Phantom brown shadow over Europe

Over centuries of history, the treatment of Jews - a people with its own religion (Judaism) and customs; "outsiders" living in exile for two thousand years - has become a specific criterion of respect for human rights in a society where tolerance is one of the main symbols of democracy and the rule of law. The tragedy of the Holocaust, as a result of which at least six million Jews were killed by German Nazis and their collaborators in Germany itself and in the occupied European countries, including the Soviet territory temporarily seized by Nazi troops, has become one of the most terrible symbols of the 20th century. And to this day, the Jewish population in the world, at just over 13 million people, has never reached the pre-war number of Jews in the world - 16 million.

Nowadays, politicians, and occasionally some of the general public in European countries, especially the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden and several others have launched a propaganda war against the new Russia, reminding us sometimes of the dark days of the "cold war". The Russian authorities have been accused of violating human rights, persecuting dissidents and other "actions". However, the issue of discrimination against Jews all of a sudden volens nolens dropped out of the propaganda arsenal of modern Russophobes. In the new Russia, there is no national anti-Semitism. And here, a moment from the "Golden Calf" comes to mind, written by two great Soviet satirists, Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov. When American correspondent Hiram Burman is interested in the "Jewish Question" in Russia, the response he receives is, "We don't have such a question." But after all, "his whole life he wrote articles for his newspaper on the Jewish Question, and it would be painful for him to part with this question. - But aren't there Jews in Russia? - he said carefully. There are... - So isn't there a question too? No. There are Jews, but there is no question."

Meanwhile, the threatening level of anti-Semitism in modern Europe reminds us of that very period in Europe in the early 1930s, when the "Golden Calf" was written. And you don't need to look far to find examples and statistics of this in reality.

At the meeting of the Jewish Agency for Israel held in Jerusalem, reports on the situation of Jews in various countries, including Europe, were presented to members of the commission on the fight against anti-Semitism. Of particular interest were the findings of the latest survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The survey was conducted in 13 of the 28 EU countries. Taking part in the survey were 5,900 Jews over 16 years of age, from countries including the UK, Belgium, Germany, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia and Sweden. This study, according to the FRA, was the first informal attempt to assess the situation of the Jews in EU countries. According to the survey, 75% of participants believe that in the last five years there has been a steady increase in anti-Semitism in their countries of residence, 82% of respondents said that over the past year, they felt discriminated against as Jews, 25% had faced verbal or physical anti-Semitic actions, and 10% emphasized that anti-Semitic incidents had threatened their lives. More than half of those surveyed (55%) indicated that they anticipate dealing with manifestations of anti-Semitism in the next year as well. Jacob Hagoel, head of the department for combating anti-Semitism at the World Zionist Organization, noted when announcing the survey data that today in three European countries (Hungary, Ukraine and Greece) there are anti-Semitic parties in parliament, which give legitimacy to the anti-Semites of those countries. "I do not sleep well at night, because anti-Semitic acts, like the terrorist act in Toulouse (the March 2012 attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse that killed three children and one..."
Of course, the data from the survey mentioned previously is by no means the only evidence of the increase in anti-Semitism in the EU. In her weekly video address broadcast on the Internet, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that anti-Semitism and racial discrimination continue to pose a serious threat to democracy in Europe as a whole and in Germany in particular, despite the fact that nearly 70 years have passed since the end of the Second World War.

Nor has Denmark avoided these dangerous trends either. As a result, over the past fifteen years, the Jewish community in Denmark has diminished by more than a quarter, largely due to the constant growth of anti-Semitism on a domestic and national levels. The Jewish community in this country numbered 1,899 members in 2012, compared to 2,639 in 1997.

In an interview with a national newspaper, the president of the Jewish community, Finn Schwartz, noted that politicians’ and legislators’ attack on Jewish laws and traditions promotes the growth of anti-Semitism on an individual level. By putting the question of the legality of the ancient Jewish ritual brit milah (circumcision) to the whole society, he said, public officials, hiding behind slogans about violated children's rights, create an anti-Semitic atmosphere in the country that forces young Jews to leave their homes. In 2012, 40 major anti-Semitic incidents were recorded in Denmark, twice as much as in 2009.

Of course, there have also been cases of anti-Semitic incidents in modern Russia. However, the report on the problems of Russian anti-Semitism by the Panel on Jewish Community in Russia notes that “the situation with anti-Semitism in Russia has remained unchanged over the years. With a small number of anti-Semitic attacks and incidents of vandalism, a latent anti-Semitism prevails. It has now been forced out to the periphery...” Russian President Vladimir Putin's words at a meeting with Israeli President Shimon Perez in November 2012 were very revealing: "We will never forget the sacrifices made by the Jewish people in the struggle against Nazism. We will never forget the Holocaust."

Criticism of Russia by Western "well-wishers" compels us to turn to the Gospel of Matthew: "And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?"

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