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An Investigation into the Approach of  
Modern Russian Liberal Thinkers  
towards Nationalism

By Kristian McDonald

University of Sussex

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UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Kristian McDonald DPhil in Russian Studies

The aim of this study is to show how liberal thinkers have responded to the problems liberalism as an ideology faces in Russia, and to the challenges which Russia is encountering as a country in transition. I will argue that liberals are constantly aware both of their marginalisation (which is seen as being cultural, historical and political) when they react to other ideologies and to those who hold political power, and also of the difficulty of shaping Russia's future along liberal lines. The liberal response to nationalism, therefore, provides a useful model in showing how liberals have reacted to ideologies which are typically regarded as being outside the liberal movement in Russia and also how they have sought to respond to many of the central questions relating to transition. I will show in this study that the response of liberals towards nationalism demonstrates a huge increase in the diversity of the liberal movement from the mid 1990's onwards, as the internal divides amongst liberals have become apparent under the impact of transition. Secondly, liberals have been torn between the possible strategic benefits of combining liberalism with non-liberal elements, weighed against the ideological problems these combinations cause. These dilemmas have left Russian liberalism as an essentially stagnant ideology which remains incapable of forming a united and coherent response both to its own marginalisation and to the challenges faced by Russia.

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## **Introduction**

Following the collapse of the communism and the interest in ideas such as Fukuyama's "End of History" it seemed as if the dominance of liberalism both in Russia and in other areas in transition was being established. However, this did not come to pass. Instead, the role which liberalism is set to play in many contexts remains in the balance. What is becoming apparent is that context continues to exert a fundamental influence both in shaping liberalism and also in determining its likelihood of being successful. This study will consider the role of liberalism in Russia, the limitations upon its importance and how liberals have sought to challenge this – how they have sought to start a process where liberalism moves to the centre of Russian national identity.

This study will assess how liberals have been influenced by theories about nationalism and also by nationalist ideas present in Russia. It will explain the different ways they have reacted to it and how some liberals who are in the minority have sought to interpret and utilize the power of nationalism when they are marginalised (that is, outside of the mainstream of political power).

Approaches towards nationalism amongst Russian liberals are important for several reasons. Nationalism and questions relating to identity have become significant for all thinkers in post-Soviet Russia because in the era of transition which Russia is going through, they are essentially unavoidable. Even though nationalism has often been ignored by Russian liberals, they have been forced to consider it to some extent due to the collapse of the Soviet Union (Hosking 2005, 208).

Nationalism is a decisive factor in determining what type of society and political structure will develop in a given context. In times of transition when countries are seeking to change or redevelop, nationalism is crucial in determining what will eventually become dominant. Even as times of transition move into times of consolidation, nationalism remains important as a source of unity, mobilisation and legitimacy. There is a national debate in which liberals must engage in order for their ideology to become successful in Russia. I will argue that success in this debate requires

a coherent “liberal” approach towards the national question which is capable of drawing support from beyond the liberal movement.

However, this process is very difficult because the national question is a divisive subject for liberals and, therefore, throws into sharp relief the fundamental differences of opinion within the liberal movement about what course they should take. Russian liberals have struggled to form arguments which defend liberalism against particularistic attacks and to link liberalism to post-Soviet Russian identity. Russian liberals are embroiled in a struggle to form an ideology which can win the battle to become the core ideology of the new Russian nation, which can unite the liberal movement and also draw support from outside it.

### **Liberalism in the West and in Russia**

Liberalism is an ideology which is concerned with the emancipation of the individual, but what this actually means and has meant has been interpreted in a variety of different ways. This thesis is first faced with an issue of definition: what does liberalism mean and who is a liberal? The term ‘liberal’ is often applied to the most broad and vague values. The only firm conclusion that can be made is that liberalism has spawned a multitude of different theories and ideas. That said, as Gray remarks, it is usually possible to tell who is a liberal of a sort and who is not. Yet isolating core values in liberalism is difficult because liberalism has undergone so many transformations. As Gray shows, the understanding of who is a liberal and who is not is often only clarified by the context:

Contrary to Hayek, no useful purpose is served by seeking to separate out ‘false’ from ‘true’ liberalism. Even so, we can clearly identify some thinkers as liberals and others as critics of liberalism. (And some – such as Adam Smith and Michael Oakeshott – as both.) If it is clear that Constant and de Tocqueville were liberals, it is equally evident that Rousseau and de Maistre were not. If Kant is a paradigm of a certain type of liberal thinker, Nietzsche is no less exemplary as a critic of liberalism. When James Fitzjames Stephen attacked John Stuart Mill, his target was the leading liberal thinker of the age. (Gray 2000, 27)



As Bealey (1998, 192) puts it, “To understand the term today it is better to approach it from the angle of social and intellectual history rather than that of philosophy”.

Therefore, I will, for the most part, concentrate upon how liberalism has been interpreted in the Russian context, both as it developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and also as it changed throughout the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. In the second chapter of this study I will investigate how Russian liberalism has typically been associated with values of Westernism, anti-authoritarianism, and a concern about marginalisation.

A conflict within liberalism has sometimes been detected and remarked on: it often aspires on the one hand to determine and help to create the “good life” - the best way of life for all mankind - and on the other hand seeks to establish terms of peaceful coexistence and ways of avoiding conflict between divergent ideas. This tension is seen as critical by Gray (2000), who asserts that the contradiction between these two impulses is unbridgeable. Whether this is true or not, undoubtedly liberals do display both these impulses and sometimes those who strive more towards one come into conflict with those who display more of the latter impulse. This tension is clearly apparent between liberals who seek to help to create a “liberal society” which will protect liberty and those who are more pragmatic and less ambitious. That said, it is, in broad terms, possible to determine some values typically associated with liberalism such as: separation of powers, limitation on the power of the state, protection of private property, freedom of expression, transparency in government, and rule of law. Therefore, it is possible to say that for Russian liberals on the whole the state they strive to create manifests the same broad characteristics. However, they disagree about the means to achieve this aim, particularly concerning tactical aspects, whether Russian particularities require an approach from liberals which takes into account the Russian context, and how many of the issues connected with transition should be solved.

## **Nationalism**

Nationalism is a controversial topic and has seen almost as many different definitions as there have been books or articles written about it. This study works with a broad definition of nationalism which argues that it is a process which at various times shapes the formation or re-organisation (during periods of transition) of a nation state. It does

this by being a source of cohesion, legitimacy and mobilisation. This is a process in which everyone who has an idea about how the nation should develop is engaged.

Within the debate engendered by this process there are also more explicitly nationalist arguments which can be differentiated from other types of arguments because they consider the national aspect (be it preserving national distinctiveness, solving nationalities problems, or cultivating patriotism) as being crucial for the future, and emphasise this more than any other aspect. In explicitly nationalist arguments the national aspect is always at the forefront, rather than being unacknowledged and in the background, it is not accepted with reluctance but is acclaimed as a positive value. These explicit nationalist arguments form a reference point for those who are engaged in the broader national debate because they concentrate most consistently on issues of identity and particularism which have to be discussed during times of national transformation. I feel it is most useful to analyse these explicit nationalist arguments in a given context. In chapter 2 I will discuss the different forms of Russian nationalism which I have divided into statism, traditionalist nationalism, and ethnic nationalism and show how the ideas advanced by liberals about nationalism are influenced by them. As I will show, though these strands are demonstrably different in how they define what Russia is or should be, they often contain broadly similar anti-liberal critiques made from the standpoint of particularism.

### **Liberals and Nationalism**

For liberals, nationalism has caused some controversy. Liberals in the West have reacted with a variety of responses towards nationalism which I will briefly survey. I will first discuss the reasons why liberals take a negative approach towards nationalism before analysing their attempts to form positive associations with nationalism. At bottom, the basic division between the varying attitudes of liberals towards nationalism lies essentially between those who accept it as a concept and those who have a fundamentally negative attitude towards it.

Nationalism is seen to conflict with liberalism for a variety of reasons. Indeed, this rejection of, or antagonism towards, nationalism seems to be the most natural response for many liberals. Fundamental values which are often seen as essential to liberalism,

such as the emphasis upon individuality over community and progress over tradition, and which are not seen by some as inherent in nationalism, seem to some liberals to create an unbridgeable chasm between the two ideologies.

Anti-nationalism is in itself a complicated concept. Firstly, anti-nationalism can take the form of an active rejection of all forms of nationalism whilst trying to propose universalistic alternatives; few thinkers can be regarded as belonging to this category of anti-nationalists, because few thinkers believe alternatives to the nation-state are viable.

Secondly, anti-nationalism can also take the form of limiting or trying to restrict the role different forms of nationalism play, while not proposing nationalist alternatives. This attitude is something akin to agnosticism; the nation and nationalism are viewed as growing increasingly anachronistic or irrelevant and consequently little time is spent discussing such ideas, although there are no calls to find an alternative.

Those who feel nationalism is irrelevant fall into one of the classes formulated by Billig (1995, 16-17), that is, theorists who have either a “projecting theory of nationalism” or those who have a “naturalizing theory of nationalism”. The “projecting theory” classes nationalism as a concept which is foreign and which is important elsewhere - and therefore not too much attention needs to be paid to it. The “naturalizing theory” asserts that nationalism is (or should be) irrelevant to politics without exercising any real influence. Billig is referring to theorists operating in the West in stable nation-states which do not have fluid identities. In this context it is rather easier for some to claim that nationalism is a political irrelevance. The situation in Russia is markedly different. Clearly, for better or worse, nationalism is a factor and Russia is being shaped by nationalism as it goes through transition. Therefore, Russian anti-nationalists cannot limit themselves solely to either “projecting theories” or “naturalizing theories” of nationalism.

Thirdly, anti-nationalism can be understood as the rejection of a specific type of nationalism, while other kinds are actively encouraged because they are seen as being less harmful, or are viewed in a favourable light. This position is held by many liberals. It is also worth noting that even liberal arguments which seem to forcibly reject all forms of nationalism may still advance an acceptable form of nationalism in a less

visible and very subtle way (often such nationalism is an unspoken assumption). This can be termed “hidden nationalism”.

Liberals who have employed explicitly nationalist arguments have adopted a variety of approaches, including civil, cultural or ethnic nationalism. Russian liberals who try to synthesise nationalism with liberalism have (as I will show in this study) employed all of these approaches towards nationalism. It should be noted that even liberals who are prepared to envisage a potentially positive form of nationalism will always place limitations upon nationalism, and there will always be certain forms of nationalism which they find unacceptable. Kok-Chor Tan describes the way liberals place certain limits upon nationalism here:

Yet liberal nationalism is a *liberal* form of nationalism because liberal principles set constraints on the kinds of nationalist goals that may be legitimately pursued and the strategies that may be deployed to further these goals. (2004, 88)

Liberal theorists who propose forms of civil nationalism are generally seen as being descendants of Mill (for example, see Tamir 1993; Moore 2000; Miller 1995). Civil nationalism is sometimes considered to be the most liberal form of nationalism. According to Georgios Varouxakis (2002, 4), Mill’s views on this had a decisive impact upon the attitude of liberals towards nationalism and nationality throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. 19<sup>th</sup> Century liberals saw the nation as a vehicle for progress and the establishment of liberal regimes. However, the proposition that nationalism can be understood as a stage towards progress has taken something of a beating as the destructiveness of the mobilization potential of nationalism became apparent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some non-Western liberals in developing countries and also some Russian liberals, who have rehabilitated 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century thought, continue to advocate nationalism as a possible route to progress.<sup>1</sup>

One of the key arguments made by civil nationalists is that a nationality based on a non-ethnic form of citizenship is crucial in providing cohesion to a nation. It allows those belonging to different ethnic groups to experience a shared feeling of togetherness

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<sup>1</sup> In the Russian context, one of the thinkers who will be discussed in detail in this study, Alexei Kara-Murza, is an example of such thinkers.

which is considered to be vital for a functioning state and a functioning democracy to thrive. This is an argument which continues to resonate throughout the world and has been highly influential. This is not to say that it has not been criticized. Some regard civil nationalism as being insufficiently tolerant towards cultural and ethnic minorities, forcing them to accept the language and values of the majority.

Cultural nationalism is that nationalism which focuses upon shared values and traditions, thereby lending solidarity and cohesion to a group. The attitude of liberals towards cultural nationalism often depends upon how much they think that national particularities need to be taken into account and how much globalization needs to be tempered and controlled in some contexts.

A more specifically “liberal” attitude towards cultural nationalism is multiculturalism which here is described by one of its leading exponents, Will Kymlicka:

Liberal multiculturalism accepts that such {minority} groups have a valid claim, not only to tolerance and non-discrimination, but also to explicit accommodation, recognition, and representation within the institutions of the larger society. Liberal multiculturalism may take the form of revising the education curriculum to include the history and culture of minority groups; creating advisory boards to consult with members of minority groups; recognising the holy days of minority religious groups; teaching police officers, social workers, and health-care professionals to be sensitive to cultural differences in their work; developing regulations to ensure that minority groups are not ignored or stereotyped in the media, and so on. (Kymlicka 2002, 392)

Liberal multiculturalism is another arena of intense debate amongst thinkers in the West. Some, amongst them Fukuyama (2007, 26), have asserted that multiculturalism was little more than an attempt by liberals to create false senses of inclusion, which could not survive real challenges such as those posed by the large number of Muslim immigrants in Europe. As I will discuss in Chapter 4 of this study, liberal multiculturalism has been almost completely dismissed by Russian liberals.

The debate over nationalism can also be complicated if the concepts of nationalism and empire are involved. In the case of Russia this is clearly the case as it is involved in the process of moving from being an empire to becoming a nation state. The question liberals face is whether a nation rather than an empire is more of a help or a hindrance to liberal values. In the Russian context there has been an interesting discussion of this by Geoffrey Hosking who, while concerned about the dangerous possibility of ethnic Russian nationalism replacing imperial identity, also feels that nationalism will provide the coherence that Russia needs for a democratic future (1997, xix-xxi). A counterpoint opinion has been put forward by Anatol Lieven who argues that the ethnic dangers of post-imperial eras make these periods particularly un-liberal, especially if the main group in the empire becomes strongly ethnically nationalist. An example which he asserts is particularly important is the period following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (which had been relatively liberal in its later phase). The Young Turk movement adhered to a form of Turkish nationalism which was severely intolerant of ethnic minorities and sought to replace the empire with an ethnically pure Turkish state (Lieven 1999, 56-70).

The dichotomy between nation and empire and the relative merits of the two forms of identity have been considered to a greater or lesser extent by all thinkers involved in the debate about national identity in post-Soviet Russia. Lieven's example is of ethnic nationalism replacing empire, but even civil nationalism strongly enforced in a post-imperial context could have a negative impact on ethnic minorities. Lieven places more emphasis than others upon the risk to liberalism inherent in replacing empire with nationalism, although most acknowledge it to some extent, including those such as Hosking (1997), who feel that Russia needs to switch from an imperial to a national course.

All of these currents are present in the attitudes of Russian liberals, but as I will show, particularities of the Russian context and concerns about the immediate need to overcome the marginalisation of Russian liberalism and a concern to react to Russian particularities have meant that Western thought about nationalism has often been heavily reinterpreted and sometimes rejected. Tolz (2001, 178), for example, has shown that one of the first discussions of Western ideas of civil nationalism by a Russian liberal thinker in 1992 was generally dubious and critical of the extent to which it was

applicable to the Russian context. Therefore, this study will focus more on the marginalisation of Russian liberals and how this influences their response to nationalism. Those who are heavily influenced by Western theoretical discussions of nationalism are generally abandoned to follow a path relatively separate from the rest (as I will show with the example of Valery Tishkov in this study).

However, the most important influence on how Russian liberals interpret nationalism is the fact that Russia is going through transition from the Soviet Union to a Russian nation state. As this process is not completed the issues of what type of nationalism will be influential and national identity become critical: Russian liberals, therefore, can strive to ensure that liberalism plays a central role in Russia's future, and that forms of national identity which are unacceptable for liberals do not become powerful and central in post-Soviet Russia.

### **Why is Nationalism Important in Understanding Russian Liberalism?**

Nationalism is a decisive factor in determining what type of society and political structure will develop in a given context. In times of transition when countries are seeking to change or redevelop, nationalism, or perhaps we should say, competing nationalisms are crucial in determining what will eventually become dominant. Even as times of transition move into times of consolidation, nationalism remains important as a source of consolidation, mobilization and legitimacy. For Russian liberals, therefore, it is an issue they cannot avoid considering – even if they often do not approach debates about nationality with the same enthusiasm as those who actively define themselves as “patriots”.<sup>2</sup>

Up to now the literature discussing Russian liberalism in the post-Soviet context has not adequately linked it to transition and nationalism. Studies of approaches to identity in Russia have not focussed on the liberals (see in particular Tolz 2001; English 2000; Brudny 1998) but instead on the attempts by all Russian thinkers to define what the Russian nation is or should be. These studies have really had little to say about the

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<sup>2</sup> I will discuss in chapter 3 that very few describe themselves as nationalists in public, preferring the term “patriot”. However, for the purposes of this study, I regard “patriotism” and “nationalism” as having no difference in meaning. When I refer to those who actively define themselves as being first and foremost patriots in Russia, I will use the term in quotation marks.

impact of this debate upon Russian liberals and their ideas. Thus, an important aspect in understanding post-Soviet liberalism has largely been ignored.

Several studies have analysed the period immediately before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union from the point of view of broad ideological debates (English 2000; Shlapentokh 1990; Tolz 2001). These investigations concentrated upon tracing the evolution of liberal ideas through the dissident era and showing how those influenced by these ideas achieved positions of power; they are particularly useful in grounding Russian liberal thought in context – showing Russian liberal thought as reacting to ideological opponents. However, these studies generally do not explain the fault lines amongst liberals, tending to present them as monolithic.

Indeed, in general, the ideas of Russian liberals (particularly during the Putin era) have continued to receive little attention. However, Axel Kaehne (2007), has made a useful study of recent liberal political and social thought. Kaehne's exposition is very important because it is the first to fully present the richness and diversity of contemporary Russian liberal thought. Kaehne accurately describes how the newness of modern Russian liberalism has resulted in a movement which is intrinsically divided, riven by deep ideological divides. He also correctly notes the distinct lack of influence of modern Western thought on Russian liberalism. While Kaehne emphasises that the consideration of particularism and universalism is important in understanding Russian liberal thought, he does not pay so much attention to how liberals have been influenced by those within Russia who are outside the liberal movement. This is understandable because Kaehne is focussing on Russian liberalism as a political theorist – principally his focus is exploring what is different between Russian and Western thought, however, in the area between political theory and political reality the influence of non-liberals and non-liberal ideas is very important, and it might be argued that Kaehne isolates liberalism too much from the broader Russian political context.

The dialogues Russian liberals have had with Russian nationalists of different types have not been explored adequately. While the responses of liberals to overtly nationalist or patriotic arguments have been considered as part of broader discussions of nationalism, the importance of these debates in shaping Russian liberalism itself has not been explored. Once again this is an issue which is hugely important because it is critical



in shaping the ideas and approaches Russian liberals have formed about Russian national identity. Liberals have begun to reshape liberalism to respond to the challenges Russian nationalists have made.

### **Aspects which Influence Russian Liberalism**

Of course, both the interpretation various Russian liberals advance of nationalism as a concept and of nationalist arguments in Russia, and their engagement in the debate about what Russia can or should be, are influenced by the ideological, social and political factors which shape Russian liberalism itself.

If liberalism relies on core values, but is also dependent on context to give its definition, then we must comment upon the particularities of Russian liberalism. I will explore this in greater detail in the second chapter of this study. Analysing how liberals have responded to the national question requires an understanding of what Russian liberalism is, what the motivations of Russian liberals are and how the Russian context has shaped liberalism.

Contemporary Russian liberalism is shaped by strong feelings of marginalisation.<sup>3</sup> However, for a brief period after the collapse of communism, Russian liberalism did play a highly influential role. Liberalism in post-Soviet Russia enjoyed a brief period of strength during the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this period Russian liberals subscribed to a relatively narrow ideology which ignored most projects other than economic reform and the dismantling of communism, etc. Russian liberalism relied principally upon government support, legitimacy derived from the perception that the world had reached “the end of history” and a surge in public support after the collapse of communism. This support dissipated after the economic hardships caused by reforms. For most of the post-Soviet period since then liberals have been largely marginalised politically. For Russian liberals the stark contrast between the sense of optimism they experienced in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union when they

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<sup>3</sup> Most of the literature describing marginalisation is not particularly useful as it refers to vulnerable social groups rather than ideas. The literature on hegemony is more useful and I will comment on it later in the introduction.

exercised a great deal of influence, and its subsequent diminution, is likely to intensify the feelings of marginalisation that they experience now.

One of the most important assumptions which any discussion of contemporary Russian liberalism should make is that those taking part in it perceive themselves as being marginalised. This marginalisation is multifaceted and profound: it can be termed political, historical or cultural.

### *Political marginalisation*

Any consideration of the political spectrum in modern Russia has to start with the overwhelming success of Putin's statism. If we make the assessment that the position of liberals is most clearly influenced by the state, the first thing we then have to consider is what attitude does the state have towards liberalism? Some assert that Putin's statism does not have any ideological content. This is not true: statism demonstrably embraces consistent ideological motivations. However, statism also displays strong elements of pragmatism and flexibility. Ideological motivations for statism include the acceptance that Russia is and should be part of Europe (though this does not necessarily mean Russia should follow a "European path", the acknowledgment of capitalism as being the best economic system, the desire for Russia to be a great power, and the desire for Russia to maintain her own culture and follow her own path. The flexibility of statism is manifested, crucially, in its approach to political liberalism and its policy towards the West.

Putin has largely given liberal specialists the task of influencing economic matters in Russia (Sakwa, 2004, 79). In general, in post-Soviet societies, in economic areas liberals often received support from what Jerzy Szacki (1996, 165) called "unexpected quarters", but this did not necessarily translate into political power or influence for liberals. In Russia this can, in fact, be clearly demonstrated by the greater success liberals have achieved in economic matters rather than in political or civilisational debates. In spite of this, many liberals believe that the Russian economy has not evolved in a truly liberal direction. They are strongly critical of the attitude towards property rights and the failure of economic liberalism to operate in a wider framework of the rule

of law. They have focussed on the politicization of the legal process. As Shevtsova points out:

Moreover, the splintering of economic liberalism and democracy inevitably led to lawless, oligarchic capitalism; there simply could be no other kind of capitalism under such conditions, where economic freedom was not accompanied by political freedom and the rule of law, and economic freedom was limited by the manipulations of the state apparatus. (Shevtsova 2007, 55)

Some liberals maintain a cautiously optimistic stance towards statism, particularly if their liberalism contains a degree of pragmatism. Others are more ambivalent towards it because they are unhappy with what they regard as its authoritarianism and its restrictions on free political discourse. The overwhelming power of statism and what liberals regard as its hostility towards liberalism in the political sphere have lead to feelings of marginalisation amongst many liberals. Liberals are also worried about the potential of statism to become more authoritarian and to place further limitations on liberals if statist decide that this is required at a given moment, because the inherent pragmatism of statism means it can move in several different directions. The potential influence of anti-liberal particularistic nationalists upon statistism is a concern for liberals.

The political marginalisation of Russian liberalism is evident firstly in the relative weakness of Russian political parties since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The 2003 elections represented for many liberals a profound disappointment as the two main liberal parties, *Yabloko* and SPS, failed to achieve the 5% of the vote necessary to win seats on the party list contest.<sup>4</sup> Though this was something of a low point for Russian liberal political parties, their combined support in elections since then has rarely exceeded 15% of the vote (Nikonov 2004, 11). Undoubtedly this has been due partially

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<sup>4</sup> Allegations of election fraud were made in these elections. Liberals such as Galina Michaleva (2004, 9) were particularly vociferous. However, the fact that elections do take place in Russia is for liberals a positive sign. This is not to say that the presence of elections is itself a demonstration of a liberal society, Zakaria (2007) has argued that “managed democracy” can in fact inhibit the development of liberalism, though actually most theorists of democracy emphasise a host of factors beyond fair elections, including freedom of information, freedom of association, property rights, limitation of powers etc (see Levitsky and Way 2002).

to the failure of liberals to properly engage their potential electorate, and also to infighting between the small liberal parties which divides their vote.

One of the issues frequently cited as necessary for the success of liberalism in a given context is the emergence of a middle class and in Russia a middle class has appeared since the collapse of the Soviet Union, this is made up both of workers in the new economy and also those who formally were part of the intelligentsia in the Soviet era. This middle class does remain quite small. For strongly universalist liberals the notion that the middle classes will necessarily desire a liberal transformation as they did in Britain, for example, would seem to be self-evident. However, there are also numerous examples where emerging middle classes have not supported liberalism. White's (2006) study of *Yabloko* suggested that there was sympathy for the party amongst the middle class but it has not generated into hard and firm support for the party. White (2006, 116) argues that there is, in fact, more support than is generally considered to be the case for liberalism in Russia, but that liberal parties have not successfully engaged their potential electorate.

Of course, politics is more than the sum of the party political process. Additionally, as we are considering the particular role played by thinkers, we must be aware of the ways that thinkers can seek to establish alternative political systems and communities and also begin to establish alternative models which they hope will become influential.

Some commentators have shown that there is greater acceptance of liberal values in general terms than would be expected given the small number of votes liberal parties have received. Michael McFaul (2001, 332), in particular, referred to opinion polls to show that Russians broadly supported what he termed "democratic values" such as individual rights, freedom of expression, and the army being restricted from entering politics, etc. However, evidence of this sort is of limited usefulness as such values are too general to have enough meaning; it does not evaluate how central these types of values are for individuals in their worldview; and it fails to show that ordinary Russians can frequently hold contradictory values at the same time (as was demonstrated by Diligenski 2000). Thus, it is possible to assert that whole-hearted support for liberalism in Russia is confined to a minority of the population, though there is limited support for some values associated with liberalism amongst the majority of the population.

Historically, liberals are constrained by the pragmatic actions of non-liberal Russian governments which might encourage some liberals to an extent by co-opting them during eras of reform, but which might disappoint them by ultimately acting against them if their perceived influence becomes too strong. As Hamburg shows this is a cyclical pattern:

Three times in late imperial history intractable structural issues dominated the national agenda: in the great reform era from 1855 to 1866, during the autocratic crisis from 1878 to 1882, and during the revolutionary events of 1904 to 1907. At each of these moments the government considered overhauling the provincial administrative system, broadening the public's role in decision making at the national level, and ameliorating the peasants' condition. At each moment leading bureaucratic reformers sought the public's support for projected policy initiatives. At each juncture liberals helped shape the political agenda, only to be disappointed later by the government's duplicity, half-heartedness or pusillanimity. Each period of debate over structural change was preceded by an era during which censorship precluded open discussion of critical issues. (Hamburg 1992, 332)

Many liberals believe this trend seems to have continued into Soviet and post-Soviet times, with liberals being occasionally courted but ultimately marginalised. Of course, Russian liberals are not completely banished from having any power and influence. As has been noted, in the area of economics, particularly, Russian liberals are very influential and their policies have been promoted by the government. However, in other spheres the influence of liberals is much more limited.

Even if liberalism should gain a strong footing in a particular nation and become the prevailing ideology in the main stream of intellectual life, it does not necessarily mean that liberalism will dominate politically. The experience of liberalism in Poland exemplifies the difficulties liberals face. Machini Janowski (2006, 267) shows that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century liberalism gained a strong footing and became the prevailing ideology in the mainstream of intellectual life, yet ultimately failed as it was unable to permeate

political culture owing to the way political power was controlled by illiberal forces. In Russia, where liberalism is less powerful, the difficulties are magnified.

### *Cultural marginalisation*

If we turn to history and what is useable for arguments put forward by Russian liberals, that is, what liberals can find within history to support their ideas, we once again encounter problems – suggesting that the cultural and political marginalisation of liberalism in Western and Eastern European histories is sometimes perceived as producing different types of nationalism. Probably the classic contrast was made by Hans Kohn (1976, 330), who wrote: "[while] Western nationalism was, in its origin, connected with the concepts of individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism current in the eighteenth century, the later nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia easily tended toward a contrary development." Kohn's division of nationalisms into Western and Eastern European versions has been challenged by those who argue that the rather severe division between these two types of nationalisms is problematic because both types of nationalisms have occurred in Western and Eastern Europe (see Auer 2004).

Undoubtedly, cultural determinism has been applied too rigidly in some cases by both Russian and Western analysts of Russia. Cultural determinism denies that nations can sometimes be highly fluid and change rapidly and that cultural values adjust to match the changing demands of a given time and context (Auer 2004, 18; Brubaker 1996). But, the reverse of this - to simply say that Russia's historical baggage is irrelevant, is equally misleading.

Many Western historians of Russia (particularly those who are interested in nationalism) have constructed theories which attempt to identify the core element of Russian difference from the West. While frequently sharing perceptions of some of the core values which Russia is said to possess, including absolutism, communalism, traditionalism and the key importance of her relationship with the "other" (i.e. the West), these theories often offer varied and opposing reasons as to why this difference

has occurred, ranging from Greenfeld's (1992, chapter 3) focus on resentment,<sup>5</sup> to Pipes' assertion that the relationship between ownership of resources and political power has always linked Russia to undemocratic government. Pipes claimed that: "The notion of law and universal human rights lack deep roots in the consciousness of the Russian people" (quoted in Horvath 2005, 82). If these suppositions are common in some Western scholarship, it is yet more the case in Russian scholarship and, still more importantly, in popular perceptions in Russia.

The perception of the historical lack of liberal tradition in Russia was also clearly articulated by President Putin when he said:

It will not happen soon, if it ever happens, that Russia will become a second edition of, say, the US or Britain in which liberal traditions have deep historic conditions. (Quoted in Worth 2005, 143)

The implication here is that liberal traditions are perceived as being particularly weak and marginal in Russian history. This is a problem that Russian liberals constantly face and to which they are forced to react. Another problem liberals have to contend with is the weight of the traditional "Slavophile" critiques of liberalism as being "un-Russian" which feature heavily in Russian intellectual history. An example of this is expressed by Dostoevsky's Yevgeny Pavlovich Radomsky, in 'The Idiot':

I'm not saying anything against liberalism at all. Liberalism isn't a sin; it's a necessary part of the whole, which would fall apart or decay without it; liberalism has as much right to exist as the most right-thinking conservatism; it is Russian liberalism that I'm attacking, and I must repeat again, the reason I am attacking it in fact is that the Russian liberal is not a Russian liberal, he's an un-Russian liberal... (1998, 350)

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<sup>5</sup> Some have disputed generalised claims made by historians who make these kinds of judgements, such as the claim that Russia has a more communal identity than a civil one. For example, Kolossov (2003, 251) has questioned Greenfeld's (1996) claim that Eastern European nations were more likely to have a communal ethnic identity rather than civil identity, at least in the case of Russia. He notes that, in the case of Russia at least, there are significant signs of identification with the state and with local regions rather than with ethnic identity.

These critiques of liberalism as being foreign and un-Russian continue to resonate in modern Russia.

Some attempt to show that Russia does have an important usable history which could help modern liberals has been made by various Western scholars such as Rabow-Edling (2006) who, for example, showed that there were some ideas which were Westernising and modernising amongst the Slavophiles, who are often perceived as traditionalists who only wanted to separate Russia from the West. Another example is Aileen Kelly's (1998) work in intellectual history which sought to demonstrate that traditions of individualism as well as of communalism were present in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian intellectual history. Probably the most important of this class of works in terms of its relevance to the modern debate is that of Robert Horvath (2005, 84-138) who has shown convincingly that there is a clear intellectual progression and influence from late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers (such as the Vehki group) through to the pre-dissident thinkers who emerged in the 1950's and to those who followed in the 1960's and 1970's. As he puts it: "Despite the hackneyed stereotypes dispensed by cultural determinists, dissident legalists did not emerge from a vacuum" (Horvath 2005, 83). However, he is unable to show that in terms of influence (both political and cultural) these thinkers and groups were anything other than marginal in the main, except for the occasions when they briefly enjoyed the favour of the state.

As I will show in chapter 5 of this study, many Russian liberals regard Russian history ambivalently because while it does have some limited possibility of providing support for liberalism, it is more often perceived by them as a block to the acceptance of liberalism and a provider of "useful history" for non-liberal ideologies. Most importantly even those Russian liberals themselves who try to construct positive interpretations of Russian history (see Kara-Murza 2002a, 2002b) do so with some concern about the challenge Russian history poses. Kara-Murza, for example, accepts that the history of liberalism in Russia could suggest that liberalism may struggle to be successful in Russia at any time in the near future (Billington 2004, 97).

This is not to say that the cultural aspect prevents Russia from ever being a fully liberal country. This type of determinism is misleading and also shows a lack of awareness of the ways that culture can change very quickly under certain circumstances. However,



equally, this does not mean that cultural challenges can be ignored, and that establishing liberalism in Russia does not face difficulties.

*The place of Russian liberals in the political spectrum*

Russian liberalism is part of a much wider spectrum than its Western counterpart. Because liberalism does not dominate the main discourse to the extent that it does in the West, the effect is that ideological-political positions which might be termed “centre right” and “centre left” in Western contexts are squeezed together under the single banner of liberalism in Russia. This means that the differences liberals have are not always apparent straight away. Liberals do have some values which give them unity, such as the acceptance of basic political freedoms, Westernism, and anti-Sovietism; however, the differences between them come into play as liberals try to deal with other issues.

As Sakwa notes, the difficulties for Russian liberals are not just a reflection of Russian attitudes towards liberalism, but are also the result of what he terms the “narrowness” of Russian liberalism (this will be discussed in particular in chapter 2 of this study which will show that Russian liberalism has a small number of basic attributes such as pro-Westernism, anti-communalism, etc. which forms its core). Russian liberalism still regards itself as quite separate from other ideological streams. This is particularly noticeable in the attitude of Russian liberalism to socialism. What is significant here is that Russian liberals restrict the position they are able to achieve in the ideological spectrum and the possibility of finding allies and they limit their ability to make liberalism acceptable and understandable to much of the population. By failing to combine with other political viewpoints and ideologies, their influence is circumscribed. Sakwa notes, for example, that by failing to engage properly with socialism, Russian liberals have hampered the formation of a modern social democratic movement in Russia, “the reconciliation between the socialist striving for social justice and individual liberty has not yet been achieved, weakening both in the process” (Sakwa 2001, 280).

An important point to make here is that liberals in Russia can move in various different directions when they seek to broaden the ideology, even if they have not fully achieved this. For example, they can move towards a social democratic orientation or a more

conservative one. This is because liberals are pushed together as a marginalised group who are united by their commonly held liberalism. If liberals try to broaden their ideology they are likely to move in different directions; as I will show in Chapter 3 of this study, this is actually becoming the case.

A good example of how the broadening of liberalism can weaken it is shown in the close association of liberalism with leftist ideas, which was a feature of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century liberal thought. As Walicki (1992, 397) has shown this was the subject of debate amongst thinkers linked to the Kadet party – those who were heavily influenced by socialism were criticised by the more conservative Vehki group. The problem for liberals was that they were pulled apart by the battle between the leftist opposition and the government. This split the liberals as they moved in divergent directions and diminished and diluted their influence.

### **Marginalisation of Liberals – Non-Western Contexts**

For Russian liberals the process of looking at alternative ideologies was partly precipitated by a change in their position, or, more precisely, by a recognition that they were marginalised. This realization led to a reconsideration of what had previously been a rather narrow ideology. Thinkers such as Sogrin (1997) called for a broadening of what liberalism meant in Russia. In some ways this process could be seen as a maturing of liberalism. After all, it could be argued that the best hope for liberalism in Russia would be if groups such as liberal socialists, liberal conservatives and so on were to emerge, that is, parties which accepted liberalism, but interpreted it to fit in with different ideologies. This process might also suggest that the possible disintegration of Russian liberalism into separate ideologies would not necessarily be a bad thing in the long term, though it does cause significant difficulties in the short and middle term.

The liberals in Russia are faced with a challenge resulting from marginalisation. In one respect the literature on liberalism is not particularly helpful to them because most of it fails to consider what action liberals should take when liberalism is not dominant in political culture. Indeed, this leads one to question whether the role of liberals should simply be to achieve political power before they are able to act and implement their liberal ideas. For this reason the discussion amongst liberals in contexts such as Russia

is as much about how they can change the political culture as it is to define what in ideal terms liberalism consists of, or what an ideal liberal society should be. (This is not to say these debates do not happen at all in these contexts- just that they are seen as secondary at times to more immediate concerns).

It is important to note that Russian liberals have responded to the challenge of achieving political power by focusing most closely on Russian particularities and the context in which they find themselves. In spite of the fact that they discuss the West constantly, the debate concentrates more specifically on the critical examination of a set of values which are associated with the West (as I will show in chapter 3), rather than the detailed analysis of Western countries, or for that matter of Western thinkers. Marginalisation has lead Russian liberals to think about those ideas and factions which have immediate influence, impact and power in Russia.

The question of how liberals try to overcome marginalisation partially relates to how they respond to ideologies which are outside of liberalism, but which exercise some influence in the society in which they are operating. Again we see the conflict between pragmatism and idealism which I described earlier in the discussion of Russian liberalism, as liberals have to decide the extent to which they can compromise with forces which are outside of liberalism.

How liberals respond to outside forces depends upon several factors. Firstly, there is the extent and nature of their marginalisation. Liberals may be operating in contexts where, though politically marginalised by the ruling elite, they exemplify historical and cultural traditions, or can appeal to large numbers of sympathisers or call on the support of influential segments of society. This will condition the extent of their need to compromise. Secondly, there is the extent to which they can make alliances or at least enjoy common aspirations with other factions which advocate ideas which liberals find acceptable.

The way in which liberalism reacts to an alternative ideology, particularly when liberalism itself is in a position of weakness, can be illustrated by examining the relationship liberalism has with the ideas of religion. In the modern world, the relation

between liberalism and Islam is apposite. Therefore, I will refer to the example of Islam several times in this section of the introduction.<sup>6</sup>

The appropriation of those symbols and values which have typically been exploited by Islamists (that is, those who seek to create an Islamic state under sharia law) is a feature of the Islamic world where those who are more moderate seek to undermine the hard liners. Throughout the Muslim world secular regimes (be they authoritarian, democratic or semi-democratic) have sought to co-opt Islam and remove it from the control of Islamists by establishing religious organisations and supporting more moderate Islamic thinkers so that the Islamists do not have a monopoly over “Islam” as a source of legitimacy (See L. Esposito and John Obert Voll 1996 for an examination of this in a variety of contexts).

One interesting example of this is the approach of Muslim reformers in the modern age. While Muslim countries have seen their fair share of secularists, communists and nationalists who have tried to either push Islam completely out of the political sphere or limit its influence as much as possible, there is another stream in Muslim thought which has constantly made “Islamic” arguments and tried to find justification for liberal and modernizing ideas rooted in Islamic theology and traditions. How successful this strategy is depends largely on how flexible the brand of Islam that exists in a given context is, how much useable history is available, the attitude of holders of power (particularly the state), the relative strength of conservatives and the attitude of conservatives to liberal ideas - ranging from outright hostility to limited acceptance. An interesting study of this has been made by Robert Hefner (2000, 126) who argues that one of main shots in the arm for democracy in the recent history of Indonesia was the role played by what he terms “civil Islam”, an ideology which argued Islam should play a prominent role in politics, but also believed that this political role should be in keeping with the challenges posed by modernity. This ideology was very important in preventing the success of a counter attack upon democracy staged by conservative Islamists which was gaining momentum under the leadership of president Suharto in the mid 1990’s. Such a process occurs in many non-Western contexts. The Chinese

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<sup>6</sup> Gellner interestingly has suggested that Islam is the only religion which shares the features of nationalism as it forms a similar role in the construction of the state (Hefner 1977, 19-20).

philosopher, Hu, for example, tried to form a synthetic ideology combining liberalism and Confucianism (Guo 2004, 36).

The fundamental reason why many reformers take this approach is, of course, ideological – they are Muslim believers and, therefore, seek to accommodate their political ideas with their religious beliefs. (In other non-Western contexts, attempting to accommodate liberalism with perceived national particularities can be the result of a thinker combining liberalism with conservatism). However, these arguments are also being made with an awareness of cultural context. The thinkers know that Islam is one of the main sources of legitimacy, if not the main source; therefore, if reformist ideas can be attached to Islam they become much more powerful and authentic. Liberals operating in Islamic countries will sometimes try to look beyond the liberal movement for potential support and this can, therefore, include moderates amongst the Islamists and traditionalists (Hamzawy 2005). In some contexts where Islam dominates the discourse, forming arguments which are not at least partially supported from Islamic sources is almost impossible (if there is any desire for these ideas to have influence). This has very important implications for liberals, or for any political ideology, because it shows that the way the ideas themselves are formed is often influenced by the general consensus.

For those making arguments as political, cultural and ideological minorities, the ideas and the culture nearer the centre of power have to be taken into consideration, when they themselves seek to move their own ideas into the centre ground. And the more marginalised and weakened the ideological minority is, the greater the compromise that has to be made.

In 2004 the International Crisis Group (ICC) criticized the leftist Egyptian reform group, Kifaya, for targeting both President Mubarak and the Islamist opposition to the president (in particular the Muslim Brotherhood). The ICC argued that by refusing to form a broad coalition with some of the Islamists, Kifaya had exacerbated the marginalisation which it already suffered from, and risked becoming an irrelevance. However, Kifaya could equally say that it found both Mubarak and the Islamist opposition to him ideologically unacceptable. This is the choice that ideologically marginalised groups face. Many will find any compromise unacceptable, and only some

members of the marginalised group will try to compromise: this risks exposing splits in the group and making them even less influential.

Even if pragmatic unions are successful they are at best only temporary. An interesting analysis of secularism in Turkey argues that a *modus vivendi* (a temporary coalition) has been created between moderate Islamists and secularists and the army which enables secularism to remain in place in Turkey. Steunebrink (2004, 169) concentrates upon modern Turkey and it is interesting to note the emphasis he places on the importance of history and of scholars who find evidence to support secularism in Turkish history and thought. According to Steunebrink, the aim for liberals should be to move from a temporary coalition to transferring these values so that they are genuinely accepted as part of civil society. It might be argued that if liberals do manage to establish some sort of compromise with segments of the ideological opposition they may then have a more signal effect upon society. Deeper relationships between liberals and non-liberals require significant ideological meeting points. For example, some liberals (both in Western and non-Western contexts) borrow some of the concerns about universalism expressed by conservatives. Alexei Kara-Murza, whose ideas will be discussed in detail in this study, is an example of this kind of thinker.

Thus, there are two aspects to consider: on the one hand the strategic benefits which liberals might derive from close association with those who hold different ideologies, and on the other hand the problems arising from the ideological conflicts which these associations can cause, especially if liberals are in a weak position.

### **Hegemony and Civil Society**

Russian liberals are looking for ways in which their view of what the Russian nation should be can actually dominate. A useful concept to consider here is hegemony. Hegemony is often discussed in global terms describing a powerbase or ideology gaining a dominant level of influence in the world. Hegemony is also discussed in national terms. It can be viewed as both the power of the state to directly control and influence politics and a wider process where the state influences civil society.

There are two ways for liberalism to gain hegemony. Firstly, liberals themselves can become the dominant group in Russian politics and as a block govern the country. Secondly, liberal ideas can influence all the main actors in such a way that socialists are liberal socialists, conservatives are liberal conservatives, etc. This has partially been achieved in the economic sphere though not in other areas. Despite incomplete access to the media, liberals are able to have public debates, particularly over electronic media. According to some theorists of counter hegemony in the tradition of Gramsci the counter hegemonic argument needs to follow as closely as possible the dominant hegemony in order to achieve its goal. In some ways this explains some of the motivations of a number of Russian liberals as they have sought to overcome marginalisation by trying to move their ideas closer to the dominant ideology of the Russian government.

The sphere where Gramsci located the battle between the existing hegemony and the challenging counter hegemony was in civil society. He saw civil society as presenting opportunities for those who were in control and for those who wanted to change the status quo. Those in control of the state could use civil society to make arguments which gave the state legitimacy and support. Those pushing “counter hegemonies” could look to civil society as a space where they could gain influence and support, eventually enabling them to achieve enough momentum to become dominant.

It must be noted that theorists of hegemony, such as Gramsci, generally regard this as a very slow process. As Gramsci put it, it requires “steady penetration and subversion” (quoted in Lester 2002, 11) and is a war that must be first fought and won in civil society. The slowness of this process is something with which Russian liberals are beginning to come to terms.

Russian liberals are aware of the applicability of ideas of hegemony to the Russian context. In the early 1990’s liberals were interested in the ideas of Gramsci, for example, as they saw his ideas as being pertinent to what they saw as a struggle between ideological groups in Russia, though they dismissed the Marxist ideological baggage (Lester 2002, 97). Alexander Yanov, whom I will concentrate upon in the study, also has a strong interest in Gramsci (Yanov 2002, 355).

The central issue for theorists of civil society is how it relates to the state, particularly how much “space” is controlled by the state at the expense of civil society. In Russia there is general agreement that the state plays a huge role in society, a legacy both of the dominant role of the state during the Soviet era and the re-establishment of the state’s authority following the chaos of the Yeltsin period. The influence of state controlled organisations and institutions and the absence of media freedom can be cited as contributing to the lack of development of civil society. However, there are signs that civil society is starting to emerge. A particularly strong indication of this is the growth of the NGO sector (Sakwa 2004, 127). For liberal thinkers the NGO sector has been very important, providing them with forums to organise around and outlets to publicise their ideas, and most of them are connected to various NGOs. That said, many observers remain sceptical about the possibility of civil society remaining free from overbearing state interference, at least in the short term. This gives liberals less space to expand their ideology beyond liberal circles.

The debates that take place in these contexts can be viewed as competing ideas of nationalism in the broadest definition of the term, because they concern competing attempts to define what the nation in a given context should be. A useful argument which links nationalism and hegemony together has been made by Ernst Haas (1997) who argues that in nations that are going through transition there is a national debate – the winner of which sets the ideological, political and cultural agenda for the nation, until there is another period of transition.

### **The Engagement of Liberals in the National Question**

Just because liberals often do not clearly state that they are trying to form liberal answers to the national question does not mean they are not attempting to do this. Indeed, as Russia is going through transition, the effort to remake Russian identity is a project that everyone is engaged in. Even many of the liberals who are sceptical about nationalism as a theory or who concentrate upon rejecting Russian nationalist arguments are still taking part in this debate, because they have an agenda about how they want the Russian nation to develop.

Nationalism and its interpretation is therefore a “blind spot” in understanding liberalism in post-Soviet Russia which has not been fully investigated. The national question is



both an opportunity and a challenge for liberals. It is an opportunity for Russian liberals because Russia is still in a process of transition and thus there is a possibility of directing it in what liberals would consider to be the “right” direction. Because they are marginalised, Russian liberals are challenged to find some way to tie liberalism to the central identity of Russia. Thus, in this thesis I will argue that liberals must be able to come to a satisfactory answer to the national question in order for liberalism to progress in Russia. This answer must be:

- 1) Capable of uniting the majority of liberals and sections of non-liberals. As Russian liberals are a small minority of the population it seems logical that they will be able to engage in debates about which form of nationalism should or should not dominate, if they have some degree of uniformity in their argument. Also, they will be more successful if the argument resonates with some who do not regard themselves as liberals. It might be argued that if liberals cannot generate a theory which unites liberals themselves they cannot really aspire towards generating a theory which draws significant support outside the liberal movement.
- 2) Capable of successfully utilising whatever social and political resources are in place. The argument they make must be able to mobilise some of the potential resources of support available. In a broad sense this means the people. But support must also come from organisations, political parties, etc. In the Russian context some maintain that the argument must also be acceptable to the government.
- 3) Capable of answering the cultural challenge. Liberals must explain how liberalism can or should fit in with Russian cultural particularities. Issues of identity have brought up many challenges for liberals, particularly as liberalism is often dismissed as being not “Russian” in some way. Nationalist arguments which strongly emphasise communalism and anti-liberalism are seen as more natural – these values are more readily connected with “Russianness” and must be counteracted.

### **Problems of Dialogue from a Position of Weakness**

Russian liberals who are marginalised have a problematic relationship with those who hold political power, and with those who hold to different ideologies. Again, the question they must address is whether a possible strategic benefit is worth the ideological problems such a relationship can cause. The problem for Russian liberals who seek to adapt liberalism and to make it suitable for the Russian context and palatable for non-liberals is that they can themselves become a product of their context rather than influencing it.

This dilemma is apparent in their relationship with the central authority. This point has been made in accounts of the history of Russian liberals, particularly by Sergei Solov'ev. Alexander Semyonov recounts Solov'ev's analysis:

The great Russian historian, Sergei Solovyov, pinpoints the "mirror effect" as the main determinant of the Russian liberal tradition. He contended that Russian liberals lacked an internal profile and designated their program according to the current policy of the autocracy, which intermittently switched from reform to reaction and back again. (2006, 335)

This is still a concern for Russian liberals (in this study articulated in particular by Yanov) and must be a problem which they seek to confront, as in their marginalised state they seek to gain influence, but from a position of weakness. And although their ideology upholds an idealized view of the West and anti-communism, their attention is mainly focused on the ideas and values of those who wield power in Russia.

Bogdan Kistiakovskii (see Walicki 1992, 242-404) accused his fellow liberals of being overly politicised in how they approach different issues. Kistiakovskii argued that oppositionist liberals and the government both failed to regard the law as being independent from the ongoing political battle, but instead saw it as being a political weapon to be used against their opponents. Kistiakovskii illustrates the tension that exists between liberals who strive for immediate answers to problems, and those who try to develop deeper and more long-term solutions, which are not affected by the immediate political fray. The issue is therefore what solutions would be acceptable to

differing groups of liberals. Russian liberals have a broadly similar long-term ideal which they are striving for; however, they vary on how much they are willing to compromise – how much they are willing to diverge from the perfect vision of a completely westernized liberal democracy.

The study of liberals who feel they are marginalised, therefore, shows that marginalisation can have a fundamental effect both on their ideologies and also on their strategies towards rival ideologies. When Russian liberals discuss a general idea their main concern and focus is on how this idea is relevant in Russia, rather than the merits of this idea as a concept or how it is manifested in other contexts.<sup>7</sup> This applies as much to their approach towards nationalism as it does to anything else.

### **Employing Clearly Nationalist Arguments to Bolster Liberalism in Periods of Transition**

In this study I will argue that all liberals are engaged in a debate about the Russian nation with the aim of transforming it into a liberal Russian nation. I have already explored how broadening the base of what liberalism is concerned with is a way of potentially opening new avenues of support for liberalism both amongst those in the ideological centre of the political elite and also amongst the wider population. However, there is a question as to whether overtly nationalist arguments are helpful to liberals in this process.

There are several ways that an approach which is clearly nationalist or patriotic can help or weaken liberalism. The greatest advantage nationalism can confer on liberals who are in a minority is legitimacy. It can also shield them against attacks from particularists. One of the most serious problems liberals in non-Western contexts face is that their ideas can be dismissed as Western and irrelevant by particularists. Nationalism can play a key role in legitimizing liberalism and protecting it from the attacks of those who

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<sup>7</sup> Also important in discussing the issue of compromise or even convergence between liberalism and rival ideologies, is how these ideologies have themselves been influenced by and have partially accepted liberalism. For example, some of the “Patriots” in Russia, from the mid-1990’s onwards, became influenced by some early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian liberal thinkers (Drobizheva 1998, 141) and in general became more responsive to liberalism and less antagonistic towards Western economic models. This actually meant that more of a rapprochement could be made with some liberals who were themselves becoming interested in Russian discussions of nationalism.

claim it is “foreign”. Kennedy states that in the case of Eastern Europe, “becoming national” is a way for liberals to insulate themselves against these attacks:

Such a liberal critique of the Polish nation would be perfect fodder for nationalist counter mobilization if it were mounted from London or New York alone. In this case, however, liberalism comes from within the Polish nation. In that moment, liberalism offers its rebuttal to nationalism...liberalism thus enters the nation as an alternative nationalism that claims to be apart from nationalism. Liberalism gains its transformative power by becoming national. Its power rests on its ability to transcend the national.

These two engagements of liberalism and nationalism – the liberal critique of the actually existing nation and the liberal critique of the actually existing nationalist – are both national expressions. Without grounding within the nation, the liberal critique cannot escape the nationalist counters. Thus, liberalism must become national in order to become effective and must accept the national claim in order to become effective and must accept the national claim that national identity matters. (2000, 360-361)

In contexts where liberalism has been weak and marginal, liberals have to work harder to make liberalism “become national”. This is because it is too easy for anti-liberals to dismiss liberalism as not being part of the national tradition. Therefore, liberals who want to employ nationalism positively will often construct theories which show that liberalism can at least play a significant role in the country. These theories often focus upon history or upon certain traditions which are seen as particular to the nation and compatible with liberalism. As I have already discussed, this process is affected by the power that liberals have; the more marginal they are the harder it will be for them, and the greater the compromise they may have to make.

In Russia, as elsewhere, nationalism (both as a theory and in its manifestations in Russia) is particularly divisive for liberals and this factor makes it harder for those liberals who are trying to use it as a positive force. Anti-nationalist arguments made by liberals can therefore reinforce the perception that liberalism and nationalism are incompatible.

Of particular importance is the nature of the nationalism in a given context. Nationalism typically has different values associated with it, which can vary from place to place. In Russia, being obviously patriotic is frequently associated with illiberalism. This again means that liberals have to work harder if they want to make liberalism seem national.

One final area of importance is that nationalism in Russia has not (possibly in spite of predictions to the contrary) posed a radical challenge to the authorities. This is especially the case because independent nationalist movements with radical intentions of reorganising the state have been fairly marginal.<sup>8</sup> Instead, nationalism in Russia has been very easily manipulated to bolster the statist agenda of post-Soviet Russian authorities. Thus, those liberals who desire a radical change to the status-quo have found nationalism to be less useful than it might be in other contexts.

### **Russia in Transition – Problems as well as Opportunities**

I have already discussed how the engagement of liberals in the national debate is an opportunity because Russia is going through transition. Transition can be seen as an opportunity for thinkers, as it is a time when ideas become more important and more influential. Indeed, it might be argued that Russia is no longer in an age of cynicism about ideas in general (which was the case during the 1990's in the aftermath of communism), and is now more actively searching for something to replace Soviet ideology. As Judith Goldstein argues:

Periods in which power relations are fluid and interests and strategies are unclear or lack consensus generate demands for new ideas. In such times, articulations of principled and causal beliefs that were ignored earlier may exert an impact on policy. (1993, 26)

However, it should be noted that thanks to the success of Putin's statism in the national debate, the doorway to establishing a new identity for Russia is quickly closing to those who have other visions of what Russia should be, but given the newness of the post-Soviet Russian nation, it has not completely closed.

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Eduard Limonov's National Bolshevik Party which has been courted by some liberals opposed to Putin. However, in practice the threat to the Putin government has been minimal.

Transition allows for the reappraisal of issues connected to national identity and for reconsideration of what Russia is or should be. Therefore, transition saw the resurgence of different forms of nationalism in Russia which became sources of new ideas about Russia. While the liberal position is not always clear on these issues (as I will show there is considerable diversity), there is still an incentive for liberals to have an input - to stop national debates being dominated by non-liberals. Meanwhile, as will be shown in this study, it is apparent that the experience of transition has spurred some liberals into considering and exploring nationalism who would otherwise have been unlikely to have turned their thoughts to it.

The danger of ideological stratification is another feature of transition which warrants attention. Countries in transition are likely to encompass ideological groups with little or nothing in common. Building consensus between divergent political ideologies is seen by some as one of the most important ways of establishing successful transitions.<sup>9</sup> This, therefore, is another reason why liberals might want to consider the wider ideological spectrum, including ideas formulated by some nationalists and particularists - though for most liberals winning ideological battles remains the main concern.<sup>10</sup>

However, transition also has the effect of confusing those involved in political debate. It requires a readjustment in thinking as some of the old ideas that were previously important are no longer relevant or have to be significantly readapted. Often there is movement from previously held feelings of certainty to feelings of confusion. For Russian liberals, the period of readjustment from the mid 1990's onwards has led to greater variety of opinion throughout the liberal movement. The many contradictions presented by transition do not necessarily have a single "liberal" answer any more. Questions such as whether Russia should have a federal or a national structure, for example, or how much modification Western ideas need if they are to be imported into Russia, or what role the state can and should play in introducing reforms cannot be

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Noha el-Mikawy's (1999, 41-69) emphasis on "pluralist consensus building".

<sup>10</sup> The wider question of consolidation in Russia, and the way nationalism might help in achieving it, has been highlighted by some Western commentators such as Hosking (1997, 486). For the most part Russian liberals are not motivated by a concern for consolidation, perhaps because they remain more concerned about how Russian society can change from its collectivist character to being more individualistic, than how it can or should be consolidated. The exception to this, however, is the nationalities debate which thinkers of all types are interested in.

answered with a single liberal voice. This diversity has impacted the whole world since the collapse of communism. For this reason, (as displayed by their attitudes towards nationalism) Russian liberals have begun to show much greater diversity from the mid 1990's onwards, as liberalism began to split and divide.

## **Methodology**

The aim of this study is to give a picture of how those who either define themselves as liberals, or have this term attributed to them, have reacted to the challenges that liberalism faces in Russia, and, in particular, how they have responded to the question of nationalism. I have examined a core group (Alexander Yanov, Alexei Kara-Murza, Igor Klyamkin, Igor Yakovenko, and Valery Tishkov) who have been selected because they are most concerned with nationalism. All the thinkers I am dealing with can be clearly demonstrated to be "liberal" in the position they occupy within the Russian spectrum. I will lay out the criteria for defining who is a liberal in the Russian context and what this means in chapter 2 of this study.

Although I have selected this core group, the goal of this study is not so much to compare and contrast the different opinions of these thinkers, as to use them as a vehicle for illuminating the way that Russian liberalism has reacted towards nationalism. Therefore, the study is not limited only to these thinkers, but will include input from others if they are useful for attaining the wider goal of describing the relationship of Russian liberalism with nationalism. Equally, I will not discuss in great detail aspects of the ideologies and outlooks of the "core thinkers" if they are not relevant to the overall aim of creating an overview of the relationship between liberalism and nationalism.

The "core thinkers" occupy positions regarding nationalism which are important in giving an overview of the liberal interpretation of nationalism. The positions which I ascribe to each of the thinkers are given briefly below.

Yanov opposes all forms of nationalism in a traditional dissident-liberal style. This style could be called "hard anti-nationalism". Klyamkin displays scepticism towards nationalism but with perhaps less intensity than Yanov. (Klyamkin has been included to give more balance to anti-nationalist arguments). This position could be called "soft

anti-nationalism” and is the position held by the majority of liberals in Russia. Tishkov can be termed a “liberal-nationalist” in his interpretation and application of Western theories about nationalism, particularly theories of “civil nationalism”. Kara-Murza can also be labelled a liberal-nationalist on account of his reinterpretation of certain traditions in Russian thought – a reinterpretation of both Russian liberal streams of thought and also Russian nationalist traditions. This is a style of thought often regarded as “cultural nationalism” by analysts. The category “liberal-nationalist” also applies to Yakovenko in his reaction against imperialism. This approach mixes elements of ethnic and cultural nationalism. These thinkers have all engaged with the national question on a fairly consistent basis during the Putin era. Furthermore, they are all important and significant in terms of the sum of their political, public and intellectual influence.

The terms I have used to describe the different nuances of liberal opinion in the previous paragraph are on the whole rarely consciously employed in the Russian debate. Thus, Klyamkin does not define himself as a “soft anti-nationalist”. This is a term which I have attributed to him. But, in studying the ideas of liberals I have noted these different positions regarding nationalism amongst them which can, in fact, more accurately be defined as shades of opinion - liberals tending to share one or other aspect of their thought to a greater or lesser degree. A more accurate way of describing the various positions liberals adopt might be to characterize them as ‘impulses’ in liberal thought about the “National Question”. The lack of an ideological self-definition and of a clear definition of terms used by Russian thinkers themselves (which I will discuss further in future sections), places a limitation on the accuracy with which observers can categorise thinkers and ideologies in Russia. Thinkers and political parties do not rally to the cause of one type of “civil nationalism” or “cultural nationalism”. This is partly because, though the liberal movement in Russia shows a high degree of diversity, it is still operating within an illiberal or semi-liberal society. This factor means that internal differences between liberals, however severe, are generally never as great as the differences between them and non-liberals. This prevents them fragmenting completely into sub groups.

Many of the thinkers under consideration in this study have not been dealt with in close detail in Western monographs (though Alexander Yanov and Valery Tishkov have



received some attention).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, this study will reveal new perspectives from Russia that have not been closely examined. Most Western studies of liberalism and nationalism in Russia have been normative accounts of how these problems should be dealt with in the Russian context. There have not been many studies of how Russians have answered these questions themselves, particularly in the latter part of the Yeltsin era and the Putin era. Therefore, I feel there is an excellent opportunity to explore the views of Russian thinkers themselves.

The first chapter of this study will discuss the role of thinkers in Russia in general. This will focus in particular upon their relations with the agents who can affect change in Russian society: in particular, the state, political parties and the media. It will show that thinkers are important because of the relative autonomy they have in comparison to those who are closely linked to political power. However, this section will also show that political power and marginalisation are key factors for Russian thinkers which have a critical impact upon their ideas and ideology.

The second chapter will focus in particular upon Russian liberalism. It will show that the core values of Russian liberalism are Westernism and anti-Sovietism. It will argue that liberalism in Russia has had this particularly narrow meaning because of how it is defined, both by liberals themselves and also by opponents of liberalism. This chapter will also discuss important developments in the history of Russian liberalism, in particular, how Russian liberalism (responding in part to its marginalisation) developed from a narrow vision into one which began to broaden its scope by studying Western ideas, integrating ideas from Russian intellectual history, and, in some cases, responding to the challenges of Russian particularities. It will show that this broadening of Russian liberalism has led to a greater variety of positions amongst liberals, and also to greater conflict amongst them.

The third chapter will discuss the various approaches to nationalism as a theory which have been influential in Russia. It is my view that because of the marginalisation of

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<sup>11</sup> Alexander Yanov has been the subject of several studies, particularly in Dunlop's "The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism" (1983). The wider attention he has received in the West is due to the fact that he actively publishes in the Western press as well as in the Russian press. Igor Klyamkin and Valery Tishkov have both published several books and articles in English. Alexei Kara-Murza, and Igor Yakovenko have a mostly Russian profile.

Russian liberals, they have mostly focused upon the debate in their own country when forming ideas about nationalism. This has had both positive and also negative repercussions; liberals who have sought to embrace positive attitudes towards nationalism have also borrowed some ideas from Russian “patriots”, and liberals who reject nationalism in Russia are mostly responding to domestic nationalists. I have also shown how the more positive response towards nationalism has been aided by some of the “patriots” being influenced by liberal ideas. In this chapter I will show how thinkers such as Tishkov, who have tried to introduce modern Western ideas about nationalism, have been the exception rather than the rule.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters will explain how Russian liberals have engaged in nationalism in a broader way – how have they sought to shape what the Russian nation is or should be. This is often in response to the anti-liberal and anti-Western arguments made by some Russian nationalists, because those who engage most overtly in national debates are naturally the main reference points for the approach of others to national questions. Here we will examine how Russian liberals are engaged in an ideological battle, aiming to establish liberalism at the centre of Russian identity.

The fourth chapter will examine the question of particularism and universalism, the debate over which dominates Russian intellectual history. In post-Soviet debate “civilisational” discussions are still very popular and Russian liberals engage in them frequently with ideological opponents. This chapter will examine how Russian liberals have continued this debate and how it has influenced their attitudes towards nationalism. Though all liberals are by nature Westernisers, they do not all perceive the West in the same way: some argue that the West represents universalism and post-nationalism, while others argue that the West is a collection of individual nations. This chapter will also explore the contentious issue of particularism, which is very divisive for liberals. Liberals have tried to explain if (and how) liberalism should be adapted to the Russian context and how the challenge of anti-liberal particularism should be answered.

The fifth chapter will discuss the perception of liberals as to what Russia is and what it should be. In the first instance the question of definition will be considered. The most important aspect of this for many liberals is proving that Russia is a “Western” country.

This is achieved through advancing both historical and also sociological arguments (the latter arguments aiming to prove that the mentality of modern Russians is the same as that of people in the West). There is less agreement amongst Russian liberals about what other areas of Russian identity are important. For example, some place an emphasis upon history, while others reject it as practically irrelevant. Much of the time liberals are more interested in undermining those aspects of Russian identity which they feel are antagonistic towards liberalism rather than defining Russian identity in a positive sense.

A further aspect of the debate about Russian identity is the extent to which national minorities should be given autonomy and how far Russia should be a “multicultural” rather than a civil nation. Russian liberals, probably due to their own marginalisation, have been very reluctant to give support to national minorities which are more likely to provide support for conservative anti-liberalism than for liberalism. Furthermore, Russian liberals are to some extent concerned about the possibility of the fragmentation of the Russian Federation. A counter point to this is that Russian liberals continually insist that Russia’s leadership should halt any imperial ambitions they might have. This is occasionally taken to extremes when it is asserted that Russia needs to become smaller in order to function as a Western nation. Chapters 4 and 5 will show that while liberals have made some headway, they still have a long way to go till they can form an effective answer to the national question.

The sixth chapter will examine how “useful” overtly nationalist arguments can be for Russian liberals both in building support for liberalism amongst the wider population and also from the state. It will question whether this is a viable strategy for broadening the base of liberalism and strengthening it. However, a close relationship with nationalism as it is normally interpreted in Russia could also pose the threat of liberalism being overrun, particularly as liberalism is coming into the relationship from a position of weakness.

## **Chapter 1: Russian Thinkers in the Post-Soviet Context**

In this study I will be considering a group of Russian thinkers and publicists who can all be described as having liberal political views. I will discuss how they have reacted to the “national question” in Russia; that is, I will be assessing their attitudes towards nationalism and how they believe Russian liberals should try to influence the development of national identity in their country. Before discussing the ideas of the members of this group we will first consider what it means to be a “thinker” who is concerned with creating ideology in contemporary Russia. Those who are concerned with creating new political theories and ideologies can be divided into three groups: Thinkers, Publicists and Politicians. These different types have different approaches to dealing with issues and making arguments. In reality, more often than not, most people operating in political debates fall under more than one of these headings and sometimes under all three. However, I feel it would be beneficial to examine each of these terms individually before going on to consider how they combine together.

### **The Role of the Thinker in Russian Politics**

What a “thinker” is, or more specifically, what role he or she should take in society is a question of some controversy. “Thinker” is a less specific term than “intellectual” and it does not necessarily carry the baggage that the word “intellectual” bears. “Intellectual” has been defined in differing narrow terms as Edward W. Said (1994) has shown. Said contrasts Julien Benda’s vision of an individual super-intellectual who acts as the conscience of the nation, to that of Gramsci’s idea of a class that includes advisors, media, academics, and punches “heavier than its weight” in political terms. Perhaps in reality both these definitions can be useful in determining how those who see themselves as intellectuals operate. Generally, examples of these two types co-exist in most nations - there is an intellectual elite group which produces individuals who become public figureheads for certain ideas. The emergence of the intellectual represents one of the key developments in the history of Russian political thought. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the meaning of the term was specifically defined: it referred to a moral belief in self sacrifice on behalf of the people or the (usually radical) cause, strong idealism and fervent belief in the indisputability of their arguments. I prefer the term

“thinker” because it has a less tightly defined meaning.<sup>12</sup> Dostoevsky is clearly a Russian thinker, though few would regard him as an intellectual in the typical Russian sense because of his virulently anti-radical politics. Therefore, “thinker” is more useful because it is ideologically neutral. I would consider a thinker as someone who takes a reflective, analytical approach to the debates that are current in his or her time. Thinkers are generally not so concerned with winning support for certain ideas and attitudes; they are rather more concerned with describing the world they live in. This is not to say they do not have a creative role also; thinkers do also construct ideas and ideologies.

The question of what role the thinker should have in relation to society is naturally discussed by modern Russian thinkers themselves. One of the interesting contemporary topics of discussion is what the relationship between thinkers and politicians should be. Generally, in Russia the relationship between thinkers and power has been a contentious subject of debate. Russia has always lacked a civil society in the Western sense. Therefore, political ideas sometimes become more influential according to the proximity of the adherents to those who wield political power. This was particularly the case in the perestroika era, though it is much less so in recent Russian history. Alexei Kara-Murza feels that division between the role of the thinker and that of wielding political power are not necessary:

A politician must be understood as the combination of two hypostases - man, who attempts to react, and man, who makes political decisions. ... It seems to me that Democrates divides these spheres too sharply.... For indeed it is necessary for one to be occupied by practical activity, to take responsibility for these or other solutions and so forth. Many people, who assert that they are completely distant from policy, do also participate in the configurations connected with the distribution of authority ... They [political thinkers in Western history] were all people who directly participated in politics and who were attempting to transfer their theoretical views into political practice. I do not

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<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Andrei Sinyavsky, alias Abram Tertz, in “The Russian Intelligentsia” (1997), has noted the traditions of self-sacrifice laid down by the Russian intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and is scathing in his criticism of the glasnost era intellectuals, accusing them of betraying this tradition. He is particularly critical of their coldness towards the plight of the general public, during the economic downturn of the early 1990’s. In modern Russia it is doubtful whether this term has a fixed meaning. For example, in one episode of the talk show “Svobodnoe Slovo” numerous different definitions of the term were given when the question “What is meant by intelligentsia?” was discussed.

exclude the possibility that, if at that time there were opportunities, these people could be chosen for the highest posts in the state. I would say that the participation of the political theorist in the formation of policy is a widely disseminated phenomenon. Thus, Machiavelli was the secretary of the Florentine council, and Spinoza, who was interested, however, more in metaphysics than political problems, still worked with chancellor de Witt. (2003)

One of the most important theorists of liberalism in Russia, Boris Kapustin, also makes a similar claim that thinkers should have a direct input into society. Indeed, he feels that the ideas produced actually benefit from those producing them having close links with the society they are trying to understand. Without this, according to Kapustin: “...the result is political philosophy becomes ‘a game of wits in campuses’, instead of the discussion of that which really influences political life, and the possibility of entering into a strategic alliance with these political forces. As a matter of fact, the destiny of political philosophy is a destiny of society, instead of a separate area of thought; and if the given type of knowledge is not necessary for society, political philosophy is at best marginalised, and in the worse case is swept away” (2003).

However, in the 1990’s not all thinkers were interested in engaging in politics, (including many of those who had a natural affinity towards liberal political ideas). This was partially a legacy of the cynicism about politics which became common in Russian society during the later part of the Soviet period. It was also a legacy of the disappointments following the collapse of communism. Ironic cynicism and reluctance to engage in politics amongst intellectuals have probably weakened the power of the liberal movement in Russia. However, it should be noted that this cynicism has been less of a feature of Russian debates in recent years and there is growing acceptance of the importance of political ideas.

Thinkers are, of course, influenced strongly by the context in which they are evolving their ideas. For politically-minded thinkers this is perhaps even more so the case; they are continually influenced by outside pressures and are, at the same time, trying to influence the wider society. Thinkers, therefore, have an awareness of and a concern about their relationship with those who hold political power. This concern is firstly

manifested in a desire to be able to enter into independent and unfettered dialogue (a concern evident, for example, in the case of the Eastern European thinkers who sought to create a space for independent discussion during the later decades of the Soviet Union – see Swift 1999, 55-64). Secondly, there is the aim of influencing and shaping the political sphere, both through impacting the wider political arena and also through communicating ideas to the wider population. Thinkers who are concerned about politics are very sensitive about their marginalisation because they realise this can mean their ideas are essentially irrelevant.

Indeed, the role of ideas in influencing society (or the lack of this influence) is a constant area of discussion for Russian thinkers. And it is because ideas are seen as so crucial that Russian intellectual disputes have had such intensity. The domination of ideas in politics significantly affected the manner and content of reform during the collapse of the Soviet Union and the early years of the post-Soviet period. Here, Simon Kordonskii describes the way thinkers acted in the post-Soviet era:

In the time of perestroika there appeared a new generation of social directors. Perestroika initiated such academicians, as Aganbegyan, Shatalin, Arbatov and Zaslavskaya in the roles of theorists, advisers and assistants to the first leaders of state. Also Popov, Sobchak, Khasbulatov and other professors appeared first as the opponents of conservative forces in the management by state and the compilers of the alternative programs for the turn to the market, and then as the functionaries of the new order. Finally, in the epoch of Gaidar [the economist who helped to formulate the privatisation plan in Russia in the early 1990's] the important state matter of the building of capitalism switched over to Candidates of Sciences, students of professors and academicians, who appear in the roles of experts, consultants, deputies of the people and the leaders of the " independent research centres ". They present the last reserve of the Soviet mentality, with the idea of the infinite plasticity of social reality characteristic of it and the domination of the economy above politics and the culture. (2005)

We should conclude, therefore, that thinkers in Russia do not always confine themselves to university campuses or research centres. Generally, thanks to the

upheavals that Russia has faced directly as a result of intellectual revolutions, there remains a tradition of thinkers engaging directly in Russian politics.

For thinkers such as Gramsci the issue is not whether the intellectual should seek to engage in the political process, but how they can do this successfully. Importantly, Gramsci emphasises the role of understanding the “national sentiment” in connecting intellectuals to the people they are trying to influence:

The popular element "feels" but does not understand or know; the intellectual element "knows" but does not understand and, above all, does not always "feel".  
(Gramsci 1996, 173)

In some way this resonates with the traditional lament of Russian thinkers (especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) that they are detached or separate from the people. As I will discuss in chapter 6, appropriating nationalism is sometimes seen as a way of overcoming this divide and enabling thinkers to increase and to feel more “connected” with and their influence upon the wider population.

In Russia there is also an important tradition of thinkers trying to influence society and politics through engaging with the media; such thinkers can be referred to as publicists. The important role played by publicists should not be seen as a new phenomenon in Russia. Indeed, its appearance in contemporary Russia seems to be a continuity of traditions that have been present in Russia since at least the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this period the journals published (ranging from legal, to semi-legal, to samizdat) were hugely important in forming intellectual discourse. This continued into the Soviet period, with journals remaining the main engine for driving political ideas. In post-Soviet Russia it is still the case that debates in the serious political journals (and their modern variant, websites) remain the most important locale for discussing the sort of questions we are considering. For this reason we will be concentrating mainly on this area. Of course, these debates are different from academic debates and they are sometimes seen as lacking the depth of academic debate. However, claims such as this by Kordonskii about the frivolousness of political debate amongst publicists, does not seem applicable only to Russia:



The Intelligent expert, who most frequently bases his judgments on newspaper and journalistic information, has an opinion about everything and is not troubled in any about voicing them under any circumstances. The political scene in the "new " times is overfilled with experts and analysts, competitors with each other in the artistic attractiveness of their ideas, estimations and forecasts. (2005)

Discussions amongst publicists are more polemical than discussions located elsewhere, (in theory- though even the more measured Russian academic debates, perhaps like everywhere else, have a strong polemical aspect) and generally rhetorical persuasion is more frequently employed than rigorous and critical analysis. It is particularly important to note, however, that those who operate as publicists and those who are located in the academic sphere have a markedly different attitude to defining concepts: academics take care to be more rigorous and accurate in their definitions. This is a key consideration because, as a result of their enthusiastic employment of rhetoric and polemics, the ideologies of publicists can be less easily discerned than those of other kinds of intellectuals. Here Marc Raeff describes the great 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian publicist, Mikhail Katkov:

Katkov was a journalist, reacting rapidly and acutely to every event. He did not have the time or genuine desire to think through the theoretical implications of his opinions; therefore, in his case we cannot expect a logical and perfectly consistent ideology. Yet, behind his emotional outbursts and in spite of his contradictions, one can discern a pattern of attitudes towards Russia's political, economic, and social problems. (1952, 160-161)

However, it is necessary to emphasise that the divide between discussions in academic journals and the debates in which publicists engage is not always clear cut and often they flow into and influence each other – indeed publicists are often responsible for introducing ideas developed elsewhere into a more public domain.

The final area we are looking at is engagement in politics: this can mean engagements in the political process through the media, membership of pressure groups and NGOs, and membership of political parties. Thus, rather than a narrow definition of political activity we are also considering engagement in civil society here. We should mention,

too, that membership of a political party in Russia is a slightly different undertaking than it is in some Western countries, particularly for the types of liberal politicians we are focusing upon.<sup>13</sup> Firstly, there are several small parties in Russia to which the liberals belong. The most important of these – *Yabloko*, and Union of Right Forces – have been in existence for several years, while the smaller ones are constantly disappearing and being replaced by new ones. Interestingly, I often find the attitude and actions of liberals who engage directly in politics through functioning political parties, and those who rather try to engage in debates as publicists, to be almost identical. Furthermore, the relationship between the small liberal parties and those who control political power is almost identical to that between an intellectual and the government. The best liberal political parties can achieve is to influence the government on certain issues by persuasion or to try to publicise the errors that government is making. Since liberals are suspicious of the government's reforming instincts they have to make a decision about how they are going to interact with the government and this has regularly oscillated between persuasion and attempting to criticise errors.<sup>14</sup>

All of the thinkers we are considering are academics. Therefore, they are used to the rigorous debates that occur in academia, where terms are carefully defined. Often, however, theories and ideas which originate in the academic sphere, where the thinkers under scrutiny in this thesis are located, enter into the debates engaged in by publicists and politicians, who are closer to political power. The result is that frequently ideas that initially emerge within the academic sphere take on a different character during this progression. This is most clearly exemplified in the lack of care taken over definitions that occur in non-academic debates. Whereas academic debates usually feature long discussions about what the specific meanings of certain terms are, non-academic debates define terms more loosely. The outcome of this is that while academic debates

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<sup>13</sup> According to Nikolai Petrov the party system in Russia is not yet fully developed and cannot as yet be compared to its Western counterparts (see Oates 1999, 79).

<sup>14</sup> A useful demonstration of this is in the article "Guchkov ili Milyukov?" by Igor Bunin and Alexei Makarin (*Segodnya*, 31 March, 2001). In this they offer two options for liberal politicians in their relations with government. They can either co-operate (as in the case of Alexander Guchkov who formed an alliance with Stolypin) or they can be steadfastly in opposition (such as Milyukov who was an idealistic oppositionist). These two models, the authors feel, are demonstrated constantly in Russian politics with both conciliatory and oppositionist attitudes displayed towards the government. Therefore, we can conclude that while in the West party membership makes a real difference to the actions of politicians and the way they express their views, in the liberal parties on the sidelines this is less the case and apart from a few high profile cases (namely leaders such as Boris Nemtsov, who is a leader of the Union of Right Forces, and Yavlinsky who is synonymous with the party *Yabloko*) the members of liberal parties behave in a similar way to intellectuals and publicists.

can sometimes become almost paralysed by exhaustive attempts to define and agree about the terms being used, non-academic debates often leave their participants talking at cross-purposes as arguments are based on differing definitions of the terms essential to the discussion. It is noticeable that when the thinkers I am considering engage in debates as publicists rather than as academics, they tend to be rather less careful about defining the terms they are using. The issues surrounding the definitions of terms will be commented upon in more detail in later sections of this study.

An academic background and specialisation in a specific area gives some authority to a publicist when he or she seeks to support their ideas. The branch of academic specialization also has a strong effect. The thinkers we are focussing upon in detail come from different academic backgrounds. Igor Klyamkin is a sociologist, Igor Yakovenko, Alexander Yanov and Alexei Kara-Murza are historians of ideas, and Valery Tishkov is an ethnographer. The arguments these thinkers propose, therefore, are very often influenced by the particular academic expertise in which they specialize. Thus, Klyamkin makes many more arguments which are supported by sociological observations than Yanov, for example, who employs theories about history to support his arguments. There are also some fundamental differences in their overall approach; some of the thinkers (particularly those who have a more philosophical background) deal with broad, abstract concepts, while others (particularly Tishkov, who is much closer to being considered a social scientist) concentrate on more specific, concrete examples. The fact that they have diverse backgrounds is useful for studying how liberals have approached the National Question, because this is itself an issue that requires a multi-disciplinary approach (i.e., it is a question that relates to history, sociology, political philosophy, international relations, etc.).

The approach that thinkers take specifically towards interpreting nationalism and engaging in broader debates about what Russia can or should be is also conditioned by their academic specializations. For example, Tishkov concentrates more upon the nationalities question within Russia than the others, due no doubt to his day to day professional involvement with this question. It is interesting to speculate the extent to which those who come from similar backgrounds adhere to similar positions when they move from narrow academic debates into broader political ones. Generally, I feel there are no direct correlations, except that many of the thinkers who hold “civil nationalist”

views similar to Tishkov, have arrived at this position via the study of nationalism as an academic specialization. They are more open to viewing it as a neutral concept and have made detailed studies of Western approaches to this issue. (We will discuss how these factors have influenced Tishkov's perception of nationalism in more detail in a later section.) However, the thinkers I am concentrating on come from different academic backgrounds yet their academic experience for the most part, does not determine their outlook; numerous other issues influence their attitudes. Thus, most of the particularities of Tishkov's outlook, for example, relate to him only, and it is not necessarily the case that all ethnographers in Russia share his views just because they have a shared academic speciality.

I have taken into consideration that the type of thinkers we are considering have roots in the academic sphere and sometimes in the political one, but I wish to concentrate upon their actions as publicists. This is where liberals from different backgrounds and specializations "meet" and engage in debates together and where it is possible to compare their views. We are not dealing, then, with pure theory or purely with the political process. Rather we are looking at the space between theory and direct engagement in politics, which I think is the most useful area to investigate for the purposes of this study.

It is evident that thinkers in Russia are critically aware of their relationship to those who are in authority and also of the ideological and political battles taking place in Russia. They are sometimes animated by a desire to overcome the perceived weakness of their ideas in relation to a powerful state. The role of politically active thinkers in these struggles is to try to develop ideas which can have an influence beyond their circle.

## **Chapter 2: Liberals and Liberalism**

This chapter will seek to define liberalism and who are liberals in Russia. It will introduce the ideological and social influences which have shaped how liberals have interpreted nationalism and have attempted to influence how the Russian nation should develop. In particular, the shared concern about marginalisation and whether liberalism needs to be adapted to make it a successful ideology in Russia will be examined. It will also be demonstrated that liberalism has become a progressively more fragmented and divided ideology throughout the Putin era.

### **Defining Liberals and Liberalism.**

Before discussing how Russians define “liberalism” we should first consider how this term is defined in general. What makes this term difficult is its multi-faceted usage. It is used to refer to a theory, a type of person and a type of mentality. Let us start with how the term is used in political theory. Liberalism originally arose in Western Europe, and from the very beginning it has been impossible to define “liberalism” as being one single ideology with one clear meaning. England, France, Germany and other countries of Europe formed distinctive traditions as did America. From this time onwards the flow of liberalism developed and responded to the different historical contexts in which it found itself. Liberal theory has depended on different sources for legitimacy ranging from Locke’s argument about the social contract (and Rawls’ (1971) modern version of this argument), to Mill’s belief in progress and utilitarianism, and also to the belief in natural law as argued by many including the thinkers of the French Enlightenment. While describing all the wanderings of liberal theory over the years is not necessary here, and is in itself perhaps an almost impossible task it is possible to pinpoint some core values that all liberal theories embrace, such as individualism, for example. Yet, the only firm conclusions one can draw are that liberalism, or the protection of individual rights, has resulted in a multiplicity of different theories and ideas<sup>15</sup> and that

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<sup>15</sup>Indeed, it is interesting to read different accounts of “liberalism” and spot the different ideological positions of their authors. For example, some accounts of “liberalism” show a clear appreciation of welfare-orientated social liberalism, while Friedrich Hayek (1944) and John Gray’s earlier work (1991),

in many modern contexts it has been very hard to define. In late 20<sup>th</sup> century France, for example, according to Hazareesingh (1999), there was considerable confusion about what exactly liberalism should mean.

The fact that liberal theories have produced complex theoretical structures sometimes leads to these structures being dismissed as too abstract and useless for helping with real problems. This criticism may be levelled too often; but we can say that liberalism is more than just a theoretical construct- it also describes a way of behaving. John Gray (1991), for example, contrasts liberal activity and liberal theory which he views as completely different from each other. It is important to consider that there have recently been attempts to remove some of the ideological and moral beliefs which liberalism rests upon and instead see liberalism more as a tool for resolving conflicts. The most important theorist of this type is Rawls who argues that liberalism is a neutral concept. However, these efforts have for the most part proved incomplete and unsatisfactory because such theorists ignore the moral assumptions that all those who engage in liberal practice have to share.

The word “liberalism” is applied to more than just theoretical constructs; it is also used in a locative sense. When placing different ideas, or people in a spectrum it usually refers (though not always) to those in the middle of the spectrum. Interestingly, in both the modern American context and also in modern Russian the term “liberal” has a flavour that places an individual or an idea on one side of the political spectrum. For example, the American use of “liberal” normally refers to a belief that the state should have a large influence in social and typically also in economic affairs, what is normally described as social democracy in Europe. Like most ideological labels used to describe a certain position this is in a sense misleading. The debate over liberalism has largely been won in the West, and rather than being one amongst many competing ideologies, liberalism has instead become the main source for the set of values which all the debaters both in the political and the academic arenas adopt. Indeed, Western debates are often about different types of liberalism in conflict with each other, each trying to use their definition of “liberalism” to gain legitimacy. The way these ideas are used to

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give a favourable representation of classical 19<sup>th</sup> century style liberalism and regard socially-orientated liberalism as a utopian mistake. It seems to be part of the nature of this doctrine that many writers have sought to claim it as their own and each one sees himself as the true prophet of liberal ideas.

seek support for certain beliefs is perhaps reminiscent of the role that Christianity used to occupy in political debates in the West - it was a legitimising force that could be relied upon to back up numerous different arguments. In Western politics the debate over issues such as capitalism and liberalism has receded into the background, with much more space being taken up by shared consensus than by ideological differences. For this reason, it is almost an irrelevance to call someone a liberal. When they claim this term it is always with reference to a specific type of liberalism; thus the debate in American publications over the decline of “liberalism” in the 1980s, for example, is focussing on one specific tradition (namely, the redistributive, socially-orientated liberalism of the Left (Hayward 2001)). Liberalism in its broadest sense has not declined but continues to dominate the political landscape. It is almost unavoidable here to mention Francis Fukuyama (1992) whose famous polemic proclaiming the “end of history” struck a chord in the West where it seemed there was complete consent that liberalism’s dominance was unshakable.<sup>16</sup>

The “locational” definition of liberalism, which judges what is liberal by its place in the political spectrum, has sometimes been used to describe the political mainstream in Russia. A Russian example of “liberalism” as being synonymous with the central ground can be seen in G. Karpi’s essay, “Byli li slavyanofili liberalami?” (2002) This argues that the Slavophiles of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were liberals because the position they adopted in the political spectrum was that of centrists despite the fact that their ideological views were largely critical of the West and of modernisation, the sort of views that are generally considered anti-liberal. Therefore, it seems that the “locational” method of determining whether someone is liberal can lead to distortions of the definition, or at least to wildly different uses of the term depending on context.

In a similar sense, “liberalism”, or more specifically, the term “liberal”, can be used to describe different political actions, notably, reforms, such as Russia’s Great Reform of 1861. This is often described as “liberal”. Furthermore, the Great Reform drew support from many Russian thinkers including those who are sometimes described as anti-liberal or conservative.<sup>17</sup> Looking at responses to specific events is a different approach

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<sup>16</sup> Fukuyama has, not surprisingly, received widespread attention in Russia. As I will show in Chapter 4, the responses to his ideas were generally mixed.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Mikhail Katkov.

to locating and categorising varying political positions than that of trying to use distinct ideological tags. With this latter approach it is possible to maintain the belief that people are capable of engaging in “liberal” actions or supporting “liberal” causes, even while proclaiming anti-liberal views. When this method is applied to those who wield political power it can be used to access them instrumentally; instead of examining what they said, one investigates what the effects of the policies they supported were.

A final way to define “liberals” or “liberalism” is to focus on how the term is used (if it is used) in a given context. We can examine those thinkers who define themselves as “liberal” and who also have this term attributed to them. The problem here could be that the term might be used in a misleading way or it might take on certain characteristics that lead it to be used in too narrow or too wide a sense. The fact is, as we have seen with the many different Western uses of this term (and as we will see when we analyse how Russians use the term in the next section), “liberalism” is prone to being influenced by the context in which it is used. Since in the West there has been no single and precise definition of “liberalism” I will be working predominantly with the Russian variation of the term.

It must be remembered most importantly, then, that “liberal” and “liberalism” are versatile terms that can be used in a variety of ways. In this study we will be concentrating upon Russian thinkers who define themselves as liberals. The reason they define themselves in this way may be because they subscribe to ideological and theoretical views they judge to be coming from a liberal tradition, or because they locate themselves as centrists, or because they support reforms which are interpreted as liberal, or most likely a combination of all of these factors.

### **Problems of Definition in the Russian Context**

The use of the term “liberal” in Russia can be discussed as part of a wider question about the function of ideological tags in Russia (and, as I will show in a future section, some of the issues raised also apply to Russia’s use of the term “nationalism”).

According to the writer, A.K. Pavelenko, the need to label people under certain ideological orientations is part of Russia’s political legacy. As he puts it: “...the use of labels is one of the elements of the Russian political tradition which liberals have not



refused” (2001, 326). Pavelenko is correct that all political thinkers in Russia, including liberals, do employ ideological terms - though one feels that this is not a distinctively Russian tradition. Indeed, the discussion of different political ideas and thinkers becomes a very difficult and messy process without labels. What Pavelenko may really be referring to is the way that ideological terms sometimes take on a distinct meaning and are applied in a distinct way within the Russian context. This is not a question restricted purely to Russian thinkers, but many Western commentators have referred to specific particularities of Russian political thought. Here a Russian historian, I.A Khristoforov, refers to Alfred J. Rieber’s work on the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century reforms in Russia:

“Political language”, the American researcher Alfred J. Rieber writes, “is used in the 19th century by the majority of historians..., it was generated on the basis of the experience of West-European countries. To apply it in the context of Russian history only confuses and moves us away from the real situation...” In this analysis there is much that is true. And still, in my opinion, it is impossible to agree with the conclusion, that “the description of the political life of Russia needs a completely different terminology”. In fact, Western terminology was (and remains!) the major means of judgment of political processes. (2001, 120)

Khristoforov’s conclusion here is, I think, very sensible: while it is debatable as to whether Western concepts about political ideologies are suitable for accurately describing the situation in Russia, there is no alternative.

It is useful to examine some of the other attempts to examine ideology in a post-Soviet context, particularly in terms of the terminology used. In his study, “Nationalism and the Russian political spectrum: Locating and evaluating the extremes”, Sven Gunnar Simonsen makes some interesting observations about how attempts have been made (all ultimately unsuccessful) to explain ideological trends in post-Soviet Russia:

A more common approach to the problem of analogies has maintained the single continuum that suggests relative placement, but has identified *groups* of actors within the continuum that share characteristics, and made less a point of the

distance between the actors. The underlying idea is precisely the one that opinions and attitudes tend to come in clusters. The number of groups/categories may vary between such models. The extent to which the models use popular Russian terminology – for instance the term ‘national-patriots’ – is another variation. Typical such categories include *Stalinists*, *new Left*, *social democrats*, *centrists*, *liberal democrats*, *national patriots*, and *extreme Right*. Among the categories specifically identified as nationalists (or national patriots) in Russia, terms one may encounter include ethnocrats, imperialists, fascists, etc. (2000)

Simonsen is critical of all of these concepts because he feels the groups having these terms attributed to them do not really exist as movements, that is, as groups which tightly define themselves behind one of these ideological terms. Furthermore, he asserts the subjectivity with which labels are given:

....To illustrate, analysts in the conservative American Heritage Foundation will tend to view the Russian political spectrum as lying more to left than, say, European liberals or Russians themselves would. Consequently, for instance, Heritage Foundation described the electoral bloc that included Anatoliy Chubais, Sergey Kirienko, Yegor Gaidar, and Boris Nemtsov (the SPS [also known in the West as the Union of Right Forces]) as ‘centre-right’ [Other observers including Russians would often brand these as radicals]. (2000)

Peter Rutland’s (1997) useful article on ideology in the Yeltsin era makes it clear how fractured the ideological patterns that formed at this time were.<sup>18</sup> He emphasises the ideological flexibility of this era; the examples he gives are the patriot, Alexander Lebed, (the patriotic “strongman” who employed an economist, an adherent of Friedrich Hayek’s theories, to write his economic program), and the widespread use of anti-Western arguments made by liberals at the time of the war in Yugoslavia.

However, away from the political power centre towards the fringes, it is clear there is genuine ideological commitment to political principles. This is where the liberals, nationalists and communists are located. The fact that liberal parties do not account for large proportions of the population means that they do not wield much power and

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<sup>18</sup> It must be said that the combination of militaristic patriotism and libertarian economics is not a particularly strange combination in the West – for example, the American “Neo-Conservatives”.

therefore do not call for much ideological conformity amongst their members. Indeed, apart from the leadership of these parties, the members act as if they are members of a loose federation rather than of a tightly focused unit.

Furthermore, when multiple issues rather than a single issue become prevalent (as seems to have happened with British politics since Labour came to power), the old debate about left and right wing socio-economic modules has been superseded by a host of new issues – human rights, the environment, Europe, immigration, devolution, Britain's relationship with America, etc. These issues crisscross and divide the political spectrum, and left-right is often no longer an adequate explanation of a much more complex political landscape. The same has been the case since the collapse of communism in Russia where multiple issues such as reaction to Russia's history, reaction to the West, the views about different economic structures and a host of other issues continue to divide opinion. Thus, the problems of definition one faces when commenting on debates in Russia are driven by Russian particularities, by difficulties caused by transition, and are also the result of a general confusion that has enveloped the whole world following the end of the Cold War.

### **Defining who is Liberal in the Russian Context**

Despite this general confusion about how groups and individuals should be labelled in Russia there has, in fact, always been a significant group willing to claim the appellation of 'liberal'. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, former dissidents, as well as those from other backgrounds, have claimed to be liberals. Several small political parties, publications and organisations have defined themselves as liberal, and therefore the individuals who belong to these groups can be defined in their own terms as liberals. The individuals I am concentrating upon mostly fall into this category. It is perhaps the most reliable method for selecting them, since they have defined themselves. However, it does raise several other questions: if someone claims to be a liberal in Russia, what does this mean - particularly in comparison to the West? And secondly, which groups and individuals are not liberals? This issue is particularly difficult when we divide liberalism from the non-extremist centre which sometimes pursues a pro-Western, reformist agenda.

There have been some specific “Russian” uses of the term “liberalism” relating to the particularities of the Russian context. For example, the use of the term in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century described both centrists and also those of a more radical political persuasion. This was the result of censorship as terms like “socialist” and “radical” were not allowed in the printed media. But, interestingly, the fact that “liberal” was seen as describing radical politics seems to have led to the term itself being re-interpreted with “liberalism” gradually becoming synonymous with radicalism, which had not been the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A modern example of “liberalism” gaining non-centrist connotations is its use to describe the economic reforms in the early 1990’s. For communists and “patriots”, the term “liberalism” is used to describe what they see as reckless economic extremism. This highlights the fact that in a non-Western context “liberalism” does not always mean the centre ground - that is, when non-liberal ideas are the mainstream of political opinion.

Modern Russian liberalism has its roots in the dissident movement of the Soviet period. It was essentially a political movement with the focus on removing the Soviet regime. The modern liberal movement in Russia emerged from the dissidents and from reform-minded elements of the Soviet establishment. The movement was highly idealistic leading critics to complain that it failed to advance concrete ideas about Russia’s post-Soviet future. This criticism is, I feel, unfair; the samizdat publications of the Russian dissident movement display considerable richness and diversity. (For a discussion of mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century unofficial thought see Horvath, 2005). The problem Russian dissidents encountered arose more from the fact that they were not prepared for the suddenness of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the late 1980’s the popular image of liberalism generally excited a positive response as the era of reform began. The early 1990’s saw the liberals gain power under Yeltsin. This period is critical for interpreting the attitude of the public towards liberalism for the rest of the post-Soviet period.

The public perception of liberalism in Russia is that it is purely concerned with economics;<sup>19</sup> this was, indeed, the self image of the self-defined liberals in the early

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<sup>19</sup> This perception might also be influenced by the fact that under Putin the influence of liberals has been much greater in the economic sphere than the liberal sphere.

1990's who forced through the policy of "shock therapy". When "liberalism" is attacked in post-Soviet Russia, it is usually conceived of as a solely economic phenomenon. For example, Alexander Panarin, sees the modern variant of liberalism as exemplified in the views of the "Chicago School" of economists (2001, 67). Thus, "liberalism" is criticised for the physical hardship that reforms have caused people in Russia. Although as Yitzhak Brudny (1998, 261) points out, some of the opposition to the reforms was voiced by liberals, notably Grigory Yavlinsky of the *Yabloko* faction in the early 1990s, even so, in the popular consciousness, "liberalism" is often seen as homogeneous, and the criticism directed at liberalism embraces the whole movement without distinction.

Liberals are seen as technocrats who do not feel emotion. Such claims elicited a strong defence from Igor Yakovenko (responding in particular to the anti-liberal Alexander Tsipko). He feels that what began as a cynical propaganda tool to portray liberals as opposed to the people, has been manipulated and has evolved so that many actually believe the myth to be true:

Alexander Sergeevich [Tsipko], yes, we are not from Mars! The image of the insensitive liberal-Westerniser to whom both simple and good human feelings are inaccessible - is an ideological horror story. It suits as a polemical weapon to frighten a trustful audience. But if the ideologist starts to become hypnotised by his own constructions and believes them, eventually, it is not professional.  
(2003)

Before further examining "liberalism" in Russia in order to define it more closely, let us focus on the ideas of some of Russia's anti-liberals in order to clarify its meaning by comparing and contrasting. Non-liberals are sometimes characterised as being the adherents of extremist or simplistic ideas. While it is certainly the case that these sorts of ideas are usually more manifest than they are in the West, to characterise all non-liberals in this way is false. One example of a thinker who uses the term "liberal" in a purely negative sense is Alexander Panarin. For example, he criticises the reforms of the early 1990's for dismantling the social safety nets that were in place and for making the Russian people much less secure and causing severe material hardship. Panarin makes the critique advanced by some self-proclaimed "patriots" (but also by some liberals, including some of those we are considering in this study) that the reforms were a form

of robbery as a corrupt elite secured power for itself. However, the 1990's reform is the only context in which he employs the term "liberalism" (as it is for the majority of the population in Russia). The system he describes as being a positive response to liberalism is democratic republicanism.<sup>20</sup> What this actually involves is a mixture of socialism and populism.

If we analyse Panarin's thought on the basis of how he defines himself, the way he talks about liberalism and the basic ideological views he proffers, we can conclude that he is not a liberal. Yet, Panarin is a thinker who is positioned not on the extremes, but somewhere closer towards the centre. Within his ideology there are, in fact, some elements that could be construed as liberal. One might say that Panarin is in some respects "liberal" in the post-Soviet context in that he does not explicitly call for a return to an authoritarian government and places some value on freedom of speech, etc. Furthermore, he has been "liberal enough" to engage in debates with liberals without these immediately descending into out and out conflict - there is enough common ground to allow for meaningful discourse. It is an interesting fact that he is considered a friend by Alexei Kara-Murza amongst others. In this way in a "locational" sense he can be placed towards the centre and could perhaps be defined as a liberal in the sense this is sometimes used. A very broad definition of liberalism which includes all of those in the centre would therefore include Panarin, but this type of definition would be so broad as to almost be meaningless. However, he does not give the impression that the semi-liberal views he seems to have adopted concern him deeply; rather it seems that any liberal ideas rank in importance well below his social concerns and that he would be more than willing to sacrifice a liberal state for one that was organised in the way he wanted, and with an authoritarian government.

Panarin's attitude is typical of a wide segment of those who occupy the centre ground in Russian politics. Centrists generally hold synthetic ideologies which draw on all sorts of

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<sup>20</sup> Panarin is much more open to the concept of democracy than he is to that of liberalism. Indeed, whereas originally the term "democrat" was used only as a derogatory term by those who were not liberal-Westernisers to describe opponents, by the mid-1990's it had become a positive term for these elements. Panarin emphasises the importance of a democratic society that is for the people – he is considering concepts like social justice, etc. This is a view shared by many and is sometimes used to criticise liberalism (see the radical extremist Alexander Dugin's essay "Demokratiya protiv liberalizma" 2003). The arguments Panarin makes in this context bear some similarities to those made by communitarians.

ideological strands including different types of liberalism and nationalism. This has been the dominant ideology since the latter part of the Yeltsin era. It actually becomes rather difficult to discern whether or not these people are liberals, or even what their attitude towards liberalism is. From an ideological point of view it is impossible to brand Putin, for example, as either an anti-liberal or a liberal. His attitude leans more to considering liberalism as one of many different ideological sources which he sometimes draws on, but it is far from being the dominant ideology he embraces and is instead part of a complex balance of powers. Therefore, to label centrists as liberals is misleading, though they are not necessarily strongly opposed to it. It is for this reason, also, that I feel it is more appropriate to concentrate in the main upon those who openly and precisely define themselves as “liberals” in this study as in other cases it is difficult to say with any certitude who is and who is not a liberal.

The thinkers we are focussing upon are all generally defined both by their peers and by themselves as liberals. We will consider the more complex question of what type of liberal they are in the next section and also how liberalism has evolved since the mid 1990's. I am, however, interested in some of the thinkers who are often considered as “centrists” rather than liberals, such as Tishkov. These thinkers are generally centrists who have a liberal orientation. I have included such thinkers because their liberal leanings are more pronounced than those of other centrists. For example, though Tishkov did not come from a dissident background, but instead worked within the Soviet administration and is therefore seen as being a centrist, he is not one who is “illiberal” to the extent of the centrist Panarin whom I mentioned above. He occupies a role which is rather different, as he is generally critical of extremism and holds a positive view of modernity and democracy. He was a staunch supporter of the reforms during perestroika and has frequently collaborated with those who define themselves as liberals.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, in a locational sense within the Russian ideological spectrum, and also in terms of some of the values he holds, Tishkov can be regarded as a liberal, though he is not regularly defined in this way within Russia and does not clearly define himself as such.

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<sup>21</sup> For example, during the creation of Russia's post-Soviet constitution (Tolz 2001) Tishkov worked with several prominent liberals.

## **Russian Liberalism and Problems of Marginalization and Narrowness**

Russian liberals are constantly aware of the weakness of their position. As I showed in the introduction to this study this weakness is both cultural and political, with historical roots. This concern has become the cornerstone of all debates amongst liberals in Russia and has had a critical impact on the development of liberalism.

It is interesting that in Russia (certainly in the history of Russian discussions about Russia's destiny) there is a recurring tendency to accord the West only a few basic attributes (see the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky, etc.). This still happens today.<sup>22</sup> Leonid Ionin asserts that this trend of oversimplification or the attempt to reduce complex ideologies to a few basic values can be seen in Russian reactions to liberalism - they reduce liberal ideology to a limited set of values when, as we have seen, such a generalisation bears little relationship to the reality of liberalism as a broad and diverse concept. He writes:

It should be recognized that there are liberal states with a high degree of state regulation of economy, and also with a low amount of regulation. There are liberal states with a free commercial revolution from the ground and those where this is restricted. There are the liberal states which recognize the death penalty and those which reject it. There are countries where equality in material conditions and style of life prevails, and also where the deepest social differentiation occurs. There are the countries coming to liberalism and democracy by bloody revolutions, and by velvet revolutions. There are liberal states with high taxes, and with low. And finally, there are liberal republics and liberal monarchies. From all this it is possible to draw a very simple conclusion: the ideal liberal country does not exist. Liberalism as a doctrine can be understood perfectly. But, liberalism as a social system is a Utopia. It is not possible to say where it is. Or, to express the same idea differently, in each country there is liberalism. (Ionin 2001)

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, the writing of Alexander Dugin where the West is conceptualised as being the epitome of values which are apparently totally alien to Russia, such as extreme individualism, lack of spirituality and materialism



However, the tendency for liberalism to be interpreted in a fairly fixed and narrow manner (mostly focused on economics, a pro-Western stance and anti-communism) is not confined to Russia. Certainly across Eastern Europe there arose a distinct style of liberalism which was heavily influenced by its post-communist context. Michael Kennedy (who is generalising from observations made from post-Soviet Poland) asserts that this type of liberalism was a natural result of the requirements made on liberals at this time:

In post-Communism, however, liberalism cannot be so fluid [as it is in the West]. Locked in ideological struggle with Communist rule and later with varieties of nationalism and socialism, liberals must make liberalism more fixed than its ideological project declares ideal. This is especially apparent when its promoters become rulers and attempt to make a liberal economy, if not polity and society. (1999, 349)

Liberalism, then, has often been almost caricatured in Russia, particularly by anti-liberals, in such a way as to emphasise the narrowness of the ideology and its unsuitability for Russia. It is true to say, however, that the generation of Russian liberals who were influential during the late Soviet and early post-Soviet era did gain a reputation for recklessness amongst the population.

However, criticisms of this type of Russian liberalism which appeared in the early 1990's have also come from those within the liberal movement. In 1992, writing not long after Russia's difficult period of economic reform had begun, Boris Kapustin differentiated between political and economic liberalism, describing them as being intrinsically opposed to each other. This was because the liberal reforms were imposed in an authoritarian way and thus the political and economic aspects of liberalism were set up to oppose each other. On reflection it is interesting to observe how frequently Russian political liberalism and economic liberalism have been divided from each other. Kapustin is probably being a little unfair to the reformers, some of whom were genuinely worried about a communist takeover - which would have had, to say the least, strong illiberal implications.

Another criticism levelled at liberals centres on the lack of historical knowledge they revealed. Some leaders of the Russian liberal movement seemed unaware of the history of Russian liberalism. V.Sogrin voices a concern sometimes expressed in the 1990's about Russian liberals:

Reviewing the ideology of modern Russian politicians, one gets an impression that they were unfamiliar not only with the ideas but even with the names of Chicherin, Kavelin, Milyukov and other outstanding liberals of pre-revolutionary Russia, whose evolution could teach one many important lessons, help our contemporaries to avoid mistakes and pass on the apprenticeship with fewer losses. (1997, 116)

Ignoring, or being unaware of, the history of liberalism leads to concerns that past lessons have not been learned, and that liberalism without depth of knowledge and experience is artificial. Pantin comments on the superficiality of such liberalism: "as in the past, when vulgar Marxism was forcibly disseminated in Russia, so a grossly oversimplified version of liberalism is now being grafted upon the country" (1994, 77). As I will show in this study, overcoming the perception that liberalism is weak because it is accounted a shallow, imported and foreign ideology has been a particular concern for Russian liberals.

In response to these issues, a considerable effort has been made to reconsider and re-evaluate what liberalism means in the Russian context. An example of this has been the attempt to rehabilitate Russian liberal thought from the 19<sup>th</sup> and late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has been successful to such an extent that rehabilitated Russian intellectual history now forms an important component of the modern discourse for Russian liberals. Indeed, some thinkers such as Kara-Murza derive many of their ideas from pre-Soviet liberals.

### **The Growth in Varieties of Different Types of “Liberalism” during the Yeltsin and Putin Eras**

Partially because of this re-evaluation of liberalism in the early 1990s, Russian intellectuals (particularly those with liberal outlooks) and parties which are liberal (such as the Union of Right Forces and *Yabloko*) subscribe to a much more developed and

sophisticated understanding of liberalism than do either the patriotic opposition or the populace. For example, an extract from the 2001 manifesto of the Union of Right Forces presents a vision of liberalism which is broader than the purely economic one:

The fundamental values of liberalism are personal freedom and personal responsibility, freedom of word and associations/unifications, separation of authorities, command of law, democratic control of the society over the state, private property, economic freedom, equality of rights and possibilities for all citizens, tolerance of the differences.<sup>23</sup>

The fact that liberal political parties, however small, with properly developed ideological views, have emerged in Russia has been important in giving a sense of definition to liberalism. Even more important for this have been liberal publications. The significant role that such publications play is a continuation of a tradition that has its roots in the pre-revolutionary period. At a time when political parties were non-existent, liberal publications acted as ideological flag bearers. In the Glasnost era the role was famously performed for liberals by the journal *Novy Mir*. More interesting for the purpose of this study are the journals that deal specifically with political ideology. Amongst the most important of these are the journal, *Polis*, and *Liberal'naya Missiya* formed around the website [www.liberal.ru](http://www.liberal.ru). These have both been of major import in recent Russian liberal intellectual history. However, the growth of these standard bearers for Russian liberal political theory did not entail the construction of rigid definitions nor the imposition of definitive boundaries as to what "liberalism" did or should mean - in fact, both political parties and publications remain shelters under which stand different variants of liberalism.

As we move into the later 1990's, the term "liberalism" gains a broader meaning, closer to the multi-faceted Western use of the term, at least amongst certain sections of the intellectual elite in Russia (mainly those who regard themselves as liberals). The old legacy of dissident liberalism was built upon and sometimes challenged. Already by the early 1990's the realization that the changes in Russia's historical situation would also

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<sup>23</sup> The Party's 2001 manifesto is available here: Russian Profile Union of Right Forces, <http://www.russiaprofile.org/resources/political/majorparties/sps/index.wbp>, (Accessed 20 October 2005).

impact on the intellectual debate, particularly on the ideas of the old intelligentsia, had become widespread and both Western and Russian observers commented upon it (for example, Pastukhov 1993).

Undoubtedly a drive behind this reconsideration was concern over marginalisation, which led Russian liberals to consider what role Russian liberalism had traditionally played in Russia's past, and to reconsider the relationship between liberalism and the holders of political power. These questions influenced their attitudes towards nationalism and also led to greater variety of opinion appearing amongst the liberals. It also enriched the search for "liberal" answers to questions that Russia faced. One of the important questions raised in debate from the early to mid-1990's onward was whether Western liberalism, which itself comes in a multitude of different types and guises - embodying arguably the whole of Western thought was applicable to the peculiarities of post-Soviet Russia.

One of the results of this change in what liberalism meant (or what it should have meant), was a conscious effort to investigate the meaning of liberalism both in Russian history and also in Western experience and Western theory. This became one of the dominant themes for political and academic conferences during the Yeltsin and Putin eras, that led to a deeper understanding of liberalism and its different variants (although interestingly the number of conferences and publications that dealt with this had declined by the end of the 1990's, with conservatism becoming a more fashionable topic for discussion). The relative newness of modern Russian liberalism meant it evolved quickly as it left behind the dissident period and began to react to new challenges.

By the time of the Putin era even anti-liberals were beginning to become aware of the multiplicity of different ideas appearing under the liberal banner. Here is an interesting description of how an anti-liberal nationalist writing in the anti-Western, extremist journal, "*Zavtra*", understands liberalism. Importantly, in this article, the author focuses first on the diversity of liberalism. The analogy he uses is that of poisonous mushrooms, commenting, "there are various types but they are all equally harmful". This is a clear indication that an understanding of the diverse nature of liberalism was filtering through to the groups who opposed it. Whereas at an earlier date opponents may have described

“liberalism” in monolithic terms, seeing it as being concerned only with economics, now they were more aware of the different features it could possess. The author itemises some basic values that he concludes liberals hold in common:

What unites all these different types and versions of liberals? First, their cultural and civilisational priorities; they do not believe that Russia has a special historical and spiritual path. Second, they are horrified at the prospect of the restoration of Russia as a world superstate. Thirdly, they are frightened also by the opportunity to transform the country into a mobilization economy, which, as a matter of fact, means returning to socialist principles of the organization of the national economy. Fourthly, liberals have quite certain geopolitical priorities and though they can be guided by the different power centres of the West (either by the USA or Great Britain, or by the European Union), any "turn to the East ", to an alliance with Iran, India, China in foreign policy of Russia they find intolerable. Fifthly, all liberals break out into allergies and convulsive spasms at the mention of the names of Lenin and Stalin, the word "USSR", the red flag, and also all spiritual and cultural phenomena which remind them about the Soviet “great power”. (Sergeev 2000)

Of course, this is a polemical attack on liberals and the author fails to mention other core values that Russian liberals hold in common, namely, basic human rights and individualism. The legacy of totalitarianism is one area where those who have a positive view of the Soviet state are on the defensive. The author is correct, however, in pinpointing the fact that Russian liberals practically always evince a pro-Western ideological orientation and that Westernism is indeed a cornerstone of Russian liberalism.

However, the author shows that he is aware of “different types of liberals”. The growing diversity amongst liberals is of great significance; as will be shown throughout this study, it has threatened to divide and fragment the liberal movement and to dilute the overall impact they could make in national debate. According to Shelokhaev (1999) the discussions of what liberalism is in Russia, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, often do not “have any conceptual points of contact”. Different liberals have completely

different perceptions of what liberalism is. Shelokhaev stresses that liberalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was also divided: “In fact, the liberal theoretical model of Russia's social transformation was a synthesis of several sub-models developed in the programs of various liberal parties”. This problem is not particularly confined to Russia as I showed in the introduction to this study; it is rather a problem which occurs in most discussions of liberalism because liberalism is a particularly diverse ideology. However, Shelokhaev is correct to argue that Russian liberalism became more and more fragmented throughout the 1990's; furthermore, this growing and continuing fragmentation has undoubtedly limited the power of the liberal message at a time when liberals are seeking to overcome their marginalisation.

In some ways this fragmentation is natural as liberals seek to broaden their ideology. Modern Russian liberalism is a new ideology, by which I mean it has had a short period of development and is therefore still in a state of flux. This development can move in several different directions to combine liberalism with other ideas, as liberalism itself is only a marginalised segment of a broad political spectrum. The only uniting factor for Russian liberals is their attitude towards liberalism and Westernism – they might also be social democrats or conservatives. As I will show in this study, the diversity of their approaches to issues concerning nationalism, Russian particularities and national identity indicates that increasing diversity of liberalism is unavoidable as it considers any question which does not have a clear liberal answer.

The divisions between liberal thinkers have also been mirrored in Russian party politics, with Russian liberal parties proving unable to form a single united voice. The reasons for this are often the same as those which cause the variations amongst liberal thinkers. As White (2006, 73) correctly says, while the divides between the main liberal parties are often explained as resulting from personal differences amongst the leadership, this cannot solely explain the difference, as deeper divisions separate them, including: “...programmatic and ideological differences, distinct social bases of support, contrasting attitudes to the regime, institutional factors (notably the electoral system and the role of the presidency), electoral strategy on the part of the two main liberal groups, and the role of agency...” These deep divisions continue to be one of the most important facets of modern Russian liberalism.

## Summary

There are several conclusions which I think can be drawn from the study of liberalism in present day Russia. Firstly, the term can be used loosely and is not always defined clearly. Undoubtedly, political concepts are often less clearly defined in Russia than in the West, though this is sometimes exaggerated. Secondly, in the West the hegemony of liberalism is secure at present: in Russia, liberalism is not the dominant ideology. Nor, indeed, does the term refer to the centre as it often does in the West. This lack of dominance influences the way liberalism interacts with other ideologies in Russia and also with the holders of political power. Thirdly, liberalism within Russia is sometimes described in rather narrow terms by those who criticise it. While there is some truth that it was a narrow movement in the early 1990s, the growth in complexity during that time is often underestimated (as will become clear throughout this study). Fourthly, there has been a subsequent growth in both the complexity and the diversity of the views espoused under the banner of liberalism throughout the post-Soviet period. This leads to newer types of liberalism forming which challenge older liberal beliefs, partially as a result of “cracks” between liberals appearing due to the challenges posed by transition, but also because some felt compelled to modify the ideology in response to the marginalisation of liberalism, to adapt it in different ways to Russian particularities, in particular to the consequences of the exploration and reintroduction of ideas from Russian intellectual history.

### **Chapter 3: Dialogue between Liberalism and Nationalism**

Nationalism can be understood in several different ways, all of which are relevant for this study. The first is the process of shaping the identity of a nation particularly during transition. This is a broad understanding of nationalism, which includes all of those who do not actively seek to find complete alternatives to the nation state – i.e. imperial or federal structures. Almost every thinker in Russia is engaged with nationalism in this way, and I will investigate the way liberals have engaged in this debate in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

However, there is also a difference between ideologies in terms of how much emphasis they place on the nation. While some ideologies (which I described as “anti-nationalist” in the introduction) strive to restrict the role of nationalism as much as possible, while still regarding the nation as a necessity, other ideologies assert that strengthening national feelings or defending national identity from outside influences is important. Before considering how liberals engage in the broad debates about national identity in Russia, I will consider first their attitude towards overt forms of nationalism. I have divided the ways liberals interpret nationalism into their attitude to nationalism as a concept (which I will deal with firstly in this chapter) and their attitude towards overtly nationalist ideas that have been formed in Russia by those outside the liberal movement (which I will explore in the second part of this chapter). Of course there is an overlap between these, but it is still possible to isolate them and analyse them separately.

In determining what constitutes these overt forms of nationalism we should concentrate on how much emphasis is placed on the national issue – in overtly nationalist ideologies it is a central issue which will have crucial influence over the future; it is not relegated to the background or mentioned with reluctance, but instead the development and strengthening of national sentiment is strongly emphasised as a positive value. As I will show in this chapter, there are often many differences between these ideologies; for example, overt nationalists can define the nation in different ways – as being based around an ethnic group, a shared culture, or a group of citizens with a common language.



In examining how Russian liberals have approached nationalism as a concept, we need to begin by considering how nationalism is conceived in Russia. Contemporary views of nationalism in Russia are informed by several different ideological legacies which can leave participants in debates talking at cross purposes. As we have seen, the debate is frequently not informed by clear definitions of terminology and can therefore be difficult to follow. As has also happened in the West the discourse about nationalism is conducted with different terms being used, sometimes interchangeably. They include: “The National Idea”, “The Russian Idea”, “Patriotism”, and “National Identity”.<sup>24</sup> In academic discourse the term “nationalism” is used in a neutral sense, but in public perception it almost always has negative connotations.<sup>25</sup> Those who make statements or have ideologies which are nationalist do not actively claim this label for themselves and are more likely to use the term “patriotism”. In an article criticising the use of the term in Western discussions of Russia (Tuminez, Pipes, Hosking, etc.), Yanov claims that:

There is one exception to the strange trend in which everybody is prescribing nationalism for Russia: In Russia itself, which for obvious reasons was cut off in the twentieth century from sophisticated Western debates on Russian nationalism, nobody I know pretends that there is anything benign about it. Even the most reactionary nationalist forces, such as Zyuganov's communists, never call themselves nationalists, only "patriots." Even Dugin [an extremist intellectual] swears that his Eurasianism (which in post-Soviet Russia has replaced both the old pan-Slavism and communism as the leading ideology of *Sonderweg*) is a prescription for an empire, not nationalism. I would like to think that this is a credit to the memory of Vladimir Solovyev, who left an indelible mark on the nation's consciousness. (2001)

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<sup>24</sup> During the period from 1996 to 1999 a mass of literature was produced which sought to create a new identity for Russia or a new “National Idea”, including works authorised by the government. While these works were not particularly successful in their goal, they did help to establish issues relating to nationalism as one of the main areas of debate, including discussions amongst liberals. For examples of these works see: I.B.Chubais 1998; Butenko 1997; Nikolaev 1997; Chernenko 1999; Migranyan 1999; Pavlov 1999.

<sup>25</sup> This seems to be the case across the former Soviet Union. For example, Walicki stated: “...in the vocabulary of Polish politics the word “nationalism” is a pejorative term, reserved for the manifestations of intolerant, xenophobic ethnocentricity” (Walicki 1997, 253). Speaking of former Soviet nations in Eastern Europe, Auer (2004, 19) described the term “liberal nationalism” as being “virtually unthinkable”.

Yanov is correct in assessing that “nationalism” is not a term which is used publicly in Russia. Indeed, one would never hear a politician employ the term. However, this does not especially separate Russia from the West. In most Western countries, one would never hear any mainstream politicians (or, for that matter, many on the fringes) claim to be nationalists. All this merely proves that the term “nationalism” in Russia, as everywhere else, has different usages in the academic and public arenas. Finally, it is worth noting that “patriotism” is a more acceptable term in Russian public discourse – though the practical differences between “patriotism” and “nationalism” are often not very distinct.

Although Russia was cut off from “sophisticated Western debates on Russian nationalism” during the Soviet period, it has not been cut off for at least fifteen years; as Tolz (2001, 237) notes, translations of the main Western theorists had begun to appear in Russia in the late 1980’s. The academic usage of the term is closer to that adopted by Western academics employing it as a neutral concept. However, on the other hand, several Russian scholars have been critical of what they regard as lack of awareness in general discussion in Russia about what different terms can and should mean and that there is still a long way to go until nationalism and identity is discussed properly (Bykova 2004, 37; Tishkov 1997, 298). This tension between popular attitudes towards nationalism and more scholarly interpretations informs the way in which it is interpreted by Russian liberals. One final point to make here is that those theorists (Tamir, Miller, Moore etc) in the West who have formulated ideas of “liberal nationalism” discussing how nationalism can aid democratic processes have not been influential in Russia and Russian liberals have not absorbed their ideas, this is true both for the works of publicists and also more academic works (Olga Malinova (2000) is an exception).

To a greater or lesser extent Russian liberals have begun to grapple with what “nationalism” as a concept is in different ways. For some of them theoretical approaches towards nationalism have started to shape how they view what the Russian nation is or should be and also how they argue that liberalism should or can be successful in the Russian context.

## **Russian Liberals and the Concept of “Nationalism”**

I will examine the views of the Russian thinkers about nationalism as an ideological concept and then investigate specifically their reaction to nationalist ideas that have appeared in Russia. This separation is not always a completely natural one because the perception of how nationalism is expressed within Russia itself is clearly the most important factor in determining how Russian liberals respond to nationalism as a concept. An important point to make is that most of these thinkers (with the exception, as we will see, of those like Tishkov) have not engaged in the exhaustive definition of concepts and evaluation of the nationalist position in relation to other ideologies in which most Western thinkers have engaged. Therefore, forming a complete picture of their theoretical approach towards nationalism as a concept is not always possible. In fact, several of them do not work with a conscious theoretical idea about what nationalism is; their ideas are completely derived from their reaction to various questions and ideas from within the Russian context. The impetus for their thinking derives partially, I believe, from the impact of marginalisation which has lead them to concentrate mostly upon Russian particularities (both in a positive and negative sense) in an effort to make liberalism relevant in Russia.

### *Alexander Yanov and “Hard” Anti-nationalism*

Unlike some of the thinkers we are considering, and in contrast with the liberals described above, Alexander Yanov presents a clearly formed theory about “nationalism”. Alexander Yanov’s concept of nationalism is strongly rooted in the context of the debates that were engaged in by intellectuals in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Soviet Union. Those who wished to preserve a type of traditional Soviet ideology combined with aggressive imperialism, and who generally considered anti-Westernism, militarism, and communalism to be positive values disputed the liberal values adhered to by those at the opposite end of the political spectrum, who believed in progressiveness and demonstrated either a reconciliatory or a positive attitude towards the West. These ideological debates took place both in dissident and semi-official circles because a parallel argument raged within the Communist Party amongst those who felt that the Soviet ideology should be founded on Marxist universalism and those

who focused more on traditionalism and nationalism.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Yanov, as a universalist, seems to indicate a future of blurred borders where national difference becomes less and less important.<sup>27</sup>

In the 1960's some liberal thinkers began by arguing that the Soviet Union was moving away from the true foundation of its Marxist roots, before developing arguments that rejected Marxism itself. The liberal wing of the dissident movement preserved the strongly anti-nationalist and universalistic element of Marxism, even when it became anti-Marxist.<sup>28</sup> For this reason, Andrei Kortunov accused the liberals in Russia of being very slow to react to the new situation which Russia was placed in because their ideology did not equip them to deal with it adequately:

Yet another explanation was that even after the August coup, most Russian liberals remained Soviet-type liberals. They never tried to develop a liberal Russian national agenda; and one is tempted to say that they were not particularly interested in defining Russian national interests. As Soviet intellectuals, they were cosmopolitan in outlook, and the mere notion of nationalism was alien to them; moreover, it had a distinctly derogatory connotation. During the whole Gorbachev era liberal intellectuals had never been very interested in defining the state interests; for them the whole idea of the state was obsolete if not irrelevant. Much more attention was paid to concepts of the "new world order" UN reform projects, and the analysis of "transnational" trends in global politics. In a sense, like their most consistent opponents from the Marxist-Leninist camp, liberal intellectuals were pure "ideologists", basing their concepts on values and beliefs rather than facts and interests. (1996, 149)

The commonest response of liberals such as these towards nationalism has been to dismiss it as quickly as possible as a subject of debate. It is an anachronism or an idea which is better ignored as it can only make things worse if it is discussed. As this is the

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<sup>26</sup> Robert English (2000) sees this debate as a continuation of the Slavophile-Westerniser debate of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and certainly there are some parallels.

<sup>27</sup> This is an approach that is sometimes advocated in both Russia and the West. For example, Peter Reddaway and Dmitri Glinski (2001) answer the national question like this.

<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that the dissident movement itself did contain a minority, which included writers such as Solzhenitsyn and Valentin Rasputin, who displayed both nationalist ideas and an anti-Soviet orientation.

overwhelming reaction of liberals to this question, it should be remembered throughout this study that we are dealing with a minority of liberals who have decided to debate the question more deeply.

It is interesting to note here that while “patriots” throughout the Brezhnev era had been constructing a nationalist ideology, the liberals in Russia remained largely unaware of this issue. There were semi-official debates between nationalists and universalists, but it is debatable how big an impact these debates actually made in Russia itself - it is probably the case that more attention was given to them in the West than elsewhere. Leokadia Drobizheva (1998, 131) remarks: “Only a small part of the intelligentsia was aware of the debates between *Molodaia Gvardiia* and *Novyi Mir* in 1969-1970.” For this reason, we should not overestimate the impact of the debates that followed at various times during the Brezhnev era on Russian liberals. Most liberals were focused on the more immediate task of changing the Soviet system and nationalism simply was not an issue for them.

The anti-nationalist attitudes prevalent amongst liberals in modern Russia were further influenced by pre-Soviet universalistic thought as demonstrated by thinkers such as Solov’ev. Yanov represents one of the clearest examples of this type of anti-nationalist liberalism in modern Russian discourse. Because Yanov is a universalist he ultimately feels that the world requires an alternative form of organisation from nation states:

Europe has gone a long way toward pulling itself out of the old world of geopolitics, where military power has reigned supreme since time out of mind. (That state of affairs was described as “national egoism” by Russian 19th-century religious philosopher Vladimir Solov’ev). The Europe of today is following liberal rules; granted, on its small territory with a population of just 380 million. The point is that it is mutual trust rather than military strength that determines interstate relations in today's Europe. And the interests of the European Union as a whole take precedence over the national interests of each individual EU member state. Moreover, frontiers between the member states are transparent. Thus, the Constitution of Europe poses, as it were, an open challenge to the old world. (2002)

Yanov probably endorses anti-militarism as strongly as he does because militarism is (as we will see) one of the main channels through which the most visible forms of Russian nationalism are conveyed. The argument that nationalism has caused wars in the past is indisputable. However, it is debatable whether nations themselves continue to pose a threat, at least in the West. Indeed, when the modern debate is dominated by references to wars without barriers, ethnic and religious conflict within states, and terrorism, Yanov's view will seem, at least to some observers, strangely anachronistic. The fact that Yanov lists the late 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, Solov'ev, as his principle source on the question of nationalism is instructive.<sup>29</sup>

In his reference to Solov'ev's ideas, Yanov's interpretation of nationalism can be seen as part of the general rediscovery and reapplication of 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian thought which had been embraced in dissident and semi-official thought throughout the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, and which gathered pace under perestroika. The glasnost era saw a scramble to find "useable history". At this time the thought of early 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers became particularly popular. This enthusiasm is described by Konstantin Azadovskii:

How joyfully we welcomed, in the first years of perestroika, the return of Gumilev, Merezhkovskii, and Berdiaev! It seemed as if the connection between time past and time present was being restored, and we were coming back to our own roots, from which we had been violently cut off. It seemed as if we were reacquiring lost values, a fulcrum or place from which to take a bearing, from which everything could now start afresh. (1995, 85)

Liberals were involved in the process as much as anyone else; in the early 1990's they were all reading from the "same reading list".<sup>30</sup> For Yanov and many others these early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian thinkers are hugely authoritative and his enthusiasm for Solov'ev should be regarded as typical of the prevailing attitude which confers on Russian thinkers a higher status as authorities on "Russia" than

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<sup>29</sup> He regularly describes Solov'ev as his "ideological mentor" (see for example 2001, 197).

<sup>30</sup> By the mid 1990's some intellectuals were becoming worried about the overbearing influence of pre-revolutionary thinkers in Russia (Tolz 2001, 237).

those from the West. Solov'ev considered chauvinism as the logical outcome of Slavophilism, and included all the nationalists, even Katkov, who had stronger connections with the Westernizers than with the Slavophiles, among the Slavophile progeny. The process had three stages:

The worship of one's own people as the pre-eminent bearer of universal truth; then the worship of this people as an elemental force, irrespective of universal truth; finally the worship of those national limitations and anomalies which separate the people from civilized mankind, that is, the worship of one's own people with a direct negation of the very idea of universal truth — these are the three consecutive phases of our nationalism represented by the Slavophiles, Katkov, and the new obscurantists, respectively. The first were purely fantastic in their doctrine, the second was a realist with fantasy, the last finally are realists without any fantasy, but also without any shame.

Solov'ev concluded:

The worship of the virtue of the people, the worship of the might of the people, the worship of the savagery of the people — these are the three descending steps of our pseudo-patriotic thought. (Quoted in Riasonovsky 1952, 198)

Yanov's view of nationalism draws heavily on the ideas of Solov'ev on this question. His use of the term "national egotism", for example, is borrowed from Solov'ev, a term which can be simply defined as the view that one's own country is superior to and should dominate other countries. Yanov also borrows from Solov'ev the idea that politically assertive nationalism which is not originally extreme will ultimately develop this characteristic. Both Yanov and Solov'ev cite the example of the original, peaceful and reformist Slavophile movement of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century which developed into the aggressive Pan-Slavist movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Yanov 1978, 10-16; Dunlop 1983, 280). This descent into extremism is a process which Yanov feels is inevitable with any form of politically assertive nationalism and thus the outcome of even quite moderate forms of nationalism will always be the same. This conviction has had important implications regarding Yanov's willingness to tolerate the idea that nationalism and liberalism can become compatible.

Although Solov'ev is Yanov's most important "ideological mentor", he also accepts some more modern views of nationalism. In particular, he is impressed by Gramsci's idea that links nationalism to hegemony; it is a process employed by those who want to gain power in order to control the population (2003, 355). Yanov employs an historical approach when describing the essence of Russian national identity. He is not influenced by constructivism and instead seeks to locate his arguments firmly in Russian history. For example, he asserts that Russia was originally a European country when the nation first came into existence - a fact which he feels lends legitimacy to the claim that Russia should have this orientation in the contemporary world. National identity is for him, therefore, fixed in history – and is an identity that cannot be changed easily. This is actually one of the interesting aspects of Russian liberal anti-nationalism. While liberals generally have a constructivist vision of Russian politics and economics and think it is possible to create a new society in Russia, they do not look at nationalism in the same way. National identity is often perceived by them as static and unchanging. For this reason nationalism will always inhibit attempts to change society.

#### *Igor Klyamkin and "Soft" Anti-nationalism*

In one way, Yanov is unrepresentative of anti-nationalist liberalism in Russia, in that those representing this outlook do not focus on this issue with the same consistency with which he does. They do not think about nationalism as a theoretical concept as much as he does, but instead concentrate on its influence, specifically in Russia.

Perhaps more representative of typical liberal anti-nationalism in Russia is Igor Klyamkin. Unlike Yanov, he does not propound a fully worked out philosophy of nationalism; he is not as explicit about nationalism as a concept; and his views are more suitably discussed in later sections when we deal with the issues relating specifically to the Russian context. However, he comes from a similar background of liberal dissidence to Yanov, and he subscribes to several basic beliefs that are very similar to those of Yanov.

Firstly, Klyamkin has a strongly universalistic outlook - though he has not articulated as clearly as Yanov that, in his opinion, a post-national future would be beneficial to



Russia. Secondly, he emphasizes individualism and is skeptical of those who place group interests above such values. Klyamkin denies the right of anyone to say on behalf of the rest of the nation what national attributes are or should be. He thinks it is unjustifiable for one person to attribute certain traits to all of his fellow countrymen just because they share the same nationality. His critique of nationalism is made from the point of view of individualism. While individuals may define themselves as patriots, they are not entitled to impose obligations on others in the name of patriotism. In this respect, Klyamkin essentially reduces patriotism to a concept that has little practical meaning (see in particular 2003e). He further limits its meaning by claiming that everyone is a patriot and denying that anyone has the right to maintain that someone else is not a patriot. One of the main charges levied against pluralizing all concepts is that the concepts themselves become empty - that they lose any distinct ideological characteristics that could make them useful. Klyamkin's ideas on nationalism and patriotism do essentially seek to marginalise nationalism and reduce its significance. Thirdly, Klyamkin's strong universalism means that, in his view, cultural particularities do not have any significance. Therefore, he rejects nationalist arguments which call for society to be organised in a certain way to fit in with cultural particularities. (These are, as I will show, very common in Russia and I will deal with the attacks Klyamkin makes on Russian particularism in the next section).

In general, Klyamkin displays an attitude towards nationalism which is similar to that of Yanov, though there are some differences in the extent to which they are willing to tolerate disagreement with their ideas. This will become clear in the next section when we examine attitudes towards the expression of nationalism as it is articulated in the debates taking place in Russia. Though I have labeled Klyamkin a "soft anti-nationalist" because his attacks on it are not as ferocious as those of Yanov's, this has more to do with his personality and approach as a thinker than his actual ideology.

An important difference between Yanov and Klyamkin can be located in the positions they take with regard to national identity. Yanov refers to fixed elements of Russian national identity which are both positive and negative; for example, as well as harmful conservative elements he also focuses on a centuries old impulse to reform and focus on the West in Russian history. Klyamkin demonstrates how, in his view, specific fixed elements of Russian identity have been negative in their impact and have been a

bulwark against liberalism. He associates liberalism solely with universal human values and therefore calls for Russia to follow a path towards these values in order for liberalism to flourish. He does not believe that liberalism can be promoted by looking towards national particularities. At the same time he seeks to undermine those who concentrate on particularism by constructing sociological arguments to show that most Russians share the same values as people in the West.<sup>31</sup>

*Alexei Kara-Murza and the Attempt to Combine Russian Traditions of Liberalism and Nationalism*

Alexei Kara-Murza is another thinker who does not define his attitude towards nationalism as clearly as does Yanov. For this reason, as in the case of Klyamkin, we will discuss his ideas in more detail when we deal with questions relating specifically to the Russian context. Like Yanov, Kara-Murza is more influenced by the Russian intellectual tradition than by contemporary Western debates. However, his reference point is not the idealistic universalism of Solov'ev, but rather the Russian liberal tradition which combines a positive view of reform and modernization with clear displays of patriotism<sup>32</sup>. Examples of such figures include Vissarion Belinsky and Alexander Struve. Kara-Murza wants to appropriate the ideas of pre-revolutionary thinkers in order to inspire a similar ideology which combines liberalism and nationalism in present day Russia. Kara-Murza's approach is similar to some Western political philosophers who use the example of 19<sup>th</sup> century liberals to establish that the reconciliation of liberalism and nationalism is a possibility.<sup>33</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup> century liberals adopted nationalist arguments for several reasons. The "nation" was seen as a vehicle of modernisation to take Europe forward. Sometimes this argument was made quite explicitly as in the case of Mazzini (1887); he argued that the old aristocratic order should be replaced by nations based on popular sovereignty and

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<sup>31</sup> As will become clear later in this study Klyamkin's attitude towards particularism changes, depending on his optimism or his pessimism, with regard to the possibility of liberal reforms taking place. When he is optimistic he argues that the Russian people are essentially the same as those in the West; when he is pessimistic he argues that the Russian people have not yet moved forward from the Soviet legacy.

<sup>32</sup> In 1987 Klyamkin was one of the first to try to rehabilitate liberals from the mid 1800's including Kavelin. However, by the 1990's he had grown less interested (see Humburg, 1992, 349).

<sup>33</sup> Kara-Murza has produced several monographs discussing Russian intellectual history (usually with an emphasis upon liberalism and Westernism). See *Znamenitye russkie o Venesii* (2001); *Reformator: russkie o Petre I* (1994); *Rossiiskii liberalizm: idei i lyudi* (2004).

that these nations would not wage war because war was caused by the old aristocratic order. (Unfortunately, Mazzini's optimism here proved to be dramatically misplaced). Other liberals were not as explicit in their nationalism as Mazzini. However, it is possible to argue that the concept of progress was seen in distinctly national terms; indeed, all social questions were talked about as being solved in national terms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was the case in Russia as it was elsewhere. Russia's liberals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century were as open to the idea that nationalism could play a positive role as those in any other country. Indeed, it might be argued that they were more open to this argument than their Western counterparts. Vissarion Belinsky, for example, was a Russian liberal who was also a nationalist. As Andrea Rutherford (1995) shows, Belinsky argued that Russia needed a strong sense of nationhood in order to contribute to European civilisation. Belinsky opposed minority national movements (notably that of Ukraine) because he felt that their own cultures would not allow their people the access to civilisation and progress that being part of Russian culture would.<sup>34</sup> While Kara-Murza might not be particularly responsive towards Belinsky's dismissal of minority nationalism, he very much shares Belinsky's Western-orientated patriotism.

Attempts to combine liberalism and nationalism have usually led to some sort of compromise being made. One way of looking at this is to examine how different thinkers combine different ideological concepts, and it is normally in a hierarchical sort of structure; one ideology will predominate over the other. The relationship is not always an equal divide between one ideology and the other. Here is Richard Pipes' description of the Russian intellectual, Struve. Struve's abandonment of revolutionary Marxism for what he branded "conservative liberalism" is sometimes seen as contradictory. However, his goal remained the same as in his Marxist days; it was only the means of achieving this that had changed:

Nationalism constitutes the lowest substratum of Struve's mind. Before he was anything else — a liberal, a Social Democrat, or what he himself called a liberal conservative — he was a monarchist, a Slavophile, and a Pan-Slavist. Nationalism is

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<sup>34</sup> There has been an attempt to rehabilitate Belinsky as an example of acceptable patriotism in modern Russia. See "Ne khochu byt' dazhe frantsuzom..." Vissarion Belinskii kak osnovatel' liberal'nogo natsionalizma v Rossii. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. 14 June, 2001. Belinsky had previously been interpreted as a supporter of internationalism because Lenin strongly admired him and therefore he was celebrated in Soviet hagiography.

one of the several continua in his intellectual biography, a constant of which most of his other political and social views were merely variables. A great, vital, cultured Russian nation was for him, from the earliest moments of political awareness, the principal objective of public activity. (1970, 15)

Thus, for Struve, according to Pipes, all the other strands of his ideology were subservient to his underlying nationalism. When a liberal seeks to combine their ideology with overt forms of nationalism, or vice versa, I feel that generally one of them has the upper hand. One of them determines what form the other takes. When we examine Russian thinkers who have sought to combine liberalism and nationalism, we should therefore always consider which one predominates.

In the case of Kara-Murza, conservatism forms a bridge between his liberalism and his acceptance of nationalism. Conservatism, with its emphasis upon particularities, ties closely to nationalist arguments which also emphasise these particularities. As Pipes (2005, xii) notes, these responses to perceived particularities lend conservatism some of its ideological definition: as he puts it, in America conservatives try to preserve small government and in Russia conservatives emphasize the importance of a strong state. However, within conservatism there is a liberal stream which emphasises slow but steady reform. According to Pipes (2005, 198), Stolypin was the last of this “breed”, at least of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century tradition of this type of thinker. Liberal conservatism is often seen as an ideology which is rooted in Russian intellectual history which is being rehabilitated in modern Russia, rather than one which is derived directly from modern thinkers (see in particular Narezchnyi and Shelokhaev 2001). This form of Russian liberal-patriotic conservatism is a key reference point for Kara-Murza. However, conservatism is a divisive issue for Russian liberals (as will be shown in chapters 4 and 5 which deal with the issue of particularism).

As well as referring to history, Kara-Murza enlists other arguments to support the linking of nationalism and liberalism such as his emphasis on the role of property. When someone loves their property (which he defines as family, possessions, home, etc.) they also love their country, because they own part of the country. This is a rather shaky attempt to link liberalism and capitalism with patriotism and it does not seem to me to be successful. The immediate psychological impulse that possessions create is, in

my opinion, not necessarily a national one and in some people possessions do not lead to this impulse arising at all.

There is an important difference to be noted between Kara-Murza on the one hand and Yanov and Klyamkin on the other. While Kara-Murza is a liberal-conservative, Klyamkin and Yanov both come from liberal traditions which call for more drastic action. Klyamkin and Yanov both feel that radical political positions are often justified, whereas Kara-Murza is strongly attracted to the political middle ground. He feels that overt extremism - be it wild radicalism or stifling traditionalism - is harmful. Therefore, he rejects the more radical attitude of some liberals (particularly those attached to the Soviet era dissident movement). As a liberal-conservative Kara-Murza is more open to traditional patriotic arguments as there has often been a significant overlap between these and conservative arguments. Thus, some of the arguments that have animated Western liberals who support some form of nationalism seem to have also animated Kara-Murza. The assumption that society needs some cohesion based on shared culture and tradition is clear in Kara-Murza as he perceives pure individualism as akin to anarchy.

#### *Igor Yakovenko and Post-Imperial Nationalism*

Apart from Yanov's rather curt rejection of most of the recent literature in the West about nationalism, the thinkers we have discussed so far have taken little note of the Western debate about nationalism. However, this literature has been available in Russian translation for some time, and the next two thinkers we are considering - Valery Tishkov and to a lesser extent Igor Yakovenko - are influenced by it, though they use it to support different conclusions. What is particularly interesting about Tishkov and Yakovenko is that they are more careful about terminology concerning nationalism than the other thinkers we are considering. The reason for this is that they have studied nationalism as academics as well as engaging in polemical debates. In this sense they use terms like "nationalism" in the style of Western academics, as well as of polemicists engaging in debates. The impact of the spread of Western-style ideas about nationalism is, in fact, a very important feature which changed the perception of nationalism in Russia. It must be noted that liberals are in general more open to the influence of ideas from the West, than are non-liberals.

Igor Yakovenko has a reputation as a prolific writer, but one who does not thoroughly research the issues he is considering. Therefore, in spite of his consideration of this issue in terms of Western style debates and his use of Western examples, it is debatable how much his evaluation of nationalism is actually informed by Western theorists. He is, however, one of the main Russian thinkers whose views coincide most strongly with the views of Western thinkers who analyse and theorise about Russian nationalism. Yakovenko's ideas, then, can be encompassed in the argument that Russia needs to go through the process of becoming a nation, and to move on from its Tsarist and Soviet imperialist identity – an argument which is proposed by Richard Pipes and Geoffrey Hosking amongst others.

Yakovenko argues that Russia needs to overcome its former imperial status and become a nation like countries in the West. Yanov cites Yakovenko as being influenced by the ideas of Western academics in his view of nationalism as a neutral value, which can have positive variants.<sup>35</sup> As I will explore in more detail in the following sections, Yakovenko defines what a nation is and who the members of that nation are in cultural terms (though, as we will see, his main definition of Russian identity is “civilisational”; it is larger than encompassing just those who are ethnically Russian). His description of how Russians actually engage in the political life is the same as other civil nationalists. The example of Yakovenko is important because it shows that liberals can be cultural nationalists as well as civil nationalists.

He asserts that “empires”, that is, states which stretch beyond the confines of a cultural or ethnic nation, are eventually doomed to collapse and are not part of the modern world. This is a historical model which suggests that empires have a natural cycle which leads to their eventual collapse caused by disintegration as their outlying colonies reject the central administration. Yakovenko sees this process as clearly unfolding particularly in Russia's post-imperial situation. I will comment more on Yanov's attitude towards Russian imperialism in the next section.

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<sup>35</sup> Yanov (2001) cites Yakovenko as being influenced by the ideas of Western academics in his view of nationalism as a neutral value, which can have positive variants. In particular, he cites Yakovenko's book “Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo”.

Yakovenko feels that a Russian nation therefore needs to be created. This seems to be achieved partially through a constructivist process. He speaks of “the formation of...new national myths, aspirations and values”. This process will be helped by the actual historical circumstances. As he puts it, “There does not seem to be a more favourable time for the formation of a new consciousness than following the collapse of empire” (1996).

Yakovenko describes the path laid out by the elite of the nation for the development of the nation as the “national script”. He also feels that the other element necessary for national development derives from the views held by the people, what he refers to as “national interests”. (This phrase is sometimes used by anti-Western conservatives in Russia to justify assertive foreign policy with particular emphasis upon a strong military.) Yakovenko, however, uses this term to refer to what he feels are “true” national interests, that is, what is good for every member of the nation. Yakovenko emphasises, possibly following Gellner’s opinion, that those societies which emphasise “interests” as a positive value rather than “virtue” or “honour” are more successful (Fine 1997, 124). In modern society he feels that the linkage between interests and ideals is very close and that they are entwined with each other:

In our history in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century the concept of nationalism was perceived in the consciousness of the liberally focused part of society very negatively. However, the emergence of national consciousness, and the formation of national growth can become "normal" liberal nationalism if it is a reflection of fidelity to the interests of the nation (combined with respect for the legitimate interests of other nations). (1996)

Yakovenko (1996) feels, then, that there are two central forces which are the main factors in determining what a nation is and how it acts. Firstly, there are the interests of the people - what they want, and secondly, there is the “national script”. This is the path mapped out by the elite which the nation should follow. An effective civil society means both these elements come closer together and form the nation. He also argues that the modern nation state is the best way of establishing this link.

This theory seems to suggest that whatever the public ask for is right, and goes against the grain of the normal “elitist” type of liberalism which exists in Russia. As we can see in the above quotation Yakovenko is critical of Russia’s liberals for having a wholly negative attitude towards nationalism and not assuming that it can take a positive role if it reflects the interests of the people. Actually, elsewhere Yakovenko attacks populist politics.

In a similar way to many Western thinkers, Yakovenko sees nationalism as an essentially modern phenomenon, though he does not go to the lengths of some Western theorists who have tried to put an exact date on its appearance. The other thinkers we are considering are less explicit about this, particularly if they are anti-nationalist such as Yanov, for example. However, Yakovenko’s justification for why Russia needs the type of nationalism he is proposing does not seem to go beyond arguing that Russia should follow the Western experience, nor why this system is any better than any other.

#### *Valery Tishkov and Civil Nationalism*

Tishkov approaches the question of nationalism much more in the style of a Western theorist than the other thinkers we are dealing with. He spends more time than the others in defining what he thinks nationalism is. He divides it into ethnic and civil variants, and maintains a negative perception of ethnic nationalism and a positive perception of civil nationalism. In the Russian context (1997, chapter 12) he uses the term “Russkii” to refer to ethnic nationalism and “Rossia” to refer to citizenship of the Russian Federation independent of nationality (civic nationalism). Tishkov feels that no matter how large or small a nation, if their ideology is expressed in ethnic terms it carries the potential for extremism. In Tishkov’s view it appears that some sort of nationalism will exist, so the answer is to channel it into a benign form. It is not clear whether he suggests there are real benefits brought by nationalism itself; his focus is more on managing the negative consequences that can result from it.

Tishkov is the much more influenced by constructivism than are the other thinkers we are considering. We have already mentioned that Russian liberals are usually constructivists when they focus upon aspects of Russian society (such as economics and politics, etc.) and how these can be changed, but not when dealing with issues raised by



nationalism. Whereas other liberal thinkers seek to ground their view of what form Russia should take in the positive perception of different traditions and periods belonging to the past, Tishkov does not engage in the process. Instead, he feels that it is the role of elites and the political leadership to create a national identity which will facilitate the emergence of civil nationalism.<sup>36</sup> Civil nationalism for Tishkov is based on a sense of national identity built around shared language, loyalty to the state and public participation in the political process. It is open to anyone who shares these values.

Tishkov focuses on the issue of minority nationalism within larger countries. He downplays the importance of behavioral differences which can be detected between various national minorities. For example, he rejects Solzhenitsyn's claim that the Chechens were the only group who did not submit in the Gulag (2001). This claim he says he has researched himself, and he maintains that in general they behaved exactly the same as all the other ethnic groups. That is, they participated in and rejected the Soviet system to the same degree as anyone else. Tishkov's formulation of the roots of the Chechen conflict is very interesting. He argues that the Chechen conflict did not have roots in ancient history; he explicitly mentions the British historian, Anatol Lieven, as someone with whom he disagrees on this issue. He asserts that the Chechens were not an especially savage type of people and that their culture is more North Caucasian than distinctly Chechen. Instead, he highlights factors in recent history that have led to conflict: notably, antagonism within Chechnya between the poor village dwellers and the comparatively better off town dwellers, rising unemployment, and the realization amongst young men that it was possible to plunder the supplies of the Soviet army. It is clear the Chechen conflict would be judged to be more easily solvable, if it could be shown that the roots of the problem are located in the recent past, as Tishkov maintains, than in the dim past where the factors emphasized by Lieven are difficult to amend. Thus, Tishkov's analysis is more inherently optimistic than that of many other liberals in Russia.<sup>37</sup> While Tishkov does accept that cultural differences stretching back into the past might be more important in some contexts than others, he completely rejects laying too much emphasis upon what he calls "cultural fatalism" (1997, 296).

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<sup>36</sup> During his brief career in government, Tishkov was minister of nationalities where he tried to implement these policies. Since then he is believed to have been influential in official attitudes to nationality policy in Russia (Tolz 2001, 249).

<sup>37</sup> Tishkov's views on Chechnya were also presented in a detailed study, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society* (2004). In this he demonstrated the significant role played by local and regional politics and downplayed the importance of long-term history.

One of the main characteristics which set thinkers like Tishkov apart from others is that they have a strong understanding of the Western discourse about nationalism. It would be inaccurate to say that other Russian thinkers are ignorant of Benedict Anderson, Gellner, and Smith and others as these authors have been translated into Russian and are part of the Russian discourse. However, Tishkov is the only one amongst those we are considering who analyses the question of Russian nationalism in the same way that nationalism is analysed in Western writing. In the early 1990's Tishkov claimed that his adoption of Western approaches towards nationalism was unique in Russia:

Many Western anthropologists share the vision of nations as 'Imagined communities', as cultural artefacts constructed by intellectuals (writers, historians, anthropologists, etc.). But none of the post-modern interpretations have been tested on Soviet realities neither on other influential theories. My modest attempts to write about the nation as a constructed idea, rather an obvious reality, met with total misunderstanding and repugnance even though past and current Soviet realities tend to confirm the thesis. (1992, 50)

While it is no longer the case that Tishkov can claim to be the only theorist adopting a constructivist interpretation of the nation in Russia, his emphasis on such an approach separates him from the other thinkers we are considering. These thinkers are stimulated into responding to nationalists from Russia; Tishkov is different because he responds more fully to authors from the West as he has a comprehensive knowledge of the Western debate. This changes the substance of his analysis and his ideas to a considerable extent, and allows him to break out of the cycle that some of the other thinkers are stuck in, (especially if they merely reanimate late 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> century debates).

Indeed, Tishkov is highly critical of the retrospective appropriation of 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian thought. As he says here:

Unfortunately, the whole process of the "returning of names" is not that useful for domestic intellectuals and the wide publication of texts of the Russian philosophers and publicists of the end of XIX to the first third of the XX century

(V.Solov'ev, K.Leontiev, V.Rozanov, P.Florensky, I.Ilin, N. Berdyaev, etc.) is largely of thinkers whose methodology is hopelessly archaic with its naive romanticism and social racism. (2001)

The reference to Solov'ev in particular on this list is interesting because, as I have shown, he often cited as an inspiration for Russia's liberals. (Certainly, the charge of "racism" is a little difficult to make against some of those in this list. Perhaps, in the case of Solov'ev the charge can be substantiated to some extent arising from his attitude to Asians, whom, as a mass of people, he described as being a threat.)

We have, then, several different approaches to nationalism. Important differences have emerged between the thinkers, both in the way they make their arguments and the conclusions they derive from these arguments. Yanov, Kara-Murza and, to a lesser extent, Klyamkin, have a vision of the Russian nation that emphasizes its permanence. For this reason, their arguments are based on appeals to Russian history. They do not advance constructivist arguments to suggest that a new national identity needs to be created. Conversely, Yakovenko and Tishkov are more clearly influenced by Western ideas, and Tishkov, in particular, refers to constructivist arguments. Yakovenko and Klyamkin both regard nationalism as being counter to universalistic and individualistic identities, which as liberals they look upon more favorably. Kara-Murza, on the other hand, conceives nationalism as having a potentially positive value on account of the role it has played in Russian history, particularly in the case of the arguments developed by Russian liberals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yakovenko also sees nationalism as potentially positive because he relates it to modernity - the modern era is one that is run by nation states. Tishkov divides nationalism into a positive, or at least not dangerous, "civil" form, and a destructive "ethnic" form. What these views about the concept of nationalism actually mean when they are applied to Russia by these thinkers will be explored in later sections. However, it should be remembered that we are dealing with thinkers who have radically different conceptions of nationalism itself and this is continually reflected in their arguments about Russian nationalism.

One of the most important conclusions we can draw from analysing the approach of Russian liberals towards nationalism as a concept, is that some of the arguments made by liberal nationalists in the West are not strongly influential in the Russian debate. This is partially because, as I have shown, most Russian liberals are not really used to

dealing with “nationalism” as a neutral concept. However, as I will show in chapter 6 of this study, the approach of many Western liberal nationalists – discussing nationalism as a way to unite society and the state – is not really a priority for most liberals in Russia, at least not in the short term. For them, the first aim is that the position of liberalism should be strengthened in Russia. However, the failure of Russian liberals to fully absorb some of the Western theories about liberal nationalism has perhaps left them with a less sophisticated understanding of how nationalism can be seen to help the democratic process.

The next section will show that the main factor for most liberals is the way that Russian nationalism is manifested in Russia, rather than abstract conceptions of nationalism. Further, I feel it is a facet of the marginalisation of liberals that they are forced to enter this discourse reacting to their ideological opponents rather than participating in setting the agenda for this discourse and laying down the parameters for how issues relating to nationalism and national identity should be discussed.

### **Russian Liberals and Russian Forms of Nationalism**

This section will examine the approach of Russian liberals to clearly nationalist arguments made in Russia. When we assess the attitude of Russian liberals towards Russian nationalism, we should be aware that Russian nationalism has several different forms which manifest themselves in several different ideological streams. Indeed, it is indubitably the case that a fully satisfactory method of classifying these different types of nationalism has proved to be very difficult both for Western observers and Russians themselves.

As is generally the case, the only form of nationalism which can be defined and interpreted without too much controversy is the clearly racist, extremist variant. This has had a significant history in Russia. There have been different manifestations of this type of nationalism in Russia - ranging from the Black Hundred of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to anti-Semitic samizdat publications during the Soviet era, and on to fringe groups and publications in contemporary Russia. Probably the main difference between this more unacceptable nationalism which separates it from other variants is its explicit anti-Semitism. As Stephen Shenfield (2001, 50) puts it: “The absence of anti-Semitism - or

at least of anti-Semitism in a crude and open form - is commonly regarded in Russian society as the mark of a civilised or enlightened patriot.” Extreme nationalism has not become as significant a factor in Russia as it seemed it would to some in the 1990’s. Indeed, when there was widespread talk of the rise of “fascism” in Russia during the mid-1990’s, the influence of the effect of the Second World War in conditioning popular attitudes against these types of ideology was underestimated (Klier, 1998).

However, anti-Westernism and authoritarianism also appear in mainstream ideologies. Anti-Semitism is sometimes present, but is generally hidden with attacks more likely to be made against “global capital” or other euphemisms, than explicitly against the Jews. The main examples of mainstream authoritarian nationalism throughout the 1990’s can be found in the “patriotic” sections of the Communist Party,<sup>38</sup> and ever-changing groups of small political parties and publications such as *Zavtra*. The attitude of those who define themselves as “liberals” in modern Russia is always hostile towards the ideas promulgated by those in the above groups. Essentially, it is difficult to see how liberal ideas could possibly co-exist with them. In spite of this, some are willing to conduct a debate about how much tolerance should be afforded to these ideas.

Mainstream, less extreme, Russian displays of patriotism or nationalism become more controversial for liberals to respond to, and, in fact, are more difficult to interpret positively or negatively. In Western scholarship there has been controversy over the interpretation of patriotic or nationalist ideas that do not exhibit clearly identifiable or extreme xenophobia. As we will see, it is this aspect that also provokes contention amongst liberals within Russia.

The various types of mainstream overt nationalisms in Russia can be differentiated by the way they define what Russia is or should be. These forms can be divided into statism (the idea that Russia should have a powerful state), ethnic nationalism (with an emphasis specifically upon ethnic Russian culture as opposed to other ethnic groups and cultures), and traditionalist nationalism.

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<sup>38</sup> The Communist Party, like most of the larger parties in Russia, is a federation containing within it diverse and sometimes contradictory elements. The party includes those who argue for traditional Marxist-Leninism, those whose views are more in keeping with European Social Democracy, and those whose ideas are extremist and nationalist. The party’s leader, Zyuganov, has generally favoured the nationalist direction.

It should be noted that the approach towards nationalism by statist is very complex, echoing the complex relationship between the state and the nation in Russian history. Statism can refer to both the Great Power ideology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and also to Putinism which is in some ways an updated version of this ideology. Statism draws deeply upon nationalism as a source of legitimacy; however, it seeks to heavily control manifestations of nationalism which are regarded as potential threats – especially those which have a strong mobilisation potential. Therefore, while statist seek to cultivate and control nationalism, they do sometimes have a negative attitude towards unofficial manifestations of nationalism in Russia. It should also be noted that Russian nationalism itself often concentrates on the Russian state – a powerful Russian state being seen as vital in helping to establishing a vibrant Russian nation. Statism has elements both of particularism and Westernism. (In Russian intellectual history there is a tradition of liberal-orientated Westernism which also emphasised a powerful Russian state exemplified by Struve and Belinsky, so the combination of these two elements is not necessarily alien to the Russian context). Putin’s pragmatic statism can be seen as holding both particularistic and Westernising elements. Liberals are often concerned about the possibility of statism being overly influenced by forms of Russian nationalism which are anti-liberal, particularly concerning attitudes towards identity and “civilisational” debates or of statism evolving into anti-liberal authoritarianism. In this section we will consider liberals reaction to statism as a form of Russian nationalism, however in chapter 6 I will discuss liberals’ response to statism as a broader ideology.

Ethnic nationalism is an ideology which seeks to protect those who are regarded as being “Russian” (which can be defined in a variety of ways – including race, language, etc.) from outside influences and to emphasise their separate identity from other national groups (particularly other national groups of the former Soviet Union). It is sometimes asserted that ethnic nationalism was fostered by nationalities policies during the Soviet period (I will discuss this further in chapter 5). Ethnic nationalism of this type appears sporadically in Russian culture<sup>39</sup> and society, but typically does not have many advocates in mainstream political discourse.

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<sup>39</sup> Aleksei Balabanov’s popular “Brat” films are a good example of this.

Traditionalist nationalism is the modern version of Slavophile ideas, a sort of “cultural nationalism,” which celebrates Russian (and often also Slavic or Eurasian) religious, social, artistic and folk traditions. Traditionalist nationalism portrays Russia as a separate civilisation from the West and focuses on what are perceived as specifically Russian values such as communalism. Those who expound theories and ideas of “traditionalistic nationalism” include Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Alexander Panarin.

It should be noted that all of these types of nationalism can contain within them an anti-liberal critique. Normally all the strands employ similar particularist arguments in their anti-liberal critique, though these critiques vary in their severity. However, in the Russian context overt nationalism is often easily linked with anti-liberalism.

All the streams of thought, as outlined above, are the first reference point for liberal thinkers when they consider issues of nationality and identity in Russia. It is the case that on the whole debates about Russian nationality are lead by those who consider themselves “patriots” of different types. These overt nationalists have posed the challenge to the liberals from a particularistic perspective sometimes caricaturing liberalism as alien and “unRussian” or at least emphasising that liberalism is far from being the “only way”. They have emphasised the necessity of answering a “national question”, and they seem to have been able to connect to some extent with patriotic sentiments amongst the Russian population (particularly those who argue for more moderate forms of nationalism, including the statistes). For these reasons overt nationalists have raised questions which liberals are impelled to answer.

In general, Russian liberals have adopted two strategies with reference to Russian nationalists. On the one hand they have attempted to oppose many of the arguments that are made by nationalists, particularly those that are anti-liberal; and on the other hand they have sometimes attempted to co-opt some of the ideas and arguments made by nationalists if they feel they might advance the case of liberalism within Russia.

Yanov’s attitude to extremist nationalism in Russia is, of course, strongly critical. Indeed, he is notable for being critical of it comparatively early with essays published in the late 1960’s (Katsenelinboigen 1990, 149). But he is also critical of the less obviously extremist manifestations of Russian “patriotism” and, most importantly, of

any attempt by liberals to compromise with such ideas. When observing his idealism and determination not to compromise (which we explored in the previous section of this study) with those ideas he essentially equates with evil, one is reminded of the cliché that is often asserted about Russian intellectual history - that is, that it is drawn to extremes. As Rutland puts it:

In reality, Russians don't think of their political system in terms of a gradation of ideas, but in terms of polar opposites, such as communism vs. democracy, or the old favourite, Westernizers vs. Slavophiles. The issues are presented as Manichaeian alternatives; the choice is between right and wrong, good and evil. Throughout Russian history, debate about the role of figures from Peter the Great to Stalin has been sharply dichotomized. What some Russians saw as barbarism, others saw as the best hope for Russia to break through to civilization. There was no common ground. That polarizing tendency is combined with an overpowering inclination to personalize politics. The important thing is not so much the ideas themselves but who is espousing them and the moral qualities of those individuals. Political debate in Russia proceeds through the identification of the enemy, through distancing oneself from one's opponent. (1997)

These comments seem to apply equally well to both Yanov and to the anti-liberal “patriots” whom he attacks. Rutland himself seems exasperated when trying to explain this polarisation, though he offers some possible explanations of what might or might not be the root causes of the phenomenon:

Is this tendency toward radical polarization of ideas a product of Russian culture (something to do with Orthodoxy, perhaps)? Or is it a result simply of the harsh Darwinian political life that Russians have experienced this century, in which the winner takes all, including the head of his opponent? If this really is the picture of modern Russian politics, then one wonders whether they can ever escape, or whether they are doomed to repeat the cycle indefinitely...(1997)



These views are echoed by the modern Russian thinker Alexander Akhiezer and his explanation of Russian thought and society being dominated by seemingly unbridgable rifts:

Thus, three great rifts took shape: between the authoritarian and the collectivist ideal, between moderate and mature utilitarianism, and between the *veche* ideal and the liberal–modernist one. These rifts emerged because in Russian culture, antagonism between these poles predominates over their interpenetration; which, in its turn, can be explained by the fact that the historical development of these ideals was not accompanied by a parallel development of corresponding cultural and institutional mechanisms of interpenetration, of dialogue between the poles of these oppositions. This paved the way to a rift in society. (2003,2)

A further explanation of this constant polarisation can be detected in the fact that for Russian liberals the position of their ideology has, as we have seen, always been marginal in relation to political power and popular support. How and in what manner liberals should respond to non-liberal ideas is a question that has never been answered satisfactorily. The suggestion that there is something distinctly Russian about this, is also contradicted by the normative post-Communist experience across Europe. George Schopflin drew the following generalisation from his study of the attitudes of liberals in post-Communist contexts:

The absence or weakness of second order rules means that the key democratic values of self-limitation, feedback, moderation, commitment, responsibility, the recognition of the value of competing, multiple rationalities cannot function adequately, given that other political —potentially all other political actors—are seen as enemies and not as opponents. In effect, political parties in the post-Communist world see themselves, though this is denied, as if they are or should be Communist parties, possessors of a single, ideologically determined truth.

Hence, unlike in the West, there is a real fear that the loss of power through defeat at the polls can mean destruction of one's attainments because the other political actors seek to wholly transform the system. From this perspective, ruling parties cannot afford to be liberal and tolerant; they are impelled to maximize their political gains and make them irreversible. And it should be made very clear that in this framework behaviour of this kind is completely

rational. Thus it is erroneous to see post-Communist systems as post-modern: on the contrary, in many ways they should be seen as a destructive but rational variant of modernity. (2002, 121)

However, while it is possible to argue that Eastern European countries might be moving on from this phase as liberalism gains a more stable role as the dominant ideology, it is not possible to do so about Russia. A wider contributing factor to the polarisation noted by Rutland and Schopflin lies in the fact that liberalism experiences difficulties when confronting non-liberalism or anti-liberalism in any context.

In fact, liberalism faces an insoluble contradiction when faced with those who are not liberal. In the West, where, as we have noted, liberalism in some form remains the basic ideology that almost everyone shares, the difficulty in dealing with non-liberals is less great. This is because non-liberals have little real possibility of gaining power; thus far-right extremism and Islamic fundamentalism (pre-September 11<sup>th</sup>) were left largely unfettered and were tolerated. It should be noted, however, that liberals believe that tolerance should be moderated in certain areas; liberals normally oppose any manifestation of authoritarianism or racism. However, when the power of illiberal groups is marginal as it is in the West, it is easier for the ruling liberal majority to display a tolerant attitude towards them, than it is when they have a genuine hope of gaining power or influence.<sup>40</sup>

In Russia the position of liberalism has always been precarious. It is a doctrine which has generally not been the official policy of the state, and therefore, because liberals in Russia are more concerned with hard-fought struggles for power, they sometimes find it difficult or, indeed, impossible to tolerate non-liberals in comparison with their Western counterparts. In fact, the key issue in determining whether liberals in Russia are willing to tolerate opposing opinions is how close the ideas to which they are reacting are to the wielding of power. The more politically powerful the non-liberal viewpoint is, the more vigorous and determined is the liberal opposition. Thus the absence of tolerance and willingness to compromise displayed in Yanov's stance, derives in some part from the fact that liberalism has yet to conquer the mainstream in Russian political thought.

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<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the different liberal stances on this question, particularly between American and European attitudes, see Gray (2000, 77-78).

This ideological characteristic underpins Yanov's remarkably intolerant attitude towards any attempt to describe Russian nationalism of all types in anything other than forthrightly critical terms (and influences the strongly antagonistic attitude towards Soviet communism all liberals display). It is undoubtedly true that this hostility can be partly explained as stemming from Yanov's temperament, but is also ideological. He criticises certain figures in Russian history; for example, he attacks Chicherin (2002, 170) for his temporary association with patriotic sentiment during the Crimean war.<sup>41</sup> Yanov is particular in that he does not restrict his adverse comments to those outside the liberal fold. He is willing to criticize those within the liberal spectrum if their views (particularly with regard to nationalism) do not fit with his own. In his reactions to modern authors, Yanov is unusual in the level of criticism he aims towards those who hold liberal convictions, but are yet prepared to compromise with different patriotic ideas. Chicherin, as we have seen, is attacked and, in the modern era, Solzhenitsyn comes under fire (see in particular 2002b, 288-292). In fact, Yanov's comparatively early attack on Solzhenitsyn marks him out from many other liberals.<sup>42</sup> It should also be noted that while there are different streams of nationalism, Yanov is notable for treating them all as being essentially the same, if they contain any particularistic arguments or argue for strengthening national sentiment in Russia.

The uncompromising nature of Yanov's approach to other "liberals" has been highlighted by one of his ideological opponents, John Dunlop. During the time that Yanov was a dissident living in America in the mid 1980's, he came into conflict with Dunlop. Dunlop suggested that Russian nationalism was a potentially positive force in the former Soviet Union. He describes Yanov as possessing the same fanatical and prophetic qualities as those he was criticising. Dunlop's criticism was mitigated by some admiration for his opponent, but the point has been made much more harshly elsewhere. In *Ideas in Russia Leksykon rosyjsko-polsko-angielski*, the criticism of Yanov is much more severe:

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<sup>41</sup> Chicherin was a liberal of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century who advocated careful reform. He had an aversion to "flag waving". See Hamburg (1992, 183) for a description of Chicherin's brief interest in overt nationalism.

<sup>42</sup> Yanov originally said his criticism of Solzhenitsyn was being made with reluctance considering what an important role Solzhenitsyn had played in dissident politics (1978, 185).

An historian of ideas, an example of Russophobia. He is bent on finding the 'devil' in human history, an Intelligence wholly preoccupied with the lust for doing evil. He finds it in the 'Russian idea', which, according to him, constitutes the theoretical crux of the ideology of The Russian New Right. He maintains that it was brought to existence by Slavophiles ..... Yanov makes a mistake typical of a philosopher of history who thinks that he has discovered the laws determining the history of the world and the plots affecting its course. He does not analyse historical facts, but he uses them to support the theory he himself has created. Yanov must have decided to expose the 'Russian devil' in the same way in which the Zionist devil has been repeatedly exposed in Russia. He grouped together sundry 19th century Russian thinkers, émigrés, A. Solzhenitsyn, added the 'black hundreds', National Bolshevism and Soviet 'patriots' to them, and then made it known to the world that he had the wrongdoer. He believes that there is no need to fear Communism and Zionism, since all evil, as well as the future threat to the world, have their roots in Russian nationalism, which from time immemorial has striven to destroy all civilization created by man. Yanov overlooks the hatred expressed in his own opinions, while he does observe hostility in the attitudes that some Russians express towards others. (de Lazari 1999, 486-487)

One further point that is interesting to note about Yanov is that he does not often reflect on "nationalism" as a general concept, but usually concentrates specifically upon "Russian nationalism". This, as we will see, is the position taken by almost all liberals, due in part to their marginalisation and concerns about how to deal with Russian social and cultural particularities. That Yanov focuses most pointedly on Russian nationalism is evident in the unfavorable comments he makes when discussing purely theoretical accounts of the topic. He rarely refers directly to the experience of other countries. The main exception to this is Germany, which is presented as being a direct parallel with Russia (2003, 346-348). This judgment is expressed in his comparison of Russian and German totalitarianism as resulting from the same urge for national distinctiveness in the face of universal civilization. For this reason, Yanov's argument is weakened as he does not take into account the national experience of any other countries, particularly

those that have developed stable liberal democracies, where it could be argued that nationalism played a role in the process.<sup>43</sup>

However, Yanov's most recent writings are beginning to reveal a more measured approach towards patriotism because he accepts the possibility that it might have played a positive role in some European countries. But the proposition that nationalism could function positively is dismissed as being irrelevant for modern Russia; according to Yanov, nationalism belongs to a different context and a different time. However, Yanov is willing to divide "patriotism" and "nationalism" into positive (or at least tolerable) and negative manifestations of national identification. He asserts that "patriotism" is like the love one has for one's children, or children have for their parents, in that it is an intimate and private value. He asserts that one would not march or wave banners about how much they "...love their mother!" (2002d). Therefore, they should not do this with regards to their nation. Furthermore, he sees the Russian intellectual, Dmitry Likhachev, as a successor to his hero, Vladimir Solov'ev, thus casting Likhachev as a positive figure. Likhachev, while criticizing extremism and aggressive nationalism, is also famous for his attempts to preserve Russia's cultural traditions (Yanov 2001). It might be the case, therefore, that, for Yanov, "patriotism" is ultimately a concept without distinct political implications, but which can rather be expressed in cultural terms.

Yanov's approach here may bear some similarities to the way other intellectuals, particularly East Europeans, have divided the economic and political aspects of a country, which should not be organized along particularistic lines, but should instead be modeled on universalistic, Western lines, from the expression of national culture which should strongly reflect national particularities. For example, the Slovenian Milan Kucan sees the loss of Slovenia's economic independence in the European Union as a positive development especially if this is made more acceptable by "intensifying our individuality in the area of culture" (quoted in Auer 2004, 356).

However, for Yanov the danger that what he considers to be acceptable patriotism will degenerate into hostile nationalism is always present. It is this risk that concerns him

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<sup>43</sup> In a discussion with me he said that the English national legacy was one which could be summed up with the quotation: "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel". He uses this quotation, which is sometimes used during debates about patriotism in Russia, to suggest that England had "overcome" nationalism and this was the reason why it had established a stable liberal democracy.

rather than the positive values patriotism could bring to Russia. It also explains why he generally does not take different approaches to different types of nationalism in Russia – traditionalistic nationalism, statism, ethnic nationalism are all essentially interpreted in the same way. They all contain within them the same dangers.

Klyamkin employs some of the same arguments as Yanov. He feels that the essence of Russian patriotism of all types, including statism if it becomes influenced by particularistic nationalism, is intrinsically opposed to liberalism. According to his analysis, the core values of Russian patriotism are authoritarianism, militarism and what he calls a “majestic” instinct - aggressive imperialism (2003c). He is highly critical of those who try to force their patriotic ideas onto the rest of society. This critique, like that made by Yanov, seems to be made against all types of Russian nationalists – both traditional and statist. His criticism was made particularly clear in a debate he had with Alexander Tsipko, who argues for Russian society to become more patriotic and criticises liberals for not being patriots. Klyamkin considers that these arguments represent a “totalitarian instinct” because they cannot see beyond what they think is patriotic and they want everyone else to share these views:

The totalitarian instinct is not capable of bearing even slightly the belief that the patriotic impulse can bring *different* political, economic and ideological projects. And that supporting such different ideas can be based on desire to bring blessings to the country, instead of only egoistical self-interest. (2003e)

Klyamkin asserts that those who make an issue of their patriotism should not differentiate themselves from everyone else. The conclusion is that debates about patriotism should not be partisan. They should not be based on excluding other views. Thus, Klyamkin challenges the most common assertion made against liberals by Russian nationalists of all types who employ anti-liberal arguments; that Russian liberals hate Russia. Klyamkin asserts that these claims are groundless due to lack of evidence, which gives “....a not so pleasant smell, reminiscent of the times of the war with rootless cosmopolitans” (2003b).

Furthermore, he asserts that describing attempts to reform Russia as “unpatriotic” is always groundless, unless it can be proved that under the cloak of such reforms other

interests are being put forward which will harm the national interest. Klyamkin illustrates the point that no-one has the right to have authority over others simply by virtue of being a “patriot”; “patriotism”, he asserts, using ice hockey as a metaphor, is not in itself a guarantee of wisdom:

Imagine the person who, for the first time having risen on skates, jumps out during an ice hockey match on to a platform and being hardly able to keep his balance, starts excitedly to explain to the players that they are not playing by patriotic rules and that only he knows what rules are patriotic, and what rules are not. A picture which is sad, but instructive. In this sense it is better that everyone is engaged in this business. (2003b)

It is interesting that Klyamkin appears to admit that there is a national problem that needs to be solved; though he does have a vision that he would like the whole of Russia to subscribe to - that is, a change in the civilisational paradigm towards considering Russia to be a part of the West. The fact that all liberals have a vision about how they want Russian national identity to evolve will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5. Thus, Klyamkin is a liberal in that he believes everyone can express their patriotism in their own way, but he does not go so far as to be a complete relativist - everyone's patriotism is not equally valid. The outcome of this is that, in Klyamkin's treatment of the subject, patriotism is in danger of becoming meaningless and losing any definition as a political concept. Thus, claiming that everyone is a patriot reduces patriotism to the commonplace and dilutes its influence as a clearly differentiated political idea; it is a way of limiting its power.

However, Klyamkin is not completely sceptical concerning the potentially positive role that can be played by Russia's “patriots”. Willingness to compromise is probably as much related to personality as it is to ideology. Certain individuals are more open to compromise than others. The success of dialogues also depends on more than just the context in which they take place. They depend on how open-minded the participants are. There is a type of mind that is determined to fully understand the motivation and ideas of ideological opponents. Probably the classic example of this is JS Mill. Mill is notable for actively seeking to engage in debate with his natural ideological opponents, in such a way that he made every effort to see their point of view and even allowed

himself to be influenced by them. This openness is demonstrated in his friendship with Thomas Carlyle and his investigation into Romanticism (Capaldi 2004, 95). Klyamkin certainly displays this characteristic in comparison with Yanov (though his ideological position is very similar to Yanov). The discussion on the website *www.liberal.ru* is an example of this. Here several intellectuals who define themselves as liberal Westernisers engaged in debate with those who come from “patriotic”, anti-Western and communitarian positions.<sup>44</sup> As Klyamkin (2003c, 20) put it, such a debate was in “the spirit of liberalism.” Klyamkin also asserted that the debate was important because it helped the liberals clarify things, since they themselves were not naturally inclined to spend time considering some of the issues raised by the “patriots”, particularly the question of Russian identity amongst others.

Klyamkin also emphasises factors that could perhaps bridge the gap between the liberals and the patriots. Here is his introduction to the debate:

Till now dialogue between tradition and modernity has been impossible. And whether it is possible in general, for me personally remains a question. But at a level of personal behavior I try, as far as I can, to establish relations that promote dialogue: it is for me a way of approaching problems even at a personal level.  
(2003c, 21)

Dialogues are always useful to both sides in helping to determine their positions. Without engaging in debate it is impossible to sharpen arguments and make more precise definitions. Here Klyamkin explains why he sometimes finds dialogues useful:

When they [nationalists] speak, say, about traditions or values inherent in their opinion, we are given impetus to reflect about these traditions and values, we check how well they are described, and, perhaps, most essentially, we try to find out (including during sociological research) whether they are really shared by the population. In this respect nationalists are even very useful to Westerners.  
(2003c, 20)

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<sup>44</sup> This debate was later published as *Zapadniki i Natsionalitsy: vozmozhen li dialog?* Fond Liberal'naya Missiya, 2003, which is the version I am using in this study.



This describes an important process in current Russian thought. In the case of issues relating to questions of identity the agenda is often set by non-liberals and the values being investigated are those normally attributed to Russia by non-liberal thinkers, even though those investigating these issues do not necessarily sympathise with these values, and often seek to undermine them. The fact that non-liberals are setting the agenda and liberals are following along with everyone else puts non-liberals in a powerful position. When liberals themselves investigate what Russia is or should be (as I will show in chapter 4 and 5), their arguments frequently refer to those made by Russian nationalists.

Perhaps it could be asserted that Klyamkin's personality makes him a "better" liberal than Yanov. His conclusion to the debate is particularly interesting. He feels that shared experiences can help overcome the ideological divide in Russia:

Alexander Yanov, having quoted Konstantin Leontev ("The Russian nation specially is not created for freedom"), has drawn a conclusion of the basic impossibility of dialogue between patriots who adhere to similar views, and Westerners such as Kondratii Ryleev. Probably, before the last century they really did have nothing to talk about. But since then much has changed. Besides the experience of slavery under autocracy we have the experience of the fall of autocracy, its revival in the Bolshevik revolution and – once again its collapse. And the idea of freedom in all these processes played not the smallest role.  
(2003a, 392)

This is also a tacit acknowledgement that the attitude of Russia liberals towards questions of identity and nationalism are decisively influenced by their response to the ideas of non-liberals. This will be explored when we consider the liberals' own attempts to engage in the national debate in chapter 4-6.

Yakovenko has a different approach; he accuses the "patriots" of being confused about the concepts they are using. Yakovenko mostly singles out those "traditionalistic nationalists" who recycle arguments in the Slavophile or Eurasian tradition; he does not focus to the same degree on other manifestations of nationalism. He attacks them because he feels many of them are *not nationalists*. That is, they are motivated by ideas

that have little to do with establishing a stable Russian nation, with clearly visible borders:

Objecting to today's "Russian nationalists" who "aspire to contain Sacred Russia... In more or less compact borders " the ideologist of orthodox empire Tatyana Glushkova, writes: "... In fact from the point of view of Sacred Russia, it is boundless, why use the spiritual constraints of these political concepts like "national" to box in the Orthodox empire? ". So, empire is a terrestrial reflection of a heavenly spiritual substance and as Sacred Russia is boundless so also the Russian empire cannot have final borders. To establish eternal borders for the religious empire means to doubt the divine, universal character of the creator which generated it. The medieval person experiences empire as a reflection of God in terrestrial topology. .... But a day draws near when both the Doctrine, and also the Empire, will capture for itself the entire world. This is the belief held in the traditional religious consciousness. As S.J.Matveeva writes, "an imperial principle, as a matter of fact, is boundless, the borders of empire are limited only by the current balance of forces..". The national state as a political manifestation of the nation is essentially limited. It can try to claim the territories populated with compatriots, but if these people are located in another state or are within the sphere of influence of another state, the degree to which it can absorb them is limited. While it can control them, it cannot completely absorb them. Such a policy carries dangers for the nation itself as the intergrational potentialities of any nation are finite. (1996)

Thus, Yakovenko clearly separates "nation" and "empire". Yakovenko criticises "empire" as a dead concept – he sees it as an irrelevance in the modern age, arguing that the most modern societies in the world have left the imperial stage of history. Yakovenko applies this type of critique to the entire spectrum of "patriotic" opinion in Russia. For example, he points out that there is a fundamental contradiction between ideas of nationalism (which he asserts have generally been based on Westernism in Russian history) and the anti-Western, Slavophile tradition that Russian "patriots" usually share. The Slavophile tradition was not really nationalist in that it focused more on a confederation of Slavic people (though undoubtedly most of its Russian supporters envisaged Russia as the leader of this confederation).

For Yakovenko the real core value of anti-liberal forces in Russia is traditionalism, not nationalism. Indeed, referring to the debate organised by Klyamkin on the website *www.liberal.ru*, where those who were described as “Westernisers” debated with their opponents who were classified as “nationalists”, Yakovenko questions the appropriateness of both these terms. Westernisers are not naturally opposed to nationalism (as he understands the term) and instead their real enemies are traditionalists (which is how he would categorise Russia’s self proclaimed “patriots”). As he puts it:

Discussion between modernists and traditionalists is useful and necessary, but it would be good if it took place without masks and everything was referred to by its proper name. (2003b, 80)

In response to this criticism Klyamkin accepted that this might be a valid point. As a strong Westerniser he agrees that both Russian Westernism and the actual experience of Western countries can be viewed as a type of nationalism (2003b). However, he is ambiguous about whether he views this analysis as still applicable to the modern world, (he notes that the nation state seems to be disappearing in the West) and also to Russia itself. Thus, his position with regard to nationalism when it is not expressed in the clearly anti-liberal terms of particularistic nationalists in Russia is difficult to discern. In fact, his stance is consistent with that of many liberals whose attitude towards Western theories and the Western experience of nationalism is, on the whole, hardly enthusiastic.

Furthermore, this wary attitude is reflected in popular perceptions of nationalism and the West. There seems to be a lack of popular consideration of the idea that nationalism can be as easily (or perhaps even more easily) a Western concept as a Russian one.

In a questionnaire asking which values people associated most with Russia and most with the West, A.L Andreev (2003, 102) found that “patriotism” is regarded by 68.4% of those asked as being a value associated with Russia, while only 25% saw it as a Western value. Values typically regarded as Western were “liberal” values such as rationalism, egotism, human rights and freedom, while Russia was seen as the home to

traditionalism, communalism, etc. The notion of viewing nationalism as both an abstract concept and also a process that can appear across the world seems to be lacking outside of academic debates in Russia. Nationalism, in popular expression, is only mentioned in the Russian context.

Yakovenko, therefore, represents a different line of thought from the other thinkers under consideration. He rejects the views of Russia's particularistic and anti-liberal nationalists and seeks to replace them with a liberal form of nationalism. Yanov, too, opposes Russian "patriotic" views, but argues for a universal future. In this, he is supported by Klyamkin, who also challenges "patriotic" views, and advances similar universalistic ideas.

Tishkov is often worried about the dismissive attitude towards former opponents displayed by some liberals in Russia. Speaking in the mid-1990's when there was some tension in relations between Russia and the West, he maintains:

Tolerance in Russia requires tolerance with respect to Russia and, first of all, understanding of its domestic situation and the sentiments of its people. No matter how difficult the road to the establishment of the new society, acts of revenge by former warriors of the Cold War and those representatives of the diaspora who in the past invested their emotions and energy into struggle against communism are counterproductive. (1995)

He links the way countries are "tolerated" in international affairs with how they themselves maintain tolerance within their own borders. It is an argument that contradicts the calls of some liberals for the West to exercise some responsibility in pushing Russia towards tolerance, because according to Tishkov "intolerance of intolerance leads to further intolerance" (1995).

This tolerant attitude does not mean that Tishkov avoids criticising the Russian "patriotic movement" - far from it. He regards it as an example of a dangerous sort of ethnic nationalism which has aggressive tendencies. He wants to replace this with a modern political form of nation without any ethnic element and also one that in general

does not emphasise cultural particularities. This type of “civil nationalism” is still rarely seen in Russia.

On the other end of the spectrum of liberal reactions to nationalism there have been attempts to co-opt Russian nationalism as a support for liberalism. These attempts, however, do not fall into the same mould or pattern as Western theories of “liberal nationalism”. The debate in the West concerning the relationship between liberalism and nationalism was in the nature of elevated political philosophy where the practical implications were not immediately clear. Calls for instant changes were rarely made, as Western nations have a relatively stable sense of national identity.

The attempts to merge liberalism and nationalism have been made largely by those seeking political power. High profile exponents of such attempts can be found within the political leadership of Russia: both Yeltsin and Putin have either at different times or in combination sought to play the liberal and the nationalist card. These attempts have on occasion been the result of aiming to appeal to the widest number of political interest groups over which they hold the balance of power, and at other times have been attempts to garner public support. A factor that also altered attitudes is that the substance of the views held by those within the “patriotic movement” has changed. What was originally a movement defined by its hard-line attitude and unwillingness to compromise became more flexible throughout the 1990’s. As Leokadia Drobizheva comments, “Although many analysts noted the Yeltsin camp’s shift to a more nationalistic stance, few recognized a complementary shift towards the centre among certain segments of the national patriots (1992-1993) - ideas from Soloviev, Struve and Illin had been incorporated into their program” (1998, 141). The adoption of the ideas of this class of thinkers is seen as a bridge from “patriotic” to liberal ideas (and as we will see later they can also be used by liberals to accommodate Russian patriotic positions).

However, on the whole there have been few attempts to directly merge nationalism and liberalism – in terms of explicitly combining the two ideologies. (In chapter 6 I will explore the political impact of attempts to combine liberalism and nationalism). The reason for this is that politicians perhaps fear that an ideology of liberal nationalism (or liberal-patriotism) would be difficult for the population to understand. It should be

remembered that liberalism and nationalism do not have clear definitions that the public are aware of, and therefore, combining these concepts would be confusing in a popular context.

Of the thinkers we are considering Kara-Murza most strongly seeks to combine Russian ideas about patriotism with liberalism. As I will show, Kara-Murza seeks a genuinely deep ideological union between patriotism and liberalism, rather than merely a pragmatic and more temporary “strategic” union between them. Firstly, Kara-Murza suggests that liberals themselves can try to gag opponents whom he feels are opposing the basic thrust of liberalism. He is clearly influenced by the attempts to create non-ideological forms of liberalism which rather formulate a set of rules for allowing for debates amongst those with diverse groups:

There is some space for cultural dialogue within the correct game rules where everything is allowed, except for claims for totalitarianism. We shall listen, we shall understand and we will recognize the originality of anyone if only he really aspires to dialogue, instead of trying to muffle all others. Substantially liberalism is not a general and obligatory ideology, but the form, the procedural regulation of interpersonal dialogue. In the liberal outlook the opportunity is created - not only to speak, but also the opportunity to hear and estimate the "other". (2003b)

However, there are also limits to liberal tolerance. Potentially totalitarian ideologies, such as Bolshevism of various shades, fascism, or fundamentalism, have no rights to exist in a liberal context. The legal space which protects cultural variety should not be “infected” by these ways of thought.

Kara-Murza goes on to note the main problem with dialogue in Russia. As he puts it “...for us this liberal legal space has not been generated yet”. Thus the game rules for dialogue in Russia are not liberals ones. In Kara-Murza’s analysis (echoing the views of Rutland which I quoted earlier), debate in Russia is more often defined by overtly oppositionist approaches, by attempts to drown out and demonize opponents by those whose “...lack of their own creative effort is compensated by belittling, and in extreme cases, eliminating opponents” (2003b).

Kara-Murza does not merely evince a more tolerant attitude towards those who make clearly nationalist arguments in Russia than other liberals; he is positive about some aspects of their views. This applies to both traditionalists and statist providing they do not take a hard stance against liberalism. It is clear that the more pragmatic, less ideological liberalism which Kara-Murza outlines above allows for the possibility of joining traditional nationalists' values together with liberalism in a slightly more sophisticated way than that attempted previously by Russian politicians such as Boris Fedorov (see Bunin, 2002) who had campaigned unsuccessfully under the banner of liberalism and patriotism.

Kara-Murza is critical of Russian liberals for their attitude towards nationalism or patriotism. This is especially the case when he refers to those liberals who reformed Russia in the early 1990's. They were:

...technocrats....economists... In general this is normal and as it should be. It is bad that these people did not have serious partners from backgrounds concerned with the study of the humanities. Those with technocratic backgrounds frequently gravitate towards internationalism ... In fact the technocrats, the radical Westerners, are too centred upon economics: in the history of Russia they ostensibly have nothing to love. It is supposedly an empire of darkness, this society which has not woken up yet where the general crush of dullness and backwardness prospers, etc. In their opinion it will be possible to grow fond of Russia only when it becomes the West. It is a typical vulgar, primitive Westernist interpretation of Russia. Actually in the history of our Fatherland there is much more. And it not only can be loved - it is necessary to love it. (2002b)

This quotation in some ways echoes the standard particularistic nationalist critiques of the reforms of the 1990's. The reformers did not understand and love Russia and that is why their reforms brought such misery. It is noticeable that Kara-Murza sometimes takes his lead from standard patriotic arguments about the liberals themselves. This creates some obvious contradictions for him because he is a member of the Union of Right Forces party, which includes those who carried out the 1990's reforms, such as Gaidar and Chubais. He himself accepts that this means the image of his party is a little paradoxical:

Unfortunately, the Union of Right Forces is economic-centred and technocratic...Simply due to that the leading part is played there by figures known to you - Gaider, Chubais, Nemtsov [The leaders of the Union of Right Forces]...All these are dear people, my friends. But they are either liberal economists, or liberal managers. Unfortunately, as I have already said, all humanitarian discussions for us have been removed to the background. It frequently happens, and not only in Russia. But the Union of Right Forces is a young party; it has all the opportunities to remove this omission. ... I shall add this about liberal patriotism: any economic reforms even if they at some stage look rigid, in the end are directed for the blessing of the country, therefore they are patriotic. (2002b)

The final argument that Kara-Murza makes is becoming more and more common amongst liberals who generally concentrate their discourse on economic issues. They ask how the fact that they recommend a particular economic course is indicative of a lack of patriotism. Surely, they are recommending the course they chose because they think it will make their country stronger. Unless it can be proved that the liberals are working for either foreign interests or interest groups within Russia at the expense of Russia as a whole, it seems ridiculous to make this attack. However, one article in the Soviet loyalist and particularistic nationalist journal, "*Sovetskaya Rossiya*", criticises Kara-Murza's views from an interesting perspective:

It seems that the attempts by the liberals of the same type as K.-M. [Kara-Murza] to accustom their colleagues to utter the word "patriotism" without stutters and grimaces will be successful only with those who understand the necessity of it with a view to self-preservation.

But, their poses will hardly be convincing for the majority of Russians: they have been too clearly exposed for the last 15 years as enemies of everything that is dear and pious to the normal person who loves the fatherland.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, Alekseyu Kara-Murze ("LG" N 2-3) Poslednee pribezhishche, 2 September 2002



Of course, the author is making his point with typical “patriotic” rhetoric. However, he does pose an interesting question. If liberals want to be seen as patriots, how can they do this in a way that is convincing? This is the problem liberals face if they are only interested in a pragmatic union with patriotism, rather than finding deeper ideological links between liberalism and patriotism as it is expressed in Russia. If patriotism is only a vehicle for gaining popular support it will not be effective. Thus, it seems the issue is in some ways a matter of perception. One can be a patriot if others believe that this patriotism is genuine. Furthermore, as the patriotic ideas that have developed in Russia are anti-liberal, and as the liberals themselves experience “stutters and grimaces” if they try to claim that they are patriotic, some way of reconciling what are perceived as contradictory elements needs to be constructed.<sup>46</sup>

So, how does Kara-Murza try to reconcile liberalism and traditions of Russian nationalism? Kara-Murza aims to move Russian nationalism as it most obviously and consistently manifests itself away from its image that is closely associated with the Communist Party. (We see here that any theories of nationalism have to respond to the perceptions already held in Russia about nationalism and patriotism). Therefore, Kara-Murza first tries to undermine this legacy. The reason Kara-Murza rejects the communist (and, for that matter, the legacy of other extremist groups) is that he feels these ideas are incompatible with liberalism, and also because he wants to discredit them because the fact that they dominate the debates over patriotism in Russia means they block liberals from being able to employ the term freely and without compromising their views. Therefore, Kara-Murza argues that the communists’ own historical championing of internationalism strongly discredits their attempts to gain patriotic support. He boosts his argument by referring to Lenin’s notorious celebration of the Russian defeat during the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 (2002b). This, he asserts, is out of keeping with the militarily-orientated nationalism that the Communist Party endorses today. (We will examine the various historical arguments various liberal thinkers turn to their account in more detail in a later section).

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<sup>46</sup> There have been attempts to create ideologies which draw on all of Russia’s traditions. One of the most prominent has been made by the brother of Anatoly Chubais, Igor Chubais. His book “From the Russian Idea to the Idea of a New Russia: How We Must Overcome a Crisis of Ideas”, (1998), tries to tie what is an essentially contradictory mass of all the different ideological strands in Russian history together. Needless to say he is not very successful in achieving this goal.

A second influence on Kara-Murza's ideology can be found in the history of Russia. Here, I feel, he is on stronger ground. He is correct in asserting that any attempt to create an ideology combining liberalism and nationalism will be more convincing if it has some roots in Russian history. Therefore, as an historian of ideas, Kara-Murza has concentrated on the traditions of Russian Westernism and liberalism. There are some important traditions which Kara-Murza pinpoints where strong patriotic sentiments were combined with liberal political beliefs. (He places particular emphasis on the ideas of Belinsky, Struve, etc.) He remarks:

... Russian Westernism and Russian liberalism were frequently painted in liberal - conservative and even Statist tones. Thus, Westernism does not exclude (and at times even assumes) motives which love the native land: Pushkin, as is known, firmly protected the values of the original Russian culture against extreme Westernism... In general, the best examples of Russian Westernism, were born in interaction with the emancipating motives in Slavophilism (P.Struve's liberal - democratic conservatism, though doubtlessly Westernising at the basic level was inspired, as is known, in many respects from I.Aksakov's [an important Slavophile] influence). For the same reason the most fruitful concepts of "intelligent" Russian Westernism have never arisen on the radical flank... (1993)

The link between liberalism and Russian nationalism is even more explicit in the following quotation where Kara-Murza links the success of liberalism in Russia to its rootedness in Russian traditions. He feels that liberalism will only work in Russia if it takes into account the Russian traditions that Russian nationalists of all types are always more ready to embrace than are liberals. This outlook shows the essential difference between Kara-Murza and Yakovenko. Yakovenko attacks the "patriotic" movement in Russia for being too traditionalist. He feels this traditionalism is counter to the true goal of forming a new Russian nation. However, Kara-Murza tries to co-opt the "patriots'" embrace of traditionalism, and use it to support liberalism:

I think that liberalism can become really strong, only by being implanted in tradition. In Russia there are serious liberal traditions, and in this sense I prefer to speak not simply about liberalism, but about liberal conservatism. Liberalism

cannot be imported; it can be raised up only from the nation's own ground. During the time of the previous attempts at liberalization this was not taken into account. People simply had a poor knowledge of history, having believed in the version offered by our political opponents, which asserted that Russia ostensibly is not intended for reforms, for liberalism, that in Russia there is any only a gregarious, socialist instinct. In my opinion, the reality is essentially the opposite, the real problem for Russia is not in a rigid gregarious collectivism, but in the individual will of people, both from above (the petty tyranny of the tsars), and below (that which Pushkin has named "a revolt, senseless and ruthless", and Dostoevsky – "living under the foolish will"). Many countries have passed through this period, and liberalism appeared the best means for the solving the problem of order. In this sense, liberalism being based on national tradition in any country is the best answer to questions posed by modernity, including the threat of a new chaos, a new barbarity. Our reformers should realize that liberalism and democracy are forms of order. Russia can become a normal liberal country only in the event that these two concepts are not simply realized, but proven again and again to be a true daily political occurrence. (2001)

Kara-Murza is critical of members of the elite in Russia for not being rooted in the nationality of their country. He explicitly states that one of the main problems with the Russian elite is their distinct lack of national identity. Whereas members of the Chinese or Japanese elite keep their "primordial identity", members of the Russian elite become more like "citizens of the world". He draws parallels with Russia in the nineteenth century when the elite famously expressed themselves more comfortably in the French language than in Russian. Kara-Murza asserts that the liberal elite in all countries comprise the vanguard which will eventually pull the rest of the nation in the direction in which they are going. However, if the movement of the Russian elite leads away from Russia, then they will find that they cannot bring the rest of the nation with them, and the population will "dismiss them as defectors". Though Kara-Murza accepts that the movement of Russian elites is not necessarily physically away from Russia in that they seek to reside elsewhere, he implies that they reject their nationality from a cultural standpoint by seeking to discard "Russian" identity. Kara-Murza takes some comfort from the belief that after members of the elite have experienced life in other countries they will begin to find that maybe the life of foreigners is not that much better than that

of Russians. Therefore, he feels that the pendulum is swinging back and coming to rest somewhere between Westernism and anti-Westernism. However, Kara-Murza is concerned that the Russian elite must legitimise their position in the eyes of the Russian people - and one of the ways they can do this is through demonstrating their commitment to and their identification with their nationality. Only then will the latest attempt at modernising Russia gain the support it needs to be successful. Kara-Murza makes this assessment as part of a wider criticism of the elite for not “proving to the Russian people that they are the best people [in terms of moral standards] as well as the most successful.”<sup>47</sup> In many ways Kara-Murza’s criticism of the elite for losing their national identity is reminiscent of many Slavophile writers such as Dostoevsky. In his famous Pushkin speech, for example, Dostoevsky urged the intelligentsia to “return to the people”.

Such criticisms of the Russian elite for not being truly Russian are very similar to the attacks launched by “patriots” - in fact they almost seem to be borrowed from Russia’s “patriots”. In reality, Kara-Murza maintains close relations with some of those on the less extreme side of the patriotic movement. For example, Kara-Murza describes Alexander Panarin as a “friend” and when they appear in debates together there are no displays of the antagonism that erupts when Panarin debates with other liberals. Relationships such as these can be partially explained by understanding Kara-Murza’s perception of liberalism. One of the central aspects of his ideology is his emphasis upon pragmatism (1994). In this way he is part of that general movement towards post-ideology which is apparent across the intellectual spectrum both in the West and in Russia. His pragmatism implies his willingness to compromise, because he is more flexible and does not as readily posit absolute rules that cannot be broken. This is exemplified by what Kara-Murza (1995) refers to as the “Russian philosophical tradition of ‘the constructive compromise’ ”.

Kara-Murza identifies several thinkers as representative of this trend: N.M.Karamzin, A.I.Herzen, B.N.Tchitcherin, P.B.Struve, G.V.Plekhanov, G.P.Fedotov, F.A.Stepun, and V.V.Vejdle. These thinkers do not necessarily have much in common with each

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<sup>47</sup> PUTIN: PRELIMINARY RESULTS. THE LIBERAL VIEW Russian Authorities in Search of Political Strategy and Development Model (a roundtable), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta – Stsenari*, No. 1, 2001. This was a discussion in which Klyamkin and Kara-Murza both took part.

other, except that in a locative sense they are difficult to place in any ideological spectrum. They are neither radical nor conservative, Slavophile nor Westernising. However, their willingness to explore the ideas of ideological opponents is a characteristic which they all share. Yanov responds to such pragmatism differently from Kara-Murza. The thinkers listed by Kara-Murza represent the type of ideological compromises that Yanov credits with having the potential to damage liberal-reformist ideas. In their reactions to such thinkers Yanov and Kara-Murza are clearly in direct conflict.

Kara-Murza also has links to the “patriotic” movement of traditionalistic and particulistic nationalists through his family. His brother is the pro-Soviet thinker, Sergei Kara-Murza. His championing of the Soviet Union, combined with his anti-Westernism, means that he is in many ways the ideological opposite of his brother. Another of Kara-Murza’s brothers is the famous television satirist and journalist, Vladimir Kara-Murza. Vladimir Kara-Murza was seen as one of the main representatives of free speech and the right to criticize the government, firstly on the television channel NTV and then on TVS before NTV was taken over by the state and TVS was closed down in 2003. While Vladimir is more radical than Alexei, Sergei is more conservative. Curiously, this family epitomises the various ideological stances within the fractured Russian political spectrum. Presumably, family gatherings must lead to some interesting discussions. However, according to Vladimir, there are no problems in this respect: “One of them is a red, another a white, but we still sit down and eat together” (Interview in Moscow Times, 18 July 2003).

Kara-Murza’s pragmatic style of liberalism seems closer to the statism of Putin than to the ideological liberalism of Yanov and Klyamkin. Indeed, we might ask what separates pragmatic liberals such as Kara-Murza from centrists. The most important difference is that even liberals who have a pragmatic attitude in fact hold to some ideological positions firmly and consistently. That is, they are invariably pro-Western, anti-Soviet and pro-reform. For statists maintaining stability and cohesion is the vital issue - far more important than espousing liberalism, even though they are willing to absorb some liberal ideas into their outlook. Pragmatic liberals, on the other hand, are more likely to find common ground with those whom they would normally consider to be their natural ideological enemies (especially the centrists, but also some of the more moderate

traditionalistic and particularistic nationalists) if these enemies are prepared to accept some “liberal” ground rules.

The perception, then, of Russian nationalism embraced by liberals is conditioned by both the type of liberalism (be it pragmatic or more idealistic) they adhere to and also by the particular views they have concerning the national question. Pragmatic liberals are more likely than idealistic liberals to compromise with non-liberal forces and are also more able to create synthetic ideologies forging liberalism with other elements, including nationalism. (We shall investigate further the question of how the issue of compromise with those wielding political power has influenced this debate in chapter 6). Kara-Murza is therefore prepared to try to absorb some of the moderate elements and ideas of the “Patriotic Movement” and also those of the statist. Ideological liberals are less likely to do so. However, this does not mean that Kara-Murza is simply using Russian nationalism pragmatically to help the liberal cause; the depth of his argument shows that he is trying to form a genuine ideological synthesis of Russian patriotism and liberalism. While Russian liberals have sometimes framed ideas about nationalism as a theoretical concept, we can see that they are mostly (with the exception of Tishkov) far more interested in the manifestations of clearly nationalist arguments in Russia. However, Yanov and to a lesser extent Klyamkin, generally group all manifestations of Russian nationalism together as being equally dangerous, while others such as Kara-Murza have tried to separate statists and traditionalists who are potentially more friendly towards the liberals, from those who are not.

In the following chapters I will show how liberals have engaged in the broader debate about what the Russian nation and Russian national identity is or should be. These debates are informed both by the theories of Russian liberals about nationalism and also more urgently by their reaction to the manifestations of overt nationalism in Russia. As we will see in the following sections if liberals did not face the challenge of different strains of Russian nationalism which set out to diminish the role of liberalism in Russia, the arguments liberals have formulated would be substantially different as they have sought to defend themselves against these attacks, and sometimes partially to co-opt the arguments of their attackers.

#### **Chapter 4: Universalism and Particularism in Debates about Identity**

Understanding the engagement of liberals with nationalism requires a consideration of the broad ideological battle in Russia, a battle where liberals are fighting to shape Russian national identity. Even those liberals who would define themselves as “anti-nationalists”, who reject overt forms of nationalism in a theoretical sense and who also dismiss Russian traditions of nationalism and patriotism are still engaged in this struggle – they still seek to define what the Russian nation is or should be and show why liberalism should be at its heart.

The position of Russian liberals in the national debate is formed using reference points from and in opposition to the major players in the debate – the statistes and also the traditionalistic nationalists. So far, undoubtedly Putin’s statism has proved the most successful ideology at dominating the national debate and shaping Russian identity. This is only partially because of the control of resources by the state. Putin’s statism has defined what Russia is or should be in a way which has proved to be very attractive for the majority of the Russian population.

A crucial issue in the reaction of Russian liberals to the national question has been their response to the issues of universalism and particularism. Russian thinkers in general often focus considerable attention on these; the questions raised have become key for Russian liberals for several reasons. Firstly, they have to find answers to the challenge made by those who make particularistic arguments to dismiss liberalism as having any relevance to the Russian context. Secondly, there is the positive part of their ideology – they must seek for an answer as to how they should define Russian identity in a way which reconciles it with their generally favourable attitudes towards Westernism and a universalistic outlook.

This chapter will first show how important universalism and particularism is in Russian thought by showing how central it is in Russian intellectual history. The chapter will then explain how Russian liberals have a generally positive interpretation of universalism as a concept. Particularism has been shown to be much more divisive for Russian liberals, and I will show that those liberals who seek to dismiss particularities

as becoming irrelevant have found that recent history has not suggested that particularities will disappear in the near future.

### **The Slavophile-Westerniser Debate and its Legacy**

Before returning to the views of contemporary thinkers on these issues, I feel it would be useful to survey how this question has been dealt with in Russian intellectual history. Perceptions about Russia and the West formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have proved very durable and their influence is clearly discernible in contemporary thought. The foundations for the Russian conception of itself and of the West began to be laid in the 18th century. An early example of the celebration of Russian distinctiveness can be seen in the writings of the great Russian intellectual, Mikhail Lomonosov, who argued for Russia's distinctiveness, uniqueness, idiosyncratic identity, and special character before the Slavophile movement itself emerged. However, Peter Chaadaev is generally seen as inspiring the intense debate about identity that has gripped Russia ever since his famous "Philosophical Letter" appeared in 1836. In fact, it is so commonplace to refer to Chaadaev in discussions of Russian debates about identity which followed this date, that it has become something of a cliché. Dale Peterson (1997, 550) puts it thus: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man possessed of a good education, Peter Lakovievich Chaadaev, initiated modern Russia's search for a national identity."

In his "Philosophical Letters", Chaadaev famously criticises Russia as being empty, "neither East nor West, and possessing the traditions of neither"; he claims that Russia is hopelessly immature in relation to Europe. Yet the publication which followed this, "Apology of a Madman", reinterpreted the lack of development more positively. Russia, Chaadaev argues, could become great because it is a blank sheet on which anything can be built. Clearly, this is a position which can be described as nationalist. Peterson comments: "Chaadaev had thus left a provocative and puzzling legacy for nationalist thinkers to contemplate; his best-known writings had prophesied a glorious national destiny that crucially depended upon a denial of indigenous cultural worth" (1997, 551). In fact, Russian nationalists and anti-nationalists, Slavophiles and Westernisers, all owe something to Chaadaev.



We can illustrate this mixed legacy by referring to one of the anti-nationalist arguments he made from the perspective of universalism in “Apology of a Madman”. Here it can be seen that Chaadaev falls into the tradition of Russian philosophers who place religion above national divides:

Love of the fatherland is certainly a very beautiful thing, but there is something better than that; it is the love of truth. Love of fatherland makes heroes, love of truth makes wise men, the benefactors of humanity; it is love of fatherland which divides peoples, which feeds national hatreds, which sometimes covers the earth with mourning; it is love of truth which spreads light, which creates the joys of the spirit, which brings men close to the Divinity. It is not by way of the fatherland, it is by way of the truth that one mounts to heaven. It is true that, as for us Russians, we have few men in love with truth; we lack examples, so one must not expect too much from a nation which has always been so little concerned with what is true and what is not, if it was so affected by a slightly virulent address directed at its infirmities. (1969, 300)

The fact that Chaadaev leaves a contradictory legacy is a reflection of how difficult the question of identity has been for Russian thinkers.

One of the main reactions to Chaadaev’s universalism was an increased emphasis on particularism. The question arose as to whether Russia was a distinct civilisation, which should be preserved from Western influences. The debate over national distinctiveness was strongly developed by the Romantics, particularly Herder. The substance of the belief can be epitomized in the idea that different cultures follow different paths, as opposed to there being one single road towards progress. There has also been debate over the extent to which national distinctiveness is a decisive factor or merely a factor that has to be taken into consideration. Russian thought has made important contributions in developing these types of ideas. Firstly the Slavophiles and then the Eurasians concentrated upon the idea that there were distinct cultural types found within different civilizations. (The Eurasian idea has been significantly compelling in modern Russia). While Herder himself is not widely influential in Russia today, the Russians influenced by him who argued for the preservation of cultural distinctiveness are very much more important. The ideological opponents of these types of views are often

“Westernisers”. As we will discuss later in this chapter, the divide between Slavophiles and Westernisers is not always clear-cut, and as always in such debates, there are inconsistencies and overlaps that makes it difficult to neatly define some thinkers as Slavophiles and others as Westernisers.

Although Westernisers can be pigeonholed as universalists and Slavophiles as particularists, the boundaries between the two ideologies are blurred in Russian thought. (The issue of universalism and particularism has, in effect, been more complicated than concluding the Westernisers concentrate solely on universalist arguments and Slavophiles adhere exclusively to particularist ideas.) In the nineteenth century, the Slavophiles were in some ways more ready to employ universalistic arguments than were the Westernisers. It is worth remembering that 19th century Europe (the West) was defined by its diversity and multi-sidedness, with many distinctive components. Therefore, in the opinion of Westernisers, Russia must also become a distinct society. The best example of such thinking is expressed in the ideas of Belinsky, who felt that in order to become part of Europe, Russia needed to bring something distinctive in order for Europe to take Russia seriously.

The Slavophiles, on the contrary, did not consider Europe as having a monopoly on what was the correct path for humanity to follow. They felt that Russia herself could discover this path and that it could fall to her to help revitalise the West. (The aid that Russia could give, however, was never clearly outlined; only hazy allusions to it were made in vague, general statements). The elements the Slavophiles identified that would help humanity in the future were preserved in the traditional aspects in Russian culture (particularly the religious aspects). Interestingly, the outlook of the Slavophiles veered more towards concentrating upon the aim of revitalising global humanity, rather than creating a great Russian nation. This raises the question as to whether they can really be regarded as nationalists.

The debate continues into the modern era, transferred in particular by the reinterpretation of the ideas of the Slavophiles and Westerniser by dissident or semi-official thinkers throughout the Soviet era. Universalism was a hugely important feature of dissident thought from the 1960's onwards (English 2000, 117-158; for a discussion of religiously motivated universalism in the dissident era, see Boobbyer 2005, 114-132).

Dissidents usually argued in favour of universal values. The reason for this was that they felt that the moral relativism which communist ideology was based on had undermined the absolute ethical beliefs they held (often from a religious or a humanitarian standpoint). Therefore, if there were absolute beliefs about what was right then it followed that these beliefs must apply to everyone. For this reason ideologies which proposed separate national values were criticised because this was another form of relativism which again undermined the universalistic belief in moral absolutes. Such thinkers with a universalistic outlook had evolved from communists into social-democrats, but they still retained many of the beliefs shared by orthodox Marxists, especially concerning the importance of technological progress to benefit mankind. Their support of technology was another area of dispute with the nationalists for whom technological progress was a Western evil which was unsuitable for Russia.

The conflict over the benefits of technological progress is illustrated in Sakharov's reply to Solzhenitsyn's famous "Letter to Soviet Leaders". In 1973 Solzhenitsyn had called for Russia's Soviet leadership to abandon Marxist dogma and instead create a state based on "Russian" values which would yet manifest an anti-Western orientation. Sakharov challenged this by emphasising shared values with the West based on a universalistic belief in progress:

I find Solzhenitsyn's treatment of the problem of progress particularly misleading. Progress is a world-wide process, which must not be equated, certainly not in the times to come, with the quantitative growth of large-scale industrial production. Given universal scientific and democratic control of the economy and of the whole of social life, including population growth, this, I am quite convinced, is not a utopia but a vital necessity. Progress must continually change its immediate forms according to need, in order to meet the requirements of human society while preserving at all costs the natural environment and the earth for our descendants. To slow down scientific research, international scientific contacts, technological experiment and the introduction of new agricultural systems can only delay the solution of these problems and create critical situations for the whole of humanity. (1976, 23)

Here we see two key features of Sakharov's critique of particularistic Russian nationalism combined - his global outlook and his modernism. In fact, Sakharov shares a remarkably similar worldview with modern advocates of the ideology of globalization, such as Fukuyama. The main weakness of this type of universalism is that it does not offer an explanation of why there is cultural diversity, nor why people do not always want to follow the Western path.

There is a continuing debate about universalism and particularism in modern Russia, which is demonstrated by the fact that both Fukuyama and Huntington have received and continue to receive considerable attention there. Andrei Tsygankov (2004, 61-113) asserts that the influence of these thinkers has been very strong and very harmful in Russia. (He even rather absurdly claims that both of them should take moral responsibility for the way their ideas have influenced the debate in Russia - as if Russian thinkers should be excused of responsibility for whatever mistakes they have made because they have succumbed to the irresistible power of the ideas of either Fukuyama or Huntington). In actual fact, the popularity of Fukuyama and Huntington probably relates more to the way their ideas fit in so well with ideas already developed within Russia, than whether they bring anything else new to the debate. Fukuyama's ideas legitimise the universalistic ideas already present, while Huntington performs the same role for particularistic ones.

Also significant in the modern debates about identity in Russia – which are often a continuation of the Slavophile-Westerniser debate because they compare and contrast Russian and Western civilisations - is the emphasis upon civilisation. Thinkers, such as Alexander Akhiezer, who have placed heavy emphasis upon civilisation, are important in this context, which explains why the current generation of liberal thinkers focus on this value so often in their discussion of identity. As Kaehne says:

One of the most striking features of Russian social and political thought is the persistence with which the concept of civilisation occurs in the literature.

Although it may be different things to different people, it often adopts either an interpretative or an explanatory function in theoretical writings in Russia. (2007, 34)

The focus on civilisation and also on “civilisational theories” is one of the links which connects Russian liberal thought closely to the wider spectrum of modern Russian thought. While there is little theoretical unity amongst those who use civilisational arguments influenced by Akhiezer (Kaehne 2007, 38) it will become clear in the following section that this is a critical value for discussions of identity for liberal thinkers. Furthermore, the approach to issues of identity as an intense moral and ethical issue continues into modern debates.

The Slavophile-Westerner debate did embrace extremes of particularism and universalism, but between these extremes there is a vast “grey area” which contains perhaps more measured versions of particularistic and universalistic outlooks. This continues into the modern era.

### **Modern Russian Westernism as an Ideology of Universalism and Progress**

This section will examine how the thinkers we are considering have focused on the Slavophile-Westerniser debate and its modern variants and also consider the question of universalism and particularism.

The idea of progress is strongly asserted in Klyamkin’s view of the West. Interestingly, he exploits the fact that even “patriots”, who attack the West, concentrate their assault on censuring the West as a symbol of capitalism. As Klyamkin regards Russia as becoming more capitalist, he asserts that the “patriots” will find it more and more difficult to attack the West for possessing non-Russian values:

The country does not have time seriously to consider utopian projects like “Sacred city Russia” and to be betrayed by dreams about leadership in an antiglobalist, antimodernist movement, making a sacrament of poverty. Even the professional patriots nowadays have wide access to information and as they try to frighten people about the West, democracy and political correctness, - even they, masterly playing on the strings of human souls, cannot change a century long archetype. Those who are really the leaders always become clever, strong and rich, instead of the one who shouts most loudly with the more strongly inflated cheeks. (2002)

Klyamkin answers the common attack made against liberal-universalists by their opponents, namely that they are too idealistic. The charge is that they place their “inorganic systems” onto a nation with completely alien cultural particularities. Klyamkin’s reply to this is to emphasize the real observable success of Western style systems. Yakovenko also makes the point that anti Westernisers are dreamers:

From Slavophiles, Tyutchev, through Konstantin Leont’ev and Agitprop [a Central Committee of the CPSU] up to authors of the newspaper "Zavtra" [a nationalist publication] all ideologists of traditionalism wait, prophesy and prophesy about the crash of the corrupted West. They listen attentively to omens, peer into clouds and lightning, ponder upon the sense of prophecies and decipher signs. And each time it turns out, that tomorrow the West does not fail, the world they have rejected does not die, but continues to live and prosper. To understand this is too difficult a task for the traditionalists. (2001)

Yakovenko feels that in general the Russian tradition is too focused upon idealism and does not consider real issues. He discerns its roots in Orthodox thought, and traces its development under communism. He feels that Western Christian traditions are different because they have never lost sight of the “real world”. Although both cultures have featured very traditionalist social structures at different times, Yakovenko feels that the effect in Russia was more exaggerated due to the influence of Orthodoxy. Yakovenko suggests that the traditionalism emanating from Orthodoxy is especially opposed to liberalism; liberalism accepts the imperfectability of the real word, as does Orthodoxy, but tries to form the best system to deal with the sort of problems that inevitably appear. Yakovenko forces this point home by focusing on the attempts to highlight the superiority of the Western universal path and by focusing on the Russian attempts to avoid this route:

She has offered mankind a new way, a special strategy of life. Incalculable resources have been spent for it, the life of four generations, cubic kilometres of both ours and others’ blood spilt, millions of evil deeds accomplished. And all this was justified only by the eternal goal. For itself Russia saw the reward in taking the position of the leader of a renewed mankind, in becoming the centre

of the universe, an empire of Divine Truth to which peoples exhausted by wandering in darkness will bow.(2001)

These observations by Russian liberals do in fact highlight one of the constant dilemmas for those who reject Western models and Western culture: How do they respond to the fact that in terms of technology and power the West has generally been stronger than Russia? As Neumann puts it, there is a certain “sameness” in the debate about the West in Russia:

As demonstrated time and again in the Russian debate about Europe during the last two hundred years, it is likely that any regime, no matter how bent it may initially be on following a specifically Russian path of development, will discover that maintaining the position of Russia in its international setting may demand a certain copying of European models. (Neumann 1996, 192)

The example that Neumann gives to illustrate this point is that of the advice of the Minister of Finance, Reutern, to Tsar Alexander II, when he warned that:

Without railways and mechanical industries Russia cannot be considered secure in her boundaries. Her influence in Europe will fall to a level inconsistent with her international power and her historical significance. (Quoted in Neumann1996, 192)

Clearly, Russian Westernism is often strongly related to universalism. It is easy to see that this element features in the ideas of all of our thinkers. Yanov puts it most stridently in his refusal to tolerate anything other than the Western path. (Indeed, Yanov’s attitude is sometimes reminiscent of the stark and unromantic Westernism that appears from time to time amongst radical, materialistic thinkers in Russian intellectual history, such as Nicolas Chernyshevsky.) Kara-Murza also portrays a universalistic vision:

For me Westernism of the XIX-XX centuries - actually represents, not Westernism in a narrow sense, but cultural universalism. In my opinion, the West was simply the first to realize certain social universals. (2003a, 380)

A further attempt to limit the impact of universalism draws attention to the diversity manifested in the West. This attempt can be made from two angles: firstly, by highlighting the ideological diversity within Europe (the variety of different ideological currents - conservatism and socialism, as well as liberalism), and secondly, by emphasising the geo-political divides that are seen to exist within the West. Klyamkin opposes such attempts to separate the West into positive or negative variants. The accusation that the West is divided is sometimes made (much more so after September the 11th) by Russian thinkers who argue that the EU and the USA are two separate structures:

The logic of the eminence of culture above civilization, induces many (as the discussion between us shows) to substitute the problem of the integration of Russia into the Western community with the integration of Russia into Europe. "Uncivilized" America does not feature in these calculations, only the European Union. Personally such a project seems to me, at least, debatable. Their supporters artificially dismember the consolidated Western community, proceeding from the precondition, that for Russia it will be easier to renounce an essential part its sovereignty, than it is for England, and do not take into account the territories which without careful cooperation with the USA and Japan we will not master and will not keep. (2003c, 440)

Therefore, it is correct to conclude that all of the thinkers we are considering are universalists in that they accept that the Western path is the correct model for Russia. However, this does not necessarily mean they reject particularism completely and it also does not necessarily mean they reject overt nationalism.

### **Russian Liberals and Particularism**

The differences between the thinkers under review become more apparent when we consider their attitude towards particularism. The first issue is whether particularities should be shielded from universalism even if this universalism improves the standard of living; this is basically an ethical question. Secondly, there is what might be seen as being more a practical question – can and should liberalism be adapted to particularities,



and if so how? Finally, there is the question of how to deal with anti-liberal particularities – will the importance of these gradually diminish?

According to D.V Dragunsky (2003) universalism can be divided into “hard” and “soft” variants. In the starkest terms this is reflected in a choice which Dragunsky describes as between: “Rescue from famine and a decrease in children's death rate – or preservation of cultural originality? Which will intellectuals vote for if the choice is between one or the other?” The hard variants are those which suggest there is simply one way of doing things, which should not be modified to reflect cultural contexts.

“Hard” universalists have been challenged by some interesting particularistic arguments in contemporary Russia. The rise of anti-globalist ideas in the West has had some impact on the Russian patriotic movement with some of the ideas causing problems for Russian universalists (notably, the ideas of Huntington). Traditionalistic nationalists such as Panarin and other Russian intellectuals, who argue that Russia should be protected from aggressive cultural influences from the West, have clearly borrowed from the debates about this in the West. From one point of view their ideas can be seen as liberal if their aim is that of protecting global diversity. The quotation from Alexander Dugin makes this point:

The West just now comes to understanding an obvious thing: Western society, though it is liberal inside itself, is extremely authoritarian to those who are outside of it. Moreover, this Western internal liberalism therefore has matured, so that all authoritarian complexes have moved to the outside and the Western idea is imposed upon “lesser civilizations”. (2000)

It seems something of a contradiction for a thinker, who is himself highly critical of liberalism, to employ liberal arguments. In fact, this contradiction can be partially explained by the diversity of liberal political arguments, and it shows how these arguments can come into conflict with each other. The liberal idea of cultural diversity is, of course, prone to be antagonistic towards universalistic liberal ideas if these ideas are seen as being forced on an alien culture. Different sorts of liberalism are not compatible when it comes to this issue and the divide between them seems unsolvable.

It can seem strange that a significant proportion of Russian thinkers as a whole do respond so readily to the apprehension that Russian identity is under threat from Western influences. For Russians trying to protect Russian culture from globalisation, it is difficult to mount an argument that Russian culture is under threat with the same force as one can argue that minority cultures are under threat. The argument becomes less liberal when one considers that, far from being seen as the victim overwhelmed by outside cultural pressure, Russia is often accused of overwhelming smaller nations. Russian particularists have tried to get around this by arguing that Russia is, in fact, the protector of numerous traditional nations from baneful Western influence.

For those liberals for whom the West is the supreme example for Russia, then Russia's goal should be to become exactly like the West. The question arises as to whether there is anything in Russia that is distinctively Russian that should be preserved. The strength of the impulse towards particularism cannot be denied, however, and Russian liberals must be careful about dismissing this as an irrelevant emotional impulse which is what they frequently do. Liberals rarely try to understand why these feelings actually arise, let alone try to make some allowances for them in their ideologies. Part of the reason for this is that liberals belong to the middle class segment of society which feels the least threatened by the increasing Westernisation of urban areas in Russia, but which instead is threatened by more "traditional" elements. Liberals do not always understand the impact of the expression of "hard universalism" which does not make allowances for those who cannot keep pace with modernity. Thus, it can seem remarkably heartless towards those (particularly the older generations and those in rural areas) who are less able to adapt. Certainly there are some liberals who have drifted towards this position, particularly Klymakin.

While the question of whether particularities should be taken into account for ethical reasons is important, a more crucial issue for Russian liberals to consider is how far liberalism has to be adapted to match cultural particularities in the Russian context to be an ideology which can be effective and win support. Most liberals argue that liberalism has historically faced a cultural challenge in Russia. As Kara-Murza put it, Russian liberalism developed "in historically high-risk space" (quoted in Shelokhaev 1999). To a greater or lesser degree, as well as pointing to the lack of cultural and social preconditions, liberals also emphasise the obstacles put in the way of an acceptance of

liberalism by the holders of political power – often the government, but also by other political forces which were markedly anti-liberal.

Several liberal theorists have explained the weakness of Russian liberalism as resulting from the absence of the necessary preconditions and particularities which would favour its development in Russia. One of the most important contemporary theorists of liberalism, Boris Kapustin, noting the absence of necessary preconditions, "revealed the absence of all or almost all conditions which in the past had enabled the West to channel the liberation intention to maximize private benefit into economic interest that managed to set up a system of universal usefulness without resorting to authoritarian-despotic methods" (1994, 30). Kapustin has argued that in Russia's recent history attempts to transfer liberalism to anytime or place irrespective of the cultural and social conditions have ended in a distorted form of liberalism (see Kaehne 2007, 106-107). Another Russian theorist, V. Prilensky, identified what the different preconditions were which led to the weakness of liberalism in Russia: "I refer to the absence of solid social support for liberal thought in society, its anti-democratic character, the principle of monarchism, a strong and pronounced conservative trend and the absence of civic freedoms in Russian society during the initial period" (quoted in Shelokhaev 1999). The focus on the importance of social, cultural and political preconditions as being necessary for the success of liberalism is widespread amongst liberals.

Russian liberals have responded to this challenge in several different ways. All the thinkers we are considering accept that liberalism will only be successful in Russia if some social preconditions are fulfilled; that is, all of them argue that the Russian political system and society needs to evolve and be modernised (in particular they emphasise the removal of elements of the Soviet legacy which are seen as being blocks to liberalism – see Chapter 5). As Kaehne (2007, 95-112) shows, a recurring theme of contemporary Russian liberal political theory is linking liberalism to modernism. However, while all of them call for modernisation they have different approaches to the degree that liberalism needs to be tailored to match Russian particularities – while some argue that Russia needs to be modernised along the Western path to have any chance, others are less deterministic arguing that liberalism presents the best path to solve the problems which modernity brings, but it is far from definite that Russia will follow this path.

This means there are different approaches to how thinkers are able to adapt liberalism to its particularities. Kara-Murza's attitude is similar to those in many non-Western countries who argue for the adoption of "soft" cultural relativism. Therefore, though the basic idea of the correctness of Western values is maintained, it is argued that these values should be tailored to match the particular situations in which they are being placed.

Kara-Murza, as we noted in the previous section, is always the most willing to compromise with the Russian "patriotic" tradition. His willingness to compromise with them relates to his Westernism, an aspect of his thought which, much more than that of most contemporary Russian liberals, is more akin to the liberals of the 19th century, such as Struve and Belinsky, who were believers in the need for Russia to find her own identity in order to become part of Europe. Here is a section from an article that Kara-Murza wrote (in partnership with Alexander Panarin, which itself is interesting because Panarin is known for his anti-Western views):

It is necessary to remember that the best samples of national culture have, in general, been in opposition to 'Russian barbarity' and in this sense cannot be divided into streams that are either 'Russianist' or 'Westernist'. Referring to F. Dostoevsky and L. Tolstoy's ideas (which asserted, for example, that 'Westernism and Slavophilism in Pushkin are one', and 'the more deeply one is implanted in the country, the more deeply he moves to Europe'), S.L. Franc has formulated this position like this: 'It is common sense that national character does not assume isolation from another's influences, the isolation of the national culture. On the contrary, the substance of the national spirit is alive, she eats the material borrowed from the outside which she processes and acquires, not losing it, but quite the opposite, developing in it national originality...'

Therefore, it not necessary to deny the danger of the 'denationalization of Russia', the loss of the positive experiences acquired by her in the course of intercivilisational interaction and intelligent resistance to the active cultural and economic expansion of the West. The submission of Russia to another's canons would simply deprive the country of the prospects of successful modernization.

Moreover, Russian opponents of Westernism were absolutely right in the sense that the Russia which has lost its national originality will not get 'to Europe', and on the contrary, will lose its rightful place in European culture for it will become for Europe uninteresting and unnecessary. (1995, 15-16)

One interesting feature of this argument is that it brings into question some of the arguments made by those whose convictions are strictly universalistic and exclude the possibility of any particularism. The argument is strikingly similar to Belinsky's: in order to become a European nation Russia needs to gain the respect of Europe. The implications of Kara-Murza's argument are that Russian liberalism must be adapted to particularities in order to be successful – only a form of liberalism which takes into account what he highlights as specifically "Russian" cultural factors will be successful.

Kara-Murza notes the confused legacy of Slavophilism and Westernism. Indeed, the attempt to divide these strands into neat categories is not always successful. For example, Kara-Murza notes that Slavophilism has a tradition at least as anti-authoritarian as that of Westernism:

Notice that the early, classical Slavophiles were much more anti-statesmen, than classical Westerners. Our Westerners frequently said that only the government is capable of leading this uncivilized people into Europe. And liberal Slavophiles asserted that people in Russia were already more civilized than when under authority, and that the Westerner Peter the Great enslaved Russia, having imposed on it Western bureaucracy. Therefore, Nikolai I was also afraid of Slavophiles much more than he was of Westerners, who can always be persuaded to support authority. (2003a, 380-381)

This is an important challenge to the type of outlook that Yanov has - that historically liberals as universalists always line up on one side and particularistic-authoritarians on the other. Kara-Murza argues that the general population are not well enough educated about history – believing the account pushed by anti-liberal particularists which asserts that liberalism and reform are "not Russian" (2001).

Both Klyamkin and Yanov have criticized Russian liberals who emphasise the importance of combining liberalism with Russian particularities. Yanov seems unwilling to accept that different cultural factors might play a role in explaining why the political system is (or should be) different from that of the West. Klyamkin generally seeks to present Russian people as possessing the same features and opinions as people in the West. In fact, both these ideas stem from typical Russian dissident liberalism, a movement of which both Klyamkin and Yanov were part.

For Klyamin and Yanov, promoting particularism is generally seen as a block to liberalism; particularities will diminish in importance as Russia becomes a “modern” country. (I will explore in more detail the ideas of Russian liberals about what Russia can or should be in the following chapter.) Here we face the question of how anti-liberal particularism can be dealt with. For Yanov and Klyamkin anti-liberal particularities have to be and will be swept away as part of an ideological process and also through the process of globalisation and modernisation. However, this outlook can result in problems when modernisation and transition do not actually lead to greater support for liberalism. An example of this is the expectation that a growing middle class will lead to greater support for liberal political ideas. Russian liberals have begun to discard the notion that the development of an expanding middle class “inevitably” leads to calls for political liberalisation, though they generally still see it as being helpful. This was a position that was more likely to be held by liberals in the 1990’s, but which has largely been discredited by the realisation (particularly after the failure in the 2003 elections) that solid support from an expanding middle class for liberalism was not guaranteed.

The problem, then, in the view of Yanov and Klyamkin, is that if modernisation of society does not remove what are regarded as particularistic blocks to liberalism, liberalism cannot take root. Since adapting to particularities is not an option, there is a danger of liberals who reject any form of particularism being bitterly disappointed. This is particularly the case for Yanov who regards ingrained anti-liberal aspects of Russian identity as essentially unchanging. Yanov’s view of Russian history is interesting because it partially endorses Greenfeld’s (see Canovan 1996, 127) notion that Russian particularities are fundamentally unsuited for liberal reforms due to the type of nationalism that appeared there.

One of the curious features about the way most Russian liberals approach particularism is that it is generally understood in primordial terms – particularities (whether they are interpreted positively or negatively) are seen as essentially static and unchanging, and are something either to be accommodated or swept away. This shows the influence of Russian civilisational thought on many of the liberals. It does also stand in contrast to their constructivist approach to economics and politics which are seen as dynamic and changing, while national and cultural factors are seen as static. This stands in contrast to Western thought where national identities are seen as dynamic and constantly evolving by almost all theorists – as Brubaker (1996,16) put it “...everyone [meaning Western theorists] agrees that nations are historically formed constructs”.

Tishkov (2001) reveals a dissenting attitude towards particularism. This is not manifested in his attitude towards the Slavophile-Westerniser debate - as we have seen in the previous section he regards this as an irrelevance. His disapproval of particularism surfaces in his absolute rejection of any theories which emphasise “national characteristics”. Indeed, his unwillingness to draw on Russian intellectual history can itself be seen as a symptom of this. He explains most recent historical events, which are often described as resulting from peculiarities relating to national identity in these regions, as resulting rather from interest politics and the interplay between elite groups. He cites as examples of this process both the collapse of the Soviet Union and the causes of the Chechen conflict. Tishkov, therefore, suggests that mankind has a universal history, though characteristically he makes this claim without the emotive language which is typical of other Russian thinkers.

However, while Tishkov’s glasnost era writings reverberate with strong optimism about the way new identities can be created in Russia, his spell in the government of the early Yeltsin administration and the subsequent disappointments that followed this era seem to have changed his view. While his early writings are very much constructivist in tone, his later ones begin to take into account some of the elements already in place in Russia. (He says a new “Russian” identity needs to be built upon foundations already in place such as shared language, defined borders, etc. though typically he still ignores historical and cultural factors (see 1997, 264-271).

Yakovenko (2001) undermines particularism by demonstrating the changeability of history.<sup>48</sup> He attacks traditionalism by suggesting that just because something has always been one way it does not always follow it will remain so. For example, he states that the use of Cyrillic makes it more difficult for Russia to integrate with world culture. Other Slavic nations do not use Cyrillic and therefore have an advantage. Furthermore, just because Russia has used Cyrillic for some time does not mean it always will. He cites the example of Turkey which changed to the Latin alphabet in the 1920's.

Particularism remains the main point of division amongst Russian liberals. Most liberals argue that there needs to be a change in the social and political structure in Russia in order for liberalism to be successful. However, they disagree about how much liberalism needs to be adapted to the broader cultural challenges which liberalism faces. Some "hard universalists" argue that these particularities need to be swept away to allow Russia to follow the Western path and that adapting liberalism too much to what are seen as anti-liberal particularities will create a distorted form of liberalism.

If we consider what might be useful in the national debate, we can see that the "hard universalist" approach faces some difficulties. The economic crises which Russia has faced in the post-Soviet era, particularly in the aftermath of the Soviet Union, do not make the link between prosperity and a liberal-universalistic model as close as Klyamin and Yanov would like it to be. The arguments of culturally aware liberals such as Kara-Murza do contain some potential to begin the process of making liberalism seem "Russian", and may also be able to begin to neutralise some of the challenges posed to liberals by particularists. The constructivist approach made by Tishkov and Yakovenko presents a challenge to particularists by undermining some of the things they argue are "eternal" and "unchanging". However, these arguments are probably more likely to have a gradual long-term impact than to have immediate short-term application.

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<sup>48</sup> This is an area which liberals are only beginning to explore. Perhaps a potentially useful argument emphasising the changeability of particularities is Milyukov's claim that Russian nationality was itself defined by its adaptability and changeability (Stockdale 1996, 53-81). It has yet to be significantly employed in modern Russian thought.



## **Chapter 5: Russian Liberals and Questions of Russian Identity**

This chapter will continue to examine the engagement of the liberals in the national question by discussing their attempts to define what Russia is or should be. Some of the problems thrown up by these questions are the results of Russia's post-imperial, post-Soviet transition; others of them have their roots in longer historical struggles which have constantly troubled reformers. This chapter is divided into three parts: the first deals with the discussion of Russia's relationship with the West; the second deals with the perception of Russia itself; and the final part will examine to what extent Russian liberals believe Russia's identity can be changed and how this can be accomplished.

The discussions of Russian identity to which Russian liberals apply themselves have a purpose – there is a desire to create an ideology which will place liberalism at the centre of Russian identity. Liberals in general regarded the end of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to create something new - a new identity for Russia.

### **Part 1: Russia and the West**

This section is divided into two parts. The first constructs the type of arguments Russians propose about identity, particularly in relation to Russia and the West. The second section details the attempts of Russian liberals to portray Russia as a Western nation.

#### **The Use of the “West” in Contemporary Russia**

Questions of national identity in Russia are frequently defined in terms of Russia's relationship with the West. Undoubtedly, the discussion of this relationship is one of the most important aspects of Russian intellectual history. It is debatable whether too much emphasis is placed on this by observers of Russian intellectual history, to the extent that it becomes cliché-ridden. The fact remains that almost every debate in Russia is coloured by this issue. Here, Olga Malinova (2002) describes how all-pervasive this debate is:

Collisions between "Pochvennichestvo" [a term closely related to Slavophilism] and "Westerners" occur during discussion of the results of reforms that have already taken place and plans of new transformations, foreign policy and prospects of the introduction into WTO, national interests and even methodology of social studies (see the discussion in "Pro et contra" in 2000). Disputes are conducted both internally, and in absentia, on pages of newspapers and magazines, in television shows, amongst academics, on the Internet and in simple "kitchen discussions".

We have already focused on the intellectual history of this discussion in the previous chapter, but here we will discuss in more detail its role in contemporary debates. Traditionally, Russian writings about the West have really been about Russia. This is because Russia is always perceived to be behind the West in terms of development. Therefore, it faces the choice of either trying to follow the Western path of development or adopting a new way forward. Usually, an author who criticises the West will call for a different path for Russia.

All modern Russian liberals have a strongly pro-Western orientation. This is perhaps one of the most clearly discernible factors in modern Russian liberalism, and one of the key aspects that give the movement some sort of ideological unity. Indeed, it is perhaps the case that it is impossible to combine a strong, ideological antagonism towards the West and still be considered a liberal in Russia.<sup>49</sup> However, there is some diversity in how the idea of the "West" is employed, and what it means to different thinkers.

Traditionally, the terms the "West" or "Europe" have signified a range of differing concepts for Russian thinkers. Firstly, there is the way certain ideological elements are ascribed to "Europe". Indeed, this mode of thinking is very common and all of the thinkers we are considering use terms such as the "West" or "Europe" to denote ideological spaces rather than geographical ones. This being the case they have often been used interchangeably to symbolise ideological values. The values typically attributed to Europe and the West are modernisation, liberalism, democracy and

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<sup>49</sup> Perhaps the only way this could be achieved is by arguing that the idea of national distinctiveness and cultural diversity are strands of liberalism which can be marshalled against the overbearing force of Westernisation. Some intellectuals such as Panarin can be perceived as holding these views.

capitalism. Since these values are invariably associated with the West it is not surprising that liberals always paint a favourable picture of it as an ideological construct.

Naturally, when a Russian thinker has praised or criticised these factors in Western civilisation it follows that they are at the same time recommending what course Russia should take.

Secondly, the perceptions of the “West” and “Russia” have also been shaped by understanding them as major civilisations. This is as much a reflection of how Russia is visualised, as how the West is visualised. The idea of Eurasianism which was first promulgated in the early 20th century, conceives of Russia as part of a linguistic-cultural union with Southern Turkic nations. It argues that this civilisation has distinct characteristics that separate it from the West, such as traditionalism and communalism rather than modernity and individualism, and faith rather than rationalism. This idea has resurfaced in contemporary Russia, thanks in particular to the writings of the historian Lev Gumilev who helped to popularise these ideas. Eurasianism has clearly influenced many particularistic nationalists in modern Russia. For example, Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Communist Party, recycled these ideas. They were also influential on Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Amongst Russian “intellectuals”, Alexander Dugin has deployed them most consistently (see Parland 2005, 23-100). As has been noted, the ideas of Samuel Huntington have also been influential. His argument that the borders between different civilisations were consistent with the religious cultures upon which these civilisations were based, has been widely debated throughout Russia. Russia and the West are, thus, often perceived as separate self-contained “civilisational” structures. These arguments also appear in a less forceful way amongst the centrists in Russia. As Yuri Fedorov (2000, 15) puts it:

This dramatic contraposition of the Russian and Western civilizations is typical of the leftist and also nationalist segment of the Russian political spectrum. More moderate politicians and intellectuals, including those considering themselves to be part of the democratic segment of the Russian elite, frequently uphold similar ideas, although they express them in a softer or less overt form. For instance, the idea has been floated that it is the West, not Russia, that is a unique civilization whose standards and practices are unacceptable for the rest of humanity. Vladimir Lukin, one of the leaders of the *Yabloko* Party, and his

former colleague from the prestigious Institute of the USA and Canada Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences) Professor Anatoly Utkin, argue:

The West constitutes a unique region and unique civilization. The 1990s have demonstrated, perhaps more clearly than the period of [Cold War] confrontation, that Russia and the West live in separate civilizational realms created, above all, by their different historical experiences. There are visible civilizational differences and ignoring them has never done Russia any good and will not do it any good in the future.

Fedorov is, in my view, exaggerating the consistency of opinion amongst the centrists on this issue. The time period he refers to as an example is the period immediately after the war in Yugoslavia. Generally, at this time the centrists were anti-Western (Markov 1995). In reality most centrists change their opinions depending upon circumstances and are pragmatic. In this respect, it is more accurate to judge them to be essentially neither anti-Western, nor pro-Western, though they do have the potential to move in either direction. Fedorov is right to note, though, that they are always less enthusiastic in expressing strong opinions on this subject than either liberals or particularistic nationalists.

Vladimir Malakhov notes that in the general discourse civilisational values are regarded as being very rigid. Writing in 1997 he commented that: "During the five years which have expired after the wreck of Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, in the book and especially in the journal market a huge quantity of compositions has been brought out, whose authors comprehend events in terms of "cultural" (or "ethnocultural") conflict. And professional representatives of the philosophical sphere, and the journalists practicing in the genre of cultural science, proceed thus from a silent assumption as if society consists of certain fundamental values which, though they can come into contact with each other, basically are self-sufficient and extremely hard to change" (1997).

Arising from this fundamental belief there is a basic conclusion drawn that conflicts between different cultures are inevitable. And sometimes the conclusion is reached and is expressed in extreme terms that Russia and the West are fundamentally different civilizations which will always be in conflict with each other. In supporting such

arguments, while the ideas of earlier thinkers are often referred to in Russia, not everyone is willing to employ these sources. However, this does not mean the underlying ideas are different from “civilisational” arguments; the change might just be one of terminology. As Malakhov (1997) rather sardonically puts it:

Those who do not want to look today like a reactionary, do not speak any more about "national characters" and even about "national mentalities". They speak about "national identity". The term "identity" is often supplied with predicates such as "cultural" and "national", "collective" and "individual". This gives the public an impression of theoretical weightiness and scientific good quality.

...It seems, more and more people start to believe, that if the fences between "cultures" are higher, their carriers are more reliably guaranteed against mutual destruction...It is regrettable to observe, with what eagerness intellectuals have joined in this manufacture.

Thirdly, the “West” is used in political and ideological discourses to represent different systems and practices which should be adopted in Russia. These arguments are more specific and less idealistic than the arguments about whether Russia should share Western ideals. Indeed, even those who are critical of the West as being inherently corrupt, will still often call for certain aspects of Russian society or, in particular, the economy, to be organised along Western lines.

A further influence on how the West is interpreted in Russia emanates from international relations and foreign affairs and is directly related to what sort of conflicts are present, particularly between Russia and the West. Undoubtedly, international relations can have an extremely important effect on how the values that different nations and cultures represent are perceived. Particularly significant have been the different “shocks” that Russian public opinion has sustained when the West is perceived as being particularly aggressive, such as during the war in former Yugoslavia in 1996, and also recently during the war in Iraq. During both these events there have been noticeable public displays of anti-Westernism. However, as German Diligensky (2002) notes, the long-term effects of this seem to be less enduring. Opinion polls seem to return to their “natural” positions shortly after these kinds of events. While there is a rich tradition of

Soviet anti-Westernism and also post-Soviet particularistic attacks on the West, most of the Russian population only seem to connect with this type of propaganda during extreme international situations. Liberals at these times are often on the defensive, or sometimes offer analyses separating different Western governments from “Western values” or accusing them of betraying “Western values”. However, it must be asserted that those who have entrenched ideological affinity or antagonism towards the West are not likely to change their views because of the latest international events. The Westernism of liberals in Russia, therefore, is not noticeably affected by international events that may cause others to express anti-Western opinions. The attitude of the Russian people in regard to many issues, including their attitude towards the West, has been hard to judge. Perhaps this is because most people do not have clearly defined positions on this issue. Russian people, unlike intellectuals and publicists, are not obliged to form clear ideological opinions or hold definite “positions” on different issues. Their views tend to be generally vague and they are much more likely to be swayed by the latest international events.

Often the “civilisational” idea of basic cultural and ideological identity can be used to overrule the perception of internal diversity in the West. The pro-European liberal politician, Vladimir Ryzhkov, therefore, has tried to contrast the “superior” West of the European Union (because it is based upon co-operation and rejects expansionism) with the “less developed West” of America and also of Russia. He maintains, like all modern Russian liberals, that Russia is a Western and European nation but that it is not a “modern” European nation because it still seeks to expand and dominate. (We will explore this more fully in the next section):

The USA is a European country if we exclude geography. It is European in the sense of uniform values, and economic and political organization. And Russia is also European. But neither of them are modern European countries; that is, a country which today prefers to engage in dialogue rather than to use force and is determined to spend years at the negotiating table in order to achieve a consensus with their partner. The USA and Russia think in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century categories, the categories of "egoism": “We will do what I decide as I am strong enough and I can triumph over all successively”. We still think of the Russian empire, of the Soviet Union, which is like a soloist in a chorus of

superstates, while Europe already has for a long time played harmoniously in a common orchestra. (2002)

Diligensky (2002) also suggests that Russians maintain a more positive view of individual Western countries than they do of the West as a whole. Perhaps individual countries are easier to personalise than the rather imprecise concept that is the “West”. The vagueness of the “West” adds to the perception of this being a powerful and threatening entity. Russia experiences the same pro-Western attractions and anti-Western distrust which characterise many other countries.

It is impossible for the thinkers we are considering to deal only with abstract values when debating concepts such as the “West” and “Russia”. The role of international relations also has an important impact upon the content of the debate. The thinkers under scrutiny generally have a view of history that concentrates on the long-term flow of events and are, therefore, less likely to be impacted by temporary factors. Yet, real relations between Russia and the West can still have an impact. During the war in Yugoslavia, as noted, there was widespread condemnation of what was perceived as American and, to a lesser extent, European aggression. (This is sometimes said to result from a sense of brotherhood between Russia and Serbia relating to Slavophile ideas, but, in reality, has more to do with anger at Western interference in Russia’s sphere of influence and also a concern about the legality of the attack since it did not have the approval of the UN.). In fact, this concern was strong enough for some commentators to actually deem the war in Yugoslavia to have had a potentially unifying effect on the otherwise fractured Russian political spectrum.

However, because the kind of anti-Westernism this generated was superficial, liberalism did not have to respond vigorously nor attempt to construct explanations or defences; there was never any danger that their ideas of ideological Westernism would be swept aside by what proved to be temporary and inconsequential displays of hostility towards the West in the media and in the population. It is noticeable how little the liberals commented upon both the war in Serbia and in Iraq.

September 11th was an event upon which they were more confident about commenting upon. Klyamkin (2002c) argued that the time immediately after the period of September 11th represented an excellent chance to improve Russian and American relations. The manner in which he argued this demonstrated the same kind of cultural and civilisational reasoning that we have already explored in the previous section. It should be noted that the thinkers we are considering are not actively involved in studying international relations. While there are liberals who are from this background and who have made detailed studies on the relations between Russia and the West concentrating on more specific areas, these latter categories of experts are generally more technocratic than ideological thinkers and therefore have not been included in this study.

The final point to be made is that the views of Russian thinkers reflect the reality that the West is not necessarily a homogeneous concept. Since the appearance of nations the West has, of course, been as much a demonstration of diversity as of unity and uniformity. Clearly, as we are dealing with the perception of nationalism by Russian liberals, this aspect of European history is very important. It should be noted that, as well as allocating different values to the West as a whole, Russian thinkers have sometimes allocated values to individual countries. For example, England traditionally has been conceived of as representing the values of conservatism (especially regarding religion in comparison to France), liberalism, and capitalism in 19th century thought. Germany and France have been ascribed other values. In contemporary thought the split between Europe and America is beginning to make an impact on these debates in Russia. Generally Europe is seen as the more progressive part of the West, while America is seen as more conservative.

### **Liberals and the View of Russia as a Western Nation**

We have already stated that Russian liberal thinkers always display a strongly pro-Western outlook. Generally, their Westernism is multi-faceted, expressed in affinities to basic Western values and also to Western countries themselves. In terms of values they associate aspects which they feel are positive (democracy, progress, etc.) with the West; in terms of models and systems they call for Russia to copy Western practices; in terms of international relations they demand a close relationship with Western countries.



One of the key issues they attempt to deal with is what Russia's original or historic relationship with the West actually comprises. This is, in fact, a strand of argument that seems to have become more prominent from the mid 1990's onwards. In the early 1990's most of those who called themselves liberals agreed with those who called themselves patriots, that Russia was an inherently different civilization from the West. In this respect, indeed, they agreed with the particularistic nationalists who emphasized differences between Russia and the West. But, unlike the particularistic nationalists, liberals emphasized difference in order to call for change, to make Russia become more like the West. This is a point made by Alexander Tsygankov in his essay "Rediscovering National Interests after the End of History: Fukuyama, Russian Intellectuals, and a Post-Cold War Order" (2002). Tsyganov showed that both the particularistic nationalists and the liberals conceived of the West as an upholder of the values of liberalism and capitalism. Therefore, the liberals and the extreme nationalists held some interesting ideas in common on this subject, the difference being the way they interpreted what they perceived to be facts.

From the mid 1990's onwards there have been some changes in the ways that liberals make their arguments. They endeavour to point out how close Russia always has been to Europe. Thus, liberalism in Russia seeks to gain legitimacy by emphasizing how natural a position it occupies in terms of Russia's historical background. Part of the motivation for this can be explained as coming from the widespread emphasis on searching for "useable history" which could be used to bolster liberal-capitalist ideological positions, both by Russian and Western thinkers. (We will examine the attitude to history displayed by Russian liberals in the next section of this chapter). Further, the move towards legitimacy also possibly gained strength from the fact that liberalism became less of a radical position throughout the 1990's. As it has become more mainstream so the liberal evaluation of the West has changed. While it was in the interests of those who wanted radical change to emphasize how much was different between Russia and the West, the less radical intellectuals of the later 1990's did not want to emphasize Russia's differences with Europe too starkly, concentrating more steadfastly on the natural closeness they perceived in the history of the two areas.

It must also be noted that the need to make this form of argument is spurred on by the fact that their opponents often employ history to come to the opposite conclusion,

emphasising how different Russia is from the West. Actually, as Kara-Murza (who has studied the history of Russian debates about the West in some detail) asserts, the issue of whether Russia was originally Western or a distinct and separate society is one of the key issues in debates about Russian identity. Here he lists the different variations that have appeared on this theme over the years:

1. "Russia is nothing, but should become as Europe" (for any other language for self-expression does not exist - early Chaadaev).
2. "Russia was not Europe, but Peter 'has recreated her,' having put her on the European track." (Belinsky).
3. "Russia is between Europe and Asia but she should and can become Europe." (A.Pushkin, who named Russia, "native Turkey ", and Petersburg, "northern Istanbul". It also refers to the ideas of Plekhanov who was the supporter of Marxist concepts of "the Asian way of manufacture". Here he was concerned with and supported the gradual replacement of Russian backwardness with Europeanism).
4. "Russia was Europe, and should return to Europe". (Veulde)
5. "Russia is the best Europe." (Russian Europe represented by St Petersburg has grown using Moscow as a root rather than destroying it. "Europe in its pure state existed on the banks of the Neva, instead of the Seine, the Thames or the Spree". (G.Fedotov)
6. "Russia is Europe, but backward Europe and there it will remain." (I.Turgenev)
7. "Russia should go on and merge with the West by convergence". (From "Russian Nights", from V.Odoevsky up to the academic A.Sakharov). (1993)

Kara-Murza himself essentially adopts those ideas which portray Russia as being originally strongly Western-orientated. Yanov, also, aligns himself with those who favour Russia's Western origins as can clearly be seen in his ideas about Russian history. Employing a style of argument which bears some similarity to the "primordial" arguments made by some nationalists about their countries always possessing certain attributes, Yanov emphasizes the idea that Russia was originally a European country. He asserts that "Western civilization has not been violently imposed at all on Russia by Peter as the Slavophiles asserted". Yanov seems to judge how "European" Russia is by

identifying how free and progressive her government is. He does not interpret Europe in terms of geography and international relations, but rather in terms of basic values. Therefore, Yanov deems Russia to be originally a European country because its values were originally progressive. He concludes that it was after the Mongol invasion that the alternative tradition in Russia, which is anti-progressive, appeared and grew in strength. Yanov interprets the rest of Russian history as a series of conflicts between these two alternative traditions. The fact that Russia was originally a European state means Yanov (2003) can reject the common Slavophile argument that attempts at reform are "...superficial and casual". The reason for this is that Russia was from the very beginning a European state, and can discover its roots as much in Europe as anywhere else.

Kara-Murza also emphasises Russia's fundamental western identity. But, it is interesting that while he draws on Russia's European essence as a source of legitimacy for contemporary reforms as Yanov does, he understands the difficulties some Westernisers face if they do not perceive Russia as having a European identity but consider Russia to be Eurasian or Asian:

It can be said with confidence that any transformation of one civilization into another is simply impossible. If someone claims that Russia is Eurasia or Asia and wants to make her turn violently into Europe, it is necessary to defend the national culture very quickly, because such a process can be very damaging. In our country there are such "Grand Westerners". They claim Russia is an empire of darkness, we shall force her to go to Europe, and there we shall begin to live. ...it testifies only to the intellectual limitations of pseudo-reformers: they blame the essence of Russia, not the quality of their reforms. (2003a, 381)

And here we find further demonstration of his liberal perception of Russia's "Western" identity:

I want to bring to mind a very important thesis formulated by Vladimir Vasiljevichem Vejdle, the Russian liberal-emigrant. He was a strong supporter of Europeanism and Westernism, but he felt that the Russian Westerners had one serious sin: they try to make Russia into Europe, overlooking and forgetting that

Russia is already Europe. Both Westernism and anti-Westernism have brought extreme violence in their attempts to change Russia. It is not necessary to drag Russia by force to Europe - she is already there. It is necessary to recognize Russia as a European country, and any citizens living here, even if they seem at first view undeveloped, are European, a priori. Our compatriots should not be altered, and it is necessary to realize, at last, that they do not require a basic change. (2002b)

Kara-Murza advances the argument of Russia's original Western orientation for much the same reason that Yanov does. It gives legitimacy to the contention that Russia should have close relations with Europe, and counters the claims that Russia should guard itself against its identity being undermined by Westernisation. It is also noteworthy that both Kara-Murza and Yanov hold a primordial view of the "nation"; they represent it as a relatively static entity, and place some importance on distinguishing its "original form". However, Kara-Murza's view differs in one respect from that of Yanov in that he is critical of some attempts at the Westernisation of Russia, which he asserts were carried out without sufficient attention to the particularities of the Russian context. Probably, Kara-Murza focuses more critically on those who in recent times have sought to force through reform. Kara-Murza is naturally a conservative and is, therefore, very sceptical of sudden changes. His criticism of those who feel impelled to push Russia towards the West, combined with his attacks on those whom he accuses of falsely denying Russia's Westernism, gives the impression that he seems to be recommending no action should be taken on this issue. Actually, in his other writings, Kara-Murza counsels that Russia needs to tie itself more closely to the West (especially in international relations) suggesting that, while he does not believe "basic changes" are needed, the situation could still be improved. The difference between Yanov and Kara-Murza is that between a radical and a conservative. Though they both have positive views of the West, their positive views are shaped and qualified by their ideologies. An exploration of the differing approaches of these two thinkers thus clearly illustrates the fact that the terms "Russia" and "the West" are extremely versatile; we can draw the conclusion that they are concepts that can form part of both radical and conservative visions of the future.

Other Russian liberals, such as Klyamkin, also deploy arguments to support a Westernized view of Russia. As was noted in chapter 3, the point of reference for liberals is always the stance of Russian nationalists on such issues; they construct their theses in response to the stated theories of the nationalists. Klyamkin begins his argument by denying the contention of traditionalistic and particularistic nationalists that Russia is a culturally different nation from the West. For example, Klyamkin disputes the main argument made to support Slavophile ideas that Russia is separate from Europe because of its Orthodox culture (the stream of thought that was strengthened in the post-Soviet era by referring to Samuel Huntington and his “Clash of Civilisations”). He bolsters his attack by asserting that Greece is an example of an Orthodox country which also is undeniably Western and a part of Europe. Klyamkin’s main ideological weapons are arguments gleaned from sociological research (though he does also enlist historical arguments). He contends that, at least on a basic individual level, Russian people are the same as their Western counterparts. Russia’s problems arise because the state and society are not organized along Western lines: as he puts it, Russians are “ordinary people in an abnormal system”.<sup>50</sup>

Klyamkin’s exposition bears some similarities to that of Fukuyama. (I will develop this further in the next section). He claims that schemes proposing a different path for Russia have exhausted themselves. However, he does allow the possibility that rather than being part of Western civilization, Russia might be a separate civilization which is “Western”. (2003c, 392-442) He foresees, however, that there could be some problems combining this “separate” identity with a “Western” identity. At bottom, Klyamkin is very critical of attempts to highlight Russia as a “special” country; on the contrary, he unfailingly emphasises that she should return to being a “normal” country.

Klyamkin’s ideas in this respect bear some similarities to Yakovenko’s conception of Russia. Yakovenko is a Westerniser, but he also seems to regard Russia as being a separate self-contained civilization which is based on a shared culture derived from Orthodoxy. It is difficult to assess how Western he considers Russia to be at this point in her history. Unlike Klyamkin he does not argue that Russian people are identical to their Western counterparts nor does he blame the system for causing Russia to seem

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<sup>50</sup> This is the title of an essay which Klyamkin published in 2002.

different from the West. He does, however, share Klyamkin's assessment of the absolute supremacy of the Western model. He argues that the opponents of Westernism are "traditionalists" to their disparagement. Again, he does not follow Kara-Murza and Yanov in discerning a positive tradition which reveals that Russia was originally Western. The ambiguity in Yakovenko's ideology, about whether Russia is already a Western country or not, allows some elements of particularism to enter his thought, which we will consider in the next section.

Before examining Tishkov's approach towards the question of whether Russia is or is not a Western nation, we need to briefly survey his approach to the Slavophile-Westerniser debate. Tishkov also affirms Westernism, stressing that the models on which the West is structured are the best for Russia, rather than asserting that Russia has always been part of Europe. Since Tishkov, and to a lesser extent, Yakovenko, adopt constructivist approaches to the nation, they are naturally less likely to rely on historical arguments to support their views. Tishkov displays a completely different approach towards the West from other liberal thinkers. Interestingly, he does not make use of the sweeping ideological terms that are so characteristic of Russian thought. Of the thinkers we are considering, while he obviously has a positive view of the West, he is not a Westerniser. That is, he does not follow in the tradition of the Slavophile-Westerniser debate, but instead seems to be completely aloof from it. This indifference springs partially from his rather contemptuous attitude towards 19th and early 20th century Russian thought which he finds irrelevant to current discussion.

Tishkov has carried out research into ethnic questions in a variety of different countries. It is his willingness to focus on individual examples within these countries, rather than on broad sweeping "civilisational" themes, which marks him out as a different thinker from the others. Tishkov in this respect stands apart from the typical debate which dominates Russian thought. He is less responsive to the urge to legitimize liberalism by "proving" Russia is Western which motivates most liberals.

The thinkers we are considering who have engaged in "civilisational" debates with ideological opponents arguing that Russia is part of Western civilisation encounter a difficult problem when Asia enters the equation. Russia is often perceived as being between Europe and Asia; indeed, the anti-liberal doctrine of "Eurasianism" emphasizes

this as a virtue. This ideology celebrates Russia as a unique civilization with its own values and system of thought. Anti-liberals also frequently cite China as a positive model for the combination of authoritarian leadership with a dynamic and powerful economy. In the realm of international relations anti-liberals also call for unity with Asian and Middle Eastern nations against Western (particularly American) power. Liberals generally avoid any suggestion of linking Russia with Asia as they classify Russia as a purely Western country in her very nature. This alignment with Westernism can also manifest itself in a negative response to non-Western countries. Klyamkin, in particular, takes a strongly critical stance against attempts to move Russian foreign policy away from the West.

Klyamkin's position on relations with America and with China is interesting. He feels that a full relationship with the West is Russia's only option in the new time in which she finds herself. He disagrees with realist ideas that propose a pragmatic approach to international relations. His support for a close alliance with the West is displayed, for example, in his belief that Russia should be careful to guarantee that she should have the support of Japan and America in relation to China (2003d, 193-194). Additionally, Klyamkin (2003b) emphasizes that Russia is much more culturally close to American civilization than to that of China.

This conviction is typical of Russian liberals who have traditionally reacted negatively towards Asia. Their attitude reflects and builds upon strong traditions within Russian thought where progressive thinkers have always manifested a hostile demeanour towards Asia. In the following quotation, Alexander Lukin discusses the way "China" was interpreted in Russian intellectual history, with Vladimir Solov'ev the example of a liberal who also expresses a distinct fear of Asia as a whole:

They [Russian thinkers] usually argued that China did not have a civilization or culture in the real, European sense, and that it was politically and socially stagnant. This was the view of the Russian Christian philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev, who believed that the only positive morality was associated with Christianity and saw the Russian future in the unification of Christian churches. Solov'ev also founded the Russian tradition of mystical fear of the new invasion of Eastern barbarians which was later developed by many writers and poets of

the early twentieth century. He argued that if the West persisted in its deviation from the originally united true Christianity, the well-organized but stagnant East, led by China, would conquer it as the barbarians earlier conquered the Roman Empire. (1999)

While not so explicit in his views, Yanov's work also displays a generally critical attitude towards "Asian despotism". On the whole, liberal thinkers have not seriously taken into account the fact that Russia is partially Asian. One of the most conspicuous aspects of Russian Westernism (and this is a theme which constantly appears) is the difficulty of dealing with those elements within Russia which are different from the West or even hostile towards it. It is difficult for liberals to answer the question: if Russia is a Western country why do these elements exist?

Another aspect of Klyamkin's attitude towards civilisational identity is that he also opposes attempts to separate the West into positive or negative variants. This is sometimes posited (much more so after September the 11th) by Russian thinkers who argue that the EU and the USA are two separate structures. Klyamkin criticises attempts to represent America as being the "uncivilized West" opposed to the "civilized European Union", arguing that this is an artificial divide of the "consolidated Western community" (2003c, 440).

Yakovenko approaches this question differently. While Yakovenko is a Westerniser, he does not believe that Russia's make-up is exclusively Western. He, more than all the thinkers we are considering, takes into account the idea that Russia has a partially Asian identity. Yakovenko considers that the consequences of this mixed identity could be serious: namely, that part of Russia is considered to be situated in Europe and part is seen as being located in Asia. Indeed, Yakovenko (2002a) predicts a potential break up of Russia with the Ural Mountains forming a new border between the European and the Western sections of Russia. The underlying reason for Yakovenko's conclusion lies in the fact that he understands "civilisational" identity to be critical in forming peoples' outlooks, and the fact that Siberia and the eastern parts of Russia are situated in Asia has critically shaped their identity. He feels that the loss of power of the Orthodox church in these regions in relation to "syncretic cults and religious movements" is not just the result of cultural migration or the growth of influence from Asian territories, but ensues



necessarily from the fact that these regions have always been (and it seems always will be) part of Asia. Therefore, while nationhood, and other modes of unifying people, are constructs as far as Yakovenko is concerned, “civilisational” identity is, in his opinion, a much stronger and less temporal factor.<sup>51</sup>

In summary, the conclusion most of the thinkers under consideration come to is that Russia should count itself as a Western nation. For Yanov and Kara-Murza this is legitimized by referring to the history of Russia. Yakovenko and Klyamkin also raise arguments which focus on the superiority of Western civilisation and the lack of alternatives to it. The fact that “civilisational” arguments always seem to loom so greatly as soon as Russian thinkers, be they liberal or anti liberal, consider what Russia is – shows how important this mode of thinking is in Russia. This becomes clear when Russian liberals construct their definitions of Russia in direct response to those of the “patriots”, who employ strongly particularistic arguments which seek to undermine the possibility of liberalism being part of Russian identity. The assertion of the liberals that Russia is a Western nation is potentially a useful argument to employ in the wider national debate, with appeal to the centre and also to the wider population who are used to regarding Russia as one of many European nations. Because Westernism is closely tied to liberalism this is a potential source of legitimacy for Russian liberals.

Tishkov is something of an exception amongst the liberals. While other liberals seek to counteract the arguments of the “patriots” on their own terms, Tishkov simply dismisses the entire debate as being anachronistic.

## **Part 2: Russian Liberals’ Consideration of Russia. What does “Russia” mean to Liberals?**

In this section we shall deal with the attempts by Russian liberals to define what Russia is or should be. Some of this has already been explained in previous sections, particularly those dealing with the liberals’ dialogue with nationalists of different types in Russia, and their perceptions of Europe and the West. There are three main areas

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<sup>51</sup> The potential breakup of the Russian Federation is regarded by Yakovenko in this essay as a catastrophe that could bring chaos to Central Asia and Siberia (2002a). In another discussion (2002b) he implies that the reduction of Russian territory could be positive as it would prevent “civilisational conflict”, but is probably practically impossible.

which are important in considering the approach of Russian liberals to this question. These can be organised under the following headings: their approach to Russian history; their approach to the sense of national identity experienced by Russians; and their approach to questions of nationality within Russia. The question we are considering here is how significant they think these aspects are in terms of their contribution to a definition of what constitutes “Russia”, and how useful they are in helping to promote liberalism.

### **Debate over Russian History**

There are two main ways in which Russian history is deployed to define what “Russia” is. Firstly, there are those arguments which seek to make generalisations about the way that things have always been and continue into the present. An example of this approach is Yanov’s (1999) view of Russian history as representing two continuing traditions that are always in opposition with each other – one of reform and one of reaction. Yanov legitimises the continuing opposition to Russia’s “patriots”, seeing it as a natural sequence in the battle that has taken place throughout Russian history.

Other arguments from history seek to find a positive value in the past and to re-interpret it in the present to legitimize a point of view. We have already seen how Russian liberals reinterpreted arguments made by previous generations of Russian intellectuals to justify their belief that Russia is a Western country, and this type of approach can also be used to make assertions about other aspects of Russian identity.

While liberals have necessarily carefully examined Russia’s pre-Soviet legacy, they have also had to consider the nature of the Soviet period itself. This undoubtedly continues to be the most significant era for reinterpreting what “Russia” is. In the ensuing post-Soviet present, “Russia” has lacked firm definition, other than amongst extremists with simplistic ideas of racial or religious identification. Several observers have noted the similarity between post-Soviet Russia and post-Empire Britain (in particular, post-Empire England) in that, due to the creation of a single multi-national whole, the identity of the dominant nation becomes merged to the point of almost becoming synonymous with the multi-national one. As Anatol Lieven puts it:

Until the Second World War, Soviet rule - though dependent on the Russian language and Russian imperial traditions of central government - smashed Russian national symbols, traditions and entire classes (nobility, clergy, peasantry and bourgeois intelligentsia) with almost the same fury it directed at other nationalities. From the Second World War onwards, by contrast, the Soviet Communist Party developed what one might almost call a vampirical relationship with Russian traditions and sentiments - it loved them to death. That is to say, while celebrating and relying on certain Russian traditions, the Party also drained them of any content and meaning other than its own imposed Soviet one. To a greater extent than most of the other Soviet peoples, therefore, the Russians were unable to preserve a national tradition and identity capable of replacing the Soviet one. As it did with the Cossacks during the Second World War, the Party certainly exploited Russian symbols and sentiments, but for its own purposes. This emerges clearly from Stalin's famous victory speech of 1945, in which he thanked the 'great Russian people' for its endurance and its faith in and support for his *Soviet* government - a form of words which reveals the closeness of the new Soviet-Russian relationship, but also the enduring elements of distance. Nonetheless, the fact that Russians did identify more closely than other peoples with the Union (though not enough to persuade them to rise in its defence in 1991) meant that their sense of a separate Russian national identity was gravely weakened. (1999, 63)

Thus, just as it is not always clear how English identity was different from British identity, so it is not really clear how Russian identity was different from Soviet identity. Equally, it did not serve the purpose of the elites either in Soviet Union or in Britain to clearly differentiate these two types of identity.

One of the great problems for liberals is that the most significant events for most Russian people all took place in the Soviet era. This is not to say that they need to have experienced these events themselves; it is to say instead that in most people's perception of history, events associated with the Soviet Union are more vividly imagined and of greater significance than those associated with the post-Soviet period, or for that matter with the pre-Soviet era. A further issue is that for most people the Soviet era is not something that can be dismissed in solely pejorative terms. The majority of Russians

combine negative attitudes towards the repressive aspects of the Soviet past, with positive opinions about different Soviet achievements. For most people forming a wholly negative or positive view is not only undesirable, it is impossible.

However, anyone who considers themselves a liberal in the Russian political spectrum is by nature an anti-Soviet. As we have seen, modern liberalism in Russia is defined by its anti-Sovietism. Most liberals want to reform the perception of Russia in some way and, therefore, they need to identify some positive aspects from Russian history. The 20<sup>th</sup> century is problematic because almost every positive element that can be found reflects by its nature approvingly upon the Soviet system, as a result of the pivotal and colossal role the Soviet government played in managing society.

Kara-Murza (2002a) demands that the process of creating a liberal-democratic society requires strong opposition to the Soviet legacy: "To create democratic symbols, first the communist legacy needs to be attacked." He remarks that he is not particularly concerned about Lenin's body in the mausoleum- but only because there are many other ideological symbols that are harmful, such as streets being "named after terrorists". This perceived need to confront such ideological manifestations is described by him here:

The outstanding Russian thinker Pavel Novgorodtsev has analyzed in detail the ideological and political paradox which he saw at the beginning of the last century: radical socialists (notably Bolsheviks) use a symbolical arsenal which has been almost completely borrowed from liberalism. "The moral basis of socialism - respect for the human person – was from the beginning liberal, instead of socialist," wrote Novgorodtsev. "But in socialist doctrines this basis does not develop, and is blacked out ". Novgorodtsev considered that Russian liberals are obliged to discredit, first, the pseudo-liberal demagogy of socialists, and, second, to develop the real liberal ideology more fully. (Quoted in Billington 1999)

Yakovenko enunciates the typical criticism of the Soviet era. He feels the Soviet period was an example of a false assertion of the possibility of there being different paths for Russia from the West:

We did not manage to make mankind happy. Before us are ruins. But the Bolshevik revolution was a deeply traditional phenomenon which only

occurred in Russia. It was inspired by the idea of a final victory of Absolute Values, a devout, prophetic belief in an inevitable victory but which only cost incalculable victims. This faith cost Russia 60-80 million human lives, and has led to the loss of historical momentum. For a hundred years we have not come nearer, and in many respects have even further lagged behind the West. This fidelity (to the idea) cost resources which cannot be quantified, has resulted in three if not four waves of emigration, and has generated world-wide alienation from Russia and Russians. The adherence to this ideal will cost us the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (2001)

However, all of the thinkers under consideration find some satisfaction in the fact that communist nostalgia is most clearly associated with older generations in Russia, although this is remarked upon more enthusiastically by some more than by others. Klyamkin, for example, points out that positive responses to communism in sociological surveys are generally made by those who are part of the older generation. Kara-Murza asserts that the occasionally positive representations of communism which are made in the Putin era will come to be seen as anachronistic:

The melting pot where pre-communist history is “partially rehabilitated” and continues along with old communist history “will be perceived by new generations of young Russians as absolutely alien”. (2002a)

Attempts to reconcile Russia’s Soviet past with liberalism are almost non-existent amongst those who actively define themselves as liberals. The case is different amongst those who uphold an inclusive statist ideology (including the Russian government) which combines a positive view of liberalism and communism; this is a philosophy of checks and balances which, rather than attempting to reconcile contradictions between these elements, seeks to find an equilibrium between them. Liberals, on the other hand, are sometimes left in the position of ignoring the communist period completely, or concentrating only upon negative aspects of the Soviet legacy. The result of this is that liberals have become separated from the mainstream of public opinion which in general seems to be largely ambivalent towards the Soviet Union - as has already been noted.

While "patriots" and especially statist<sup>52</sup> seem able to match the public mood, by alternately praising aspects of the Soviet legacy or criticising other areas, liberals have been unwilling to allow themselves to affirm Russia's Soviet past or to respond approvingly to communist history.

While there is agreement about how the Soviet era should be appraised, the pre-Soviet era represents an awkward period for Russian liberals. When Russians seek to find some "useable" history which can be made into a model for Russia's future development, they often turn to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several of the thinkers we are discussing have located trends within Russia's pre-Soviet history with which they can sympathise, or which they can support or which they think is helpful. Yanov's examination of history for this purpose has been more detailed than that of the others we are dealing with. He has identified a linear pattern of progress which begins with church reform in the Middle Ages and carries through to the enlightened rule of some of the Tsars and on to movements such as the Decembrists. It is interesting that despite striking so hard at nationalism both as a concept and its manifestations in Russia and also at the legacy of particularism in Russia, Yanov has himself striven so hard to prove that progress and liberalism are demonstrably Russian phenomena (see Yanov 2001, 1999).

Kara-Murza, as has already been mentioned, concentrates upon the history of liberalism in Russia from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (See 2002a; 2002b). He has written less extensively on earlier periods, but, like Yanov, his aim is to establish an alternative history which can be used to justify current ideas. The legacy he draws upon is more specific than that of Yanov who is quite general in ascribing the label of "progressive" to some whole streams of thought and trends in Russian history and "reactionary" to others. Kara-Murza, more than Yanov, clearly feels that the ideas of distinctive liberal thinkers, particularly Struve, provide a model that relates directly to the problems that Russia faces today; that is, they can be reintroduced without much reinterpretation.

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<sup>52</sup> For example, the Moscow Mayor, Luzhkov, has at times organised memorials for victims of the Soviet regimes, while at other times he has called for the restoration of memorials to those who carried out these attacks. In 2002 Luzhkov called for the restoration of the statue of the head of the Checka, Felix Dzerzhinsky, which had been destroyed following the collapse of the Soviet Union (see Billington 2004, 256).

Russian intellectual history is diverse and rich enough to provide the raw materials to challenge almost any generally held notions about how “Russia” should be interpreted. Indeed, this has been demonstrated by Western historians as well as Russian ones. For example, Aileen Kelly (1998) challenged the idea that Russian thought is prone to extremism by citing a different strand of thought which emphasised Herzen and Turgenev as figures who were more open to compromise and to see the point of view of ideological opponents. However, it has yet to be seen if these arguments can make a genuine impact on popular attitudes.

It is also not possible to judge whether pre-Soviet thought is any less anachronistic and irrelevant in the current context than is Soviet ideology. The other thinkers we are considering pay less attention to Russian history in the quest to define what “Russia” is. Tishkov exemplifies this position the most clearly. As noted, he is highly critical of any reference to 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian thought claiming it is anachronistic (2001a).

One final area to be considered is Russia’s recent history. Both Yanov and Kara-Murza employ extensive historical arguments to support their views about Russia’s present. This suggests that they regard identity as less changeable than Tishkov does, and, therefore, regard historical factors as retaining a continuing influence on contemporary issues.

It is the lot of modern Russian liberals that the post-Soviet period does not provide them with sources that are useful to them; the period of reform has provided much ammunition to their opponents. Actually, Kara-Murza concludes that democracy is separate from other ideological segments in Russian politics in that it does not have a serious ideological tradition to build on. The reason for this lack can be assigned to the failures of “democrats” in the 1990’s (Billington 2004, 97).

Russian liberals are generally in agreement that Russia’s Soviet legacy should be rejected. Some concentrate on different intellectual or political trends in other eras which they regard as applicable in contemporary Russia, while others do not consider history as particularly useful at all. Liberals are diverse in their approach to history; the

lack of unity amongst them means that liberals really only define what “Russia” should not be – that is, they expend most of their energy on attacking the Soviet legacy. In terms of “usefulness” in the wider ideological debate, this approach is unlikely to be successful, but for Russian liberals there can be no compromises when they assess the Soviet era.

### **The Debate over Russian Identity**

In this section we will consider the question of what it means to be Russian. The focus here is on how the individual is affected by their nationality. While particularists detail clear values which they feel describe how Russians think and behave, liberals are less willing to be prescriptive or to identify specific characteristics which are essentially “Russian”. This results from the fact that they are more open to universalistic ideas which emphasise the sameness of humanity, and also because they are more sensitive to the realities of the modern Russian mentality; unlike particularists they are much more willing to consider the effects of modernity on the post-Soviet consciousness.

#### *The Russian Mentality*

Those thinkers who argue for a universalistic outlook can be reluctant to talk about specific features of national identity. Klyamkin is, as we have seen, a strong universalist. He argues that the system of government and society in Russia is different from the West, but that the people within Russia are essentially the same as those in Western countries (although he does seem to allow some effects of socialisation by admitting that some of those who lived during the Soviet era have struggled to adapt to the post-Soviet situation.). His apprehension of the universal nature of humanity means that Klyamkin does not feel any compulsion to promote arguments that Western-style systems should be tailored to reflect the Russian context. As we discussed in the previous chapter, the difficulty that arises from the analysis that those with a universalistic outlook outline is how to explain why these non-Western systems arise - surely Klyamkin should entertain the possibility that these systems emerge as a result of the culture in which they are embedded?



Secondly, Russian liberals are more sensitive to the divisions which cut across Russian society. They are acutely aware that large segments of modern Russian society are conservative and traditionalist. Therefore, Kara-Murza argues that “there is no single Russian identity”, (quoted in Billington, 1999), and Klyamkin and Yakovenko both emphasise the contrasts in outlook that exist between the older generation (and according to Klyamkin, the less educated parts of Russian society) which emphasize traditional values, and the younger generation that they both perceive as more progressive. It is worth noting that liberal thinkers are, therefore, very much aware of the essential flaws inherent in shaping ideologies that speak for the Russian people as a whole; in a country with such disparate groupings framing ideas that will inspire everyone is impossible.

One feature that Klyamkin accepts as being typically Russian is the willingness of the public to be lead from above; this, in his opinion, is a result of socialisation under the Soviet Union, and accounts for the strong part the government is able to take in leading public opinion. Yanov explains the authoritative role the government plays differently; he considers such paternalism to originate in the power struggles throughout Russian history. In his view, it suits the cynical interests of certain interest groups to attack progressive, Westernising forces within Russia.

The rather vague perception of the Russian mentality that is held by liberal thinkers and their refusal to be tied down to a rigid, prescriptive definition of “Russianness” constitutes a much more accurate analysis than the attribution of set values and characteristics – a position taken by the “patriots”. The reason for this is that, as the contradictory results of opinion polls and elections show, it is not really clear what values Russian people currently affirm and in which direction the popular mentality is moving. It seems the popular mood of the Russian people has been, at least throughout the duration of the post-Yeltsin era, unusually difficult to judge.

Some liberals do make arguments about identity which are closer to those held by “patriots”. Since those who combine patriotism and liberalism are willing to accept that specific cultural factors do play a role within Russia, this leads Kara-Murza, for example, to make some of the typical arguments that conservatives make for limiting radical reform:

As Solonevich—whose thinking comes close to Aksiuchits—correctly said: geography limits Russia's freedom. If in England geography guarantees their freedom, in Russia freedom is limited by geography. (Quoted in Billington 1999)

Radical reformers in Russia have always been opposed to theories that are heavily weighted to culturally specific factors within Russia, because they argue these are generally used to justify conservatism. As a conservative, Kara-Murza is readier to take these factors into account, because they do not contradict his point of view to the same extent that they do those of thinkers such as Klyamkin and Yanov. If radical reformers go so far as to accept that the Russian mentality is unique and culturally specific, they are critical of this fact and find it inimical to their ideology.

*Ethnic, Cultural and Religious Definitions of “Russianness”*

No liberal thinkers define who is Russian by ethnicity. In fact, Tishkov is very critical of the use of ethnic definitions on passports as a hangover from the Soviet era (Tolz 2001, 249). In his view this emphasis on ethnic distinctiveness is one of the greatest sources of intolerance and lack of unity in post-Soviet Russia. Traditionally, liberals have found it more acceptable to define national identity by constructing cultural definitions, particularly based on language. All of the thinkers we are considering define Russia through linguistic and cultural means. Indeed, a closed ethnic definition of who is or is not a Russian is comparatively rare in Russia, even in quite extremist political publications. This is because Russia's tradition is one of assimilating other nations, rather than defining itself in opposition to outsiders.

Yanov believes that the Russian population has a need for pride in itself as a people. He feels that language and culture are viable expressions of national identity, which can nurture suitable feelings of worth as a nation. Such thinking is possibly influenced by Dimitry Likhachev (see Yanov 2001). Yanov feels that the celebration of Russian culture can act as a safety valve that diffuses those nationalist sentiments that can only have negative outcomes if they are expressed through political action. Russian culture is the safest arena for any patriotic feelings to be expressed since the political implications

of the celebration of Russian literature and music are hazy. The other thinkers we are considering have not explicitly called for Russian culture to be celebrated in the same way, but we can assume that they would not be opposed to this (though Yakovenko and Kara-Murza would argue against the idea that Russian nationalism should be expressed exclusively through celebrations of Russian culture and not through politics). Tishkov also concludes that the Russian language is the main shared value that can be used to unite the diverse Russian nation. (We will examine this more fully in the next section).

Kuznetz makes the point that is common amongst many liberals, and is in fact probably ascribed to by all the thinkers we are considering, that pride in Russia's cultural heritage is a potentially unifying force that is without the harmful implications of a more political nationalism:

The simple Chechen protecting with a call from the heart the house of Leo Tolstoy, of the author of "War and peace", and "Hadji-Murat", really, that is worth immeasurably more than all the ideologically sustained concepts and doctrines of interethnic relations. (2003, 169)

Russian liberals are referring here to high culture as they follow in the steps of the traditions of the intelligentsia. Presumably a more populist focus might emerge amongst future generations of liberal thinkers in response to cultural changes within Russia. However, it is also worth noting that the forces of liberalism themselves are held to be responsible for the collapse of "high culture" by some of the "patriots".

A main cornerstone of Russian culture and civilisation is the Orthodox religion. Orthodoxy is often co-opted by the "Patriotic Movement" to buttress their position and is almost always a constant presence in any overt portrayal of Russian nationalism. The majority of particularistic nationalists consider Orthodoxy to be one of the key attributes of the "Russian Idea". Interestingly, those who emphasise an imperial view, such as the Eurasianists, generally combine this positive view of Orthodoxy with positive representations of all "traditionalist religions" – with the usual exception of Judaism. The only "patriotic" groups who do not manifest a positive view of Orthodoxy are some of the fringe extremist groups, who reject Orthodoxy in its entirety as being weak and instead celebrate pre-Christian paganism. The Orthodox religion has provided a source of support for ideas such as traditionalism, anti-Westernism, the belief in a separate Russian mentality, and communalism. Clearly, therefore, the

standard use of Orthodoxy in political rhetoric in Russia is counter to the type of Russia that liberal intellectuals want to represent.

The intellectual legacy of Orthodoxy is, however, very broad. Different streams have flowed from it which have influenced diverse and often contradictory viewpoints. There is an important stream of thought which combines Orthodox Christianity with pro-Western liberalism. Interestingly, this stream of thought, which includes early 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers such as Solov'ev and modern Russia thinkers such as Likhachev and Zalygin, is sometimes described as "liberal nationalism" (Brundy 2000, 352; Lester 1995, 224; Shenfield 2001, 324). However, the legacy of thinkers such as Solov'ev is also influential upon dissident liberal anti-nationalism, as exemplified by Yanov. As we have seen he was influenced by the strand of anti-nationalist universalism in Orthodox thought, particularly through his studies of Solov'ev.<sup>53</sup>

It is typical of certain thinkers to emphasise the centrality of Orthodoxy in shaping the Russian consciousness. For example, Viktor Aksiuchits argues that Orthodoxy is the key to Russian civilisation:

If you want to speak about their [the Russian people's] most essential characteristics, then you have to admit that the first act of national self-consciousness, the baptism into Orthodoxy, was a religious act. . . . It was after the baptism that we see the different neighbouring tribes begin to crystallize into one people. . . . The Russian people, as the subjects of a historical act, become the people who organized the state and the people who created Russian culture and Russian Orthodox civilization. Other groups entered into this civilization, just as other cultural streams, languages, and religions fed into it. The religious side of the national character has the following basic characteristics: the metaphysical, collective spirituality, universality, and binary oppositions. (Quoted in Billington 2003, 65)

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<sup>53</sup> The thinkers who adopt this view do not seem to have occupied the mainstream of Orthodox opinion. An example of a thinker of this type, who is still alive, is Vladimir Kandor. He emphasises the importance of shared Christian values between Russia and Europe.

Liberals on the whole have not granted Orthodoxy such a central and pivotal role in shaping Russian consciousness (indeed, if any of the thinkers we are considering do hold religious convictions they have not publicised them widely). In this respect their approach is similar to that of many liberals across the world in that they do not allow religion a significantly influential role in politics. In the post-Soviet context, Russia's liberals can be judged as being less interested than liberals in other countries in limiting what is perceived as the overbearing influence of religion in their native countries. This is because the Soviet government throughout the 20th century suppressed religion. Some liberals are worried about the revival of support for traditional Orthodoxy by the establishment. They underline the multi-faith and multicultural identity of modern nations. As the liberal thinker, D.V.Dragunsky, puts it:

Let's leave to one side especially academic disputes about whether Russian culture is "Orthodox" (and French - "Roman Catholic", etc.). Russia is (a) the secular state, (b) both a multinational and multi-confessional state and (c) the state in which the majority is made up of people who are non-believers. Ordinary Atheists. (2003)

Dragunsky's use of the term "ordinary atheists" refers to those whose beliefs are probably more akin to agnosticism than straightforward atheism. Klyamkin's sociological surveys of post-Soviet value systems support this view:

However, spirituality, as well as conscience, has not yet gained definition and meaning: it is not atheistic (the rating of "atheism" in all groups is close to zero [in sociological surveys]), but at the same time not religious: the belief in God, if to judge by our data, has not received much wide circulation in Russian society, and in elite groups it is distributed even less, than amongst the masses. (1994)

Therefore, if Orthodoxy is not the main ideology of the people this does suggest that any definition of what Russia is which leans too heavily on Orthodoxy as a component of the national identity will be skewed. It must be noted that the perception of religion which Klyamkin outlines above does not reveal a significantly outright antagonism towards Orthodoxy. Therefore, the appearance of Orthodox symbols and ideas used in unobtrusive ways seems inoffensive to most people. Referring to studies carried out on

the attitudes of Orthodox believers, Klyamkin attempts to undermine the way that anti-liberal nationalists co-opt Orthodoxy, by suggesting that, in fact, Orthodoxy actually contradicts the values they attribute to it, if it is understood in the way most Russians conceive of it.

Orthodox spirituality in modern Russia is more combined with Westernism, than with anti-Western traditionalism.

Religious conservatism is focused first of all on family, and family today is a both a conservative, and a revolutionary value. It is conservative by virtue of the traditional character of this institution. And it is revolutionary since the value of the family and its well-being for the first time are today more highly regarded than the value of the state: the major requirement people have from the holders of power today is the durability and well-being of the family. (2001)

Yanov (2003) also disputes the adoption of Orthodoxy to support particularistic arguments. In his judgment, the use of anti-Western arguments within Orthodoxy are a result of the same processes that gave rise to conservatism and anti-reformist forces in other parts of society. Thus, he considers various attempts to reform the church (and the counter reformations that followed them) as part of a wider struggle throughout Russia. As we have already noted, Yanov is heavily influenced by the universalistic tradition encountered in Russian Orthodox philosophies and it constitutes one of the main influences on Yanov's strongly anti-nationalist stance.

Yanov and Klyamkin are, therefore, operating with the same goal in mind though they make different arguments. They are seeking to change the way Orthodoxy is normally appealed to in Russia as a force for promoting particularism. Yanov focuses on intellectual history and the history of the Orthodox Church itself and Klyamkin analyses attitudes towards it in contemporary Russian society.

Kara-Murza makes similar claims about Orthodoxy to those he has made about other ideas adopted by the "Patriotic Movement". He feels that it is unfortunate that Orthodoxy has been appropriated to support anti-Western ideas. He laments that pro-

Western thinkers who have argued from an Orthodox perspective have been marginalised.

Yakovenko's post-imperial nationalism is heavily influenced by civilisational arguments and therefore, like most clearly nationalist thinkers in Russia, he is more interested in Orthodoxy as a corner stone of Russian identity than is usually the case amongst liberals. Some liberal thinkers, or at least thinkers who are not anti-liberals, are willing to focus on the issue of Orthodoxy and how it relates to Russian identity. For example, the old ideas about Russia being a distinct cultural civilisation have to some extent been revised by thinkers such as Oleg Kharkhordin (1999), (a thinker who does not have a clearly liberal or anti-liberal position) who have adopted modern sociological theories and investigations to argue that Orthodox civilisation influences the way Russian people behave. Kharkhordin makes his points in a neutral way which avoids saying that Orthodox civilisation is, in fact, any worse or better than any other in the world.

Yakovenko, as we saw in the section on Russian identity, follows Huntington in asserting that religion is a base value from which the different attitudes of civilisation are derived. However, Yakovenko seems to locate the real civilisational divide between Orthodox and the non-Orthodox religions in the South and East. He does not discern any real divide between the Orthodox mentality and that of other Christian religions. In fact, Yakovenko, as a liberal Westerniser, criticises Orthodox thinkers when they erect barriers between themselves and the West. He asserts that they are the "main carriers of medieval ideas" (2003a).

Generally, liberal intellectuals occupy a standard position with respect to Orthodoxy. Rather than being consistently positive or negative in their attitude towards it, they observe it in a neutral fashion with the aim of exploring how Orthodoxy influences Russian society. In the main Russian liberals examine Orthodoxy as an instrumental phenomenon which should be judged by the results that stem from it, rather than by its intrinsic value.

As in the case with "history", it is easier to discern how liberals think Russia should not be defined than how they think it should be. In the case of Yanov and Klyamkin this is

particularly true. However, because of their universalism, Russian liberals who want to argue for the creation of a new type of Russian national identity struggle because they are reluctant to determine how Russia is different from other countries, particularly how it is different from the West. Or if they do specify these differences, they are (as we have seen) reluctant to give them the positive interpretations which are necessary for the creation of national identity.

### **Russia as a Diverse Nation**

This section will deal with the attempt to define Russian identity in relation to the ethnic and religious diversity that exists within it. It will also deal with the question of Russia's imperial legacy and the question of how this should be interpreted in the post-Soviet age. Anatol Lieven maintains the view, shared, as we have seen, by some liberals such as Klyamkin, that Russian nationalism is weak. He regards this as a good thing, contrary to some of those who suggest Russia needs a stronger sense of national identity, because Russia did not engage in conflict with ex-Soviet states in the name of ethnic solidarity. As Lieven notes (1999, 66), the "lack of a clear definition of Russian identity has been of critical importance in avoiding ethnic conflict." Support for this conviction is evidenced in the fact that Russia has not tried to claim territory where ethnic Russians are living in the way that Serbia did where ethnic Serbs were living in the territory of other nations during the collapse of Yugoslavia. Generally, neither Russian minorities living abroad nor the Russian government have shown an aggressive response to the attempt to form nations by former Soviet states.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, there is usually a fairly conciliatory attitude demonstrated towards national minorities within Russia.

In fact, no mainstream and few extremist thinkers define Russia in a way that makes no concession to its multi-religious and multi-ethnic identity. For example, the extremist Alexander Dugin's Eurasianism, though it often exhibits anti-Semitic overtones, accepts Muslims in Russia (and the former Soviet Union) as an important source of support for its anti-Western, anti-liberal perspective.<sup>55</sup> As well as emphasising shared outlooks and

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<sup>54</sup> Since the breakup of the Soviet Union there has from time to time been interest in the rights of ethnic Russians in the "near abroad", though this has remained mainly an area of interest for Russian patriots rather than for Russian liberals (Kolstø and Edemsky 1995, 8).

<sup>55</sup> See Parland (2005, 23-100) for a discussion of modern the Eurasianist geopolitical outlook. In general, "patriotic" demagogues such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy have supported the vision of a multi-ethnic and



traditions, the Eurasian style “patriots” also point to the threats posed by outsiders (mostly the West or sometimes China) and try to use these as a rationale for bringing together and uniting the diverse groups within the Russian Federation. It is debatable how successful these attempts can be without genuine fear that Russia is in danger of being invaded.

There has not been one set “liberal” answer to the question of Russia’s internal diversity in Russia. At first the question of diversity arose from the existence of the multi-national Soviet state; then again became an issue after the break in the newly formed Russian Federation. During perestroika, liberals seemed more willing to promote minority nationalism than the nationalism of the majority. This is, in fact, a common theme in liberal thought in the West, where there is a strong tradition of liberals being concerned with the position of minority nations which are dominated by more powerful ones or of minority groups within a majority population.

Historically, the nationalities question was a source of concern for liberals which raised questions about national consolidation and internal conflict. However, it could also be a source of support; the nationalities were sometimes courted by liberals, particularly if their national struggle had become closely linked with democratic ideas. The question of national minorities has lost some of its importance for Russian liberals since the break up of the Soviet Union. For example, the question which animated liberal thinkers such as Milyukov and Struve (Stockdale 1996, 185-186) of how to deal with Ukrainian national aspirations does not need to be answered by liberals for the time being.

The liberal position in Russia before the collapse of the Soviet Union had been to regard national autonomy as an absolute goal. Though the focus then was on the smaller nations within the Soviet Union, the fact that the autonomous nation states also implied the creation of a Russian nation was an aspect that simply did not seem to have been interesting to the liberals. Paradoxically, though Russian liberals might have been willing to focus on some national movements, their ideology was (as we have seen) essentially universalistic. In fact, there are some similarities to this position and the one adopted by the Labour Party in England and its attitude towards national minorities

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multi-religious Russia; while there are groups which focus exclusively on Russian ethnicity, these remain largely on the fringes.

within Britain - while they were prepared to encourage the moves for greater autonomy for these nations, they were still much more comfortable with an overall federal identity under the umbrella of the United Kingdom than with dividing Britain up into individual nation states. Sakharov-style liberals supported national self-determination within the USSR during the Soviet era, while the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union seemed more like a utopia (Gorenburg 2003, 85 and 95).

Interestingly, when Yakovenko focuses upon divisions within Russia, he uses the same language to describe ideological divides as those that are used to describe the divides between Russia and the West. He uses the term ‘civilisational’, for example, in both cases. Yakovenko judges the collapse of communism to be a critical factor in the renewal of civilisational breaks within the Russian Federation. Communism hid these divides which are now more and more coming to the surface.

The fact that civilisational divides within the Russian Federation are more important for Yakovenko than regional divides or national divides shows how significant a concept this is in Russian discourse. Yakovenko remains the only one of the thinkers to take seriously the fact that Russia has cultures within it which are Asian as well as European. Most of the thinkers we are considering display a critical attitude towards “Asia”, and describe Russia as either needing to aspire towards becoming a European country or already being a European country. Generally, Russian liberals ignore what non-Western parts of Russia in their analyses because they feel these are anti-liberal.

From the early 1990’s onward, indeed as soon as the Soviet Union broke up, the idea that Russia should form a new identity which is post-imperial began to appear. Such thinking is not produced solely by some liberals - there is a strand of “patriotic” thought which seeks to promote a post-Soviet state which has an exclusively ethnic Russian identity. This in some way represents something of a watershed in Russian thought, as Tolz (2001, 161) notes: “Russian nation builders in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ignored the imperial dimension”. That is, they did not present the creation of a Russian nation as a reaction against Russia’s imperial identity. The difference resulted from the position in history in which those in the post-Soviet era found themselves compared to their 19<sup>th</sup> century counterparts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was not an option to disband the Russian Empire, while in the 1990’s this was not only a possibility, but was becoming a historical reality.

Yakovenko exemplifies a liberal thinker who has adopted the post-imperial idea that Russia needs to move on from its imperial identity. He notes that in the post-Soviet period considerations of what it means for Russia to be a nation have begun to emerge. However, he attacks the traditionalistic nationalists who dominate these debates because they always refuse to give up “imperial pleasures” such as Russia’s “colonies”.

With the growth of traditional consciousness and nostalgia for imperialism, nationalism is inherently reduced to a naive desire to receive the advantage of empire without solving the problems connected to it. The person of traditional orientation does not find within themselves the ability to recognize the existence of fundamental alternatives: either empire, or Russian people. One of these two should disappear. (1997)

These views are not only a challenge to Russia’s “patriots” who call for the formation of a Russian nation, they are also a challenge for all those liberals who renounce Russian imperialism, but still call for Russia to have economic and political control over the “near abroad”. Yakovenko criticises such post-Soviet mechanisms as the Commonwealth of Independent States as being essentially meaningless. His view of the CIS is that it is a psychological tool to lessen the discomfort felt by Russians, arising from the fact that they are no longer the leaders of an empire. He claims if the CIS actually became a concrete reality and Russia really did lead former Soviet nations, it would not be in Russia’s interests as the demands made by these nations in exchange for their sovereignty would be unsustainable. Yakovenko(1997) also sees the maintenance of the imperial mentality as being influenced by the military-industrial complex, what he calls the “archaic economy”, which seeks to preserve the old Soviet style system.

Yakovenko notes that pre-revolutionary liberalism, as exemplified by Struve for example, stood strongly for imperialism. We have already noted the arguments made in this respect and that Kara-Murza seems to hold similar views (see chapter 3).

Yakovenko (1997) asserts that pre-revolutionary liberalism failed to reject imperialism because “the conflict between values of liberalism and an imperial principle was not realized as unsolvable.” Yakovenko feels that at certain periods the idea that empire can play a civilising role is valid (particularly in the early periods of the existence of the

empire). However, he notes that by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Russian empire was already in a state of disintegration. The formation of the Soviet Union effectively prevented liberalism from evolving a post-Imperial state, which Yakovenko feels would have been formed otherwise.

Yakovenko is keen to point out that what he feels is misplaced imperialism does not display itself exclusively amongst those who are close to the fringes of the Russian ideological spectrum. It also manifests itself amongst centrists and even sometimes amongst liberals. It should be noted that while the thinkers we are considering associate the Russian Federation with its current borders and not with the Soviet ones, there is a strong tendency within Russia as a whole, particularly amongst the elite, to regard the former Soviet States as special zones of influence. A similar mentality appears amongst some liberals - for example, the advisor to Yeltsin, Sergei Stankevich, who in the early 1990's tried to bring the former Soviet states under the domination of the Russian state with the stated aim of promoting democracy in them, and Chubais (2003), who as we have already discussed employed the concept of "Liberal Empire" in much the same way that 19<sup>th</sup> century liberals did in Russia - seeing Russia as having a civilising role amongst the "backward" nations on its borders.

Interestingly, the term "Liberal Empire" had also been used at various times by moderates within the "Patriotic Movement" in the early 1990's (Drobizheva 1998, 143). This suggests that once again we see the liberals responding to an agenda set by the "patriots". However, it is the norm in modern Russia for liberals to reject such ideas. Indeed, the generally critical attitude towards Chubais's "Liberal Empire" election campaign demonstrated by liberals is testament to this.

Yakovenko is unique amongst Russian liberals in that he sometimes challenges the borders of the Russian Federation as they currently exist. For example, while discussing the issue of Russian identity, Yakovenko suggests that some sort of change to the extent of the territory of the Russian Federation might be necessary (this would mean a reduction in size) in order to strengthen identity and national cohesion and enable Russia to move from being an empire to a nation:

There are two variants. The first - we stay as we are, we do not recede anywhere and then we suffer loss of identity. The second - we in part lose space, but we keep identity. The problem is that Russia [by which he means the Russian nation] has not risen yet to full growth. If Russia becomes part of Europe, I see a re-evaluation of her territory as being inevitable. (2002a)

However, the choice of either a national identity or an imperial one can seem rather stark. Yakovenko himself is aware that the strict divide between national and imperial identity exists more in theory than reality:

...one general remark should be suggested about the typology [of national and imperial models]. In models of the national state, classical empire, colonial and post-theocratic empires, we are describing idealized structures. (1996)

Perhaps it would be better if Yakovenko allowed for some flexibility in the definitions he is using and looked at some examples in the West, particularly Great Britain and the United States, - nations which are or have been simultaneously federations and even empires as well as being nation states. Furthermore, even a more narrowly-defined Russia would still be a multi-national state that might face difficulties. Also, the creation of a smaller Russia is either a utopian dream far from reality or so contrary to the aspirations of Russia's elite and popular opinion that its realisation would be catastrophic (as Yakovenko accepts in another article - see *Dezintergratsiya RF: stsennarii i perspektivy*, 2002b). Therefore, this idea is not "useful".

Kara-Murza's positive perception of 19th and early 20th century liberal-nationalism could lead to the assumption that he also shares the unequivocal acceptance of the assessment of imperialism which was common at this time. However, as is the case with Yakovenko, on this issue he is more influenced by 20th century events. In his article, *Rossiya v treugol'nike "Etnokratiya- Imperiya-Natsiya"*, Kara-Murza asserts that in Russian history the value notions of "ethnos", "empire" and "nation" are linked together. This is a philosophical essay which does not consider issues relating to nationalities within Russia in any detail. Firstly, he asserts that a purely ethnocentric interpretation of the nation will result in xenophobia. Secondly, he feels that the imperial principle asserts that people should be joined together as citizens in service to

the state. The national principle requires that people should live in a territorial-state area as individuals. Kara-Murza does not describe very clearly how these concepts relate to each other, simply contending that they are connected. While it is clear that he judges the nation to be the best form of statehood, he does not describe how this process relates to Russia in much detail. What is interesting about Kara-Murza's view is that he does not make the cast iron definitions of "nation" and "empire" that are made by Yakovenko. The choice, he seems to assert, is not necessarily between "nation" and "empire"; rather it is possible to envisage some sort of middle path that combines elements of both.

As we saw in the previous section, the focus of many liberal thinkers is concentrated much more particularly on Russia's external relations, particularly with the West. However, for Tishkov the opposite is the case. He understands Russia from the perspective of inside out rather than looking at Russia from outside in - from the perspective of the West. He is acutely aware of the danger posed by ethnic tension. Like Kara-Murza, he feels that understanding the nation in ethnic terms is the cause of most of the conflict in the post-20<sup>th</sup> century world. Tishkov concludes that an inclusive form of nationalism needs to be created, built around the concept of "Rossiya" which he feels is a more inclusive term than "Russkii". Tishkov also examines Soviet policy towards ethnicity in Soviet history, which according to his interpretation has emphasised a primordial and unchanging perception of nationality. Equally, Tishkov is opposed to what he calls "hegemonic nationalism", which is an ethnic nationalism that seeks to dominate and perhaps ultimately engulf other surrounding nations. He attacks the usual suspects, such as the expansionist Soviet State, and contemporary parties, such as the Communist Party and Zhirinovskiy's LDPR (1997, 236-245). Interestingly, according to Tolz, (2001, 250-251) ethnic minorities within Russia are more comfortable with the brand of views expressed by those who follow the Soviet tradition within Russia, because of the Soviet emphasis on the perception of the primordial nature of nations. This is particularly true for elites associated with these nationalities. However, Tishkov launches the same attack that both Klyamkin and Yakovenko made about nationalism amongst Russian elites, that it does not represent the grass roots properly. In Tishkov's opinion, which he supports with the usual evidence of surveys and opinion polls, minorities in Russia have fluid perceptions of their national identity. Thus, they easily

feel themselves part of Russia as well as part of whatever other nationality to which they belong.

Tishkov's position is well illustrated by the comparison he draws between Russia and China; he argues that China has handled nationalism within its borders better than Russia. Here we can see two of the main components of his ideology. Firstly, the overwhelming importance of elites in shaping national identity and secondly, the absolute plasticity of nationalism:

A lot depends on administration policy and ideological prescriptions. In the 1950s, China conducted one of the censuses using Soviet standards and communist *ethnofilia*, and it happened that about 400 'nationalities' were identified. After urgent bureaucratic regrouping, only fifty-six have been officially institutionalized. Their overall membership is still over 100 million people but no one is questioning China as a nation-state. (2000, 642-643)

Thus, Tishkov envisages a sort of half-way house between imperialism and the rather rigid definition of a nation state that Yakovenko postulates. It is a nation-state which has a strongly federalist orientation, but which also regards the common Russian language as the main glue which holds everything together.

Whether Tishkov's "Rossiyan" nationalism is a realistic project that can actually be achieved is a debatable point. Here a liberal thinker, Vladimir Malakhov, criticises its practicality:

To imagine that one will manage to convince the Ossetian, the Tatar, etc. (let alone the Chechen) of the superethnic value of the term "Rossiyan" and to accept it as their main term of self-identification can come into the heads only of intellectuals who are very far from real life. (1999, 130)

In one of his recent publications, Tishkov investigates multiculturalism. In the 1970s he wrote extensively about Canada, in particular the attempts to accommodate different

nationalities there.<sup>56</sup> This is interesting in itself because it shows that Tishkov attempts to consider the West from the perspective of a social scientist rather than as a philosopher. Rather than using the West as an abstract term he tries to understand how problems have been approached in practical terms in Western countries. Tishkov does not think the Canadian experience is directly applicable to Russia because Canada is a state which is clearly divided into two main nations.

As we have seen, Western ideas about nationalism, including multiculturalism, have not yet fully entered the mainstream of ideas in Russia. And as Malakhov notes, this ideology is still engaged in the process of gaining acceptance:

Ideas of multiculturalism are gradually being acquired by the Russian intellectual community. As trailblazers, some of those within the education system and some people within pressure groups and human rights organizations are spreading these ideas. They emphasize the idea of the cultural heterogeneity of modern Russia. It seems to me obvious enough, that the cultural pluralism of the Russian society does not find expression in political language. But it seems to me obvious also, that adequate expression of cultural pluralism in our conditions could be made through the discourse of Multiculturalism. (1997)

In actuality, according to Malinova, (2004) multiculturalism is gaining more acceptance than some other Western ideologies such as gender equality, for example. However, it remains an ideology only for some specialists and in fact many liberals (even those who have considered the question of Russian identity) do not pay much attention to it. In the West theories of multiculturalism that have been advanced by liberals such as Taylor and Kymlicka have argued that identity is an important aspect of an individual's well being. Those who are discriminated against cannot escape the sense of inferiority that is imposed on them both by a negative image from others, and the resulting negative self-image. Taylor and others argue that minorities need to be protected as their positive self-image is linked to the preservation of their culture. He points to Quebec as an example of a national minority which has preserved its cultural distinctiveness for these reasons.

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<sup>56</sup> See, for example, *Istorii Vozniknoveniya franko-kanadskogo natsional'nogo voprosa*, 1974.



Russian liberals would be reluctant to take up this approach for several reasons. Firstly, anti-nationalists such as Yanov and Klyamkin are worried about preserving individual rights; they have demonstrated little or no interest in communities. Secondly, they have placed liberal values above other considerations and would therefore be reluctant to encourage minorities to contradict these values within their own communities. There have also been critiques made of theories like those proffered by Taylor and Kymlicka for not being applicable in the Russian context. Magda Opalski (2002, 298-321) is unconvinced as to why group rights based on a shared culture should be applied in Russia. She notes the comparative rarity of inter-ethnic conflict in Russia and also the impossibility of actively promoting the linguistic rights of ethnic minorities in Russia. Opalski asserts that Kymlicka's views are based only on one context and that he then generalises beyond this context in a way which does not match Russian particularities. Once again we have a sign of liberals employing particularism to support or to dismiss arguments which have originated from the West. Vladimir Malakhov (1997) follows the same line of argument, asserting that multiculturalism can only be sustained in Western countries because Russia does not contain ethnic minorities made up of diasporas, but "In the half-way house between nation and multicultural federation that was the Soviet Union and is now the Russian Federation it is rather more difficult to 'take pleasure in multiculturalism' as there is so much shared history and intermingling."

Tishkov actually promotes the concept of multiculturalism in opposition to what he terms "multinationalism" which he sees as dangerous. He supports the expression of differing identities by various groups within the Russian Federation and is in favour of proper representation of those groups in central government. Furthermore, he feels that a localised infrastructure would also help to channel their frustrations away from nationalism. However, as Tishkov would agree, Malakhov describes the situation well when he warns of the danger to liberalism posed by multiculturalism if it is appropriated by extremists:

The "Fundamentalist" form of multiculturalism is represented by active representatives of an ethnic minority. They call for their ethnic group to tear away completely from the values and the norms developed within the framework of modern liberal democracy. Principles of liberal democracy for

these people are in essence no more than veiled violence, a covering of domination of one group over all others. Hence, revenge is necessary. (1997)

Tishkov's approach to nationalism amongst the minorities is, in essence, strikingly similar to Yanov and Klyamkin's attitude towards Russian nationalism itself. They are all of the opinion that this sort of nationalism is harmful if it takes on a political dimension, and for that reason, they seek to channel it away from political power and mobilisation. Hence, Tishkov's "dialogue", or in some cases, "conflict", is not so much with the Russian "patriots", but with those who are representatives of smaller nationalities within the Russian Federation.

Tishkov's idea appears to be spreading beyond the liberal milieu. For example, Solzhenitsyn's later publications espouse a similar viewpoint.

A multinational country during the difficult moments of history should have the support of all citizens. Each nation should have the conviction that the uniform protection of the general interests of the state is vitally necessary for everyone. Such state patriotism in today's Russia is not present. (1998, 153)

Klyamkin, in *Gazeta.ru* and elsewhere, accuses the anti-liberals of being "majestic", a term he uses pejoratively, which he also groups with authoritarianism and traditionalism.<sup>57</sup> From this we can conclude that he is anti-imperial. However, it is not clear whether his anti-imperialism is of the same caste as Yakovenko's. Klyamkin is opposed to those who want to make Russia a strong state with dominion over its neighbours. He does not take this anti-imperialism as far as Yakovenko does who implies that if Russia is anything but a pure nation-state it is tainted. Furthermore, like most liberals, and unlike Yakovenko, he has not suggested that Russia's borders could be reduced.

Yanov and Klyamkin, as noted above, deal with the question of what Russia is almost exclusively through interpreting her relationship with the West and also through consideration of whether certain movements in both Russian history and contemporary Russia are orientated towards the West. However, Yanov does make some points which suggest he shares some views in common with Tishkov.

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<sup>57</sup> Repressivnoe sozanie protivopolozhno pravu, 10 December 2003, <http://gazeta.ru/comments/expert/70405.shtml>

Firstly, Yanov responds positively to a federal identity for Russia. However, his opinion on this is given in a comment appearing in an aside in one of his articles and cannot therefore be regarded as a pivotal or central part of his ideology. Yanov also accepts the term “Rossiya”, a term Tishkov unreservedly appropriated. (See, especially, “Rossiya protiv Rossii: ocherki istorii russkogo natsionalizma 1825-1921”, 1999). However, there are significant differences in the way Yanov and Tishkov employ these terms: Yanov associates “Rossiya” with a Westernising reforming impulse while “Russkii” is seen as reactionary. According to Tishkov, as mentioned earlier, “Rossiya” refers to a civil form of nationalism, while “Russkii” refers to an ethnic form of nationalism. The particular and dissimilar meanings that Yanov and Tishkov give to these terms provide a striking illustration of the essential difference between Tishkov and the other thinkers. For Yanov and the others excluding Tishkov, the debate about Russian identity is answered in civilisational terms. Russia is interpreted in relation to the West. Therefore, though all of the thinkers we are considering have some sympathy towards Russian minorities, on the whole they tend to ignore them because the nature of debates which focus primarily on Russia and the West leads to less emphasis being placed on the internal differences that exist within Russia and within the West. To focus on these internal divisions would complicate things and weaken the arguments of pro-Western liberals. Furthermore, the minorities in Russia are not seen as natural supporters of progressive liberalism, which is precisely why “patriots” court them more than do liberals. While many liberals in stable Western democracies are secure enough in the dominance of their ideology to enable them to embrace multiculturalism, it is debatable whether Russian liberals who are themselves minorities within their country are able to make the same commitment.

## **Summary**

There is relative agreement amongst liberals about what Russia’s relationship with the West should be and that her identity is basically Western. This is a potentially useful argument which could be persuasive in demonstrating why liberalism can and should be close to the core of Russian identity. However, there is little or no agreement about other facets of Russia’s identity. Therefore, even those who argue that Russian national identity needs to be strengthened or developed do not agree with each other. While

Yanov and Klyamkin argue that “cultural blocks” to liberalism are the main problem, Kara-Murza argues that Russian liberals need to embrace Russian culture. Meanwhile the question of whether Russia needs to develop into a completely post-imperial nation, or should be a mixture of nation and federation does not seem to have a single “liberal” answer. This suggests that any consensus amongst liberals about the national question will not be forthcoming, due principally to the difficulty of the issues of identity thrown up by Russia’s transition. This will weaken both the clarity of the liberals’ message and their effectiveness in engaging in the national debate.

Furthermore, Russian liberals have shown themselves unable to create a form of identity which explains the national question as effectively as Putin’s statism. Part of the basis of the success of Putinism is that it does not try to radically reshape Russian national identity, but builds on and actively embraces much of Russia’s recent past. While its approach towards the Soviet era is not completely uncritical, it is far more favourable than that of the liberals. This is an approach which has found favour with the majority of the Russian population, the majority of whom are not willing to reject the Soviet period as completely as liberals do.

Part of the problem for liberals is that their ideology is still not seen as being close enough to that of the majority of the population. Putinism has been successful because, as an ideology, it matches the outlooks of most people in Russia. It has defined Russian identity in a way that matches the perception of, not only the majority in Russia, but also the majority of the elite. It has understood the existence of particularities in the Russian context and has been moulded to suit them, rather than trying to ignore their existence or claiming they are not important. Sometimes it has been prepared to celebrate and loudly proclaim the worthiness of these particularities, while at the same time sometimes emphasising Russia’s links to the West and Europe. For these reasons Putinism is an ideological success story as well as a story of success in social control. Russian liberals have to work harder, therefore, to make their desired form of identity seem acceptable in the wider debate about which form of identity Russia has or should have. It seems they have a long way to go before they can achieve this goal.

## **Chapter 6: Nationalism and the Political Process in Russia**

This section focuses on how the role of nationalism and liberalism relates to the political process in Russia.

### **Liberalism and the Role of the State**

Although liberals might be partially working to create a dynamic bottom up movement, a “counter hegemony” which could eventually become dominant, they are critically aware that this is potentially a very long-term process – especially considering the still developing civil society in Russia. The most pressing issue which faces them, at least in the short term, is the state. While the thinkers might have different approaches towards the construction of different forms of identity, the issue of state power comes to the fore when we consider how these ideas can be put into practice. All of the thinkers we are examining consider the role of ideas to be hugely important. However, one of the conclusions that Suny drew in “Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation” (1999, 383-418) is that the role of intellectuals and the ideas which they produce is dependent on how they relate to political power. Thus, any hope of transforming the type of nationalism dominant in Russia depends upon whether these ideas become part of the ideology of the political leadership.

Having the opportunity to create a new Russia is for Russian liberals a political question – how can they have access to political power to make this happen? The role that liberals think the state should play in politics is a critical question for this study. The “state” as an abstract concept is important in theories of nationalism and national identity. This is because the “nation” is often seen as a key consolidating force which can help with the formation of the state. The relationship between the state and the nation is often regarded as somewhat of a “chicken and the egg” process, because it is not always clear which begets which. Very often the process seems to be one of continuous mutual encouragement. Nationalism is also important in that it is often seen as being vital in unifying the people behind the state. However, in Russia this has not always been the case. As Rogger (1962, 252) points out: “Modern Russia did not develop a nationalism that was capable of reconciling important segments of Russian society to one another and to the state.”

Furthermore, as many Russian liberals are not naturally predisposed to considering nationalism as a neutral concept (Yanov and Klyamkin fall into this category), they often ignore the role that nationalism could play in uniting diverse elements behind the state. Indeed, due to their rejection of the ideologies adhered to by the state and also by diverse elements in society, they are frequently unwilling to accept that a form of nationalism needs to be developed to unify the nation behind the state, unless the state were itself implementing a liberal ideology.

On the other hand, as we saw in the last section, there is a realization amongst some liberal thinkers that an alliance with those who control state power is crucial in order to achieve whatever goal they have for creating a new kind of Russian nation.

Liberals are often perceived as seeking to limit state power. They are careful to ensure that checks and balances are in place to prevent the state from limiting the freedom of the individual. This is particularly true in the Russian context where the whole of dissident liberalism had been almost exclusively focused on battling a totalitarian regime. Furthermore, in the economic sphere, particularly, liberals emphasized the idea of the “minimal state” in the immediate aftermath of communism (Lukin 2000, 263).

During the 1990’s liberal thinkers began to explore what elements were necessary for the establishment of liberal practice in Russia. As Russia was threatened with fragmentation during the first part of the Yeltsin era, it became apparent that in order to work liberalism needed the intervention of the state. The period of transition from communist to post-communist states also heightened interest in what constituted the state and what sort of response should be made to the idea of the state amongst liberal reformers. This was highlighted by Jerzy Szacki (1995, 210), who argued that there was a contradiction between the ideal of an anti-constructivist, individualistic social model, and the intense state activity which was required to move society towards this idea.

Indeed, the study of the Western experience of liberalism has led some thinkers to remark that most liberal theories make assumptions about a powerful state. Vladimir Mau, who is attached to the Putin administration, challenges the typical attitude of liberals towards the state:

For this purpose first of all it is necessary to declare the real economic and political views [of liberals] precisely. Unfortunately, in our society many myths which black out the real processes and attitudes have accumulated. An example of this is the attitude of liberalism towards the state. The widespread myth is the representation that liberals oppose the strong state. This is completely incorrect. Liberals support the state created by a society, but strictly within certain frameworks. The myth about the anti-statehood of liberals has arisen because their arrival to positions of authority at the beginning of the 90's occurred against the background of the complete wreckage of the old Soviet state, when the new Russian authority was literally crippled and unable to restore control of the country, because it refused to continue many of the traditional methods of governance. And when the state structures, due to the resoluteness of liberals, by the end of 1992, began to show signs of life, liberals were asked to clear space for "skilled managers" [a term used to refer to bureaucrats].

However, the state in Russia cannot, of course, be considered only as an abstract or neutral concept. The state has had differing values attached to it at various times depending upon the ideologies of those who wield political power. Very often the ideology of Russian rulers has been antagonistic towards liberalism.

The concept and role of the state have historically been the pre-eminent elements in the ideas of Russian thinkers and remain so today. In Russian intellectual history, it can be seen that Russian liberals consistently look towards the state to achieve their goals. An illustrative example of this is the 'juridical school' of history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kavelin, S.Solov'ev, Chicherin), which argued that Russian autocracy, i.e. the State, could be moulded following a continental model to make it suitable as a vehicle for reforms:

In terms of the history of political language, this was an attempt to appropriate the concept of autocracy and to redefine it in a reformist-Enlightenment perspective, in a manner conducive to the social and liberal cause. (Semyonov 2006, 336)

However, this was ultimately to prove unsuccessful as the Russian state moved into an increasingly reactionary direction from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, continuing to leave Russian liberals marginalised. Indeed, this process seems to be cyclical with segments of the liberals trying to co-operate with authority and ultimately being disappointed several times. But because the state has been seen by Russian liberals as the only actor able to introduce liberal reforms, they have often sought to find ways to adapt liberalism to make it more acceptable to the holders of political power. This is a strategy which, of course, has its risks – and leads to the danger of liberalism being overwhelmed and corrupted.

However, liberal reformers have noted the weakness of civil society and bottom- up movements<sup>58</sup> and accordingly have judged the state to be the best, most effective, way to introduce reforms and protect liberal values (Sakwa 2004, 93). In general, and not just in Russia, the state is also seen as critical for those who wish to implement a certain form of national identity in a given context (Suny and Kennedy 2001, 383-418). This is not an opinion held by all liberals, as there are some who are more sceptical about the role it plays – particularly when it is dominated by non-liberals. Russian liberals remain divided (and this division has grown deeper) between those who are willing to work with the holders of political power and non-liberals in general, and those who have decided that it is preferable for liberalism to remain pure but on the sidelines.

Furthermore, the weakness and lack of dynamism of liberalism in Russia has not enabled the creation of an alternative and thriving liberal “counter culture” which might eventually gain hegemony in wider Russian society. Russian liberals lack the necessary influence and are too divided to enable this to happen.

The latter part of the Yeltsin era, and particularly the Putin era, have brought into being a more centralized state and this, combined with the more accepting attitude towards

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<sup>58</sup> It is clear from the electoral performance of Russian political parties that liberalism does not have mainstream political support in Russia (Nikonov 2004, 11). Some (Carnaghan, 2007; White, 2007; McFaul, 2001) have argued that lack of enthusiasm for democracy, capitalism or liberalism does not necessarily imply a grand rejection of these values amongst the population, but could mean that these values have not been introduced in a way which solves Russian peoples’ problems – though in my opinion, the Russian population, while not inherently antagonistic towards liberal ideas, is also not especially supportive of liberalism and also is likely to have a similar attitude towards non-liberal ideas.



Soviet and Tsarist autocratic tradition which have appeared during this time, have made liberals uneasy.

The dominant ideology of the centre throughout the Putin era has been statism. This ideology argues for a strong state almost as an end in itself. On other issues it is essentially pragmatic. In chapter 3 of this study I analysed the attitude of the thinkers we are considering to manifestations of nationalism in Russia. Statism overlaps with the particularistic nationalist ideology of the “Patriotic Movement” in Russia over the belief that Russia should have a strong state, and also the belief that Russia should not necessarily support the same form of government as Western countries. It is far more pragmatic on issues of identity and Russia’s relationship with the West. However, while liberals are regarded by many particularistic nationalists as having an overbearing influence on the approach to economics of the statist, the liberals often regard the particularistic nationalists as having too much influence on the approach of statist to “civillisational” arguments and questions of identity.

How Russian liberals evaluate statism broadly depends upon how they evaluate Putin, because the policy is so closely associated with him. From this point of view Klyamkin makes an interesting criticism of Putin. He suggests that the government that Putin has created does not represent a truly strong state. Klyamkin (writing when Putin was still president, but making an argument which might still hold in the Medvedev era) clearly refers back to the chaos that occurred when Yeltsin was seriously ill by commenting:

If Putin should, hypothetically, be put into a hospital for three months, where he will be denied access to his duties and powers, this is when we would see if his system has shaped up, or if everything hangs on one man, meaning that it is not operational institutionally. I think that, from the viewpoint of institutional operation, the regime has grown stronger, but the system has become weaker.

Why has it become weaker? Because the regime is based on the following principle: The more power I (the president) have, the stronger the state. This is true - but only in the case of a totalitarian or consistently authoritarian regime. And this is not true in case of democratic procedures. At least this is not true on

the intermediate, let alone long-term, plane.<sup>59</sup>

Klyamkin is clear that this kind of attempt to consolidate the state is dangerous because rather than creating a strong democratic state in the Western sense it is instead prone to tyranny:

There are different models of “guided democracy” with vastly different underlying principles. A Soviet-style democracy was guided and we all know its underlying principle - the party and its leader were safely protected from any responsibility. There was guided democracy under the generals in South Korea, and its underlying principle was clear, too - the emergency political laws, which enabled the rulers to make short shrift of the disloyal opposition.

There is nothing Soviet or South Korean in modern Russia. There is - it has not shaped up but is only developing as of yet - an imitation-legal regime, which allows the selective use of legal norms in return for loyalty. It is not suited to a strong state or for combating corruption, but then I don't think it was designed for this purpose. There are certain signs - only signs so far - of the establishment of a new principle of relations between the federal authorities, on the one hand, and the regional leaders and oligarchs, on the other hand. This principle is: Remain in the shadows, wallow in corruption, but don't interfere in politics.<sup>60</sup>

This analysis is probably the standard liberal critique of statism. For Klyamkin, aggressive attempts to centralize the state are doomed because of the destructive Soviet legacy. As we have seen he claims that this continues to have an adverse effect on elites in contemporary Russia. This means that state formation is always perceived as being achieved through the ruthless control of resources and by power being channelled through a single clique propped up by a stifling bureaucracy.

In the same debate where Klyamkin presents the opinions shown above, Kara-Murza argues for a different scenario. Here again we see Kara-Murza's willingness to react with openness to ideas and institutions that are normally regarded with distaste by

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<sup>59</sup> PUTIN: PRELIMINARY RESULTS. THE LIBERAL VIEW Russian Authorities in Search of Political Strategy and Development Model (a roundtable), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta – Stsenari*, No. 1, 2001. This was a discussion in which Klyamkin and Kara-Murza both took part.

<sup>60</sup> *Nezavisimaya Gazeta – Stsenari*, No. 1, 2001

liberals. Kara-Murza asserts that the state is the driving force behind reform in Russia. He feels that progress in Russia has always been lead from above and this remains the case today. This aspect of his ideology surfaced in an interesting way in a debate between Klyamkin and other liberals, over how liberals should co-operate with non-liberals who hold power. The question was formulated through the discussion of Russian intellectual history, with the examples of Milyukov being articulated to represent an idealistic position, and Guchkov to illustrate the attitude of co-operation. Milyukov is castigated by Kara-Murza as a clear example of a destructively oppositionist style of thinking, while Guchkov is admired as an example of an intellectual who implemented political reforms by co-operating with the conservative Russian government. Therefore, Kara-Murza postulates that in Russia reforms are powered by the compromise between progressive liberals and the conservative Russian state. We have already revealed how this position was demonstrated in his much more accepting attitude towards particularistic Russian nationalism, but he goes further in his assertion that “bureaucracy” is capable of being a useful (indeed the only) force that can help drive Russia forward:

Putin also settled (even if partially) the problem of oligarchs and, apparently, the problem of the media, at the same time maintaining his high rating. How did he do this? By bureaucratizing the system. By the way, bureaucratization is not the one and only rut in which Russia has been travelling since olden times. It is a kind of a road leading to results, which is probably why it is a rut. There can be no stepping right or left, and everything eventually returns to the rut. This is because the alternatives are either grass-roots liberalization, which results in chaos, or the popular revolt, which means chaos again.

But we should remember about the task of catching up with Europe. When one starts to think about ways of doing this, one comes to the conclusion that there is only one way: a bureaucratic modernization from the top. All successes in the liberalization of the economy are only the side effects of bureaucratization. Conquer the Duma, and you will push through a liberal law. This is the only way - so far. This is how it has always been in Russia: liberalism is the by-product of the strengthening of the state. But where is the limit to the strengthening of liberalism, which will want to go on and on? The answer to this

question can be provided only in the logic of bureaucratic limitations.<sup>61</sup>

Kara-Murza here displays his conservatism and also his willingness to compromise “pure” liberalism with other values. For him, Putin represents a central course and, therefore, a way to avoid the destructive impact that could result from limiting the state too much or, on the other hand, allowing too great a growth of authoritarianism. The main difference between Klyamkin and Kara-Murza is whether or not they think liberalism is compatible with traditional Russian systems of government which emphasize centralization and bureaucracy. Klyamkin, unlike Kara-Murza, firmly believes that Russian traditions of bureaucratization are incapable of sustaining liberal reforms.

Thinkers, (such as Tishkov and Yakovenko) who feel that a new form of nationalism is necessary in Russia, understand the vital role the state should play in this project. Here Yakovenko accuses Russian liberals of underestimating this:

The liberal version of the Russian national doctrine has not been generated, has not ripened, has not achieved the status of being a recognized political and cultural factor. Among the reasons for this are a quite realistic and well-proven fear of the imperial state tradition, and also chronic anti-statism. The liberal of today clearly realizes that to recreate empire means to suppress anew the person, to limit their freedom. Russian liberalism in general distinguishes itself in its fear of too strong a state and of any mobilization of ideas which can recreate it, and according to this logic, patriotism can be seen as a mobilizing idea. But here we see the influence of the too habitual anti-statist moods of the Russian intelligentsia. The state always is aggressive, and from it nothing good will come. The idea of the weak state is a projection in intellectual consciousness of the anti-statist traditions of the Russian peasantry. (1996)

A constant theme threading through the thought of Russian liberals is the idea that the state is a vehicle to create the reforms they envisage as being necessary. However, some of them are suspicious of the brand of Russian nationalism that is generally appealed to

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<sup>61</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta – Stsenari, No. 1, 2001.

in order to help consolidate and legitimise the state because, as we have seen, some of them believe (certainly in the Russian context) that it is incompatible with liberalism.

The other option open to liberals is to try to ally themselves with an alternative type of Russian nationalism from that connected to the Russian state. However, there are several problems with this. Firstly, most of the grass roots nationalist movements which actually exist in Russia today and are antagonistic towards statism are also antagonistic towards liberals. Secondly, the discussion in the previous section has demonstrated that the process of introducing new forms of nationalism into the public realm in an effective way would seem to almost always require state power to achieve it, certainly while civil society and the impact of alternative discourses from that postulated by the state remain weak. This contradiction is one of the main factors which prevents the national discourse from evolving in Russia and therefore always leaves liberals at a disadvantage. It is for this reason (as I will demonstrate in the next section by discussing party politics) that the introduction of alternative, modern theories of nationalism into the popular arena has been limited and will perhaps continue to be so.

### **Russian Nationalism and Party Politics**

A separate issue for Russian liberals to consider is how overt nationalism can be harnessed as a part of their portfolio of ideas in their efforts to gain the support of the people. As I discussed in the introduction, the alternative way to gain “hegemony” for liberals is to make their ideas have more impact on the general population. Clear displays of nationalism or patriotism can be useful for this as they are a strong mobilising and legitimising force. As I commented upon in the introduction, this is a strategic issue, which also raises ideological problems. When we discuss utilising overt nationalism or patriotism by liberals here, we are usually discussing utilising Russian patriotic arguments – that is arguments which are formulated by those who consider themselves to be Russian patriots.

Russian liberal parties such as the SPS and *Yabloko* are notorious for being mostly unsuccessful in elections throughout the Yeltsin and Putin era (Nikonov 2004, 11), as mentioned earlier. The elections in 2003 represented a slump in their fortunes because they failed to gain the necessary support to rise above the 5% barrier necessary for

parties to gain seats – a failure which contributed significantly to feelings of pessimism amongst liberals.<sup>62</sup> While these parties have more importance in terms of influencing debates in Russia than their lack of votes might indicate, they are certainly not mass parties and thus are very weak. Since most (if not all) of the successful parties in Russia have made some appeal to traditional patriotic values it might be envisaged that this could be a method by which liberals might broaden their appeal. Liberalism in itself remains a minority movement which fails to appeal to a large segment of the population.

According to White (2006, 114-116), by 1998 *Yabloko* had put some thought into the issue of patriotism and included sympathetic statements in their literature. Their treatment of patriotism was, however, not particularly prominent and was made with reservations. However, Malinova (1998) shows that this process was probably entered into by both the main parties some time earlier, probably by 1995. She argues that this engagement with patriotism was influenced by the example of democratic-nationalist movements in the Baltic States and also by the rise of the Patriotic Movement in Russia, which forced Russian liberals to take a position on national issues. By the mid 1990's liberal politicians were already making the arguments that have become the most frequent approach of liberals to nationalism. These arguments are exemplified by Gaider who combined a strong aversion to the “anachronism” of Russian nationalism as portrayed by the patriotic movement with the claim that liberals themselves were true patriots because their reforms were made in the best interests of Russia. Malinova also argues that while the Union of Right Forces probably proved more interested in promoting Russian patriotism as a value in itself, *Yabloko* adopted a slightly more aggressive foreign policy which was not necessarily always as strongly pro-Western as was that of the Union of Right Forces.

There have been several attempts to ally with Russian traditions of patriotism more openly or explicitly. In the mid-1990's one of the more prominent attempts at merging liberalism and Russian manifestations of patriotism was launched by Boris Fedorov (see Bunin, 2002). He tried to link explicit patriotism with support for liberal-democracy and free market economics. This would mean the appropriation of nationalist or patriotic

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<sup>62</sup> The 2007 elections saw liberal parties continue to perform badly, receiving only a tiny portion of votes cast.

symbols, and the use of traditional patriotic rhetoric. The attempt by Fedorov to link these values with liberalism is problematic because of the anti-liberal image of patriotism in Russia. In a more recent comment Fedorov (2002) suggested that he himself was very concerned about the possibility of combining these values successfully.

A further example of liberalism being combined with Russian patriotism was Anatoly Chubais's "Liberal Empire" idea which was launched as an attempt to gain popular support for the SPS party in the 2003 party elections (see A.Chubais 2003). This appears to argue that Russia should continue to exert influence over the former Soviet Union because it can promote liberal values in these places. This is an attitude perhaps inspired by reference to the idea (popular amongst liberals in the 19th century) that Russia should play a civilizing role amongst its neighbours (See Belinsky, Struve, etc.). However, Chubais's campaign was dropped due to criticism from many within the liberal movement in Russia.

In Russia the attempts to create links between liberalism and clearly nationalist arguments have been greeted in general without enthusiasm by liberals themselves. This lack of support results in part from the fact that both in their relationship to political power and in the actual substance of their ideologies nationalism and liberalism are fundamentally different concepts in Russia compared to how they relate to each other in England, for example.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the efforts to merge liberalism with Russian nationalism have not resulted in huge gains in votes for liberals when they have been attempted. The political analyst, Igor Bunin, claimed that these programmes failed because they seemed "completely inorganic" (2002), because the relationship between liberalism and patriotism did not seem natural. This is true to some extent. As we have seen the way both patriotism and liberalism are perceived in Russia makes it confusing for the electorate when a politician claims to adhere to a combination of these values. Furthermore, the term liberal-nationalism or liberal-patriotism is rarely used anywhere, including in the West, outside scholarly debate. So a politician would be unlikely to use this as a rallying cry. Furthermore, politicians in the West rarely identify with these concepts, and would be unlikely to hitch their wagon to either of them. It must be said,

however, that jumping to fixed conclusions about the popularity of different ideologies from the success or failure of political parties is dangerous in a political system that depends to a large extent on media control and other power bases. An important criticism of Bunin's position is that the ideology of the Yeltsin and Putin governments could be described as a variant of liberal-patriotism, and this ideology has been the most popular in recent times.

Of the thinkers we are considering, Klyamkin and Kara-Murza are the two most directly engaged in trying to influence party politics in Russia. The others cover issues in more theoretical terms. We will focus, therefore, on Kara-Murza and Klyamkin in this section. Klyamkin is of the opinion that an appeal to Russian patriotism, apart from being incorrect ideologically, would not necessarily give liberals increased support. He reasons, from his observations, that the Russian population is not particularly nationalist. Klyamkin's background as a sociologist puts him in a good position to offer a critique of the many of the values that "patriots" assign to the people:

It remains to be discussed to what extent the values normally associated with the "Russian Idea" correspond to the general values of the population...

Referring to the data of empirical research, I have tried to show that the attitude of Russian society (at least its majority) does not coincide with Slavophile representations about its features. Thus, the concurrence is less amongst people who have high levels of education, younger people who are further (by virtue of age) from the Soviet epoch and those who are more deeply steeped in city culture.

It is possible to count, say, patriotism as our main national relic. But also not to reckon with the fact that the overwhelming majority of Russians today do not transfer this value to their children; in fact, in my opinion this is impossible. But I do not hasten to condemn the people for this, nor do I call for the immediate strengthening of patriotic education. (2001)

Thus, Klyamkin argues that while a certain proportion of the population do respond positively to overt Russian nationalism they are generally those who have a poor education, the older generations and those who live in rural areas. These are naturally



the groups that do not respond positively towards liberalism in Russia. Klyamkin goes on to say (in accordance with his open definition of “patriotism” which I discussed in chapter 3) that the newer generations could still be patriotic but that they could simply be forming new definitions of patriotism, which are different from the way patriotism has been traditionally perceived in Russia. Unfortunately, as always, he does not say what this new form of patriotism consists of, nor what it should consist of, so patriotism continues to be a rather empty term in Klyamkin’s philosophy. Therefore, as his remarks above demonstrate, Klyamkin would argue that appeals to patriotism would be unsuitable for winning votes as it would alienate the people to whom liberal parties are already trying to appeal: that is, the highly educated, the young, and the city dwellers.

While Klyamkin is accurate in his assessment of the weakness of nationalism amongst the general population, he should be careful because it is equally easy, if not easier, to say that the Russian people are not particularly liberal. Indeed, it could be asserted that the Russian people as a whole are not especially responsive to any ideas. German Diligenski seems to have the most realistic assessment of the attitude of the Russian people:

The mentality of the majority of Russian society not siding with the ideological minorities (liberal or communist) is ambivalent; it vacillates between nostalgia for the good old stable life and the temptations of the new life and the hopes it nourishes. Thus, the most adequate symbols of this ambivalent mentality become the national symbols which allow them to express non-acceptance of the bulk of the Soviet and Western symbols alike and to preserve a certain freedom of choice and combination of diverse components of the "old" and the "new". The conflict between the Western and grass-roots, “soil-related”, nationalist dispositions is a manifestation of the conflict of modernizing and conservative trends, a form that allows this latter conflict itself to somewhat attenuate and evade the blatantly anti-market and antidemocratic socialist conservatism. (2001)

This perception of the Russian people as holding views that are a mixture of both liberalism and also particularistic nationalism is persuasive. Naturally, the fact that these ideas might be in some way contradictory is much less important for “normal” people than it is for political thinkers because the general population do not have to define their

position with as much care as political thinkers do. Furthermore, it professes an explanation of why liberal parties have performed so badly in the elections: that is, the narrow focus of Russian liberal parties alienates the majority of the population.

Kara-Murza, as an ideologue of the Union of Right Forces, thinks that a more positive embrace of Russian patriotism is possibly a useful strategy in Russian party politics. Typically the Union of Right Forces is more willing to conduct self-consciously populist campaigns than other liberal parties.

For Klyamkin, the 2003 elections represented an important turning point in post-Soviet Russia. While he noted that the 2003 elections resulted in a victory for “Majestic nationalism”, with the success of the Vladimir Zhirinovsky’s LDPR and the Patriotic-Socialist party *Rodina*, he asserts that it still remains the case that the “patriotic” section of the political spectrum is as divided as the liberals. Blocks such as these will be reduced to existing on the sidelines, with the centrists choosing ideas or promoting individuals from time to time from one block or the other. It seems that the criss-cross of ideological divides makes the emergence of solid and uniform power blocks very unlikely. This situation looks set to remain at least for the short to medium term.

Klyamkin characterises the late 1980’s and 1990’s as being a time of opposition between democrats and communists. However, Putin completely changed this:

Now this time has ended, and such opposition [between communists and democrats] was replaced by another arrangement of forces which is a direct consequence of the Putin presidencies and to a certain degree represents two components of his political outlook: on the one hand, representation about the necessity of the liberalization of the economy, and on the other - traditionalism as a component in which there is a mixture of the pre-Soviet and the Soviet experience. (2004)

Klyamkin accuses *Yabloko* of being too co-operative with the Putin government and not fulfilling its proper role in Russian politics. He asserts that while The Union of Right Forces and the parties that preceded it had always adopted a conciliatory position towards the centre, *Yabloko*’s role was meant to be that of a critic of the government.

However, leading up to the elections in 2003, Klyamkin objected that *Yabloko* was not fulfilling this role, because it was itself being conciliatory towards the government. Klyamkin's accusation encapsulates one of the main arguments against a conciliatory attitude in Russian politics: if the liberals aim to appease the centre too much this can lead to liberalism losing its distinctive character as it is swallowed up by all the encompassing centrists.

Furthermore, since patriotism in Russia is so clearly joined with anti-Westernism, great power and traditionalism, it seems that any ideology that seeks to combine liberalism with patriotism will be confusing to the electorate. In a time when liberals are worrying about a clear opposition to the Putin-style centrists in the middle of the political spectrum and the "patriots" towards the extremes, a conciliatory stance might lack clarity and be lost in the ideological muddle that characterises Russian politics.

While liberalism does not appeal in sufficient strength to the average Russian, from whom it is vital to build political support, undoubtedly there is some sympathy for liberal values. But in the hierarchy of ideologies of which the public is cognizant, liberalism does not necessarily rate higher than others. While it is true that elections in Russia have not always been fair and that mistakes made by liberal parties are often emphasized as reasons for its failure to gain support, the underlying reason is its failure to appeal strongly enough to the average voter in the electorate.

Klyamkin's investigation into sociology and his universalistic beliefs have led him to question the usual belief that the Russian population requires "strong leadership". According to his analysis this is because the Russian people are like all people, that is all Western people. He accepts that, in this respect, the older generation have been left behind. Following the 2003 elections, Klyamkin highlighted the role played by the Putin administration in driving the Russian people towards an anti-Western, anti-liberal viewpoint. He claims that by taking control of information the Putin administration has a monopoly on opinion formation in Russia. Furthermore, the Russian people are seen by Klyamkin as especially prone to accepting "leadership" from the government in terms of ideology due to Soviet conditioning. It is interesting to note that Klyamkin emphasizes that the support for "patriotism" in the elections was the result of manipulation of the public - thus he wants to discredit it as truly representing their

genuine feelings. Here Klyamkin seems to be moving away from his earlier views which minimised the differences between the attitudes of the Russian people concerning liberalism and that of their Western counterparts. This attitude is echoed by Yanov:

If liberals could not break a 5 percent barrier in elections in the Duma in 2003, and any national patriotic party such as "*Rodina*" could, clearly then the cultural ground for political modernization still waits for the plough and paternalistic ideas are still even more influential than the European idea. (2004)

For Yanov (and also for Klyamkin) “velvet revolutions” are an important route for liberal values to enter into the mainstream in many post communist countries. However, their pessimistic conclusions about the Russian people, who, as Yanov puts it, have not “connected” in the way their Ukrainian counterparts have, means they do not see this as an immediate solution. We should note that they both fail to mention the not inconsiderable role played by nationalism in all of the “velvet revolutions”. Indeed, it could be argued that this provided an even greater source of support than liberalism and democracy ever did. Again we return to the question of whether nationalism can, or should be, co-opted to gain mass support for liberalism amongst the population.

If liberals do choose to try to utilise patriotism they face an issue of authenticity. While liberals can create their own alternative answers to the question about what Russia can or should be, these are unlikely to have the same mobilising potential – or are less likely to be seen as “patriotic” as arguments which exploit traditions of Russian nationalism. In actual fact an ideology such as liberal nationalism has rarely been utilised to gain support anywhere, just because it is unlikely to achieve this goal; it lacks the potential for mobilisation which more romantic forms of nationalism have. Michael Kennedy (1999:342-382) points out in his commentary on Eastern Europe that those who actively try to implement democratic policies combined with civil nationalism, in fact combine this with rhetoric which is primordial or anti-Western just because this type of nationalism is more likely to gain public support. However, this somewhat cynical combination may risk accusations of opportunism.

Russian liberals have completely different approaches to the political process. Kara-Murza's acceptance of some of the values of Russian patriotism means he can perceive Putinism in a positive light. He is also more willing to embrace the promotion of Russian patriotic values as a strategy for liberal parties. Klyamkin views the situation somewhat differently. He is sceptical about statism and also rejects the promotion of patriotism as an effective strategy in Russia.

## **Conclusion**

This study has sought to explain firstly how liberals have reacted to nationalism as a concept, and how they have reacted to its most visible manifestation in Russia, and secondly, how they have sought to create a liberal answer to the “national question”, pushing liberalism forward to become the dominant ideology of the Russian nation. This study argues that in order to fully understand Russian liberalism it is necessary to consider Russian nationalism. The reason for this is that Russia is going through transition, and different nationalist arguments are crucial in defining what Russia can or should be. The attitude of Russian liberals towards nationalism as a concept, and more significantly, towards clearly nationalist arguments in Russia, is important in shaping how Russian liberals have engaged in the broader debate about Russian identity; this is the case because the ideas of nationalists form a reference point, a fundamental basis, for debates about nationality, and the particularistic rejection of liberalism by nationalists is a challenge that liberals must be able to answer.

### **The Understanding of and Response to Nationalism made by Russian Liberals in general and in the Russian Context**

There is little agreement among liberals regarding nationalism as a concept and also about the manifestations of nation which have appeared in the Russian context. Undoubtedly, for most liberals the appearance of nationalism in the Russian context is far more important than evaluating nationalism in theoretical terms or assessing its development in other countries. These clearly nationalist ideas have had a crucial influence on Russian liberals, because many of their ideas about identity and what Russia should be or should not be are made in response to the different types of nationalists present in Russia.

The basic division between the varying attitudes of liberals towards nationalism lies essentially between those who accept it as a potentially positive value in some circumstances, and those who are fundamentally opposed to it. Of the thinkers I have focused upon, Yanov and Klyamkin are clear examples of this latter trend. Although they are anti-nationalists, both of them judge the term “patriotism” to have a potentially positive value - but one that is essentially meaningless in a political sense. Klyamkin asserts that everyone is a patriot no matter what ideology they propagate and Yanov

maintains patriotism is only a private feeling which should not be expressed in the form of political ideology. In this respect, they fall into one of the classes of anti-nationalists formulated by Billig (1995, 16-17), that is, theorists who have a “naturalizing theory of nationalism”. Billig is referring to theorists operating in the West in stable nation-states which do not have fluid identities. In this context it is rather easier to claim that nationalism is a political irrelevance. However, the situation in Russia is markedly different. Clearly, for better or worse, nationalism is a factor and Russia is being shaped by political nationalism. Therefore, Russian anti-nationalists cannot limit themselves solely to “naturalizing theories of nationalism”.

For this reason, Russian anti-nationalist liberals have drawn on several other theories. Firstly, they postulate what Billig calls “Projecting theories of nationalism”. This means they argue that nationalism is something that exists elsewhere; it is an “other”. Yanov asserts both that nationalism emerged mainly in Germany (i.e. especially the Nazi era) and also, in accordance with his scheme which divides Russian history into two distinct processes, he is able to assert that nationalism is something that belongs to the “non-liberal other” which is a completely separate part of Russian history from the pro-reform, liberal tradition. Yanov appears to be employing both “naturalizing theories” and “projecting theories” in his attempt to remove nationalism from exerting any influence in the political discourse. Secondly, Klyamkin and Yanov have both argued that nationalism is employed by elites for their own ends - to control the population and, in Russia, to prevent the kinds of reforms that are needed.

The other thinkers we are considering all adhere to a view of nationalism as potentially positive and also to the idea that the form it could take in Russia would have possibly favourable implications, (though, as we have seen, the forms they believe this should take differ). This constitutes a fundamental divide between anti-nationalists, such as Yanov and Klyamkin, and those thinkers who propound the possibility of some kind of synthesis of liberalism and nationalism. This divide seems essentially unbridgeable.

Arising from this fundamental disagreement, Russian liberals offer differing views about a variety of other questions relating to many individual issues that all stem from or are related to the issue of nationalism in Russia. Specifically, there are disagreements about how to accept particularistic claims made by Russian nationalists.

While all Russian liberals profess to be Westernisers, what this actually means is open to many different interpretations and can be, and is used, to justify completely different paths for Russia. As well as disagreements about what the West represents, liberals are also in disagreement over particularism with conflicting ideas about the extent to which Russia's political and cultural traditions should be taken into account. For anti-nationalists such as Klyamkin and Yanov, Russian particularities which have political implications and are not "Western" should not be allowed to play a role in contemporary Russia (though Yanov does suggest that celebration of Russian culture could be way of blowing off nationalist steam which does not have political force). As a civic nationalist who also believes in the plasticity of national identities, Tishkov does not place great weight upon national particularities, other than basic factors such as shared language and national borders. Yakovenko asserts that national features are still important (including cultural and religious identities that are fixed and need to be taken into account when introducing political ideas into Russia), but Russia can still be transformed. This is a position also adopted by Kara-Murza, though he places an even greater emphasis upon cultural particularities.

The diversity of the reactions of liberals to nationalism, both as a concept and its manifestations in Russia, is a direct result of factors relating both to the way the debate was structured as well as the actual issue of Russian nationalism and how this should be interpreted. I will deal firstly with those factors relating to the debate itself. In chapter 2 I commented upon the difficulty of defining concepts in Russia. This not only hampers the analysis of debates from outside, but it might also lead to confusion amongst those who are actually taking part in the debates themselves. However, a key factor has been the importance of a definition and interpretation of liberalism and what it means to be a liberal. Russian liberals almost always consider concepts first and foremost by their potential impact upon liberalism itself. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was little variety of opinion amongst liberals as to what constituted liberalism; after the collapse, and particularly by the mid-1990's, this changed significantly. The expansion and diversification of "liberalism" since the collapse of the Soviet Union has allowed Russian liberals to interpret nationalism in many different ways, as there is no longer a single and tightly focused ideology amongst liberals. The reinterpretations of what liberalism can and should mean have, as a result of the study of both Western theory and Russian and Western historical traditions and also the attempts to try to reform



liberalism to fit modern Russian perimeters, begun to demonstrate more emphatically liberalism's adaptability and ability to function in many different contexts. The appearance of pragmatic theories of liberalism which attempt to remove its ideological content, and of theories of liberalism which seek to combine liberalism strongly with one ideology or another (such as that adopted by Kara-Murza), has meant in effect that a liberal must automatically embrace one particular opinion or another about nationalism as a direct consequence of his ideology. This change from a single definition to a more diffuse concept of liberalism in Russia is one of the keys to explaining the diversity that has become apparent amongst liberal interpretations of nationalism.

Russian liberals have employed fundamentally different ideological frameworks to evaluate nationalism (both as a concept and its clear manifestations in Russia). The variety of different influences current in contemporary Russia results from the decline of the previous ideological framework which had orthodox Soviets pitted against liberal dissidents. This left a void which was filled by the rehabilitation of Russian pre-Soviet thought and perhaps to a lesser extent ideas from the West. Indeed, the historical situation in which Russia has been placed since the collapse of Communism and the impact of transition has lead to thinkers being influenced by completely separate sources of ideas, all of which have lead to fundamentally disparate approaches to nationalism.

Furthermore, Russian liberalism is in many ways a new ideology, though it does build on pre-revolutionary and dissident traditions, it is essentially an ideology which has had only a few years to develop. This explains why Russian liberalism has quickly diversified and it also explains why the approach of Russian liberals towards nationalism can sometimes seem to lack the nuance of their Western counterparts, who are building upon a long tradition of thought about nationalism in the Western context. This lack of development means that Russian liberals have not yet began to consider the whole range of questions brought forward by the national question – particularly issues relating to citizenship (beyond issues relating to national minorities) and what role nationalism can play in the relationship between the state and the people and supporting democracy.

The fact that Russian liberals have often ignored much of the Western thought on this subject really is because they assert that the key issue for them is how liberalism can gain a stronger position in Russia, and they do not see much of the Western thought about nationalism as being particularly helpful with this question. However, it can be hoped that in the future Russian liberals will be able to develop their ideas about nationalism further and move beyond regarding the national question as being only a discussion of a “civilisational” struggle determining whether Russia can have a national identity with liberalism at its centre.

Some observers have also argued that the variety of positions adhered to by liberals reflects a lack of certainty which is widespread throughout contemporary Russian thought (not just amongst liberals), commenting on how “...the great polyphony of positions and opinions reflects the lack of new conceptual foundations for approaching this issue. The new social and political context requires that a new conceptual framework be created, one that can be used to approach current social and political issues” (Bykova 2004, 37). Thus, the sheer complexity of the situation in which Russia currently finds herself has led to a great variety in Russian thought.

### **The Engagement of Russian Liberals in the National Debate**

This study argues that even those liberals who reject nationalism as a concept or who reject observable nationalist ideas in Russia, are still themselves engaging in a national debate, because they have an agenda about what Russia can or should be.

Russian liberals have begun to develop ideas which seek to answer the challenges posed by the national question with growing intensity from the mid to late 1990’s onwards. They have constructed some potentially useful arguments, including their justifications for terming Russia a “Western Nation” (see chapter 5) and therefore providing a way of linking values such as liberalism to the core of Russian identity. They have constructed arguments which seek to ground liberalism as a “Russian value”, or at least as not completely alien to the Russian context, by deploying historical and sociological arguments and by undermining some of the critiques by those Russian nationalists who advocate a particularistic anti-liberal position.

Despite these successes liberals have not been able to form a unified front and a unified argument. Furthermore, those liberals who advance completely anti-particularistic or anti-nationalistic arguments have not been able to convincingly demonstrate why particularistic or nationalistic ideas should be irrelevant or dismissed completely from the Russian context.

Part of the problem for liberals is the challenge of transition. Transition is both an opportunity and a stumbling block for liberals who wish to engage in the national debate. As Russia is in transition it is currently a country in flux which has widespread variances in levels of modernity (as Akhiezer (2003, 7) puts it: “Russia may be regarded as a simultaneous display of several strata of history”), in the extent to which the population relates to Western or Eastern identities, and in the extent to which they align themselves to individual or to communal identities, etc. This diversity is heightened because, as we have seen, many of the people do not adhere to these positions rigidly, but shift from one to the other - or feel themselves linked to all at the same time in contradiction of each other. Thus, the thinkers we are considering can find in Russia evidence to support whatever they are trying to argue about Russian identity.

Kennedy (2000, 360-361), referring to Eastern European intellectuals, has noted that in order to be convincing, criticisms of nationalists in non-Western countries have to be made from within the nation itself, not from the West. The “hidden” nationalism of Russian liberals goes further than this. This is because it is much easier for nationalists to present liberalism as alien to the Russian tradition than it is in Eastern Europe. But for Russians making liberalism “become national” is much more difficult than simply making it legitimate by arguing for it as a Russian. The impact of particularism and universalism on the Russia debate has meant that even those who directly attack nationalism (including those who do not restrict their attacks solely to Russian nationalism, but oppose nationalism as a concept, as Yanov does) have to accept some form of nationalism in order to refute the ideas of self-proclaimed “patriots” and to make liberalism seem intrinsically “Russian”.

It must be noted that all the thinkers we have considered have referred to Russia as a Western nation and have therefore sought to legitimize liberalism as being grounded in Russian particularities. These Russian particularities are to some extent historical. Yanov and Kara-Murza, especially, refer back into history to emphasise liberal and

Westernising historical models (though as we have seen their outlooks are radically different). Others are less ready to deploy historical arguments so strongly (as we have seen Klyamkin judges the liberal tradition in Russian history to be one of fragility rather than of strength). The problem with this type of “hidden nationalism” when it is employed by avid anti-nationalists such as Yanov is that it is almost consciously hamstrung, because if it were too effective it would come into conflict with the anti-nationalist thrust of his ideology (especially as Yanov insists that even moderate nationalism runs the risk of easily transforming itself into a more aggressive form).

The nationalities debate has been a divisive issue for liberal thinkers. One of the most striking features about it is the way that those who concentrate on civilisational arguments (claiming that Russia is or should become Western) are often reluctant to pay attention to Russia’s internal diversity. This includes both anti-nationalists like Yanov and Klyamkin and also cultural nationalists such as Kara-Murza. The difficulty for them is that if Russia is a Western nation as they maintain, then how can the internal diversity within Russia be explained - especially as this diversity is often not “Western”? For this reason the thinkers who focus on broad civilisational questions generally avoid the issue of Russia’s diversity. As we have seen, the anti-nationalists do not have much to say about Russia itself at all – about what features set it apart (though ironically, as I will comment upon shortly, their analysis does reveal significant elements of particularism). They are not comfortable defining Russia as separate in any way from the West. As the one thinker (Yakovenko) who has focused on both Western and non-Western identity in Russia has shown, there is potential for some sort of split between Western and non-Western parts of Russia if the non-Western parts strongly express their identity – a danger which causes Russian liberals to be reluctant to engage in debate on this issue if they are also promulgating Western civilisational theories.

Russian liberals who are prepared to discuss this question more openly are those who are less concerned with Russia’s civilisational identity. It seems they are more able to acknowledge the existence of Russia’s internal diversity. Tishkov’s call for Russia to have a shared civil identity is the way that liberals normally answer this question, but, as we have seen, the degree with which they argue for the implementation of this type of policy varies. Some of them think that it is unrealistic to expect minorities to accept Russian identity to the extent that Tishkov believes they can. Furthermore, there has

been some opposition to this type of civil nationalism from intellectuals from different minorities within the Russian Federation, who are generally more comfortable with ethnic or strongly cultural nationalisms and sometimes appropriate liberal theories to support their arguments.

Part of the diversity of liberal opinion, therefore, relates to the diversity of the Russian situation itself. Liberals will focus on one particular aspect of this, but if they try to make this aspect all-encompassing for the whole of Russia contradictions will immediately arise. This forecasts a pessimistic prospect. We can therefore predict, without doubt, that there will not be a unified approach to the national question made by Russian liberals in the near future. Partially for this reason it also seems that liberals will probably remain a marginal voice in this debate. Loosing this debate does have real implications for liberalism in Russia, as they have been unable to tie liberalism to post-Soviet Russian identity in a way which would insulate it against particularistic attacks from “patriots” and also statist (when they find political liberalism inconvenient for pragmatic reasons).

### **Employing Overt Nationalism to Garner Support**

Russian liberals face a problem resulting from their marginalisation and have not been able to “win” in the battle to establish their ideology at the core of the post-Soviet Russian nation. While their engagement in this struggle has looked to Russian nationalistic ideologies as a point of reference, overtly nationalistic ideologies might themselves be a source of support and legitimacy for liberalism.

With the exception of Tishkov and, to a lesser extent, Yakovenko, Russian liberals have not concentrated on the questions which animate liberals who are interested in nationalism in the West. For example, as was shown in chapter 6, Russian liberals are less concerned about the issue of how nationalism can consolidate support for the state and unite citizens. Liberals who do consider this question either worry about how national minorities can be included into a cohesive civil national structure (see Tishkov) or have begun to think about the role a strong state could play in supporting liberalism. While some liberals have begun to move away from always emphasising authoritarianism only with reference to the state, they do, of course, continue to criticise its enduring manifestation in Russia. For most Russian liberals their focus upon nationalism is more

often made with short term gains in mind because of the weakness of liberalism. This approach may sometimes be mirrored in the way liberals deal with and respond to other questions.

The strategic issue of how to increase support for liberalism is one on which Russian liberals expend most thought. Some Russian liberals have sought to broaden the appeal of their ideology, by making it more acceptable to those who exert political power and also to the population. What Shlapentokh (2004, 152) calls the “tradition of the Russian liberal contempt for the masses” could suggest that Russian liberals do not see public support as being important. However, if Russian liberals are democrats, as they claim to be, they cannot avoid the necessity of gaining the support of the masses in order to achieve legitimacy. However, an element of disillusion has crept in and those liberals who are less inclined to react positively towards Russian manifestations of nationalism are also less inclined to react positively towards “the people”; Klyamkin, in particular, after the 2003 elections combines anti-nationalism with an attitude of scepticism about the likelihood of the Russian people supporting liberal reforms (in contradiction of his previously held belief that the Russian people were as supportive of liberalism as those of the West).

I have already commented that all of the ideologies of Russian liberals face problems resulting from the diversity of the national question in Russia. This will mean that a segment of the population will find nothing in the proposed ideology they can support. This is the case, for example, with Tishkov’s civil nationalism, which, though often perceived as “liberal” in political theory, raises the possibility of significant illiberal implications as to how tolerant one can be towards national minorities, and these national minorities have been and may continue to be a critical source of opposition. This is because civil nationalism strives to enforce a form of identity which is not based upon ethnicity or culture; therefore, there can be unwelcome pressure placed on cultural and ethnic minorities to adopt the same norms as the majority. On the other hand, Yakovenko’s proposal of reducing the size of the state would, of course, be utterly unacceptable with the Russian elite and almost all of the population who define themselves as being Russian.

With the 2003 election showing significant support for all parties whose manifestos included policies supporting some form of patriotism ( particularly the government's party United Russia, *Rodina*, and the Communist Party), some liberals have sought to cull some of this support and neutralise its usefulness for others by demonstrating that they too are patriots. However, as has become clear, this requires a fundamental change in the way nationalism is usually expressed and perceived in Russia. Liberals must articulate their position effectively in order to avoid allegations that they are cynically adopting a patriotic ideology simply to win votes. Kara-Murza's historical arguments and his emphasis on existing Russian liberal-patriotic arguments will be more effective in the public sphere than ideas which are purely constructivist and are imported from the West.

It is sometimes claimed that playing the nationalist card to garner public support is the "easy option". In fact, this is not necessarily so: it requires some skill, particularly for liberals, because combining concepts of liberalism and patriotism can be confusing for the public; and whoever appeals to patriotism for political purposes has to do so in a way that is convincing and does not seem contrived. Kara-Murza has been attacked in this respect, particularly because he also emphasises the importance of pragmatism.

However, in general, I feel that Kara-Murza's approach is the most likely to gain support in Russia. Not only is it the most likely to attract public support, but it is also close to the pragmatic statist ideology of the elite in Russia. Furthermore, Kara-Murza is pragmatic enough to understand that liberals have to compromise; they are too weak to do anything other than work with non-liberals.

There are two main aspects which must be considered when judging how successful a synthesis of liberalism and any other ideology is. Firstly, there is the nature of the synthesis itself. As I discussed in the introduction of this study, the more grounded this synthesis is the more successful it will be. The aim must be to move away from a merely temporary, pragmatic coalition, towards a synthesis which has ideological depth and therefore is more durable and seems less contrived. Kara-Murza has sought to achieve this by emphasizing arguments derived from Russian intellectual history.

Secondly, the synthesis must broaden liberalism in a way that makes it more attuned to the needs of the context. This broadening of liberalism can be done partially to make it

seem more authentic by including ideas and traditions which are seen as being specific to a given context. It can also broaden it by including elements which address the interests of the population, with which liberals have not necessarily previously been concerned. As I showed in the introduction and also in chapter 2, Russian liberalism in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union had quite a narrow focus. Broadening it improves the perception “normal people” have of liberalism and begins to turn it into an ideology which is relevant to the day to day problems which people face. Kara-Murza has tried to do this with his focus on a liberal-conservative synthesis as being a call for the preservation of order in Russia – both against abuse of power from above and below. This is something which may resonate with ordinary Russians.

Kara-Murza’s emphasis on conservatism lays out a genuine path for combining much of the energy of acceptable forms of Russian patriotism with liberalism – to eventually form a centre right wing national-liberal movement in Russian politics. This could be more than a simple pragmatic union, but crucially one which has real ideological depth. However, liberal-conservatism will never be an ideology which would unite the liberal movement as a whole, as we have seen many liberals reject ideologies which emphasise particularities. Indeed, Kara-Murza’s conservatism shows the problems liberals face when they broaden their ideology, at some point liberals will have to stop being only liberals and become liberal-conservatives, liberal-social democrats etc. However, as soon as they begin to make this move the liberal movement becomes more divided and weakened than it already is, as many liberals would reject conservatism and many others would reject social democracy. Liberals face a dilemma about when and how they can make this move.

The problem for liberals such as Klyamkin and Yanov is that they are in danger of depending on a relatively narrow source of legitimacy; they rely only upon the West for their example, on the history of liberalism in Russia (in the case of Yanov) and on their own moral views. The dilemma for them is how they can expect others to share their views if they do not mould their ideas in such a way as to appeal to both the Russian political mainstream and the majority of the population, and if they do not draw support from other sources of legitimacy such as Russian traditions, and the mobilizing force of nationalism as methods of buttressing their position. They also seem to be too ambitious - holding to what seems to be an unlikely vision as the only way forward for Russia.



An important reason for liberals to try to utilize overt nationalism for legitimacy is in order to divert the charge that they are not acting in the interests of Russia and that they are attempting to impose a system that is not Russian. This is why, as we have seen, all liberals – including most of the anti-nationalists – make the claim that liberalism is a key part of Russian history and that Russia itself is in its nature a Western country. The very fact that they almost try to link Westernism and liberalism with “Russianness” demonstrates that they realise that nationalism of this type is an important source of legitimacy which cannot be ignored, especially by those who are trying to come to terms with marginalisation.

### **The Dangers of Combining Liberalism with Overt Nationalism**

However, as I explained in the introduction to this study, there are problems caused by the association of liberalism with other, non-liberal ideologies. Kara-Murza faces the usual criticism that is often aimed at ideologies which purposely combine nationalism and liberalism. The meaning of these concepts, critics aver, is diluted. This criticism could possibly be aimed at Kara-Murza with some justification. Kara-Murza emphasises his pragmatism and underscores his attempt to avoid being heavily constrained by ideological terms that have no link with reality. The danger of this is that it leaves him too close to the intentionally inclusive and meaningless ideologies that have been associated with Russian power since the second part of the Yeltsin era. If the liberalism and Westernism in Kara-Murza’s outlook are too heavily diluted, his view could become too close to that of the Putin government, which has not shown itself to be completely in favour of Westernism and liberalism.

One of the difficulties faced in trying to exploit the type of patriotism most clearly articulated in Russia, is that it is often inherently opposed to the vision that liberals like Kara-Murza have for Russia. This factor, combined with his Westernism, means that his ideology either has to become toned down to fit in with Putin’s centrism, or run the risk of being irrelevant. He explains the liberal failure in the December 2003 elections thus: “In Russia it was not possible to create an effective Right-wing liberal political force combining principles of freedom and patriotism” (2004b). It could be concluded from this remark that already ingrained expressions of patriotism in Russia have been identified too closely with non-liberalism to make it possible for liberals to co-opt patriotism for themselves. Thus, for Kara-Murza, one of the main problems seems to

have been that European traditions of conservatism, which combine the acceptance of liberalism and capitalism, blended with patriotism and traditional values which sometimes appear in the West, have not taken root in Russia.

Nationalism remains a volatile force of which Russian liberals are rightly suspicious. While Canovan (1996, 108) argues persuasively that liberal democracies need national myths to consolidate them and that liberalism is supported by nationalism in the West, she is careful to note that this came at a price:

Writing of Englishness in the 1940s, Orwell liked to think that for all their unavoidable involvement in war, the English were a gentle, unmilitaristic nation, whose patriotic poetry tended to celebrate unsuccessful military actions like the charge of the Light Brigade. But, Englishness by then had plenty of time to mellow with age. The patriotism of the eighteenth century or earlier was quite as strident as that of younger nations in more recent times. Nationalism with all its faults (the most conspicuous being bellicosity and the mobilization of the in-group against the out-group) seems to be a necessary stage in the evolution of nationhood.

The threat of war and suffering that arises in any attempt to strengthen nationalism in Russia is a fear which animates Yanov, though his warnings about the danger are often expressed in absurdly melodramatic tones. Those thinkers such as Yakovenko who call for Russia to copy the history of Western nations sometimes forget how much bloodshed has been involved. Yakovenko tries to combat the problems that might be caused by this fear by suggesting that divides between “civilisational” groups in Russia mean that Russia might need to become smaller than it is now. But as I have noted, it is highly questionable whether any change so dramatic would be a peaceful process whatever the circumstance, and we do have fairly recent examples of the process of empire becoming nation causing considerable bloodshed - particularly when the Turkish nation emerged from the old Ottoman Empire. For this reason I believe that those thinkers who avoid calling for Russia to be either a nation or an empire, but instead suggest it can be a combination of the two, have adopted an approach which matches more closely the realities of the situation in which Russian finds herself. Kara-Murza, in particular, recognizes this.

The debate in Russia over national identity and what Russia comprises is often dominated by anti-liberal nationalists. This fact means that the strengthening of nationalism in Russia is likely to have illiberal consequences and anti-nationalists such as Klyamkin and Yanov have warned about this. Probably, the success of particularistic nationalist rhetoric in recent Russian history has made any reformation of the traditions of Russian patriotic discourse impossible, at least in the short term. The success of parties such as *Rodina* and Zhirinovsky's LDP gave legitimacy to these kinds of ideas and these ideas threaten to dominate the debate over Russian identity. Thus, while the promotion of overt nationalism is a strategy which can be taken on board by Russian liberals, it is one that should be adopted with caution.

### **A Liberal Future for Russia?**

The dilemma for liberals can thus be seen to be multi-faceted. Firstly, liberals suffer from a lack of cohesion and a failure to form a united front in order to strengthen their impact. Secondly, while trying to ally Russian liberalism with traditions of Russian nationalism might have some strategic benefits in making liberalism seem more Russian, and also making it more acceptable to the elite and the population, there are ideological problems in making ideas which are (at least in the Russian context) often opposed to each other work together, without liberalism being overwhelmed as a lesser partner in the synthesis of liberalism and patriotism.

The final long-term goal liberals wish to achieve is for the liberal movement to completely fragment and disappear, but only after liberalism has gained hegemony; with liberals replaced by liberal social democrats and conservatives as liberalism becomes dominant in the mainstream. While there are signs of liberalism having at least some impact on those outside the liberal movement, this goal is still a long way from being achieved.

The overriding impression is that liberals are left in limbo; the debate is stagnant due both to the contradictions that divide the liberal movement about how to answer the national question, and to the possibility that both promotion and rejection of overtly nationalist ideas could lead to undesirable consequences. The debate will probably remain deadlocked until factors from outside the liberal movement change the parameters within which the discussions take place and force liberals to adjust in some

way, or a new generation of liberal reformers emerge with different approaches (perhaps a completely new ideology of Russian liberalism) who are able to unite the diverse liberal movement behind them and give it a single voice so it can make a greater impact.

Like all aspects of ideology in contemporary Russia, what happens regarding the concepts of liberalism and nationalism will depend upon the reality within Russia. Probably one of the main features of the Putin era is that ideology is following changes in official policy rather than causing them to happen. Therefore, predicting the course the Western-orientated liberal ideology in Russia will take is difficult, as the international and domestic factors which have a critical influence upon it are also difficult to predict.

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