

WE ARE ON THE WAY

Speech by Maksim Zamshev at the Likhachev Readings

It has become almost common place that after the beginning of the special military operation (SMO), Russia entered a new reality. But not everyone realizes what it will be in the end, since it is obvious to everyone that Russia is now like a heavy ice floe that has shifted and is floating somewhere. Of course not. I am far from comparing the country to an airplane without controls, as the great writer Yuri Bondarev did during perestroika. But the fact that we are observing some processes that are far from completion is obvious. Moreover, their completion is quite difficult to predict if you are in the sense of the system analysis, not of the propagandic frenzy.

The main thesis of the present time can be called the thesis of existence of the multipolar world and its values. This thesis is not new, but now it is presented as fateful. It is seen as a salvation from the former hegemon of the West. They say, recognize our values and everything will be fine. But we will not recognize yours, because you impose them on us. Everything is crystal clear. Fighting for the freedom to live the way you want to live. I would venture to suggest that this is just the tip of the iceberg. The SMO and the tragedies associated with it are somewhat blinding us.

The Russian President always emphasizes that there are no unfriendly countries, there are bad elites. And these words are worth pondering. There's nothing worse than establishing an enemy image. The West is now on these rails. And this is the only weakness of the West before us; we should not adopt this weakness, it will destroy us, turn us into savages, nail us to the cruel and alien East, which is disastrous for our culture. We must realize that there is nothing wrong with the values of the West in their classical form, and the West became our enemy when it began to abandon these values, replacing them with other values. Totalitarian and inhumane. False and leading to entropy.

In order to understand what I am talking about, it is necessary to understand, get away from agility and make out how the West won the aesthetic confrontation with the USSR. The West had a better understanding of the psychology of human of that time. The elderly leaders of the USSR believed that depriving oneself of everything for the sake of an idea was a good thing. The people, however, shared this mantra of the Soviet power less and less every year. Why? Because it was based on one truth: tighten our belts for the future. It is effective when the present is horrific, as it was after 1917 and after 1945. Everyone understood what it was for. The breakdown occurred already in the 60s and 70s. When belts were left tightened after gigantic overall people's efforts, and the country wallowed in deficits and a shadow economy. The West showed that it was possible to live without suffering for the sake of the future and did it skillfully. When Soviet people were put up with strangers in hotels where there was always no room, from the movie screens French "Man and Woman" loved each other as they wanted and where they wanted, sitting in any cafes. It became fashionable in the USSR to resemble Western dandies, although the West was considered the main rival. Were the values of the USSR good? They were good. But when they are not confirmed by the improvement of people's everyday life, they are no longer believed in, especially when those who broadcast them, in life profess something else. Top party officials and Komsomol bohemia of the late USSR, their way of life clearly confirms the above. Were there any exceptions? But they didn't define anything. This experience of value defeat is extremely useful right now. What did that defeat lead to? We have abandoned ourselves to the conqueror's mercy, bringing down the entire block of our allies, succumbed to his lures,, become part of the American-centered world. Gradually we have come to understanding that the hegemon is not perfect, that it creates a myth, leads like a hustler, that its seductive values are clearly frayed or perhaps non-existent, but when the weak realizes the wrongness of the strong, he is quickly made a scapegoat and blamed

for everything. That's what happened to Russia. Until we realized that and decided to change the rules of the game. Is it a big risk? Yes, it is. Slaves are far from always seeking freedom and independence. But once we are on this path and the process is underway, it is important to pay attention to some basic things in order to avoid mistakes and strategic defeat in the future.

Firstly. The colonial psychology must be overcome. The internal structure of any colony is based on the fact that the leaders are those who are closest and most connected to the metropolis. There is no law for them. The phrase "friends get everything, others get the law" is a typical example of colonial thinking and economic underdevelopment. There are few prizes of life, so it is necessary to divide them into an extremely narrow circle. All the benefits are from the metropolis. It benefits from supporting not the best on the social ladder, but the most effective of its client states. Compare the salary of a secretary at Gazprom and a lecturer at SPBSU? There's still a lot of work to do. Isn't there?

Secondly. It is necessary to avoid a huge mistake of fighting the enemies and not to take the path of prohibition and repression. It is Russia's enemies and rivals who always push us down this path, as it weakens us most of all. We should take the best of what the collective West influences minds with. It is impossible to influence minds by denial and prohibitions, to make the appearance of one's values attractive. Tolerance for other values must become a core traditional value if we recognize the world as multipolar and build our rebirth on that.

And thirdly. It is important to bear in mind that effective investment of capital is not only where the money has been repaid and increased. Such cheap monetarism is the enemy of values. The state should invest where the best are, in culture and in science. And don't expect a return. Effective managers are a harmful and empty myth. Reduction of costs is not efficiency; efficiency is increasing them if we want to win. It is impossible to describe how much the US invests in promoting its culture and literature in the world through different

foundations. I can't describe it! And no one here is thinking about the repayment, the repayment is about something else entirely. The repayment is that the whole world is waiting for Franzen's new book even six months before its issue.

And fourthly. Don't lie to yourself if you think that lie is white. Then we'll be free and independent. Not until then!