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DIALOGUE WITH HISTORY: EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINIAN HISTORICAL EDUCATION RECONSIDERATION

Ukraine is at the very beginning of her way of state-building, which is difficult, full of contradictions and dangers. This process takes place in the context of global civilization shifts which cover all areas of human activity and show deep transformational changes in all spheres of public life. These changes determine the sociocultural and anthropological contours of society development. In conjunction with the achievements of scientific and technical process they make significant adjustments in living standards, possibilities of human working activity, speed of economical growth, cultural characteristics of society, causing unification of markets, cultures, political systems, etc. Generally speaking, globalization appears to be a multifaceted process that certifies the creation and development of interconnected structures and a new type of world community. However, the processes of unity, interdependence of social and cultural phenomena are accompanied by the cultural differentiation and disintegration. These trends are reflected in the spread of the regionalization and localization phenomena, accompanied by the intensification of ethnic, cultural, religious, economic regeneration and represent extraordinary contradictory development processes of a global world. At the same time on the background of unity and searching common or contiguous and interrelated processes the need to preserve unique and distinctive strongly increases.

This fact is especially significant for Ukrainian state-building processes. It should be also underlined that contradictions of global development increase in connection with the internal problems of Ukrainian society. Nowadays it is faced with political instability (which tends to escalate into state collapse), the underdevelopment of civil society institutions, social polarization (which is rapidly and steadily growing), economic deterioration, dependence on energy resources, significant ecosystem disruption, cultural degradation, etc. But the greatest danger for the Ukrainian society is the loss of its independence and territorial integrity in conditions of separatism and warfare manifestations in the East of Ukraine.

Only spiritually strong nation is able to demonstrate national pride of those who identify themselves with it and can overcome the difficulties and challenges which Ukrainian society is faced with. It can become strong fostering moral and philosophical values such as honor, dignity, ability to sacrifice, justice, patriotism, etc.

At the same time *mankurtism*¹ is one of the most important causes of misery and failure, which rich and generous Ukraine cannot overcome yet. It generates massive apathy, frustration and time-serving that ultimately threaten the integrity and statehood, the disappearance of Ukrainians as an ethnic group, the destruction of fertile Ukrainian lands, which can be saved only by nature-aligned ethnic group.

1. The notion was created by Chingiz Aitmatov, one of the most renowned Soviet and Kirghiz writers in his novel *A Day as Long as Centuries*. Mankurts were a mythical group of Kirghiz people who had been captured and turned into slaves and were forced to forget their pasts. Mankurtism is widely used as a synonym for way of russification in which non-Russian nationalities had been cut off from their historical memory as the result of conscious conspiracy by the Communist elite in the Soviet time.

It is necessary to underline, that the contemporary problems have deep historical roots. Centuries of statelessness were accompanied by a number of internal contradictions, mass repressions, genocide and famine of Ukrainian people. The result of this is not only the numerous human casualties but also destruction of national self-consciousness, destruction of the main features of Ukrainian ethnos: language, culture, historical memory, etc., everything that unites people in a single community. The number of generations learned to live and lived under the rule of other nations for many years, undermining their culture and spiritual heritage. As a result there was loss of continuity of generations, raising lack of initiative, mindlessness, stagnation, slavish idolatry and more. We are talking about the destruction of the Ukrainian people, not only physically, but also spiritually and mentally. Metastases of genocides, which Ukrainian people have undergone in 20th centuries, appear in the present. Ukrainian researcher I. Mahrytska analyzes the connection between the consequences of the famine of 1932-1933 and contemporary problems and tribulations of Ukrainian society. She points out that the famine mentally broke Ukrainian nation into separate groups, depriving a sense of national solidarity: "That's why Ukrainians will easily pay bribes for their illegal benefits and positions, not thinking about how many of their citizens, as a result, will not get them legally"².

According to Mahrytska's mind, to overcome this post-genocidal syndrome is not possible precisely obeying formulas of European States reforms. Traditional foreign grants do not play also a decisive role in this process. Struggle with the consequences of genocides that are the national tragedies is possible in conditions of learning the "common traumatic experience" by the citizens and searching exclusive ways and guidelines for further development. Searching for ways to overcome these and other hazards means to get a chance of becoming an independent country for Ukraine, that can solve problems of state and territorial unity of the country with numerous linguistic, religious, cultural differences, etc.³

Contemporary Ukrainian society is faced with the problems of its history in general. That's why their leveling predetermines that they occur again and again in various guises before society, causing all new threats and challenges in its further development. The history of mankind is a holistic formation. It is never entirely new, because obviously there are long-term conditions and structures that manage to withstand the pressure of changes, causing corresponding individual events and processes that are experienced by human at the time. German researcher Reinhart Koselleck (*Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik*) in his concept of historical time pays attention to this fact. He confirms that "modernity can be the point of intersection in which the past becomes the future that is the point of intersection of three time dimensions, in which the present always disappears. Then this is an imaginary zero point on the imaginary axis of time. Human is always in the past, while the future exists in front of him"⁴. Thus, the present becomes an imaginary nothing, which certifies the identity of the person to the past and to the future. Therefore, the awareness of what is happening with society today and what might happen in the future is possible only with the realization of past experience. It is very important to seek for the historical experience to overcome the difficulties and dangers. It concerns the use of historical heritage in understanding the realities of the modern world, searching constructive ways, resolving contradictions, restore "sense of a single family", without all of that it is impossible to imagine a fully healthy Ukrainian nation. The experience and lessons of the past have to "treat" tormented identity (urgency to find out who we are, where we are, under the influence of what circumstances we are formed, and finally why we are who we are today), help to restore the lost system of moral coordinates, to follow and enhance democratic values and traditions, to enter as an equal member of the European community and so on. The events of the past acquire its value only in the context of modern demands. Reconstruction of the past is possible and necessary only in the interests of present and future.

2. Ирина Магрицкая, *Постгеноцидная Украина без грима и украшения*, [www: pravda.comua/ rus/ inozmi/svoboda/2012/11/12/6977304/](http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/inozmi/svoboda/2012/11/12/6977304/)

3. Ibid.

4. Райнгард Козеллек, *Часові пласти. Дослідження з теорії історії* (пер. з нім.), Дух і Літера, Київ 2006, с. 274.

Achievements of the past should be seen as help in overcoming the destruction of the spirit. The history itself teaches the qualities that are needed for the Ukrainian society in the process of state-building. It appears to be not only a remembrance of the past, but also a rebirth and revival of the spirit in the Ukrainian community.

Understanding the sociocultural significance of past experience in solving current problems explains the increased interest in history as an academic discipline. Historical education not only provides knowledge about the experience of past generations, but also acts as “agent of the future”, because it forms the personal qualities of a person, affects the development of personal outlook, encourages the search for the meaning of our own existence. The task of historical education is to teach the youth to distinguish the essential from the inessential, to be able to identify the preconceived opinions and understand algorithms of certain important social transformations. Historical knowledge is the background and observation point, the intellectual perspective, without which individual actions are narrowed to technical skills.

The aim of article is to pay attention to the necessity of rethinking historical education depending on the needs and requests of the modern Ukrainian society. First of all, historical education needs to get rid of some stereotypes that interpret Ukrainian history as the story of the unfortunate people who constantly depend on and are influenced by someone’s evil will. The stereotypes present Ukraine as a victim, which have such specific features as the absence of national dignity and ability to get up off its knees, a tendency to discord and fratricidal conflicts. According to Ukrainian famous poet Lina Kostenko, such views are fatal for the development of Ukrainian community. This approach, to her mind, teaches and develops an inferiority complex and provincialism, which creates generally not presentable image of Ukrainian history⁵. Besides the cultivation of the image of the grief-stricken Ukraine, its past does not allow solving a number of problems, but also becomes a starting point for them in future. The youth should positively

perceive their own history, growing up on the examples of heroic past and there are a lot of heroic stories in the Ukrainian history. The nation should look triumphantly and creatively, but not insignificant and disadvantaged. Only the right approach allows the youth to understand that they belong to a strong, original, talented, courageous and hardworking nation. In that case young generation finds out not only about the past, but also gets well known with the famous patriots of their homeland. We cannot join European community without reconsideration of our historical roots. We possess the rich cultural heritage that is a powerful potential for further development.

Of course, we are not talking about the refusal to explore the tragic pages of our history that caused mixed feelings in the society. On the contrary, learning them and understanding is necessary to ensure that future generations never feel victims or indifferent observers. All that tragic events that had happened in the past should warn humanity in the future. The history of genocides generates memory-sorrow. This memory finds the ability to empathize, in the case of the tragedy, to design the future through tolerant attitude to another culture, outlook and lifestyle finally. Paul Ricoeur in his work *Memory, History, Forgetting* advises to pull the instructive value out of the traumatic memories. This advice can be realized only by converting memory in the project. If traumatic syndrome refers to the past, the instructive value guides to the future. At the same time the cult of memory for the sake of memory eliminates not only vision of the future, but also the question of the moral sense⁶.

All those kind, valiant, heroic, evil, tragic or shameful events that had happened in Ukrainian history remained in the past. It should be different in the future. This approach opens perspectives for the future. Thus, the historical education plays preventive role eliminating the risks and threats for the development of society in the future. The lessons of the tragic past filled with suffering and loss should be a warning for the modern world in which, from time to time, intercultural, interethnic and interreligious relations are tangled. They are intended to prevent

5. Ліна Костенко, *Україна як жертва і чинник глобалізації катастроф*, [в:] Дві Русі (За загал. ред. Лариси Івшиної), Факт, Київ 2000, с.457.

6. See: Поль Рикёр, *Память, история, забвение* / пер. с франц., Изд. гуманитар. литературы, Москва 2004, с. 124.

the transformation of any cultural dividing lines to the “split lines”, on the contrary to nurture balanced, tolerant, friendly attitude to individual and group differences.

The core that orients to the world of multiplicity recognizes tolerance as new mode of interaction with other world, the one that is different from mine. Cultural interaction of different types of cultures is known with that when borrowing any value from other cultures, our own culture changes it to “ours” without losing its original identity. In that way culture is constantly in interaction with others, creating “own world”, seeking and presenting her identity. “Disappearance” of *Other* is dramatic for the own usual culture because it deprives the projection of future development. Single culture is not a static system that creates “own world” and locks it. It is a dynamic system that is constantly “looking for place” for their own identity, entering into relations with other cultures. Understanding and recognizing the cultural experience of the other culture as a productive and worthy will determine empathic unity of differences, represent the identity and cultural flavor of their own life, help to overcome the inferiority complex and restore the moral and spiritual coordinates, which were deformed in the totalitarian days. The study of historical education is entrusted with the task of forming the young generation’s capacity for mutual tolerance and empathy in understanding *Other*, nurturing spiritual flexibility and ability to compromise, the orientation of students to understand the life values and priorities that differ from usual for them, the recognition of social equality because all people are equally valuable. Dialogical understanding the past presents a history as dynamic and open process, as “consonance” of unique, self-sufficient, valuable cultural worlds and life practices.

In this sense history appears to be a factor of society consolidation but not as a tool of ideological confrontation in hands of politicians. Dialogue between past and present is multicultural by character; it discovers the ability to prevent those negative trends and consequences that many countries had faced with in cultural policy of co-action, national and ethnic relations. This dialogue is productive in

formation of pluralistic mentality in Ukrainian community, in searching and supporting its own identity. Historical education rethinks acquired experience in accordance with today’s reality and defines the contours of the future, with the aim to teach the youth how to navigate in the modern multicultural society. Its mission is to make young people vaccinated against a possible “clash of foreheads” between different cultural, ethnic and territorial communities, prevent military confrontation in the future.

Does contemporary national historical education use the intellectual and cultural resources that were offered in the experience of previous generations? Is it multicultural oriented in elucidation of events of the past and in understanding the contemporary realities? Content analysis of textbooks on Ukrainian history does not permit us to give the positive answer.

Content analysis was based on Dr. James A. Banks’ concept of multicultural dimensions in education which were structured on the following levels by Ukrainian researchers N. Goncharenko and N. Kushnariova:

1) “Individual contributions”: the material introduces stories of the contributions of minorities, the cultural events or achievements related to national minorities.

2) Additive approach: adding programs which introduce specific topics, sections, and concepts related to multiculturalism without changing the general structure.

3) Transformation approach: the structure of the course is modified so that pupils (students) can review all themes and concepts of the course under different cultural (ethnic) points of view and come to their own conclusions⁷.

Analysis of the teaching materials content presented in textbooks demonstrates the absence of multicultural, tolerant and unprejudiced review of past events. The structure of the learning materials does not represent any attempts to explain events and phenomena from the point of view of their alternativeness and multiperspectiveness that would allow the student to think independently and critically about historical events and phenomena, to

7. Надія Гончаренко, Марія Кушнар'єва, *Школа іншування* [в:] “Критика” 2001, №4, с.23.

make their own, uninfluenced conclusions. Transformational approach, which aims to illustrate the dialogue of cultures in horizontal dimension of historical existence and dialogue of cultural epochs in vertical section, is missing in learning materials. A double standard remains typical: the same actions of “our” and “foreign” historical figures are estimated differently. In particular, in the textbook of R. Lyaha, N. Temirova nomadic people such as Cumans, Pechenegs, and hordes of Tatar Mongols were portrayed as cruel and irreconcilable enemies, conquerors. But the foreign policy of Prince Sviatoslav I of Kyiv⁸ is presented without “rapacious marking” although he had also seized the lands of other peoples. According to the authors of textbook, Prince “became famous primarily for his campaigns, in which he spent almost all his life”. They write: “All of these had a great impact in strengthening of the Kievan Rus’ state and the development of economic relations because it has opened Volga trade route to the Eastern countries for merchants, contributed to the development of the Don region, Azov, Kuban. In particular, at the Taman Peninsula a Rus’ colony was appeared”¹⁰.

The textbook of H. Shvydko demonstrates the similar examples of non-critical, unified attitude to his own history, the formation of a stable image of the “evil enemy neighbor”. Describing the historical fate of the Transcarpathian Ukraine, the author places emphasis only on the aggressive plans of Hungary, without noticing the presence of Princes’ aggressive intentions of Galicia–Volhynia Principality: “Hungarian feudal lords seized the land of Carpathian Ukraine gradually...the aim of the Hungarian kings was Galicia, but the Galician Princes successfully resisted this desire, moreover, they attempted to rescue Transcarpathia. Prince Lev Danylovych¹¹ during his reign has managed to attach a part of

Transcarpathian Rus’ to the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia – from Wyshkove to Shariska zhupa with cities Mukacheve and Beregove”¹². The foreign craftsmen are also negatively characterized as dangerous competitors of Ukrainians and co-creators of urban culture at that time. H. Shvydko marks: “Ukrainian citizenship was experiencing hard times. Polish and German craftsmen of different specialties have appeared at Ukrainian cities; having a high level of professional training in major industrial centers of Germany and not finding jobs there they created new shops of various craft specialties here”¹³.

Special attention should be paid to the theme “Ukraine XV - XVI centuries in descriptions of foreigners”, the materials of which give interesting evidences and detailed descriptions of life and manners of Ukrainians, featured only as a hospitable, highly cultured, noble people¹⁴. The history of Ukraine tends to be presented only as the history of the Ukrainian people, but not as multinational and multicultural country. The textbooks made only short mentions about life and cultural achievements of ethnic communities and national minorities that had lived or continue to reside in the territory of Ukraine.

In the textbook of V. Vlasov the people which inhabited the Southern region of Ukraine (Serbs, Bulgarians and others) are quite briefly mentioned¹⁵. G. Lyakh and N. Temirova in their textbook write: “Volodymyr¹⁶ has completed the unification of the Eastern lands into a single state. Kievan Rus’ has become the largest state in Europe... It was inhabited mainly by Slavs. Non-Slavic people (Chud, Merya) and all who settled in the North-East were a small part of the population”¹⁷. Materials that are dedicated to the cultural development of Ukrainian lands in all textbooks of Ukrainian history is accompanied just by an illustration of the achievements of

8. Grand Prince of Kyiv (942-972). His decade-long reign over the Kievan Rus’ was marked by rapid expansion into the Volga River valley, the Pontic steppe, and the Balkans. By the end of his short life, Sviatoslav carved out for himself the largest state in Europe.

9. Роман Лях, Надія Темірова, *Історія України. З найдавніших часів до XV ст.*: Підруч. для 7 кл. серед. шк., Генеза, Київ 2000, с. 120.

10. Ibid, p. 121.

11. He was son of King Danylo of Galicia and reigned from 1264 to 1270. Prince made a lot for the cultural and economical development of the state, tried to expand its territories.

12. Ганна Швидько, *Історія України. XVI – XVIII століття*. Підруч. для 8 класу серед. шк., Генеза, Київ 1997, с.94.

13. Ibid, p.18.

14. Ibid, p.74.

15. Віталій Власов, *Історія України: Підручник для 8-го кл. загальноосвіт. навч. закл.* (За ред. Юрія Мицика), Генеза, Київ 2002, с. 78

16. Grand Prince of Kyiv, and ruler of Kyivan Rus’ from 980 to 1015. His reforms contributed largely to development of Kyivan Rus’.

17. Роман Лях, Надія Темірова, *Історія України. З найдавніших часів до XV ст.*: Підруч. для 7 кл. серед. шк., Генеза, Київ 2000. с. 126.

Ukrainian nation, representatives of other cultures who lived and worked on the territory of Ukraine remained undiscovered by authors. Rather as an exception H. Shvydko in his textbook observes that “to Ukraine came to work well-educated foreigners who were Ukrainianized and made a great contribution to the development of Ukrainian culture. For example, Germans Benedict Herbest and Metropolitan Innokenty Gizel, Moldavian Petro Mohyla (founder of Kyiv and Mohyla Academy) and others”¹⁸.

The authors of the Ukrainian history textbook for the 7th grade V. Smoliiy, V. Stepankov emphasize: “Ukrainian culture developed on the bases of the previous traditions, acquiring achievements of Western civilizations, its openness and ability to borrow have become the foundation of internal dynamism, the key to progress in terms of stateless life”¹⁹. This textbook differs from other ones. Historians illustrate the multicultural heritage of past generations, using an additive approach. Materials that present political, social and economical life, cultural achievements, life practices of people which lived on Ukrainian territory, and made a lot for the creation of its historical and cultural heritage were included to the textbook. In particular, this is reflected in the topics “The formation of the Crimean Khanate and its relations with Ukraine”; “Ukrainian lands in the Grand Duchy of Moscow, Hungary and Moldavia”²⁰.

Content analysis of Ukrainian history textbooks has also demonstrated preservation of Soviet conceptual approaches in describing the past. Despite the fact that our textbooks are issued almost every year, they still have unreasoned wordings, factual errors and misinterpretations. Distortions of facts, false interpretations of events in order to fit into a certain ideological clichés are found on the pages of academic publications. A political component is still foreground, and determines a formation of the content and the selection of the factual material. However, consideration of the historical past mainly in the ideological and political categories does not allow to comprehend historical events holistically, and to free the historical past of its fake image. The reduction of truth to a particular modus, firstly, dis-

torts the content of historical knowledge because it “cuts off” everything that is outside of programmed reality; secondly, generates linearity and one-dimensionality in comprehension of historical events. Therefore, rethinking historical education can be implemented on the basis of the humanization of the content and methods of historical knowledge, harmonization of epistemological and axiological components of historical education. This approach will facilitate the understanding a “spirit of the era”, the need to take into account the priorities and values of everyone (individuals, groups, nations). Individuals should feel themselves as another person in another time. Therefore, the historical process is discovered not from outside, through the application of scientific categories and schemes, but from inside, through human, through the penetration of the sensual world of historic epoch and everyday life. The history of the individual families, family lore and traditions plays an important role in discovering the historical past. Honoring family memory allows more fully and objectively illuminates the sociocultural image of Ukrainian society, and determines the guiding points for overcoming its problems.

The ability to think critically about historical facts and to give them own assessment is relevant in overcoming the false image of historical education. The ability of critical rethinking the past will transform the students from consumers of information resources who are conformable to manipulation to personalities who can knowingly defend their own positions. Rethinking the past critically is the ability to perceive a certain historical situation from different points of view. The formation of critical thinking habits by means of historical education is of great importance. The relevance of historical knowledge is in the human perpetuation in his national and cultural traditions that should become the spiritual source of the present and future development. Past has a strong potential to perform in both constructive and destructive roles. History can be a subject of disputes, and the subject of philosophical and cultural reflections about the mutual influences of cultural heritage. Overall, the experience of the past

18. Ганна Швидько, *Історія України. XVI – XVIII століття*: Підруч. для 8 кл. серед. шк., Генеза, Київ 1997, с.109.

19. Валерій Смолій, Валерій Степанков, *Історія України*: Підруч. для 7 кл. загальноосвіт. навч. закл., Генеза, Київ 2007, с. 193 – 194.

20. Ibid., p. 224.

is the most important source of moral atmosphere restoration, nation spiritual uplift, the key to the formation of a new psychological climate in society, solving a number of internal problems, etc. Historical past will also facilitate the development of planetary dialogue construction. In these conditions, the integration processes are understood not only as the

mechanism of civilization functioning, but also as a principle of culture. Self-sufficiency and openness of productive, equal dialogue with other cultures, a dynamic synthesis of all its components in a multi-dimensional internal hierarchy will be able to ensure the viability of every national culture.

