

Nationalism and (falling) statues

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The oxymoron of modern society lies in the fact that in its origin it is as unhistorical as possible, it is established by a radical rejection of its origin, however, the thesis of compensation, expressed by philosophical school of Joachim Ritter, says the following: an unhistorical society of modernity generates a large deficit on the issue of cultural identity, and history as a science and narrative satisfies the need for us to compensate for this deficiency. In this way other phenomena of modernity are constructed: museums, the sphere of protecting monuments, we see everywhere a manifestation of the need to preserve the past as compensation for the dynamics of modernity, this is also an attempt to rationalize modernity. Thus, the gesture of destroying monuments is a gesture of rejection of modernity. Good or bad is not the subject of this essay. The subject of this essay is the relationship of nationalism and manipulation of the historical past in the form of material objects, be they monuments or other landscape objects, for example, the names of streets and signs that will be discussed.

Changing the historical landscape, we change our own history, our national identity (author's translation from Russian into English): "This is connected with a special question (which we will consider elsewhere), why is historicism a component of the modern world, that is, a specially organized and historically unprecedented in scope and intensity a culture of historiographic portrayal of one's own and someone else's identity? Whatever the answer, it remains in force that subjects acquire their unique identity among their kind through stories and that, accordingly, access to identity is opened through stories. "¹

At the moment, in many countries of the world, there is a revision of the attitude towards monuments as objects of a certain ideology. In Russia, this is due to the policy of decommunization or de-Sovietization that began after the collapse of the USSR. The policy of decommunization is most clearly manifested in the European part of Russia, almost without affecting regions with a predominantly non-Slavic population. Only in the last few years after the so-called *Snow Revolution* (Protest Movement in Russia 2011-2013; *Swamp Revolution*), when famous Russian nationalists were imprisoned, the Russian national movement begins to gradually accumulate its forces again. The zone of interests of Russian nationalists inherently includes the de-Sovietization of Russian cities, but not only open nationalists are in favor of decommunization: one of the latest examples is the city of Tarusa (Kaluga region), where the city council decided to rename 16 streets, replacing Soviet names with pre-revolutionary ones. It should be noted that such intentions are rarely embodied in such a volume, which is why Tarusa is a bright and unique case in modern Russia.

¹ Люббе Г. «Историческая идентичность. 1977»: Вопросы философии.- 1994.- №4.- С. 108-113.

For German original: Lübbe H. Geschichtsbegriff und Geschichtsinteresse. Analytik und Pragmatik der Historie. Basel/Stuttgart, 1977 S. 145-154. Kap. 12. Identität durch Geschichten.

The main message of de-Sovietization in Tarusa is the end of the glorification of the accomplices of terrorism and a return to the primordially Russian national landscape, which is considered to be precisely the Russian Empire with its toponymy. Lenin Street became Kaluzhskaya Street (by the name of the region), Lenin Square - Sobornaya, Kaliayev Street - Bogolyubskaya (*loving God*), Oktyabrskaya Street became Voskresenskaya Street, Volodarsky Street - Pronchishchev, and so on. Old pre-revolutionary street names are associated with Christianity, landscape toponymy (ravines, fields), the explorer of the Arctic (Pronchishchev). This kind of decommunization can be called *light*, since it does not affect the entire toponymy without exception, denying the existence of only those names that are directly related to bloodshed.

The Tarusa case has both allies and opponents. Among the allies we see Russian nationalists, Christians and simply opponents of the Soviet regime. Among the opponents there are both communists and people without a special political orientation, who are simply accustomed to Soviet street names. Many Russian people do not associate themselves with the pre-revolutionary Russian nation. The USSR, which was trying to create a Soviet nation, a new Soviet man, left a trail of uncertainty in the issue of national identity for a modern Russian: how and through what to define his national identity? Unfortunately, in this essay it is not possible for us to answer this question.

But we can say for sure that the issue of the relationship to the historical past has a national dimension. The transformation of the material environment is one of the tools for constructing collective memory. However, we will try to answer another question. What to do with the Soviet legacy in Russia? Is it necessary to demolish everything related to the Soviet state, which justified violence against Russians and other people who were part of the so-called Soviet nation? The answer is no. For a diverse kind of material heritage from the Soviet era, a certain reservoir should be created, a museum, where objects of the Soviet era associated with the policy of terror will be displayed. The rest of the material monuments of the Soviet era, not directly related to the politics of terror, should be left in the landscape. Thus, we will not commit a rejection of modernity, if we express ourselves in the spirit of the Ritter school, but we will only accept one of the ways to rationalize modernity.

Bibliography

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