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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MOUNTAIN PEOPLE AS A SUBJECT OF SPECIAL RESEARCH

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Abstract. The article addresses the influence of natural and social-economic factors on the formation of the psychology of mountain people. A special mountain environment, living and housekeeping conditions, religious beliefs, and traditions mold stamina, pride, industriousness, and courage. The research into the psyche of Ukrainian mountain people living in the highest areas of Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi and Transcarpathian regions in the totalitarian period was openly scorned if not completely forbidden. For a long time, no research was done on the ethnic identity formation and rich feelings of hutsuls — a numerous ethnic community. Far too little attention was paid to hutsuls' most important psychological traits of character — bravery, freedom of mind, dignity, respect for others, industriousness, stamina etc.

Keywords: natural and social-economic factors, formation of psychology, sense of dignity.

A sense of dignity is a special feature of this ethnic group. A comparative analysis of various ethnic groups living in Ivano-Frankivsk, Transcarpathian and Chernivtsi regions shows that hutsuls were best able to preserve a sense of dignity; moreover, they strengthened this feeling in times of totalitarianism. It can be explained by a number of reasons.

Since ancient times highlands have been inhabited by brave and independent people. Struggle with the forces of nature, a special upbringing system based on ethnopedagogy, labor traditions and folk customs have shaped their sense of dignity.

Hutsuls' special housekeeping conditions have exerted a considerable influence on the formation of their sense of dignity. Traditionally, after marriage hutsuls felt economically independent because they began to keep house early in life. Since childhood both boys and girls felt needed. They had definite duties. Adults approved of their children's willingness to work about the house, which formed responsibility and with it a sense of dignity.

Respect from others as well as self-respect comes to those who have overcome some difficulties, shown persistence, industriousness, and, in some cases, bravery and courage.

Legends about Ukrainian rebels "opryshky", who were the bravest of young men (used to be called "lehini"), show that they were fearless, not afraid of cold or enemies. Their souls opposed foreign power. They observed centuries-old laws of mountains. The local people always sought rescue and defense from them.

The ethnopsychological expeditions we made to the mountain villages of Kosiv and Verkhovyna districts have enabled us to identify a number of interesting regularities concerning hutsuls' heightened

self-respect. One of them is that a sense of dignity is better developed in those people who live far from the center of a village, on the outskirts, in sparsely populated areas. They seldom go to the village center, and when they do go there, they wear their best clothes, which generates a positive emotional uplift, a kind of euphoria. According to observations, in public places hutsuls behave in a more reserved way, with obvious respect, without the fuss or haste characteristic of citizens; with a marked dignity they hold conversations on housekeeping, moral, ethical, and social-political issues.

Another regularity we have found is that hutsuls do not have humiliating street nicknames, which are often used in lowland villages. They address people respectfully by name; the elderly are addressed by their last names preceded by "pan" (sir) or "pani" (madam). This tradition of respecting one's own and others' dignity has been kept at all times, even when the address "pan" (sir) was officially removed from use.

The formation of a sense of dignity is influenced not only by living in a sparsely populated area but also by ways of housekeeping and limited communication experienced by a considerable number of women who work from home (according to separate statistics, up to 50%). Human dignity is closely connected with work, acquisition of material welfare through labor. According to B. S. Mordarevych in his article "Customary Law", "this important legislative principle which naturally arose from the way of life and ideology of workers, signified, on the one hand, respect and sacredness of property acquired by honest labor and, on the other hand, a negative attitude to any non-labor or criminal enrichment"¹.

It is a sense of dignity that explains hutsuls' claims on the forests, valleys and hay fields which they once cultivated and were deprived of during the expansions of the landowning gentry. Under any rule, a hutsul always tried to be an independent housekeeper. He treated any power, be it Polish, Austrian, or Moscovite, with distrust.

Nowadays, there is a sharp property difference among the inhabitants of the Hutsul District. Sociological investigations show that an absolute majority of workers disrespect those who came into quick money by trading in timber, souvenirs, land etc. The reason for this is not only envy or a profit gap between production owners and employees, but also a violation of hutsuls' traditional views on housekeeping, industriousness as a source of welfare, independence, dignity.

Hutsuls' sense of dignity is closely connected with a strong condemnation of wastefulness, alcoholism, household negligence. These factors are considered to be reasons for family breakdowns, poverty, and difficulties. Hutsul men have a highly developed sense of duty to protect and defend their families, which is connected with a sense of dignity.

In the village of Kryvopillya in Verkhovyna region we documented a legend which has it that a long time ago hutsuls lived an eagle's life. High. Freely. That is why their souls strive for freedom. Mykhailo Lomatsky in his essay "Verkhovyna, you are our world" writes that in times of O. Dovbush there were no poor people in the mountains. O. Dovbush considered poverty the vice of laziness. Hutsuls, with their keen sense of dignity, think that a healthy able-bodied person should not be poor. Poverty is the destiny for the physically challenged, frail, lonely, old.

For ethnopsychology, the spiritual world of hutsuls, their understanding of the soul and the spirit is an interesting source. Interesting observations about it can be found in the article by Khrystyna Stebelska "Yipe, where will I be?"², p.14-16 Soul for hutsuls is a spirit, and after the death of a person soul does not disappear, it lingers over the bed of the deceased person, then moves into a flower or tree. The researcher accounts for this belief by saying that "a hutsul lives in the lap of nature, and in nature everything moves somewhere into something".

There seems to be no compelling reason to argue that "hutsuls are people of mood, and their emotions outweigh reason", but we agree with K. Stebelska's observation that a hutsul tends to be more individual than communal, he likes to talk with his own soul. This is because he has nobody "to chit-chat" with. In Kh. Stebelska's opinion, hutsuls "strive for an isolated family life and housekeeping, and it determines their circle of friends and sympathies. Related souls dissolve in a big company"².

Here the author has mistaken a consequence for a cause. In fact, an isolated family life and housekeeping in a sparsely populated area, lack of everyday communication shape such traits of character as modesty and caution in communication with strangers; moreover, it seems that hutsuls are

aloof. They traditionally distrust strangers. "To draw a hutsul out," writes Kh. Stebelska, "is a difficult thing to do, because you need to overcome his distrust and catch him in the right mood".

We fully agree with the researcher that "the need to hide in his inner world has been formed in a hutsul historically – the external world impinged his freedom. His soul, as well as his homestead and family, was a fortress unassailable by strangers. It was his own world – a world of belief in oneself, in God and in His good powers and spirits." However, as our observations show, hutsuls are open, cordial, and generous to those who they trust.

A sense of revenge is often ascribed to hutsuls, like to other mountain people. Even the word "hutsul" is mistakenly connected with the Romanian "hots" – daredevil. This interpretation cannot be fully disproved, but a desire for revenge can be understood as a wish for freedom. "Every bird struggles for its nest." Such are inner convictions of most generations of hutsuls.

The Hutsul District (Hutsulshchyna) has gone through various hard times. It has had a certain impact on the character of this ethnic group. A representative example is six thousand hutsuls displaying their allegiance to the Ukrainian idea when they decided to struggle under the flags of B.Khmelnysky, the Ukrainian Halych Army, and the Ukrainian Rebel Army. However, there was treachery among hutsuls who sided with Polish invaders and fascists. There was indecency and spiritual dishonesty. But it was not a mass phenomenon. In times of occupation, some hutsuls became disillusioned; their hopes died; their souls gave up obsession. However, most of them never stopped striving for freedom. One cannot agree with those who say that "humility and patience entered a hutsul's soul". Those were only external signs, double behavior, but not double thinking.

Nowadays, when Ukraine is an independent state, the national devotion of Ukrainians is being revived. Every ethnic group of the Carpathians and the Precarpathian region is experiencing a resurgence of the undeservedly forgotten feelings of self-respect, dignity, and self-sufficiency.

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