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On the Meaning of History

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The article is devoted to historical knowledge that the author, by analogy with “the meaning of life” calls “the meaning of history”. This aim cannot be the idea of history as a tool useful for unhistorical purposes. The meaning of history is in establishing the truth and in participation in the intellectual process, called “the court of history”.

Keywords: the meaning of history, the court of history, the necessity and inevitability, historical reconstruction, purpose, motive.

The problem of *the meaning of history* is one of the most complex issues of the European science tradition. Its foundation dates back from the cult of *truth* which was formed in the Ancient Hellas, and which was supposed to be reached and proved regardless of whether genuine knowledge complied to the beliefs of the majority or it contradicted them, whether it was pleasant to an individual, people or the mankind or this knowledge was bitter and disgusting, whether it was useful or useless.

Such a cult was not familiar to the great ancient oriental civilizations that were deprived of humiliating (as it was regarded then) requirement for a *guru*, a *teacher*, a *sensei* to prove to everybody and especially to the gosling pupils the verity of his statements. Even in the second half of the 19th century the cult of truth for truth sake was unknown to the Chinese, who decided to deprive the translation of the Euclidian geometry schoolbook into Chinese of all the proofs, considering them practically useless, as

problems could be solved with the knowledge of theorems without the knowledge of their proving. Apparently, they considered mathematical proving as a certain intellectual decoration, a certain *European ceremony*.

Herodotus, who came from Hellenic world, was not a zealous adept of the cult of truth, which become very popular in Attic and Italic periods of his life, though he was critical about authenticity of the certain sources of his spoken stories that were published later by his followers. Those published stories were called *History*, and this title was given either by himself or by his followers. Properly speaking, Herodotus was not a *historian*. Hellenes called the genre of his stories *logography* – word description of geographic, ethnographic and historical data provided by travelers who came back home. Many centuries after, retired soldiers from Suvorov’s army used similar stories to broaden the mind of their fellow villagers. The first historian in today’s meaning of this word was Thucydides, and his *History of*

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