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National Identity in the Context of the Present-Day Crisis in Ukraine

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Summary:

With the rise of Maidan phenomenon and unfolding the deep crisis in all spheres of life in Ukraine the problem of national identity and upbringing of the new Ukrainian civil society became the real challenge. On the one hand, Ukrainian people are striving for conservation of their national identity which somebody just finds in time when Maidan detonated their patriotism. On the contrary, the surge of our national pride mustn't become arrogant like an obstacle on our way to organic confluence with European community. Correct favourable decision about national identity will guarantee Ukraine forming as economically and politically strong European state. National identity problem in the context of the upbringing of new elite and controlling the aggression in society is investigated in the article.

Key words:

national identity, aggression, “hostile” (“hot”) aggression, “instrumental” (“cold”) aggression, self-organization, globalization.

Political events which have been taking place over the last two years in Europe absorbed scientists' attention all over the world. In order to make an adequate prognosis and to determine ways for solving imminent problems, many people are trying to understand what is happening. Conferences, “round tables” and TV-debates with politicians, political scientists, sociologists, and economists have become constant companions of Europeans – hard to stay apart and be indifferent and impartial in conditions of maturing real threat of the world military conflict which has not been fading in Ukraine for about two years. Politicians and scientists specializing in studying of variety of socio-political processes are actively criticizing the current situation, with one accord they are speaking about crisis and catastrophic situation in Ukraine economy and politics. They appeal to save Ukraine immediately but only few are able to offer high-quality treatment of the disease, even after making a detailed diagnosis. As a rule, modern researchers of the Ukrainian problem are limited to speculative references to humanitarian issues, calling to revive the high level of spirit-

uality and patriotism, desperately criticizing the present corrupted political elite which got stuck in the meshes of the proper insatiable greed. At this level our scholars are played out typically. This situation is similar to such when patient, visiting doctor at last receives as much as possible full picture of his diagnosis which is flavoured with the most disappointing details, but the doctor is so interested in description of the diagnosis that he does not have the strength, resources and time for the employment of treatment.

Forming the national identity is a root-question lying in the base of many problems. On the one hand, preservation and enhancement of national peculiarities is the state-forming factor, without which it would not take a “revolution of dignity”. Contrariwise, radical forces that do not accept the globalization processes and are ready to hopple good international relations with others, often gather under the flags of the national idea. That is to say national identity could play radically opposite roles. How to solve the question of the correct measures of national identity in Ukrainian state for making only constructive effect?

Socio-cultural environment which carries responsibility for the integrity of Ukraine and security of its citizens will be the subject of our research and object can be represented as national identity as an aggression phenomenon. Indeed, aggression is a factor that is the cause and consequence of the situation in the country, in all its socio-political possible forms we would like to explore. We propose to take the self-organization concept studies in psychology (David G. Myers)¹, and ethologic sphere (Konrad Lorenz)² as primary basis of the methodology, which will be able to shed light on human behaviour in modern society and in particular situation.

The crux of the matter lies in fact that Ukraine is facing an acute problem about which society it will build, to which kind of society it will transform – subduing the global process brought from outside or preserving and multiplying national characteristics by isolating. Evidently, we have to study how to balance between these two extremes: being flowing in to European world to save face. With the help of self-organizing methodology we can examine outward influence as entropy forces to which we have counteract for keeping system in homeostasis balance.

D. Myers marks out two types of aggression: “hostile” (“hot”) and “instrumental” (“cold”)³. The main difference between them is the aim: in case of hostile aggression the main goal will be to harm another, it acts as a source of anger. The purpose of instrumental aggression differs from hostile and is not related to an injury, but it may be a source of aggression indirectly and harmful acts may be used as a means to an end unintentionally. Succeeding many prominent scientists and philosophers (Hobbes, Spencer, Freud, Karl Lorenz and others) we will focus on the belief that aggression is a feature of all biological

¹ Д. Майерс, *Социальная психология*, Питер 1997, с. 688.

² К. Лоренц, *Оборотная сторона зеркала*, 1998, с. 393.

³ Д. Майерс, *op. cit.*, с. 486.

organisms including man and it mustn't be ignored. K. Lorenz asserts the aggression in biological species is a mechanism that retains the hierarchy and order inside species. So we can refute that the main role of aggression is an annihilation because aggression is mainly responsible for the maintaining and continuity of the life of the species. In particular, the behaviour of animals, to which we can attribute ourselves, builds mechanisms to restrict, redirect aggression – it punishes, indicates the place in the hierarchy, organizing, but not aiming at killing their own kind. If we compare the results of D. Myers` and K. Lorenz`s investigations, normal aggression, constructive, designed to keep the kind of a person would be called “instrumental” or “cold” and is a mandatory attribute of any human community. On the other side is a destructive, killing aggression – “hostile” or “hot”. Exactly this kind of human aggression causes murders, violence, war and bloodshed, with which 20th and the beginning of 21st centuries are filled. Myers leads surprisingly precise quote by Lewis Thomas (1981) that “in nature nothing is more dangerous to mankind than humanity itself”⁴.

According to K. Lorenz, constructive aggression in case of not finding opportunities to pour out into the outside world is used for the benefit of species (fighting with a rival, for example) able to amass. Whereupon it changes its main distinctive quality and becomes a destructive force – splashes out on relatives, impairs the life of the system. Lorenz and Myers cited examples of frustration as the cause of generating anger and evoking a hostile aggression: in the animal world it is an inability to accomplish any instinctive action, in the human world – inability to achieve delivered goal. In both situations, frustration and aggression which follows it, is stronger as closer we are to the goal. Only one difference is present: a person is able to endure with the aid of its ability to be strong-willed on the basis of the generated motivation. It is not that simple “Unavoidable misfortunes can be endured with patience, but can become unbearable in case they seem able they might evade”⁵.

To be precise, according to the concept of self-organization, constructive aggression (cold) is a compulsory unit of society`s homeostasis because without it, it is impossible to realize normal life. Aggression makes us motivated, gives us the ability to achieve goals, becomes more successful and stronger, which generally contributes to the development of the whole society. It does not kill and destroy, but only builds a hierarchy of society, making it a viable and resilient to external influences. The variety of human society`s rituals serve as limiting mechanisms. Ritualization of our lives up to the good manners and an easy smile relieves stress and suppresses aggression excess, gives no possibilities to form anger – the source of “hot” aggression. People transmit the accumulated knowledge about rituals to the next generations, fixing them as he-

⁴ *Ibidem*, c. 488.

⁵ *Ibidem*, c. 494.

redity important to preserve society. Not in vain Confucius places high emphasis on ceremonial and paternalism.

Unfortunately, human history is filled with violence and aggression of a destructive nature that can be directly attributed to the lack of phylogenetic human persistent prohibitions on the destruction of their own kind, because physically it is really difficult for us to do this without sharp canine teeth and long claws. But people learned to make weapons and began to apply it against their own kind. This is due to the lack of those mechanisms for the referral and removal of aggression. When rituals, designed to maintain the optimal amount of cold aggression, are not enough, when population density is increasing, and the area is growing, new requirements to improve the life, rises the amount of hot aggression that begins to destroy society appears. Hostile aggression serves as the entropy of society, it disturbs homeostasis and, as a result, society gets into a zone of increased turbulence – fluctuations grow and can destroy or severely harm the existing order. One of the most important factors in maintaining the vitality of society as a self-organizing complex system is the accumulation of the order that can prevent an increase of hostile aggression. K. Lorenz argues that only an emotion, a sense of the value of life gives meaning to our whole behaviour that endows us by humaneness⁶. Myers actively explores the role of television and other mass media in modern society, arguing that humanity from high-developed countries simply loses sensitivity, falling into a mental stupor. Thanks to the Internet and TV programs violence has become the norm of life and is programming population for new violence and aggression. People get accustomed to the cruelty and inhuman behaviours simply because from childhood our only opportunity to become human is to repeat, learn from others. If examples, standing right in front of us are associated with violence and aggression, normally we ought to expect in response is violence and not humane behaviour. Ensuring the viability of the system, in this case, for the normal development of society, needs to maintain an optimal balance of instrumental aggression, which is the compulsory condition for the existence of a man as a biological (and as a social) being with non-aggressive behaviour. On the contrary, hostile, destructive aggression must be constantly monitored by society and the state, as it is not part of homeostasis, and its rise in any case, shall entail destructive actions. As the mechanisms, controlling the situation, we can offer the compulsory popularization of non-aggressive behaviour, reduce the amount of cruelty and violence on TV and in other media, which suggests the idea of implementation of social mechanisms of censorship and its provision.

It should be clear that globalization is a kind of constant process which is impossible to avoid. In that case the question remains “how to optimize integration of the state into the global society and at the same time to preserve its identity in such conditions”. It is important not to forget the features of our national

⁶ К. Лоренц, *op. cit.*, с. 229.

mentality expressed in ideas of cosmism in Ukrainian philosophy. As stated above, we need to accumulate the order by compiling the order information which helps us to keep system in balance between chaos and order, balance of hot and cold aggression. Cold aggression prevents state destruction; a sort of this aggression can be our national identity, realization of national originality.

Recalling to D. Dontsov's article "Youth and Politics" where he argues that "in the life of the nation should be a certain number of axioms, irrefutable truths and no doubt to be present in them, as for the believer – commandments or »I believe«. For each member of the nation these axioms are: God, Motherland, proper pride and honour. They must be steadfast concepts... We must and can learn different ideologies, political programs and so on. But these three axioms must remain an unshakable foundation for young people. These basic concepts must be indissoluble by any effect"⁷. The concept allocated by Dontsov as axioms acquires purely philosophical sense, the understanding of which will provide the possibility of forming new elite. God axiom cannot be found through church attendance and religious ceremonies celebration, it can be realized by transcendent comprehension of the divine nature, which can be reached only through a philosophical outlook. That is shown in concepts of cosmism – ideas of individuals' unity with the general principles of space through the sophia prism. According to Berdyaev's concept of individual freedom, the universe can be included in man and be cognized because man contains its entire stuff, all its strength and properties. He wrote that "in cognitive meaning the person enters the universe as a huge man; yield its creative efforts as a small universe, as a microcosm. Man and Space are coping by forces as equals"⁸. As a Microcosm person includes the entire Cosmos. Consequently, it cannot be a part of something, it is always a wholeness. This central person's place in space is determined exclusively by its spirit. All of the above could mean the importance of the organization of national educational space on the basis of theoretical and philosophical level. Neither the knowledge of Christian ethics at the school through the study of the Bible nor permanent educational events dedicated to various national heroes and historical events of the last countries will give such a complete and comprehensive desired result as philosophy.

In the modern world it is difficult to use empirical examples taken from world and national history. Very often young people criticize and do not trust historical facts, because for a short time (last 20-25 years) they have been watching an examples of the constant rewriting of history, adjusting it under the status quo in politics. That understanding of the world through axiomatic, a priori knowledge of God as Absolute gives meaning for the knowledge about Good. Only the awareness of the general and objective, which are put into effect as the result of a philosophical deduction, is able to bring to mind the idea

⁷ <http://dontsov.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=207:ddoncov-qmolod-i-politykaq&catid=31:tvorcha-spadshchyna&Itemid=46> (10.10.2015)

⁸ Н. А. Бердяев, *Философия свободы. Смысл творчества*, Москва 1989, p.295.

of God, which is not “view”, “public opinion” but firm conviction of high-educated and highly spiritual person. On the same basis of philosophical education should be “the formation of his character, a man of noble, with highly developed sense of honour, loyal, firm in defence of his beliefs and his country – “gentleman”, as they say in England, “Cossack” as saying in Ukraine, a man of much higher moral species, with clean “blood”, with “precious bones”⁹. Modern world is increasingly implementing illusion of infinite possibilities of human change. In the judgment of majority – people are so free that can be converted permanently. But such confidence creates a big problem – lost sense of sanctity of man, it gets full autonomy and independence. Such faith according to the outstanding thinker of the 20th century Leszek Kolakowski, becomes destructive. He argues that the utopia of absolute autonomy of man and the hope of unlimited perfection can be the most effective instruments of self-destruction ever invented by human culture. Denial from everything it is a rejection of our own limits. This is a rejection from the idea of evil. In the rapidly globalizing world it is difficult to live with confidence about the sanctity of our state autonomy, independence, economy and politics from external influences. But the belief in indissoluble value of the “noble man” who understands the true meaning of the concepts “God”, “holiness” and cares not only about his personal remains. As we follow the Dontsov`s advice, formation of the new elite gets a new meaning. This creative elite can be formed not on the basis of certain political forces, but on the highly intellectual education, has its own dignity and sense of duty to people and to the universe.

Hence, national identity is a kind of social factor, which makes the state viable by accumulating constructive, “cold” aggression. To the same extent national identity has destructive influence being as the source of “hot” aggression. All in all, modern Ukrainian society must keep in balance both spheres of aggression, because both of them are necessary. For such purpose can be recommended: 1) active engagement in the promotion of non-violent, non-aggressive behaviour among the population of all ages, starting from kindergarten and continuing quality programs and movies on TV for seniors. Even news programs, taking into account the war events taking place in the East of the country, must give sufficient time for sharing with the audience not only negative, but also positive events and emotions, showing what good is happening in the country and abroad; 2) to give auspicious conditions for the future elite education must have maximum philosophical grounds, because only philosophy can show the deepest sides of the problem and gives us weapon to withstand the threat of aggression. Philosophy is the main tool to accumulate necessary sort of information to keep system in balance, to resist destructive (hot) aggression by forming tolerant nation with own national interests at the same time; 3) absolutely do not permit the spread of weapons in the country legally and illegal-

⁹ <http://dontsov.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=207:ddoncov-qmolod-i-politykaq&catid=31:tvorcha-spadshchyna&Itemid=46> (10.10.2015).

ly, to familiarize the public with statistical data, giving an exact picture of interference between the prevalence of firearms and the consequent rapid growth of aggression and violence in these areas, as it has been reported in detail in Myer's work; 4) it is important for the political and economic elite of the country to realize that the suggestion of public expectations and the refusal in consequence of the implementation of the promise is a direct path to a catastrophic increase of the hostile aggression that translate into uncontrollable riots, leads to destabilization and sometimes even to the death of the system, in which entropy overcomes.

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