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IMPROVISATION ON HISTORICAL TOPICS: A NEW RESOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



A recent European Parliament resolution, “On the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe”, is an unfortunate example of the politicisation of history. The key conclusion a Russian observer can make is that Euro-optimists are so weak in Europe that only through anti-Russian points is it possible to find a platform for pan-European identity. This contrasts starkly with the period of European euphoria, when the European community was kept together by the idea of overcoming dividing lines and pursuing a common destiny, grounded in constructive and positive foundations.

We see that the political leadership of France and Germany in the EU has stumbled upon the resistance of national parties both within the individual countries of the union and at home. Of course, it is a triumph for the Eastern Europeans, because they were able to achieve their goal and instil in Brussels their own historical phobias and paranoia. The Poles and the Baltic states, in fact, filled the ideological vacuum absent stories about a great Europe which had freed itself from slavery.

Perhaps we are witnessing a natural development of events. After all, the Second World War was a sad experience for Europe, because the continent saw the loss of its subjectivity in big international politics. The fate of the continent was decided by the Soviet Union and the United States. This is probably why Europeans do not cherish the memory of the Second World War and instead celebrate the end of the First World War on a large scale, and during these celebrations the main emotion remains sorrow for the dead.

But if there is no story of greatness, then a story of sacrifice inevitably arises. The image of a victim also works for unification, but it is infantile and even servile, as it pushes to seek support from the strong powers, primarily the United States. Thus, the European

Union itself mentally deprives itself of subjectivity in big international politics, and shrinks to the scale of the Eastern European states.

The event was also the result of a deeply-rooted liberal misconception that the politics of power are outdated in the 21st century. For most European elites, the events of World War II are a deep past that does not matter now. This mistake was the result of a “vacation from strategic thinking,” which has continued for European elites since the very end of World War II.

But if Europe wants to play a role in the big politics of the 21st century, its most far-sighted leaders should remember the European leaders of the resistance against Nazi Germany and the importance they attached to the alliance with the Soviet Union. It will also be useful to recall the Atlantic Charter, in which it took part, and under what circumstances it was first adopted. Finally, it’s time to reconsider the view on the role of power and realise that delegating your own security to a third party always puts you in a subordinate position.

As long as France, Germany, and the other viable countries of the European Union fill the ideological vacuum with the emotions and phobias of their Eastern European allies, Europe will not be strong. It will be weak, subordinate and servile.

In any event, it is possible that Russia is too closely following the resolutions of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Maybe this is a mistake, because these organisations have long lost their weight in the political life of the continent and are becoming as secondary as the idea of European leadership in the 21st century. Conclusively, the national governments of the EU countries may not even notice these resolutions. These countries are absorbed in themselves and their own agendas. As can be seen from recent statements made by French President Macron, individual EU countries are beginning to realise the importance of proactive and vigorous strategic leadership in the new international environment.

Ignoring the issues of historical memory, especially ones as crucial for Europe as the Second World War, is a step on the road to oblivion, a way to nowhere. It means regression and mediocrity. Russia does not want this future for Europe.

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