

THE “CAPTIVE MIND” IS WORSE THAN REPRESSIONS. PSYCHOTRAUMATOLOGICAL STUDY OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA IN LITHUANIA

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INTRODUCTION

The academic discourse on trauma has currently expanded beyond the scope of a review. “What is shocking is that it is not shocking that there is no clarity about the precise meaning of the word trauma, in a nonphysical, nonmedical sense, despite its extensive use. Although the overwhelming majority of people, specialists and non-specialists, are convinced that they know what they mean when they use the word trauma, the obvious fact is that there is not much evidence for such claim” (Papadopoulos 2019, 91).

Historically, the first scientific studies and concepts of trauma were clinical. The clinical processes and effects of psychological trauma were first described by the researchers of war trauma (Rivers 1918; Kardiner 1941) and clinical neuroses (Janet 1907; van der Kolk and van der Hart 1989), and their work was further developed by psychoanalysts (Freud and Breuer 1895). In the 1980s, the concept of trauma became the object of positivist *psychotraumatology*. This interdisciplinary field of study of psychological and psychosomatic effects of trauma was called *psychotraumatology* to differentiate it from medical, surgical traumatology (Fischer and Riedesser 1998; Everly and Lating, 1995). Psychotraumatology strictly defines the term of psychological trauma and describes the conditions caused by trauma, e. g. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD), Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) (DSM-V 2013), Adaptation Disorder (ICD-11 2018) etc. Tools have been developed to measure the traumatic experience and its effects, and they are

especially useful in quantifying the scope and extent of trauma, comparing various groups of victims.

But over the last decades, the concept of trauma which belonged primarily to the clinical field of psychotraumatology has been imported into the humanities and social sciences. The concept of *cultural trauma* has emerged. At first, the concept of trauma was very reductionist (Gailienė 2015), i. e., the explanations of social events were based on clinical approaches – psychoanalytical (Caruth 1996; Friedlander 1992) or cognitivist (Neal 1998; Smelser 2004) ones. Just like in the clinical paradigm, the effects of cultural trauma were described in clinical terms: *symptoms of trauma* (Sztompka 2000; Alexander 2004). Later, J.C. Alexander distances himself from the clinical theories and formulates a constructivist social theory of collective trauma, in which he defines cultural trauma as a collective construct: “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (Alexander 2012, 6).

On the one hand, the proliferation of the concepts of trauma seems quite chaotic, but on the other hand, the variety of the terms may be a reflection of the fact that the traumatic experience of people, especially one that is complex and long-lasting, does not fit a framework of a single concept and requires diverse approaches.

The research into the long-term historical trauma not only reveals the complexity of heavy traumatization and its effects, the characteristics of coping and intergenerational processes but also allow to consider the problems in the theoretical approaches to trauma. In the Vilnius University in Lithuania, the psychological research into long-term effects of historical trauma has been carried out for already two decades. The psychotraumatological and the psychodynamic analytic approaches have been employed the most frequently. These studies have provided a lot of important data about the complexity of collective trauma, but they have also revealed the specific methodological problems of such research.

THE PROBLEM OF THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRAUMA

Out of the 15 former republics of the Soviet Union, only the three Baltic countries – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – have fully restored their independence and joined the Western alliances the EU and the NATO in early 21st century. The totalitarian past was over. The choice towards liberalism and development as a Western democracy was resolute.

Once democracy was restored, it became possible to study and evaluate the effects of the long Soviet occupation, the prolonged and complex traumatization on individuals and society.

The most pertinent condition for studying the effects of trauma is the very acknowledgement of trauma. Before traumatization is over, before the victims and the perpetrators are named, the study of the effects of trauma is not possible. Sometimes small, limited trauma studies are carried out in refugee centers, centers for torture victims, but that is not sufficient for extensive research. The history of psychotraumatology is replete with tensions and struggles for the acknowledgement of traumas and trauma victims (Herman 1992; Weisæth, 2004a; Gailienė 2008). The reasons for the denial and lack of acknowledgement of trauma may be political, emotional, professional and other (Gailienė 2008).

For instance, after World War II the Western specialists for a while were slightly confused as they saw the difficulties that former Nazi concentration camp victims were facing. The irritability of the victims, the nightmares that still haunted them were obvious, but the specialists dared not declare that those are the effects of the heavy traumatization (Eitinger 1980). The psychoanalytical theory was dominant at the time, and it postulated the concept of neurotic predisposition. It stated that psychologically healthy people can cope with any trauma. If the effects of trauma continue, the personality itself must be neurotic, weak. Most of the former prisoners presented with the various nervous problems – irritability, fearfulness, a reduced capability to work, and they associated that with their concentration camp experience. “Meanwhile, we,” Leo Eitinger, Norwegian professor who was among the first to start a systematic study of former prisoners, tells with a hint of self-irony, “the doctors full of wisdom from our old textbooks, ‘knew’ that it ‘can’t be’. We had learned that a ‘healthy, normal’ person cannot get sick due to psychological load! [...] We happily stuck to our bad knowledge – at least for the first 10-15 years after the war” (Eitinger 1988, 137). It seemed impossible to believe that people who have experienced heavy psychological traumatization can suddenly and apparently without a reason lose their health and ability to work, even if they have been seemingly healthy and functional for a while, and that the reason for it is their experience at the concentration camp even a decade or more afterwards. “Back in 1945, however, it was unthinkable that a 50-year perspective would be necessary to fully evaluate the long-term and delayed effects of traumatic war stress as they are known today” (Weisæth 2004, 197). “After WWII, in the psychoanalytic literature, the traumatic neurosis is only mentioned in attempts to deny its existence” (Rapaport 1968, 719). Such attitudes stigmatized the victims of concentration camps and prevented the researchers from carrying out more extensive studies. A breakthrough only came when the specialists in Norway and the USA began unbiased

studies of the situation of the victims of trauma and classified their difficulties as *concentration camp syndrome* (Eitinger 1964; Eitinger and Strøm 1973), *survivor syndrome* (Niederland 1968) and similar. Professor Antony Kępiński, who studied former Auschwitz prisoners at the Krakow Medical Academy's Psychiatric Clinic, compares the psychic state of the former prisoners to those who have experienced psychosis: both seem unable to return to where they were after what they experience. "There are certain limits to a person's experiences, and there is no crossing them without punishment; if one happens to go 'beyond', it is impossible to return to the previous state. Somehow, the very foundational structure changes, the person is no longer who he or she was" (Kępiński 1978, 106).

The success of trauma research also depends greatly on their political acknowledgement. As long as traumatization is denied, the victims are also unacknowledged, and their experience is not an object of serious study attempts. The studies of the heavy long-term traumatization after World War II were also favorably affected by political and social decisions. *Nazism* was deemed a criminal ideology. The perpetrators are on trial, the victims are named, their suffering acknowledged, attempts are being made to provide them with compensation, the body of academic scientific research is growing. The other totalitarian regime of the 20th century, *communism*, survived 50 more years after the war, and once it fell, it was never acknowledged as a criminal regime. There is still a lot of ambivalence and even denial in the Western countries regarding the acknowledgment of crimes of communism. One of the most reliable indicators of the political and social acknowledgment of trauma is the academic discourse. Even though millions of people suffered the traumas caused by the communist regime and the traumatization lasted very long, there are disproportionately few scientific studies into the effects of these traumas. The topics of communist trauma are still avoided in the academic world.

SOVIET TRAUMA

It has different characteristics in different countries. In the Baltic states that were directly occupied and annexed the Soviet regime acted out slightly differently than in the so-called people's democracies in Eastern Europe, the Soviet satellite countries.

The first Soviet occupation of Lithuania began in summer 1940. On the 15th of June, according to Stalin's ultimatum, the Red Army entered Lithuania. Along with the first occupation of Lithuania comes the first wave of "red terror". The order signed by the Internal Affairs People's Commissioner of the USSR Lavrentij Beria on October 11th, 1939 regarding the groups of residents of the

annexed countries that are to be destroyed comes into action (Anušauskas 1996). Immediately mass arrests begin as well as the hunt for the "people's enemies" and "antisoviet element". The goal of the first wave of repressions was to destroy the social groups that potentially appeared disloyal and could resist the regime, the ones whose loyalty to the occupant government could hardly be expected. All the politically and socially active citizens present in an independent Lithuania are declared enemies of the regime. On the 17th of July, the Lithuanian Prime Minister Antanas Merkys and the Foreign Minister Juozas Urbšys are arrested and sent to prisons in the Soviet Union. In Lithuania, members of all political parties, leaders of social organizations, editors of forbidden newspapers, former ministers, Lithuanian and Polish army officers, Trotskyite Jews, etc. The majority of them were shot or tortured to death in the GULAG's camps.

On the night of the 14th of June, 1941 the first mass deportations of the Lithuanian residents to Siberia and the northern parts of the USSR began. Based on the lists of "antisoviet elements" and their family members made in advance and the carefully prepared repression plans, the operative groups for execution of deportations with the help of local collaborators (the so-called Soviet and party active) suddenly arrested whole families of "enemies of the people" and used trucks to take them to loading stations. There, they were stuffed into windowless cattle cars protected by the Red Army. In a few days, an echelon of cattle cars full of deportees would be formed and the head east. The special characteristic of these first deportations was the fact that in the train stations, men were suddenly separated from their families and taken to lagers in other, boxcars. Over these few days, around 20 thousand Lithuanian people were deported deep into the Soviet Union – teachers, professors, students, priests, farmers, members of social organizations, and also war refugees from Poland (Polish and Jewish), and so on. Most of the victims of these repressions were killed or died. Only 10 % of the first prisoners returned to Lithuania (Anušauskas 1996).

The June deportations were interrupted by the German-Soviet war. The Red Army on its retreat from Lithuania also carried out particularly cruel operations of punishment and destruction of political prisoners. The last week was "also the most horrible week of the Soviet occupation. Having killed 1100 Lithuanian residents (not including the guerilla fighters), the occupants replaced each other. The ideology of terror changed, but Lithuanian residents continued to be destroyed" (Anušauskas 1996, 133). The illusions that Lithuanians along with the Latvians and Estonians had that the Nazis would recognize the independent Baltic states soon dissipated. Nazi repressions began. During the Nazi occupation in 1940–44, people of Jewish ethnicity suffered the most. According to various historical data, 160–200 thousand of Lithuanian Jews were killed, the majority

of the local Jewish community. Only a few managed to escape repressions either by a lucky coincidence or with the help of other people who rescued them. Some managed to retreat deep into the Soviet Union at the very beginning of the war.

In the summer of 1944, Lithuania was again occupied by the Soviet army. The second Soviet occupation lasted for nearly 50 years. Again killings, terror, mass arrests and deportations to Siberia and other eastern parts of the USSR began. This time the Lithuanian people were actively resisting the Sovietization—they avoided the mobilization of the Red Army, they started an organized guerilla war against the Soviet Union. The majority of the people arrested and deported in 1945–47 were guerilla fighters, their supporters and evaders of recruitment in the Red Army. More than 20 thousand guerilla fighters died. Their family members were arrested and deported. The guerilla war lasted until 1953. Its last participant, refusing to be captured alive, shot himself in 1965.

The largest deportation from Lithuania took place on May 22–23, 1948. Over the two days, more than 40 thousand people were arrested and deported. This time the majority were the wealthier Lithuanian farmers, derogatorily termed *kulaks*. Many of them supported the guerilla movement, besides, the Soviets started the so-called collectivization – the drive into *kolkhoz*. The farmers' possessions were confiscated, and they were forced to join the *kolkhoz*, but more often than not deported. The deportations of 1948–51 were intended to destroy the “class of *kolaks*”, as their “understanding of property and work was incompatible with the communist dogma” (Anušauskas 1996, 319).

The most brutal repressions lasted until Stalin's death in 1953. After that, the regime became slightly milder, partly also because the majority of the “enemies of the people” were already gotten rid of, besides, the prisoners' uprisings in the camps brought about a wave of relative “liberalization” of the regime (Anušauskas 1996). Some prisoners were released to “freedom”. But the “liberated” ones could not come home for a long time or never did. They were only allowed to reside in certain territories. It seems that the Soviet government realized that the “antisoviet element” that they were repressing cannot be re-educated and turned into Soviet citizens. The puppet Lithuanian Communist Party was afraid of the returning political prisoners. In 1956, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party Antanas Sniečkus asked the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to forbid them to reside in Lithuania. Some former prisoners are forbidden from returning to Lithuania at the threat of 5 yrs of deportation in case of disobedience. Therefore they were forced to stay in Russia or tried to find a home as close to Lithuania as possible – in Latvia or Kaliningrad. For instance, a psychotraumatological study of 50 former political prisoners revealed that they could not return to Lithuania for an average of 10 years after the end of their sentence (Kazlauskas and Gailienė, 2003).

Throughout the Soviet era, the repressed people were discriminated in different ways and experienced injustice, threats, humiliation, and some even returned to the places of deportation. The possessions of most were confiscated and never returned. Their home was taken away, often strangers were already living there. It was very hard to register at a place of residence, receive a passport, get a job. The former political prisoners and deportees were continuously followed by the KGB, their neighbors questioned about them, their homes were often searched, they were summoned for interrogation, threatened, recruited. Their children were also discriminated, it was almost impossible for them to enter a university, they were never allowed to go abroad, not even to the Soviet bloc countries. Parents try not to talk too much about the repressions they have experienced in their families, as they want to protect their children from the problems.

Over the succession of occupations, Lithuania lost approx. 33 % of all residents. In 1940–53, 12 hundred thousand people were deported, sentenced to death, imprisoned, killed due to political reasons, forced to emigrate. Hundreds of thousands of people experienced suffering, loss of loved ones, humiliations, persecutions, torture. It is impossible to completely describe and list all of their traumatic experiences. The traumatization was heavy, long-lasting, inflicting physical, psychological and moral wounds.

However, political repressions were not the only point of leverage on society. Another characteristic of the Soviet totalitarian regime was the fact that it not only attempted to occupy and rule other countries but also to change a person – the aim was “to destroy, assimilate the Lithuanian political nation and turn it into a mass of people that is suitable for the totalitarian rule” (Gailius 2006, 190). The regime paid a lot of effort not only to subdue people but also to make them loyal. The tools employed were an ideologized system of education, control of youth and other social organizations, the propaganda mechanism, total surveillance of the citizens and isolation from the free world. “In the Soviet Union, all citizens truly were equal before that sometimes quite incomprehensible totalitarian machine [...] Even the highest echelons of the Party emphasize (and sometimes use it to their advantage today) that they too felt equally unsafe, able to fall every minute, be persecuted and sometimes without the slightest idea why. [...] A person was entirely helpless. His or her opinion had no meaning, his or her choice had no meaning, he or she was entirely unable to resist the system. In the Soviet Union, a person was guilty in advance. This sense of complete helplessness probably haunted all the Lithuanian residents for 50 years”. (Ališauskas, quoted from Gailienė 2002: 125). More and more historical studies in Lithuania reveal the consistency and watchfulness with which the attempts were made to restructure the society, achieve loyalty – a cunning politics of

atheization, total and well-organized control of the press and literature, careful political oversight of all the cultural processes (Putinaitė 2015; 2019; Streikus 2018). To survive and adjust to the regime, people used various psychological defense strategies, tactics of dual moral standards and other ways to deceive the system, the cunning and the pretense.

Thus, these are the characteristics specific to the Soviet trauma that may be identified:

1. The traumatization lasted very long, for decades.
2. Traumatization after traumatization – the traumatization and persecution of the victims of the Soviet repressions and their families continues even after their prison or deportation sentence – they remain discriminated until the fall of the Soviet system.
3. The system attempts to affect the whole society, each citizen is unsafe, has no freedom of speech, is forced into the ideologized system of education, controlled and censored the press, religious persecution.

THE EFFECTS OF THE SOVIET TRAUMA

The first and so far the only representative psychotraumatological study in the former Soviet bloc countries has been carried out in Lithuania, trying to evaluate the long-term psychological effects of the Soviet trauma (Gailienė and Kazlauskas 2004; Kazlauskas 2006). A few important factors support its scientific reliability and validity: the representative sample of the study and a very high response rate. The representative sample was possible because Lithuania has the Law of the Legal Status of the Victims of the Occupations of 1939–1990. The Lithuanian Seimas passed it in 1997. The law defines who is to be considered a victim of the occupations (both Soviet and Nazi), who is granted the status. Therefore, official lists of victims of the occupations exist. For the study, a large random sample was selected from the list – approx. 1.5 thousand people. Thus, the factor of the random, representative and large sample of study participants ensures the scientific reliability and validity of the data collected. The aspect of motivation is also important. Often the studies of long-term traumatization face the doubts regarding the motivation of the participants – they might be interested in possible compensation and therefore likely to embellish their difficulties (Weisæth 2004). Our study eliminates these aspects, as each person who is legally considered a victim has also already received state compensation. Another important indicator of reliability is the response rate. In social sciences, it should reach at least 50 %. In our study, the response rate was very high – 80%. Also, the comparison group was selected appropriately – it consists of persons of the same age as the victims, but without the legal status, randomly selected

from a list of Lithuanian residents. The tools of psychotraumatological studies were employed to evaluate the traumatic experiences of the participants and their subjective perception of the effects on wellness, health and life. The study revealed that the politically repressed people had experienced the most violence (torture, persecution, humiliation, etc.) – the political prisoners and deportees. They still experience a various degree of somatic, psychological and social problems (Gailienė and Kazlauskas 2005; Kazlauskas 2006).

But this study has also revealed a methodological problem of the comparison group. It appears that an adequate comparison group cannot be comprised of the study of Soviet trauma. The formal criterion is not enough – to select a control sample that has not experienced political repressions. Even though the repressed persons are more traumatized than the comparison group according to quantitative values (especially in terms of violent experiences like torture, threat to one's life, etc.), the people who officially experienced no political repressions and simply lived in Lithuania under the conditions of occupation are in some ways similar to the victims: a quarter has lost loved ones to repressions, as much as a third indicate failed professional and academic goals due to occupation, their divorce rate is three times higher than among the political prisoners, and they feel worse than political prisoners studied in other countries (Gailienė and Kazlauskas, 2005). Thus, in the case of Soviet trauma, the victimhood / non-victimhood does not seem to be a clear enough distinction, there is a problem regarding the definition of *a victim*. It raises doubts about whether the psychotraumatological approach of quantitative studies is sufficient to evaluate the effects of such long and complex traumatization.

WHAT IS TRANSFERRED TO OTHER GENERATIONS?

INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA RESEARCHES

How do parents' traumas affect their children or even grandchildren? What generally happens in repressed families? What is transferred transgenerationally? In the studies of Holocaust survivor families, the concepts of *secondary traumatization* or *vicarious traumatization* emerged (Fossion *et al.* 2003). Some studies indicated that the victim's children, having experienced no direct traumatization themselves, are affected by the suffering of parents and experience more difficulties in life than the people who grow up in non-traumatized families. Greater sensitivity to stress, increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder, weaker self-confidence, various relationship problems has been observed. But it seems that such indications are only characteristic of clinical samples. In the populational samples, the signs of transferred traumas are less prevalent. Some studies even find a greater psychological resilience of victimized families. Thus,

the transgenerational transfer of trauma remains controversial, some studies confirm it, others do not, but the outcomes depend both on the sample and the method of the study.

There have already been several studies on issues of transgenerational transfer of Soviet trauma carried out at Vilnius University. The first focused on adult children of the people who participated in the study of political repressions (Vaskelienė 2012; Gailienė 2013). More than 70% of the children indicate that the repressions had a highly detrimental effect on their parents' life and wellbeing. Primarily, ruined health, irritability and especially fear are mentioned – the constant sense of fear and threat that the parents experienced. However, only 31% of the children mention negative effects on themselves. Others consider the effect to be ambiguous, positive or are unsure how to define it.

The studies of the intergenerational transfer of trauma have indicated that the children of repressed parents are more sensitive and vulnerable (Vaskelienė 2012; Kazlauskas and Zelviene 2017), even though they have not been directly traumatized like their parents and present no post-traumatic stress disorder. But they often experienced fear, anxiety, discrimination, they felt the effects of their parents' repressions on their lives (Vaskelienė 2012). Thus, parents affected by long-term heavy traumatization transfer to their children a certain predisposition to vulnerability. Besides, the psychological state of the children is related to the psychological wellbeing of the parents: the worse the parents feel, the worse the indicators of the psychological wellbeing of their grown-up children, thus, the traumatic experiences and post-traumatic reactions of parents are significant to the wellbeing of grown-up children (Gailienė 2013). Often, a specific atmosphere emerged in the family, when the parents hid their past from the children due to political considerations, to protect them from possible repressions. Some children of repressed parents only found out about the family history as adults after independence. Some knew or guessed, but experienced constant insecurity and anxiety (Gailienė 2008; Vaskelienė 2012).

But that is not the whole story. The children of repressed parents still learned more truth from their family about the country's history, the political system, than did the children in the families that adjusted to the regime. The Soviet repressions in Lithuania were carried out not based on ethnicity or religion, but targeting the most active part of the society – the best educated, the high achievers, the politically most active people were repressed. Such families also instilled clear values in their children (Vaskelienė 2012): *These difficulties in my parents' lives made me respect them deeply. I am sensitive to the misfortunes of others. It helped me realize what stamina people have when they fight for their Homeland or their ideals. It allowed me to feel the special connection that people have with their native land (V.K.) It helped me understand that freedom is the basic*

value of a state. But not just any freedom, but the one that our parents and grandparents fought for. Freedom must be cherished with appropriate values: honesty, love and respect for our Homeland. My parents always tried to instill these values to me and my older sister. I think they succeeded. (B.A.)

24 years after Lithuania regained independence, we carried out a study on a representative populational sample of three generations to evaluate the psychological state of the various social groups (Gailienė 2015b). It turned out that the second and third generation of the people who come from families with experience of Soviet repression is stronger, happier, more resilient. A study specifically designed to measure the intergenerational transmission of resilience (in a representative sample of 1000 participants) revealed that the family history of repression is an important predictor of the psychological wellbeing of offspring (Mažulytė 2017). Members of repressed families feel better psychologically, are more optimistic and happier than in the families that have no experience of direct repression. More of them have a university degree, they have learned more adaptive psychological ways of coping. Besides, after the country regained independence, the social context has been favorable: the historical traumas have been recognized and compensated, the families are on the "side" of historic justice, the winners.

Families that have experienced political repression transfer to their children and grandchildren important factors of psychological resilience (Kazlauskas *et al.* 2017; Kazlauskas and Želvienė 2015). The most important protective factor of transgenerational historical trauma is identifying with family history. The later generations of repressed families have more precise knowledge regarding the historical experiences of their family members, they are willing to learn their family stories and tell them to others (Mažulytė *et al.* 2014; Mažulytė 2017). Conversely, the participants from the families that were not victimized know less about the experiences of their family members and are less interested in family history. The research into family memory has revealed that even 30 years after the independence, the families that had adapted to the Soviet regime transfer historical memory with greater difficulty (Žilinskienė 2014).

Thus, it is possible that not only traumas are transferred intergenerationally, but resilience too. Parents who have survived heavy traumas can provide their children with successful development and psychological resilience. It is a relatively new topic in psychotraumatological research. There are hardly any studies about the transgenerational transfer of resilience.

Paradoxically, a point could be made that the offspring from the families that have experienced the Soviet political repressions are less affected and psychologically sturdier than the people from families that were not repressed. Adjusting to a totalitarian system is more harmful than experiencing their repressions,

even though the victims often fail to perceive the damage. Maybe the true damage is the „captive mind” as described in Czesław Miłosz’s work that reveals the mechanisms of the communist totalitarian system (Miłosz 1999): its product is what the Lithuanian writer Petras Dirgėla calls a “cleft mind” – a mind that no longer resists (Dirgėla 2016).

Thus, the effect of the Soviet traumas is long-term and greatly varied, requiring a complex outlook and account for multiple factors.

Another non-linear theoretic approach is applied in the intergenerational transfer of trauma research carried out at Vilnius University. It is a concept of a *cultural complex* from analytic psychology of C.G. Jung (Singer and Kimbles 2004). It defines how collective traumas disturb the normal cultural identity (*cultural ego*) of social groups and individuals, and it may be replaced by *cultural complexes*, single-minded, simplified attitudes that evoke a lot of strong irrational feelings when good qualities are subconsciously ascribed to own group, and bad ones are projected onto others. The behavior, choices and decisions stemming from cultural complexes are generally more primitive. The task of coping with trauma is to restore a healthy cultural identity ensuring a concept of own uniqueness, realistic judgment and acceptance of contradictions as well as allowing free interaction with other cultural and social groups of people. Trauma will be overcome once the forgotten memories of it will be integrated into consciousness and self.

In-depth psychotherapy studies explore how trauma lies in families and how it affects second or third generation, how it can be overcome. The basis of these studies consists of case studies of long-term psychotherapy (Gudaitė 2005; 2014). In the early stages of therapy, the clients did not associate their difficulties with historical trauma or the repressive system. They came for therapy because of various psychological difficulties in their everyday life. They knew little about their family history and were not greatly interested in it. Some knew the historical facts, but the emotional relationship with them was hazy. Others were unwilling to talk, a subconscious sense of guilt was perceptible, especially when the family history was controversial and tangled. But later in therapy in almost 70 % of these cases what emerges are facts about the Soviet past and topics of political repressions of collaboration in the family history. The traumatic stories present in symbolic forms, very often the relationship of the person with them is defensive, the traumatic experiences are unintegrated and cause emotional problems, the family stories are often little known, often very confusing and contradictory. The layer of the Soviet experience emerges as a certain subconscious complex. Unintegrated traumatic experiences cause difficulties in behavior, emotional life and relationships (Gudaitė 2014). Thus, one of the goals of therapy was to help the clients confront their family history to achieve greater

integration and coherence. But these studies also revealed that submerging into the subconscious is associated with great risk, a lot of difficult feelings, and some people succeed better than others. It also turned out that a very important part of therapy is restoring a constructive relationship with an authority figure, renewal of inner authority because the authoritarian regime has caused a lack of adequate inner authority. The subconscious authority often came to be identified as dangerous, it is associated with an aggressor, and the relationship of ego with it is complicated, therefore an important task in the therapy was establishing a clear distinction between authority and aggressor (Gudaitė 2016).

Thus, the long-term studies of the Soviet traumatization indicate that long-term subconscious deformations are more important effects of the Soviet trauma than clinical symptoms. Adjusting to the regime could have been much more harmful than direct victimization. Therefore it seems that the effects of the trauma caused by the totalitarian regime present more as subconscious cultural complexes and not as clinical post-traumatic symptoms. They are expressed in the life of the society as echoes of the Soviet mentality (Gailienė 2019).

IN SUMMARY

Thus, the research of the effects of the Soviet trauma of the past two decades has revealed the complexity of long-term heavy traumatization and its effects, the characteristics of trauma coping and transgenerational transfer. The studies of Soviet trauma allow a glimpse into the complex destructive impact of criminal regimes on individuals and societies. Also, the experience of these studies allows consideration of certain methodological problems of studying historical trauma.

One of the main problems in the study of trauma is the acknowledgement of trauma. Before the traumatization is over, no studies of the effects of trauma are possible. Of course, it only became possible to study the traumas caused by the Soviet regime as the regime fell. The Baltic states are the only ones of the 15 former republics of the Soviet Union to become fully integrated into the Western alliances and to unambiguously evaluate the criminality of the Soviet regime. But there is the question of the broader political recognition. Two criminal regimes prevailed in Europe in the 20th century. But the scope of their recognition and academic study differs greatly. The prolonged hesitation and unwillingness to recognize that communism too was a criminal regime also determines the fact that academic research into the effects of Soviet traumatization, in particular, is disproportionately slim.

The importance of recognition of traumatization and its victims also emerges in the results of our studies. Among other factors, better situation of the offspring

of the second and third generation of the repressed people is without a doubt also dependent on the fact that after the independence, a favorable social context emerged, the Soviet traumas are recognized and compensated, those families are on the right “side” of historical justice, the winners.

Another methodological question is what is victimization due to the Soviet regime? In the psychotraumatological studies and especially in the ones with clearly defined groups of victims, namely, the repressed people, it seemed like a representative study of trauma in a large sample might show the scope of victimization and long-term effects of trauma. And it is partly true. But it also appeared that the field is full of paradoxes. It seems that in the long-term and intergenerational perspective, there are more perilous things than experiencing direct repressions of the regime. The methodological problem of *comparison group* has indicated that adjusting to the regime could have been much more harmful than direct suffering.

This problem becomes even more acute in the intergenerational studies of long-term traumatization. In studying whether traumas “travel” from one generation to another, whether children and grandchildren also feel the traumas of their elders, it appeared that not an only vulnerability is transferred, but resilience too. It is transferred by the most traumatized people – those who experienced the political repressions of the regime. The transgenerational transfer of psychological resilience emerges as a new topic in the study of historical trauma. Paradoxically, in the later generations, the offspring of the families victimized by the regime are psychologically sturdier than the offspring of the families who adjusted to the regime.

Thus, in studying the effects of the Soviet trauma, clinical post-traumatic symptoms are less important than the long-term subconscious deformations, the cultural complexes. In considering the problem of theoretical approach best suited to such research, it is doubtful whether the psychotraumatological approach of quantitative studies is sufficient to evaluate the effects of such long-term complex traumatization. On the one hand, the quantitative approach allows for a reliable quantitative evaluation of group tendencies and provides a solid ground for further research. On the other hand, it does not sufficiently reveal the problematics of complex individual cases. Our studies have shown that combining several theoretical approaches, in our case psychotraumatological and in-depth analytical, allow for a revelation of a more complete image of the long-term effects of historical traumatization.

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THE “CAPTIVE MIND” IS WORSE THAN REPRESSIONS.
PSYCHOTRAUMATOLOGICAL STUDY OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA IN LITHUANIA

SUMMARY

In the Vilnius University in Lithuania, the psychological research into long-term effects of soviet trauma has been carried out. The psychotraumatological and the psychodynamic analytic approaches have been employed the most frequently. These studies have provided important data about the complexity of soviet trauma. A representative study in a large sample of politically repressed people showed the long-term effects of such heavy traumatization on the victims. In the intergenerational studies of long-term traumatization appeared that not only vulnerability is transferred, but resilience too. It is transferred by the most traumatized people – those who experienced the political repressions of the regime. Paradoxically, in the later generations, the offspring of the families victimized by the regime are psychologically sturdier than the offspring of the families who adjusted to the regime. In the intergenerational perspective, there are more perilous things than experiencing direct repressions of the regime. Adjusting to the regime could have been much more harmful than direct suffering. Methodological question *what is victimization* due to the Soviet regime is worthy of consideration.

Keywords: soviet trauma, long-term effects of political repression, transgenerational transfer of trauma, transgenerational transmission of resilience, psychotraumatology, cultural complexes