

## GENERATION M

Many of my comrades consider that it is senseless to comment on president Dmitry Medvedev's famous article "Russia, forward!", and even more so to polemicise with it. According to this point of view, the publicly declared attempt by Medvedev to appeal to the intellectually and creatively active part of society is a farce and a bluff, and the head of state is merely playing the classic role of the "good cop" in a theatrical performance by the name of "The Russian Tandemocracy". All this is being done so that one part of the population of the RF would continue to love Putin as before, while the other, which does not overlap with the first, would start to love Medvedev, or at the very least begin to believe him.

Well, who knows, maybe this is so. Or partially so. I have no evidence of the contrary. All the more so since the presidential article, with its so invocatory and ambitious a title, does contain some fragments that do not witness at all to a beginning (if we recall the "perestroikan" terminology) of "new political thinking". For example, the author of "Russia, forward!" considers that the independence of the judiciary is manifested "in an autonomous understanding of what the state needs". (Perhaps what he is talking about is that a judge should not "come to a full stop" in expectation of a telephone call from the Kremlin, but ought to be able to figure out on his own what kind of decision the bosses expect from him). Although, generally speaking, modern legal theory assumes that a court should be subordinate only to the law, not to the state. And all the more so not to the body of bureaucrats/favourites who have appropriated for themselves the exclusive right to be called that same "state" in today's Russia.

That part of the presidential article which is devoted to substantiating the possibility of starting a modernisation of Russia without a rejection of the authoritarian system is dispiriting. And the issue here is not only – and, perhaps, not even so much – that authoritarianism in its current Russian form does not meet many key humanitarian requirements customary for any country that wishes to consider itself modern and European. (If memory does not fail me, the Kremlin, whatever it may be doing to reduce the space for democracy, has never officially announced servilely that "we are Asia". It has always spoken of Europe, even if it was the "Other Europe"). But rather, [the issue is] that the infamous "vertical of power" is spectacularly inefficient. And we already see this on the example of how the existing bureaucratic machine is working – or, more precisely, not working – in recent years. Such a big, complex and heterogeneous space as Russia

can not be run with the help of archaic mechanisms, which are incapable of attaining planned results even within the confines of the Garden Ring. All the more so – in conditions of perhaps not a managed crisis, but a crisis nevertheless, which modernisation always is.

Not being overly full of illusions, I nevertheless consider it worthwhile to enter into a discussion on the proposed question, all the more so because some fragments and passages of the article “Russia, forward!” suit me perfectly well; for example, the unambiguous admission that no modernisation can justify huge human sacrifices brought to its altar (examples – Peter the Great, Stalin); the sufficiently true affirmation of the contemporary state of the Russian economy; the direct declaration that corrupt officials and the businessmen who corrupt them will be against modernisation, since the parasitic “pipe economy” completely suits them.

It goes without saying that I do not lay claim to preparing my own version of a future presidential missive. That is why for now I would consider it correct to put before Dmitry Medvedev only one question, which seems important to me: **If a political decision about modernisation in today’s Russia is going to be adopted, then just *who* is going to implement this modernisation?**

The corrupt part of the bureaucracy and the business-groups adjoining it – it is already understandable that no[, it will not be they]. This Medvedev has admitted.

The *siloviki* elite - also not. It is meant to guard, but not to create. All attempts at combining these incompatible tasks did not go to the benefit of either the function of guarding or the function of creation.

It is absolutely comprehensible - a leader alone, even the strongest one, can not engage in modernisation if he does not have someone to rely on. Single individuals can not implement modernisation. This business is beyond the strength of the hundreds and perhaps even thousands of its allies from the bureaucratic camp.

To my view, imperative for the implementation of real modernisation is an entire social stratum - a **full-fledged modernisational class**. For which modernisation of the country is not a fictitious campaign, descended from on high, but a question of survival, of self-shaping in one’s own country and, if desired, a question of the gradual coming to power. Summing up and generalising the historical experience of various modernisations, one can assert that the numerical strength of the modernisational class must comprise no less than 3% of the able-bodied population. That is, in our situation – no fewer than 2 mln. persons.

Those who can comprise the foundation of the modernisational class are, in particular:

- professional innovators, including - owners and managers of small and medium private companies created “from scratch”, with tangible results of work in the innovational sphere;
- scientists and engineers born in the 1960s-1970s, who received an education in the USSR, are working in their professional field in Russia and have not yet lost all hope of realising themselves in the Motherland;
- scientists and engineers who have left Russia in the post-Soviet period and have realised themselves in the West; a certain part of them may return, if they believe Medvedev’s call and see qualitatively new opportunities for themselves in the Motherland;
- young specialists with high creative potential, who are now making a difficult choice: to leave and realise themselves “over there”, or to believe Medvedev and remain “here”;
- rather broad strata of the humanitarian intelligentsia who have not been beaten to the ground by the glamour and the games at “sovereign democracy”, including, first of all, - real teachers and journalists.

The modernisers of Russia can be people only of a creational, and not a parasitically-distributive, mindset. Unfortunately, in recent years the elites and the machinery of power have in the main encouraged the rise of the latter and the elimination of the former.

This community, capable of becoming a *collective modernisational subject*, we shall provisionally call the “modernisation generation” (Generation M).

If Medvedev truly wants to give such people a chance – specifically such people – then modernisation might not turn into a profanation. But this means also that very complex decisions await the president. After all, generation M needs to be allowed to clear the field, seriously squeezing out representatives of the already mentioned “corrupt bureaucracy/parasitic capital” tandem, whose claws are grasping tightly to their places. Is the president capable of committing himself to support such steps? He has proposed to us to ask, so let us ask then. But until there is an answer to this question, it is hard to speak seriously about modernisation.

And another thing. Representatives of “generation M”, by definition, do not like the “vertical of power”. They organically need, along with vertical mobility,

working institutions of a democratic state and an effective civil society. But this we will not get without political reforms. You can not issue a call to “generation M” and in this way form a subject of modernisation, having in so doing denied it a real modernisation of Russia’s political arrangement.

This is the first thing I would consider it right to say to president Medvedev about his programme article. About the rest, perhaps, I will speak later.

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