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## OVERCOMING THE BURDEN OF “VOLYN TRAGEDY” AS AN OPPORTUNITY OF FURTHER DIALOGUE OF COEXISTENCE

Zaporozhchenko R.O.

Language Supervisor: Peshkova O.G.

**Abstract.** In the present paper the author analyzes dynamics of research and debate as for the issue of “Volyn tragedy”, political reasons for non-decision of the conflict. The concepts of Ukrainian and Polish historiography of “Volyn events” are viewed. Policy of reconciliation is researched as one of the forms of overcoming conflicts in modern times.

**Key words:** collective memory, historic memory, historiography, policy of reconciliation, “Volyn tragedy”.

**Introduction.** Historic memory is a powerful tool for the formation of national idea, civil society and state as a whole. Very often it influences the identity of every nation – its historical development, traditions, customs, culture and origin. So, no wonder that now historical memory, which presents the **object-matter** of our research, is used for manipulation, updating past, broadcasting some ideas, turning them into mainstream currents of modernity.

A striking example of this "policy" is an update of events related to World War II, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Such an event presenting the **subject-matter** of our research, is "Volyn tragedy" – an event that is really controversial, "painful" for both sides (Poland / Ukraine), and for a long period of time anyhow used by both parties to achieve their goals. Therefore, this issue is urgent and requires thorough research and analysis through the prism of Ukrainian and Polish historiography practices to overcome such conflicts in Europe and Asia, which is the **objective** of the given research.

**Methodological bases of research.** Both in Polish and Ukrainian historiography there formed the main research approaches towards "Volyn tragedy," among which we should note traditionalist (V. Filiar, G. Mazur, J. Turovsky) revisionist (D. Motyka T. Olshansky), Polish historians of Ukrainian origin (R. Drozd, M. Syvitskyy) - Polish historiography, and the public (I. Ilyushin), cultural and anthropological (J. Hrycak, A. Portnov) - Ukrainian historiography.

The article is aimed at the analysis of the dynamics of research and debate on the phenomenon of "Volyn tragedy", practices of "policies of reconciliation", making possible recommendations for continued dialogue to resolve the conflict both in Ukrainian and in the Polish community.

**Presenting main material. Dynamics and actualization.** "Volyn tragedy" is the events that occurred in 1943 during the Second World War in Volyn. Historians note that this event is bilateral ethnic cleansing on the part of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), and from the Kraiov Army, and was due to long-term confrontation between Ukrainians and the Polish in Western Ukraine (Volyn, Galychyna, Kholmshchina, Pidliashia, Lemkivshchyna) . The Volyn events of 1943 remain the subject of heated Polish-Ukrainian discussions, which are held by professional historians, politicians, public figures [Volyn Tragedy].

Well, to begin with, it will be interesting to trace the dynamics of research and discussion of the phenomenon of "Volyn tragedy", i.e. the analysis of studying, omission, updating events both in Ukrainian and the Polish community for a long time. After the war Ukraine continued to exist in the USSR ("internal colony"),

while in Poland there established pro-Soviet regime ("outer colony") and began the integration of the "socialist camp". So, at the state level the theme of "Volyn" was not relevant, but it was present in public discourse.

One of the first discussions of "Volyn tragedy" occurs in underground Ukrainian magazine "Idea and work", which referred to defending the Ukrainian population as a reaction to the policy pursued by the Polish political elite in ethnic Ukrainian lands [2, p. 461]. Another underground newspaper "Surma" (1943) characterized the event in Volyn as a way of Ukrainian defense from "Polish anti-Ukrainian terror" [2, p. 461].

During the 1940-50's the topic of "Volyn" was not used for the analysis of the events and those responsible but for establishing by Soviet authorities the image "national enemies", under the stamp of which fall UPA and Kraiov Army supporters, that is all so-called collaborators and "traitors" of the Soviet ideology. So there was no important research of this topic in the historiography of that time, as Volyn events were not discussed in the community at all.

It is not surprising that a return to studies of "Volyn tragedy" was already in the 1990s when both countries became independent and began to establish bilateral relations, including cultural ones. Poland was the first to recognize the independence of Ukraine, contributed to the establishment of economic, political and cultural relations, lobbied the interests of Ukraine on "European scene".

In 1990 the Ukrainian historians began to explore the issues of "Volyn." The first trips to the blast site, meetings with Polish historians, witnesses of those events took place. The formation of a huge layer of information, analysis of the events began [Volyn Tragedy: 13].

In 1996 a new wave of mainstreaming the question "Volyn" begins when the discussion began, research and analysis of issues from both the Ukrainian and the Polish side. And during the 1996-2001 10 scientific seminars were held, which involved 15-20 historians from each side [In Search of Truth: 1]. The main objective of the seminar was to seek common approaches to the evaluation of the past, in determining the issues on which the positions of Ukrainian and Polish specialists coincide, and where there are noticeable differences that need further research [Volyn Tragedy: 8].

Political aspect of unresolved issues. The special event, as it was noted by historians, was the mutual actions and deeds of Ukrainian and Polish sides during the historical development of both countries. This is the official Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation at the national level, July 11, 2003 with the participation of the presidents of both countries – Leonid Kuchma and Alexander Kwasniewski. This event was dedicated to 60-th anniversary of "Volyn tragedy," where presidents issued a joint statement, opened a monument "Memory - Grief - Unity" in the village of Pavlovka, Volyn region. The conclusion of the mutual recognition was presented in the following thesis "Volyn tragedy was a natural consequence of historical and political mistakes made in 1917-1945 by the previous occupation regimes in Volyn. It was the kind of tip of the iceberg, the main basis of which remained under water" [Myshchak 2008: 9].

Certainly, signing a joint official reconciliation was the result of long-term cooperation during the nineties. However, it has become more formal and demonstrative action, though at the international level. From the political point of view we can outline the following terms for "failure" of the policy of reconciliation:

- 1) The change of leadership in both countries. In 2005 in Ukraine and Poland new presidents were elected (Yushchenko, Kaczynski respectively), which changed vectors of policies which were developed by the Presidential Administrations, and changed priorities at both national and regional levels;

- 2) Lack of action plan. The process of reconciliation was not shown in the "reconciliation policy", so there was no strategy for further action to study events of "Volyn", interactions between scientific and political circles of both countries, formation of common vectors.

- 3) Destructuralization of historical memory. If the events of "Volyn" in Poland are regarded as an important criterion for the collective memory, among Ukrainian society this issue is relevant at least for the western regions. The problem of "Volyn" is still unknown to most Ukrainian. In 2003, according to opinion polls 48.9% of Ukrainians knew nothing about "Volyn tragedy" [Berdychovska 2003: 69].

- 4) Continuation of the policy of different vectors. In 2009, during the 65th anniversary of "Volyn" Polish Sejm unanimously adopts a resolution according to which the OUN and UPA committed "anti-Polish campaign - the mass murder that had the character of ethnic cleansing and had signs of genocide" [Uchwala]. President Viktor Yushchenko in 2010 gives the status of Hero of Ukraine to S. Bandera and continues the policy of the OUN and UPA popularization of Ukrainian society. Such heterogeneity and diversity of actions and deeds of power in Poland and Ukraine can thus be noticed.

Since 2013 significant dynamics in updating "Volyn tragedy" has continued and this historical fact has been used for political purposes. In particular, there was an appeal of the Ukrainian MPs to the Polish Sejm in 2013 to recognize "Volyn tragedy" as genocide of the Polish people. The group of initiators were deputies

representatives of the Party of Regions and the Communist Party. However, Polish Foreign Minister R. Sikorski made a request not to aggravate this subject, and Sejm rejected the project.

The politicization of "Volyn" events is the process of populism, in our opinion, because Polish society has formed a strong collective memory of these events and the political elite uses an episode from history to preserve the unity of the national idea. Therefore, the use of historical episodes appealing to these events once again consolidates society, taking it from the important and pressing issues of economic, social or political character. In 2007-2009 Poland's economic growth began to decline, moreover the global crisis manifested itself, foreign exchange reserves decreased, unemployment rose, emigration of Poles to European countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, UK) increased [Iliushyn 2003, Morozova 2013]. Therefore, updating the historical events that are important for Poles is a good political move to shift the focus of public attention from the economic vector to historical and cultural ones.

In 2014 the president of Ukraine P. Poroshenko during a visit to Poland apologized to Polish people for "Volyn" events in his speech in the Polish Sejm. Also, at the beginning of June 2016 a group of prominent Ukrainians, including President Viktor Yushchenko and Leonid Kravchuk addressed the open letter to Poland, in which they apologized for the historic event and at the same time forgave Poles for the same historical events. This document caused the positive trends and Polish elite reacted to it also with an open letter in which forgave Ukrainians and apologized to them for their historical mistakes.

However, the apogee of the "new" mainstreaming "Volyn issues" were the events of 2016, when a conservative political party "Law and Justice" led by A. Duda came to office in Poland. A new wave of updating "Volyn" issue began, however, it had a rather negative side. The result was the decision of Sejm to regard July 11 as the "National Day of Remembrance for the victims of the genocide committed by Ukrainian nationalists against the citizens of the Second Polish Republic."

**Polish and Ukrainian historiography.** During the long-term development of the subject both in Ukrainian and Polish historiography there were some currents that differently assessed "Volyn" events, interpreted their meaning, explored both certain aspects, and in general conducted comprehensive studies. As for Polish historiography it is important to say that there are three main areas [Iliushyn 2003]

1) traditionalist (V. Filiar, G. Mazur, J. Turovsky). Representatives of this trend define "Volyn tragedy" as the ethnic cleansing of Poles by Ukrainian nationalists. They try to interpret these events as a crime of Ukrainians against the Polish and require condemnation [Morozova 2013: 461].

2) revisionist (D. Motyka, T. Olshansky). Representatives of traditionalists oppose this direction and try more thoroughly, objectively and critically analyze materials and explore topics, using declassified archives, to observe, to use qualitative methods of analysis [Morozova: 457].

3) Polish historians of Ukrainian origin (R. Drozd, M. Syvitsky) insist that "Volyn tragedy" was a reaction of Ukrainians to policies and actions that were carried out by Polish elite on ethnic Ukrainian lands which were in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [Hud 2011: 109].

In any case, most Polish historians tend to interpret "Volyn" events as a deliberate policy of Ukrainian nationalist groups regarding the Polish population. However, it should be said that Polish scholars came to study this issue thoroughly and fairly informatively. Indeed, all the necessary resources have been arranged: information space, archives of special services and the government, cooperation with international researchers, foundations, creation of research centers, analytical centers devoted to the "Volyn" events.

As for the Ukrainian historiography, it also consists of several scientific approaches:

1) state (I. Ilyushin). Scientists of this approach are not interested in-depth study of the nature and course of Ukrainian-Polish conflict because of their "hanging" fear of being accused of "lack of patriotism" [Uhach 2010: 11-17];

2) cultural and anthropological history (J. Hrytsak, A. Portnov). Representatives of this approach determined not only political, but also ethnosocial character that was formed for centuries and had an impact on the events that occurred during World War II [Uhach 2010: 229].

However, we should say that regardless of the approach, most Ukrainian historians come to the idea that "Volyn" is the culmination of a gradual chronological events during the 20-30s of the XX century by the Polish authorities on Ukrainian territory. That is, at a time when there is a war and the two countries were divided into three camps (Soviet, German, nationalist), literally defending of ethnic lands took place, so the event of "Volyn" is just one of the pieces of this period of time, which was transformed into a huge focus and turned into a means of populism among the political elites of both countries.

**Practices of the policy of reconciliation.** In this context, the urgency is given to the "politics of reconciliation", which is repeatedly used in many countries to overcome injuries and to establish the dialogue of

cooperation. Policy of reconciliation is a process of looking for consensus, creating conditions for the consolidation of society, the use of collective memory to overcome injuries, contradictions, conflicts, searching for joint positive traits, characteristics, values that are necessary to create a single "field of understanding."

For example, the practice of reconciliation in Spain teaches us that "one goal - and different ways to it" but that does not mean that people should be responsible for their ideological persuasion or their own choice. According to the researchers, after the Spanish Civil War in 1939, the new head of state General Franco continued the policy of persecution of Republicans and those who opposed him and his political beliefs. However, already 20 years later Franco understood the importance of honoring the memory of those who gave their lives for the country, therefore, the memorial was built, where Republicans and Franco proponents, who died in the war were buried near one another, which symbolized the unity of the country [Shapoval 2014].

Another example of a policy of reconciliation is Poland. In 1989, the official authorities (NDP) and the opposition trade union movement "Solidarity" began talks, round tables, regular meetings and discussions, which helped stabilize the political space, begin destructuralization of the old system, economic reforms, establishment of the Polish national idea of unity and European movement.

**Conclusions.** "Volyn tragedy" is a clear example of inter-ethnic conflict that reflected the two countries in modern times and became politically special. However, "Volyn" is also a historical memory of society, those events that should not be overlooked in order to prevent this in future, so we should continue to explore the issues of the topic, analyze the sources and materials, try to move away from political influences. So, this topic requires further analysis and research. Overcoming the trauma and looking for a common dialogue and equal coexistence is the main goal of both Ukrainian and Polish societies. It should always be understood that the events created in the past can be realized, accepted and forgiven in the future. F. Bacon once said: "One should be fair and respectful to the memory of any predecessor; otherwise this debt will probably be given to him but not you". So, let us fairly and respectfully treat the events of the past, however fairly and honestly coexist in the present.

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## Частина II. NATURAL SCIENCES

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INTEGRATION DER BEHINDERTEN MENSCHEN IN DIE GESELLSCHAFT