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FOOD SECURITY AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL CHANGE. FROM THE TRAUMA OF FORCED COLLECTIVISATION TO THE TRAGEDY OF THE GREAT FAMINE

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Abstract: The phenomenon of social change often strikes fundamental and inalienable human rights to freedom and security – the source of inherent dignity of a human being. A meaningful and tragic example of the impact of social change on the loss of food security, the implication of which was a disastrous violation of human dignity, was noted in the initial period of the USSR – the first state that initiated social change (agricultural collectivisation), governed by the theories of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. The publication of the once famous joint study entitled *The Black Book of Communism* revealed and made the nations of Europe and the world aware of the limitless extent of the crime committed in one of the communist countries, which historians refer to as the Great Famine. In this article, that tragic event, unimaginable in its consequences and scale, will constitute a specific basis for the analysis of the dignity of identity in the context of social change resulting in the loss of food security.

Keywords: social change, Great Famine, food security, human dignity.

Introduction

For many decades, the gruesome truth about the most tragic "episode" of the Great Famine was carefully concealed. For several years now the Great Famine of 1932-1933 has no longer been a taboo subject, and is more and more often analysed by scientists from different fields. Besides, this issue appears to be debatable not only in a historical, but also social, political and legal aspect. Contrary to the intentions of the Great Famine instigators and the generation of their successors, the literature addressing this subject is relatively abundant and varied; it is represented by synthetic and monographic studies that describe the terrible conditions in which people found themselves when their food supplies were cut off and when hunger became

so poignant that they had to resort to cannibalism in order to survive. Despite the intensive and extensive scientific research, practically to this day this topic triggers numerous controversies, disputes and polemics. Contemporary reflections on the Great Famine, both historical and journalistic, develop rather dynamically, often bringing an important interpretation to it.

The authors of this study have set a goal for themselves to analyse selected dilemmas of the Ukrainian tragedy – as a result of social change – in the context of food security and its impact on respecting the fundamental human right to dignity of identity. Therefore, this article is not a historical reflection, an attempt at legal classification or an analysis of the reasons, scale or interpretative positions of the Ukrainian Great Famine of 1932-1933.

Human dignity in the context of food security deprivation

Although thousands of books have been devoted to the sources of moral reflection, it has been difficult so far to determine when and how moral consciousness – as a result of which humans ceased to be one of animal species, achieving human dimension of existence – was born. As a "citizen of two worlds", the man simultaneously belongs to the material and the spiritual world. As a material being, with body and senses, he belongs to the natural world, which is what Aristotle wrote about, defining him as a "rational animal". The second dimension of the man relates to the spiritual sphere, to the transcendental world, in which the subjectivity and self-awareness, focused on the identical "me", play a dominant role. We only know that as a result of the evolution of this awareness, thanks to the cognitive processes, some two and a half thousand years ago ethics[1] was born in the European culture, which, generally speaking, justifies the sphere of moral obligations and examines the scope of a man's responsibility for the choices made. As a branch of philosophy, ethics deals with creating thought systems – the basis of moral norms formulation. According to Maria Ossowska, they "are associated with the task of defending certain rights, such as life, freedom and security. In this case it can also be said that the necessary condition for the existence of moral directives is the existence of certain rights that must be defended" (Ossowska, 1970, p. 221). Among the main rights that have to be defended, Ossowska mentions freedom, security and human dignity (Cf. Ossowska, 1970, p. 95).

Despite the numerous disputes regarding the definition, the category of human dignity in a normative aspect, appearing in many legal acts, both international (Cf. Zajadło, 1989, pp. 103-104) and national, is, as a rule, considered in the context of natural, inherent human rights. For example, Article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland provides that the

[1] Of course, one cannot ignore the culture of the ancient East, China and India, which had been the cradle of moral reflection even earlier, and helped the man, who created his own value system, understand himself and the surrounding world better.

dignity of the man is inherent and inalienable and above all "constitutes a source of freedoms and rights of persons and citizens. It shall be inviolable. The respect and protection thereof shall be the obligation of public authorities"[2]. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, probably the most frequently quoted document in which human rights have been described in a comprehensive and universal way, human dignity is considered to be one of the basic human rights, regardless of the geographical location, the economic, social and cultural situation, etc. For years, the document, ratified in the first half of the last century by almost all countries on our planet, has been "striving by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance"[3]. The preamble of this historic document recognises the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, which constitute the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. It is worth emphasising that human dignity does not have one meaning and is most often considered in many aspects.

Maria Ossowska, whom the researchers studying the subject of dignity most often refer to, claims that "the concept of dignity has two fundamental semantic variations. […] According to the first one, there are those who have dignity and those who do not. […] According to the second one, all people are entitled to have dignity due to the privileged place of the man in nature" (Ossowska, 1970, p. 50). In the first sense, dignity can be attributed to some and denied to others, depending on their behaviours and attitudes. A few examples provided by Ossowska in which dignity is denied can be quoted. These include flattering, obtruding, opportunism, showing blind obedience, allowing to be treated as a commodity, etc. In the second sense, the man is entitled to dignity due to the fact that he possesses an immortal soul and the ability to shape his own existence according to his own hierarchy of values. Thus, it is enough to be human to automatically have dignity.

Attempting to put the concept of dignity in order, as it appears in the international law, Marek Piechowiak identifies four types of dignity:

1. Dignity of a human person – determined by the very fact of being human – is an inherent dignity with its source in human rights. As a human being, different from any other, everyone is entitled to have dignity, irrespective of the conduct, characteristics and the circumstances in which they live. This means that the dignity of identity is inherent to human beings, it is enough to be human to have the dignity of identity.
2. Personality dignity of moral stature (also described as "personal dignity" or "one's own dignity") – determined by the activities of its subject – is associated with moral excellence. Contrary to the dignity of identity, the dignity of moral stature is not ascribed to a human person due to the mere fact of being human, and therefore this type of dignity may be acquired or lost, depending on the subject's behaviour (decisions). The dignity

[2] Article 30. Principle of protection of human dignity, Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 78, item 483 – The Constitution of the Republic of Poland.
[3] Quote from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

of moral stature is a consequence of acting in accordance with one's own beliefs and conscience; with what has been deemed right and fair.

3. Dignity determined by circumstances – understood in the perspective of the dynamic nature of dignity of identity in which humanity is fully revealed. There are external conditions, including other people's actions, or selection criteria, understood as the abilities and possibilities of a person to act in a certain way. This type of dignity is a certain current state that exists depending on whether the living conditions correspond to who a man is, therefore, as in the case of the second type, this dignity may also be acquired or lost.
4. Personal dignity of merit based on the opinions of others – associated with the dignity of moral stature, understood as a good name, which can be considered a special case of dignity based on the living conditions, as it may be violated by the actions of others. This dignity is determined by the opinions of others regarding a certain person. It can be violated by, among other things, spreading false information that diminishes the dignity of moral stature of a person respected by others (Cf. Piechowiak, 1999, pp. 343-349).

Henryk Piluś, quoting *Pacem in terris*, an Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII, and the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et spes* distinguishes the inherent dignity – natural, and the dignity of a human person in the supernatural aspect. In the first sense, "human dignity is based on reason, conscience and freedom, while in the second – on the supernatural dimension of human existence, described as creation in the image and likeness of God and adoption by the grace of Christ" (Piluś, 1999, p. 23). Piluś emphasises that dignity of a human person must go hand in hand with respect and freedom, because a man can really be oneself only by acting consciously and freely.

Having made this introduction to the different categories of dignity, it is worth noting that the problem of human dignity recognised as the source of rights and obligations most often occurs in situations of danger or mass violation of these rights. Insecurity can be a typical manifestation of such a threat and violation of the right to the dignity of identity. The sense of security enables man's proper functioning, ensures the development of a human being, strengthens the man and makes him become the subject of security.

It is difficult to clearly define the concept of security[4] because there are nearly as many attempts to scientifically specify this term from the point of view of diverse area or thematic range as there are subject experts. Security escapes unequivocal classification because there are numerous divisions and schemes of the term. Security systematisation, most frequently quoted in the source literature, is the breakdown proposed by Barry Buzan who has distinguished

[4] For a detailed review of security definitions see for example: J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Współczesne koncepcje*, PWN, Warszawa 2012; S. *Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, AON, Warszawa 2002; M. Kwieciński (edit.), *Bezpieczeństwo wymiar współczesny i perspektywy badań*, Kraków 2010; L/ F. Korzeniowski, *Podstawy nauk o bezpieczeństwie*, Difin, Warszawa 2012; and others.

"five sectors of security: military, political, social, economic and ecological" (B. Buzan quoted after: Czaputowicz, 2012, p. 71). For us, the focus is food security[5], situated both in the economic and ecological sector, "which is defined as having enough food to sustain the life of a society. Ensuring food security is about guaranteeing both physical and economic food availability" (Czaputowicz, 2012, p. 91).

In most cases, disturbance or loss of security, including food security, may be an implication of warfare or natural disasters. It may also be a result of (un)intentional and erroneous policy in strategic sectors of the national economy, both internally and externally. The obvious consequence of the lack of food security are food crises and famine, which affect nations and local communities.

History is full of examples of famine that has plagued humanity for millennia. For example, the *Bible* contains numerous examples of widespread famine, e.g. in the times of Abraham and Isaac, during the lifetime of Joseph as well as during the reign of King Zedekiah and Roman Emperor Claudius. There is also no country in Europe that was not affected by famine in various eras. One can read about this in the *Annals* by Jan Długosz – a medieval Polish chronicler.

It is worth noting that the examples of famine described above were usually the result of catastrophes, which, in turn, were caused by a low degree of urbanisation and natural disasters, which the man had no direct impact on. One cannot pave over the periods of famine which resulted from the dictatorship of madmen, such as famine in Cambodia during the reign of Pol Pot, famine in North Korea or China. Unfortunately, this problem has also been known in modern times. In the third world countries the problem of famine has basically been known "forever". Such countries as Sudan, Somalia, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Kenya are constantly using food aid.

Satisfying hunger and food security are among the basic, even atavistic, needs of human beings. An American psychologist, Abraham Maslow, explains that "in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others. A person who is lacking food, love, and self-esteem would most likely hunger for food more strongly than anything else. […] For the man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food. He dreams food, he remembers food, he thinks about food, he emotes only about food, he perceives only food and he wants only food. The more subtle determinants that ordinarily fuse with the physiological drives in organising even feeding, drinking or sexual behaviour, may now be so completely overwhelmed as to allow us to speak at this time (but only at this time) of pure hunger drive and behaviour, with the one unqualified aim of relief" (Maslow,

[5] The category of food security should not be identified with the concept of food safety, which the Food Safety and Nutrition Act defines as "general conditions which must be met, in particular: a) additives and flavourings used, b) levels of pollutants, c) pesticide residues, d) food irradiation conditions, e) organoleptic properties and actions that must be taken at all stages of production, processing and distribution of food in order to ensure human health and life" – see the uniform text of the Food Safety and Nutrition Act of 5 July 2019, Journal of Laws, item 1252.

2009, pp. 63-64). Deprived of food, the human body begins to consume its own protein in a simultaneous act of self-defence and self-destruction. As a result, the weight of the human body systematically decreases, causing acute stomach pains, which disappear after a few days of starvation. They are replaced by lethargy, dullness, indifference. As a consequence, acute mental disorders occur, including hallucinations. Higher-order needs cease to have any meaning, are pushed into the background, and all skills are used to acquire food. "The receptors and effectors, the intelligence, memory, habits, all may now be defined simply as hunger-gratifying tools. Capacities that are not useful for this purpose lie dormant, or are pushed into the background" (Maslow, 2009, p. 64). According to Maslow, it is the human body that imposes the hierarchies of values that uphold humanity. As it turns out, an individual exposed to hunger loses the internalised, absolute and seemingly indisputable moral norms, and the existing world of values – including the inherent human dignity – ceases to have any meaning in confrontation with hunger. Security deprivation not only ruins the internal order of the individual, but first and foremost threatens the fundamental and inalienable human rights to freedom, which are the source of inherent and inalienable dignity of a human person. A number of problems generating a threat to human life in its fundamental foundations result from one of the main sociological problems determined by the phenomenon of social change.

Social change – an optimistic vision of the future or destabilisation of the present?

The phenomenon of social change is an inseparable element of social life. According to Guy Rocher, social change is "any observable and verifiable transformation over a period of time which is neither temporary nor short-term and which affects the structure or functioning of the social organisation of a given community, changing the course of its history" (Couet, Bremond, & Davie, 2007, p. 36). Generally speaking, social change is most often understood as a significant change taking place in connection with various social structures in a given society. The category of social change was used to explain significant changes taking place on our globe, which immeasurably reversed the course of history. Social change is usually based on an ideology that unifies "the vision of the future world and wants to encourage practical actions that would help this vision come true" (Ritzer, & Jankowska, 2004, p. 111).

A model example of social change was the so-called agricultural collectivisation implemented in a real society at the beginning of the USSR, which was based on the Marxist ideology of dialectical materialism. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written together with Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, a German philosopher, publicist and the most famous apostle of the revolutionaries, explained that history of societies is a history of class struggles "that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the

common ruin of the contending classes. […] Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other – Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (Marks, & Engels, 1986, p. 515). According to the ideology of communism, the determinant of the transformation of societies is change, and its base is the clash of the opposites and the struggle between these two antagonistic classes. This nineteenth-century revolutionary activist formulated the so-called conflict theory, in which he argued that what had brought the human being to the top of the hierarchy of beings was the struggle for influence and dominance, mainly in the material sphere. Sociologists claim that the eternal conflict between classes as well as endless wars and social conflicts are an integral part of society development. Recalling this dichotomous, conflicting model of class structure, the author of communism justifies that conflicts, usually revolutionary in their nature, must give rise to change. In his ideology, he argued that the man's processing of the material world determines his greatness as a being who not only shapes himself but, above all, changes the world by writing the pages of history. According to the communist model of dialectical materialism, conflicts between social classes will eventually lead to a classless society and shared ownership. There will be order and "a social system in which people will be close to the ideal Marxist concept of productivity for the first time in history. By using the achievements of modern technology, they will harmoniously affect the nature and enter into relationships with other people, creating means necessary to live" (Ritzer, & Jankowska, 2004, p. 27).

The utopian vision of the socialist society emboldened the main Bolshevik leader – Vladimir Lenin (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov), a supporter and advocate of the Marxist ideology – to try to introduce communism in Russia. Inspired by the Marxist idea of restraining social productive forces by eliminating previous methods of assimilation, Lenin issued the *Decree on Land of 1917*, which decreed abolition of private property and redistribution of the landed estates amongst the peasantry. Lenin's *Decree …* made peasants take over by force not only the landowners' land, but also their cattle, domestic inventory, multigenerational property and material achievements. As Evgeny Anisimov notes, with "such forced takeover and division of land sanctioned by the Bolshevik state, peasants 'incurred a debt' with the new authorities, who now began to demand food supplies from them – in large, previously unthinkable, quantities. The Bolshevik idea was simple: the peasantry, grateful for the *Decree on Land*, would provide grain for bread for factories and plants" (Anisimow, 2017, p. 288). However, due to the total defeat of the Leninist scheme, the authorities were also forced to resort to force solutions very quickly. In the summer of 1918 the Bolsheviks introduced compulsory food supplies, and by the decree of 9 January 1919 they sanctioned the so-called "prodrazvyorstka" (food apportionment)[6], which was the confiscation of grain and other agricultural products from peasants at nominal fixed prices according to specified quota.

[6] In the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) instruction letter the governorate party committees were explained that "razvyorstka" was already a definition of surplus in itself. Thus, this "surplus" was not at all **what** remained on a peasant's farm after satisfying the needs of the owners, the family, but an arbitrarily imposed grain supply standard (after 1920 other products as well). See J. Anisimow, *op. cit.* p. 289.

"Prodrazvyorstka" fitted into the Bolshevik policy of war communism perfectly well and, complemented by the universal obligation to work, cashless exchange of goods and free services, in the early spring of 1921 it led to a serious food crisis, making the Bolshevik authorities aware of the need for a radical and rapid turnaround. For the sake of retaining power, Lenin was forced to depart from his ideological principles, and introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) practically in the entire former Russian Empire. The idea behind the New Economic Policy came down – first and foremost – to abolishing "prodrazvyorstka", which was catastrophic in its socio-economic consequences, replacing it with the "prodnalog" tax and introducing free market, which almost immediately went into private hands. The New Economic Policy turned out to be Lenin's huge success and the Bolshevik Russia changed its economic face literally within several days.

Lenin's death and Stalin's takeover of power begins a new stage in the history of the first state building communism, created in 1922. The course towards industrialisation, announced at the 14th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in December 1925, was the end of the New Economic Policy, and in the view of heavy industry being subsidised with the funds from the hitherto self-sufficient countryside, in the mid-1920s the USSR faced food crisis again. Stalinist industrialisation, carried out as part of the five-year plan hastily developed in 1929, was implemented by means of a drastic increase in taxes imposed on the NEPmen, raising prices, lowering the living standards of the society and, above all, at the expense of the peasantry. The countryside became a powerful reservoir of both material goods and cheap labour for hundreds and thousands of construction projects of the five-year plan.

On 7 November 1929, the multinational, 130-million rural society of the USSR learned of the communist authorities' intention to change their lives radically. In Stalin's article, entitled *A Year of Great Change*, published in the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *Pravda*, notes on the transition from fragmented and backward rural economy to the great and leading collective agricultural economy, on the major breakthrough in the peasant masses and on the voluntary and mass accession of "medium-sized" farms to *kolkhoz*, sounded like an ominous announcement of another social and economic disaster. The aim of the heralded social change was the obvious liquidation of kulaks as a class, meaning, in fact, the most reliable and hard-working peasants. Forced and unlawful collectivisation based on the mandatory system of creating collective farms (*kolkhoz*) brought not only social, but also physical destruction of kulaks. One of the effects of the ruthless collectivisation policy of the USSR was the Great Famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine.

The Great Famine of 1932-1933 – an example of the impact of social change on the loss of security, freedom and human dignity

One of the first and major crimes committed during the initial period of social change – in the newly created state called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic – was the hecatomb of several millions in the rural population of Ukraine, who starved in 1932-33. The publication of the once famous collective study *The Black Book of Communism* (Kersten, Courtois, & Wakar, 2001) revealed and made nations of Europe and the world aware of the limitless extent of crimes committed in the countries of the communist bloc as a result of collectivisation. This dramatic social change, introduced through the destructive policy of forced collectivisation and obligatory supply of crops to the last grain, turned out to be a terrible shock both in the economic and social as well as cultural and moral context. The ideologically planned destruction of the countryside at its very roots, liquidation of peasantry and creation of a new social layer – collective farm owners – resulted in millions of victims. In historiography, this tragic event, unimaginable in its effects and scale, is referred to as the Great Famine or – from Ukrainian – Holodomor[7]).

The result of the Soviet Union's ruthless policy was the application of measures consisting in isolation, closing the flow of local people to other regions of the country and complete confiscation of food, taking entire grain stocks away from the peasants, which resulted in terrible hunger in the first half of 1933 in the areas inhabited by two-thirds of the Ukrainian population. As E. Anisimov notes, "Ukraine was hit by a terrible tragedy: entire villages became deserted, houses were full of the dead and dying – adults and children, mass cannibalism, thousands of refugees moving towards Russia, where swollen and black from hunger they wandered the city streets, begging for a piece of bread, and then dying in parks and squares" (Anisimow, 2017, p. 335).

One of the most tragic consequences of this cannibalistic policy of the central authorities, which was revealed relatively recently as a result of gaining access to secret Soviet archives, was anthropophagy. B. Hołyst notes: "Constant lack of food can cause illness, exhaustion, death – to prevent that, a person is able to eat everything, even indulge in cannibalism" (Hołyst, 2014, p. 226). Most cases of cannibalism occurred in eastern Ukraine and the Kiev province, but also in other areas of the USSR, which were experiencing famine. Deprived of food, people reacted in different ways: some – as long as they had strength, despite dangers, prohibitions and heavy punishments, tried to escape to big cities[8], others – left alone, died alone in their homes. There were also those who committed acts of cannibalism. A Russian writer, Vasily Grossman, who was one of the few to have the courage to openly, literary document these dramatic events,

[7] The word *holodomor* is a combination of two Ukrainian words: *holod* – hunger, and *moryty* – to kill.

[8] These people, due to strict rationing of food, addressed only to registered citizens with food stamps, most often also died of hunger.

wrote: "…each person dies in his own way. In one house a real war is going on, one is watching the other, one is taking away the last crumbs from the other. The wife is lurking for her husband, the husband stands against his wife. The mother hates her children. In another house – love is intact" (Гроссман, 1989, p. 42).

Grossman's character, Anna Sergeyevna, who participated in *dekulakisation*, confesses in a bitter self-reflection: "Then I understood: a hungry man is like a cannibal. He eats meat of himself. Only the bones remain, the fat is completely eaten. Then he loses his mind – that means he ate his own brain. A hungry man eats all of himself" (Гроссман, 1989, p. 81). Causing the Great Famine, Stalin forced many people to seek this relief through survival cannibalism!

The acts of cannibalism are known both from secret party reports, militia and the State Political Directorate (secret police) of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Shocking facts are also revealed by numerous witness accounts (see e.g. Dzwonkowski, 2004). Cannibalism was not limited to simple necrophagy: acts of cannibalism were committed by parents killing their own children to save themselves and other children from death, older siblings killing the younger ones, the stronger killing the weaker. There were also cases when people who were still alive were eaten.

In this context, the attitude of those who openly and courageously preached the words of truth about this most tragic and shameful episode of the Great Famine deserves special recognition. Vasily Grossman, whose novel *Everything Flows* was "imprisoned" particularly for mentioning the Great Famine, wrote: "At first, hunger drives you out of your house. In the beginning, it burns and torments you – it tears you at your guts, at your soul. And so you try to escape your home. People dig for worms, they gather grass – and yes, they even try to fight their way through to Kiev. Whatever they do, they've got to get out, they've got to get away. And then the day comes when the starving man crawls back into his home. That means hunger has won. This one has given up the struggle; he lies down on his bed and stays there. And once hunger has won, you can't get the man up again, try as you might. Not just because he doesn't have the strength but because it's all the same to him; he no longer wants to go on living. He just lies there quietly. All he wants is to be left alone. He doesn't want to eat, he can't stop peeing, he has the runs. All he wants is to sleep, to be left in peace. If you just lie there quietly, it means you're near the end. […] But there were some people who lost their minds. They only went still at the very end. You could recognise them by their bright, shining eyes. These were the ones who cut up corpses and boiled them, who even killed and ate their own children. As the human being in them died, the wild beast came to the surface. I saw one woman. They brought her to the district centre under a convoy – her face was human, her eyes wolf-like. They said such people, cannibals, were shot to a man. And they were not guilty. The guilty ones were those who led the mother to eat her own children. Can you find the culprits, no matter where you ask? It was for the good, for the happiness of humanity, that they led mothers to such terrible things" (Гроссман, 1989, p. 81). Grossman was one of the first people to literary document another shameful attitude of the Soviet authorities. Both the criminal code of USSR

and the jurisdiction of Ukrainian SSR did not sanction acts of cannibalism. These dealings obviously did not fit into the legal initiative of the Bolshevik paradise jurists. Therefore, the Soviet authorities sentenced people accused of cannibalism to imprisonment (labour camps) or death on the basis of articles that did not take into account the specifics of the committed acts[9].

Determining the exact number of anthropophagic acts during the Great Famine is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, the recently disclosed documents from the National Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine reveal that the total number of convicts for cannibalism in 1932 and 1933 amounted to 2,505 people (See Kuśnierz, 2012, p. 173). It is likely that those cases that have not been disclosed or judged will remain secret forever.

Ending

Apart from bringing a new quality to the transformation of social structures, social change often violates the basic norms that regulate social life. There is feedback between social change and social moral regulators as well as the human right to freedom, dignity and security. Sociologists argue that as a result of social change "norms change in the first place because they guide people's behaviour directly. Over time, beliefs start to change. […] Once these changes in social structures, norms and beliefs become sufficiently large and spread, then values or the criteria of right and wrong, may also change" (Turner, 2004, p. 218). In this context, the attitude of Pavlik Morozov[10], a boy from Gerasimovka village, who, convinced about his ideals and doing good, denounced his father, an alleged participant in the *kulak* conspiracy, can be a meaningful example. It is significant that according to the Soviet authorities the only victim and hero of the forced collectivisation worth commemoration was this young *Komsomol* activist. Only this victim could be talked about out loud and his example served the authorities in their fight for communism. Blood ties, parental relations, family – as a bourgeois anachronism – became the object of a decisive attack for the new power. Those who were the avant-garde of the fight for a new communist world order became heroes. Their names were given to thousands of plants, factories, streets almost until the very end of the USSR.

[9] The following regulations were usually used as an explanation: Article 56, item 17 of the Penal Code of Ukrainian SSR [who commits acts of banditism (…)], Article 138, letter "a" of the Penal Code of Ukrainian SSR [who kills a person to obtain benefits (…) for the wrong reasons (…)], Article 138, letter "c" of the Penal Code of Ukrainian SSR [who kills a person with extraordinary cruelty (…)], Article 174, item 4 of the Penal Code of Ukrainian SSR [who commits robbery which results in murder (…)]. This was not the first nor the last case of Soviet authorities' actions which resulted in the roles of the perpetrator and the victim being reversed.

[10] Morozov was probably murdered by his relatives in an act of revenge for denouncing his father.

The most common effect of the initial period of social change is axiological chaos, mainly in the sphere of traditional values and patterns of behaviour. It usually arises from undermining (often completely destroying) the elementary foundations, which until now guaranteed survival, relative order and stability to the individuals and entire societies. The Ukrainian tragedy of the early 1930s is a dramatic exemplification of the dominance of one man over another by depriving him of food security – the foundation of existence of every biological being. The effect of such domination and the unlawful robbing of a human being of his inherent right to freedom, self-determination, security and dignity constitutes an axiological confusion affecting all spheres of human life. The quoted "episode" of the Great Famine confirms the dramatic concept of the creator of the hierarchical structure of needs, which provides that a hungry person and a person deprived of security, love and respect will do everything to satisfy their hunger first by eating his own brother, sister, mother… You can ask yourself if there is any limit to humanity, dignity of a man whose name allegedly sounds proud? The answer may be the confession of the heroine of *A World Apart*, a former Gulag prisoner in the years of contempt and hatred. When asked what hunger was, she said: "Hunger, hunger… A terrible feeling, eventually changing into an abstract idea, dreams, fuelled by the fever of existence less and less. […] What is the limit of its actions, beyond which the declining human dignity regains a disturbed balance? There is none" (Herling-Grudziński, 2007, p. 51). Here is another question: Is the fight for living/surviving dignified? Is living at all cost – even at the price of losing higher values – devoid of dignity? Since the spark of life barely smoulders in the hungry body, and the process of feelings and thoughts is extinguished, should one be surprised that survival becomes the main imperative? As it turns out, in an extreme situation people get rid of morality, like an unnecessary ballast, which hinders and sometimes prevents further walking, in this case walking the path of life.

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