

DIXI

- Michael Wieviorka 1

Yaroslavl 2010: impressions of the participants

- Immanuel Wallerstein . . . 2-3
- Robert Skidelsky 3
- Piotr Dutkiewicz 4
- Doris Naisbitt 5
- John Dunn 5

Matter of the Fact

- Gleb Pavlovsky 6-7

Dialogue with the President

- Vladislav Inozemtsev 8
- Andrey Kolesnikov 9

New debates about Democracy

- Alexander Auzan 10-11
- Mikhail Remizov 11
- Tatu Vanhanen 12
- Arend Lijphart 13
- Boris Mezhuev 14-15

In Memoriam

- The Mover of Change: in memory of Shmuel Eisenstadt 16

Michael Wieviorka:

THE YAROSLAVL FORUM IS GOOD FOR RUSSIA'S DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT

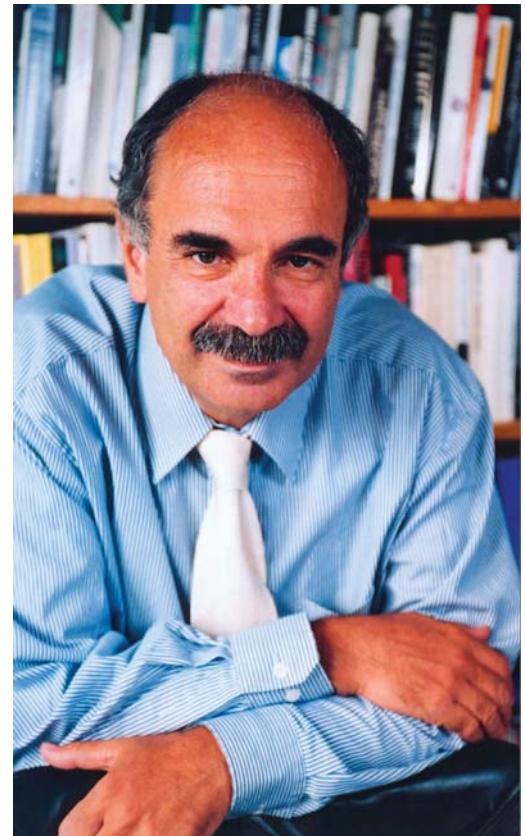
President Medvedev chose democracy as a major topic for the 2010 Yaroslavl Forum, indicating that it is not merely an abstract subject for him, and that perhaps he himself is a democrat. Medvedev increasingly believes that Russia should be more of a democracy. Of course, he also understands that democracy is a process, an aim, which can be defined in theory, but is never perfectly attainable in reality.

This too was very well understood by all the participants at the Forum, who discussed the idea of democracy and the process of democratization, that is to say, the ways in which to improve or further develop democracy.

As the President correctly noted, there is no one standard for democracy. Democracy is a process and a spirit, not a monolithic political model. Each country has its own formula, its own set of norms related to its political culture, its traditions, its history, as well as its social and economic situation. There is not just one preferable way, but rather a multiplicity of paths towards several democratic models. There are several roads to democratization.

The Yaroslavl Forum is aptly called the Forum of 'Global Policy.' Even if an event of this kind and the topics discussed cannot change the world immediately, it is nevertheless a moment in which democracy is discussed at a high level and as part of a global dynamic between politicians, intellectuals, and other key actors.

It is a moment whose importance cannot be diminished, particularly after all that has been accomplished. **The forum in**



Yaroslavl ought to continue, and the next discussion should be devoted to the topic of justice, from the local to the global level. What are our conceptions of justice, and how can we connect them to concepts of democracy and to economic globalization? A forum that grapples with these questions could ultimately become a place for resolving critical issues that face the entire world. ■

Exclusively for RJ

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