

# Inside and Around the Kremlin's Black Box: The New Nationalist Think Tanks in Russia

Marlène Laruelle

STOCKHOLM PAPER  
October 2009



Institute for Security &  
Development Policy



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This publication is kindly made possible by support from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The opinions and conclusions expressed are those of the author/s and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute for Security and Development Policy or its sponsors.

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ISBN: 978-91-85937-67-7

Printed in Singapore

Distributed in Europe by:

Institute for Security and Development Policy  
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden  
Tel. +46-841056953; Fax. +46-86403370  
Email: info@isd.eu

Distributed in North America by:

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## Summary

This report focuses on the structuration of new nationalist think tanks close to the Kremlin. For some years now, Russian leaders have refused to remain content with the usual few shadow counselors and have begun to rely on an increasingly large network of competitive experts. A new wave of Russian nationalism has been emerging that broadly exceeds the influence of older strains of nationalism, whether founded on Slavophilism, Soviet nostalgia, or Eurasianist theories. This new form of nationalism is advanced by ideologues that are very young (of around thirty years of age) and educated in disciplines such as law, economics, management, and foreign languages. They are convinced of the benefits of the market economy and private property, and want to explore new paths toward the future. As such, they are intent on re-opening the ideological front, and call for Russia to embrace globalization.

In April 2008, United Russia decided to formalize certain existing ideological tendencies in the form of clubs and not fractions. It has instituted a "Political Clubs Charter" and included it among the documents of the Congress of United Russia. The charter was signed by Vladimir Pligin representing the Club of 4 November, Andrei Isaev for the Center for Social Conservative Policy, and Irina Iarovaia for the State Patriotic Club. The party's leadership hopes thereby to benefit from the new ideas emerging from the Clubs not only to make its political strategy more dynamic, but also to be able to control possible ideological radicalism within them, and to avoid the party's splintering into real forces of political opposition. The Center for Social Conservative Policy is supported by Boris Gryzlov and Yuri Shuvalov, while Fadeev's Institute for Social Forecasting is close to Vladislav Surkov and Aleksei Chesnakov, the former deputy president of the presidential administration. The ideological stances thus comprise only one element, among others, of a series of different career strategies within a closed political system.

The impetus that the Kremlin has given to questions of patriotic ideology and doctrinal structuration has been put to good use by several discussion forums, clubs, and institutes external to the presidential party, which took

the opportunity to open ideological sections in order to meet the state's need for structures of expertise. Pavlovski's Foundation for Effective Politics, for example, remains a veritable "innovation machine" in terms of communications technologies, and has played an essential role in the formulation of a new Russian nationalism through the *Russkii zhurnal* and the *Evropa* publishing house. Other centers, clubs, or institutes are also pressing their claims in the public arena. Two major categories have formed. The first includes think tanks that have existed since the 1990s. These think tanks have followed the Kremlin's reflections on national ideology and sought to offer it new products. This is the case, for instance, with the Center for Political Conjunction of Russia or the *Politika* Foundation. The second group includes new think tanks that have entered the market thanks to their more or less close links either with one of United Russia's internal clubs or with the state organs. One example is the National Institute for the Development of Contemporary Ideology, which was founded in 2007 and works for the State Patriotic Club; another is the Center of National Glory of Russia, which is situated in a more orthodox ideological niche; and yet another is the State Club, which functions as a center for training cadres destined to serve the state. In addition, the Institute for a National Strategy runs the famous press Agency for Political News (APN), one of the main platforms for discussion and the promotion of new nationalist doctrinaires. Lastly, it is also worth mentioning the newspaper *Vzgliad*, which is considered one of the foremost sites for the elaboration of ideology specifically designed for the Kremlin.

Other discussion sites have also emerged that serve as a meeting space for official figures as well as for more marginal ones. These sites facilitate the process of cooptation – professional or ideological – of circles outside of the ruling elite. Despite varying degrees of radicalism, all these sites are united in their quest to provide Russia with a new ideology, which they define as conservatism. Among them are the following: the *Serafim Club*; the web site *Pravaya.ru*, which has rapidly become one of the main platforms of Orthodox neo-conservatism; and the Center for Dynamic Conservatism, which is known for its publication of the *Russian Doctrine* and is financed by a foundation called *The Russian Entrepreneur*. The new ideologues of Russian conservative nationalism form a supple conglomerate with permeable borders,

a continuum in which personal relations and strategies of cooptation make it possible to get near to the leadership circles of United Russia as much as to the circles that define nationalism as a counter-culture.

Western observers and political scientists have a tendency to reserve the label "nationalist" only for small extremist groups or political parties, such as Gennady Zyuganov's Communist Party and Vladimir Zhirinovski's LDPR. It prevents them from taking stock of the existence of an ideological continuum that encompasses the entire Russian political spectrum. Indeed, as this paper demonstrates, the presidential party United Russia is itself thoroughly permeated with ideological debates about the nature of the country's national identity. Owing to its ability to co-opt doctrinaires, to finance them, and to broadcast their messages to media and public opinion, it has even become one of the major actors of the nationalist narrative. In addition, neither is the Union of Right Forces, often presented as the representative of Western-style liberalism, exempt from nationalist forms of argumentation: a number of "new ideologists" were in fact members of the party led by Nemtsov and Kirienko before being won over to the Kremlin. Lastly, even the opposition group The Other Russia is occupied with debates on national identity: Garry Kasparov does not seem bothered about rubbing shoulders with Eduard Limonov, the leader of the National Bolshevik Party, which is today banned in Russia but has played a key role in the constitution of nationalism as counter-culture and a form of political resistance to the Kremlin.

The question of the financing of think tanks quite obviously proves complex on account of its opacity. It is probable that some think tanks are more or less linked to the secret services and partly financed by them. If one looks only at the public financing received through commissions and the grants obtained by nationalist think tanks, there is a notable prevalence of several types of patron: United Russia of course, which is a real financial power owing to its close links with the presidential administration; the Duma, and the ministries; the municipality of Moscow with Yuri Luzhkov, known for his support of all the major nationalist causes since the 1990s; and large state corporations such as Gazprom, but also more unexpected economic circles like the banks, supermarket chains, and the agribusiness complex. The latter actors act as confirmation of process of institutionalization that has occurred

in the field of think tanks in Russia. Think tanks are no longer financed solely by state-related institutions but also by private interests. The vast number of these latter interests and the rivalry between them is, at least in theory, a measure of greater autonomy of thought and a reflection of a diversity of interests. Even so, corporate sponsoring in Russia, whether nationalist or otherwise, remains rare as compared with other developed countries.

United Russia is becoming a factionalized party on the model of the former CPSU and presents itself as a discussion platform for currents with very different ideological backgrounds. The structuration of political clubs within the presidential party, the role of the Department of Domestic Policy at the presidential administration and of its leaders (Surkov, Shuvalov, Chesnakov, etc.) in the formation of nationalist think tanks, the development of new institutions of expertise, and the increasing cooptation of doctrinaires of Russian neo-conservatism, all confirm the Kremlin's present propensity to engage in ideological experimentation. Whether this will take the form of a new prescriptive indoctrination is going to depend on future domestic and international evolutions.

## Introduction

The notion of think tanks encompasses a large range of institutions and varies widely from country to country. It can include independent research institutes and “universities without students,” political parties’ clubs of discussion; public policy centers with objectives to promote specific values or sectors; pressure groups on executive and legislative power; consulting agencies which offer economic and financial expertise or communication technologies to campaigning politicians; and a wide range of NGOs capable of procuring the most varied types of funding.<sup>1</sup>

Despite their existence during the Soviet era, the think tanks are still a relatively recent phenomenon in Russia and remain limited: they had up until recently been held back by an absence of private financing, and a regime which is unfavorable to the expression of political diversity, has a general lack of interest in the ideas debate, and which saw a collapse of its human resources in the intellectual domain during the 1990s. Over recent years, however, a think tank milieu has been rapidly structuring: during the Putin presidency, the inflows of money from the oil and gas manna provided new financing opportunities, and a new generation of young scholars has emerged, giving rise to a renewed intellectual vigor. In addition, the reduction of the competing political parties has paradoxically accelerated the constitution of clubs within United Russia. Political and economic actors are now obliged to invest in lobbying structures able to influence decision-making.

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<sup>1</sup> There is an abundant literature on this subject. See, for example: D. E. Abelson, *Do Think Tanks Matter? Assessing the Impact of Public Policy Institutes* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002); J. McGann and R. K. Weaver (eds.), *Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Action* (New York: Free Press, 1993); D. M. Ricci, *The Transformation of American Politics: The New Washington and the Rise of Think Tanks* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1994); A. Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); J. A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks And The Rise Of The New Policy Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1993); D. Stone and A. Denham, *Think Tank Traditions: Policy Analysis Across Nations* (Manchester: Manchester, University Press, 2004).

Lastly, the Kremlin's desire to put the Russian state "back on its feet," in both the domestic and international arenas, has heightened its search to find stronger ideological formulations.

The contemporary Russian regime is founded on the idea of a conservative stabilization that reduces political competition, but that does not repudiate the principle of pluralism. As United Russia became more organized, the media slogans for election campaigns and presidential speeches became more sophisticated. Their texts promoted "conservatism" and assumed a conscious will to engage in propaganda.<sup>2</sup> However, the question of investing more distinctly in the ideological sector by implementing new strategies of indoctrination presents the ruling elite with a fundamental challenge. It entails breaking with the reconciliatory logic that United Russia has strived to embody. Indeed, the existing repertoire out of which a national consensus can be built appears limited. Having rehabilitated the symbols of the motherland and institutionalized a kind of patriotic "brand," the Kremlin seems hesitant about giving them doctrinal formulations. It understands nationalism as a determinant factor in its ability to structure the political field over the long term. Yet, regardless of the justness of this reading of the situation, it threatens to lead United Russia into a position of discursive rigidity. This could provoke internal dissension among the ruling elites or incur the rejection of a society that is hardly keen on learning another political cant.

Owing to these inherent paradoxes, the Kremlin has been promoting an explosive mixture of Soviet nostalgia – focused on past greatness and the victory of 1945 – and calls for Russia to assume a leading role in the twenty-first century. This conjunction is aimed at urging Russian society to reunify around the advocacy of consensual symbolic referents. The impression is undeniably one of a political power that is continuously manipulating its contradictions and toying with multiple identity strategies: its allusions to Russia as a fortress surrounded by external and internal enemies, bound to the historical values of empire and faith, are combined with convictions affirming Russia's place in the process of globalization as it seeks to acquire

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<sup>2</sup> S. Prozorov, "Russian Conservatism in the Putin Presidency: The Dispersion of a Hegemonic Discourse," *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2005, pp. 121-143.

a new role in world leadership. Western analyses which claim that United Russia's only ideology consists in loyalty to the president thus fail to grasp the recompositions that are currently underway, not to mention the debates that animate the presidential party.<sup>3</sup>

This study aims, first, to identify the trends, attitudes, and ideas that will be key to influencing developments in Russia in the coming decade; and second, to develop a better sense of the place of nationalism in this structuration. To this end, this report focuses on the structuration of new nationalist think tanks close to the Kremlin. In fact, a new wave of Russian nationalism has been emerging for some years now that broadly exceeds the influence of the older strains of nationalism, whether they are founded on Slavophilism, Soviet nostalgia, or Eurasianist theories. This new form of nationalism is advanced by ideologues that are very young (of around thirty years of age), are educated in modern disciplines (law, economics, and management), speak foreign languages, are convinced of the benefits of the market economy and private property, and want to explore new paths toward the future. As such, they call for Russia to embrace globalization and are intent on re-opening the ideological front. Their nationalist feeling is based on capitalist economic competitiveness, the power that comes with energy resources and technology, an offensive multilateral policy privileging countries with anti-American agendas, such as Hugo Chavez's Venezuela, and the desire to prevail in the ideological battle with the United States.

Who are the individual and institutional actors of this current nationalist revival? What are their main approaches to doctrinal engineering? How do they gain access to the decision-making circles? What are their main sources of financial support? For some years, Russian leaders have not remained merely content to have a few shadow councillors; instead, they now rely on an increasingly large network of competitive experts. The opinions of the latter, however, remain consultative: the Department of Domestic Policy at the presidential administration (GUVF) continues to be the central decision-making institution. The current ideological effervescence is reflected in a concomitant terminological diversification: the notion of think tank can in fact

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<sup>3</sup> For more on this nationalist/patriotic issue, see M. Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation. Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia* (New York: Palgrave, 2009).

be translated into Russian as brain center (*mozgovye tsentry*), ideas factory (*fabrika smyslov*), intellectual club (*intellektual'nye kluby*), etc. The multiplication of think tanks confirms the indecision and internal debates that stir the authorities. It sheds light on the plurality of the entity called the "Kremlin," which is all too often cast as a uniform monolith.

## Short Outline of the Structuration of the Field of Think Tanks in Russia

The first Russian think tanks were heavily subject to the Soviet system of division by ministries and were permeated by the idea of political and economic rivalry with the West. They played a major role in constructing knowledge and did so in accordance with the political decisions of the party and the state. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union had three institutions of political thought directly linked to it: the Academy of Social Sciences within the CPSU Central Committee, the Institute of Social Sciences within the CPSU Central Committee, which worked in a hermetic way, and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. The KGB and Komsomol also had their own research and information facilities.<sup>4</sup>

In the domain of international relations, it was not until the second half of the 1950s that the Academy of Sciences acquired the right to have its own research institutes. The first of these was the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) established in 1956. From this date onward, numerous specialized centers developed within the Academy, with a degree of autonomy larger than those that were linked directly to the party: the Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Foreign Affairs Ministry (MGIMO); the Institute of Study of the United States and Canada (ISKRAN), created in 1967 to train specialists on the United States and Canada in the framework of the Soviet-American détente; the Institute for Far East Studies (IVD), which was created in 1966, amidst the total crisis in Sino-Soviet relations, and endowed with the mission of studying Russia's Asian neighbors; and the Institute of Current International Problems, which was established in the 1970s and affiliated with the Academy of Diplomacy as part of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

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<sup>4</sup> For an historical overview of think tanks, see D. Zaitsev, "Mozgovye tsenry Rossii," *Novaia Politika*, September 16, 2004, <http://www.novopol.ru/material449.html> – All the internet sites listed in this document were verified on the August 19, 2009. Any sites that were no longer in existence by this date provide their last date of access.

At the fall of the USSR, the disappearance of the Communist regime and the passage to the market economy fundamentally modified the field of expertise and the mode of functioning of think tanks. The old structures linked to the Party were transformed: the Academy of Social Sciences became, in 1991, the Academy of Public Administration within the Duma (the Parliament) and then, in 1994, the Academy of State Service attached to the Presidency. The Institute for Marxism-Leninism was renamed the Independent Institute of Russia for Social and National Problems. The research centers of the Academy of Sciences underwent an evolution in their structures and research topics, but remained within an academic framework. The experts that work for them continued to be university academics, despite the fact that these centers were now able to accept, in addition to the salaries paid by the state, private financing, notably thanks to grants from Western foundations. Alongside IMEMO, which today remains the largest institute of the Academy of Sciences, and MGIMO, other institutes of international relations were also created: in 1990, the Institute of International Policy and Economic Research (IMEPI) emerged out of the former Institute of the Economy and World Socialist System; and in 1992 the Institute of Strategic Studies of Russia (RIIS) was created, principally to fulfill the commissions from the Security Council, the Duma, and the presidential administration. Research centers addressing domestic issues also emerged such as the Institute of Economic Prognostics and the Institute of Social and Policy Research. The former was founded in 1986, during perestroika, in order to deal with questions of privatization, financial and fiscal policy, and the development of the banking sector, while the latter was founded in 1991 after a split with the Institute of Sociology.

During the 1990s, new categories of think tank emerged, in direct competition with the academic centers. They are less dependent on the ministries, live on private financing, have their own means of issuing autonomous publications, and entertain much closer relations with foreign countries. This new burgeoning milieu can be divided into several categories. The sociological survey and polling institutes constitute a first category. They are close enough to the academic centers in terms of the professional – i.e. university – training of their members, but function on the basis of private and state orders and grants from foundations. Among them are the Panrussian Center

for the Study of Public Opinion, known under its abbreviation VTSIOM, established in 1992; the Levada Center, which includes all the researchers from the former VTSIOM who, following the lead of its director Yuri Levada in 2003, objected to the Kremlin's stranglehold over the center; and, lastly, the "Public Opinion" Fund, which is close to the authorities.

A second category includes private centers entirely devoted to consultancy, which work exclusively to order, in accordance with the contracts obtained. In order to diversify their clientele as much as possible, they propose a large spectrum of topics but mainly focus on economic and commercial issues to attract the enterprises and financial structures. They do not seek to defend a particular policy perspective, are not dependent on any state structure or single private employer, and are merely content to sell their information, in particular market studies. Among these, it is worth mentioning Monitoring.ru, established in 2001 on the basis of companies that once worked under the collective name NISPI-ARPI-AIST; Romir Consulting, founded in 1992 upon the initiative of a group of researchers working at the Institute of Sociology and VTSIOM; the Center of Political Technology, which specializes in biographical data bases of the country's main businessmen, the training of cadres, and lobbying within state organs for the Association of Businessmen of Russia, the Association of Banks of Russia, and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Russia; the International Institute of Policy Expertise, specialized in policy communication and lobbying; and the Interregional Center of Cooperation for Business (MCDS), which produces reports on Russian regions and the CIS countries, and offers audits for investment projects, strategic forecasting, and industry sector expertise. This is also the case for the Center for Policy Information (CPI), which specializes in studies for the Russian federal and regional elites and influence groups in the political and commercial sectors.

A third category can be included under the term "public policy centers." These think tanks also live on private contracts and financing through grants, but they have a more distinct orientation: they often specialize in a specific area of research or defend a distinct vision of politics and the future of Russia. As a result, they tend to work with sponsors, Russian as well as foreign,

who at least partly support their worldviews, but they cannot be considered as purely political lobbies.

Many of these public policy centers work in the sector of national security: the Institute of Policy and Military Analysis (IPVA) is specialized on questions of security; the Center of Policy and International Research (CPIS) on theories of conflict settlement; the Council for Foreign Policy and Defense (SVOP) is focused, as its name indicates, on foreign policy and the defense of Russia; the Center of Policy Research (PIR) works mainly on international security and the nuclear question; and the Center of Strategic and Technological Analysis (CAST) is specialized in the Russian military-industrial complex. The Center of Information and Analysis for the Study of Sociopolitical Processes in Postsoviet space and the International Institute of Policy and Social Scientific Research (IGPI) are interested, for their part, mainly on the social and political evolutions of the Near Abroad. Other institutes concentrate on societal evolutions: the INDEM Foundation is interested in parliamentarism and manages a data base on the activities of political parties; the Center for Strategic Works provides recommendations to state organs in the social and economic domains and participates in “priority national projects”<sup>5</sup>; the Independent Institute for Social Policy (IISP) analyzes the public health system and manages an index of consumption in Russia; the Sociopolitical Center of Russia (ROPC), linked to the presidential administration and the Municipality of Moscow, facilitates cooperation between NGOs and state organs. Lastly, the Carnegie Center of Moscow remains the principal research institution of U.S. origin in Russia, alongside the New Eurasia Fund, which was established with support from the American Eurasia Foundation. Think

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<sup>5</sup> In September 2005, Putin decreed that the country should now focus on a few major projects, which would receive special state attention through a council for the implementation of priority projects. Dmitri Medvedev, then the head of the presidential administration, was appointed deputy prime minister responsible for the implementation of these projects, thus confirming that they are also designed to strengthen the influence over the ministries of those close to the president and to accentuate the role of the presidential administration as a “parallel government.” Five priority projects were defined: health, education, housing, agriculture, and “gazification” – that is, the development of access to natural gas throughout the country.

tanks with a more economic vocation have also taken shape in recent years. Hence, the Institute of Strategic Development-2050,<sup>6</sup> created in summer 2008, which is focused on macroeconomic projects intended to contribute to Russia's modernization in the twenty-first century and seems to be financed by networks of real estate agents as well as by some agricultural lobbies close to the Agrarians. They endorse the development of telecommunications, the struggle against weakening economic links between the European and Asian parts of Russia, renewed industrialization of the Russian Far East, as well as multiple strategies for the development of land, in particular via real estate and agricultural resources.

The fourth and last category groups think tanks that are clearly identified with an ideological opinion, with a party, or with a recognized political personality. It includes the International Foundation of Socio-Economic and Policy Research, known as the Gorbachev Funds; the Funds for the Defense of Glasnost, which defends the gains of perestroika; Andrei Illarionov's very liberal Institute of Economic Analysis; the Center of Policy and Economic Research (EPItsentr), close to the democratic party Yabloko and its leader Grigori Yavlinski; the Liberal Mission Funds, and the Panorama and SOVA centers, which include defenders of human rights and analysts of Russian society's evolution toward authoritarianism and nationalism; the Institute of Problems of Globalization of Mikhail Deliagin, a social democrat who is more and more engaged alongside alterglobalist networks, etc. Among those of nationalist sensibility, one ought to mention the Experimental Creative Center led by Sergei Kurginian, who was very active in the last years of the Soviet Union, as well as the activities of well-known publicists such as Alexander Prokhanov and Sergei Kara-Murza, who have small research structures organized around their persons; there is also the Spiritual Heritage led by Aleksei Podberezkin, for a longtime considered to be the think tank of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation; and, lastly, lobbies that defend the Russians of the Near Abroad such as the Institute of the Diaspora and Integration led by Konstantin Zatulin, and Panslavic movements around Natalia Narochitskaia.

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<sup>6</sup> *Institut strategicheskogo razvitiia 2050*, [www.isr2050.ru](http://www.isr2050.ru)

The organization of nationalist think tanks more or less directly linked to the Kremlin has therefore not occurred on virgin ground: the political authorities in Russia were not the first to establish think tanks; on the contrary, they had already taken shape from 1990 to 2000, well before the Kremlin came to realize the importance and utility of the phenomenon.

## The Ambiguities of the Putin Regime on Matters of Ideology

During Vladimir Putin's first period as president (2000–04), the Kremlin took pleasure in refusing all allusions to any ideological debate: after the political rifts of the 1990s between partisans of the reforms and conservatives of communist sensibility or nostalgics for the Soviet Union, the new president cast himself as a-ideological. He claimed to be working solely in accordance with technocratic objectives, necessary to promoting Russia's stabilization and then revival.<sup>7</sup> However, the authorities' use of terms was not neutral: from 1999, the site of the Unity party (*Edinstvo*), the direct precursor of United Russia, contained a rubric called "Our Ideology," which made direct reference to conservatism. The Director of the Center for Work on Programmatic Documents, German Moro, a recognized researcher on conservative theories, indeed saw in conservatism the "only system of ideas capable of saving Russia." He defined it as a way of thinking that "is based on eternal social and moral values: respect for one's own tradition, trusting in the tradition of one's forefathers, and giving priority to the interests of society."<sup>8</sup> United Russia's principal doctrinal reference had thus been in gestation since the end of the 1990s. Similarly for the word "patriotism," a term that Vladimir Putin has employed regularly, beginning with his manifesto of 1999, all the while claiming that he refuses all national ideology.<sup>9</sup>

During Putin's second presidential period (2004–08), the a-ideological narrative of the authorities was suddenly overturned. Outside Russia, the "colored revolutions," and especially the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine in 2004, shook the established elites. While references to liberalism and the

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<sup>7</sup> S. Hanson, "Instrumental Democracy: The End of Ideology and the Decline of Russian Political Parties," in V. Hesli and W. Reisinger (eds.), *Elections, Parties, and the Future of Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 163-185.

<sup>8</sup> E. Popov, "Priamye i krivye kremlevskoi ideologii", *Novaia Politika*, July 20, 2006, <http://www.novopol.ru/text10384.html>

<sup>9</sup> On Putin's narrative, see Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation. Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 142-145.

Western model seemed to have been wiped from the public arena after the failures of the Yeltsin era, the return of political contestation in the name of democracy, even potential, induced the Kremlin to react. Although the Union of Right Forces led by Boris Nemtsov and Sergei Kirienko and the party Yabloko of Grigori Yavlinski were moribund (with less than 5 per cent of the votes, they were without any representation in the Duma), a contestation inspired by the “colored revolutions” formed around Garry Kasparov and Mikhail Kasianov, the leaders of the movement The Other Russia. This signaled to the Kremlin that the time when ideological combat seemed pointless was well and truly over. On the domestic scene, the authorities also had to face up to the large popular demonstrations of 2005. These events showed that social contestation is still possible and took United Russia by surprise.<sup>10</sup> Just as unexpected was the dissidence of the Rodina party led by Dmitri Rogozin, especially since it was created with the support of some members of the presidential administration and had been expected by the Kremlin to show the greatest fidelity.<sup>11</sup> United Russia thus understood that a space of political contestation existed, not only in the liberal-democrat camp, but also to its left, one centered on topics of a more nationalist and social nature. If the presidential party wanted to leave its stamp on Russian political life for the coming decade, it would no longer be able to limit itself to glorifying the president’s person and had to formulate a more coherent policy doctrine.

The question of ideology again moved to the center stage during the presidential elections of March 2008 and the transfer of power from Putin and Medvedev. In fact, despite its omnipresence in the political field, the Kremlin remained weak, and with it the entire regime it had built since the beginning of the 2000s. United Russia’s long-term stranglehold on the political spectrum was far from assured. Russian citizens remained largely dissatisfied

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<sup>10</sup> The largest social mobilization the country has known was that of January 2005: the state had decided to replace the forms of aid in kind (mainly free transport and medications) traditionally granted to the poorest classes with financial compensation. This monetization of social advantages triggered large spontaneous demonstrations from several tens of thousands of persons in the country and forced the Kremlin to reverse its decision.

<sup>11</sup> On Rodina, see Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation. Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 102-117.

with their institutions and politicians, even when they approved of Putin and voted for United Russia.<sup>12</sup> Still today, despite its control over the media and the whole electoral process, United Russia has not really succeeded in inspiring the expected political confidence. The party faces a fundamental contradiction: on the one hand, it functions according to the logic of the dominant party, insisting on its bureaucratic legitimacy; but, on the other, it is based on a logic of personalized power revolving around the figure of a charismatic leader.<sup>13</sup> United Russia has tried to maintain these two sources of legitimacy and their underlying evolution in parallel. But this balance is an unstable one. Russia, with no tradition of diarchy (*dvoevlastie*), has become a country with two centers of political power. This two-headed system could prove to be a dangerous instrument, especially since the power relationship between the country's two strongmen remains to be negotiated. And while Medvedev continues to show deference to Putin, it remains unclear when and if he will attempt to wrest the reins of power from his predecessor. Under these conditions, the question of what ideology is capable of structuring the party and of legitimating it to ensure continuity in policy during the leadership transition becomes far more pressing.

The Kremlin's communication advisors and ideologues, called "political technologists" (*polit-tekhnologi*) in Russian, or spin doctors, have thus worked to establish a structured set of power mechanisms, political principles, and lastly, tools of propaganda. For some United Russia propagandists, ideology is seen as a determining factor in the permanence of the regime. From 2003 onward, the ruling authorities have actually been busily discussing the

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<sup>12</sup> R. Rose, N. Munro and W. Mishler, "Resigned Acceptance of an Incomplete Democracy: Russia's Political Equilibrium", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2004, pp. 195-218.

<sup>13</sup> Max Weber distinguishes between three ideal types of legitimacy, namely, traditional, bureaucratic, and charismatic. If Lenin and Stalin belong to the third category, Vladimir Putin fits the second: he draws his legitimacy from the institutions that he represents; he is only the foremost of functionaries, applying abstract rules valid for all. Nevertheless, the idea of a figure of exception endowed with specific qualities inspiring the affection of the people is also present in Putin's popular image in Russia.

creation of a Council for National Ideology (*Sovet po natsional'noi ideologii*)<sup>14</sup> to be convened by important intellectual and cultural figures, but to date nothing has eventuated. In 2006, the publication of a book by Aleksei Chadaev titled *Putin: His Ideology* provoked a stir within the party. While some political technologists appeared to support the move toward formalizing an ideology, based on, among others, the theme of “sovereign democracy,” other figures, including Dmitri Medvedev, did not hide their lack of appreciation for the expression. The quest for a national doctrine thus does not have unanimous support among the presidential administration or the president’s political advisors. Does the country really need a state ideology to establish a sole legitimate vision of national identity, if such implies breaking with the consensus? Does the patriotism that has been around since the start of the 2000s not suffice to mobilize society? The stakes are considerable, since what will be revealed, even if indirectly, is the party’s degree of centralization and capacity to suppress internal dissent and factionalism. The question also arises of the level of popular support required by this new ideological indoctrination.

Vladimir Putin’s personal opinion of the ideological matter has remained imprecise. He is known for preferring to apply managerial principles to politics rather than ideology.<sup>15</sup> However, he has oftentimes complained about United Russia’s lack of ideology. In 2000, he made an explicit parallel between Russia’s need to share a common moral value and the Moral Code of the Builder of Communism (*Moral’nyi kodeks stroitelia kommunizma*), thereby permitting himself a positive reference to the ideological rigidity of the Soviet regime.<sup>16</sup> During the December 2007 legislative elections, he made a point of criticizing this lack of ideology: “Has United Russia proven to be an ideal political structure? Quite obviously not. It has no formed ideology, no principles for which the majority of its members would be ready to do battle and

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<sup>14</sup> “Prochat v glavny soveta po natsional’noi ideologii”, *BusinessPress.ru*, December 8, 2003, [http://www.businesspress.ru/newspaper/article\\_mId\\_33\\_aId\\_286900.html](http://www.businesspress.ru/newspaper/article_mId_33_aId_286900.html)

<sup>15</sup> V. Shlapentokh, “Putin as flexible politician. Does he imitate Stalin?,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2008, pp. 205-216.

<sup>16</sup> V. V. Putin, “Poslanie Federal’nomu Sobraniuu Rossiiskoi Federatsii”, July 8, 2000, [http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2000/07/08/0000\\_type63372type63374type82634\\_28782.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2000/07/08/0000_type63372type63374type82634_28782.shtml)

to stake its authority."<sup>17</sup> The president has therefore had to hedge his bets: to rehabilitate patriotism at least as a value, all the while remaining as imprecise as possible, since any doctrine in the least bit precise risks undermining the reconciliatory dynamic embodied by the presidential apparatus. The call for United Russia's ideologization appears therefore to contradict the incessantly repeated need for pragmatism.

If Putin has remained cautious about the question of ideology, Vladislav Surkov, United Russia's *éminence grise* and Putin's personal political advisor, decided to make public the need for a party doctrine. In 2006, Surkov claimed that sovereign democracy (*suverennaia demokratiia*) is the first fundament of any future ideology. The adjective "sovereign" is meant to indicate the idea that Russia has a specific path of development: it must therefore refuse the *Pax Americana* imposed by Washington and define its own rhythm of development and priorities. Sovereign democracy is the Kremlin's direct response to the "colored revolutions" of 2003–05: no Western interference will be accepted in the name of democratic values.<sup>18</sup> By sovereign democracy, Surkov wants to underline the fundamentally modernizing character of his national project, whose mission is to guarantee Russia "the nationalization of the future," as the title of one of his principal programmatic texts explains.<sup>19</sup> Very often presented as the Suslov of the post-Soviet times,<sup>20</sup> Vladislav Surkov caused much ink to be spilled among Western and Russian experts in his role as the new ideologue of Putinian nationalism. However, an attentive reading of his writings and of his place in the contemporary Russian ideological field does not place him as the most radical. Very skilled in media manipulation and convinced of the necessity of putting forward a more ideological narra-

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<sup>17</sup> V. V. Putin, "Zachem ia vozglavil spisok Edinoi Rossii", November 13, 2007, <http://www.kreml.org/media/165463628?mode=print>

<sup>18</sup> A. Okara, "Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea or PR project?," *Russia in Global Affairs*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2007, pp. 8-20, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/20/1124.html>

<sup>19</sup> V. Surkov, "Natsionalizatsiia budushchego (paragrafy pro suverennuiu demokratiuu)," *Ekspert*, no. 43, November 20, 2006, [http://www.expert.ru/print/issues/expert/2006/43/nacionalizaciya\\_budushchego/](http://www.expert.ru/print/issues/expert/2006/43/nacionalizaciya_budushchego/)

<sup>20</sup> Mikhail Suslov (1902-1982), in charge of the ideology of the CPSU from the 1960s until its disappearance.

tive on the future of Russia, Surkov distinguishes himself, however, by his moderate anti-Westernism, his positive reading of globalization, his refusal of traditional Soviet nostalgia, and his belief in a Russia that is open to the rest of the world.<sup>21</sup> Although his relations with Dmitri Medvedev have been complex, both men seem to have succeeded in maintaining the status quo, as Surkov was confirmed in the post of vice-director of the presidential administration in May 2008. The ideological stakes that shake Russia are nevertheless far from being limited to the unique career of Vladislav Surkov.

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<sup>21</sup> On Surkov's theories, see Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation. Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 145-148.

## The Formation of Conservative and Liberal Wings within United Russia

Only a few months after the large demonstrations of January 2005, United Russia was shaken by discussions between the party leadership and several important figures who were calling for more internal debate and the formation of ideological party wings. In April, Vladimir Pligin, president of the Duma Constitutional Legislation Committee and a lawyer by training, made public a text signed by thirty senior party functionaries calling for debates to be organized within the party apparatus. The document denounced the hold that the security services have over Russian public life and encouraged political power to strengthen its authority over an administration that had become too powerful. This accusation itself seemed to bear out the tensions that exist between the various clans in power.

Some days later, Boris Gryzlov, then United Russia president and Duma speaker, intervened to say that the party's purpose is not to divide itself into wings: "Discussion is not only natural, but necessary, notwithstanding it must not be generated to the detriment of party discipline."<sup>22</sup> In order to unite divergent opinions, he has tried to systematize United Russia's viewpoint by asserting that it has one ideology, namely "social conservatism."<sup>23</sup> By this term, the Duma speaker meant to define the party's centrism within the ideological field (opposing both "extremisms," the liberal one and the communist one), its pragmatism in economic matters, and its desire to dominate the entirety of the political checkerboard. He lambasted the principle of revolution, charged with having caused Russia much damage and with slowing down the country's modernization, be it that in the 1910s and 1920s or that of the 1990s. In his view, Russia's modernization can only be realized by a process of gradual reforms, that proceed without inducing any devastating

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<sup>22</sup> B. Gryzlov, "U Edinoi Rossii kryl'ev ne budet," *Russkaia liniia*, April 23, 2004, [www.rusk.ru/st.php?idar=150593](http://www.rusk.ru/st.php?idar=150593)

<sup>23</sup> B. Gryzlov, "Sovremennyi rossiiskii konservatizm," *Tsentr sotsial'no-konservativnoi politiki*, December 7, 2007, [http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=187&Itemid=34](http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=187&Itemid=34)

social effects, without endangering the state's stability, and without borrowing from foreign ideologies, whether Marxism or liberalism. The ideology of the party is, according to Gryzlov, "the support provided to the middle class and the actions undertaken in the interest of that class, which has no need of a revolution of any kind whether financial, economic, cultural, political, orange [colored revolutions, *ML*], red [communist], marron [fascist] or blue [homosexual]."<sup>24</sup> Social conservatism is therefore presumed to be larger than any political current and unable to be reduced to one. However, Gryzlov's definition remains largely insufficient to provide any doctrinal basis to the presidential party. Two informal currents, rightist and leftist, have thus tried to constitute themselves.

The first current, termed conservative liberal, is led by Vladimir Pligin and Valeri Fadeev. Pligin came from the legal milieu and worked in the 1990s as a lawyer for the Mayor of Saint Petersburg Anatoly Sobchak (1937-2000), whose administration has trained numerous "liberals." Valeri Fadeev has been the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Ekspert* since the second half of the 1990s, a member of the Public Chamber,<sup>25</sup> president of the Institute for Social Forecasting,<sup>26</sup> and co-president of the association Business Russia. The conservative liberal current includes several figures that began their political careers in the Union of Right Forces before allying with United Russia. It is backed by close associates of Dmitri Medvedev, who on several occasions has claimed that he would like a right-wing ideology to develop within United Russia.<sup>27</sup> The rival current, called social conservative, is directed by Andrei Isaev. A former professor of history with close ties to union circles,

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<sup>24</sup> Gryzlov, "U Edinoi Rossii kryl'ev ne budet."

<sup>25</sup> Lacking any decision-making authority, the Public Chamber functions only as a subordinate bureaucratic body. Its members are held up as representatives of civil society, and include academics, artists, company directors, association presidents, and various individuals. They play an important role in refocusing public discourse on patriotism, presenting it as a request emanating from below rather than a process driven from above.

<sup>26</sup> *Institut obshchestvennogo proektirovaniia*, <http://www.inop.ru>

<sup>27</sup> Medvedev in fact remarked that "the absence of a rightist ideology gives rise to ersatz versions and produces many prejudices." Quoted in E. Liubarskaia, "Rozhdenie demokratii iz dukha avtoritarizma", *Lenta.ru*, April 22, 2005, <http://www.lenta.ru/articles/2005/04/22/er/>

he was formerly head of the Federation of Independent Unions of Russia before siding with Yuri Luzhkov and Evgeni Primakov's Fatherland – All Russia Party. In 2003, he became a member of United Russia and since then has headed the Duma Committee for Work and Social Policy.<sup>28</sup> His second in command is Andrei Kokoshin, another close associate of Yuri Luzhkov, who was longtime President of the Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, and leader of the Institute for Problems of International Security.<sup>29</sup> Another of its directors, Yuri Shuvalov, member of the Presidium of the General Council of United Russia, vice-president of the presidential administration, and formerly in charge of relations with the media and society, is regarded as a representative of the party's left and one of the principal, highly placed political mainstays of the social conservative current.

The liberal conservative current includes the deputies Viktor Pleskachevski, president of the Duma Committee for Property, Pavel Krasheninikov, president of the Duma Committee for Civil and Criminal Legislation and Arbitration, and Vladislav Reznik, president of the Duma Committee for the Financial Market – all three are natives of St. Petersburg and specialize in issues identified as “capitalist,” namely, property, justice, and the market. They assert that “individual freedom, the possibility to choose freely one's destiny [...] is the ideal that orientates the liberal conservative approach.”<sup>30</sup> This wing wants the Kremlin to deal resolutely with economic matters by privileging the monetization of social advantages and by showing the greatest respect for private property. The Khodorkovsky affair, for example, raised concern within the liberal group, which saw in it the possible undermining of the gains of privatization. The group Business Russia, created in 2004, embodies this liberal tendency in presenting itself as “the intellectual center of the business milieu of Russia.”<sup>31</sup> It gathers a new generation of businessmen working outside of the hydrocarbon and mineral sectors, which are charged with being too close to the secret services and political power. These businessmen are principally involved in the finance,

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<sup>28</sup> See his personal site, <http://isaev.info/>

<sup>29</sup> *Institut problem mezhdunarodnoi bezopasnosti*, [www.ipmb.ru](http://www.ipmb.ru)

<sup>30</sup> “Tseli i zadachi kluba”, <http://www.inop.ru/club/>

<sup>31</sup> *Delovaia Rossiia*, <http://www.deloros.ru/dr/about/>

construction, automobile, and agribusiness milieus, flagship sectors of the young Russian market. Business Russia calls on the Kremlin to put an end to the bureaucratic pressures that privilege the large state-run corporations but impede the burgeoning of the private sector, and encourages the country to commit itself to policies of economic diversification. Valeri Fadeev and the president of Business Russia, Boris Titov, would thus like to see a rehabilitation of the pre-revolutionary Russian capitalist traditions and both lay claim to the heritage of Petr Stolypin.<sup>32</sup>

The social conservative current, on the other hand, advocates adapting the socialist system to the conditions of the market economy. By this, Andrei Isaev aims to promote a reinforcement of the role of the state and its moral rehabilitation as a mediator of the common good, in order to overcome the sentiment of foreignness (*otchuzhdenie*) that citizens have vis-à-vis the state.<sup>33</sup> Andrei Isaev openly enlists in a leftist tradition that he has never renounced. During perestroika, he led a small anarcho-syndicalist movement and today controls the Duma Committee for Work and Social Policy that enables him to remain close to the union milieus and to continue to work with the working-class movement. Since 2008, he has also directed United Russia's Council for Propaganda and Agitation Work. He nonetheless refuses to assimilate his current with European social democracy. Where the latter is born of the demands of the working class and stamped by internationalism, social conservatism is, in his view, about being open to all social classes but marked by specifically Russian traditions.<sup>34</sup> The social conservative current, which also includes Il'dar Gabdrakhmanov, who assists Isaev in the Committee for Work and Social Policy, and Vladimir Gruzdev, director of supermarket chain the "Seventh Continent," have also adopted a certain number of Eurasianist claims concerning Russia's return to the status of a great power, its assumed

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<sup>32</sup> Petr Stolypin (1862–1911), prime minister of Nicholas II, known for his agrarian reforms and a large symbol of prerevolutionary Russian capitalism.

<sup>33</sup> L. Sigal, "Predlozheniia k platforme rossiiskogo sotsial'nogo konservatizma," *Tsentr sotsial'no-konservativnoi politiki*, no date, <http://www.cscp.ru/about/manifest/41/>

<sup>34</sup> "Tsentr sotsial'no-konservativnoi politiki stal pitatel'noi sredoi dlia oboikh kryl'ev Edinoi Rossii", *Tsentr sotsial'no-konservativnoi politiki*, April 19, 2004, <http://cscp.ru/about/manifest/31/>

role as a stabilizer of the Eurasian space, and the model of plurinational and plurireligious harmony.<sup>35</sup>

These two currents have never been recognized as official fractions or wings, but instead express themselves in discussion clubs. The liberal conservatives' club is called the Club of November 4.<sup>36</sup> It works principally with the Institute for Social Forecasting, organizes conferences and seminars, and conceives of itself as the liberal lobby within United Russia. Although it defends the idea of sovereign democracy, the club does not think Russia should go down the isolationist path, and foregrounds Russia's historically liberal past, as well as the necessity of upholding freedom as the state's first value, and the importance of private property.<sup>37</sup> As far as the social conservatives are concerned, they have created their own Center for Social Conservative Policy,<sup>38</sup> designed as a place for discussion between the two currents. Financed in part by Vladimir Gruzdev, the center organizes regular workshops and offers activities for training cadres, such as "the school of the Russian politician." It has also held competitions called "professional brigades for the country" in various regions. Notwithstanding their rivalry, both currents share the veiled critiques that Vladimir Pligin has voiced against the security services. For Andrei Isaev, too, only a clearly defined doctrinal program will allow the authorities to curb the omnipresence of the secret services and to prevent them from breaking with the legal order in the name of reinforcing the state and the fight against terrorism.<sup>39</sup>

During the 2007 legislative campaign, the party's leadership accepted the opening up of debate. United Russia deputies were presented the work done by the various clubs of reflection, but this debate did not aim to formalize

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<sup>35</sup> "Sotsial'nyi konservatism – ideologiya Edinoi Rossii," *Isaev's site*, <http://www.isaevinfo/vzglyad/6/>

<sup>36</sup> *Klub 4ogo noiabria*. The Club does not have its own site and so it is hosted on the site of the Institute for Social Forecasting. The Club's name makes reference to the new national holiday introduced in 2004, namely People's Unity Day, chosen to commemorate the 1612 victory of Moscow residents over the Polish-Lithuanian *Rzeczpospolita*.

<sup>37</sup> "Liberal'no-konservativnoe videnie budushchego Rossii," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, November 18, 2005, [http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2005-11-18/10\\_future.html](http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2005-11-18/10_future.html)

<sup>38</sup> *Tsentr sotsial'no-konservativnoi politiki*, <http://cskp.ru>

<sup>39</sup> "O CSKP", <http://cskp.ru/about/>

the existence of ideological wings. Apart from the liberal and social currents, a group called “Russian Project” was also presented, as were texts labeled as “Christian conservative.”<sup>40</sup> The objective of this sudden exhibition of the party’s ideological diversity had an eminently electoral objective: by waving a large range of available ideological products, the presidential administration hoped to steal votes from the opposition, whether liberal (Union of Right Forces), Communist (the CPRF), or nationalist (Fair Russia). The polit-technologists were in fact concerned about the negative impact of United Russia’s political monopoly, which was corroding its popular support. The multiple references that United Russia made in favor of the model of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party – able to remain the pillar of Japanese political life for several decades precisely because it harbored multiple ideological tendencies – is therefore revealing of the image that it has of itself.

The impression, quite widespread among the ruling elites, that United Russia lacks ideas and innovation in numerous sectors, also gave rise, in 2007, to the heavily media-exploited project of the “Ideas Factory,” which was promoted by United Russia and financed by public monies.<sup>41</sup> The Factory, headed by deputy Andrei Kokoshin, former deputy minister of Defense in the 1990s and rector of the MGU Faculty of World Politics, has the mission of “forming a highly efficient contemporary economy, one based on knowledge and the use of leading-edge technologies, of formulating strategies to establish Russian technological production on the world market, and of attracting foreign investments.”<sup>42</sup> The choices of strategies and the allocation of financing are left to the Center of Planning and Strategic Forecasting,<sup>43</sup> a discrete structure linked to United Russia. Several key domains were decreed priority areas by the Ideas Factory, including nanotechnology, biotechnology, alternative energies, and naval construction, with the aim of applying them to national industry. The old Soviet discourses heralding the glory of

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<sup>40</sup> A. Samarina, N. Kostenko, I. Rodin, “Edinaia Rossiia razdelitsia na techeniia,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, November 2, 2007, [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-11-02/1\\_er.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-11-02/1_er.html)

<sup>41</sup> *Fabrika mysli*, <http://fabm.ideacompany.ru/news/view27/>

<sup>42</sup> For more details, consult the website <http://fabrikamisli.ru/about/> (accessed October 12, 2007, now closed).

<sup>43</sup> *Tsentr strategicheskogo planirovaniia i proektirovaniia*, no website.

the exploits of national industrial science have thus once more become the flavor of the day, but have been thoroughly modernized.

## The Ideological New Wave: from the “Russian Project” to the Patriotic Club

In 2007, while debates pitting the two currents, liberal and social, against one another were raging, and preparations of the legislative campaign fueled internal conflict over the question of a new mandate for Vladimir Putin, a third tendency emerged, namely patriotic conservatism. Its manifesto, the “Russian Project” (*Russkii proekt*), was published in February 2007 and immediately recognized for its potential to become one of United Russia’s programmatic texts. At the head of this new current, which is linked to the Center for Social Conservative Policy, is Ivan Demidov, one of the main leaders of the Young Guard, United Russia’s youth movement, and adviser to the political section of the presidential party. Demidov has a very original and unique career to draw on: presenter of one of the most famous youth shows during perestroika and then of the main rock show at the beginning of the 1990s, he rapidly became a shrewd expert of the televisual scene before becoming involved in TV production, in particular in the military channel Zvezda in 2004 and the Orthodox channel Spas in 2005.

The Russian Project also has the support of more traditional political figures: Andrei Isaev and Yuri Shuvalov, who consider that the text broadly responds to the expectations of the social conservative current; the United Russia deputies Pavel Voronin and Igor Igoshin; the Duma deputy speaker Alexander Torchin; the professor at the Spiritual Academy of Moscow, deacon Andrei Kuraev; the deputy president of the first channel and advisor to the political department of the presidential party Andrei Pisarev; the editor-in-chief of the Orthodox journal *Fom*; and the nationalist journalist Mikhail Leontiev. This group backed Vladimir Putin’s candidacy for a third presidential mandate and to this end participated in a signature collection. United Russia has not hidden the instrumental character of the Russian Project, which aimed at attracting people of more radical nationalist sensibility, in particular former Rodina voters. At the project’s launch, Demidov thus stated that “United Russia is ready to revive the terms of nationalism, nation

and Russian, which have been privatized and discredited by organizations such as the Movement Against Illegal Immigration.”<sup>44</sup> The use of the term “Russian” (*russkii*) to the detriment of “of Russia” (*rossiiskii* or Rossian) is not neutral: the former, involving primordialist ethnocultural connotations, is considered as the mark of a nationalist sensibility, while the latter, which emphasizes the civic identity of Russia, is conventionally the most commonly used in connection with the state. Demidov’s choice of expression is therefore a provocative one: He is not interested in a *project for Russia*, but in a *project for Russians*, meaning ethnic Russians.

The Russian Project has set itself the objective of putting the question of identity at the heart of the electoral debate and of opening a large platform for discussion around the question of Russianness. During the presentation of the project, Aleksei Chadaev, one of its members, claimed for instance that the country needs “Russians by profession” (*professional’nye russkie*), people who are able to promote a balanced but assumed nationalism, one detached from extremism and xenophobia.<sup>45</sup> The Russian Project calls for a revolution of cadres: it asserts that Russian elites must get rid of the taboo of Russifying Russia and spread their national convictions at the regional and municipal levels using concrete measures, not speeches.<sup>46</sup> The Project’s website maintained links to numerous nationalist internet resources, ranging from Stalinist nostalgia to Orthodox fundamentalism. One of the site’s main editors, Egor Kholmogorov, considers that the Stalinist repressions at the end of the 1930s were necessary, while Nadezhda Orlova, another regular collaborator on the

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<sup>44</sup> “Edinaia Rossiia sozdaet Russkii proekt”, *km.ru*, February 5, 2007, <http://www.km.ru/magazin/view.asp?id=7B48241A748C4AA3B67F32F1C006400D>. The Movement Against Illegal Immigration, created in 2002, is one of the main Russian xenophobic groups. It succeeded in becoming the intermediary between the skinhead movements and more respectable nationalist political personalities and in widely broadcasting the slogan “Russia to the Russians.” For more on this topic, consult Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation. Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 74-79.

<sup>45</sup> V. Kholmogorova, “Levyi russkii”, *Ekspert*, February 5, 2007, <http://www.expert.ru/articles/2007/02/05/lr/>

<sup>46</sup> “Ivan Demidov o russkom voprose i politicheskom ‘patriotizmetre’”, *Russkii proekt*, December 20, 2007, <http://www.rus-proekt.ru/nrpc/2930.html> (accessed January 27, 2008, now closed).

Project, calls for the creation of an Orthodox Hezbollah.<sup>47</sup> Demidov, for his part, does not conceal his sympathy for the neo-Eurasianist ideologue Alexander Dugin, who often makes provocative geopolitical remarks, defending alongside Demidov the idea that Russia has an imperial destiny.<sup>48</sup>

Demidov wants to rehabilitate the term Russian and once more give to it a place in political discourse, for, as he puts it, “the Russian people is the country’s founding people, its builder, if you will, the bearer of the principal driver of action.”<sup>49</sup> He calls upon United Russia to present itself as a Russian party (*russkaia partiia*) and rejoices at the increasingly common use of the term national (*natsional’nyi*) as a synonym of the state (*gosudarstvennyi*), a long-dead tradition in Russia. As he sees it, no Russian nation-state can exist unless it is built on the recognition of the primary role of the Russian people and assigns a special status to its language, culture, and religion, such that Orthodoxy should be granted the right to participate directly in political decision-making. For the Russian Project’s partisans, the nation is not a given; it must be constructed by the elites. And it necessitates the edification of a pantheon of national heroes, whom it would be obligatory to commemorate, and the formulation of a unique reading of national history.<sup>50</sup> Demidov also desires to reinstate the Soviet system – suppressed in the 1990s – of mentioning the “nationality” of each citizen in their passports. He rejects the “replication of the European-American style, according to which [...] indi-

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<sup>47</sup> “Ukhod Ivana Demidova polozhil konets eshche odnomu ego detishchu – internet-portal Edinoi Rossii Russkii proekt,” *Kommersant*, February 22, 2008, <http://www.nazlobu.ru/press/article2564.htm>

<sup>48</sup> M. Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism. An Ideology of Empire* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center Press/Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 107-143.

<sup>49</sup> “Stenogramma onlain-konferentsii koordinatora MGEP po ideologii, koordinatora ‘Russkogo proekta’ Ivana Demidova,” *Molodaia Gvardiia*, November 16, 2007, [www.molgvardia.ru/ideologicheskii\\_otdel/page/5/](http://www.molgvardia.ru/ideologicheskii_otdel/page/5/) (accessed January 27, 2008, now closed).

<sup>50</sup> N. V. Shelianin, “Problemy formirovaniia rossiiskoi natsii. Podkhody k resheniiu,” *Tsentr sotsial’no-konservativnoi politiki*, February 12, 2007, [http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=39&Itemid=36](http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=39&Itemid=36)

viduals have neither family nor tribe."<sup>51</sup> His definition of Russianness, however, seems not to be founded on ethnicity or race but on the culturalist idea of a specific Russian civilization.

Ivan Demidov recognizes that there is a battle for words presently going on in Russia.<sup>52</sup> To influence public debate, the Russian Project planned to organize multiple public discussions in different cities on ten questions considered to be central: What is meant by the Russian nation, the Russian world, nationalism, and racism? Is the slogan "Russia for the Russians" appropriate? What stance must be taken with respect to Orthodoxy? And how is Russian great power to be developed?<sup>53</sup> Demidov presents himself as someone who is as radically opposed to liberalism as to socialism. For him, the state's mission is not to guarantee the interests of the individual, but to ensure the existence of the people in history. He also objects to the socialist-cum-alterglobalist discourse, which says that Russia can be conceived in terms of a universalist schema, an altruism that he adjudges utopian. Demidov appeals on the contrary to "national egoism."<sup>54</sup> His ideological offensive is very important: in his view, the term "Rossian," born among the Yeltsin liberals, will not allow the country to develop a modern national identity and gives the citizens to believe that no titular ethnos (*titul'nyi etnos*) exists in Russia.

The Russian Project is closely linked to the Russian Club,<sup>55</sup> a small nationalist center of discussion whose seminars bring together members of United Russia and more radical figures such as Sergei Kara-Murza, a renowned essayist bent on promoting a new Communist ideology. The Club, which began organizing meetings in 2005 under the name of "Conservative Meetings" (*Konservativnoe soveshchanie*), develops in its own way the Russian

<sup>51</sup> "Stenogramma onlain-konferentsii koordinatora MGEP po ideologii, koordinatora 'Russkogo proekta' Ivana Demidova."

<sup>52</sup> E. Rudneva, "Edinorusskii proekt," *Obshchaia gazeta*, February 5, 2007, <http://www.og.ru/articles/2007/02/05/22043.shtml>

<sup>53</sup> "Edinaia Rossiia otkryvaet Russkii proekt," *Edinaia Rossiia*, February 5, 2007, [http://www.edinoros-ural.ru/analytics/society/2007/02/06/society\\_829.html](http://www.edinoros-ural.ru/analytics/society/2007/02/06/society_829.html)

<sup>54</sup> "Rashirennoe zasedanie CSKP v TPP: Partia parlamentskogo bol'shinstva. Obnovlenie i razvitie," *Tsentr sotsial'no-konservativnoi politiki*, November 12, 2007, <http://www.vsesmi.ru/news/1257279/>

<sup>55</sup> *Russkii klub* is without its own internet site, but many of its communiqués are available at <http://www.rus-obr.ru/about>

historiosophical tradition that existed at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It states that the Patriarchate should be supported in its request to introduce courses of Orthodox culture in schools, and militates for a strict control of migratory flows, which are blamed for multiplying mafia networks.<sup>56</sup> The reference to empire plays an important role in this Russian Project: according to Demidov, a country that sees its historic priority as being a great power and a multinational state owes itself to be an empire. Mikhail Leontiev has done distinctive work on this topic. He contends that “the Russian project is the empire. The only response to problems of xenophobia is imperial identity.”<sup>57</sup> This vision of Russia presumes a return to unitarism: historically, Russia was never a federation, national republics have to subsume under super-regions, and no national minorities can be recognized.<sup>58</sup>

After the December 2007 legislative elections and the March 2008 presidential elections, the Kremlin decided to force the Russian Project to toe the line. Indeed, Demidov had scandalized part of the ruling elites and did not win the favor of the new president Dmitri Medvedev. The Project’s website was closed in February 2008 and certain texts, the least radical, were reprised by the Center for Social Conservative Policy. The television programme linked to the Russian Project, which planned to go by the provocative name of “I am Russian” (*Ia – russkii*), never saw the light of day. Yuri Shuvalov, one of the Project’s promoters, brought the debate back within the limits of the politically correct in stating that “the Russian idea” owes itself to be supra-national and could not give priority to ethnic Russians,<sup>59</sup> while nevertheless

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<sup>56</sup> See for example “Poslednii vrag uprazdnit’sia – smert’,” *Russkii proekt*, December 26, 2007, [http://www.rus-proekt.ru/russian\\_truth/3035.html](http://www.rus-proekt.ru/russian_truth/3035.html) (accessed January 27, 2008, now closed).

<sup>57</sup> M. Leont’ev, “Russkii proekt – odin. Drugogo net, i nikogda ne budet,” *Tsentr sotsial’no-konservativnoi politiki*, February 5, 2007, [http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=23&Itemid=36](http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=23&Itemid=36)

<sup>58</sup> M. Leont’ev, “Imperskie traditsii i obustroistvo sovremennoi Rossii,” *Tsentr sotsial’no-konservativnoi politiki*, November 12, 2007, [http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=174&Itemid=36](http://www.cscp-pfo.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=174&Itemid=36)

<sup>59</sup> V. Kholmogorova, “Vziali pod krylo,” *Ekspert*, February 26, 2008, <http://www.expert.ru/articles/2008/02/26/krylo/>

defending the major place of Orthodoxy in the national narrative.<sup>60</sup> This new approach was formalized in a text called *Russian Matrix. Reloaded* – a reference to the famous American film – by Sergei Volobuev, member of the Center for Social Conservative Policy. Volobuev maintains that the first of Demidov's ten questions, "Does Russia belong to the Russians?," does not correspond to the spirit of Russia since the Russian nation is not an ethnonational entity but a spiritual and political one. Spiritual, because Orthodoxy and openness to the other traditional religions is its fundament; political, because it combines democratic and monarchic elements, as only a form of personalized power (*edinolichnaia forma*) is conceivable in Russia. The text equally examines the Russian question in a globalized world, offering its formulation of the solution in terms of the "Russian world" (*ruskii mir*), understood as the cross-border deployment of Russian culture.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the closure of the Russian Project, the idea of a third "patriotic" current to complement the two existing tendencies, liberal and social, continues to exist. The contested heritage of the Russian Project has thus been transformed into a State-Patriotic Club,<sup>62</sup> which is much more respectable because it is less overtly linked to certain radical movements and less overtly centered on ethnic Russians. In its founding declaration, the new Club nevertheless makes reference to its two master thinkers, the émigré philosopher Ivan Ilin (1883-1954) and the dissident Alexander Solzhenytsin (1918-2008), known for their political conservatism and their ethnonationalist sensibility. The Patriotic Club's declaration emphasizes the unique character of Russia: "All of the planet's countries are unique and original, but only one of them remains outside of the rational schemas and the common patterns of geopolitics, Russia. Russia was and remains an undecipherable mystery for the West and a hope for the East."<sup>63</sup> Very classically, the Club has adopted the major affirmations of Russian nationalism: the supremacy of the state and not of the individual as the driving force of society; the importance of mili-

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<sup>60</sup> "Russkii proekt," *Fond imeni Pitirima Sorokina*, 2008, <http://www.sorokinfond.ru/index.php?id=165>

<sup>61</sup> S. Volobuev, "Russkaia matrirtsa. Perezagruzka," 2008, <http://volobuev.livejournal.com/14460.html>

<sup>62</sup> *Gosudarstvenno-patrioticheskii klub*, <http://www.gpclub.ru/>

<sup>63</sup> "Politicheskaia deklaratsiia," <http://www.gpclub.ru/news/0x1x2.html>

tary tradition in Russian identity; the notion that Russia would disappear when the people stop believing in the state, as happened in 1917 and in 1991; and the promotion of conservatism, defined as a strong state and the respect of national traditions. The strength of the patriotic current, which is also that of United Russia as a whole, lies in its refusal to make a stand for one or other definition of Russianness: “Our common civilization can be variously called: East European, Eurasian, Russian Orthodox, Postsoviet.”<sup>64</sup> This desire for consensus is supposed to make it possible to reconcile the whole of nationalist sensibilities beyond their doctrinal differences.

The Club’s activities are directly linked to the promotion of the patriotic education of citizens, in particular of the youth, but also to the diffusion of moral values and respect for military institutions. Equally, and more pragmatically, the Club appeals for the maintaining of a unified cultural space with the CIS and the implementation of an information war to defend the Russian viewpoint in crises with refractory countries such as Georgia, the Ukraine, and Estonia, as well as for the promotion of strategic economic sectors such as agribusiness. Since the economic crisis of 2008, the patriotic Club has also stood out on account of its dissemination of “ten anti-crisis measures,” a reprisal of United Russia’s program on this question.<sup>65</sup> The Club has a large network of partners, which guarantee it close-knit interaction with more activist circles in the promotion of nationalism: the intellectual milieus via the Writers’ Union of Russia, well-known for its nationalist doctrines (in contrast to the Union of Russian writers);<sup>66</sup> the World Russian National Council, an Orthodox association whose annual forums are attended by very many politicians and cultural personalities in Russia;<sup>67</sup> the Military Fraternity, which comprises the veterans of the army and special troops (the Interior Ministry, the secret services, *spetsnaz*, the border guards);<sup>68</sup> lastly, youth

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> “Gosudarstvenno-patrioticheskii klub predstavit paket antikrizisnykh mer”, <http://gpclub.ru/news/872.html>

<sup>66</sup> *Soiuz pisatelei Rossii*, <http://sp.voskres.ru/>

<sup>67</sup> *Vsemirnyi russkii narodnyi sobor*, <http://www.vrns.ru/>

<sup>68</sup> *Boevoe bratstvo*, [www.bbratstvo.com](http://www.bbratstvo.com)

associations such as the Young Guard and Seliger, as well as Civic Control, an association of journalists close to the Kremlin.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Grazhdanskiy kontrol'*, <http://www.gkontrol.ru/>

## The Institutionalization of Clubs within the Presidential Party

Clubs and lodges are burgeoning within the Russian establishment: since the start of the 1990s, the Rotary Club, the Mercury Club, and the Pen Club have all opened branches in Russia, as have most of the freemason lodges that recruit from among members of the ruling elite. Other, more informal discussion groups have also been created: the Arbat Club and the VIP Club in the 1990s, and clubs by professional corporations (lawyers, oil businessmen, bankers, parliamentarians, etc.). Among the most active, we should mention the Moscow Intellectual Business Club, which was created in 1992 and is directed by the former Soviet deputy Nikolai Ryzhkov; the Club 2015, which includes businessmen issuing mainly from the telecommunications sector, directed by Sergei Vorobiev, the vice-president of Vympelkom and a close associate of German Gref. The Club of Amateurs from the football team Zenit is a recent creation dating from 2007, which is financed by Gazprom, presided by Dmitri Medvedev, and gathers together the Speaker of the Duma Boris Gryzlov, the President of the presidential administration Sergei Naryshkin, and the Secretary of the Council of Defense Nikolai Patrushev.<sup>70</sup> These thematic-style clubs serve as informal places of discussion between political figures, businessmen, and academia, and enable the negotiation of alliances and networks which do not rely on any public involvement. They do not always defend a political viewpoint or precise economic interests but play an important role in the unification of the interests of members of the elite.

Once the legislative and presidential elections were over, the Kremlin did not limit itself to making the Russian Project toe the line. It also decided to bring under its control the diversity of opinion that had come to light during the campaign, in particular the liberal and social clubs, and to restructure it according to a consolidating “vertical of power.” In spring 2008, United

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<sup>70</sup> A. Mukhin (ed.), *Sistema klubov i lozh* (Moscow: Tsentr politicheskoi informatsii, 2009).

Russia announced the creation of a new club, designed to become the intellectual center of the party and named Club-2020, an allusion to Putin's strategy Russia-2020. The objective behind this is to unify the three ideological tendencies that have emerged in order to provide a space for debating ideas while avoiding any party splintering.<sup>71</sup> The project of the Club-2020 was nevertheless stillborn, apparently under pressure from the new president,<sup>72</sup> and has been transformed into an annual forum, Russia-2020. In addition, Dmitri Medvedev has complicated the game of think tanks internal to the party after he decided to favor the Institute of Modern Development,<sup>73</sup> a structure created in March 2008 at his initiative, the Supervisory Council of which he is the director. The director of this new think tank was not chosen by accident: Igor Iurgens heads a bank and is the vice-president of the Union of Industrialists and Investors of Russia. Thereby Medvedev has vividly displayed the fact that his priorities are not national identity, but the country's economic diversification, including the promotion of the most dynamic private sectors, and the weakening of the large state corporations. The Institute of Modern Development offers its consulting services to the state organs, principally in the domains of health, education, housing, reform of the agricultural complex, and demographic policy.<sup>74</sup> The more ideological debates on the nature of Russia's national identity, of concern for the Center for Social Conservative Policy, thus have no place in the structures formed by Medvedev. The liberalism advertized by the Institute for Modern Development nevertheless does not make up a unified community with Fadeev's Institute for Social Forecasting, with which disagreements and rivalries seem to be increasing.<sup>75</sup>

Igor Demidov's career was not stopped by the closing of the Russian Project, quite to the contrary: he has been appointed the director of the ideological

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<sup>71</sup> "Pri partii Edinaia Rossiia mozhnet poiavit'sia tak nazyvaemyi Klub-2020," *Gazeta.ru*, March 6, 2008, [www.gzt.ru/politics/2008/03/06/115858.html](http://www.gzt.ru/politics/2008/03/06/115858.html)

<sup>72</sup> I. Nagornykh, "Edinaia Rossiia gotova stat' mnogopartiinoi," *Kommersant*, April 10, 2008, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=878588>

<sup>73</sup> *Institut sovremennogo razvitiia*, <http://www.riocenter.ru/ru>.

<sup>74</sup> "Natsional'nye proekty Rossiiskoi Federatsii," [http://www.riocenter.ru/ru/priorities/national\\_priorities](http://www.riocenter.ru/ru/priorities/national_priorities).

<sup>75</sup> This is what came out of a discussion held on <http://ivangogh.livejournal.com/1055168.html>

section of United Russia, and then, in April 2009, was also named director of the Department of Human Policy and Social Relations of the presidential administration. His entry into this closed circle can be unambiguously considered a promotion. As for the Patriotic Club that succeeded the Russian Project, it is led by two jurists by training, Irina Yarovaia, deputy director of the Duma Committee of Federation Affairs and Regional Policy, and Grigori Ivliev, director of the Duma Committee for Culture, a key post for all those concerned by the issue of national identity. The “patriots” have thus been able to obtain influential posts, whether linked directly to questions of propaganda, or to the domains of culture and youth, which are especially subject to the control of the state and its financial supervision.

The ideological tendencies that have emerged within United Russia are rooted in divergent social milieus and old partisan affiliations: the liberal conservatives derive mostly from the legal milieus, trained in international law, as well as from the private sector not directly linked to the main state-run corporations dealing in primary resources. Many of them were close to the Union of Right Forces at the turning point 1999-2000, before rallying to United Russia. The social conservatives, meanwhile, often originate from the public service, the state organs, or large public corporations, and were generally close to Luzhkov and Primakov at the end of the 1990s. However, the conflict that opposes these currents ought not to be analyzed as purely ideological. The Center for Social Conservative Policy is supported by Boris Gryzlov and Yuri Shuvalov, while the Institute for Social Forecasting is close to Vladislav Surkov and Aleksei Chesnakov, the former deputy president of the presidential administration. Internal political struggles between Gryzlov and Shuvalov, on the one hand, and Surkov on the other, structure both camps. The ideological stances thus only form one element among others from an ensemble of career strategies within a closed political system.<sup>76</sup>

In April 2008, United Russia decided to forge ahead by formalizing the existence of these ideological tendencies in the form of clubs and not of factions. It thus instituted a “Charter of Political Clubs” which was included in the documents of the Congress of United Russia and signed by Vladimir

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<sup>76</sup> A. Kolesnikov, “Otkuda u Edinoi Rossii vzialis’ ideologicheskie i intellektual’nye resursy?,” *Ryzhkov’s site*, April 14, 2008, <http://www.ryzhkov.ru/pg.ph?p?id=7846>

Pligin for the Club of 4 November, by Andrei Isaev for the Center for Social Conservative Policy, and by Irina Iarovaia for the Patriotic Club.<sup>77</sup> Yuri Shuvalov, now the coordinator for work with the Clubs, evoked the possibility that these latter could have a seat within the party's Presidium and could enter into relations with the United Russia fraction at the Duma and the various Committees.<sup>78</sup> The party's leadership therefore hopes to benefit from the new ideas emitted by the Clubs to dynamize its political strategy, to control any possible ideological radicalism within them (the memory of the "Russian Project"), and to avoid the splintering of the party into real forces of political opposition.<sup>79</sup> This process of institutionalization is bound to become greater in scope in the coming years: the more United Russia remains the sole master of the Russian political game, the more contradictory tendencies will appear within it, transforming the presidential party into a pluripartite party according to the model of the former CPSU.

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<sup>77</sup> M. Shchipanov, "Klubnaia zhizn' edinorossov," *Vechernaia Moskva*, April 14, 2008, <http://www.vmdaily.ru/article.php?aid=56544>

<sup>78</sup> "Informatsionno-analiticheskaia podderzhka vnutripartiinoi diskussii," *Informatsionnyi biulleten' NIRSI*, no. 2, 2008, pp. 26-28.

<sup>79</sup> Nagornykh, "Edinaia Rossiia gotova stat' mnogopartiinoi."

## Nationalism and Communication Technologies: The Pavlovski Network

The impetus the Kremlin gave to questions of patriotic ideology and doctrinal structuration was taken advantage of by several discussion forums, clubs, and institutes external to the presidential party, which have opened ideological sections to meet the state's need for structures of expertise. If the institutes, properly speaking, are quite few in number, since they require substantial financial means and steady human resources, there are many other means of ideological influence available on the public stage, at less cost, such as internet sites, online newspapers, and discussion clubs. This virtual domain is particularly developed in Russia: the Russian internet (*runet*) is not financially costly, is legally flexible, and is more difficult to control in cases of problems with the authorities. It also embodies the largely informal character of the networks of nationalist sensibility close to the authorities: these latter do not aim to achieve any electoral presence, their rationale is one of ideological entryism into the organs of power. Above all, they seek to create human networks.

The pioneer of think tanks remains the Foundation for Effective Politics (FEP),<sup>80</sup> created in 1995 by Gleb Pavlovski. A former dissident, he was already very active in the dissemination of samizdat publications during the Soviet period. Since perestroika he has become involved in many political clubs, such as the Club of Social Initiatives (KSI), alongside leftist militants such as Boris Kagarlitsky, and then directed a famous information agency, Postfactum, the embodiment of the freedom of speech of the last Gorbachev years. Very critical of Boris Yeltsin during his war with the Supreme Soviet (the Parliament) in 1993, Pavlovski, however, quickly reconciled with the authorities: the FEP collaborated closely in the re-election of Boris Yeltsin to a second mandate in 1995, organized the birth of the pro-Putin party Unity in 1999, and still plays a key role in building the brand-name image of the Kremlin

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<sup>80</sup> *Fond effektivnoi politiki*, [www.fep.ru](http://www.fep.ru)

and its president.<sup>81</sup> Pavlovski is considered as Russia's foremost *image maker*, who endorses the use of advertizing techniques in politics and the transformation of the media into instruments at the service of the Kremlin. One of Vladimir Putin's close advisors in the presidential administration, Pavlovski took control of the Russian media world: he inaugurated about fifteen internet sites such as Kreml.org, strana.ru, SMI.ru, gazeta.ru, lenta.ru, smi.ru, vesti.ru, etc., which shape and reshape public opinion. From 2005 to 2008, he presented a weekly television programme, *Real Politics*, defending the candidature of Dmitri Medvedev in succeeding Putin. Even if his influence seems to have diminished in the face of competition, the Foundation for Effective Politics remains one of the main Russian think tanks. It organizes electoral campaigns for governors and local personalities in the regions, and participates in debates with the presidential administration concerning domestic policy.

Pavlovski's decision, in 1996, to found the Russian Institute<sup>82</sup> and, in 1997, the *Russkii zhurnal* (Russian Journal)<sup>83</sup> confirms that the national question has since become an integral part of strategies for the marketing of "power" to society. In the foundation's manifesto, the director of the Russian Institute, Sergei Chernyshev, today also director of the Center for Corporatist Entrepreneurship,<sup>84</sup> criticizes the taboo affecting the term "Russian," and the inability to speak serenely about Russian national consciousness (*russkoe samosoznanie*).<sup>85</sup> The themes evoked by Ivan Demidov in 2007 were therefore already clearly formulated by an organization close to the Kremlin ten years earlier. The common objective of the Russian Institute and the *Russkii zhurnal* is indeed to "establish a Russian cultural awareness and form institutions to represent a new social identity."<sup>86</sup> The newspaper is regarded as one of the most pro-Kremlin of the Russian media scene, and never grows

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<sup>81</sup> See the biography proposed by Vladimir Pribylovski on his site Antikomprot, [www.anticomprot.ru/pavlovsky/pav.html](http://www.anticomprot.ru/pavlovsky/pav.html)

<sup>82</sup> *Russkii institut*, <http://www.rinst.ru/>

<sup>83</sup> *Russkii zhurnal*, <http://russ.ru/>

<sup>84</sup> *Tsentr korporationogo predprinimatel'stva*, <http://www.ckp.ru/>

<sup>85</sup> G. Pavlovskii, S. Chernyshev, "K vozobnovleniiu russkogo," *Russkii Institut*, June 27, 1996, <http://old.russ.ru/ri/index.htm>

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.rinst.ru/>

tired of participating in the political polemics. It argues in an intellectualized manner about Russia's position on the international scene: it refuses a West that is a "giver of lessons"; promotes a pro-Asian and pro-Muslim foreign policy; denounces virulently the "colored revolutions"; upholds aggressive discourses against Georgia; defends the Ossetian people as victim of "genocide," etc.<sup>87</sup> It also reflects the modernization of the "Russian idea" on the domestic level, rereading the great classics of nationalist thought and adapting their theories to a globalized Russia, which purportedly no longer fears affirming its mission in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Among the main authors of *Russkii zhurnal* it is worth mentioning Aleksei Chadaev, author of the above-mentioned work on Putin's ideology.<sup>88</sup> Particularly young (born in 1978), Chadaev was trained in Biblical studies and has a diploma in culturology from the State Academy of Slavic Culture, an institution with a strong national and Orthodox sensibility. For a longtime he was close to Boris Nemtsov, worked for the Union of Right Forces at the end of the 1990s, and then presided over the club "New Right" (*Novye pravye*)<sup>89</sup> in 2003-04 and the site Globalrus.ru. Then he was recruited by Pavlovski for the *Russkii zhurnal* and was elected to the Public Chamber, where he was regarded as one of Pavlovski's best students in media technology. He has become a specialist in denouncing the supposed censure that the term "Russian" has been placed under and vies for its rehabilitation.<sup>90</sup> In 2008, however, Pavlovski decided to dismiss the political section of *Russkii zhurnal*, including Chadaev, for having developed "non-democratic methods of polemic," but in reality for having made politically incorrect remarks with respect to the Kremlin.<sup>91</sup> It also seems that the debates concerning the legitimacy of these new nationalist ideologues have been reconsidered in the upper echelons of power, as the regime is seemingly hesitant about giving doctrinal

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<sup>87</sup> <http://russ.ru/about>

<sup>88</sup> A. Chadaev, *Putin. Ego ideologiya* (Moscow: Evropa, 2006).

<sup>89</sup> *Novye pravye*, no website.

<sup>90</sup> A. Chadaev, "Vozvrashchenie russkogo i 'tret'ia Rossiia'," *Izvestiia*, August 8, 2006, <http://www.izvestia.ru/comment/article3093629/>

<sup>91</sup> "Pavlovskii podtverdil fakt uvol'neniia Chadaeva i Shevliakova," February 3, 2008, <http://www.nazlobu.ru/press/article2517.htm>

consistency to popular rallying to Putin.<sup>92</sup> Chadaev, however, continues to direct a site called Libery.ru, a discussion blog initiated by the FEP aimed at the young generation.<sup>93</sup>

For the purpose of elaborating the ideological corpus that the Kremlin requires, a publishing house called *Evropa* (Europe) was established in 2005. Its objective is described as being one of “political education, the reinforcement of civil society as well as of Russia’s political system as a European state.”<sup>94</sup> The publishing house is headed by Viacheslav Glazychev, president of the Public Chamber’s Commission for Regional Development and Local Self-Management, and by its editor-in-chief Gleb Pavlovski. The presence of these key figures is confirmation of just how keen United Russia is to conquer the editorial market and to make good-quality propaganda literature, with the help of the FEP’s innovative ideas. *Evropa*’s range of publications has pretensions to be large. It is replete with theoretical works devoted to nationalism, from philosophical and historical angles, with books presenting Putin’s and Medvedev’s thoughts and plans, as well as with publicity brochures promoting United Russia and handbooks about “political technologies” and working in state structures. Its mission in the editorial field is similar to that of United Russia’s in the political field: to present itself as a unique discussion platform for currents with very different ideological backgrounds. Accordingly, *Evropa* has published Dmitri Trenin, from the Carnegie Center of Moscow, considered *the* pro-Western think tank in Russia, as well as Egor Kholmogorov, one of the principal doctrinaires of a neo-conservatism of Stalinist persuasion.<sup>95</sup>

*Evropa* has devoted many books to what it defines as anti-Russian extremism in the CIS. “The extremists are all the forces that aim to destabilize the

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<sup>92</sup> D. Bykov, “Patrokhamy. Teper’ gosideologiiia deliaiut podonki, tak kak normal’nykh liudei pod eto podpisat’ nevozmozhno,” *APN.ru*, November 17, 2007, <http://www.apn.ru/publications/article18403.htm>

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.liberty.ru/about>

<sup>94</sup> Presentation of the publishing house’s brochure, Moscow, 2007, obtained from the *Evropa* bookshop. See also <http://europublish.ru/>

<sup>95</sup> D. Trenin, *Integratsiia i identichnost’: Rossiia kak “novyi zapad”* (Moscow: *Evropa*, 2006); E. Kholmogorov, *Russkii natsionalist* (Moscow: *Evropa*, 2006).

political situation in Russia,"<sup>96</sup> a catch-all category that covers everything from the Islamists to the Oranges, that is, supporters of "colored revolutions." Among the many dangers threatening the country, at the top of Evropa's list is NATO's eastward enlargement, the United States' involvement in Caspian energy issues, the destruction of Serbia, Western support to anti-Russian regimes in the post-Soviet space, and actions organized against the Russian population (discrimination against Russian minorities in the Near Abroad, the trials of Second World War veterans in Baltic countries, etc.) or against pro-Russian minorities (the Ossetians and Abkhaz in Georgia, the Dagestani in Azerbaijan). Several works are devoted to U.S. policy in the post-Soviet space and the impact of the global economic crisis. The publishing house is also specialized in the denunciation of other political parties. The CPRF, for instance, is denied by Andrei Isaev the right to claim the legacy of the CPSU and the Soviet Union.<sup>97</sup> Liberals, whether from Yabloko to the Union of Right Forces, are treated the same as oligarchs, whose return to Russia they are charged with supporting unequivocally. According to *The United Russia's Agitator*, a booklet published by Evropa, liberals and fascists are united by their "hatred of Russia . . . their goal is to control [Russia] from the outside in order to prevent its renewal."<sup>98</sup> In a book whose title could not have been more explicit, *Putin's Enemies*, also published by Evropa, the authors denounce Boris Berezovsky, Mikhail Kasianov, Garry Kasparov, and Eduard Limonov for seeking to "destroy everything that was built up between 2000 and 2007," and who, by their refusal to recognize Putin's success, are automatically deemed to be "enemies of the state and the nation, enemies of our Homeland."<sup>99</sup>

Condemning the "colored revolutions" as examples of an anti-Russian conspiracy organized by the West is one of Evropa's most salient themes. Its specialist, Vitali Ivanov (born in 1977) started his career at the Council of the Federation before becoming the deputy director of the political section

<sup>96</sup> P. Danilin, N. Kryshchal', D. Poliakov, *Vragi Putina* (Moscow: Evropa, 2007), p. 137.

<sup>97</sup> A. Isaev, *Edinaia Rossiia, partiia russkoi politicheskoi kul'tury* (Moscow: Evropa, 2006), pp. 16-17.

<sup>98</sup> *Agitator Edinoi Rossii* (Moscow: Evropa, 2006), p. 87.

<sup>99</sup> Danilin, Kryshchal', Poliakov, *Vragi Putina*, p. 3

of the newspaper *Vedomosti* and publishing in *Vzgliad* and the *Izvestiia*. He is known for his legal works on the notion of contract and his texts on Russia's regional policies. Profoundly shocked by the "colored revolutions" in Georgia and the Ukraine, he then moved closer to the Kremlin and the think tanks milieu: in 2005-06, he directed the Center for Policy Research at the Institute for Social Forecasting, in 2006-08 he was made vice-director of the Center of Political Conjunctures of Russia, and since 2009 has been the director of the small Institute of State Policy and Law.<sup>100</sup> However, he is famous mainly as a nationalist essayist close to Evropa. He supported the Putin regime, which he defined as a consensual oligarchy, but criticizes the Kremlin's valorization of liberal democracy, instead preferring references to Russian autocracy.<sup>101</sup>

Ivanov founded the Web site *Antirev.ru*, devoted an entire book to the doctrines of "anti-color revolutionism" in 2005 and another one to his theory of conservatism, under the title *The Preserver (Okhranitel')* in 2007. His aim was not so much to denounce the events that occurred in Georgia and Ukraine as to demonstrate the unlikelihood of such a scenario in Russia. According to him, the idea of a political alternative exerting pressure from the street is borne by the oligarchy and the last Yeltsin supporters, who allegedly see in it a chance to take revenge on Putin. Russia, Ivanov says, already had more than its share of destabilizations and revolutions in the 1990s. What it needs now are pragmatic technicians rather than romantics still captivated by the myth of the "great night." He endorses the merging of patriotism and Russian nationalism, since in his view the Russian people are the bearer of statehood (*gosudarstvobrazuiushchii*), just as he frowns upon the xenophobic violence which ought not to occur, he believes, when one thinks of Russia's historical tradition of tolerance.<sup>102</sup>

The multiple media products launched by Gleb Pavlovski and the FEP, a veritable "innovation machine" in terms of communications technologies, have played an essential role in the formulation of a new Russian nationalism. The *Russkii zhurnal* and the publishing house Evropa have an influence

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<sup>100</sup> *Institut politiki i gosudarstvennogo prava*, no website.

<sup>101</sup> V. Ivanov, *Partiia Putina. Istoriia Edinoi Rossii* (Moscow: Evropa, 2008).

<sup>102</sup> V. Ivanov, "O patriotizme, natsionalizme i natsional'noi ekstremizme," *Delovaia gazeta Vzgliad*, April 18, 2006, <http://www.vz.ru/columns/2006/4/18/30482.html>

that can be deemed as significant, albeit difficult to measure, on the public opinion of cultivated Russian milieus: they offer good quality ideological products, which propose a modernized version of the discourse on national identity, in line with the expectations of the middle classes and the elites. They also know how to preserve their image as loyal to the Kremlin, while simultaneously providing a platform for most contestatory personalities to air their views. Pavlovski has thus been able to multiply the narratives of nationalist sensibility by manipulating the spectrum of online newspapers and internet press agencies, and by using strategies to coopt more radical circles.

## In the Service of Power: Nationalist Thematics and Strategies of Entryism

The networks linked to Pavlovski are not the only ones to occupy the niche of the “ideology factory.” Other centers, clubs, or institutes also press their claims in the public arena. Two major categories have taken shape. First, some think tanks already in existence such as the Center for Political Conjuncture of Russia or the Politika Foundation have managed to follow the Kremlin in its reflections on national ideology by offering it new products. Secondly, some new think tanks have entered the market thanks to their more or less close links with one of United Russia’s internal clubs or with the state organs. For instance, NIRSI works for the State-Patriotic Club, the State Club for the “presidential reserve of cadres,” the Russian World Foundation is linked to the Ministry of Culture, the Center of National Glory of Russia to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Patriarcate, etc.

Some think tanks that are influential on domestic and international questions have existed since the 1990s and built their reputation during the Yeltsin decade. This is the case, for example, of the Center for Political Conjuncture of Russia,<sup>103</sup> founded in 1992 by the Institute for Political Mass Movements at the Russo-American University and the Institute of History of Russia. The Center rapidly became one of the main institutes of expertise in the country; today it is among the top five institutes most referenced by the media. It maintains a biographical database of Russian politicians and offers analyses on electoral sociology, foreign policy, and studies on the energy sector. Since 1999, it has participated in the organization of electoral campaigns for Unity/United Russia. Its director, Konstantin Simonov, specializes in energy questions, since he is also the head of the National Energy Security Fund. The Center receives commissions from state organs (ministries, municipalities, Security Council etc.), from United Russia, as well as from large Russian companies (Gazprom, Rosneft, Slavneft, Itera, RusAl, Kamaz, MosEnerg), and publishes a monthly journal, *Orientiry*. Since 2008, the Center has seen

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<sup>103</sup> *Tsentr politicheskoi kon'iunktury Rossii*, [www.ancentr.ru](http://www.ancentr.ru)

the return of one of its former leaders, Aleksei Chesnakov, the former deputy director of the Department of Domestic Policy of the presidential administration, who was precisely in charge of relations with the expertise community. Close to Vladislav Surkov, Chesnakov participated in Dmitri Medvedev's electoral campaign team, which guaranteed the Center for Political Conjecture privileged access to the Kremlin as well as a say in formulating the ideological needs of the authorities.<sup>104</sup>

Similar is the Politika Foundation,<sup>105</sup> created in 1993 at the initiative of well-known political scientists such as its director Viatcheslav Nikonov, who is a member of the presidium of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy and former president of the Public Chamber's Commission for International Collaboration and Diplomacy. The Foundation also includes Georgi Saratov, founder and president of the INDEM fund, which functioned as the think tank of Mikhail Gorbachev during perestroika;<sup>106</sup> Andranik Migranian, a renowned political scientist who occupied official functions in the 1990s and who since 2008 has directed the New York representation of the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation, and finally Aleksei Salmin, who died in 2005. These political scientists have sought to develop collaboration between researchers in political science and business circles. The Politika Foundation undertakes studies of Russia's domestic and international policy, provides recommendations to state organs, and sells its services of expertise in policy and economic matters. It specializes in marketing, specifically in forming positive images for public institutions, large corporations, political parties, and businessmen. It has worked for Gazprom, Norisk Nickel, KIA-Motors-Baltika, Mosekspo, Alfa-Kapital, Inkombank, Nipek, the Union of Industrialists of the oil and gas sector, as well as for numerous regional administrations. It equally collaborates with the World Bank, the International Aspen Institute, the Carnegie Center, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, etc.

Of liberal persuasion, the major historical figures that contributed to the renown of the Politika Foundation have since rallied to Putin. Owing to his

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<sup>104</sup> S. Solov'ev, "Izvestnyi piarshchik pereshel na rabotu v Administratsii prezidenta," *Utro.ru*, June 25, 2008, <http://www.utro.ru/articles/2008/06/25/747055.shtml>

<sup>105</sup> *Fond Politika* [www.polity.ru](http://www.polity.ru)

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.indem.ru/>

multiple articles, its director, Viatcheslav Nikonov, can indeed be regarded as one of the great defenders of the current regime. Since 2003, he has co-directed the Foundation Unity in the Name of Russia,<sup>107</sup> which offers its consulting services to state organs, along with both Alexander Vladislavlev, a member of United Russia, and Vladimir Pligin, the leader of the party's liberal wing. Taking up the unifying discourse of United Russia, the Foundation seeks to privilege "cooperation between political parties and the constructive forces of Russia"<sup>108</sup> in order to set the country back on its feet – wording that is typical of the managed democracy established since the start of the 2000s. Nikonov also directs the journal *Strategiia Rossii v XXI veke*, which reflects upon the country's future and its modernization in terms that can only be pleasing to the authorities. The presence of Pligin in the Foundation therefore tends to situate Viacheslav Nikonov among United Russia's "liberal conservatives."

The growing interest in the international influence of Russian culture and in its linguistic and cultural presence in the Near Abroad constitutes a new ideological niche for think tanks. This niche is presently dominated by the Russian World Fund,<sup>109</sup> created at the behest of Vladimir Putin for the occasion of the "year of the Russian language" in 2007, the direction of which was given to Viacheslav Nikonov. Working in the name of the state, Russian World has two main objectives: to promote Russian culture in the world (by supporting Slavic studies abroad, giving financial aid to the development of Russian language policies and to organizers of cultural events) and to reinforce the national belonging of Russian communities abroad (supporting Russian associations, aiding the repatriation of those who want to return maintaining links with the Orthodox Church). Although the Foundation is financed by the state and is obliged to respect the politically correct discourse in force on the multinational character of the country, Nikonov does not hide his more ethnonationalist convictions: for him, as a democratic country that is peopled by a majority of ethnic Russians, Russia owes it to itself to become the nation-state of these very same Russians and to guarantee them

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<sup>107</sup> *Fond Edinstvo vo imia Rossii*, <http://www.fondedin.ru>

<sup>108</sup> "Informatsiia o Fonde," <http://www.fondedin.ru/about.php>

<sup>109</sup> *Fond Russkii mir*, <http://www.ruskiymir.ru>

a privileged status.<sup>110</sup> The concept of “Russian World,” very present in state discourse since the start of the 2000s, puts forward a concentric conception of Russian identity: if the ethnic and Orthodox Russians are at the heart of it, all possible types of identification with Russianness are welcomed, whether through language, history, religion, or territory. As the Foundation puts it, “the Russian world is not uniquely ethnic Russians, citizens of Russia, our compatriots of the Near and Far Abroad, emigrants who have left Russia and their descendents. It also comprises foreign citizens who speak, study and teach Russian, all those sincerely interested in Russia, who are alive to its future.”<sup>111</sup> Through this concept, the Foundation thus seeks to formulate a globalizing and modern project for Russia, whose influence would exert itself principally on the cultural level.

Certain influential figures close to the Kremlin, such as Sergei Markov, do not belong to any well-defined institutions. Markov was a member of many parliamentary commissions in the 1990s, the director of the Association for Centers of Policy Research for a decade, and has been a United Russia deputy since 2007 as well as vice-president of the Duma Committee for Social Organizations and Religious Associations. Owing to his publications, he can be considered one of the regime’s main ideologues. Other figures have had more complex political trajectories. Stanislav Belkovski, who founded the Institute for a National Strategy in 2004,<sup>112</sup> ran into difficulties after rallying to Garry Kasparov.<sup>113</sup> The Institute’s direction was then entrusted to Mikhail Remizov, but it is no longer really active at the present moment. Its main activity consists in running the famous press Agency for Political News (APN),<sup>114</sup> still one of the main platforms for discussion and the promotion of new nationalist doctrinaires. APN.ru is quite close to the *Russkii zhurnal* in its argumentation and, like it, seeks to defend the Kremlin’s policy decisions in an ideologically polished way. Lastly, let us mention the newspaper

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<sup>110</sup> See the round table discussion “Patriotizm i natsionalizm,” *Fond Liberal’naia missiia*, February 18, 2004, <http://media-liberal.ru/articles/1086>

<sup>111</sup> “O Fonde,” <http://www.ruskiymir.ru/ruskiymir/ru/fund/about>

<sup>112</sup> *Institut natsional’noi strategii*, no website.

<sup>113</sup> “Interv’iu s Mikhailom Remizovym,” *Pravaya.ru*, May 17, 2005, <http://www.pravaya.ru/ludi/451/3278>

<sup>114</sup> [www.apn.ru](http://www.apn.ru)

*Vzgliad*,<sup>115</sup> also considered as one of the sites of elaboration of an ideology designed for the Kremlin. Here again, like Ivan Demidov, the trajectory of its founder Konstantin Rykov, today a deputy of United Russia, is unique. He is indeed the founder of many politically incorrect internet sites devoted either to pornography and eroticism,<sup>116</sup> or to the vulgarities of the Russian language, such as Fuck.ru.

Other centers or institutes have also emerged recently, taking advantage of the patriotic wave that United Russia has given impetus to over recent years. Centered on ideological issues, the National Institute for the Development of Contemporary Ideology (NIRSI),<sup>117</sup> created in 2007, presents itself as a think tank working for the presidential party. Its specificity lies in its centering on questions of doctrine: it regards the formulation of a national ideology as a priority, necessary for the stability of the political system. In practice, NIRSI has set itself the objective of anticipating society's ideological evolutions so that United Russia can remain in touch with its electorate: its task is to "modernize the technology for disseminating the idea of sovereign democracy and force its main concepts into the general consciousness."<sup>118</sup> NIRSI is directed by Galina Voronchenkova, who comes from a background in communication. She directed the press service of the Ministry of Economic Development and Commerce, then that of the monitoring of the Transport Ministry. She is assisted by Yuri Baklianski, a sociologist by training, who, for fifteen years, directed the sociology service of the metallurgic complex of Norilsk, above the polar circle. However, NIRSI is unable to support itself solely by looking at questions of national ideology and also works, more classically, on aiding the decision-making in state organs, on strengthening the communications technologies used by United Russia, and on elaborating policy scenarios.<sup>119</sup>

NIRSI seems to have three main sources of financing. For starters, it fulfills requests from the State-Patriotic Club, which, like it, is especially interested in ideological questions, including the promotion of conservatism, the state

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<sup>115</sup> <http://vz.ru/>

<sup>116</sup> For instance [www erotoman.ru](http://www erotoman.ru), [www neznakomka.ru](http://www neznakomka.ru), [www aramis.ru](http://www aramis.ru), [www ozornik.ru](http://www ozornik.ru), [www popka.ru](http://www popka.ru), [www persik.ru](http://www persik.ru), [www stulchik.ru](http://www stulchik.ru), [www dosug.ru](http://www dosug.ru), etc.

<sup>117</sup> *Natsional'nyi institut razvitiia sovremennoi ideologii*, <http://www.nirsi.ru/>

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.nirsi.ru/nirsi/index.php>

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

of the spiritual market in Russia, the establishing of a youth-oriented policy, the patriotic indoctrination of youths in the school system, etc. The Institute's journal, for instance, presents Russia as an ideocratic state, defined in opposition to "nomocratic" Western countries, and on this basis tries to justify the predominance of ideology over law in Russian tradition.<sup>120</sup> Secondly, it has received commissions from several regional administrations for studies in political monitoring before local elections, or for promoting the image of a region, a request coming mainly from the Far East. NIRSI seems to have specialized in the constitution of brands for regions. Lastly, it works in close partnership with the Academy of National Economics,<sup>121</sup> which has a department of professional training and a school for consultants in management. In this vein, NIRSI has published several documents promoting small and medium-size business, and others that discuss Russia's food security and the state of advancement of agrarian reform in the framework of the national priority projects. Like the State-Patriotic Club, the Institute seems to have very close links to ASSAGROS, an association of unions of the agribusiness complex.<sup>122</sup> Created in 2000, ASSAGROS's mission is to defend the interests of the Russian agricultural sector, hence the works of NIRSI on the topic of food security.

The Center of National Glory of Russia,<sup>123</sup> founded in 2001 following a conference devoted to the "National glory of Russia in the 21st century," is situated in another, more orthodox ideological niche. The Center is officially run by Sergei Shcheblygin, but the real person behind its inspiration is Vladimir Yakunin, currently the president of its Council of Supervision, whom the media ironically nickname the "Orthodox Chekist" on account of his past in the secret services and his engagement at the sides of the Patriarchate. Having been involved in business since the 1990s, Yakunin has managed to gain influence in the transport sector, in particular in railways. After working as

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<sup>120</sup> N. V. Sheliapin, "Rol' i mesto gosudarstvennoi ideologii v rossiiskoi civilizatsii," in *Rossia XXI veka. Puti i perspektivy razvitiia. Materialy nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii* (Moscow: Fond Obshchestvo, 2007), <http://www.nirsi.ru/materials/public/1.php>

<sup>121</sup> *Akademiia narodnogo xoziaistva*, <http://www.ane.ru/>

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.assagros.ru/>

<sup>123</sup> *Tsentr natsional'noi slavy Rossii*, <http://www.cnsr.ru>

deputy minister for Transport, he was named in 2005 as the head of the Russian railway state company, over which he still presides. The Russian Center of National Glory presents itself as an outgrowth of civil society, bringing together figures who are driven by the "desire to contribute their own rock to the rebirth of our country's grandeur."<sup>124</sup> Among its ranks are clerics, in particular the Orthodox metropolitan of Central Asia Vladimir, several "heroes of the Soviet Union," military men, cosmonauts, numerous regional high state employees, individuals in charge of various state foundations, and Sergei Ivanov, former minister of defense and now deputy prime minister.<sup>125</sup>

The Center organizes seminars on ideological issues, mainly to debate the Russian national identity and its links with Orthodoxy. With the support of the Patriarchate, it campaigns for the development of a foreign policy based on Orthodoxy, for example through programs such as common prayer sessions in the Orthodox Churches in Jerusalem, humanitarian aid to the Serb community in Kosovo, and Orthodox initiatives in the Ukraine and Belorussia. The Center is directly linked to the Orthodox Charitable Foundation Andrei Protocletos and awards the prize "For Faith and Fidelity," which rewards important people who have contributed to "the reinforcement of Russian statehood and to the diffusion of the national glory of Russia."<sup>126</sup> Recipients include the Patriarch Alexis II (who died in 2008), the Mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov, and former President Vladimir Putin. The Center also collaborates with numerous military charity funds that depend on different army corps and many of its publications are linked to the commemoration of great historical battles, such as the 150 year anniversary, celebrated in 2006, of the end of the Crimean War (1853-56).

However, the Center mainly became known to the general public through the "Dialogue of Civilizations" program, inaugurated in Moscow in 2002 thanks to a Russo-Greco-Indian initiative.<sup>127</sup> The forum is presided by Yakunin himself, assisted by the president of the Kapur Surya Foundation, Jagdish Kapur, and by the president of the Titan Capital Corporation

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<sup>124</sup> "Missiia Tsentra," <http://www.cnsr.ru/about.php?id=7>

<sup>125</sup> "Members of honor," <http://www.cnsr.ru/about.php?id=4>

<sup>126</sup> *Fond Andrei Pervozvannogo*, <http://www.fap.ru/>

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.wpfdc.org/>

Nicholas Papanicolaou. Thanks to the funds provided by these three businessmen, each year in Rhodes the Dialogue of Civilizations unites various international and national nongovernmental organizations, as well as representatives of the world's great religions, to develop the principles of mutual openness between civilizations, with the support of UNESCO. The Forum can be regarded as a window display-case to promote the Patriarcate abroad, which prefers to play the card of the "dialogue of civilizations" instead of that of ecumenism, but also as a discrete instrument of Russian foreign policy, which likes to emphasize the existence of a specific Orthodox civilization.<sup>128</sup>

Lastly, the State Club,<sup>129</sup> specifically centered on the youth, functions as a center for training cadres destined to serve the state. It was created upon the initiative of students from the State University of Moscow (MGU), Russia's foremost institution of higher education and considered to have close relations to political power. Since its creation in 2006 the Club has been financed by United Russia, run by deputies Sergei Shishkarev, the director of the Duma Committee for Transport, and Mikhail Margelov, the director of the Committee for International Questions. It is part of the "presidential reserve of cadres," a project launched by Dmitri Medvedev in spring 2009 for the training of a new generation of high-level state employees. The Club aims to form a "patriotically oriented" political class<sup>130</sup> by offering financial support through a system of grants to students and teachers. Sergei Shishkarev has published articles in which he staunchly argues for a conception of Russia as a Russian, and not a Rossian, state. He calls for people to stop thinking of Russia as "a country without a nation,"<sup>131</sup> denounces the fictive character of Rossian civic identity, and demands recognition of the supremacy of ethnic Russians, of their language and culture. So, notably, even the institutions most attached to the state apparatus can propound discourses that are regarded as relatively radical in their conceptions of national identity, and that do not correspond to the official state narrative.

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<sup>128</sup> Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation. Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 164-166.

<sup>129</sup> *Gosudarstvennyi klub*, <http://www.gosclub.ru/>

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> S. Shishkarev, "V poiskakhrusskosti: opraverusskikhbyt'natsiei," *GosKlub*, [http://www.gosclub.ru/news/articles/121145862?user\\_session=8590309ca52684da437d53c](http://www.gosclub.ru/news/articles/121145862?user_session=8590309ca52684da437d53c)

## The New Doctrinaires of Russian Conservatism

Other sites of discussion have also emerged which serve as a meeting space for official figures and more marginal ones; and facilitate the process of cooptation, professional or ideological, of circles that are outside those of the ruling elite. Despite the varying degrees of radicality, all these sites are united in their quest for a new ideology for Russia, which they define as conservatism.

The Serafim Club provides a good example of this. Created in 2003 by well-known journalists such as Mikhail Leontiev, Maksim Sokolov, and Alexander Privalov, it is conceived of as a new space for developing conservatism as a philosophy. It does not defend ideas about a conservative revolution nor about integral conservatism, such as those endorsed by the neo-Eurasianist Alexander Dugin, but lays claim to a conservatism that is more liberal on the economic level, citing Stolypin's Russia capitalism at the beginning of the 20th century and Gorbachev's thesis during the first years of perestroika as its models. It endorses, for example, a conception of Russia as a domestic market: it considers that developing domestic consumption will open new perspectives for growth that are no longer uniquely based on hydrocarbons and exports. For its members, the sense of Russia's mission is not to deliver gas and oil to the rest of the world; its strength is its territory, and therefore its domestic market: prosperity must come from the material well-being of Russians. Serafim's members argue for the idea of "Russia's geocultural sovereignty," where Russia is conceived as constituting a world in itself, but do not support socialist or Soviet economic references. In fact, they defend the idea that Russian capitalist traditions must be revived, as they are more moral than the ones in effect in Western countries: Valeri Fadeev puts particular emphasis on the middle classes, an actor traditionally forgotten in the history of Russia that he hopes to rehabilitate.

If the Club's ideological platform – to formulate a new conservatism as a political project for Russia – is shared by all its members, these latter are nonetheless riven by internal division: Alexander Privalov is the key figure of the *Ekspert* newspaper; Maksim Sokolov, who publishes mainly in *Izvestiia* and *Ekspert*, is regarded as a moderate conservative nationalist; while Mikhail

Leontiev differs from his colleagues by his insistence on the naturalness of empire, of Orthodoxy, and of neo-Eurasianism, themes that cannot be shared by journalists linked to *Ekspert*, who find their inspiration in liberal conservatism. After trying to get his articles published in various newspapers, Leontev eventually found his professional niche in television at the end of the 1990s. Since 1999 he has presented a program called *Odnako* as well as several other programs on Russia's first channel. Cynical and provocative, he is regarded as one of Putin's preferred presenters. Among the ideologues close to the Kremlin, he is one of the only figures to champion Alexander Dugin and also openly advocates the fundamentally imperial nature of Russia. The *Serafim Club* therefore has proven to be a novel experiment as it has been able to create a discussion between multiple, traditionally opposed opinions.

Other instances have also emerged in which this conservatism is formulated. Created in 2004, the site *Pravaya.ru* has rapidly become one of the main platforms of Orthodox neo-conservatism. The site plays on the double meaning in Russian of the term right (*pravyi*), which signifies both rightwing in the political sense as well as right or just in the moral sense. The aim of the collective of authors in the "rebirth of a just/rightwing idea of Russia," based both on Orthodoxy, presented as the just faith par excellence, and on the rehabilitation of monarchism. The site collaborates with other groups such as the Association of Orthodox patriotic media; the Orthodox political assembly, which gathers small nationalist parties from Russia, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Transnistria; the Orthodox Charity Foundation *Andrei Protocletos* led by Vladimir Yakunin; and the International Association of Cinema of Slavic and Orthodox peoples, which, directed by the filmmaker Nikolai Burliaev, includes the famous Nikita Mikhalkov as a member. It entertains close relations with the Union of Orthodox citizens, some radical Orthodox parishes and Alexander Dugin's Eurasianist movement, and works with the newspaper *Natsional'nye interesy* (National Interests), which promulgates a "just/rightwing comprehension" of Russia's national interests; both the famous nationalist essayist Igor Shafarevich and the political leader Sergei Baburin also publish in it.

In 2006, Pravaya.ru published *The Manifesto of Russian Conservatives*, which defines conservatism as the “faith in oneself, in one’s historical and spiritual path, and the ability not to submit to foreign influences while remaining open. [...] Conservatism is always national: national conservatism is above all the love of one’s historical personality and the recognition of the creative force of one’s people.” The principal author of this text, Egor Kholmogorov (born in 1975), has become one of the most visible figures of Russian neo-conservatism, and is known for his cult of the secret services (he worked at the association of veterans of the Alfa anti-terrorist group). Defining Russia as “the geopolitical embodiment of the divine” (*geopoliti-chesoe ubozhenstvo*), his formulations combine a virulent form of Orthodoxy, worship of the monarchy and the empire, and nostalgia for the Stalin years. In the 1990s, Kholmogorov worked as part of a schismatic current of the Orthodox Church (known under the name of Suzdal schism) attached to the Orthodox Church outside of Russia, before returning into the Patriarchate’s fold, of which he has since become a loyal defender. In the 2000s, he published in nationalist newspapers such as *Spetsnaz Rossii* (The special services of Russia) and press agencies of the same sensibility such as *Portal-credo.ru*, *Globalrus.ru*, *APN.ru*, and *Pravaya.ru*. In 2002, he founded, along with Mikhail Remizov, a conservative press club and then contributed to the newspaper *Konservator* (The Conservative), which, however, quickly disappeared owing to a lack of finances. In 2005, he participated in the organization of the first Russian March alongside the Movement Against Illegal Immigration and the Eurasianist Youth, but he rapidly detached himself from the Movement as he joined Demidov’s Russian Project, of which he was a key activist. The objectives of the Russian Project are today pursued through two internet newspapers, *Russkii obozrevatel’* (The Russian Observer) and *Novye khroniki* (The New Chronicles), whose editor-in-chief is Kholmogorov himself. As with his work, *The Russian nationalist*, published by Evropa in 2006, his participation in the “Russian Project” and then his role in *Russkii obozrevatel’*, controlled by the Youth Guard, confirms that the radicality of his remarks has not prevented his cooptation by the most radical branch of the presidential party.

Another founding text published by Pravaya.ru, *The Counter-Reform. Re-port of the Conservative Assembly*, also denounces reformatory thinking

and its postulates, according to which all change is necessarily beneficial. For its authors, “the policy of reformation does not permit the national success of Russians, who might reinforce their strength and their identity,” and therefore presents counter-reform as a “self-evident national choice.” Among the signatories of this manifesto, it is worth mentioning, apart from Kholmogorov, the Orthodox essayist Vitali Averianov (born in 1973), a member of the Writer’s Union, the founder of several Orthodox internet sites, and the author of a book with the telling title of *The Nature of Russian Expansion*; the journalist Andrei Kobianov, co-author of the book *The Decline of the Empire of the Dollar and the End of Pax Americana*; and Konstantin Krylov, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Spetsnaz Rossii*, member of Congress of the Russian communities, editor-in-chief of APN since 2007, and a convert to Zo-roastrianism. Here again, the ideological orientation of the authors leaves no room for doubt.

Among this group, Mikhail Remizov (born in 1978) is the one who dominates in terms of intellectual quality. The author of several theoretical texts devoted to conservative thought, he bases himself on the classic assumptions of European conservatism and on the neo-conservatism formulated by Samuel Huntington. Remizov criticizes the cult of universalism, the abstraction of Enlightenment, and defines conservatism as a “call to belonging” (*appelatsiia k prinadlezhnosti*). In his articles on Russia, often based on the great classics of Russian historiosophy, Remizov criticizes the liberal model of the 1993 Constitution, which in his view endorses an abstract state without nation that mixes in together all the citizens of the former Soviet Russian Federation. Remizov argues, on the contrary, that the idea of a state-civilization is specific to Russia’s imperial tradition, which means that the nation is not “an assemblage of persons who come to fulfil their natural rights over a given territory but an organic unity of generations, founded on a historic identity and embodied by an uninterrupted state sovereignty.” Thus he rejects the French model of the political nation and defends the idea of Russia as a “project of civilization” (*tsivilizatsionnyi proekt*), which presupposes the abolition of federalism, the primacy of the nation over the individual, the supremacy of executive power over the parliamentary system, the refusal of all supranational integration, and the definition of Russia as a

“society of believers.” As the Russians are the kernel of that civilization, he contends that the people did no more during the Kondopoga pogrom than to defend its rights against “feudal gangs.” In this vein, Remizov asserts that “to make Russia the country of Russians rather than of Rossians will be to everyone’s advantage.” Reserved about the contemporary Russian political system, he advocates a Gramscian tactic for conservative patriots: he urges taking control of the cultural and intellectual sphere, but also involvement in street actions, but without seeking to directly influence electoral political processes.

A third structure is the Center for Dynamic Conservatism, which was created in 2005 but seems to have ceased to exist as such as of 2009. It became known for its publication of Serge’s Project – referring to Sergius of Radonezh – also known as the Russian Doctrine. The Doctrine was written up by a collective comprising authors already mentioned above who are close to Pravaya.ru, such as Andrei Kobiakov, Vitali Averianov, Egor Kholmogorov, and a neo-Pagan doctrinaire inspired by German National Socialism Vladimir Kucherenko (known under his pseudonym Maksim Kalashnikov). This programmatic text presents itself as the heir to the famous 1909 Milestones, but equally merits comparison with the New American Century project, the doctrine advanced by American neo-conservatives at the beginning of the 1990s. In 2007, the Doctrine’s authors considered that their text could become the doctrinal foundation of a political party issuing from Rodina and maintained their close relations with the deputy Andrei Saveliev, but this reference disappeared rapidly when the Kremlin banned the party Great Russia, the successor of Rodina.

By the paradoxical concept of “dynamic conservatism,” the authors condemn liberalism and Social Darwinism, which they assimilate to shock therapy, but refuse to consider conservatism as a reactionary force. For them, conservatism cannot consist in the refusal of all change, since this would mean accepting the state of Russia as it was left after the Yeltsin decade: on the contrary, conservatism must be dynamic in that it calls for an evolution in the political conceptions of the state, as well as in the priorities of its foreign and domestic policies. The Doctrine is thus presented as “a first attempt to extirpate the foreign ideas of existing paradigms in Russia, to create a vision

that conforms to the nature of our mission, of our particular path.” The reference to Sergius of Radonezh confirms the distinctly Orthodox tone of the document, which is presented as a first attempt at theorizing new Russian conservatism. It thinks of Russia as a specific civilization, whose values are in direct opposition to those of the West. It calls on the country to fight for its spiritual sovereignty and to recover its strictly Russian – and not Rossian – historical traditions such as autocracy, empire, and unitarism. Its insistence on Orthodox traditions is not conceived as contradictory with the Soviet heritage since, as the Center claims, “we consider the borders of the Russian empire and the USSR as holy.”

The Russian Doctrine has significant support from institutions known for their nationalist traditions such as the Writers’ Union of Russia. It also has a direct access to the Patriarchate: the then-Metropolitan Kirill, Patriarch since 2008, presented the text at the World Russian National Council. The Center for Dynamic Conservatism, whose only function is to promote the Russian Doctrine, is financed by a foundation called The Russian Entrepreneur. The fund’s objective is what it calls “popular diplomacy,” that is, to popularize discourses on the Russian nation and Russia’s place in the world for the general public. To this end, it finances a newspaper of the same name, published since 2001 by Kobianov and Kucherenko – some issues of which endorse the slogan “Russia to the Russians” – the information agency RPSMonitor, which has a special page titled “Russian world” dedicated to the media treatment of the issues linked with the identity of Russia, as well as an internet portal of geopolitics designed to popularize the main axes of Russian foreign policy in such a way as to “counter the ideological diversions that forces opposed to Russia try to develop in the youth.”

The Foundation works in close collaboration with the Patriarchate, in particular the Danilov monastery, known for its conservative positions, and finances the World Russian National Council. It also supports patriotic film productions, such as a movie dedicated to the last Tsar, Nicholas II. In 2009, it set up a project called Decalogue-21, which promotes the ten biblical commandments among the youth as moral ideals perfectly adapted to contemporary life and to all the citizens of Russia, irrespective of their religious belonging or non-belonging. This initiative can be understood as the

continuation of the logic of the Russian Doctrine: innervate the state organs with religious precepts in the name of the need for order, morality, and the patriotism of citizens. Though the biblical references may seem extreme, the Foundation has nevertheless organized a conference devoted to the Decalogue in partnership with the Patriotic-State Club of United Russia, in which several high state functionaries have participated, including members of the Committee for Youth Affairs.

These three discussion clubs, the Serafim Club, the site Pravaya.ru, and the Center for Dynamic Conservatism, stand out on the Russian scene by their ability to attract the media spotlight thanks to their diverse programmatic texts, of which the Russian Doctrine is the most elaborated example. Although all are distinctly more oriented toward Orthodoxy, and the latter two also toward the rehabilitation of monarchism, these circles can all the same not be solely defined as more radical than the think tanks directly linked to the Kremlin. As has been noted, the transfers and cooptations are constant: Kholmogorov, Leontiev, and Remizov occupy multiple institutional positions and publish across a large range of media, stretching from the newspapers or sites that are closest to United Russia and financed by Pavlovski to more marginal newspapers or sites that are close to distinctly Orthodox, monarchist, or Eurasianist groups. The new ideologues of Russian nationalism thus form a supple conglomerate with permeable borders, a continuum in which personal relations and strategies of cooptation make it possible to get near to the leadership circles of United Russia as much as to the circles that define nationalism as a counter-culture.

## Conclusions

The tendency of Western observers and political scientists to define as “nationalist” exclusively the small extremist groups or political parties such as Gennady Zyuganov’s Communist Party and Vladimir Zhirinovski’s LDPR presents a distortion. It prevents from taking stock of the existence of an ideological continuum that encompasses the entire Russian political spectrum. The presidential party United Russia is itself shot-through with ideological debates about the nature of the country’s national identity, as this paper has demonstrated. It has even become one of the major actors of the nationalist narrative owing to its ability to coopt doctrinaires, to finance them, and to broadcast their messages to media and public opinion. In addition, neither is the Union of Right Forces, often presented as the representative of Western-style liberalism, exempt from nationalist forms of argumentation: a number of “new ideologists” were in fact members of the party led by Nemtsov and Kirienko before being won over to the Kremlin. A whole movement with liberal economic convictions but with a strong nationalist sensibility has blossomed within the Union of Right Forces in small discussion groups such as “Novye pravye,” whose name is obviously reminiscent of the New Right in France, Italy, and Germany. Lastly, even the opposition group The Other Russia is engaged in debates in national identity: Garry Kasparov does not seem bothered by his rubbing shoulders with Eduard Limonov, the leader of the National Bolshevik Party, which is today banned in Russia but has played a key role in the constitution of nationalism as counter-culture and a form of political resistance to the Kremlin. It is therefore necessary to approach the question from another angle than that of the binary division of the political spectrum into right/left, or nationalist/non-nationalist.

The question of the financing of think tanks quite obviously proves more complex on account of its opacity. It is probable that some think tanks are more or less linked to the secret services and partly financed by them. This situation is neither new, nor exceptional: in the Soviet period, the KGB was one of the great defenders of the nationalist lobbies within the Party and the state apparatus, and other secret services throughout the world also play this

role in their own countries. If one looks only at the public financing received through commissions and the grants gained by nationalist think tanks, there is a notable supremacy of several types of patron: United Russia of course, which is a real financial power owing to its close links with the presidential administration; the Duma, and the ministries; the municipality of Moscow, since Yuri Luzhkov is known for the support he has given to all the major nationalist causes since the 1990s; the large state corporations such as Gazprom, but equally more unexpected economic circles like the banks, supermarket chains, and the agribusiness complex. These latter actors are confirmation of the institutionalization of the field of think tanks that has occurred in Russia. Think tanks are no longer financed solely by institutions related to the state but also by private interests, whose multiplicity and rivalry are in theory the gauge of a greater autonomy of thought and a reflection of the diversity of interests. However, sponsoring in corporate culture in Russia, whether nationalist or otherwise, still remains rare if compared with other developed countries.

Within the spectrum of "ideology factories," the main dynamic seems to be that of cooptation. This is not specific to United Russia and the nationalist question in itself, but constitutes one of the modes of functioning of the Putin regime: the Kremlin seeks to reunify not only the political field under its control, but also the economic sector and society as a whole. Since its creation, the Public Chamber has played this role of cooptation of "civil society" by seeking to attract personalities to it, some of whom eye the regime critically, such as, for example, defenders of human rights. On the ideological level, United Russia promotes the same logic: Demidov's "Russian Project" or the Evropa publishing house enable a platform for discussion with doctrines external to the innermost circle, and to gauge the reactions elicited by such and such of their assumptions. As has been shown, the personal relations, the various career objectives, and the possibilities of publishing in very diversified forms of media all work to guarantee this continuum, which thus enables theoreticians such as Kholmogorov or Remizov to rub shoulders with high level party employees. The youth movements, in particular the Young Guard, which is directly affiliated with United Russia, seems also to play a key role in this cooptation by concentric circles: Ivan Demidov himself

made a career within it before being propelled into the presidential administration; and the thematics of the “Russian Project” have been reintegrated into the internet portal of the Russian Observer. Similar to the State-Patriotic Club within United Russia, the Young Guard enables dialogue with external milieus that are more distant from the “politically correct” assumptions operative in the state organs.

Traditionally, the theoreticians of Russian nationalism belong to literary circles, steeped in history, philosophy, and theology. The new generation of doctrinaires, apart from their youthfulness (many of them were born in the 1970s), base themselves on disciplines that are more engaged in the analysis of the modern world such as economics, sociology, and political science. On the doctrinal level, the rehabilitation of monarchism to be found in the work of Egor Kholmogorov and Mikhail Remizov ought not to mislead us: it has nothing to do with practical commitments intent on seeing the return of the Tsar in Russia, but with a mode of reflection on the contemporary Russian political regime which advocates an autocratic system, in theory compatible with republican principles. The orthodox sensibility of many of these think tanks and doctrinaires also has to be apprehended more as a call to conservative moral values than as a faith in some divine transcendence. The importance of references to Petr Stolypin, the rehabilitation of specific Russian capitalist traditions, advocacy of the market economy and its criteria of success are proof, as if it were needed, that this new nationalist wave is profoundly adapted to the new post-Soviet Russia. It does not advocate a return to the Soviet Union or Tsarism but centers its calls on a modernized messianism for the future. It can therefore be paralleled with the American neo-conservatism that emerged at the start of the 1980s and took on its fullness in the 1990s-2000s: the conservatism advocated by Samuel Huntington, the theme of a return to values and identity, culturalist discourses on the existence of particular civilizations founded on a religion, all these elements are shared and inspire a reading of the situation that re-sembles a so-called postmodern worldview on several points.

The new think tanks and their ideologues all take their inspiration, whether directly or not, from the model created by Gleb Pavlovski and were educated in corporate PR and political technologies. Therefore, “their professional

mentality is specific due to their faith in the omnipotence of humanitarian technologies." Hence the effervescence of the Russian in-ternet, the multiplication of sites, blogs, online newspapers, and discussion clubs, accompanied by a militant discourse on political technologies and the possibility of manipulating public opinion. As Kholmogorov states, for all of them "nationalism [is] a specific technology of working with the nation." The real impact of this ideological effervescence on Russian society can only provoke reflection. Despite the fact that the Kremlin is vacillating about whether to embark on a new indoctrination of society, the domestic use of some nationalist narratives appears to be forging ahead. Though insensitive to Surkovian discourses on sovereign democracy and little interested in debates on national identity, instead preferring think tanks with a social and economic vocation, Dmitri Medvedev continues to bet on the national consensus in the name of patriotism, which was confirmed by a May 2009 decree for the creation of a Commission to fight against attempts to falsify history.

On the model of the former CPSU, United Russia is becoming a factionalized party and presents itself as a discussion platform for currents with very different ideological backgrounds. The structuration of political clubs within the presidential party, the role of the Department of Domestic Policy at the presidential administration and of its leaders (Surkov, Shuvalov, Chesnakov, etc.) in the formation of nationalist think tanks, the development of new institutions of expertise, and the increasing cooptation of doctrinaires of Russian neo-conservatism, all confirm that the Kremlin is currently out to engage in ideological experimentation. Whether it will take the form of a new prescriptive indoctrination will depend on future domestic and international evolutions.

# Appendix

## List of Persons

### *Chadaev, Aleksei*

One of the main collaborators of *Russkii zhurnal*. Close to Boris Nemtsov for a long time. Worked for the Union of Right Forces at the end of the 1990s, and then presided over the club “New Right” in 2003-04 and the site Global-rus.ru. Author of a book on Putin’s ideology. Recruited by Pavlovski for the *Russkii zhurnal* and elected to the Public Chamber, where he was regarded as one of Pavlovski’s best students in media technology.

### *Chesnakov, Aleksei*

Former deputy director of the Department of Domestic Policy of the presidential administration, in charge of relations with the expertise community. Close to Vladislav Surkov. Participated in Dmitri Medvedev’s electoral campaign team and supports the liberal conservative Institute for Social Forecasting.

### *Demidov, Ivan*

Founding father of the Russian Project, leader of the “patriotic wave” inside United Russia, and a former leader of the Young Guard, United Russia’s youth movement. Appointed director of the ideological section of United Russia in 2008. Named director of the Department of Human Policy and Social Relations of the presidential administration in 2009.

### *Fadeev, Valeri*

One of the main figures of the liberal conservative faction inside United Russia. The editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Ekspert* since the second half of the 1990s. A member of the Public Chamber, president of the Institute for Social Forecasting, and co-president of the association Business Russia.

*Gruzdev, Vladimir*

Director of supermarket chain the “Seventh Continent.” Close to Andrei Isaev. Finances the Center for Social Conservative Policy.

*Isaev, Andrei*

Leader of the social conservative faction inside United Russia. Formerly head of the Federation of Independent Unions of Russia, he now leads the Duma Committee for Work and Social Policy. Since 2008, he has also directed United Russia’s Council for Propaganda and Agitation Work.

*Ivanov, Vitali*

Began his career at the Council of the Federation before becoming the deputy director of the political section of the newspaper *Vedomosti*. In 2006-08 he was vice-director of the Center of Political Conjunctures of Russia, and since 2009 he is the director of the small Institute of State Policy and Law. Famous as a nationalist essayist close to *Evropa* and the main theoretician of “anti-color revolutionism”.

*Kholmogorov, Egor*

One of the most visible figures of Russian neo-conservatism. His doctrine combines a virulent form of Orthodoxy, worship of the monarchy and the empire, and nostalgia for the Stalin years. Close to the Russian Project and is the editor-in-chief of two internet newspapers, *Russkii obozrevatel'* (The Russian Observer) and *Novye khroniki* (The New Chronicles).

*Leontiev, Mikhail*

Has presented a program called Odnako as well as several other programs on Russia’s first channel beginning in 1999. Regarded as one of Putin’s preferred presenters. One of the only figures among the ideologues close to the Kremlin to champion the neo-Eurasianist Alexander Dugin and openly advocate the fundamentally imperial nature of Russia.

*Markov, Sergei*

Influential figure close to the Kremlin and a member of many parliamentary commissions in the 1990s. Director of the Association for Centers of Policy Research for a decade. Is a United Russia deputy since 2007 and vice-president of the Duma Committee for Social Organizations and Religious Associations.

*Nikonov, Viatcheslav*

Member of the presidium of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy. Director of the Politika Foundation, of the Russian World Foundation and co-director of the Foundation Unity in the Name of Russia. Has published numerous articles defending an ethnonationalist conception of Russia.

*Remizov, Mikhail*

One of the main figures of the Press Agency for Political News (APN). Author of several theoretical texts devoted to conservative thought, based upon the classic assumptions of European conservatism and the neo-conservatism of Samuel Huntington. Argues that the idea of a “state-civilization” is specific to Russia’s imperial tradition.

*Pavlovski, Gleb*

Considered Russia’s foremost image maker, endorses the use of advertizing techniques in politics and the transformation of the media into instruments at the service of the Kremlin. As one of Vladimir Putin’s close advisors in the presidential administration he took control of the Russian media world and inaugurated about fifteen internet sites.

*Pligin, Vladimir*

President of the Duma Constitutional Legislation Committee, and one of the leaders of the liberal conservative faction inside United Russia.

*Shuvalov, Yuri*

Member of the Presidium of the General Council of United Russia, vice-president of the presidential administration, and formerly in charge of relations with the media and society. Regarded as a representative of the party's left, he supports the Center for Social Conservative Policy. Now the United Russia coordinator for work with the Clubs.

*Surkov, Vladislav*

Personal political advisor to Vladimir Putin. Vice-director of the presidential administration and the propagandist of "sovereign democracy" terminology.

*Titov, Boris*

President of Business Russia, close to Valeri Fadeev.

## **List of Think Tanks**

*Agency for Political News (APN)*

One of the main platforms for discussion and promotion of new nationalist doctrinaires. It seeks to defend the Kremlin's policy decisions in an ideological way.

*Center for Dynamic Conservatism*

Center known for its publications on the Russian Doctrine.

*Center for Political Conjecture of Russia*

One of the main institutes of expertise in Russia and among the top five institutes most referenced by the media. Maintains a biographical database of Russian politicians and offers analyses on electoral sociology, foreign policy, and studies on the energy sector. Since 1999, it has participated in the organization of electoral campaigns for Unity/United Russia. Its director, Konstantin Simonov, is also head of the National Energy Security Fund, specializes

in energy questions. Since 2008, the Center has seen the return of one of its former leaders, Aleksei Chesnakov.

*Center for Social Conservative Policy*

This is the social conservatives' club. It organizes regular workshops and offers activities for training cadres, such as "the school of the Russian politician," and has held competitions called "professional brigades for the country" in various regions. Supported by Boris Gryzlov and Yuri Shuvalov, it is headed by Andrei Isaev.

*Center of National Glory of Russia*

Orthodox Center founded by Vladimir Yakunin, ironically nicknamed the "Orthodox Chekist" by the media on account of his past in the secret services and his engagement at the sides of the Patriarchate. Yakunin is head of the Russian railway state company and also one of the founders of the pro-Orthodox "Dialogue of Civilizations" program.

*Center of Planning and Strategic Forecasting*

Small organization linked to United Russia allocates funding to the Ideas Factory.

*Club of November 4*

The liberal conservatives' club. It includes Viktor Pleskachevski, president of the Duma Committee for Property, Pavel Krasheninnikov, president of the Duma Committee for Civil and Criminal Legislation and Arbitration, and Vladislav Reznik, president of the Duma Committee for the Financial Market.

*Evropa (Europe)*

Publishing house established in 2005 by Pavlovski for the purpose of elaborating the ideological corpus that the Kremlin requires.

*Foundation for Effective Politics (FEP)*

Created in 1995 by Gleb Pavlovski. Plays a key role in building the brand-name image of the Kremlin and its president. It is a veritable “innovation machine” in terms of communications technologies, which have played an essential role in the formulation of a new Russian nationalism.

*Ideas Factory*

Aims to “form a highly efficient contemporary economy, one based on knowledge and the use of leading-edge technologies,” including nanotechnology, biotechnology, alternative energies, and naval construction.

*Institute for Social Forecasting*

One of the main liberal conservative think tanks. Directed by Valeri Fadeev, and with close ties to both Vladislav Surkov and Aleksei Chesnakov.

*Institute of Modern Development*

Created in March 2008 upon the initiative of Dmitri Medvedev, who is also the director of its Supervisory Council. Its director is Igor Iurgens, vice-president of the Union of Industrialists and Investors of Russia.

*National Institute for the Development of Contemporary Ideology (NIRSI)*

Institute that regards the formulation of a national ideology as a priority, seeing it as necessary for the stability of the political system. Works mainly with the State-Patriotic Club, in partnership with the Academy of National Economics, and seems to have very close links to ASSAGROS, an association of unions of the agribusiness complex.

*Politika Foundation*

Created in 1993 at the initiative of well-known political scientists such as its director, Viatcheslav Nikonov. Of liberal persuasion, the renown of the Politika Foundation was contributed to by major figures who have since rallied

to Putin. Owing to its multiple publications, the Foundation is regarded as one of the great defenders of the current regime.

#### *Pravaya.ru site*

This site has rapidly become one of the main platforms of Orthodox neo-conservatism. Among the signatories of some of its major neo-conservative texts are Mikhail Remizov; Egor Kholmogorov; the Orthodox essayist Vitali Averianov, a member of the Writer's Union, the founder of several Orthodox internet sites; the journalist Andrei Kobianov; and Konstantin Krylov, editor-in-chief of the newspaper Spetsnaz Rossii, member of Congress of the Russian communities, and editor-in-chief of APN since 2007.

#### *Russian Club*

A small nationalist center of discussion linked to the Russian Project.

#### *Russian Doctrine*

A famous manifesto of Russian neo-conservatism written by a collective comprising authors close to Pravaya.ru, such as Andrei Kobiakov, Vitali Averianov, Egor Kholmogorov, and a neo-Pagan doctrinaire inspired by German National Socialism, Vladimir Kucherenko (known under his pseudonym Maksim Kalashnikov).

#### *Russian Project*

Launched in 2007 by Ivan Demidov, with the aim to attract potential electors of more radical nationalist sensibility to United Russia, in particular former Rodina voters. Desired to put the question of identity at the heart of the electoral debate and open a large platform for discussion around the question of Russianness. Among its supporters were Andrei Isaev and Yuri Shuvalov; the United Russia deputies Pavel Voronin and Igor Igoshin; the Duma deputy speaker Alexander Torchin; the professor at the Spiritual Academy of Moscow, deacon Andrei Kuraev; the deputy president of the first channel and advisor to the political department of the presidential party Andrei

Pisarev; the editor-in-chief of the Orthodox journal *Fom*; and the nationalist journalist Mikhail Leontiev.

*Russian World Foundation*

Headed by Viacheslav Nikonov. Its goal is to promote the international influence of Russian culture and its linguistic and cultural presence in the Near Abroad.

*Russian Entrepreneur Foundation*

Funds the Center for Dynamic Conservatism, and promotes discourses on the Russian nation and Russia's place in the world for the general public. Also finances a newspaper of the same name, the information agency RPMonitor, as well as an internet portal of geopolitics designed to popularize the main axes of Russian foreign policy. The Foundation works in close collaboration with the Patriarchate. It has set up a project called Decalogue-21, which promotes the ten biblical commandments among the youth.

*Russkii zhurnal (Russian Journal)*

Founded by Gleb Pavlovski in 1996 and regarded as one of the most pro-Kremlin of the Russian media scene. Argues in an intellectualized manner about Russia's position on the international scene.

*Serafim Club*

Created in 2003 by well-known journalists such as Mikhail Leontiev, Maksim Sokolov, and Alexander Privalov. Conceived of as a new space for developing conservatism as a philosophy.

*State Club*

Created upon the initiative of students from the State University of Moscow (MGU). Financed by United Russia and run by deputies Sergei Shishkarev, the director of the Duma Committee for Transport, and Mikhail Margelov, the director of the Committee for International Questions. It is part of the

“presidential reserve of cadres,” a project launched by Dmitri Medvedev in spring 2009 for the training of a new generation of high-level state employees.

#### *State-Patriotic Club*

Created in 2008, it has taken over from Russian Project, operating in a much more respectable way, less centered on ethnic Russians, with less overt links to certain radical movements. The Club has been recognized as the third major club within United Russia. Headed by two jurists, Irina Yarovaia, deputy director of the Duma Committee of Federation Affairs and Regional Policy, and Grigori Ivliev, director of the Duma Committee for Culture.

#### *Unity in the Name of Russia Foundation*

Co-directed by Viacheslav Nikonov. Seeks to privilege “cooperation between political parties and the constructive forces of Russia”, wording that is typical of the managed democracy established since the start of the 2000s.

#### *Vzgliad Newspaper*

Considered to be one of the sites responsible for the elaboration of a Kremlin-designed ideology. Founded by Konstantin Rykov, today a deputy of United Russia.

## About the Author

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