

Self-Determination of the Belarusian Intellectual

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Social development is impossible without the knowledge, ideas, ideals, projects, utopias and all those things, produced, preserved and transmitted by a specific community of people, who one has recently been calling – increasingly often – intellectuals. When I said "recently", I meant the time when the old Soviet intelligentsia began to surrender their positions in the post-Soviet space. To surrender their positions in the sense that the intelligentsia ceased to produce, preserve and transmit ideas, ideals, knowledge, etc. Besides, they ceased to store and broadcast newly developed ideas and knowledge. The emphasis here should be on the production of ideas, ideals and knowledge.

The intelligentsia, i.e. teachers, bureaucrats in the first place, continued to preserve the part of culture that had been transferred to them for preservation in Soviet times. The phenomenon of the old Soviet intelligentsia deserves special consideration. Here I am going to consider a new phenomenon – intellectuals, who in one form or another are opposed to the old Soviet intelligentsia. Even if the phenomenon we call intellectuals had existed before, there was a time when intellectuals did not distinguish themselves from the mass of the intelligentsia and did not oppose themselves to it.

It is possible that today's intellectuals could have forgotten about the time when they were one with the intelligentsia. I clearly remember that period of perestroika, when A. Solzhenitsyn's reasoning about "obrazovanshchina" [derogative word play with the word form of "education"], which referred to part of self-determined intelligentsia, was perceived as outrage and revelation. The period when future intellectuals were painstakingly breaking up with the intelligentsia that had given birth to them is worth a special study. Perhaps there will be historians-intellectuals who will be able to propose a method of such research and carry it out. So far, I can hardly outline that period and describe it. I was living at that time. It all happened to me, I am a witness. Therefore, I will gladly tell you what I still remember from that time, I will tell it to all who will be able to ask meaningful questions. It is possible that in the late 1980s, those who

stopped reading Soviet newspapers became the conscious intellectuals. M. Bulgakov through the lips of his hero advised this back in the 1920s, but who then could take advantage of such advice? Even fewer could in the late 1980s. Every morning, intellectuals met at newsstands and lined up for "Pravda", "Izvestiya", "Komsomolskaya Pravda", and in Latvia, where I was living at the time, for "Sovietskaya Molodezh", and then for "Atmoda". In the queues, there were exactly those intellectuals who had not thought to subscribe to these newspapers. They subscribed to "Argumenty i Fauty", "Literaturnaya Gazeta", or "Moskovskiye Novosti". These were weekly magazines, like "Ogoniok". However, they had to queue in the morning for the "Ogoniok" under Vitaly Karotich's editing, because in the previous year no intellectual could have thought of subscribing to then flippant "Ogoniok". Therefore, the intelligentsia are those who stood in line for newspapers during the perestroika years and read "thick magazines". All future intellectuals had spent a lot of time in these queues. Except for those, obviously, who were still young at that time. What else the intellectuals were doing, I don't know. Different people were doing different things. It is not difficult to find out about each individual intellectual. You do need to find it out! To enquire in a direct and categorical form: "So what were you, gentlemen intellectuals, doing before 1991?"

I know something else: intellectuals were the first to quit the queues. They were the first to stop reading Soviet newspapers. After the newspapers came the turn of "Ogoniok", "Literaturka", and then all the "thick magazines". Intellectuals began to think for themselves and read only what they determined for themselves.

Were those who wrote at the time to "Ogoniok", "Literaturnaya Gazeta", "Moskovskiye Novosti" and "thick magazines" the intellectuals? Did they think for themselves? This is a very difficult question. Was Fiodor Burlatski an intellectual, or, for example, Roy Medvedev, or Simon Soloveichik (almost forgot about "Uchitelskaya Gazeta" – one of the flagships of perestroika), Karotich, Chernichenko, Nuikin, Aganbegyan, Zaslavskaya, Adamovich¹ and others?

Later, however, intellectuals stopped reading. Once a country with the largest number of readers, it switched to soap operas on TV and crossword puzzles. Everyone stopped reading. Or, almost everyone – intellectuals stopped reading only things that were produced by the Soviet intelligentsia. Yet, what the

¹ A number of Soviet writers, scientists, publicists, who in the 1980s – early 1990s actively criticized various aspects of the Soviet system, including discussing the issues of perestroika in the USSR on the pages of popular magazines and newspapers (Editor's note)

intellectuals themselves began to write, the Soviet intelligentsia could not comprehend.

We will consider separately the complex relationship between intellectuals and intelligentsia. Here it is important to us that intellectuals arose in the depths of the intelligentsia, came out of it or from it, but separated and ceased to be it. We will not understand anything about intellectuals if we confuse them with the intelligentsia. Before formulating any additional opinions about intellectuals, it is necessary to indicate what or who intellectuals are not, i.e. set a couple of categorical oppositions. At one of the poles of each of the oppositions, we will place intellectuals, and at the other the category that is opposed to intellectuals, i.e. what or who intellectuals are not.

Picture: Intellectual: artist, clerk/service provider/employee, intelligentsia person, creator, ordinary person, and a specialist.

The picture shows six social and activity categories, which intellectuals have much in common with, but there are also fundamental differences between them. Intellectuals are not creators. Not ordinary people, not specialists, etc. Of course, intellectuals are not many other things too: neither livestock breeders, nor entrepreneurs, nor police officers. It is possible that I missed some significant differences, but for me now it is more important to demonstrate an approach, a way of thinking and analysis, rather than to give an exhaustive study. If the topic ever becomes relevant, then one can add everything else. I dwelled on the six categories listed because they are the ones most often confused with intellectuals. Confused not just as in failing to recognize, but rather regarding social and activity expectations. Intellectuals are expected and required to do what cannot or should not be expected and demanded from intellectuals, but what can be obtained from someone else, for example, from a specialist, an intelligentsia person, or a creator. On the other hand, sometimes there are opposite expectations, when those who are not intellectuals are expected and required to do what only intellectuals could give.

Thus, the first categorical opposition: INTELLECTUALS – INTELLIGENTSIA. INTELLECTUALS are not intelligentsia, although they are related not only by their origin, but also by their common functions in relation to culture. Whereas not only INTELLECTUALS, but also the ruling and creative elite stem from the intelligentsia in the post-Soviet countries. Intelligentsia and INTELLECTUALS are the main consumers of cultural values. They read modern

books and re-read classics. Actually, what they reread becomes classics. They listen to serious music and go to art galleries and theaters. All this exists for them. They pass on cultural values to new generations and pass on the need to consume cultural values.

The most significant difference between the intelligentsia and the intellectuals is that the intelligentsia is a category from the social and class discourse, and the INTELLECTUALS – from the cultural and national. To explain this thesis, it is necessary to analyze the historical phenomenon of intelligentsia.

Intelligentsia is a historical innovation that appeared in the second half of the 19th century. Intelligentsia arises in specific historical conditions, when the class structure of traditional feudal society is destroyed, on the one hand, and on the other hand, accelerated modernization is stimulated in the country, which brings about an imbalance between these processes: social dynamics does not keep up with the processes of modernization. There emerged quite a number of people unable to determine their identity, who came from different walks of life and had no property, no inherited business or profession. In Russia, these people were called *raznochintsy* (commoners, those who do not belong to gentry). Despite all the differences in origin, a good education was something they had in common, which not only gave them a means of subsistence, but also determined the way of life. The way of life of commoners at that time was associated with intellectual work, which allowed the writer Babarikin to call them all intelligentsia, as well as with seeking their place in society. Having lost class and social certainty, the intelligentsia could not find themselves in either an ethnic group or a nation. Ethnically, these people were as diverse as in terms of class. These people in the Russian Empire came from a variety of ethnic groups. There were Germans settled in Russia, Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians and Jews among them. In addition, pope's children of Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples, natives of the Caucasus. All of them, along with the Russians themselves, had a quasi-European education that distanced them from the ethnic groups of their origine.

One should emphasize that this was not exactly a European education, but a quasi-European one. Most of the intelligentsias were educated in Russian, having a poor command of foreign and classical languages. Educated nobles in Russia knew languages, but did not have a systematic education, and commoners-intelligentsias no longer knew languages, so they were educated without the original sources, using translations into Russian and renderings. Mathematical, natural, and technical education did not suffer much, but the humanities, philosophy, and theology lost a lot. These losses are not limited to humanitarian (and legal) illiteracy. There was a serious moral and ethical gap in the education of the Russian intelligentsia, which had profound consequences.

One could sense this shortcoming rather acutely, so the Russian intellectuals were literally obsessed with moral and ethical issues. These problems bothered them, but they could not find an adequate solution. Weak and undeveloped Russian philosophy rejected the long European scholastic tradition and did not understand the European philosophical classics.

For some time, commoners-intelligentsia were searching for the moral and ethical in fiction. Writers were "engineers of human souls" only for the intelligentsia. The hypertrophied role of fiction and literary criticism in the worldview of commoners-intelligentsias led to another rift. Detached from social and ethnic roots, they also detached from reality. Fictional life became more real for them than usual. This is especially evident in the ideology of "narodnitstva", or else populism (although this ideology got its name from a small organization "Narodnaya Volya" and from the enthusiasm of the intelligentsia to "go to the people", it was spread so widely that it became practically a common worldview). Populists went to the people, lived among the people, but judged them according to the sentimental and pastoral novel, and did not form an idea based on their own experience. The intelligentsia, in particular the populists, separated themselves from the people, opposed themselves to them, so the concept of a nation – a community of all classes, social strata and groups – always remained an abstract concept for the Russian commoners-intelligentsia. The intelligentsia viewed the people and the nation as objects of their relationship, such as love and care, rather than as a framework for self-determination and self-identification. At first, they identified themselves as cosmopolitans, and then this cosmopolitanism was replaced with an imperial identity. Imperial sympathies and cosmopolitanism for the intelligentsia were related by the fact that both allowed to get rid of ethnic attachment and social status, get rid of the obligations associated with them. At the same time, imperialistic worldview was more popular because it allowed both love and hate, i.e. it was more complete. Moreover, the whole worldview of commoners-intelligentsia grounded on contradictions and inconsistencies. Yes, the Russian intelligentsia considered themselves Europeans in an Asian country. At the same time, they were fearing and hating Europe far more than the Asian people, who they opposed themselves to, did.

When Marxism began to spread in Russia, it found fertile ground here – a huge number of educated, but declassed, denationalized, demoralized commoners-intelligentsia. Marxism as a system of views and social democracy as an ideology gave the intelligentsia everything they lacked in the culture of the people they stemmed from, and what they could not take from the pan-European tradition: worldview, grounds for self-identification, morals, goals, frameworks and principles of activity. Further, the intelligentsia began to recreate itself as an independent social phenomenon, broadcasting Marxism adapted to its needs as

its own intellectual mentality.

I described the emergence of the Russian intelligentsia in such detail not only because educated Belarusians, Poles, Jews of the North-Western part of the Russian Empire comprised a significant part of the intelligentsia, settled far beyond the former Grand Duchy, primarily in both capitals of the empire. The thing is that the formation of the Russian intelligentsia is the clearest example of this phenomenon, which occurs in all countries that are in a situation of modernization, trying to catch up with the developed Europe. The intelligentsia in any country is a large number of European-educated people who find it difficult to fit into the context of a traditional national culture, in a way different from the European one (in this case, a phrase "European-educated" is absolutely appropriate and it makes this phenomenon more understandable). If this idea may seem somewhat simplistic, it can get complicated as follows: the intelligentsia is the rearguard of the Enlightenment in those countries that have not had time to solve problems and complete the processes that had began in the Enlightenment, or did not experience this era. That is, the intelligentsia exists only in the European periphery, in countries and cultures that develop according to the European model, but are delayed in their development. In countries and cultures that choose a fundamentally non-European path of development, there is no intelligentsia, for example, in countries dominated by Islamic fundamentalism. Another question is whether a fundamentally non-European path of development is possible in the age of globalization? In historical empiricism, this is an open question. So far, we have been dealing with the fluctuations and shifts of individual countries between modernization and fundamentalism. As a rule, fundamentalism wins in those countries that have experienced an intense short but not very successful period of modernization. The change of direction towards modernization or fundamentalism is due to the frequent change of political regimes, and the period of the regime functioning is clearly insufficient for the manifestation of such a phenomenon as the intelligentsia, or for its complete elimination. Even if the extermination of the intelligentsia takes place on a scale such as in Cambodia under the Pol Pot regime or during the "cultural revolution" in China. Therefore, in a sense, one can speak about intelligentsia only in countries that are strongly influenced by Western European culture and civilization, and they are located in Central, Eastern Europe and Russia, as well as in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey and, to some extent, in the the Mediterranean.

It is important to note that there is no intelligentsia in Western Europe. There the demise of feudalism and the formation of modern nations were synchronous and coordinated. The Enlightenment, although leaving a number of unresolved issues to the modern nations of Western Europe, ended positively there.

Let us recall some historical problems that were solved in the disputes, conflicts and wars of the Enlightenment, without delving into their analysis, just for the sake of identifying the factors that lead either to the formation of a layer of intellectuals or the emergence of intelligentsia:

- The Enlightenment bridged the gap between aristocratic high and plebeian low culture, and removed the contradictions between them. With this bridge erected, national cultures emerged with their rural folklore, urban subcultures, and what survived of cosmopolitan high culture united, enriching each other. Moreover, the forms of preservation, broadcasting and creativity in culture became authorial for all levels and genres. Performers of folk songs and opera arias did not differ in social status and prestige, but only in the amount of fees. The fees, in turn, did not depend on the chosen genre, but on popularity and demand. In those nations that did not bridge this gap, national culture did not develop. There was a folk culture and a Europeanized culture of educated people. The intelligentsia was formed based on the latter. If the culture of the people and the culture of the intelligentsia existed in one language, then, although with difficulty, such peoples formed a modern nation. If, as in case with the Belarusians, the folk culture and the culture of the intelligentsia existed in different languages for several generations, the formation of a nation was significantly complicated, if possible.

- During the Enlightenment, the mind became the factor that managed the social processes. Until the XIX century, the right to make important decisions in state and public affairs was a class privilege, and the cultivation of reason and thought was considered the prerogative of some guilds, in fact equated with crafts (for example, medieval universities, later joined by associations of scientists: academies, guilds of lawyers, etc.). In the XVIII century, one demanded some reasonable justification from monarchs and aristocratic rulers who made decisions. The realization of this demand led, on the one hand, to the abolition of aristocratic privileges, on the other – to the public cultivation of reason and thinking, in contrast to the corporate guild. Where this task was completed, intellectual activity became necessary in public life, and intellectual activity was not considered something extraordinary. Traditional institutional forms for the use of reason and thinking were preserved, and they were easily completed with the new institutions. Educated people who were engaged in intellectual work identified themselves primarily with these institutions (for example, the institute of the profession), and did not consider themselves members of a community of people united only by the availability of education. In countries where the most important decisions remain the privilege of the aristocracy or, later, at the end of the XIX century, are usurped by bureaucracy, and intellectual activity has no institutional forms, having education becomes sufficient for public self-identification. The educated public, regardless of their origin (the same

commoners), begin to feel like a special social group – the intelligentsia.

- The Enlightenment legitimized private property and private life, and an individual became autonomous. In countries that completed this task successfully, there was a clear distinction between public and private. Nothing, including the state, could encroach on private property, just as much as no one could interfere in private life and try to influence a private opinion. Mind and thinking belong to private life, to the realm of autonomous personality, as do beliefs, ideals, tastes, and attachments, while the products and results of intellectual activity one can exhibit publicly. There is a public sphere of applying mind and thinking. In countries where personal autonomy, privacy and property are difficult to separate from the public sphere, attempts to impose one's views, preferences and ideals on others are quite common. Moreover, a special layer of people emerges – the intelligentsia – who consider it their social task and life mission to “sow the wise, the good, the eternal,” to enlighten others. Not to enlighten the sphere of public, communal, political, which this group is isolated from, but to enlighten individuals or entire communities, without taking into account the autonomy of the individual.

These three factors are more than enough to show the fundamental differences between intellectuals and intelligentsias.

Thus, an intellectual differs from an intelligentsia person not in his qualities and values, but in the conditions of his life and activity.

An intellectual is integrated into the social structure, integrated with other social positions and roles, well adapted to a diverse social environment. An intelligentsia person feels good only in the environment of his peers, and he has been searching for this environment all his life. An intellectual does not distinguish himself from the people, the nation, and the society. He has no problems with self-determination and identity. These problems accompany an intelligentsia man all his life, because his life is spent in a troubled society, and unformed nations.

Western European nations do without the intelligentsia. Why exactly these countries successfully solved the problems and paradoxes of the Enlightenment, one can try to understand separately. As well as to find out which nations belong to Western Europe and which do not. The same Western European INTELLECTUALS dealt with these issues. Someone is localizing Western Europe according to the territory covered by the Napoleonic Code at the end of the Enlightenment, a legal system that absorbed the ideas of the Enlightenment. Some people draw the border in accordance with the extension of the principle of entailment, because thanks to this principle, the problems that adult

intelligentsia people suffer from are solved at the level of family upbringing of children. The format of the article is obviously small to discuss all these issues. I need this digression into the history of the formation of the intelligentsia in order to formulate a simple hypothetical thesis. As Middle and Central Europe integrate into a united Europe, the number of intelligentsias will be declining. And in public life, INTELLECTUALS will become more and more important – people who operate with the mind and thinking in the public sphere, do the intellectual work of the nation in public space, but do not interfere in people's private lives.

In Belarus, the intelligentsia still dominates public life. This dominance manifests itself not only in the control by the intelligentsia of the whole sphere of ideology, media and education. It manifests itself in the ban on public intellectual activity. INTELLECTUALS already exist in Belarus. They do not educate people; they do not impose their opinion on the society. They are engaged in their professional activities, but they seek to make the products of these activities and their intellectual work public property, trying to influence the most important decisions in the country. It is here that the sharpest confrontation between the intelligentsia and intellectuals reveals itself. The intelligentsia offers its opinion to the whole society as the most educated opinion, and the INTELLECTUALS only want their opinion to be taken into account when making socially significant decisions. This is especially evident during the referendums, which have recently become a frequent phenomenon in our country. While the intelligentsia imposes its opinion on the general public, INTELLECTUALS consider referendum decisions to be unreasonable, and find referendums themselves as a way of making decisions unreasonable.

As long as Belarusian society avoids European integration, Belarusian intellectuals have no chance to become an influential force in society. Another problem is that intellectuals practically do not and cannot have a single position, even on European integration. Many INTELLECTUALS can see well the shortcomings and flaws of a united Europe. Yet the Euroscepticism of Belarusian intellectuals has a completely different nature from the Europhobia of the Belarusian intelligentsia.

It was necessary to give so much attention to the distinction between intellectuals and intelligentsia, because at the present stage of development of our society INTELLECTUALS and intelligentsia not only have much in common, they are now competing for influence in cultural process, and this competition can have very important consequences for the fate of the country and the nation. Further categorical oppositions are much easier to decipher and formulate.

INTELLECTUAL – CREATOR. Sometimes INTELLECTUALS create something. However, this is not the essence of their existence. The essence of

intellectuals is precisely in consumption. They are not creators, but consumers. Including intellectual products. INTELLECTUALS are just as much INTELLECTUALS as they consume intellectual products. They read philosophers and thinkers of the past. Read in order to make judgments in the present. When INTELLECTUALS consume up-to-date information, they prefer arguments to facts. They are interested not so much in the events as in their reasons and explanations, not so much in the decisions as in the justification of the decisions. Intellectuals are often expected and required to take action, deeds or produce artifacts. Sometimes INTELLECTUALS even act, perform actions and create (make) artifacts: write books, make films, create new educational courses, and develop strategies, concepts and programs. However, this is their optional, not their main function. Their main mission is to form opinions. Not just to express their private opinions, but to demonstrate reasoning publicly in order to reveal the results of intellectual work publicly – opinions that claim to be universal. Noam Chomsky² cannot stop the war in the Balkans himself, but his views on this war are shared with the public and influence government decision-making. It doesn't matter if he is right or wrong in his opinion. It is important that this opinion is reasonable, not emotional, free, not biased. This view must be contrasted with the same reasonable and free opinion. An intellectual is capable of such opinions not because he creates them himself, but because he makes them based on previous consumption of intellectual products, not the tabloids or ideological propaganda.

The anti-intellectualism of the Belarusian elite and intelligentsia is manifested not in the fact that they do not create something, but in the fact that they do not read, do not consume intellectual products. Therefore, their opinions are not intellectually supported. The idea of what is happening in the country can be formed based on BT TV programs. However, a full-fledged opinion cannot be formed without the knowledge of Aristotle, Kant, without criticism of Ales Adamovich's worldview, without challenging the opinions of Valyantsin Akudovich.

INTELLECTUAL – AN ORDINARY CITIZEN. In this categorical pair, the difficulty is not in pointing out the difference, but in understanding the similarities. The fact is that the well-known opposition between the intelligentsia and the common people (philistinism), borrowed by Belarusians from the Russian intelligentsia, is often transferred to intellectuals. While an intellectual is not opposed to the commoner, just as he is not opposed to people, other social roles

² Avram Noam Chomsky is an American linguist, political publicist and theorist, one of the most famous left-wing intellectuals. (Editor's note)

and functions. An intellectual shares ideals and values with the common people, identifies with the people. An intellectual lives the same way as his neighbors. He has the same family, the same house (apartment), car, furniture, TV, even a higher education diploma. Slight differences can be found regarding channels people watch on the TV, books that are on the shelves in the same bookcases, books that are lying around at the headboard in the morning. Yet these differences fit simply into the range of individual differences. That is, in private life, an intellectual can be no different from any other citizen. They are different in public life. Most people have almost no public life or it is minimized, while an intellectual is obliged to lead a public life.

Without it, he is no different from an ordinary person or turns into a marginal schizophrenic.

INTELLECTUAL – A SPECIALIST. Public presentation of reason and thinking often touches on very specific areas of knowledge. Experts try to monopolize opinions in specific areas. Economists think about the economy, ecologists think about ecology, milkmen think about milk, journalists think about newspapers, the military think about war. Intellectuals should think about intellect. Yet this is exactly what intellectuals have little interest in. The opinions of intellectuals are often subject to disavowal precisely because theirs are not the opinions of experts. However, that is exactly why an intellectual is a consumer of complex intellectual literature – they want to develop the ability to understand the most complex issues no worse than specialists do. Not worse, though different from the experts.

Typically, an intellectual can be an expert in one or more areas. That is not what makes him an intellectual. Having made a career in a certain profession, an intellectual occupies a specific place in the structure of the profession. Most often, it is a place with the function of reflection and comprehension of the profession itself, that is, it is a meta-position, not the position of a specialist. This allows him to work with disobjected knowledge, in disobjected forms. Not only to work, but also to communicate with other professionals who hold similar positions in other professions or systems of activity. Overcoming specialization, going beyond the specialist, the professional does not leave the profession, does not become a philosopher or methodologist. He just gets free enough and equipped to do other, varied things. Being equipped and free for interprofessional communication, he is ready for the public use of his intellect. Going out into public space, he becomes an intellectual. Going into public space requires a certain degree of fame, popularity, reputation, without which there are no intellectuals. If in a public situation the opinion of a specialist is required, it may be an unknown specialist.

Chomsky's above-mentioned view on the war in the Balkans is not the opinion of a well-known linguist (highly qualified specialist), but the opinion of an intellectual. At the same time, Chomsky is not an expert in military affairs or international relations. He is not an expert in the issues he is thinking about, but what he is an expert in, in this case, is not in demand. We should not demand from intellectuals what should be demanded from specialists, and vice versa.

INTELLECTUAL – AN ARTIST, AN ACTOR, AN ART WORKER.

The intelligentsia has formed a number of archetypes of public consciousness that remain alive. In particular, such archetypes include the hypertrophied role of art in understanding social and political processes and phenomena. In general, this archetype does not stand up to criticism, but there is one position in the art world, which I mentioned above when considering the genesis of the Russian intelligentsia, which has long claimed the highest authority in all matters. These are writers. It would be good if those were only writers, who dissect society because of the lack of scientific information about this society, as did the novelists of the XIX and XX centuries. However, for the intelligentsia "a poet in Russia is more than a poet." Without underestimating the role, place and significance of artistic creativity, and poetry in particular, in the spiritual life of humankind, we just want to remind we should not confuse one with the other. The public presentation of the mind cannot be based on poetic metaphors and hyperboles. Yet for a long time, when INTELLECTUALS could not appear in Belarus, writers performed their function. This is not an equivalent replacement. Yet, the habit to replace one with the other is still there. Even now, instead of reasoning and rational argumentation, poetic images are popping up. Not only from poets, but also from people who claim to be intellectuals.

INTELLECTUAL – A CLERK, AN EMPLOYEE, A SERVANT. This is the simplest categorical opposition, but also the most dangerous one. The public presentation of the mind can only be free and unbiased. It is possible that this thesis does not even require any argument – so much has been said and written on this topic. However, the tendency to use intellect in the service function does not disappear. Perhaps it will exist forever, at least as long as people strive for power and money. Intellectual justification and excuse of the actions of politicians, the military, bureaucrats are always and everywhere in great demand. Belarus is no exception. There are many smart, educated, creative people in the country. The state and business will always attract such people to work and serve. It is wonderful and good, it is necessary for the state and business to develop. However, when entering the service, a person loses his autonomy; he becomes part of some superpersonal subject, a superhuman formation.

The function of the public use of the mind is precisely in keeping control

over such an entity!

I am far from offering intellectuals never to be hired, not to become officials or functionaries in business. On the contrary, I would only welcome such a state and such a business that would attract intellectuals. Every government official and socially responsible business is obliged to justify their actions and decisions publicly. Publicly, i.e. in the media, in public speeches, in discussions. They must communicate with free intellectuals. It is by no means a fact that in such communication, in serious discussions, free INTELLECTUALS will be smarter and stronger than sensible and intelligent officials are. Still the point is not to find out who is smarter, an official or an intellectual! The point is to adopt the most important decisions for the nation and for the country using the mind and intellect.

Today in Belarus INTELLECTUALS are all by themselves. It means that we have not yet solved the tasks of the Enlightenment in our country.

The trouble is not even that the dictatorship and the authoritarian regime do not give intellectuals the floor, do not give the opportunity to participate in decision-making at the national level. The trouble is that INTELLECTUALS avoid this. They avoid their social function and mission. Someone is fleeing into art. Someone – into a narrow specialization. Someone undertakes a servile function and serves others' decisions and actions intellectually. Most of them share the prejudices of the Soviet intelligentsia, powerless, weak-willed, sentimental and argumentative.

However, it is important that INTELLECTUALS already exist in Belarus. Not just smart men and women, but public figures. It is high time they started acting publicly.