

WHATEVER THE ELITES DO IS LAUGHABLE

Fedor Girenok



FEDOR GIRENOK is a philosopher in the Faculty of Philosophy at Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov. He has authored the following books: 'Pleasure to think differently' (2008), 'Autography of language and consciousness' (2010), 'Verbatim cartography. Pathology of the Russian mind' (1998), and 'Stalemate metaphysics' (1995)

The feeling of hatred exists within Russian society and it is progressing. This feeling is growing and pulsating, and it sometimes undergoes the process of senseless sublimation. I believe that there are new reasons in place today for its development, which can be explained by two things.

First of all, this is occurring due to powerlessness: people are realising that nothing actually depends on them and that there is nothing they can do. Secondly, hatred occurs when there is a rift between what the elite wants and plans to do, and the thoughts and needs of the masses, of the ordinary citizens, of the majority of people. It is an abrupt rift, **and all the efforts and programmes that are formulated by the elite simply give rise to hebephrenic laughter.**

But such a rift is not caused solely by the elite's misunderstanding of

the needs of a given society. One can put it even harsher – the true elite appears only when, apart from its private interest, it also understands the objective interests of the people that they live with. This is something that needs to be done. **As to our elite, I would say that it does not understand anything.** The words of the experts servicing the elite at first arouse contempt, and then trigger wild hatred.

And this hatred is caused primarily by the share of the elite, which is either insignificantly related to the authorities, or is not related to it at all. I think that very important changes are taking place in our country at present. And it is possible that these changes will require a new elite in the near future. In essence, if I perceive these processes correctly, a new elite is currently emerging and being consolidated in Russia. This prospective new elite has a different understanding about our internal and external policies and it can develop relations within the country, between ethnic groups, with the neighbouring states in the CIS, and with other foreign countries in a different way. It is also capable of establishing entirely new tasks.

And now everything needs to be ridiculed; nothing should be taken seriously. Whatever they do in regards to the militia or to the police, as of March 1, an illegal gambling business will still be exposed within the Moscow region... **These are the telltale signs that the current elite has fully discredited themselves. Even in the case that the elite suggests really fool-proof ideas, they will still be rejected on the emotional level.** This rejection by society of what is suggested by the elite can hardly be viewed as a sign of de-politicisation. On the contrary, I am afraid that some social layers are becoming radically politicised. I do not know when the new elite will come to the forefront, but it will be totally unexpected by quite a lot of people. Right now it is rather early to predict whether the change

process involving the elite will be something similar to what is currently taking place in the Middle East. I think that the current regime in Russia will undergo a radical change and that the existing elite will lose its grip on the society in the coming years.

In principle, if we speak the language that assumes the existence of an elite, we can say that **the elite exists only when the masses exist. The elite is a part of the masses.** Our society has deteriorated so much that we can speak only in the terms of the masses. We cannot even say that we have what we used to term 'the people'. The people don't need an elite, but the masses do. And, as a result of our human degradation, the masses will need charismatic leaders, but not the bureaucrats or functionaries, who have already discredited themselves. The masses are eager to follow those who can assume total responsibility.

The transnational character of elites can partially explain the hatred that exists towards them. Stereotypes about the elites' venality have grown at the same time as stereotypes about their adoration of the West, 'he lives here, but all his interests are there' or 'he just makes money here, but his true home is London'. The processes involved in globalisation are controversial, and the dislike of globalisation is also manifested in the dislike of elites by the masses. The rejection of elites is, at the same time, a rejection of the tendencies connected with globalisation.

The elites should love their people and, in principle, the more that elites are becoming Russian, the more we shall become more humane people, which should allow Europeans to better understand us. However, the elites and the people do not even understand each other; hence the mutual hatred. And what will be born in the space of this mutual hatred? Such dilemmas tend to be resolved only with blood. ■

Exclusively for Yaroslavl Forum