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THE VOLYN TRAGEDY IN MODERN UKRAINIAN-POLISH RELATIONS

The international Ukrainian-Polish confrontation that took place in Volhynia in 1943-1944, known as the Volyn tragedy, has been the subject of controversy between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland for several decades. Despite all the efforts of international reconciliation by both the political and intellectual elites of both countries in the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, these problems today are often at the center of social and political discourse. The purpose of the article is to retrace the evolution of socio-political discourse in Ukraine and the Republic of Poland concerning the Volyn tragedy, to analyze its consequences and impact on Ukrainian-Polish international and inter-state relations. Based on a brief historical analysis of previous events of 1918-1943, the author shows that this bloody conflict was a consequence of previous tense relations between Ukrainians and Poles. The silence surrounding the problem in Soviet times and hypertrophied interest to these events of the past in the early 1990s by both countries were stated. As a result, it led to the intensification of social and political discourse in Ukraine and the Republic of Poland, mutual claims and attempts of new counting of victims of international confrontation. The evolution of socio-political discourse and its influence on the Polish-Ukrainian relations at the level of interpersonal relations and at the level of interstate relations are shown. The novelty of the study is the analysis of the conflict between the historical memory of Ukrainians and Poles in relation to the Volyn tragedy that lays in fact that the two sides make mutual claims, considering their own side the most affected in the conflict, as well as operating with directly different figures of victims of international confrontation. This difference in interpretation of the common past, which are actualized with a certain frequency due to political manipulation of historical memory, lead to the tension in the interstate relations of Ukraine and the Republic of Poland.

Keywords: *international conflict; Ukrainians; Poles; the Volyn tragedy; World War II; confrontation; social discourse.*

Introduction

The Volyn tragedy is one of the most controversial and difficult for modern international Ukrainian-Polish understanding problems of the common history. In scientific and public discourse this term is used to denote the events that occurred not only in Volhynia, but also in Galicia, Kholmshchyna, Lemkivshchyna, Nadsyannya and Pidlyashya in 1943-1944, also known as an international Ukrainian-Polish conflict. Relatively small temporal distance of these events, the presence of living witnesses of the Ukrainian-Polish conflict, big number of victims on both sides, the tragedy of international conflict, reinforced by the events of World War II, - all these and many other factors transform the history of Volyn tragedy and related aspects into essential topic that has become a center of attention among Ukrainian and Polish societies with a certain regularity in recent decades.

At the time of the totalitarian Soviet regimes that established in Poland and Ukraine after World War II, the ruling regimes considered it preferable not to recall the international conflict that occurred between Poles and Ukrainians during World War II; this topic, along with many other controversial pages of Ukrainian-Polish history, was considered an ideological taboo. Since the beginning of the 1990s, when both Ukraine and the Republic of Poland (RP) appeared as independent states, the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in Volhynia and in

Galicia had been beyond political and media discourse. On the 50th anniversary of the bloody events, the Polish political and intellectual circles were hesitant to provide an unambiguous assessment of those events, considering that not at the right time. The 60th and 70th anniversaries of the Volyn tragedy had great resonance, both at the political and social levels.

In the modern Ukrainian and Polish historiography, *the state of scientific development of the problem* is rather modest, despite the fact that the individual components of the problem were studied quite broadly. In particular, the course of international conflict in Volhynia was studied by Ukrainian historians B. Hud, O. Kalishchuk, Y. Borshchuk, M. Kucherepa¹. On the Polish side such authors as H. Mo-

¹ Hud, B. (2017). Z istoriyi etnosotsialnykh konfliktiv. Ukrayintsi y polyaky na Naddniprolyanshchyni, Volyni y u Skhidniy Halychyni v XIX - pershiy polovyni XX st. (transl. from Poland). Kharkiv: Akta, 440 p.; Kalishchuk, O.M. (2013). Ukrayinsko-polske protystoyannya na Volyni ta v Skhidniy Halychyni u roky Druhoyi svitovoyi viyny: naukovy ta suspilnyy dyskursy. Lviv, 510 p.; Borshchuk, Ya. V. (2015). Dzhereina baza doslidzhennya istoriyi volynskoyi trahedyi: deyaki osoblyvosti. *Spetsialni istorychni dystsypliny: pytannya teoryi ta metodyky*. CH. 26-27. p. 161-166; Kucherepa, M. (2013). Prychyny, khid ta naslidky ukraiyinsko-polskoho konfliktu na Volyni v roky Druhoyi svitovoyi viyny. *Krayeznavstvo*, 2013. № 3. S. 33-41.

tyka, B. Berdykhovska² should be marked. Socio-historical stereotypes in the consciousness of Ukrainians and Poles were studied by L. Khakhula, O. Dobrzhansky³; A. Kyrydon, S. Troyan, V. Vyatrovych studied politics of historical memory⁴.

Therefore, **the purpose** of the proposed article is to retrace the evolution of socio-political discourse in Ukraine and the Republic of Poland concerning the Volyn tragedy, to analyze its consequences and impact on Ukrainian-Polish international and inter-state relations.

Methods

The author of the article considered it appropriate to analyze the relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland through the prism of contemporary social and political discourse on the topic of Volyn tragedy in both societies in dynamics of the development of the problem, underlining certain features and stages of its establishment. That is why the problem-chronological approach is the basis of the conducted research, what allowed to focus gradually on detailed analysis of the most illustrative problematic issues. The research methods are based on the general principles of historicism, multifactority, scientific objectivity, comparison and analysis, systematic and formal logic, as well as provisions and principles based on the achievements of national and foreign historical science, they take into consideration conceptually important developments, theoretical conclusions and generalizations that contributed to understanding of the basic principles of the problem. The use of multidisciplinary and retrospective methods of scientific research provided comprehensive study on the problematic issues of the research topic.

Results

Polish-Ukrainian relations of the 1990s - the first decades of the 21st century can be analyzed in various aspects: political, economic, social, and cultural. The article is dedicated to the research of the narrow problem of inter-state relations, namely the contemporary Polish-Ukrainian controversy surrounding painful for both peoples events of World War II, known as the 1943-1944 international conflict in Volhynia, which for several centuries was a kind of experience frontier of Ukrainians and Poles.

² Motyka, H. (2019). Druha svitova vйна u polsko-ukrayinskykh istorychnykh dyskursakh. *Ukrayina Moderna*. № 4 (15). S. 127-136; Berdykhovska, B. (2013). *Polshcha-Ukrayina. Duzhe vazhke dorikannya. Nezalezhnyy kulturolozhnyy chasopys "YI"*. 2013. CH. 74. S. 23-25.

³ Khakhula, L. (2016). "Rizuny" chy pobratymy? Suchasni dyskursy pro Ukrayinu. Lviv: Natsionalna akademiya nauk Ukrayiny, Instytut ukrayinoznavstva im. I.Krypyakevycha, 304 p.; Dobrzhansky, O. (2018). Evolyutsiya suspilno-istorychnykh stereotypiv u svidomosti ukrayintsiv ta polyakiv na prykladi opiky nad mistysamy natsionalnoyi pamyati. *Ukrayina - Polshcha: istorychne susidstvo. Materialy mizhnarodnoyi naukovoï konferentsiyi. 19-20 travnya 2017 r.* / ed. Yu. A. Zinko. 2017. S. 365-370.

⁴ Kyrydon, A. (2018). "Istoychna pamyat" u prostori polityky pamyati. *Transformatsiyi istorychnoyi pamyati. Istoychni ta politolohichni doslidzhennya. Naukovyy zhurnal. Spetsialnyy vypusk: dopovidi na mizhnarodnyy naukovy-praktychniy konferentsiyi "transformatsiyi istorychnoyi pamyati"*, 2018. S. 45-53; Troyan, S. (2000). *Ukrayina i Polshcha v Yevropeyskomu poli hlobalnykh transformatsiy. Stratehiya ukrayinsko-polskoho sotsialno-ekonomichnoho partnerstva: Materialy mizhnarodnoyi naukovo-praktychnoyi konferentsiyi (Lviv, 7 - 8 hrudnya 2000 r.)*. Lviv: LNU, 2000. S.132-135; Vyatrovych, V. (2011). *Druha polsko-ukrayinska vйна 1942-1947*, Kyiv: Alternatyv, 288 p.

Volyn tragedy as a bloody international conflict that occurred during wartime was the consequence of strained Ukrainian-Polish relations of previous decades. To expose the problem integrally we have to resort to a brief historical analysis of the events that preceded, actually, the international conflict itself.

It is common knowledge that before World War I, Volhynia, as the majority of the Ukrainian lands, was part of the Russian Empire. There was such political situation at the end of World War I that since 1918 year Volhynia was in the middle of the struggle between the two states: renewed independent Ukraine and the Second Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania (*Strilchuk, 2018: 149*). Actually, the struggle for the Volhynia began in 1918 with the attack of the J. Piłsudski Polish Legions supported by the Triple Entente on the young West Ukrainian People's Republic. The last, as known, lost this struggle, and its territory together with the western Volhynia and western Belarus became part of the Second Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania (*Zashkilnyak, 2002: 451-552*).

The new Polish state resorted to a variety of oppressions of Ukrainians with the aim of making the Second Commonwealth a mono-ethnic state by introducing polonization, colonization of the region. A striking example of the attempts of polonization in Volhynia is the fact that the Polish authorities confiscated the best lands from Ukrainians and delivered them to the Polish colonists, the "osadniks". Usually they were retired Polish soldiers and officers, as well as civil volunteer migrants from among the Poles who lived on the so-called "crown lands", and they received allotments on the territories of Western Ukraine (Western Volhynia, Polissia, Eastern Galicia) and Western Belarus after the Polish-Soviet War of 1920 (*Zashkilnyak, 2002: 552*). This fact alone caused a conflict between the Ukrainians and Poles, because the most fertile lands were confiscated from Ukrainians delivered to the Poles. The pacification policy implemented in the 1930s did not assisted with gaining authority to Polish authorities, to the contrary, it sharpened international hostility between the indigenous ethnic groups - Ukrainians and the state nation - Poles. The pacification policy brought mass arrests, acts of vengeance against the civilians, the closure of Ukrainian schools, Orthodox churches, the prohibition of the activity of Ukrainian civic-cultural institutions and organizations to the Ukrainian population of Volhynia and Galicia (*Strilchuk, 2013A: 10*).

The peculiarity of the World War II in Volhynia was the national liberation struggle of Ukrainians on three fronts: with the German punishers, red partisans and, third front, the Polish self-defense groups and the Armia Krajowa. Actually, in 25 years of Polish power in Volhynia, Poles from friendly to Ukrainians became the main enemy in Ukrainians' wars of national liberation, on the way of building the independent Ukrainian state. In addition, provoking inter-ethnic confrontations in Volhynia by the Germans and the Bolsheviks led to the Ukrainian-Polish conflict apogee that took place in 1943-1944 (*Strilchuk, 2018: 149-150*).

The above facts reveal that there were many causes of an international conflict in the Volyn region. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Polish Armia Krajowa (AK) were involved in the international confrontation, strengthened by the tragedy of World War II. The Ukrainians tried to return lands lost in previous years, the Poles, who were often supported by the German fascists, responded to such attempts with punitive actions. In order to protect the Ukrainian civilians from armed Polish self-defense groups, the UPA interfered with the conflict, subsequently AK did

the same. Apart from protecting the Ukrainian people from Polish retaliatory actions, the aim of the Ukrainian nationalists in Volhynia was to prevent the future claims of the Polish Government to these lands (as happened after the end of World War I) (*Strilchuk, 2018: 150*).

However, neither the hopes of the Poles for possession of the lands of Western Ukraine, nor the hopes of Ukrainian nationalists for the establishment of their own state were not realized. The Soviet regime, which returned to these areas and was established in Poland, wanted to forget about the international conflict and undertook the development of the socialist commonwealth with the enthusiasm inherent to communists. Of course, under such circumstances, such "inconvenient" history was a taboo, especially since events in Volhynia in the years of World War II were closely linked to the activities of the UPA, and the latter was considered "the most shameful page in the history of Ukraine".

The years of the Soviet totalitarian regime were accompanied by *silence surrounding the problem*. So, it is reasonable that a strong, sometimes even exaggerated desire to provide answers to many difficult questions of the historical past developed in renovated Ukraine and the RP in the early 1990s, in the national environment both Ukrainians and Poles. One of the most acute problems of international reconciliation were the events associated with World War II: the Volyn tragedy and the "Vistula Operation", which was carried out in 1947 by the Polish communist regime. Relatively small time separation, as well as the presence of living participants and witnesses of international conflict, long silence and traumatic historical memory - all of that caused the activation of social and political discourse in Ukraine and the Republic of Poland, mutual accusations and claims, attempts of new counting of victims of international confrontation.

From the beginning of 1990s, there were attempts to sharp the rough edges of the historical past at high leadership levels of government of both countries, however, in both societies the memory of these events was rather painful. For example, on August 3, 1990, the Senate of the Republic of Poland issued a Decree condemning "Operation Vistula" of 1947. The document stated that the communist authorities were responsible for the massive resettlement of Ukrainians. In fact, the Senate admitted the partial responsibility of the Polish party for the action organized by the regime of B. Bierut with this decision. Despite the stated in the Decree idea that: "in view of the presence of the Ukrainian people in Poland, mutual learning, understanding and the connection between Poles and Ukrainians are particularly important", in the eyes of many Ukrainians, the "Operation Vistula" was legitimized as one of the historical faults of Poland towards Ukraine (*Nowak, 2007: 377*), confirming the stereotype of the repressive policy of the post-war Poland towards Ukrainians. However, for the Polish historical memory, "Operation Vistula" remained an "appropriate answer to the UPA's crimes during the war or after it" (*Prokop, 1997: 99*).

Vivid examples of attempts to smooth international contraries at the level of the highest authorities of both countries are the joint statement of the Presidents of Ukraine and the Republic of Poland "To Understanding and Unity" of May 21, 1997 (*Do porozumienia, 1997*); the unveiling of a memorial to the Ukrainian-Polish reconciliation in the village Pavlivka in Volhynia in 2003 by the President of Ukraine, L. Kuchma, and the President of Republic of Poland, A. Kwaśniewski; the unveiling of a memorial to killed Ukrainians by V. Yushchenko and L. Kaczyński on May 13, 2016. In Pawłokoma (RP) (*Strilchuk,*

2018: 179). On February 28, 2009, Presidents of Ukraine and Poland, V. Yushchenko and L. Kaczyński, attended the commemoration of the victims of the international confrontation during World War II in Huta Pieniacka (Ukraine).

Along with the course for international reconciliation, which was supported by the ruling political elites of Ukraine and Poland in the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, scientists from both countries also worked actively. In particular, the best representatives of historical science took up a responsible, rather difficult and extremely important mission to agree the interpretation of common history, thus establishing good-neighborly relations and promoting international understanding and reconciliation.

The Ukrainian-Polish Historical Commission headed by Academician J. Isajewycz was established by the decision of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine of August 26, 1993. On October 29 of that year in Lublin, an organizational meeting of the joint commission of historians "Ukraine - Poland" was held. The Ukrainian part of the commission was headed by J. Isajewycz, the Polish part was headed by A. Podraza, professor of the Jagiellonian University (*Strilchuk, 2013B: 349*). During 1996-2002, ten seminars, where the experts of both sides discussed all the components of the Polish-Ukrainian relations of inter-war decades, the years of World War II and the first post-war years, were held. The seminars resulted in the publication of materials of reports and transcripts of discussions, disputes, protocols of agreements and disagreements, as well as chronology of events in Volhynia and Galicia in 1939-1945 published in Polish and Ukrainian languages. The published materials filled gaps in the history of Ukrainian-Polish relations during World War II and became valuable for the preparation of historians, political scientists, lawyers, sociologists, experts in international relations. In addition, the seminars promoted the formation of a group of young Ukrainian and Polish historians interested in the study of Polish-Ukrainian relations of the twentieth century (*Kolesnyk, 2001: 6-7*).

Actually, the course of seminars and published materials themselves showed the difficulty of reaching a common view on controversial issues in doing it on the basis of politicized positions. Each of the parties wants to see the events of the Ukrainian-Polish international of wartime from the position of their own national interests, and attempts to look at them from the common human position almost always met with the accusations of betrayal of "national interests". Despite significant differences in the approaches of historians of Ukraine and the Republic of Poland to many issues of the Polish-Ukrainian relations of the mentioned period, seminars demonstrated that such meetings have the right to exist and aim at smoothing out the cornerstones of contradictions.

In fact, summing up the period of the twenty years of Ukrainian independence, it can be stated with certainty that both nations, the Ukrainians and the Poles, made a huge progress on the way of overcoming the negative historical heritage. However, as further events demonstrated, all the hopes of the Ukrainian side for the decisive point in the issues of international reconciliation about the events in Volhynia in years of World War II proved to be premature.

The statement of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland made in June of 2013 in the eve of the 70th anniversary of the tragic events in Volhynia in 1943 was the first disturbing message for Ukrainian society. It also caused a violent public discourse in Poland, placing on the agenda the question of rethinking the attitude towards Ukraine and Ukrainians (*Strilchuk, 2018: 179*). The discussions that accompanied the 70th anniversary of events in Volhynia

had essential differences from the previous waves of debates. There was enough conciliation rhetoric from politicians, intellectuals, civic organizations, churches. When the anti-Ukrainian apogee of July, motivated by the 70th anniversary of the massacre in Volhynia, was signaled in the spring of 2013, it might have seemed like it would only cover the parliamentary platform and the media. However, it happened differently.

Unlike the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the Volyn events, the Ukrainian-Polish dialogue in 2013 effected not only on the political climate of the Ukrainian-Polish interstate relations, where the talk of the need for mutual concessions for political reconciliation was in sharp contrast with the unwillingness to compromise, but also on public statements of motivated intellectuals who just added fuel to the fire of discord.

The worst predictions made in the spring of 2013 were confirmed in June. In the upper chamber of the Polish Parliament, the Senate, the relevant decree restored heated discussions on the proper commemoration of the Polish victims of the international conflict in Volhynia in the years of World War II. In the decision taken by the majority, Volyn events were called "ethnic cleansing with signs of genocide" (*Uchwała, 2013A: 582*). The Senate emphasized the unfair national policy of the Second Polish Commonwealth and called J. Kuroń and L. Kaczyński the primary figures of the case of the Polish-Ukrainian consolidation (*Khakhula, 2016: 240*).

In the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, where five draft decisions were submitted to the consideration of the ambassadors, there were heated verbal battles. Finally, on July 12, 2013, the majority of votes adopted the agreed text of the decree, the main thesis of which was that "... the Volyn crime was of ethnic cleansing with signs of genocide ...", declaring the number of the Polish victims of the conflict in 100,000 people (*Uchwała, 2013B: 606*).

In the years that followed the situation escalated even more. In author's opinion, reviving of the controversy surrounding the events of World War II in Volyn was a direct consequence of the implementation of national politics, in particular the policy of memory, which was implemented by the ruling political force, fulfilling its electoral promises (*Myelykyestsev, URL*). In this case, it is about the PiS ("Law and Justice"), right-wing party, with the advent of which to power in the Republic of Poland, the political and social discourse between Ukraine and Poland concerning the Volyn tragedy was significantly aggravated, reviving the old controversy that appeared in the 21st century with new faces.

The "Law and Justice" is, in fact, the largest party of the right direction in Poland, which is on the Polish political stage since the end of May 2001. In its history, the PiS formed the Polish government twice (2005 and 2006), it also was in the opposition three times - in 2001, 2007 and 2011. In the last convening of the Sejm, the "Law and Justice" party was the largest opposition force. J. Kaczyński (Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland in 2006-2007) remains the leader of this force for many years. This party won in the presidential race twice. L. Kaczyński (twin of J. Kaczyński) occupied the highest position in the state from 2005 to death in the Smolensk plane crash in April 2010. His brother J. Kaczyński was a presidential candidate in 2010 election, but in the second round he lost to B. Komorowski. However, in May of 2015, the candidate from the PiS, A. Duda won the presidential race. These were the first elections in the Republic of Poland since 2005 where "Law and Justice" celebrated a victory (*Partiya Pravo*

i spravedlyvist... URL). Today, the PiS combines elements of social and national conservatism, as well as solidarism.

With the advent of the PiS to power in the Republic of Poland the revision of history, the return to the previously tested attempts to influence on the transformation of the historical memory of Polish society appears on the agenda with all the urgency. It is demonstrated by the return to the discussions around the Volyn tragedy, the recount of the number of victims of the Ukrainian-Polish confrontation in the years of World War II, manipulation and overestimation of the figures of the Polish victims of the conflict.

The above facts demonstrate that contemporary Ukrainian-Polish contradictions are the result of the same old problems, however, with new faces. The author sees this "new face" in the manifestation of hypertrophied and distorted nationalism, which the modern political elite of Poland has taken for a conceptual doctrine in making the state policy of national memory.

After coming of the PiS to power, political and social discourse around the Volyn tragedy is gaining gradually higher degree not only in Poland but also in Ukraine. The story has received a continuance in 2016, when the Ukrainian leadership expressed its readiness to apologize for the old historical unfairness to the Polish side, what caused the response in the Ukrainian society. On July 22, 2016, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland voted for the resolution "On establishing the 11th of July the Day of Remembrance of Poles, Victims of Genocide committed by OUN-UPA". The resolution of the Polish Sejm, in fact, destroyed all undermined all previous achievements of the Ukrainian and Polish political institutions in the process of international reconciliation, bringing old socio-historical stereotypes to the public court.

In fact, that date, the July 22, 2016, became a new turning point in the Polish-Ukrainian international relations: the mutual accusations supported and warmed up by the current Polish authorities quickly turned to so-called "war on the graves", the beating of Ukrainian students and migrant workers in Poland, the shelling of the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Lutsk on March 29, 2017. The film "Volyn" by W. Smarzewski that was released in October 2016 even more fed the fires of interethnic hostility (*Strilchuk, 2018: 180-181*).

The film "Volyn" claim leadership in the nomination "a film that negatively influenced on international relations" with its scandalousness, distortion of historical facts and gratuitously cruel scenes. However, this film broke all sale records of the Republic of Poland over the last ten years (*Polskyy film ...URL*), and therefore, it was seen by a large part of Polish society. Although in Ukraine the film "Volyn" by Wojtek Smarzewski was immediately prohibited after its release on wide screens, the public resonance associated with it influenced on the attitude of Ukrainian society to the Polish neighbors negatively. In addition, sociological researches conducted in the Republic of Poland showed that after a few months of distribution of the film, the number of Poles who changed their attitude toward Ukrainians from positive or neutral to negative increased sharply.

To confirm the last point, let us compare the results of sociological surveys conducted by the Polish institutions: the Center of public opinion polls (Centrum badan opinii społecznej) and the Center of the Study of Public Opinion (Ośrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej) (*Wołyń 1943-2003...URL; Rocznica zbrodni na Wołyni...URL; Wołyń 1943. Komunikat...URL*). So, among the Poles as at 2003 the percentage of those who did not know about the events of the international confrontation in Volhynia during World War II was 49% of respondents, and in 2013 - those were

already 31%. In 2003, 14% of the respondents were well aware of the problem, and in 2013, respectively, 28%. After watching the film "Volyn", the number of Polish spectators who apprehended this film with enthusiasm reached 43%, and another 21% were those who gave exemplary remarks to this film (*Rocznica zbrodni na Wołyniu...URL*).

Two consecutive and rather loud emphases (the decision of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of July 22, 2016 and the release of the film "Volyn") on Volyn events of World War II made by the Polish side showed attempts to manipulate historical memory and socio-historical stereotypes for political purposes. The events of 2016, related to the Ukrainian-Polish international confrontation in the years of World War II, made clear whether they have become an essential part of the Polish historical consciousness. Actually, once again these events revealed the differences in their perception in Ukraine and the Republic of Poland. For Polish society, the topic of Volhynia is alive, it constantly causes emotions, and, for the Ukrainian society, this topic appears as marginal episode that is much less important than a confrontation with Russia and the USSR (*Babakova, 2016*).

Meanwhile, with the approaching of half-anniversary of the Volyn events, on January 22, 2018, Polish members of parliament supported a bill prohibiting the propaganda of "Bandera ideology". On the night of February 1, the Institute of National Remembrance adopted an appropriate law, which was supported by the Senate of the Republic of Poland. The President of Poland, A. Duda, signed the law, what resulted in disappointment of several countries of the world. It is also known that later A. Duda appealed to the Constitutional Court with a request to check the articles of the law for their compliance with the national legislation.

The Constitutional Tribunal of the Republic of Poland admitted changes to the law about the Institute of National Remembrance on the provisions of the "Ukrainian nationalists" as contradicting the constitution of the Republic of Poland. In fact, the judges supported the position of the President of the Republic of Poland, A. Duda, who said that the terms "Ukrainian nationalists" and "Eastern Lesser Poland" were inaccurate and violated the fundamental law, so he appeals these provisions in February 2018. However, the Sejm and the Attorney General of the Republic of Poland took the direct opposite stand (*U Polshchi vyznaly...URL*).

Actually, the 75th anniversary of the international Ukrainian-Polish conflict in Volyn in years of World War II, contrary to expectations, passed calmly, without targeting the fact that the Presidents of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko, and the President of Poland, A. Duda, did not meet each other, personally participating in ceremony of the commemoration of the victims of the Volyn tragedy.

It is known that on the eve of the mournful ceremonies, the Ukrainian side proposed simultaneously to commemorate the victims of the Volyn tragedy jointly by the two Presidents in the Volyn region, and then visit the Polish village Sahryń, where it was planned to open the memorial to the Ukrainian victims of the Volyn tragedy. The Polish side refused to participate in joint action (*Poroshenko i Duda ne zmohly...URL*). Therefore, the President of Poland A. Duda arrived in Lutsk on July 8, 2018 to attend the events dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Volyn tragedy, he visited the Holy Mass in the Saint Peter and Paul Cathedral in Lutsk. Ukrainian President P. Poroshenko was in the village Sahryń (RP) at that time. There he opened the Memorial to Ukrainians killed by the Polish "farmers' battalions" and the units of the Home Army in March 1944 (*75 richnytsya Volynskoyi trahediyi...URL*).

On the 75th anniversary of the day of commemoration of the victims of the international conflict, the presidents once again illustrated the positions of their states and peoples in their addresses. In particular, speaking in Lutsk on 8th of July, 2018, A. Duda described the international confrontation as "ethnic cleansing" (*Pro shcho hovoryly Poroshenko...URL*). At the same time, the president of the Republic of Poland urged to build relations with Ukraine on historical truth and not think about revenge.

Unveiling the Monument in memory of the Ukrainian victims of AK in Sahryń Ukrainian President underlined that Ukraine was counting on amending the Poland's law about its Institute of National Remembrance and revising the attitude to Ukrainians. He described the events of Volyn tragedy as "the most painful trauma" and "fratricidal conflict". P. Poroshenko emphasized that the 1943-1944 conflict required a thorough historical study undertaken by a joint group of Polish and Ukrainian scientists (*75 richnytsya Volynskoyi trahediyi...URL*).

The Ukrainian President noted that the Ukrainian and Polish peoples are united by the experience of the struggle for their freedom against the Russian invaders, so Warsaw and Kyiv have to take all possible measures to prevent conflicts between peoples. P. Poroshenko declared that any speculation on this topic by the political forces would be inadmissible, probably hinting at the ruling party of Poland "Law and Justice", which initiated the recognition of the Volyn tragedy as genocide against the Polish people in 2016.

Discussion

Considering modern Ukrainian-Polish relations through the prism of socio-political discourse, the author emphasized Ukrainian-Polish relations from the aspect that was unexplored before - the conflict of historical memory of Ukrainians and Poles concerning the Volyn tragedy. *The scientific novelty* of the conducted research lies in this approach. The evolution of social and political discourse is shown. It is proved that the latter has direct impact on international Polish-Ukrainian relations and leads to not only the increased tensions in interpersonal relations of neighboring states, but also the tensions in interstate relations, that in general has a very negative effect on the Ukrainian-Polish partnership.

The modern conflict of historical memory between Ukrainians and Poles lies in the fact that both sides bring mutual claims, considering their own side most affected by the conflict together with giving entirely different figures concerning the number of victims of the international confrontation. This difference in interpretation of the common past, which are actualized with a certain frequency due to political manipulation of historical memory, lead to the tension in the interstate relations of Ukraine and the Republic of Poland.

Concerning *the practical use of the results of the research*, the analysis of the problems in the modern Ukrainian-Polish discourse on the Volyn tragedy and the identification of the moments which are the most difficult to come to an agreement can be used by the existing government institutions, responsible for the policy of historical memory forming, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in the vector of foreign policy formation.

Conclusion

The genesis of Ukrainian-Polish controversy is deeply rooted, however, only moving forward and not recalling the past and mutual reproaches could influence on the normalization of relations and the building good-neighborly

relations. International reconciliation will benefit all: average citizens and politicians. The reviving of negative national stereotypes about neighbors, and furthermore an attempt to implement political speculations through them is a road to nowhere. Apart from this, it is necessary to understand clearly that overcoming the negative historical legacy in national consciousness is possible only with bilateral interaction and coherent policy of Ukraine and the Republic of Poland, as it was, for example, at the time of the presidency of A. Kwaśniewski. Taking into account the previous positive experience and significant groundwork, there are optimistic preconditions for looking to the future with hope, and we would like to believe that the present posture of affairs would become rather negative lesson than the norms of bilateral relations.

The conducted research shows that the topic of Ukrainian-Polish understanding on issues of the causes, course and number of victims of the Volyn tragedy became the subject of political manipulation. Old controversies about a common history with new faces of disputing politicians have shown once again that recalling past injustice is a road to nowhere.

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ВОЛИНСЬКА ТРАГЕДІЯ В СИСТЕМІ СУЧАСНИХ УКРАЇНСЬКО-ПОЛЬСЬКИХ ВІДНОСИН

Міжнаціональне українсько-польське протистояння, що мало місце на Волині у 1943 - 1944 роках, відоме як Волинська трагедія, уже не одне десятиліття є предметом суперечок України та Республіки Польща. Не дивлячись на усі зусилля міжнаціонального примирення, зроблені політичними та інтелектуальними елітами обох країн у 90-х роках ХХ - на початку ХХІ століття, ці проблеми сьогодні доволі часто постають у центрі суспільного та політичного дискурсу. Метою статті є простеження еволюції суспільно-політичного дискурсу в Україні та Польщі щодо Волинської трагедії, аналіз його наслідків і впливу на українсько-польські міжнаціональні і міждержавні відносини. На підставі короткого історичного аналізу попередніх подій 1918-1943 рр. автор показує, що цей кривавий конфлікт став наслідком попередніх напружених відносин між українцями і поляками. Констатовано замовчування проблеми в радянські часи та гіпертрофований інтерес до цих подій минулого на початку 90-х років ХХ століття з боку обох країн. У підсумку це спричинило активізацію суспільного і політичного дискурсу в Україні та Республіці Польща, взаємні претензії та спроби нових перерахунків жертв міжнаціонального протистояння. Показано еволюцію суспільно-політичного дискурсу та його вплив на польсько-українські взаємини на рівні міжлюдських стосунків і на рівні міждержавних відносин. Новизною дослідження є аналіз конфлікту історичної пам'яті українців та поляків щодо Волинської трагедії, який яполягає у тому, що обидві сторони виставляють взаємні претензії, вважаючи саме свою сторону найбільш постраждалою у конфлікті, а також наводять діаметрально різні цифри жертв міжнаціонального протистояння. Ці різночитання спільної минушини, що в силу політичних маніпуляцій історичною пам'яттю актуалізуються з певною періодичністю, ведуть до напруження у міждержавних відносинах України та РП.

Ключові слова: міжнаціональний конфлікт; українці; поляки; Волинська трагедія; Друга світова війна; протистояння; суспільний дискурс.

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