

DESIRE TO SAVE STATESMANSHIP

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Reflections as to why loyalty is not currently popular depend on what should be viewed as the keyword in this word-combination. If the keyword in this discussion is ‘popular’, then we should remember that, at the beginning of this century, such a concept really did exist. At the same time, the words ‘Putin’ and ‘president’ became somewhat like a brand, and it was not only the loyalists who used this brand for their own ends. For instance, let’s remember Minkin’s editorial column ‘Letters to the president’ in the publication *MK*.

Today something similar is also happening in the Chechen Republic. What many analysts and journalists called Kadyrov’s cult of personality is actually, for most Chechens, the very successful brand ‘Ramzan Kadyrov’ that many people would like to be a part of.

It is widely accepted that the youth-related media tends to be more radical and not affected by fashion for political loyalism. At the same time, youth-based political movements are perceived by

their members as exclusively career ladders. I do not agree with this. For example, there is a category of young people in Chechnya, who dream about driving a Lada-Priora, having a Stechkin gun on their hip side (a traumatic gun for those who do not work in law enforcement) and a picture of them standing beside Ramzan Kadyrov (or at least just his picture). The third condition is the easiest one to meet. So, these young people are actually classical loyalists. And there is nothing new in this. Thus, **loyalty to the governing authorities is actually possible amongst the youth generation. The most important task in this regard is to choose the correct political brand.**

At that, let’s not forget that the appearance of political brands is related to the fact that politics are built in a similar way as a business – essentially, the goods need to be sold. As well, brand goods tend to sell better. The political engineers of this century have offered the political market new merchandise – political loyalism – and they have frantically advertised it as well. But the old brands are gradually being substituted with new ones. The loyalists have turned into custodians, in the same way that fashionists have been transformed into conservatives if they stick to their specific tastes. However, fashionists are imitated, while conservatives are laughed at. The same goes for the realm of politics.

If we continue treating politics in the same way as we view business, then we should also be changing everything, we need new brands. And these new brands need not necessarily be revolutionary. The procedure is well developed; we just need to insert new elements into the system.

However, let’s return to the word-combination ‘fashion for loyalty’. If we take ‘loyalty’ as our keyword, then a decline in loyalty towards government authorities

(similar to an increase) can be explained not only by the changing fashion for certain political brands. There are also things, which are more global in scope. Thus, **the global crisis of statehood is largely related to the appearance and development of the role of supranational (transnational) institutions** (the so-called ‘globalism’). Actually, the formation of the global economy requires management and regulation solutions that go beyond the framework of the ‘national’ state. For instance, Russia takes an interest in the global economy mainly as a supplier of raw materials, but Russian state interests also require the creation of a high-tech innovative economy.

In addition, loyalty to the existing authorities and loyalty to the Motherland (patriotism) have never been synonymous in the context of Russian society. In that regard, society has almost always been alienated from the state and its institutions. The degree of this alienation has been different at various historical stages in the country’s history, but it has always been present, because the authorities have never set it as their task to serve society. Rather, they have always coerced the society to serve the state’s needs.

Besides, the existing distribution of national wealth has no moral legitimacy in the eyes of Russian society. Loyalty on the part of society towards the existing authorities – both six years ago and today – is largely ensured by the intentions of the authorities (despite all of their vices) to preserve Russia’s statehood, to ensure Russia’s future and to avoid the country’s disintegration. One can reasonably say that the degree of loyalty of Russian society to the existing authorities is largely determined by the patriotism of the authorities themselves. ■

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