

THE RUSSIAN NATIONAL CHARACTER AND WESTERN INDIVIDUALISM

XXI th century – is the era of globalization, which cover almost all countries. But, in spite of this fact, national features still play very important role in international communication and business. That's why I decided to consider and to compare main traits of character in Russia and in the West.

The character of a people is a strong factor to define the fate of a country and the nation's government and business of this country. A national character, which can partially change during the course of time, basically remains unchangeable within the people's historic life. When authority understands the people, it is the main chance for the country and the authority itself to survive [1].

Many patriots say that the Russians are collectivists by nature who like to be in tight communities, while the living model in the West consists of separate people living under perpetual conditions of competition. It is sometimes believed that liberal reforms have resulted in the triumph of the Western individualism in Russia. However, to my mind, both points of view are mistaken. In this work I'd like to consider main features of character of Russia and Western countries and to prove that Russia does not belong to collectivist type of culture. Certainly, we have some similar traits, but it's showed not so clearly as in China, for example, which is country with purely collectivist culture [2,3].

The Russians differ from the Europeans (and from majority of other people) not by some mysterious collectivism, but by their attitude towards property. Russian peasants never owned land as private owners; they merely had land leased by their community. In addition, the people's predestination has been always understood differently in Russia: while an emphasis is placed on talent in the West, a person's calling is the focus in Russia. Talent means people's capabilities, and a calling is people's duty in life. Human rights are the cornerstone abroad, at the time when people's duties are of great importance in Russia. That is why the understanding of freedom is different in Russia and abroad. A man in the West is free when he is free, and a man is free in Russia when he has an opportunity to see his calling fulfilled. When a Russian has an abstract freedom of choice, but has no opportunity to see the calling fulfilled, it means misery and not freedom for him. Even if The Russians go handcuffed and escorted to the workplace they love, they still will be very happy. Famous Russian aircraft and plane architects (Korolev, Stechkin, and so on), who wrongly suffered from the repressions of the 1930s and were sent to design bureaus with a prison regime for work, managed to work ably and brilliantly even there. A man in Russia is happy when he is happy. Happiness means not only to be understood, but also to be able to see your dreams come true and help your country prosper. The society of the 1930s was devoid of what we call political freedoms now: people couldn't say and write what they were thinking, and no criticism of authorities was allowed. People just saw the country change for the best and their dreams about future of the country come true, which made them very happy, and people considered themselves free.

The unique ideology of the Russians is explained by the lack of private land ownership. At the time when interests of Europeans were confined within limits of the estate, the views of the Russians turned from the community to the divine world, to the universe. This is an explanation to the high degree of spirituality in Russian literature and to the philosophic character of Russian ideology. The Russians, who are actually a people without property, differ from other people in their mobility (that is often mistaken for collectivism): the Russians easily participate in business of public importance, even when it doesn't concern them personally. Other nations, on the contrary, are bound up with their property.

Certainly, only the mobility of the Russians is not a factor to found a great state upon. The Russians are open to impulse from the state, and they have a national instinct, which is why a great

independent civilization was created in Russia. And this very feature of the Russians is taken for collectivism as opposed to individualism of the West. People in the West are unlikely to give up personal interests for the sake of abstract national or international issue. However, people abroad easily cooperate with others for some common issue that affects their private interests. Conformity is expected and perceived positively in Russia, but at the same time it's acceptable to pursue individual goals at the expense of others in the West.

Also, I should pay attention to the fact that nowadays we can observe considerable changes in the minds of people, especially of younger generation who perceive themselves more as autonomous individuals independent of groups rather than their members. They are career oriented, aimed at individual growth and achievements. So, to sum it up, we have considered basic traits of character in Russia and in the West. As we found out, the main differences are concluded in the lack of private land ownership, and, therefore, another attitude to freedom. To survive, Russian people should unite in communities, to help each other, to value conformity and so on. But at the same time, the Russians evaluate initiative, enterprise, and purposefulness. That's why we can't speak about collectivism in Russia, only about some of its displays. In the Western countries personal goals and achievement are strived for; it is acceptable to pursue individual goals at the expense of others; individualism' is encouraged whether it be personality, clothes or music taste; the right of the individual reign supreme.

REFERENCES:

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