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TECTONIC MOVEMENTS OF THE VALUE DOMAIN (Belarusian fracture)

When face to face,
There is no face to see.
**The big things, to be seen,
require distance.**

S. Yesenin. Letter to a woman

Sergei Yesenin's famous lines are acutely relevant to the analysis and evaluation of contemporary social processes. The globalization policy has been generating the challenges and threats in recent years, both in the Republic of Belarus and globally. The situation requires a special kind of thinking and an appropriate "observation altitude," in order to see processes and events as a whole and not as isolated manifestations, transferring the adequacy of perception in the plane of situational thinking, affective activity and emotional pacifism.

Just a few years ago – *perhaps only a sick imagination could have conceived this in the year of the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory* – in a country that had lost every third man in the terrible ordeals of the Great Patriotic War and had the opportunity to bring up generations that had not known battle, to gain independence, there would be mechanisms capable of turning over the minds of a seemingly adequate part of the population even without armed intervention, push them towards self-destruction, and make a flag that is historically questionable at the least and associates with collaborationism in the Belarusian land during a bloody war, into a symbol of imaginary freedom. Only an unhealthy imagination could fathom heirs of the Great Victory covering the Minsk is a Hero City stele with this flag – with their own hands, without coercion, moreover – with fanatical enthusiasm. As if it were a great experiment,

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we have observed practical implementation of theoretical technologies for manipulation of public consciousness and behavioral attitudes, carried out in a short period of time but with thorough prior preparation, and can conclude today that it has worked. An unprecedented PR campaign, rallies similar to concerts, with speeches by leaders addressing different target audiences, introduction of symbols such as white ribbons... Nothing like this has ever been implemented in Russia, and certainly not in Belarus. "Peaceful protests" were instantly transforming into street riots; people's actions spoke that they had been willing to abandon welfare, peace, and history of the country under a general motto: "We stand for all that is good and against all that is bad."

Belarus has become one of the testing grounds for practicing and implementing particularly subtle strategies, which we have yet to comprehend in order to understand the entire spectrum of problems and global social processes, to see how underestimated was the work with meanings, values and culture, how great the power of the accumulated destructive tools and resources, and how global the nature of social development issues.

Color revolutions, social upheavals, armed conflicts, world wars, the destruction of countries, empires, and the like are only manifestations of the great civilizational confrontation that we have witnessed and participated in. *The goal of this confrontation lies in the spiritual realm, and now we are observing its tectonic shifts.* Behind common concepts and their substitution, like in murky water, code systems are being built on an unconscious level.

Discord in concepts, terminologies, their substitution leads to discord among the people. Structural categories of our society such as democracy, human rights, freedom of speech, civil society, sustainable development goals, green economy, decentralization, gender equality, quality education and the like have become habitual and are deemed

to be self-evident in administration decisions at the state level. Still, although we are on the march for restructuring all spheres of life in accordance with these goals, or the so-called points of social growth, there is no consensus or common understanding of all categories of transformation and no single attitude toward them in the society. The postulated social priorities are promoted under the motto: “Do as we do, and you will live as we do,” without the right to actual discussion, without the slightest effort to reconcile them with cultural, spiritual, moral, and, of course, economic national interests. As a consequence, individuals and the society as a whole, on the one hand, experience confidence, as these categories reflect the world practice of success, backed up by large-scale informational and PR support, and on the other hand – value dissonance and a state of social entropy.

This approach explains the value contradictions in relation to market processes which were emphasized by sociologists before the 2020 presidential elections in Belarus and the accompanying attempts to take down the government. Thus, the vast majority of people believed that the state should allow citizens to earn their own money, and at the same time said that it was obliged to provide benefits and allowances. On the one hand, there was a commitment to market trends, and on the other hand, a claim of social guarantees.

Discord is a social disease where it is not the body but the consciousness of the society that is affected. *It is necessary to have a clear understanding of the values integrated into our lives, their social acceptance*, an awareness that there is a “goal tree” behind the borrowed values, and knowing whether they are aligned with our basic interests.

As noted by V. S. Stepin, values and goals are always interrelated, but values determine the “goal tree.” A goal answers the question: “What?” and a value answers the question: “What for?” [8, c. 41].

The true origins of discord lie in the spiritual and moral realm. In an area that consolidates, relates people, unites them into one nation, as opposed to a process characterized by sociologists as the “atomization of society,” in which social ties break down, “I and my surrounding” attitude governs, and personal interests prevail over collective ones.

In the case of a shift of value priorities toward the material needs, including situations of natural and artificial economic hardships, most people lose the ability to see the big picture and to adequately assess the situation, and personify it on the basis of situational stimuli. Destructive processes and discord in public consciousness are caused by deterioration of the economic situation, followed by a *systemic increase in social anxiety and putting personal value priorities over the national values*.

The personal integrity is achieved through being focused on a particular system of values that exists in the structure of the personality and acts as a center shaping the direction of behavior and development in life. *The value attitude functions on the basis of a selective relation to the material and spiritual aspects of life* [3].

The best way to characterize a personality in this regard is to use the concept of “personal value orientation.” Value orientation is “a special subjective, individualized and motivated reflection of social values in the psyche and consciousness of a person or a social group at a particular stage of historical development” [5, c. 366]. Value orientations

act as a permissible limit to the possibilities of behavior. *The concept of value orientation reflects the importance of cultural values, clarity and direction* of all kinds of spiritual and practical activities and social behavioral attitudes [3]. Value orientations form a system of coordinates in social and personal development in terms of what is good and what is bad. Consolidated through various spiritual, moral, and aesthetic means, this system becomes the most important source and mechanism for creating a variety of behavioral patterns and awareness of a sense of social identity – one of the key factors determining social behavior.

At the present stage, we are witnessing if not a complete *destruction of administration mechanisms regulating social behavioral attitudes*, then their hypertrophied change which has occurred due to systemic global challenges.

The loss of the fundamental functions of religion and its fundamental influence on formation of ideals and meanings of life in the society, their replacement by ideologized values during a certain historical period made functioning of the regulatory mechanism possible. At the contemporary stage of development, when religion has lost its system-forming positions in shaping of the value-worldview domain for most people in the society, and political ideologization of this domain was being challenged and even condemned, *there was a disorientation resulting in severe social, political and economic consequences, which determined the need to borrow the allegedly effective international practices*.

Besides, in the modern era, historic time becomes compressed: a single generation has an opportunity to live through several epochs, with the possibility of cultural adaptation, development of value perception and assertion of life meanings.

The transformation of modern post-industrial (information) society, along with significant scientific and technological advances, has caused the need to build new worldview approaches. The consequences of this social transformation call for rethinking of value attitudes, which causes a loss of value orientations and a conflict between social and personally significant forms of organization of life. In the structure of value orientations, external demonstration of adherence to certain spiritual priorities decreases, while the dominant individualistic orientation contributes to the development of stable material aspirations and priorities of collective recognition in the mind. People born in an agrarian society had to work during the industrial period and transform their values during the post-industrial time and the digital age. This inevitably causes stress and intensifies destructive social processes which are characterized by an inability to reconcile the current reality with the values that have been traditionally transmitted and internalized earlier.

Expansion of technogenic civilization challenges culture as an independent system of values and norms that brings order into the society – it destroys the basis of personal identity, transferring the world from the system of local cultures to a “global culture” [4, c. 127].

The challenges of time dictate the need to change throughout life, constantly finding oneself in an unfamiliar world. *The urge to fill the gap in the system of value coordinates resulted, inter alia, in the change of basic values*. Thus, according to the results of monitoring of the sociopolitical and economic situation in the Republic of Belarus, conducted by the Center for Sociological and Political

cal Studies of the Belarusian State University in the period from 2010 to 2018, there was an increase in the importance of such a central value as “family.” Attitude toward the value of “religion” has changed: its importance has increased, indicating the need to return to traditional values in the period of collapse of ideological postulates.

Moreover, according to the current data obtained by the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies in 2020–2021 during the cycle of sociological surveys, it was found that the contemporary Belarusian society is characterized by dominance of basic values (family, health, work, etc.), integrity and continuity of historical memory, combination of paternalistic settings with the values of individualism and self-actualization, predominance of territorial identity (self-identification) over ethnic, religious and political identity. The peripheral values are sovereignty and independence of the Belarusian state, securing and implementation of social guarantees for citizens; there is a pronounced social demand for quality communication between the authorities and the population [1].

It would seem that the results of the study are quite optimistic, since people prioritize family, health, and work. However, if we consider value priorities in terms of their alignment with the task of forming a socially responsible, patriotically oriented personality, it makes sense to ask: perhaps instead of raising an egocentric person, even if possessing certain favorable qualities, we should focus on bringing up a person integrated into the society, with a healthy social, spiritual and moral consciousness and civic responsibility?

This approach to the basic values is clearly established by the states with a nationally oriented ideology. The government of the People’s Republic of China, echoing the ancient sages, strategically placed the values of law and order, patriotism, love of one’s work, honesty and friendliness in the concept of socialist core values along with such notions as power, democracy, civilization, harmony, freedom, and equality [7, c. 251]. They also make it clear that the concept of core values in fact represents the moral aspect, both of the individual and of the country and society. Without it, the state cannot prosper and the individual cannot succeed. If a nation has no unifying concept of core values, no shared opinion or norms of behavior, such a nation cannot move forward. It is also emphasized that such cases are not uncommon [7, c. 234].

In development of these ideas, one might say that “the interest of the society and its intellectual elite in the search for a national idea arises in a situation of a crisis of identity. Hyperbolization of the national idea, in this case, acts as a compensatory mechanism that helps avoid the sense of national inferiority and discover a national and cultural identity <...> in conditions of civilizational challenges.” [4, c. 369].

Organizing work with the domain of values is especially relevant in the context of the current global challenges associated with international pressure of opposing systems, attempts of critical analysis of the historical past aiming at destruction of previous values and worldviews, accompanied by one simple explanation: “we cannot live like this anymore, we need to develop like the civilized world does.” Given that after the collapse of the USSR, liberal ideology was freely propagating in the public consciousness as progressive, and the entire post-Soviet space was being im-

pregnated with Western values, a clear *distinction formed between the advocates of neoliberal market reforms and the adherents of traditionalist, paternalistic principles.* These branches of thought differ in terms of ideological, spiritual, moral, social and economic content, suggest different concepts of social structure and perceptions of its value foundations.

The contemporary period of the society is associated with transformation of its political, socio-economic, spiritual, moral and cultural domains. This process is exacerbated in the states that are undergoing a period of developmental transition.

Collapse of the society is caused by decay of the collective consciousness, loss of the ability to reason and generate life meanings and development strategies, and not only by economic factors in their pure form. The Soviet Union collapsed not because of the economic problems, but because of the decay of ideals and development strategies. Underestimation of the role of ideas and preoccupation with a situational, descriptive format of work delays progress towards the established goals at the least, and in the worst case – leads to rapid destructive processes that we have observed and continue to observe in the post-Soviet space.

The conceptual framework of approaches to solving the problems of safe social development is prone to change in the course of history. Even in the same time span, it often lacked universality across different social and economic formations. Nevertheless, there is increasingly more attention to the problem, there are more resources to address it, and country-specific approaches to understanding and implementing safety measures are evolving. Notably, the development of theoretical ideas in this area is noticeably behind the practical needs – which makes it difficult to determine the general patterns of emergence of the main sources of dangerous phenomena, create algorithms for the dynamics of processes, ensure uniform approaches to the assessment of security levels, optimize steps preventing various threats, etc. [2, c. 308].

The genesis of social behavioral and value-based attitudes is ambivalent. The attitudes involve influencing human behavior both biologically and socially. They can be hereditary and acquired, unconscious and conscious, individual or collective. Social behavioral attitudes are formed so that the biological and social component are both determined by the influence of the external environment, the sphere of existence and life of social subjects.

Accordingly, the development of social behavioral attitudes includes a set of objective and subjective factors. Objective factors include the level of socio-economic development and welfare of the society, the level of social expectations of interacting subjects, and the presence of goal-setting in the development of social systems. Subjective factors include beliefs, norms, values, collective perceptions, and various models of identity (sociocultural, religious, civic, etc.).

In the conditions of global informatization and digital transformation of the society, there should be a separate category of factors – communicative foundations of development of social behavioral and value attitudes. The communicative foundations include the media, network technologies of the Internet environment and other tools of mass communication systems. Informational influence from the mass media can have either favorable or unfavorable impact

on the development of personal value attitudes; in the latter case, destruction (partial or complete) of the system of coordinates in the value and worldview domain may occur.

Due to the loss of the former influence of religion and political regimes on values and worldviews, a special role is assigned to information and cultural mechanisms, mass media, and media communications: their super-influence can no longer be disputed. In the administration mechanism, they take on the meaning of a vector which sets the principles of understanding and norms of behavior in the society. The society begins to be shaped through the mass media and media communication.

Today the global media environment pervades all social institutions, the spiritual and moral sphere, and culture – all that integrates an individual into social processes. Judgments, assessments, moral, aesthetic, and ideological state of the society are influenced through the extensive toolkit of the print and electronic media, the blog sphere, messengers, and social media – a veritable factory of modern information resources.

The world is rapidly entering the digital age, information and communication technologies are outpacing social development, and information is becoming a strategic resource.

So, in the beginning of 2022, the number of Internet users on the planet grew to 4.95 billion, i.e. 62.5% of the total population. In January 2022, there were 4.62 billion social media users in the world, which is 58.4% of the total population of the Earth [9].

According to a Google Books study, about 150 million authors have been published in the history of mankind, whose works, including scientific ones, have been read by about 300 million people. Over the past 30–40 years, the number of authors has grown to 3.5–4 billion. These people are able to deliver their thoughts to an unlimited audience of readers and viewers, regardless of where they live. Readers, in turn, can leave comments, write messages in the forums – “talk” to the authors in real time. From a subject-object relationship between the author and reader, the media have moved to a “subject-subject” relationship, which underlies a new perception of text as a source of information.

More than 85% of Belarusians use the Internet. Various media and platforms (Internet television and radio, online versions of newspapers, mobile applications, media websites, social media, messengers, etc.) are available to the modern Belarusian audience [6]. However, traditional mass media (radio, television, and printed press) remain the most important sources of information for people aged 45 and older. The traditional media are primarily looked to for analysis, commentary, and clarification. But as a source of up-to-date information, they have long been replaced by Internet resources.

“The media field of the Republic of Belarus is rich and diverse” [6]. As of January 1, 2022, there were 1,680 print media in the country, of which 428 were state-owned; 261 television and radio broadcast media, of which 180 were state-owned; 7 news agencies (2 state-owned); and 38 online publications with only an Internet format (31 state-owned). Thus, state-owned media make up about a third of all media outlets registered in the country.

“The most popular messengers among Belarusians are Viber – 87%, Telegram – 56%, WhatsApp – 46%, Skype – 22%; social media: VKontakte – 3.8 million users, Insta-

gram – 3.2 million users, Odnoklassniki – 2.8 million users, and Facebook – 750,000 users” [6].

According to a study commissioned by the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus and performed in 2021 by Medialzmeritel, Belarusian citizens mostly use such sources of information as Internet sites and television (58.2% and 45%, respectively). Messengers are used by 10.8% and social media by 23.8%.

The reality of the modern information space is determined by the concept of “post-truth,” which accurately reflects the trend of information influence development. Large-scale fake-based influence focused on shifting the consciousness to emotional experiences, distracting from the real situation and pushing to specific predetermined anti-state goals – this is the strategy of destructive forces in the Internet space and their challenge to the society.

In 2021 alone, 2,358 Internet resources were blocked, more than 500 of them for distributing extremist materials. This is also a performance indicator of six years of previous work of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus. As of January 1, 2022, access to 5,023 information resources and parts of information resources is restricted. 1,519 resources posted information on the sale of narcotics, 1,195 – inappropriate advertising, 993 – extremist materials, 86 – information that could harm the national interests, 22 – pornography, violence and cruelty promotion, 6 – taboo language, 10 – information on behalf of unregistered organizations, 2 – information on the manufacture of explosives, and 1,187 – gambling. Three of the resources did not meet the requirements of Mininform.

Today we have to admit that the Republic of Belarus is faced with threats generated by ideological risks and challenges to national security. This situation undermines the psychological and spiritual environment in the country, shatters the public consciousness, bringing forth the need to effectively strengthen the traditional values of the Belarusian people, viewed from the perspective of national interests of the Republic of Belarus.

Healthy goal-setting can be mainly achieved through “effective organization of communication of concepts in the domain of consciousness: ideals, life meanings, and values” [2, p. 308]. The state appears as a structure for shaping internal communications of the individual in the mechanisms of cognition of value scales in the society.

The practice of organizing work with the mass media and mass communication implies the need not only and not as much for news content, debunking and denouncing opposing ideologies and destructive manifestations of reality, but mostly for conceptual ideas and consolidating values shaping the historic truth. The historic truth is not one and only; it depends on the culture and civilization with which we associate ourselves, on the ideology we develop and defend based on our political priorities.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize, yet again: knowledge and thinking that determine the value priorities are the most expensive commodity. Those who determine the ideology, the thought, the intellectual life of the society, determine the future of social development.

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