

cy. This has resulted in a decrease of one's physical feeling of freedom. Undoubtedly, this all happened because people felt a rough, almost animalistic fear for their lives.

As to the fears related to migrants, which are quite popular nowadays in the West, these are fears of a different nature. They are often explained by the existence of so-called xenophobia, which is a falsity. For example, Swiss society has demonstrated its fear of migrants, but this society cannot be xenophobic in principle, because it consists of three communities that speak different languages. What exactly are the Swiss afraid of, then? They are afraid that some strangers may establish their own rules in their country - rules that are incompatible with Swiss democracy.

A prevailing sense of fear is characteristic for the Russian society, where people don't have much of anything, but they are terribly afraid of losing the little of what they still have. Such a society cannot be revolutionary. It is always conservative, even in cases when it seems to be revolutionary. In particular, the so-called desire for security is actually a desire to cease being afraid of something terrible, and there indeed are a lot of terrible things in Russia.

It is another matter that **everyone who offers protection, as is quite often discovered later, has really been the one who should have been feared.** In this respect it should be said that our society is full of distrust, not just fear. As a rule, Russians are afraid that the situation may become even worse. And this thought, 'What if they make the situation even worse?' is the underlying stream of thought in Russia.

One of the main fears tormenting today's Russian society is the fear of change, because in the past the changes that everyone wanted and expected eventually turned into such a nightmare that many people are still suffering from it even today. The problem here lies in the fact that such a fear, on the one hand, paralyzes society and renders any positive change impossible, while, on the other hand, it does not release the society from the need to undergo change.

Everyone who is afraid of a new perestroika today, or who hopes for a new perestroika, should think about this: 'Why did the perestroika under Gorbachev fail?' Those who want a new Perestroika should introduce one that will succeed. And those who are against it should offer a clearly understood alternative. What is actually happening? There is a lack of action.

Everyone actually understands that we live in a temporary structure, which does not allow for any development. But we will still be forced to make changes. The changes should take place at the structural level. For example, the change of personalities as such will not give us any positive results if we continue playing by the same rules that are in place today. ■

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MEDVEDEV AND THE FEAR OF BACKWARDNESS



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Our society is not held together on account of any shared fear but is rather imbued with fears of everything around suddenly collapsing or exploding. Such fears can not be perceived as a systemic stabilizing factor for any long period of time; such fears transform themselves all too quickly into a sense of despair, which in turn descends into a personal and then later a collective fearlessness or apathy. In the longer term, there develops a forgetfulness and a loss of any historic memory of traumatic experiences that otherwise might prevent a nation from committing the same mistakes all over again.

It remains true that a well-organized and developed industrial market economy is supported by fear. Being a social state, it is held together by a fear of financial crisis. Being a democratic state, it is supported by its fear of social collapse, of the catastrophe of fascism, etc. An authoritative state, on the other hand, is supported exclusively by a fear of repression.

The shortcoming of Russian society is the absence of those fears characteristic of democracy, as well as those fears that characterize authoritarian regimes. Our people are not afraid of repression, and they are not afraid of the advent of fascism or of the country's disintegration into violence.

The only fear that really held the country together in

the first decade of the twentieth century was a fear of terrorism and a fear of the external environment. The fear of terrorism was felt by ordinary people at a time when the elite was fearful of the events relating to the 'orange revolution,' and when they were apprehensive of the fate of leaders like Miloshević. This external fear was very significant and it played a positive role by enforcing the legitimacy of the state. Alongside its cohesive force, the fear of illegitimate violence made it possible in those 'zero years' to conduct some constructive activity. However, this fear of the external environment has evolved into a certain feeling of placidity in the current epoch of 'rebooted' relations with the West. At the same time there are now fewer self-sustaining fears available. As a result, many social problems have begun to resurface yet again.

Dmitry Medvedev has tried to replace all the old fears that the elites no longer have with one single fear: the fear of backwardness. He has commented at length on how bad it is to be leaders of an economically and socially backward country. He has tried and is still trying to play up this new fear. Hence the now prevalent impulse towards modernization. But will this impulse be enough? There are still no indications that the state apparatus is really worried about this future danger. ■