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Collective Responsibility or Death

Denis Sultangaliev

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For many days two things are happening simultaneously: the bombing of Ukrainian cities and the musings of Russian minds on the acceptability of the collective responsibility. The synchronicity here is highly significant, as it is impossible to define the primordial process. Precisely the destroyed Ukrainian cities and thousands of murdered people provoke the mentioned discussions among the Russians. On the other hand, the inability of the Russians for collective self-organization, connected with the eternal demagogy about their own (ir)responsibility have made the world, where the maternity home in Mariupol is bombed and the civil citizens in Irpin are shoot.

The thesis about collective responsibility originates from the very sense of the democratic institutions since, as we remember, even in ancient Greece, participation in the democratic process primarily meant the responsibility of all the agents of the process. And everybody affiliated with the democratic process is still responsible for the usurpation of the democratic institutions by the 'tyrant'.

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Here is the institutional argument about the responsibility of the Russian citizens, who possess political rights.

Following the Greeks, I think that separation of the ethical from the institutional is unacceptable; and hence, the institutional responsibility is inherent to the responsibility of the human entity. In this concrete case, we deal with the fascist political monster, which, as we wrote earlier, comprises in itself the pervert affection to death and the nuclear danger for all living things. The responsibility of the struggle with those global threats is not limited to the state and institutional borders and should be taken by all humanity.

But certain individuals and nations are included in this collective responsibility more than others. For instance, they are the Ukrainians, the Georgians, or the Estonians, who were "fortunate" to be neighbours with fascist-minded Russia because of the historical coincidences and fate. But primarily – the Russians, who are directly connected with the emergence of putinism due to a multitude of factors: the inability to organize the effective resistance for the regime; the discourses, in a creation of which everyone able to speak or write participates.

The only basis on which the separation of the Russians from their responsibility emerges (apart from the animal fear) is the idea of individualism, the autonomy of personal fate from the global political processes. It is funny to recall Bertolucci and Godard's distant argument on the primary illness of the epoch: individualism or the fascist repression of the individual. It is funny since the problem of the Russian's (ir)responsibility synthesizes those two syndromes in the one illness of putinism. The consumerist individualism of both the Russian bourgeoisie and the Russian workers, nurtured with the essential comfort, creates the safe zone for Putin's fascism even in their conventional unloyalty. At the same time, Putin's fascism allows individualism to exist only in the frames, safe for putinism. This way, the regime destroys the nature of the individual, only quasi-individual visibility of which remains.

The rejection of personal responsibility with the belief in individualism is already integrated into the fascist frames of the permitted. When you drown in the swamp with the golden chains, it may seem that there is still room for free breath. However, the lungs will painfully rupture from inside out the next second, and the swamp will fill the body, organically enveloping viscera.