

**RUSSIAN INTELLIGENTSIA BETWEEN CLASSICS AND MASS
CULTURE**

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In the past three-four years many magazine and newspaper publicists, artistic people – people belonging to different generations, having different, sometimes incompatible, views and artistic positions – write and speak about preponderance of mass culture in Russia. To counterbalance this menacing process they put forward the task of keeping up the high standards and preserving the noble traditions of Russian classics, protecting and safeguarding Russian “spirituality” against the dictate of the market (it is noteworthy that their use of modern technology of mass propaganda is quite professional). Thus the conceptual sphere of culture receives a uniform idealized model – either of the Bolshoy Theater or of the Russian Museum. Quite characteristic is both the feeling of danger coming from the recently familiar world of books, music, cinema (new publications or works of art are more and more often seen as alien, incomprehensible and uninteresting not only by yesterday’s authorities in the field of culture, the experts, but also by the wider circles of connoisseurs) and the unexpectedness, the impossibility to identify the happening for the professionals with university degrees in this field, for all the “intellectuals” of the country.

Loss of social position. This fact cannot be explained by the economic factors alone – the scanty state budgeting of “institutions of culture”, their staff’s low salaries which are not paid on a regular basis, the financial collapse and, on the opposite side, the “easy money” of some new patrons of art, the “merging” of that or other patron with criminal business, etc.. All these things do exist. However, until recently, two thirds of the most well-educated respondents, people with university degrees, nevertheless spoke of themselves and their families as of people with average incomes (10-15%, young people more often than others even described themselves as belonging to the upper strata of the society). Of late, the sum of self-assessment of

the respondents' material standing has also been better in this group (even though not dramatically better) than that of other Russians.

At the same time, as the data of mid and late September, 1998 VCIOM surveys show, at present up to 80% of the well-educated stratum are for establishing state control over prices, from 36% to 43% would prefer to have "a limited number of articles at a price affordable for everyone, lines and rationing" (30-39% of this contingent are for a "multitude of goods, even at prices that many people could not afford"). From 55% to 61% of specialists and people with university degrees believe that the West is now trying not to "stabilize the situation in Russia" (this point of view is supported only by 10-12% of the well-educated), but to master Russia, "ensure control over Russian economy and its political life". Subgroups of approximately the same number of specialists with university degrees (16%-17% each) support the "communists" and the "democrats". The largest share of respondents (compared to other groups) - 45% - do not sympathize with politicians of any of the existing parties. Two equal (by size) groups of respondents with higher education have opposite opinion on the Communist Party role in modern Russia (VCIOM poll conducted in the end of October, 1998): 43% believe that if communists get power they'll do their best to reinstate the pre-perestroika order in the country i.e. they'll nationalize banks, abolish private property etc.; the other 44% think that G.Zuganov and his allies would act in this case "in terms of the existing laws" and wouldn't struggle against private property, democracy and civic rights. Representatives of the well-educated stratum are bifurcated and scared, frantic and, at the same time, apathetic. Inner dualism, lack of self-confidence, the feeling that they have been left without any help from the state make them susceptible to populist rhetoric, communist demagoguery, uniform, equalizing stereotypes.

Another phenomenon is also characteristic. It is the well-educated Russians that in the past three or four years have had to see how low is the prestige of their principal symbolic capital – education, and how weak is their orientation to success in life and in their careers (with the exclusion of the very young). It is noteworthy that when speaking of the possible ways to success, the well-educated respondents, more often than other groups, mention not “education”, which they have and which they are quite satisfied with, but “power”, which they do not have and which, as they say, they do not respect or believe. This stratum does not have the energy of a group action, of achievement of common goals. The inside unity of the group has become weaker, the same as the feeling of belonging to a socially important group of people of authority.

Compared to other groups of present-day Russian society, in the nineties the intelligentsia has lost its authority most of all. Assessing the real influence that the well-educated, highly qualified people have on the life in Russia now (1997 VCIOM survey “Power”), the respondents give the intelligentsia the lowest points compared with the bankers, the civil servants, the journalists and the clergy (only the trade unions have a role that is less important). However the assessment of the desired influence, especially given by the members of this group, is the highest, and the gap between these two axes is extremely wide. We are witnessing the resultant phase of the social and cultural processes that have long been under way but have become especially intense lately.

The role of the intelligentsia and the importance of classics. Freelancing as such (and the role of a freelancer) did not figure in the system of social stratification of a mature Soviet society. However, it is within this framework that the consciousness of the pre-Revolutionary Russian intelligentsia was taking shape. The

social status of the well-educated strata in post-Revolutionary Russia (“the intelligentsia of the civil servants”) is connected with their role in the processes of a centralized accelerated modernization of the country, their place in industrialization, in the educational and “cultural” revolution, in the formation of the super-national unity (“the Soviet people”), and in promoting the urban values and standards of modern civilization. The state, having become stronger by the late thirties, “rehabilitated” and summoned the intelligentsia as a stratum of relatively qualified executives of the modernization program, as agents to mobilize the masses for its realization. The intelligentsia acted as the middle echelon in the management system. They became intermediaries between the top level of the power hierarchy and the population¹.

The intelligentsia’s treatment of Russian literary, artistic and musical classics, together with the “classics of the peoples of the USSR” corroborated the ideological legend of Soviet power being a legitimate heiress of “the best aspects” of the fatherland’s past and world history. At the same time, classics embodied “universal” and “eternal” values, and the population of the country was to partake in them. Both theses were taught at school on a mass level. Consequently, beginning with mid thirties Literature of the motherland was included in the official curriculum of secondary schools. The same way as different subgroups and factions of the well-educated stratum (the civil servants, “internal emigration”, liberal dissidents, the Pochvenniki opposition) later fought for their “own” classics and their own understanding of it, did they fight for their “own” school and their own “program” of educating children.

¹ Gudkov L., Dubin B. *Intelligentsia: Notes on Literary and Political Illusions*. Moscow; Kharkov, 1995

The status and the definition of an intellectual in Soviet environment were dual from the very beginning. As Yu. Levada put it, they reflected his “phantom existence”². The origin of the intellectuals was sort of dual: on the one hand, they originated from the state power that decreed them, on the other, they stemmed from the culture that they absorbed. The dual nature of self-identification, the conflict between the status and the mission, the heritage and the function, the ideas and the interests were transferred by the intellectual into his understanding and interpretation of culture. This was set as a normative barrier of interpretation and assessment, but it was seen as the quality of the “text itself” – the “progressive” or “reactionary” qualities of classics, their “delusions” and “artistic findings” relevant for the present. The intelligentsia ascribed to classics the significance of allegory projecting to it the dualism of their own intermediary existence, actually extrapolating to history the allegoric nature of their treatment of culture. For the intelligentsia the present is also allegoric (it is significant only as a reference to the past, its repetition), as is the past (it is reduced to a combination of allusions to the present and is to be deciphered with the help of the “double reading” technique). The sphere of the present as such does not seem to belong to this type of thinking: this sphere is taken by “the Other”, it belongs to power, and behavior within this field is conditioned by the interests of power (for the generations that came later, during the period of stagnation and disintegration of the Soviet system, this is a sphere discredited by the power and the official ideology, so it is not important or interesting).

This is how a particular attitude to classics came to be used in defining an intellectual and became one of the essentials of the social status of the intelligentsia. For less educated groups and strata of the society under transformation that in the new

² Levada Yu. *Essays in Sociology*. Moscow, 1993. P.157.

conditions began to be oriented to the models and style of behavior of representatives of the intelligentsia, classics began to be used as a synonym of literary culture as well as culture as such, a symbol of city life, a more civilized life style, it became an essential component of the prestigious and - at a certain period of time (the thirties-the sixties) - attractive role of a “man/woman of culture”. It is during these decades that the educational revolution was evolving in the country. The intellectual was its embodiment, and in the fifties–the sixties – the peak of social importance and authority of all the well-educated strata.

On the whole, the Soviet social system with its model of development, its institutions of indoctrination and the stratum of the intelligentsia by the eighties had exhausted the possibilities of self-preservation (to say nothing of growth). The gap in the level of education of the intelligentsia and that of the masses had narrowed, secondary education had become general. The modest place of classics in the life of the “country with the greatest number of readers” was also established. In 1980-ies books by pre-Revolutionary writers were to be found in only one out of four family libraries. The super-significant names of the past were an authority first of all for the “new” book collectors who tried to purchase collections of works that were hard to get. Another group of consumers of classical literature consisted of schoolchildren and students – children of those very newcomers to literary culture.

In the nineties, classical literature was by far less popular than action books and detective stories, love stories, historical prose and memoirs. Among the “most outstanding writers of the XXth century”, the readers mention today not only Sholokhov and Solzhenitsin, Bulgakov and Lev Tolstoy, but also J.H. Chase and Agatha Christie, Valentin Pikul and Alexandra Marinina. Every year in the period of

1992-1998 saw a diminution of importance and a drop in circulation of those works that used to serve as a point of reference in the self-understanding and reproducing the social role of an intellectual, as well as in self-assertion of the intelligentsia in the society. Even the well-educated Russians have lost interest in (stopped considering to be important for them) any other music except the generally accepted pop music, sometimes folk, which was constantly broadcast on the radio and TV. The share of people who love symphonic music, opera, operetta and romance has reduced considerably. It is among the well-educated respondents that the share of those who prefer to watch action films, comedies and especially “old films” on TV has grown most of all³.

The “extreme groups” have obviously drifted close together, the groups whose tastes and consumer habits with regard to culture used to be just the opposite. Thus in the subgroup of those who do not read books now there are more elderly and less educated Russians. But the growth of the share of those who gave up reading books in the nineties was especially rapid among younger respondents (under 39) with university degrees. Another example is action novels. Well-educated people of an active age (25-39) read such books now more than others. However, the group of lovers of this genre has been growing fastest among the elderly and less educated Russians. With the loss of the intelligentsia’s exclusive position in the sphere of assessment and treatment of culture, their tastes ceased to be the standard – the symbolic “height”, and were no longer socially attractive.

Dynamics of cultural communications. In the nineties, the communication and contacts within the well-educated stratum saw obvious decay. At the same time, its

³ Dubin B. Groups, Institutions and the Masses: Cultural Reproduction and Cultural Dynamics in

channels of communication with other groups and strata also narrowed sharply. The stratum split and mellowed. The number of the emerging and disappearing micro-groups and their group initiatives grew, but the reach of each of the subgroups and its range of influence grew smaller. The cohesion of the stratum as a whole, its volume and regularity of its cultural reproduction were going down with every passing year.

In the period of 1990-1997, the number of theater goers and museum visitors became twice smaller (at the same time, the number of theaters grew by 1/3, and museums – by 2/5). The number of public library readers fell by 30% (the number of libraries themselves dropped by 16%; I am not going into the poor funding for book purchase now). The total number of visits to the cinema is 30 times less than it used to be. The print run of the books published has fallen by 5 times (with the number of published books in terms of titles having grown by 1.5 times). 96% of the books that are published in Russia now (98% in fiction) are first editions and these books are not meant to be read over and over (73% of books published in 1997 are paperbacks). Even with children's books the share of reprints was only 2% of the edition. 40% of titles and 55% of editions of fiction are translations from other languages (mostly from English). Publications of scientific books on the whole fell by 1/3 in titles and 2/3 in editions (the average edition of a scientific book in 1997 was 930 copies). With a certain increase in the number of published magazines (by 17%) their circulation figures dropped by 15 times; literary magazines' circulation dropped by over 100 times. The circulation figures of national newspapers dropped by 10-12 times with an increase in the number of publications by 5 times, etc..

On the whole, the situation in culture consumption is determined nowadays by two interdependent processes:

- decline in and transformation of the cultural activity of the well-educated strata (“the intelligentsia”) – giving up reading as such and switching to TV viewing; giving up sophisticated, new, problem modern literature (first of all, magazines), switching to products of mass communication, popular literature, TV series, on the one hand, and coming back to the Soviet models and stereotypes, on the other. But what is more important is the loss of the social mission, of the leader self-perception, of interest in contemporaneity with the exclusion of immediate tasks and concerns, and decline in the creative potential of the former leaders;
- general change of the role of the well-educated strata in the society – loss of their usual “partners” and “opponents”, lower self-assessment and less authoritativeness for other groups and, consequently, a fall in the significance and attractiveness of all the ideas and views connected with the intelligentsia (“high” culture and books in particular). The most important among the symbols that are fading away is, probably, the “national literature” - in the meaning of everything that is significant in the Russian society and culture. Its social prestige has been evidently reduced in the last years (as well as its ability to attract young generations in terms of opportunities for practical self-realization and of being a sphere of meaningful self-identification). It’s important to notice that in this situation the significance of such spheres as politics, economy, mass-media, mode and advertising has increased. They are new for the “soviet man” and unusual for soviet mentality, but they are the most attractive for more active sub-groups of the society - for urban youth with higher education.

Mass culture, its types and models. By now, established structures of mass behavior of readers and viewers have been formed (as well as those of the consumers of advertising matter, political images, and samples of popular religiousness): their preferences have taken shape, have become legitimate and are widely spread. The main axes of audience stratification in this sphere are not so much differences in education but rather in age and gender. The thirty-year-olds set an example in the activity of culture consumption. The models being circulated have a clear-cut division into female and male, or constantly aim at emphasizing this division.

It would be more to the point to speak of different sectors of mass culture, where each has its own combination of values and models being used and its own audience. To illustrate this point, I will give just a few obvious values strata:

- values of modern civilization, success in life (good, proper career), harmonized social ties and emotional relationships, consumer convenience, health and pleasure. They mostly come from advertising, both foreign and domestic, which follows the same patterns (Russian mass culture has practically no such genre as “success story” – the notorious “new Russians” are negative characters, and the story-line of crime novels develops around the defeat, downfall of the main character);
- values of a modern urban happy family, an emotionally rich marriage, a “new” woman’s self-determination. These are developed mainly in soap operas and “love-burgers”. They are totally foreign culture products, with a few examples in domestic pop music;

- samples of social deterioration (erosion of the whole), illegitimate and unmotivated violence (“bezpredel”, “lawlessness”), male resentment and criminal revenge resulting in death. These are shown in TV crime and scandal news and domestic action novels, which are anti-intelligentsia and anti-“democratic”, e.g. Docenko, Koretsky, and especially Bushkov);
- the nostalgic images of the already-gone social order, “simple feelings”, communal-flat-type human relationships, transition from rural to urban life style, the early stages of getting used to the urban standards and norms together with all the other Soviet symbols. These come from the constantly rerun domestic films of the thirties-the seventies (including such action films as Govorukhin’s “You can’t Change the Meeting Place”, Lioznova’s “Seventeen Moments of Spring”, and the musical comedies by G. Alexandrov, I. Pyriev, L. Gaiday and E. Ryazanov). The same themes are used in “Starye Pesni o Glavnom“ (“Old Songs about Main Things”) and songs of some rock-bands (“Lioube”, “Chaif”);
- examples of the pre-Revolutionary past – epic pasticcios with such values as integrity and stability of existence, search for the Russian “roots” and “sources”, with the attributes of a great power heroicism, war victories and, at the same time, with the semantics of historical documentaries, “authenticity” of the events described. Examples of these are hundreds of published and reprinted novels in the series like “Hey, Slavs!”, “Princes of Great Rus”, “Fellow-fighters and Favorites”, etc., that were written by the former members of the Union of Soviet Writers and the Union of Journalists. Similar are the newly published works by Danilevsky, Lazhechnikov, Mordovtsev, Geintse and other domestic authors of historical panorama and historical adventure prose of the XIX century, new

editions of the Soviet historical novels of the 1970-ies – books by V. Pikul, D. Balashov and others;

- experiments with a relative, virtual reality, getting to know a new computer civilization not like a technical phenomenon but like a type of a culture organization with its own means of reproduction. Such are computer games for children and teenagers, youth musical techno-culture and, close to it, the simplified mass-type variants of post-modernist prose that is read by better-educated urban youth (like the fashionable novels by Pelevin, Uspensky' and Lazarchuk's fantasy "Look the Monsters in the Eyes", etc.);
- values of hedonistic youth "kaif", demonstrative intermediate social position, "belonging nowhere", distancing from any role definitions, anything serious ("styob", "gibe"). These are manifested in the video-musical clip-culture, rave-mouvement, and part of similar domestic rock culture which is popular with the less-educated young people and teenagers in middle-sized and small towns.

The "new" and the "old" (or, in other terms, traditional Soviet, mass-mobilizing and modern, imported from the West, mass-consumer) anthropological models come together in the minds of modern post-Soviet people, the same way as they interact today on TV. However, I would not speak of their clash. These seemingly conflicting standards of life coexist for the Russians in a kind of social collage, as conventional signs or synonyms of their different social and virtual partners - from close ones to strangers (Clifford Geertz speaks about "immethodicalness", ant-heat-likeness of common sense as a cultural system⁴). These

⁴ Geertz Cl. Common Sense as a Cultural System// Geertz Cl. Local Knowledge. Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology. London, 1991. P.91-92.

are sort of different variants of today's unstable existence, many of which people in Russia "try on" and do not exclude from their biographies. All of them are to be found in the life of Russians nowadays, even though it may be just the life of a viewer (at present, the number of those who watch TV "very often" is much higher in Russia than in many other countries) – a viewer of product adverts, political shows, sensational investigations, and bloody "score-settlings"). Moreover, the conflict of the two models and the two types of morals (we can refer to them as the attitudes and habits of the "Brezhnev" phase of Soviet life and the new, market, criminalized reality) is a structural thing around which the basic story conflict evolves in modern popular literature – police novels and action novels by Marinina, Koretsky, Bushkov, Abdullayev, and others.

Another problem pole of these widely read novels is the relationship of the System with an individual, atomized person and his private, poor existence. It would be more accurate to speak of two coexisting and mirroring each other systems – an overt state system (KGB, police and prosecution, prisons and camps) and a "secondary" system – covert, criminal, be it one of the Mafia organizations in a big industrial city (from "amber" and "sport" to drugs and resale of "white flesh") or some foreign intelligence service with another "conspiracy against Russia". On the surface of it, the systems do not look much different. Of the few differences I will mention two: those belonging to the state system do not kill for pleasure and do not take part in sex orgies. However, foul language and linguistic aggression can be equally observed in the speech of both. The state system is extremely unreliable and corrupted, its personnel are no good at all – the best people were made redundant or found better-paid jobs in private detective agencies or as security guards, but still it

works (there is bound to be at least one absolutely reliable chief who holds the rank of a general). The ideas in the name of which the criminal is pursued and punished, or more often killed, and the very right of the state system to violence are not discussed in modern domestic best-sellers though the scenes and the theme of death (murders, score-settling, often accompanied by erotic symbols or by an implied erotic undertone) are constantly present in the plots, book-titles, and the design of book-covers. In these pressing novels there is practically no mention of the court, tribunal, trial procedures, formal norms of law, conflict of the universal law with other normative systems and value commitments. However, very often, especially in Marinina's novels, the themes of the mysterious "evil", "guilt" and "sin" are elaborated. Most often it is the guilt and sin of the parents' generations, people of the "Brezhnev era", and the generation of their children (today's youth) has to pay for them now by their crimes and death. With no legal foundation, it is important for the novels that the criminal who is trying to hide will be inevitably discovered and punished (this idea of retribution in the novels by Marinina, Dashkova, Bushkov is more often than not painted in magic colors).

Reaction of the well-educated community. In the stratum of the intelligentsia, whose task and established role is to guarantee reproduction, continuity and stability of the social and cultural whole, the old ideological templates and purely retrospective or conservative models still prevail. So, the well-educated strata and their leaders are not living in the present, as it were, they lose their specific qualities – sense of reality, social perceptivity, an "ear" for the present. One can say they do not feel the dictate of the modern times, the pressure of topical objectives. At the same time, they lose the sense of the historic value of what is happening, the understanding of the multidimensional character of life around them, the correlativity and relativity of the

judgments passed by different groups and strata including their own views. This reflexive understanding is impossible now for the well-educated strata: after the collapse of Soviet ideology and the weakening of the bureaucratic structures supporting it, the group no longer has a generalizing value frame, a universal scale to correlate different values.

It is the social circles that with the decay of the Soviet system lose their authority and dominant positions of bearers of models that reject “mass culture” today, now demonizing it, now acting as if they do not notice it. With all the spread of mass media and mass culture in Russia nowadays, with all its effect on everyday life and the minds of the Russians, practically no consistent analytical effort is being made to work at the languages of mass communication, at the social discourses of various power groups and formula poetics of mass literature. It is only different negative aspects that are being discerned in the image of “mass culture”. It is being disparaged for being artistically low-grade; for stupefying people and leading to degradation of the society; for being purely entertaining and lightweight; for being marketwise, based on “the power of capital”; for being western, “not ours”, etc.. To the process of the masses’ adaptation to the changes through the civilization of everyday life, conventional representation of its most urgent problems and dealing with them by playing a game, the intelligentsia usually counters the principles of distancing from the present, conservation of cultural models and the defense mechanisms of xenophobia. It is not the elite but the establishment that tries to counteract the masses here, and what is important is that it is the establishment that is leaving the scene, its time is over.

However, no establishment, no matter how important it is for the functioning of culture, can form, or be a substitute for elite. It is so because it does not create its own new models of understanding, understanding of exactly the problems of today, as any elite emerges in answer to live problems and gives its own interpretation of the new time. No matter what concrete sphere of social life that or other elite group is formed in (be it politics, religious life, or literature), the specific interpretations and solutions of a particular combination of the urgent problems that it suggests are bound to be connected with an alternative definition of the whole situation, a new interpretation of values that are important for other groups as well, for the whole community.

Instead, the Russian intelligentsia of today and its representatives who pretend to the leading positions only react to the situation with the creation of which they did not have anything to do, as it were. This secondary, dependent nature takes the form of a purely negative identification, when the group identifies itself through negation and gets consolidated around “the image of the enemy”. Their own inability for self-realization, suspiciousness and aggressiveness are projected to the interpretation of the enemy and extrapolated to its imaginary constructed figure. Thus the real, most important and still unsolved problem of the elite (elites) of the Russian society is substituted for by the “shadow” of mass culture. This “false identification” allows the pretenders to leadership to come back to the definition of the situation they are used to and the approved function of the preservers.

Besides, the establishment, both of the past and of the present, actually does not have any direct links with the most active, “inquisitive” parts of the audience: the “first-night” viewers, listeners and readers. They orient themselves to the real leaders,

the productive elite, “Hamburg count”. The establishment maintains its status by approving reputations and setting rules. Creating new languages of culture, new values and new audiences is not for representatives of the establishment, they do not want to have anything to do with it. They can influence only the most passive strata of the audience, who are far from problem zones, areas of indefiniteness and creation of values in culture, who orient only to the already approved, accepted, and established (this is the audience of reprints, who read only “selected works”).

It is noteworthy that in modern Russian culture such a fundamental social form of creating a literary event as a journal, a careful collection of modern texts with a particular viewpoint on literature, culture, society, that come to the audience maintaining the rhythm of regular changes within the scope of the relevant present is practically non-existent. At the same time, increase in just the number of events, texts and names without a new vision, an alternative scope of understanding, without new views with regard to art, culture, and the world as a whole becomes senseless, begins to annoy and put off even the professional audience: there is “too much” of everything, as it were. And last but not least, the present situation definitely lacks may be the most important form of self-realization of the elite, namely, defining problems. It is a very rare occasion when you can find a symposium or an issue of a journal dealing not with that or other personality or period of time, but with a problem.

In fact, the establishment is always concerned with its own unification (the main forms of its collective life today are presentations and awards) and activities in the periphery of its cultural zone as such, culture management – communication of institutions of cultural reproduction with “external” subsystems and contexts (federal and local administrative structures, foundations and patrons of art in Russia and

abroad). In the situation of the current crisis the chances of all these lines of activity, as well as the very existence of a cultural establishment, are not too good. At the same time, there is less opportunity for any non-profit initiatives. Thus smaller publishing houses, magazines and newspapers close down, staffs are laid off, their pay goes down; as it is not possible to pay for copyright, translation activities are reduced. Most probably, all these factors will work for the cultural production for commercial institutions becoming more “mass” and for state institutions – more “classicalized” (in 1997, 47% of book titles and 75% of print runs in Russia were published by private publishing houses). The number of institutions of both types is likely to be reduced and the volume of production is going to grow.

Be that as it may, it is possible to say that another stage of an accelerated modernization initiated “from the top” is completed, all of its protagonists and agents, retranslators of their ideas and support groups are leaving the scene. The fact that of the axes of social self-identification and symbolic dissociation it is the age axis that prevails points to the natural order of social movement and reproduction but at the same time, it demonstrates a poor social structure, the weakness of the intellectual strata and the more active social groups, the fragility of the structural elements of the dynamics, the market and the civil society. The symbols of innovation (“reforms”, “democracy”, success in life) are not part of any of group self-identifications and are not considered by any of the authoritative groups as dominants, as “their own”. What the society wants most of all is stability, and the prevailing models are either of negative self-identification (anti-power, anti-wealth, etc.) or ironic burlesque about the achieving values coming from even the young and successful mass-media people (as in “Old Songs about Main Things”).

Traditionally, the intelligentsia of the transitional periods (of the sixties of the XIX century, pre-Revolutionary years, the period of thaw) was oriented to the young. Today the intellectual leaders of the well-educated turn to the elderly. It means that Soviet intelligentsia, formed by the mid-thirties and transformed in the late fifties-early sixties, lived a life span of one generation in the sixties-seventies. Beyond this time (i.e. as a universal model beyond the age limits) it could not go, it turned out to be unreproducible. It is a historically restricted phenomenon. It is disappearing as a system of views and tastes, as a life style together with the generation that introduced and maintained them, as well as with the whole social frame of a closed society in which it was formed and which it got used to.