



## V CONGRESS OF THE RUSSIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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### Psychology crises in the network century (speech at the RPS V congress)

My dear colleagues!

I'm looking at our hall and think that such destiny and time coincidences happen only to us, psychologists. I tell this suffering from egocentrism. Only people in love with psychology could gather for the congress on the St. Valentine's Day (applause).

In this situation I would like to express some theories and have named the speech "Psychology crises in the network century".

Every time when we speak about our science we should precisely understand that varying names of the time we live in set the logic and status of psychology in culture anyway. How is our century called? It is called differently. Some call it an information epoch, the others call it an epoch of communications, but more often we hear voices, such as the voices of sociologists Bauman or Giddens who name our modernity "the fluid modernity" or name our world "the escaping world" and even more often we hear the name of our century which appeared only two years ago – they name our century "the network century". I pay attention to this definition. All these names say that the world round us has changed in the most serious way. But what is the driving force of many changes? Not because as psychologists we, masters of the profession, want to put all caps on ourselves ...

I remember the words of the researcher of genius Vladimir I. Vernadsky. He told that there comes a special era, and he named this era "the psychozoic era". We all live in the psychozoic era. When Vernadsky said that we live in the psychozoic era, he thereby emphasized that the noosphere surrounding us, the semiosphere anyway reflect a life psychologization.

In the history of science the term "psychologization" has various shades and there is an ambivalent relation to it, but at the same time we should precisely understand that today there is a life psychologization, and in this situation of life psychologization we should see a number of things which are risks of this psychologization in our society which also is call "a risk society". I want to imagine a situation that here right now on the stage there appear two persons and they try to continue the dispute on the following: how does psychology develop?

In the 70th Aleksey N. Leontiev has suggested a metaphor that psychology should develop in the trunk, and it will ensure the unity and firmness of psychological science.



The other remarkable researcher Boris F. Lomov has said that psychology should develop in the branch, and then there was this discussion.

Looking at the today's congress, and looking at the today's development of our science and at the program of our congress, I would say that Lomov's metaphor is more correct today. Today is the congress of "branch" psychologists. Psychology began to develop in the branch; it began to lose its tree.

Actually we should precisely understand that such development is normal, and the polarities in the branch or in the trunk, these metaphors, explain different moments. It is either science integration, or its differentiation – this is one of lines.

The second line is connected with the "branch and trunk" metaphor – it is either a science universalization, or its narrow specialization.

And, at last, the third line connected with this is an attempt of creation of manistic pictures of the world or pluralistic pictures of the world.

As a matter of fact, these are normal tendencies of the science development of the XXI century. If you look at what occurs in genetics today, what occurs in physics today, you'll remember a situation which was at our knowledge of history at the beginning of the XX century when they said that anyway there is no place to generalizing theories, there is no place to synthetic concepts any more. At the same time, I want precisely to emphasize the following: in due time Pual Kare said that physics has no future, and it was the time when after a while there appeared Einstein's physics and Newton's physics. In this regard, being a historical optimist, I consider that at the branch development of psychology which consequence consists in several crises, about which I'll speak, there should come the time of synthetic approaches in psychology, not contradicting the branch approach. In this regard, notice that today, discussing the science development, many people say: "but there is no synthesis", but at the same time there appear books with vivid titles, as Romakh Re's book entitled "Pavlov's dogs and Schrödinger's cat". This single title combining the world of Pavlov's researches and the world of the great physicist Schrödinger shows the whole complexity of the situation. And in this situation I look at works of Vygotsky and Byuller in 1926–27 with envy. In the 1926th as you remember Lev S. Vygotsky wrote the work "A historical sense of psychological crisis" and in the 1927th there appeared Byuller's book "Psychology crisis". Dear colleagues, then they said that there is no single psychology, suffering without manism, but there are many psychologies, there is no integrated psychology.

And for the first time I want to say that today we have not a psychology crisis, but today we have crises of different psychologies. And these crises are shown in the next moments. The first is a crisis of scientific schools. This crisis of schools of sciences is not only in psychology, but it is also in many other sciences. At the same time a consequence of the crisis of schools is the following. Scientific schools set examples of culture, schools of sciences set cultural paradigms which are to be followed and guided. As Mandelstam told they expressed tastes and styles of thinking. At the crisis of scientific schools, whether it is psychoanalysis school, school of cultural and historical psychology, school of cognitive psychology, we face that if we do not reflex crises of these



schools, we start to enter into practicism and narrow subjects, and there appears the tower of Babel effect. Psychologists, gathering at a congress in different audiences appear speaking different languages, often without hearing and understanding each other. And the crisis of scientific schools is one of such phenomena. In modern reality a consequence of the crisis of scientific schools is emergence of copying psychologies, "a back effect", we always find someone who we name a supergiant of today, we try to run behind him and as the great Chelpanov has once named such psychology a private associate-professor's psychology, a psychology of copying of samples. Don't get me wrong, copying and reproduction are good things but when we copy, reproduce, without estimating that enormous phenomenon of cultural paradigms which have gave our schools, sensu stricto we appear lost and we do not see the future, being shocked not by the future as Alvin Toffler, but by the present and turn into the private associate-professor's, copying, imitating psychology. This risk is the present day, and I want us to hear this risk. The second risk is when I say that today there is not the psychology crisis, but the crises of psychology – we face that as a matter of fact if further psychology goes and develops only in the brunch, instead of in the trunk, there will appear one more crisis – the crisis of professional identity of psychologists when in fact psychologists will lose their "I", will lose their understanding as a representative of the psychological science and will lose the navigation where to move in the today's reality and in the today's world. This sort of crisis, the professional identity crisis is the most serious risk which we face and which is, alas, our serious reality for today. The professional identity crisis is connected with one more crisis, namely – the crisis of professional development of psychologists. I draw a special attention to this. Even the school we criticize for a naked verbalism, that there are only verbal modes of work. At the same time in the higher education, and including the psychological education, this verbalism prevails and we are verbalism captives. There is a paradox: if today there is a psychologization of school education, and on September 1st, according to the new standards based on a culture-activity psychological paradigm, there enter the school hundreds and hundreds of thousands of the first formers, where the standards are under construction according to a system-activity approach, in our psychology at training of psychologists, though we speak about workshops, about practices, but all the same verbal methods prevail. And in this regard let's think about ways and matrixes of creation of that we really, speaking about practical things understood, how there should change the reality in this process. Today more than ever, speaking about these things, we should precisely understand what happens to us through methodological optics, optics of post-nonclassical and nonclassical rationality. I will give you only three examples; these examples are the following. Nesbor is right saying: "the observer and the observed are two inseparable things", and in this sense, depending on who we postulate and project as an object of our researches, there appears a corresponding psychology. When we do the psychology of the patient, there appears the clinical psychology and clinical practice. This is a separate psychology and not casually we have distinguished the specialty "Clinical psychology" as the separate. When we



postulate and project the psychology of the examinee, the psychology of experimental culture, cognitive psychology, psychophysics and other unique major directions continue to develop independently from anything. And, at last, when we project the psychology of the client, there develop the psychotechnical, human engineering and ergonomic directions of psychology. It turned out that these realities of psychology are connected with different subjects of the analysis: both the client, and the patient. And today the psychologies connected with examinees remain the ruptured worlds and there are their own practices. They have accumulated a unique, brilliant experience, but it is to be reflected and understood precisely by us when we think of psychology and the future of its development.

Dear colleagues! When it all comes down, not once the interdisciplinarian idea of the psychological science has already been heard today and this is a polydisciplinarian idea when we find contacts with the cultural anthropology when the cognitive science becomes reality, to say that at all our crises we have great prospects, and, speaking about these crises, there is only one thing I want ... My dear colleagues, I want us, as a society of psychologists, to have a collective, council reason and that there will be a collective reflection, and we won't be lone persons or wolves, who don't know how to go and everyone sings own songs, as Akela on the council rock, that we won't turn into the psychology of lone persons. And speaking about this, I want to say that today psychology is ever more responding to the time ideals, and ideals act as searchlights, illuminating a number of psychology directions. Today we have not casually begun with safety problems, and, along with justice ideals, equality ideals in the public axiological consciousness, the ideal of safety has become one of ideals of the risk society. And the unique directions connected with a perspective of safety ("Safety psychology" is a confirmation of this). Along with a safety ideal we have new directions of psychology, for example, the psychology (I'm speaking about this and I am internally joyful somehow) of optimum happiness and there appears the positive psychology. With the freedom ideal there has always been and will be associated the identity and personality psychology; development of the psychology of identity and personality psychology – there is a freedom ideal. Communication of psychology, its directions with different ideals this is what is extremely important for us to understand. And at last, it is also extremely important to understand and that today<sup>6</sup> in deficiency of value orientations and guidelines, as Bogdanov, great tectologue, in due time has said it is psychology that can function as an ideology of our science and society. Psychology sets varying ideological matrixes: so it was, so it is and so it will be. And it is especially urgent when happens in the psychozoic era.

Dear colleagues! When I say that today there play and argue paradigms of constructivism, paradigms of cognitivism, culture-activity paradigms when these directions go and when we have unique researches and unique approaches, at the same time, according to Klaparedo's law, more and more I want us to realize those difficulties which we face, and at the same time today, here and now, in our audience I say that here and now I'm addressing to you and I'm saying this, speaking about crises, but I'm



saying this as a happy person, for the happy person is the one who had teachers who changed his scale of vision for life. And when not at once I say that I enter into a conversation, whatever I do, with my teachers and I hear their voices, my colleagues-psychiatrists may think that I have a special condition. But I really hear voices of my favourite teachers: Aleksey N. Leontiev, Alexander R. Luriya, Daniil B. Elkonin, I hear voices of great psychologists, such as Lomov, Vekker, Ananiev who have set culture matrixes. And our congress should remember these matrixes and understand that psychology should develop, as Vladimir A. Wagner, founder of biopsychology, has said, not along the straight lines, but along the mixed lines of development. And hence there is the future of ideology; it is the future of our ideology between different schools.

There are good old lines that one may arrange a celebration in honour of the madman who will lull mankind to sleep in a dream of gold. I don't know, whether we will be these madmen, but the time of calms has passed and psychology as a professional manufactory won't survive, but live, if we realize, dream and really will become whoever we are: psychogeneticists, psychologists of law, psychologists of sports, acmeologists, I'm not hesitating to say this word. Whatever happens we will become and always remain that our teachers gave birth to us, we will become psychologists. And consequently the future is ours and consequently we should remember:

Still not easily  
Our century tests us,  
You may walk into the square,  
You dare to walk into the square,  
You may walk into the square  
In that appointed hour.  
Where there stand on a square  
Regiments being spread  
From Synod to Senate  
As four lines.

On this St. Valentine's Day I wish you strength and to multiply ideas and schools and other deeds.