

# NATIONALISM IS TO BECOME THE AGENDA FOR 2012

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The election campaign of 2011-2012 has already gotten underway, but this is only happening at the level of governmental clans. It is not occurring just yet at the public or official level.

The country's leading figures compete with each other, and you can see this in the humanisation of Putin's behavior and also in Medvedev's more recent transition to great power duc-course. They are going halfway to accommodate each other. Putin has showed sympathy to the injured and dead and to widows as well. He also demonstratively left the Victory Day Parade to deal with the emergency situation in the Rospadskaya Mine. Not so long ago, it appeared that Putin felt discomfort when he had to assume a specific posture. Today, he not only does it, but he also openly shows what he does. Medvedev, in his turn, has become much sterner while saying that power must be wielded

through him. Both of them are taking part in a common competition, but there is an absence of malice and fury therein. They behave like small boys playing marbles or some other game and it seems that they both understand that they are just play-acting. The reason for this is that both of them believe decisions will be resolved upon meeting one-on-one.

As for what is happening at the level of the entourage of experts, the final 'battle' is now being held, which is the most difficult. The experts are trying to impose some commitments on Medvedev. In public speeches and in the liberal mass-media, it has repeatedly been mentioned that Medvedev now 'must assume responsible for us', since he 'has awakened us and stirred us to action' and there cannot be now way back. In fact, the liberals impose this responsibility in their own view upon the President in terms of decoding his message to society, his so-called meta-signals, which he may not have even sent.

The entourage of experts is now trying to impose themselves on the leaders in various ways and this is a particularity of

'prince of the blood' so to speak. Indeed, we are still people of the feudal culture and the feudal way of thinking. We have never really had a bourgeois revolution or bourgeois humanism either. People continue to think in clearly feudal terms.

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The future officials of today should have views that are as possible. Currently, the key players manage to do this, as well as the entire political class of Russia. Russians can trust someone 'under the ' and tend to hate with extreme prejudice. Russian people daydream about power, but they become totally upset upon openly taking responsibilities. They do not want any commitments. If you declare the road 'to Berlin', it becomes a commitment. Russians today are so dissociated from the government, that they require vagueness. As a result, I would recommend that politicians be incredibly indefinite in their dealings.

There exist some challenges that may be equated with the separatism of 1998-1999. The foremost among them is the desire to have a strong state. The

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political activity in Russia. **Being feudal or neo-feudal in its essence, Russian political activity is, as a rule, focused on a 'crown prince' or at least a**

Russians want to hear rhetoric of nationalism from the government. That is namely where politicians should speak as indistinctly as possible to ensure that

everyone hears exactly what he wants to hear, so to speak.

**Nationalism will become a hidden agenda**, but it will always be translated as being statist or as favoring the Russian Orthodox Church. Directly proclaimed nationalism will result in a shock to the non-Russian population, create fear within academic circles, as well as various intellectuals who identify the 'Black-Hundred' in the word 'Russian'. No anti-state nationalism is possible in Russia, because the Russians today are undoubtedly sacrificial and heroic people. They have paternalistic and ultra-rightist views and they think in an ultra-rightist-state way, but one that is not Nazi-like.

**People have become used to the prohibition of spicy, salty, or variations of ideology, in which even brief appeals to nationalism sound somewhat like a manifesto.** Remember how the Soviet citizen read, for example, Stalin's statement that, first and foremost, he was grateful to the Russian people for the Victory in World War Two (the Great Patriotic War). He was essentially beating around the bush. He said it only once and never repeated it again. To everyone to whom these words were addressed, they read them and took them with extreme gratitude. When speaking about Stalin, they repeated and cherished his words, believing that he was 'for us', for the Russian people.

Russian people tend to believe in the of truth regarding nationalism, but this truth has not yet been verbalised. Rather, it is undergoing vague languor. If you show a Russian something even for a brief moment, he will start putting his languor into it. They do not insist on straight talk. An official may hint at what people want to hear when required with the help of charisma, and this will be quite enough to win the people's confidence.

**While any clear statement from the opposition will not be taken positively, an indistinct and unintentional hint from the country's leading figures will be taken as a manifesto, as a declaration.** This is the paradox of the modern national psychology.

People are waiting for the country's leading figures to confirm that they are 'our guys'. We always tend to believe that the person governing the country is also 'one of us', and that he is not allowed to do simply anything that he wishes to do. We also tend to believe that Russians use to operate under circumstances. In fact, this perception is simply rubbish. Of course, our emperor also has to do many things against his own will. He has to be sly, play the hypocrite, pretend that he's doing things in favour of other people while he's actually doing them in our favour. When he pronounces only one phrase: 'I'm grateful to the Russian people', this is quite enough and nothing else matters. By saying this very phrase, he is sending us a signal and we interpret it adequately. ■

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## IN THE REALM OF INEQUALITY

*Walter Laqueur*

*Continuing. For beginning see p. 1*

### ***Social problems in the nearest future***

One of the most important issues—and this too concerns America as well as Europe and Russia (but not China and Japan) is immigration, both legal and illegal. In the United States there are probably 10 million illegal immigrants, if not even a little more, mostly from Mexico, and their absorption into society while unemployment is running at 9% has become a central issue. Since the central government has not been able to develop a strategy on a federal level, all kind of decisions have been taken by the border states trying to restrict immigration. But there will have to be a unified policy and this will be a major issue in Washington. In Europe, needless to say, the problem is even more severe, because many of the new immigrants (mainly from Muslim countries, much less from others) have no desire to integrate. As a result, the whole demographic make-up of European cities is changing—one need only walk the streets of London, Brussels, Paris or Berlin to realize this. **In brief, the old Europe is gradually disappearing and no one can say for sure what the new Europe will be like 20 years from now.** As for Russia, I believe the same is true. Politicians are shying away from considering political and social consequences even in the nearest future.

### ***Foreign Policy***

The Obama administration has tried to 'engage' other countries, meaning to establish friendlier relations. It has had only limited success (and none at all with Iran) but it is still a reasonable goal because had it not done so, its critics would have claimed for the next 10 years that it missed golden opportunities. There have been, and still are, conflicts with China but I believe they will be resolved because the approach of the Chinese leaders is sober and sensible, and the White House wants better relations too. The agreement with Russia concerning nuclear weapons is very welcome, but it could have gone further, although perhaps it will in the future. Unfortunately, there has been not that much progress in other aspects of US-Russian relations. There are various reasons, but **this might change for the better once American troops withdraw from Afghanistan (the sooner the better) and once Russia has to accept its responsibilities its 'privileged zone of influence' in Central Asia.** ■

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