

# Non-Liberal Democracy Societies as the Sources of Resentment

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**Abstract.** In the socio-philosophical discourse, there was an opinion that resentment is formed in totalitarian societies, which are characterized by total control over their citizens, the formation of the image of the enemy, the use of methods of intimidation, violence, and terror. Such methods create conditions for mistrust, suspicion, fear, alienation. Fear, coercion, violence create the prerequisites for the formation of such negative feelings as anger, hatred, which are sources of resentment. At the present stage of development, most societies position themselves as democratic, proclaiming the rule of law, ideas of freedom and equality of all members of society, and in fact tendencies characteristic of many societies are revealed: violation of constitutional rights and freedoms, concentration of power in the executive branch, corruption, presence of authoritarian practices, censorship. Such societies are called totalitarian or non-liberal democracy societies. For these societies is characteristic manifestation of destructiveness, resentment. Within the framework of the actual article we identify the factors that contribute to the formation of resentment in non-liberal democracy societies and propose methods that reduce the level of aggression and resentment.

## 1. Introduction

The crisis of humanism is observed at this stage of civilization development in the conditions of cardinal sociocultural transformations. It is reflected in the reorientation of the creative principle of man to destructive. The proof are local wars, terrorist acts, destructiveness, resentment. Further civilization development of society is possible only under the condition of reducing the degree of people's aggressiveness, identifying ways of preventing the formation of resentment.

### 1.1. The urgency of this topic

In the conditions of cardinal sociocultural transformations, the validity of addressing the problem of resentment is the formation of new forms of destructiveness and an increase in the number of individuals of the resentimental type. It is not by chance that the UNESCO Committee on Culture at the United Nations declared the 21st century as the century of a non-aggressive person, which gives grounds for recognizing the magnitude of the problem of destructiveness and resentment.

### 1.2. Literature review

The source bases of the article are the works of foreign and domestic philosophers F. Nietzsche, M. Scheler, D. Fassin who investigated the problem of resentment. The problem of destructiveness of modern society has become one of the central in the works of E. Fromm, E. Bertram, H. Bloom, J. Talmon, D. Eggel, M. Galvin, F. Hayek, I. Jokhadze, to whom we also referred.

### *1.3. Problem statement*

Within the framework of the actual topic, we set ourselves the task of characterizing the existing ways of organizing livelihoods (totalitarian, democratic), analyzing their characteristic features, identifying the main factors of the formation of resentment, and proposing ways to prevent its formation and distribution. The study of the determinants of resentment formation will reveal the causes of social explosions and the possibility of overcoming them.

### *1.4. Theoretical basement*

Ressentiment as a philosophical concept was first used by F. Nietzsche to characterize Western society. According to F. Nietzsche, the society, having ceased to improve, begins to degrade, giving preference to the lowland, immoral, as a result of which conditions are created in it for the formation of resentment. In the interpretation of F. Nietzsche, resentment is a complex of negative emotions, the formation of which occurs gradually in a person who is aware of his impotence, inability to change circumstances, through suppressed aggression.

At various times, domestic and foreign philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists have turned to the study of this phenomenon. Special contribution was made by M. Scheler.

At the present stage of social development, this phenomenon has again increased interest. A whole stratum of works by contemporary Russian and foreign researchers of E. Bertram, D. Fassin and N. Birns, investigating the phenomenon of resentment, appeared. Most researchers consider resentment as a mental attitude, which is formed on the basis of envy, anger, hatred, developing into revenge [Birns, 2010]. We consider resentment as a phenomenon that is being formed in the social environment in the process of human interaction based on domination and subordination. Resentment is a hidden force formed in response to various social obstacles, carrying destructive actions in relation to objects and subjects [Isachenko, 2013]. It was the conviction that resentment is formed in societies with a non-democratic way of organizing life, which includes totalitarian and authoritarian societies. Totalitarian societies are sources of resentment, as they use methods of intimidation, violence, total control over citizens, the formation of the image of the enemy, terror [Arendt, 1996]. Such methods create conditions for mistrust, suspicion, fear, alienation. Violence, the formation of the image of the enemy contribute to the formation of fear, alienation from society, create the prerequisites for the formation of anger, hatred, which is fraught with explosions accumulated by the masses of the charge of revenge, resentment. Gradually, resentment becomes the source of the social upheavals of the insurgent masses against the existing prohibitions leading to the clashing of antagonistic sides, to revolutions, wars [Isachenko, 2018].

At the present stage of civilization development, societies with a democratic way of organizing life dominate. In such societies, the rule of law is recognized, the freedom and equality of all members of society are proclaimed, and civil society is developed. The presence of these factors implies stability, well-being, a high standard of living, the access of all members of society to material and spiritual benefits, the formation of a sense of satisfaction. But, unfortunately, in modern society the level of aggressiveness does not decrease, revolutions, coups, terrorist acts occur, wars do not stop, which is a manifestation of resentment. Therefore, there is a need to analyze the problems of modern society, to identify the determinants of resentment.

An analysis of modern societies with a democratic way of organizing life showed that already at the end of the twentieth century they were "fragile structures" in which freedoms and equality guaranteed by the constitution were violated. J. Talmon in his work "The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy" described in detail two types of democracy - liberal and totalitarian. According to him, they arose in the XVIII century, but they still exist in modern society, being in constant conflict. According to J. Talmon, liberal and totalitarian democracies recognize the primacy of freedom. However they understand the process of realizing freedom in different ways [Talmon, 1952]. Liberal democracy, without denying the presence of force, evil in society, connects the essence of freedom with the absence of coercion. In accordance with the principles of liberal democracy, the presence of positive qualities in a person and his ability for self-improvement does not require the use of methods

of coercion, which later may contribute to the creation of a harmoniously developed society. Totalitarian democracy recognizes the primacy of truth only in politics. It recognizes the possibility of realizing freedom only in the process of achieving a collective goal. Achieving the goal is the duty of society, and therefore totalitarian democracy does not deny the possibility of coercion. The basis for the use of coercion is the recognition of mankind spoiled. As J. Talmon points out, totalitarian democracy assumes the primacy of politics in everything, allowing it to "reign" in all spheres of society, using the methods of violence and coercion [Talmon, 1952].

We consider it more appropriate that a democratic society in which a decline in liberalism is observed be called a "non-liberal democracy" as a society.

Experts of the GlobalChallenges Global Calls Foundation D. Eggel and M. Galvin [Eggel, 2016], after analyzing modern democratic societies, concluded that a paradoxical situation is developing in the world - liberalism is declining in societies that position themselves as democratic. D. Eggel and M. Galvin argue that a sharp decline in democracy was observed in the period from 2006-2016. It should be recognized that in recent years there has been a growth trend in societies of illiberal democracy. In societies of illiberal democracy, political leaders are elected by the people, but the goal of their coming to power is to undermine the rule of law, the violation of constitutional guarantees, the reduction of civil liberty, that is, the desire for complete and unlimited power. For societies of illiberal democracy characteristic signs are: the concentration of power in the executive branch, corruption, the presence of authoritarian practices, censorship, the weakening of civil society. Information technologies are actively used for propaganda processing of consciousness and the formation of public opinion. In contrast to totalitarian, illiberal democracy societies strive to preserve pluralism, to confirm democracy through referendums, plebiscites (monitoring of public opinion). But at the same time, in societies of illiberal democracy, social subjects feel alienated from the political and economic elite, from the state, which contributes to anxiety, tension, and uncertainty about tomorrow. These trends contribute to the growth of a feeling of powerlessness, anxiety, which are often accompanied by the formation of anger, hatred of the rich, successful, which contributes to the formation of resentment.

The feeling of powerlessness and the inability to change one's position for the better contributes to the formation of negative emotions towards the government, the elite, which are accompanied by a desire for revenge, which is the source of the formation of resentment [Isachenko, 2013]. Resentment appears as a reaction to injustice that exists in a society in which material and spiritual benefits are unevenly distributed, in which the few elite have huge advantages over a larger, but poorly secured part of society. According to J. Barbolet, the mutual intensification of negative reactions very often leads to the emergence of hostile open conflicts [Barbalet, 1999], therefore, to resentment.

In non-liberal democracy societies, a decrease in the role of religion is observed, which frees the subjects from recognizing conscience and honor as fundamental, contributes to the transformation of the value system, and the liberalization of amorality. Pragmatists in exchange for traditional universal human values offer social usefulness and profit from all material benefits. The cult of consumption is being built into a fetish.

N. Bloom argues that Western society, which declares itself democratic, has long been massively "charged" (Bloom, 1994) with re-sentiment. This was the emergence in the 80s of the twentieth century of various leftist movements (radicalism, cultural apartheid), "studies" of deconstructionists, afrocentrists, feminists who forcedly imposed their culture and values on society, spreading ideas of Machiavellianism, revanche [Bloom, 1994]. Revanchists, demanding the restoration of responsibility for causing harm, or for repression, most often deny their own blame for aggressive actions towards other countries.

For the Western non-liberal democracy societies, it is characteristic to construct an image of the enemy. Most of the Western states have declared Russia as their external enemy, and as the internal - migrants. For modern Western society, it is characteristic to impose Western ideas, values, and culture on the world; distortion of facts, the use of "double standards". The use of double standards has become commonplace in countries declaring themselves democratic. Their goal is to create coalitions

against undesirable countries in order to diminish their importance in the world community, or their destruction.

## **2. Practical significance**

The study is determined by the fact that the materials of the study can be one of the sources for the round table, conferences on the problem of resentment. This material can be used for solving modern problems of social philosophy, sociology and political science.

## **3. Conclusion**

The revealed negative tendencies of modern societies of non-liberal democracy give grounds for asserting that they can gradually turn into a “monolithic totalitarian system” (Bloom, 1994), which can become a threat to the civilization development of the entire world community.

Therefore, it is necessary to determine ways to prevent the formation of resentment. It is impossible to eradicate evil, hatred, aggression from human society irrevocably, but it is possible to reduce their level in order to prevent the formation of resentment. It is possible to prevent resentment through the formation of a legal state, civil society, capable of building a dialogue between the state and society. We assign a special role to the philosophy that is capable of forming in the public consciousness the idea of non-violence, laying the foundations of morality, morality, principles of humanism as the foundation of the spiritual integrity of society in the consciousness of the young generation [Isachenko, 2018: 490]. It is necessary to form a non-consuming type of activity and lifestyle, focusing social subjects on self-improvement, on the reproduction of the individual and society.

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