

OVERCOMING BASHFUL NATIONALISM

Olga Kryshstanovskaya



OLGA KRYSHSTANOVSKAYA — a Russian sociologist specializing in the study of elites. She is the head of the Center for the Study of Elites at the Sociology Institute at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Her books include ‘The Anatomy of Russian Elite’ (2004). Kryshstanovskaya was a member of the Global Political Forum in Yaroslavl in 2009 and 2010

The national issue and the issue of the country’s integrity are both key challenges for Russia. The ideology of proletarian internationalism has for some time provided a solution to this puzzle, however, an ideological vacuum ensued in the wake of the Soviet Union collapse. No alternative for that sharply defined and ardently implemented conception was immediately available. Attempts were made to form a Russian nationalist ideology, but they were met with strong rejection.

This is because a great deal of Russians are of mixed blood and identity. They regard Russian nationalism with almost as much disdain as they hold for fascism. **An approach that gives priority to some microscopic analysis of blood,**

instead of examining the views and political identification of a person effectively ruins a nation. A major part of Russia’s population feels threatened to be deprived of their own country. This means that people have to call themselves Russian in fear of being stripped of citizenship rights and probably suffering other negative sanctions. The Russian government had in due time pursued the course of Russian nationalism, provoking internal animosities between different people and confessions. This negative reaction eventually forced the state to conceal its nationalism, and obscure the very ideology it holds as its own.

‘Bashful nationalism’ is how I prefer to call the current ideology of the Russian state. People openly proclaim ‘Russia for Russians,’ while the state seems to be neither here nor there. It resorts to allusions, calling things anything but their proper names. Due to its inferiority and bashfulness, this ideology has now become an additional factor of illegitimacy. People can accept neither our elite, nor our political order, nor the ruling power, because they always suspect them of lying. They observe with disdain fraudulent elections and inconsequential anti-corruption measures. **Bashful nationalism is not an articulated ideology, it is part of a torrent of lies by omission.**

However, state ideology is not allowed by the Constitution. It is natural for a country that went through totalitarianism to negate an unambiguous state ideology. However, this creates additional problems. Russia is at a crossroads. It lost its foundations of Marxism-Leninism and didn’t find a new basis in Russian nationalism. In truth it is not looking for a new foundation. The whole world is stirred these days. The Islamic world

is very active, which is affecting us. Nothing serious is likely to happen in the coming five or six years, but if the problem is left unsolved we can definitely look forward to new surprises.

In order to rule out some of the future problems, certain measures are needed that require political decisions, namely, legalizing the entire situation. Everything should be governed by laws. However, the law itself is stained with ideology, when we consider the fact that it prevents people from entering Russia and enjoying equal rights with its citizens. From the other side, if we leave the gates wide-open, this will also be dictated by some ideology. Ideology is of primary importance. **If a well-defined ideology is not there, problems arise with regulating laws.** Public opinion is irritated with self-contradicting, half-baked laws.

The task of creating a unifying identity can be properly articulated only by a development or political management group. If Russia’s political elite is apprehensive of a danger of losing identity and a break-up, they should make the problem forefront and start solving it. The problem is not even visible to an average citizen. People’s lifestyles did not change even when the Soviet Union broke-up and different states emerged with their own identities. They occasionally do become rather uncomfortable with the break-up, when they need to cross a border or communication with their families is obstructed, or when all of a sudden the language they were using for communication is stripped of its stately status. It’s only then that they suffer the consequences of decisions that were adopted along time ago. ■

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