POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE US ELECTION: DEATH OR REBIRTH OF LIBERALISM?

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The win of Donald Trump in the US presidential election will go down in history. The unexpectedness and unpredictability of Mr. Trump's win is comparable to Brexit – a no less incredible political event in 2016, the reasons and the consequences of which still need to be explored. The goal of this article – to find out why a billionaire who has never been a politician, with a scandalous and impulsive presidential campaign, won the election and what it means for the USA and the rest of the world?

Keywords: US Election 2016, Donald Trump, political analysis.

"The most interesting fight brewing in the Republican primary isn't between Donald J. Trump and the rest of the world, but between Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio..." – wrote The New York Times in December 2015 [1]. No less skeptically was the beginning of Mr. Trump's political career met by Vox News. "Why I still believe Donald Trump will never be president" – David Roberts, a observer of Vox News, wrote in January [2].

2 days before the election – November 6, Hillary Clinton was ahead of Donald Trump on 6%, according to the poll by Langer Research Associates [3]. It did not seem surprising after Mr. Trump lost the support of the Republican elite, when 50 Republicans decided to vote for Hillary Clinton [4]. However, despite the fact that the election campaign of Donald Trump was accompanied by numerous scandals, accusations of racism, sexism and populism on the part of the world's leading media – he won. In defiance of the opinion of CNN and BBC, The New York Times and Bloomberg as well as social surveys, he did it.

So, we should try to understand why the system broke down and neither the Republican elite nor the leading media were able to prevent Mr. Trump from becoming President. Perhaps, it is rooted in the fact that the US economy has been in a deep recession since the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and many American workers have lost their jobs because of illegal Mexican immigrants, Chinese factories and corporations that keep their profits offshore? Or, is the reason that the mysterious company Cambridge Analytica, which via social networks has captured the minds of American voters? Maybe both facts are truth?

At first glance both statements could be considered as truth. But only at

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first glance. Certainly, the economic growth in the USA has slowed down since 2008 to 2.5% in 2014-2015, but it is not the worst index in the world: for example, the real GDP of France amounted to 1.27% in 2015 [5]. Herewith the banking system in the USA is in better condition than in EU (the share of problem loans in Italy's banks has reached €360 billion this year). After all, the US is the largest economy in the world with a real GDP of more than \$18 trillion [5].

But what about Mexican (or Chinese) illegal workers who take away American jobs? As noted by Bob Tita, an industry expert of The Wall Street Journal, "after a long decline, manufacturing is returning to the U.S." [6].

According to Mr. Tita, after a decline in 2000-2010 there was a slow recovery of the number of jobs in the US industry, from 11.5 million in 2010 to 12.3 million in 2016. Meanwhile, the volume of industrial production in Q1 2016 almost reached the pre-crisis level of Q1 2008 [6]. Of course, it does not look like Trente Glorieuses but it is not the Great Depression.

Well, let us consider another item. After publishing an article about the use of psychometric micro-targeting in the Ted Cruz and Donald Trump political campaigns by Swiss Das Magazin [7], Cambridge Analytica became the focus of the media and right-wing politicians worldwide. Briefly the essence of that method is that via psychological tests and social networks Cambridge Analytica creates profiles of users, and then uses that data to manipulate public opinion.

Frankly, target advertising is more effective than mainstream advertising, which does not take into account the needs of people. But there is a difference between like in Facebook and voting for Trump. A much greater impact on the was their personal economic status, education, the availability of work and political views.

Obviously, there are other reasons and in order to understand them we should look back at the results of the US policy for last 15 years and not only in the US but also in the EU. The main cause of voting against the will of political and financial analysts as well as leading media is that the results of globalization have been ambiguous for millions of people on both shores of the North Atlantic. Needless to say, such cities as New York and London have benefited from the globalization, but globalization is also associated with the Rust Belt (where Mr. Trump got the greatest support) or rural areas of England (where the majority of people voted for Brexit).

Certainly, workplaces, in our traditional sense of the term, will contract due to robotization of production as a part of the Fourth industrial revolution. However, a steelworker today will not become an investment banker tomorrow. And so what have George W. Bush and Barack Obama offered to Rust Belt, Detroit or St. Louis? Shadi Hamid, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center of Middle East Policy, pointed out that "liberal democracy had, contrary to the intent of its originators, become – the kind of center-left managerial technocracy that was as uninspiring as it was unthreatening" [8].

This type of democracy could be right for elite and "wonks who believed that the future of politics was in finding the right "facts"..." but "for everyone else, it failed to offer a substantive politics of meaning" [9]. As a result we can see the crisis of liberal democracy (that increasingly looks like socialism) among all of

the developed countries – from the USA to the EU where even right-wing politicians stick to the idea of saving the European Economic Area, but without the intervention of Brussels in the national policy of parliament and government.

Donald Trump was able to recognize the emotions and expectations of many Americans who feel abandoned and do not believe that the government serves to their interests. He did not use the typical phrases about “creating an economy that works for everybody”, in contrast, Mr. Trump’s speeches were simple and understandable. “America’s future belongs to the dreamers, not the cynics”, “every American citizen in this country is entitled to a government that puts their jobs, wages and security first” or “massive taxes, massive regulation of small business, and radical restrictions on American energy, have driven jobs and opportunities out of our inner cities” [9]. Indeed, the emotional effect of Donald Trump’s performances meant for voters much more than pictures in Facebook.

Donald Trump, who has never had a political or bureaucratic experience, gave to the USA the right of real choice between two absolutely different candidates and the election’s programs. “Trump belongs to the wing of the Republican party that believes government should stay out of the bedroom as well as the boardroom” – Roger Stone, an American political consultant, lobbyist and strategist of the Republican party who has been an advisor of Donald Trump during his presidential campaign, said [10].

The main problem of the political elites, media holdings, financial analysts, sociologists and other opponents of Donald Trump was in that many Americans do not live in their world – the USA is not only Wall Street, Cupertino and the Capitol. In a situation when the share of the middle class has decreased and at the same time the number of Americans living below the poverty line has increased by 5 million since 2008 and despite promises of the Obama’s administration, cities such as Detroit, Michigan, Stockton, California and Jefferson County, Alabama experienced bankruptcy in 2011-2013, and the credibility to public officials from Washington, D.C. has been lost. Donald Trump used it, and turned his disadvantages into advantages, promising to “drain the swamp” in Washington. Besides, Mr. Trump, thanks to his origin, embodies the main slogans of Republican Party – “the chief business of the American people is business” and “reliance on thyself, distrust to the state”.

Moreover, the information campaign that was organized in support of Ms. Clinton, had rather the opposite effect: instead of discrediting Mr. Trump, made his electorate marginal. As a result the people who heard the charges against their candidate regarding racism, went to the polls and voted for him while over 92 million voters did not vote for anyone.

There is no doubt that the USA and the rest of the world will wait for great changes over the next 4 years. But we can say that it is not the death of liberalism. It is the rebirth of liberalism.

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