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POST SUICIDAL SYNDROME OFIDEOLOGICAL FANATICS
(BASED ON FILES OF OUN UNDERGROUND IN VOLYN)

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Introduction. The human race has entered into 21st century with an issue of ideological fanaticism escalation. The important precondition for its development was a loss of confidence in future by many people and discontent with their place in society. In order to resolve the issue, fanatically attuned individuals were ready not only to kill, but also to contemplate to take their own lives. In consideration of these facts, the post suicidal syndrome research emerges as topical. The underground activity of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in 30th - 40th of 20th century is a valuable source for the study of this matter.

 Aim and task of the study are to analyze fanatically attuned individual’s behavior after an unsuccessful suicide. For this purpose, the biographies of several underground OUN members from the territories of Volyn were examined.

The suicide was perceived differently, from heroization to contempt, depending on the epochs and nations. Sigmund Freud considered the death as an aim of life. The living beings possess an aspiration to revert back to inorganic state, from which they emerged, and the death instinct is a basis for all forms of violence, homicide and suicide. Nevertheless, the suicide is always regarded as a mortal sin. In consideration of this fact, at first sight, the practice of suicide appeared to be abnormal among deeply religious Volyn peasants, who formed the fundamental part in the underground movement.

In order to understand this phenomenon better, it is worthy to quote from a manual for OUN members with encrypted name ‘Sanitary instructions for chronic diseases’:

‘The underground organization is not a cooperation which requires only a statement, it is an iron brotherhood, among which exists an unconditional trust between all, the highest unity and deference, and heroic code of honor, aware of the one command only: ‘Victory or death!’’. Thereby the suicide for the highest idea in guidelines of the underground organizations was harmoniously fitted into the principles of the Christian self-sacrifice, martyrdom. According to Emile Durkheim this kind of a suicide can be classified as ‘altruistic’ one.

For the desire to devote one’s life to the highest goal, the suicidal tendencies, at first sight, could provoke minor psychological traumas. The example of that was an incident occurred with the underground OUN member Mykola Koltoniuk ‘Shchupaka’. Mykola was deeply impressed by the death of Eugene Konovalets, the OUN leader in Rotterdam, on May 23, 1938. The Poles favorable reaction to the event, realization of his service as pointless, moral sufferings, finally pushed Koltoniuk for desertion in June the same year. Mykola revealed himself as a mentally ill person, while he was leading a night watch. He claimed he could not remember anything. After that he was sent to Lviv Psychiatric Hospital. Constantly being under observation, Mykola was compelled to take injections and to tolerate tortures with electricity. In the autumn 1938 the military service period of 1914 year conscripts was terminated. Nevertheless, Mykola was not demobilized but shunted to Krakow psychiatric hospital. Exhausted by suffering, he decided to commit a suicide. At night he descended through a window using a bed sheet lace and directed to a guard who was on duty. Mykola attacked him suddenly, expecting an immediate death. Instead of what was expected, the guard struck him on the head with a gun stock and the unconscious was car-
ried back to his hospital ward. Nonetheless, Koltoniuk resolutely continued suicide attempts. At some time while trying to ‘run across a bullet’, he headed for border fortifications. However, the fortune miraculously saved Mykola from the death again. Being nervous, he lost in darkness and came across German positions. It is not clear why the same day Mykola was returned to the Poles, who sent a ‘critically ill patient’ to a single prison cell of Krakow ‘Montelupich’ Prison. He was conveyed to psychiatric department of a local hospital in a day. Koltoniuk was quickly ‘fading away’, being close to the death because he had lost his zest for life. In April 1939 the leader of the sanitary service returned Mykola to his parents to Piddubtsi village, Lutsk district, Volyn region, trying to get rid of a ‘terminally ill patient’. Koltoniuk was quickly recovering surrounded by the family and friends, and the resurgence of his ties with OUN returned him optimism and energy. In particular, a present, which is a British Enfield revolver in the 11.6 mm caliber, offered by the underground member Sergii Kachynsky, revived Mykola greatly. He was looking forward to using it shortly after against his offenders, the detested Poles.

Subsequently, in the summer 1943 Koltoniuk completely realized his ambition of revenge by administering elimination of the Poles in Kovel circuit. Apparently his craving for revenge released Koltoniuk from suicidal intents and motivated him to an active life – marriage, fatherhood and also rapid career advancement in the underground.

The post-suicidal syndrome of the OUN circuit commander Oleksandr Panchuk, nicknamed ‘Mamai’, developed in an absolutely different way. Together with his typist he got into NKVS (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) military division encirclement on July 15, 1945 in Synteiv hamlet, Dubno district, Rivne region. Following the instructions, published for the OUN underground of Rivne territory, on September 26, 1944, with a statement ‘Do not give up! Fight to the death!’, they opened fire on the division. The typist died immediately but Oleksandr decided to shoot himself as he had got serious injuries.

It is worthy to notice that the majority of the encircled underground members chose to commit a suicide. That was the way to keep their organization secrets and save themselves from sufferings of the captivity. That was the criteria which differentiated the ideological fanatics from ordinary suicide victims. The amount of uncompleted suicide attempts among the ordinary suicide victims is ten times higher than successful ones.

Regardless the OUN underground members determination, their suicides often were unsuccessful, due to various circumstances (haste, nervousness, dizziness caused by a wound, etc.). The majority of them instantly attempted suicide one more time if that possibility was available. Some of them became unconscious and subsequently tried to kill themselves: they through out of hospital windows, attacked convoy guards, etc. The situation in the case of Mykola Pan-

chuk appeared to be more difficult. He lost his eyes, arms and legs and was delivered to the Municipal Hospital of Dubno in an unconscious state as a consequence of serious wounds and an ineffective suicide attempt. For couple of years the patient had been pretending to be deaf and unable to speak. He was sent to Lviv Psychiatric Hospital on October 17, 1947 being suspected of simulation. Oleksandr started to talk as a result of electric shock therapy which he underwent on January 30, 1948. The doctors discovered that their patient had suffered from ‘reactive psychosis with symptoms of surdo mutism’, however, they claimed him to be mentally healthy in general. Nonetheless, Oleksandr did not give up even after that. Under interrogation, he claimed that he would not give any evidence. That is how even being ‘mutilated he continued to cause damage to the enemy’.

Afterwards, he was again sent to Lviv Psychiatric Hospital. According to the act № 110/115 created by a medical commission, we have an idea about physical and mental state of the patient: ‘considering his nervous system condition: both eyes blindness (caused by absence of both eye balls), the tongue is along the midline. The left nasolabial fold is smoothed. The tactile reflexes of upper and lower patient’s limbs are strong. The tendon reflexes of the lower limbs are absent. He has tremor occurred in the stretched hand fingers. Considering his psychological state: he has a clear consciousness which responds to surrounding environment and his self-awareness is adequate. The patient provides detailed evidence about himself. He freely gets in contact and has once told that he has not been disappointed in his convictions. There is nothing for him to lose as his family is exiled, and he is blind and unable to move. He claimed that if they treated him badly, he would refuse to talk as a sign of protest. In the ward he conducts himself calmly. Any intellectual or thinking disorders are not detected. He has been dwelling in Lviv Psychiatric Hospital from 17/10/47 to 03/03/49 (the medical record 1739 considering reactive psychosis with symptoms of surdo mutism). He was declared mentally healthy by the Commission on February 6, 1948’.

Being sent back to the prison № 1 of Rivne city, Oleksandr steadfastly refused to talk. Due to the forensic medical expertise on June 23, 1948, the patient was sent for treatment to Vinnytsia Psychiatric Hospital. He was declared to be psychologically healthy one more time by the medical conclusion from July 11, 1949.

Evidently, after that incident his investigators abandoned any hope to uncover at least some important information from the prisoner and took him to court. During the court session Oleksandr conducted calmly even being accused of more than 50 terrorist attacks. He testified that he did not consider himself as a citizen of the Soviet Union and that is why he could not be its traitor. Moreover, he affirmed that a murder of any person committed by him is not proven.

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9 DARO [State archive of Rivne region], f. R-30, op. 2, spr. 24, Ark. 102.
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After several complex surgeries the patient recovered
at the Kyiv Neurosurgical Department of Internal Troops
MDB.

A captivated underground member was transported by plane to
his testimony tremendously, considering the fact that the
Lutsk district, Volyn region. The proposition to surrender
shelter under a house of local citizen of Shepel village,
riddled with bullets, was traditional for such cases. Eventually, Oleksandr or-
N MDB) appeared to be ‘bold, decisive, disci-

Conclusion. All things considered, the analysis of post
suicidal syndrome in three cases had significant differences.

They based on psychological peculiarities and physical state
of personality, circumstances of suicide attempt and also
surrounding people behavior in post suicidal period.

Right after an unsuccessful suicide attempt, Mykola Kol-
toniuk committed the next one. The second failure caused a
deep depression. The factors that recovered Mykola to his
normal physiological state were his return to the circle of
relatives and possibility to revenge to his offenders.

In the other case, Oleksandr Panchuk could not repeat a
suicide attempt, due to physical inability caused by serious
injuries. For a long time he isolated himself from surrounding
people and avoided communication. After being tortured
with electricity charge he was compelled to give evidence.
Nevertheless, he clearly stated that his flight continued by
refusing communication and he did not have fear of the
death. Oleksandr strived to complete commenced suicide by
making fun of the investigators and court.

The third case of Mykola Kmet post suicide syndrome
was absolutely distinct from two previously mentioned. After
an unsuccessful suicide attempt and following complex
treatment, which was provided by the enemy, influenced
him to reconsider his deeds. Apparently, his desire to live
and to accommodate to new conditions gained a dominant
position in his life. Mykola actively joined the process of
underground destruction after had betrayed his comrades.
He unhesitatingly aimed his entire energy to serve a new
ideology.

In conclusion, the materials which consider the OUN
underground members’ death may be valuable for findings
in suicidology and crisis psychotherapy, especially, when
studying suicide of ideological fanatics.

Antonuk Я. Постсюїдіальний синдром ідеїних фанатиків
(на матеріалах Підпілля ОУН Волині). Аналізуючи
постсюїдіальний синдром трох розглянутих підпіلників
ОУН Волині, можна зробити висновки, що кожен раз він мав
суттєві відмінності вони залежали від особливостей психологіч-
чного і фізичного стану людей, обставин здійснення самогуби-
ства, а також поведінки оточуючих в післясюїдіальній пері-
од. Таким чином матеріали про загибель учасників підпілля
ОУН можуть стати корисними для досліджень суїцидології
і кризової психотерапії. Особливо при вивченні самогубств
ідеїних фанатиків.

Ключові слова: постсюїдіальний синдром, ідеїні фанати-
ки, підпілля Організації українських націоналістів, христвіа-
нство, інструкцій, оточення.

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Коло наукових інтересів: український визвольний рух у
ХХ столітті. Автор 78 наукових праць, в т. ч. 4-х монографій.

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Received: 18-01-2017
Advance Access Published: March, 2017

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Applications:

Fig.1 Oleksandr Panchuk (photo 1949)

Fig.1 Mykola Yakymchuk (photo 1939)