

# THE RESOURCE OF POLITICAL HATRED IS ACCUMULATING

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People are not over-enthusiastic about power, but subconsciously they still spontaneously presume that the others - that is, counter-elite groups - are even worse. We have always held contempt for those in power - the bosses, the state, and its institutions. It is also typical of Russians to scold their Motherland, even upon meeting a foreigner for the very first time. However, in the case that the foreigner directs any criticism at Russia, we tend to burst out with patriotic rage. These feelings cannot be used as a political resource. I would not say that today, hatred towards elites has grown significantly, but the first signs of that can be observed.

I think **everything could potentially change when the generation of 30- and 40-year-olds end up coming into the arena, when they begin to realise not only their own economic interests, but also their political ones.** This is the very middle-class in its Russian version, which has been expected to emerge for a long time already. The demands of this group tend to be liberal. These people are acquainted with the West, with both its advantages and disadvantages, and they are geared towards it, unlike the roman-

tic democrats of the 1980s and 1990s, who loved the image of the West that they had created in their minds rather than the West itself. This group will bring the liberals, in the proper sense of the word, back to power.

The representatives of the middle-class generation, if we may call them such, understand what they personally want from politicians in the context of their own life and well being, as well as what they do not want. Thus, they do not care much about 'what decision the UN has made on Honduras', oil pricing, the reduction in mortgage interest rates as a result of Russia's accession to the WTO, and why shopping malls close their doors at 10 PM rather than at 12 PM.

Their hatred, or rather rejection, of the very essence of the traditional Russian civilisation is fundamental in the same way that a highly allergic individual cannot stand what it is that makes him itchy. It is likely that a large part of this Russian neo-liberalism is going to be represented in the form of cultural racism. The generation of 30- and 40-year-olds does not tend to dislike people due to their skin colour or eye shape, but it does totally reject people who exhibit a different cultural and civilisation-based type of behaviour and those who are unable to come to its own level. This dislike becomes even more elevated in the case that the people in question are outsiders with a non-European face.

The potential social base of the neo-liberals is currently enjoying what is coming their way from so-called petrodollars. They spend their days at their respective offices and evenings in bars. Amongst themselves, they ridicule the present state of things, which is, by the way, largely supported and created by themselves. **In their private conversations they become enraged over the blinkers of politicians' cars, RosPil, Putinism and the duumvirate, but they nevertheless seemingly continue to form the backbone of loyalism.** And they do these things deliberately, thinking that it is not time to advance. By default, they presume that the current excesses in our society are sometimes inevitable and maybe even

necessary, but soon enough, these people are going to demand more and will want to modify the country according to their own views. In its turn, time seems to work in favour of this process - over the years, the number of such people is increasing, and the number of 'traditional' Russians - whether they wear white or red - is declining. It can be said that political hatred as a political resource is accumulating within them.

Due to reasons of an economic and geographic character, there currently exists such an order where the elite has somewhat colonised its own population. In other words, the population is somewhat treated as a source of profit. The most interesting thing in this regard is that the population seems to be largely satisfied with this order. It resents this system a little bit, but nevertheless accepts it. Lermontov (a famous Russian poet of the nineteenth century) wrote, 'And you the blue uniforms, and you the people devoted to them' (*editor's note: police officers wore blue uniforms back then*). If it were otherwise, the authorities in Russia would have long been overthrown, as was the case recently demonstrated in Egypt. **The elite is dependent on and maintains its position not due to some population groups, but by this very deep-set mixture of Russian Byzantine-Mongol political culture.** But it is extremely dangerous to overreact and to ostentatiously harbour a mixture of hatred and disdain towards the population, since it can revive the Pugachev archetype (*editor's note: Yemelyan Pugachev was a contender to the Russian throne, who led a great insurrection in the eighteenth century*). The opposition should be given a place in the real political process. In this case, it will be less inclined to take on a radical form. From my perspective, it is also not going to make notable progress. The authorities' policy continues to be supported by the population against all odds. From the opposition's standpoint, it will certainly try to act at all levels and use all opportunities available to it, especially in the case that new prospects should open up. ■

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