

Ideological Innovations in the Post-Soviet Countries

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, inhabitants of its former republics have witnessed the return of history in their homelands. The Soviet illusion of a preordained and predestined future has been replaced by a feeling of unpredictability concerning the future, coupled with a sense of vulnerability vis-à-vis history in these new states. The challenges of great change have led to a multitude of ideological responses in the lands lying between Tallinn and Vladivostok, Murmansk and Osh, Magadan and Chisinau. Formerly engaged in the dogmas of Soviet Marxism, ideological creativity has returned to the new societies that are currently dwelling on the ruins of the USSR. History has repatriated the post-Soviet lands as a conflict of ideas and a clash of ideologies.

The disappearance of the great Soviet society was not as rapid as the changes in the political regimes. The new societies of Eastern Europe survived tectonic transformations, leading to a flourishing of different phenomena related to ideology. The new social reality had to normalize multiparty systems, private property, the significance of money, consumerism, the coexistence of post-totalitarian traditions in democratic and oligarchic institutes, the co-presence of atheism and religious renaissance, etc. In the late 20th and early 21st century, new ideological frameworks were created, allowing individuals, groups and societies to accept the new political and socioeconomic reality.

The Ideology and Politics Journal is dedicated to the study of these ideological frameworks. The aim of our journal is to analyze ideology in its political, social, and conceptual forms, at the core of post-Soviet societies. We are a communication platform for researchers who study ideological processes in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. Thus, we hope to chronicle the establishment of new societies and the multiplicity of their ideological forms.

Since philosophy, social science, history, and political science operate with many different, often conflicting, definitions of ideology, we define ideology in the widest sense possible: from a system of political ideas and beliefs, to a unanimous instance of power dispositions legitimation; and from a false consciousness created by the dominating class, to a symbolic system utilized to make sense of the social reality. In this manner, it is possible to reconcile the Marxist, neo-liberal, and postmodern interpretations of ideology.

The first issue of the Ideology and Politics Journal is dedicated to the topic of ideological innovations, i.e., to the new forms that have evolved in recent years. This collection of articles represents an attempt to identify core trends of ideological processes in the political chaos of Eastern European countries. It is therefore crucial to maintain the polyglossia and polyphony of the region (to include English). A thorough analysis of ideological innovation requires the inclusion of multiple languages within one journal.

The first article of this issue, written by Anna Schor-Tschudnowskaja (Dr. rer. soc., Sigmund Freud PrivatUniversität, Vienna, Austria), describes how the political identity of the post-Soviet Russian society is developing in the absence of any consolidating ideas or new political perspectives to guide. Additionally, the author examines Russian society through the prism of personal enrichment and the idea of a 'luxury life.' Schor-Tschudnowskaja shows how the tempting images of glamour are connected – in a paradoxical way – with Soviet ideology and Utopian ideas of New Society. The author also argues that images of luxury and glamour have evident ideological meaning within Russian political processes.

The second article, written by Vadym Triukhan (National Academy of Public Administration, Kiev, Ukraine), analyzes the ideological background of Ukraine's European integration. Triukhan reviews specific ideological characteristics of the "Eastern Neighborhood Policy" (ENP). Special attention is given to very sensitive issues, such as the competitive struggle for Ukraine, and the region as a whole, from quite conflicting integration perspectives: European and Eurasian.

In the third article, Natalia Koulinka (Stanford University, USA) analyses the ideological processes that allowed Alexander Lukashenko to win elections in 1994. Koulinka focuses on the failure of the political élites' quest for the common good, which was acceptable to different groups in the pre-Lukashenko Belarus.

The next article, written by Oleksiy Koval (Ukrainian Association of Sinologists, Kiev, Ukraine), analyzes critical lessons from the collapse of Soviet Union as identified by two generations of Chinese leaders. Koval states that the political development of China over the last 20 years has been based on the mitigation of certain risks, identified as decisive in the failure of the USSR. Based on analysis of the Chinese ideologists, Koval argues that contemporary Chinese Marxism has applied lessons from Soviet failures to implement its own plans; primarily to preserve the leading role of the Communist Party of China.

The concluding article by Olga Lakizyuk (Dr. Phil., University Bielefeld, Germany) addresses how the concept of 'culture' is being used in immigration policies of the post-Soviet regimes, and the role it plays in ideological debates within contemporary post-Soviet societies. Lakizyuk argues that the various interpretations of 'culture' represent power dispositions within society. Additionally, the author establishes a basis for understanding the aims and limits of 'social integration'.

Publication of this issue of the Ideology and Politics Journal is the first step in a study of ideological processes in Eastern European countries. I hope, it is the step in a right direction.

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