

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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AS

Her Father



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Context

The inspiration for this speech was my dad, an elderly Yugoslavian man, who, many years after his country was disintegrated, still lives in a space where Yugoslavia exists. He spends much of his time in cafés where old men gather to discuss the matter of the day. I think that even though these men hold problematic views, they also keep a lot of wisdom in having lived incredibly difficult lives. Many of them hold on to their idea of a perfect past, that has now been ruined due to foreign influences and corruption. I found that, similarly, in many ex-Soviet countries more than half of the people say to be nostalgic for the USSR (Pew Research Center, 2017). The speech is written based on this idea of Soviet nostalgia. I tried to incorporate catchphrases of the Soviet culture into my speech, such as the Moral Code of the Builder of Communism, and the pledge of the young pioneers. The final speech I came to is me impersonating my dad, if he were currently living in Russia. The speech is situated in a café in Russia, where old men are playing cards, drinking too much, and telling stories about where the world went wrong.



Speech

My friend, I will explain the situation to you. Russia has fallen. It is not what it was anymore. Back in our youth, life was better. Back in our youth, life was good. There was free healthcare, free education, free apartments. We could travel everywhere in our country, had half of the world at our feet. We had a large country. We had a powerful country. And it's more than that... the people were better. Everyone was equal, there was no rich and no poor, we did not have this competition we have now. I grew up as a field worker and when Stalin came, he gave us freedom and pride. He gave us a chance at a future.

But now things are different. I will explain to you the two problems we have. We have criminals everywhere. All around the country are criminals. People are not what they used to be. In my youth, people could be trusted. Our society was just. We were brothers and comrades and worked together to build our country. But now... look at Ukraine, look at Georgia. With them I have fought in the Afghan war, they were my friends. We defended our country with pride. And now they pretend like they were never with us. They turned against their country and their past. They say we were never one. They hate us. They are willing to die to get rid of us.

And we have a second problem. We let the Americans and their disciples ruin us. The EU, and all others with their so-called liberal values. They sold our Ukrainian, our Georgian brothers stories of freedom and money. And with their ideology they brainwashed them. They, the Ukrainians, did not hold on to their pride, their history. They bought into this fantasy. This is why they are now so much against us. They do not realize that in our youth we had everything. We had money and we had freedom. But now... all of our countries are suffering. We are fighting against ourselves. In these wars, all of us are losing.

Ah yes, the old times were better... when I was a young pioneer, with my little red tie fighting for the cause of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. We went to summer camps, sang songs, ate healthy food. Back then there actually still was healthy food. We lost that as well. There was stability, safety. And what is left of this now... The young people now don't understand what it was like... When I look at my sons I fear for them. Will they be sent away to fight against those who were once our own? Will they be sent away to fight for a country that is ruining them? I tell them it is better to leave from here. To go to countries where it is peaceful. They have no future in Russia. They have nothing to die for and nothing to be proud of.

When I was young, one human being was a friend, a comrade and a brother to another human being. Now, one human being is a thief, a murderer and a liar. Our country is no more, and will be no more. But I have pride in the old days, and cherish the memories of my youth. Always prepared.