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Fear of Ideology: Political Theory and Political Practice in Contemporary Russia

Abstract

The battle of ideas has raged in Russia since the times of Peter the Great and Catharine the Great and continues even today. The front line is between the liberals (Westernisers, Europhiles) and a camp that could broadly be called conservatives (Slavophiles, Eurasianist). Today's Russia faces a new challenge, having emerged from a rigid communist system, as before in history the country is faced with soul-searching. In today's Russia there are three broad ideological camps: liberals, conservatives and realists. Beyond this division they can be defined as systemic and non-systemic, according to whether they are recognised as legitimate by the Kremlin and whether they themselves see the state as a legitimate actor. Liberals and conservatives can be in or out of the system, but not the realists, who because of their centrist position are voluntarily locked in to the system. In this article, I explore the dynamics between the three camps, the attitude of the state towards them and their representation in institutions such as universities and the media. I also determine their positions through a set of test questions pertaining to the 1993 Constitution, the Russian Central Bank and the conflict in Ukraine. I also want to explain the position of conservatives, the only camp striving to create a new ideological formula, as well as the attitude of the state to conservatism in the atmosphere of the new Cold War. Or is the state deploying its spin-doctors and only using these divisions as a tool for creation of a never-ending political reality show? The symbol of this political reality show in Russia is the Kremlin's spin-doctor-in-chief, Vladislav Surkov, who used *sovereign democracy* as a syncretic term and a temporary ideological placeholder to balance the ideological camps. Finally, I contemplate what might lie ahead for Russia and whether the state, currently ever balancing between the three camps, could swing towards conservatism.

Key words: Russia, conservatives, liberals, realists, ideology, syncretism, sovereign democracy, constitution, central bank, Putin, Surkov.

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It is hardly possible to speak about contemporary Russian political thought meaningfully, nor understand it fully, without first shedding some light on its origins. If there is one characteristic of Russian political thought that has remained constant over the last three centuries, it is a lack of consensus on which civilisation Russia belongs to. Divisions apparent in other, Western political communities, have always been ideological but the one thing they had in common has been a consensus on civilisation. In Russia, on the contrary, there has been little unity even about some of the most basic questions, such as which civilisation Russia and its people belong to – Western, Romeic (Byzantine), Turkic or some other – nor even to which continent: Europe or Asia or both.

Since the time marked by two rulers titled “the Great”, Peter I² and Catherine II, Russia’s elite has been divided into two broad camps, each with its many differences and nuances. One is broadly known as the *liberals* and the other the *conservatives*. It should be borne in mind that both terms are subject to distinctly Russian understandings, which will be explored in more depth later in this article. The root of this division was the rapid Westernisation experienced by Russia’s elite during the reign of Peter the Great, which socially – and, in a manner of speaking, nationally – divided the Russian people.

It was difficult to speak of a nation when aristocrats usually spoke the Russian language only with servants in the city and with peasants in the countryside. Noblemen spoke French to one another, cultivated Italian music and architecture, and – most fatefully of all – thought in German. (Billington 2004: 10)

Conservatives too came from the nobility but believed that this kind of division can be fatal for national unity. Russian history proved them right as a significant motivation for the revolutionaries of 1917 was how alienated the elite were from the people.

In the Russian context, the label *liberal* is essentially attached to a Westerner, hence *liberalism* means Westernism with all the general-

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- 2) Peter’s westernisation of Russia was dense with symbolism. In 1721 he subordinated the Russian Orthodox Church by abolishing the institution of Patriarch, replacing it by the Holy Synod. This would exclusively be led by laymen and often some of its 10 members were not even Orthodox. Peter also degraded the long monastic tradition of Russia, making entry into monkhood difficult by placing the lower age limit at 50. He moved the capital from Moscow to Saint Petersburg, erecting the city from scratch in a completely Western manner. Its very construction in marshland cost thousands of lives. Peter even introduced a high tax on beard wearing, a fashion among Russian men at the time. Russian conservatives would argue that all these reforms – and the many others he introduced – left a permanent stain on Russia’s character.

isations that this term carries in non-Western societies. That is why Russian conservatives (*populists*)³ (Бердяев 2013:26) see their “liberal” compatriots as self-hating despisers of the people.⁴ These charges stem from the works of certain Russian liberal thinkers, such as Vasily Tatishchev (Василий Никитич Татищев) of the 18th century or Alexander Herzen (Александр Иванович Герцен) and Pyotr Chaadayev (Пётр Яковлевич Чаадаев) of the 19th. The latter – one of the most prominent liberal thinkers – claimed that all of Russian history

represents a chain of barbarities, crude superstitions and ignorance, and humiliating rule by conquerors, whose legacy is irreversible to this day. United in our seclusion [i.e. monasteries] we have not moved from our spot, while western Christianity was on a glorious path defined by its divine founder. (Решетников 2013: 29)

While undermining Russian history and culture, Chaadayev idealised the West, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, and proposed conversion to Catholicism and western Christianity in general as the best solution for the people of Russia. This meant that, in terms of identity, modernisation would simultaneously represent Westernisation, which he saw as a positive outcome. The circle of Russian liberals also included such resounding names as Vissarion Belinsky (Виссарион Григорьевич Белинский), Ivan Turgenev (Иван Сергеевич Тургенев) and Sergey Nechaev (Сергей Генадьевич Нечаев).

Nechaev went so far as to write that the best route to salvation for Russia would involve the murder of all those mentioned in the Great Ektenia (*Великая Ектения*).⁵ Needless to say, Vladimir Lenin (Владимир Ильич Ульянов Ленин) was delighted by this aspect of Nechaev’s work. According to the testimony of Lenin’s close friends and prominent Bolshevik, Margarita Fofanova (Маргарита Васильевна Фофанова):

Vladimir Ilyich [...] excitedly said, “[...] just listen to what Nechaev writes! He says that all of the Imperial family should be killed. Bravo Nechaev!” After making a short pause Vladimir Ilyich continued: “We shall do what this great revolutionary could not achieve.” (Димитријевић 2006: 721)

3) The English term *populist* is not a direct translation of the Russian word народолюбитель (lit. one who loves the people), however I have chosen to use it in order to describe this ideological standpoint. This term is mentioned in the preface of Nikolay Berdyayev’s (Николай Александрович Бердяев) book *Русская идея* (Russian Idea).

4) All translations of Russian and Serbian language sources are by the author.

5) The Great Ektenia is a litany within Orthodox Christian liturgy which lists all of the highest Church dignitaries, as well as the Russian state leadership, including the Emperor and his family.

Lenin's secretary, Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich (Владимир Дмитриевич Бонч-Бруевич), testified of his even clearer expression of excitement for Nechaev's idea.

"It is completely neglected," said Vladimir Ilyich, "that Nechaev possessed extraordinary talent [...] It is enough to recall his reply, in one flyer, when asked who should be murdered from the imperial house. Nechaev gave the correct answer: 'The whole of the Great Ektenia.' Well, this is pronounced so simply and clearly [...] Everybody knew that in the Great Ektenia the entire imperial house is mentioned, all of the members of the House of Romanov. 'Who among them should be killed then, an ordinary reader would ask.' 'The whole House of Romanov' should be one's answer. Hence, this is simple to the level of geniality!" (Димитријевић 2006: 721).

On the other side of this historical division are the members of the *Society of the Russian Word* (*Беседа любителей русского слова*): Gavriil Derzhavin (Гаврил Романович Державин), Alexander Shishkov (Александр Семёнович Шишков), Dukes Sergey Shahovskoy (Сергей Владимирович Шаховской) and Platon Shirinsky-Shikhmatov (Платон Александрович Ширинский-Шихматов). The most prominent thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries were Konstantin Leontiev (a neo-Byzantine, author of *Byzantinism and Slavdom* and *The Average European as the Ideal and Instrument of Universal Destruction*), Lav Tikhomirov (Лев Александрович Тихомиров), Konstantin Pobedonostsev (Константин Петрович Победоносцев), Sergei Nilus (Сергей Александрович Нилус), a famous thinker sadly rather neglected by scholars, Alexander Pushkin (Александр Сергеевич Пушкин), who started out as a liberal but later in life became a monarchist, a path also taken by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (Фёдор Михайлович Достоевский) and Durnovo (Н. А. Дурново). Durnovo's idea was perhaps analogous to British theorist, Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, as, according to Leonid Reshetnikov (Леонид Петрович Решетников), Durnovo proclaimed: "The only holistic approach to the salvation of the person as well as of the state is the patriarchal arrangement according to Christ and His eternal truths." (Решетников 2013: 33)

Among the conservatives one of the most important was Nikolay Danilevsky (Николай Яковлевич Данилевский),⁶ a famous Slavophile

6) Danilevsky insisted on Russian distinctiveness from Europe: "So, does Russia belong to Europe? I have already answered that question. As you wish; for he who wishes it, it belongs if you wish it to – it partially belongs to it, if you so wish. In essence, in the discussed manner, there is no Europe at all, but only a western peninsula of Asia, which in the beginning differed little from other Asian

and author of *Russia and Europe*. Regardless of being a Slavophile himself, Danilevsky warned Russians not to fall into the trap of Slavophilia, which would lead to them losing their identity. The main concern and constant fear of the Russian conservatives was the imminent danger of a loss of Russian identity, which was distinct from what they considered to be European identity. They saw European identity, and Russia as its part, only as the Asian periphery, while their leading thought was that Russia was a unique civilisation. Danilevsky thought that the trap of Pan-Slavism could be that Russians, as the true Panslavists, could come to adopt Western culture through Catholicism and Protestantism as practiced by the western Slavs.

The representatives of this branch of Russian political thought in the 20th century were Ivan Ilin (Иван Александрович Ильин),⁷ Ivan Solonevich (Иван Лукьянович Солоневич), with his masterpiece *Peoples Monarchy*,⁸ Eurasian émigrés,⁹ Nikolai Trubetzkoy (Николай Сергеевич Трубецкой),¹⁰ Peter Savitsky (Пётр Николаевич Савицкий)¹¹ and

peninsulas, which were on the periphery, becoming ever shredded and ever parsing.” (Данилевский 2008: 74)

- 7) Often quoted by Vladimir Putin (Владимир Владимирович Путин).
- 8) Solonevich emphasised the indigenous and distinct Russian political culture: “Russian statehood, Russian nationality and Russian culture go along their own path, absorbing many foreign influences, yet not repeating paths of any other statehood, nation and culture in the history of modernity. The Empire of the Rurikids is at the beginning of our history as peculiar and as unrepeatable as the autocracy of the Moscow tsars, as is the empire of the Petersburg period, or even as today’s Soviet authorities. Therefore, no foreign measurements, recipes, programs and ideologies borrowed from wherever are, in any sense, applicable to Russian statehood, Russian nationality and Russian culture.” (Солоневич 2014: 26–27)
- 9) “The publicity that the first Eurasianist publications received in emigrant circles (above all, as a new idea and theoretical stance which is irreducible to pre-revolutionary streams of thought), contributed to their popularity, especially among the emigrant youth, which was dissatisfied by the world of ideas of their fathers.” (Суботин 2004: 32)
- 10) Trubetzkoy saw western cultural domination in Russia, as well as in the rest of the world, as a form of chauvinism: “Let’s see what content do the European cosmopolitans attach to the term ‘civilisation’ and ‘civilised humanity’? Under ‘civilisation’ they understand the culture that was jointly build by the Romanic and Germanic peoples of Europe. As civilised peoples – foremost again, they consider Romanic and Germanic peoples, and only after them others who appropriated European culture. In this way that other culture, which should, according to the opinion of cosmopolitans, rule the world, abolishing all other cultures, is also a culture defined by a specific ethnographic-anthropological unit, as well as that unit of which a chauvinist dreams. There is no principle difference here.” (Трубецкой 2004: 10)
- 11) In his opening article “Turn to the East” (rus. Поворот к Востоку) of the most famous publication of the first Eurasianists “Exodus to the East” (rus. Исход к

Georges Florovsky (Георгий Васильевич Флоровский), and their successor Lev Gumilyov (Лев Николаевич Гумилёв).¹² This war of ideas never ceased, and I would argue that it is as present now as it has been over the last three centuries.

From Chaos to Order

After the Cold War, Russia emerged from the ideological collapse of communism, which also meant the breakdown of existing ethical, economic, educational and value systems. The Russian Federation emerged from the ruins of a very rigid, inflexible ideology, hence in 1991 Russia had an urgent need to redefine itself. One of the main legacies of President Boris Yeltsin's (Борис Николаевич Ельцин) era of decay was the hastily adopted 1993 Constitution. One of its basic tenets, still in force today, is the explicit prohibition of a state ideology (a statement that could itself be seen as ideological).

Russia did however embrace a new ideology, but one that resisted being presented as an ideology at all. This new invisible ideology was 'free market liberalism', imported from the winners of the Cold War. The United States with its 'perfect' system and the consumerist West in general were viewed as the 'golden calf' by the citizens of the collapsed Soviet Union, in particular the people of Russia. The buzzwords of the day were 'democracy', 'free market', 'business', 'stock exchange' and suchlike.¹³ The populace were fascinated by newly available con-

востоку) Savitsky exclaims: "Precisely because Russia is not only 'West', but 'East' as well as, 'Europe', as it is 'Asia', and not even Europe at all but 'Eurasia', – exactly because of that, to that historical essence, which is the great French revolution, the Russian revolution is amalgamated, by another yet undisclosed essence." (Савицкий, Сувчинский, Флоровский, Трубецкой 1921: 9)

- 12) Like his predecessors, Gumilev insisted on opposition to the exclusivity of Eurocentrism: "Eurasian polycentrism presumes that there are many centres. Europe is the centre of the world but Palestine too is the centre of the world. Iberia and China, likewise, and so on. There are many centres, and their number could be calculated by similarity of the landscapes." (Гумилёв 2007: 25)
- 13) "Yeltsin then named himself acting prime minister and proceeded to form a government led by a group of young, Western-oriented leaders determined to carry out a decisive economic transformation. Charged with planning and carrying out the program was his deputy prime minister Egor Gaidar. Under the program – widely called 'shock therapy' – the government undertook several radical measures simultaneously that were intended to stabilize the economy by bringing government spending and revenues into balance and by letting market demand determinate the process and supply of goods. Under the reforms, the government let most prices float, raised taxes, and cut back sharply hardship as many state enterprises found themselves without orders to financing... In every country where it is applied, radical economic stabilisation affects many interests and causes acute hardship for

sumer goods such as Nike sneakers or McDonalds burgers, in the same way indigenous nations were fascinated by the simple trinkets western sailors brought to trade prior to enslaving them and plundering their gold and diamonds. At first, Russian citizens were intoxicated by the newly-discovered freedoms available to them, only to realise that, like Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio, they had been duped and made jackasses of by their western 'friends' and local Russian crooks. What emerged from this application of Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market was chaos, mafia rule, pyramid schemes, all kinds of swindles and, consequently, extremely high crime rates, especially violent crime and murder.

Moscow for example with about 1,700 murders in 2001, had about 1,000 more murders than New York City [...] Russia was second only to South Africa in terms of murders per 100,000 people and crimes connected to organised crime were up 36 per cent in 2001. Most important, the Russian Mafia and crime in general have been a major impediment to Russia's economic recovery. (Goldman 2003: 177–178)

Eventually this chaos gave rise to a new class. The barons of the new elite came to be known as oligarchs and the Russian people came to see them as a modern incarnation of the boyars. At the end of the Cold War most oligarchs were young professionals within the state apparatus who understood that the system was collapsing and had the combination of boldness, opportunity and skills to loot state-owned corporations and resources¹⁴ by privatising them for pennies, thus generating enormous wealth for themselves at the expense of the crumbling state and its unfortunate citizens. This time was also marked by the catastrophic First Chechen War (1994–1996) and Wahhabist terrorist attacks in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia. The deadliest of these was the attack on Moscow's Dubrovka theatre in October 2002, when the mostly female terrorist group (the so-called black widows of martyred terrorists) held hostages for several days before anti-terrorist troops stormed the building and killed all of the attackers. The tragedy continued as many hostages subsequently died having inhaled a gas that used to incapacitate the terrorists. A medical logistics failure meant that doctors were not aware of the plan to pump gas into the theatre and so could not administer an antidote to all of the freed hostages. Another massive terrorist attack was carried out on a school in North Ossetian town of Beslan on

society, at least in the short run.” (Remington: 2004: 53–54)

14) Alena Ledeneva (Алёна Валерьевна Леденёва) wrote two excellent books on these corruption mechanisms and how a culture of corruption emerged in Russia. (Ledeneva 2006; Ledeneva 1998)

1 September 2004, the first day of the school year. Aslan Mashadov's group held more than 1,100 hostages, including 777 children, for three days. After special forces stormed the building, 334 hostages were found murdered, among them 186 children. All of the attackers were eliminated but the cost in innocent lives was unbearable. This terror spree had to end. The citizens of Russia demanded order.

Fear of ideology or fear of a classical ideological system as we know it remains to this day a defining feature of modern Russia. The years of free fall into wild capitalism, which brought wealth to few and misery to many, resulted in growing unrest among the population who demanded security above all else.

Vladimir Putin, with early successes such as the Second Chechen War, his ability to bring the oligarchs to heel and swift economic growth (driven by the high price of oil during America's foreign adventure in Iraq), gave the population the sense of security they so badly needed. Regardless, there remained void to be filled, a need for a higher purpose. The emerging political system was based on security and stability and a swift move in a new ideological direction was considered to be very dangerous and sensitive. In a sense, it was arguably impossible after the catastrophic collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia was no exception here because, since the end of the cold war, great ideals and ideas were in retreat around the world. Russia's comparable misfortune relative to other countries was that it was at the epicentre of an ideology that had just lost that war.

A new era had arrived but no one knew what was it supposed to mean and it seemed these new times were not founded on coherent ideological grounds. This new system emerging in Putin's Russia needed a name. The content of the system was essentially branded – Putin's personality was in the centre, saving the country from absolute collapse and dissolution. Nevertheless, this process was also very chaotic and it was not grounded on any ideology whatsoever. An attempt by the state to define the new ideology was made, resulting in *sovereign democracy*, a term coined in 2006. The term is not new (Jean-Jacques Rousseau used it to describe the Swiss system) but in the present-day *sovereign democracy* was introduced to contemporary political jargon by Putin's top spin-doctor Vladislav Surkov (Владислав Юрьевич Сурков). His job is known in today's Russia as 'political technologist' or creator of politics and political content, which some might call manipulation and others deception. Before his time at the Kremlin, Surkov worked for two oligarchs, Boris Berezovsky (Борис Абрамович Березовский, who fled to London in 2000 and was found dead under suspicious circumstances in 2013), and Mikhail Khodorkovsky (Михаил Борисович Ходорковский).

Sovereign democracy is an attempt to reach compromise between Russia's ever antagonistic ideological camps. The word *democracy* here should stand for *freedom* and *liberty*, something opposed to the previously rigged ideological society. A Hegelian antithesis to communism, a system still vivid in minds of many, which sought to control its citizens. Yet, at the same time, due to their experience of 'democratic and capitalist transition' (which in reality meant criminal privatisation, looting of public property and pauperisation), in the minds of many Russians the word **democracy** had become corrupted and associated with general feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and loss of sovereignty. That is why the word **sovereign** was placed in front of **democracy** to check and balance it and, essentially, to provide much needed psychological insurance. With this context in mind and in an attempt to appease all ideological camps, Putin's Russia reinvented *sovereign democracy* as a very important political formula. Its main quality was that it represented syncretism. The idea was that it should be broad enough for everyone to read into it whatever they pleased. Another important feature that sovereign democracy should have is that it be exceedingly Russian, coming from and imbedded in Russia's unique political culture. As Putin's favourite thinker, Ilin, put it: "Every people and every country represents living individuality with its unique characteristics, its unrepeatable history, soul and nature." (Ильин 1993: 28)

Syncretism did not end with sovereign democracy but became an inseparable part of Russia's new political culture. There are many examples: The new Russian national anthem with its familiar Soviet melody but revamped lyrics, cleansed of their former ideological baggage; military insignia combining imperial eagles and communist stars; Kremlin towers topped both by red stars and two-headed eagles; and so forth. The glorification of the Red Army's victory over the Nazis in World War II – but, crucially, not the Bolsheviks who destroyed the Empire – is symbolically represented every 9 May by a victory parade on the Red Square where the red flag of victory (a copy of the one flown over Reichstag) marches side by side with the tricolour of the Russian Empire. Examples of these trends are abundant: "With this combination of symbols representing all the stages of Russian history, Putin proposed to show the ties of time and to give tangible form to Russia's glorious heritage." (Shevtsova 2003: 144)

Syncretism in fact is the main characteristic of this non-ideological, fluid and flexible formula. This flexibility sits in stark contrast from the rigid system of ideological dogmas. Thus far it has worked well and has proved to be the main strength of this new system.

In the BBC documentary, *HyperNormalisation*, (Curtis 2016), Adam Curtis described this way of ruling:

In Russia there is a group of men who have seen that this very lack of belief in politics and dark uncertainty about the future could work to their advantage. What they have done is turn politics into a strange theatre where nobody knows what is true or what is fake any longer, they were called political technologists [...] they rose up and they took control over the media [...] for them reality was just something that could be manipulated and shaped into anything you wanted it to be [...] Surkov used Kremlin money to finance all kinds of groups [...] even whole political parties that were opposed to president Putin [...] both Donald Trump in America and Vladislav Surkov in Russia had realised the same thing that the version of reality that the politics presented, was no longer believable. (Curtis 2016)

Or as suggested by the title of a book by Peter Pomerantsev, another BBC employee and Briton of Russian origin: *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia*. Pomerantsev dedicated a whole chapter to Surkov and his description is even more direct than Curtis'.

As former deputy head of the presidential administration, later deputy prime minister and then assistant to the President on foreign affairs, Surkov has directed Russian society like one great reality show. He claps once and a new political party appears. He claps again and creates Nashi, the Russian equivalent of the Hitler Youth, who are trained for street battles with potential prodemocracy supporters and burn books by unpatriotic writers on Red Square. As deputy head of the administration he would meet once a week with the heads of the television channels in his Kremlin office, instructing them on whom to attack and whom to defend, who is allowed on TV and who is banned, how the President is to be presented, and the very language and categories the country thinks and feels in... 'Stability' – the word is repeated again and again in a myriad seemingly irrelevant contexts until it echoes and tolls like a great bell and seems to mean everything good; anyone who opposes the President is an enemy of the great God of 'stability'. 'Effective manager', a term quarried from Western corporate speak, is transmuted into a term to venerate the President as the most 'effective manager' of all. 'Effective' becomes *raison d'être* for everything; Stalin was an 'effective manager' who had to make sacrifices for the sake of being 'effective.' (Pomerantsev 2014: 208–210)

Pomerantsev's account holds a strong bias, yet his description of the government's techniques for media management is extraordinarily detailed and gives an sense of the atmosphere surrounding the centre of power in modern Russia.

While this ‘magic’ might be true for internal politics and to some extent in the international arena, Russia behaves according to the rational rules underpinning *realpolitik* – although Western partners seem to no longer speak the same language. The problem in the West is that the brief moment of victory that brought on Fukuyama’s *end of history*, characterised by liberal interventionism driven by a peculiar type of idealism, made them forget that other countries can adhere to rules of engagement dictated by *realpolitik*. At one point, it seemed that Western politicians and public opinion started to believe that, after the fall of the iron curtain, the whole world became liberal. This belief became a rigid dogma that blinded the Western political class to a new emerging reality in which a country like Russia can, in post-ideological times, invent an incomplete post-modern anti-ideology based on the syncretism of everything it wishes to integrate, regardless of any or all dogmatic scruples. Western dogma based on the ‘responsibility to protect’ was incompatible both with Russian realism and with post-WWII international law and endangered, therefore, the whole international order. In political terms, Robert Cooper’s “breaking of nations” rules,¹⁵ enforced by the (Clintonian and Blairite) idealists in the aftermath of Cold War victory, was something to which the whole world was expected to adjust. This naturally included the idea that, in spite of the double standards it applied, the West always held the moral high ground. This was in Cooper’s mind and the minds of likeminded thinkers, a burden that the victors of the Cold War were forced to bear. Soon enough (it is hard to say when exactly – probably at the time of the 2008 Georgian war), Cooper and those who shared this worldview were proven wrong.

Henry Kissinger was probably the only Western statesman who actually understood what was going on in Russian behaviour in the international arena. He travelled to Russia often, spoke with Putin and his own counterpart, Yevgeny Primakov (Евгений Максимович Примаков), on many occasions, but it seems there was nobody willing to listen to Kissinger back home.

Despite sovereign democracy and syncretism as the main features of internal politics and, on the other hand, a *realpolitik* approach to international affairs, there remained an ideological battle within Russia. This

15) “For the postmodern state there is, therefore, a difficulty. It needs to get used to the idea of double standards. Among themselves, the postmodern states operate on the basis of laws and open co-operative security. But when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of state outside the postmodern limits, Europeans need to revert to a rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary for those who still live in the nineteenth-century world of every state for itself.” (Cooper: 2004 61–62)

battle, as in the 19th century, concerns Russia itself but the clash of ideas is also about what Russia's role should be in the world. In the next chapter I will try to identify the ideological camps of contemporary Russia.

Tree Broader Ideological Camps in Russia Today

Today there are three broader ideological camps or three ideological coalitions: *liberals*, *realists*¹⁶ and *conservatives*.

Besides this there is another division or another level of Russian political life. Here the criteria are based on relationships with the state. In other words, whether people, parties, movements, NGOs or media belonging to any of these three broad camps “respect” or are in some way affiliated to the state (and government) or not. Or in Russian political jargon, whether they are part of the system or not (*системные, несистемные*). We can, therefore, distinguish systemic or non-systemic liberals and conservatives. There are, however, no realists who do not belong to the state system because this is the mainstream or centrist position both within governmental structures and the public arena.

What does this mean in reality? A good example can be found in the 2011 protests. These protests were supported by anti-system (non-system) people from across almost the whole political spectrum: communists, national-Bolsheviks, neo-Nazis, monarchists, ultra-liberals and others – all of them protesting against the establishment representing the system and all protesting for their own reasons.

It is possible for the *liberals* and the *conservatives* to be inside system or outside of it and even to enter and exit the system multiple times. For instance, former Minister of Finance (2000–2011), Alexei Kudrin (Алексей Леонидович Кудрин), became an anti-systemic oppositionist, yet he found his peace with Kremlin and became a part of the system again, this time as the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Saint Petersburg State University and, more importantly, in 2016 he became Deputy President of the Economic Council of the Presidential Administration of Russia. On the other hand, there are similar examples among the conservatives too, such as well-known writer, Zakhar Prilepin (Захар Прилепин).¹⁷ Once an opponent of Putin during the protests, but after the reunification of Crimea in 2014, Prilepin came to

16) The ideological standpoint of Russian realists was shaped by former Russian minister of foreign affairs, Yevgeny Primakov. Arguably, today this ideological position is represented by Fyodor Lukyanov (Фёдор Александрович Лукьянов) a opinion-maker, and chief editor of a journal called *Russia in Global Affairs*, which is affiliated to American journal, *Foreign Affairs*.

17) Born as Yevgeny Nikolayevich Prilepin (Евгений Николаевич Прилепин).

the conclusion that the authorities regained their legitimacy and gave them another chance.

Three Test Questions

One way to understand ‘who is who’ on the Russian ideological map is to pose three test questions. The first *test question* tests attitudes to the 1993 Constitution, i.e. whether this document is in need of amendment or not. While realists avoid this topic, liberals lean towards thinking that the state should provide a more liberal environment and relinquish some of its powers for the benefit of individual liberty. Liberals essentially want Russia to integrate into the West and become a part of world envisaged by Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man*. As for conservatives of various colours – whether they be National-Bolsheviks, Stalinists, Eurasianists or Monarchists – from their perspective, the main flaw of the Constitution is that it forbids a state ideology.

The *second test question* pertains to Ukraine. Even some system liberals opposed the Russia’s reunification with Crimea (or annexation of the peninsula – how this event is defined depends largely on one’s ideological stance). Of course, conservatives maintain that Ukraine, Kiev especially (as the “mother of all Russian cities”), is historically Russian land. They claim that approach of the Russian authorities towards the Ukraine crisis was far from satisfactory. Realists, meanwhile, remained quiet while the Crimea operation was unfolding but were compliant with the official position of Kremlin when reunification occurred. Especially so because, according to perhaps the most important name in contemporary Russian conservative thought, Alexander Dugin (Александр Гельевич Дугин), said that realists are in fact “closet liberals”. In his words, liberals represent a *fifth column* while realists are the *sixth column*. In his view, this fifth column includes all system and anti-system liberals, while the sixth column are the realists within the system who obstruct the authorities from making more radical patriotic moves but, once the authorities do such a thing, they became apologists for this approach.

The *third test question* is about the role of Central Bank of Russia or its powers and its status as an invincible institution, independent from other branches of the government, especially the executive branch. Conservatives regard the Central Bank as an alien institution, a body that is independent from Russia and, in essence, as part of the American Federal Reserve System. The chief villain in their eyes is Elvira Nabiullina (Эльвира Сахипзадовна Набиуллина), Chairwoman of

the Central Bank of Russia. In the view of Russian conservatives, the powers that the bank has derive from the 1993 Constitution. Three of the most prominent thinkers focusing on this are famous Russian economist, Valentin Katasonov (Валентин Юрьевич Катасонов);¹⁸ State Duma deputy and prominent member of the United Russia party, Yevgeny Fyodorov (Евгений Алексеевич Фёдоров), who claims Russia is under soft occupation; and Putin's economic advisor, Sergey Glazyev (Сергей Юрьевич Глазьев). Realists avoid the question of the Central Bank altogether while liberals, especially system liberals, do not see any problems with this institution.

Fyodorov wrote the following about the Central Bank:

The Russian Central Bank is independent and does subordinates neither to the president nor the state, it organizes the issuing of the rouble by purchasing foreign currency for a total sum of 1 trillion roubles annually. That is why the majority of Russia's problems should be linked precisely to the 'Law on the Central Bank', written by American advisors, according to which the USA can not only buy all imaginable resources of the country (Russia), but also influence in its internal processes. (Фёдоров 2014: 187)

Katasonov's thoughts follow these same lines:

Many things happening in Russia and the very political system of the country can be understood by evaluating the true position of the fifth, but in reality the first, and only branch of power – the power of money, exercised by the Central Bank. Especially if one takes into account that for the state government, and for the management of the Central Bank of Russia, the people and the economy of the country do not constitute priority elements in the formation of long-term goals and tasks. (Катасонов 2014a: 107)

Interestingly enough, the official symbol of the Central Bank of Russia is a two-headed eagle, yet without the three crowns that appear on the state coat of arms. It is the exact same eagle that symbolised Alexander Kerensky's (Александр Федорович Керенский) Provisional Government, established after the February Revolution in 1917. This brief period of Russian history is praised by modern Russian liberals and anathematised by conservatives, furious about its symbol being minted on every rouble and kopek. Many among them see it as yet another symbol – or even solid proof – of the 'internal occupation' they claim dom-

18) Katasonov spent much of his career in global financial institutions. He was, for example, an advisor to the president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and also an expert at the World Bank and the UN.

inates Russia. Here again, we see how the war of symbols and historical references is very much alive in modern Russian political discourse and the important role it plays.

In Katasonov's view, standing in opposition to today's Russian economy is Stalin's period of state-led rapid economic growth and industrialisation. "After his death J. V. Stalin left the most powerful economy, that according to most indices was the first in Europe, and second place in the world (only to that of the USA)." (Катасонов 2014b: 8) For Andrey Fursov (Андрей Ильич Фурсов), this rapid industrialisation, especially between 1927 and 1941, was one of the reasons why the Soviet Union was able to win World War Two and defeat Nazi Germany, which was, according to him, a globalist project.

Third Reich was an experimental project of the globalists. The very fact that Stalin destroyed it is, without a doubt, a blow against the globalists. This is another thing for which Stalin is so hated in the West: under his leadership the Soviet Union was rebuilt. Stalin died or was assassinated in 1953, however, already by the mid-1950s, i.e. for the better part of Stalin's life, the Soviet Union was rebuilt and became a superpower. (Фурсов 2017: 192)

This view is not so very rare among the Russian conservatives. Another prominent individual sharing this view is Alexander Prohanov (Александр Андреевич Проханов), editor-in-chief of the *Zavtra* newspaper (*Завтра*, Tomorrow). It is also not rare for conservatives frequently laud Stalin as the victor of World War II, together with the Imperial Russia. This would, of course, have been impossible in the Soviet Union but today, as I have previously explained, this syncretism became the official position of the state. This worldview is incompatible with the views of Russian liberals and the 1993 Constitution.

Universities as Ideological Barracks

The camps that can be characterised as being part of the system, excluding the conservatives, have their institutional basis within higher education. The fortress of the liberals is the Higher School of Economics. Interestingly enough, its Rector, Yaroslav Kuzminov (Ярослав Иванович Кузьминов), is married to the previously mentioned Chairwoman of the Central Bank, Elvira Nabiullina. The headquarters of realists is world-famous MGIMO University (the Moscow State Institute of International Relations). Russian conservatives, however, do not dominate a university in a similar fashion. As a result of the propaganda about Russia that they have created and started to believe in, this maybe come as something of

a surprise to Western political thinkers, politicians, media and public discourse in general. Instead, Russian conservatives congregate around a club of thinkers called the Izborsky Club. Conservatives did attempt to hold ground at the Lomonosov Moscow State University where Dugin taught sociology, however, when his views started to differ from the perceived official position of the Kremlin (i.e. the realist position) after May 2014, he was in effect forced to give up his position at the University.¹⁹ Today, therefore, the conservatives have lost their base there. This feeds into the view of most Russian conservatives who believe that Russia is dominated by liberals or so-called crypto-liberals.

Apart from the universities, members of ideological camps gather at annual forums or summits. The economic branch of the liberal camp gathers at the Gaidar Forum. This forum is founded by one of the most recognisable faces of the 1990's, Yegor Gaidar (Егор Тимурович Гайдар), who was Minister of Economy & Finance during the Yeltsin presidency and also acting Prime Minister and Vice-Premier for the Economy between June and December 1992. Gaidar is considered to be the father of Russian shock therapy (a term coined by Jeffrey Sachs). Gaidar's reforms resulted in privatisation and mass poverty. Today he is a wealthy individual and is considered to be a leading reformer by the liberal ideological camp.

The Valdai Club is a political forum considered to belong to system liberals and realists. The conservative hard-core consider the Valdai Club as a liberal forum, yet it sits better in the realist category, since it is organised by the state and, in addition to economic and political matters, covers other state and global matters and is always visited by President Vladimir Putin who is a regular keynote speaker.

The conservatives also have their own forums but these are not as well-financed, nor are they as permanent as those of the liberal and realist camps.

The situation is very similar when it comes to the media sphere. Mainstream state media such as TASS and RIA Novosti or TV Russia 1 belong to the realists, while liberals have TV Dozhd and Radio Echo Moskvy. The latter, interestingly enough, belongs to the media arm of Gazprom.²⁰ Conservatives are as fractured in the media sphere as they are amongst themselves. The various fractions at the conservative end

19) Rumours at the time were that Surkov was behind Dugin's dismissal from university.

20) Gazprom is the Russian state gas monopoly and one would think they would lend their support to the realist position. For some reason, however, they back Echo Moskvy, which is often critical of the Kremlin, gives a voice to non-systemic opposition, and sometimes even broadcasts very harsh statements against President Putin himself.

of the ideological spectrum have a number of mostly marginal internet TV stations, websites, blogs and so forth. Until recently there was no serious TV channel that would give them a voice. Only a few years ago in 2015 Tsargrad TV (Царьград ТВ) was established. Tsargrad is a major conservative TV station with the highest production quality and professionalism of top global TV stations, and it is the only channel of its kind in Russia.²¹ Tsargrad was founded by Konstantin Malofeev (Константин Валерьевич Малофеев) who is portrayed in Western media as an “Orthodox-Christian tycoon” and, because of its dark public relations, the channel is often attacked by ideological foes in Russia and abroad.

Pomerantsev would argue that no matter what ideological position the Russian media adopt, they all belong to the Kremlin and play their own role in a grand political reality show. Although there might be a grain of truth in this point of view, this position is oversimplified because Pomerantsev underestimates the power of ideas and ideologies themselves, and if the Kremlin underestimates them too and sees them only instrumentally, as Pomerantsev suggests, then they are making the same mistake. I believe the same is applicable to the universities as the ideological barracks of the future generation of Russians.

Conservative Alternatives

I have given the conservatives more space in this essay in order to explore the diversity apparent in the conservative corner of Russia's ideological landscape – i.e. precisely because they are the most divided camp. Indeed, they could arguably hardly be called one camp at all due to their considerable ideological differences. What connects them (besides previously mentioned test questions) is more what they oppose than what they are for, because they stand for very different visions of Russia's future and often its past too.

The essential problem for all Russian conservatives is the lack of a coherent ideological alternative to liberalism, which won in 1991, and for them continues to dominate Russian social, political and economic life. Maybe here one can find the answer to the almost metaphysical problem of the resilience of Elvira Nabiulina, the Russian Central Bank and the rest of the financial elite who are so closely integrated with Western-dominated global financial institutions. This ‘liberal’ group of financial gurus appears to have so many enemies within the Russian political elite and broader society, however, the fact remains that while

21) That is, if one does not count TV Spas of the Russian Orthodox Church.

there is no coherent alternative nor official ideology or radically different economic programme, Russian society will continue to operate as part of the liberal economic paradigm. In a sense, ideology is no longer important. Everybody can say virtually anything they want and not be held to account. Freedom of speech in modern Russia is almost limitless and open discussion has become and continues to be a normal part of daily life. So what is the catch? As long as no one actually challenges the existing liberal financial system, they can do and say whatever they wish. This might change with the emergence of a new Cold War and the imposition of the economic sanctions on Russia by the West. If Russia is forced to create its own SWIFT system and other financial tools, then it might start thinking about changing its economic paradigm and, necessarily therefore, its ideological paradigm also. This process may already be underway but only time will tell how far is Russia prepared to go with reforms that would provide her with economic sovereignty. Russia started to trade oil on the Shanghai stock exchange in Yuan rather than petrodollars; there are talks of creating an alternative world currency, bank, trading system etc. Also worth mentioning is that, thanks to Western sanctions, Russian agriculture has now become independent and self-sufficient.

Faced with these issues, like their predecessors from the 19th and 20th centuries, contemporary Russian conservatives are trying to formulate an ideological alternative to the West. They are actually the only ones trying to create an ideological alternative, in other words trying to give a meaning to Russia, make sense of it and find it a higher purpose. I will mention some of most important thinkers and people known in the Russian media and internet spheres who are working to formulate alternative ideological formulae.

Alexander Dugin came forward with the *Forth Political Theory*. (Dugin 2012) He claims that all three ideologies that emerged from Modernity: liberalism, socialism and fascism (in all its forms from ethno-nationalism to racially founded National Socialism) have failed. The latter two clashed during World War Two, resulting in the end of fascism, while liberalism (according to Dugin the first and purest ideology of the modern era) defeated socialism at the end of the Cold War. All three of these ideologies had a Cartesian subject, which represents them. For liberalism this Cartesian subject is the individual, for socialism it is the class, while for fascism it is the race or nation (depending on the form of this third political ideology in Dugin's vocabulary).

Dugin proposes the Forth political ideology, which would oppose all but first and foremost liberalism as the remaining ideology of the era of

modernity. This Forth political ideology is, however, more a mechanism for the creation of a new ideological formula than a coherent ideological system in its own right.

There is only one way out – to reject the classical political theories, both winners and losers, strain the imagination, seize the reality of the new global world, correctly decipher the challenges of Post Modernity and create something new, something beyond the political battles of the 19th and 20th centuries. Such an approach is an invention to the development of a Forth Political Theory – beyond communism, fascism and liberalism. (Dugin 2012: 6)

Andrey Fursov, a neo-Stalinist historian and one of the most famous social scientists in today's Russia, does not propose a new ideology, as in his view the Stalinist Soviet approach is preferable. Instead he proposes a new science with new disciplines and methodology. Conspirology, he claims, should no longer be mystified and should become a legitimate field of study applying scientific methods, because without it it is simply not possible to explain many political and historical phenomena.

Nikolai Starikov (Николай Викторович Стариков), an alternative historian and prolific writer, gives new and often daring explanations of historical events, such as the nature of the Russian Bolshevik revolution, with emphasis on the role of foreign secret services, especially those of Great Britain.

Yegor Kholmogorov (Егор Станиславович Холмогоров), a Russian nationalist author, suggests that the ethnic Russian people have often been neglected by Russian empires and especially during the Soviet period. A neglect that has also become common in politically correct thinking in contemporary Russia. In a sense, his nationalism has much in common with that of famous Russian writer, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (Александр Исаевич Солженицын).

The young voice of the Russian nationalist is well articulated by blogger, Anatoly Karlin (Анатолий Карлин), who criticises the Kremlin for not being loyal enough to the interests of the Russian people in the post-Soviet space. For the group he represents in the conservative camp, Ukraine is the most important issue and also Putin's 'greatest sin'. Karlin does not, however, criticise only the Kremlin and the President's policy, he is also very critical of people who he identifies as 'bots' of the regime, such as Starikov, mentioned earlier.

The Kremlin hesitated in 2014, probably fearing a New Cold War with the West, but it increasingly looks like they are going to get it anyway. Russian Stalinist nut job, Nikolay Starikov, was preaching scare stories

of nuclear war with the West if Russia was to intervene in 2014, but a few months ago, a mercenary group belonging to one of Putin's cronies seems to have directly attacked American troops in Syria and promptly got wiped out. 'Let's fight a nuclear war not over our own people but over some oil refinery in a Middle Eastern shithole,' nationalists complained. Whereas in 2014 the entirety of Novorossiia was ripe for the taking, as of today it seems like Russia would be lucky to merely hang onto a small slice of the Donbass in the long-run. But at least Putin got his chance to play G.W. Bush in the Middle East, and the 80% approval to go with it, and that's what really matters. (Karlin 2018)

Radical leftist, Eduard Limonov (Эдуард Вениаминович Лимонов), leader of the National-Bolshevik Party, is a very interesting character in the conservative camp. He was one of the leaders of the protest movement in Soviet times and a very vocal Russian nationalist. Among many other things, he is famous for predicting the Ukrainian war in 1992, years before it began. (Лимонов 2014) In the early 1990s he collaborated with Dugin²² but the two fell out as both are strong personalities who could not compromise.

Valentin Katasonov and Sergey Glazyev (one of Putin's economic advisors) are proposing a new economic system based on financial and economic independence that would become the basis for state independence and sovereignty.

Leonid Reshetnikov, former director of the Russian Institute of Strategic Research, and Konstantin Malofeev formed the Two-Headed Eagle Society, based on Imperial and Orthodox traditions and family values.

Of course, this is not a complete list of all prominent personalities from the conservative scene. Some of the most prominent mainstream conservative thinkers include Natalya Narochnitskaya (Наталья Алексеевна Нарочницкая),²³ Alexei Miller (Алексей Ильич Миллер),

22) Limonov, Dugin, musician and artist, Sergey Kuryokhin (Сергей Анатольевич Курёхин), and a famous Russian punk-rocker, Yegor Letov (Егор Фёдорович Летов), were the recognisable leaders of the National-Bolshevik Party (NBP), founded in 1993. In the NBP, Limonov was the true frontman, political showman and a scandal-maker and Dugin an intellectual in charge of ideological and intellectual components but his disagreements with Limonov were insurmountable and he left the party in 1998.

23) Her idea that Orthodox Christianity influences Russia's specific national identity is worth mentioning: "Christian, above all Orthodox, conciseness gives birth to a completely different national-state thinking – a feeling of belonging to the holy fatherland, that is not identical to the state, which is a political institution with all of its imperfections and sins. Nevertheless, this feeling runs more often in deeply religious people, that felt the rituality not only of personal but also of national-state being as a gift of God and is passed on in consciousness from generation to generation." (Нарочницкая 2005: 9)

Michail Remizov (Михаил Виталиевич Ремизов), but there are many others, some more famous and important others less so if not utterly marginal.

Conclusion – Putin seems to be constantly balancing the three camps but for how long?

Ideology cannot be avoided forever. Syncretism has its limitations. The great test came in 2017 on the occasion of the centenary of the October revolution. The authorities did not know how to react to this event, how to describe it, what meaning to attach to it. Was it a glorious revolution as it was interpreted in the Soviet Union? Or was it a murderous spree of Bolsheviks who forcefully took power and killed the whole imperial family? Revolutionary overthrow of the government is certainly not a behaviour to be glorified in a system that emphasises stability as the core value of a balanced and content society. At the same time, after the collapse of the Soviet Union there is no general consensus among the majority of the Russian population. Some Russians view the revolution positively and some do not. The question was brushed under the rug and in that moment the syncretic formula simply did not work. So, the state-led media machinery diverted serious discussion about meaning of the revolution, derailing it with scandal and trivia about the film *Matilda* (partly financed by the Russian Ministry of Culture). This film depicted Emperor Nikolay II Romanov (Николай II Александрович Романов),²⁴ who is revered as a saint by many, as a weak man who even had a mistress. In this way any serious discussion about the deep meaning of the revolution for Russian society was averted.

Vladislav Surkov, the creator of Russian political syncretism, detects this problem of sustainability, of the impossibility of forever avoiding ideology. Surkov therefore came out with a new and very bold article in 2018 titled: “The Solitude of a Half-Blood.” (Surkov 2018) Here Surkov completely embraced the classical position of Russian Eurasianists.²⁵ If

24) Serbs have deep respect for Emperor Nikolai II, who stepped in to protect their country in 1914. In turn, they helped Russians destigmatise this Emperor, vilified during the decades of Bolshevik propaganda by erecting a monument to him in the centre of Belgrade in 2014, on the site of the former Imperial Russian Legation.

25) So for four centuries Russia’s direction was eastbound, and then for another four centuries it was westbound. Neither direction produced any roots. We’ve reached the end of the road in both directions. Now new *third way* ideologies will be required; civilisations of the third type, of the third world, of the third Rome... But it’s doubtful that we are ‘the third civilisation’ - rather, a bifold and dualistic one that incorporates both the East and the West. Both European and Asian, and therefore neither fully European nor fully Asian. Our cultural and geopolitical affiliation

Pomerantsev is correct in assessing that Surkov is Putin's main political advisor and shadow creator of politics in Russia, then this article is of great significance. If the article is not a part of Russia's political reality show, then this would mean that the era of realism as disguised liberalism is over and that the country is moving from *sovereign democracy* towards the creation of a new ideological position for itself, one radically closer to the position of Russian conservatism, in both its 19th century and contemporary iterations.

* * *

The fact is that although liberals and realists are in control of most state resources, people are apparently naturally more inclined to the conservative camp. This is, judging by Surkov's article, well understood in the Kremlin of 2018. Perhaps it was not fully understood in 2014?

This inclination to patriotism or conservatism was obvious during the *Russian Spring* of 2014, which has shown that people are very much inclined to a radical conservative u-turn. The subsequent events in Ukraine, Russian disengagement and the Minsk process showed that the government was afraid of a true turn towards Russian Orthodox Christian tradition, understood by the masses as the unification of Russian lands, so they have decided to rebrand the Russian spring into Crimea spring.

The lasting lesson of the Russian Spring is that if Russia ever turns seriously towards conservatism, the only conservative turn that stands a chance is the one rooted in the strongest archetype. That is the Orthodox Christian Byzantine model abandoned since Peter the Great's westernisation. Most of the population of the Russian Federation are ethnic Russians with an Orthodox Christian background. Since this Byzantine model is by definition universalist, other religious and ethnic groups can be integrated while preserving their traditions, as was the case in both imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. Some tentative signals in this direction have been given emitted by the government but never fully, as the regime is ever balancing between the three camps. A turn in this direction would, however, mean an end of illusionism created by the political technologists and is therefore a move that would pose great challenges.

resembles the fluid identity of a man born of mixed marriage. He is everyone's relative, but nowhere is he a native. At home among strangers, a stranger at home. He understands everyone but is understood by no one. A half-blood, a half-breed, a strange one. Russia is a western-eastern half-blood country, with its double-headed nationhood, hybrid mentality, intercontinental territory and bipolar history. And just like any half-breed, Russia is charismatic, talented, beautiful, and lonely. (Surkov 2018)

Nevertheless, Russia as the *largest* country in the world has always managed to find a global mission. It bears a tradition of its specific role in the world, which Nikolai Berdyaev defined as the Russian Idea. Many Europeans dissatisfied with the current path of Europe in the European Union – both left and right wingers – today look to Russia. Many in the rest of the world also see Russia as the country that will find a new ideological formula and define a new hope for the world, hence the great support for Russia and its President in places such as Serbia, Syria, China, Latin America, Africa and even North America.

I conclude this essay with a prophetic thought by Konstantin Leontiev (Константин Николаевич Леонтьев), one of Russia's greatest minds of the 19th century, who more than a century ago predicted a trend that is unfolding today:

If anarchy takes over the West, we need discipline to help the West, so that what is worth saving there finds salvation and precisely that which made its greatness – The Church, which ever it is, the state, remnants of art, and maybe [...] *science itself!* (Леонтьев 2005: 128)

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