



Vladimir Avdonin

FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVE
Optimism vs. pessimism: Russian experts on the policies of the EU
and its relations with Russia

Analyzing the range of opinions established in the domestic expert community on the problems in relations between the European Union and Russia, the author distinguishes two major alternative tendencies. He calls them, respectively, an integrative model of «approaching partners» and a model of «independent world actors». V.Avdonin himself is not a proponent of such a strict and unambiguous choice, but calls for a search of a specific form of relations combining elements of different alternatives. He believes that, considering economic and political conditions in Europe and Russia, a new treaty between Russia and the EU should in no case lead to a loss of integrative components in their relations, whereas the values of Russia's «European choice» should not be questioned.

Igor Chubais

POLITICAL CULTURES
What kind of Russia we need, or how to end the dispute over the
«Russian idea».

The article raises a question of a Russian national idea and comments on different ways of its interpretation. The author considers a perception of the national idea both on an everyday and a philosophic level. A considerable attention is devoted to the problem of continuity with the historical Russia. Finally, I.Chubais provides for his own definition of a national idea. In his view, morality, historic spirit, construction and democracy should become the essence of a regenerated and reformed Russian idea, or an all-Russian idea. It is the orientation on these values that, he believes, should be an optimum way to overcome our conceptual and identity crisis through establishment of solid Russian coordinates.

**Igor Zadorin,
Lyudmila Shubina**

PRACTICAL SOCIOLOGY

The way Russians perceive social risks and threats: status and 10-year dynamics.

The data from an all-Russian survey held in April-May 2006 served an empirical basis for the article. The authors also used the materials from 1996-1999 surveys, which let him measure the dynamics of Russians` mass consciousness during the latest decade. Among the parameters of the analysis were a level of confidence in the future and assessment of the level of danger posed by particular social threats (from unemployment and criminalization of society to inter-ethnic conflicts and natural calamities). Apart from that, the authors studied the impact of demographic parameters (such as gender, age, education) on the perception of social dangers.

Leontiy Byzov

Kondopoga as manifestation of a systemic crisis in the national issue

The author focuses on the dynamics of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations and the way these are reflected in public opinion. Based on the VCIOM surveys` data, L.Byzov ascertains a slow and gradual aggravation of enmity, but at the same time cannot find an empirical prove for an avalanche-type growth of tension. The article studies the reasons which, according to Russians, cause the intensification of such tensions, and categorizes answers according to age groups. A particular attention is paid to the issues of Russian nationalism and attitude to a multinational character of the Russian state. Whereas multinational problems are quite real and potentially can create serious threats to stability, the inter-confessional situation, mainly along the `Orthodoxy-Islam` line, is much healthier.

Gleb Musikhin

CATHEDRA

Authority of power and authority of reason (comparative analysis of German and Russian experience of the late XVIII – early XIX centuries).

The object of analysis in the article is the notion of authority, which is one of the main substantial categories in the definition of power. The author emphasizes that authority acquires a special meaning at crucial moments, when power has to demonstrate its capacity to govern, i.e. prove itself adequate in the surrounding historical context.

Having compared the historical experience of Russia and Germany, G.Musikhin concludes that both countries have seen an intellectual authority (authority of competence) to exist independently of the institutional one (authority of power) for a long period of time. Subsequently, power in Russia did not possess an intellectual authority, whereas in Germany a universally recognized intellectual authority did not enjoy real support and recognition from power. In both cases extremely excessive claims were put forward: power wanted the public political thought to serve it, whereas political philosophy demanded political power to correlate with its intellectual constructs.

Timur Polyannikov

Nationalism in (post) modern world.

According to the author, ethno-political conflicts of the late XX – early XXI centuries clearly demonstrate a dramatic intensification of ethnic consolidation and mobilization processes. T.Polyannikov is not disposed to consider nationalism as mass state of mind characteristic only of the world system's periphery. He regards today's activation of ethno-nationalist consciousness as a world-wide phenomenon. The article pays a particular attention to the study of a difficult interrelation between «postmodern» nationalism and the process of globalization, values of liberalism and political democracy. T.Polyannikov believes that the appearance of a “new” nationalism at the confines of the XXI century constitutes a rather natural, although quite dangerous and fraught with many risks, factor of a general process of global democratization.

Nikolai Borisov

POST SOVIET SPACE

Characteristics of political systems' transformation in Central Asian states (examples of Uzbekistan and Kirghizia).

The article conducts a comparative analysis of post-soviet development of Uzbekistan and Kirghizia, and forecasts the dynamics of political processes in these countries in the foreseeable perspective. The author pays in this regard a special attention to the role of political traditions that had their own, very different from each other, characteristics in each of the given states. N.Borisov takes as well into consideration such factors as the structure of the economy, presence or absence of private property, level of urbanization of the title nation, cultural and value aspects. The article explains the reasons why Uzbekistan witnessed a return to the tradition of a strong despotic power with closed access, and its legitimization's path lies through nationalism and Islam. The author considers just as natural for Kirghizia the presence of a limited pluralism in the form of a hidden, and

sometimes obvious, confrontation between the elites of main families, with a semi-closed access to power and its legitimization mainly through national and cultural values.

Boris Orlov

**TO THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF G.V.PLEKHANOV
Georgy Plekhanov and today.**

In 1970s-1980s the author showed himself to be a reputed specialist in Western social democracy studies, and in the post-Soviet period he played a visible role in the attempts to recreate and activate a social democratic movement in Russia. It is for this reason that the Orlov's interest to Plehanov's legacy is so natural. The article raises the question of the extent to which Plehanov's views could be applied to today's Russia in the situation when, after the collapse of socialist experiment, against which he warned repeatedly, the country returned to the frontier of February 1917, to the initial stand of market economy and representative democracy.

Victor Borisyuk

**BOOK REVIEW
Democratic challenges as interpreted by American political
scientists
K.Dzhanda, D.M.Berry, D.Goldman, K.B.Khuda. Through a
difficult path of democracy. The process of public administration
in the US. – M.: ROSSPEN, 2006. – 655 p.**

The object of Borisyuk's review is the Russian translation of a fundamental monograph on the establishment of democracy in the US, which ran through 9 editions in its country. Its special edition has the form and functions of a school-book and is of great help to students and professors from history and political science departments in American universities. The author of the review names among the undoubted merits of the book a fundamentally new approach that very well combines a classic narrative of the material and information technologies whose capacity serves a reference point in each of the work's sections. Their structure allows to "volumetrically" follow the history of formation and development of major US political instruments. At the same time, V.Borisyuk draws the attention to a certain apologetic bias in the presentation of material, which seems to leave in shadow the challenges and difficulties for a democratic process that are mentioned in the title of the book.

Stability of still waters and secrets of the underground.

Party life in the fall 2006.

The traditional for the «Politeia» journal chronicle presents main events in the life of Russian political parties in the fall of 2006. As usual, the chronicle provides for an analysis of the distribution of political forces in Russia during the given timeframe. The author comments on the shifts in all segments of the Russian political domain. In Korgunyuk's view, the power purposefully scares the society away from participation in political life, thus forcing a considerable part of politics to go 'underground'. And those processes that have inevitably started to grow ripe there eventually could create serious problems both for the power itself and for democracy in general.