

THE RUSSIAN WORLD IN THE CONTEXT OF A NEW GEOPOLITICAL REALITY

As part of the project “Russian Political Science — a space for dialogue”, the editorial board of the journal publishes an interview with **Sergey Vyacheslavovich Perevezentsev, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor of the Department of History of Socio-Political Doctrines of the Faculty of Political Science of Lomonosov Moscow State University.**



The main topic of the interview is the Russian world in the context of a new geopolitical reality.

Andrey Gorokhov, Editor-in-Chief of the journal “Russian Political Science”:
Before turning to the ideas and values of the Russian world, I would like to ask about your vision of the current ideological state of the Russian state and society. What ideas and values prevail in Russia today?

S.V. Perevezentsev: It is necessary to honestly admit that for 30 years an extremely contradictory socio-economic and socio-political structure has developed in Russia. The ideological and political state of modern Russian society is equally con-

tradictory. The ideological and political contradiction is already contained in the Constitution of the Russian Federation: paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 13 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation state that “In the Russian Federation ideological diversity shall be recognized”; Article 2 declares as the main absolutely definite liberal ideological principle: “Man, his rights and freedoms are the supreme value.”, and the additions made to the Constitution of the Russian Federation in 2020, they are clearly conservative in nature.

Ideological stratification is also characteristic of the entire Russian society. This has become especially noticeable in recent years, when an ideological campaign to oust the so-called “Western

values” has begun in state structures and the media. The contradiction lies in the fact that they have been planted by the same state structures and the media for the last thirty years and, frankly, continue to be planted to this day. As a result, the third generation of Russians is already growing, for whom “Western values” are the meaning of life. Moreover, adherents of the liberal course of the country’s development make up a significant part of employees of state institutions, educational bodies of all levels, cultural figures, mass media, etc. At the same time, lefty and openly leftist sentiments are spreading in society, especially among young people. And this is despite the fact that, in general, conservative and patriotic sentiments are steadily growing in Russian society, as evidenced by many facts: voting on amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, opinion polls, including a noticeable increase in confidence in President Vladimir Putin after the start of a special military operation in Ukraine. Thus, according to VCIOM, the approval rate of the President’s activities from March 14 to March 20, 2022 was 77.9%, and 80.6% of respondents answered positively to a direct question about trust in Vladimir Putin.

Now it is quite obvious that the social structure that has developed in Russia and the lack of a clear ideology do not meet the tasks of today and the future. The main problem is to understand the prospects for further development of Russia as the center of the Russian world, which is a collection of territories and peoples united by one culture, one language, one faith, one history, closely connected economically, etc.

A. Gorokhov: Today we are witnessing the highest level of Russophobia, especially in European countries. This did not happen either in Soviet times or during the period of the Russian Empire. To be honest, I am shocked by some statements made by representatives of the Western public. For example,

the former president of Poland, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Lech Walesa said that the population of Russia should be reduced to 50 million people. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki went even further, calling for the destruction of the entire Russian world, which he defined as a monstrous new ideology that poses a deadly threat to the whole of Europe.

And such statements, as it seems to me, are not a reaction to a special military operation in Ukraine. This is a reaction to Russia and Russian culture, which are trying to defend their right to exist. By and large, Russia today is the last country in Europe that declares the need to preserve traditional values. Therefore, Russophobia is the quintessence of hatred for tradition, for historical memory, for religiosity, for traditional values. Russophobia is an ideology of enmity and the destruction of all Russian and Russia as a state and civilization. What can the Russian world offer in such a situation? What idea, what values, what ideology does the Russian world carry to the rest of the world today? And what is the Russian world today? And who is Russian today?

S.V. Perevezentsev: The events of the last few years, which began with the “Russian Spring” and the return of Crimea “to its native harbour”, indicate that the history of Russian civilization, figuratively called the Russian world, is far from over, but, on the contrary, is just beginning to reach a new level, to acquire a new, in fact, universal scale. Certainly, today and tomorrow we all face difficult times.

In these conditions, an ideological understanding of the reality surrounding us becomes extremely important, i.e., the formulation of the purpose and meaning of the historical development of our country and the whole world. In other words, what image of the future can Russia offer to its associates and partners?

Russian world is a multinational civilization created by the Russian people, whose

peoples have a common historical destiny, solve common historical tasks, and are preserved as a cluster of traditional cultures and religions.

The basis of the Russian world is the East Slavic Orthodox civilization in its spiritual, political, cultural and historical boundaries.

The core and center of the Russian world is Russia as a country—civilization, which unites in itself and around itself many peoples belonging to various religions and cultures.

Russian nation is the civilizational and state-forming nation of the Russian world, which united various peoples in the course of solving common historical tasks, ensured the preservation of traditional cultures and religions.

Russian identity is proposed to be based on the definition contained in the “Declaration of Russian Identity”, which was adopted in 2014 at the 18 The World Russian People’s Council (<https://vrns.ru/documents/deklaratsiya-russkoy-identichnosti/>). Russian identity, supplemented from the point of view of the methodology of “Russian khranitelstvo”, can be defined as follows:

Russian is

- a person who considers himself Russian;
- having no other ethnic preferences;
- speaking and thinking in Russian;
- recognizing Orthodox Christianity as the basis of national spiritual culture;
- feeling solidarity with the historical fate of the Russian people;
- loving his Fatherland, understanding the responsibility for the fate of his homeland.

Basic traditional values of the Russian world. Basic traditional values are values developed as a result of centuries—old historical and spiritual-political development of the people in the prevailing climatic, geographical, concrete historical, spiritual, moral and socio-political conditions and are an indispensable

factor in the formation of the national and political identity of the people.

Russian khranitelstvo methodology makes sense to single out a group of **spiritual and political values**, because in the history of the Russian world, the significance of social and political ideas has been determined for a long time and is still determined by their spiritual content, by how much they contribute to the realization of religious and spiritual ideals in socio-political practice. The group of these values of the Russian world should include the most important concepts for the national consciousness, such as (arranged in alphabetical order, not by importance):

faith (spirituality), state, dignity, a single history, life, knowledge, culture, personality, mercy, peace, democracy, national traditions, morality, fatherland (motherland), Russian language, self-restraint, freedom, family, justice, diligence, honesty.

A. Gorokhov: You mentioned the “Russian khranitelstvo” several times. Perhaps you mean a certain trend in Russian conservatism? Or is “Russian custody” — Russian conservatism? Please tell us more about this.

S.V. Perevezentsev: In conservatism, the main thing is not the imposition of unified rules of existence and thought (as in liberalism or communism), but the “*preservation*” of life in all its diversity, in all its manifestations. As he wrote in the 19 century Russian literary critic N.N. Strakhov, “in order not to transfer anything, not to imitate anything, but to develop everything from what is, and without destroying what is,” and, to paraphrase the words of a Russian thinker of the 19 century K.N. Leontiev, to keep the world in a state of “blooming complexity”.

Therefore, it is possible and necessary to speak not just about “conservatism”, but about **“Russian khranitelstvo”**. This concept was proposed by the Head of the Department of Russian Philosophy of the Faculty of Philosophy of Lomon-

osov Moscow State University, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor M.A. Maslin, the Department of History of Socio-Political Doctrines of the Faculty of Political Science of Lomonosov Moscow State University (Guardians of Russia) develop the idea. Anthology. — Vol. 1–6 / Ed. by S.V. Perevezentsev and A.A. Shirinyants. — M., 2016–2018; *Perevezentsev S.V. Essays on the History of Russian Preservation: Monograph / S.V. Perevezentsev, A.A. Shirinyants.* — Part I. — M.: Moscow University Press, 2021. — 352 p.). It seems that the term **“Russian khranitelstvo”** can be called the **“new conservatism”** that is so necessary for our country today (**“reasonable conservatism”**, **“healthy conservatism”**, etc.).

The methodology of **“Russian khranitelstvo”** provides ample opportunities for the preservation of ethnic and national diversity and the free choice of peoples of their own path of development. The **“preserving”** approach, in contrast to the liberal principles of universalism and individualism, can be summarized in general terms as follows:

- recognition of traditional religion as the spiritual foundation of society;
- preference of traditional forms of socio-political development to abstract universal schemes;
- recognition of the significant role of the state in the development of society;
- recognition of tradition as the most important source of formal law;
- recognition of the priority of the community over the individual;
- defending the civilizational identity of their people (groups of peoples close in their traditions);
- recognition of the right to free historical development of any people or civilization;
- recognition of the ideal of a free, morally responsible person before society.

A. Gorokhov: Thank you very much, Sergey Vyacheslavovich. The pres-

ervation is probably a more accurate definition for Russian conservative thought. Yes, and in the history of Russian thought, you can find various examples when philosophers, publicists, researchers are trying to change the connotation of the concept of “conservatism”. And this was done by adding certain adjectives to conservatism: “real conservatism” by Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev, “healthy conservatism” by Nikolai Onufrievich Lossky, “true conservatism” by Dmitry Ivanovich Romashkov, etc. This is not accidental, since conservatism at the ordinary level is not always perceived as an ideology of development. And preservation can solve this contradiction by assuming, probably, the presence of certain ideas and values that need to be stored and developed over time. I have another question: if the ideological source is the “Russian khranitelstvo”, then how can we imagine the ideology of the Russian world, the future of the Russian world?

S.V. Perevezentsev: The ideology of the future Russian world cannot be built on the basis of **“denial, removal, cancellation, termination, elimination of something or reverse action.”** Any ideology of the future can be built only on creation, on the creation of a new, better, on the pursuit of an ideal. It is why there is proposal to call the program of the establishment (the ideology) as **“Russian Creation” (variants: “Russian Century”, “Russian Epoch”)**. The ideological basis of the program **“Russian creation”** can be 10 principles.

1. The world is a collection of different civilizations. The most important task is the need to preserve the diversity of the world as a **“blooming complexity”**, i.e. as a complex system, because only complex systems are capable not only of survival, but also of self-reproduction, of adapting to new living conditions.

2. The development of the Russian world in the 21 century should be based

on traditional ideals, values and religions. Reliance on the basic traditional values of the peoples of the Russian world provides the state and society with their own response to any global challenges, which becomes the most important condition for continuity and stability of further historical development.

3. Spiritual improvement of society is the most important way of revival and development of the Russian world. The basis of the spiritual, state and cultural existence of the peoples of the Russian world is their traditional religions (Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Catholicism, various branches of Protestantism), but first of all Orthodoxy, as the religion of the majority of the population, as an integral part of history and modernity, politics and economics, culture and education, the most important component of national ideology and psychology.

Russian people is a civilizational and state — forming nation among other peoples, uniting all the peoples of the Russian world into one whole, into a true “blooming complexity”. It is not recognized as special rights in the constellation of the peoples of the Russian world, but the agreement with the special responsibility of the Russian people for the development of the civilization of the Russian world, sacrificial service of the Russian people to the common good.

5. Love for one’s Fatherland, service to it, prosperity and freedom of the Fatherland are enduring values formed in the minds of the peoples of the Russian world by a centuries — old joint history, integral parts of the national consciousness. For the Russian people, a united and free Fatherland for many peoples is the earthly embodiment of the ideal of Holy Russia.

6. The ideal of a free, morally responsible person is an undoubted value developed during the historical development of the Russian world. In the Russian understanding, a truly free person can be considered only one who understands the limits of his freedom, i.e. freedom begins

only when a person knows about the existence of very rigid boundaries that he has no right to cross.

7. The Russian world is a society of social justice for all its members, for all peoples united by state, spiritual and cultural borders. Strict observance of the principle of social justice is the most important condition for the multiplication of spiritual and material values that will ensure the existence of future generations.

8. The principle of sufficient consumption, i.e. conscious restriction of consumer needs based on traditional religious and moral values, and rejection of consumer attitudes towards neighbors and the world around them. A person cannot exist without consumption, but it cannot be the meaning of his life. The model of development of the consumer society is exhausting itself. The principle of sufficient consumption is the Russian response to the so-called “green agenda” imposed on the world.

9. The creation of a truly people’s state, combining the efforts of a developed system of self-government and central government in solving common national tasks. The goal of the Russian state is to ensure the spiritual and material development of society, the multiplication of the people, ensuring the principles of social justice and the possibility of further development of the country. The State should prioritize national interests in both domestic and foreign policy.

10. The Big Family is the leading national project of the Russian state, which should become a way to solve the main problem of the modern Russian world — the extinction of the population. This is a return to the traditional large family, the establishment of the spiritual unity of children and parents, the return to the family of its true meaning and purpose, the affirmation of parents and children in moral values, the satisfaction of their spiritual and material needs.

A. Gorokhov: How do you see the conceptualization of the ideology of the Russian world in the future?

S.V. Perevezentsev: On the basis of the ideological heritage of the Russian world, it is necessary to prepare a national program "Russian creation" (possible names: "Russian Century", "Russian Epoch"). The ideological heritage of the traditional Russian world will help us to survive in the struggle that has begun for the establish-

ment of a new world order. To stand, to win and to begin your own, Russian path to the creation of a new gracious society in which all people, all peoples will find their rightful place.

A. Gorokhov: Thank you very much, Sergey Vyacheslavovich, for the frank conversation, for your creative work and rationale of the Russian world!

Author of the translation of the article from Russian into English:

Kirill Vasilev

MCU, Institute of Foreign Languages

