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“Survival strategies” in history methodology

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Abstract. The article considers the meaning of the term “survival strategy” in historical science, prospects, and practices of its use in the study of traumatic historical experiences, including the history of the famine of 1932-1933. The term “survival strategy” is widely used in ecology, economics, history, psychophysiology, and psychotraumatology. Even though survival strategies during the Holocaust, Holodomor, and Great Famine in China are a topic that is still popular but there are works in which this term is included in the title, there is no clear definition of this term in historical science. The article considers the meaning of the term “survival strategy” in historical science and analyzes the prospects and practices of its use in the study of traumatic historical experiences, including the history of the famine of 1932-1933. The methodological basis of the study is an interdisciplinary approach. The methodology for defining the concept of “survival strategy” is based on the work of biology, genetics, ecology, trauma psychology, psychophysiology and neurobiology, and economic theory. Practices of using the terms “survival strategy” in historical science are analyzed. Thus, as we can see, the concept of “survival strategy” has taken its place in historical science and is widely used in practice, in the study of the history of traumatic experiences, such as the Holodomor of 1932-1933. An interdisciplinary approach allows the successful use of the methods of natural and social sciences in the historical humanities.

Keywords: methodology; survival strategies; everyday history; oral history; the famine of 1932-1933.

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Formulation of the problem

The term “survival strategy” is widely used in ecology, economics, history, psychophysiology, and psychotraumatology. Even though survival strategies during the Holocaust, Holodomor, and Great Famine in China are a topic that is still popular and there are works in which this term is included in the title (Bessonov, 2009; Jackl, 2019; Masliichuk, 2008; Xun, 2012), there is no clear definition of this term in historical science. Let us try to outline the meaning of the term “survival strategy” in historical science and analyze the prospects and practices of its use in the study of traumatic historical experiences, including the history of the famine of 1932-1933.

Research methodology

The methodological basis of the study is an interdisciplinary approach. The methodology for defining the concept of “survival strategy” is based on the work of Eric R. Pianka (Pianka, 1970), John P. Scott (biology, genetics, and ecology), P. Valent (trauma psychology) (Valent, 1998), Stephen W. Porges (psychophysiology and neurobiology), G. Minzberg and J. Quinn (economic theory) (Mintzberg, 2009) etc. Practices of using the term were studied by historians O. Kis (Kis, 2018), Z. Xun (Xun, 2012), V. Masliychuk (Masliychuk, 2008), V. Ogienko (Ogienko, 2021) and others.

The purpose of the study is to determine the origin of the term “survival strategy” in historical science, and to analyze the prospects and practices of its use in the study of traumatic historical experiences, including the history of the famine of 1932-1933.

Discussion

There is no definition of the term “survival strategy” in historical science. This is because in the humanities, including history, survival strategies are explored through an

interdisciplinary approach, borrowing methods from other sciences to study the history of everyday, family and gender history, historical anthropology, and working with sources of oral history. It is the interdisciplinary approach that provides an opportunity to understand the motives of behavior, and actions and analyze them at the individual and collective levels, contributes to the humanization of history, and helps to understand the scale and consequences of traumatic experiences for society.

In studying the history of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine, the study of survival strategies allows us to pay tribute to the manifestations of humanism and self-sacrifice shown by our people during the tragic events of the Holodomor, to explain why it saved them now. Similarly, this technique can be applied to the study of the Famine in Kazakhstan – Asharshilak.

Thus, in ecology, survival strategies are the ways in which a creature survives in its environment, without negative connotations – successful survival strategies lead to the prosperity of the species in its ecological niche and depend on its characteristics (Survival-strategies). Mankind as a biological being also has its own survival strategy, which scientists refer to as K-Selection (Ohienko; 2021: 592-597). Representatives of K-Selection are mammals. They are characterized by the fact that they give birth to a few offspring and usually put a lot of energy into each of their offspring. That is, to take care of their offspring for a long time is inherent in our evolution.

Cooperation also plays an important role, because man is a social being. Psychologist P. Valent, reflecting on the nature of the development of the human psyche, draws attention to how Darwin speaks of cooperation as a strategy of survival: «species evolved through differential propagation of favorable variations, which Darwin called natural selection. Favorable variations could enhance life through a competitive edge in struggles with predators, environmental conditions, members of the same species, and

the struggle for progeny. Thus, various functions including instincts and emotions could evolve if they favored survival. In *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* Darwin (1872/1965) described rage and terror with accompanying fight and flight as strategies serving survival. He included cooperation also as a means of enhancing life» (Valent, 1998: 115-123).

However, Valent, based on the theory genetics of behavior John P. Scott, believes that Charles Darwin's "survival strategies" are part of evolution, but survives are not stronger, this is a misunderstanding of Darwin's theory, but those for whom the stronger is willing to sacrifice everything he has is. He also explains why geneticists' calculations say that the diversity of genes could not be explained otherwise.

According to Valent, someone who maintains mental health, and therefore a chance at life, should be able to empathize, interact and support others: "The path to discovery of more strategies of survival was blocked first because of misinterpretation of Darwinism (1859/1974) natural selection as survival of the fittest. This view allowed only struggle for survival, or competition, as a strategy of survival. The view was politicized to justify on evolutionary grounds entrenched power groups, and racist, even genocidal theories. Next, neither survival of the fittest, nor natural selection could explain altruism or the fact that it was often the fittest who sacrificed themselves for the group. Lastly, it was unclear how natural selection worked... This inclusive fitness came to be seen as a vehicle of evolution (Scott, 1989), and it opened possibilities of means of survival beyond competition to behaviors such as protection, caretaking, and cooperation." (Valent, 1998: 115-123). This approach allows researchers to study and focus on the manifestations of the best human traits in the worst times, and not only on destructive phenomena in society and personality deviations. However, these don't negate the fact that the survival strategies of millions of people have been defeated by the

genocide policies of the famines in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, China, and so on.

Valent also developed his own classification of survival strategies, but his main goal is to determine methods of psychological help to overcome post-traumatic syndrome (Valent, 1998). Valent developed his own classification of survival strategies, which has the potential to be used to study the history of the Holodomor. Valent's classification includes eight strategies: "Rescuing, Attaching, Asserting, Adapting, Fighting, Fleeing, Competing and Cooperating" (Valent, 1998: 115-123). These can be ready-made areas of research on the history of traumatic experiences based on oral history, as they include many components for research: "such as adaptive and maladaptive emotions, physiological responses, traumas, moral judgments (such as guilts, anger, shames), moralities, meanings, values, and principles" (Valent, 1998: 115-123), which were previously poorly amenable to analysis and classification.

Based on the concept of survival strategies in ecology, in economic theory, survival strategies are one way to classify economic strategies: "based on the results of forecasting and choice of priorities", consisting of breakthrough strategy, evolutionary development strategy, and, in fact, survival strategy (Kononova, 2017: 146-150).

The survival strategy as a necessary goal, without which all other strategies will not make sense, is reflected in a study by Minzberg and Quinn: "This approach makes us think in terms of ecology: we are talking about organisms that in this hostile and changing world not infrequently enter into a relationship of symbiosis." (Mintsberg, 2001: 47).

The term "survival strategy", adopted in psychophysiology, as the variability of strategies of the behavior of a living being in a stressful situation: "fight", "run" and "freeze" (two active: resistance or flight, and passive obedience to fate) with another concept of "traumatic stress". During stress, two survival strategies are generally accepted in psychophysiology – struggle and escape

(Valent, 1998). Valent, in the mentioned work notes in this regard: "We already noted that Darwinism (1872/1965) descriptions of rage and terror and Cannon's (1963) addition of sympathetic nervous system arousal. Cannon clearly described fight and flight as means of survival by seizing prey and killing enemies and escaping enemies and danger respectively. Cannon speculated that fight and flight were reciprocal, depending on how events were perceived" (Valent, 1998: 115-123).

Consider examples of practice in the use of the term "survival strategy" in historical science.

Studies of survival strategies in extreme conditions, such as famine, in various historical periods, are becoming widespread in modern Ukrainian historiography. Thus, in the work of Volodymyr Maslychuk "Child and famine years (strategies of adult and child behavior on the northern Left Bank in the 80s of the XVIII century)" (2008) reflects the strategies that took place during the famine of the 1780s, begging, escape from landlords, resettlement, adoption of children by wealthy families. Maslychuk draws attention to the social component of hunger – "it was primarily reflected in the lower strata of the population (poor Cossacks, peasants), widowed families without breadwinners", and the fate of children depended entirely on parents, because children's rights were absent and regulated only in the case of inheritance of property. Such studies allow us to compare survival strategies related to famine in different historical periods and to find out if they have changed, to distinguish between common and different features, and find out the success or failure of similar strategies in different historical circumstances. According to the researcher, the impact of survival strategies on society is significant and needs deeper study (Mintsberg, 2001: 94-99).

The most complete picture of survival strategies during the Holodomor is reflected in Robert Conquest's "Harvest of Sorrows" (Konkvest, 1993: 185-206). He does not use this term but names all possible ways of salvation

that Ukrainians chose in the terrible times of famine. The Conquest consistently describes strategies and their component – survival practices in the chronology of their application, and comments on the reasons for choosing a strategy, their consequences, and the difference between the strategies of peasants and townspeople. The Conquest consistently describes strategies and their component – survival practices in the chronology of their application, and comments on the reasons for choosing a strategy, their consequences, and the difference between the strategies of peasants and townspeople. Peasants buried bread in the pit, dropped grain in the well, and engaged in the theft of collective farm grain, spikelet's in the field and potatoes. In the case of repression, attempts were made to escape prosecution (including a family that fled to the forest and successfully stayed there until the verdict was forgotten). Concealment of grain in straw was practiced – poor quality threshing and hand mills were made to avoid state control over the grinding of flour. All these simple strategies were in the hands of the authorities and were severely punished. In a stalemate, the peasants staged riots to get to granaries and carried out organized attacks on them, which were immediately brutally suppressed (Konkvest, 1993: 185-206).

The heads of collective farms, state farms, and village councils, who gave earnings to peasants to save them from starvation, risked repression, removed from office, and convicted of indulging the kulaks. At the same time, holding the leadership position of the head of the collective farm, village council, and foreman provided access to resources, but Conquest also cites examples when activists who actively confiscated grain and food from fellow villagers soon died of starvation (Konkvest, 1993: 185-206).

Until the famine came into force, the peasants were able to take active action: they tried to leave the territory of Ukraine, or at least go to the city hoping to get a job, exchange things for food in the markets or in the Torgsin network. But these strategies also met with

resistance from the authorities, control over borders, restrictions on the use of rail transport, the introduction of a passport system, and limited the ability to leave, get a job in the city, and beg. Conquest emphasizes that the authorities did not have full control over the movement of the population, in the current circumstances, but made it difficult to implement these strategies, except for the Torgsin network, which effectively purchased valuables from the population in exchange for food (Konkvest, 1993: 185-206).

During the famine - in the spring of 1933 - the activity of the population decreased: "life gradually died down," - writes Conquest. The main survival strategies were eating atypical food, and begging. As for the consumption of atypical food, the researcher notes that it did not save from starvation, only delayed it or on the contrary, approached (inedible, poisonous plants, dead animals, etc.). Begging and other active practices also hid the threat, leading to death on the road, at railway stations, and in cities, as these actions took away the last physical strength. Conquest considers starvation killings, necrophagy, and cannibalism to be a deviation that led to the disintegration of the individual, not a strategy of (Konkvest, 1993: 185-206).

In the cities, workers received rations that depended on the city's supplies, and in the spring of 1933, these rations became meager, unlike those of party bodies and the OGPU. To survive, you had to have grocery cards and stand in huge queues for bread, which ran out quickly (Konkvest, 1993: 185-206).

In the last stage, the only survival strategies for those who somehow survived the winter and still had the strength to work, became work in cities on construction sites, state farms, and collective farms, because through them they could get food. But not everyone could get to places of work; Conquest cites examples of people dying on the way to or during work (Konkvest, 1993: 185-206).

Vitaliy Ogienko in his article "The Holodomor through the eyes of the victim: immobilization and humiliation by work as a

survival strategy" (2020) [10] analyzes the memories of Anastasia Lysyvets (1922-2011) "Tell me about a happy life" [7], based on the work of modern American psychophysiological and neurobiologist Stephen W. Porges (polyvagal theory, which speaks of three physiological strategies by which the human nervous system fights traumatic situations: social interaction, mobilization, and immobilization). Ogienko comments on the behavioral strategies of the Lysivets family in the traumatic experience of the Holodomor, comparing the phylogenetic hierarchy of Porges' strategies with the corresponding stages of the Holodomor era (Ohienko, 2021).

Thus, the most modern strategy in the hierarchy – the strategy of social interaction, in his opinion, was involved in the period of relative security – NEP and was characterized by "normal" life: the family works hard but supports each other despite difficulties, poverty and troubles. As an example of such a strategy, Ogienko calls the "cult of labor" – the belief that if they work hard, it will avoid dangerous situations, and provide a stable life for the family. Ogienko connects the onset of the second, already more archaic strategy: "fight or flight" or mobilization, with collectivization. This strategy was reflected in the peasant uprisings, Father Lysivets left the collective farm. He has been oppressed, he has lost his livestock and his fields, his family's source of livelihood, his family is afraid, and his family wants to escape hunger, but he no longer has the resources. And then the oldest strategy of immobilization or complete subjugation was used, which was characterized by passive behavior to save resources to prolong life, something like anabiosis. Ogienko connects the beginning of immobilization with the outbreak of hunger: "Among starving peasants, the transition to the most primitive and deeply rooted in the autonomic nervous system immobilization strategy begins in late 1932 – early 1933 and is associated with the collapse of strategies of struggle and flight." He notes that although this strategy is saving for cold-blooded

animals, it is dangerous for humans if you stay in it for a long time. Anastasia Lysivets' father, mother, brother, and sister are dying. And later: "in parallel with the period of mass starvation, the final phase begins, which, along with apathy and immobilization, constitutes the true dual nature of the Holodomor. Hungry people are being rescued. But save only those who obeyed, recognized their tormentors. People were literally taught discipline, feeding only in schools or collective farms, and at certain times, during collective meals." (Ohienko, 2021).

With the help of this theory, Ogienko tries to explain the psychological essence of the policy of "starvation" and its consequences: "the experience of the Holodomor itself is the experience of the immobilization strategy hunger. He also tries to explain the high mortality rate among men due to an additional factor – a deep psychological experience due to the inability to perform the social role of head of the family. This is a very interesting reconstruction from the point of view of historical anthropology. However, certain issues are raised by the duration of processes and their transfer from the functioning of the autonomic nervous system to the functioning of society.

Therefore, Ogienko explains that the length of stay in a state of immobilization was supported by survival practices – the search for alternative food, which allowed not to avoid, but to avoid death from starvation.

Porges himself believes that a sign of a healthy human psyche is an adequate change of strategies in response to external challenges, and vice versa, when a person's higher nervous system goes into a chronic state of "survival" – it significantly affects the quality and duration of human life. That is, for a person to survive the traumatic events of the Holodomor, it was necessary to maintain mobility in changing survival strategies, rather than adhering to one of them for a long time, which would be dangerous to mental health and life. Porges sees a way out of the traumatic state by returning to the strategy of social interaction,

and Ogienko, describing the post-traumatic experience of Anastasia Lysivets, draws our attention to the active involvement of the girl in school and collective farm life (returned to the strategy of social interaction) (Ohienko, 2021).

But the society to which she returns is just as traumatized and unable to ensure the previous "normal" level of human communication is distorted and flawed, "work and humility," as Ogienko concludes (Ohienko, 2021). This is a very interesting reconstruction from the point of view of historical anthropology.

The gender approach, namely women's survival strategies, is presented in the works of Oksana Kis. In her article "Ukrainian women in the Holodomor: disenfranchisement vs capacity" (Kis, 2018), she draws attention to the difference between male and female experience of survival in the Holodomor, based on the socio-cultural and physical-anthropological plan. "The first is related to the gender structure of the peasant family and the predominance of repression against male heads of households who opposed forced collectivization, while the second is related to the physiology of the female body and traditional food distribution practices in critical food shortages" (Kis, 2018).

The researcher focuses on stories in which a woman begins to play a new social role as the head of the family due to the loss of a breadwinner (arrest, departure, separation from the family, premature death, including from hunger, husband) and shows greater physiological endurance in famine. Kis analyzes the memoirs and concludes that they reflect at least three scenarios of actions of Ukrainian women in conditions of famine to preserve property: "1. passive resistance (concealment of food, clothing, etc.); 2. active counteraction (individual and group protests, defense of property); 3. legitimate defense of their own rights (complaints, letters, appeals to the authorities)" (Kis, 2018). The researcher emphasizes that few of these strategies were successful and fruitful, explaining it by the

criminal nature of the authorities who resorted to genocide. Kis also singles out four women's hunger survival strategies: selling and exchanging women's property for food; women's mutual assistance; abandonment of habitual maternal practices; use of the female body as a resource. Based on memories that repeat the most used strategies, the first includes the exchange of women's property: jewelry, clothing, fabrics, scarves, and towels in the markets, and in the network of food merchants. The second is acts of women's charity, which, unlike men who took advantage of their official position, stemmed from the desire to share, and support the starving for the sake of children, the practice of adoption, when resources were taken by relatives or acquaintances, and the child survived" (Kis, 2018).

Kis singles out maternal survival strategies and highlights the high mortality rate among infants due to lactation loss and the lack of breast milk substitutes. According to the researcher, women chose several strategies for children, including sacrificial, when a woman gave all the food to children, and vice versa - refusing to feed children to save their lives, leaving children to their own devices or throw in orphanages. Of interest is the analysis of physiological factors, namely the experience of losing and finding one's own body, when shame and disgust from neglect and unsanitary conditions led to mobilization, actions of girls and women and became the impetus to restore the thirst for life. Kiss writes about the potential of the female body as a resource for survival, citing examples (few, due to the extreme trauma of such memories, according to the researcher), when women hid cake in their bosoms, offered children to consume their flesh in case of death, prostitution in exchange for food" (Kis, 2018).

Strategies for the survival of children during the Holodomor through the theory of consumption are revealed by Iryna Skubii in the article "The material world of children during the Holodomor and what saved their lives" (Survival-strategies, 2020).

She points out that an important strategy for saving a child's life has been the exchange of family-owned materials for food.

Skubii also distinguishes children's survival strategies self-mobilization: child labor, search for alternative consumption areas, and food sources: natural and man-made (plant collection, fishing, hunting, food waste collection near railways, public catering). She concludes that these strategies are "an example of children's self-mobilization when they have turned from victims and eyewitnesses of hunger into active social actors and take responsibility not only for their own lives but also for the whole family." The researcher draws attention to the fact that children had limited life experience, so they had to "discover" alternative food resources and build formal and informal relationships with the adult world (Survival-strategies, 2020).

Natalia Kuzovova examines how Ukrainian families were forced to choose survival strategies in extreme conditions of the Holodomor (Childhood during the Holodomor 1932-1933 in Ukraine (in the South of Ukraine), 2021). (Kuzovova, 2021:59-77). These strategies rarely considered the interests of children who lost financial support as their parents were arrested, exiled, or dead. As a result, children became homeless or even fell victim to cannibalism. Nevertheless, most of the children received parental care and support as parents made every effort to keep the family together (Kuzovova, 2021:59-77).

In his work "Kitchen Knowledge', Desperate Foods, and Ritual Healing in Everyday Survival Strategies during the Great Famine in China, 1958-62" (Xun, 2012). Zhou Xun explores survival strategies during the Great Famine in China. His research is based on oral history: "Using the methodology of oral history set against the historical background of traditional materia medica, this paper elicits how ordinary people in rural China devised complex and plural strategies to cope with fundamental biological crises," – the researcher came to interesting conclusions about

successful survival strategies (Xun, 2012: 384-404).

About the forces that people took when turning to religion in the tragic times of famine: "The Communist government's concerted effort to eliminate religion as well as popular beliefs and practices could not remove their importance as essential strategies for survival. In a time of traumatic social, political, and economic changes, popular beliefs and practices provided ordinary peasants with a sense of agency and hope, as well as a source for healing" (Xun, 2012: 384-404).

At the same time, he notes the decline of public morality: "...villagers stole and cheated to stay live. Some even sold their children in exchange for a bowl of rice." (Xun, 2012: 384-404). He believes that "Religion and popular beliefs as well as basic household kitchen knowledge continued to provide solace and are often the only hope and consolation for many survivors. Their shared remedies and

recipes, which they used to sustain hunger and to survive famine, provide a non-threatening context to elicit and explore what are often painful memories" (Xun, 2012: 384-404).

Analyzing and comparing the history of traumatic experiences and survival strategies in different cultures, we can see that they have much in common. Certain patterns are due to biological evolution, and some - social and cultural development.

Conclusion

Thus, as we can see, the concept of "survival strategy" has taken its place in historical science and is widely used in practice, in the study of the history of traumatic experiences, such as the Holodomor of 1932-1933. An interdisciplinary approach allows the successful use of the methods of natural and social sciences in the historical humanities.

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Тарих әдіснамасындағы "өмір сүру стратегиялары"

Аңдатпа. Мақалада тарих ғылымындағы "өмір сүру стратегиясы" терминінің мағынасы, оны травматикалық тарихи тәжірибені, оның ішінде 1932-1933 жылдардағы ашаршылық тарихын зерттеуде қолданудың перспективалары мен практикасы қарастырылады. "Өмір сүру стратегиясы" термині экологияда, экономикада, тарихта, психофизиологияда және психотробуматологияда кеңінен қолданылады. Холокост, Голодомор және Қытайдағы ұлы ашаршылық кезінде өмір сүру стратегиялары әлі күнге дейін танымал тақырып болып табылады және бұл терминді атауға болатын жұмыстар бар, бірақ тарих ғылымында бұл терминнің нақты анықтамасы жоқ. Мақалада тарих ғылымындағы "өмір сүру стратегиясы" терминінің мағынасы қарастырылады және травматикалық тарихи тәжірибені, оның ішінде 1932-1933 жылдардағы ашаршылық тарихын зерттеуде оны қолданудың перспективалары мен практикасы талданады. Зерттеудің әдіснамалық негізі пәнаралық тәсіл болып табылады. "Өмір сүру стратегиясы" ұғымын анықтау әдістемесі биология, генетика және экология, жарақат психологиясы, психофизиология және нейробиология, Экономикалық теория еңбектеріне негізделген. Тарих ғылымында "өмір сүру стратегиясы" терминін қолдану тәжірибесі талданады. Осылайша, көріп отырғанымыздай, "өмір сүру стратегиясы" ұғымы тарих ғылымында өз орнын алды және практикада, атап айтқанда 1932-1933 жылдардағы Голодомор сияқты травматикалық тәжірибелер тарихын зерттеуде кеңінен қолданылады. Пәнаралық тәсіл Тарихи гуманитарлық ғылымдарда жаратылыстану және әлеуметтік ғылымдар әдістерін сәтті қолдануға мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: әдістеме; өмір сүру стратегиясы; күнделікті өмір тарихы; ауызша тарих; 1932-1933 жылдардағы ашаршылық.

“Стратегии выживания” в методологии истории

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается значение термина “стратегия выживания” в исторической науке, перспективы и практика его использования при изучении травматического исторического опыта, в том числе истории голода 1932-1933 годов. Термин “стратегия выживания” широко используется в экологии, экономике, истории, психофизиологии и психотравматологии. Несмотря на то, что стратегии выживания во время Холокоста, Голодомора и Великого голода в Китае - тема, которая по-прежнему популярна, и есть работы, в которых этот термин включен в название, в исторической науке нет четкого определения этого термина. В статье рассматривается значение термина “стратегия выживания” в исторической науке и анализируются перспективы и практика его использования при изучении травмирующего исторического опыта, в том числе истории голода 1932-1933 годов. Методологической основой исследования является междисциплинарный подход. Методология определения понятия “стратегия выживания” основана на работах биологии, генетики и экологии, психологии травм, психофизиологии и нейробиологии, экономической теории. Анализируется практика использования термина “стратегия выживания” в исторической науке. Таким образом, как мы видим, понятие “стратегия выживания” заняло свое место в исторической науке и широко используется на практике, в частности при изучении истории травматических переживаний, таких как Голодомор 1932-1933 годов. Междисциплинарный подход позволяет успешно использовать методы естественных и социальных наук в исторических гуманитарных науках.

Ключевые слова: методология; стратегии выживания; история повседневности; устная история; голод 1932–1933 годов.

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