

VALDAI DISCUSSION CLUB REPORT



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# GLOBAL 'RIGHTIST REVOLT': TRUMPISM AND ITS FOUNDATIONS

Oleg Barabanov, Dmitry Efremenko, Boris Kagarlitsky,  
Vasily Koltashov, Kirill Telin

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# Authors

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## Oleg BARABANOV

Ph.D. (Habilitation), Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club; Professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Professor of the Russian Academy of Sciences

## Dmitry EFREMENKO

Ph.D. (Habilitation), Deputy Director for Research at the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences

## Boris KAGARLITSKY

Ph.D. of Political Sciences, Director of the Institute of Globalisation and Social Movements

## Vasily KOLTASHOV

Head of the Economic Research Centre at the Institute of Globalisation and Social Movements

## Kirill TELIN

Ph.D. of Political Sciences, Research Fellow of the Faculty of Political Science at the Lomonosov Moscow State University

## Edited by Oleg BARABANOV

The authors of the report acknowledge the contribution of the participants of the situational analysis devoted to the “Trumpism and ‘Rightist Revolt’” held by the Valdai Discussion Club on 16 March 2017:

### Vladimir Vasilyev,

Ph.D. (Habilitation), Chief Research Fellow of the Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies Russian Academy of Science;

### Daniil Grigoryev,

expert from the Center of Economic Research at the Institute of Globalisation and Social Movements;

### Kirill Koktysh,

Ph.D. of Political Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Political Theory at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation;

### Boris Mezhuev,

Ph.D. of Philosophical Sciences, Editor-in-Chief of Politanalitika.ru;

### Maria Shibkova,

Lecturer of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

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# Contents

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From ‘Globalization of Elites’ to ‘Globalization for all’: ‘Rightist Revolt’ Phenomenon .....	3
“Their Triumphs Have Not Been Your Triumphs”: Trumpism and ‘Redneck Values’ .....	4
Social-Ideological Nature of Trumpism.....	6
Public Support for Trumpism.....	8
Who Is Mr Trump: Socio-Political Analogues .....	12
The Economy of Trumpism .....	15
Reaction of Trump’s Opponents: the Eschatology of Trumpism .....	19
Trumpism and Europe: Is Replication Possible? .....	20
Trumpism and Russia .....	24

## From 'Globalization of Elites' to 'Globalization for all': 'Rightist Revolt' Phenomenon

Starting in 2015, one of the prioritized expert topics chosen by the Valdai Discussion Club has been studying global alternatives to the traditional neoliberal mainstream and their impact on the world's transformation. Originally, the main focus was on various non-western projects (Chinese, Turkish, Arabic, Latin American, BRICS and others). As regards the intra-West alternatives, the main emphasis was first placed on leftist movements in Europe – both by virtue of the historical tradition in the last couple of decades (anti-globalists, Occupy Wall Street, etc.) and due to the then ongoing political processes in this part of the world (for instance, SYRIZA coming to power in Greece, the uprising of leftist progressivist civil movements in other parts of Southern Europe, Jeremy Corbyn being elected a new Labor leader in UK).

However, the events of 2016–2017 sharply changed the political balance in the West and across the world. The Brexit success, sensational victory of Donald Trump at the U.S. presidential elections, the atmosphere of 'the last battle' 'on the brink of a precipice' during the presidential elections in France, a dramatic turn to right wing nationalism in Poland, Hungary and some other countries of Central Europe – the whole of it brought the 'rightist revolt' against the established mainstream (and response to it) into the global focus. Serious challenges to the domestic security of western nations (migrants, terrorist attacks, racial tensions in USA (Ferguson), etc.) also enhanced the social base of the rightist turn, bringing a visible tilt towards violence.

In this context, the Valdai Discussion Club came up with a new concept of global revolt at the turn of 2017, characterizing those trends as "a revolutionary situation in the world". The same problems were highlighted in the report

of the Club<sup>1</sup>, and discussed at the 13th Annual meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in 2016 that was attended by the Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as by ex-presidents of Finland, Austria and South Africa.

The key interest in the global revolt concept lies in analyzing the divergent pace of globalization in different parts of the world. It is important to note that earlier this term was traditionally used to designate the gap between the developed nations of the golden billion and the rest of the world, when wealthy nations, became richer while poor nations lived in worsening poverty. Accordingly, the problem of overcoming the unevenness in globalization processes was seen above all as the need to accelerate the development of the 'rest of the world.' The concept of 'three silver billions' that formed an ideological foundation for the political activity of BRICS emerged in that particular context. It is based on the assumption that the middle layer of contemporary world has more rights to represent the interests of the entire humanity on a global scale, from justice perspectives, than the elite of the golden billion nations and financial-economic institutes under their control. The most radical versions of this paradigm called upon "fair redistribution" of global wealth and capital in favor of poorer nations as one way of overcoming the global divide. Such an approach characterized most of ideological manifestations of the anti-globalist movement.

The events of 2016 showed that now this issue can be differently formulated. The main collision in the march of globalization is being shifted from the international and civilizational

<sup>1</sup> 'Global Revolt and Global Order. The Revolutionary Situation in Condition of the World and What to Do about It', 2017, Valdai Discussion Club Report, Moscow, February. Available from: <http://valdaiclub.com/files/13306/>

aspect to domestic conflicts inside the West with growing antagonism between the western elites and civil society. It is this conflict that poses a conceptual challenge to the status quo of global economy and politics.

In his speech at the 13<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club Vladimir Putin pointed out: “Essentially, the entire globalization project is in crisis today ... But it is very clear that there is a lack of strategy and ideas for the future. This creates a climate of uncertainty that has a direct impact on the public mood. Sociological studies conducted around the world show that people in different countries and on different continents tend to see the future as murky and bleak. This is sad. The future does not entice them, but frightens them. At the same time, people see no real opportunities or means for changing anything, influencing events and shaping policy.”<sup>2</sup>

The former president of Finland Tarja Halonen, who participated in the aforementioned

meeting, also paid attention to the uncertainty of society about the future: “We really have a lot of challenges. And what I have seen this in different forums I’ve been to during the last years, especially after being free from being the president of the Republic of Finland. People always say that this world is a world of uncertainty, and that’s true. People feel everywhere that they have doubts in the future. And it is sometimes very paradoxical, as we have still advanced so much.”<sup>3</sup>

Eventually we arrive at the conclusion that ‘globalization of elites and globalization for the elect’ is at odds with ‘globalization for all’. The ever increasing intensity of this conflict makes the possible future transformation of the West of the relevant agenda. It is this transformation attempt, the current establishment resistance to it, as well as the struggle for its continuation that will most probably be the main political intrigue not only in the years to come, but also in the longer run.

## “Their Triumphs Have Not Been Your Triumphs”: Trumpism and ‘Redneck Values’

“Today’s ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another, or from one party to another – but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People.

For too long, a small group in our nation’s Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost.

Washington flourished – but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered – but the jobs left, and the factories closed.

The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country. Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our nation’s capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club’, 2016, official site of the President of the Russian Federation, October 27. Available from: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53151>

<sup>3</sup> ‘Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club’, 2016, official site of the President of the Russian Federation, October 27. Available from: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53151>

That all changes – starting right here, and right now, because this moment is your moment: it belongs to you.”<sup>4</sup>

Some may think that this is a quote of a certain prominent revolutionary. It might well be uttered, say, by Fidel Castro, should the Communist Cuba have somehow seized Washington, or by Leon Trotsky who could launch a Marxist revolution in the United States 100 years ago in early 1917, when he still lived there, or may be by a Communist candidate who would somehow win the U.S. presidential elections. Yet, this speech has no fantasy background: it is absolutely real, since this is a quotation of the inaugural address delivered by U.S. President Elect Donald Trump on 20 January 2017.

America has never heard anything like that in the inaugural addresses of its presidents. This led to shock waves and criticism. One of the most widespread (and perhaps mildest) characteristics was “populist”. This opinion was also shared by leading experts of the Valdai Discussion Club who formulated their vision hot on the trail.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, Trump’s inaugural address was totally in tune with the logic of his election campaign, its ideological climax being the Gettysburg Address on October 22.<sup>6</sup> Trump’s victory in the context of establishment break-up and a direct appeal to the needs of masses brought to life the ‘redneck revolution’ concept.

All these generally denigrating catchphrases of the American slang (‘rednecks’, ‘Rust Belt’ and others) correspond to such Soviet stock phrases as ‘common folks’ and ‘working masses’. Whatever

name you choose for this stratum, it is this lower social layer of working people that was deliberately chosen by Trump as the key target group of his election strategy. Is this populism? Of course, it is. But, at the same time, this is a natural populism and perhaps the long-awaited response to the growing establishment estrangement from masses, which did not elicit any electorate reaction under a rigid bipartisan system in the United States, unlike many European countries with their more nuanced multiparty systems, where new parties are easier to start and promote.

Such a sharp rebuff of traditional mainstream rhetoric and its deliberate dismantling in the course of Trump’s election campaign (as well as the very fact of his sensational victory) resulted, among other things, in the rightist national non-systemic radicalism being associated with the name of Donald Trump, even though it had existed in many countries before. This is how the new term of ‘Trumpism’ came into being.

It should be straight off noted that Trumpism as an ideology and a system of values is much broader than the political figure of Trump and is not directly tied to his current political activities. This being said, the question of whether Donald Trump will be able to stem the onslaught of the old Washington establishment, rather than walking away from his election platform, is not that important for the given discourse. Much more important is the fact that a global political wave caused by Trump’s electoral success formed a fundamentally new ideology and even a system of values which could conventionally be described as ‘Trumpist’ (once again, without any tight conjunction with the future evolution of Donald Trump himself). Following this logic, Marine Le Pen was repeatedly called a “French Trump”, Viktor Orban – a “Hungarian Trump”, Jaroslaw Kaczynski – a “Polish Trump”, etc. Using a not really correct comparison with the Soviet history, it can be stated that far from all the so-called

<sup>4</sup> *The Inaugural Address. Remarks of President Donald J. Trump – As Prepared for Delivery*, 2017, the White House, January 20. Available from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/inaugural-address>

<sup>5</sup> Sherr, J, Treisman, D, Wohlforth, W, Remington, T & Weitz, R, 2017, “Mobilizing; ‘Populist; ‘Rebellious’: Valdai Experts Assess Trump’s Inauguration Speech”, Valdai Discussion Club, January 21. Available from: <http://valdai-club.com/a/highlights/mobilizing-populist-rebellious-valdai-experts/>

<sup>6</sup> *Donald Trump Foreign Policy Speech in Gettysburg, PA. First 100 Day Plan*, 2016, October 22. Available from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_R4L-Os2LSI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_R4L-Os2LSI)

Trotskyists had any actual connections with Leon Trotsky. And now, several months after Trump's inauguration it is already obvious that 'Trumpists' in other countries and Donald Trump are not exactly the same phenomenon. Nevertheless, Trumpism as a label denoting the rightist national agenda has taken root and can now be used in a broader sense.

Therefore, the key component of thus construed Trumpism is a set of new values which should appropriately be described as 'redneck values'. It is important to determine what constitutes their 'positive basis', apart from protesting against the elite. The very term 'redneck' makes it clear that most of them are of social and economic nature. First of all, it is the value of productive economy as the foundation for the sustainable well-being of the society. From the standpoint of Trumpism this base has been pushed out by services and the financial sector, which leads to growing broader public dissatisfaction. The second socio-economic value of Trumpism related to the first one is the value of reindustrialization and, in broader terms, the value of modernization of economic and social development. The third value (which is, understandably, more often in full view) is the value of of nation's own labor force labor force (and the resulting migration policy). Hence the fourth value: the value of protecting the domestic market or sound protectionism. Not in vain did it form the basis of Trump's pre-election economic programme (it is sufficient to recall his

remarks about Mexico and China). This was also one of the most important emotional-ideological paradigms of his call upon the American society in the Gettysburg speech.

The given set of socio-economic values entails no less important political values of Trumpism. The main of them (and the fifth in a row) is the value of protection of sovereignty. "Make America Great Again" – the key motto of Trump's election campaign – explicitly reflects this value. The sixth political value of Trumpism is the value of protecting the national identity and historical-cultural identity of society, which is also topical not only in the United States, but in other countries as well. Finally, the seventh value of Trumpism that was noticeable during and after the U.S. election campaign is the value of abstaining from political correctness, the willingness to speak directly about the society's pressure points and, in this connection, the rejection of mainstream media stereotypes and agenda.

Such is the set of the key values identified with Trumpism. None of them is a personal invention of Donald Trump, as they have always been an integral part of the rightist discourse in various countries. But the 'magic' of Trump's victory has abruptly raised this set of ideas to the level of the real agenda and key to electoral success, so it can be tempting for other political forces to repeat this Trumpist strategy of the 'rightist revolt' in other countries.

## Social-Ideological Nature of Trumpism

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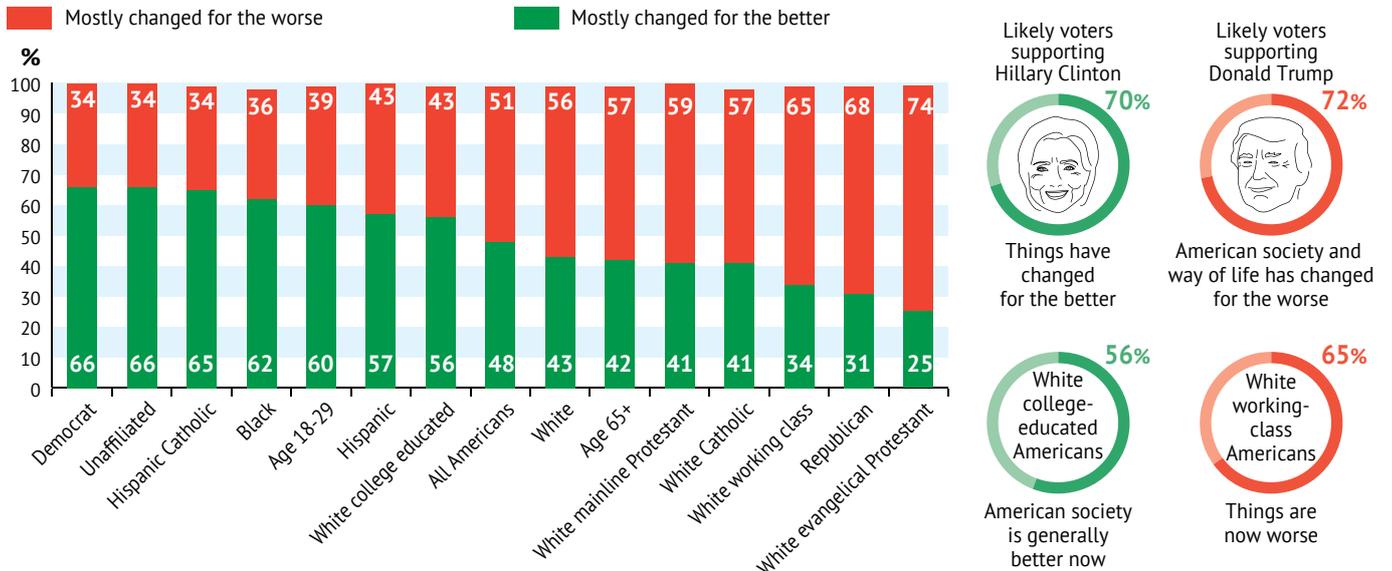
Trumpism is definitely a new phenomenon, but it is rather deeply rooted in the American political history. As was rightly noted by Walter Russel Mead, Trump and Trumpism demonstrate good compliance with the Jacksonian paradigm, i.e. American

nationalist populism. Jacksonianism implies a vision of America and its role in the world that substantially differs from the vision of the Founding Fathers, for whom the top priority was nation-building based on the totality of political principles.

## THE DIVIDE OVER AMERICA'S FUTURE (2016)

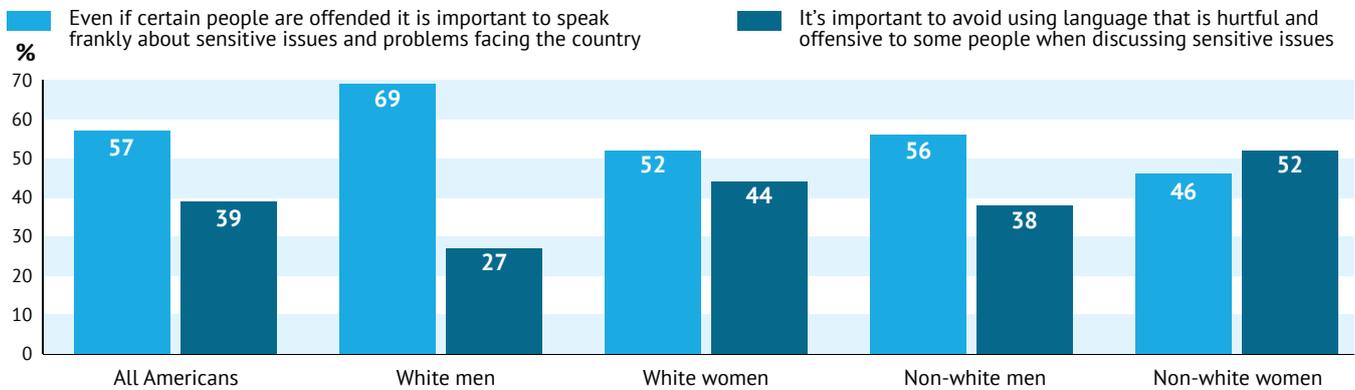
### Nostalgia for the 1950s

Since the 1950s, do you think American culture and way of life has mostly changed for the better, or has it mostly changed for the worse?

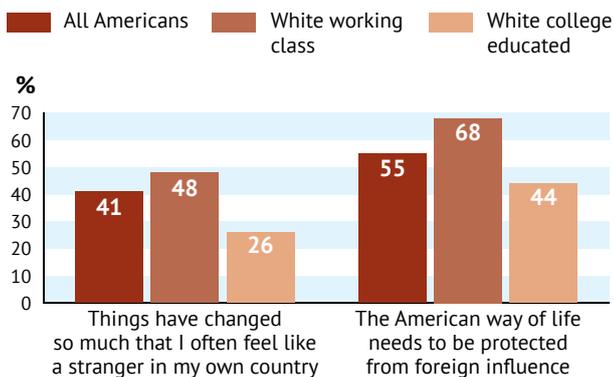


### White Men Most Averse to Politically Correct Language

Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view - even if neither is exactly right?

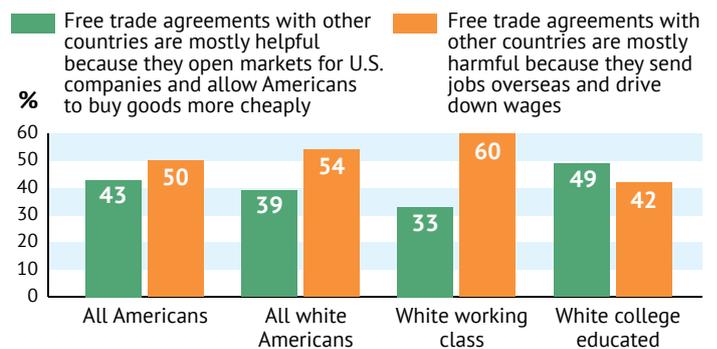


### White Working-Class Americans More Likely to Express Cultural Protectionism



### Large Class Divides Among White Americans on Free Trade

Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view - even if neither is exactly right?



Source: Public Religion Research Institute.

Jacksonian nationalism, on the contrary, is based on the vision of America as the Promised Land conquered, seasoned and sanctified with sweat and blood. Sovereignty is one of the most important categories for Jacksonians. In case of Andrew Jackson protecting or spreading the American sovereignty was not only about the territory, but also about restoration of the federal government's sovereign control over the financial system. In this sense, the Jacksonian "I killed the Bank" is tantamount to Trump's escapades against supranational financial structures stripping Americans of control over their own national economy.

Jacksonianism in America has gone through ups and downs, but it never died. In the evolution of American conservatism, the Jacksonian paradigm was obviously on the rise during the two recent decades until it led to the temporary consolidation of forces

determined to topple the order symbolized by Clintons and Obama. American conservatism is a heterogeneous phenomenon, to be sure, uniting polar movements – from libertarians to paleoconservatists. Trumpism became a reality by virtue of the high demand for a figure capable of consolidating protest sentiments and expressing the hopes of numerous electorally significant interests.

Yet, the success of the rightist populism personified by Trump does not boil down to the figure of an establishment-rejecting rebel. The electorate and stakeholder groups who brought Trump to the White House voice a broader demand for transformation of the American political system, the model of social mobility and access to resources. The fact that this model was turning increasingly closed for millions of Americans, generated Trumpism.

## Public Support for Trumpism

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Talking about the social nature of Trumpism, it is closely related to American conservatism. Therefore, it is not by chance that Trump, who was in contact with both Republicans and Democrats at one time, after all decided to run for office for Republicans because his philosophy corresponds a lot more with the sentiments and interests of the Republican masses, as opposed to the interests of the Republican elite.

A characteristic trend in the western politics of the recent 30 years or so has been that political party elites used their traditional social support as some sort of a guaranteed resource, almost as their private property. According to their logic, "regardless of what the electorate wants and thinks, they will vote for us as they

have no choice anyway, and we will press for our own agenda, which was moving towards the consensus of elites with slight cultural variations". The left politicians were actively involved in this game as well. Moreover, at some point they even formed the vanguard by touting cultural difference as their key narrative.

What does all this imply? It is connected with transformation of the left-of-center mainstream, which had lost ties with its electorate and no longer represented any serious mass forces, having degenerated into a radical wing of liberalism. Quite typically, the left played more ardent liberals than liberals themselves in many cultural issues. In other words, the left turned from anti-liberals into radical liberals.

This trend can explain the popularity of Bernie Sanders in the course of the past election campaign, since he tried to revive the authentic leftist agenda understandable to masses. From this perspective, it is extremely important that Trumpism included not only rightist, but partly also leftist sentiments. In this context one of Trumpism's possible populist analogues is Argentinian Peronism. What do Peronism and other similar populist movements in Latin America originate from? Why did they seem very specific and almost unique from the point of view of European political scientists? Because in sociological terms, there are no established classes in Latin America, while social structures are vague and heterogeneous.

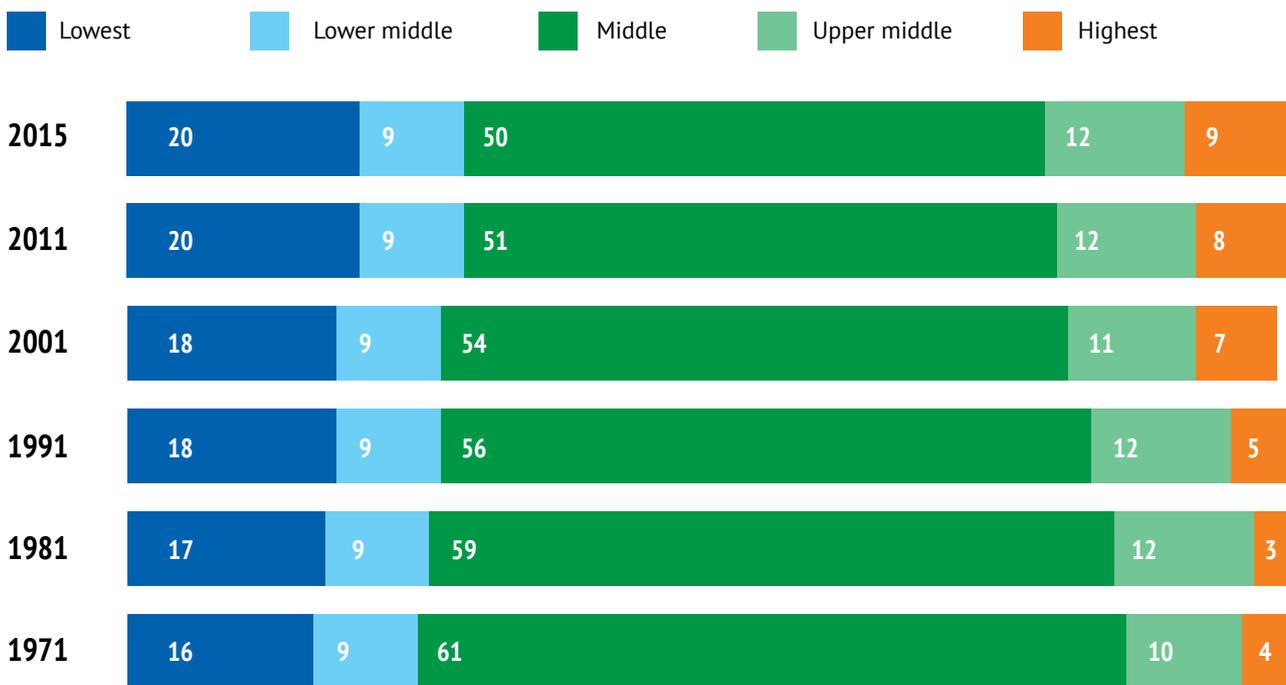
Latin American sociologists also noted that there are several working classes, which

often have absolutely different interests – not only because of racial stratification, but of labor realm as well. Thus, workers of parochial enterprises with low productivity of labor, lack of advanced technologies and patriarchal labor relations are socially alien to workers of transnational corporations.

This is why Latin America with its social instability and messy social structures might well be a breeding ground for populist movements. They were difficult to be defined in accordance with the European traditions as left or right, since they shaped some conglomeration. It should be focused on a charismatic leader who is not a populist in the traditional sense – a demagogue promising everything to all. The leader's figure is rather important in this structure: on the one hand, this person should

## SHRINKING AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS

% of adults in each income tier



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center.

epitomize certain cultural and psychological idiosyncrasies, but also put together and cement these highly heterogeneous, motley and contradictory forces, given that these people, while having some common interests, quite often pursue conflicting agendas. As long as a strong leader is capable of keeping them afloat, such movements exist. It is for this reason that they are given personal names. Thus, it is clear why we refer to Trumpism or Peronism, rather than to a new republicanism or conservatism of the XXI century, or something like that.

The question is why this has all been transported to Western Europe or United States? The answer should also be sought in sociology; the paradox is that under the impact of neoliberalism western societies increasingly resemble Latin American communities, at least outwardly. In other words, we witness devolution and fragmentation of their social structure. The neoliberal discourse and neoliberal economic and social policy led to fragmentation of lower strata of the society, with elite being the only consolidated element. In this environment identity politics, affirmative discrimination, targeted assistance and other policies are both ideological and institutional factors of fragmentation. This made the western society a lot more variegated, thereby creating the very breeding ground for new populist movements being neither leftist, nor rightist. But on the other hand, this fragmentation paradoxically generated the need for reconsolidation and overcoming the rampant fragmentation. Trump's call "Make America Great Again" is not about white men, whatever liberals might say, but about overcoming fragmentation and revival of integrated society in place of numerous minorities. The paradox is that in this context conservatism serves as an ideology oriented towards the majority, or towards creating this

majority – not necessarily a really existing majority, as a matter of fact, but a certain visional majority yet to be created.

Thus, Trumpism not only amalgamates leftist and rightist elements, but also relies on a bloc of extremely contradictory interests. One of the elements is what can be characterized as middle-class bourgeoisie, which is, as a matter of fact, a very conventional category. It is important that mega-bourgeoisie, being very different from the above-mentioned, is extremely impersonated. These are not sole entrepreneurs, but an impersonal techno structure (in the words of Galbraith) under control of the top management. This impersonated management is opposed to personified bourgeoisie; this is very important culturally and even socially. By virtue of its personified nature, this bourgeoisie is not some abstract structure oriented towards the global market, but towards the domestic market instead. This is a matter of principle.

The second group is the working class. When the white working class is said to support Trump, this is not quite correct. He was backed by the working class in its original interpretation, and this is very important. When they say that Trump was elected by white population, this is only part of the truth. The paradox is that Trump was also elected by Afro-Americans and Latin Americans, because it is in the swing northern states, like Wisconsin, the choice made by black people in favor of Trump (albeit statistically insignificant) tipped the scale. Therefore, a very small part of non-white electorate drifting towards Trump was a very important factor that changed the situation quality-wise. The point is that they voted like other workers, but not like their racial peers. Sociologically, we clearly see what the non-whites who voted for Trump and the non-whites

who voted for Hillary Clinton represent. They are sociologically different groups, because non-whites voting for Trump are basically people who worked in the manufacturing industry, while non-whites voting for Clinton were mostly people living on unemployment benefit and dependent on community leaders; therefore, this in fact was a clientele voting. They voted for Clinton because this is what they were told to do by community leaders distributing social assistance.

Another important part in the working segment of Trumpism's social base is what can be described as 'engineering proletariat'. These are not blue collars in the original meaning – they are 'grey collars'. It was the engineering proletariat that incurred greatest losses in the course of deindustrialization in the United States. The point is that while a low-skilled worker losing one job can find another of the same level, engineering proletariat has to downgrade its social status and give up the earlier acquired professional and technical competences, even if their wages are not lowered significantly, when they change for unskilled work. In other words, most advanced workers suffered highest losses. This is why the reindustrialization demanded by Trumpists actually means remodernization following the actual demodernization (with regard to the technical production competences, not modernization of consumption, gadgets, etc.) that resulted from the neoliberal mainstream policy.

What is all this leading up to? The first conclusion is that the social support for Trumpism is extremely heterogeneous, and in the long run it can, even almost inevitably, fall apart into the conditionally leftist and rightist components, as it happened to Peronism. which gave rise to such opposing political figures as Carlos Menem and Néstor Kirchner. As a matter of fact, Montaneros,

the armed leftist rebels in Argentina, were also Peronists. There was even a famous slogan: "Should Evita be alive – she would be a Montanera". In other words, there is a wide range from the extreme right to the ultra-left within peronism. This bloc began crumbling and falling apart while Peron was alive. The leader can seldom keep the balance for too long.

The second conclusion is that this bloc will not fall apart in the near future. It will remain until its objectives, which brought them together, are reached. These are absolutely real objectives that do not reflect any particular sentiments or result from populist demagoguery, but reflect deeply rooted interests. One of them is certainly consolidation of the American domestic market. This is one of the key issues uniting a significant part of industrial bourgeoisie and the working class, including by means of trade unions – a stable domestic market means stable wages and stable wages mean strong unions. That is why it is no coincidence that Trump became one of the first U.S. presidents who immediately called Union leaders to the White House. The left as meant by the mainstream quickly tagged these Union leaders as corrupt ones, whose corruption was only in the attempt to make a deal with Trump. Not that they were corrupt before: they are labelled corrupt, because they are disliked by the left. The left press came up with headlines like "Workers Betray the Left". But in this case a reverse question would be more pertinent: what if the left were the first to betray workers?

It is important to emphasize that sociologically (talking about different tints of Conservatism) Trumpism is not a paternalistic movement. One of the most exciting perspectives opening in connection with Trump is the end of paternalism.

Interestingly enough, the right keep bashing the left for paternalism; in reality, however, it is neoliberals who created paternalistic systems on an unprecedented scale. When accusing the left of paternalism, they really mean a social safety net, which has nothing to do with paternalism, because the safety net treats everyone on an equal footing. Paternalism presumes personified approach in providing social support. Policies such as positive discrimination is paternalism per se, transforming into clientelism.

Trump tries to pursue a policy that will be eroding the clientelist logic. For now, he has achieved moderate success, but the beginning has been set. Moreover, this will be a growing trend. And in the future the success of Trump, if he wants to stay in the White House in 2020 or promote his candidate, who will not necessarily be a Republican, will depend on whether he will be able to ultimately dissolve this system.

So until the problem of strengthening of the domestic market and a number of urgent social problems are solved – the two tasks being somehow interrelated, the social basis of Trumpism won't fall apart. But given the diverse nature of Trumpism, this policy will be extremely ineffective at first stages, and this is the third conclusion. Despite certain common interests, a number of aspects pull

Trumpism every which way. This contradiction is seen in the first practical decisions, because in each particular case there is a leading group defending a certain decision that leads to opposite ends. On the one hand, the bloc will certainly be preserved, but on the other hand, it will be so much on the verge of disintegration, rather remaining consistently ineffective, because of the said contradictions. The liberal resistance and Trump's personal downgrade may, on the one hand, amplify the disunity of his social basis, but on the other hand, it is this forceful liberal resistance that may withhold this bloc in the pro-Trump field.

The British political vocabulary has an interesting term: 'Red Tory' – a trend largely associated with the name of Winston Churchill, which was suppressed by Margaret Thatcher. Churchill was a typical 'Red Tory,' especially in his youth. Later he joined the liberal camp, but then came back to the conservatives. Churchill could productively interact with Labor ministers in the coalition cabinet and actually implement their agenda in 1941–1944. What was suppressed in England and what may resurface again at present, will be clearly associated with Trumpism in America. If this raises a wave of pro-Trump activism, we will then deal with a revolutionary situation, because the current anti-Trump campaign may sooner or later cause an increase of his electorate activity.

## Who Is Mr Trump: Socio-Political Analogues

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We should reiterate that the victory of Donald Trump was a stunning surprise for the 'old' elite, mainstream media and expert community. His calls "to drain the Washington swamp" provoked a slashing

attack on Trump from his adversaries. This definitely led to pejorative labels, comparing Trump with Hitler, etc. The origin of these stereotyped clichés is understandable and does not require any analysis. What really

matters, is that despite the marked uniqueness of Trump in the U.S. contemporary politics, many compared him with other American presidents (or presidential candidates), both Republican and Democratic. In particular, Trump was compared with Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, Barry Goldwater, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter and even Barak Obama. This phenomenon seems very interesting. On the one hand, it is psychologically important as a defensive posture against absolute novelty and an absolute stranger. The attempt to pigeonhole this stranger in the already established political landscape in the United States, outlined by political scientists and sociologists, makes the reaction to novelty and erosion of this landscape less painful. On the other hand, given the aforementioned broad and non-uniform social base of Trumpism, comparing the new president to some of his predecessors allows drawing upon the historical experience while building a real strategic policy of Trump (if he can and will carry out his election campaign promises). In any case, this patchwork-style attempt to compare Trump with a number of his predecessors with their different policies and personalities has no analogues in U.S. politics and reflects more significant in-depth processes going on in the American society.

Comparing Trump with Nixon implies above all the perception of Trump as a 'classical', 'old-fashioned' conservative without neoliberal ideologically charged overtones. This is how Nixon is typically represented. Another factor of their similarity, besides conservatism, is political pragmatism (especially in foreign policies) purged from any ideology. The third factor is the staff rotation, inviting to leading offices of some individuals, who had never been a part of the political establishment, but are ideologically close

to the President (some even compare Steve Bannon with Henry Kissinger). An allusion to impeachment is also used.

Whenever Trump is positioned as a 'frantic' and 'fiery' conservative crusader, rather than a 'classical' conservative, he is often compared with Goldwater. Many see quite a few thematic and stylistic parallels between the presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Trump's campaign. As regards the sociological particulars, many remind of Goldwater's famous phrase that America's main foe is the younger generation, who are easily converted to communism, betraying the American ideals and values. Trump never said anything like that, to be sure, but senior and middle-aged people prevail among his proponents. Trump's opponents also give themselves a treat, hinting that a group of American psychiatrists came to the conclusion that Goldwater was insane, unable to be responsible for his actions and absolutely unfit for the presidential office.

The conservative crusade makes Trump somewhat similar to Reagan as well. Both are charismatic leaders prioritizing the swelling military budget. There are some similarities between Reaganomics and Trump's economic program. The main difference between the two is that Reaganomics actually ruled out public regulation, while Trump needed tougher public regulation of both tariffs and industries for his election economic agenda to be implemented.

This brings us to yet another comparison between Trump and Franklin Roosevelt. The need for stiffer public control of 'Trumponomics' evokes direct parallels with Roosevelt's New Deal. From social and emotional perspectives, the social contract with the electorate proclaimed by Trump in his Gettysburg speech also echoes the New Deal. Other similarities between the models of Trump and Roosevelt proceed from

the significance of the leftist component on the grassroots level for building up the social support.

Yet, Roosevelt is not the last Democratic president compared to Trump. Another comparison is Trump and Johnson. Indeed, the radical transformation of the American society, Trump called upon in his Gettysburg speech, and in the very slogan “Make America Great Again”, stylistically and often essentially is similar to Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society program. The matter does not only regard “greatness” or the scope of ambitions, but also allusions to the possible results of such programs.

Another comparison stems above all from the novelty effect: Trump as Kennedy. The bright star of Kennedy, his rapid ascent to the political Olympus is very similar to the quick rise of Donald Trump, despite their generational and other differences. Furthermore, it is Kennedy and Trump who did not shy away from appointing their close relatives to the key posts in the administration. Finally, it is also true that Trump’s opponents, talking about the system repelling any novice and stranger, also cannot help hinting at the fate of John Kennedy.

The next comparison is Trump like Carter. For all their dissimilarity, they are similar in that Carter was the only president prior to Trump who came to “cleanse the Washington swamp”. If we remember the post-Watergate context, alienation of the broad layers of society from the old Washington elite and demand for reforms, the whole of it made the Carter election situation similar to Trump’s election.

And finally, the most unexpected comparison: Trump like Obama. While fighting Obama’s heritage and being his direct opponent, Trump had a similar appeal

to the electorate. Opinion polls reveal that four out of five positive qualities of Obama and Trump that appealed to voters in 2008 and 2016, respectively, coincide.

As estimated by Pew Research,<sup>7</sup> Trump’s strongest qualities, in the opinion of respondents, were his ability to keep promises (60%), “make everything work” (54%) and strong leadership (49%). Likewise, Obama’s leadership and effective management were also rated very high in 2008.<sup>8</sup> Based on these data, it can be surmised that those changes (“Yes, We Can”) and electoral demand that brought the Democrat to power in 2008, also brought Donald Trump to the White House in the last campaign, as he epitomized the same social demand that, alas, remained unmet during the Democrat’s two tenures.

In both cases we see the effect of novelty and expectations (maybe overstated) from the “new and historically unprecedented” image of the President. The only thing that makes Obama different from Trump in terms of sociological anticipation, is that Obama, according to the respondents, understands the daily problems experienced by common Americans, while Trump does not. All the rest is more or less the same. Respondents never mentioned similar values of the President and their own as the key factor that attracts them. As for management and public administration, both Obama and Trump were positively rated by voters.

<sup>7</sup> *In First Month, Views of Trump Are Already Strongly Felt, Deeply Polarized*, 2017, Pew Research Center, February 16. Available from: [http://www.people-press.org/2017/02/16/in-first-month-views-of-trump-are-already-strongly-felt-deeply-polarized/1\\_6-8/](http://www.people-press.org/2017/02/16/in-first-month-views-of-trump-are-already-strongly-felt-deeply-polarized/1_6-8/)

<sup>8</sup> Jones, J, 2009, *Obama Gets High Marks on Leadership, Empathy*, Gallup, July 24. Available from: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/121880/obama-gets-high-marks-leadership-empathy.aspx>

## The Economy of Trumpism

Talking about the economic foundations of Trumpism, it draws on the classical Republican political logic, i.e. on economic protectionism, which was normal for the USA of the XIX century. This protectionism further converges with economic regulation which cannot be dispensed within modern-day economy, especially in America where it is necessary to implement such programs as development of high-speed railway transport. Social and health expenditures also need to be rationally administered that they might be effective both for people and the U.S. economy, to disable parasitic forms of business. The government must steer the financial mechanism by taking the Federal Reserve System (FRS) under its control instead of it being at nod.

Trump only dropped a hint at a new economic policy, but it can be presumed that this hint has yet to be disclosed, resulting in a triune system: protectionism, regulation and welfare state; the conservative nature of Trumpism is on hand here. We see an appeal to America's Golden Age of the 1950s–1960s. And when we see Trump surrounded by many aged people, occasionally called “Trump's old folks”, this is not accidental. They are more classic Nixonian or maybe even Eisenhower-era Republicans, who participated in building the prosperous America and remember the economic boom. In those days it was the income, not bank loans, that made any person part of the middle class.

One of the problems faced by modern-day United States is that quite often the middle class live on tick. For Americans, this is an outgrowth of both the social and political crisis. And while U.S. Democrats argue that it is normal and loans are fine, Trump's election showed that most Americans prefer income growth to debt growth, especially because the debt has been swelling recently. Moreover, it is on the debt growth that economic stabilization was built

upon under Obama. The growing corporate debt made Deutsche Bank announce in the fall of 2016 that a recession is inevitable in the U.S., since the debt of common Americans has grown. In other words, people's income does not cover even their current expenses and people pay interest to banks even on their daily spending, not only on home or car loans.

This largely ensured Trump's political success, but also sparked a general movement among Americans that helped to lay the foundations of Trumpism as a new approach to the settlement of old issues. In recent decades Americans saw enough of the target solution of general problems, the aforementioned affirmative action, and opted for an alternative. This is the difference between the classical Republican approach to problem solution and neoliberal democratic approaches.

Nevertheless, we see how the current political and partly economic crisis in the United States differs from a similar situation in the times of the Great Depression. Economists are fond of comparing the current crisis, especially its first wave of 2008–2009, with the Great Depression in the U.S. back in 1929–1933. Two developments in times of the Great Depression spared President Franklin Roosevelt many problems and enabled him to pursue the economic policy he planned. The first one was a revolution in the Democratic Party. Throughout the 1920s new Democrats were counteracting corrupt old Democrats “lining their pockets”, according to their critics. Roosevelt stood at the helm of the already renewed party; in other words, there was a well-organized political system backed by millions of American voters who believed that this political force would make a difference.

The second fact was that Roosevelt won in the wake of the crisis exacerbation. Trump entered the White House before the financial bubble burst. Trump kept talking about

the bubble busting policy throughout 2016. He said it would be expedient to let the bubble burst, but it has been inflated even more than in 2007 on the eve of the First wave of the global economic crisis.

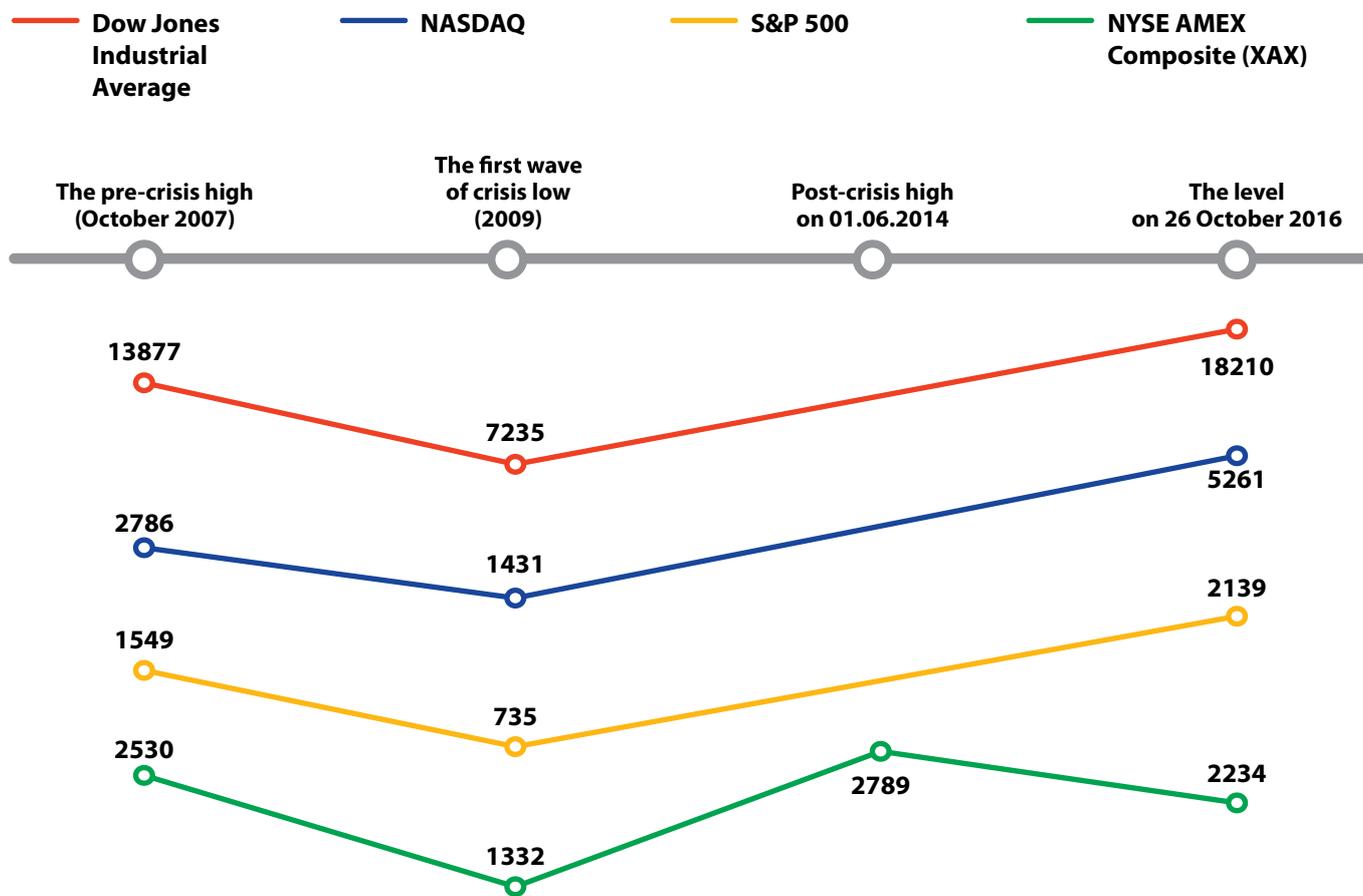
The following infographics was published in the report “Donald Trump and Economic Context”, released one week before Trump’s election.

This report was presented by the Laboratory of Plekhanov Russian University of Economics and the Institute of Globalization and Social Movements. The data of key American market indices were processed, and it became clear that they are on the level that

almost 1.5 times exceeds the level of 2007, on the eve of the U.S. stock market collapse in 2008. In other words, not only did the U.S. stock market overcome the fall of 2008–2009, bouncing back from the minimums of 2009; it also exceeded 1.5 times the level of 2007, i.e. the financial bubble is overinflated.

Trump understands that this bubble must burst, but, to his bad luck, the bubble has not burst yet. Why is it so important for the bubble to burst? Until a revolution occurs within the Republican party, most Republicans will not be pro-Trump. If Trump could barely win the Republican National Convention and the entire campaign, at least in economy he

U.S. STOCK INDEX: PRE-CRISIS HIGHS AND CURRENT LEVELS



Source: Report: Donald Trump and Economic Context // Plekhanov Russian University of Economics/IGSO.

should have a free hand. When FRS raised the key rate from 0.75 to 1.0%, it limited Trump's ability to carry out his economic plans, even timid ones. The FRS decision made any efforts almost futile, since any potential savings will have to be given to FRS as part of the debt service. The interest on bonds is not high, but the very debt is close to \$20 trillion.

This is how Trump is now entrapped: "you promised people a lot, but we will not give you money". This exacerbates Trump's blockade and the political situation in the whole country. President is destined to combat FRS and part of the financial elite, but not all of the banks, some of which can behave differently.

Trump's policy is based on the interests of middle capital and aimed at weakening big capital in favor of the middle capital. This is a very important contradiction which will determine the entire dynamics of American politics. Why? Because big American capital has apparently outgrown the U.S. market, the American nation and has already entered a sharp collision with the American medium-sized business rooted in the local market, not only the construction market, although the fact that Trump comes from this business environment is quite indicative.

The word 'profit' is very important here. The Chinese economy is counteracted for the sake of profit redistribution in the American market. This is fighting for the profit, rather than net redistribution of product sales or jobs. The profitability of USA-based companies has dwindled in recent years. At least several studies showed that things have gone awry, corporate debt keeps growing, profitability is either zero, negative or very small in case of manufacturing firms. This did not take a toll on the stock market, however, with its upward trend. Judging by the stock market, everything is fine in the American economy, official unemployment standing at only 5%.

Yet, for some reasons, American workers do not see the picture in rosy colors, and sociologists believe that their discontent is justified. This contradiction can bring about serious upheavals.

We have similar historic precedents. In times of the French revolution there was a very acute conflict between big and middle capital: big capital was interested in close links with Britain. In 1786 the king signed a trade agreement with England to the benefit of French big owners: he linked French trade with the English market. These were mainly wine, agricultural products and luxury items exported to the growing English market, to please the French nobility and large bourgeoisie, while others threatened with bankruptcy were dissatisfied. The revolt of the middle capital against the big capital led to the French revolution.

We now see a similar situation in the United States, because big capital has become transnational here. It is interested in the strong dollar and does not care about the situation in the home market or that the strong dollar means low exports from the United States. It is obvious that when all currencies are weak, including Euro and GBP, and the currencies of the BRICS nations are in fact devaluated, save for RMB, which is but slightly devaluated, it has become very difficult to export anything from the U.S. With bulky import the main source of GDP growth is burgeoning public outlay due to the debt increase. This is what happened under Obama, with debt and public expenses growing along with GDP.

Trump's economic 'foes', if we divide them, include financial capital, FRS, USD and China, the latter being a collateral adversary. Trump behaves as a classical Republican of the XIX century. Trump said, at least during pre-election period, that they would trade with China, but Chinese goods would not be

on sale in the USA. They would not be banned, but heavy duties would be introduced. Trump has further increased the already huge tariffs on Chinese steel, introduced in times of Obama. The Chinese leadership makes frequent statements like “let us sit down and discuss all problems at a table.” The United States seems to agree, but builds up the support of projects deemed dangerous in Beijing.

The base of Trumpism is the American domestic market. It is vital that this is a large market, where contradictions accrued during the crisis years and prevalence of neoliberal politics can be settled. Because the American economy can grow, then by crowding Chinese goods from the extensive home market, building new railways, housing as well as the Mexican Wall it is possible to give the U.S. economy a strong impulse. The U.S. market is oversaturated with Chinese merchandise to the extent of stifling U.S. manufacturing industries.

Yet, during the first months of his presidency Trump was unable to push through his agenda, since he was blocked. This does not mean that this blockade will put an end to Trumpism, since it does not represent an accidental historic phenomenon.

Trumpism did not rise from dissatisfaction of the American society, but from its protests. The Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party movements reflected the political crisis in the United States. A viable outcome was a new tradeoff between Republicans and Democrats, which stabilized the budgetary policy but did not pull the economy out of crisis. All hopes crumbled by the end of the second presidential term of Obama. Yet, those hopes were based on some elements now cast away by Trump as well; we should take a note of them.

The first element is slashing budgetary expenditures. During Obama's first term the public debt was growing faster than

during his second term. The second element is the attempt to implement a protectionist agenda in a broader space, beyond the United States, specifically in Trans-Pacific (TPP) and Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment (TTIP) Partnerships. This was an attempt to blend American protectionism with financial globalization, spreading the protectionist policy to the zone that can seemingly be kept under control and thus ensuring the growth of both American economy and the economy of this friendly zone.

This policy came to an end, when Trump announced the exit from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This was likely just stating the demise of the TPP as an organization and project, because the U.S. economy did not grow. At the time of starting the partnership in 2014 the American economy demonstrated growth and revival that triggered a large inflow of capital to the United States where optimism reigned supreme. Yet, the picture was different by the time Trump had disbanded the TPP. It comes out that the U.S. failed to implement an intermediate pre-Trump protectionist plan or even convince Americans in its usefulness.

In 2016 Trump won his first battle in American politics after being voted into the White House. The second battle is combating the Congress, FRS and implementing at least some parts of his economic program. This second battle, and maybe a third one if it is to happen, are being prepared for at the moment. Trump needs to win interior battles, addressing American ills. President's most provocative initiatives rejected by the Congress may usher in new dynamics: turning anti-Trump congressmen into outcasts. The unwillingness of the Congress to collaborate with Trump exasperates the American electorate who wants the initiatives of the new President to start working. This is important, given that the hopes

of American voters were twice frustrated under Obama. Trumpism must unlock its potential in the home economic policy; only then will

it take its final shape. Right now there are too many promises and allusions, but almost no actual work backing them.

## Reaction of Trump's Opponents: the Eschatology of Trumpism

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Contemporary moods related to discussing the populist turn in the political process are eloquently depicted in the Bible. The conviction that the victory of Donald Trump at the U.S. presidential elections will be followed by a collapse of the old system is essentially eschatological. This is anticipation of the imminent Doomsday, the “latter days” of the traditional world as we know it, if not the end of this world: the fall of political establishment, the end of globalization, and even the Leviathans of integration projects that will not stand the frontal attack of Brexits.

To a certain extent this state is predetermined by the former actions of politicians, when the threat of populism, especially of the rightist variety, was not taken seriously following the ‘this can never happen’ logic. Opinion polls repeatedly confirmed the pertinence of this attitude, stressing the marginality of radicalism. Yet, brewing under the shadow of weighty opinions is a large-scale discontent with both the political class and engaged intellectuals. At some point the deprivation of citizens became excessive so that system-oriented forces (most often, centrists) experienced a number of painful electoral defeats: in Spain the Podemos movement won 20% of the entire electorate off the reel, UKIP raised its head in UK, while 5 Stelle marched triumphantly across Italy.

This shift was not only caused by migration fears or growing inequality

on account of the financial and economic crisis, but also by two other circumstances, which still attract insufficient attention of researchers. First of all, radicalization of the political discourse became possible due to the ‘identity shock’, which became a direct consequence of globalization processes. Despite the plentiful praise of the ‘flat world’, the population in developed nations proved unprepared to replace the former national identities with multicultural cosmopolitanism. Even in case of structures that could potentially emerge as mouthpieces of a new identity, as was the case with the European Union, political mistakes and ‘modernizing’ exclusion of citizens resulted in the new self-identity rooting in the minds of every tenth citizen at best. Overstated expectations are also to blame: as was once noted by Giovanni Sartori, the worst enemy of democracy is a demand for a better democracy, whereas integration and globalization projects were traditionally accompanied by the “faster, better, more affordable” rhetoric, which for many people was divorced from reality.

Secondly, the resentment populism proved to have been engendered by tinkering reforms. After amassing slighted and disenfranchised citizens, reformers opted for the worst scenario of developing their policy by reversing it, thus only aggravating the already rampant deprivation. By and in itself the policy of neoliberalism was an

extremely specific initiative that could not but lead to growing inequality. However, when systemic programs are not brought to fruition, but transformed again and again, this exacerbates the crisis.

Talking populism as a consistent ideological movement in this environment is futile because: a) populism, being a way of thinking rather than an ideology, is organically averse to conceptualization or reification, and b) political populists do not need any notional austerity, giving preference to more convenient murky wording.

This pronounced eschatological implications on the part of Trump's opponents spread from America to Europe. We should note again that the first months after Trump's victory passed in anticipation of a ripple effect, when under the influence of his

success the old status quo will start crumbling in some EU nations. This is why the French presidential elections should also be assessed from this eschatological perspective. While nobody took Trump seriously in the course of his election campaign, following his triumph neoliberal forces braced themselves, as if for the final battle, against Marine Le Pen (and Francois Fillon): when the old status quo was at stake and on the edge, the victory of Le Pen (and maybe also Fillon) would fully destroy the established political system. This eschatological take on events resulted in neoliberals rallying around Emmanuelle Macron and in an extremely dirty and rowdy nature of the French election campaign. Without these deliberate implications of the 'final battle', the course of the French elections could be different.

## Trumpism and Europe: Is Replication Possible?

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However, Macron's success in France is not the end of the 'final battle' between neoliberals and Trumpists. Eschatological views on Trump lead in turn to a tempting projection of the American scenario to European politics – not only in a general continental context, but as applied to each of the national cases. With the tide of migrant flows rising, almost all populist movements in the U.S. and Europe have one thing in common: peculiar nativism. But that is perhaps almost the only similarity.

Almost – because at least the establishment's impotency and estrangement from the masses make the American problems similar to the predicament of the Old World. Irrespective of the left and right orientation

of populism, it exposes the incapacity to address the existing problems within the former structural framework. In other words, it lays bare a serious political crisis of the European space as regards its integration and problems specific to each European nation. Is populism a way out of the crisis? No, because the worst thing that may happen to a populist is his victory, Trump's case convincingly demonstrating the truth of this statement. Is populism a chance to find a way out? Rather yes, than no, however one additional condition should exist for this outcome to be possible: the lack of destabilizing actions capable of restricting the opposition to populism. In other words, by retaining a dialogue mode (or initiating such a mode), populists will indeed play a positive role

in sociopolitical evolution, or else the current situation is fraught with daunting conflicts, rather than a revival of the conservative 'Europe of nations'.

At any rate, given Brexit and the rise of Trump, which signify profound upheavals for the western world on both sides of the Atlantic, there are weighty grounds to talk about an antisystemic 'rightist revolt'. Who has revolted against whom or what? And what are the possible consequences? How should we respond?

In general terms we are witnessing a change of eras and a related change in ways and styles of political thinking. Not in vain did Zygmunt Bauman, analyzing the civilizational dynamics of the early XXI century, applied the term *Interregnum* used by Antonio Gramsci in his 'Prison Notebooks' to describe the anticipation of radical reforms caused by social disruptions of the Great Depression. Gramsci meant upcoming simultaneous and profound changes of the sociopolitical and legal order. Today, as at the time of Gramsci's imprisonment in Torino, many global concepts, institutes and mechanisms demonstrate progressive dysfunctionality, with no full-fledged replacement of these pillars heaving in sight for now.

Under these conditions the political scene on various levels, from local to global, is being entered by forces interested to speed up the demolition of the ineffective order where too many actors and groups turned out to be outsiders. Yet, formulating an intelligible alternative is a lot more daunting challenge which can nevertheless be observed in competitive political systems, where electoral procedures enable the mainstream opponents to make a statement and offer the electorate a programme, which can be described as creative destruction. It can be situational, focused on one or two problems,

which are crucial or considered as such under the current circumstances.

The revolt against the neoliberal political-ideological mainstream of national and supranational elites is compound, strangely blending seemingly incompatible aspirations and interests. Above all, we see a protest against globalization, for the first time in history supported by significant electoral groups in both the United States and Europe. It suddenly dawned upon these groups that the current thrust of globalization processes marginalizes them. The migration threat and fears of cultural identity being undermined just open a list of globalization effects quite unexpected for a western man in the street. The erosion of national sovereignty is increasingly often interpreted by many western voters as the loss of control over one's own destiny.

The revolt against the neoliberal mainstream is largely turned against its political-ideological, discursive and sometimes even aesthetic components related to postmodernism. At least the 'rightist revolt' is an organic reprobation of eclecticism, construing any truth as relative and conventional, relegation of the common good principle to something of secondary importance, etc. This is also a revolt against political correctness as a deeply layered system of double standards, tabooing and self-censorship.

As regards the 'rightist revolt' in EU the main difference of the U.S. situation from the European one is that internal split is not a surprise. The bipartisan consensus is a thing of the past – at least starting in mid-1990s, when Newt Gingrich (a close friend of Donald Trump) led the Contract with America resulted in deeper polarization within the American elite. In EU countries (at least in 'old Europe' as referred to Donald Rumsfeld) the situation was different. 1990s and 2000s were characterized by gravitation towards the political center and

even partial ideological convergence of political mainstream parties. But now the polarization trend and the demand of voters for a sharply defined stance has reached the 'old Europe'.

Under greatest pressure are traditional conservatives increasingly affected by rightist conservative populism with its radical ideas gradually transforming the respectable conservative philosophy. In the meantime, mainstream conservatives try to keep away from 'non-handshakable' populists, while poaching some of their slogans, tactics and thus increasingly distorting the classical ideological matrix of political conservatism.

In Europe the rightist populism is now equivalent to Euroscepticism, even though Euroscepticism is not tantamount to rightist populism. Nevertheless, the very existence of the European Union and its institutes is like a gift of heaven for rightist populists in Europe, because this gives them a universal basis for bashing the political mainstream as the key instrument for stripping European nations of their sovereign power, stressing that supranational authorities have no legitimacy within the framework of the national state.

The problem of political sovereignty, incidentally serving as a political basis for the rapprochement of Eurosceptic activists with modern-day U.S. Jacksonians, is coming to the fore.

Ralf Dahrendorf succinctly formulated the gist of the problem almost a quarter of a century ago: "Constitutions institutionalize the rights, which are legal guarantees, rather than just empty promises and nice words... The rights necessitate instruments of coercion or enforcement bodies. All three classical branches of power find their place here. But these authorities can function only in a perfect form of the nation state. The ones rejecting the nation state also lose effective guarantees of their main rights. Those who

consider the nation state superfluous also announce the civil rights superfluous, even if unintentionally."<sup>9</sup>

In the modern political context this logic provides a strong posture for those willing to embrace it, and gathers further momentum, when aversion to Eurocratic elite is supplemented by disillusionment in the national pro-European elites. The latter are not only willing to assign sovereign rights to Brussels, but also pursue a common migration policy (i.e. beyond the pale of the nation state), a common policy towards minorities, making a case for special norms and values essentially based on self-censorship and actual renunciation of the cultural-historical foundations behind the national identity. If it is accompanied by the aggravation of socioeconomic problems, the electorate changes its perception of globalization turning its ugly face on the European voter.

What more general conclusions can be drawn?

As for the outlook of conservatism and its transformation under the impact of populism, one should be more cautious here. The 'rightist revolt' in the United States and Europe is global in terms of its political repercussions. Trump is a very American story; Marine Le Pen is a French story. For now, the national context retains primacy, so the development of events will vary in different nations.

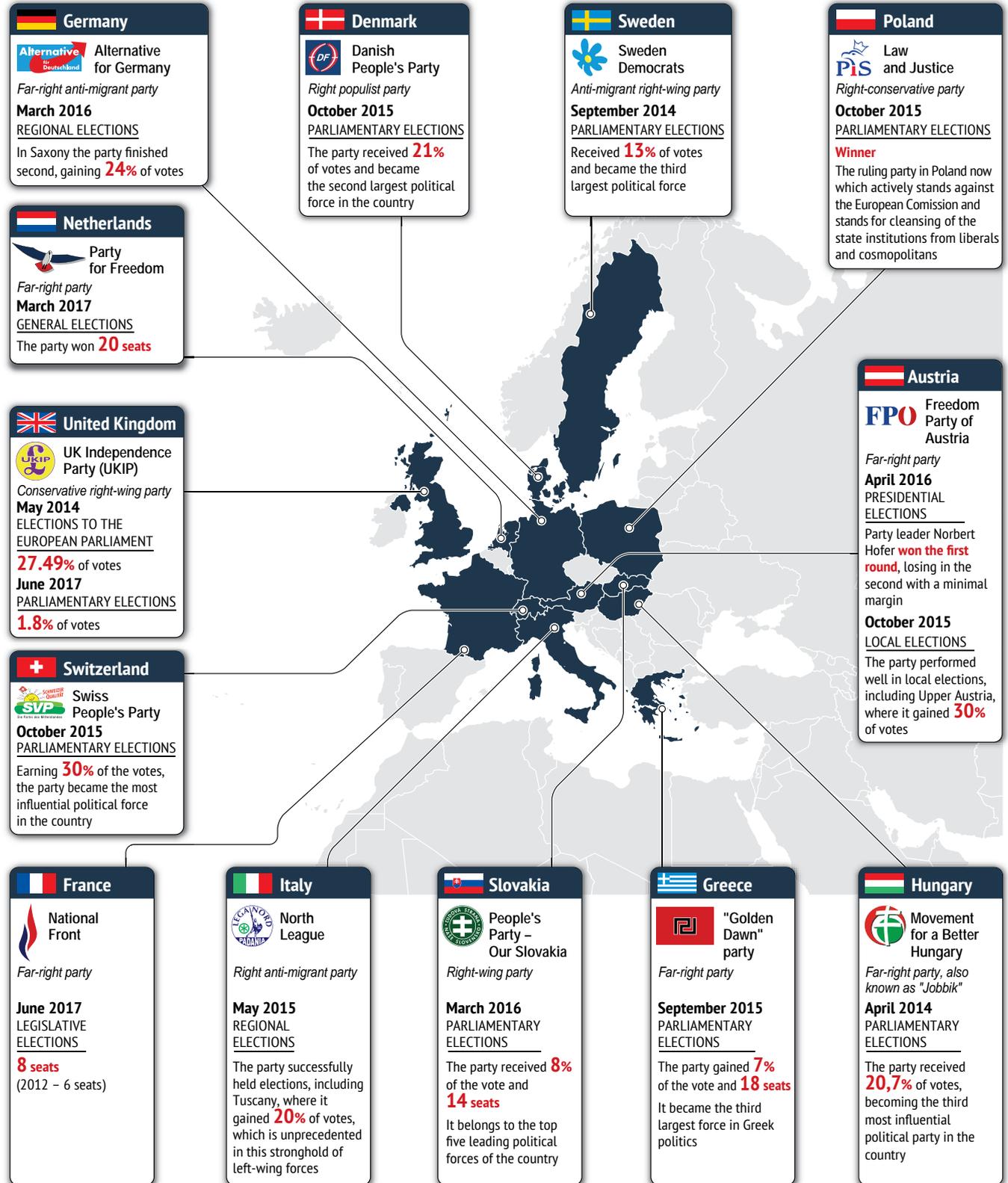
Somewhere we will see traditional conservatives crashing and being replaced with rightist populists, but in other countries conservatives will borrow the populist rhetoric, evolving in this direction, incurring painful losses, but nevertheless retaining stable positions.

Britain is quite an indicative case in this respect. It is obvious that the post-Brexit

<sup>9</sup> Dahrendorf, R., 1993, 'Die Sache mit der Nation'; in 'Grenzfälle: über neuen und alten Nationalismus', Hrsg.: Jeismann M., Ritter H. Leipzig, s. 109.

EUROPE'S RIGHT TURN

Migrant crisis in Europe has seriously shaken the traditional political establishment and increased the influence of the extreme right-wing nationalist parties. The discontent of the population is also fueled by globalization fears and loss of national identity



conservatives will be different from the pre-Brexit ones. The Party of Independence played its part, but it is the Tory who have to implement the new agenda. It is next to impossible for the British Tory to become pro-European once again. But while implementing the exit program, they still try to steer clear of Nigel Farage and his followers.

On the whole, the red lines will move further away and populist forces will not only grab more seats in European parliaments, but will also get involved in government coalitions in some places. And then the liberal West will still become different from what it was a quarter of a century ago, at the dawn of the post-history era that was never ushered.

## Trumpism and Russia

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What should Russia's attitude towards the 'rightist revolt' be? The temptation of simple decisions is difficult to resist: Russia is interested to revise the post-bipolar world order, which is perceived as unfair; it criticizes the current globalization model while capitalizing on the opening opportunities to the best of its ability; many in Russia reject the postmodernist value matrix. Consequently, those who contribute to the erosion of the world order, whether it is deliberately or not, criticize globalization and question the values prevalent in the West can be viewed as our allies. But we should be careful not to go too far.

The western media did their best to place Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump within one symbolic field. This is not to say that the Russian leadership should thus position their nation. Rather it is necessary to be always open and ready for dialogue with everybody. In fact, any force or politician trying to get

western nations back from postmodernist heaven to the earth of national interests, i.e. to the frame of reference where an intelligible dialogue is possible, could be a potential partner for Russia. In the meantime, we should be aware of potential risks: the language of national interests can be better understood, but the interests can be antagonistic. The conflicts of national interests can be a lot more intensive and dangerous, than conflicts around values.

If Moscow suddenly decided that it should align with the rightist populism, this would mean the narrowing of political opportunities. Moreover, Russia would not only share the success of these forces, but also their failures (which are inevitable). Therefore, it is important to stake on a certain frame of reference for the dialogue, acceptable to Moscow, Europe and our overseas partners, rather than on certain political-ideological forces or movements.



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[valdaiclub.com](http://valdaiclub.com)

[valdai@valdaiclub.com](mailto:valdai@valdaiclub.com)

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