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THE POLICY OF HISTORICAL (NATIONAL) MEMORY IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINE'S SECURITY CHALLENGES

The article substantiates the relevance of studying the issues of historical memory and the policy of historical (national) memory today, in the period of the armed aggression and information warfare waged by Russia against Ukraine. A manifestation of this confrontation is the transference of the conflict into the sphere of public consciousness and collective historical memory.

The main approaches to the concept of historical memory are analyzed, and the author proposes its interpretation as the knowledge and reflection concerning events, traditions, ideas, and theories, reflected in the collective consciousness, through which a people (ethnic community) comprehends and preserves its past.

The article proposes an understanding of the policy of historical (national) memory as a set of social practices aimed at representing (modifying) particular images of the shared past, actualized by the contemporary political context. It is argued that, in modern democracies, the formation (construction) of memory policy constitutes one of the directions of state policy. It is demonstrated that the policy of historical (national) memory is objectified in the form of legislation, strategies, and concepts that define the means of reproducing past events or memory in society, being incorporated into political declarations, governmental programs, commemorative practices, and memorial objects. The purpose of memory policy is to form a collective interpretation of the past and to determine certain events, symbols, or individuals that are to be honored in society.

It is substantiated that the current state of crisis in historical memory in Ukrainian society, coupled with the shortcomings and gaps in the past implementation of the policy of historical (national) memory – especially under conditions of information warfare and hostile propaganda – may hinder societal unity and pose a serious threat to public cohesion and national security.

Keywords: *historical memory; policy of historical (national) memory; national security; public consensus; consolidated model.*

Statement of the problem. Historical memory has always played one of the key roles in the processes of shaping national consciousness, national unity, and ensuring societal and national security. The phenomenon of historical memory acquires particular

significance during periods of socio-political upheaval – such as the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has become for Ukrainian society. This war, in addition to the extreme brutality of the aggressor, is characterized by its hybrid nature

and the transfer of confrontation into the sphere of public consciousness, one of the components of which is historical memory. Attempts to disseminate the concept of the “Russian world” through appeals to shared fragments of historical heritage are most vividly manifested in the enemy's efforts to distort the historical past. However, it is precisely the historical memory of Ukrainians, as a component of their national consciousness, that obstructs Russia's long-standing attempts to finally draw Ukraine into its sphere of influence. The imperial and Soviet past, along with the tragic mass crimes committed by Russia against Ukrainians – such as the Baturyn massacre, the destruction of the Sich, the war against the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), dekulakization, the Holodomor, the “Executed Renaissance,” Russification, and, undoubtedly, the current russo-ukrainian war – have had a profound impact on the national consciousness of the Ukrainian nation, its collective self-identification, and the perception of political, cultural, and ideological phenomena both in the past and in the present.

The importance of studying the problems of historical memory and the policy of historical (national) memory in contemporary Ukrainian society is conditioned by the role these phenomena play in the context of self-identification and state-building processes, ensuring internal and external national security, and determining the political future of the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian nation. The security-related dimension of historical memory remains insufficiently conceptualized and studied. However, in the context of the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, national memory intensifies its identifying, consolidating, and mobilizing functions. In the process of implementing an appropriate memory policy, it becomes a significant factor in strengthening Ukraine's national security system.

Analysis of recent studies and publications.

Historical memory is studied by specialists in various sciences: philosophers, psychologists, historians, and sociologists. The theory of historical memory was developed by French sociologists of the first half of the

20th century, Henri Bergson and Maurice Halbwachs, who proved the interconnection between space, time, and people's ability to retain certain events in their consciousness, and also developed the concept of “collective memory.” Researcher T. Vasilevska [1, 2] proved that the basis for conceptualizing national memory in modern democracies is the titular nation, which forms the nation-state as an imaginary political community, and also substantiated the leading role of the state in constructing a model of historical memory and implementing a policy of national memory. The phenomenon of historical memory, its place and role in the system of social values was studied by L. Nahorna in her works “Historical Memory: Theories, Discourses, Reflections” [3] and “Historical Culture: Concept, Information Resource, Reflective Potential” [4]. The relevance of forming a national memory policy through the prism of national security is highlighted in the analytical report “The Policy of Historical Memory in the Context of Ukraine's National Security” [5], which examines the problem of national identification in the context of historical memory policy. The researchers highlighted the humanitarian expansion of the Russian Federation in the field of Ukrainian national history, religion, and assessment of the past as one of the methods of forming anti-Ukrainian sentiments in the eastern regions of Ukraine, and identified the priority role of education, science, and culture in shaping the historical memory of Ukrainian society and overcoming the destructive influence of the Russian factor.

In addition to those mentioned above, problematic aspects of historical memory and memory politics were developed by O. Hotra [6], N. Dichek [7], I. Kovalskaya-Pavelko [8], A. Pugach [9], N. Kuzminets [10], and other researchers. Thanks to the works of these authors, the foundations for understanding the concepts of historical memory and historical (national) memory policy have been laid, and it has been proven that historical memory shapes national consciousness, which is a means of national self-identification and can either promote or, conversely, not contribute to understanding between representatives of different segments of society and be

used as a tool in infowar.

At the same time, the problems of forming a policy of national memory in Ukraine that would best meet the needs of a society that has been resisting an aggressor country for more than ten years remain understudied.

The purpose of this article is to explore the concept of historical (national) memory policy and determine its place in the structure of public and national security concepts. To this end, the following tasks must be accomplished: 1) to explore the concepts of historical memory and historical (national) memory policy; 2) to establish the main directions of the interconnection between the state of historical memory and the content of historical (national) memory policy with the components of national security; 3) to reveal the tasks of historical (national) memory policy in the current military-political realities of Ukraine.

Presentation of the main material. Despite its prevalence in scientific and journalistic circles, the concept of historical memory is characterized by a multiplicity of interpretations. It is most often understood as a socio-psychological phenomenon, the ability of the human mind to preserve individual and collective experience of interpersonal relations and, on this basis, to form ideas about the course of the historical process and one's place in it. The concept of collective historical memory is generally considered to be close to the concept of national memory, which is worth agreeing with. Accordingly, within the scope of this study, the concept of collective historical memory is equivalent to the concept of national memory, and the concept of historical memory policy is equivalent to the concept of national memory policy.

The terminological and conceptual reference book "Historical Science" defines historical memory as "the ability of human consciousness to reproduce the past. Without 'historical memory,' it is impossible to reproduce the history of society. It is the inheritance of past experience, which is embodied in appropriate cultural forms (traditions, monuments, memoirs, etc.), and also exists in the form of the historical consciousness of a people" [11, 281]. In the Encyclopedia of Ukrainian History [12], the concept of historical memory is presented as a set of purposefully

constructed, relatively stable, interrelated collective ideas about the past, standardized and codified in society, culture, and political discourse, myths, symbols, mnemonic and commemorative practices. It also defines the key function of historical memory as the transmission of experience and knowledge about the past as the basis for self-identification.

With this in mind, we propose to understand historical memory as knowledge and reflections on events, traditions, ideas, and theories reflected in the collective consciousness, through which a people (ethnic community) realizes and preserves its past.

As researcher N. Yakovenko notes, historical memory is a collective representation of the past, the foundation of national identity [13]. This memory not only records a significant number of events, but also synthesizes and weaves them into a single context of national history, where each fact and event occupies its own value niche. Through the mechanism of historical memory, the experience acquired by a nation or people is sorted into positive experiences that must be learned and multiplied, and negative experiences that serve as warnings. Thus, in this assessment, we can identify the main function of historical memory, which is to preserve and transmit the experience of the past of one's social community or nation as a whole as a basis for further determining one's place in it, which is, in essence, social or national identification.

Emphasizing the nation-building potential of historical memory, in a situation where Russia is not only conducting an aggressive war against Ukraine but also appropriating Ukrainian history and culture, we believe that Ukrainians now, more than ever, must demonstrate their civic achievements to the world, defend historical values and historical memory, and cultivate historical culture and historical science.

The concept described above constitutes the essence of historical (national) memory policy—a set of social practices aimed at representing (modifying) certain images of the past (images of a shared past) that are actualized by the current political context. In modern democratic countries, the formation (construction) of memory policy belongs to one of the areas of state policy—a purposeful activity of state authorities aimed

at solving societal problems and achieving and implementing generally significant development goals of society or its individual spheres. Such a policy is materialised in the form of relevant legislation, strategies, or concepts that define the ways of reproducing past events or memory within society, being incorporated into political declarations, government programs, commemorative practices, and memorial objects. The purpose of memory policy is the formation of a collective interpretation of the past and the determination of specific events, symbols, or individuals that should be honored in society. Key measures in the implementation of memory policy include: the establishment of national holidays by the state; the formation of a pantheon of national heroes; the commemoration of historical events; honoring heroes; the introduction of appropriate concepts for the teaching of history, etc.

Analyzing the concept of memory policy, V. Artiukh rightly emphasizes that “historical memory in the context of politics is a function of power, which determines how the community should imagine the past. Memory policy is always aimed at creating a ‘necessary’ synthesis of the present with the past [...]”. In fact, through the identification of a certain mass of individuals with a constructed model of historical memory in the process of their socialization, the phenomenon of the nation itself is constituted” [14, p. 5]. The subjects responsible for determining and implementing memory policy in contemporary Ukraine include: a) the state and its agencies, as commissioners and directors of the process; b) scientific institutions – as institutionalized reconstructors and creators; c) civil society – as a subject of the production of historical memory and a subject of interaction.

Back in 2006, leading scholars and experts in the field of history and social practices proposed a set of strategic directions for cooperation between the state and society in shaping the most acceptable model of historical memory for Ukrainian society. In particular, these include: a) achieving a shared vision of Ukrainian history by Ukrainians and a societal consensus around its key events, as well as the “reconciliation” of opposing views of the past; b) the public demonstration

by the state, political forces, and national elites of respect for Ukrainian history and a commitment to restoring historical memory and justice; c) the proper commemoration of significant historical events and figures and the consolidation of public opinion around them; d) the modernization of the Ukrainian historical narrative, state support for domestic historiography, and enhancing the prestige of the historian’s profession; e) the integration of Ukrainian historiography into the European and global academic context; f) the promotion of the development of domestic archaeology, historical archives, and museum work; g) the revival and preservation of national shrines and historical monuments; h) the improvement of standards for teaching the course of Ukrainian history in educational institutions [15, p. 44]. Despite a fairly clear and objective vision of memory policy that should have been implemented by the respective agencies and institutions, the achievements in its realization have been rather limited. State institutions, certain political forces, and opinion leaders have not always demonstrated unity regarding the construction of a model of historical memory that corresponds to the tasks of building the Ukrainian state. This has led to an amorphous state of the historical memory of the Ukrainian nation, which has become an additional factor in the Russian dictator's decision to initiate armed aggression against Ukraine. Among the main manifestations of the crisis phenomena within the structure of Ukrainians’ historical memory, we also identify the following: a lack of coordination between the all-Ukrainian and other forms of collective identification; discrepancies between national and regional interpretations of historical events and figures; the absence of a general consensus regarding the foreign, anti-Ukrainian nature of imperial and communist rule imposed from outside; the success of manipulations concerning the language issue; and the presence, within a segment of society, of nostalgia for the Soviet past.

Thus, the crisis state of historical memory in society, combined with the amorphous nature of memory policy, under conditions of ongoing information warfare against the state and society, may

hinder societal unity and pose a threat to social harmony and national security.

It should be noted that, in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On National Security” [16], national security of Ukraine should be understood as the protection of the state’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic constitutional order, and other national interests of Ukraine from real and potential threats. Threats to Ukraine’s national security are phenomena, trends, and factors that hinder, complicate, or may hinder or complicate the realization of national interests and the preservation of national values of Ukraine. In the academic field, national security is most often considered as a concept that characterizes the degree of protection of vital interests, rights, and freedoms of the individual, society, and the state from external and internal threats, or the degree of absence of threats to human rights and freedoms, as well as to the fundamental interests and values of society and the state [17, 18]. One of the most authoritative experts in the field of national security, V. Lypkan, interprets this concept as a set of officially recognized views on the goals and state strategy in the sphere of ensuring the security of the individual, society, and the state from external and internal threats of a political, economic, social, military, technogenic, environmental, informational, and other nature, taking into account available resources and capacities [19].

Thus, it can be stated that the absence within society of a clear understanding of symbols that are significant for the entire nation, an undefined and often mutually exclusive policy of historical (national) memory, and the lack of concrete guidelines regarding historical, national, and societal values—in the conditions of information warfare and armed aggression—can create a direct threat to national security. There is no reason to disagree with T. Vasylenko and T. Bevz in asserting that the relevance of a consolidated model of historical (national) memory policy is particularly urgent for our country in connection with the ongoing process of political nation-building and the war that has continued for over ten years. This war is being waged not only on the battlefield, but also on the informational, educational, and intellectual fronts, and manifests

itself, in particular, in the form of “memory wars” [2, p. 137]. The key objective of the aggressor state is the dismantling of Ukrainian statehood. To this end, the manipulation of historical facts, the destruction of citizens' identity and values, and the imposition of foreign cultural standards are used. Under such conditions, the silencing or insufficient respect for the heroism of defenders who died defending Ukraine’s state sovereignty and territorial integrity is unacceptable. Accordingly, now more than ever, it is vital to implement a memory policy strategy that does not allow fallen Heroes to become mere statistics, but preserves the historical significance of each individual act of bravery and sacrifice for present and future generations.

Emphasizing the state’s priority task of forming a consolidated model of historical (national) memory in Ukraine, it must be stated that such a policy should be balanced, take into account contemporary realities, and be based on a solid legislative framework. According to Article 11 of the Constitution of Ukraine: “The State promotes the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness, traditions and culture...” [20]. Significant for the formation and implementation of historical memory policy in Ukraine are the following legislative acts: – the Law of Ukraine “On the Prohibition of Propaganda of the Russian Nazi Totalitarian Regime, the Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation as a Terrorist State against Ukraine, and the Symbols of the Military Invasion of the Russian Nazi Totalitarian Regime into Ukraine” [21]; – the Law of Ukraine “On the Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and the Decolonization of Toponymy” [22]; – the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine ‘On Geographical Names’ Regarding the Improvement of Activities Related to the Establishment, Regulation, Registration, Use, and Preservation of Geographical Names” [23], among others.

In the Vision *"Vision of Ukraine: Reform and Restoration of the Socio-Humanitarian Sphere in the Perspective Until 2030"*, adopted in 2023 within the framework of the Reanimation Package of Reforms, it

is stated that “national memory policy shapes a favorable social and media environment for a continuous process of critical reflection on the lessons of both distant and recent history, prevents the use of complexes of national inferiority or superiority and exceptionalism in foreign and domestic policy, facilitates mutual understanding with European neighbors regarding historical traumas, preserves, honors, and promotes the memory of Ukrainians’ struggle for freedom and resistance to misanthropic imperial regimes” [24].

These legal acts and visionary documents allow us to affirm that even under conditions of war, the Ukrainian state continues its efforts to implement historical (national) memory policy. In particular, during 2022, Ukraine renamed 9,859 toponyms associated with Russia and dismantled 145 monuments related to “the propaganda of Russian imperial policy” [25].

In this context, we agree with T. Vasylevska and T. Bezv that “the challenges of today, especially in the conditions of Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine, require a rethinking of the past, a rejection of Soviet clichés of idealization and victimization of history. Memory policy must become a powerful foundation for the development of a new post-war national and civic identity of Ukrainians” [2, p. 153].

We argue that the implementation of memory policy under current conditions, as one of the directions of state policy in Ukraine, should be carried out comprehensively, taking into account the real state of historical memory in Ukrainian society and based on the results of scholarly research. We concur with the view of V. Kryvosheia that the foundation of such a policy must be the principle of equality and the opposition to all forms of discrimination against models of memory, regardless of the ethnic, political, ideological, or religious origin of those models [26, p. 35]. Furthermore, following A. Sushko [27, p. 45], we consider the following to be essential principles of memory policy in Ukraine: a) alignment with the goals of societal development; b) coherence in implementation strategies among various actors of the political process; c) consideration of the state of

collective consciousness and the informal level of historical memory; d) consideration of the objective achievements of historical science. In addition to the above, we believe that the key event that should shape the content of memory policy for all subjects involved in its definition and implementation under current conditions must be the heroic resistance of the Defense Forces and the entire Ukrainian people to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as well as the commemoration of the heroes of this war.

In general, considering the wartime realities of today, it is rather difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding the success of national memory formation in Ukraine in recent years. However, it is important to emphasize the need for continued efforts and new educational initiatives to promote and objectively represent the history of Ukrainian statehood.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research

This article presents the following:

1. The importance of studying the issues of historical memory and historical (national) memory policy is substantiated, particularly in the current context of Russia’s armed aggression and information warfare against Ukraine, which has resulted in the transposition of the conflict into the realm of public consciousness and collective historical memory. It is demonstrated that this importance stems from the critical role played by historical memory and historical (national) memory policy in national identification processes, nation- and state-building, national security, and the determination of Ukraine’s political future.

2. The main approaches to the concept of historical memory are analyzed. Historical memory is proposed to be understood as the body of knowledge and reflection embedded in collective consciousness concerning events, traditions, ideas, and theories through which a people (ethnic community) becomes aware of and preserves its past.

3. The concept of historical (national) memory policy is proposed as a set of social practices aimed at representing (modifying) particular images of a shared past, actualized by the current political context. It is demonstrated that in modern democracies, the

formation (construction) of memory policy is one of the directions of state policy. Historical (national) memory policy is materialized in the form of legislation, strategies, and concepts that define ways of reproducing past events or memory in society, being incorporated into political declarations, government programs, commemorative practices, and memorial objects. The purpose of memory policy is the formation of a collective interpretation of the past and the identification of certain events, symbols, or individuals that should be honored in society.

4. It is substantiated that the existing crisis state of historical memory in contemporary Ukrainian society, combined with past deficiencies and gaps in the implementation of historical (national) memory policy, particularly under conditions of information warfare and hostile propaganda, may hinder societal unity and pose a serious threat to social cohesion and national security.

5. The priority of the task of forming a consolidated model of historical (national) memory for both state authorities and civil society is emphasized. It is stated that such a policy should be well-balanced, grounded in contemporary realities, and supported by a solid legislative foundation. It is proven that, under the ongoing war with the Russian aggressor, historical (national) memory policy must be based on both historical and recent experiences of the Ukrainian people's struggle against Russian colonialism and aggression. It should also rely on historical facts, events, figures, and symbols considered important by Ukrainian citizens in the context of state-building and ensuring national security, regardless of the historical, political, or social context in which they emerged. The importance of honoring and showing respect for the heroes and heroines of the ongoing war is particularly emphasized as a key component of national memory policy.

Prospects for further research include the expansion of scholarly approaches to studying the characteristics of the historical memory of the Ukrainian nation and the historical (national) memory policy in Ukraine in order to accelerate the development of consolidated, objective, and non-contradictory models. In particular,

further research is needed into the main strategies and mechanisms used to construct national memory, as well as an assessment of their impact on national and state security.

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