

## PHILOSOPHY: YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

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### MANIFESTATIONS OF NIHILISM IN MODERN SOCIETY

An essential factor of changes in cultural, social-historical and political spheres of society's life during the last century is nihilism traditionally viewed as a negation of conservative values. Nowadays nihilism appears to be a complex multidimensional phenomenon which refers to the key concepts of modern culture without comprehension of which one can't gain understanding of current and predict coming social events.

European philosophy of nihilism takes roots in Friedrich Nietzsche's writings state nihilism to be a natural part of historical process. The essence of nihilism is gradual denying and overcoming of the supra-sensual phenomena embodied in ideals, norms, rules, purposes etc.: "What does nihilism mean? That the highest values are losing their value. There is no purpose. No answer to the question: "Why?"" [1, p. 9]

Nietzsche's diagnosis (nihilism stands at the door) seems to be prophetic. He asks: "Whence comes this uncanniest of all guests?" [1, p. 7] and answers, connecting the historical origin of nihilism with Christian morality as a basic interpretation of reality neglecting everyday life a man lives in. Christian ethical interpretation of the world implies the seeds of its own destruction. The reason is its concentration on the search for truth. Being testified by the truth criterion Christian ethical doctrine itself seems to be inadequate to the reality. The God, the highest reality and any other transcendent source of human values are declared to be a myth.

Nietzsche heard the call of the time. In XX century chaos of emotional nihilism led to theoretical chaos. As a result, various directions of nihilism emerged (religious, moral, legal, gnoseological and others).

Different forms of nihilism revealed its characteristics:

- to manifest itself through socially dangerous negation of universally accepted values,
- to be an indicator of boundaries of destructive transformation of individual as well as of public consciousness.

Thus, nihilism exists, first of all, as negation. Basic indications of nihilism are its intensity, refusal to compromise, predominance of subjective or more often individual origin. In most cases nihilists choose the worst possible courses of

actions identifying with antisocial behavior, violation of moral and legal norms. If nihilism is shared by a group of people it gains a possibility to become an authorized legitimate culture or subculture. Nihilism as an idea and a social behavior are interconnected. Appeared once nihilism has a tendency to spread its influence on every sphere of society's life and infect coming generations with its ideas. An objective quantitative indicator of prevalence of nihilism is a mass character of negation.

In modern collective consciousness nihilism becomes widespread. According to many thinkers, a factor of massive nihilistic manifestations appears to be a philosophical tendency of European culture formed as a reaction on crisis of educational rationalism – cultural relativism. According to its trend man's nature and his rights are up to historical and cultural context. Therefore, there is no value of universal character as it is determined by cultural and religious peculiarities of a nation a man belongs to, so no culture could be evaluated from outside but on the basis of its individual principles.

The deeper value crisis is, the wider the legal nihilism of the collective consciousness is. Normative forms of institutions are canceled to let informal norms and customs are installed. Legal nihilism is manifested in various forms: from ignorance of law to extremist and terrorist views including their new types such as cyber-terrorism and cyber-extremism.

So, philosophical tradition of the study of nihilism connects it with negation of universal values and norms of society's and man's being. Cultural relativism serves as a breeding ground for the spread of nihilistic views because an attempt to level the significance of different cultures excludes universal foundations (including fundamental law principles) of human society. Nihilistic negation of ideas and institutions of the social order threatens the safety of society, man's rights and freedoms.

### **References**

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