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Conservatism in Russia

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Editorial

by Alexander Meienberger

Conservatism is not a new trend in Russian politics and society. It traces its long history back to the 19th century when Slavophile, an intellectual movement, developed; this movement advocated for Russia's future development to be rooted in the values and institutions that had their foundations in the country's early history. In 1833, Count Sergej Uvarov formulated his state doctrine, "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality," that sought imperial unity under Orthodox Christianity and the absolute authority of the emperor. His doctrine can be called the first version of Russia's state-prescribed conservatism. Following this, Russia's Pan-Slavism movement arose, foreseeing the union of all Slavic nations under Russian leadership. After the First World War, the movement of Eurasianism developed, albeit in exile. Its members saw Russia as a unique civilization with a particular mission. During Soviet times, communism dominated all aspects within society.

In modern Russia, political elites started to shift towards conservatism between 2007 and 2012, as evident in both domestic and foreign policies. However, in Russian political society, conservatism has always been present to a certain degree.¹ The return of Vladimir Putin, who had already served two terms as president, from 2000-2008, and then as prime minister from 2008-2012, marked the final turn of the Kremlin from liberalism to conservatism.² In 2011, the pro-Kremlin-orientated political party United Russia won the parliamentary election, and in 2012, Putin won the presidential election. These two elections were reportedly manipulated, and opposition groups accused Putin and the United Russia party of fraud. It led to mass protests in Moscow and other cities. The protests started in February 2011 and continued until June 2013. The protest movement was seen by the Kremlin as a riot of the so-called middle class. Therefore, the Russian policymakers, and especially Putin, turned to conservatism and the so-called "common people."

The conservative turn in Russian politics can be marked by its oppressive law, its zero tolerance to any opposition groups except for systematic opposition with only decorative function, and its view of Russia as a significant player in international affairs. As a result of these mass protests, the Kremlin signed in 2012 the foreign agent law requiring anyone who receives financial support from outside Russia or is under the influence from outside Russia to register themselves as "foreign agents". Many Russian human rights organizations, like the Memorial, the Sakharov Center, and the Golos, fell victim to this law and were shortly shut down. Later, in 2012, Putin signed the Dima Yakovlev law, also known as the anti-Magnitsky law, which defines sanctions against U.S. citizens involved in violations of the human rights and freedoms of Russian citizens. In 2013, the Duma passed the gay propaganda

law prohibiting the distribution of non-traditional sexual relationships among minors.

Later in 2020, the Russians adopted a new constitution; technically, the changes were called amendments. However, their significance is too important to call them simply “amendments.” For instance, according to the updated Russian constitution, Russian law takes precedence over international law.³ Moreover, it defines marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman.⁴ Furthermore, the president gets the right to remove judges.⁵ Finally, Putin can stay in power until 2030⁶ if he wins the presidential election in 2024, which should not be a problem for him with all oppressive laws in force and state apparatus on his side. Furthermore, after a full-scale war against Ukraine, the Russian law makers passed in 2022 war censorship laws that establish administrative and criminal punishments for discrediting or dissemination of unreliable information about the Russian Armed Forces, other Russian state bodies and their operations, and the activity of volunteers aiding the Russian Armed Forces, and for calls to impose sanctions against Russia, Russian organizations, and citizens. These few examples show a clear picture of political development in Russia, which has been developing since 2000 into a dictatorship.

As for foreign policy, conservatism plays a significant role. The Russian political elites view Russia as a global player in international affairs. However, they see Russia not as the leading country in the economy or as promoting democracy but as a protector of traditional Christian values. This external conservatism should be viewed as a reaction policy of Russia towards Western countries. In Russia’s perception, the West did not want to give Russia the desired recognition as a significant power. “The inconsistency between Russia’s status ambitions and Western policies has finally triggered a change in Russia’s narrative about her exceptionalism.”⁷ This Russian exceptionalism allowed the Kremlin to speak about its sphere of influence, the post-Soviet space, and to use its military to attack its neighboring countries: Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014.

The Russian war against Ukraine has been going on since 2014, when Russian soldiers occupied the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and supported rebels in the Eastern parts of Ukraine. On 22 February 2022, the conflict escalated into a full-scale war. The Russian state declared war on Ukraine, and the regular military troops started to bombard Ukrainian cities. As justification for probably the most significant conflict in Europe since the end of World War II, Putin has used moral categories such as denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine. This evokes a direct association with the Soviet Union and its achievements in the denazification of Germany. That shows that the Russian political elites are firmly confident in the role of Russia and its exceptionalism.

The *Euxeinos* issue no. 35 on state-prescribed conservatism in Russia analyzes this phenomenon politically, socially, and economically, both before and after February 2022. Alexander Kynev opens this issue with developments in Russian

internal politics. In his article titled “The Scandalous Electoral Victory of the Governing Party United Russia,” the author shows how, and by which means, the party United Russia won the latest election and what political methods the government used to gain the majority of votes for this party. Kynev provides evidence of unprecedented restrictions on voting rights, such as the banning of every single small public activity of the opposition, and he goes on to show how the electoral process was manipulated. He argues even when the party United Russia gains a comfortable majority, the secret winner of the election is the Communist Party, which, unlike the other opposition parties, increased its share of votes.

Alexander Meienberger reveals how conservative thinking informs Russian foreign policy. In his article titled “The Concept of the ‘Russkiy Mir’: History of the Concept and Ukraine,” he explores the concept of the *Russkiy Mir* (the Russian world), its history, and how the Russian elites see Ukraine within this controversial concept. He argues that the idea of *Russkiy Mir* was unknown until the occupation of the Ukrainian peninsula Crimea in 2014 and the war in the Eastern parts of Ukraine. The concept, first developed in 1991 as an idea to unify all people who speak Russian, has evolved and become a geopolitical tool that the Kremlin has adopted for its purposes in the early 2000s. The Kremlin, for instance, wants to polish the Russian image abroad with the help of the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation and to consolidate the Russians abroad with the help of the state agency *Rossotrdničestvo*. Later, the Kremlin used the concept to justify the war in Georgia and the occupation of Crimea. The Russian geopolitical concept *Russkiy Mir* now symbolizes the cruelty of the Russian state in Ukraine and all the civil victims in Butcha and other Ukrainian cities.

Regula M. Zwahlen and Natalija Zenger, in their article titled “Silenced Dissent in the Russian Orthodox Church,” outline how the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) now deals with dissent in general, and the authors provide an overview of dissent among priests and lay people within the ROC in the aftermath of the mass protests against the arrest of the Russian opposition politician Alexey Navalny in February 2021. They argue that raising a protest voice within the ROC was possible before launching the full-scale war against Ukraine in February 2022, and many individual clergy members showed an understanding with the protesters. However, after February 2022, such allowances and understandings have become next to impossible due to the official support of Russia’s war against Ukraine by the leadership of the ROC. Yet even though there is little room for anti-war action by Orthodox clergy and laity, some are seizing the opportunities left to them.

Sergei Erofeev continues the exploration of Russian society. In the article “What will the Russian Diaspora Do When ‘Dvizhukha’ Starts at Home?,” he delves into the evolution of Russian émigré culture, a growth that has gained momentum since Vladimir Putin’s return as Russia’s president in 2012. The author contends that a qualitative shift unfolded between 2012 and 2018 in the attitudes and inclinations

of new émigrés, potentially fostering a robust anti-authoritarian political ethos within a significant portion of the diaspora. He concludes that it is premature to unilaterally criticize the Russian diaspora for not immediately and en masse responding to Putin's military actions in Ukraine.

Finally, Roland Götz explores in his article titled "War Economy: Russia's Economic Development in 2022" the economic development in Russia after the launch of the full-scale war against Ukraine. He argues that the Russian economy should have fallen into a classic recession after the beginning of the war. Some tendencies confirm this expectation. However, this was not the case. He sheds light on Russian financial institutions' work and the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy after February 2022.

The *Euxeinos* issue no. 35 is a cooperation between the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe at the University of St. Gallen (GCE-HSG) and the *Ökumenisches Forum für Glauben, Religion und Gesellschaft in Ost und West* (G2W). Previous versions of these articles were published in German in *Religion und Gesellschaft in Ost und West* in October 2021. Due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, the decision was made to extend and to update the articles.

Endnotes

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The Scandalous Electoral Victory of the Governing Party "United Russia"

by Alexander Kynev

With unprecedented restrictions on voting rights and electoral manipulations, the governing party United Russia succeeded in gaining a comfortable majority in the Russian Duma elections despite growing dissatisfaction in the country. The secret winner of the election is the Communist Party, which unlike the other opposition parties increased its share of votes. During the parliamentary elections in Russia between 17 and 19 September 2021, the governing party United Russia officially won 324 of the 450 seats in the State Duma with 49.82 percent of votes. The results of the election again give the governing party a two-thirds majority, enabling it to amend the Constitution. However, its results are worse than in 2016, when United Russia received 54.2 percent of votes and 343 seats. At the same time, the approval rates for the party remained at a stable low of 27 to 28 percent during the entire electoral campaign according to the official sociological Russian Public Opinion Research Center.¹

Keywords: Russian election 2021, United Russia, Russian electoral system

“Electoral sultanates” and protest regions

The discrepancy between the official electoral victory and surveys can be explained by differences between the Russian regions, which extremely differ with regard to the political situation and electoral behavior. There are numerous regions with hard authoritarian regimes, in particular in the Northern Caucasus and Volga area, in which the governments always can boast an above-average electoral participation rate of 80-90 percent of votes for the governing party. According to independent election experts as well as the opposition, electoral participation there does not differ in reality from electoral participation in other Russian regions. However, massive electoral fraud takes place in these so-called “electoral sultanates”.

Altogether, 24 regions can be designated as “anormal” electoral regions. Approximately 30 million or 27.46 percent of the eligible voters in the country live there. Yet due to their seemingly above-average electoral participation, 38.04 percent of ballots and 49.3 percent of all votes for the governing party came from there in 2016. Since an even higher electoral participation can simply not be expected, every increase in electoral participation in the other regions with more protest and independent votes should decrease the share of the “electoral sultanates” in the entire result and the result of United Russia. Therefore, the

government is primarily interested in demoralizing potential protest voters and giving them a feeling of hopelessness regarding their electoral participation, as was the case in the 2021 electoral campaign. The aim was to decrease electoral participation in the regions of the “protest zone”: in the large cities of most regions in the Ural, in Siberia, in the Far East and in the Russian North. Although electoral participation in the protest regions slightly increased (altogether it increased from 47.88 to 51.72 percent), this year’s victory of United Russia was nevertheless ensured by manipulations in the “electoral sultanates”.

Besides the “electoral sultanates”, an online voting experiment was carried out in seven regions with the purpose of boosting votes for *United Russia*: in Moscow, Sevastopol and in the Kursk, Murmansk, Nizhegorod, Rostov and Jaroslav Oblasts. Between 2 August und 13 September, 2,032,498 persons registered for online voting, 1,524,000 of them in Moscow. According to the opposition, it is impossible to determine who voted how online and whether the published results correspond with the actual results. The results of the electronic vote in Moscow were not announced until 12 hours after the end of the elections. The online votes were ultimately decisive for the victory of United Russia in all Moscow districts, in which the opposition parties were ahead while votes were being counted.

Changes in the opposition landscape

The situation of the opposition has radically changed since the elections of 2016. At that time, the *Communist Party of the Russian Federation* (KPRF) and the populist-nationalist *Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia* (LDPR) almost received the same number of votes, that is 13 percent of votes each, and the leftist-centrist party *Just Russia* (SRZP) 6.2 percent. After the pension reform of 2018 though, the favorability ratings of the governing party decreased significantly again, while those of the KPRF increased. Therefore, the government began to openly attack the KPRF in 2019 – around 40 of its representatives in the regions were victims of criminal or administrative proceedings.

The KPRF has de facto no longer been a “communist” party for a long time, rather a normal leftist party, whose name is simply a familiar brand. As a parliamentary party, it is privileged with regard to the registration of candidates. It therefore most frequently puts up local oppositional activists or defenders of the law. The battle against the KPRF has further strengthened the concentration of protest voters around it, so that it took the lead among opposition parties. According to official data, it received 18.93 percent of votes and 57 seats in the recent Duma elections. It strongly increased its voting share in the protest regions: it won in Yakutia, the Khabarovsk region, the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the Republic of Mari El and in many large cities such as Vladivostok, Omsk, Syktyvkar and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. In all these regions the governing party won in 2016.

By contrast, the LDPR experienced a deep fall. This primarily has to do with the

fact that the party factually refused to defend its member, the then very popular governor of the Khabarovsk region, Sergey Furgal, who was arrested in July 2020 due to a conflict with the Russian Vice-Premier and Plenipotentiary Representative of the President in the Far Eastern Federal District Yuriy Trutnev. And this took place even though the Far East always had a stable voter base for the LDPR. The 75-year-old party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has aged significantly and has not travelled through the regions for a long time (died April 6, 2022). During the debates, he was forced to unsuccessfully justify abandoning Furgal. Number two in the party from 2000 to 2021 was his son, Igor Lebedev, who is not well known. Zhirinovskiy was Vice-Speaker of the Duma and Lebedev party group leader of the LDPR. However, Lebedev did not campaign during this year's elections. The transfer of leadership of the LDR to a new person is openly discussed. As a result, the LDPR lost nearly half of its votes and only secured 7.55 percent of the vote and 21 seats in the Duma.

The party *Just Russia* united before the election with two ultra-patriotic parties, the *Patriots of Russia* headed by Gennadiy Semigin and *For Truth* headed by Zakhar Prilepin. Therefore, part of the moderate supporters left the party, with some of them joining the party *New People*. SRZP carried out a large-scale electoral campaign, during which the focus was primarily on social and municipal issues. Despite the declining approval for the governing party, SRZP was hardly able to gain support: 7.46 percent and 17 seats compared to 6.22 percent in 2016.

It is also important to note that a new party was elected to parliament for the first time in 17 years: the party *New People*, which was founded in early 2020 by Alexey Nechayev, the director of the cosmetics firm Faberlic. This moderately liberal project was admitted to the elections by the government, in order to give educated urban voters, who tend towards the opposition, at least a chance at political representation. The charismatic former mayor of Yakutsk, Sardana Avksentyeva, became #2 in the party list. The other candidates were largely unknown among the public – the party elected them as part of a competition on Youtube. In summer 2020 it launched a massive campaign with newspapers and billboards in the regions. On television it was among the three most frequently mentioned parties, whereby it was only portrayed positively, and the KPRF only negatively. It was elected with 5.32 percent of the votes and obtained 13 seats. It received almost no votes in the “electoral sultanates”, but between 8 and 10 percent in the protest regions.

Unprecedented repression

In comparison to 2016, the 2021 electoral campaign played out entirely differently regarding the direct mandates. In 2016 it was a “colluded” game, because the competition was still an imitation and United Opposition had even succeeded the so-called “system opposition” part of the electoral districts in advance: in 19

of 225 districts the governing party simply did not put up any candidates, it won in 203 districts and only lost in three districts. In 2021 there was no division of districts: United Russia did not campaign in only eight districts. However, it did not concede these districts to the opposition, rather to self-appointed candidates from local administration. In doing so, it was victorious in 198 districts and only lost in 19. In the latter districts the opposition won after feisty electoral campaigns. In approximately 20 other districts the opposition lost due to electoral manipulations.

Under the pretext of “health protection” due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the government banned every single small public activity of the opposition, while countless government activities were allowed. The headquarters of the Electoral Commission allowed the elections to be held on three days, instead of one day as before, based on sanitary-epidemiological reasons. This significantly limited the possibilities for monitoring the election, while facilitating the organized submission of votes and direct electoral manipulations. At the same time, the pandemic led to a deterioration of the socio-economic situation. It ruined many small and mid-sized businesses and contributed to an increase in frustration and hopelessness among citizens,² which in turn negatively impacted the approval ratings of the governing party and increased the willingness of voters to engage in protest voting.

An additional particularity of this year’s elections was that they took place after the constitutional reform of 2020, which had consolidated the powers of the President – in particular with regard to his influence on the justice system. The new regulations make it more difficult to defend the rights of citizens outside national borders and led to a series of new bans on voting rights, which previously were included in laws, but not in the Constitution.

Thus, the declining approval rates of the government and the new constitutional means for repression enabled the government to exert pressure on civil society, oppositional organizations and politicians in an unprecedented manner, even for Russian electoral standards. There had indeed been repression campaigns, but this time it was a massive campaign, to which thousands of people fell victim. The “victims” are not only the citizens, who were not able to run for election, but also those who were arrested or forced to emigrate.

Massive restrictions on electoral rights

On 23 May 2020, the criminal provision no. 153-F3 was introduced, which denies every citizen who was convicted to imprisonment due to a moderately severe crime the right to run for political office for up to five years after the termination of the period of punishment. This also holds for suspended sentences. This applies not only to citizens who committed crimes against other persons, but also “political” crimes: for example, the “public dissemination” of knowingly false socially significant information”, the “repeated disruption of organizational rules for assemblies”, “public appeals for extremism”, “calls for separatism” and

“the use of force against governmental representatives”. Large-scale indictments due to commercial crimes (“fraud, embezzlement or misappropriation”) and drug offences were also handed out by the prosecution authorities.

After the arrest of Alexey Navalny on 17 January 2021 and the subsequent protest activities, all regional departments of Navalny’s *Anti-Corruption Foundation* (FBK) and the “Navalny

Shtaby” (Navalny Regional Offices) were forcibly broken up. Several of his companions emigrated, while others were arrested. On 16 April, the Moscow Public Prosecutor applied for the classification of the FBK, the *Navalny Shtaby* and the *Foundation to Defend Civil Rights* as extremist organizations, because the “actual goal of their activities is to create conditions to modify the foundations of the constitutional structures, including the application of scenarios of a ‘color revolution.’”³ On 9 June the court ordered their disbandment.

On 27 May the organization *Open Russia* also had to suspend its activities and close all regional departments. The executive director Andrey Pivovarov communicated on the issue: “*All members were locked out and their membership cancelled in order to avoid potential criminal proceedings against them. We did not need any new publications and criminal proceedings and we want to protect our adherents.*”⁴ The police referred to the links between *Open Russia* and the British organization *Open Russia Civic Movement*, which was founded by Mikhail Khodorkovskiy and whose activities in Russia were deemed as “undesired” and already had been terminated in 2019. Pivovarov himself was arrested at Pulkovo Airport before his trip to Warsaw on the evening of 31 May.

At the same time, law no. 157-F3 against the FBK was approved by fast-track procedure on 4 June. This law bans people who belong to a civil or religious association or another organization, which is classified as “extremist” or a “terrorist organizations, from running for political office. Founders, leading members, leading figures of regional or another structural sub-divisions and their representatives, who have had one of these positions in a timeframe retroactively three years since the coming into force of the disbandment or ban of the organization by court order, may not run for office in the following five years. “Simple” participants, members and employees of the organization and other persons close to them may not run for office for three years after the court order. The law stipulates that their affiliation can be determined by an expression of support, including on the internet, or other activities such as donations. This law thus reverses the rule of law: it punishes for people for actions which were not unlawful at the time they were carried out. The vague wording creates new arbitrary possibilities to take action against citizens who support the opposition. It is impossible to determine the exact number of people in Russia who currently are not allowed to run for political office. The movement for the protection of electoral rights *Golos* (“voice”) estimates their numbers to be no less than nine million, which corresponds with

approximately eight percent of persons eligible to vote in Russia. However, the number is presumably significantly higher.⁵

The government is attempting to suppress and restrict the protest activities to the maximum extent. Not only they are intimidated, but also the members of political parties. Therefore, the latter criticize the situation very carefully with allusions and euphemisms, while compulsorily and indeed ritually distancing themselves from Alexey Navalny and his companions. However, the fear of repressions will not be able to stop the increasing dissatisfaction due to the deteriorating living standards and lacking future prospects.

About the author

Alexander Kynev is a well-known political scientist and political expert in Russia. Graduated with honors from the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Philosophy, Moscow State University. Since 2000 he actively cooperates with various NGOs as a specialist in political parties, the electoral process and the political development of the regions. From 2008-2010 to 2012-2019 he was Associate Professor at the Higher School of Economics, and since 2018 he is head of the expert group on Election Monitoring of the Committee for Civic Initiatives (CIC) 2012-2018, the Liberal Mission Foundation. From January 2017 to February 2020 he was member of the Expert Advisory Group under the Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. 2010 – 2020 he was also Member of the OSCE/ODIHR Core Group of Experts on Political Parties. He is also author of several hundred scientific and journalistic articles in the Russian media, author and co-author of a number of books. His more recent works are *Governors in Russia: Between Elections and Appointments* (2020) and *Elections of Regional Parliaments in Russia 2014–2020: New Departmentalization and Managed party system 2.0* (2021).

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The concept of the “Russkiy Mir”: History of the Concept and Ukraine

by Alexander Meienberger

The concept of the Russkiy Mir (Russian world) has cultural and geopolitical implications. Since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the concept has started to play a significant role as a propaganda instrument and as a justifying tool for Russian military aggression in Ukraine. However, this was not always the case. It was not until 2007 that the Kremlin institutionalized the concept by creating a foundation called Russkiy Mir. Until this time, the concept was not widespread among the Russian elites. Later, Russian politicians articulated the Russkiy Mir differently and without its exact meaning. Three different understandings of the Russkiy Mir have emerged: a global sphere of the Russian language and/or Russian-speaking diaspora, the geopolitical sphere of influence of Russia, and an ideological sphere of the new conservative right-wing forces. By analyzing the idea's roots in the Russian context using published sources, the article shows how the Russkiy Mir has developed from a nonpolitical and loose idea that should unite all Russian-speaking people around the globe to a geopolitical tool Russia uses to justify its influence in the post-Soviet space, particularly in Ukraine. Moreover, the article aims to answer the question of to what extent, from a Russian state view, Ukraine plays a role in this concept.

Keywords: the concept “Russkiy Mir”, history of the concept, Russian geopolitics, cultural policy

Introduction

The Russian cultural sphere is larger than the Russian state. President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly lamented that Russia is the largest divided nation in the world, resulting in tensions particularly with Ukraine. The country has been a cornerstone of Russian foreign policy since the end of the Soviet era. The Kremlin considers Ukraine to be within its sphere of influence because Russia views itself as the successor state of both the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union and lays claim to the heritage of both great empires. In 2014, tensions reached their climax when Russia illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula and unofficially intervened in the war in eastern Ukraine. On 24 February 2022, Russian troops invaded Ukraine's territory and started a full-scale war against the Ukrainian nation. One of the reasons for the invasion was an assumption that Ukraine is a part of the so-called *Russkiy Mir*.

The *Russkiy Mir* concept is a patchwork of well-known special path ideologies that have existed in Russia like “Moscow, Third Rome,” “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality,” and philosophical movements such as Slavophiles, Westernizers, Pan-Slavism, Eurasianism, and Neoeurasianism. As Michael S. Gorham put it concisely:

Looking for a more organically “Russian” conceptual anchor to improve global perceptions of a nation resurgent, political technologists turned in part to a loose mixture of language, culture, religion, and history, symbolically unified under the umbrella concept of the “Russia world”.¹

According to Ulrich Schmid, the *Russkiy Mir* is originally a cultural concept, which in its ideologized form, is also used to legitimize Russian influence in the post-Soviet area.² It emphasizes the social ties between Russian language and literature, Russian orthodoxy, and a collective East Slavic identity.³ Moreover, the concept of the *Russkiy Mir* stresses the special role of Russia in the world and sees the country different from the so-called West, in particular from the U.S. The current version of the *Russkiy Mir* consists of three main elements: Russian culture, Russian history, and Russian orthodoxy. All these elements can stand alone or be mixed.

The subject of the *Russkiy Mir* is relatively new in science because the concept was established in political and social discourses only after the political crisis in Ukraine in 2013-2014. However, some scholars have already done research on this topic from various perspectives. On the one hand, many scholars see the concept of the *Russkiy Mir* as a new geopolitical ideology or as a new Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet space, which the Kremlin is pursuing with determination.⁴ Some of them see the concept as a new geopolitical tool of the Kremlin, especially in Ukraine.⁵ On the other hand, the concept of the *Russkiy Mir* from the perspective of Eurasianism and Neoeurasianism is considered in the works of Laruelle⁶, Kukulin⁷, Kurfürst⁸, Lewis⁹, Morozova¹⁰. In his texts, Kazharski examines the discourse on Eurasianism and civilization among Russia’s political elite.¹¹ From a geopolitical perspective, Trenin sees some opportunities for Russian foreign policy, which the Russian Federation can realize in the greater Eurasia region, post-Soviet region, plus other countries in Eurasia.¹²

Moreover, the role of the church, which contributes significantly to the concept of the *Russkiy Mir*, has often been underestimated in Russian foreign and geopolitics. Sidorov has shown that the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) is often viewed as marginal, with its representatives playing a strong role, and the concepts they propose are often modern or postmodern.¹³ In their articles, Bremer¹⁴, Druzenko¹⁵, Halbach¹⁶, and Curanović¹⁷ believe that the ROC plays an essential role in propagating the *Russkiy Mir*.

Besides the presented literature, the problem of defining the *Russkiy Mir* has been addressed in many works, but not considered in detail. Batanova has attempted to thoroughly study the concept and believes that defining it is hugely

problematic.¹⁸ She concludes that the *Russkiy Mir* means Russians abroad. The authors Kočerov¹⁹ and Alejnikova²⁰ comment on the same problems. Although they propose many definitions of the *Russkiy Mir*, they cannot agree on a common interpretation. However, both authors argue that Russia and its geopolitical interests are at the heart of the concept. In his work, Suslov emphasizes the three different articulations of the concept and points to its historical development from 1996 to 2015.²¹

This article looks at the current debates on Russia's "special path" in a contemporary setting and, more precisely, the *Russkiy Mir* concept, which is currently enjoying a renaissance in Russia. The Russian political elites justify some of their decisions with this concept and move the country to the right on the political spectrum by endorsing conservative views. Looking at the meaning and genealogy of the concept, I want to find out how the current version of the Russian special path narrative, particularly the concept of the *Russkiy Mir*, has shifted away from a liberal idea towards a conservative thought. Furthermore, the questions which role the Kremlin assigned to the Ukraine in the concept of the *Russkiy Mir* to answer. To analyze this complex concept from a historical perspective, I will apply qualitative discourse analysis.

The Russian "special path" in the 19th century

The concept of the *Russkiy Mir* as a special path has a long tradition in Russian history. The open compound word *russkiy mir* (Russian world) is not a product of the 21st century. According to the Russian national corpus *Ruscorpora*²², it appears as a term as early as the 19th century and refers to the entire Russian Empire.²³ This term is used in literature by liberal but also conservative circles without any political connotations. Mikhail Zagoskin, a best-selling author, and supporter of official patriotism, mentions the word collocation *Russkiy Mir* in his story *The Russians at the Beginning of the 18th Century* published in 1848. "A few more days passed, and the great feast of God came, and the whole Russian world was abuzz with life and merriment."²⁴ Liberal writers such as Pavel Annenkov also used this compound word in his texts as a synonym for the Russian Empire. In his memoirs of Nikolay Gogol', Annenkov writes "In general, he [Gogol'] was convinced at that time that the Russian world is a separate sphere with its own laws, of which Europe has no idea."²⁵ Likewise, oppositional publicists such as Nikolay Ogarev used this term in reference to the Russian Empire and its culture. In his *Introduction to the Anthology of Russian Uncensored Literature*, he compares the importance of the *Russkiy Mir* for Aleksandr Pushkin to the importance of the compound word "German world" for Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich Schiller.²⁶

Moreover, the *Russkiy Mir* was used as a proper name in the 19th century. There were two weekly newspapers named *Russkiy Mir*: The first newspaper was published from 1859 to 1863 by Fedor Stellovskiy. The newspaper had no political

orientation and published political reviews, fiction, feuilleton, and bibliographies.²⁷ The second newspaper was published between 1871 and 1880 by the Governor General of Turkestan, Mikhail Chernyaev. It is only with publications of this newspaper that the term *Russkiy Mir* is associated with conservative views. Major General Rostislav Fadeev, who had to leave the army due to disagreements, was named the editor-in-chief. Fadeev was known for his conservative and national orientation, belonged to the Pan-Slavist movement, and expressed himself against the West. He polemicized against Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin²⁸, among others, and published his conservative ideas in the newspaper in numerous articles under the common title *What shall we become?*²⁹

Meanwhile an ideology of the Russian special path developed in the conservative circles of Russia, the apotheosis of which is the “*Russkiy Mir*” in today’s Russian state. In general, the 19th century is characterized by a flourishing of diverse ideas and concepts that impacted the development of the *Russkiy Mir*. During the 1830s and 1840s, Russian intellectuals divided into Westerners, who stood for European-standard reforms, and Slavophiles, who favored the “original Russian” and viewed the village community as an extended family.³⁰ In 1840, the Minister of Education Sergey Uvarov proposed his triad “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality” to Tsar Nicholas I as a national ideology. Uvarov’s concept interpreted tsarist power as unrestricted and declared the autocratic rule system as a profoundly Russian characteristic, distinguishing Russia from the Occident.³¹

In the second half of the 19th century, Russian social discourse was dominated by the idea of Russian Pan-Slavism, actively propagated by Fëdor Dostoevskiy and Nikolai Danilevskiy. Russian Pan-Slavism envisioned the Russian Empire as the power center of a future All-Slavic Empire.³² At the end of the 19th century, the idea of “Moscow as Third Rome,” formulated by the monk Philotheus of Pskov in the 16th century, was further developed. In a letter to Ivan IV, Philotheus warned the tsar of the fall of the Christian world and the victory of evil. Two Romes have fallen, the third stands, and there will be no fourth.³³ Philotheus’ idea fell on fertile ground with representatives of religious philosophy, such as Vladimir Solov’ev and Nikolai Berdyaev, and with those of Symbolism, such as Dmirtiy Merezhkovskiy.³⁴ They saw in this idea a historical mission that the Russian state should pursue. In the 1920s, Russian émigrés Georgy Florovskiy, Pëtr Savitskiy, Pëtr Suvchinskiy, and Nikolay Trubetskoy published the anthology *Way Out to the East* in Sofia in 1921, in which they formulated the political concept of Eurasianism. Its adherents saw Russia as a unique civilization whose task was to unite the Asian and European peoples into a state and cultural entity.³⁵

During Soviet times, the *Russkiy Mir* concept was forgotten for obvious reasons. The whole country was building a new Soviet reality. However, since the 1990s, the concept has experienced a renaissance in Russia.

From a cultural to a geopolitical concept

According to a Levada-Center survey conducted between 24-28 November 2017 in 48 regions in Russian among 1,600 participants, 64% of respondents think that Russians are great people with particular importance in world history.³⁶ The perception of a particular country connects with an idea of the Russian special path. The Russian idea of the special path refers to the German idea of *Sonderweg* (special path) that was developed during the 19th century and became popular in 1914 at the beginning of the first world war. "German *Kultur* was considered different from and superior to western [English or French] Civilization [...]."³⁷ The Russian and German special paths have certain similarities notably because Russian intellectuals copied the idea of *Sonderweg* and transformed it into Russian special path in the 19th century.³⁸ The main difference between these two ideologies is that the German *Sonderweg* is not as attractive to Germans anymore as it used to be in the interwar period. In contrast, the Russian special path is currently enjoying a renaissance in Russia.

The idea of a Russian special path became immensely popular by the elite as early as 1994, and is widely used now. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 brought on the one hand a wind of change, but on the other, a vacuum of political and ideological concepts emerged. Although Russian intellectuals produced a wide range of ideas and ideologies in a short time, they could not meet the demands of the young nation and new political elites. Nowadays, the political elites actively promote a new Russian patriotism using rhetoric based on differences between "us" Russians and "others" Western countries. Many Russian intellectuals and serious scholars are trying to find out why Russia is not the U.S. and why Russia cannot go the same way of capitalism and liberalism. In this way, the idiom of special path is an extended part of the official political discourse that the elites use from time to time to gain popular support and to control the masses.³⁹

In the 1990s, the general discourse of the Russian special path turned into something new, into a concept of the *Russkiy Mir*. More recently the *Russkiy Mir* gained popularity because of the political and military crisis in Ukraine in 2014.⁴⁰ Until this time, the concept was widespread neither among the former Soviet states nor among the Western countries. Moscow justified the annexation of the peninsula Crimea as "protection of the Russian-speaking population from the unstable Ukrainian government."⁴¹ Immediately after that, Dmitriy Peskov, the spokesman for the Russian president, called Vladimir Putin the security guarantor of the *Russkiy Mir*.⁴² On 2 February 2022, Putin proclaimed at a state awards ceremony in the Kremlin: "It is such a multifaceted '*Russkiy Mir*,' huge. We did not create it. Our mission is to strengthen it, develop it, and make it attractive to our citizens, to the whole world."⁴³ Three weeks later, Putin sent Russian troops into Ukraine under the slogan of "protecting the '*Russkiy Mir*.'" As recently as 14 March 2023, he declared that Russia was fighting for the *Russkiy Mir* in Ukraine.⁴⁴

What is this *Russkiy Mir* that the Kremlin tries to defend? Directly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the space of the *Russkiy Mir* was understood as the entirety of all Russian-speaking people without political connotations. Based on the idea of the *russkiy mir v mire mirov* (Russian world in a world of worlds) formulated by Mikhail Gelter in the 1980s, political technologists Petr Shchedrovickij and Efim Ostrovskiy developed a political doctrine of the *Russkiy Mir*.⁴⁵ The authors understood by it as a global community of Russian speakers.⁴⁶ The Russian language is the asset that still unites all these expatriate Russians with the homeland – even if they no longer live there. Therefore, Russia should use these foreign Russians to be successful and not miss the connection to new technology.⁴⁷ The ideologues were convinced that the *Russkiy Mir* could exist as a linguistic space just like the Francophonie.⁴⁸ This cultural initiative targeted the 40 million Russian speakers who lived outside the borders of Russia after 1992. The concept was institutionalized with the establishment of the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation in 2007. With its many cultural centers around the world, the foundation serves to popularize the Russian language as well as cultural dialogue with other countries and forms the institutional basis of Russia's cultural policy abroad.

Parallel to this, a notion formed that the *Russkiy Mir* is limited to the post-Soviet space. Vadim Tsymbursky developed the idea of the *Ostrov Rossiya* (Island of Russia). According to him, Russia should unite with other post-Soviet countries to form an island and distance itself from Europe.⁴⁹ After all, Europe has brought Russia only wars throughout history. Political technologists Sergey Gradirovsky and Boris Mezhuiev defined the *Russkiy Mir* as a cultural space of Russian speakers within the post-Soviet area.⁵⁰ Fellow expert Yuri Gromyko also limits the *Russkiy Mir* to the post-Soviet space.⁵¹ It is important to emphasize that the two did not attribute geopolitical connotations to the term but instead spoke about the divided Russian nation as a phenomenon that emerged after 1991. The common colonial past that links Russia to these countries is crucial to these views. The *Russkiy Mir* is understood here as a postcolonial spatial construct like the Commonwealth of Nations or the Francophonie.

President Putin introduced *Russkiy Mir* into the political discourse in 2001. Later, the term developed into a foreign policy concept, which is supposed to legitimize Russian influence in the post-Soviet sphere. In 1999, a diaspora law was passed, which defines the term “compatriot abroad”⁵² and in 2008 the federal agency “*Rossotrudnichestvo*” was founded to primarily deal with the matters of the “compatriots abroad.” With this initiative, the Kremlin attempted to exploit its cultural sphere of influence. Similar opinions were expressed by several intellectuals who see the *Russkiy Mir* as an instrument for Russia to exert power in the post-Soviet territory. They spoke of “Russian islands” such as Crimea, Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorny Karabach and Northern Kazakhstan, which should reunite with Russia.⁵³

Conservative circles have also simultaneously discovered the concept for their own purposes. Since taking office as the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2009, Patriarch Kirill I has actively supported the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation and further developed the concept. In his speech at the Third Plenary Assembly of the *Russkiy Mir*, he explained the ROC's position on the *Russkiy Mir*. The patriarch's concept sounded more like geopolitics than church doctrine.⁵⁴ He mentioned Russian orthodoxy as a basis of the *Russkiy Mir* besides the Russian language and history.⁵⁵ Thereby orthodoxy sees itself as the founder of the *Russkiy Mir* and serves more as a value system and not only as a religion.⁵⁶ With the new category, the Patriarch Kirill I completes the already overloaded concept in the semantic sense while making the geographical space of the *Russkiy Mir* narrower. The *Russkiy Mir* core for him consists of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. The periphery includes Moldova, the South Caucasus, and some southern European countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia.⁵⁷ This conception of the core of the *Russkiy Mir* coincides with the canonical territory of the ROC.⁵⁸ With establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) in 2018, the ROC and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) had to give up their monopoly in Ukraine. However, it did not vacate its place because there are two Orthodox Churches in Ukraine: the OCU and UOC MP.

Orthodox rhetoric in the *Russkiy Mir* is represented by the anti-liberal Izborsk Club⁵⁹, founded in 2012, whose members are Russian intellectuals with conservative⁶⁰ and right-wing views on foreign and domestic policy. Since 2005, Vitaliy Aver'yanov, Sergey Baranov, Aleksandr Gaponenko, Aleksandr Eliseev, Alexey Komogorcev, and Nikolay Starikov have worked on the Russian doctrine, which in 2016 they renamed the doctrine of the *Russkiy Mir*. It goes in the same direction as the patriarch's reflections and considers Russia as a specific civilization whose values directly contradict those of the West.⁶¹ The authors argue that Gefter's idea has lost its appeal over time and that the Kremlin, especially after the annexation of Crimea, is more sympathetic to the concept of the *Russkiy Mir* formulated by the patriarch. However, the ROC follows the Kremlin's agenda and not vice versa. Regarding categories belonging to the *Russkiy Mir*, the authors cannot decide which categories are most important: geography, genes, Russian language, religious faith, state or territory, and Russian culture.⁶² The authors explain that the *Russkiy Mir* cannot be reduced to one of these because all categories are fundamental to this "Russian world." However, they add something new: the Russian spirit or the Russian energy.⁶³ The Russian spirit lives in all East Slavic peoples, which form the core of the *Russkiy Mir*. These are Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.⁶⁴

In the meantime, the concept of the *Russkiy Mir* has developed from a liberal idea of peaceful co-existence of all cultures into a conservative Orthodox buzzword. It exhibits three characteristics: *Russkiy Mir* as a 1) global sphere of the Russian language and/or Russian-speaking diaspora; 2) the geopolitical sphere of influence

of Russia; 3) as an ideological sphere of the new conservative right-wing forces.

	Culture	Geopolitics	Ideology
	<i>Russkiy Mir</i> as a global sphere of the Russian language and/or Russian-speaking diaspora	<i>Russkiy Mir</i> as the geopolitical sphere of influence of Russia	<i>Russkiy Mir</i> as an ideological sphere of the new conservative right-wing forces
Actors	Pavlovskiy, Shchedrovitskiy, Ostrovskiy, Gradirovskiy, Tishkov	Tsyburskiy, Mezhev, Gromyko, Dugin	Narocnickaya, Patriarch Kirill, Members of Izborsk Club
Important elements:	Russian language and culture	Historical awareness: tsarist and Soviet history	Norms and values of the Russian Orthodox Church
Institutions and political bodies:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rossotrudnchestvo, Russky Mir Foundation	Kremlin, EAWU	Russian Orthodox Church, Izborsk Club
Recipients:	Russian-speaking population abroad, Russian-speaking diaspora, Russian compatriots	Countries of the EAEU, former republics of the Soviet Union	Worshippers in Belarus, Molodova and Ukraine

Ukraine in the *Russkiy Mir*

From the Russian government’s perspective, Ukraine plays a key role in the *Russkiy Mir* concept. This narrative is actively propagated by Moscow and other Kremlin-linked institutions such as the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation, the federal agency *Rossotrudnchestvo* and the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian politicians are convinced that the three foundational elements of the *Russkiy Mir* concept - the Russian language, Russian history, and the Russian-Orthodox faith - are strongly present in Ukrainian society. According to the Kremlin’s claim, Russian culture and language are central narratives for the unity of Ukrainians and Russians. The Russian elites justify this discourse with the “Great Russian” culture, which is *edina* (uniform) for these people.⁶⁵ Authors such as Nikolay Gogol’ and Taras Shevchenko are mentioned as examples of this common culture and language: both originated from Ukraine; Gogol’ wrote in a form of Russian that was full of Ukrainianisms, while Shevchenko penned his poems in Ukrainian and his prose in Russian.⁶⁶

Since the conservatism turn of the Russian state in 2012, the Russian elites constantly point out that Ukraine is a part of the Russian culture. The apotheosis of this controversial idea was an article published on 12 June 2021 by Putin on the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians, in which he claims that Ukraine does not have a tradition of statehood and that it is only a product of the 19th century.⁶⁷ This view is based on the concept of *Russkiy Mir*⁶⁸ propagated by Russia. It bonds Ukraine to Russia in three ways: linguistically (culturally), historically (politically),

and spiritually (religiously).

The Russian language holds a prominent position in Ukraine, even though it is slowly losing influence. In 2013, 21.2% of Ukrainians declared Russian to be their mother language, whereas only 11.4% did so in 2017. Yet an increasing number of Ukrainians declare that they are bilingual: in 2017, 23.5% of Ukrainians reported Ukrainian/Russian to be their mother language.⁶⁹ Thus, the loyalty of the citizens towards both languages has increased.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Ukraine remains part of the *Russkiy Mir* from the Kremlin's viewpoint. In 2014, Russia invaded Crimea under the pretext of protecting the Russian-speaking population from the unstable Ukrainian government.⁷¹ The same rhetoric "to protect Russian-speaking people from the neo-Nazis Kyiv regime and to demilitarize and denazificate Ukraine" was used on 24 February 2022 after the Russian president launched a full-scale war against Ukraine.⁷² The aggressive Kremlin policy in the name of its Russian compatriots, the hidden support for military groups in Eastern Ukraine have the effect in Ukraine that Russian culture and language are seen as endangering national unity. The survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology at the end of 2022 among 2,005 Ukrainians shows that 41% of responders speak only Ukraine language, 6% speak only Russian, and 24% of Ukrainians speak both languages.⁷³ Many Ukrainian activists called to boycott Russian culture in the face of the Russian-Ukrainian war.⁷⁴ Some of them went further and proposed canceling Russian literature for being imperialistic.⁷⁵

The Kremlin appeals to the shared history when elevating the cultural proximity of Ukrainians and Russians. Moscow claims that Ukraine was part of Russia for centuries until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Russian state cannot acknowledge that Ukraine is a sovereign state with its own political and security interests. According to this narrative, Russian elites foresaw Ukraine as a future cornerstone of the Eurasian Economic Union – an alternative to the EU promoted by Russia. This perspective was so crucial for the Kremlin that Moscow did not want to approve an approximation of Ukraine to the EU. From a Russian perspective, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and, as a result, the full-scale war launched in 2022 is only the second-best solution. The price for this is that the Kremlin has lost Ukraine as an alliance partner for decades. On a symbolic level, Ukraine bid the common past with Russia and the Soviet/Russian Victory in the Great Patriotic War farewell as soon as 2015. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko renamed Victory Day, celebrated on 9 May, as the Day of Victory over Nazism in World War II in 2015 and designated 8 May as the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation. 2023 President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a decree to celebrate the Day of Remembrance and Victory over Nazism in World War II on 8 May.⁷⁶

As for the religious context, both countries were linked until 2019, when the new autocephalic Orthodox Church was founded in Ukraine. Thus, the Russian Orthodox Church is doomed to lose its canonistic sphere in Ukraine, even though

25% of believers profess their allegiance to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is subordinated to the Moscow patriarchate.⁷⁷ The concept propagated by the ROC regards Russian orthodoxy and “the triune of Russian people” as central elements, which came about after the “baptism of the Rus.”⁷⁸ For the Russian Orthodox Church, these elements are incomplete without Ukraine and void the entire concept. Moreover, members of the Izborsk Club call for the Russian annexation of the Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine because these areas have more in common with Russia than with “rump Ukraine” characterized by liberal ideas from the West.⁷⁹ The club’s members view the democratization processes in Ukraine as defective and dangerous for the unity of the Russian people. Despite the proximity of the Izborsk Club to the Kremlin this revanchist idea has only found support in right-wing conservative circles up to now.

The full-scale Russian war against Ukraine marked, on the one hand, the final Ukrainian goodbye to Russia with its language, culture, shared history, and church; on the other, it contributed to the strong Ukraine identity, which is newly more orientated to Europe and European values rather than the Soviet past.

Conclusion

The “special path” ideology has a long tradition in Russian history and can be traced back to the 19th century. In the new Russian history, the *Russkiy Mir* concept became an umbrella term for conservative thoughts and irredentism ideas. However, it was not always the case. Russian philosophers introduced it in the 1990s to public discourse as a liberal idea to unite all the Russian-speaking population abroad and build a community on an example like a Francophonie. In the 2000s, the Russian political elites discovered the concept. They institutionalized that by creating federal and state institutions to promote Russian culture and language abroad and to support Russian compatriots abroad. The Kremlin’s understanding of the *Russkiy Mir* concept was squeezed into the post-Soviet space, whereas the initial idea would unite the whole globe. Meanwhile, conservative circles such as the Russian Orthodox Church and the Izborsk Club discovered and reinterpreted the concept according to their understanding of the *Russkiy Mir*. They stressed orthodox beliefs as a critical element of the concept and the Russian national identity.

From the Russian state perspective, Ukraine is essential for the existence of the *Russkiy Mir* concept. Without Ukraine’s cooperation in the framework of *Russkiy Mir* as a socio-cultural project, the latter loses its foundation, whether it is the sphere of the Russian language, Russian history, or the Russian-Orthodox faith. Even though the political elites of Russia insist that Ukraine is part of the *Russkiy Mir*, the reality is different. Ukraine is indeed culturally, politically, and religiously linked with Russia, but this does not substantiate any of Russia’s political claims. After the full-scale Russian war on Ukraine and the tragedy in Butča and other

Ukrainian cities, the *Russkiy Mir* stands now for the Russian regime's imperial politics and the Russian violence in Ukraine.

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Silenced Dissent in the Russian Orthodox Church

by Regula M. Zwahlen and Natalija Zenger

The official support of Russia's war against Ukraine by the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church has silenced most of the voices of existing dissent. However, before February 2022, there were different reactions from the church to various waves of protest. While the church leadership spoke of a "crisis of the young generation", individual clergy members showed understanding for the outrage over the state repressions and the lack of prospects perceived by the youth. Under the current circumstances, there is little room for anti-war action by Orthodox clergy and laity, but some are seizing the opportunities left to them.¹

Keywords: Russian Orthodox Church, Russia, protest, dissent, religion

Russia's war against Ukraine since 24 February 2022 is fully supported by the Moscow Patriarchate and legitimized as a war against evil forces who want to destroy the unity of the "canonical territory" of the Russian Orthodox Church. This rhetoric is not entirely new. Since the beginning of its "rebirth" in 1988, the Moscow Patriarchate has cultivated a national conservative and apocalyptic discourse: Orthodoxy and the Russian army together are stopping the Antichrist – at least on the territory of "*Holy Rus*".² Equally not entirely new is the fact that there has always been a diversity of voices within the Russian Orthodox Church, which – until recently – the patriarchy has found difficult to contain. At the end of February, up to 300 clergy members and lay people of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, as well as in Belarus, have immediately called for reconciliation and to end the war.³ They did so right before Russia's parliament passed the law from March 4th, imposing a jail term of up to 15 years for "discrediting" the Russian Armed Forces and its operations and spreading "fake" news about these issues. In February 2023, the editorial board of the Russian Orthodox website *Blagodatnyj ogon* (Holy Fire) has called on the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church to strip clergy of their rank who have openly opposed the Russian war on Ukraine a year ago.⁴

In this article, we outline how the Russian Orthodox Church deals with dissent in general and provide an overview of dissent among priests and lay people within the ROC since the mass protests against the arrest of the Russian opposition politician Alexey Navalny in February 2021. Since then, there has been no doubt the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church unconditionally supports the existing power structures – and indeed not only in Russia, but also in Belarus,⁵

while the majority of the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, including its head Metropolitan Onufry (Berezovsky), immediately condemned and compared the Russian invasion to Cain killing his brother Abel.⁶

It has been difficult to gather information about war protest in Russia ever since,⁷ let alone within the Russian Orthodox Church. Not one Russian Orthodox bishop has raised his voice against the war, and the question: “Why have you forgotten the truth of God?” posed by Sergey Chapnin, the former editor of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, fired in 2015 and living in exile now,⁸ has remained unanswered so far.⁹

Regime critique with appeals to Christian principles

Since the poison attack in August 2020, Alexey Navalny’s treatment in the Berlin Charité clinic, his return to Russia in January and sentencing in February 2021, Navalny has been sitting in a Russian prison camp. He immeasurably irritated the regime not only with his return, but also with his film documentation on the construction of a luxurious palace for President Putin on the Black Sea coast. Navalny has been well known for years for his exposure of corruption scandals among the governing elites. Nevertheless, he is not an uncontroversial opposition politician, especially because his statement that Crimea belongs to Ukraine represents only a recent policy shift.¹⁰

In a written interview for the *New York Times* in late August 2021 regarding his condition of detention, Navalny spoke of psychological violence. He reports he is constantly provoked so that he can then be accused of outrages. Therefore,

I just decided this would become an excellent Christian practice. We continually talk about loving thine enemy, but really, just try to understand and forgive people you literally couldn’t stand at all just a little while ago. But I’m trying.¹¹

Already in one of his speeches in court Navalny had described himself as a devout person, who acts according to the principle: “*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.*” (Mt 5,6).¹² Appeals to Christian motives are not unusual among members of the Russian opposition – this already occurred in 2012 during the scandalous “Punk Prayer” by the group *Pussy Riot* in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, during which the Mother of God was made aware that the Patriarch does not believe in God, but rather in Putin.¹³ Since then, the Russian Orthodox Church has been intensifying the state promoted conservative discourse on “traditional values”,¹⁴ whereby members of the opposition like to question the Church’s interpretative authority with regard to Christian principles: for example, during his widely acclaimed final statement in court the student and blogger Yegor Zhukov, who was sentenced to three years of probation due to his critique of the manipulations of the Moscow municipal Duma elections in 2019, appealed to the Christian values of love, trust, compassion, humanism, mutual aid

and care for one another on which a strong society must be based.¹⁵

Zhukov's and Navalny's statements stand in a long tradition of regime and church critics. For example, a letter from the publicist Vissarion Belinsky from 1847 to the freshly converted Nikolai Gogol is famous in Russian cultural history:

[The] Orthodox Church [...] has always served as a bulwark of the knout and servant of despotism. But why have you mixed Christ up in this? What have you found in common between Him and any Church, much less the Orthodox Church? He was the first to bring people the teaching of freedom, equality, and brotherhood and sealed and affirmed the truth of his teachings with his martyrdom. And this teaching was man's salvation only until it became organized in the Church and raised Orthodoxy as its basic principle.¹⁶

Fyodor Dostoyevsky was sentenced to death in 1849 for publicly reading this provocative text and only pardoned shortly before the execution order.

"Crisis of the young generation"

The increasingly repressive character of the current Russian regime could be observed in 2021: besides the treatment of Navalny, the brutal treatment and arrests of peaceful protesters, the massive obstruction of the participation of oppositional candidates and the obvious manipulations during the Duma elections as well as the inclusion of independent media and media professionals into the notorious register of "foreign agents" spoke volumes. In October 2021, the latter had 47 entries, thus nearly three times as many as in April. During the protests at the beginning of 2021, 11,000 people were arrested and currently 186 have been prosecuted regarding the "palace case" (eight in a penal colony, eight imprisoned in a detention center, while the others were released with various restrictions on their freedom or fines or have left the country, and 34 are missing). Besides the release of Navalny and other political prisoners, fair and honest elections as well as social injustices were among the main concerns of the mainly young protesters in early 2021 – according to surveys, approximately 24% were between 18 and 25 years old, 42% between 25 and 35 years old and 15% between 36 and 46 years old.¹⁷

Metropolitan Ilarion (Alfeyev), head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate until June 2022,¹⁸ indeed acknowledged the existence of social problems and corruption. However, in his view this was still by far no reason to "call on young people to take to the streets". According to him, children and youth are "deliberately not being introduced into politics, rather into a political confrontation" and this is an "absolutely impermissible violation of the civic legal order". Concerning the "political seduction of the youth", lamented by Patriarch Kirill, there was therefore also no lack of sarcastic comments regarding the alleged entirely unpolitical "military-patriotic" education at Sunday schools.

It is no coincidence that Metropolitan Ilarion labeled critics of this synodal

department as “church Navalnys”.¹⁹ By focusing on the inadmissible politicization of the youth, Ilarion followed the line of interpretation which Patriarch Kirill set out: he interpreted the protests as a “crisis of the young generation”, which he believes is literally going crazy under the tremendous influence of the media and internet and losing its entire orientation in life. To fend off their “destructive influences”, above all parents should teach children the “right thoughts and convictions”. The latter are represented by the members of the “Special Purposes Mobile Unit” (russ. OMON), said the deputy director of the Synodal Department for Church’s Relations with Society and Mass Media, the political scientist Alexander Shchipkov: they are the “best part of the Russian youth”, who sacrifices its health to “protect us.”²⁰ To date tens of thousands of young soldiers have already laid down their lives for their fatherland – a sacrifice for which Patriarch Kirill also promises them immediate absolution (no doubt also for whatever war crimes they may have committed).²¹

Back in 2021, regime critics took notice of an interview with arch priest Maxim Kozlov, a member of the Supreme Church Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. According to him, the main problem was neither “a certain mister [Navalny] for whose freedom people were demonstrating nor the palace”, which was purportedly built for President Putin, rather the absence of a “clear positive project” for the country:

I can very well imagine myself in the situation of a young person, who is 16, 18 or 20 years old and thinks: “Well, are things going to always remain the same until 2036? Not this way, not that way? Always the same faces in the Duma, the same eternal faces in the Duma, who have been party leaders since the 1990s, soon old men, whom we have known since 1991, 1993, and is there really no one else in Russia, who would be able to express the desires of the people?” The perception that this is the case, but that there is no other possibility unfortunately leads, among other things, to such events as those we experienced last Saturday [23 January 2021].²²

Besides the allusions to the late Soviet stagnation with its old-aged party secretaries, this statement could also be interpreted as critique of the conservative constitutional reform of 2020, which allows for two presidential re-elections and thus the presidency of Vladimir Putin until 2036. Kozlov additionally emphasized that contemporary parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church must be open for people of every political persuasion, both for protest participants as well as for OMON policemen. In his opinion, the obviously “non-monolithic, less solidarity-oriented” Russian society must learn to live peacefully with different socio-political views, because the attempt to create a mono-ideological society already led to totalitarianism once. However, after the start of the Russian war against Ukraine, Kozlov seems to be “in line” with the monolithic war ideology of the Russian regime, since in June 2022, in addition to his former duties, he was appointed director of the *Aspirantura/Doktorantura* of the Moscow Patriarchate. On 9 May 2022, when

Russia celebrates its victory in World War II, Kozlov said that believers should not only pray for those who “laid down their lives so that fascism could be defeated” but also “for those killed in other armed conflicts”.²³

In 2021, the greatest hopes of the critics of the church leadership within the church still lied in lively discussions about social and youth issues at the local level: Sergey Chapnin called on the local priests to honestly address the problems of youths and to “spare them from official rhetoric of the church”, whose talk of “traditional values” and critique of social networks and the consumption society among youths draws anything from skepticism to Homeric laughter: “The youth is not dumb.” The church indeed attempted to set up youth services throughout the church, but with its blatant support for the state repressions and not the slightest understanding for the concerns of the protesters the church hierarchy – both in Russia as well as Belarus – is committing a great mistake, Chapnin said.²⁴

The priest Georgiy Edelshteyn, known for his commitment to the rights and freedoms of believers in the 1970s and a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group (ordered to shut down in January 2023²⁵) argued similarly regarding the dubious legal proceedings against Navalny:

One should not regard me and millions of my fellow citizens as idiots [...] Why was the entire center of Moscow closed off? [...] Why were tens of thousands of police moving around Moscow? [...] Was it really because some Alexey Navalny did not show up for registration five or six times?

Millions of people in Russia could only conclude from this that courts and the state prosecutor can never be trusted.²⁶ For the sake of recollection: Navalny was sentenced to two and a half years in a prison camp, because he could not regularly show up for his registration during his treatment in Germany – a violation of the conditions of probation from an equally politically motivated trial in 2013. In March 2022, Navalny has been given nine more years in a “strict regime penal colony”.²⁷

Former debates within the church

In the run-up to the Duma elections in September 2021, Metropolitan Ilarion emphasized that the Russian Orthodox Church does not become directly involved in political campaigns. However, the church supports all political forces which promote a stable government, civic, interconfessional and international peace.²⁸ Doubts whether the ruling governmental elite really served these objectives were already in place back then, and when Ilarion received the order of Alexander Nevsky on 2 February 2022 from President Putin, he mentioned that “*in recent years we [the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate] have felt more and more like a kind of defense department, because we have to defend the sacred boundaries of our Church.*”²⁹

For at least a decade, within the Russian Orthodox Church the political

determination for change and participation has been stifled with reference to the revolution of 1917 promoted by “foreign agents”. As for its rejection of youth protests, the church leadership draws on the “Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church” from 2000, because calls for political changes are undesired: “*The Church does not believe it possible for her to become an initiator of any change in the form of government.*” (III.7).³⁰ Nevertheless, until the beginning of 2022 the indeed very lively debates in the church environment have only been suppressed in individual cases. The expert on religion Roman Lunkin even claimed back then that “Patriarch Kirill’s silence opens the field for the political self-determination of the clergy.” He observed an awakening political interest among a new generation of young clergymen and members of the community, who wanted to shape their own future.³¹ They also appealed to the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church: the unprecedented “*If the authority forces Orthodox believers to apostatise from Christ and His Church and to commit sinful and spiritually harmful actions, the Church should refuse to obey the state (III.5)*” attracted quite a bit of attention. However, the reference to the following passage was much more frequent:

Among the traditional areas of the social efforts of the Orthodox Church is intercession with the government for the needs of the people, the rights and concerns of individual citizens or social groups. This intercession is a duty of the Church, realised through verbal or written interventions by appropriate church bodies with the governmental bodies of various branches and levels. (III.8.)

For example, in 2019 an open letter drew a strong response as nearly 200 clergy members advocated for indicted and sentenced participants during the protests against manipulations of the local Moscow elections. However, the Moscow Patriarchate condemned the letter as a “political declaration”, although it was not being followed up by sanctions. In December 2020 over 2000 Russian Orthodox Christians signed an additional open “letter to the Christians in Belarus”, who took part in the protests against Lukashenka’s electoral manipulations.³² Even during the protests in early 2021, debates on the issue were carried out in the Christian social networks, during which clergymen mostly did not side with Navalny, rather against state violence and the destruction of civic freedoms in the country. A certain degree of self-censorship and the fear of discipline may have contributed to the fact that this time there was no comparable joint action of the clergy in Russia to support the protesters. Instead, it was individual priests who expressed critique and felt stiff headwinds. For example, the priest Andrei Vinarskiy was sentenced to 20 days in prison due to his participation in a demonstration in favor of Navalny in Khabarovsk in January. After serving his sentence, the church leadership banned him from celebrating masses despite a petition for his return from his community. The ban is not supposed to be lifted until he repents. However, Vinarskiy refused to do so. On 2 July he was detained again while protesting at the Khabarovsk court

building against the trial against the previous coordinator of the local Navalny regional network. Vinarskiy, who has been a priest in the Birobidzhan Eparchy for over 20 years, was already well known for his support of the arrested ex-governor of the Khabarovsk region, Sergey Furgal, and was detained several times during the demonstrations in autumn 2020.³³ Vinarskiy continues his support for Furgal to this day. Every evening he holds an individual protest in Khabarovsk for about half an hour which he streams on *YouTube*.³⁴

Missing theological language

All in all, quite a few church representatives and believers held the opinion that one does not have to be a Navalny fan to be outraged over the circumstances of his arrest and the treatment of the protesters. An example for the comparatively openly conducted debate in 2021 was the case of Alexey Uminskiy, a priest in a church parish in Moscow, who is highly regarded due to numerous publications and media appearances and one of the few priests who openly sympathizes with the opposition. In April 2021 he appealed in a video for “Christian mercy” towards the imprisoned Alexey Navalny, who entered a hunger strike to obtain an examination by an independent medical officer. In the video, Uminskiy expressed his hope that the attention given to Navalny’s fate would compel the authorities to solve the problem of the poor medical supply situation in prisons.³⁵ Two days after the release of the video, Sergey Karnaukhov, a lecturer in political science at Moscow University and previous employee of the Interior Ministry, severely attacked Uminskiy in a television show entitled “Who is dragging the church into politics and turning criminals into martyrs?” aired by the television station *Spas* of the Russian Orthodox Church: Karnaukhov claimed that Uminskiy is a criminal and should be arrested, before he “drives our church into the abyss”. He accused him of “extremism” and demanded that priests be more systematically disciplined. Otherwise, the Russian Orthodox Church will greatly suffer soon from many clergymen who become the main actors operating “not only against the church, but also against the constitutional structure of Russia”.

Various Orthodox organizations and church representatives subsequently sided with Uminskiy, for example the well-known Arch Deacon Andrei Kurayev in his *LiveJournal* blog. The Orthodox internet portal *Pravmir* announced that it would suspend its cooperation with *Spas* until the management of the television station officially apologizes. Uminskiy calmed down the situation by claiming that those responsible for the television station apologized personally to him. The moderator of the concerned program, Roman Golovanov, then explained live during his show *Strim* that it was a mistake to broadcast Karnaukhov’s accusations and apologized to “everyone who was hurt”.³⁶

It can therefore be concluded that in 2021 some diversity of media and social

networks existed within the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁷ In his account of the Navalny protests, the Russian-Orthodox theologian Andrey Shishkov saw potential for development: according to him, the Orthodox Christians of Russia were still lacking a theological language with regard to political issues, which goes beyond commonplaces such as “the church is outside politics” and “To Caesar what is Caesar’s”. In his view, dedicated Orthodox political thought became stuck in the interwar period before WWII, when it gradually emerged under Russian émigrés in Paris as a response to political violence (in the USSR and in view of rising fascism in Germany), injustice and the inability of the church to morally characterize the political events: *“What we witness now are so far episodic, barely connected initiatives. They remind one of the attempts of a person who has lost the ability to speak and has to learn to speak again. The voice is still weak, and the words are often confused. There is still a long rehabilitation period ahead.”*³⁸

Since 24 February 2022, even the weak voices seem to be mostly silenced. In the face of Russia’s war against Ukraine, the mentioned rehabilitation period is deferred for years and will be even more painful and difficult. But the thought by the mentioned Russian Orthodox intellectuals in exile of the interwar period could certainly be helpful to address these issues (e.g., Sergey Bulgakov, Nikolay Berdyaev, Simon Frank, Anton Kartashev, Maria Skobtsova). The Church historian Georgy Fedotov (1886–1951), for example, considered “national repentance” crucial for the future resurrection of Russia with its Orthodox Christian culture. Already in 1933, he feared, that if Russia, after a possible breakdown of the Soviet regime, was rebuilt with the hateful energy of Russian (Orthodox) nationalists, “an ecclesiastical, orthodoxized evil is far more frightening than outright [Soviet] anti-Christianity.”³⁹ Also, Fedotov pleaded for the liberation of Russia from its “imperial burden”.⁴⁰

A “win-win” symphony?

Regarding the political position of the church leadership, the Moscow Patriarchate has visibly moved closer to the government since the appointment of Patriarch Kirill in 2009. The Russian Orthodox Church is not a state church which receives tax money, but it is a central actor in the new conservative authoritarianism, for whom the “symphony” with the state pays off. The Main Cathedral of the Russian Military Forces, inaugurated in 2020 in Moscow, is symbolic of this. The other side of the coin is that the Russian Orthodox Church can hardly afford to criticize the current regime. The forms of cooperation with the state have rapidly increased in the past decade: a 2015 report on the allocation of presidential funds from the *Center for Economic and Political Reforms* determined even back then that the Russian Orthodox Church and related NGOs who support the government’s rhetoric are among the most significant recipients of subsidies.⁴¹ The journalist Andrei Soldatov even claimed that the Russian Orthodox Church has

largely surrendered the freedom to act as an independent religious organization: in numerous “cooperation agreements” with all security agencies, “including the Interior Ministry, the *Rosgvardija* (Forces of the National Guard) and the law enforcement agencies (FSIN)”, the church is directly subordinating itself to military commanders.⁴² Hence, in case Putin is voted out of office or the government is even overthrown, the church has much to lose, in particular regarding its budget. Therefore, already before the war against Ukraine the church leadership has lost the respect of many “liberals”, in particular urban intellectuals.⁴³ But moreover, it also lost the respect of the so-called “Orthodox fundamentalists”, which it was aiming to win over with its rhetoric on “traditional values”. Their influence has enormously increased during the pandemic. Numerous priests and believers ignored the protective measures which were imposed by the government and supported by the church leadership, while condemning the ordered closures of churches as part of a “liberal-secular conspiracy”, which was rather ironic in view of the church’s antiliberalism. Proof of the fundamentalists’ dubious success is the fact that monasteries became major infection sites.⁴⁴ Apparently, at least until the end of 2021, the “church shepherds” were unable to keep their disparate “flock of sheep” in check. The events of the year 2021 show that the stability of the political system in Russia was increasingly being purchased through repressions as well as media and electoral manipulations.

By making himself dependent on this government, the Moscow Patriarchate was increasingly lacking the flexibility to deal with the range of opinions among church members. The war seems to be helpful in this regard. There are priests and parishes that openly support the war, at least five have died so far by volunteering for the front line. Nevertheless, in December, Patriarch Kyrill requested that during the mobilization, clergy were granted a deferment from mobilization for the entire period of their priestly ministry.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, many priests follow the official call of a circular letter from 28 December 2022 regarding the organization of church aid to the families of the mobilized.⁴⁶ All in all, the Synodal Department for Charity says by 6 February 2023 it collected 311.7 million rubles (3.8 million Euro) to help refugees and victims in the conflict zone.⁴⁷ Church aid to the mobilized themselves, however, is organized on own initiatives. In any case, if a priest does not follow the call to organize church aid, he will certainly get into trouble. A priest who wanted to stay anonymous to the journal “Cherta” assumed, that the percentages of Russian Orthodox believers who support the war, pray for peace or are just indifferent, most likely correspond to the divisions within the Russian society as a whole.⁴⁸ According to the survey by the Levada Center from 12 December 2022, the question, “do you personally support the actions of the Russian military forces in Ukraine” was answered “definitely yes / yes” by 74% (42/32), “no / definitely no” by 20% (11/9), and “can’t say” by 7%. All in all, the support is stronger among the older age groups (75%), and the lowest (62%) among the youngest (18–24).⁴⁹ Hence, only about

20% of the Russian population don't support the war.

It is also reported, however, that many people, disgusted by Patriarch Kirill's war rhetoric, leave church, or convert to other religions (though there is no measurable system of "church membership").⁵⁰ However, it must be said that all "traditional" and the majority of "non-traditional" religious communities officially – actively or passively – support Russia's "special operation" against Ukraine. On 29 March 2022 they were all summoned to take part in a round table about "Worldwide traditional religions against the ideologies of Nazism and Fascism in the 21st century", organized by the Russian Duma, and were expected to support the "military special operation in the Ukraine" at the "humanitarian, spiritual front" within Russia.⁵¹ We know of only three religious leaders, who refused to take part in this and left Russia rather immediately: Archbishop Dietrich Brauer of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Russia (ELKR),⁵² Moscow's Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt,⁵³ and Telo Tulku Rinpoche, the former supreme lama of Russia's Republic of Kalmykia.⁵⁴ The open support of the "special operation" by Bishop Sergei Ryakhanovsky, head of the church union of Russian Evangelical (Pentecostal) Believers, has caused friction among Pentecostals in Russia. Other religious communities in Russia experience the same, and most of them choose a strategy of non-provocative silence that remind of late Soviet patterns of behavior.⁵⁵ In any case, this is not a real win-win situation for almost any religious organization, except apparently for the Moscow Patriarchate.

Prayer for peace or victory?

The first priest who was fined because of "discreditation of the armed forces" was Ioann Burdin, who held a sermon about the commandment "You shalt not kill" on 6 March 2022 and prayed for peace in Ukraine in front of 10 people of his parish. He was denounced by one of them, sentenced to pay a fine and forced to retire and leave his church in the Kostroma Oblast in April 2022.⁵⁶ The above mentioned Georgiy Edelshteyn was also quick to condemn the war in a post on *LiveJournal* on 26 February.⁵⁷ To date the website *shaltnotkill.info* (in cooperation with Belarusian Christian Ecumenical group "Christian Vision") documents 12 cases of hierarchs (priests, deacons) and seven lay members of the Russian Orthodox Church who are persecuted for their anti-war stance in Russia (fines, termination of service).⁵⁸ Hieromonk Ioann (Kurmoyarov), who was already defrocked in 2021 for criticizing the militaristic design of the new church of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Moscow, and has been incarcerated since June 2022 – his containment has been extended several times (currently until 28 May 28). He is accused of posting several videos about Russia's war against Ukraine on his YouTube channel, as well as posts on the VK social network calling for anti-war protests – and he pleaded guilty.⁵⁹ Lay people who are protesting against the

war with reference to religion, as to the commandment “Thou shalt not kill”, are prosecuted by state authorities.⁶⁰

One bishop so far, Ioann (Popov) from Belgorod and Staryi Oskok, called for an end to bloodshed only once, under the impact of a missile attack on the Russian city of Belgorod at the beginning of July 2022.⁶¹ According to an interview from February, his eparchy is supporting the Russian army and refugees. In addition, his eparchy has taken in 40 priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and their families who fled criminal prosecution in Ukraine.⁶²

Other church co-workers just quit their official service voluntarily. One of those is Grigori Ohanov, the former chairman of the *Kerigma Association of Orthodox Youth Communities* of St. Petersburg, who openly claimed that “what Russia is doing now is going against Christ”:

*This may be a war against Satanists, only clearly Satanists are on the other side. A disgusting statement, and the church will have to repent for it for sure. I think it will be 50 years from now, I hope. There are no Western values, there are Christian values, which in the West are realised, expressed in human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and so on. Russia is a part of this European, Christian civilisation. A war against such Western values is a war against Christ, because Western values are based on the Gospel.*⁶³

Another so-called “liberal” priest, who spoke about the sin “of calling the good bad and the bad good” in an interview with the journalist Katerina Gordeeva (now a “foreign agent” in exile) in October 2022,⁶⁴ is hieromonk Ioann (Guaita), priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, who is already known for helping protesters during the protests in Moscow 2019.⁶⁵ No charges against him are known so far, while Reverend Andrey Kordochkin, Rector of the St Mary Magdalene parish in Madrid was dismissed in August 2022, because he compared Russia’s declared love for Ukraine to the kiss of Judas.⁶⁶

According to the above-mentioned anonymous priest, the situation for any priest with an anti-war stance is most difficult, if he still wants

*to serve as a pastor, to be able to conduct worship services, to help people, both spiritually and materially. Then he is forced to weigh what will bring more benefit: his statements in the media, on camera, in his blog or the opportunity to bring people God’s word and explain day after day that war is evil, while the essence of Christianity is quite different – it is in love for God and people, and a Christian, if he is really a Christian, has no enemies. It is not an easy choice to make, but we have to make it.*⁶⁷

In this spirit, a group of “Russian Christians of different confessions” published a common “Christmas declaration” against Russia’s war against Ukraine in December 2022. They chose to stay anonymous to be able to spread their message further as simple pastors, teachers, and laypeople in their professions. The call fellow Christians “not to ignore, to pray, to stand up against, to non-violently resist

mobilization, to get involved in humanitarian aid [for Ukrainian refugees].”⁶⁸

One possibility to shape one’s own pastoral service is the choice of prayers during liturgy, as we know thanks to an investigation by Irina Pärt.⁶⁹ On several occasions – during the *Euromajdan* in Ukraine in February 2014, right after the Russian invasion in February 2022, and in September 2022, when military mobilization was underway – Patriarch Kirill launched new official prayers. The “Prayer for restoration of peace” from March 2022 was prescribed to all parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate and *“the message of the prayer is clear: Holy Rus’ is under threat, and our common heritage is now being attacked and needs to be defended.”* The new prayer from September then “explicitly calls for victory over the enemies of Holy Rus’” and prays for “the soldiers and all defenders of our homeland”. Pärt observed some flexibility in how these new prayers were received in different parishes. Many parishes did not replace the “Prayer for peace and overcoming internal strife” from 2014 by the prayer of March 2022 because it is perceived more neutral and focused on the suffering subject. Others just ignore the official prayers and use others, while many priests even provide additional patriotic prayers or “digital prayer space” for the relatives of the soldiers. However, not using the official prayers can have serious consequences as well. In February 2023, priest Ioann Koval’ was suspended because he changed one word in the officially prescribed liturgy in the following line: “Rise, O God, to the aid of Thy people, and grant us Thy mighty victory.” By replacing “victory” with “peace” he obviously committed the same crime as many Russian civil activists in their anti-war protests.

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What will the Russian Diaspora Do When "Dvizhukha" Starts at Home?

by Sergei Erofeev

This 2021 paper discusses the prehistory and some elements of political culture of the new Russian emigration which has been growing since the return of Putin as Russia's president. Following a sociological study, I argue that a qualitative change occurred between 2012 and 2018 in the moods and action predispositions of the new émigrés which can contribute to a strong anti-authoritarian political culture of a significant part of the diaspora. Small recent additions deal with the Seventh Wave of emigration caused by Putin's war in Ukraine, and the possibilities of structuration and further mobilization of the cross-border Russian prodemocracy movement.

Keywords: Russian diaspora, political culture, potentiality, structuration, movement, effective opposition

This article was first published in German in October 2021. In February 2022 Putin's Russia started an all-out war not only against Ukraine but virtually against the whole free world, so the concept of "dvizhukha" (movement, agitation, stir, commotion) has to be approached slightly differently. The meaning of the word has now expanded to include the entirety of popular shock and stir, the new Russian democratic and antiwar resistance as well as the radical Russian government's actions all the way to the massive war crimes in Ukraine and, possibly, by the moment of the article's English publication, mass terror against the people of Russia.

It has been more than two years since our Atlantic Council's report on the new Russian emigration was published.¹ Looking at the period between 2000 and 2018 and entitled "The Putin Exodus: The New Russian Brain Drain", the report intended to draw international attention to the qualitative change in the population outflow from a country which, throughout the Cold War decades, acted as one of the two world superpowers.

The change, we argued, was in principle twofold. First, the emigration wave that we mark as the Sixth significantly differed from those we numbered Three (the World War II emigration), Four (the Second Jewish emigration) and Five (the "sausage emigration" during the early post-Soviet economic troubles).² This emigration was neither predominantly politically driven or due to ethnic deprivation. Nor was it caused by serious economic hardship. Instead, with open borders, growing global awareness as well as new material and linguistic resources

enabling them to go abroad, more diverse populations ventured to explore new vistas without the danger of losing connection with the home country forever.

A key characteristic of the Sixth Wave uniting people of different geographic, ethnic, occupational, and other backgrounds became a high level of education coupled with a sense of entrepreneurship and free exploration in an increasingly physically and digitally interconnected world. In fact, soon after 2000, when Vladimir Putin became president, a significant return of Russians who, due to their experience abroad, had gained new knowledge and other resources, started to match the outflow. A certain perspective opened up, that of cultural and economic reinvestment into the country based on brain gain as a part of the growing global brain circulation. This continued up to Putin's second decade when the other aspect of the wave's change became obvious.

This second aspect is basically about the growing dissatisfaction with Russia's political, economic, and cultural prospects. Instead of developing a career or business that might lead to double benefits from engaging the homeland, the younger, more active, and better educated Russians on both sides of the border started to think of building their future away from the economic restrictions and political repressions which gradually became so characteristic of Putin's political system.

In our report, we argued that it was the 2011 back-shifting of the presidency between Vladimir Putin and his seat-warmer Dmitry Medvedev that provoked a radical, albeit not immediately discernible, change in the political sentiments of the more dynamic Russians both at home and in diaspora. Putin's decision in 2011 to sacrifice Russia's development to his endless stay in power was soon followed by extraordinary steps that shocked the world, but which were, in retrospect, unavoidable for sustaining such a political system. Using the "Crimea incorporation effect", the only country other than the USA capable of nuclear destruction of the planet crossed the post-WWII red lines of European non-aggression.

By all accounts, this was done to secure public support for Putin's rule when it started to wane. However, instead of boosting Kremlin-style patriotism, post-Soviet revanchism caused fears and aversion among most new Russian émigrés. Gradually, the Crimea effect subsided due to growing concerns of Russians with excessive high-level corruption,³ the neglect of people's fundamental needs⁴ and, subsequently, with Putinism beginning to resort to terror and violence.⁵ This is how we justified the title of our Putin Exodus report: through surveys and focus groups conducted in 2017-18 in four major destinations of the new Russian émigrés in the US and Europe,⁶ we detected a statistically significant shift in their political moods. Now the Sixth Wave looked more like an exodus of the younger, brighter, and more active from a land where their talents and life prospects were going to be neglected and even threatened.

Our most striking finding, however, was the difference between those who

left Russia before and since 2012, the year of the first massive crackdown on the protest against electoral fraud and antidemocratic politics. Comparing the values, expectations and attitudes of the respondents representing the emigration cohort of 2000-2011 vs that of 2012-2017, we labelled the second one “Wave 6.2” since it was qualitatively dissimilar to the first sub-wave in being less politically indifferent, more critical of the Russian authorities and, remarkably, supportive of the leading Russian oppositionist Alexei Navalny and his team already then. It also turned out that those who emigrated later were inclined to follow the real effective opposition⁷ in Russia in various ways – from showing support and approval through social media to participating in protests and funding projects like Navalny’s anti-corruption investigations.

Some remarks in our focus groups showed that despite the seeming inactivity of the Russian émigrés, they were only just waiting for a moment of “*dvizhukha*” (as mentioned above: movement, agitation, something that promises change). Little we knew then about what was going to happen in just a few years in Belarus, the country closest to Russia in terms of political culture. Today, broadest audiences both in Belarus and Russia are aware that 2020 was marked not only by unprecedented mass protests in Minsk and other Belarussian cities against the unlawful retention of power by Alexander Lukashenko through electoral fraud and political repressions, but also by vast mobilization of the Belarussian diaspora engaging in all kinds of activities in support of the protesters at home.

Despite the anti-democratic endorsement of Putin’s unrestricted rule through the “constitutional vote” designed to cement the system and create the impression of its mass popular support, a new kind of *dvizhukha* unfolded in Russia in 2020 as well. Proportionally to the population, nothing like the Khabarovsk protests against the arrest of a freely elected and popular regional governor – who turned to representing *vlast*⁸ “with a human face” – had ever before struck the streets of Russian cities. Unfolding in parallel with the Belarussian protests, these rallies were preceded and inspired by the success of smaller regional protests. Importantly, Khabarovsk protesters also built on the 2019 Moscow eruption of election-induced protests when the real effective opposition’s attempts to register its candidates for the city legislature were brutally crushed.

Following these developments, 2021 brought even more shocks to the diaspora. During the previous year, the Kremlin’s unsuccessful attempt at a “final solution” to the “Navalny problem” using the Novichok military-grade toxin led to the unlawful imprisonment of Putin’s main political opponent in January 2021. The protests against this injustice boosted by another powerful disclosure of Putin’s grandiose corruption by Navalny⁹ provoked massive street protests around the country despite the Kremlin’s use of the pandemic as a muzzle. This became the moment when the Russian diaspora showed that it really had awoken and started to follow the Belarussian pattern of fighting for democracy all around the world. Dozens of

cities across all continents saw previously politically inactive immigrants protest in front of Russian diplomatic missions, all the way up to the unprecedented rallies in Geneva during the Biden-Putin summit in June 2017.¹⁰ Considering that the anti-democratic legislation in Russia had been severely tightened since 2012, the pro-Navalny protest showed that Russian citizens became ready to its much higher costs in terms of not only losing their well-being but homeland and even freedom.

It can be argued that if a comprehensive study of the Russian diaspora were conducted now, it would reveal even a greater shift of political moods towards the real effective opposition. Today, the diaspora is watching Putin system's shift from legitimacy built on electoral techniques and propaganda to power built on violence. It is still far from what the Belarussian diaspora has experienced since the existential presidential elections in Russia are still yet to come. Yet, the contempt for the law and the people's will demonstrated by the ruling elite in the 2021 parliamentary elections has further outraged the émigrés who took to the streets of free "western" cities from January to April. Between winter and summer 2021, they have created numerous political groups and clubs, come up with many events and initiatives and continued to build a politically driven globally networked community. However loose, this community looks like the first ever Russian political force abroad since the White Emigration a hundred years ago.

One thing which clearly distinguishes the new Russian emigration, even in its infancy, as a political force different than the White Emigration is that there is no longer a homeland beyond its reach. The events at home now have more bearing on everyday life up to the émigrés' unprecedented self-mobilization to participate in the September 2021 parliamentary vote on all continents.¹¹ As their social media activities demonstrate, many of them are supportive of Navalny's "Smart Voting" strategy to consolidate protest votes against Putin's monopolist United Russia party in the wake of the total ban on independent candidates from running for parliamentary seats.¹² More than that, in coordination with Navalny's team, the "Vote Abroad" initiative is gaining momentum.¹³

In view of these developments, time may have come for analysts to think of a Seventh Wave of Russian emigration beginning in 2020. It would partly include anti-Putinists from the Sixth Wave, but it would mainly signal a critical mass of newly involved intellectually and politically influential Russians joining the diaspora. As The New York Times point out, "experts say the current exodus of journalists and dissidents is the biggest wave of political emigration in the country's post-Soviet history".¹⁴ This is practically an understatement since this wave, in terms of its cultural and political capital, is more likely to be the biggest since a hundred years ago.

As contemporary emigration researchers point out, today "emigrants represent an increasingly critical category of transnational political actors."¹⁵ With the presumably growing power of those who emigrate from a country of special

significance to maintaining and developing the international liberal democratic order; the world's attention should be turned to what *dvizhukha* in the country of their origin can do to the diaspora.

About the author

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War Economy: Russia's Economic Development in 2022

by Roland Götz

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, numerous institutes predicted a significant economic slump in Russia in 2022 due to the tightened Western sanctions. This did not materialize. As the energy sector remained almost completely exempt from sanctions until the end of 2022, Russia's economy saw a significant inflow of foreign currency. This prevented a collapse of the financial system. Statistical data show that in 2022 the war economy was strengthened at the expense of the civilian economy.

Keywords: Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russian war economy, Western sanctions regime, Russian energy exports, Russian economic growth

Wrong forecasts

Russia's economy was predicted to suffer a significant decline in output in 2022 as a result of the war against Ukraine and the tightening of Western sanctions. The forecasts ranged from an 8% decline in gross domestic product (GDP) - according to the consensus forecast of 18 Russian economic experts published by the Central Bank of Russia - to 10 percent (Bank of Finland Institute for Emerging Economies, BOFIT), 11% (World Bank) and 15-20% (Polish Economic Institute). A "classic" recession of the following kind had been expected: a sharp drop in exports causes a devaluation of the currency, a bank run and a resulting crisis of the banking system, resulting in rising unemployment, a budget deficit and increasing inflation. Signs of an emerging severe economic crisis had indeed been seen in the spring and summer of 2022 and seemed to confirm expectations. But in the fall of 2022, the forecasts had to be corrected.¹

Russia's robust economy in 2022

The situation of Russia's national economy is presented below on the basis of publications by the Statistical Office of Russia (Rosstat), the Central Bank (Bank Rossii) and the Ministry of Finance (Minfin), as well as publications based on them, such as those of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.² Russia's territorial status in these statistics is the Russian Federation, including the Crimean Peninsula annexed in 2014.

Russia's gross domestic product (GDP) declined by 2.1% in real (inflation-adjusted) terms in 2022 compared with 2021, far less than had been predicted.

Although the federal budget showed a deficit of 2.2% of GDP, there was no crash in the ruble exchange rate: Russia's currency - after recording a brief peak in March 2022 - actually appreciated somewhat on average over the year compared with 2022. Unemployment was lower in 2022 than in 2021, with only inflation clouding the picture: consumer goods prices rose by 14% year-on-year - twice as much as in 2021. Even if the statistics are, as always, still subject to revision, there can be no doubt that Russia's economy proved quite robust in 2022 in the face of sanctions and the withdrawal of Western companies.

However, it cannot be concluded from this that the economic sanctions had no effect. They have certainly left their mark. After all, Russia's GDP was expected to grow by around 3% in 2022. The actual decline of around 2% therefore means a GDP loss of around 5%, which can be attributed to the consequences of the sanctions. There is no other way to explain why Russia's economy did not grow in a year in which global GDP rose by 3.4% and the price index for raw materials - Russia's main export goods - by 33%.

There are several explanations for the resilience of the Russian economy in 2022: A lack of imports could be temporarily replaced from stocks, and in the case of consumer goods, the population was forced to switch to domestically produced products, whereupon companies in the consumer goods industry expanded their production capacities, which in turn stimulated production in the capital goods industries. Production in the arms industry was boosted by government orders.

The central bank helped stabilize the financial situation: after the war began, it stopped the exchange of rubles into foreign currencies for a few weeks (with exceptions for business trips), thus preventing a bank run by the population. For loans to banks, it raised the key rate to 20% from 26 February 2022 to 12 April 2022 which limited demand for foreign currency. These measures prevented a devaluation of the ruble, at least in 2022.

Russia was also able to partially escape the pressure of the sanctions, which were significantly tightened by the EU, the USA and other countries in 2022, by many companies expanding economic relations not only with Russia's South Caucasian and Central Asian neighbors, but also with China, India, Turkey, Singapore and the United Arab Republics, thus finding both new sales opportunities for export goods and substitutes for failing imports. Also, by no means all companies from countries that have imposed sanctions have withdrawn their subsidiaries from Russia.

Only weak sanctioning of energy exports

Russia did not suffer a massive economic slump in 2022 primarily because it was able to export the same amount of crude oil, petroleum products and coal as in 2021, while at the same time benefiting from the global rise in prices of these and other raw materials. While some countries quickly imposed an embargo on energy imports from Russia, the EU states only partially implemented this step

and delayed it because of fears of supply shortages and price increases. The U.S. banned imports of coal, petroleum, petroleum products and liquefied natural gas from Russia in March 2022. Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom ended their imports of petroleum and petroleum products from Russia in mid-2022. An EU coal embargo has been in effect since 10 August 2022.

An oil embargo prohibiting imports from Russia was decided by the EU states in June 2022 as part of the 6th sanctions package. It has applied to crude oil transported by ship since 5 December 2022, and to oil products since 5 February 2023. Bulgaria has obtained a temporary exemption for the supply of its refinery in Burgas until 2024.

Germany and Poland stopped importing crude oil via the northern arm of the Družba pipeline from Russia at the end of 2022. However, the Czech Republic and Slovakia continue to receive a mix of oil from Russia and Kazakhstan via the southern arm of the Družba pipeline and Hungary via the Turkish stream pipeline. In addition, crude oil is further processed in India, which has replaced Europe as the main market for oil from Russia, and shipped back to the EU in the form of petroleum products.

All EU and G7 countries and Australia have decreed an oil price cap, which has applied to crude oil since 5 December 2022, and to petroleum products from Russia since 5 February 2023. Shipping companies, insurance companies and other service providers for oil transport must prove compliance with this “price cap” in their contracts, but this is not subject to any audit. Price limits were initially set at \$60 per barrel for crude oil, \$45 per barrel for lower-grade petroleum products and \$100 per barrel for high-grade petroleum products. However, countries such as China and India do not want to adhere to either the oil embargo or the price limits for crude oil and oil products and are also using a “shadow fleet” of tankers from unknown shipping companies and with unclear insurance cover for this purpose.

In fact, a regional fragmentation of the price for crude oil from Russia could be observed in December 2022: While ship deliveries from Baltic and Black Sea ports to India were at USD 58/barrel and thus complied with the oil price cap, the price of oil transported by pipeline from Eastern Siberia to China and from Russia’s Pacific ports by tanker to China and India was oriented to the world market price of the reference Brent crude (named after an underwater oil field between Scotland and Norway) at USD 81-84/barrel.

The EU has imposed neither a gas embargo nor a price cap on gas delivered from Russia. Russia continues to supply Austria, Hungary and Italy via the Ukraine pipeline and Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Spain with LNG tankers. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany were no longer supplied by Russia under pretexts and/or have renounced gas imports from Russia on their own initiative. While about one-third of EU gas imports came from Russia at the beginning of 2022, only about ten percent did so at the end of 2022.

Production of GDP

The statistics for gross value added (GVA) provide information on the production of GDP. It was down 1.3 percent in 2022 compared with 2021. Among the 12 largest economic sectors, which represent 90% of gross value added, seven showed positive growth rates. Among them was “Public administration, defense, social security” with 4.1% growth, benefiting from increased spending on military and security services, and mining with 0.4%, as its companies were stimulated by high commodity prices to fully utilize their extraction capacities. Among the sectors with declining gross value added, trade stood out with a 12.7% drop, mainly due to the fact that motor vehicle trade fell by 45%. In the largest sector of the economy, manufacturing, output declined by 2.4% in 2022 compared with 2021.

Within the economic sectors, the individual industries showed different rates of change: Manufacturing industries with increasing output included the production of “fabricated metal products except machinery and equipment” (up 7.0%), “computers, electrical and electronic products” (up 1.7%), and “other machinery and equipment” (up 1.3%), which includes the production of munitions and weapons systems. However, militarily important goods are also produced in a large number of other sectors.

Use of GDP

The GDP expenditure account suggests that the consequences of war and sanctions have had at least some impact on Russia’s economy: Only the government sector (at 2.8%) and fixed investment (at 5.2%) showed real (inflation-adjusted) growth in 2022 compared with 2021. In both cases, arms orders probably played a role: Government consumption includes not only the maintenance of the government apparatus but also personnel expenses and current expenditure on property, plant and equipment for military purposes. Fixed capital formation includes not only investment costs incurred by companies for the production of civilian goods - by international convention - but also the acquisition costs of weapons systems (with a planned useful life of more than one year, i.e. tanks, military vehicles, guns, aircraft, ships, etc.).

In the GDP expenditure account published by Rosstat 2023 until April, the data for imports and exports as well as their rates of change are missing for 2022. Supplementary information on foreign trade can be obtained from the Central Bank statistics, of which only an abridged version has been published up to April 2023: While Russia’s export earnings in 2022 exceeded those of 2021 by 14% (\$78 billion), the value of imports was 9% (\$34 billion) lower. This resulted in a 66% (\$112 billion) year-on-year increase in the balance of trade and services (the external contribution to GDP). The combination of lower imports and increased exports, and the associated inflow of foreign currency, primarily prevented Russia’s economy from experiencing a pronounced economic crisis in 2022.

State budget and defense spending

The federal budget is published by the Ministry of Finance. As expenditures were about 12% higher than revenues in 2022, the budget deficit accounted for 2.2% of GDP, compared with a surplus of 0.4% in 2021. While in 2021 both domestic and external federal debt were reduced, in 2022 a reduction in external debt was offset by a significant increase in internal debt.

In 2022, federal budget expenditures exceeded government consumption as reported in the expenditure account of GDP by 15%, while this ratio had been six percent in 2021. This is likely due to the fact that government spending, unlike government consumption, includes investment, which includes the year-on-year increase in the commissioning of weapons systems and military buildings.

Since the beginning of 2022, the budget fulfillment statistics published by the Ministry of Finance no longer include a breakdown by individual expenditure items. However, the budget plan published by the Ministry of Finance in October 2022 does contain such a breakdown. For 2022, the consolidated (general government) budget included 4680 billion rubles for defense (a share of 3.2% of GDP) and 2971 billion rubles for security and justice (2.0% of GDP). For 2023, defense spending was planned to increase to 4983 billion rubles (3.3% of GDP) and security and justice to as much as 4609 billion rubles (3.1% of GDP). Since military-related expenditures may also be included in other budget items, this alone does not indicate the full extent of defense spending. Also, these data can only be compared with the defense expenditures of other countries if specific purchasing power parities are used instead of exchange rates.

Social Situation

Russia's statistics agency calculates "real disposable income" as the total sum of wages and salaries, entrepreneurial profits and monetary social benefits after deduction of taxes and contributions, taking inflation into account. This sum was only 1% lower in 2022 than in 2021, despite the 2% decline in GDP, for which war-related special payments to employees in the state apparatus and military may have been responsible. Also for 2022, official statistics show a decline in consumer spending by the population of about 2%, which may have been due to a lack of consumer goods due to a lack of imported goods and the withdrawal of Western retail chains from Russia. This is also indicated by the fact that the gross value added of the retail sector decreased by 6.8%.

Unemployment fell from 4.4% to 3.7% in 2022 compared with 2021, despite the decline in output on average for the year, which was probably related to partial mobilization as well as the flight of hundreds of thousands of workers abroad.

Sanctions against Russia's arms industry

Those sanctions that prohibit exports to Russia target primarily military-related

goods, including those with both civilian and military uses (dual-use goods). These measures have been quite effective: Imports from countries such as Iran and China, which did not participate in sanctions against Russia, have not been able to fully replace the lost shipments, at least so far.

Production of certain military vehicles, such as the truck for the Pancir air defense system, as well as heavy military trailers, supply vehicles and special vehicles at the Kamaz plant was halted because the Bosch fuel injectors manufactured in Germany were no longer available. T-72 main battle tanks lacked French-made thermal imaging cameras and Japanese-made optical products; the production of several modern air defense weapons lacked German-made electronics. Cruise missile production was hampered by the unavailability of Taiwanese, Dutch, U.S. and Swiss components. Russia's state-of-the-art satellite-guided Tornado missiles lacked U.S.-made gyroscopes. Of course, it has to be expected that these components can be replaced by own production, albeit possibly with lower quality, and/or imported via third countries by circumventing the sanctions. Even the supply of military or dual-use goods that are actually prohibited continues to take place.

Although the extent of the economic sanctions imposed on Russia in 2022 was historically unprecedented, political success has so far failed to materialize. That they could persuade Russia to end its war of aggression on Ukraine, however, was not to be expected in any case, as a statistical evaluation of sanctions imposed since 1950 and their sanction effects shows.

Outlook

In its February outlook, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) forecasts a further 3% decline in Russia's GDP in 2023 and does not expect weak economic growth of 1% until 2024. Expert estimates published by the Central Bank of Russia in February 2023 range from minus 6.5 to plus 0.4% for 2023, with a median estimate of minus 2.5%, while the median estimate for 2023 is plus 1.2. At the end of January 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected economic growth of 0.3% in 2023 and 2.1% in 2024.

The editors of the business magazine *Expert* Tat'jana Gurova and Petr Skorobogatyj believe it is possible that Russia's economic output will grow by 7-10% annually in the coming years. In their opinion, the biggest growth driver will be the replacement of imports by domestic production at 3.5%, followed at 1.5-2% by an increase in the output of the military industry, at 1-1.5% by an improvement in living conditions, among other things through a housing construction program, and at 0.5-1% each, infrastructure investment for a "road to the east" toward China, as well as production growth in the four Ukrainian territories partially occupied and claimed by Russia in addition to Crimea: Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson. The authors assume that the state will generously subsidize this reorientation of the economy. They ignore the possibility that commodity prices

could fall sharply, which would have a corresponding impact on the revenues of commodity-exporting companies and on state revenues. In this case, it is hard to imagine that Russia will experience economic growth in 2023.

About the author

Roland Götz, born in 1943, studied economics at the Free University of Berlin, received his doctorate for a thesis on mathematical models of Soviet price planning, and taught at the universities of Augsburg, Bielefeld, and at the Free University of Berlin. He worked on the Soviet economy and the economic transformation of the successor states of the USSR at the Federal Institute for East European and International Studies in Cologne and was responsible for the economy of the CIS states at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin.

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