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Леонид Яковлевич Подвойский
[Leonid Y. Podvoisky]

**Политический карнавал и культура
политических элит
– рецензия на книгу П.Л. Карабущенко
«Карнавальная политическая
культура» (2022 г.)**

**The political carnival and the culture of
political elites – review of the book by P.L.
Karabushchenko "Carnival Political
Culture" (2022)**

*Астраханский государственный университет имени В.Н. Татищева
г. Астрахань, Россия, leonid.podv@gmail.com / Astrakhan State University named after V.N.
Tatishchev, Astrakhan, Russia, leonid.podv@gmail.com*

Аннотация. Наблюдаемое в последнее время усиление карнавальной политической культуры затрагивает в первую очередь поведение правящих политических элит так называемого «коллективного Запада». Она проявляется, прежде всего, в том, что в политическую практику проникают элементы абсурда и политической девиации, сказывающиеся на резком снижении качества профессиональной компетенции элит и их лидеров. В СМИ давно уже закрепились за подобными «политиками» такие выражения, как «политический клоун», «политический шут», а его команда представляет собой своеобразную труппу «театра абсурда» и т.д., характеризующие такое безответственное поведение с предельно негативной точки зрения. В научной литературе данное исследование стало первым, в котором системно затрагиваются не только современные особенности карнавальной политической культуры, но и основательно изучаются ее исторические корни. Это первая монография, посвященная теме анализа сущности политического карнавала и карнавальной политической культуры. Именно анализу этой работы и посвящена настоящая рецензия.

Ключевые слова: элитология, история, карнавал, карнавальная политическая культура, политическая клоунада, политический шут, театр абсурда

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Abstract. The recently observed increase in the carnival political culture primarily affects the behaviour of ruling political elites of the so-called "Collective West". First of all, it is manifested in the penetration of elements of absurdity and political deviation into political practice, which has an impact on the sharp decrease of the quality of professional competence of the elites and their leaders. In the media these "politicians" have long been associated with expressions such as "political clown", "political buffoon", and his team is a kind of "theatre of the absurd", etc., which describe such irresponsible behaviour from an extremely negative point of view.

This study is the first in the scientific literature to systematically address not only the contemporary features of carnival political culture, but also to thoroughly examine its historical roots. It is the first monograph to analyse the essence of political carnival and carnival political culture. It is the analysis of this work that this review is devoted to.

Keywords: elitology, history, carnival, carnival political culture, political clowning, political buffoonery, theatre of the absurd

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Introduction. Recently, the topic of carnival political culture has received a second wind, becoming the subject of discussion first in political journalism and then in scientific literature. The intensification of the political carnival occurs against the backdrop of a decline in the quality of professional competence of the ruling elite groups. And this carries additional risks and threats to the system of political stability and security. The theme of carnival political culture has already been tested by the author in a number of his scientific publications (Karabushchenko, 2021a-b; 2020a-c). Therefore, the monograph “Carnival Political Culture” became a kind of summing up of the preliminary results of his many years of research.

The author points out the emerging political and cultural community of such figures. Carnival politicians are all brothers in common political stupidity. But carnival figures should be called “politicians” in quotation marks. These are outright politicians. Consequently, the carnival political culture itself is understood as a culture of decadence, decline and degradation of professional competence: “Carnival political culture is not necessarily something funny and amusing. Carnival political culture always means inappropriate behavior of politicians and inadequate policies pursued by them. This inadequacy gives rise to an anomalous zone that exists in the form of a political carnival action, involving various kinds of elements and segments, distorting and grinding them beyond recognition” (Karabushchenko, 2022, p. 11). In the tradition of the classic carnival, everything is turned upside down, everything is turned upside down. The political carnival does the same thing - it also changes everything, confuses everything and leads to a state of disrepair, pathology and anomaly.

“Carnival political culture turns all the meanings in political rhetoric upside down - when something serious is said about something frivolous and vice versa. The deliberate misuse of political rhetoric creates a semantic gap in which the political carnival fits as an inadequate political phenomenon. Political carnival is the ability to overturn objective reality for the sake of private interests. Misrepresenting everything that becomes important becomes the norm of behavior for politicians in the political carnival. The inadequate person himself can take on a wide variety of forms and types. He can deliberately catch your eye and “rape” you with his obsessive mania, or he can modestly and almost imperceptibly peek around the corner of history and quietly giggle at you, misleading you” (Karabushchenko, 2022, p. 11). Carnival political culture is assessed as a pathology, deviation, distortion (and even perversion) of political culture.

The work provides a systematic presentation of new terminology, with the help of which the nature of carnival political culture is described: “theater of political absurdity”, “booth”, “caricature”, “carnival”, “political jester/clown”, “chimera”, “political freaks”, “political circus”, etc. (Karabushchenko, 2022, pp. 67-121). These terms collectively describe the contradictory nature of the political carnival. The need for them is due to the fact that, according to the author, political carnival and carnival political culture have not previously been the subject of special scientific research and it is very difficult to technically describe their nature in already existing categories. We can partly agree with such a statement, since practice itself will objectively show in the future which of the proposed terms will take root and justify themselves, and which are of an excessive terminological nature.

Materials and research methods. The methodological basis of this study is based on the traditions of studying carnival culture by F. Rabelais, Sebastian Brant, M. Cervantes, W. Shakespeare... The concept of the famous Russian researcher M.M. Bakhtin is taken as the basis for his vision of the essence of carnival culture. It was M.M. Bakhtin who becomes our guide into the world of carnival folk tradition. But, according to P.L. Karabushchenko, these same principles turn out to be working for assessing the quality of carnival political culture. And in his research, he gradually proves the validity of this judgment. The essence of the carnival is the same – to turn everything upside down, distort everything, bring everything to the point of absurdity. And in this regard, the political carnival is not much different from the folk carnival tradition.

The “heroes” of the political carnival are a world of political nonentities, a world of constant scandals, a world of far-fetched fears, phobias and utopian hopes and plans. Everything that the political carnival touches requires the use of the prefix “anti” (anti-democracy, anti-liberalism). Everything that exists with inverted meanings, everything falls under the category of political carnival. This is how great rulers and great empires die. And political history is rich in stories of this kind.

The main activity of such “politicians” is to produce information outrage, to compose and prove incredible stories to everyone. They bombard everyone with information garbage, constantly increasing it exponentially. The basic rule of the political carnival is to always lie and never stop lying. Therefore, the theme of the political carnival runs into another important theme – the theme of the political falsification of history.

Research results and their discussion. Of great interest is the practical use of categories and techniques for studying the foundations of carnival political culture in the study of specific historical subjects. The entire second Part of the monograph, which is called “The History of Carnival Political Culture” (Karabushchenko, 2022, pp. 138-476), is devoted to this issue. Of particular interest are those fragments of the work that relate to the reconstruction of controversial issues of political history. We are talking about the problem of falsifying history. And here the author puts forward a number of interesting reconstructions that give slightly different interpretations than the official versions: “carnival stories” of Socrates, Caligula, Seneca, Nero... (Karabushchenko, 2022, pp. 176-189). It is the traces of carnivalism in these stories that make it possible to identify and eliminate their falsification aspects. This is perhaps the only benefit of carnival political culture.

Giving a historical overview of carnival political culture, the author also turns to well-known examples from fiction. In particular, he examines examples of images of political carnival in the fiction of the twentieth century: Romain Rolland, Jaroslav Hasek, Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov, M.A. Bulgakov, E.L. Schwartz, P. Woodhouse, F. Iskander, G.I. Gorin, Umberto Eco... (Karabushchenko, 2022, pp. 447-473). The traditions of carnival culture can be traced throughout the history of world fiction. And there are too many such examples to ignore.

The last third section of the work is devoted to modern aspects of carnival political culture (Karabushchenko, 2022, pp. 477-582). Using specific examples of modern political practice, the author shows the features of the political carnival, which testifies to the deep professional decline of the ruling political elites and their leaders.

Public statements by carnival politicians are characterized by an increased degree of illogicality and absurdity. Most often, they are also of an immoral nature, which no one diligently notices. Carnival politicians are a special type of people: they are crazy people who constantly demonstrate their madness to the whole world; This is an absolute demon who has completely gone mad. They are great specialists in their own PR, masking their psychological illnesses. Such politicians do not understand how ridiculous they look.

In the media you can often find such definitions as “political buffoon”, “clowns”, “political circus”, etc. Such politicians are not capable of intelligibly constructing their own behavior, but they actively undertake to promote global world projects. These are “politicians” who “didn’t use their brains.” And this discrepancy between form and content causes a satirical attitude towards them, which, in fact, is a discredit to their professional activities.

Indeed, Western analytics are so divorced from reality that they are actually carnivalesque in nature. What the so-called “think tanks” sometimes do is more like tilting at windmills. They generate meaningless “white noise” that creates the appearance of political activity. The lack of objectivity produces the wretched spectacle of a systemic position of political elites divorced from the truth. There is a breakdown in connections in the system of political governance. Therefore, completely “gray individuals” are increasingly coming to power.

Conclusion. The author rightly notes that carnival “politicians” easily cross the barriers of arrogance, that ethics as such is generally alien to them. The decline of moral foundations is one of the most important indicators of the carnivalization of big politics, the fact that politics has reached its historical dead end. Politicians turn into politicians who are not responsible for anything and actively imitate political activity. They are perceived as puppets, obediently carrying out the will of their puppeteers. Therefore, it is not surprising that carnival political culture is becoming an arena for various conspiracy theories that actively promote various types of falsifications and openly anti-scientific doctrines. Thus, carnival political culture becomes a general trend of modern world politics, the most important symbol of the deepening crisis of the political profession...

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ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРЕ

Леонид Яковлевич Подвойский – кандидат философских наук, доцент, Астраханский государственный университет имени В.Н. Татищева, Астрахань, Россия

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leonid Ya. Podvoisky – Cand. Sci. (Philos.), Associate Professor, Astrakhan State University named after V.N. Tatishchev, Astrakhan, Russia

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