



The discussion that we began in one of the Yaroslavl Forum's newsletters about the mutual contempt, indifference and hate felt between the masses and the elites – has been met with pronounced lively feedback from subscribers to this publication. This topic is not declining in relevance; on the contrary, it appears that it is becoming more acute. In this issue, we return to this topic, giving the floor to Vsevolod Emelin, a renowned poet and a writer.

HATE STEMS FROM THE MIDDLE CLASS

Vsevolod Emelin

I am not a political scientist, but it seems to me that the current global alienation of the elites from the middle class is accompanied by an equally deep symbiosis, where the problems with those state institutions that are seemingly most hated (e.g. the police and various inspection-oriented bodies) are often resolved 'according to the rules of the underworld' and to the mutual benefit and satisfaction of the parties involved. Hate in this relation is mostly concentrated on external attributes: winkers, wristwatches. As for everything else... I think that there is actually more talk than walk occurring with respect to hate. As for discussions regarding the transformation of hate into something positive and negotiable, I do indeed hope that this will happen.

Undoubtedly, the dispossessed and the wretched are not enveloped by such hate. It seems to me that, in this sense, they have already come to terms with their wretchedness and, just like in the West, wretchedness ceases to be a purely economic phenomenon and, more often than not, it becomes something that is more a matter of free choice of each individual. The wretched have to deal with the authorities less often than other people, mainly because there is essentially nothing more that can be taken from them. At the same time, it is also true that young people still have not compromised themselves (on Moscow's Manezhnaya Square, for example)... There is also such a phenomenon as Islam and this is very real...

What can we say about the opposition in this case? The opposition has fell by the wayside a long time ago (to



be more precise, it was made to disappear from the political field). It has become more radical, without becoming more popular at the same time. People do not believe that the so-called opposition, in its current form, will actually represent their interests and manage to resolve their problems. There exists a figure of a protector (there are at least two figures – they go around, see into the problems, and issue orders). However, the faith in these protectors has all but faded. They have now been trying to protect something for ten years already, but they have ultimately not succeeded to protect anything.

Genuine hate stems from the middle class, which represents those who are robbed by the police and tax inspectors, whose cars are smashed into pulp by Lexuses with winkers. They feel their vulnerability and inferiority more acutely than others do. The artistic elite also belongs to the middle class, and the fact is that their freedom of self-expression is more and more often determined by the

'guys in uniform'. I hold to the belief that our elites do not have an actual foothold within the country, and they strive to find support from their colleagues abroad. Businessmen seek support from other businessmen, just as liberals do from other liberals, leftists do from others on the left, artists do from their fellow artists, etc. However, due to the fact that government authorities have recently started to become increasingly de-personalised, that hate is directed towards the system as a whole, rather to specific personalities.

As I have previously mentioned, I do not believe that hate is so extreme within our own society. At the same time, I do not see any particular passive resignation either. I would compare the current situation with the one we experienced in the 1970s, when society was dominated by cynicism, hopeless historical fatigue (because we had tried everything and it all turned out to be smoke and mirrors) and now again, we see a low percentage of youth among the general population. ■

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Vsevolod Emelin is a poet and a popular blogger who goes by the pseudonym *emelind*. He is the winner of the poetry nomination category in the poll 'The most important books of 2009', which was carried out by the portal Openspace.ru. Vsevolod Emelin has authored several poetry collections, including 'Outsider's songs' (2002), 'Grumblings' (2005) and 'Petitions' (2009). His style is characterised by an all-penetrating irony that targets modern media clichés, modern mass consciousness and the news.

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