

Life after tragedy

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No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. We need to overcome the problem by rising to the next level

Albert Einstein

Before we start discussion about the most important, I will touch the secondary within the goal of this article. A couple of words on systemic crisis which is being experienced in today's politics, economics, culture, on various levels throughout the world. Specifying its indices – would imply repeating what is already said. However, by the law of genre, it is necessary to name the most important of them.

The closest one is right before our eyes – crisis of the EU itself and its ideas regarding the future of the union. In 2005 the European constitution was buried, and then came Brexit. Many questions, but few answers and even less hope. Process, initiated long ago in Roman Palazzo Chigi in the sixth decade of its history has spluttered and seems like even turned backwards.

Globalization crisis. Behind this *round* and not very clear term I suggest to consider aligning – natural and involuntary, as well as unification of different countries and territories under the rule of the United States. This project in the last years has also started to rein in in the face of growing resistance. Why? Is it bad when everybody is doing equally well? Why is globalization process passing so anxiously?

Because of the same reason the communism is not possible and *levelling*: people are born different – with different talents, predispositions, and even inherited weak spots. Where one has enough, the other is seeking for more. Even in so regulated model, as was the Soviet Union, there was capacity for economic nonconformity. Regardless of fear from criminal prosecution, there were those who on principle worked for themselves, not for the benefit of kolkhoz, preferring to think with their own mind and find their own solutions.

Countries and nations – also have different history, culture, genotype, and temperament. Unlikely today you'll find (or in foreseeable future) many countries, which will be ready, like Ukraine, to change their “civilizational choice”. At least the Chinese, Arabs, Russians, Asian Indians – these all are definitely not ready for it.

Both burning away processes, euro integration and globalization have experienced their “golden times” in the 90s. Preconditions for it were created by the fall of the Soviet system: nature abhors the vacuum and the vacuum emerging in the Eastern Europe started to fill up from the West. It was the time of euphoric expansion of the European project: new territories joined with their resources – human, material, technological, as well as new sales markets. So, the average “core European” started living during that period better and more comfortably.

But soon after the process started to “work”, it started to run down. Why – it is already clear. American diplomat, father of the political deterrence of USSR, George Kennan explained it using a simple example: there is a wind-up toy car which goes forward, it is going to continue the movement until the spring loses windup or there is a wall on its way. So, to stop the toy car, obstacle is needed.

Peter I could and wanted to learn from the West: “And he raised his cup to the health of his teachers”- it is said about the Swedish after Poltava. Current Russian leader is also taking emperor for a model. He started to use “deterrence” right after NATO and EU were joined by the former Soviet Republics (maybe even earlier). Operation in Georgia, after that in Ukraine a parapet was built in front of the Western “toy car” which made its movement forward problematic for the years to come, and maybe even decades.

Crisis of living standard. Today the quality of life in Europe not only does not grow, but it literally decreases. It happens in the face of aging population, problems with budget filling and the fact that many countries were left without existing economy, by moving their production to third world countries. They wanted to live like rentiers. If you are interested you can read Trump’s pre-election texts regarding this matter.

Financial-budget crisis in EU and USA is strongly felt through the current politics of repressions against offshores, which were created long ago for servicing interests of international corporations and to avoid paying taxes by the local elites. Offshores were doing great, they were the must-have “underwear” you should not show.

Today everything has changed, the eyes are open, absolute suppression of the offshores. Which indicates willingness to squeeze everything there still is into budgets. By the way in the 70s a research was conducted authors of which claimed that the budget is capable of collecting up to maximum 80% taxes. If you try to squeeze out more – disobedience and revolts start.

About the crisis of international law. Historically it was harmonizing the rights of different countries, serving as a common denominator. “Pacta sunt servanda”, the agreements had to be honoured – this principle since old ages ensured predictability and stability in international affairs. But not today. Especially obvious it became after the operation in Yugoslavia.

Today it is normal, if you are strong, to ignore international laws, substituting them with your own national regulations. Or which is even “cooler” – with your “values”. What are “values” and how do they work – it is unlikely someone is going to explain it to you comprehensively. But the principle of values is broadly used: “If you do not share our values – you cannot be with us. You are an enemy”.

I think that the “value” issue is philosophical and moral, not political. And if we are talking about real, unchanging values – those are the ones Moses was given by God on Sinai hill... The rest is from devil.

Leadership crisis, the problem of absence of leaders. Mechanics of politically correct selection caused leader deficit, lack of passionate personalities capable of seeing goals, setting them and defending, capable of achieving them. Today it is like in a Russian saying: in an empty field, a beetle is meat. And in such “aquarium” even Frau Merkel is perceived by many as present-day Churchill, only in a skirt...

Democratic institution crisis. With the rise of communication and PR technologies the elections have lost their main purpose. They ceased to be an act of declaration of will and became a field for manipulation and marketing campaigns. Today the elections are won by those who remind of masterful PR agents and marketers, feeling the moods and having ability to gratify them, not by those who are able to offer topical ideas to public and bring them to life.

What does double victory in presidential and parliamentary elections of Macron mean? What is it – is it a failure of Theresa May? It means that the electorate is fed up – both active parties and their leaders – they are ready to lightheadedly “turn their backs to the old world” and vote even for Mickey Mouse, or Harry Potter – only to *change the picture*. The rest depends on funding.

One more thing. Macron and Trump expressed themselves during pre-election campaigns as protectionism idea defenders – so, de facto, they are anti-globalists. And found wide support through this idea in public. It was surprising, especially in the case with Trump – USA until now was the “locomotive of globalization” and generously sponsored it. Although, by the way, it has so far been most beneficial to China...

Today in USA many understand that globalization – is a stick with two ends. Global leadership ruling the rest of course opens unique advantages. Not without reason Alexander the Great strived to achieve it, and Napoleon, and Hitler too. On the other hand, all the “establishment” to be purchased must be managed and for so many things it must be paid (listen to Trump there again). And once more the lie is OK with it until Akela misses his kill...

About journalism. With the rise of the internet faded the greatness of printed word, it became digital and free. Classic journalism with its ethics, canons, and traditions, formed through centuries, is no longer in demand. Every internet user can put themselves in the role of director, writer, photographer. But each fake can be disseminated and influence the minds of millions.

Intrusion in our lives of algorithmic technologies, broadening of the virtual environment provokes humanity crisis. Human being becomes addicted, controlled, dependent. And will remain like that until they learn to live in this “Delightful new world”, until they survive a crisis of a respective scale and carry out a lesson.

And now about the most important. Systemic crisis differs from any other because it cannot be solved using tools and possibilities existing within the system. Systemic crisis cannot be managed, since it cannot be overcome linearly, through catastrophe, with which problematic, “restraining” parts of the system destruct and die. Their place is taken by new mechanisms which in previously unforeseeable way take the system to another level, lining up with political system, economic and other relationships

It is not possible to predict what these institutes will be and how they are going to act, similarly like it is not possible to guess where the lava will flow from erupting volcano, where the lightning will strike and where the path of a whirlwind will be.

Social, political and other changes are going to happen vigorously, non-linearly, and painfully. This is not going to be the end of the world – but we must be ready for that it may be amplitudinous disruption – war, national turbulences, revolutions.

Similar catastrophe, solving global systemic crisis was World War I. Could it be previously predicted? Looking from the “distance” of today, we can see that catastrophe signals were scattered all over on the eve in all spheres of life. They were obvious in culture, could be found in the art of Wells, Block, Kipling, and Rainis. I am not even mentioning the work of philosophers and religious visionaries.

Result of the World War I is commonly known. Liquidation of four empires (Austro-Hungarian, German, Russian, and Ottoman), and beginning of the fall of the fifth – British. In the end, it set beginning of a new empire – American. But in Europe more than ten national states emerged. Some nations became independent for the first time in many centuries of their history.

The “red project” emerged too – in Russia and all around the world. On the historic arena stepped Mussolini and Hitler. League of Nations was founded – prototype of “the government of the world” and the cradle of the future UN. Although the day before nobody could even imagine anything like that – neither in a nightmare, nor in a daydream.

Bad politician is like a good serviceman, when they are preparing for upcoming battle. In comparison with a general, a politician must possess imagination, to be idealist, a little bit of visionary, to have an ability to predict in perspective: only a big idea can unify a political party, give it energy and inspire the public.

There are very few such politics nowadays. But there are many counting on a very specific class, like bureaucracy, nurturing and cherishing functionaries, feeding them with both hands. And in Latvia for example – who were the first to get back their bonuses and premiums after 2-3 years of forced “fiscal consolidation”? Exactly, bureaucrats. The public is somehow badly informed about this side of relationship between the bureaucrats and public politics, despite overall “openness and transparency”.

Relations between politicians and bureaucracy have been difficult through all times. Politics (governing) see Praetorian Guard in the face of the functionary class, serving their interests. However, at the same time influence of the bureaucracy over politics – both position and opposition – is massive! Any politician initiating any sort of change, covering the interests of bureaucracy, instantly encounters resistance.

The bureaucracy sees everything and immediately calculates everything. It is not teachers, doctors and not even pensionaries who go on strikes “afterwards”. A bureaucrat sees a threat to his/her

interests “here and now”, as soon as a politician opens mouth to talk about it, reacting to the plans of the “enemy” rapidly and painfully.

I am not against bureaucracy – it is necessary to every country, each international organization. But we shall not confuse bureaucracy and the middle class, namely substitute middle class with it.

Historically bureaucracy did not produce anything, except for, maybe, “order”. Order – a necessary thing, but it is not enough for progress. The order was also in each separate barracks of concentration camp, but god forbid! Therefore, it is so important not to miss the moment when the order starts to chain us.

And now too there is a lot of order in EUR, but no happiness. Just the opposite, there is a feeling of helplessness and worry. Bureaucrats are everywhere and striving, but “real” middle class – the one which treats, teaches, produces practical value – sits on a credit needle and objectively is forced to live from “pay check to pay check”.

Many businesses talk aloud that in Europe capitalism is practically dead, there is ever fewer rich, ever fewer successful. But it only seems so that you can live in debt forever – that the debt disciplines *civilization*. In reality, though – it nourishes hatred of the borrower against the creditor and willingness to protest.

We can be talking about fairy-tails about faery career of Macron or the history of the success of Soros, about social lifts, start-ups – about possibility to find the way to success – but the choice “who to be?” for a young person still comes down to two things nowadays: whether to become a manager in impersonal international company, or to become a bureaucrat.

But let us get real with all this bureaucrat. There will be judge for it too. It is more important today to formalize the problem. And there is no need to ask question, for example, whose fault is the crisis, and how to avoid it. The answer to the first part shall be trusted to historians, the second – there is no answer.

It is necessary to think seriously first of all about two things. The first – how to behave correctly in crisis conditions (namely, catastrophe), the second – what can the world become like after that and what characteristics can it gain, and which – it will lose?

It makes no sense to guess from what and how it will start, what will we lack, the first one to collapse will be dollar or euro, the salt will disappear, buckwheat of petrol. In 1940 when the war emerged in the Atlantics, in Britain there was no yellow onion, because it was always imported from India, whereas Hitler’s war marines were managing sea communications at the time...

I think all will benefit from the instruction of Dan Xiaoping, the idea of which is that you always need to do “something real”, relying on your own capabilities and resource. For that you need to thoroughly analyse, what you possess, perform an inventory of resources and maintain them in working condition. Both material resources, and human and professional.

It is necessary to search for people who will be able to be leaders, realize the management of the public: talented, brainy, practical, having contacts with local businesses.

The second objective originates from the first one. The most important role in process management during a period of crisis will play local regulatory bodies – on municipality level, communities and street blocks. It may even be a union of apartment owners in a block of flats, non-working mothers' club – the level in which all current issues can be solved in the most efficient and sensible way, where the tasks can be set on self-organization and be fulfilled afterwards.

The special importance will be gained by horizontal links between self-administrations – they will be the most efficient, because there is the most practicality, specifics and understanding of needs in them.

It is possible that global management centres, possessing particular resources, are going to continue their operations – in Brussels, Washington, Moscow. Intermediate steps and levels are not going to be popular, most probably they will even cease to exist in current form.

Local bureaucracy is going to partially transform and partially die out. It will remain as much as it will be necessary. And to facilitate this process, it is necessary already now to implement budget spending cuts, and “get rid” of non-productive items, despite bureaucratic “whines”.

Here is one example. In Latvia now “there is discussion” on the topic of reforms in taxes and budget. At first the business rejoiced: taxes will be lowered, at least a little bit – otherwise the situation is simply hopelessly bad. But nothing of the kind. “Moderators of discussion” are not even looking in that direction.

There is no funding for such ideas, it means that the budget cannot be lowered, but actually can even be slightly raised. And it is possible to fight this disaster only from below, by reducing and correcting the expense part. Depriving a bureaucrat from their honeypot.

It must be thought also about the church which due to its specifics and historical heritage is capable in hard times to become a centre of self-organization and consolidation. In my book on founding of the Republic of Latvia in 1917-20, released this spring, the role of catholic advent and spirituality is explained in these fateful processes – it was progressive.

Where can everything start? So far, the Middle East suits the best to the role of “XXI century Balkans”, especially in the light of attempt to create there “Sunni NATO” and set it against Shi'ite East.

What should be done then? We should think, discuss, attracting not only politicians to the analysis of situation, but specialists in particular fields, public and spiritual leaders.

Strengthening local self-administrations, pilot-testing the leaders and sticking to common sense solutions.

And what is more. It is necessary to morally get ready and learn to live wisely, without America and even without Brussels.