

Kerstin Olofsson

Rysk kulturdebatt

under perestrojkan
och den postsovjetiska perioden

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Inledning

”Inte alla som säger ’Herre!’, ’Herre!’ hör himmelriket till. Inte alla ’bildade’ hör till gruppen av kritiskt tänkande individer, det vill säga till intelligentsian.” (Ivanov-Razumnik 1911)¹

DE ARTIKLAR som samlats i denna antologi har skrivits åren 2000-2003 inom ramen för forskningsprojektet *Media Societies Around the Baltic Sea* vid Södertörns högskola. De berör alla på olika sätt rysk kulturdebatt i olika medier under perestrojkan (1985–91) och den postsovjetiska perioden. De artiklar som har översatts till engelska publiceras på detta språk.

Perestrojkadebatten och 90-talets postsovjetiska debatt skiljer sig starkt från varandra. 90-talet saknar målmedvetenheten och de klara politiska motsättningarna, det liberala lägrerets kamp för yttrandefrihet och demokrati i tro på Ordets, den uttalade sanningens, läkande förmåga. Med ett citat anført ur en liberal artikel 1991 i denna antologis första text: ”Perestrojkan som började med en antialkoholkampanj har avslutats med en svår baksmälla.” Det postsovjetiska 90-talet är präglad av övergångens svårigheter, av identitetssökande som tar sig många olika uttryck. Ett av dessa uttryck är att den ryska intelligentsians roll och egenskaper blir ett av huvudämnena i debatten under den första hälften av decenniet. Det är denna debatt som fokuseras i antologins artiklar om den postsovjetiska perioden.

I den ryska kulturen har det sedan 1800-talets första hälft ägnats oerhört mycket intresse och tankekraft åt landets intelligentsia – hur skall den definieras, vad har den för egenskaper, vem ingår i den, vem skall uteslutas, vilken är dess roll, vad betyder den för ”Rysslands öde”. Intelligentsians historia skrivs gång på gång. Särskilt brytningstider har präglats av heta debatter om intelligentsian – det gäller till exempel 1870-talet efter livegenskapens avskaffande, 1890-talet med dess inträngande kapitalism och uppbyggnad av bondesamhällets gamla former liksom perioden efter den första ryska revolutionen 1905–07 med dess politiska turbulens och omvandling. Denna typ av debatter omöjliggjordes av den sovjetiska censuren. Men när brytningstiden 1990-talet kommer visar det sig att sovjettiden inte medfört ett traditionsbrott – åter uppstår en intensiv debatt om intelligentsian.

¹ Ivanov-Razumnik, *Istorija ruskoj obscestvennoj mysli*, 1, sid 8

De stora idéströmningarna under det ryska 1800-talet och tidiga 1900-talet är slavofilismen (kunde också kallas russofilism), olika ”västinriktade” strömningar (socialistiska och liberala), den agrarsocialistiska narodnikrörelsen, anarkismen, panslavismen, marxismen och sekelskiftets religionsfilosofiska idealism. Särskilt levande i dagens debatt är slavofilismens, narodnikrörelsens och religionsfilosofins intelligentsiasyn, den sistnämnda i främst slavofilismens fotspår. Att klargöra slavofilismens och narodnikrörelsens intelligentsiaidéer är värdefullt för förståelsen av dagens intelligentsiadebatt. Denna präglas av en rad säregenheter som på ett slående sätt visar sig ha sina rötter i 1800-talets idévärld och debatteknik.

Slavofilismen från och med 1830-talet är en konservativ och religiös lära för bevarande av Rysslands särprägel mot förändringar inspirerade från väst; europeiseringen under Peter den store under 1700-talets första del ses som ett syndafall. Narodnikrörelsen från och med 1860-talet vill att Ryssland skall göras socialistiskt genom vidareutveckling av den ännu kvarlevande ryska bygemenskapens traditioner. Den har en revolutionär och terroristisk del och en fredlig. Det är alltså mycket olika rörelser. Vad de har gemensamt är tron på en ”särskild väg” för Ryssland i förhållande till Västeuropa, den ”Andre” som intellektuella ryssar mäter sig emot – ”Ryssland och Europa” är det övergripande temat i 1800-talets intensiva nationella identitetssökande. Det finns också mycket gemensamt i deras syn på intelligentsian och behandling av intelligentsiabegreppet.

Intresset för intelligentsian som samhällsföreteelse är gemensamt. Det finns också påfallande likheter i hur de båda rörelserna utnyttjar de retoriska möjligheter deras behandling av begreppet ger. Slavofilen Ivan Aksakov är den förste metodiske ”intelligentsiaideologen”, själva benämningen ”intelligentsia” tog han upp som en av de första i början av 1860-talet. Utgångspunkt är den allmänna uppfattningen om Ryssland som uppdelat i ”folket” och ett västeuropeiskt bildat överskikt, från och med 1860-talet ofta kallat ”intelligentsian”.² Detta överskiktets import av västeuropeisk bildning, medan befolkningen i stort förblev analfabetisk och höll fast vid gamla trosföreställningar, hör till de faktorer som fått nutida ryska sociologer att kalla Ryssland för det ”första landet i Tredje världen”.³ Men det finns en dubbelhet, eftersom Ryssland samtidigt var en stormakt. Denna dubbelhet är en viktig bakgrund till ryska intellektuellas ofta frustrerade sysslande med sin identitet, till frågor som ”Vad är Ryssland?”, ”Vad är intelligentsian?”.

² O W Müller, *Intelligencija. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte eines politischen Schlagwortes*, sid 252, 258, 259

³ L Gudkov, B Dubin, *Intelligencija*, sid 81

Något som de båda riktningarna har gemensamt är just uppdelningen i ”folk” och ”intelligentsia” sedda som helheter, med statsmakten i triangelns tredje hörn. För slavofilerna är folket en ”organisk enhet” i överensstämmelse med deras romantiska samhällsideal.⁴ Romantiken som filosofisk lära har överhuvudtaget varit mer inflytelserik i den ryska kulturen än i sitt ursprungsland Tyskland. Narodnikerna anser i överensstämmelse med sitt socialistiska samhällsideal att folket har gemensamma sociala intressen.⁵ Båda riktningar tilldelar intelligentsian en mycket stor roll som andlig ledare, och i samband därmed finns en konception om intelligentsians skuld för negativa samhällsföreteelser och folkets olyckor. Återkommande är också uttryck för besvikelse på intelligentsian, som ständigt inte anses leva upp till förväntningarna. Detta leder hos skribenter inom båda riktningarna till hela ”lastkataloger” eller ”syndaregister” med den tyske intelligentsiahistorikern Otto Müllers uttryck.⁶ Aksakov framlägger den inflytelserika teorin om intelligentsian som förmedlare mellan folket och statsmakten, något som han anser gör politiska partier överflödiga.⁷ Politiskt ”splittring” av intelligentsian (liksom folket) ses som något negativt. Något som båda riktningarna har gemensamt, liksom från olika utgångspunkter den traditionella ryska intellektuella högern och vänstern i stort, är en avsky för kapitalistiska och materiella drivkrafter, för borgerligheten, sedd som en del av ett komplex av ”småborgerliga” ideal.

Nu återstår den stora frågan om *vad* och *vem* som konstituerar denna intelligentsia med dess krav på en ledande roll. Då är vi framme vid det ytterst komplicerade problemet med definitionen av ”intelligentsian” och den retoriska användningen av begreppet. Otto Müller skriver om en ”babylonisk språkförbistring” i sin kända begreppshistoria, där ”intelligentsian” redan i underrubriken betecknas som ett ”politiskt slagord”. Så som ordet används i 1800-talets texter, skriver han, visar sig den omhuldade föreställningen om den ”klassiska ryska intelligentsian” vara en litterär fiktion. Ordet ”intelligentsian” betecknar en rad olika saker. Och inte nog med det – det räcker inte att fråga *vem* ordet betecknar; man måste också fråga sig *vem* som yttrar det, *när* det görs, i *vilken* avsikt och *vilken* tid som avses. Olika normativa modeller för en äkta intelligentsia kläs dessutom i deskriptiva termer. Han ger exempel på logiska kullebyttor i en 1800-talstext och förklarar

⁴ Ivanov-Razumnik, a. a. I, sid 357. O W Müller, a. a., sid 255

⁵ Ivanov-Razumnik, a. a. I, sid 121, 345

⁶ O W Müller, a. a., sid 264, 267, 268, 269, 290, 292, 294, 303

⁷ Ivanov-Razumnik, a. a. I, sid 357. O W Müller, a. a., sid 258

att krav på begreppsstringens får absurda följder. Texten kan bara förstås med hänvisning till ordets slagordskaraktär.⁸

Slavofilernas och narodnikernas behandling av intelligentsiabegreppet kan tjäna som exempel på delar av denna språkförbistring. Deras sätt att använda begreppet överensstämmer med varandra till debattfunktion, om också det konkreta begreppsinnhållet skiftar. Båda laborerar med en ”falsk” och ”äkta”, en ”dålig” och ”bra” intelligentsia. Överhuvudtaget finns det en uppsjö av definitioner av den ryska intelligentsian som bland annat har till ändamål att skilja fåren från getterna. Den ”kritiskt tänkande individ” som finns med i det inledande citatet ovan är narodnikernas särmärke. Frasen är ett sådant begrepp i den ryska kulturen att den finns med som uppslagsord i en filosofisk uppslagsbok från 1999, liksom för övrigt även ”intelligentsian”.⁹ Den återkommer också i många artiklar under 1990-talet.

Den kritiskt tänkande individen skapar historien, är bärare av samhällsidealen och kämpar för deras genomförande, medan ”massan” är passiv och nedtyngd av materiella intressen. Hos slavofilen Aksakov finns en liknande motsättning: i intelligentsian – den ”goda” och ”folkliga”, med slavofila åsikter – sker folkets medvetna verksamhet, medan folket saknar andlighet och lever ett omedelbart och oreflekterat liv. I båda fallen har intelligentsian (den ”goda”) rätt att tala för folket som självt är ”stumt”. Samtidigt finns hos narodnikintelligentsian slagordet att ”tjäna folket” och uppfattningen att man har en skuld till folket för sin bildning och mer privilegierade ställning. Hos slavofilerna finns uppfattningen att folket med sin ”ursprungliga kultur” är överlägsen intelligentsian med dess ”inlånade” västeuropeiska bildning. Det finns alltså en elitism men samtidigt andra aspekter. Den ”oäkta” intelligentsian är antingen majoriteten av det bildade överskiktet som slavofilerna anser vara för västeuropeiskt inriktad och narodnikerna ser som parasitär eller också intelligentsior med avvikande åsikter, till exempel den ”liberala intelligentsian”. Men målet för attackerna är hela tiden ”intelligentsian”. Eller tvärtom är ”intelligentsian” det ryska samhällets ”bästa del”.¹⁰

Efter tsarmordet 1881 utfört av narodnikrörelsens terroristiska del bedrev officiella och konservativa kretsar en hetsjakt mot ”intelligentsian” förstörd som bestående av liberaler och revolutionärer. Den kände narodniken Nikolaj Michaj-

⁸ O W Müller, a. a., sid 251, 252, 348

⁹ *Russkaja filosofija. Slovar'*, sid 187, 188, 245

¹⁰ O W Müller, a. a., sid 253, 254, 255, 291, 304

lovskij skrev att han verkligen var överens med deras slagord ”Ned med intelligentsian!” och ”Leve folket!”. Men med ”intelligentsian” avsåg han ett annat sociologiskt objekt, nämligen det enligt hans mening parasitära bildade överskiktet i samhället.¹¹ Detta är ett enkelt fall av användningen av ordets polysemi, det finns mycket mer komplicerade. Men samtidigt utgör det ett slags ”blottläggande av greppet” med de ryska formalisternas språkbruk.

På liknande sätt framträder mycket klart hur många definitioner fungerar hos intelligentsiahistorikern Ivanov-Razumnik, som verkade i början av 1900-talet i både slavofilernas och narodnikernas efterföljd. Han har varit inflytelserik genom sin systematisering av tesen om ”intelligentsian” som ”småborgerlighetens” motsats. I polemik med Maksim Gorkij framhåller han som absurt att denne beskyl- ler intelligentsian för småborgerlighet, när ”anti-småborgerlighet” är intelligentsians grundläggande kännetecken, just det som skiljer en medlem av intelligentsian från ”högkulturens barbarer”. Hans definition utesluter ”småborgerlighet”, som är lika med ”det onda” i hans värderingar, och som har mycket gemensamt med begreppet ”massan” i västlig filosofi.¹² Alltså hänförs intellektuella beskyllda för detta till en mindre vackert benämnd grupp. Logiskt blir det en rundgång. Som Müller påpekar görs ingen skillnad mellan det normativa och det deskriptiva. Samma operation kan utföras med omvända förtecken när intelligentsian framhålls som en negativ storhet.

”Intelligentsian” har under 1990-talet betecknats som en av den ryska kultu-rens ”konstanter” i betydelsen kulturbegrepp som finns i det kollektiva medvetandet eller det kollektiva omedvetna.¹³ Ovanstående är bara en liten del av den historiska bakgrunden men en representativ del, vars drag genomsyrar även den nu- tida debatten. Man kan tillägga att även påståenden om intelligentsians snara und- dergång som är centrala i 1990-talsdebatten har sina historiska föregångare.¹⁴

Artiklarna i denna samling hör alla till mitt centrala tema, nämligen den nuti- da kulturdebatten. Artiklarna om intelligentsiadebatten tar fasta på definitionens obestämthet och dess funktion, på återknytningen till försovjetisk tid, på uttryck för elitism i intelligentsians syn på sig själv och slutligen på uppfattningen om in- telligentsian som enhet och som förmedlare mellan makten och folket i förhållan-

¹¹ *ibid*, sid 296

¹² Ivanov-Razumnik, a. a. I, XXI, II, sid 510

¹³ *Russkaja intelligencija*. Istorija i sud’ba, sid 15

¹⁴ Ivanov-Razumnik, a. a. II, sid 519, 520

de till det nya politiska livet i Ryssland. Apropå det sistnämnda kan man tänka på slavofilen Ivan Aksakovs åsikt att intelligentsians samhällsroll gjorde politiska partier överflödiga. Debatten som helhet är ett intressant uttryck för en tidigare etablerad grupps kamp för en roll och en mening i den postsovjjetiska periodens nya verklighet.

Litteratur

L Gudkov, B Dubin, *Intelligencija*, Moskva 1995

Ivanov-Razumnik, *Istorija russkoj obscestvennoj mysli*, I-II, S.Peterburg 1911

O W Müller, *Intelligencija. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte eines politischen Schlagwortes*, Frankfurt 1971

Russkaja filosofija. Slovar', Red M A Maslin, Moskva 1999

Russkaja intelligencija. Istorija i sud'ba, Moskva 1999

The Cultural Debate Concerning the Abolishment of Censorship

PERESTROIKA IN THE SOVIET UNION under Gorbachev lasted from April, 1985, to August, 1991. To an astonishing degree, it was marked by an expanding freedom of speech, albeit with certain setbacks. I will examine the debates in three Russian cultural journals of different persuasions from 1989 to 1991, during which time Russia experienced the abolishment of censorship and the fall of Communism. The three journals I have chosen represent the most important ideological trends of this period: *Znamya* (*The Banner*), *Novyi mir* (*The New World*), and *Nash Sovremennik* (*Our Contemporary*). In total, my source material consists of 1,270 pages, fairly evenly distributed among the journals and over the years (see References).

Traditionally, these "thick journals" have been of great importance in Russian society, both during the nineteenth century and during the Soviet era. In a public life marked by censorship, literature and literary criticism provided a "mouthful of freedom," as one of the writers in my selection expresses it (S. Chuprinin, *Znamya* 10/91: 222). Their great importance grew even more during *perestroika*, in particular from 1987, after the publication in a journal of Anatoly Rybakov's novel *The Children of Arbat* which depicted those persecuted during the Stalin era and attempted to form a psychological portrait of Stalin. The novel had been banned from publication for 21 years. In a situation of an increasing plurality of opinion but without the freedom to organize politically, the thick journals could be seen as surrogate political parties before the rise of actual parties, which occurred only during the second half of the 1990s, when Paragraph 6 of the Soviet constitution, that prescribed a leading role for the Communist Party, had been abolished.

During the years 1989–91, *the glasnost of perestroika* – increased freedom of speech but with the caveat that higher authorities should decide the limits of this freedom – is transformed into freedom of speech. In August, 1990, a new press

law abolishing advance censorship makes it possible for individuals and organizations to start their own journals and radio channels. In the fall and winter of 1990–91, however, politics takes a turn toward increased repression and censorship. In connection with the declarations of sovereignty by the Baltic republics, in January, attacks are carried out in Vilnius and Riga by Russian troops, resulting in death casualties. This is a time that gives rise to dark reflections and a rather grim analysis of *perestroika* in the selected journals. In August, 1991, the failed three-day coup constitutes an attempt to prevent the dissolution and fall of the Soviet Union, following which event the Communist Party is prohibited at the initiative of Boris Yeltsin, the President of the Soviet Republic of Russia.

With this, we have arrived at freedom of speech in Russia, although still with restrictions and with threats against it. Towards the end of the period, the importance of the thick journals lessens and the editions become smaller, having been enormous particularly as to journals supporting *perestroika*. In 1989, a surge of public opinion put a stop to the attempts by the authorities to limit subscriptions to these journals. Some figures: *Znamya's* edition in 1986 was 250,000, in 1990, 1,000,000, in 1991, 425,000, and in 1993, 75,000. For *Novy Mir*, the figure in 1987 was 490,000, in 1990, 2,710,000, in 1991, 965,000, and in 1993, 53,000. For *Nash Sovremennik*, finally, the figures were: in 1988, 240,000, in 1990, 480,000, in 1991, 280,000, and in 1993, 60,000. Issues number 9 through 12 of 1990 of *Novyi mir* never came out due to problems with paper availability and distribution. *Novy Mir's* enormous number of subscriptions in 1990 can be ascribed to the publication of parts of *The Gulag Archipelago* in 1989 after a long struggle with censorship on all levels (*NM* 9/91: 233) and to the journal's promise to subscribers that they would be able to order the collected works of Solzhenitsyn.

Toward the end of this period one sees emerging a new public life with representatives of political parties, The Russian Orthodox Church and other religious groups, political scientists, sociologists and other experts, and a new, more flexible and informative journalism in newspapers and television, along with an entertainment industry largely imported from the West. But heavily increased costs for paper and distribution also contributed to the smaller editions in 1991.

"Civil War in Literature"

Of the journals I have selected, *Znamya* represents a Westernizing, democratic trend supporting pluralism and freedom of speech. *Novy Mir*, which under the direction of Alexandr Tvardovsky constituted a center in the struggle for in-

creased freedom of speech during the thaw of the 1950s and 1960s, today represents what a writer in *Znamya* calls "enlightened conservatism" (S. Chuprinin, *Znamya* 10/91: 233), that is, a democratic variant of an orientation toward orthodoxy, specifically Russian traditions, and a cooler attitude toward the West: a stance resembling that of Solzhenitsyn. Not surprisingly, after his return to his home country in May, 1994, Solzhenitsyn has chosen to publish in *Novy Mir*.

Nash Sovremennik, finally, represents those whom another *Znamya* writer, after the failed coup in August, 1991, names as being "the ideologues of the coup" (N. Ivanova, *Znamya* 10/91: 203). These are the "national patriots," the beginning of what will later be called the "red-brown" alliance. They emerge clearly a few years into *perestroika* (they have predecessors both in the preceding period and among the "national Bolsheviks" of the 1920s). The coup is initiated by "old-time communists" whose motivation, however, is not concerned with communist issues of class but with the nation and the empire. Pro- and anticommunist nationalists leave their disagreements aside in the "national patriot" movement which becomes increasingly influential as of 1988.

About one year into *perestroika*, what Russian media call a "civil war in literature" erupts. Enforced unity is followed by polarization. At the opposite ends of the poles are the positions held by *Znamya* and *Nash Sovremennik* respectively. This is a traditional division in Russian society: one, Westernizing position that strives for innovation and modernization inspired by Western patterns, and the other a "Slavophile" orientation that desires to retain what it sees as "old Russian values." This polemic takes up the largest space in my selected journals. At the end of 1991, the Editor-in-Chief of *Znamya*, Sergei Chuprinin, declares that the war is finished, and with the newly won freedom of organization the conflicts move to the political scene (*Znamya* 10/91: 230). In Chuprinin's view, the democratic media with their invectives have given publicity to the hawks and chauvinists who, standing outside culture, should in fact be isolated (231).

A less antagonistic polemic between the 1960s activists and the "postmodernists" also takes place within *Znamya*. Having come of age during the period of political thaw, the former are very active also during *perestroika*, and when the initial enthusiasm is turned into disappointment they suffer several attacks from, among others, the "postmodernists" who reject the traditionally socially engaged Russian literature. The antipathy is mutual. *Novyi Mir*, too, takes up and counters "postmodernist" views. Furthermore, a debate nourished by their different orientations is carried on between *Znamya* and *Novyi mir*.

"It's More Exciting to Read Than to Live"

In the journals I have selected there is a large number of articles concerned with history: the Stalin era, the 1920s, the whole Soviet era, the "thousand-year-old Russian culture," and, as already stated, *perestroika* and its different stages, from its beginning to its end. In the polemical debates different interpretations of history are often resorted to for argumentation time and time again. This is often part of an attempt to define the contemporary situation, to identify causes and effects, and to understand "how we ended up here." The point of departure is one that no doubt is the only view held in common by all writers: that Russia has been hit by a catastrophe during the twentieth century. The prescriptions written in order to cure the illness of society vary, says one writer, but the illness is a fact recognized by all (A. Archangelsky, *NM* 2/91: 235). Thus, the polemics as a whole can be seen as a search for identity and orientation during these long years of uprootings and spiritual and material uncertainties.

The "classical" ideology of *perestroika* flourished from around 1987 to 1988. The leading concepts were: *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and democratization. "Democratic socialism" constituted the over-arching concept which, among other things, included the idea of a socialist market economy. With Michail Gorbachev leading the way, mass media criticized Stalin's and the "command-administrative" system's deformation of true, Leninist socialism. The battle cry was: "Back to Lenin!" Among the adherents of *perestroika* there was unity. Among the intellectuals, the "children of the Twentieth Party Congress" (the activists of the 1960s) played a leading role. Initially, they continued the line of "purifying socialism" that had been the predominant one among reformists during the thaw of the 1950s and 1960s under Chruschchev, before Leonid Brezhnev became party leader in 1964. The debate thus returned to the point at which it had been interrupted twenty years earlier, and continued from there.

Already during this "classical period," the limits of democratic socialism begin to be questioned along with the limits established by the Communist Party through the concept of "socialist pluralism" for the politics of *glasnost*. This questioning arises precisely from the thick journals and their publishing of works that had previously been prohibited. In 1988, for example, Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* was published in *Novy Mir*, and Vasilii Grossman's *Life and Destiny* in the journal *Oktyabr*. In Grossman's account, socialism was a disaster for Russia from the very start, and Stalin does not so much destroy as continue Lenin's work.

The period of 1986 to 1988 was the phase of *perestroika* which has been described by the famous humourist, Michail Zjvanetsky, in what immediately became a household phrase: "Nowadays it's more exciting to read than to live." During this period, according to Sergei Chuprinin's historiography, journals supportive of *perestroika* were prime movers in the battle to publish forbidden works, and any such publishing was a social and cultural event that touched many people and that, noted in television and print media, caused much debate. The publishing of parts of *The Gulag Archipelago* in *Novyi mir* 8–11, 1989, was, according to Chuprinin, the last of this kind of publishing (S. Chuprinin, *Znamya* 10/91: 223). These publications revealed the crimes of the Soviet era primarily during the Stalinist epoch, "the war of the regime against the people" is a frequently used expression in this writing.

"It Is Hard to Tell the Truth"

As of 1989, a new phase in *perestroika* emerges. At that time, the initial euphoria began to fade (S. Chuprinin, *Znamya* 1/89:224). One critic writes in the beginning of 1989: "No one would have believed that it would be so painful to go from a lack of freedom to freedom" (Yevg Shklovsky, *Literaturnoe obozrenie* 2/89: 20).

In *Novyi mir* 2/89: 204–238 we find an article by Igor Klyamkin, which could be seen as representative of the increasingly radical criticism, searching and questioning Soviet society during this phase, at the same time as *perestroika* as a concept is still alive. Klyamkin's headline, "Why It Is Hard to Tell the Truth," suggests that the original banner words of *perestroika* about truth as a means of reaching innovation has been complicated by new lies and anti-democratic maneuverings. However, the slogan is still valid, since, as with all propaganda, it is concerned with a commodity (in this case, the truth) that is in short supply.

"I think we are just beginning to become more aware," writes Klyamkin, "of the depth and difficulties of the spiritual transformation we need to undergo" (205); "It won't hurt to once more glance through the medical history, because this concerns our own history, our own and nobody else's illness" (205, 208). These statements are followed by an examination of the history of the Communist Party, a history that had still not ceased to be of interest. Questions examined included: Why did political lies, which occur everywhere, lead to such a catastrophe precisely in Russia? Why would a politics that claimed to represent truth and fight all "bourgeois lies" result in such an incomparable break with even the most elementary notions of good and evil?

According to Igor Klyamkin, the abundance of lies in the history of the party is a matter of a readiness to make black appear white for higher purposes, a higher truth that is unreachable for ordinary people, whereby the greatest liar embodies this truth. There is a compulsion to publicly renounce one's inappropriate opinions, something that can only lead to hypocrisy. The coercion to remain silent about anything that deviates from the public truth contributes to the authorities' perception of being surrounded by enemies and traitors hidden behind smiling masks. To mention just one example of this kind of behavior within the party: During the "Congress of Victors" in 1934, various delegates praise Stalin from the podium, but vote against him in the secret ballot, the results of which are subsequently falsified. During the Great Terror, almost all of the congress delegates vanish. Along with the fabricated trials concerning non-existent organizations, associations, and deeds, a nearly all-encompassing falsehood is created, called "a higher democracy." This, writes Klyamkin, is what lies accomplish in an undemocratic society. "When the state/party has a monopoly on all information and when there is nobody who can reveal untruths, then there are no and cannot be any reasonable limits to deception" (206–213).

Klyamkin goes on to discuss the much-debated and for "national patriots" central question of guilt: There are those who locate the source of our misfortunes outside the borders of the country, in the idea of Marxism, a foreign ideology imported from abroad, but, he writes, they do not ask themselves why these ideals have led to such disasters in Russia but not in their countries of origin. You cannot deceive anyone who has not first deceived himself."Our self-deception," moreover, breaks all records."No one before us has attempted to build an existence . . . inspired by alluring flames at the end of the tunnel where everyone is supposed to attain the good life. . . . For this reason, we have produced swindlers of a caliber never seen in this world."

Stalin was victorious, Klyamkin continues, because War Communism was more comprehensible to the millions of new industrial workers than was the market. The workers were deceiving themselves as to being "the masters of the country" and the creators of a new civilization and thus needed to be deceived. There are those who argue that the system also had its bright sides, he writes, but the enthusiasm, for example, was due to a belief in enemies within the country who had caused all the problems and who had to be eliminated. Thus began an existence where the present was sacrificed for the sake of the future. "Only now are we beginning to understand the level of self-deception and the seriousness of

the illness” (229), an insight that is a precondition for the ”hard road back to civilization” (230).

According to Klyamkin, history shows that an industrial society cannot develop without a market economy (225). So far, he is in agreement with the pro-market spokespeople of *perestroika*. Unlike them, however, he emphasizes the huge difficulties of the transition given the background of Russia’s near and distant past. He writes that the market economy proponent’s ”abstraction of efficiency” stands against the ”abstraction of a national uniqueness.” Exemplifying the latter stance, the national patriots perceive the market as a ”foreign invention” of no use for the particular Russia. They search in the traditions of the country for something unique, superior to the market, and end up in the very ideology they themselves hate, that is, the ideology of War Communism.

Perestroika has made but scant progress, writes Klyamkin. There are no free elections. The leading role of the party is sacred and has even been enlarged.

The privileges are no longer even discussed. The political affair concerning Boris Yeltsin, dismissed as the party leader of Moscow, is surrounded by a fog of lies. The source of the lies is to be found in the Administrative System: the lies will live on as long as the system does (214–217). In his conclusion, Klyamkin argues that *perestroika* aims to destroy the Administrative System and create political democracy and a modern economy. If, at that point, people see that their lives are improved there is grounds for optimism. ”So far, there are not too many reasons for such an optimism. Therefore it is still hard to speak the truth. Therefore the truth remains the symbol of and catchword for change” (238).

”Russophobia ”

It is thus in the lack of freedom of speech that Igor Klyamkin sees the roots of evil, and in the unchecked lies he sees the causes for ”the Russian disaster.” In the conflict between unity and democracy in the Communist Party, he writes, unity is uppermost. Klyamkin represents a ”Westernizing” line (in the introduction to the article the editorial board of *Novyi mir* underscores that it does not agree with everything he writes). How, then, do the national patriots of *Nash Sovremennik* (NS) view the questions of freedom of speech, ”the Russian disaster,” and the issue of guilt?

There are differences of opinion among the writers of this journal as to, for example, socialism, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, or what one wants to see published, that is, cases where freedom of speech more or less clearly is seen as something

positive. But there are also several assertions and arguments that pop up in article after article that, in my view, form a more striking unity of opinion than is to be found among the writers associated with the other two journals being reviewed here – a view that might stem from the fact that my own stance is more distant from the *NS* writers.

Igor Shafarevich was a human rights activist and critic of the regime who collaborated with Solzhenitsyn (among others), before the latter was exiled in 1974. In 1992, when the Soviet Union had just been dissolved and economic shock treatments were called for, the communist and nationalist oppositions were consolidated into a unified block. One of its organizations was led by Shafarevich together with representatives of the party and KGB *nomenklatura* of the Soviet regime. What would later be called "the red-brown" alliance was anything but self-evident when it came into being, rather, it gave rise to many reflections. In *Znamya* 1/90, Sergei Chuprinin sees the alliance of the "unity fanatics" as "unnatural." As one in a series of "unnatural" bedfellows he points to Shafarevich and the Stalinist, Nina Andreyeva, "that is . . . real writers have joined with the patently untalented, writers who were supported by Tvardovsky and his *Novyi mir* with those who made careers out of the elimination of Tvardovsky and the spirit of 'old *Novy Mir*, ardent stalinists with equally ardent rebels against tyranny" (209).

One comment in the 'new' *Novyi mir* concerning the same phenomenon mentions the so-called rural writers who, with works published during the 1960s and 1970s, could be said to have contributed to paving the way for *perestroika*. Their often dark narratives about rural life were published in the Soviet Union despite their critical potential: "at that point it was hardly possible to foresee that some of the writers who had so forcefully lamented Russian rural life, the broken back of the nation and the annihilation of the peasants, would form a united front together with the adherents of the ideology that had caused this national tragedy . . . that they would speak up on behalf of the great empire, against reforms and against the rights of other peoples and call this patriotism to boot" (A. Latynina, *NM* 1/90: 255).

In *NS* 6 and 11/89 parts of Shafarevich's treatise "Russophobia," earlier distributed through the illegal channel of samizdat, were published. In 12/91, "Russophobia: Ten Years Later" was published, in a total of fifty-three large, densely printed pages. In this manner *perestroika* worked to further the possibilities to publish even for its critics, the national patriots. Shafarevich's treatise met with great attention and debate and was influential in the nationalist

movement, in which "Russophobia" became a key concept. What, then, is this concept about?

During the 1970s, writes Shafarevich, a unified current of thought had crystallized that found an expression both within Russia and in the West in a majority of the Russian emigrant journals as well as in the mass media. Due to an increased stream of emigrants, the emphasis had been transferred to the West. The following statements are being made by this current, according to Shafarevich: Russian history is decided by typical Russian characteristics such as a slave mentality, intolerance, and envy; Russians wish to subordinate themselves to a strong and ruthless power at the same time as they dream about saving the world – the "Russian messianism"; this is why Russia is continuously dominated by despotic and bloody regimes: but the Russians do not understand the causes of their misfortunes – xenophobic, they blame their misfortunes on anybody except themselves, on the Tartars, the Germans, or the Jews . . . ; Stalin is an extremely Russian phenomenon, a direct continuation of Russia's barbaric history. The greatest danger lies in the resuscitated attempts to find a uniquely Russian path of development, attempts that lead to nationalism, neostalinism, and antisemitism and that are of great danger to all of humankind. The only salvation lies in building a society along the lines of contemporary western democracies (NS 6/89 167, 168). Against all this, Shafarevich places his own historiography, according to which the totalitarian state, reigns of terror, and socialism, for example, are phenomena originating in the West.

"Who Is To Blame?"

What, then, is the *aim* of this current of thought whose arguments, in Shafarevich's characterization, have been presented above? We are only seeing the tip of the iceberg, he writes: "If these views were to be absorbed by the national consciousness this would mean spiritual death: a people who make *such* a judgement of its own history cannot exist" (NS 6/89: 173). In his examination of how sacred Russian values are desecrated, he subsequently returns time and again to the idea that such an undermining activity threatens to annihilate the Russian people (NS 6/89: 174, 179, 190, 192; 12/91: 128, 133, 138). In NS 12/91, where Shafarevich discusses the current *perestroika* ten years after his original treatise and answers some of his many critics, the situation is described thus: "Among the Russians, the aristocracy and clergy have been eliminated, the countryside deserted, and the birthrate has fallen to catastrophically low levels. It is the

Russian people, and not the Jewish people, who are facing ruin and destruction” (138).

This is a pervasive theme in *NS*. There is despair over “the destruction of Russia” and the revelations of *perestroika* that at times is openly expressed, as for example: “In a state of merciless sobriety, we have caught sight not only of the ruins surrounding us but also of the ruins in our very souls” (M. Lobanov, *NS* 6/90: 166). This feeling is connected with a sense of being deceived, deprived of everything, occupied by hostile foreign forces, and being a victim; in brief, of being a victim of Russophobia. The Jewish motif is tied into this discussion. Throughout his treatise, Shafarevich expresses that he is searching for the solution to an “enigma” connected with a “question that is totally prohibited” (*NS* 6/89 167). After a dizzying historical description of the notion of the “little people” who in crises have exerted a fatal influence on the “big people” such as in Russia in 1917, he arrives at the “working hypothesis” that the core of the former group today consists of Jewish nationalists (*NS* 6/89: 187–189).

Why, then, are Jewish nationalists feeling such a “hatred towards Russia, Russian history, and the Russian people in general?” The answer is that nowhere else have Jews had such a huge influence as during the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and during the beginning of the Soviet era. It may be instructive for the world to “see the consequences of such an influence” in Russia. From this follows that Jewish writers have a need to prove that “the Russians themselves are guilty of everything, that cruelty is in their blood, such is all of their history.” Understanding “the role of Jews in our history” might be “of crucial importance for the destiny of our people” (*NS* 11/89: 162, 163). As to why the Jewish people have played this role, Shafarevich points to religion, to the “belief in being the ‘Chosen People’ and its predestined world domination” (*NS* 11/89: 169). Under the guise of an impartial investigation, he arrives at a series of traditional, antisemitic notions. While several critics have identified his antisemitism, both Shafarevich himself and the board of editors dispute this, pointing to the great number of letters to the journal with thanks for the first part of “Russophobia” in 11/89.

In “Ten Years Later,” in 12/91, Shafarevich submits that the current that was just barely visible when he wrote “Russophobia” at that point is becoming a powerful force. Television, newspapers and journals are succumbing to it. Moreover, there is a “flood” of Russophobic literature: such is thus his judgement about a large part of the literature that had been forbidden and that was published during *perestroika*. A typical example, he finds, is Vasili Grossman’s

Forever Flowing. Grossman is a Russian-Jewish writer who is a constant target of attacks in *NS*. "The Revolution and the subsequent chain of tragedies" is, according to Grossman, due to the fact that "the Russian soul is a thousand-year-old slave." Besides this, he compares and contrasts the freedom of the West with the lack of freedom in Russia (*NS* 12/91: 127). In short, a perfect example of Russophobia. The fact that Grossman is denouncing "our lack of freedom" is lost on Shafarevich, since, being a Jew, Grossman evidently cannot be one of "us" (V. Grossman, *Vse tecet*: 159).

As to the question of guilt, we have seen that Igor Klyamkin writes about the responsibility of the people and "our self-deception" in *Novy Mir*. Vasilii Grossman gives striking expression to the same thought: "In Stalin, post-revolutionary Russia got to know itself" (162). Throughout the articles in *NS* there is a denial of the guilt among the Russian people. Shafarevich is almost unique in admitting, after his enumeration of a series of other factors, that there may be some degree of "Russian guilt" in connection with the Revolution. Yet the traces of any such guilt are lost in the rest of his description. There are formulations that are more prevalent in *NS*, such as: "The people . . . becomes a defenseless victim of small, aggressive groups" . . . "The unchanging hatred of the West toward the historical Russia played a significant role as did a powerful inflow of radical Jews to the Revolution" (*NS* 12/91: 132). Shafarevich belongs to the *NS* writers who are most negative toward the Revolution and toward socialism. As already stated, there are differences.

Shafarevich writes that the most widespread objection to his depiction of the "little people" in "Russophobia" is "the view that it would be improbable that a minority could ever force a majority against its will and that such a thought even is an insult to the 'big people' . . . But no one is surprised that . . . barely visible bacteria kill a huge animal. Is that fact an 'insult' to the animal?" (*NS* 12/91: 133) This type of comparison occurs now and then in *NS*. The youth culture of the West is a "cancerous tumor," and influences from abroad are "foreign weeds" (*NS* 6/89: 128, 1/90: 58). Further: "The radical left press such as *Ogonyok*, which has been predominant in our country, has, in the brief time of 'glasnost' and 'pluralism,' created a veritable spiritual Chernobyl in the consciousness of the masses. All of the sound past has been reduced to ashes" (M. Lobanov, *NS* 6/90: 162). In relation to the question of guilt, such comparisons may be said to reinforce the sense of being a victim.

In "Russophobia," Shafarevich examines a number of Jewish emigrant writers

– in the 1970s, it was primarily Jews who emigrated. One of them presents a "project of spiritual occupation and transformation of Russia, carried out 'by the intellectual community of the West'" (NS 6/89: 189). Further on, he writes: "The most fatal feature of this century which can be traced to the increasing Jewish influence consisted in the cloaking of antinationalist tendencies in a liberal, Westernizing or internationalistic phraseology. (To be sure, many Russians, Ukrainians, and Georgians were also *drawn into* this)" (NS 11/89: 167, emphasis added). "Ten years later," moreover, he submits that the "small people" and the "people on the left" are one in the same (NS 12/91: 130). This is of significance if we want to understand how the writers of NS view their antagonists within the grand polemics of *perestroika*.

"Unity Fanatics"

In the polemics, the national patriots are dubbed "unity fanatics" (*zaedinsciki*) by their antagonists. Furthermore, there are several indications that pluralism, one of the catchwords of *perestroika*, is not only unnatural but unthinkable, that is, impossible to conceive, for them. A whole complex of conceptions – of which some have already been mentioned – is connected with this. Whatever is dividing society must come from the *outside*. This is why anyone who has a different opinion must be removed from the definition of community: they do not belong to the "Russians" or to the "people" but to what Shafarevich defines as the "little people," those who are eternally in opposition to the "big people" and who, clandestinely, are inspired by a "foreign," ethnic group. This *outside* is hostile and conspiratorial. The surrounding world desires to hurt Russia: the West have their henchmen who are busy undermining the country from within, and what Jews really strive for is world dominion. The imagery resorted to suggests the satanic origin of these forces. Emigrants are seen as deserters and defectors, renegades who have sold themselves to the West; according to most of these writers that is the case with all emigrants with the exception of Solzhenitsyn, who is not regarded as an emigrant but rather as one banished into exile. Part and parcel of this complex of ideas is also these writers' view of freedom of speech.

Several NS writers proclaim themselves to be against pluralism, viewing it as a mockery of common sense or as a threat against morality in its effacing of right and wrong (see e.g., 11/89: 173; NS 5/89: 163). At the same time, inconsistently, they declare that pluralism in reality exists neither in the West nor in the Russian *perestroika* press. Instead, what prevails is a monopoly that blocks their views and

manipulates the views of the people, a monopoly that borrows bourgeois techniques of disinformation and deception all of which aims to degrade the "Russian people" and its history. While democracy and human rights are routinely described as illusory, such explicit denunciations of democracy as the following are rare: "Democracy exists in hell, but in Heaven the reign of the czar prevails" (*carstvo; carstvo nebesnoe* = heaven) (V. Pudozyev, *NS* 1/91: 164). This is the motto of one of many of the new, sympathetically described, "patriotic" journals, the "democracy" of the motto referring to both liberals and Bolsheviks.

One of the rural writers, Vladimir Krupin, writes that *perestroika* means a constant rooting around in problems, hundreds and thousands of unsolved problems, in which truth drowns (*NS* 1/90: 64). In *NS* 1/91, one writer calls for control of the mass media and changes in the newly accepted press law in order to make clear that they belong to "the people, the state, and the responsible parties" (P. Krasnov *NS* 1/91: 8,12). In *Znamya*, Lyudmila Saraskina relates the notion of "we-are-the-people" to "totalitarian practices." She recounts ironically how, in the elections to the parliament of the Soviet Republic of Russia in 1990, "the people" became "minority voters" when the results proved unfavorable for the national patriotic candidates (*Znamya* 7/90: 191,192, 196). Most of the *NS* writers seem to embrace this notion as self-evident. Igor Shafarevich formulates a principle in his approving quotation of the conclusion to the book *Russia and the Jews*: "There are two options: either you are a foreigner without political rights, or you enjoy Russian citizenship, based on patriotic love. There is no third option" (*NS* 11/89: 172).

This vision of the people or the nation as an indivisible unity is also obvious in Shafarevich's reasoning as to the central point in his charges against the "little people." According to him, the Russian national character is distinguished by the belief that the destiny of the individual and of the people are impossible to separate and that they are identical in times of crisis. It is further marked by a communion with the earth, with both the soil and the nation. "All our hopes for the future reside in this tradition. It is for the sake of this tradition that we must do battle with the 'little people,' whose credo was intuited already by Dostoyevsky: 'Whoever curses his past is already ours – that is our formula!'" (*NS* 6/89: 192) Connections with the past are of crucial importance: the national patriotic movement is in utter agreement about this. It is reflected in what can be seen as the key catchword of the movement, "the rebirth of Russia," although the struggle for such a rebirth is embraced also by those "nationally inclined" who are not necessarily nationalists.

In NS 4/90, a "Letter from the writers, cultural workers and researchers of Russia" to the highest state authorities and the 28th Congress of the Communist Party is published. This letter was signed by hundreds of cultural workers and thousands of sympathizers. It can thus be regarded as representative while also providing a quick review, with some additions, of national patriot themes: The total edition of "patriotic mass media" amounts to 1.5 million, while the "Russian-speaking but Russophobic" edition is 60 million. This is an unparalleled instance of racism, at the same time as the "Russian people" without reason is charged with "fascism" and "racism." It is no more nationalist than the "democratic" people's fronts in other Soviet republics, where Russians are persecuted without this getting public attention. For more than 72 years Russia has been discriminated against and deprived of its own resources. Jews constitute an overwhelming majority in central mass media. Zionism strives for world dominion and wants to make of Russia an Israeli colony. Zionist capital seeks to devour several peoples, not just the Arab world. There are even Zionists in the governing bodies of the Communist Party. Just as in the 1920s, there are plans to annihilate the Russian people and Russian culture. Fabrications concerning Russian fascism are planted in order to detract attention from exterior threats and to justify the destruction of both the Soviet army and the nullification of the outcome of World War II, of which the reunification of Germany is one example. These falsifications are meant to conceal treason to the native country – a betrayal of Russian interests and a collaboration with foreign businesses and governments. This is detrimental also for the friendships between the peoples of the Soviet Union, "who for a long time have been welded together by 'great Russia'" (NS 4/90: 136–145).

Natalia Ivanova, who, along with Chuprinin, is a leading critic for *Znamya*, writes apropos the above letter that the RSFSR Writers' Union – an important center for the national patriots – has appropriated the right to speak on behalf of Russia's writers (*Znamya* 8/90: 224). Ironically, Saraskina declares that the pathos of this "WE platform" is that "WE are NOT guilty of anything; WE are insulted, WE are oppressed, WE are ruined, WE can be sold." This is "an outrage to Russians, who have fought and won so many times" (*Znamya* 7/90: 198). On the occasion of the abolishment of censorship in 1990, Chuprinin writes more parenthetically and perhaps in part jocularly, about the feelings behind the letter. This has given rise to the same degree of resistance among national patriot writers as the abolishment of serfdom did in 1861 among some of the servants of estate owners, who begged not to be let free. Writers feel offended since the Master, that

is, the state, has ceased giving clear instructions and also stopped rewarding the completion of tasks carried out. Such desires have also been made explicit. In reality, according to Chuprinin, a majority of the members of the Writers' Union cannot manage without supervision and nourishing care either in the market or in a free competition between talents. There is already massive unemployment among writers, and the situation will only worsen (*Znamya* 3/91: 220–221).

“Feudal Socialism”

In a quotation above, Sergei Chuprinin calls the national patriotic alliance between “old-time Russian” nationalists and “old-time Communists” “unnatural.” The *Novyi mir* article “Feudal Socialism,” by Michael Voslensky, a Russian emigrant known in the West for his book, *Nomenklatura*, gives a thought-provoking comment on this. He sees the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917 as a counter-revolution that cancels out the results of the anti-feudal and democratic February Revolution of the same year, the upheaval which overthrew the Reign of the Czar. The October Revolution is an expression of a feudal reaction: abolishing the market along with democracy and civil rights such as the freedom of speech, it reintroduces dictatorship, the police state and censorship and a system founded on extra-economic coercion and position of power rather than on property ownership. It is a restoration of the old pattern in a slightly different form, something that has occurred throughout history. Totalitarianism, even Nazism, can be seen as an outbreak of a feudal past in the present time (*NM* 9/91: 187–198).

Searching for an explanation for the alliance, Chuprinin observes that the different parties come together from their different ideological traditions in shared opinions and values. The traditions merge in their view that Jews are guilty of Russia's misfortunes, that destruction comes from the West, and in the feeling of living in a “state of siege.” A hostile and pluralist world outside Russia stands against the unity that for Russians is the only natural condition – in the one case, departing from the orthodox religious idea of the people's communion, and in the other, from the idea of a Communist, ideological monolith. What these two directions share in common is the trend towards an authoritarian government and a control of the mass media.

They are all “particularity enthusiasts” (*samobytniki*), writes Chuprinin: “I am convinced that the temptation to see Russia as exceptional and special has caused us more misfortunes than any other.” From the cul-de-sac into which the “special

way”has placed the country they want to choose another special way, this time a national instead of an ideological one. There is, however, a natural desire among people not to have it worse than others and to ”at last feel like *normal* people in a *normal* country, not as ‘chosen by God’ or as ‘the vanguard of all of progressive humanity’” (*Znamya* 1/90: 210–218).

Reflecting upon the same phenomenon, Natalia Ivanova argues that the fall of command socialism only has enabled civil society to begin to develop at long last but that it also made it possible for forces to surface that earlier were kept down by the internationalist dogmas of official ideology. As to the alliance between different forces she observes how the patriarchal terminology of the church in strange ways coincides with the party rhetoric. She gives one example from a speech at a board meeting with the RSFSR Writers’ Union in December, 1990: ”The renovated Communist Party of Russia can find its way to the sanctuary of the soul of the people and make the hopes of the people its prayer.”

Ivanova, too, asks herself what unites the parties of the alliance. Her article is entitled ”Returning to the Present” and concerns dystopia as a genre in the new literature, a genre that had been prohibited in Soviet literature in which the postulates of the Communist Party of the ”bright future” were not to be questioned, the present being merely viewed as a necessary stage on the way to this future. Along with several other liberal debaters, she regards this utopianism as devastating. As the connecting link among national patriots, moreover, she points to the utopian consciousness and the reluctance to take hold of the present and look reality in the face. Utopia is located in part in the ”bright future” and in part in the ”bright past” that is expressed in their version of the idea of rebirth. Their view of Russia as chosen by God to play a messianic and reforming role in the world ”stands in opposition to a realistic comprehension of the extremely difficult situation in a country that in terms of development has slipped behind in catastrophic ways” (*Znamya* 8/90: 222–236).

The liberal critic Sergei Chuprinin writes that there are huge differences between the ”particularity enthusiasts” – from an imperialistic militarism to sophisticated ideas of a national rebirth taking its cue from Russian philosophy of religion (*Znamya* 1/90: 212). According to Chuprinin, the *Novyi mir* writer Alla Latynina, who in the quote above expressed her indignation at the rural writers’ joining of the national patriotic alliance, is part of this last-mentioned orientation. Her stand against the alliance as such is, naturally, stronger than that of the liberal debaters. For example, she uses expressions such as ”the unnatural hybrid between

the Russian philosophy of religion and the imperial consciousness of the national Bolsheviks” (NM 1/90: 256).

Latynina offers a formulation that might be applied to the difference between *Novyi mir* and *Nash Sovremennik* : ”It is about time that we draw a sharp line between the Russian, cultural-national, and Christian democratic movement, on the one hand, and Soviet chauvinism, on the other. The first-mentioned is oriented toward a pulling together of the nation as a spiritual organism, something that is only possible through a renunciation of the exertion of pressure on other nations and through remorse. The last-mentioned goes very well with the slogans of the International (were the soldiers in Afghanistan not called internationalists?). Solzhenitsyn is working for a national rebirth but absolutely not for imperialistic pretensions. The ideas of a cultural and spiritual rebirth must be wedded to liberal and democratic changes in society (NM 1/90: 255).

The year 1990 is commonly called ”the year of Solzhenitsyn” since this year saw the beginning of the publication of all of his works in the thick journals, a condition for his returning to his home country. Latynina’s article is about him. ”Our new Russian nationalists,” she writes, have brought up not a few of Solzhenitsyn’s thoughts, but have distorted them. Firstly, their search for the guilty stands in opposition to the author’s awareness of guilt and his ideas of the necessity of remorse, something that is of crucial importance in today’s tense situation. ”Stop blaming everyone else,” Solzhenitsyn wrote in 1974, offering an ironic depiction of the comments of national bolshevism: ”the character of the Russian people is the most noble in the world; neither its old nor its modern history is soiled by anything. There is nothing to reproach either Czarism or Bolshevism for. . . Even today, there are no national problems in relation to the peripheral republics. . . whether you are a Russian or not is solely determined by your blood” (NM 1/90: 253, 254). This could, in fact, be a description, devoid of parody, of many articles in *Nash Sovremennik*.

”The Ideologues of the Coup”

On the morning of August 19, 1991, classical music was played on all TV and radio channels: a sure sign that put many listeners on the alert. This was the beginning of the failed three-day coup that was started in order to save the Soviet Union and the Soviet system. Among the first measures taken by the men behind the coup was the introduction of censorship and the prohibition of several newspapers and journals. On August 20, they sent a messenger to the Secretariat

of the Soviet Writers' Union: a telling sign of the great importance Soviet rulers, in their own way, attached to writers and to literature. The messenger was met with sympathy.

Many writers from the democratic camp who, by their own account, had not been invited to the meetings at the Secretariat for a long time, arrived to the August 23 meeting after the coup. The weekly magazine *Literaturnaya gazeta* which had been the mouthpiece of the Writers' Union before the press law of 1990 depicted this remarkable meeting in an extensive article published August 28. The democratic writers came from the PEN Club, and when they turned up, three of the sympathisers with the coup of August 20th made off. Yevgeni Yevtushenko was elected chair of the meeting. Some contributions to the discussion brought up the support given to the coup by the Writers' Union in terms of propaganda and ideology. *Nash Sovremennik* occupied a central position among the newspapers and journals pointed to in this connection. One speaker argued, for example, that two articles in *Nash Sovremennik* 8/91 contained explicit denunciations of certain publications; these publications were subsequently prohibited by the junta. Another speaker declared that it appeared that national patriotic writers had written the appeals, orders, and decrees of the coup makers: these authors were the "writers of the executioners."

Among other things, the meeting decided: "To judge the publication of 'Appeal to the People,' signed by Yu Bondarev, V. Rasputin och A. Prochanov as ideological support of the attempted coup and to demand that they resign from their posts as secretaries of the Writers' Union of the Soviet Union and the RSFSR. To judge the journal *Nash Sovremennik's* . . . ideological direction as spreading national discord and as an intentional or unintentional summons to antidemocratic action" (LG 34/91: 9). "Appeal to the People" was published in July, 1991, in several places. It was signed by the three above-mentioned authors together with several of the perpetrators-to-be of the coup. Gennady Ziuganov was one of the twelve signatories, which might be of interest today as he is the leader of Russia's largest party, the Communist Party. The editor-in-chief of *Nash Sovremennik* was among those who joined the appeal, and he had time to express his support of the coup during its brief span of existence. After the coup, there were many who referred to the appeal as a presage of the coup and who found formulations that were in accordance with the documents of the junta.

The following is a sampling of excerpts from "Appeal to the People": "Brothers, what has become of us? Why have rich and greedy misers . . . been able

to seize power through exploiting our naïveté? . . . they sentence us to a pitiful existence of slavery and submission to omnipotent neighbors. How did it come to be that we . . . allowed rulers to take over who do not love this country and who crawl like slaves for overseas protectors? . . . We turn to all of you . . . for whom our differences are nothing compared to our shared misery and pain or compared to our shared love of our native country: one and indivisible, our native country has united our brother nations to a powerful state without which we have no life under the sun. . . . It is not the fault of the army that it quickly had to abandon foreign garrisons . . . and be the target of perpetual attacks of lies and slander from irresponsible politicians. . . . We are convinced that the fighters in the Army and the Navy, in loyalty to their holy duty . . . will act as a bulwark for all the healthy forces in society. . . . We turn to the Communist Party, which carries the entire responsibility . . . for the tragic last six years . . . and which has surrendered the power to frivolous and incompetent parliamentarians who have created dissension among us. . . . There are statesmen among the inhabitants of Russia who are ready to lead the country into a non-degrading and sovereign future” (*Sovetskaya Rossiya* 142 23/7 1991).

During 1991, there was a great deal in *Nash Sovremennik* that presaged the coup. Issue number 5, for example, was dedicated to the Army, with one article praising it and describing it as the target of “witchhunt” during *perestroika* and declaring it to be the guarantor of the union (*NS* 5/91: 3–10). Number 7 contained a questionnaire with replies from representatives of the “patriotic movement.” In this questionnaire, it is stated that everything that had been created during seventy years of hard work by the people now was being destroyed. One of the questions was: “Experiences from the whole world indicate that in a crisis, state socialism is superior to capitalism and private enterprise. How, in your opinion, are we going to overcome the present crisis?” (*NS* 7/91: 122) – a leading question, to put it mildly.

Another question concerns the central issue of a union between communist and non-communist nationalists: “Do you see historical roots to socialism in the past of our native country (socialism and orthodoxy, socialism and the formation of the state, socialism and traditions in the life of the people)?” Answers along the lines evoked by the questions are given from the leaders of “Christian Rebirth” and “The Association for the Spiritual Rebirth of Our Country,” for example. They speak of the idea of brotherhood of orthodoxy and the tradition of the peasant commune that have survived for so long in Russia, which they view as

allied to socialism. Igor Shafarevich, on the other hand, wonders if the question is an expression of black humor: "There is no reason to blame the nightmare our country has been through on 'national values.' . . . Socialism is not based on the national values of any people, but can only be realized in opposition to such values and through their total elimination" (*NS* 7/91: 122–133). Interestingly, Shafarevich joins the old Communist *nomenklatura* on the level of organization but without any manoeuvres of accommodation on the level of ideology.

"The Revolution is Finally Over"

While the coup was still in progress, *Znamya*, along with many other democratic publications, expressed its support for the popularly elected Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, who was the main opponent of the perpetrators of the coup. Natalia Ivanova wrote a long article in *Znamya* 10/91 about the important role played by writers and intellectuals for those who carried out the coup and about the "Appeal to the People." She argues that the idea of the national patriotic or rather national socialist movement was created in *Nash Sovremennik* and a few other thick journals, after which it increasingly penetrated politics. Dating back to the 1960s, this ideology, after a certain confusion during the first years of *perestroika*, in 1988 became explicitly offensive. Early in 1991 a secure foundation of good finances, a network of organizations, and print media had been established.

Ivanova writes of the signatories of the appeal and other writers: "They viewed reality as a literary room in which they could construct their intrigues of criminal investigation (concerning national as well as international conspiracies and 'enemies of the nation,' Jews/freemasons . . . Society and the people were to them a blank page on which one might draw whatever one fancied: a piece of paper can put up with anything. . . . Why did they lose touch with reality to such a remarkable degree? After all, it was clear that social support for the anti-democratic forces was small." Ivanova's explanation "as a literary critic" points to the writers' being brought up with socialist realism, a literary method that excludes actual knowledge of reality but that contains a belief in transcendence beyond the inertia of reality. (*Znamya* 10/91:205). At the same time, at the end of the article, Ivanova argues that a significant part of the intelligentsia harbors imperialistic ambitions. The nationalist propaganda continues to be intense. "The immunity of the people, no matter how strong it may have been, has its limits. . . . A difficult winter is ahead of us. The empire is falling apart. . . . People who have experienced euphoria may, by the spring 1992, be the victims of apathy, or worse,

of despair. The social basis for a transformation of the population into a lumpenproletariat of society remains. . . . Rehearsals do not cancel the show” (219).

According to Ivanova, the perpetrators of the coup did not take into account the fact that people had gained a considerable amount of self-knowledge during *perestroika*. The resistance was spontaneous, and no organization was needed.”The fulfillment of hope began at the walls of the White House during August 19 to 21, 1991. The Revolution was finally over. The October Revolution of 1917 suffered a final defeat. The people defended the lawful government” (215–216, 219).

Aspects of Censorship

”Special archives”

I have already cited parts of Igor Klyamkin’s article in *Novyi mir* 2/89, entitled ”Why It Is Hard to Tell the Truth”, subtitled: ”Selected Parts From a Medical History.” As stated above, the kind of historiography presented by many debaters in *Novyi mir* and *Znamya* often constitutes an attempt at writing the ”medical history.” Self-deception is our most serious illness, according to Klyamkin. ”And in order to find a cure, we must return to our roots and see how everything began, where, when and at what point of our historical route people had the idea that violence and terror could lead to freedom” (219). This is necessary in order to overcome the ”chronic lack of self-knowledge” that is a part of ”our common illness” (215).

Little by little, this ”therapeutic” writing of history also includes censorship among its themes. Here, one ends up in what several writers declare to be the most inaccessible area, which may be an indication that we are approaching the very core of the system. Censorship is still a ”closed zone” for researchers, writes one of them, and not even the most affected, that is, the author of a manuscript, is able to question the ”invisible censors” or their secret instructions (S. Ushanov, *NM* 8/89: 250). What is new in this respect as compared to the time prior to and during *perestroika*’s earliest period is that the words ”censor” and ”censorship” concerning Soviet conditions appear in print. Earlier, the very existence of censorship was censored.

S. Dzhimbinov writes in *Novyi mir* 5/90 that the time has not yet come for a serious writing of the history of Soviet censorship, since, among other reasons, all the archives are closed (245). Yet, his article is precisely an attempt to begin writing the history of censorship, concentrating on a phenomenon that has

received but scant attention in the Western mass media, that is, the so-called "special archives" (*specchran*) in some libraries, something that was also unmentionable before *perestroika*. Instead of "section for forbidden books" the euphemism "special archives" is used, he writes, just as "active methods of interrogation" had substituted for "torture." He refers to George Orwell's novel *1984* with its "newspeak," a concept that gathered enormous force in Russian debates since the novel's publication in *Novyi mir* 2–4/89. "The novel itself, needless to say, was placed in our special archives" (243). At that time it was read in pale *samizdat* copies in the same way as forbidden books were read in Orwell's novel (V. Chalikova, *Znamya* 8/89: 223).

Censorship began already on the day after the Bolshevik October Revolution in 1917, when certain newspapers were discontinued, writes Dzhimbinov. In 1922, Glavlit, the Institute of Censorship, was founded, before which the Security Police, among others, possessed certain censorship rights. What developed after 1917, however, was "not at all censorship as one commonly defines it but a consistent nationalization of the literary process" (251). The concept of the special archives turns up for the first time in 1923 in a directive signed by Lenin's wife, Nadezjda Krupskaya, among others. It stated that "harmful and counter-revolutionary books" were to be weeded out, leaving at most two copies in special, locked cabinets at the central library (245). Initially, lists of hundreds of suppressed books were published, but this ceased in 1924 since the lists evoked storms of protest (249).

In 1987, before *perestroika* had started to "liberate" the books, the special archives at the National Library, the Lenin Library in Moscow, contained 300,000 titles of books, more than 560,000 magazines, and at least a million newspapers (244). It is noteworthy that only twenty to thirty libraries had such special archives. Otherwise books were burnt or were collected as wastepaper. "At the bottom of our hell of books" were books by Trotsky and Solzhenitsyn, unreachable for most people and surrounded by especially strict formalities if anyone desired to borrow them. The possession of a book by Trotsky was punishable by ten years in prison camp during the era of Stalin (246). Since both Trotsky and Solzhenitsyn were published in 1989, "two structural columns" fell and "the special archives collapsed immediately" (251). At this point the archives were practically empty, but the author of the article concludes with the warning that everything could return to the old order, since, contrary to earlier praxis, the books' coding and placement on the shelves has been kept (252).

”Enough for the Wise Person”

”Under a totalitarian regime, laws concerning reading and writing are different than when there is freedom of the press.” Thus Natalia Ivanova quotes the emigrant, Yefim Etkind, in *Znamya* 11/89. Censorship has a rich history in our country, she writes, and ”it is closely connected with the rise and forced flowering of the aisopic language in Russian literature” (222). The aisopic language is a kind of writing between the lines in order to cheat censorship and to reach the wise readers. In 1989, then, in connection with the translation of her book about a contemporary Russian writer, Ivanova scrutinized her own text and ”discovered that it was extremely coded: during the ‘period of stagnation’ [1964–85], the principle behind the code was: ‘sapienti sat’ – ‘enough for the wise person’”(221).

During the period of stagnation the aisopic language flowered, according to Ivanova. Being a time of doubleness, this period differed from the Stalin era when even doubleness was impossible (223). The historical genre, for example, was suitably double-edged, as were stories of foreign countries. Among the ”aisopic themes” were Ivan the Terrible, fascism, maoism, and bureaucracy in the West (227). Ostensibly, literature was treating these themes, while alluding to contemporary Soviet society. For Yury Lyubimov and many other theater directors the aisopic language was fundamental. The Taganka theater production of Alexander Pushkin’s historical play *Boris Godunov* ”screamed about the disfranchisement and submissiveness of the people” and was forbidden. ”Now, the changed times have removed what had been most important: the resistance against the regime, the allusions, the language.” The crisis of the theater discussed at present is mainly due to the fact that the aisopic language has become unnecessary (223).

”The hindrances put up by censorship have worked as stylistic ferment in the development of Russian literature.” In 1978, Joseph Brodsky wrote that the necessity to skirt these hindrances stimulated metaphorical language: ”Someone who under normal conditions would speak a normal aisopic language, speaks an aisopic language of the third degree. This is excellent, and one must thank censorship for this” (223). This is one aspect, but the conclusion of the article is different. A letter from a reader during the stagnation period read aloud at a conference during *perestroika* prefaces the concluding passage: ”We are tired of the aisopic literature and of the necessity to decipher texts resembling some kind of Mayan alphabet in order to penetrate through a jungle of vague expressions, allusions, and allegories, to the thought that is hidden in the work” (229).

Perestroika has brought new possibilities for publishing. "Out of desk drawers and archives works written in a different, clear, and unequivocal language have been brought forward." Today, what is simply and clearly said is cherished. This is a question of a "principal language shift" in society. In the mid-1980s, the distance between the real language and the language permitted in literature grew larger (230). The previously forbidden and the newly written literature do not only take up new themes. It is also written in a different language which gives voice to social groups that had been made invisible. The new literature is only the beginning of this path. The article concludes: "Do you remember the beginning of Tarkovsky's film, *The Mirror*? A doctor is treating a youth for a severe case of stuttering. With infinite difficulty and pain the youth struggles to utter a freely pronounced word: . . . Do you remember? 'I can speak . . .'" (231).

In *Znamya* 3/91, at a point when time and *perestroika* have gone forward, Sergei Chuprinin writes: "Everything is permitted. Everything is received with open arms. If anyone wants to write about Stalin, feel free! Or about erogenous zones – by all means. If anyone wants to hint at a concealed religiosity or monarchism – go ahead! One after the other, forbidden fruits cease to be forbidden and . . . here begin the serious problems that are truly literary and artistic and that have nothing to do with censorship" (230). The abolishment of censorship effected by the new press laws is the beginning of "a de-nationalization of literature" (220), he asserts, at the same time as he writes about the threats and crimes against the law during the turbulent fall and winter of 1990-91. It might seem meaningless to talk about artistic freedom when "tanks are tearing up the asphalt in our towns," but at such times everyone has to do their utmost in their chosen fields (233).

Ivanova discusses the crisis of the theater in connection with the new openness. Towards the end of *perestroika*, then, Chuprinin emphasizes that the abolishment of censorship, in its way, is a problem for literature. Prohibitions create an interest, and what is not accessible for everyone acquires status. A former underground poet testifies to a loss of the sense of being chosen because of his having spoken freely despite censorship. Literature has hardly had time to breath a sigh of relief after the persecutions of censorship before the principle of permitting anything is exposing it to new trials (230, 231). In *Znamya* 10/91 he develops this theme further. Whenever anyone managed to outwit censorship and publish some deviant work this was formerly an event "on everyone's lips," wide circles were thus participating in the event as an act of civil disobedience (221).

The literature of the thaw and the literature of stagnation has much to thank its persecutors for. For many people, it was not so much a question of a passion for literature as of being disgusted with the regime and its ideology (222). After the abolishment of censorship and the rise of other sources of information, the real lovers of literature are evidently not that many (225).”Literature has to moderate the pretensions cultivated during the ‘century-long war’ against tyranny, its claims to give the people spiritual guidance” (226).

”A Word of Truth is Stronger than an Ocean of Lies”

The above quote is from one of many letters from readers to *Novyi mir* occasioned by the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* in 8–11 1989 (NM 9/91: 247). This publication gave rise to an enormous number of letters from readers, the largest since the publication in 1962 in the same journal of *A Day In The Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the great work of the thaw by the same writer (NM 9/91: 233). In *Novyi mir* 9/91 a small selection of quotes from 45 letters is published under the headline ”*The Gulag Arhipelago* is read in its home country.” Indeed a historical event.

These letters express reactions ranging from the view that Solzhenitsyn will be declared a saint to the opinion that he is a ”Judas” who has sold everything holy for dollars, a renegade who has not been imprisoned without reason, because, as the expression goes, ”nobody is imprisoned without reason,” and further to the opinion that this is ”loathsome graffiti” that calls for washing one’s hands with soap and brush if one has touched it (238, 244, 245, 246). Most letters are deeply appreciative, however. Here are some examples: a female doctor from a Siberian village writes that for her, the reading matter was revolutionary, despite the fact that her own family had suffered heavy losses. This was the case also for other people in the village, people who had believed in the version presented by Soviet authorities.”If we had had ‘freedom of press,’ if *The Gulag Archipelago* had been read in time . . . I am convinced that life would have been somewhat different . . . a person cannot but be changed from reading *The Gulag Arhipelago*” (239). A miner says:”If all this had been published when it was written, we would probably not be swaying to and fro like blind kittens today . . . The people has long understood that we are headed in the wrong direction, but due to systematic disinformation we have not been able to imagine any other paths” (244).

In *Novyi mir* and *Znamya*, we find many expressions (such as the ones quoted above) about the importance of freedom of speech and the devastating effects of

ensorship, perhaps even more so in *Novyi mir* than in *Znamya*, which would accord with *Novyi Mir's* more traditional, "Russian" direction, while an engagement for freedom of speech evidently is part of *Znamya's* liberal views. In the public life of czarist Russia and Soviet Russia, advocates and critics of the regime alike put a great emphasis on the word, from which followed both a censorship of varying rigor and a battle against censorship with different methods. There was a belief in the transforming powers of the word, a belief that was one of the factors behind the original enthusiasm of *perestroika* and the following disappointment and discussion of complications.

The editor-in-chief of *Novyi Mir*, the rural author Sergei Zalygin, writes: "Today, one is allowed to say a thing or two about the construction of nuclear power stations, whereas until quite recently one was only permitted to praise them. As a result, we suffered the disaster of Chernobyl" (*NM* 1/89: 32). At the same time he writes about the deceived expectations on the transforming capabilities of the word. Bureaucrats who started being criticized in the press during *perestroika* were dismayed at first but soon realized that they could keep working undisturbed. "The bureaucrats adjusted faster and better to *glasnost* than those who are creating the situation of *glasnost* and who put their hearts into it" (40).

There are other articulations of the importance of freedom of speech. The rulers' efforts toward an all-encompassing control has put a stop to all individual movement in society, since without freedom of speech social life withers and only a shadow life remains (V. Kamyranov 8/90: 215; A. Avtorchanov *NM* 1/91: 170). "The invisible war of public officers against science," the censorship of government departments, and the absence of research information has led to gigantic losses (S. Ushanov, *NM* 8/89: 248, 250). The empire and other huge societal structures are doomed to destruction because of information paralysis (V. Yaroshenko, *NM* 3/91: 155). Anyone who has been raised in fear of the authorities is incapable of creating anything, and whereas science has been living on remnants of freedom from the past these are now exhausted; on principle, new trends arise almost exclusively in the West; as soon as the system permits deviating views, it loses its omnipotence over people's minds (J. Shreyder, *NM* 11/91: 232, 235, 240). Totalitarianism and an all-encompassing control infantilizes people and creates subjects who are incapable of taking initiatives; only freedom can create citizens who have access to all information, the "real, measurable freedom" found in human rights in contradistinction to "spiritual freedom" – the last-mentioned being typical of liberal *Znamya* (A. Ageyev,

Znamya 8/91: 194, 199, 204). There are many writers in both journals who connect freedom with the right to private ownership, while privileges doled out by the system is viewed as creating dependence (see e.g., *NM* 3/91:155, *NM* 11/91: 234 and *Znamya* 8/91: 204).

”We Want Bread Instead of Freedom”

In the fall and winter of 1990–91 a period of repression and censorship followed despite the new press law, and in January there were the bloody beginnings of attempted coups in Vilnius and Riga. In connection with this, Lyudmila Saraskina publishes a grim article in *Znamya* 5/91 entitled ”The Morning after Freedom.” ”Starting with a campaign against the consumption of alcohol, *perestroika* has ended with a huge hangover” (209). Further, she asserts that *glasnost* failed to lead to freedom of speech in the sense of intellectual honesty and inner freedom from group loyalties, divisions into ”pure” and ”impure,” and a monopolization of truth (215, 216). Is there anyone at all who needs freedom? The theme of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky that people prefer to throw off freedom as if it were a yoke and to have bread instead occurs to Saraskina apropos a recent meeting between President Gorbachev and the cultural workers (217).

It is a dramatic time, writes Saraskina. There is a crisis of power and many ineffective presidential decrees while people’s lives increasingly consist of a never-ending chase for basic sustenance. The barely discernible freedom is in danger – worn and lost people may prefer an authoritarian government. Russian revolutions have been conducted in the spirit of the Grand Inquisitor, and choosing bread before freedom is a ”fundamentally Russian theme.” There is another truth: ”freedom does not in and of itself solve any problems; it only makes it possible to speak openly about them.” If in the future we will have enough peace and quiet for ”my fellow countryman” to meet himself he will discover that ”his closest enemy resides within himself and that he must first defend his own high ideas against himself” (223, 224).

There are other expressions for how complicated the belief in the transformative powers of the word and the blessings of freedom of speech has become. One problem among others is touched upon by Sergei Kostyrko, who writes in *Novyi mir* 3/90 that the emigrant writer, Eduard Limonov, is free from ”our prohibitions.” But in his pursuit of publicity in the West he represents an inner lack of freedom that is new in Russian literature. With the commercial-

ization of literature this lack of freedom threatens to spread (255). Another thought is brought up by, among other writers, J. Shreyder, who writes in *Novyi mir* 11/91 that the total demands of obedience in both thought and action by ideology and its demand for the participation of all in its way meant comfort, that is, a liberation from having to choose on one's own. Freedom, on the other hand, with its requirements of individual responsibility, always brings with it a certain amount of discomfort (232, 233). Yet another aspect is represented by A. Zotikov in his review in *Znamya* 5/90 of a book about the repression during the 1930s through the 1950s in the series "Returning to Truth." The flood of revealing material during the last five years of *perestroika* has transformed people's reactions from a shocked interest to a feeling of surfeit and then to a condescending smirk (221).

Among other things, the disagreement between "postmodernists" and the "1960s activists" concerns the importance of free speech. The "postmodernist" "other prose" has risen during *perestroika* out of the underground of the Brezhnev era. It is commonly described as a departure from what is seen as the main stream of the Russian tradition: a socially engaged literature, didactic goals and a belief in the transforming powers of the word – all of which was part of the *credo* of the activists of the 1960s. In *Novyj mir* 10/89, Vladimir Potapov argues that the "other prose" is linked to a different tradition, that is, to the new Russian literature at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the end of this century, furthermore, it is far from easy to share the positivist belief in progress. The "other prose" knows that "the proclamations of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy and the harmony of Pushkin – in brief, all of Literature and the Word – did not save the people and the country from the tragic blows of history (253, 254).

"Liberal terror"

Not only encompassing trends such as national patriotism, negative views of liberalism from both leftwing and rightwing perspectives have deep roots in Russian culture. In *The Possessed*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, to take one example, depicts the terrorism of the 1860s as sprung out of the liberalism of the 1840s. In *The Red Wheel*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn describes the liberal February Revolution of 1917 as a source of misfortunes that led to the Bolshevik seizing of power in October. Earlier in this chapter, I have written about how writers in *Nash Sovremennik* view freedom of speech as illusory, and the liberal Russian *perestroika* press as monopolist and oppressive or even persecuting towards

different opinions. For this there are concepts such as "liberal terror" and the "liberal gendarmery" (see e.g., T. Glushkova, *NS* 7/89: 166-188, 9/89: 163-179; V. Pudozyev, 1/91: 163) These concepts have been employed in a more narrow sense in *Novyi mir* in order to characterize certain aspects of the polemics, and, at the same time, the national patriots were criticized (A. Latynina, *NM* 8/88: 232-244). The concepts have been criticized in *Znamya* (V. Kardin, *Znamya* 3/89: 215).

Igor Shafarevich, the writer of "Russophobia" writes about the movement for human rights in the Soviet Union and its demands for freedom of speech and that in the West the emigrated authors have used this freedom to "defame Russia." Approvingly, Shafarevich quotes Solzhenitsyn's statement that it is "a misfortune for the whole nation" that great writers such as Akhmatova and Zamyatin have been forced to be silent (*NS* 1/90: 63). In a 1989 journal, on the other hand, he deplores the failure of the Orthodox world to respond to an offensive work by Andrey Sinyavsky in the same way as the Islamic world responded to Rushdie – that is, with "grandiose demonstrations" where hundreds of people sacrificed their lives and managed to get the book prohibited in several countries (as quoted by S. Chuprinin in *Znamya* 1/90: 213). A belief in the word needs not be tied to sympathies with pluralism. Critics of "Russophobia," Shafarevich submits, claim that he is provoking pogroms against the Jews by "quoting" Vasilii Grossman (as delineated above). Whoever unlike himself believes in pogroms "ought first and foremost to turn against the publications of such works" (*NS* 12/91: 139) Moreover, he depicts Grossman as a hypocrite who writes one thing in the works published in the Soviet Union while other books by him written "in secret" say something else (*NS* 11/89: 168). Similar tactics were also part of the Soviet propaganda against authors of different views.

Other formulations in *Nash Sovremennik* regarding freedom of speech I have addressed above in the section about "Unity Fanatics". Most articles are marked by anticapitalism, be it "feudal" or "socialist" or both. In combination with the typical view of the West this sometimes results in descriptions such as the following: Radicals, in particular in the capital, "prefer modern philistines, consumers of rights, goods, mass culture, and what can generally be seen as a 'Western life style'" (P. Krasnov, *NS* 1/91: 5). Or: the nouveau riche are attempting to requisition a cultural heritage that does not belong to them. "They are shedding crocodile tears over the tragedy of the imperial family and making it known to the 'devourers of emptiness.' And at once there is a greedy finger pointing to the bright visage of czarovich: so who is this..." (A. Kazintsev, *NS*

10/89: 157). In this article as in so many others in *NS* there is much that a rational summary must fail to do "justice." During a period of *perestroika* much was written about the Bolsheviks' execution by a firing squad of the Czar family in 1918. While the writer of the article, on the one hand, is an adherent of the Czar, on the other, he is evidently against the treatment of this previously forbidden theme in the press. This writer also brings up the same theme as *Novy Mir's* editor-in-chief, mentioned above, although with a conspiratorial twist: initially, *glasnost* evoked enthusiasm. "Now it is clear that the bureaucracy has invented an ingeniously simple mechanism that liberates it from all responsibility: 'You think the situation is bad? Well, nobody is saying that things are fine with us, either!'" (*NS* 7/89: 143).

Conclusion

A few years after the end of the "civil war," Natalia Ivanova writes in *Znamya* 9/93: "After the tough ideological battle between 'democrats' and 'conservatives,' 'Westernizers' and 'neo-slavophiles,' liberals and nationalists along with unity fanatics of all kinds, we have reached a pause of a sort. . . . But who *won* this battle, that is an interesting question. . . . Sad to say, the victor, as so often is the case, came from a completely unexpected corner: while none of the first two sides were victorious, a third part was : mass literature" (198).

This statement reflects on the commercialization and, more specifically, on the increasing popularity of the western popular culture streaming in after having been prohibited. However, as regards the degree of strength between the main opponents, represented by *Znamya* and *Nash Sovremennik (NS)* in this article, there is yet another aspect to consider. During the years 1990-91 the liberals were at their most influential, and in 1990, in particular, the Western world was at its most popular in the views of the general public. After this, their influence diminished as did their numbers, in part due to the hurtful effects of the economic shock therapy affecting people in general. On the other hand, the national patriot movement that according to Ivanova was born in *NS* and a few other thick journals, has strongly increased its influence.

Today, Gennady Ziuganov is the leader of the largest party in the country, the Communist Party, and he is also the leader of the largest group in the state *duma* or Russian House of Commons. We have seen how he signed the "Appeal to the People" before the attempted coup in August 1991. During 1992, when the shock therapy was initiated, he continued the work for an ideological rapprochement between pro- and anticommunist nationalists. Recognizing orthodoxy as

foundational for Russia, he depicted the socialist ideals as sprung from the Bible and from the Russian peasant commune. The NS writer, Vadim Kozhinov, on the other hand, who had depicted the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 as the result of a conspiracy against Russia by Jews and freemasons, wrote in *Pravda* in December, 1991, that socialism was the bright goal of world history (V. Sorgin: 137-138).

This important alliance was being formed as soon as it was politically possible during *perestroika*. In the cultural debates there are many reflections on the alliance. The immediately preceding period, the "stagnation epoque" of the Brezhnev era, was marked by the dictatorship of the Communist Party and the natural, cultural pact against it by "decent people" according to Sergei Chuprinin (*Znamya* 1/90: 209). *Perestroika* changes this scenario, and individuals who have been on opposing sides are now joining forces. In the search for an explanation for the alliance, several debaters point to the common features of the ideological traditions of Russian communism and Russian nationalism under the Czar, despite the fact that these groups have been historically opposed to each other. These traditions both place the defense of the Empire at the center. From different points of view they declare that destruction comes from the Western world, they oppose pluralism and endorse an authoritarian government and control of the mass media. Finally, they emphasize the particular features of Russia and its separate path of development on ideological and national levels respectively.

Another fundamental phenomenon reflected in the debate is a cultural "paradigm shift" at the end of *perestroika*. A new, more pluralist public life has developed, censorship has been abolished, and a multiparty system has been introduced.

Literature (and literary criticism) no longer constitutes a special channel of information and carrier of forbidden truths. The laws of totalitarianism for how to read and write – between the lines – are out of the running. Reading, purchasing, or discussing dissenting works no longer represent a collective act of civil disobedience. The belief in the transformative power of the word had been nourished in the tension between the prohibitions of and the struggle to outwit censorship. On the other hand, the state no longer needs the writers in the same way as the Soviet authorities did. An odd example of this was when the men of the coup sent a messenger to the secretariat of the Writers' Union during the second day of the coup in August, 1991. Commercialization is emerging as a lack of freedom of a new kind. This does not necessarily mean that the adherents of freedom of speech are abandoning their convictions. After the years of *perestroika*,

however, the cultural debate is marked by questions and concerns about the role of literature and the intelligentsia in a new cultural situation.

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”Avgör intelligentsian Rysslands öde?”

JAG HAR SKRIVIT OM KULTURDEBATTEN i Ryssland under perestrojkan (kapitlet ”The Cultural Debate on Abolishing Censorship”). När det gäller den postkommunistiska perioden är ett stort debattämne, särskilt ungefär vid 90-talets mitt, den ryska intelligentsian, dess egenskaper och samhällsroll. Så som det också har hävdats i debatten är detta ett återkommande fenomen i den ryska kulturhistorien – i brytningstider diskuteras intelligentsian, dess insatser och framförallt dess tillkortakommanden.

Detta fenomen är så slående att en liberal rysk litteraturkritiker och ”intelligentsiahistoriker” år 1908 skrev, att i andra länder fanns det diskussioner om vetenskap, politik och konst – i Ryssland fanns det bara diskussioner om intelligentsians natur (Dmitrij Ovsianiko-Kulikovskij – med i liberala motantologin till *Milstolpar* se nedan). Lägg märke till benämningen ”intelligentsiahistoriker”. I dagens akademiska och kulturella liv i Ryssland finns det *intelligentovedy* och *intelligentovedenie* – alltså intelligentsiaforskare och intelligentsiaforskning.

Vad är då bakgrunden till att intelligentsian upplevs som så central att grundläggande samhälls- och utvecklingsproblem ställs i förhållande till den?

Milstolpar – 1990-talet

Ett av de tillfällen då intelligentsian diskuterades på detta sätt var efter den första ryska revolutionen 1905–1907. Då tillkom den ryska 1900-talskulturs troligen mest omdebatterade bok, nämligen artikelsamlingen *Vechi, Milstolpar*, med undertiteln *En artikelsamling om den ryska intelligentsian*.

Boken fördömer materialism och positivism och förespråkar en ny idealistisk och ortodox religiös medvetenhet. Här definieras intelligentsian oftast som enbart bestående av radikala bekämpare av självhärskardömet. Intelligentsian kritiseras för att ta avstånd från statsmakten och religionen. Den anklagas för att se sig som befriad från vanlig moral för sina idéers skull och därmed anse sig ha rätt inte bara till andras egendom utan också till deras liv och död. Den sägs föra krig mot

världen för att med våld göra den lycklig. Den uppmanas att befria sig från politikens makt för att i stället på den nationella traditionens grundval bidra till Rysslands kulturella återfödelse. Intelligentsian uppmanas att vända sig inåt i stället för att syssla med de yttre samhällsformerna – bara ånger och moralisk förnyelse kan bidra till samhällsutvecklingen..

Boken kom ut i flera upplagor, och debatten om den var oerhört omfattande med mängder av artiklar och flera motantologier liksom tjocka volymer med intelligentsiahistoria. Den mötte motstånd från liberaler och socialister av olika schatteringar och fick medhåll nästan bara från starkt nationalistiska kretsar. Detta visar svårigheten för den ”liberala konservatism” som *Milstolpar* representerar. Lenin var en av de argaste kritikerna. Och under sovjettiden hörde boken till det fördömda och förbjudna arvet.

Boken utkom i väst 1967. Den blev aktuell igen i Ryssland på 70-talet via *samizdat* genom Alexander Solzjenitsyns kända artikel ”*Obrazovansjtjina*” (”Fuskarintelligentsian”) – *obrazovansjtjina* med dess pejorativa suffix *sjtjina* är ett skällsord för intelligentsian. Solzjenitsyns artikel ingick i artikelsamlingen *Iz-pod glyb* (*Röster ur ruinerna*) som bildar etapp i dissidentrörelsen.

Solzjenitsyn är en efterföljare till *Milstolpar*. Han behåller dess sätt att definiera intelligentsian och skärper dess hårda kritik av den ytterligare. I 90-talets debatt betraktar fortsättarna av denna traditionslinje *Milstolpar* och *Röster ur ruinerna* tillsammans med den av *Milstolpars* författarna skrivna *Iz glubiny* (*De profundis*) från 1918 som en kanonisk trilogi. Trilogins del två och tre liksom många efterföljare ser *Milstolpar* som en profetia om Rysslands olyckor efter 1917. Det är ett av diskussionsämnena under 90-talet.

Från och med 1990 har *Milstolpar* kommit ut *legalt* i flera utgåvor, och intresset för boken har återigen varit mycket stort – ett sådant intresse väckte mycket av det tidigare förbjudna kulturarvet som nu blivit tillgängligt. I kulturdebatten på 90-talet spelade boken stor roll. Bland debattörerna fanns i vanlig ordning kritiker av diskussionen som sådan – de hävdade bland annat att den inte lade något till det som *Milstolpar* och dess motståndare redan sagt.

Så här inleds i sammandrag en artikel: Den här revolutionen är intelligentsians verk. Den har inte givit det som förväntades av den utan i stället utvecklat en väldig förstörande energi. Det ryska samhället är utmattat av den tidigare anspänningen och av alla misslyckanden, det befinner sig nu i ett tillstånd av apati, depression och andlig upplösning. Den ryska staten har inte förnyats och stärkts trots att detta var så nödvändigt. Den ryska litteraturen dränks i en grum-

lig ström av pornografi och sensationsmakeri. Det finns all anledning att frukta för Rysslands framtid.

Det kunde vara en artikel från 1990-talet. Men det är början på religionsfilosofen Sergej Bulgakovs artikel i *Milstolpar* från början av seklet. I många 90-talsartiklar om denna bok anges också sådana utgångspunkter som gemensamma.

I det hotande läge som målas upp vid båda tidpunkterna är alltså intelligentsian det centrala ämnet i kulturdebatten.

Bakgrunden/”modernisering”

I dag finns det ryska sociologer som kallar Ryssland för ”det första landet i Tredje världen”. De ser Peter den stores europeisering av landet i början av 1700-talet som det första fallet i världen av så kallad modernisering med mönster från Västeuropa. Utvecklingen handlar om övergång från ett svagt differentierat traditionellt samhälle till ett starkt differentierat, individualistiskt, pluralistiskt, sekulariserat, industrialiserat och marknadsekoniskt.

I Peter den stores moderniseringsprojekt var intelligentsian ett tunt skikt av bärare av utländska, västliga, idéer i ett land där den analfabetiska befolkningen var motståndare till dessa idéer. Till exempel år 1840 uppgick andelen analfabeter i Ryska riket till 98 procent. Så sent som i början av 1900-talet var andelen analfabeter ca 70 %. Moderniseringsanhängarna anser att Rysslands problem idag beror på att den modernisering som inleddes av Peter den store inte har fullbordats.

Perestrojkan som inleddes 1985 brukar betraktas som ett av de för Ryssland typiska moderniseringsrycken styrda uppifrån. Idag hävdar många att moderniseringsförsöket i stället lett till avmodernisering. Bakgrunden till sådana påståenden är stark nedgång i produktion, levnadsstandard, forskning, utbildning och sjukvård, utbredning av naturahushållning och byteshandel, starkt ytterligare vidgad klyfta mellan stad och land, Moskva och övriga landet.

I artikeln i *Milstolpar* ger Sergej Bulgakov mer poetiskt uttryck åt det som dagens sociologer kallar den ofullbordade moderniseringen. Intelligentsians själ, skriver han, är Peter den stores skapelse. Rysslands öde ligger i intelligentsians händer, hur förföljd den än har varit. Den är det fönster som tsar Peter slog upp mot Europa – och som släpper in västlig luft, samtidigt livgivande och giftig. Ryssland behöver denna upplysning. Nu är frågan om den ryska intelligentsian kan höja sig till sin uppgift, så att Ryssland får en bildad klass med rysk själ. Annars kommer intelligentsian tillsammans med tatar-andan att bringa Ryssland i

fördärvet, det har revolutionen 1905–07 visat. Detta är ett ofta citerat yttrande.

Bakgrunden till den ryska intelligentsians ställning i nutiden är bland annat den ofullbordade moderniseringens villkor som jag har talat om. Här ingår också samhällsförhållanden under tsarväldet och sedan sovjetstaten såsom en censurerad offentlighet, brist på organisationsfrihet och yttrandefrihet, frånvaro av politiska partier och folkvalda församlingar. (Pavel Miljukov i den liberala motantologin till *Milstolpar*: den ryska intelligentsian har varit avskuren från deltagande i och ansvar för samhällsangelägenheter; se nedan).

De här förhållandena har bidragit till att begreppstriaden ”intelligentsian” – ”folket” – ”makten” har levt kvar till idag, även om många debattörer nu förklarar att de nya förhållandena har löst upp den. I denna triad har intelligentsian rollen som upplysare av folket och läromästare för de maktavande. I denna begreppsvärld talas det om att intelligentsian skall ”uppfostra” folket och att den är förmedlare mellan folket och makten. Än idag kan det på allvar förekomma uttryck som att intelligentsian är ”folkets representanter” – självvalda då uppenbarligen.

1990-talsdebatten uttryckte ett identitetsproblem i intelligentsian. Detta problem var framkallat av att det hade vuxit fram ett annat samhällsmönster med i viss utsträckning fri press, med kommersiella intressen, med underhållningsindustri, intresseorganisationer, politiska partier och valda församlingar. Detta liksom den höjda allmänna utbildningsnivån gav ”folket” större möjlighet att föra sin egen talan.

Till kritiken av intelligentsian under 1990-talet hörde också att den var auktoritär i den mån den bevarade krav på att ha en upplysande roll i gammal mening. Å andra sidan anklagades intelligentsian för otillräcklighet när det gällde att vara en orienterande kraft i det andliga kaos den nya tiden skapat hos många. Både ”folket” och ”intelligentsian” differentierades och begreppen blev ohanterliga.

Definitionen

Just *begreppet* ”intelligentsian” och hur det definieras är ett stort problem om man vill förstå 1990-talets ryska kulturdebatt. Även här ger det mycket att återvända till *Milstolpar* eftersom dess mönster i behandlingen av intelligentsiabegreppet präglar också 1990-talet. Också argument liknande antologins kritiker finns med.

Till de många som protesterade mot *Milstolpar* hörde Pavel Miljukov, ledare för det liberala partiet Konstitutionella demokraterna. Han förklarar i en liberal motantologi från 1910 att intelligentsian inte är enhetlig som *Milstolpar* hävdar

genom att likställa den med vänsterradikala krafter. I själva verket fördömer dess författarna *en* strömning inom intelligentsian, samtidigt som de själva representerar en annan strömning som också hör dit. I stället för termen ”intelligentsia” borde de sätta ”anarkism” eller ”rysk socialism”.

I *Milstolpar* förklarar flera författare att deras användning av ordet ”intelligentsian” är ordets traditionella ryska betydelse. Men i de flesta artiklarna förekommer en vacklan mellan olika betydelser. Sergej Bulgakov skriver om ”den ryska intelligentsians” besatthet av en enda idé, att bekämpa självhärskardömet, och om dess framhypnotiserade samstämmighet. Samstämmigheten är inte så märklig med tanke på att andra riktningar som till exempel slavofiler och religionsfilosofer förklaras stå utanför intelligentsian. De hör till den ”bildade klassen”. Men i ett annat sammanhang kan Bulgakov skriva att vad landet behöver är en ”kyrklig *intelligentsia*”.

Också i 1990-talets texter är det mycket vanligt med sådan vacklan mellan ”intelligentsian” i betydelsen ”liberaler, vänsterradikala, oppositionella, västorierade” och i andra betydelser, bland annat hela det ”utbildade skiktet”. Definitionerna är skiftande och oklara, och nästan alla skribenter växlar fritt och utan förvarning mellan olika betydelser av ordet ”intelligentsian”. Dessutom används ordet ofta negativt eller positivt laddat. Efter sympatier räknar skribenter in dem de ogillar i en negativt beskriven intelligentsia eller dem de gillar i en positivt beskriven.

Ytterligare en komplikation är det faktum att ”intelligentsian”, som brukar ställas mot begreppet ”folket”, inte ens alltid betraktas som en del av det ”utbildade skiktet”. Med negativa förtecken skriver Bulgakov i *Milstolpar* att både företrädare för den bildade klassen och för folket är med i intelligentsians humanistiska kyrka med ateism som trosbekännelse. Med positiva förtecken skriver Solzjenitsyn 1974 i sin ovan nämnda *samizdat*-artikel om ”intelligentsians kärna” och att även en okänd mjölkerska från någon kolchos tillhör denna ”det godas kärna”. Då har ”intelligentsian” som skällsord eller honnörsord helt kopplats bort från sin sociala betydelse.

Jag var i Petersburg i september år 2000. Då roade jag mig med att göra miniintervjuer där jag frågade intellektuella om de ansåg sig tillhöra intelligentsian och vad detta i så fall innebar. Efter uppräknig av en lång rad idealiska egenskaper sammanfattade ett av intervjuoffren, en äldre person, så här: Att fråga ”Hör du till intelligentsian?” är samma sak som att fråga ”Är du en bra människa?”

Det som präglar mycket av debatten är alltså tänkande i helheter hellre än i

olika strömningar och emotionell färgning av begreppen, inte bara av begreppet "intelligentsian". Båda dessa faktorer samverkar till att skapa en diskurs som bekämpar pluralism, men som är pluralistisk så till vida som att olika sidor kommer till tals.

Den emotionella färgningen delar in grupperingar och personer i bra och dåliga. Att det finns olika åsikter och världsåskådningar ses inte som legitimt. I sin artikel om intelligentsian 1974 ansluter sig Solzjenitsyn till ett påstående om att det är på tiden att *utesluta* en och annan ur intelligentsian. Här gäller det moraliskt uppträdande, och den allvarliga bakgrunden är kampen för frihet mot en förtryckande regim.

Förtrycket, kampen och riskerna eller anpassligheten och tjänandet av regimen från förr är naturligtvis också en viktig yttre orsak och bakgrund till att debatten om intelligentsian är så känsloladdad. Men det finns också en inre orsak som handlar om brist på eller medvetet avståndstagande från pluralism. Den framgår när Solzjenitsyn i en artikel 1982 använder sitt skällsord *obrazovansjtjina* som likabetydande med uttrycket "våra pluralister".

Enhetstänkandet bearbetas av olika skribenter på 1990-talet. En skriver att det finns en tendens att förklara avvikande åsikter som förräderi (*Novyj mir* nr 2 1994). En annan framställer tanken på den ryska kulturens enhet som ett hållfast mytologem – motsättningar utplånas eller skiljaktiga element utdöms såsom icke tillhöriga den äkta ryska kulturen (antologin *Novaja volna*, 1994).

Sociologerna Lev Gudkov och Boris Dubin kom 1995 med boken *Intelligentsian* som var viktig för debattens liberala deltagare. De förklarar att "intelligentsian" opererar med totala begrepp, vilkas omfång har att göra med stora prentioner – sådana som "landet", "folket", "väst", "kulturen". Detta anger de hänga ihop med att det totalitära medvetandet appellerar till helheten. Jag anser att opererandet med begreppet "intelligentsian" är något liknande. Men jag tror inte att det behöver vara ett totalitärt drag, utan att det är något som hör ihop med ett traditionellt, "förmodernt" samhälle och med vissa filosofiska riktningar.

I år hölls en stor konferens om intelligentsian i Petersburg. Sådana konferenser är fortfarande vanliga. I ett inlägg där förklaras begreppet "intelligentsian" vara ett "ideologem" och handla om makten över diskursen, det vill säga den som har makten att räkna sig till "intelligentsian" har makten att yttra sig med auktoritet i det offentliga samtalet. Att söka efter en "vetenskaplig" definition på intelligentsian skulle enligt detta inlägg vara detsamma som att söka en frånvarande svart katt i ett svart rum. Och naturligtvis hittar någon denna frånvarande katt

och ger direktiv om var någonstans i rummet den finns (E G Sokolov, docent vid S:t Petersburgs statliga universitet). På sitt sätt står detta i samklang med Solzjenitsyns tanke att en och annan borde *uteslutas* ur intelligentsian.

Avslutning

Vi har alltså å ena sidan en tradition av fördömanden av intelligentsian, då för det mesta sedd som bara dess oppositionella del. Å andra sidan har vi en linje av idealisering, då ”medlemskap” i intelligentsian jämförs med att vara en bra människa, att inte ljuga (Solzjenitsyn), att stå över det materiella, att vara ett föredöme och en uppfostrare av ”folket”.

Dessa två linjer kan ses som två sidor av samma mynt. Med det rimmar också återkommande perioder av stora förväntningar som sedan blir avlösta av besvikelse. Och målet för besvikna anklagelser blir återigen intelligentsian. De är ofta utslungade av människor som rimligt sett skulle kunna räknas till intelligentsian. Men i denna genre av förebråelser ställer de sig utanför och blir anklagande i stället för självkritiska, på samma sätt som *Milstolpars* författarna i huvudsak gjorde.

Att se intelligentsian som avgörande för Rysslands öde är en övertygelse som finns kvar hos många idag. På samma sätt som *Milstolpars* författare såg den första ryska revolutionen som intelligentsians verk, så ser många debattörer idag ”intelligentsian”, det vill säga dess oppositionella del, som central för kommunismens fall. De röster som betvivlar detta är mycket färre.

1990-talets besvikelse utspelar sig mot bakgrunden av perestrojkans förväntningar. Perestrojkan ses av många liberala skribenter som en revansch och en äreräddning för sovjetintelligentsian. När det gäller den perestrojkavänliga delen av intelligentsian, så präglades perestrojkan av spänningen att jaga på för att utvidga yttrandefrihetens gränser, vilket lyckades i en utsträckning som ingen kunnat tänka sig från början.

Det kulturella paradigmskiftet mot slutet av perestrojkan på grund av avskaffad censur och större pluralism innebar att kulturintelligentsian slutade vara ledande opinionsbildare som den hade varit under perestrojkan. Det så kallade aesopiska språket – konsten att skriva mellan raderna för att lura censuren och nå de kloka läsarna – behövdes inte längre.

Under 90-talet uttrycker mycket av kulturdebatten att det inträtt förvirring och depression i stället för den förväntade blomstringen. Jag avslutar med några uttryck för dessa stämningar.

Tre nummer i rad i början av 1991 publicerar en av perestrojkans stora förkämpar, veckotidningen *Ogonjok*, en stort uppslagen artikel av poeten Jevgenij Jevtusjenko. Artikeln heter ”Plac po cenzure” (”Sorgesång över censuren”) – den sovjetiska förhandscensuren hade avskaffats 1990.

Artikeln berättar censurhistorier om olika av Jevtusjenkos verk, bland annat hur en speciell upplaga av poemet *Bratskkraftverket* trycks särskilt för landets högsta ledning, politbyrån medlemmar, och hur deras utlåtande plockas fram för uppläsning ur en mapp stämplad med orden ”Soversenno sekretno” – ”Högsta sekretess”. Litteraturen som statsangelägenhet drabbade med både personliga och konstnärliga olyckor. Ändå finns det kulturartiklar under 90-talet som vittnar om en känsla av övergivenhet i intelligentsian inför den nya statsmaktens likgiltighet.

Jevtusjenkos sorgesång gick förstås inte ut på att poeten ville ha den politiska censuren tillbaka. Men som många andra hävdade han att författarna förut hade förväntat sig att censurens avskaffande som genom ett trollslag skulle ge ett underbart liv. Nu hade det hela visat sig vara mycket mer komplicerat. Det rörde yttre förhållanden som ekonomisk och kommersiell censur och inre, mänskliga – det gällde för författarna att övervinna sin självcensur och visa sig värda friheten.

Litteraturkritikern Natalija Ivanova skriver 1994 i den liberala kulturtidskriften *Znamja* om förändringar i det litterära klimatet jämfört med sovjettiden – ”det nära förflutna som redan är historiskt”. Läsarna är vana från förr att ”försöka få en kick av att tolka det aesopiska språket”. Sedan ”när allt plötsligt blev möjligt, så blev ju allt också tråkigt.” Artikeln handlar bland annat om hur atmosfären vitaliseras av lekfulla och skandalomsusade uppbrott från det allvarstygda och moraliserande som till en del utmärkte föregående period.

De här sista citaten är ett lite lättsinnigt sätt att visa något av vad det kulturella paradigmskiftet innebar. Det var en av de faktorer som medverkade till kulturintelligentsians och kulturens förändrade ställning i det ryska samhället. Detta ligger bakom 90-talsdebatten som är en tolkning av det nutida Ryssland via en analys av intelligentsian.

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Bilden av intelligentsian i Vladimir Makanins "Laz"

Mot slutet av perestrojkan skedde ett kulturellt paradigmskifte i Ryssland i samband med censurens avskaffande och sovjetsystemets fall. I den intellektuella debatten bearbetades kulturtidskrifternas, litteraturens (Ordets) och intelligentsians förändrade samhällsfunktion. Kaos och förändrade sociala roller liksom utarmning respektive berikande skapade eskatologiska stämningar. I Vladimir Makanins uppmärksammade berättelse "Laz"/"Passagen" från 1991 får övergångens problem skönlitterär gestaltning.

Vladimir Makanins berättelse "Laz" publicerades i *Novyj mir* nr 5 1991 och fick stor uppmärksamhet.¹⁵ Av kritiker i Ryssland har den kallats ett verk som förenar och skiljer den sovjetiska och postsovjetiska litteraturen och en vändpunkt i litteraturen.¹⁶ Makanin betraktas idag av många som en av samtidens främsta ryska författare eller rentav den främste.¹⁷

1991, perestrojkans sista år, var ett svårt år i Ryssland. Affärerna var tomma på varor, förfallet och brottsligheten spred sig, man fruktade svält, inbördeskrig, statskupp, totalt sammanbrott. "Laz" skildrar två världar, en underjordisk och en uppe på ytan. I den övre världen härskar skrällen på de halvmörka, tomma gatorna hotade av våldsverkare, i en stad där gatlyktor, telefoner, kollektivtrafik, elektricitet och vattenförsörjning i huvudsak slutat fungera, där husen står med

¹⁵ Den text jag har använt är V. Makanin, "Laz", *Nezavisimyj al'manach "Konec veka"*, 1991, sid. 7-65. Till svenska har berättelsens titel översatts med Manhålet, Jyväskylä 2000. Detta är ordets andra, speciella betydelse i moderna lexikon. Den första är en trång passage i till exempel ett plank eller en underjordisk gång. Just ordets betydelse av svårframkomlig passage är viktig i berättelsen. Jag har gjort mina egna översättningar av citat.

¹⁶ A Genis, *Ivan Petrovic umer. Statji i rassledovanija*, sid 47.

A Nemzer, "Zamecatel'noe desjatiletie. O russkoj proze 90-ch godov", *Novyj mir* 1 2000, sid 207.

¹⁷ A Nemzer, *Literaturnoe segodja. O russkoj proze. 90-e*, sid 259. A Archangel'skij, "Gde schodilis' koncy s koncami", *Druzba narodov* 7 1998.

mörka fönster som ”döda ögonhålor” (41). Skräck väcker också en väldig folkmassa i rörelse i staden med sin ”oförutsägbara beredskap och förhöjda mottaglighet för påverkan” (44).

Om världen på ytan ligger i mörker och halvmörker, så är den underjordiska världen alltid klart upplyst. Här råder överflöd i affärer och restauranger, här kör glänsande bilar, här finns sjukvård, opinionsundersökningar, diktuppläsningar, ändlösa intelligentsiadiskussioner, umgänge – allt som saknas däruppe. Men här finns ont om luft, människor spottar blod och faller plötslig ihop, döda, en lätt död sägs det. Däruppe är luften frisk och gräset grönt.

De två världarna är isolerade från varandra med undantag för en *laz*, en trång passage i jorden som än drar ihop sig, än vidgar sig; ”jorden andas” (16). Huvudpersonen Viktor Kljutjarjov tycks vara den ende som kan passera igenom denna *laz*.

Redan på berättelsens konkreta ytplan finns det alltså helt klara signaler att den skall läsas symboliskt och/eller allegoriskt. Här härskar inte några aristoteliska sannolikhetskrav. Detta är typiskt även för den moderna allegorin liksom kompositionen med två parallella världar som ställs mot varandra, en dubblering som oundvikligen har allegorisk effekt.

Massan och minoriteten

På berättelsens första sida etableras motsättningen massan-intelligentsian, massan-minoriteten, död-liv. Kljutjarjov tänker på att tvåhundra människor trampats ihjäl i folkmassan, den räknar inte. Själv presenteras han två gånger redan på denna första sida som tillhörig till intelligentsian (7). Han är helt ensam på de tysta och tomma gatorna i kvällningen nu och senare. Tillsammans med andra förbindelser i och utanför berättelsen anger detta hans tillhörighet till minoriteten. Massan dödar, Kljutjarjov upprätthåller liv.

Den vanliga världsordningen har vänts upp och ner i berättelsen – världen på ytan präglas av kaos och halvmörker, den underjordiska världen av ordning och ljus, om det också är artificiell belysning. Också denna uppochnervändhet är allegorisk. Den kan bland annat förbindas med vad Vladimir Makanin skriver i ”Kvasi”, *Novyj mir* nr 7 1993, om att den nivellerade massan lever i kaos och mörker och att den har kommit upp till ytan under 1900-talet. Han använder också uttrycket ”temnyj narod” (det okunniga/mörka folket), folket förbundet med mörker om man förstår ordet i icke överförd mening. I sina teoretiska resonemang skiljer författaren inte på massan och folket, vilket annars är vanligt i

rysk kulturtradition. Häri överensstämmer han med den spanske filosofen José Ortega y Gasset som han uttrycker stor beundran för i "Kvasi".¹⁸

Ortega y Gassets idéer förkroppsligas i "Laz" på ett slående sätt. Det är ytterligare ett allegoridrag. Det är svårt att inte se detta som uttryck för en seriös intention, även om det finns en ambivalens när det gäller utsagornas status i "Kvasi", bland annat på grund av att textens genre är oklar. Den räknas till skönlitteraturen i *Novyj mir*s översikt för året i nr 12 1993, samtidigt som även en känslig och erfaren kritiker talar om den som Makanins "direkta uttalande" om olika företeelser.¹⁹ Kanske kan man säga att det i "Laz" liksom i andra verk av Makanin konstitutivt ingår drag av ambivalens och självdesavouering. I analysen får man ta en sak i taget för att till slut ge en mer sammansatt bild.

På ytan härskar massan, och i underjorden sitter intelligentsian och pratar och pratar. I enlighet med Ortega y Gassets beskrivning i *Massornas uppror* har den kvalificerade minoriteten trängts undan av massan som inte längre vill lyda den. Men också de moderna intellektuella är i mångt och mycket diskvalificerade enligt den spanske filosofen.²⁰ I "Laz" framgår detta redan av underjordens brist på luft, artificiella belysning och avståndighet från verkligheten på ytan.

Kljutjarjov hör till intelligentsian, och det finns mycket som förenar honom med underjorden – orden och umgänget där är för honom liv som saknas på ytan. Men han står också i motsättning till underjorden. För det första är han den ende som kan passera mellan de båda världarna och som sådan en exklusiv enmansminoritet. Hans efternamn är allegoriskt och som flera kritiker påpekat bildad på de ryska orden *kljutj* och, kan det tilläggas, även *kljutjar'* – nyckel och nyckelinnehavare, som Sankte Per för himmel och helvete.²¹ Han blygsam i orden men stor i livsuppehållande handling, medan underjordens intelligentsia på olika sätt framställs inte leva upp i handling till sina höga ord. Han personifierar dem som i Ortega y Gassets idévärld genom att "betunga sig med svårigheter och plikter" står i motsättning till massan som inte ställer krav på sig själv.²²

Massmänniskan är "genomsnittsmänniskan" (ett begrepp upptaget av Makanin i "Kvasi"), den som "känner sig som alla andra"; redan i närvaro av en

¹⁸ V Makanin, "Kvasi", *Novyj mir* 7 1993, sid 132, 134.

¹⁹ N Ivanova, "Slucaj Makanina", *Znamja* 4 1997, sid 219.

²⁰ J. Ortega y Gasset, *Massornas uppror*, Stockholm 1934, sid. 14, 19, 20.

²¹ A Genis, "'Laz' Vladimira Makanina. Vzgljad iz Nju-Jorka. Agorafobija", *Nezavisimaja gazeta* 25.07 1991.

²² J. Ortega y Gasset, a. a., sid. 13.

enda person kan man avgöra om han hör till massan eller ej, skriver Ortega y Gasset. Han anser som vi sett, att traditionellt ”exklusiva grupper”, till exempel intellektuella, har urartat. Men bland arbetare, vilka traditionellt har hört till massan, kan man idag stöta på ”människor med ett kultiverat själsliv”.²³ Det finns två inslag i ”Laz” vilka kan tjäna som direkta illustrationer till dessa teser.

Både i världen på ytan och i underjorden rör sig Kljutjarjov mot ett bestämt mål. Däruppe är det en färd (46), som han företar genom den farofyllda staden tillsammans med den höggravida Olja och Tjursin, intelligentsiatillhörig med barnhemsbakgrund. Målet för resan är ett bårhus – de skall begrava Oljas man, Pavlov, som dött på gatan av infarkt.

Till hindren på vägen hör en busschaufför som vägrar köra vidare till slutstationen in i nermörka öde kvarter. Han är en typisk ”massmänniska” i sitt uppträdande och sin brist på respekt för minoriteten. ” – Jag ser att hon är med barn! skriker föraren med plötsligt uppflammande ilska på intelligentsiarepresentanterna som är och förblir skyldiga. [- - -] Antagligen hade han lyssnat på deras samtal, och eftersom de inte använde svordomar, inte pratade om primuskök och käk, så stod det klart att de kört landet i botten. Bringat det i fördärvet! (Om inte sålt det.)” (39)

När de tre kommer fram till medicinska högskolan där bårhuset ligger tas de om hand av en liten karl med en rad folkliga attribut – namnet Semjonytj, vaderad jacka, enkelt tal, spade, skicklighet att gräva. Han visar ansvars känsla och omsorg när han hjälper dem att begrava Oljas man på en gammal övergiven kyrkogård inom området – ”den siste yrkesmannen som ärligt sköter sin verksamhet” (46). Dessutom är han utrustad med en knippa väldiga rostiga nycklar, ytterligare en nyckelbärare, men hans nycklar tycks höra till en gången tid. Han hör till de ”människor med ett kultiverat själsliv” som Ortega y Gasset fann bland arbetare. Som den siste av sin sort hör även han till en minoritet.

Det farligaste hindret på vägen är *hopen*, ”*tolpa*”, beredd att ”trampa ner var och en som inte går skuldra vid skuldra” (45). Den översvämmar ett torg som de tre måste ta sig över för att komma fram till medicinska högskolan. I *hopens* virvlar är de nära att uppslukas. På fem sidor skildras *hopens* väldiga hotande kraft och rörelse. I ”Kvasi” beskriver Makanin hur genomsnittsmänniskan tar itu med en ”skoningslös rensning av torgen (för kvasi) i samhällsmedvetandet för att

²³ *ibid.*, sid. 12, 14

ge plats åt tempel och minnesmärken ägnade nya avgudar”. Han berömmar Ortega y Gasset för djärvheten att stå emot en kultur dominerad av ”den månghövdade slaven som kommit ut på torget, det vill säga folkmassan”.²⁴ Jämför den spanske filosofen: ”Massan tillintetgör allt som är annorlunda, exklusivt, personligt [...] Den som icke är ’som alla andra’ [...] löper risk att bli avkopplad [eliminerad].”²⁵

På berättelsens första sida förbinds Kljutjarjovs tillhörighet till intelligentsian med hans huvudbonad – en stickad mössa med tofs som darrar när han går. ”I förening med tröjans och byxornas alldaglighet gör skidmössan honom rätt kufisk. (Kljutjarjov håller inte med om det. I mössan ser han en under lång tid utvecklad logik som gäller hans tillhörighet till intelligentsian – den har funnit en blygsam utmaning och samtidigt en skyddande form. Men inte mimikry.)” (7). Detta attribut återkommer i berättelsen som ”tecken för en medlem av intelligentsian” (12, även 30,32,34). Det förstärker Kljutjarjovs allegoriska representativa funktion på liknande sätt som de av berättaren inte kommenterade attribut som hörde till den ”gode arbetaren” Semjonytj ovan. Denna funktion är gemensam även om Semjonytjs attribut saknar tofsmössans ironiska och degraderande nyans.

Att Kljutjarjov återkommande och understruket vandrar fram ensam på de tomma gatorna angavs ovan markera hans tillhörighet till minoriteten. Det gör även användandet av begreppet ”mimikry” – skyddande likhet med omgivande obesläktad art. Enligt Ortega y Gasset är tillhörighet till minoriteten i sig något gott – han säger sig uttryckligen ”överföra kvantiteten till kvalitet”. ”Massan är genomsnittsmänniskan. [...] människan i den mån hon inte skiljer sig från andra”. En elit däremot ”bildas just för att skilja sig från majoriteten”, den har speciella kvalifikationer till skillnad från massan.²⁶

Tjursin, som tillsammans med Kljutjarjov hjälper den gravida Olja att begrava maken, försöker sig till skillnad från denne på mimikry. Inför färdens ”kamp utan regler” sätter han på sig en keps, ett främmande attribut som i själva verket är massans och som hänger ihop med hans barnhemsuppväxt (37, 44). Men han blir, som vi sett, ändå ”igenkänd” av busschauffören (39). Och i mötet med hopen

²⁴ V Mekanin, ”Kvazi”, *Novyj mir* 7 1993, sid 134, 135.

²⁵ J. Ortega y Gasset, a. a., sid. 16.

²⁶ *ibid.*, sid. 11, 12.

är han nära att gå under – han dyker upp ur dess virvlar ”utan keps, med det förvirrade ansiktet hos en människa, som räddats av ett under och inte av sin barnhemsuppväxt” (45).

Underjorden och Orden

Kljutjarjov visas på första sidan ha en underlig ryckig gång (7). Hans kropp är täckt av djupa skråmor (efter passagerna genom den trånga laz). Han är på väg till hålet; och när han tränger sig ner river han upp blödande sår igen. Han kommer ner i en vacker upplyst sal, en ”källarrestaurant” där folk sitter och pratar och dricker vin (8, 9).

De två världarna strukturerar en rad motsättningar som handlar om Orden. Höga värdefulla ord står mot låga destruktiva ord eller hopens ”oklara då” och ”rytande” (41,44). Oklanderliga men tomma ord står mot defekta men meningsfulla ord eller tystnad fylld av förståelse (23, 24, 51). Det första ledet i motsättningarna präglar den undre världen, det andra ledet världen på ytan. Det rör sig alltså inte om någon enkel fördelning av ”gott” och ”ont” mellan världarna. Vad det handlar om är vad som tjänar livet och vad som tjänar döden, och det mönstret har sina komplikationer.

Kljutjarjov passerar tur och retur genom *laz* två gånger (8 + 15-17, 48 + 61-62). Berättelsens längsta avsnitt på cirka 35 sidor utspelar sig i den övre världen mellan nedstigningarna och upptar bland annat den farofyllda färden till bårhuset. Den utsätter han sig för som omtänksam vän, och hans rörelser i båda världarna och mellan dem är betingade av oavbrutna omsorger om hans egen, vännernas, hustruns och sonens liksom obekanta våldsoffers överlevnad. Vid berättelsens mittpunkt råkar han under dessa rörelser hamna bredvid *laz* och upptäcker att hålet har dragit ihop sig helt (34).

NERIFRÅN hör han höga ord, sång och gitarrspel, diskussion om andlighet och beställning av en omgång till på ”hundra gram”, det vill säga vodka. Detta är en uppsättning intelligentsiaattribut. Föreningen av höga ord och vodka stör inte Kljutjarjov, tvärtom fylls han av ”värme och en stark mänsklig önskan av vara tillsammans med dem, vara där”. Att vara avstängd därifrån innebär en enorm förlust, en förlust av själva tanken, tänkandet. Ingen har några slutgiltiga kunskaper, men de talande och Kljutjarjov med dem försöker, ”och deras gemensamma försök är deras räddning”. De höga orden påminner om att de inte kommer att dö. Utan de höga orden kan han inte leva och inte hans ordlöse efterblivne son Denis heller. ”Vi är ord.” (35)

I detta avsnitt med erlebte Rede präglad av Kljutjarjov finns i anslutning till uttrycket de ”höga orden” också meningen: ”Takens höga himmel över borden där de sitter och talar” (35). Himlen där är artificiell liksom ljuset. Det ger de höga orden en tvivelaktig bismak, vilket påpekats av en kritiker.²⁷

Han har varit en bit ner i hålet. När han kommer upp ser han sin fru på väg hem till deras son. Han föreställer sig hur det skulle vara, om han i stället skulle bli avstängd ”från denna mörknande gata, där hustrun nu går, och där Denis finns, så väldig och godsint, och där den döde Pavlov finns, och där man på de mörka gatorna inte kan köpa vare sig en spik eller ett batteri”. Han riktar ett rasande och fåfängt skrik ner i underjorden. Hustrun kommer att stanna hos sonen. ”(Om Denis vaknar och är ensam, så gråter han; den enkla själen, han öppnar ett fönster mot gatan och ropar gråtande: ’Mamma! Mamma!’ – rena gåvan för dem som jagar profit och lätta förtjänster. Den tomma utdöda gatan. Och ett barns gråt – vad kan vara enklare!)” (36)

Underjorden och världen på ytan är var på sitt sätt både dödsrike och livets rike. På ytan finns den destruktiva hopen, döda gator, fönster som döda ögonhål. Men världen på ytan rymmer också liv. Här är gräset grönt och luften frisk. Här ser Kljutjarjov en gång när han tar sig upp ur den svarta jorden en glimt av den ljusa himlen (17), det enda verkliga ljuset under berättelsens gång. Här är Olja havande, här finns familjen och vännerna, omsorgerna om dem. Till och med den ”döde Pavlov” kan ses som ett tecken för liv – det handlar om tillgivenhet och pliktuppfyllelse som binder till livet och platsen. På den tysta, tomma och hotfulla gatan tänker Kljutjarjov: ”Det här är livet...” (7)

Det andra besöket i underjorden: ”Kljutjarjov som varit förstummad (död) på de öde gator, där bara tjuven är aktiv sittande på sitt offer och grävande i dess fickor – den förstummade Kljutjarjov känner ordets närvaro. Som en fisk återbördad till vattnet lever han upp” (50). Åter död däruppe och liv därnere. Samtidigt visas ord och handling därnere gå isär. Runt bordet talar man om Dostojevskij och vägran att acceptera lycka grundad på andras olycka. Men Kljutjarjov som just trängt sig genom *laz* under ”outhärdlig smärta” har varit bortglömd av det glada laget. Den anordning lik en flygplanstrappa som han behövde för att ta sig ner från hålet var flyttad för att ge plats för fler bord, så att han var nära att slå ihjäl sig. Dessa ”höga ord” liksom andra – om gemenskapen mellan människor i båda värld-

²⁷ P Vajl, ”Klaustrofobija”, *Nezavisimaja gazeta* 25.07 1991.

darna, om deras gemensamma olycka ifall ”hopen blir helt vansinnig” (51) – ifrågasätts också genom berättelsens upplösning.

Den som talar om denna gemenskap spottar blod drabbad av bristen på luft – ”Blod inte från kroppen utan från strupen” (till skillnad från Kljutjarjov) (51). På återvägen stannar Kljutjarjov åter upp i källarrestaurangen fångslad av samtalet. I detta avsnitt på en dryg sida förekommer uttrycket ”De talar” fem gånger, varav fyra som anafor i ett stycke. Det sista stycket före Kljutjarjovs uppträngande genom *laz* består enbart av det, som avslutning på underjordens samtal i berättelsen (60, 61). Detta är ytterligare inslag som minskar tilltron till underjordens intelligentsiaordande.

Samtidigt tycks beskrivningen uttrycka även respekt för de talande: ”De talar uppriktigt och med smärta [...] Deras höga ord är inexakta och låter inte övertygande, men de rymmer hoppet att även om de uppriktiga orden är ungefärliga, så kommer de att öppna själen (en passage [*laz*] i vår själ), och den smärta det framkallar kommer att säga ett nytt ord. [- - -] (Och hopen blir god? [...]) [- - -] Kljutjarjov står deras ord nära, han sätter värde på dem. Men människan är ändlig. Människan är dödlig.” (61) Här står människans dödlighet i motsats till orden i stället för att orden gör henne odödlig som i tidigare referat.

Återfödelse som förnyelse

När Kljutjarjov lämnar de talande i underjorden återstår drygt fyra sidor av berättelsen. Det sista genomträngandet genom *laz* med sin smärta associerar både till födelse, död och samlag. Väl uppe beger han sig hemåt, till lägenheten i ett femvåningshus byggt under Chrusjtjovtiden, en *chrusjtjovka* – emblematiskt sovjetiskt boende. Han upptäcker att en grotta han grävt som överlevnadsprojekt blivit förstörd. Bredvid hänger en dödad kråka – ”Så går det när man gräver sig något eget, säger den. [- - -] Nåja, tänker han, från zoologi och hat har de övergått till konkreta tecken som man kan förstå. Det är redan ett tecken. Det är redan början på en dialog. (Efter tecken och gester kommer orden – inte sant?) [- - -] Han är trött men knotar inte, sådan är han.” (63)

I sin utmattning sätter han sig ner alldeles i närheten av hemmet, somnar och drömmer en kort dröm: *Laz* har slutit sig. I det lilla hål som är kvar ropar han ner om den övre världens olyckor. Han ropar bland annat att det annalkande mörkret avskaffar den mänskliga personligheten, att till och med våldtäktsmän och tjuvar är rädda på gatorna. Han ropar om Denis, om svält, om mörka gardiner för fönstren. Deras datorer kan tolka informationen. De brukar be om vilken information

som helst, och nerifrån kommer uppmaningen: ”–Tala! Tala!” Kljutjarjov släpper ner en metrev genom hålet och känner att de sätter fast något. Han väntar sig en text, men det kommer ”inte ett enda ord till svar”. I stället för ett ”svar till själen” skulle han kunna nöja sig med knippen med varmkorv. Men till slut förstår han vad han håller på att dra upp i tusental: ”b l i n d k ä p p a r. När det blir fullständigt mörkt, kan man gå o ch gå o ch slå med käppen mot trottoarerna. Det är hela svaret.[- - -] En hemsk dröm.Och orättvis enligt Kljutjarjovs åsikt i själva sin misstro mot förnuftet.” (64, 65)

”En god man i skymningen. (Så lite och så mycket.) Han väckte Kljutjarjov denne förbipasserande.[- - -] – Hur kan ni somna här? – en enkel röst.– Man bör inte sova på gatan... Kljutjarjov, delvis sömning fortfarande, tittar. Där står en man. Medelålders, med ganska långt hår som faller fritt nästan till axlarna. [- - -] – Res er, upprepar han lika övertygande,med ett lugnt och tålmodigt leende.[- - -] Kljutjarjov reser sig. – Ja,säger han och sträcker på sig. – Så mörkt det har blivit. – Men det är inte natt än,säger mannen [- - -] Mannen står kvar på samma plats, och först allteftersom Kljutjarjov avlägsnar sig blir hans figur upplöst lite i taget (men ändå inte helt upplöst) i skymningen.” (65) Det är berättelsens sista ord.

Denna plötsligt uppdykande Kristusgestalt kan bland annat ställas mot avsnittet med underjordsintelligentsians förhoppning att uppriktiga ord kan öppna en smärtsam och förnyande passage/*laz* i vår själ och Kljutjarjovs invändning att människan är dödlig (61). Den sovande Kljutjarjov väcks av Kristus som kallade den sedan uppväckte Lasarus’ död för sömn och sade ”Jag är uppståndelsen och livet. Den som tror på mig, han skall leva, om han än dör”.²⁸ Om man så vill kan man påpeka en fonetisk förbindelse mellan berättelsens titel ”Laz” och Lasarus – Laz – Lazar’.

Både berättelsens avslutning och Kljutjarjovs passager genom *laz*, särskilt det sista smärtsamma uppträngandet, där det sägs att det kanske är han som håller förbindelsen öppen med sitt kravlande (62), är symboler för denna passage i själen liksom i samhällsmedvetandet. Och här kommer vi tillbaka till Ortega y Gassets idéer. Denne anser att ”Vår tids tema”, boktitel från 1923, är att övervinna klyvningen i samhället mellan kultur/förnuft och det levande spontana livet, en klyvning som också finns inom den moderna människan mellan förnuftet och det vitala konkreta jaget som historisk realitet.²⁹ Kulturen måste vara vital, livet

²⁸ Joh. 11:11, 25.

²⁹ J. Ortega y Gasset, *V r tids tema*, Stockholm 1936, sid. 28, 55.

måste vara ande; liv utan kultur är barbari, kultur utan liv bysantinism.³⁰ Att Kljutjarjov i slutet av "Laz" kan antydvas vara bärare av möjlighet till förnyelse, i form av den för den ryska kulturen traditionella återfödelsen, har med hans roll som mediator mellan världarna att göra. Metaforen *laz* och andra behandlade symboler i sammanhanget uttöms givetvis inte av förbindelsen med Ortega y Gasset's idévärld.

Ortega y Gasset skriver: "Vår tids uppgift är ett ställa förnuftet i vitalitetens tjänst, [- - -] 'Allt det vi i dag kalla kultur, uppfostran, civilisation skall en dag framträda inför den osvikliga domaren Dionysos', profeterade Nietzsche".³¹ I "Laz" finns en antydning till en Dionysos, nämligen Kljutjarjovs son Denis (namnet är bildat på det grekiska Dionysos). Att göra guden till efterblivet barn innebär en degradering som inte är otypisk för den moderna allegorin, samtidigt kanske det alluderar på en period av vansinne som den unge Dionysos genomlevde. Denis är tilldelad en del av gudens attribut. Han är mycket stor till växten. Kljutjarjov badar honom och "tvättar hans ljumske, könsorganen – han är en riktig karl trots sina fjorton år [- - -] (Växtligheten är ovanligt kraftig – ja, det beror på [hormon]preparaten.)" (23). Dionysos är bland annat växtlighetens gud, och hans symbol som gud för jordens frukt bärande krafter är en fallos.

Det är Denis som står för tystnad med innebörd och meningsfulla defekta ord mot underjordens oklanderliga men tomma. Han klappar fadern på ryggen, och "hans hand säger i det ögonblicket just det ordet ['pappa'] och inget annat. Helt klart." (23) Kljutjarjov tänker sedan på sonens ögon, "så milda och goda", hur uppfattar sonen den nuvarande situationen, "med vilken hemlig kunskap? [- - -] Min pojkes ögon är underbara. De uttrycker aldrig något överflödigt, alldagligt. De är fulla av kunskap som människor har men som de inte kan uttrycka". Den kunskapen medför en sorg och en öppenhet som gör att Kljutjarjov inte kan möta sonens ögon. Och sonen tröstar: "Nall na... (Allt är bra.)" (24)

Ortega y Gasset igen: "denna söndring av det som blott kan existera enat – vetenskap och andning, moral och sexualitet, rättvisa och en sund inre sekretion – medför de inre katastroferna".³² Som vi sett hindrar bristen på luft andningen i berättelsens underjord. Den spanske filosofen anser att det rena förnuftet föder revolutionerna och utopierna, det konstruerar en idealvärld som skall ersätta den

³⁰ *ibid.*, sid. 47.

³¹ *ibid.*, sid. 61.

³² *ibid.*, sid. 73.

befintliga världen.³³ Detta är också ett möjligt sätt att se på de båda världarna i ”Laz” – därav artificiellt ljus, artificiell himmel och, vid ett tillfälle, ”artificiell omsorg” där nere (11). Diskussionerna i underjorden har utopisk anstrykning, till exempel i det anförda citatet om förhoppningen att öppna en passage i själen – ”Och hopen blir god?. Detta är något som nästan definitionsmässigt är omöjligt enligt berättelsens nät av värderingar.

Berättelsen är genomsyrad av mytiska mönster och allusioner, inte bara i fråga om Denis. En kritiker har påpekat att Kljutjarjov i sin mediatorsroll är en mytisk så kallad kulturhjärte som hämtar eld och arbetsverktyg till människornas värld på ytan.³⁴ Kljutjarjov hämtar nämligen upp från underjorden under sitt första besök en spade, ett spett och en hacka, under sitt andra besök tyg, te, batterier, ljus och ett fotogenkök.

Kaos råder i världen på ytan – mytiska kaostecken är mörkret och halvmörkret liksom tomheten och tystnaden, allt för eteelser vilka omtalas gång på gång. Ett annat kaostecken är att tiden står stilla. Under alla de händelser som utspelar sig i berättelsen råder det oföränderligen halvmörker och skymningen faller, ibland tillfogas att det mörknar ”snabbt” (37,47,64). Frasen ”Det är inte natt än” uttalad av ”Kristus” i slutet är återkommande (7, 32, 34,38,65). Inte heller i underjorden tycks tiden gå. Störningar i växlingen mellan dag och natt hör till de eskatologiska motiven. Världens ordnande från kaos till kosmos innebär bland annat tidsindelning och tideräkning skapad av kulturhjärten.³⁵

Kljutjarjovs ”återfödelse” i slutet av ”Laz” leder till att tiden börjar gå. När han blivit väckt kommer den första bestämda tidsangivelsen: ”Han hade bara sovit en fyra-fem minuter.” (65) Tidens stillastående kan också ses som symboliserande ordet ”bezvremenje” (svår tid, stagnation) i dess stavelse-för-stavelse-betydelse av ”ingen tid”. Ordet används när Kljutjarjov tänker på hur ogärna han vill fara iväg och begrava Pavlov i denna svåra tid (20). I ”Kvazi” skriver Makanin om nutiden – ”under det nuvarande tillfälliga avbrottet i tiden och skenbara stillastandet”.³⁶

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³³ *ibid.*, sid. 95, 121, 153.

³⁴ P Vajl, ”Klaustrofobija”, *Nezavisimaja gazeta* 25.07 1991.

³⁵ *Mify narodov mira* 1, sid 612, 613; II, sid 9, 10, 25, 26, 27, 28.

³⁶ V Makanin, ”Kvazi”, *Novyj mir* 7 1993, sid 136.

Kulturdebatten om intelligentsians ställning i Ryssland präglade framförallt mitten och början av 1990-talet, så man kan säga att Vladimir Makanin är tidigt ute med sin skönlitterära gestaltning av ämnet. Det centrala i berättelsen är övergångens problem (passagen). Att intelligentsian därvid kommer i fokus är traditionellt i den ryska kulturhistorien. I brytningstider har intelligentsian diskuterats – den viktigaste anledningen till detta är förmodligen problemet med att finna bärare av förnyelse mot bakgrund av ett censurerat och uppifrånstyrt samhälle som hindrat självständiga krafter att uppstå. Påfallande i debatten tidigare liksom under 1990-talet är skarpa fördömanden av intelligentsian som skyldig till krisen och inkompetent att föra landet ut ur den. Detta har sitt motstycke i idealiseringar, vilka dock är mindre framträdande.

I "Laz" ser vi å ena sidan underjordens tomt pratande intelligentsia, isolerad från verkligheten på ytan, å andra sidan huvudpersonen Viktor Kljutjarjov, också intelligentsiaföreträdare, som med sitt agerande påverkar hela världsordningen. När han vaknar/återföds börjar tiden gå igen, och bezvremen'je/krisen börjar övervinnas. Han visar sig göra skäl för sitt förnamn, Viktor (av latinets *victor* – segrare). Trots stora olikheter mellan författarna påminner detta om ett mönster som finns i Aleksandr Solzjenitsyns kända artikel från 1974, "Fuskarintelligentsian", och som är vanligt också i 1990-talets artiklar. Å ena sidan framställs "fuskarintelligentsian", ofta kallad bara "intelligentsian", som en samling nihilistiska, ateistiska och oppositionella pratmakare, å andra sidan sätts det likhetstecken mellan "intelligentsians kärna" och "det godas kärna". Den förstnämnda har fört Ryssland i fördärvet, den sistnämnda är det enda som inger hopp om räddning.³⁷ Skillnaden är att på frågan "Vem är skyldig?" sätter Solzjenitsyn intelligentsian i främsta rummet, Makanin folket/massan.

Här slår pendeln för fullt mellan demonisering och idealisering med den gemensamma bakgrunden av oerhört hög uppskattning av intelligentsians betydelse, den ses som "avgörande för Rysslands öde".³⁸ Den elitism, som ofta ligger dold i olika resonemang omkring denna ideologiska kärna, är tydlig hos Makanin, särskilt i till exempel "Kvasi" men också i "Laz". Ovan har detta delvis hänförs till ett allegoriskt förkroppsligande av Ortega y Gassetts idéer. Kanske kan

³⁷ A Solzjenicyn, *Iz-pod glyb. Sbornik statej*, sid 192, 197, 202, 203, 216

³⁸ Jämför: S Bulgakov, "Geroizm i podviznicestvo", *Vechi. Intelligencija v Rossii. Sbornik statej 1909–1910*, sid 45.

man tillämpa de förklaringar som givits till den spanske filosofen, vilka handlar om kvardröjande feodal känsla för hierarkier och historisk frånvaro av borgerlig demokrati.³⁹ Makanin är som synes också inskriven i den ryska traditionen.

Sedan är det skönlitteraturens privilegium att vara mycket mer än sina huvudidéer. Inte minst gäller det "Laz" som är spännande läsning.

Litteratur

A Archangel'skij, "Gde schochilis' koncy s koncami", *Druzba narodov* 7 1998

S Bulgakov, Geroizm i podviznicestvo", *Vechi. Intelligencija v Rossii. Sbornik statej 1909-1910*, Moskva 1991

A Genis, *Ivan Petrovic umer. Statji i rassledovanija*, 1999

A Genis, "'Laz' Vladimira Makanina. Vzglyad iz Nju-Jorka. Agorafobija". *Nezavisimaja gazeta* 25.07 1991

N Ivanova, "Slučaj Makanina", *Znamja* 4 1997

V Makanin, "Kvazi", *Novyj mir* 7 1993

Mify narodov mira II, gl red S Tokarev, Moskva 1980, 1982

A Nemzer, "Zamecatel'noe desjatiletie. O russkoj proze 90-ch godov", *Novyj mir* 1 2000

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A. Dobson, *An Introduction to the Politics and Philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset*, Cambridge 1989

J. Ortega y Gasset, *Massornas uppror*, Stockholm 1934

J. Ortega y Gasset, *V r tids tema*, Stockholm 1936

³⁹ A. Dobson, *An Introduction to the Politics and Philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset*, Cambridge 1989, sid. 84.

The Russian Intelligentsia in Focus

”I miss censorship...”

*Yevgeny Yevtushenko 1991*⁴⁰

”The intelligentsia entered into an alliance with political egoists and ended, as usual, as losers..”

*Liberal literary critic 1993 (Natalya Ivanova)*⁴¹

”The people felt, with justice, that Gorbachev had a weakness – his sympathy for and trust in the intelligentsia. But I am still proud of this kind of weakness.”

*Mikhail Gorbachev 1997*⁴²

”The ‘radiation’ of the market has proved to be more penetrating and murderous for the intelligentsia than totalitarianism.”

*Sociologist 1999 (Nikita Pokrovsky, Moscow University)*⁴³

RUSSIA IN THE 1990S was characterized by the struggle with the difficulties of renewal after the fall of the Soviet system in 1991. The intelligentsia came into focus in the cultural debate. This article provides a review of the stances and themes of this debate, and provides historical parallels. It ends with a close reading of Vladimir Makanin’s novella *Escape Hatch*, written 1991. In this novella, the intelligentsia takes a central place in the depiction of the problem of transformation.

⁴⁰ *Ogonyok* 5/91, p. 24.

⁴¹ *Znamya* 11/93, p. 183.

⁴² *Dosye na tsenzuru* 2/97, p. 12.

⁴³ *Na pereputye* (Moscow 1999), p. 49.

The Debate in the Media

The Background: Perestroika

During perestroika (1985–91) a "civil war in literature" played itself out, among other things, in the so-called thick journals, which are an important Russian institution.

There were three main camps – Westernizing liberalism, democratically inclined Slavophilism, and traditionalistic "national-patriotism," a stance hostile both to the West and to perestroika. The national-patriotic camp would eventually become what was, for a time, termed the red-brown coalition – communist and non-communist nationalists in cooperation. The primary opposition in the great debate was between Westernizing liberalism, and national-patriotism.

In a situation of increased pluralism in opinion, but without freedom of organization, the thick journals functioned as a sort of party organizations before the parties. The journals' role is an expression of what is considered the traditional role of the Russian intelligentsia, that is, to function as replacements for a more extensive civil society. Towards the end of perestroika, however, the importance of the thick journals decreased, and their circulation sank – their circulation had been enormous, especially in the case of the pro-perestroika journals.

A few years after the end of the literary "civil war," which coincided with the end of the Soviet system, a liberal debater asked herself who had emerged victorious. She maintained that victory had gone to a completely unexpected third party, namely popular culture.⁴⁴ This is one possible way of describing the result of the polemic. Another way to describe the result is to talk about a loss of influence for the liberals, who were at the height of their influence 1990–1991. You could, instead, award the palm of victory to the national-patriotic movement. According to debate participants this movement was in fact born within some of the thick journals.

Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Communist Party, figured among the national-patriots as one of the twelve signatories of the "Appeal to the People" that presaged the attempted coup of August 1991, which was meant to save the Soviet Union and the Soviet system. During 1992, the year that economic shock therapy was instituted, he continued his work for ideological rapprochement between communist and non-communist nationalists. He acknowledged the

⁴⁴ N. Ivanova, *Znamya* 9/93, p. 198.

Orthodox Church as fundamental to Russia, and presented socialist ideals as deriving from the Bible and from the Russian village commune. In doing so, he distanced himself greatly from the atheism and anti-peasant stance of his mother party, the Soviet Communist Party. Meanwhile, a non-communist nationalist who had once described the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 as the result of an anti-Russian conspiracy between Jews and Masons wrote in the December 1991 issue in the communist publication *Pravda* that socialism was the world's luminous goal.⁴⁵

In the subsequent years, there appeared a number of organizations that united right- and left-wing opposition. The People's Patriotic Front, founded 1996, expressed the basis of the alliance as follows:

We do not divide ourselves up in red and white, rich and poor, believers and non-believers. We are Russian supporters of a strong state . . . united in our love to our beautiful Russia, through concern for its welfare and its indivisibility, in unbearable sorrow over its fate.⁴⁶

This important alliance began to form as soon as it was politically feasible during perestroika. There was much speculation on the fusion within the cultural debate. Many debaters, trying to explain the alliance, pointed to the fact the intellectual traditions that underlay Russian communism and Tsarist-era Russian nationalism shared common characteristics, despite their historic opposition. Both traditions emphasize the primary importance of maintaining the empire. Both believe, albeit for different reasons, that destruction comes from the Western world. Both oppose pluralism, and support authoritarian rule and control of the mass media. Finally, both emphasize the special nature of Russia and Russia's special developmental path, in ideological and nationalist terms respectively. The national-patriotic movement had its predecessor in so-called National-Bolshevism.

The cultural debate also mirrored another fundamental occurrence: the cultural "paradigm shift" towards the end of perestroika. A new, more pluralistic public sphere had emerged, censorship was abolished and a multi-party system introduced. Literature and literary criticism were no longer special channels of information, bearing forbidden truths. The laws on how one should read and

⁴⁵ V. Sargin, *Politicheskaya istoriya sovremennoy Rossii* (Moscow 1994), pp. 138, 139.

⁴⁶ S. Kisilitsyn, V. Krikunov, V. Kuraev, *Gennady Zyuganov* (1999), p. 255.

write during totalitarianism – that is, between the lines – no longer obtained. To read, acquire, discuss, and write about a divergent work was no longer a collective act of civil disobedience. Commercialism appears as a new unfreedom. The cultural intelligentsia and the thick journals had lost their role as leading opinion makers. They had been replaced by television, commercial culture, a political life with "image makers" in prominent roles, media oligarchs.

The pro-perestroika writings showed a faith in the transforming power of the word, as pronounced truth. This belief in the word is generally considered to have survived within Russian culture. Within both the Tsarist Russian and the Soviet regime's public sphere, both regime representatives and critics attached great importance to the word; hence a censorship of varying stringency and a struggle against censorship through different methods. This faith and the expectations that were attached to it during perestroika had been nourished by, among other things, the field of tension between the censorship laws and the struggle to outwit the censor. It had been given classic expression in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize speech in 1970: "A word of truth can move the entire world."⁴⁷

The new Russian government, unlike the Soviet state, no longer depends on the power of authors and the cultural intelligentsia. The dependence of the old Soviet state on authors had its last, somewhat curious expression when, on the second (and penultimate) day of the August 1991 coup, the coup leaders sent a representative to the Secretariat of the Authors' Association.

The paradigm shift is expressed when, in 1996, a liberal writer paints the cultural situation of 1986, that is, of a decade ago, as if it were a matter of another world.⁴⁸ Another writes, in 1997, that something happened "an eternity ago" – that is, six or seven years ago – for "today we live in another land."⁴⁹ The liberal debaters, who have fought for perestroika, repeatedly work through their disappointment. Formulations such as "we believed that if only the censorship were abolished and truth appeared all would be well, but..." are common.⁵⁰

There have been many attempts to explain why the liberal expectations of what would happen once censorship was abolished have been disappointed. Here is one of these attempts, from the journal *Novyi mir*, in 1995:

⁴⁷ A. Solzhenitsyn, *Publitsistika v trekh tomakh*, tom. I (Yaroslavl 1995), p. 25. I do not agree with the English translation given in A. Solzhenitsyn, *Nobel Lecture* (N Y 1972), p. 34.

⁴⁸ N. Ivanova, *Znamya* 9/96, pp. 201–210.

⁴⁹ S. Chuprinin, *Znamya* 1/97, pp. 206, 207.

⁵⁰ For example S. Chuprinin, *Znamya* 5/92, p. 215.

Censorship is abolished. The truth has stopped being dangerous, and flows forth. For a time there was a hope that this truth would purify and transform us, but this did not happen. Information about the horrors of the past did not diminish the horrors of the present . . . We did not succeed in assimilating the truth about the past, and the unassimilated truth threatens to drown us. There appears enthusiasm, ecstasy over the disintegration, spiritual capitulation to chaos or still worse – a flight to new myths, a hunt for the guilty, an attempt to transfer the responsibility to other shoulders.”⁵¹

In the following, we will look at the question of how the debate of the 1990s mirrors what is seen as a basic problem in Russian political and social life: the historic significance of the intelligentsia. The problems experienced by Russia’s liberal intelligentsia during perestroika have historical precedents; as has their agonized and public self-examination. These historical antecedents illuminate the contours of the debate of the 1990s.

History Reappearing

Vissarion Belinsky was a literary critic and proponent of the 1840s ”Natural School,” which heralded the great Russian novels. He is considered the ”father” of the (left-wing radical) Russian intelligentsia. He started his career by complaining that there existed no Russian literature. He then, during his short life, managed to write thirteen thick volumes of articles on this non-existent phenomenon. Similarly, during the 1990s and to this day, innumerable Russian books and articles have been written, just as scores of conferences have been arranged, discussing the intelligentsia—which has been declared dead by many. The supposedly dead intelligentsia was one of the central themes in the cultural debate, especially in the period before the mid-1990s.

This, as was also brought out in the great debate of the 1990s, is another recurring phenomenon in Russian cultural history: in times of change one discusses the intelligentsia, its contributions and above all its failings. The foremost reason for this is, presumably, the need to find a bearer of renewal within a society which had been censored and steered from above, and thus unable to bring forth independent forces.

This phenomenon is so striking that the liberal Russian literary critic and ”historian of the intelligentsia” Dmitry Ovsianiko-Kulikovsky wrote, in 1908, that

⁵¹ G. Pomerants, *Novyi mir* 8/95, p. 138.

in other countries there were discussions on science, politics and art – in Russia there were only discussions on the nature of the intelligentsia.⁵² Note the term “historian of the intelligentsia.” In today’s Russian cultural and especially academic life, there exist *intelligentovedy* and *intelligentovedenie* – that is, intelligentsia scholars and intelligentsia studies.

The following is a summary of the beginning of one article: this revolution has not given that which was expected from it, the Russian society is exhausted from its earlier stresses and from all its failures and is currently in a condition of apathy, depression and spiritual disintegration; the Russian state has not been renewed and strengthened despite the fact that this was so necessary, Russian literature is drowning in a dirty stream of pornography and sensationalism; there is every reason to fear for Russia’s future.

This could have been an article from the 1990s, but is, in fact, the beginning of an article by the philosopher of religion, Sergei Bulgakov, published in 1909 in *Landmarks* (*Vekhi*), with the subtitle “A Collection of Essays on the Russian Intelligentsia.”⁵³ This is probably the most debated work of Russian twentieth-century culture. It appeared after the first, failed Russian revolution of 1905–1907. This is one of the times when the intelligentsia was discussed in a manner similar to that of the 1990s. In many of the articles that appeared in the 1990s, discussing *Landmarks*, it is also emphasized that the type of reference points mentioned in the article are held in common.

The authors of *Landmarks* mostly defined the intelligentsia as consisting only of radical opponents to the autocratic state. The seven articles oppose positivism and materialism to the new idealism and philosophy of religion, and they want the intelligentsia to take a new road (given, of course, certain differences of opinion among the authors). The “landmarks” they establish for the intelligentsia are: investment in one’s inner self rather than in changing outer circumstances; morality rather than politics; repentance and humility rather than arrogance; religion (orthodoxy) instead of atheism; admitting the mystique of the state, instead of disassociating from, rejecting and struggling against it; and patriotism instead of “cosmopolitanism.” They see the 1905 revolution as the work of the intelligentsia, and blame the intelligentsia for its failed and destructive elements.

⁵² C. Read, *Religion, Revolution and the Russian Intelligentsia 1900–1912* (London 1979), p. 1.

⁵³ *Landmarks* (N Y 1977), 23ff.

The meeting, in revolution, between the ideas of the intelligentsia and the people's instincts had generated an "enormous destructive energy."⁵⁴

The book came out in several editions, and the debate after its publication was extremely extensive. It met opposition from liberals and socialists of various kinds, while its supporters came almost exclusively from certain deeply conservative supporters of the autocracy. This demonstrates the difficulties inherent in the "liberal conservatism" that *Landmarks* represents. Lenin was one of the most hostile critics. And during the Soviet Era the book was part of the condemned and forbidden heritage.

During the avalanche of publications of formerly forbidden works during perestroika, the turn also came to *Landmarks*. The introduction to one of the book's new editions, in 1991, discusses the book's relevance to current times. As in 1909, so also in 1991 there is a general feeling among the intelligentsia that the country has a historical need of renewal. The beginning of the century is seen as having been conscious of many aspects of such a radical renewal, which still are not realized. As long as the fundamental problems of renewal have not been solved, they will be the object of heated discussions. Therefore, the introduction continues, it is no coincidence that a number of publishing houses have reissued the book, and in very great numbers besides.

The 1991 introduction also expresses sympathy for the book's authors, five of whom were expelled in 1922 on the so-called philosophical steamboat. It emphasizes the great harm that was caused to Russian culture through the persecution of dissidents and the importance of gaining knowledge of the interrupted intellectual traditions.⁵⁵ Culturally, this retying of links to the period between 1905 and 1917 had already happened to a great extent during perestroika. On the political plane one can refer to a detail such as the fact that Russia's new parliament was, as of December 1993, termed the fifth State Duma – the first four being the (pseudo) parliaments of the years between 1906 and 1917.

The Problem of Renewal

In the cultural debate of the 1990s *Landmarks* had a very important role. Just as in the century's beginning, so do many believe today that the situation is so threatening that it puts Russia's future into question. In this dangerous situation

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 26, 27, 41, 42, 51, 54, 72, 73, 141, 142 (and so on).

⁵⁵ Vekhi. *Intelligentsiya v Rossii* (Moscow 1991), pp. 19, 21.

there is, to cite *Landmarks*, “no subject more compelling than the nature of the Russian intelligentsia.”⁵⁶ Then, as now, the intelligentsia is put at the centre of Russian modernization. In his 1909 article, Sergei Bulgakov gives a more poetical expression of what today is termed the problem of the uncompleted modernization. The soul of the intelligentsia, he writes in an oft-quoted expression, is the creation of Peter the Great:

Be it bad or good, the fate of Peter’s Russia is in the intelligentsia’s hands regardless of how hunted and persecuted it is . . . The intelligentsia is that window on Europe that Peter cut out and through which we breathe in Western air, at once both life-giving and poisonous . . . Russia cannot do without this enlightenment . . . [T]here is no more agonizing and alarming concern than whether the Russian intelligentsia will rise to its task, whether Russia will acquire an educated class with a Russian soul . . . For otherwise the intelligentsia, in conjunction with Tartar barbarism which is still so prevalent in our state and social systems, will ruin Russia.⁵⁷

A common feeling – with its modern antecedents among, amongst others, Alexander Solzhenitsyn in the *samizdat* of the 1970s – is that *Landmarks* is an “unheard prophecy”; and the “price” or “result” of the intelligentsia’s unwillingness to change itself according to its precepts was Russia’s “catastrophe” with the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the millions of victims of the “regime’s war on the people” and other damages to society.⁵⁸ This judgement is an expression of the “absolutist” view of the importance of the intelligentsia, which is typical if not universal.

Continuity exists, thus, in the valorisation of the intelligentsia as responsible for Russia’s fate. There is also continuity in the discussion of the intelligentsia’s function in society. The triad “intelligentsia” – “people” – “power” is a concept that has survived into modern times, with the intelligentsia in the role as the people’s “educators,” the mediators between the people and the power. Even today one can find instances of the intelligentsia being termed the “representatives” of the people – self-appointed representatives, it seems.⁵⁹

The question of the importance of the intelligentsia in society is one of the

⁵⁶ *Landmarks*, p. 25.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵⁸ A. Solzhenitsyn, *From Under the Rubble* (London 1975), pp. 229, 236; M. Litvak, *Intelligentsiya i mifotvorchestvo* (St. Petersburg 2000), p. 6.

⁵⁹ Yu. Shreider, *Novyi mir* 5/93, p. 194.

matters in the cultural debate. The traditional pattern, described above, is defended and questioned. A liberal "critic of the intelligentsia" writes, for example, sarcastically that the people is suffering want, but that for the first time the people seems to wish to suffer want independently, without mediators.⁶⁰ Complaints about the degeneration of culture, immorality, stupid television series, Western and indigenous popular culture are common in the cultural debate. Many of these articles throw an indirect light backwards, on the Soviet system, as the promised land of true cultural values.⁶¹ On the other hand the sociologists Lev Gudkov and Boris Dubin maintain in the book *The Intelligentsia* (1995) that the intelligentsia makes "imperialist" claims to decide what is "the only right culture." Gudkov and Dubin explain that today's popular culture has a function: it socializes people into the values of the new social system, something which traditional high culture cannot do.⁶²

Many see the intelligentsia as decisive for the fall of Communism – looking, in this case, at the dissident movement, as well as certain half-official cultural expressions during the Brezhnev epoch. They also include the publication of once-forbidden texts by pro-perestroika cultural journals and other media, and their work to expand the frame for the permissible during the end of the 1980s. These phenomena contributed to undermine the legitimacy of the Soviet power. It is more unusual to hear anyone object that the system fell of its own weight, its own inner weakness.⁶³

A *Novyi mir* author criticized *Landmarks* for reducing the question of freedom in Russia to a question of the consciousness of the intelligentsia.⁶⁴ Another author presented similar criticism. Did the intelligentsia really have such a monopolistic role in the 1905 revolution? Doesn't the intelligentsia, personified in the authors of *Landmarks*, give itself a little greater importance than it in fact really has?⁶⁵ This is a question one could put to many intelligentsia debaters of the 1990s, as well.

Great numbers of texts published during the 1990s express the explicit or

⁶⁰ A. Ageev, *Znamya* 2/94, p. 168.

⁶¹ *Fenomen rossiyskoy intelligentsii* (St. Petersburg 2000), p. 151, 153. Comments on this: A. Ageev, *Znamya* 3/00, p. 198.

⁶² L. Gudkov, B. Dubin, *Intelligentsiya* (Moscow 1995), pp. 6, 102, 132, 149, 150, 182, 188.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 90; D. Shturman, *Novyi mir* 2/95, p. 161.

⁶⁴ M. Kolerov, *Novyi mir* 8/94, p. 161.

⁶⁵ D. Shturman, *Novyi mir* 4/94, p. 174.

implicit expectation, that the intelligentsia would be the bearer of renewal, the power that leads the country out of its crisis. In the paradoxically depressed 1990s, the great weight given the intelligentsia took on grandiose expressions. This was especially evident in the abuse heaped on the intelligentsia, which became the great genre on the subject. All political shades united in this abuse. The mode was typically accusatory rather than self-critical. Russians often give, in self-irony, the two great questions of Russian history as "who is to blame?" and "what should be done?"

The questions above express difficulties with renewal and transformation. Historically, periods of enthusiasm are followed by periods of disappointment, when many feel the need to find a guilty party. This is the background to the remarkable "genre" where authors who "logically" themselves could be counted as part of the intelligentsia turn against it, as outsiders, with bitter accusations.

This "genre" is supported by the value-laden definition of the intelligentsia. According to their varying sympathies, authors include those they dislike in an intelligentsia which is negatively described, or those they like in an intelligentsia which is given positive characteristics. This includes the author him- or herself who can be either self-critical, or level accusations as if he or she stood outside the group. This feature characterized *Landmarks*, as well. The book is a bill of indictment against the intelligentsia by authors whom it would be natural to see as its members themselves. (The element of self-criticism is much weaker.)

The concept "intelligentsia" can cover a number of different entities – the entire educated layer, the critics of the regime, producers of culture, those who do not lie, the milkmaid or the peasant (but not the professor), depending on different ways of describing its ideal characteristics. Bolshevik leaders can be described both as typical members of the intelligentsia and as "renegades from the intelligentsia."⁶⁶ And most authors change back and forth freely and without warning between different definitions of the word. This means, as has also been pointed out in the Russian debate, that the intelligentsia can be blamed for anything at all.

Take, as an example of the fact that this "genre" of abuse also has its historical

⁶⁶ A. Bystritsky, *Novyi mir* 3/93, p. 180; D. Shturman, *Novyi mir* 4/94, p. 153; in *Literaturnaya gazeta* 24/99 there is a roundtable, "The intelligentsia and those in power," p. 3, where different contributions include different groups and persons in the intelligentsia or exclude them from it—journalists and politicians, not journalists and politicians, Gaydar, not Gaydar, and so on.

antecedents, an excerpt from the great debate that followed the publication of *Landmarks* in 1909: a debater declares himself solidaristic with Anton Chekhov, whose letter of 1899 is quoted: "I do not believe in our intelligentsia, hypocritical, false, hysterical, badly brought up and lazy, I do not believe in it even when it suffers and complains, because its oppressors come from within its own ranks."⁶⁷

Unitarianism

Among the many who protested against *Landmarks* was Pavel Milyukov, the leader for the liberal party Constitutional Democrats. He explains, in an article published in 1910, that the intelligentsia is not uniform and that what the authors of *Landmarks* have done is to condemn one stream of the intelligentsia from the viewpoint of another. Instead of "intelligentsia," the *Landmarks* authors should have written "anarchy" or "Russian socialism." It was unjust to attribute enmity to the state and religion, to the intelligentsia as a whole.⁶⁸ During the 1990s, the liberal journal *Znamya* and even the "liberal conservative" *Novyi mir* have advanced similar critique of *Landmarks*.⁶⁹

Nonetheless, the description of the intelligentsia as a unit is very common. There seems to be a reluctance, even on a linguistic level, to give expression to the idea that there might be different streams within the intelligentsia. Debaters of the most differing shades describe, rather, the intelligentsia in terms of unity, even when the meaning is that it contains differences – the "liberal intelligentsia," the "totalitarian intelligentsia," and so on. The liberal authors who do try to talk about different currents have a tendency nonetheless to at some point fall back into thinking of the intelligentsia as a unit. The value-laden moral definitions of the intelligentsia lead to arguments about "the true intelligentsia," and that one should "count some people out of the intelligentsia." This last occurs in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's well-known *samizdat* article, written in 1974 as a follow-up to *Landmarks* – "The Smatterers."⁷⁰

When Solzhenitsyn said that it was about time to exclude the one or the other from the intelligentsia, he was considering their moral behaviour. This consideration had its serious background in the battle for freedom against an

⁶⁷ *Vekhi. Pro et contra* (St. Petersburg 1998), pp. 315, 316.

⁶⁸ *Vekhi. Intelligentsiya v Rossii*, pp. 299, 304, 329, 332.

⁶⁹ N. Ivanova, *Znamya* 11/93, p. 179; A. Kiva, *Novyi mir* 8/93, p. 160.

⁷⁰ A. Solzhenitsyn, *From Under the Rubble*, p. 251.

oppressive regime. The risks of the battle against oppression, contrasted to adaptability and service to the former regime, are naturally important external reasons for the high emotional content of the debate about the intelligentsia. But there is also an inner cause: a lack of, or a conscious rejection of, pluralism. This appears when, for instance, Solzhenitsyn in an article of 1982 uses his term of abuse "the smatterers" as the equivalent of the expression "our pluralists."⁷¹

Much of the debate is thus characterized by, on the one hand, the tendency to think in whole units, and, on the other hand, by an emotional coloration of concepts. Both of these factors collaborate to create a discourse which is opposed to pluralism, although the discourse is pluralistic insofar as different sides are allowed to express their views. The emotional coloration judges groups and persons either as good or bad. It is not seen as legitimate to have different opinions and worldviews.

The demand for unity has been discussed and criticized by various authors during the 1990s. One author writes that there is a tendency to declare all differing opinions as traitorous.⁷² Another presents the thought of the Russian culture's uniformity as a firmly held mythic pattern – oppositions are erased, or differing elements are condemned as not belonging to true Russian culture.⁷³ The sociologists Gudkov and Dubin write that "the intelligentsia" operates with concepts of totality, the extent of which has to do with terms of great pretensions – such as "the country," "the people," "the West," and "culture." This, according to them, is connected to the fact that the whole applies to the totalitarian consciousness.⁷⁴ The operation of the concept "intelligentsia" is along similar lines.

There are a great number of negative and positive characterisations of the intelligentsia as a totality in the debate of the 1990s. This is connected to the constant treatment of "the intelligentsia" as an undifferentiated concept. The journal *Novyi mir* hosted an extensive debate on the intelligentsia. Articles on the subject were especially numerous in 1994. I will excerpt two characterizations of the intelligentsia, from two articles of that year. The first: "The Russian intelligentsia has never served anyone – it has always, as far as its understanding reached, sought to serve the true, the good and the beautiful."⁷⁵ And the second:

⁷¹ A. Solzhenitsyn, *Publitsistika v trekh tomakh*, tom. I, pp. 431, 441, 442.

⁷² G. Andreev, *Novyi mir* 2/94, p. 185.

⁷³ M. Yampolsky, *Novaya volna* (1994).

⁷⁴ L. Gudkov, B. Dubin, *Intelligentsiya*, p. 86.

⁷⁵ G. Andreev, *Novyi mir* 2/94, p. 167.

”The Russian intelligentsia’s catastrophism, its apocalypsis, its shameless hysteria and psychopathy . . . have, to a great extent, contributed to Zhirinovsky’s success in the Duma elections.”⁷⁶

The nationalists likewise have joined the totalising debate on the intelligentsia. Today’s nationalists join up with *Landmarks* and Solzhenitsyn but turn their arguments to their own ends. According to the nationalists, the Russian intelligentsia was born in the chasm which divided the country during the process of Peter the Great’s Europeanization. The intelligentsia as the bearer of Western ideas is foreign to Russia, and wages war on its own country. Russia cannot be conquered from without, so it is necessary to import a doctrine. The intelligentsia, by this reading, is a sort of fifth column in the country, which is how their argument ends. This is one of the occasions when people with intellectual professions count themselves out of ”the intelligentsia” and view it as a foreign, hostile power. This does not stop them from recurring to the concept in other contexts, but then in the meaning of ”the true intelligentsia,” which is Russian-nationalist and which consists of altogether different persons.⁷⁷

I will present an article which exemplifies the fact that even those who talk of different currents within the intelligentsia, still tend to revert to unitarian thinking in wholes. In the article ”The intelligentsia in the hour of trial” (*Novyi mir* August 1993), Alexei Kiva begins by distancing himself from the predominant view of the pre-1917 Russian intelligentsia as uniformly opposed to the Tsarist regime. One should, rather, speak of different streams, among them for instance the Westernizing and Slavophile. Nonetheless, the article goes on to establish a number of uniform characteristics, with the reservation that they apply to ”the part of the creative intelligentsia which establishes the tone.” Whereupon even this reservation quietly disappears, and the author states: ”It is we who are guilty of much, we who are united by the concept of ’the intelligentsia.’” This is Kiva’s answer to the question of who bears the ”guilt” for Russia’s lack of ”uniform national spirit,” which he sees as having caused the October 1917 revolution and the subsequent ”genocide.” The idea of ”different streams” with which the article began has been replaced by the expression ”splintering of the national spirit,” something of which someone is ”guilty.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ D. Shusharin, *Novyi mir* 7/94, p. 186.

⁷⁷ V. Rasputin, *Moskva* 2/91, A. Panarin, *Na pereputye*, p. 11.

⁷⁸ A. Kiva, *Novyi mir* 8/93, pp. 160–177.

Conception of uniqueness

Unitarianism can be said to be one of the most enduring thought patterns of Russian history of ideas. Another such thought pattern is the idea of Russia's uniqueness. The debate on the intelligentsia is characterized by this idea as well. In Kiva's article, analyzed above, the idea of uniqueness is treated in the same way as the unitarian idea. Kiva begins by maintaining that there is nothing unique about Russian history, whereupon he proceeds to make the "assumption" that European history can show no analogue to the Russian intelligentsia. To back this up he cites "No common yardstick can avail you" from Feodor Tyutchev's emblematic (and constantly quoted) 1866 poem on Russian uniqueness: "Through reason Russia can't be known."⁷⁹ Indeed, almost everything that is written on this theme has its roots in the nineteenth century, when the "Russian idea" was constantly debated within Russian cultural circles. The formulations of the arguments often bear word-for-word similarity.

The *intelligentsia*, unique to Russia, is often contrasted to *intellectuals*, a phenomenon seen as typical of the West. Kiva maintains that Western intellectuals are concerned with material well-being, so that their heirs will be able to "clip coupons" and "their wives bring up their children themselves." The intelligentsia, on the other hand, seeks rather for the meaning of life and behaves according to the principle "all or nothing." "We are a young nation," as Kiva puts it, and behave like a teenager. But, he continues, there are people with high ideals in the West too.⁸⁰ There is a strong tradition in Russian culture that sees the West in this way, as a sort of "anti-world." Kiva, though, writes about ideals in the West, while many see the West (the whole of it) as completely governed by material interests.

Many thus paint the West as lacking moral and idealistic qualities. The sociologist Yevgeny Pokrovsky has expressed typical views: the Western intellectuals are first and foremost adapted to the market; morality comes second; they are preoccupied with their own problems, compete for personal success, they have no idealistic motivation, and they make no sacrifices. All this, implicitly, in contrast to the Russian intelligentsia. This line of argument is tied to a critique of Western pluralism and moral relativism (which is equated with immorality), as well as a general lack of spiritual values. The special role awarded the Russian intelligentsia even takes expression in messianic ideas, which trace their origins to

⁷⁹ *An Age Ago. A Selection of Nineteenth-Century Russian Poetry* (N Y 1988), p. 116.

⁸⁰ A. Kiva, *Novyi mir* 8/93, pp. 161, 167.

the nineteenth century. These survive in a series of articles that maintain that the Russian intelligentsia will help the West to achieve a spiritual state, help the whole world achieve a higher level, give the world light.⁸¹

Another common pattern still sees the West as an anti-world, but places the positive pole there instead of in Russia. The Russian critic-in-exile Pyotr Vail says in a 1999 newspaper interview: "Russia is convinced that there is nothing like the Russian intelligentsia anywhere else." Vail maintains, on the contrary, that the traditional contrast between the Russian intelligentsia and the Western intellectuals is false: everywhere there are people whose intellectual and spiritual interests extend beyond work and family. That is his definition of a member of the intelligentsia. There are untold numbers who devote themselves to idealistic work in the West, says Vail, so the Russian boast is groundless. But its source is clear: the members of the Western intelligentsia fight for the owl and rescue it; but in Russia they fight for the owl sitting in their kitchens, and the owl perishes in peace and calm together with the Baikal lake; to explain these facts away myths are made up about the uniqueness of the Russian intelligentsia.⁸²

The West is also seen as the positive pole by a group of liberal-minded writers and debaters, who declare the old intelligentsia to be poorly adapted to the new times. What Russia needs is intellectuals on the Western model. The sociologists Gudkov and Dubin write, for instance, of the Western intellectuals as unique. They are bearers of the European culture's relativistic spirit, of modernity, where the individual is the constitutive element. They show an adult attitude, by relying on their own subjective understanding. They are functional as innovators and as culture-bearers. The Russian intelligentsia is, by contrast, they declare, authoritarian, and symbiotic to the old power system. "The comfort of violence" meant, among other things, that the intelligentsia could show off its potential possibilities during the era of censorship without having to prove anything, because they could refer to external obstacles. This gave the intelligentsia a feeling of being chosen, while in fact the elite was castrated as innovators. Under the new, freer conditions, the intelligentsia has shown itself to be incompetent to fulfil the role of elite that society needs, in order to come out of the crisis.⁸³

⁸¹ N. Pokrovsky at the VI ICCEES World Congress, Tampere 2000. N. Pokrovsky, *Na pereputye*, p. 51, 62, 63, 64; *Fenomen rossiyskoy intelligentsii*, pp. 145, 148, 151, 153; *Novyi mir* 1/93, p. 20; *Znamya* 1/00, p. 195.

⁸² *Literaturnaya gazeta* 39/99, p. 11.

⁸³ L. Gudkov, B. Dubin, *Intelligentsiya*, pp. 77, 78, 99, 100, 101, 113.

Portrayal in literature

The question of the modern Russian intelligentsia has also been framed in literature. Vladimir Makanin's much-noted novella *Escape Hatch (Laz)* has, as its thematic heart, the problem of transformation and change. The intelligentsia, as it is depicted here, is closely tied to this problem. Central features of this story are thus connected with the media debate. The novella was published in *Novyi mir* in May of 1991.⁸⁴ Russian critics have termed the work one which both unites and divides Soviet and post-Soviet literature, a literary turning-point.⁸⁵ Makanin is seen today as one of the foremost, or even the foremost, contemporary Russian author.⁸⁶

Escape Hatch was published in 1991, the last year of perestroika, a difficult year for Russia. The stores were empty of goods, decay and crime were spreading, people feared starvation, civil war, a state coup, total collapse. Chaos and changed social roles, pauperisation and its opposite, sudden wealth, created eschatological moods. *Escape Hatch* describes two worlds, one subterranean, and one on the earth's surface. In the upper world fear rules, in half-dark, empty streets threatened by violence, in a city where streetlamps, telephones, collective traffic, electricity and waterworks have virtually ceased to function, where the houses stand with dark windows as "their dead glass eyes" (59). An enormous crowd in movement within the city, "with all its unpredictability and heightened suggestibility" (61), awakens horror.

If the world on the surface is darkness and duskiness, the subterranean world is always clearly illuminated. Here there is plenty in the stores and restaurants, gleaming cars are driven, here is health care, opinion polls, poetry readings, endless discussions among the intelligentsia, social life – all that is lacking on the surface. But here is also a lack of air, people spit blood and suddenly collapse, dead, an easy death it is said. Up there the air is fresh and the grass is green.

The two worlds are isolated from each other, except for a *laz* – translatable in English as gap, hole, or hatch – a narrow passage in the earth that sometimes contracts, sometimes widens itself, "[t]he earth breathes" (22). The main character, Viktor Klyucharyov, seems to be the only person who can pass through this *laz*.

⁸⁴ Page references and quotations refer to the English translation of the novella – Vladimir Makanin, *Escape Hatch & The Long Road Ahead* (Dana Point 1995).

⁸⁵ A. Genis, *Ivan Petrovich umer. Statyi in rassledovaniya* (1999), p. 47; A. Nemzer, *Novyi mir* 1/00, p. 207.

⁸⁶ A. Nemzer, *Literaturnoe segodnya. O russkoy proze. 90-e* (Moscow 1998), p. 259; A. Arkhangel'sky, *Druzhba narodov* 7/98.

Already on the story's concrete surface plane there appear clear signals that this is to be read symbolically and/or allegorically. There is no demand, here, for Aristotelian probability. This is typical for allegories, as is a composition in which two parallel worlds are contrasted to each other, a doubling with an unavoidably allegorical effect.

The Masses and the Minority

The story's first page establishes the opposition between the masses and the intelligentsia, the masses and the minority, death and life. Klyucharyov considers how two hundred people have been trampled to death by the crowd – "The mob [crowd]⁸⁷ doesn't count"(9). He himself is presented twice, within the first two pages, as belonging to the intelligentsia (9,10). He is completely alone in the silent and empty streets in the increasing duskiness, now and later. This, together with other connections, shows that he belongs to the minority. The masses kill [the crowd kills], Klyucharyov maintains life.

Normal world order has been inverted in this story – the world on the surface is characterized by chaos and duskiness, the subterranean world by order and light, albeit artificial illumination. The image of upside-down inversion is also allegorical. It can be linked to an essay by Vladimir Makanin, entitled "Kvazi" (published in *Novyi mir* July 1993). In this essay, Makanin wrote about how the levelled-off masses live in chaos and darkness, and that these masses have come to the surface during the twentieth century. In this theoretical argumentation, Makanin does not distinguish between "the masses" and "the people," something which is otherwise common in Russian cultural tradition. In this, he is in accordance with the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, for whom he expresses admiration in "Kvazi."⁸⁸

The ideas of Ortega y Gasset are strikingly embodied in *Escape Hatch*. From this point of view, the Spanish philosopher is important in this context. This embodiment of ideas is one more feature of allegory. On the surface the masses rule, while in the subterranean world the intelligentsia sits and talks and talks. In accordance with Ortega y Gasset's description in *The Revolt of the Masses*, written in 1930, members of the qualified minority have been shoved aside by the masses. The masses "do not obey them or respect them." On the contrary, "they push

⁸⁷ In [] are found alternative translations.

⁸⁸ V. Makanin, "Kvazi," *Novyi mir* 7/93, pp. 132, 134.

them aside and supplant them.” But the modern intellectuals are disqualified too in many respects according to the Spanish philosopher. “[I]n the intellectual life one can note the progressive triumph of the pseudo-intellectual”.⁸⁹ In *Escape Hatch* this is apparent already in the fact that the subterranean world lacks air, is artificially lit and is closed off from the reality on the surface.

The book’s hero, Klyucharyov, belongs to the intelligentsia, and there is much that unites him with the subterranean world – the words and the social life of which are, for him, the life which is lacking on the surface. But he is also contrasted to the subterranean world. He is the only one who can pass between the underground and the surface, and thus constitutes an exclusive minority of one. His surname is allegorical, created, as several critics have pointed out, from the Russian word *klyuch* and, it can be added, even *klyuchar* – key and key holder, just as Saint Peter, the gatekeeper of heaven and hell, is called in Russian texts.⁹⁰ He is shy in words, but great in his work of maintaining life, while the subterranean world’s intelligentsia is presented, in various ways, as not suiting action to its high-sounding words. Klyucharyov personifies those who, in Ortega y Gasset’s conceptual world, “make great demands on themselves, piling up difficulties and duties,” as opposed to the masses “who demand nothing special of themselves.”⁹¹

The mass man is the “average man” (a concept which Makanin picks up from Ortega y Gasset in the essay “Kvazi”); as the Spanish philosopher writes, “in the presence of one individual we can decide whether he is ‘mass’ or not.” Ortega y Gasset believes, as we have seen, that traditionally “select minorities,” such as intellectuals, have degenerated. But, according to him, “it is not rare to find to-day amongst working men,” who have traditionally belonged to the masses, “nobly disciplined minds.”⁹² There are two motifs of *Escape Hatch*, which can serve as direct illustrations of these theses.

Both in the surface and in the subterranean world Klyucharyov is moving towards a definite goal. Up on the surface it is a voyage, undertaken through the danger-filled city together with the very pregnant Olya and with Chursin, who belongs to the intelligentsia but has a background as an orphanage child. The goal

⁸⁹ J. Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (London 1969), pp. 13, 17.

⁹⁰ A. Genis, *Nezavisimaya gazeta* 25.07.91.

⁹¹ J. Ortega y Gasset, *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹² *ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

of the journey is a mortuary – they are going to bury Olya’s husband, Pavlov, who has died on the street of a heart attack. Among the barriers they encounter on the way is a bus driver who refuses to drive on to the end station in a dark, deserted quarter. He is a typical “mass man” in his behaviour and in his lack of respect for the minority.

‘Sure she’s pregnant!’ the driver yells, his anger suddenly flashing out at these intellectuals [members of the intelligentsia] who were and are responsible for everything. . . . He’d probably been listening to their conversation and inasmuch as they hadn’t been swearing or talking about primuses and grub, it was clear that they were the ones who had brought the country to ruin. Destroyed it! (If not sold it out.) (56)

When the three arrive at the medical college where the mortuary is located they are taken care of by a small fellow with a number of folksy attributes – his name, Semyonich, quilted jacket, simple speech, shovel, skill in digging. The man shows a sense of responsibility and care when he helps them bury Olya’s husband in an old, deserted churchyard in the area – “one of the last professionals doing a job honestly”(64). He is, furthermore, furnished with enormous rusty keys on a steel ring. He is still another possessor of keys, but his keys seem to belong to a past time. He is one of those with “nobly disciplined minds” whom Ortega y Gasset found among workers. As the last of his kind he, too, belongs to the minority.

The most dangerous barrier on the way is the CROWD, which “tramples anyone who’s not part of it”(62). It overflows a square that the three must cross to get to the medical college. They are close to being swallowed in the crowd’s maelstrom. The crowd’s great, threatening power and movement is described for five pages. In “Kvazi” Makanin describes how the “average man” undertakes a “merciless cleansing of the square in social consciousness, so as to make room for temples and memorials dedicated to new idols.” Makanin praises Ortega y Gasset for daring to set culture against “[t]he many-headed slave who has come out onto the square, that is to say, the crowd.”⁹³

Compare Makanin’s praise in “Kvazi” and the depiction of the crowd in *Escape Hatch* with this quotation from Ortega y Gasset: “The mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified and select. Anybody who is not like everybody . . . runs the risk of being eliminated.”⁹⁴

⁹³ V. Makanin, “Kvazi,” *Novyi mir* 7/93, pp. 134, 135.

⁹⁴ J. Ortega y Gasset, *ibid.*, p. 16.

The Subterranean World and the Word

Klyucharyov is in the beginning of the novella shown to have a strange way of moving – "he periodically makes a strange twitching movement with his body" (10). His body is covered with deep wounds, incurred during his passages through the narrow *laz*. He is on his way to the hole; and when he forces himself through he reopens his bleeding wounds. He descends into a beautiful, lit room, a "wine cellar," where people are sitting and talking and drinking wine (11, 12).

The two worlds structure a number of oppositions that have to do with the Word. High, valuable words are contrasted to low, destructive words, or the crowd's "muffled drone" and "roar." A flawless but empty run of words is opposed to defective, but meaningful words, or to a silence filled with understanding (33, 35, 71). The first of these opposites characterizes the nether world, the second the world on the surface. It is not a matter of a simple division between "good" and "bad" between the worlds. It is a matter of what serves life and what serves death, and that pattern is a complicated one.

Klyucharyov passes through the *laz* and returns twice (10–11 + 22–25, 67–68 + 85–86). The longest episode of the story, of about forty pages, takes place in the upper world between the two descents, and contains, among other things, the hazardous trip to the mortuary. He exposes himself to this danger as a thoughtful friend, and his movements in both worlds is conditioned by his incessant care for the survival of himself, his friends, his wife, his son, and even unknown victims of violence. At the middle of the story he happens, during these movements, to end up next to the *laz*, and discovers that the hole has drawn itself tightly closed (49).

From below he hears "sublime [high] words," song and the music of guitars, discussions on spirituality and the sound of someone ordering another "double shot" (of vodka). This is a collection of intelligentsia attributes. The combination of high words and vodka does not disturb Klyucharyov, on the contrary "he's overcome by warmth, love, and a passionate human longing to be with them, to be there." To be shut out from there is an enormous loss, loss of thought itself, the process of thought. None of them has final knowledge, but they speak, and, like Klyucharyov, attempt – "and this common attempt is their salvation" (50). The high words remind them that they are not going to die. Without the high words he cannot live, and neither can his wordless, mentally handicapped son. "We are words" (51).

In this section, characterized by Klyucharyov's *erlebte Rede*, the expression "sublime [high] words" is linked to the sentence "The sublime [high] sky of

ceilings over tables where people sit and talk”(50). The sky is artificial, as is the light. This, as one critic has pointed out, gives the high words a dubious after-taste.⁹⁵

Klyucharyov is a bit of the way down the hole. When he gets back up he sees his wife on her way home to their son. He imagines how it would be, if he instead were to be ”separated from this darkening street where his wife now walks and where Denis is, such an enormous and good boy, and the dead Pavlov, and where it’s impossible to buy either a battery or a nail on the dark streets”(52). He directs a pointless, furious shout down into the subterranean world. His wife will stay with his son in the apartment.

If he wakes up and no-one is right there, Denis cries out; he has a simple nature [soul], he’ll open a window looking out on the street and call in a crying voice, ’Mama! Mama!...’ a gift to anyone who loves profit and easy pickings. An empty, desolate street. A child’s cry – what could be easier! (52).

The subterranean world and the world on the surface are both, in their own ways, the realms of death and the realms of life. On the surface is the destructive crowd, dead streets, windows like dead glass-eyes. But this surface world also contains life. Here the grass is green and the air fresh. Here Klyucharyov sees, when he at one point emerges from the black earth, a ”glimpse of the bright sky”(24), the only real light to appear in the entire story. Here Olya is pregnant, here is family and the friends, and his concern for them. Even “the dead Pavlov” can be seen as a sign of life – it is a matter of affection and fulfilment of duty that ties one to life and place. On the empty and threatening street Klyucharyov thinks to himself: ”And this is life...”(9).

Yet, when Klyucharyov has forced his way down to the discussing representatives of the intelligentsia in his second visit to the subterranean world, his feelings are described as follows:

Klyucharyov, who felt numb (dead) on those desolate streets where the only active energy was the thief who sat on his victim and rummaged in his pockets – the numb Klyucharyov feels the presence of words. Like a fish landing in water again, he revives. (70)

⁹⁵ P. Vail, *Nezavisimaya gazeta* 25.07.91.

Once again, we find death above and life below. At the same time, however, the author demonstrates how words below do not tally with actions. Around the table the discussion is of Dostoevsky and the refusal to accept a fortune that is built on others' misfortune. But Klyucharyov, who has just forced his way through *laz* with "unbearable pain," has been completely forgotten by these glad companions (67). The contraption, the ladder-stairway (68) he needed to get down from the hole has been moved to make place for more tables; as a result, he almost falls to his death. These "sublime [high] words," like others – about a community between the people in the two worlds, about their common misfortune if "the mob [crowd] will [should] completely lose its mind"(72) – are brought into question here and in the novella's resolution.

The man who talks about community between the two worlds spits blood, sickened by the lack of air – "The blood's not from his body but from his throat"(71) – in contrast to Klyucharyov. On his way back Klyucharyov stops, once again, in the wine cellar, caught up in the conversation. In this section, which takes up a little more than a page, the phrase "they talk" occurs five times, of which four are anaphor in a paragraph. The paragraph that immediately precedes Klyucharyov's difficult passage up through the *laz* consists of this phrase alone, as the conclusion of the story's account of the subterranean world's discussion (86, 87). This further diminishes the reader's faith in the underworldly intelligentsia's discussions and words.

At the same time, nonetheless, the description seems to express respect for the speakers:

They talk sincerely and with pain . . . Their sublime [high] words are vague and not very convincing, but they're spoken with the hope that even approximately true sincere words will expand the soul (the gap [laz] in our soul), and the pain expelled from within will speak in words that are new. . . . And will the mob [crowd] become good? . . . [Klyucharyov] feels connected to their words, they are dear to him. But man is finite. Man is mortal.(87)

Here, the word is contrasted to human mortality, as opposed to earlier statements that seem, rather, to posit the ability of the word to confer immortality on mortals.

Renewal as Rebirth

When Klyucharyov leaves the speakers in the subterranean world the story has just over six pages left. The last, painful, forced passage through the *laz* has

associations to both birth, death and intercourse. Once up on the surface, Klyucharyov goes homewards, to the apartment in the five-story house, built during the Khrushchev era, a *chrushchevka* – an emblematic late-Soviet home. He discovers that a cave he built, as a survival project, has been destroyed. Next to the cave hangs a killed crow – that is how it goes when you build something of your own, it says (89).

Well, he thinks, from biology and hatred they've progressed to concrete signs one can understand. This is already a sign. It's already the beginning of a dialogue. (Signs and gestures are followed by words – isn't that right?) . . . He's tired but he won't complain; that's the way he is. (90)

In his exhaustion he sits down very close to his home, falls asleep and dreams a short dream: The *laz* has closed itself. Through the little hole which remains he shouts down information about the misfortunes of the upper world (90). He shouts that the approaching dark is destroying the individual, that even thugs and thieves are afraid on the streets. He shouts about Denis, about starvation, about dark curtains in front of the windows. The people in the subterranean world have computers and can decode the information. They usually ask for all the information they can get, and from below comes the call: "Speak! Speak!" (91). Klyucharyov lets down a thin cord to them, and feels them fastening something to it. He expects a text, but "there's not a single word in reply" (92). Instead of "a reply directed to his soul," however, he would be able to content himself with sausage links. But finally he understands what it is he is pulling up, by the thousands:

canes for the blind. When total dark falls, you can keep on walking, tapping the sidewalk with your cane. This is their answer. . . . A terrible dream, and unjust, in Klyucharyov's view, in its real lack of trust in reason. (93)

A good man in the twilight. (So few and so many.) [So little and so much.] He had woken Klyucharyov, this passer-by . . . 'Why have you fallen asleep? A simple voice. 'You shouldn't sleep on the street.' Still somewhat sleepy, Klyucharyov looks up. A man stands there. Middle-aged, with rather long hair that falls loosely, almost to his shoulders. . . . 'Get up,' he repeats just as firmly, with a calm and patient smile. . . . Klyucharyov rises. 'Yes,' he says, stretching. 'It's gotten so dark.' 'But it's not night yet,' the man says . . . The man is still standing in the same place, and only as Klyucharyov begins to walk away does his figure in turn ever so slowly dissolve (though not completely) in the twilight. (93, 94).

These are the last words of the story.

The sudden appearance of this Christ-like figure can, among other things, be contrasted to the section about the subterranean intelligentsia's hope that sincere words can open a painful and renewing passage/*laz* in our souls, which is followed by Klyucharyov's objection that humans are mortal (87). The sleeping Klyucharyov is awoken by Christ, who also termed Lazarus's death as sleep, and awoke him, saying "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, shall live, even if he dies."⁹⁶ If one likes, one can point to the phonetic relation between the title of the story, and the name Lazarus in Russian – *Laz* and Lazar.

Both the conclusion of the story, and Klyucharyov's passages through the *laz*, especially the last, painful forcing through to the surface, where it is said that it is perhaps he who holds the connection open with his crawling (89), are symbols for this passage in the soul, as in social consciousness. The fact that Klyucharyov in the end of *Escape Hatch* can be seen as the bearer of the possibility of renewal, in the form of rebirth traditional for Russian culture, has to do with his role as mediator between the worlds.

The story is permeated with mythical patterns and allusions. One critic has pointed out that the figure of the mediator Klyucharyov is reminiscent of the mythical "culture hero" who brings fire and work-tools to the human world, on the surface.⁹⁷ Klyucharyov does in fact bring with him, from his visits to the subterranean world, a shovel, crowbar, pickaxe, material [cloth], tea, batteries, candles, and a kerosene stove.

Chaos rules in the surface world – mythical signs of chaos include the darkness and half-darkness, as well as the emptiness and silence, all phenomena which are mentioned again and again. Another sign of chaos is the fact that time stands still, both on the surface and in the subterranean world. All the events in the surface world take place in an unchanging half-darkness. It is twilight all the time, the light is failing – sometimes, it is added, "quickly". The phrase "It's not night yet," spoken by "Christ" at the end of the story, recurs. Disturbance in the transition between night and day is an eschatological motif. The ordering of the world from chaos to cosmos involves, among other things, the culture hero's institution of periods of time and means of reckoning time.

The "rebirth" of Klyucharyov at the end of the novella results in the time

⁹⁶ *The Bible*, Joh. 11:11, 25.

⁹⁷ P. Vail, *Nezavisimaya gazeta* 25.07.91.

starting to pass. When he is awoken we receive, for the first time, exact information on time: “He had slept for four or five minutes” (93). The immobility of time can also be seen as symbolizing the Russian word *bezvremenyie* (difficult times, stagnation) in its literal meaning of “no time”. The word is used when Klyucharyov thinks about how reluctant he is to journey out and bury Pavlov “in these difficult times” (29). In this way you can link the hero’s mythical role as the starter of time with a social role as the overcomer of crisis.

Conclusion

Escape Hatch shows us the subterranean world’s emptily talking intelligentsia, isolated from the reality of the surface world, on the one hand; and, on the other, the main character Viktor Klyucharyov, also a representative of the intelligentsia, whose actions affect the entire world order. When he wakes/is reborn time starts again, the *bezvremenyie*/crisis can begin to be overcome. He lives up to his given name, Viktor (from the Latin *victor*). This is reminiscent of a pattern we find in Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s article of 1974, “The Smatterers,” as well as in articles of the 1990s debate. On the one side we are shown “the semi-educated estate – the ‘smatterers,’” often termed just “the intelligentsia,” who are a collection of empty and nihilistic chatterers. On the other, we are presented with “the nucleus of the intelligentsia” as the equivalent of “the nucleus of goodness.” The “smatterers” have brought Russia to its ruin, “the nucleus of the intelligentsia” is the only hope for its salvation.⁹⁸ The difference lies in the way of answering the question, “who is to blame?” Solzhenitsyn prioritises the intelligentsia, while Makanin focuses on the people/the masses.

Here the pendulum has swung fully between demonisation and idealization. But the two have in common the incredibly high evaluation of the importance of the intelligentsia. The elitism, which is often hidden in the arguments based on this ideological kernel, is obvious in Makanin, especially in his essay “Kvazi.” Ortega y Gasset can be included in this context; the Spanish philosopher was important not only to Makanin in the Russian debate of the 1990s.

In 2000 a large conference was held in St. Petersburg on the Russian intelligentsia. In one of the contributions, the concept of “intelligentsia” was declared to be an “ideologem,” meaning that those who have the power to include

⁹⁸ A. Solzhenitsyn, *From Under the Rubble*, pp. 229-278, 242, 271.

themselves among "the intelligentsia" are those who have the power to express themselves with authority in the public sphere. To search for a "scientific" definition of the intelligentsia was equivalent, according to this contribution, to searching for an absent black cat in a black room. And, of course, someone (defined as member of the intelligentsia) will find this absent cat and give instructions about its place in the room.⁹⁹

There is, in short, a certain circularity in the debate on the intelligentsia. It is a matter, after all, of a group that seeks to describe itself, even if some in the heat of polemic set themselves up as outsiders. The literary critic Natalya Ivanova has spoken of an intelligentsia that sought a new identity but ended up on the same old rails, unable to find a way out.¹⁰⁰ In this article, we have looked at different ways of dealing with this problem, which is a part of the identity crisis of post-Soviet Russian society.

The connection between the problem of renewal and the Russian intelligentsia's crisis during the 1990s can be illuminated by the following "post-modern" comment. Viktor Yerofeyev's *Encyclopaedia of the Russian Soul* of 1999 delivers a number of hard blows to the national Russian myths. He writes, with irony, that Westernisation has castrated the Russian element. The autocracy, by contrast, sustains Russianness. Russians should not be too educated and should not be allowed to go abroad. "In that case new Belinskys will appear. Romantic underground. The Natural School. The intelligentsia will revive again. Everything will start functioning. Empty stores – full refrigerators. Life will be heavenly."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ E. Sokolov, *Fenomen rossiyskoy intelligentsii*, pp. 166, 167.

¹⁰⁰ At the VI ICCEES World Congress. Tampere 2000. This going in circles can be seen as symbolized by a number of circular definitions of the intelligentsia in the debate of the 1990s.

¹⁰¹ V. Yerofeyev, *Entsiklopediya russkoy dushi* (Moscow 1999), p. 57.

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Translated by Madeleine Hurd

The Intelligentsia Debate in Post-Soviet Russia

Abstract

IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA *intelligentovedenie*, "Intellegentsia Studies", is an academic discipline in its own right. At the universities in Ivanovo and Yekaterinburg there are special research centres for the study of the Russian intelligentsia, which were founded in 1992 and 1994 respectively (a time when the interest in the intelligentsia was at its height). In Novosibirsk, Omsk and Kemerovo there are groups of scholars dealing with the issue, and in St. Petersburg such a group is being established. Both centres have arranged annual conferences since they started. There was also, for example, a large conference in St. Petersburg in 2000, with participants mainly from the universities and other institutions of higher education in the city. Evidently, institutionalised intelligentsia research is a concern of the provincial universities. It is above all historians who are *intelligentovedy*.

This discipline in itself is an expression of the great interest in the role of the intelligentsia in Russian culture, today and in the past. During the early 1990s it was the main issue in the cultural debate, in different media, not least in the thick journals – which is not surprising in view of the fact that the reading of them has actually been part of the definition of the intelligentsia (definitions which are, as is commonly known, legion). At a time of change and crisis, in the "Russian search for a path", the theme of the intelligentsia's role became acute once again, as in earlier historical periods.

Explanations of the background of this phenomenon usually includes, firstly, discussions about Russia as "the first country in the third world", the problem of modernisation/westernisation, and the intelligentsia as its agent. Secondly, such an explanation usually includes the problem of finding an agent of renewal in a society that has been subject to censorship and governed from the top, which has prevented the development of independent forces. The intelligentsia is expected to be the leading force to find a way out of the crisis and to bring about renewal.

The strong feelings evoked in this context cause the public discussion to be dominated by apologies on the one hand, and bitter accusations on the other, perhaps particularly the latter. Yet another explanation of the background to this debate refers to the abolishment of censorship and the Soviet system as a problem for the intelligentsia. This problem has been formulated by the author Nina Sadur in the following way: “Our most important discovery was that we lack the depth that the Soviet state allegedly suppressed in us.” Few people speak about the advantage of freedom in this debate.

These are rational and perfectly plausible historical, social and psychological explanations of the debate about the intelligentsia. Still, the very proportions of the debate, and some of its expressions, give the impression that there is an “untranslatable remainder” of the “intelligentsia” as a “cultural construction” that is characteristic of Russian society. This paper investigates problematic manifestations of the debate.

“Intelligentovedenie”

In order to get a grasp of the wide debate on the Intelligentsia in post-Soviet Russia, I will mainly focus on the very concept of the “Intelligentsia”.

In the debate on the Intelligentsia, there are all kinds of voices, even ironical ones. Alexander Ageyev writes in *Znamya* in the year 2000, that, even five years ago, it had become boring to hear about the Russian Intelligentsia (No 3, p 193). At that time, after the events of October 1993, when President Yeltsin dissolved the Parliament, he writes, “the Intelligentsia was feverishly discussing itself, the beloved one, that nobody likes, nobody appreciates and listens to”. He writes that the debate came to an end in 1995, but all the same he can’t drop the subject which, as he writes himself, after all belongs to the “eternal ones”. In fact, around the year 2000 many articles are still being written and large conferences held in Russia on the Russian Intelligentsia, this despite the assertion of most writers that it no longer exists. The discussion reached its most intense phase during the first half of the nineties, when the role and characteristics of the Intelligentsia was one of the main topics in the cultural debate. The special role this theme plays in the Russian culture is further illustrated by ‘*intelligenovedenie*’ (Intelligentsia Studies) being an academic discipline in Russia, a term one may also use about the preoccupation with the Intelligentsia outside the universities.

All of the above shows a kind of enchantment with the theme that sometimes

also is expressed in what in a literal translation from Russian is called “enchanted circles”, that is arguing in circles. These can be said to shape elements of the Intelligentsia’s search for identity, together with the common search for a national identity in the post-Soviet era. The Intelligentsia is looking for a new identity and role, but has difficulties in leaving the old circles.

The abolition of censorship, general elections and on the whole more pluralism in society tend to challenge the old position and self-perception of the Intelligentsia at the same time as the conditions of life for many people are deteriorating.

This arguing in circles is connected with the fact that the very core of the debate, the definition of the Intelligentsia, is so vague. This vagueness fulfils important functions in the debate. As all of you here are aware, the definition oscillates between social, historical, ideological and moral criteria. In articles on the Intelligentsia in the nineties, as well as previously in history, it is very common to focus on the very concept itself, record its historical evolution and so on. When it comes to the spontaneous, uncommented use of the concept the “Intelligentsia”, it is frequently filled with a constantly changing content without this being expressed explicitly.

An important aspect of the use of the concept is that the very definition is value-laden by the moral demands that often are made on members of the Intelligentsia. In this connection we encounter expressions like the “real” or “genuine” Intelligentsia, the “core” of the Intelligentsia. Those who are singled out as persons who do not live up to those moral demands, are refused membership of the Intelligentsia. They can instead be referred to as belonging to the negatively defined concepts “semi-Intelligentsia” or Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *obrazovanscina* (the smattereres). Typical of many instances is the statement of Academician, Dmitry Likhachev, in an article in *Novyj mir* 1993 (No 2). He can claim only positive characteristics of the Russian Intelligentsia, because those who diverge from them are considered as “semi-Intelligentsia”. In that way, an arguing in circles arises – what should be proved is already an integral part of the conditions. Similar circles, but with bad characteristics, are often constructed by writers who belong to the strong line of tradition of abuse of the Intelligentsia for its many deficiencies and shortcomings. This line of tradition is represented by the influential anthology *Vekhi/Landmarks* from 1909. This line claims the Intelligentsia’s guilt for the disasters of the country. This is the reverse side of the high appraisal of the Intelligentsia and its importance for “Russia’s destiny”.

Calling oneself a member of the Intelligentsia is the same thing as rewarding oneself a medal, as Nataliya Ivanova expresses it in *Znamya* 1993 (No 11, p 173). This is an ironical exaggeration of the most traditional opinion. The debate is in that way, among other things, a game of inclusion and exclusion, of a division between “us” and “them”. These accentuations are made both within the layer of intellectuals and in relation to the population as a whole – in relation to the “People” to use a concept that is as much semantically overloaded as the “Intelligentsia”. Externally and above all to the West, the Other against which Russia has measured itself through history, many writers assert the unique characteristics of the Russian Intelligentsia as compared to intellectuals of the West, such as spirituality versus materialism, idealism versus market adaptation. Many contributions are marked by social and cultural frustration evoked by the transformation of society. This frustration is expressed, among other things, in descriptions of the new reality and the position of the Intelligentsia as pure misery. Comparisons with intellectuals in the West can be related to expressions of a general national frustration after the demise of the Soviet Union.

With this, we have reached another important aspect of the concept the “Intelligentsia”, apart from it being value-laden, namely that it is a unitary concept in the singular, as compared to the concept “intellectuals” (though, even the definition of the concept “intellectuals” has been discussed with similar complications). As difficult as it seems to be to leave the theme the “Intelligentsia”, it appears to be to stop treating the concept as a unity. Many writers assert the manifoldness and complexity of the Intelligentsia when they take up the topic in explicit discussions, although this in general remains lip service – in the uncommented use of the term they relapse into the traditional treatment of the Intelligentsia as a unity.

The sociologists Lev Gudkov and Boris Dubin published in 1995 a collection of articles – *The Intelligentsia. Remarks on literary and political illusions*. It was regarded by many non-traditionalists as a watershed in the debate. The two sociologists express a critical opinion that the “Intelligentsia” has a predilection for “total, ‘objective’ concepts, the extent of which depends on great pretensions, such as ‘the nation’, ‘the people’, ‘the West’, ‘Russia’, ‘the culture’ and so on. They don’t mention the concept “the Intelligentsia” in this context. But even this is such an undifferentiated unit of thought that is contributing to making the discussions too general and simplistic.

The debate is thus characterised by the vagueness of the central concept, its

positive or negative value, a tendency of a division between “us” and “them”, as well as of thinking in terms of totalities instead of various currents and groups. There is an abundance of characterisations of the Intelligentsia as a whole – which sometimes create circular arguments. There is a lack of pluralism in the character of the debate, even if it is pluralistic in the sense that various opinions can be put forward. Some contributions to the debate claim that, paradoxically, it is the increase of pluralism and freedom of speech in the new society that has dethroned the Intelligentsia. That there indeed exists a dethronement is something broadly agreed upon.

The ideological position of the Intelligentsia in the old Russian society, both in the Soviet one and the Russia of the tsars, was based on the triad “the Intelligentsia”, “the People” and “the Power”. The role of the Intelligentsia was that of an “educator” of the people, its “conscience”, and as an intermediary between the people and the power. Even today one can see the Intelligentsia spoken of as representatives of the People – obviously self-selected ones! Gudkov and Dubin state that the still existing claim to superiority as “educator of the people” – what they call the “intellectual paternalism” of the Intelligentsia – is less and less acknowledged by the population (p 102). Ageyev makes the ironic statement that the people now for the first time want to suffer hardships without intermediaries. The chief editor of *Znamya* Sergey Chuprinin writes that writers and critics no longer are given a special place in the space between the people and the power, but on two-three pages between the sports news and the dietician’s advice column in the new weekly magazines with glossy covers (*Voprosy literatury* 6/96, p 16).

Even liberals can turn out to have difficulties in leaving the elitism represented by the triad. I shall give a small example of this, which has its origin in the perestroika debate, when the belief in democratic reforms among liberals still was much stronger than later on. The example concerns the character *Sharikov* in Mikhail Bulgakov’s *The Heart of a Dog*. *Sharikov* was a catchword in the perestroika debate. Even today the name is used to conjure up a world of concepts common to different currents of the Intelligentsia.

Bulgakov’s novella was written in 1925 and first published in Russia in 1987. Through an operation Professor Preobrazhensky transforms the charming dog Sharik to the repulsive man Sharikov. He was a dog with “good judgement” looking up to the professor and becomes a man whose first words are swearwords and then words from the Bolshevich lexicon, a man who calls the professor “comrade” and demands “share and share alike”. He shows a taste for low culture,

dresses in a vulgar and gaudy manner, and then wears the proletarian attribute a peaked cap and, finally, leather jacket, the emblem of the Communist exercise of power in the 1920's. He is disobedient, addicted to drink, violent and inclined to rape. His choice of name and patronymic, Poligraf Poligrafoovich, upsets the professor – the ability to read and write is obviously not worthwhile for such a person. Eventually the professor again operates on him returning him back to a dog.

Sharikov has become a common concept, but I shall anyway mention two concrete interpretations. The writer Vladimir Makanin claimed in two articles in 1992–93 that the emergence of the “mass man”, “the average man” and the continuing levelling of society have been the main event of the 20:th century. He describes Russia as lagging 30-40 years behind the rest of Europe, not when it comes to democratic institutions but with regard to this process of levelling of society (“Kvazi”, *Novyi mir* 7/93, p 126,131). Much of the argument is drawn from the then actual Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, among other things the statement that intellectuals, in contrast to the masses, belong to homo sapiens (p134). y Gasset is also depicted in the text as a noble fighter against the masses. Concerning Sharikov, Makanin explains that Soviet power was constituted by “the integrated will of levelled sharikovs” – that the masses created Lenin and Stalin (“Sjuzhet urednenija”, *Znamya* 1/92, p 121, “Kvazi”, *Novyi mir* 7/93, p 131).

The other interpretation is found in a *samizdat* article from 1972 written by the former camp prisoner and liberal Grigory Pomerants. He interprets the message of *The Heart of a Dog* as follows: “the people are good as long as they remain immobile, not dragged into history, as long as they remain a patriarchal Sharik. A people, which have been excited and involved in revolution, lose their soul, become a ‘mass’, clay in the hands of ‘devils’ (*Neopublikovannoe* 1972,p 153-154). For Pomerants the “people” and the “mass” are different concepts, in contrast to Makanin. The variant of Pomerants is more widespread in the Russian intellectual tradition. His interpretation has far-reaching implications. A people “dragged into history” are reasonably also a people with civil rights and freedoms and, not least, a people with the ability to read and write. When *The Heart of a Dog* after a 62 years ban, was finally published in Russia the story was greeted with enthusiasm in broad circles of the Intelligentsia. It was regarded by many as the truth of the Soviet power that finally was allowed to be expressed. However, one should not ignore the fact that Sharikov, as a symbol, is on the whole directed against the idea of a people representing itself.

How does Sharikov then function as a symbol today, for a writer working in

the media of the new era? Vladimir Tuchkov raises this issue in an article 1998 published in the net periodical *Russkij Zhurnal*, a periodical for intellectuals, N.B. not for the Intelligentsia. He writes that the old liberal didactic literature is dead. “The questions it asked in its time and the answers it found today sound like Chinese spoken at a patriotic meeting. It is understandable that the readers once enjoyed insinuations that the second secretary of the party’s town committee was an idiot and that Sharikov personified the revolutionary class. But how shall one today apply this knowledge, which had been obtained through blood and sweat in battles with censors and editors?” About the Intelligentsia Tuchkov writes: “What the ‘Intelligentsia’ is now, at the end of the twentieth century is a question hardly anyone of the even wisest men of the world can give an answer to. /- - / Today the situation in society is of a kind where the struggle between representatives of the ‘Intelligentsia’ and the ‘Anti-intelligentsia’ is something that can’t be of any interest to anyone.”

According to Tuchkov, the situation mentioned means that a horizontal society has arisen where peoples’ interests have been spread like oil on water and where only the criminal code decides what is up and what is down. A situation like that would undeniably be in contrast to the old role of the Intelligentsia, which contained clear pretensions to decide what is up and what is down.

If Tuchkov’s article is a continuation of the debate on the Intelligentsia or if it implies a new discourse – that’s something maybe this audience can help me to decide.

Rysk intelligentsiadebatt i skärningspunkten mellan nytt och gammalt

DET POSTSOVJETISKA RYSSLAND finns *intelligentovedenie*, ”intelligentsiaforskning”, som akademisk disciplin. Det är ett av uttrycken för det stora intresse för intelligentsians roll som finns och funnits i den ryska kulturen. Under början av 1990-talet var detta tema ett av huvudämnena i kulturdebatten i olika media. I en brytnings- och kristid, i det ryska ”sökandet efter en väg”, blev åter temat intelligentsians roll det mest akuta, såsom skett tidigare i historien. Debatten fortsätter. Dess stora omfattning i texter och tid vittnar om en sida av det ”moderniseringens trauma” som med ett uttryck från ryska sociologer präglar landet.

Omkring år 2000 skrivs fortfarande många artiklar och hålls stora konferenser i Ryssland om den ryska intelligentsian. Jag har deltagit i två sådana konferenser – i uralstäderna Jekaterinburg och Perm, våren 2001 och hösten 2002. Båda konferenserna var organiserade av Jekaterinburguniversitetets forskningscentrum ”1900-talet i den ryska intelligentsians historia”, forskare från hela landet deltog. Sådan institutionaliserad intelligentsiaforskning finns också vid andra provinsuniversitet.

Sådana här konferenser ordnas regelbundet, och de är i allmänhet tillägnade minnet av någon historiskt händelse. Hösten 2002 var det 80-årsminnet av den så kallade filosofiska ångbåten år 1922, det vill säga den båt med vilken bolsjevikerna lät deportera ett par hundra framstående intellektuella till Västeuropa. En del av konferensen upptogs av tolkningar av denna händelse och information om arkivmaterial som blivit tillgängligt under postsovjetsk tid. Också i andra föredrag behandlades sovjetregimens repressiva politik och dess följder, vilket gör dessa konferenser till viktiga fora idag när samhällsdebatten i övrigt tar upp detta tema i minskande omfattning.

Denna tendens underströks av att konferensens centrala inslag var ett besök

på ”Perm-36”, ett sovjetiskt arbetsläger för politiska fångar som gjorts om till museum (det enda i sitt slag i landet). Detta har den dubbla målsättningen att hålla minnet av sovjetregimens förföljelser levande och att verka för ett demokratiskt samhälle idag, densamma som Memorial, den organisation som startade museet. Museet har finansiellt stöd bland annat från Permregionens myndigheter. Till de mest intressanta inslagen i dess folkbildningsarbete hör att det får besök av rader av skolklasser och att många elever sedan med inspiration därifrån deltar i Memorials riksomfattande uppsatstävlingar på samtidshistoriska teman.

Så långt om konferensens behandling av det sovjetiska förflutna. Dess avslutande debatt berörde dagens förhållanden under den traditionella rubriken ”Intelligentsian och makten”. Denna rubrik har levt upp igen tillsammans med hela debatten om intelligentsians roll, som var mycket aktuell också i början av 1900-talet, före den sjuttioåriga nedfrysningen under sovjetregimen. En del av bakgrunden idag är beskyllningar mot intelligentsian för negativism och opposition till varje pris, medan den med en mer avvägd attityd skulle kunna vara viktig för vidareutvecklingen av ett civilt samhälle i Ryssland. Det handlar också om att ”återupprätta” intelligentsians prestige och status i samhället – den enda punkt som det råder enighet om bland alla de många åsiktsriktningarna är att det skett en ”detronisering” av den ryska intelligentsian efter 1991. De flesta ser detta med beklagande; många betraktar det rentav som kulturens undergång, ett av uttrycken för den frustration det postsovjetiska samhället skapat. Andra välkomnar tvärtom denna ”upplösning av intelligentsiamyten” och betraktar den ryska intelligentsian i traditionell mening som oskiljaktig från ett diktatoriskt och hierarkiskt samhälle. ”Intelligentsian” brukar då sättas i motsättning till de ”intellektuella” som en företeelse typisk för västvärlden med dess yttrandefrihet, individualism och politiska demokrati. Traditionalister gör däremot jämförelser till de västliga intellektuellas nackdel – de saknar den moral, idealism och offervillighet som de anser utmärka den ryska intelligentsian.

Konferensdebatten med dess underliggande tankemönster och förväntningar uttryckte mycket som är typiskt för den ryska intelligentsiadebatten i dess helhet. Denna präglas av två grundläggande drag. Det gäller dels behandlingen av intelligentsian som ett enhetligt begrepp. Dels handlar det om den därmed sammanhängande oklara definitionen av ”intelligentsian”. Termen fylls med ett innehåll som oftast outtalat bestäms omväxlande av sociala, historiska, åsiktsmässiga och moraliska kriterier. Den kan beteckna hela det utbildade skiktet, regimkritikerna, kulturarbetarna, de som inte ljuger, mjölkerskan eller bonden men inte profes-

sorn utifrån på olika sätt beskrivna idealiska egenskaper. Bolsjevikledare kan beskrivas som typiska företrädare för intelligentsian respektive som "överlöpare från intelligentsian". För att ta ett fåtal exempel. Det är inte ovanligt att en och samma text fyller ordet "intelligentsian" med ständigt växlande innehåll. Både synen på intelligentsian som en enhet och den oklara definitionen fyller viktiga funktioner i debatten.

I ett enhetsparadigm står "intelligentsian" traditionellt mot två andra stora och obestämda enheter, nämligen "folket" och "makten". Denna triad formulerades under 1800-talet i ett samhälle utan medborgerliga rättigheter, där den överväldigande majoriteten av befolkningen var analfabeter. Här har intelligentsian rollen som uppfostrare av folket, som mediator mellan folket och makten, som folkets "representant" och "advokat" i förhållande till makten. Kort sagt rollen som ett slags ställföreträdare för ett frånvarande civilt samhälle. Detta enhetsparadigm och med den förbundna föreställningar gäller fortfarande för många av dagens debattörer, och det lever vidare till synes oberörbart av de många rationella motargument som anförs. Dessa föreställningar levde upp igen under senare delen av sovjetepoken efter Stalintidens utplåning av någon som helst självständig roll. Också i sen sovjettid behövdes en ställföreträdare för det frånvarande civila samhället, även om befolkningens utbildningsnivå genomgått en revolutionerande förändring jämfört med 1800-talet.

Den som hör hemma i enhetsparadigmat är främmande för politisk organisering i dagens partiväsen. När en debattör på konferensen föreslår en deklARATION "för intelligentsian", som bland annat skall uttrycka oro för de ökande auktoritära tendenserna i det ryska samhället, möts han av invändningen att det inte handlar om auktoritära tendenser utan om en nödvändig uppbyggnad av en "maktverktal". Detta använder jag senare i debatt med deklara-tionsanhängaren som argument mot tanken på intelligentsian som en enhet för gemensamt politiskt agerande. I stället vore det logiskt att gå ihop med andra skikt av befolkningen efter övertygelse i olika politiska, fackliga, ekologiska organisationer. Som svar anför han partiernas svaghet och att den som inte vill ha demokrati (alltså inte är överens med honom) inte kan räknas till intelligentsian.

Det sistnämnda argumentet är det viktigaste, och det ligger i intelligentsiadebattens själva hjärtpunkt. Det visar ett slags totalitarism i en debatt som är pluralistisk i så måtto att olika åsikter får framföras. Detta är typiskt om också inte allena-rådande. Enhetstänkandet och den obestämda definitionen samverkar till att göra intelligentsiabegreppet till ett instrument för uppdelning i "vi" och "dem".

Om det sågs som normalt att intelligentsian bestod av olika åsiktsriktningar, vilket den gör om man väljer sociala kriterier för "medlemskap", så skulle begreppet vara mindre användbart för sådan inkludering och exkludering. Moraliska kriterier framhövs särskilt. På konferensen skämtades det om att moraliska krav ledde till att de som kunde räknas till intelligentsian blev färre än intelligentsiaforskarna. Men moraliska krav är oundvikliga så som begreppet "intelligentsian" används. Även den som säger sig vara anhängare av strikt sociala kriterier för tillhörighet till intelligentsian hamnar förr eller senare i dem. Resonemang om vem som tillhör intelligentsian och vem som inte gör det tar överhuvudtaget påfallande stor plats i debatten.

Intelligentsiadebatten som helhet uttryckte när den var som mest intensiv en plågsam kamp för en identitet och en roll i den nya postsovjjetiska verkligheten. Att debatten visar sig vara så svår att lämna hänger ihop med dess rötter i ett anorlunda organiserat samhälle som fortfarande lever ideologiskt. Intelligentsian i sin traditionellt uppfattade ställning mellan folket och makten har krav på att vara nationens samvete, folkets föredöme och rättessnöre, dess "röst" inför makten. Men, som det också påpekats i den ryska debatten, idag har många röster möjlighet att göra sig hörda. "Folket" finns lika litet som en enhet som "intelligentsian", samtidigt som enhetsbegreppen envist lever vidare i debatten.

Å andra sidan betraktas intelligentsian av många som perestrojkans och demokratins tillskyndare och utvecklare. Detta då i en användning av termen som låter den omfatta bara liberalt inställda. Intelligentsian i denna mening ses av flertalet som avgörande för sovjetregimens fall, om också besvikelse på den i dess egenskap av demokratiförespråkare varit ett av 1990-talsdebattens ledande teman i rövarkapitalismens och imperieupplösningens spår.

Censurens avskaffande som perestrojkakampanjen resulterade i innebar en omvälvning som mot förväntan inte ledde till någon omedelbar kulturell blomstring. Ryska sociologer talar om gränserna för självförverkligande bland intellektuella som konstitutionell för sovjetkulturen. Vid sidan av de kontroverser detta gav upphov till fanns det en "våldets komfort" som gjorde att man kunde leva på sina potentiella möjligheter med hänvisning till att myndigheterna hindrade deras förverkligande. Detta ledde till ett av de problem som ligger under 1990-talets kulturdebatt. Författaren Nina Sadur har formulerat det ovanligt skoningslöst och självkritiskt: "Vår viktigaste upptäckt var att vi saknade det djup som sovjetstaten skulle ha förkvävt i oss."

Den omdiskuterade ryska intelligentsian förklaras av de flesta som numera

icke existerande. Om censuren återinfördes skulle den leva upp igen då, frågade jag en bekant intelligentsiaföreträdare, expert på den sovjetiska censuren. Mycket troligt. Ur den synvinkeln är ”intelligentsians död” alltså ingenting att beklaga.

Rysk kulturdebatt

under perestrojkan och den postsovjetiska perioden

DE ARTIKLAR som samlats i denna antologi har skrivits åren 2000–2003 inom ramen för forskningsprojektet *Media Societies Around the Baltic Sea* vid Södertörns högskola. De berör alla på olika sätt rysk kulturdebatt i olika medier under perestrojkan (1985–91) och den postsovjetiska perioden. Perestrojkadebatten och 90-talets postsovjetiska debatt skiljer sig starkt från varandra. 90-talet saknar målmedvetenheten och de klara politiska motsättningarna, det liberala lägrets kamp för ytt randefrihet och demokrati i tro på Ordets, den uttalade sanningens, läkande förmåga. Med ett citat anfört ur en liberal artikel 1991: ”Perestrojkan som började med en anti-alkoholkampanj har avslutats med en svår baksmälla.” Det postsovjetiska 90-talet är präglad av övergångens svårigheter, av identitetssökande som tar sig många olika uttryck. Ett av dessa uttryck är att den ryska intelligentsians roll och egenskaper blir ett av huvudämnen i debatten under den första hälften av decenniet. Det är denna debatt som fokuseras i antologins artiklar om den postsovjetiska perioden.