



DIXI

- Zygmunt Bauman p.1,4-5

Matter of the fact

- Konstantin Krylov p.2-3
- Boris Mezhuev p.3

What is the question

- Jacques Rancière p.6-7
- Andrey Gromov p.7
- Frank Furedi p.8
- Irina Dudenkova p.9

Problematic field

- Alexander Cockburn. . p.10-11
- Alexander Oslon. p.11
- John Gray. p.12
- Dmitry Bykov. p.13
- Brigitte Nacos. p.14-15
- Sergei Kara-Murza p.15

Special opinion

- Ella Paneyakh p.16-17

Position

- Corey Robin p.18-20
- Artemy Magun p.20

The fears of Ukraine

- Vladimir Nesterenko p.21
- Alexander Muchnik, Mikhail Baymuratov, Oleg Dolzhenkov p.22-23

Review

- Zygmunt Bauman "Modernity and the Holocaust" p.24

Zygmunt Bauman: IN THE GRIP OF IGNORANCE AND IMPOTENCE

RJ It is generally believed that modern society offers more opportunities for security. Yet the growth of communications within society have led to more vulnerabilities and the creation of new fears, which in turn have become a convenient tool of manipulation. Do mass fears such as these really rule the political, economic, and social lives of modern societies?

‘Information and communication technologies’ only help to spread fear and speed up their dissemination. These technologies are not necessary for fears to be born. There are plenty of ordinary, daily experiences to inspire and fuel fears of all kinds! In our multi-centred, one-sided globalized world governed by unruly and intractable markets, there are plenty of things to be afraid of. Simply planning one’s life is a daunting task, as the future is not just misty but infuriatingly beyond singular as well as collective control.



Zygmunt Bauman, eminent English sociologist, professor of the University of Leeds reflects on old and new fears.

We feel ignorant not knowing what the future may bring and impotent at the thought of repelling or pre-empting crushing blows even if we knew they were coming. **Ignorance and impotence jointly cause us to feel humiliated, denied dignity, unimportant, and abandoned to fate; we feel like we are just pawns in somebody else’s game.** But in whose game are we, and what, if any, are the rules?! Such expressions only exacerbate the horrors of our helplessness and hopelessness further. On top of all that, add the growing frailty of human bonds (i.e. the falling stability of families, partnerships, neighbourhoods, teams, etc.), and you will get more than enough reasons to feel frightened. Insomnia filled with nightmares tends to follow the days filled with (vain) efforts to stem the tide.

To be continued p. 4–5

Editor in Chief
Gleb Pavlovsky

Editorial Director
Alexander Pavlov

Editorial Office:
M. Gnezdnikovskiy per., 9/8, str. 3a
Moscow, 125009
Phone: (495) 629-8993
Fax: (495) 629-5297
e-mail: info@russ.ru

IN THE GRIP OF IGNORANCE AND IMPOTENCE

Zygmunt Bauman

DIXI

RJ *Fear is believed to be an exclusive feature of totalitarian societies. But are people in democracies really less fearful? How do fear and democracy relate to one another?*

The most prolific source of fear is uncertainty. Both totalitarian and democratic regimes promise freedom from uncertainty, and therefore from fear. But I don't think either of them have made good on their promise, though each seems to have failed for different reasons. Totalitarian regimes, owing to their regulated/administered economies, have traditionally relied on the production of artificial threats in order to present themselves to their subjects as bulwarks of security and happiness. Democratic regimes, having refused or being unable to constrain the threats to the existential conditions of their subjects generated by the unpredictable vagaries of free-markets, need increasingly to shift the fears of the population from this menace to their social standing and to genuine or putative dangers to their personal safety.

Both regimes, however, need their subjects to be afraid of something that overrides their capacity for individual self-defence in order to demonstrate the necessity and importance of the government and its security forces. It is no different from the police's reliance on our fear of burglars, rapists, or murderers to justify the necessity and importance of their existence and to appreciate their protec-

'Information and communication technologies' only help to spread fear and speed up their dissemination

tion. Were there no fears that we could not overcome independently or collectively, there would be no need for governments and their coercive powers.

RJ *Have modern mass fears transformed the nature of democracy (e.g. fear of terrorism, fear of financial collapse, fear of migrants)?*

Oh yes, they certainly have.

There are two values equally indispensable for a decent, satisfying, and



dignified life: security and freedom. Security without freedom equals slavery, whereas freedom without security means indescribable risks and unbearable uncertainty. Both values, I repeat, are indispensable — and yet they are practically impossible to balance in a fully satisfying way: the more you have of one, the more of the other you need to surrender. Each compromise between the two is bound to be a transient settlement or a temporary armistice, and on any occasion the pendulum may start to swing in the opposite direction. It may happen that **the freedom hard won by parents is willingly surrendered by their children who resent the risks that freedom cannot but intensify** and worry about the responsi-

bilities which life-in-freedom demands.

There are many signs at the moment that in many countries the pendulum is indeed, after several decades of neo-liberal deregulation, taking another turn — though not necessarily in the direction of more constraints on market forces. With governments playing down the threats emanating from deregulated financial and labour markets, popular opinion is turning its

attention to personal safety — threats to bodies, to health, and to property — and is becoming increasingly indifferent to the defence of broader individual freedoms. There now seems to be a growing willingness to embrace new measures, which until recently were seen as violating human privacy and dignity and as nefarious assaults of the state on individual autonomy. This tendency is of course rather menacing to democracy, but also more generally to the entire world. To illustrate this last point, I'll quote the entry of 30 October in my diary:

Today's papers bring another serving of mind-boggling, blood-curdling, and nerve-shattering news. Two unnamed Yemeni women mailed two brand-new varieties of 'highly sophisticated' weapons, this time so skilfully hidden in a computer printer and a printing cartridge that no sophisticated X-ray devices installed in any airport in the world could have spotted them. (How on earth they were nonetheless discovered and defused, the sources of the press release did not say; it is left to us, on the receiving end of the communication channel, to assume that the foiling of the shrewd plot can only be explained by the superhuman perceptiveness and unsleeping vigilance of the security agents, just as was the case with the discovery of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, various 'dirty bombs,' 'liquid bombs,' and other exquisitely murderous contraptions that have been added to the terrorists' arsenal.)

First commentaries concentrate on the possible impact of this dramatic announcement on the coming mid-term American elections. How will Obama react to the news? Will he play them down or up? I don't know the answers, and frankly am not particularly interested in guessing. Of one thing, though, I am certain. As today's *New York Times* chose to express it, 'The foiling of the package plot was a sobering reminder to officials around the world that quick response to timely intelligence rules the day.' (As if the officials needed be reminded, or for that matter, wished to be sobered up.)

There will be a spate of brand new security measures designed and promptly put in place, new spying techniques developed and supported by newly produced technical devices, and a 'new and improved' regime of airport checks and searches introduced. To pay for all and each of those measures, new commissions will fill the order books of security companies, while new holes will be burrowed in state budgets as well as in the funds earmarked to meet urgent social, cultural, and educational needs of nations around the world.

Two 'highly sophisticated' bombs have been intercepted. To seize the uncounted and uncountable numbers of their not-yet-produced replicas, millions of new 'yet more highly sophisticated' contraptions and thou-

There are growing doubts whether under the present form of globalization 'democracy in one country' (or in a selected number of countries for that matter) is at all feasible or even conceivable

sands of their operators will be needed. As always, since the discovery of the self-beefing up escalation of security expenditures that is now proving to be the most seminal and lasting heritage of the cold war, the stables will be overhauled at a cost dwarfing the price of the horse(s) that bolted.

Not just the generals are prone to always fight the last victorious war, and the current 'war against terrorism' (I am sorry for adopting that oxymoron, for the lack of another publicly accepted name) is in some crucial and most seminal respects a repetition of the cold one. The combatants, the weapons, and the modes of military action have changed, but the strategy, logic, and above all **the in-built mechanism of exponential self-escalation (which was probably the precise expectation of Bin Laden's war plan) have remained the same.**

The permanent feature of cold-war battles was that they were never fought in the field. New weapons were produced on a steadily rising pace not in order to be used in action, but to render the weapons stocked by the enemy useless and force the enemy to replace them with new ones, forcing thereby one's own warehouses to be emptied and the suppliers to refill them. **The**

story repeats itself now. With every step probability grows that the ending will be also repeated. The cold war, remember, ended with one of the players in the rearmament game going impoverished and bankrupt — imploding rather than being exploded.

RJ *Is fear one of the most profitable commodities on the political market? Who exactly trades in fear and for what? Can or should this commodity be withdrawn?*

Looking from the governmental point of view, there is so little choice. What are the alternatives to use in the effort to gain legitimization? No responsible (let alone honest) government or opposition within sight of victory could ever make the type of promises that the electorate would be glad to

hear, and even more thrilled to see fulfilled. The government can't seriously promise security of employment, of old age, of savings, of a roof over everyone's head, or assistance in case of personal calamity, or a prompt health service to cover every need. Were it to do make such promises, not to mention try to implement them in practice, the country would be promptly deserted by all capital seeking (and easily finding) other places whose governments are more hospitable to their interests rather than the interests of their own citizens. Squeezed between the pressure of global forces on one side and the expectation of their electorate on the other, governments are in an unenviable dilemma. They can't meet the demands of both sides at the same time, at least not under the conditions of a fully-fledged democracy. They can invest hope of their own survival, meagre as such hope is, in forcing/cajoling/tempting their electorate into acceptance of more and more limitations on their political choices.

In short, **there are growing doubts whether under the present form of globalization 'democracy in one country' (or in a selected number of countries for that matter) is at all feasible or even**

conceivable.

RJ *It is obvious that each country has its own political fears. In some places, people are more afraid of terrorism, while in others they are more fearful of ostracism and political persecution for freedom of thought. Do you think that fear can become a factor in preventing the globalization of a state or society? Or, on the contrary, can fear be a factor that unites people?*

There are fears that unite (as, for instance, fear of a foreign invasion). Current fears, however, do not belong to that category. Current fears work to tear apart or explode nation-wide solidarity; they set regions, enterprises, interest groups, and individuals in a state of fierce and uncompromising rivalry. They devalue the idea of joining forces and marching step-in-step, while tempting everyone to pursue a strategy of 'every man for himself.' There is nothing to be won from sticking together, and everything to be gained from defeating and ruining the competition — or so, at least, seems to be the truth. But let me observe that rather than being the truth, it is but a Gordian knot or a vicious circle. It is a self-confirming view and a self-intensifying tendency: the more widely and uncompromisingly such a strategy is preferred (in deeds, if not in words), the more its alternatives grow thin, and the more difficult it becomes to escape its pressures and free oneself from its grip.

RJ *What mass fears will most likely characterize the next ten years?*

I am not a prophet, and it would be presumptuous on my part to pretend that knowledge of sociology makes my prognoses trustworthy. We can take an inventory of the future only posthumously, when it has already turned into past.

But I think that the re-marriage of power (that is, the ability to have things done) with politics (the ability to determine which things need to be done), both now separated if not already divorced (and the prime source of the present feelings of ignorance and impotence), is a task that will take more than ten years to be fulfilled. ■

Zygmunt Bauman was speaking with Yulia Netesova