

DOMESTIC ROOTS OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY. RE-THINKING STRATEGY.

A SELECTION OF CONFERENCE PAPERS

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FOREWORD

The present issue of UI Occasional Papers includes three papers and one introductory note from all nine papers presented at the workshop Domestic Roots of Russian Foreign Policy: Re-Thinking Strategy. The workshop was part of the program of the 75 years anniversary of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 28-30 August 2013.

Greg Simons' paper Nation Branding and Russian Foreign Policy has been published as a separate issue of the UI Occasional Papers series, while the remaining five presentations can be found in other publication outlets. All papers are mentioned in the introduction by Lena Jonson and the concluding remarks by Kristian Gerner.

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INTRODUCTION

Lena Jonson

In August 2013 a conference took place in celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI). The overall theme of the conference was “Global Power Shifts”. The workshop on Russia dealt, however, with domestic factors in Russian foreign policy. How come? Let me briefly set out the basic assumptions on which the workshop rests.

The first assumption is that Russia will not be among the major actors in either current or future global power shifts. This role has been taken on by newcomers – first and foremost from among the Asian states. The superpowers that dominated the post-second world war period are being seriously challenged – Russia to a far greater extent than the USA.

Russia's influence and position on the international scene has declined in the past 20 years or so. It is still a great power and has the symbols of that status, such as the possession of nuclear weapons and a seat on the United Nations Security Council. Nonetheless, the decline in international influence has continued during the 2000s. The Russia of today is riddled with huge domestic problems and challenges and, for as long as these go unresolved, it will not be able to play a larger role on the global stage.

The second assumption is that not only are Russia's major challenges today internal rather than external, but domestic factors are becoming the major determinants of Russian policymaking. Among these domestic factors are discourses on identity: Who are we as Russians? How are we to face new challenges? Which values will guide us in the future?

The third assumption is indicated by the phrase “Rethinking Strategy”. It suggests that Russia is in the middle of a paradigm shift with regard to its future policy. Although there is a general awareness across the political divide that Russia is weak, there are different answers about how to respond to the situation. Nonetheless, the contours of a new paradigm are emerging. This paradigm shift in values is reflected in debates on political, economic and cultural issues.

The fourth assumption is that the contours of the Russian state nationalist paradigm of today similar to – the Official Nationality doctrine of Tsar Nicholas I of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality (Православие, самодержавие, народность). Today's policy can of course not become a simple repetition of the policy of more than 150 years ago. Still, the similarities are striking.

With these assumptions as a background, let us turn to the structure of the workshop. The first session dealt with methodological issues with regard to the role of domestic factors in the study of foreign policy and international relations. Ted Hopf (Singapore National University) presented his contribution to international relations theory, “societal constructivism”, which involves analysing the role of domestic discourses of identity to explain Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War. In his books, *Reconstructing the Cold War: The Early Years* (2012), and, *Social Construction of International Politics* (2002), he reconstructs the Soviet internal discussion on identity, how it changed over the years and how these changes corresponded to changes in Soviet foreign policy.

The following two sessions were called “Rethinking Russia: Ideas and Visions”. They dealt with the dynamics of Russian society that stem from the views and ideas of various movements and institutions that may have a bearing on Russian foreign policy in the future. The first, the protest movement, was discussed along individual-oriented concepts of rights and the freedom of the individual as a citizen. Alexander Bikbov (Moscow State University) told about the protest manifestations of 2011–2012. Michele Micheletti (Stockholm University), who specializes in citizen expectations and how they are implemented in various societal relationships and practices, presented a comparative framework for understanding citizen demands also in Russia. Elena Namli (Uppsala University) analyzed demands for human and political rights in the context of the Russian official discourse on anti-colonialism.

The next session dealt with the dynamics of state-oriented discourses in which the individual and his or her preferences play a subordinate role. A central theme was the possible link between these state-oriented ideological-political ideas and foreign policy preferences. Irina Sandomirskaja (Södertörn University) analyzed the connection between the theoretical premises of Stalin's theory of language and his understanding of world supremacy. Per-Arne Bodin (Stockholm University) looked at the relationship between key concepts of the Church on the spatial domains of the Patriarchate, and the role and function of these concepts in the shaping of Russian foreign policy. Maria Engström's (Uppsala

University) presented contemporary neoconservative ideas as a metapolitical and intellectual movement acting at the junction of art, literature, philosophy and politics, and with clear implications for foreign policy thinking. Finally, Greg Simons (Uppsala University and UI) turned the perspective around by analyzing official efforts to reconfigure the image of Russia for a foreign audience, as nation-branding becomes an instrument of Russian foreign policy.

Concluding the session Kristian Gerner made some remarks on the domestic and international factors behind Russian foreign policy.

STALIN AND LANGUAGE: SOVIET PHANTOMS OF WORLD SUPREMACY^[1]

Irina Sandomirskaja

A series of Stalin's contributions to the 1950 discussion about linguistics, nowadays known under the title "Marxism and Problems of Linguistics" is probably Stalin's most mysterious and obscure texts. Even though the whole of the Soviet population had to study it in detail at political seminars and practically learn by heart; even though the Western sympathizers responded with understanding and support; even though Soviet linguists and philologists exploded with a hysteria of enthusiasm, it remained totally impenetrable in terms of its academic message and equally inexplicable in terms of its general purpose.

And indeed, why should Stalin, the winner in the II World War and as a result of it the leader of a considerably expanded world socialism, all of a sudden give his precious time and attention to the insignificant subject of language theory? And indeed, Stalin's intervention in the science of language was naïve and mildly speaking uninformed; his attack against Marxist linguistics obviously anachronistic; and the subject itself of language theory completely insignificant in the light of the global task that the USSR and world communism were facing in the beginning of the cold war. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in *V KRUGE PERVOM* explains the scholarly initiative of the Leader as a symptom of megalomania and a boundless urge towards expansion: Stalin in Solzhenitsyn's novel simply cannot tolerate the existence of a subject, however insignificant and specialized, that hasn't been blessed by the light of his genius. Our contemporary Stalinist Aleksandr Prokhanov, however (and I want to thank Per-Arne bodin for drawing my attention to his opinion), gave a more perceptive interpretation of Stalin's intention with which I partly agree. In Stalin's representation of language structure, Prokhanov sees an allegory of the USSR, a practical instruction as to how to assemble another USSR with its languages (or rather its tongues, in the biblical meaning of tongues as nations) and its teleology of the world supremacy in future.

In this presentation, independent of Prokhanov and not inspired by his phantasmatic imagination, even though acknowledging the embarrassing closeness

of his phantasy and my own analysis, I would like to look at Stalin's theory of language in Marxism and Problems of Linguistics as a circumlocution, as a vision – inarticulate and counter-logical, like any Vision – of a future geopolitical world order, a phantom of world supremacy under the auspices of Stalinism and in the name of Stalin himself, a world of "tongues" developing towards a global pacification in one universal language – one theory – one name, as it is – the universal tongue of victorious Stalinism that subjugates, eliminates, and annihilates all other – local – tongues, though systems, and political orders. In other words, I am reading Marxism and Problems of Linguistics as Stalin's political and geopolitical testament. For this purpose, I will concentrate on the closing chapters of this peculiar text, in which Stalin produces a design of a fantastic, utopian universal language of the future representing it as the prototype of a unitary geopolitical order in the future of victorious Stalinism worldwide.

This episode was not the first attempt by Stalin to theorize political problems by addressing them through language. In 1913, he wrote about the right of nationalities to self-determination by addressing to their linguistic rights. In 1934, he attempted to conceptualize internal "class struggle" in the Soviet socialist society in linguistic terms. In Marxism and Problems of Linguistics, he constructs a rather bizarre language theory to produce a vision of a future world after the defeat of Western imperialism and colonialism.

Nor was he the first to use linguistic metaphors in order to account for contemporary history and politics. In 1945, academician Viktor Vinogradov published a small book, *The Great Russian Language*, in which he proclaimed the historical inevitability of the victory of the brotherly Slavic tongues over the historically doomed European Germanic-Romance languages. Curious enough, this pseudo-scholarly pamphlet became the first declaration of the forthcoming cold war just a year before it was officially started, the post-WW2 European order with its East-West divide and its emphasis on the fraternity of Slavic cultures as the prototype of the "Socialist camp" of the 1960-90s.

In order to make his big leap from language theory to geopolitics, Stalin had to revise the fundamental postulates of Marxism-Leninism. Firstly, he excluded language from the categories of superstructure, but instead of including it into the composition of the base, he gave language an absolutely superior position in the system. In this new formulation, language is not product or production of culture (as in Lenin and Marx), but an all embracing symbolic environment that encompasses both the process of the base and those of the superstructure. In other words, the laws of language supersede both the economic law, and the laws of history: a radical revision of dialectical and historical materialism.

Secondly, he strongly criticized the Marxist idea about the class nature of languages. Language, according to Stalin, is indifferent to classes and “services” (obsluzhivaet) equally efficiently, all classes, whether the dominant or the working one. Equally indifferent, however, is language to nation and ethnicity, since both of them are equally well “serviced” by language for “the expression of thought and exchange of ideas”. Language is indifferent to all of them – and at the same time immediately related to all of them. The immediacy of language is like the immediacy of God’s presence in divine creation: God is not part of Creation, but Creation is impossible without God. Stalin is not using theological language, but his thought figures as concerns the role of language is clearly theological. This theology, however, contains an irresolvable inner contradiction: language is, indeed, absolutely sovereign like God – but at the same time the sovereignty of language is the sovereignty of a perfect instrument – Stalin compares language with agricultural machines – equally well and quite indifferently functioning as tools in the production of words and exchange of ideas.

As the absolute sovereign principle, language is unquestionable in its “inherent laws” but at the same time, as an ideal instrument, language is manipulable – and so are, also history and politics.

How does language change? Or – to decipher Stalin’s allegorical language – how does political and historical change occur? Even though language develops according to its inner laws (and here’s another paradox), it is subject to revolutions. Revolutions, however, do not occur by themselves. In Stalin’s late thought, in direct contradiction to Marxist historical analysis, all revolutions are “revolutions from above” (an innovative oxymoron that before Stalin used it would be considered a perfect example of

contradictio in adjecto. Revolution from above is in principle an absurdity the result of systems (linguistic, political, etc) revolutionizing themselves through violence against themselves. A historical example, according to Stalin, is collectivization: a case of a successful “revolution from above”, it illustrates what Stalin understands is the motor driving language change forward, towards a universal pacification of a universal language, a likeness of a geopolitical kolkhoz in which all classes, nations, ethnicities, and so on make use of a collective linguistic instrumentarium: a stock of words and a common grammar.

Strangely enough, in this phantasmatic construction of a collectively exploited instrumental language, one seems to discern Stalin’s own self-portrait. Just like language, Stalin “has an immediate relation” to everything and everyone. Just like language, Stalin is indifferent towards classes and nations and serves them equally efficient providing them with an infallible theory for the expression and exchange of thoughts. Stalin is not a linguist, he modestly remarks, but he has “a direct relationship to Marxism” – and therefore can have an authoritative opinion on language. Stalin is so directly related to Marxism that he practically is Marxism – and being as directly related to language, he practically is language, the universal language of the USSR, the spirit of the USSR as a communist nation, the inner form of the USSR and the Socialist world, Stalin is as limitless as language in his “direct” connection to the limitlessness of the production of the USSR and world socialism, of its almost global symbolic economy.

Thus, symbolic economy is redefined in terms of a curiously technocratic linguistic determinism. As a universal tool, language becomes a unitary technological environment for everything else, determining the functioning of everything else.

This sounds like a very odd, internally contradictory theory. But, when produced by Stalin himself, his naïve linguistic fantasy shows a serious re-orientation in the political imagination of the post-war time, which now finds inspiration in technological phantasms, such as self-sufficient, self-evolving, self-revolutionizing instruments and machines that, moreover, rule over both the economic and the historical law but at the same time service everything that is hierarchically beneath them. This is a cold war translated into allegories of language. Different languages, not different ideologies or weapons, compete with each in their capacities as operative systems, as artificial

symbolic environments with varying potentials of giving service. The USSR allegorically represented in Stalin's language machine, is no longer conceived as an arena of class conflict and revolutionary leaps, but as a space of calculability, both in its contemporary condition and in history, throughout the stages of its development. Thus, Stalin's language, on the one hand, seeks to provide world history and geopolitics with a calculability and a manipulability of machines, and, on the other, his vision of the Soviet society, the community of world socialism represented as the future of all languages is thus peculiarly, even though inarticulately, insanely technological.

As far as Stalin is removed from the proper understanding of the technicalities of the Cold War with its artificial intelligence and communication theory, his vision of language is a pre-vision of what Soviet science and society would be after Stalin's own death: the cybernetic movements, systems theory, scientific and technological progress and other innovations of the Cold War brought forward by the tremendous technical advance in global military technologies.

The Cold War and the emergence of the Second World around the USSR changed the situation so radically that it demands a new revision of Marxist theory. Now, the Marxist belief that upon the proletarian revolution the state should start to wither, proves impracticable. In the early Stalinist state, the revision of this Marxist thesis was explained by Stalin as he specially designed his famous theory about the strengthening the class struggle in the country where socialism is being built when surrounded by enemies. It was this theory that was used for the justification of terror. Nowadays, it is the Cold War and its technological competition that explains that the state still does not wither away – and on the contrary becomes even stronger – even though the revolution has been proclaimed victorious and socialism, on the whole, already achieved. Again, Stalin makes his point by referring to the all-embracing, all determining role of language in its capacity of “serving”. Just like language, the state is superior to everything else, but it is also a machine, And so are the other political machines, such as the army or the political police. However, by being an all-embracing. All-determining machine, language would ultimately bring about a pacification in class and national conflicts due to its all-encompassing indifference and its “direct relatedness” to everything. Now, the pacifying power of language is relevant not in the class war of the 1930s Great terror, but in the struggle between super-systems on a geopolitical level.

Language as a tool of communication, just like the state, the intelligence service, and the army, is necessary as a global “weapon of struggle”^[2]. It will remain a weapon until socialism achieves its ultimate victory on a planetary scale, and not until then can one think about dismantling this weapon, equally unthinkable as the dismantling of other apparatuses – the state, intelligence, and the army. The cold war is not only a race of armaments, not merely an ideological struggle and a contest in economic might, but it is a competition between languages, between lexical and grammatic systems.

In the closing section of his text, Stalin represents these imaginary linguistic star wars as a theory of popular and national revolutions, as a Utopian vision of the development of independent nations (“tongues”, *jazyki*) after the victory over imperialism and colonialism. Languages evolve, Stalin explains, like militaristic superpowers, through “the suppression and defeat of some languages, and the victory of others... two languages, one of which is to suffer defeat, while the other is to emerge from the struggle victorious”. This is how Stalin envisages the post-imperialist, postcolonial world after socialism ultimately defeats capitalism on a world scale, “when the exploiting classes are overthrown and national and colonial oppression is eradicated; when national isolation and mutual distrust among nations is replaced by mutual confidence and rapprochement between nations; when national equality has been put into practice; when the policy of suppressing and assimilating languages is abolished; when the co-operation of nations has been established, and it is possible for national languages freely to enrich one another through their co-operation.”

The global and class pacification resulting from victory of the universal international language will lead to the elimination of national borders on the world map: a transparent allusion to the occupation of Eastern Europe and the eventual formation of the world system of socialism. Apparently, the ultimate victory of Stalinism as the universal language, the ultimate transformation of local – and different – languages – into a unitary, and an indifferent universal tongue will also lead to an exhaustion of language. As I already said, I am reading Marxism and the Problems of Linguistics as Stalin's testament, an act of handing down heritage. Declaring the inevitability of the global victory of language, Stalin in the same text testifies to the exhaustion of Marxism – that is, himself. In the finishing sentence of his text, proclaiming the invincibility of his own thought as the Marxism of his time, he in the same

breath repeats four times that “Marxism cannot but” (cannot but develop, cannot but be enriched, etc). This “cannot” repeated four times seems to testify to the exhaustion of his thought and his own being. In Stalin's person, Marxism – or Language –cannot any longer resist its own self-revolutionization and

its development towards the universal pacification of the ultimate victory. Nevertheless, while “Marxism cannot”, Language in the Stalinist empire can, and will carry on Stalinist thought towards an implementation on a global level.

[1] The complete version of this text is published in Russian, in: Irina Sandomirskaja, *Blokada v slove: ocherki kriticheskoi teorii i biopolitiki jazyka*. Moscow:NLO, 2013, pp. 337-400. In November 2013 the book by Irina Sandomirskaja from which this paper is extracted was awarded the Russian Andrei Belyi literary prize for the humanities.

[2] Следовательно, без языка, понятного для общества и общего для его членов, общество прекращает производство, распадается и перестает существовать как общество. В этом смысле язык, будучи орудием общения, является вместе с тем и орудием борьбы и развития общества. Известия 12

USING AND MISUSING ANTI-COLONIALISM: A REFLECTION ON RUSSIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Elena Namli

It is extremely dangerous to encourage people to see themselves as exceptional, whatever the motivation. There are big countries and small countries, rich and poor, those with long democratic traditions and those still finding their way to democracy. Their policies differ, too. We are all different, but when we ask for the Lord's blessings, we must not forget that God created us equal.

*Vladimir Putin in The New York Times
September 11 2013*

It is very often the case that political scientists deliver their analysis based on the assumption that politics is a praxis that has very little to do with moral values. I do not share this view on politics and believe that in order to suggest a transparent and reasonable analysis of the political we need to take into consideration a normative dimension of political discourse. This dimension can be explicit or implicit, well-recognized or hidden but according to my understanding it is almost always present. Therefore in this essay I am going to suggest an analysis of the current Russian political discourse that focuses on one aspect of its normative dimension, namely the ideal of national sovereignty and anti-colonial resistance.

This resistance can be shaped and is actually shaped in many different ways. As any other vision of liberation, it is used both by the oppressed and the oppressors. Further, there are a sufficient number of different qualitative theoretical approaches that can be used in order to analyze the complexity of the anti-colonial resistance of our time. In this short reflection I will try to elaborate on some features of the current Russian political discourse that according to my understanding fits into the more general paradigm of the resistance against colonial trends of the globalized world.

I will first describe some significant changes in Russia's foreign doctrine and politics that many experts both in Russia and abroad recently have noticed. These changes include "the turn away" from the integration with the West and towards the ideal of a more traditional and value-conservative Russia. I will then relate these changes to the domestic

political developments, mainly to the rise and peculiar character of the political opposition. Further, I will analyze the anti-Western and anti-colonial connotations of the Russian political discourse. I will emphasize its ambiguity and argue that it is wrong to reject the anti-colonial connotations of Russian political discourse and that there is a need for a nuanced and value-sensitive approach to this complex dimension of the Russian politics.

ANTI-WESTERN SHIFT IN RUSSIAN POLITICS

Many experts on Russian politics have noticed a shift that appeared in Russian politics during the first year of President Vladimir Putin's latest term in office. The professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations Igor Okunev describes it as a "shift from Western-centric to non-Western-centric, and from global to regional".^[1] I believe that there are at least some indicators that support Okunev's view. Reading the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation approved by President Vladimir Putin on 12 February 2013 we realize that there are some important markers of what can be interpreted as a shift towards a non-Western orientation. For example, the 6 § of the document stipulates that "the ability of the West to dominate world economy and politics continues to diminish". Further, there is a statement that points out that traditional military and political alliances should be replaced by "network diplomacy [...] aimed at finding effective solutions to common challenges". The latter sentence is especially interesting due to the combination of a descriptive and a normative point – it says that the traditional alliances do not function properly and that new networks should seek to articulate "common challenges". This can be reasonably interpreted as an evaluation of the current international alliances as violating the principle of mutuality.

If we analyze the entire document carefully and relate it to the comments that at several occasions were made by President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, we might suggest that the current political leadership of Russia have chosen to view Western international politics as both normatively questionable and pragmatically inefficient. As Sergei Lavrov highlighted in the interview he gave in the Foreign Policy Journal April 29 2013,

Russia is very concerned by the developments of the foreign policies of the USA and the EU that seem to believe that they have the right to interfere in other states' internal affairs. Lavrov also indicated that this self-proclaimed right is often justified by the Western leaders in terms of political and ideological superiority of the West. Lavrov stressed that the Russian position, for example in relation to the so called "Arab spring", is based on the fundamental principles of international law (sovereignty and non-interference). Commenting on the situation in Syria during the spring 2013 Lavrov further confirms that in most of the cases military solutions "could only mean a radicalization of the country".^[2]

In the above mentioned interview Lavrov describes his own approach to foreign politics as "transparent and pragmatic". However, it is easy to demonstrate that Lavrov's view on international politics as presented in the interview fits very well into the tradition of just war ethics as well as it includes an articulated normative vision of how the international system of human rights should be sustained. The Concept of foreign policy points out some additional normative concerns. For example, the document stipulates that the Russian state will promote "Russia's approach to human rights issues" (4); and that "global competition takes place on a civilizational level, whereby various values and models of development based on the universal principles of democracy and market economy start to clash and compete against each other". The document includes the accusation of double standards in human rights policies on behalf of the West (39) and shows that the discourse on Asian values, as well as on Islamic values, is taken very seriously in Russia.^[3] The criticism of the Western policies of human rights delivered by the Russian authorities is in many regards similar to the criticism against Western dominance and cultural imperialism formulated by many other political actors in the globalized world. As is well-known this criticism includes the accusation of the West as trying to establish a liberal monopoly on the interpretation and implementation of human rights.

President Putin and the Russian State Duma for some time now have been forming politics that further confirms the shift towards non-Western or even anti-Western orientation. The law on "foreign agents" that by very harsh terms of counteracts international funding of non-governmental organizations, the law restricting international adoption of orphans, and the extensive legal restrictions concerning state employee's savings in foreign banks are all clear indicators of the Russian leadership's effort to claim

a political and value-related distance towards the West. Especially anti-American and anti-NATO rhetoric has loudly re-entered the Russian political discourse.

There are several factors that might have contributed to the current anti-Western development in Russia. Some of them have a character of *realpolitik* and can be understood as a direct and predictable reaction to the offensive politics of NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe and to what Russia experiences as American or/and European interference in its domestic affairs, such as for example US Magnitsky law. There is also a great disappointment regarding the political obstacles that several Russian political initiatives for a mutual cooperation with the West encounter. It is well known that President Putin has tried and still keeps trying to reach an agreement with the EU that would allow visa-free short-time travels in Europe and Russia for Russian and EU citizens. Several European countries, Sweden included, do not approve of this initiative. Some observers stress that Turkey's experiences of its pro-EU politics constantly being questioned by the European Union have contributed to the current Russian skepticism towards European cooperation.

Further, there are some important domestic political processes that can explain or at least contribute to a reasonable explanation of the anti-Western shift. I agree with those experts who believe that the rise of political opposition in Russia calls for a response on behalf of the government. The opposition's demand for political participation devaluates the previously rather effective strategy of President Putin that used to claim him and his government being non-ideological and generally representing the interests of the Russian people. The priority of building "a strong Russian state" is still an important value in the Russian political discourse but its previously almost absolute status is now seriously questioned. Both experts on and participants in Russian politics realize that the Russian "no-party state [...] is an essential feature of its political weakness".^[4]

The Russian so-called "non-systemic opposition" is unconsolidated and lacks sustainable political programs, but in a long-term perspective it represents a challenge to the monological political aim of a strong state for the sake of Russia's people. It is further important to keep in mind that the traditional opposition, the very existence of which is very seldom mentioned in the West, might become more politically engaged due to the competition with the non-systemic actors. Therefore it is reasonable to

suggest that President Putin believes or pretends to believe that the political opposition that demands the democratization of the political life and questions legitimacy of the state's leadership is a threat to Russia in that it is weakening the state and therefore in practice acting in the interests of the West and against the interests of Russia. The ongoing strengthening of the already far too narrow ties between the state and the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church indicates that the Russian governance is looking for such resources for political legitimacy that would devalue political opposition in Russia as pro-Western and therefore anti-Russian.

AMBIGUITY OF THE RUSSIAN ANTI-WESTERN DISCOURSE

How, then, to interpret and evaluate these developments? Is the anti-Western political orientation in Russia pragmatic and/or manipulative? Is the official Russian criticism of the Western human rights politics as well as that of democracy as marked by double standards and desire to dominate the world just rhetoric for the sake of an unchallenged domestic power-possession? I will argue that, although it is obvious that in Russia anti-Western sentiments have been used and still are used in order to avoid rational and critical political discussions, the current situation is more complex. In order to understand this complexity we need to recall the fact that Russian leaders find themselves in a globalized world that unfortunately does not lack examples of misuse of such well-recognized values as that of liberalism, human rights and democracy. The experiences of the 1990's when Western countries demonstrated very clearly that a weak Russia was preferable to a democratic Russia are still painful and create the most important background for the current political discourse. Therefore it is wrong to dismiss the official Russian skepticism towards "the Western values". In the Russian case, as in many other similar cases in the world, we need to recognize the complexity of the situation and find a way to adequately respond to both the legitimate criticism of the colonialist approach of the liberal West and the misuse of this criticism that often includes a ban of domestic political criticism.

Let us take one of the urgent and most recent issues as an example. The issue of homosexual relations and their legal and moral status has got a lot of attention in Russia and abroad. It has become so important that Russia's leadership presents its conservative position on sexual ethics as part of "Russian identity". The already mentioned Foreign Minister Lavrov has several times commented on the issue of homosexuality when describing Russia's foreign

policy. There are several reasonable explanations for the fact that the discourse on homosexual relations is escalating in Russia. One could be the desire of the Russian officials to politicize an issue that, according to their understanding, is not politically "dangerous". In terms of domestic competition for power the issue of sexual minorities is hardly among the most sensitive.

At the same time it is obvious that the issue of homosexuality does function as an identity issue in Russia and therefore is used as a tool for public mobilization in the political discourse. We can easily find proofs of it in politics, religion and culture. What Russian authorities claim is that Russia has an equal right to define the scope and content of human rights and that liberal interpretation of rights of sexual minorities should not be forced onto non-liberal traditions. For the moment the Russian state leaders ally themselves with the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as with several other religious actors when they argue in favor of the legitimacy of the non-liberal practices of human rights protection. Those practices seek to incorporate a communitarian perspective into the discourse on human rights. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss communitarian visions^[5] of human rights' protection. However, I believe that it is wrong to dismiss these visions just because they challenge our "natural" belief in liberalism as a universal way of liberation.

When President Barack Obama suggested Russian gay organizations to meet him during his visit to the G-20 gathering in St. Petersburg in September 2013 some of the representatives of the movement did not approve of the initiative. Some activists (as for example Nikolai Alekseev) argued that Russian organizations will work out their own strategies and that they do not want to link Russian gay liberation to such activities as boycott of Vodka or Winter Olympics in Sochi. Svetlana Gannushkina who did not participate in the meeting "because of the rescheduling" wrote to President Obama and pointed out that she does not believe that military intervention in Syria is a good way of taking responsibility for the world.^[6] Those who did meet Obama chose to balance the direction of the dialogue by raising issues such as Guantanamo. It is natural that gay activists differ in relation to foreign actors in human rights protection. These differences are similar to the dilemmas of many other Russian NGOs when they are looking for strategies in relation to foreign actors in the Russian political space. Some activists in Russia point out that difficulties that appeared as a result of the legislation against foreign support of Russian NGOs made

them more active in seeking cooperation with local communities. Dependence on local communities and a challenge of connecting their activities to the needs of the local population has in practice made some Russian NGOs more democratic.^[7]

The Russian case is so far characterized by the familiar logics of a contradiction between liberal values as Western and conservative values as traditional. The liberals in the West as well as in Russia approve of this false description by rejecting the obvious fact that also liberal values are traditional. As several contemporary theorists have demonstrated, practical rationality in any form cannot avoid contextual heritage as well as any tradition has its own potential of constructive development. I agree very much with theorists such as Gianni Vattimo who describes the reasoning of Western modernity as violent in that it presents its own "ultimate foundations" as being beyond questioning. While suggesting an alternative to this violent reasoning Vattimo states:

[...] then the choice between what holds good and what does not in the cultural heritage from which we come will be made on the basis of the reduction of violence and under the sign of rationality understood as discourse-dialogue between defenders of finite positions who recognize that that is what they are and who shun the temptation to impose their position on others legitimately (through validation by first principles).^[8]

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov is right in that universal standards of human rights and democracy are principles that must be non-violently interpreted by means of different traditions, which is also the case in the Western democracies that are using their traditions and cultural heritages in order to create domestically sustainable interpretations of international agreements. There are for example a lot of different interpretations and priorities in relation to the international agreements on human rights. Take just Sweden's refusal to ban racist organizations. It contradicts the clearly expressed opinion of the UN but Sweden has for a long time used the argument of its strong tradition of protection of the freedom of assembly as an excuse for not following the decision of the UN committee. Therefore when Russia uses its traditional culture as an argument within the discussion on how to prioritize rights and values, it expects the recognition of the general logics of the international discourse. In the recent documents on foreign politics the Russian authorities point at the similar expectations on behalf of for example Asian or Islamic values.^[9]

POLITICS AND COMMUNICATIVE ETHICS

Does it mean that the international community should accept violations of human rights? This question, as similar xenophobic rhetoric often does, presents a false dichotomy – either to accept total value relativism or to offensively impose "the only right liberal vision" of how human rights should be interpreted and implemented. What is needed is an international political discourse of a communicative kind that for example Jürgen Habermas is arguing for, namely a discourse where partners present their value priorities in such a way that they can be understood by others who have a corresponding duty to try to listen and understand. This duty implies that every listener should try "to translate" the position of the other, to adapt it to his own tradition of rationality. While discussing religious arguments in politics Habermas uses the term "cognitive adaptation" and means that what is expected of the secular citizens is "a self-reflexive overcoming of a rigid and exclusive secularist self-understanding of modernity".^[10] It is reasonable to pose the same expectation on any kind of self-understanding within the political. Only then it becomes possible to sustain a meaningful dialogue and find effective solutions.

It is important to realize that Habermas does not expect that the strategy of "cognitive adaptation" will guarantee a consensus among participants in political dialogues about values. Rather this strategy counteracts violence and makes it possible to work for democratically sustainable policies. Habermas' ethics of communication is very relevant for an analysis of international politics and Habermas has successfully applied it to a deconstruction of the notion of "global terrorism".^[11]

To create such a communicative space that Habermas is arguing for is not an easy task. Habermas pointed it out when he visited Russia in the late 1980-s and was trying to present his vision of "political transformation".^[12] Unfortunately, most of those Russians who describe themselves as democrats lack basic experience of democratic communication being busy with fighting against those who are not democrats enough. Talking with several Russian conservatives I cannot help but agree with their statement that "democracy is not identical with the power of democrats". Neither is a strong protection of human rights identical with the interpretative monopoly of the well-established Western NGOs. The international human rights system is already seriously damaged by the traditional Western policy of imposing "the right attitude" onto the other. In the Russian case, as in many other cases

all around the world, we need to recognize the right of the other to shape its liberation in its own way.

A more balanced and communicatively just international politics might, according to my understanding, contribute to the improvement of the political situation in Russia. Unfortunately, there is still a profound deficit of political activism in Russia. Most experts agree that the opposition "against Putin" gives very little hope in terms of qualitative improvement of Russian politics. Here is not the place to suggest a more comprehensive analysis of Russian politics. In other contexts I have argued that that what Russian politics really needs is the practice and experience of political organization as well as practice and experience of involving ordinary people in initiatives that go beyond mere dissatisfaction with the result of the government's politics.^[13] In this regard it is also unfortunate that the politically conscious Russian intelligentsia often demonstrates extreme arrogance towards the beliefs and opinions of the people it wants to liberate (Pussy Riot's vision of resistance is a very clear example of it). Even when driven by a genuine desire for political freedom, Russian liberals often miss the insight that such a freedom demands involvement of different people and therefore a lot of patience and respect on behalf of liberals. So far the political culture of Russian liberals is very similar to the culture of the government, namely to talk to people rather than to talk and act with them.

To sum up this short reflection, in order to understand Russian politics, domestic as well as foreign, we should try to pay more attention to its normative dimension. One important aspect of it is the challenge related to the realities of the globalized world. Today, Russia often frames its position by means of a distance to the West with its desire to dominate other cultures. It is wrong to dismiss the whole framework as a mere tool for domestic power possession. What is needed is instruments for a reasonable differentiation between manipulative anti-Western rhetoric on the one side and legitimate concerns on the other. I believe that the Russian political situation would benefit in terms of a greater potential for democratic developments and more sustainable foreign politics if the West as well as the pro-Western actors in Russia could recognize and explicitly admit the complexity of the globalized world. This complexity is marked by the great success of the Western human rights and democracy projects as well as by their heavy colonial heritage. Time and again has history shown that great liberation projects create only violence and disaster when they are imposed on people by force. Resistance to the temptation to use any kind of force when promoting norms one justifiably finds universal is the old but still most reliable way to promote a sustainable development of the other.

[1] Okunev, Igor: "A Foreign Policy to Suit the Majority? A New Dimension of Russia's Geopolitical Code". In *Russia in Global Affairs*. www.eng.globalaffairs.ru/print/number/A-Foreign-Policy-to-Suit-the-Majority-16049 accessed 2013-08-04.

[2] "'The Law of Politics' According to Sergei Lavrov – an interview by Susan B. Glasser". www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/29/the_law_of_politics_according_to... Accessed 2013-08-01.

[3] Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation.

[4] Holmes, Stephen: "Never show weakness. How faking autocracy legitimates Putin's hold on power". In Bodin, Hedlund and Namli: *Power and Legitimacy – Challenges from Russia*. Routledge, London 2013, p. 30.

[5] One of those who argue in favor of a compatibility of human rights protection and communitarian morality is for example Charles Taylor. See Taylor: "Conditions of an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights" in Bauer and Bell: *The East Asian Challenges for Human Rights*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, pp. 124-146.

[6] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/06/us-russia-g20-obama-activists-idUSBRE98510B20130906> Accessed 2013-09-10.

[7] Перспективы гражданского общества в России. Доклад Дениса Волкова. Аналитический центр Левады. Москва 2011.

[8] Vattimo, Gianni: *Nihilism and Emancipation. Ethics, Politics and Law*. Columbia University Press, New York 2004, p. 46.

[9] Since 2005 the Russian Federation is one of the observers in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

[10] Habermas, Jürgen: "Religion in the Public Sphere". In Habermas: *Between Naturalism and Religion*. Polity, Cambridge 2010, p. 138.

[11] Habermas, Jürgen: "Fundamentalism and Terror". In Borradori, Giovanna: *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2003.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY: DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

Kristian Gerner

In her introduction to the workshop *Russia: Domestic Roots of Foreign Policy. Re-thinking Strategy* Lena Jonson declares that “domestic dynamics can be expected to become major determinants of Russian thinking on foreign policy.” Lena also announced that a scholar “who is not a specialist on Russia but who in her research directly deals with issues of citizen expectations and how they are implemented in various societal relationships and practices”, would take part in the workshop. Analyses of different aspects of Russian society were combined with a general comparative perspective. In this essay I follow this double track and offer some remarks on domestic roots and external influences on Russian policies in a comparative perspective. The text as such is conditioned by its original purpose to serve as a commentary to the contributions of the workshop. However, the perspective is broadened to include a historical perspective of earlier Soviet experiences with the domestic-external cluster.

1. THE IMPACT OF THE DOMESTIC SCENE

The label for the workshop recalls a classic in historical research, the German historian Eckart Kehr’s famous thesis of *Primat der Innenpolitik*, i.e., the primacy of domestic politics. Kehr analyzed the German armaments policy and the creation of the impressive navy in the decades leading up to the outbreak of World War I. His argument was that it was necessary to take into account not only, or primarily, diplomacy and foreign policy in general but instead the role of the struggle between social classes, interest groups and political parties, as well as the economic development and the ideological currents in pre-War Germany in order to explain the German quest for global power and the resulting aggressive foreign policy.^[1] Kehr’s thesis has been disputed. However, a remaining effect of his endeavor is that ever since, serious analyses of any state’s foreign policy have had to take into account the role of domestic determinants.

A contemporary addition to Kehr’s perspective is Ted Hopf’s recent study of post-World War II Soviet foreign policy in *Reconstructing the Cold War*^[2]. Hopf’s contribution to the workshop brings Kehr’s thesis into the somewhat parochial environment of Russia watchers: it bears the title “Understanding

Foreign Policy through the Study of Domestic Lenses.” Jonson presents Hopf’s contribution succinctly as an analysis of “the role of domestic discourses of identity in explaining Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War.” The study falls within the tradition of social or societal constructivism (Hopf uses both labels in his work). It is a convincing and very fruitful approach to Soviet foreign policy under the late Stalin and the early Khrushchev regimes. Hopf’s approach to Cold War Soviet foreign policy may very well be applied also to an analysis of contemporary Russian foreign policy. His presentation was an apt opening of the workshop.

2. THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA

Decades ago I had an amicable argument with Lena Jonson over her quote from Winston Churchill, that the foreign policy of the Soviet Union was enigmatic. I noted then, and I will repeat it now, that Churchill’s famous phrase in a radio speech in October 1939 was a rhetorical device. Immediately after the enigma phrase, Churchill added that the key to solving the riddle was to consider “Russia’s national interest”. Given the workshop’s focus on the Russian domestic scene, it is relevant to note that Churchill’s statement was based upon his short-hand analysis of the implications of the then recent German-Soviet non-aggression pact for the policy of the Soviet Union in the long run. These are Churchill’s own words:

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest of the safety of Russia that Germany should plant itself upon the shores of the Black Sea or that it should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of south eastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.

Thus, my friends, at some risk of being proved wrong by events, I will proclaim tonight my conviction that the second great fact of the first month of the war is that Hitler, and all that Hitler stands for, have been and are being warned off the east and the southeast of Europe.^[3]

The gist of Churchill's argument was that in the not so very long run, Germany would be confronted by the Soviet Union in the very moment it attempted to realize its Ostpolitik, i.e., the conquest of European Russia and Ukraine. In the short speech, Churchill in an oblique way referred to the Gallipoli disaster of the ANZAC's landing on the peninsula in 1915, for which he bore the prime responsibility. This time, Churchill assured, the United Kingdom would have a future ally on Germany's eastern front: the Soviet Union. Churchill had concluded that Stalin realized that he must stand up against Hitler in order to save the Soviet Union and that the non-aggression pact with Germany was a means to this end: this was the obvious "national interest" of the Soviet Union. One notes not only that Churchill's prediction came true – the Soviet Union would stand up against Germany after the latter's attack in June 1941 and become an ally of the United Kingdom – but also that it tunes in with the official Soviet interpretation retrospectively of the Soviet rationale behind the pact with Germany in 1939.

3. "RUSSIA IS KEEPING SCORE IN THE WRONG GAME"

Lena Jonson declares in her introduction to the workshop that "Russia is not among the major actors in this global power shift. [...] the process of declining international influence has continued under Vladimir Putin's reign. Russia is a secondary actor on the global arena." Let us accept Jonson's thesis and combine the different perspectives offered by Kehr, Hopf and Churchill and make a sketch of the probable trajectory of Russian society's role for the regime's possibility to lead an assertive foreign policy.

The Russian armaments policy is well known and commented upon, and there is no need here to go into technicalities but only to remark that it is pointless, because there are not any military threat to Russia and it is highly improbable that there will be any. Instead it is illuminating to apply a comparative perspective on Russia's armaments policy. The Economist of August 8, 2013, published a thought-provoking article on the Israeli Defense Forces. The magazine reported that the Israeli Knesset had urged "a shift away from manpower-intensive armoured divisions in favour of the air force, intelligence collection and cyber-warfare." As noted by the Economist, the Israeli shift is not only one of substance. It also colors the framing of the armed forces: "Military street parades belong to a bygone era." This change is mirrored by the public atmosphere: "Voters too seem to want a more normal, less militarised state."^[4]

The description of Israel's re-structuring of its defense forces and the attitude of the citizens towards militarization has a bearing on Russia. As social conditions in Russia continue to deteriorate amongst an ageing and not very healthy population,^[5] the enormous costs of militarization may be met with resistance, if not in the foreseeable future, so at least in the long run. Russian citizens probably will want to see "a more normal, less militarized state." With reference to Ted Hopf's approach of societal constructivism it is possible to regard the manifestations in Russia against the Putin regime as based upon a different interpretation of what constitutes a sustainable society. This can be construed as an indication that a civic political culture is alive and might gain influence in the political elite.

The short-sightedness of the Russian armaments policy and the ensuing ominous prospects for the sustainability of its economic development and the viability of its social fabric are reminders of how the Soviet Union came to an end. Almost forty years ago, in a review of Joseph Berliner's book *The Innovation Decision in Soviet Industry* (MIT Press, 1976) Daniel Yergin commented on Soviet Premier Alexej Kosygin's report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU in 1976 with the words "the Russians are keeping score in the wrong game."^[6] As a rhetorical figure this phrase stands up to the standard once set by Churchill, though the meaning is the opposite: the rulers of Russia today do not know what its national interest is.

Yergin referred to the fact that Mr. Kosygin in 1976 proudly declared that the USSR had surpassed the United States in output of steel, oil, pig iron, coal, cement, tractors, cotton, wool, etc. Yergin observed that this hardly was a feat to be proud of because the Soviet economic system was suboptimal. There was a lack of incentives for innovation; "...the rewards for innovation are accurately perceived as considerably less than the risks associated with innovation, even successful innovation."

Yergin went on:

For innovation also means that risk, uncertainty and failure must be a prominent part of the economic system. And for all concerned in the Soviet Union – from plant manager to central planner to party ideologue – those are conditions of danger, best banished from daily life. And so, as Berliner demonstrates, the innovation decision in the Soviet Union is characterized mainly by its absence.

Yergin was to be vindicated. A decade later, the backwardness of the Soviet Union was recognized by Mikhail Gorbachev, who launched the politics of glasnost, perestroika and new thinking. Among many other things, the new policy was a call for risk-taking and innovation in the economy.

Now, a generation later, one has to raise the question again whether Russia once again keeps score in the wrong game. One of the then deputy prime ministers, Vladislav Surkov in May, 2013, noted that "Russia's economy rests on two pillars, the export of raw materials and importing finished goods."^[7] Developments in 2013 in the Skolkovo and Levada Center cases (see below) are an indication that the Putin regime misjudges which productive forces that counts in today's world.

The Skolkovo center was created after the then Russian president Dmitrii Medvedev had visited the Silicon Valley in California in 2010. The Guardian reported: "Medvedev embarked on a tour of Silicon Valley in a search for tips on establishing a similar technological hub, dubbed an "innograd", outside Moscow."^[8] The Russian noun means "Innovation City". The dream to establish the "Innograd" was realized. Wikipedia gives an apt description of the rationale behind Skolkovo:

Skolkovo Foundation is the principal agency responsible for the Russian Skolkovo Innovation Center, a scientific and technological center for the development and commercialisation of advanced technologies. It is a non-profit organization founded in 2010 and charged by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev with creating a new science and technology development center in the Moscow suburb of Skolkovo. The Skolkovo innovation system comprises the Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (SkTech) established in partnership with MIT, corporate R&D centers, business incubators, private seed and venture funds, and start-up companies, as well as residential space and social infrastructure.^[9]

This Russian endeavor certainly was all about "keeping score" with the United States. However, it is not certain that the Putin regime understood the rules of this game. A report from a visit to Skolkovo (May 31, 2013) by the journalist Mike Butcher (Editor of an agency named TechCrunch Europe) gives the impression that the Soviet tradition still weighed heavily:

In the U.S. almost 3% of GDP is spent on research and

development while Russian firms spend just 1%. The Skolkovo area is being created as a special economic zone in its own right, with its own border controls and legislative incentives for startups, such as a tax holiday lasting 5–7 years. It also has special laws enabling entrepreneurs to work there from other countries. [...] The main elements of the Skolkovo City will be the University and a Technopark. MIT has been signed up to co-manage the creation of the university, reportedly receiving \$300 million for its participation. The Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology will have a curriculum designed by MIT, offer graduate degrees only and – unusually in Russia – teach in English. MIT has similar arrangements in China, Portugal, Singapore and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, but Russia's home-grown talent has not been accessed by a Western university in such a way, or on such a scale, before. Skolkovo's main mountain to climb will likely be critics who see too big of a disparity between the amount of resources being dedicated to the project and the results, which to date have been limited.

Certainly, touring what is in effect a building site with one building on it (and this, after three years since the policy was first announced) does not inspire enormous confidence.

Yes, Skolkovo still has to produce results, of that there is no doubt. And heavy-handed, top-down initiatives like this nearly always look entirely alien to Western eyes in places like Silicon Valley, where government involvement in big technology projects would be viewed with surprise, to put it mildly.^[10]

This long quote speaks a very clear language: Skolkovo has an air of Soviet times or even of old Russian times. One comment on the article stated laconically: "So now Potemkin Villages have bean bags." Mike Butcher retorted: "Yes, Skolkovo still has to produce results, of that there is no doubt."

Just before Butcher published his report, the Russian daily Novaya Gazeta informed that government involvement really had become a roadblock for the Skolkovo project:

A series of criminal cases against top managers of the project, the pursuit of Ilya Ponomarev, the resignation of Vladislav Surkov - the supreme patron of "Skolkovo" - and the appointment in his place of Andrei Fursenko, who lacks influence, have spoiled the mood of investors. And even more. During the first raids in late April the Russian security forces detained for a

few hours together with the Russian personnel a top manager of the U.S. Intel. The security forces seized cell phones and documents. It was planned that day to discuss an American billion contract with "Skolkovo". The consequence was that after getting his passport back, the American dashed off to the airport.^[11]

At the same time as the innovation center's independence was curtailed, Russian authorities struck at the non-governmental opinion survey institute the Levada Center.^[12] On May 23, the Russian English language daily the Moscow Times reported:

Now, prosecutors have ruled that the Levada Center's posting of poll results and analyses constitutes "political activity" because they "influence public opinion."

Under a law passed last July, organizations that receive foreign funding and engage in activity deemed political must register as "foreign agents," a label that is synonymous with spies and calculated to evoke fear and distrust among ordinary Russians.^[13]

It is illuminating in this context to recall a conclusion by Ted Hopf concerning the impact of the xenophobic, vigilant official discourse under late Stalinism: "[...] the predominant Soviet discourse of Western danger and Soviet Russian superiority was in direct conflict with a societal discourse of identification with the West, with the European roots of Russia."^[14] Today, President Putin represents xenophobia and vigilance, whereas Medvedev, the acting Premier of Russia, and the Levada Center obviously "identify with the West."

The two events, the raid on the Skolkovo center and the attack on the Levada Center, are two sides of one coin. The targets were innovation schemes and information networks that connected Russian citizens with actors in foreign countries. The Novaya Gazeta reporter Andrei Kolesnikov concluded concerning the Levada Center affair:

The powers cut the trunk they sit upon. They deprive themselves of a trustworthy feedback link. They annihilate humanistic knowledge. And they risk to become isolated with some kind of "Orthodox Sociology." And what does it mean? "To the Orthodox security forces (Православным чекистам) – an orthodox sociology".^[15]

Opinion surveys by the Levada Center in August 2013 indicated that Russian society was in a state of anomie. Under the intriguing heading "Unstable equilibrium of

stability" the center concluded from the recent surveys that the increase of street protests contradicted the widespread total pessimism in society. "Nobody knows where a revolt may erupt." However, the Center's conclusion was that the most important fact was that the depressive mood in Russian society did not favor neither growth of the economy, nor a healthy political life and a striving of citizens to change the situation.^[16]

4. PUTIN'S FARCE – HOW WILL IT END?

The remaining contributions to the workshop fit nicely into the matrix of Putin's Russia as an embodiment of the farce that according to Karl Marx follows upon tragedy. This means that Putin is a sequel to Stalin in the same manner as Napoleon III was the sequel to Napoleon I. Without downplaying the immense suffering brought about by the Prussian-French war in 1870-1871, one must acknowledge that Marx was correct in his evaluation of the regime of Napoleon III. It goes without saying that the Putin regime of course is not comparable to the Stalin regime in terms of brutality and infliction of human suffering on innocent victims. The point is that the foundations of Putin's power are as fragile as those of Napoleon III turned out to be. Likewise, Putin's great power megalomania invokes the specter of Napoleon III's ill-advised foreign policy.

Alexander Bibkov's "The Domestic Stage: Setting the Future" has a thought-provoking heading. Bibkov took upon himself the task to create scenarios for the future in a society that is characterized by anomie. Bibkov's main observation is that the answers in recent interviews with ordinary citizens in the street and opinion surveys undermined the myth of Russia as a country of two nations of a new Russian middle class with democratic leanings pitted against an authoritarian Russian provincial mass. According to Bibkov, there is not any political movement, so to hope on the democratic potential in the middle class boils down to an illusion harbored by Western Russia watchers. The famed street demonstrations in December 2011 and in March and May 2012 were certainly outbursts of disgust at the manipulation of the elections but, Bibkov argues, they were not based upon political programs and thus without consequence. The emotional impact aroused in some people was hijacked by the blogger Alexander Navalnyi to further his own ends. The latter's "program" is, according to Bibkov, an expression of "technocratic populism."

Quite a different picture has been painted by the director of the independent governmental Center for Strategic Analysis Mikhail Dmitriev. He observed that the Russian population feared a new economic crisis.

In contrast to the situation during the previous crisis in 2008-2009, in 2013 75% of the population considered street demonstrations to be a basic human right. It had become legitimate to use protests to voice one's economic grievances. Although it was unclear how and when this "protest potential" would materialize, according to Dmitriev it was evident that the protests would be "extremely serious."^[17]

Michele Micheletti's paper "Learning and Teaching Citizenship" offers a comparative perspective on the evaluation of democratization in Russia by presenting survey results from a number of countries. Michelotti broadens the concept of citizenship to include "multiple dimensions and meanings." She informs that a few years ago evaluation of civic education in Russia showed "that Russia adolescents as a group ranked significantly lower than the international mean on conventional wisdom, trust in government-related institutions, and support for women's political rights. "It seems that "civic education" in Russia has been a process of learning by doing. The example was set by the manifestation in the Bolotnaya Square in December 2011. It was reinforced by the manifestations against Vladimir Putin in March and May 2012. However, judging from Michelotti's report on attitudes, this does not necessarily mean that Russia has come a long way in civic education. The demonstrations in Moscow in 2011 and 2012 are best defined as an indication of a contemporary little smuta.

Elena Namli's paper "Using and Misusing Anti-colonialism: a Reflection on Russian Political Discourse" opens up the double perspective of Russia as a post-colonial state that has to come to terms with the former colonies the Soviet republics, on the one hand, and on the other hand has to meet the challenge not to become a colony that delivers raw materials to developed states such as the United States, the member states of the European Union and China. I will add that Russia's relations with Ukraine are an interesting testing ground for Russian politics of anti-colonialism – and Russian neo-colonialism. The Putin regime regards Ukraine as a potential colony of the European Union and has uttered the opinion that this prospect must be countered by reining in the former Russian province.^[18]

Irina Sandomirskaja's paper "Stalin and Language: Soviet Phantoms of World Supremacy" alludes to the missionary Pentecostal dimension of Stalin's project. Sandomirskaya takes Stalin's assertions seriously. This is warranted because it brings a sobering tone to the

perpetual discussion on the pragmatic vis-à-vis the metaphysical side of Stalin's policies. In a perspicuous article Daniel Collins once observed that the idea behind propagating the Soviet planned economy as a panacea for all mankind was that work in the name of and for the cause of the collective would enable the Soviet worker to master foreign languages and spread the Holy Scripture of the proletarians to the whole world:

Infused with the spirit of collective labor and communicating without difficulty in many languages, the united workers of the sovietized Pentecost myth were given the power to carry out their Great Commission - to evangelize their country and the world at large with the values of the proletariat, to lay the foundation for the New Jerusalem of universal communism, where all would speak in a single tongue".^[19]

Per-Arne Bodin's paper "The Russian Orthodox Church and Foreign Policy" calls attention to the fact that Russia's identification with Orthodoxy has been reinforced under Putin. Maria Engström's paper "The Conservative Movement and Foreign Policy" ties in with Bodin's presentation. It concerns the ambiguity of Russian conservatism's perspective on foreign policy between the poles of isolationism and imperialism. The issue of the concept/metaphor of Moscow as the third Rome, which also pertains to Bodin's presentation, comes into play. In order to give a general background to the deployment of this notion, I quote from the abstract of an article on this theme by Dmitrii Sidorov:

[t]his metaphor is an essential element of post-imperial Russian geopolitical discourse as evident in its usage in writings of politically diverse authors. The paper focuses on resurrections of the metaphor in post-imperial Russia nowadays, and, ultimately, broadens our understanding of 'religion as geopolitics' nexus by presenting the too frequently overlooked field of Russian Orthodoxy-related geopolitics.^[20]

Following in the footsteps of Sidorov, Jardar Østbø has demonstrated the ambiguity of the metaphor the Third Rome as a foreign policy doctrine in contemporary Russia. Østbø's study can serve as an analytical framework in which to place Bodin's and Engström's papers. The approach is to "focus on the attempts of politicization rather than on the 'original myth'". Østbø analyzes the metaphor and the concomitant ideology by way of delineating two dimensions: 1) a territorial, which may be both core-oriented (isolationist) or imperialist; and 2) a religious, i.e., less or more Orthodox. A combination of these two dimensions and

their respective varieties delineates four distinct cases: a core-oriented and less Orthodox, an imperialist and less Orthodox, a core-oriented and more Orthodox, and an imperialist and more Orthodox.^[21] Østbø has not investigated the reception of the respective varieties in contemporary Russia but his four-field matrix is a useful instrument with which it is possible to define the salience of Russian Orthodoxy in the foreign policy discourse of the Putin regime. It is obvious that it is a four-sided matter and thus it is not possible to nail down the thrust and relevance for foreign policy of the nexus Russian Orthodoxy – Russian imperialism/isolationism. However, Bodin and Engström both demonstrate that the issue is highly topical today. Russian Orthodoxy has inherited the legitimizing role of Soviet Communism and it is probable that there is a rift between the official hegemonic discourse and the ideological orientation among a part of the intelligentsia much as in Stalin's times.

Greg Simons's *Nation branding and Russian Foreign Policy* is an analysis of soft power and of the use of public diplomacy. The contribution focuses on:

a number of different PR programmes and events run as a means of trying to shift the national reputation and image to a more positive one. The actors and events described are viewed mostly through the lens of public diplomacy, government to people communication. I track a number of the different PR programmes that have been run through mass media and PR agencies. The aim is to gain an insight into the wider picture of Russia's attempts to rebrand itself, and the successes and obstacles along the way.^[22]

Simons's perspective recalls the marketing of the Soviet Union as a workers' paradise. It evokes the question whether it is possible to create a favorable image of Russia more successfully than what the Soviet regime managed to do. In any case, the farce brand is certainly more tasteful than the tragic one.

5. PERHAPS THERE IS A KEY: RUSSIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

There is a ghost-like air to our focus on the domestic roots of Russian foreign policy and on Russian civil society. More than three decades ago, the issues of civil society, innovation and opinion surveys were prominent themes in the study of Soviet society. I followed developments closely and I dared to speculate about a democratization of Soviet society in terms of transparency, the growth of information networks and feedback loops between citizens and the authorities.^[23] At that time, social constructivism was not a fad among

sovietologists. However, many highlighted currents in Soviet society during the Brezhnev regime that foreboded the reforms under Gorbachev. In the forefront were Soviet scholars who published their reports in Soviet publications or presented them at conferences in more "liberal" communist countries, such as Hungary. I quote from a report by the Soviet sociologist B. Firsov at a conference in Budapest in 1971:

A problem with a bearing on public opinion and mass communication is the study of the degree of information [on social issues] in the population and in certain groups. [...] If the degree of information is related to the social conditions, the degree of information may define the intellectual potential of the nation. It can also serve as an indicator of the degree of glasnost and trust that society bestows on its citizens by giving them access to massive information in diverse forms.^[24]

One notes the commonsensical or self-evident use of the concept of glasnost. It should be added that in a Soviet anthology on governance in 1976, "the institute of glasnost" was mentioned as a means for society to control the activities of the authorities.^[25]

Thus it is warranted to conclude that contemporary Russian society, *mutatis mutandis*, of course, is characterized by processes of double-think, subterranean information networks and in certain groups an identification with the West that bear resemblance to the situation in the late Stalin and the late Brezhnev periods. Ted Hopf has shown how societal sources of Soviet identity accounted for the changes and continuities in Soviet foreign relations after Stalin's death.^[26] Dismissing the short interregnums as insignificant, the intriguing fact is that Stalin was succeeded by the Westernizer Khrushchev and that Brezhnev was succeeded by the Westernizer Gorbachev.

Sixty years after the death of Stalin, Russia will hopefully experience the coming of a third and final Westernizer who will dismantle the regressive heritage from the Soviet era. Under this successor to Putin, the strategic goal of Russian foreign policy might be to become a member of the European Union. The vision of the first great reformer, Westernizer and Europeanizer of Russia, Peter the Great, may come true. After all, Saint Petersburg was not meant to be the Third Rome. The name was chosen by Peter to announce Russia's coming home to the original Rome, to "Europe."^[27]

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