing but the desire of his body is actualised and the activity of consciousness is dulled and directed to maintain the life of this body. So, the first fundamental condition which, actually, starts the process of overcoming a historical trauma is the elimination of the factors that make this trauma possible. It is necessary to ensure the reliable cessation of traumatic factors that involves the development of socio-political project which should eliminate forever the relevant situation and take under the society's control the post-traumatic adaptation of its victims (Kis, 2010: 85).

A sustainable reaction to the impersonal and inhuman conditions of existence is the silence of the victims of a historical trauma who prefer "to forget" about it. But the silence of a victim is not only a mental response, but also a conscious strategy of certain individual as well as the society as a whole, aimed at overcoming maladaptation and "turning the page" of his own life and search of further prospects.

According to L. Petranovskaya (Petranovskaya, 2018: 3), the dynamics of a historical psychological trauma implies consistent getting through stages of shock, denial, awareness and recovery. If at the stage of shock, the main goal of a person is elementary survival, at the stage of denial there arises the illusion of rehabilitation. "The function of this stage is a respite and a pause to accumulate the resources necessary to overcome a trauma. The safer are the circumstances in which a person proves to be after a trauma, and the greater is the internal resource, the shorter will be the stage of denial". L. Naidionova notes that in the Soviet Union after the Second World War the internal policy was actually aimed at blocking the reflexion of the event that led to the stage of denial (Naidionova, 2012: 49). In our opinion, the phenomenon of silence corresponds precisely to the stage of denial.

Leading tactics of manifestation

Those who cannot keep silent choose the opposite strategy for coping with a trauma, namely, manifestation as the desire to inform the world of the injustice and cruelty of crimes. Through the manifestation of a trauma, a person tries to regain a human face, clear the violated dignity and prove the systemic and mass character of the committed evil.

Depending on the individual psychosocial characteristics, the manifestation can occur in the form of 1) informing about the truth and justice, 2) calls for revenge and even 3) justification of the violators (Kiridon, 2016: 135).

The tactics of "informing the truth" is aimed at elimination of traumatic events from the "historical non-existence". Despite the desire of the authorities and direct perpetrators to classify the crimes, the victims who chose these tactics carefully collect the information, search for the other victims, visit the scenes and spread the obtained information by all available means. As a matter of fact, this tactic is the beginning of a trauma narrativization process (Edwards, 2010: 71).

According to L. Petranovska, the stage of awareness of a social trauma corresponds to it. This stage is characterised by "overflow" with feelings, the need to talk about them, the need to come back to the scene, to restore the details, completeness and brightness of memories, "re-experience", living out anger to violators, compensatory aggression and living out guilt and the transition from guilt to responsibility.

In the Soviet socio-political discourse, the transition from silence to the manifestation of trauma inflicted by war is associated with the release of *Cranes are Flying* Film in 1957 (Naidionova, 2012: 50). But the trauma inflicted by Stalin's internal repression has become the subject of manifestation since 1962 when A. Solzhenitsyn's novel *One Day from the life of Ivan Denisovich* was published in *Novyi Mir Magazine* (Baker & Gippenreiter, 1998: 205-207). The role of psychotherapists is thus taken over by people of art. Perhaps, it is because of this fact that the question of the responsibility of torturers and violators became more or less legitimate.

The opposite tactic to "informing the truth" tactic is a tactic of revenge where in the collective psyche arise a zoological reaction to the done evil. Chronologically, this tactic is close to the stage of shock. Talion's "eye for an eye" principle overshadows the moral stratification of civilisation (Briggs, 2016: 102). Of course, revenge is the same extreme too as a trauma itself, and the stronger is the latter, more overwhelming is a desire to revenge.

It should be recalled how, after the Second World War, there were massacres of the Germans, not only of the military or the Nazis, but also of civilians, including women and children. The feeling of collective guilt and collective responsibility of all Germans was cultivated. Let us recall about *Nokmim (Revenge)* Jewish movement chaired by Abba Kovner which aim was the destruction of 6 million (!) Germans, about concentration camp for the Nazis at the place of the "branch of Auschwitz" in Poland which was led by Solomon Morel and so on (Bar-On *et al.*, 1998: 327). "These were not "good" acts. It was revenge. Actually, we have lost the war. We lost six million Jews. And that one who did not see these places, concentration camps and crematoria will not understand what we did. Because we were weak, we had neither state, nor power, we took revenge. It was not a good act", recognises Haim Laskov, one of the participants of the underground movement (Kharlamov, 2016: 2).

It is clear that the ethical position of those who chose a revenge tactic is, frankly speaking, weak. The similar creates the similar, violence begets violence. In revenge, the victim is likened to the perpetrator, creating a new cycle of violence and, consequently, a new trauma (Antze & Lambek, 1996: 142).

Another tactic of trauma manifestation is the justification by the victims of the actions of their offenders – the tactic is paradoxical and extremely contradictory and to some extent similar to "Stockholm syndrome". Olexiy Kamenskykh gives the examples of memories of a boy from a dispossessed family who thanks the Soviet authorities for free clothes and bread provided to the orphanage; story by O. Losev *From Conversations in Belomorstroy* where prisoners "with a dialectical necessity" prove to one other the appropriateness of their own arrest and sacrificing their lives for the sake of building a new world; numerous appeals of the Volga Germans to the Administration of the Perm camps in 1941-42 with requests to send them to the front for the redemption of the guilt of belonging to the German people; and after all, "reversible neostalinism" the forms of which we see in modern Russia. In all these cases, we observe not only the manifestations of *resignatio* (from Latin *resignatio* means "destruction"), but also taking one's own "guilt", inability to independently

dispose of one's own fate and solidarity of victims of violence with the violator (Kamenskykh, 2015: 78).

The effectiveness of the chosen tactic in the framework of the strategy of manifestation of a historical trauma is, of course, different. Obviously, the tactic of "Stockholm syndrome" is rather a psychopathology, and the tactic of revenge leads to the deadlock of cyclical violence. Only the first described tactic, namely, "informing the truth", can eventually lead to reconciliation, but anyway it does not guarantee automatic success.

Forgiveness

It is important to emphasise that forgiveness is the prerogative of the victims just like repentance is the prerogative of the guilty. Forgiveness as a strategy to overcome historical trauma requires a certain moral maturity and, in particular, a special level of development of mercy. Thus, V. Grossman recalls a Stalingrad woman who held out a loaf of bread to a German prisoner of war. But this situation deserves respect and honour than the situation when revenge outgrows all norms of humanity and a person turns into a beast (Kamenskykh, 2015: 92).

Most often, the culture of mercy is identified with religious education. The words of Christ "if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also" (Matthew 5: 39) in symbolic form express the commandment: to answer evil not with evil, but good," and the right to judge and punish should be left to the God. Therefore, it is no wonder that it is in religious communities that forgiveness and repentance are cultivated, and it is religious organisations that initiate appropriate social campaigns at the societal level.

But not only religious communities, but also secular society is gradually coming to the need to work out historical traumas. The strategy of "repentance and forgiveness", according to the periodization of L. Petranovska, is similar to the stage of recovery when a person says to himself "pain is enough" and "lets the historical event go" to the past. "A characteristic feature of this stage is the increase of consumption, the emphasis on the satisfaction of physical and material needs and switching to the topics of today. Compared to the past generation, lack of ideology, consumerism, and sexualization, which are inherent in the new generation, in a certain way indicate a stage of society's recovery from historical trauma" (Naidionova, 2012: 51).

The position of repentance and forgiveness is not only an indicator of a person's maturity, but also an indicator of the presence of self-reflection and consensus in the society as well as a marker of the democratic nature of the political system. "The historical gesture of German Chancellor Willy Brandt on December 7th, 1970 who knelt in front of the memorial to the victims of uprising in Warsaw ghetto was the most direct consequence of the rethinking of the Nazi past in Germany. Brandt came to power in the time of the protest movement in 1968 which in turn was the result of the processes of internal democratisation of West German society which was directly related to the re-evaluation of the past. As soon as the society's majority reached a consensus on this issue, it demanded a rethinking of relations with neighbours and led in the necessary way to Warsaw kneeling" (Epple, 2017: 3). A series of public apologies which happened after the mentioned act became a direct performative expression of the strategy of repentance. At the same time, it is still unknown who

needs such apologies more – the society to which the political leader addresses, or the society on whose behalf he speaks. Through its dependence on dialogical recognition, the strategy of overcoming historical trauma directly depends on the degree of guilt awareness. Trauma is a socio-ethical phenomenon which is at first sight ephemeral, but to overcome it, one should achieve and maintain social consensus.

Conclusion

Summing up the results of the above reasoning, we note that a historical trauma is a deep emotional and psychological impression caused by cruel forms of violence, the destruction of an established way of life as well as its negative impact on the psyche, behaviour, memory of individuals and social groups. The consequences of a historical trauma are so devastating that they destabilise the whole social system and affect all citizens and social communities.

First, this is a psychological problem and the consequences of post-traumatic syndrome that concern every person since a collective trauma is always experienced in the individual way. The metaphorical description of a trauma as an “unexploded bullet” best reflects its content. And this feeling of a foreign object is very difficult to express rationally, more irrational colours, such as tears, sadness and melancholy suit more.

Second, this is an ethical problem because a historical trauma requires a dialogue between violators and victims in which both sides recognise both a historical trauma and the traumatic past of this story. Repentance and forgiveness are the means to overcome a historical trauma. If historical images in the society are consigned to the “dustbin of history”, they are not analysed, then there is a chance of their displacement into the collective unconscious. In such circumstances, trauma "drags along" after the nation throughout its existence, forming a complex of inferiority within its citizens.

Third, this is an ideological problem and historical traumas become the background for the formation of new narratives, and this property cannot be ignored. Modern societies with great enthusiasm overcome the era of metanarratives, emphasising the harm they have done to the human community in the course of human existence, and, in particular, in the XX century. Overcoming large narratives, the society increasingly resorts to the creation of small narratives which also serve as a form of uniting the society. Politicians are looking for the “grains-events” around which it is possible to unite the society. Ernest Renan, a French scholar in his time, said that a historical trauma could unite the society even to greater extent than historical triumph.

However, in Ukraine, the process of creating new narratives takes place both within the framework of a psychological approach and through a socially-oriented understanding of a trauma. At first, at the level of psychological approach, they analyse the facts of traumatising of the society that lived out the victims and witnesses of a certain historical event, and then they move on to sociological one due to which the society’s mobilisation takes place around a trauma on the basis of a collective narrations which consist of individual stories. Since for a sociological approach it does not really matter if a trauma was in the past, it is enough that a group

of people considers a historical trauma real and identify themselves with its victims. The discourse of a historical trauma in modern Ukraine consists in the fact that identity is formed not so much around people who have experienced a trauma, but on the symbolic transmission of a trauma, namely, thanks to the films, literature and diaries of victims.

At the same time, excessive “relishing” the pain from the lived out traumas distracts the Ukrainians from actual problems, masking the mistakes and deliberate abuses of the authorities against their people. The described above strategies of behaviour of subjects (denial of guilt, self-justification, awareness of responsibility) and objects of a historical trauma (silence, manifestation – restoration of justice, thirst for revenge and “Stockholm syndrome”) are integrated, after all, on repentance and forgiveness. It goes without saying that every nation struggles for the restoration of historical justice that the perpetrators should be punished or at least they should apologise at the highest level. But the question arises: what should prevail in such a situation – historical justice or the formation of a new form of identity? Is not it better to focus on the forms of overcoming a historical trauma? No one denies that it is very important to understand the causes of a historical trauma and its consequences, but the most important thing is the movement of the society forward, not the focus on historical images, but the vision of the prospects for the society’s development. This is the way we usually overcome the traumas that fell on our fate. The main conclusion that can be made based on the analysis of socio-political discourses of post-traumatic societies is that we should take care of our people, their physical and spiritual health, well-being now, without postponing it for the future.

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