

Post-Soviet Order between the Tradition and Modernity

Editorial Introduction

Today's civil, ideological, political and, military clashes in post-Soviet Ukraine represent a critical moment for the region's development. A quest for order in post-Soviet societies has led most of them into the throes of authoritarianism. The Euromaidan, a liberationist revolution that began on Kiev's Independence Square, may ultimately destroy the regional authoritarian union that has emerged a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Russian invasion of Crimea, growing civil protests in major cities of the Russian Federation, and Western sanctions have begun to reshape the post-Soviet space.

A hunger for order is typical for the post-Soviet populations that survived the economic and administrative disorder of late Perestroika, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and bellum omnium contra omnes in 1990s. Criminal, sexual and commercial revolutions changed the private sphere. Nationalist, liberal and authoritarian transformations led to a profound change in the structures of public sphere. Conflicting individualism, distrust, and a quest for a better future pre-determined the success of authoritarian regimes. Yet the same preconditions have been fuelling a quest for solutions, including the 'color revolutions' and a hope for external management (be it by the US, Russia, EU or Custom Union). These issues are covered in the 4th issue of the Ideology and Politics Journal.

This issue of the Ideology and Politics Journal opens with an article by Sergiy Kurbatov and Alla Marchenko dedicated to the change in perception of the late Soviet era in post-Soviet memory. Kurbatov and Marchenko trace the evolution of this memory based on changes in attitudes towards Mikhail Gorbachev as published in history textbooks of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. The ambivalence of the interpretations of Gorbachev exemplifies how these three post-Soviet nations represented perestroika and its leader. In Belarus, his image reflects some nostalgia for the original order. In Russia, nostalgia for super-power status creates an image of "the one who lost it all." And in Ukraine, the "nationalization" of history constructs the Gorbachev era in terms of victimhood and sacrifice.

The second article covers the ambivalence of political development in the post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Jesko Schmoller shows a fundamental contradiction between modern models of state-building and clientelistic practices manifesting pre-modern social order. The author also

shows how the Soviet traditions of statehood and governance practices are involved in the functioning of contemporary Uzbek contradictory politics.

Polina Kliuchnikova describes the impact of Western life on democratic values of the Russian migrants residing in London, Berlin and Barcelona. The author analyses the attitudes of expatriate Russians towards the ‘Snow Revolution,’ a pro-democracy movement that took place during the Russian parliamentary and presidential elections in 2011-2012. The article carefully describes communications between Western Russians, as well as a lack of communication between ‘suspicious’ diasporas and ‘mainland’ Russian protesters. Kliuchnikova shows that the inefficient communication of diasporas with the Motherland has led diasporas to reinvent their identity.

In the next article, Natalia Belitser provides an in-depth account of the unexpected support for the Ukrainian far-right “Svoboda” party in 2012-13. Taking into account the role of this party in the tragic events of the Euromaidan, the data and analysis in this article offer us a chance to better understand the trauma that the Yanukovich regime inflicted on Ukrainian society, and the way society reacted to authoritarian rule.

Marharyta Fabrykant offers an in-depth analysis of the reaction of Russian liberalism to the nationalist challenge in Russian Federation. Based on her analysis of several liberal deficiencies, the author proposes three areas for liberals to focus on: 1) growing xenophobia and migrantophobia in Russian society; 2) refusing to use nationalist messages; 3) including positive ideas regarding the nationality issue. The current victory of nationalism in Russia makes it an utmost necessity for liberals to review their weaknesses.

In the article concluding this IPJ issue, Anne Jürgens compares the trajectories of development of the Russian-speaking populations in post-Soviet Estonia and Ukraine. The author traces how these populations survived the transition from titular groups in the USSR to a minority vis-à-vis political transition in Estonia and Ukraine. The article provides a variety of data for further elaboration of the possible role of the Russian-speaking populations in the democratization processes in countries where they are in the minority.

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