

Russian Independent Institute  
of Social and Nationalities Problems

**Mass consciousness of the Russians  
during the period of social transformation:  
reality versus myths**

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**FOREWORD**

**Relevance of the problem under study.** How can one define the type of society that has emerged in Russia after ten years of "perestroika" and the subsequent market-oriented reforms? There is a considerable divergence of views on the matter among political scientists, historians and sociologists alike.

The most straightforward approach would be to describe today's Russian society as one undergoing a transition or transformation short of trying to give an in-depth definition of the end points of that transition.

The mass consciousness of a transitional society, on the one hand, reflects the contradictions and discontinuities of the social practice, and on the other, amplifies them. An unwillingness to carry on the old way is combined with a growing disaffection with the new ideals which have proved for many in real terms to be either unattainable or false. Nostalgia for the giant nation state cohabits with various manifestations of xenophobia and isolationism. As the public painfully grew used to the freedom of private enterprise they tend to retain a naïve unwillingness to assume the responsibility for the results of their own economic and financial decisions. A desire to defend the newly-acquired privacy from unwelcome intervention and protect it from the wakeful eye of the state is combined with a longing for the "strong hand".

The political apathy of the public suddenly gave way to an unprecedented outburst of civic activity during the recent elections to the Duma. The election results came to reflect the profound differences between the sociopolitical sentiments prevalent in the center of the country and in many regions of Russia and among people of different generations.

The above is a very brief outline of the contradictions that baffle many researchers today. A greater part of the intellectual elite has proved unable to explain the stark discrepancy between the proclaimed objectives and the intermediate results of the reforms, or propose acceptable ways of dealing with the systemic crisis. Those features of the Russian mass mentality which supposedly make it impervious to democratic values and the non-totalitarian forms of social advancement are being increasingly frequently cited as the principal stumbling block. But is that really so? Has this interpretation more to do with the real or mythical?

**Object and goals of the study.** The object of the analysis undertaken is exactly to reveal the principal qualitative features of the contemporary state of the mass consciousness of the Russian public. Understandably, the seeds of authoritarianism, let alone totalitarianism, can grow only if appropriate massive change in the mental set-up of the public has taken place. We proceeded from the premise that the subject of the analysis should be those features and manifestations of the mass

consciousness which are not subject to swift change, but rather tend to derive their stability from the basic interests and existential orientations of the Russians.

It would appear to be appropriate to define, albeit briefly, what do we mean by "authoritarianism" and "totalitarianism" in this report. Short of delving into the finer details of the discussions going on in philosophical, sociological or political analytical literature we will proceed from the following definitions appropriate to the purposes of the present study. Any regime capable of staying in power without regularly seeking the approval of the majority of the people will be construed as an authoritarian regime. We will use Mussolini's definition of totalitarianism: "Nothing against the State, nothing without the State, nothing outside the State".

The similarity of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes is that they tolerate no political opposition and the difference between them is that authoritarianism at least does not attempt to stymie the development of society in areas unrelated to politics, nor does it attempt to dominate the entire socioeconomic life of society or impose its tenets upon culture and the arts or intellectual pursuits in general. Authoritarianism either has no state ideology or reduces it to a set of perfunctory rites.

Here are the basic questions that this study sought to answer: does the historical tradition of Russia influence the choice of the type of political leader by the Russian people? What is prevalent in the current mindset of the Russian people, democratic values or a longing for the rule of the iron rod? Are there any ethnic, economic, psychological or ideological pre-requisites in Russian society today for the emergence of a totalitarian or authoritarian regime? The study also investigated the readiness of the society at large and its various groups to accept possible restrictions of rights and liberties in exchange for a higher standard of living and enforcement of law and order. It also attempted to find out whether the consciousness of the Russians is intrinsically insular or open to the outside world.

**Method and sample of the study.** The analytical report relies on the results of a national sociological study titled "What kind of society will we live in?" conducted by the Russian Independent Institute of Social and Nationalities Problems in September and October 1995. That study was directed by a member of the International Academy of Computer Science and the Academy of Political Science M. K. Gorshkkov.

A total of 2017 people above the age of 18 were polled in 14 regions of the Russian Federation. They represented the following social and occupational groups:

- industrial and construction workers;
- engineers and technicians;
- salespersons, employees of the services and transport industries;
- intellectuals;

- employees of state and private enterprises and offices;
- army and Ministry of the Interior servicemen;
- small and medium-size business employees;
- retirees;
- college students;
- rural dwellers;
- unemployed.
- housewives.

The poll was conducted by interview in a two-stage sample. At the first stage 14 typical administrative regions or republics were selected in the economic zones of the country as defined by the Central Board of Statistics of the Russian Federation. The selection included the Kaliningrad region, the Komi Republic, the Nizhni Novgorod region, the Vladimir region, the Tver region, the city of Moscow, the Voronezh region, the republic of Tatarstan, the Stavropol region, the Republic of Northern Osetia, the Sverdlovsk region, the Kemerovo region, the Irkutsk region, and the Maritime territory.

At the second stage the interviews were conducted in a restricted sample proportionately to the sex and age constituency, the degree of urbanisation, and the social and occupational constituency as a whole for the population of Russia (according to the data of the Central Board of Statistics).

That is not our first attempt at investigating the state of the mass consciousness of the Russian society. Four years ago the Russian Independent Institute of Social and Nationalities Problems started an on-going project Sociological Monitoring of Sociopolitical Attitudes of the Russians. As part of that project it has conducted quarterly opinion polls in a nation-wide sample. The results of these polls have made it possible to reveal the specific features of the state of the mass consciousness in a specific situation as well as the dynamics and the tendency of the changes taking place. The material obtained as part of the above project has helped us better define the concept of the present study and analytical report and added weight to the evaluations and conclusions made.

***The analytical report has been written by a research team of the Russian Independent Institute of Social and Nationalities Problems:***

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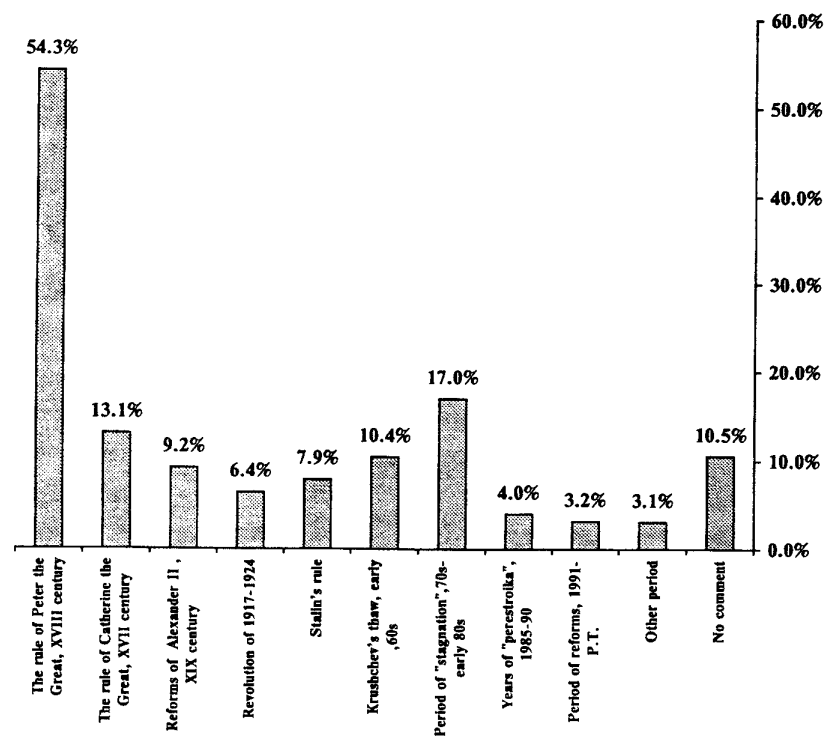
## I. HISTORICAL TRADITION IN TODAY'S RUSSIA: DO RUSSIANS WANT ANOTHER PATERNALISTIC LEADER?

A school of thought has of late been gaining currency in the West and in Russia according to which Russia is inherently predisposed to despotism which is rooted above all in its historic tradition. Does this school of thought adequately reflect the perception of the historical past by the Russians themselves?

Let us consider the results of this study given in Chart 1 to find out.

*Chart 1*

**Periods of Russian history that arouse greatest pride among the Russians**



On the whole the distribution of admirers of various historic periods among the Russians follows roughly the same trend as the distribution of their political affections: the same fragmenta-

tion and low level of the concentration of emotional identification can be observed. However, there is one period on the historical scale which clearly stands out; it is the rule of Peter the Great. That period claims the greatest number of respondents taking pride in it (54.3%) over and above the response evoked by any other historical period. Judging by the response that is the sole period of Russian history which arouses a sense of emotional identification on the part of all Russians.

Admiration for Peter the Great and his endeavours is characteristic of all age groups. Only the most senior group (over 60) has displayed a notably lower response. In that group one can see a sharp growth of the admirers of the Soviet period, the supporters of Socialism and the Socialist revolution.

The attitude toward the period of Peter the Great varies slightly depending on the occupation of the respondents. The highest positive response to it is from humanitarian and technical professionals (64% and 65%, respectively), civil servants (66.2%), the military (61%), and entrepreneurs (57%). The response of the students and industrial workers is lower and closer to the average (49.3% and 51.7%, respectively). Why do the Russians view the reign of Peter the Great with so much affection?

In our opinion here we are dealing with a "resonance" phenomenon. A comparison of the data obtained with the results of other studies leads one to believe that the myth associated with Peter the Great is so common due to the subconscious imposition of an idealized perception of the personality of Peter the Great on the archetype of power that has evolved in the Russian consciousness. Of all Russian historic personalities Peter the Great corresponds to the greatest extent to the idea of power favoured by the Russians.

Those who wield power may act harshly, but they will represent the "right kind of power" only if they manage to offer the "nation-family" a kind of common cause. Peter the Great personifies that kind of power since he carried out a historic project that opened entirely new frontiers before Russia and also since he is perceived as one involved in that project on an equal footing with others. In a common cause realized by the people and those who govern them the Russian tradition assigns the highest marks not only to the pragmatic results, such as a better standard of living, but also to factors that relate to the system of perceived values.

An impartial analysis of the endeavours of Peter the Great shows that as he proceeded with his project to bring sciences, the arts and manufacturing to Russia he ruined the country's economy. That fact, well-familiar to professional historians, has failed to register in the public mind. The net result of the "rule of glory" of Peter the Great as perceived by the public mind is that he managed to restore Russia to a sense of national dignity after his Northern campaigns and introduced Russia to the community of European states as an equal and influential member.

Are the paradigms derived from historical myths related to the real political behaviour of the Russians?

The events of recent years, observations of public sentiments and the results of the recent elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation indicate that there is indeed a positive relationship here. Historical myths are at work in real politics. The semantic matrix of the myth about Peter the Great acts here as a basis for a new mythology. One may assert that the Russians experience a profound need for the emergence of a new paternalistic reformer capable of bringing the nation together. The current state of the Russian public consciousness is attuned to this icon.

**The attitude toward the myth associated with Stalin is highly significant (Table 1).**

*Table 1*

**How Russians assess the activities of 20<sup>th</sup> century politicians**  
(five point scale)

	Marks						Total
	5	4	3	2	1	No comment	
1. Nicholas II	8.5	13.6	20.0	10.1	9.6	38.2	100
2. Lenin	19.3	20.2	18.2	11.8	14.5	16.0	100
3. Stalin	10.7	21.1	19.3	14.3	20.9	13.5	100
4. Khrushchev	9.6	25.2	33.9	14.8	9.0	7.5	100
5. Brezhnev	5.8	16.3	29.8	20.3	17.9	9.9	100
6. Andropov	16.9	29.6	21.8	9.2	7.4	15.1	100
7. Gorbachev	4.2	15.0	30.2	19.6	22.9	8.1	100
8. Yeltsin	1.8	9.0	23.8	24.1	31.5	9.8	100

The total positive marks given by the respondents to the domestic politicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century indicate that Stalin lags behind not only Lenin, but also Khrushchev and Andropov. His negative rating totals roughly the bad marks given Brezhnev. Stalin's rating notably differs on the positive side only from the ratings of Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

According to other data obtained as part of our study nearly half of the polled (48.6%) believe that there are more similarities than differences between the regimes of Stalin and Hitler. In other words today's attitudes toward Stalin in Russia are highly critical.

But nevertheless, 46% percent of the respondents support the view that Russia today needs a new Stalin. How can this be explained?

The indications are that the response does not indicate a longing a literal reproduction of Stalin's regime. The figures reflect a desire of the people to see a resolution of the problem of rampant crime.

**Russians on the notion of nationality**  
(response total exceeds 100%)

1. Nationality is a natural or God-given attribute and it may not be changed	48.6
2. Owing to their sense of ethnic identity people retain memories of their ancestors, their Fatherland and its history	48.2
3. Everyone should be proud of his or her nationality	41.2
4. Nationality is that which brings people together and enables them to attain shared goals	16.4
5. The notion of nationality is becoming obsolete	11.8
6. Everyone has a right to choose his or her nationality	9.7
7. Nationality is that which disunites people and sets them against each other	6.3

As one can see not a very large number of respondents are acutely aware of their ethnic identity. Therefore the dramatic appeal to nationalistic ideology in the programs of some political parties and movements of the radical fringe does not reach the broader strata of the mass consciousness. That is confirmed indirectly by the fact that a notable number of the respondents tend to subscribe to the view that the "notion of nationality has become obsolete" (12.6%). Acceptance of that view peaks in the 27-30 age group at 17.2% against the average of 11.8% for the whole sample. The index reaches 16% in the group of respondents with a higher education and 20% in the group of state office employees and professional technocrats. In other words, one in five respondents in some potentially influential groups support the idea that nationality is not of paramount importance. How do the Russians perceive other ethnic groups?

It transpired that 81.3% subscribe to the view that there can be "good" or "bad" ethnic groups. A mere 7.7% subscribe to an opposing view. The index of ethnic intolerance varies significantly between male (11%) and female (4.6%) respondents. This indicates that the masculine mind tends to be more nationalistic in Russia and there is no linear dependence upon age or education in that case. That index among the military peaks at twice the average and reaches a minimum among intellectuals. Judging by that index the most ethnically tolerant are Nizni Novgorod and Irkutsk (2% and 2.5%, respectively) and the least ethnically tolerant are Tver and Vladikavkaz (14.9% and 12.8%, respectively).

Our study also probed into the attitudes of the Russians toward the collapse of the USSR and the idea of the restoration of a unitary state (Tables 3 and 4).

The indications are that the overall critical attitude toward the consequences of the collapse of the USSR is very much still there. Many people are still hoping that the USSR will be restored. Only a quarter of the respondents believe that "Russia must remain an independent state" and that it must not become associated with anyone.

The people are viewing the current situation as an emergency and are convinced that it warrants resolute and firm action. In that sense Stalin is a personified metaphor for the latter. That is why the second coming of Stalin is awaited above all by respondents in the above 50 age group. Younger respondents do not associate Stalin directly with the "rule of law and order". The idea of the second coming of Stalin evokes a notable response also from the occupational groups of farmers, workers, the military and retirees.

There are considerable regional differences ranging from 15% to 35% in the attitudes toward the "strongmen" of the Soviet period. The Northern Caucasus and the regions where the tradition of worker collectivism is strong (Kuzbass mining region) evokes the greatest pro-Stalinist response. However, here too, more respondents support Andropov rather than the "great leader and teacher". For instance, in Vladikavkaz 64.1% of the respondents gave the highest marks to Stalin compared to 69.3% who favoured Andropov. In that sample Andropov got twice as many excellent marks as did Stalin. The situation is different in Moscow where Andropov's negative rating reaches a maximum. The overall response indicates, however, that the respondents clearly preferred Andropov because they associate with him a desire of the state to enforce law and order in the country.

## II. ETHNIC AND ETHNOCENTRIC ATTITUDES IN THE MASS CONSCIOUSNESS: IS GREAT RUSSIAN CHAUVINISM IMMINENT?

Historical memory and ethnic identification dominate the type and structure of mass consciousness. An important goal of the present study was to find out whether the notion of the great power is combined with the notion of the ethnic exclusiveness of the Russians in the minds of the Russian people. The respondents were asked to choose one or several proposed judgements each presenting a different interpretation of the notion of nationality (Table 2).

The sense of ethnic identity is registered largely through the following channels in the Russian mind today: the sacral (48.6%), the ethnic-historical (48.2%) and the patriotic (41.2%). A combination of the sacral and ethnic-historical perceptions of the nation appears to be the most characteristic for the Russians at present. The patriotic component of the national self-awareness and the extent to which it is common were probed with the help of a question about national pride. It transpired that only 27.4% of the respondents "frequently" experience a "feeling of pride for their nation" and 47.5% percent experience that feeling "once in a while".

Table 3

## The attitude of the Russians toward the collapse of the USSR

1. It spelt disaster for many people living in former Soviet Republics	44.0
2. There is a good and bad side to it	30.2
3. It was a global catastrophe	14.1
4. It paved the way to the rebirth of Russia and other former Soviet Republics	5.4
5. It was a positive event of global significance	3.2
6. No comment	3.1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4

## Attitude of the Russians toward the restoration of a new unitary state instead of USSR

1. Russia must remain an independent unaffiliated state	23.5
2. An integral Slavic state of Russia, Ukraine and Belorus must be created	33.2
3. The USSR must be recreated as a unitary state within its previous borders	23.1
4. No comment	20.2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>

Nevertheless, the data gathered indicate that a trend toward reconciliation with the changes that have taken place is emerging in the mass consciousness of the Russians. This is indicated among other things by the fact that 53.1% percent of the polled feel that they are citizens of Russia and only 15.5% feel that they are citizens of the USSR. The number of those who are not certain on that score has diminished notably.

The views on that matter held by respondents belonging to different confessions vary. Muslims tend to be more negative in their attitudes toward the collapse of the USSR (70.0%) than Orthodox Christians (59.2%). There are twice as many Muslims (26.7%) as Christians (13.1%) who believe that the collapse of the USSR was a global catastrophe. 22.7% Christians and 26.7% Muslims believe that the Russia should remain an independent state and that it must not become associated with anyone. The idea of a unitary Slavic state is supported by 36.3% of Christians and a mere 10% of Muslims. However, the idea of the restoration of the USSR within its borders is supported by 40% of Muslims and 23.9% of Christians.

Against that background the response to questions about the role of the Russians is significant (Table 5).

Table 5

## Russians on the role of the Russian ethnos in the state

1. Russia is a common house for many ethnic groups which must have equal rights	73.6
2. Russia is a multiethnic country, but the Russians forming majority are entitled to more rights since they are responsible for the fate of the country as a whole	13.1
3. Russia must become a state of the ethnic Russians	8.1
4. No comment	5.2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>

This suggests that ethnocentrism in Russia in general and among the ethnic Russians in particular is no more widespread than in other European nations. There is no clear "image of the enemy" focused on a particular ethnic group in the national consciousness of the Russians. Therefore attempts undertaken by some researchers to draw an analogy between post-Soviet Russia and Germany during the Weimar Republic are inconsistent. The extremist and revenge-seeking sentiments over the question of nationalities do not enjoy mass support.

## III. SYSTEM OF VALUES IN RUSSIA: IS OUR MENTALITY CHANGING?

As part of the present we also attempted to find out whether value-related attitudes of the Russians are consistent with the principles of authoritarianism and establish the key determinants of the psychological and emotional condition of the population. Table 6 illustrates the hierarchies of the systems of values of the Russians in comparison with our studies undertaken in 1993, 1994, and 1995.

The Table illustrates the stability of the basic values of the Russians. Over the past three decades their hierarchy has practically remained the same. The principal values are associated with comfort inside and in the family and with intellectually rewarding work. Power, recognition and success are outside the immediate system of values.

Material values are relatively not very significant; 35.4% responded that the most important thing about work is pay.

At any rate the percentage of those supporting that particular value is below what one may expect considering the pressing material problems which have been experienced by the Russians in recent years.

Table 6

Hierarchy of basic values of the population of Russia  
(response total exceeds 100%)

Values	% of supporting		
	1993	1994	1995
1. I must strive to have a clear conscience and harmony inside	84.7	74.6	93.4
2. I value most good relations with family and friends	81.4	70.8	90.7
3 I can dedicate a major part of my life only to work that rewards intellectually	54.8	51.0	62.7
4. I want to be distinguished rather than live like everybody else	50.6	47.8	52.7
5. One must live in a country that one likes best	54.7	45.7	52.5
6. There is only one native land and one must not leave it	41.1	43.2	46.2
7. It is better to live like everybody else than to stand out among others	43.3	39.8	44.3
8. Pay is the most important thing about work	41.2	36.4	35.4
9. Public acclaim and success are the most important values	14.9	17.8	8.1
10. One must strive for power to control others	11.9	15.1	5.9

Let us compare the data with the age, social, and occupational attributes of the respondents, their educational standards and incomes.

The distribution of the values across the age groups is the most significant one (Table 7). The Table shows data for only three of the 7 age groups studied. They were selected because the responses of the 22-26 age group and over 60 age group form two extremes and the 41-50 age group forms a watershed for the observed trends.

Let us consider the main trends suggested by these data. The following values change with age:

1. The value of one's own world inside grows while the value of power as a means to control others declines to zero;
2. The content of work grows in value while the significance of pay declines,
3. Support for a "closed society" grows. The negative attitude toward emigration triples in value and the disapproval of those wishing to leave the country grows accordingly;
4. The individualistic orientation is replaced by a directly opposite one and a conformist attitude ("live like everybody else") is gradually becoming a dominant one.

Table 7

Hierarchy of basic values in age groups  
(total response exceeds 100%)

Values	Entire sample	22-26 group	41-50 group	Over 60 group
1. Clear consciences and harmony inside	93.4%	89.2%	94.4%	98.9%
2. Good relations with family and friends	90.7%	89.8%	93.1%	91.8%
3. Intellectually rewarding work	62.7%	60.2%	65.4%	71.2%
4. Bright individuality	52.7%	63.1%	52.6%	21.2%
5. One must live in a country one likes	52.5%	65.9%	53.6%	20.1%
6. There is only one native land and one should not leave it	46.2%	31.8%	44.8%	78.8%
7. Live like everybody else	44.3%	38.1%	45.1%	71.2%
8. Pay is the most important thing about work	35.4%	38.1%	33.0%	25.5%
9. Public acclaim and success	8.1%	9.1%	5.9%	6.5%
10. Access to power	5.9%	9.1%	4.6%	0.0%

The influence of social and occupational parameters is ambiguous compared to those of age. Let us first of all single out two groups with specific value orientations running counter to the traditional characteristics of Russian mentality. Those are the groups of college students and entrepreneurs. In these groups the value of a clear conscience and harmony inside is lower (80.6% and 87.9%, respectively versus the average of 93.4 for the sample) as is the value of relations with the family and friends (79.6% and 81.8% versus 90.7% for the sample). However, they attach a higher value to success and public acclaim (17.2% and 16.7%, respectively versus 8.1% for the sample) and power as a means of influencing others (19.4% and 12.2% versus 5.9% for the sample).

Besides, the students and entrepreneurs form the most individualistic part of society. A total of 81.8% of students believe that it is better to be a bright individuality than live like everybody else compared to 75.3% among the entrepreneurs. In the retiree group that index amounts to 30.3% and in the industrial worker group it is 39.9%.

The following trends can be observed in other groups. Industrial workers attach far higher value to pay than the content of work. Considering the nature of their work that is not surprising. Significantly, in that group 48.9% preferred high pay to intellectually rewarding work and the numbers of those who value pay and the content of work are equal. Conformist attitudes are strong in that group: 58.9% of the polled workers said that one must live like everybody else.



Members of the professional groups polled attach high value to the personal word, a clear conscience and good relations with the family and friends. Of all the groups polled they attach the highest value to the content of the work they do.

State office employees characteristically attach great significance to the family and tend to support the idea that one must live in a country that one likes best (63.5%).

Professionals are characterized above all by the significance they attach to the content of work and individualistic attitudes.

The retirees attach very little value to power (0.4%) and high significance to a clear conscience (98.7%). The view that one has only one native land that one must not leave it is current among them (70.2%). Conformist attitudes are widespread with 71.2% believing that one must live like everybody else.

Conformist attitudes are also widespread among rural dwellers whose most characteristic attitude is that one has only one native land that one must not leave it.

The military and law enforcement servicemen as well as salespersons and the employees of the services industry came up with a response characterized by average parameters.

There is a distinct link between the educational standard and the systems of values of the Russians. Those without a higher education attach far less value than their educated compatriots to the content of work (52.7% and 74.1%, respectively) and more value to pay (45.1% and 24.5%, respectively). Individualistic attitudes are far more common among those with a college education (38.8% among those without a college education and 65.9% among the educated part of the population).

The level of per capita income is practically unrelated to the value-related attitudes of the Russians. However, the wealthiest section of the polled (10%) displayed a specific response. That group attached higher values to power (14% versus 5.9% for the entire sample), high earnings (43.3% versus 35.4% for the entire sample). Among those whose standard of living has grown over the past three years 70% displayed individualistic attitudes compared to 47.8% among those whose standard of living has declined. On the whole, the differences between the value-related attitudes of the wealthy Russians and others are not that significant and are below the differences between various social and occupational groups.

The present study also revealed that most Russians are aware of the presence of incompatible group interests in society. A total of 52% of the polled expressed unqualified support for the view that "it is impossible to overcome the present crisis in a way satisfactory to all or the majority, since the views and interests by the people are very different". Only 27% percent of the Russians subscribe to the opposite view.

The response to a milder question: "Would it be realistic to draw up and implement an anti-crisis program for 2-3 years to the satisfaction of an overwhelming majority of the population?" revealed that 40.8% of the population believe that it is impossible to coordinate the interests of the majority of the Russians even at the level of a specific anti-crisis program. Only 28.4% of the polled believe that is a realistic proposition.

Understanding of the pluralistic nature of society and the presence of competing group interests is combined among those polled with a fairly modest assessment of the relevance of their own judgement. Only 19.4% said they were certain that they are usually right when they argue their point versus 37.3% who take the opposite view. The most important finding, however, is that awareness of the presence of competing interests is complemented by the belief that there must be a complete freedom of expression of views that differ. A total of 73.8% of the Russians supported the freedom of expression with a reservation concerning banning the propaganda of violence, pornography, etc. Only 13% favoured restricting the freedom of the mass media by the state and said that the media should follow a certain political line.

As we can see the Russians do not believe that a "monolithic cohesion" of society can be attained, nor do they hold their own views to be absolutely correct, nor do they accept the imposition on society of any one point of view. This calls into question the proposition that the Russians gravitate toward one-dimensional thinking.

Paternalism is another factor in favour of authoritarian and totalitarian trends in the mass consciousness. The respondents were asked how the financial difficulties experienced by their own families can be overcome. A total of 42.6% pointed to the need to raise the minimum pensions, wage, and grants and only 11.9% said that they can take care of themselves. The hopes for the "invisible hand" of the state are therefore quite strong among nearly 50% of the polled, but this should be taken to mean that they are totally dependent on the state. Judging by the response to another question which proposed introducing an austerity program spelling a further decline in the standard of living for overcoming the crisis two-thirds of the polled responded in a way consistent with their own economic activity. The remaining one-third voiced various passive responses (Table 8).

The majority of the population would perhaps like someone to take care of them, but are aware that this is unrealistic and is gradually shedding paternalistic expectations.

The results indicate therefore that only one-third of the Russian population are paternalistically minded, although that percentage could be higher if the poll covered small towns in economically depressed areas.

Table 8

## Readiness of the population for various actions in the event of a harder economic situation

1. I will work harder	31.1%
2. I will leave the region, country	14.0%
3. I will experience quiet desperation	11.1%
4. I will join the labour movement and take industrial action	8.7%
5. I will go to the barricades	6.5%
6. Other	4.7%
7. No comment	23.9
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

As we move on to assess the psychological and emotional state of the public mind let us recall that as historical experience suggests the following factors have always conspired to pave the way to authoritarian and totalitarian regimes:

1. The prevalence of the sentiments of shame and humiliation among the population;
2. The spread of fear of future misfortunes and those that have already occurred;
3. The growth of aggressive sentiments;
4. Sentiments of loneliness and one's own inadequacy;
5. A desire to offset depression through ultra-radical forms of behaviour.

With this in mind what is the current psychological and emotional state of the public mind? (Table 9).

Let us single out the following of the results obtained:

- The most widespread sentiment among the Russians in 1995 was a feeling of shame for the state of the country;
- Another widespread sentiment was a feeling of the injustice of what is happening to them and those around them made worse by the a feeling that one cannot carry on like this anymore;
- One of the dominant negative sentiments is fear of rampant violent crime which overrides practically all positive sentiments offered;
- A feeling of loneliness leads the respondents to believe that their fate is of no concern to others and overrides hopes for possible support from relations and colleagues;
- Aggressive sentiments have not reached a critical mark yet, but a quarter of the population frequently experiences a desire to buy a personal weapon or "shoot all bribe-takers and dealers, another third of the population experience such sentiments "once in a while".

Table 9

## Sentiments experienced by the Russians in 1995

<i>Sentiment</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Shame for the current state of the country	64.5%	26.7%	8.8%	100%
2. Injustice of all that is taking place	58.3%	34.0%	13.5%	100%
3. We can't carry on like this any more	55.1%	31.4%	13.5%	100%
4. Fear of rampant violence and crime	54.1%	35.6%	10.3%	100%
5. No one cares about what is happening to me	48.8%	36.0%	15.2%	100%
6. It is impossible to influence what is going on	45.3%	37.8%	16.9%	100%
7. A desire to dramatically change my life	33.5%	43.6%	22.9%	100%
8. Reliable support from relations and colleagues	30.8%	49.0%	20.2%	100%
9. A desire to buy a personal weapon	28.6%	37.6%	33.8%	100%
10. A desire to shoot bribe-takers and dealers	23.5%	30.9%	45.6%	100%
11. Fear of the future because of the situation at work	23.3%	42.4%	34.5%	100%
12. Pride for own success or success of family members	19.6%	58.5%	21.9%	100%
13. Firm belief that the future of the country is not as bad as one is led to believe	17.6%	49.6%	32.8%	100%
14. Satisfaction that everything is working according to my plan	16.4%	60.0%	23.6%	100%
15. Things will get better before long	12.0%	40.3	47.7	100%

This suggests that the public mind in Russia was dominated throughout 1995 by negative sentiments capable of proving to be a social-psychological factor in favour of the establishment of an authoritarian regime under certain circumstances. Considering the fact that the public were exposed to considerable psychological and emotional stress during the previous years it becomes clear that the current social and psychological atmosphere in society may become conducive a positive perception of authoritarian aspirations by no less than half of the country's population. However, the situation is balanced by the fact there is another considerable part of society which does not experience such a dramatic feeling of psychological fatigue from the on-going change. Despite all the difficulties 53.3% of the Russians do not want to see the world around them to stay the way they have grown accustomed to see it. Upwards of 48.7% believe that living in a society that is changing all the time is hard, but it is a rewarding experience.

#### IV. ECONOMIC ORIENTATIONS: EQUAL INCOMES OR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?

The study focused among other things on the extent of the dependence of the growth of authoritarian sentiments upon living standards. There is a school of thought according to which the setbacks and the painful progress of the economic reform account for a longing for undisturbed equality under total state control. Is that really so?

The analysis conducted indicates that 23.2% of the polled view the economic situation as positive for themselves, another 14.6% are optimistically-minded despite the relative worsening of their standard of living. More than one-third of the Russian population do not therefore experience a desire for tougher political rule and economic management.

However, the disaffection with the reform has become fairly widespread: 43.4% explain the difficulties experienced by their families in recent exactly by the economic policy of the government. The growth of the cost of living evokes the greatest criticism: 64.0% favour broadening the range of regulated prices.

There are evidently grounds for believing that an authoritarian potential has accumulated in the economic sphere of the mass consciousness. However, that potential has a complex structure and it would be a simplification to establish a direct link between the growth of economic difficulties and the growing threat of a dictatorship.

Suffice it to say that our study revealed a number of aspects of the economic policy of the present government that do not arouse resistance even among those who are highly critical of the entire situation and favour tougher state controls over the economy.

This is demonstrated by the response to the question: "What economic measures could improve your own situation?" (Chart 2).

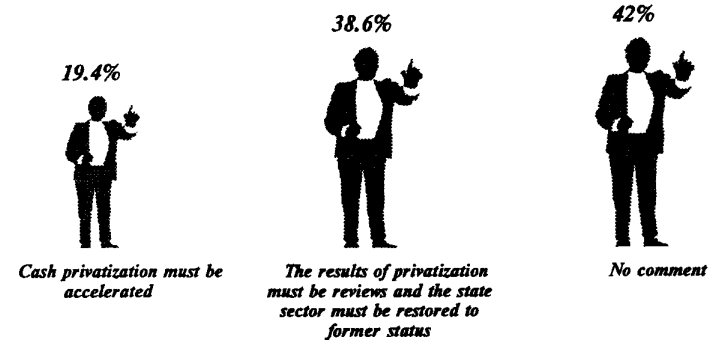
The most resolute of those respondents who favour "setting the house in order" emphasize the following key economic issues:

1. Revision of the results of privatization to restore the state sector to a leading position;
2. Expanding the range of regulated prices;
3. Restoration of state planning and tougher state control over entrepreneurial activities.

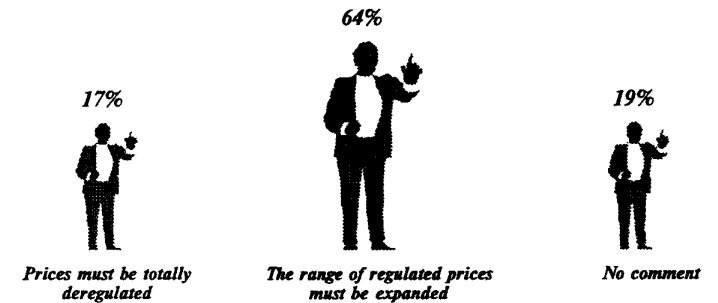
At the same time quite a few issues of the current economic policy such as free sale and purchase of hard currency by individuals, defence conversion, customs policy and even the introduction of private land ownership do not arouse an emotional response. These issues apparently form a fairly broad basis for compromise.

What economic measures will improve the standard of living ?

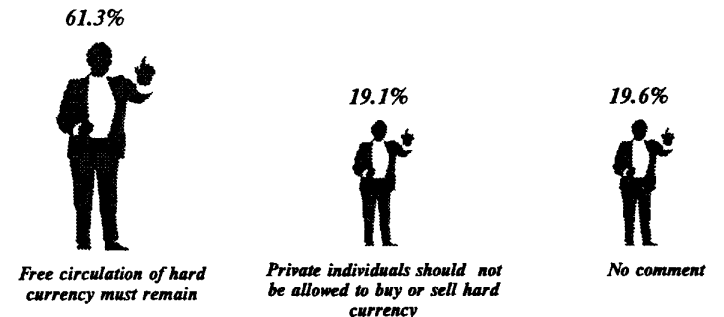
Privatization



Prices



Hard currency circulation



Economic planning

21.8%



*Industrial ministries should be dismantled*

37.6%



*State planning should be restored*

40.6%



*No comment*

Sale of land

42.3%



*Free sale and purchase of land should be allowed*

37%



*Sale and purchase of land should be banned*

20.7%



*No comment*

Defence Conversion

45.3%



*Defence industries should be converted to civilian production as soon as possible*

27.2%



*State procurement order with the defence industries should be increased*

27.5%



*No comment*

Import and Export

46.8%



*All import and export restrictions should be removed*

23%



*Import duties should be increased*

30.2%



*No comment*

Nevertheless the opposition to the economic policy of the government from those favouring state regulation of the economy is far from monolithic and could be neutralised by the introduction of state regulation based on market forces.

In evaluating the spread of authoritarian sentiments in the Russian society one must bear in mind the public response to the rapid growth of the wealth owned by certain groups which is morally indefensible in the eyes of many. Significantly, nearly half of the Russian population favour the confiscation by violent means from the newly rich Russians of the wealth they amassed dishonestly. This proved to be the only anti-democratic measure to take the country out of the current crisis that was broadly supported. In Vladivostok, Kemerovo, and Nizni Novgorod more than half of the polled (65.8%, 59.6%, and 51.0%, respectively versus the average of 45.2% for the entire sample).

The number of those disagreeing with that emergency action reached a maximum where a tolerant attitude toward social stratification generally prevailed. An average of 35.6% respondents rejected the idea of a forcible confiscation from the new rich of their wealth: 51.4% disapproved of it in Voronezh compared to 48.7% in Vladikavkaz, 46.0% in Moscow, and 43.8% in Vladimir. The percentage of those doubtful of the wisdom of such an action was well above the average for Russia.

On average the prevailing attitude in Russia toward the newly rich is neutral and tolerant. More than 50% of the polled in the Urals and most Central and Southern regions of Russia have displayed a neutral attitude toward the rich (50% in Tver to 56.4% in Vladikavkaz versus the average of 47.6% for the entire sample). Positive sentiments about the new rich (interest, and to a lesser extent, respect and sympathy) were expressed by 20% of the polled.

At the same time a tolerant attitude of most Russians toward wealthy people who have a knack for enterprise should not lead to delusions about the extent of the social tension generated

Confidence in democratic institutions and values

<i>Opinion</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>no comment</i>	<i>total</i>
1. Much depends on ordinary citizens in national affairs.	23.4%	52.5%	24.1%	100%
2. Nothing depends on ordinary citizens in national affairs, everything depends on leaders and politicians.	66.1%	20.0%	13.9%	100%
3. Democratic procedures, elections, parliament and freedom of the press exist on paper only. We are controlled by those who wield power and wealth.	73.1%	13.3%	13.6%	100%
4. Democratic procedures are crucial to organizing normal life, we cannot do without them.	56.0%	13.6%	30.4%	100%
5. Russia needs a strong personality capable of enforcing law and order.	69.6%	13.3%	17.1%	100%
6. The people must learn to respect law and order.	87.8%	2.3%	9.9%	100%

- The time-frame over which the present political culture has been formed is short. As a result, many of the democratic values have failed to percolate down to the level of personal awareness or become an integral part of personal culture and needs;
- Direct involvement in the present political process in the country requires large amounts of money which effectively locks ordinary citizens out of it which was born out by the recent parliamentary election campaign;
- The apathetic and weak model of democracy in Russia is not perceived as a vehicle for resolving the pressing social problems facing the country.

That is why acceptance of the statutory democratic norms in Russia is combined paradoxically with a longing for tough rule. A total of 70% of the polled agreed that "Russia needs a strong personality capable of enforcing law and order". Only 13.3% opposed that view.

A longing for the "strong personality" is typical of all the groups polled. However, the percentage of those supporting the idea of a tough ruler is slightly higher among the older and less educated sections of the polled. Among the group with a secondary education the percentages of those who agree and those who disagree are 77.2% and 9.8%, respectively compared to 61.0% and 18.2% among the group with a higher education, 69.4% and 14.0% among entrepreneurs, 52.5% and 16.7% among the professionals and 76.3% and 9.7% among industrial workers.

by dramatic stratification of society. In Moscow, for instance, the percentage of those holding egalitarian views doubled compared to 1994. The percentage of those supporting the idea of a society of equal incomes in Moscow grew from 9.4% in 1994 to 21.2% in August 1995. In Syktyvkar it tripled from 8.6% in 1994 to 25.0% in 1995. The Russians are on the whole prepared to accept social stratification given everyone will enjoy equal opportunities and be legally entitled to what he has earned. This is confirmed by a clear preference of equal opportunities over equal incomes and the prevailing view that everyone must have a right to a life style one can afford. There is an average 13.5% of those disagreeing with that point of view in Russia as a whole and even less, 5.1%-7.3% of the polled in Southern and Central Russia and Moscow.

An individualistic model of a society of equal opportunities has three times as many supporters on average in Russia as the model of equal incomes. In the Kaliningrad and Nizni Novgorod regions the percentage of those supporting equal opportunities is four to five times as high as the percentage of those supporting equal incomes. The dynamics of egalitarian sentiments in many Russian regions tends to be negative. According to the data we have gathered egalitarian sentiments never went above one-third of the polled.

## V. POLITICAL PREFERENCES IN RUSSIA: IS "STRONG HAND" SYNONYMOUS WITH TOTALITARIAN ASPIRATIONS?

One of the purposes of the present study was to find out too what extent the mass consciousness has accepted democratic attitudes and to evaluate potential political support for authoritarian sentiments. The polled were asked to agree or disagree with a number of judgements about democratic values (Table 10).

The data obtained indicate that the basic democratic values and institutions enjoy considerable support in Russia. The need to respect law and order is supported by 87.8% and the view that democratic procedures are crucial to organizing normal life in society is accepted by 56%.

When confronted with the notion of "democracy in general", i.e., democracy based on an appropriate legislative basis almost 100% percent of the polled gave a positive response. However, when confronted with a more specific question related to assessment of one's own obligations and the compliance with the procedures and rules without which democracy cannot exist support for "democracy in general" begins to decline. That phenomenon may be explained by at least three reasons:

What is the price that the Russian are prepared to pay for overcoming the crisis even be it by anti-democratic methods? The results presented in Table 11 give an idea of the response from sample studied.

Table 11

**Are the public prepared to support the following measures suggested by some citizens as a means of overcoming the crisis?**

	Yes	No	No comment	Total
1. Banning political parties and newspapers opposing the present government and calling for its early removal from power.	10.6%	68.4%	21.0%	100%
2. Confiscating unlawfully gained wealth from the new rich even be it by violent means.	45.2%	35.6%	19.2%	100%
3. A military coup by patriotically minded military will enforce order in the country.	13.6%	68.2%	18.2%	100%
4. Banning strikes and demonstrations during the transitional period.	18.0%	60.7%	21.3%	100%
5. Restricting freedom of leaving the country	10.3%	74.5%	15.2%	
6. Introduction of summary trials for grave offenders.	35.0%	42.7%	22.3%	100%
7. Calling off all elections for the next few years.	12.4%	62.7%	24.8%	100%
8. Use of military means to settle conflicts threatening Russia's integrity.	25.6%	51.6%	22.8%	100%
9. Suspending parliamentary activities and concentrating all power in the hands of the President and government for the transitional period.	18.1%	50.6%	31.3%	100%

The Table shows that most of the proposed measures were not supported. Supporters of the idea of calling off all elections and suspending parliamentary activities are evenly distributed among the age and social and occupational groups. For instance, 19.2% of the polled with a secondary education and 17.5% of the polled with a higher education support the suspension of Parliament along with 18.5% entrepreneurs, 19.2% professionals, 18.1% industrial workers and 25.4% retirees.

This can be explained by a combination of two trends; on the one hand there are more supporters of nominal democracy that is expressed more in terms of the statute among the more educated groups, and on the other, these educated groups tend to be dissatisfied with the slow ways and indecision of the executive branch.

Supporters of the ideas of a military coup to set the house in order and of restricting the freedom of leaving the country are concentrated in the socially passive groups, despite the fact that they do not form a majority in any of these groups and stay below the 20% mark.

The study also analyzed whether there is any ideology in the Russian society today which could act as a dominant one for the "mobilization regime" to rely on. It transpired that today's society is broken into roughly equal or at least comparable parts of the population supporting different and clear-cut ideological schools of thought (Table 12).

Table 12

**Ideological preferences of the Russians**

Support the ideology of	
1. Democrats, market reforms	17.2%
2. Russian nationalists seeing an independent Russian way	10.5%
3. Communists, Socialists	14.0%
4. Centrists supporting a variety of ideas, but avoiding the extremes	17.2%
5. No comment	41.1%
Total	100%

Most of the polled (41.1%) do not prefer any of the current ideological political tendencies and the Russian nationalists have the smallest following (10.5%).

If we consider the leading tendencies from the point of view of social and age groups we will see that there is a large number of supporters of Communist ideology among the socially passive groups (older and less educated groups). On the contrary, the Democrats have more followers among the active members of the electorate in the cities and among young people and professional social groups.

Nationalist patriots have not scored above 15% with peaks in Stavropol, Yekaterinburg, the Kaliningrad region and lows in ethnic autonomies, Moscow (8.2%) and the Maritime territory (9.8%).

The ideology of Russian nationalism which is seen by many political scientists in Russia and the West as the ideological basis of new totalitarianism in Russia does not therefore qualify for that status according to empirical results. The Russian electorate based in the provinces is inherently conservative. However, prevailing in its mind-set are Socialist and great power notions rather than nationalist ideas which are widely spread among some sections of the population of the cities (in particular, small and medium vendors competing at various markets) and the population of regions bordering on areas where ethnic conflicts are in progress.

Many analysts point out that the threat of “Russian fascism” is related to the threat of the restoration of the totalitarian dictatorship in Russia. The analysis of our data shows, however, that fascist fringe groups have an extremely small following. For instance, the number of those who trust the notorious fascist leader A. Barkashev is within 1-1.5%. These groups have an exotic following ranging from the urban down and outs to some “new Russians”. There are practically no supporters of “Russian fascism” in the traditionally conservative electorate. According to the results of the study 66.8% of the polled believe that the activities of the fascist fringe groups pose a threat to society and these groups should be prosecuted under the law on incitement of ethnic hostilities.

That is one reason why the ultra-radical political forces suffered a setback in the recent elections. They will be again represented by the party of V. Zhirinovski whom the radical nationalist patriots never counted as one of their own. As a result, the Communists managed to rally together the “protest voters”.

The fact that none of the ideological tendencies today qualifies for the status of the ruling ideology of an authoritarian let alone totalitarian regime is confirmed by the response to the question: “What idea could inspire people and rally them together for a common cause?” The largest response came from those supporting the idea of restoring Russia to a great power status, although that idea, too, was supported by less than half of the population (Table 13).

Table 13

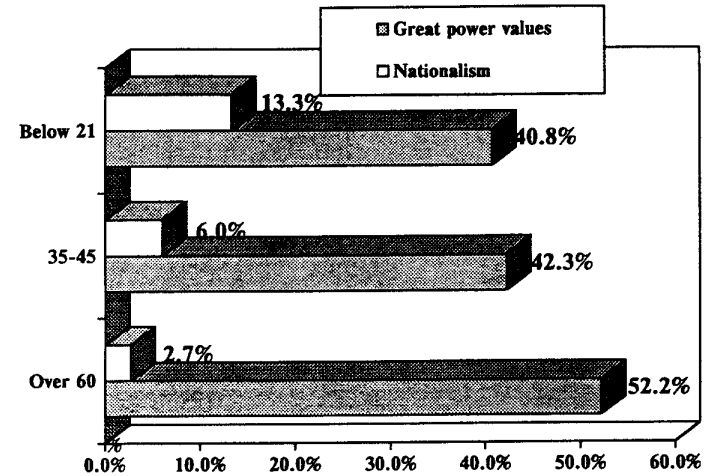
**What idea could inspire people and rally them together for a common cause?**

Idea	
1. Idea of uniting the peoples of Russia to restore it to status of a great power	41.4%
2. Idea of civic state governed by law	30.3%
3. Idea of bringing the nations together to resolve global problems	23.5%
4. Idea of rapprochement with the West	12.1%
5. Idea of return to Socialist values and ideals	10.0%
6. Idea of a Pan-Slavic union	8.5%
7. Idea of the special historic mission of the Russian people	7.3%
8. Idea of the freedom of the individual	6.0%
9. Russian Orthodox Christian idea	5.6%
10. Idea of confrontation with the West	2.3%

At the same time the “idea of grandeur, uniqueness of the Russian people and the special historic mission of the Russian people” evoked a positive response from a mere 7.3% of the polled. The data show that the Russian nationalists have a narrow, but very active social base encompass-

ing largely the less educated urban dwellers and some of the “new Russians”. The social base of the supporters of great power ideas is much broader but it is more passive since it largely represents the traditional electorate (Chart 3).

Chart 3



Significantly, there are 11.6% of nationalists in the socially active group of entrepreneurs, many more than among the unskilled worker group (5.0%).

The positions of liberals supporting Western values have grown weaker since 1993. That is partly due to the fact that their commitment to liberal ideology is no guarantee of a democratic behaviour. The leaders of Russian Democrats have on many occasions called for the introduction of an authoritarian regime to assert the political will of an educated minority. Had their plans materialized the country would have had an authoritarian regime pledging allegiance to Liberal ideals and applying the entire weight of state machinery to pushing the country toward a “bright future” to be brought about by a market-led economy.

The Centrists act more like genuine democrats because they are able and willing to account for a variety of views and do not accept violent methods. Despite the fact that the Centrists are supported by a considerable number of the polled (17.2%), their real political clout and the ability of mobilize their electorate is at this point insignificant. This is indicated by the results of the recent elections.



Curiously, the study also revealed that there is a high level of expectations among the polled that the establishment of a dictatorship in the country is quite probable (Table 14).

Table 14

**Probability of the establishment of dictatorial rule according to social and demographic groups**

<i>Social groups</i>	<i>Improbable</i>	<i>Probable</i>	<i>No comment</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Under 21</b>	25.8%	40.8%	34.4%	100%
<b>22-26</b>	20.5%	44.9%	34.6%	100%
<b>27-30</b>	20.9%	48.5%	30.6%	100%
<b>31-40</b>	18.4%	48.8%	32.8%	100%
<b>41-50</b>	18.3%	57.5%	24.2%	100%
<b>51-60</b>	20.7%	50.7%	28.6%	100%
<b>Over 60</b>	22.3%	48.4%	29.3%	100%
<b>School education</b>	20.4%	42.8%	36.8%	100%
<b>College drop-out</b>	20.5%	52.0%	27.5%	100%
<b>College education</b>	20.0%	58.2%	21.8%	100%
<b>Blue collar workers</b>	17.8%	46.1%	36.1%	100%
<b>White collar workers</b>	11.7%	62.5%	25.8%	100%
<b>Professionals</b>	23.0%	51.4%	25.6%	100%
<b>Entrepreneurs</b>	21.2%	57.0%	21.8%	100%
<b>Retirees</b>	25.4%	44.7%	29.9%	100%
<b>Total for the sample</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>49.7%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>

People aged between 41 and 50 belonging to the group with a higher education believe that a dictatorship is probable. Most of the polled link that probability to the actions of the security forces and army (16.7%), the President and his entourage (13.5%), the newly entrenched bureaucrats (9.2%), fascist groups (8.4%), financial groups (8.2%), Communists (6.4%), Democrats (2.1%).

These data show that the skeletal image of a dictatorship has so far not yet grown flesh. It is not associated in the minds of those who accept that it is probable with concrete public forces able and willing to establish a dictatorial regime. There is a kind of prescient feeling about the dictator-

ship short of a clear understanding of the real source of a possible about turn in the life of the country.

Perhaps the roots of a would-be authoritarian regime are revealed by the response to the question about the preferred political system? (Table 15).

Table 15

**Preferred form of political rule**

<i>Political system</i>	<i>Total sample</i>	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Patriots</i>	<i>Communists</i>	<i>Centrists</i>
<b>Constitutional monarchy</b>	5.6%	4.0%	11.1%	2.9%	6.0%
<b>Presidential Republic</b>	25.5%	45.6%	20.3%	9.3%	27.4%
<b>Presidential-parliamentary Republic</b>	24.2%	23.0%	31.4%	13.7%	38.1%
<b>Parliamentary Republic</b>	7.4%	10.3%	6.5%	5.9%	9.5%
<b>Soviet System</b>	15.9%	3.6%	13.7%	59.3%	3.6%
<b>No comment</b>	21.4%	13.5%	17.0%	8.9%	15.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Most Russians favour either a Presidential Republic or a Presidential-Parliamentary Republic. Despite the fact that the majority of the population are disaffected with the leadership of the country and the President, the idea of a Presidential Republic or a Presidential-Parliamentary Republic remains a popular one (about 50%). The support for a Parliamentary Republic has declined from 11.5% to 7.4% over the past 18 months.

Our findings indicate that public opinion tends to favour a clearly personified form of power. It favours a strong form of Presidential rule, a kind of authoritarian democracy rather than an authoritarian dictatorship. The line between them is thinly drawn and may disappear altogether under certain circumstances.



## VI. US AND THEM: IS RUSSIA HOSTILE TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD?

A stereotype of mistrust for the outside world and the West in particular is fairly widespread in the consciousness of the Russians. Only 7.3% according to our results agreed with the view that the West sincerely wants to help Russia versus 31.1% or three times as much who believe that the West wants to weaken Russia and make it dependent. At the same time that mistrust does not take the form of any mass phobias. A majority of the population (44%) believe that Russia is being helped for ulterior motives, but that is quite natural.

The point of view that the West intends to weaken Russia and make it a dependent state is especially common among the respondents who are over 40. It becomes a dominant one in the over 50 group. Younger people have a milder view of the West, but do not on the whole believe in its sincerity. White collar workers employed by the state tend to believe that the intentions of the West are good more than anybody else and professionals and the military, less than anybody else, because prevailing among them is a strictly pragmatic interpretation of Western policies. The retiree, farmer, and industrial worker groups fear that the West may turn Russia into a dependent state. The respondents do not believe that the probability of direct aggression from the West is high. That probability was accepted by 18% of the polled, most of them elderly and rejected by 45.6%. However, 35% of the polled do not have a clear-cut opinion.

The study revealed a wider and more differentiated range of opinions of the countries of both East and West in Russia (Table 16).

Table 16

Feelings in Russia toward other countries

Country	Positive	Negative	No comment	Total
France	78.9%	3.0%	18.1%	100%
USA	77.6%	9.0%	13.4%	100%
Britain	76.6%	4.2%	19.2%	100%
Canada	72.8%	2.4%	24.8%	100%
Germany	69.0%	11.5%	19.5%	100%
Japan	68.5%	9.2%	22.3%	100%
India	59.4%	4.8%	35.8%	100%
China	41.2%	21.1%	37.7%	100%
Israel	40.8%	20.4%	38.8%	100%
Iraq	21.7%	34.7%	43.6%	100%

The Table shows that the response to more focused questions about specific countries gives a clearer picture of emotions and stereotypes. Leading in terms of the positive response evoked is France followed by the USA, Britain and Canada. Notably, the USA evokes most negative feelings in that group. The response evoked by Germany and Japan is almost the same. Germany is trailing behind Canada in the positive response by a mere 4 points and by 2.5% behind the USA in the negative response.

A comparison of the response obtained depending on the age of the respondents shows that the negative feelings toward these countries peak in the over 60 age group, i.e., the generation that still remembers the hardship inflicted by the war. But that is not an overriding factor. The most important finding is that almost 70% of the Russians have positive feelings toward Germany and only 11% are negatively disposed toward it. The same trend can be observed in the attitude toward Japan (68.5% versus 9.2%). These results indicate that there is little room for the image of the enemy in the contemporary consciousness of the Russians and that the memories of the war are being relegated to the past.

Iraq's poor showing in the response indicates that it is viewed as an epitome of contemporary form of totalitarianism jeopardizing security in the Middle East.

The attitudes of the respondents toward various countries indicate that factors of cultural attraction and repulsion determine it more than the logic of foreign policy. The West is much closer to the Russians than the East. For instance, India which is a nation traditionally friendly to Russia evokes a positive response from only 59.4% of the respondents, far below than the response to France, the USA and Britain.

The Russians themselves are well aware of their "civilization vector" with only 17% of the polled believing that Russia is closer to the East rather than the West and 35% disagreeing with that point of view. The Russians, it appears, have no desire to identify themselves positively with the Orient, which is indicated by a restrained attitude toward China (41.2% positive versus 21.1% negative). At the same time the percentage of respondents who found it hard to define their attitude toward the Asian nations is very high (35-40%). There may be certain changes in the traditional attitudes of the Russians as a result.

The analysis of the data obtained reveals a number of stable regularities. On the whole the positive attitude toward other nations grows with the educational standard. Positive attitudes toward Western countries and Israel peak in the 27-30 and 31-40 age groups, positive attitudes toward China and India peak in the 41-50 age group and Japan evokes a maximum positive response from the 22-26 age group.

The attitude toward foreigners is heavily dependent on the social status. Professional interests and attitudes influence the image of a country. For instance, the positive rating of Japan among scientists and engineers is 10% higher than the average. The same trend is observed in the attitude of intellectuals toward France.

The entrepreneurs tend to have the most positive attitude toward Germany (81.7% or 12% more than the average for the sample) and Japan (81.7% versus the average 68.5% for the sample). They take a milder attitude toward Iraq which is on the whole negatively perceived (the difference between positive and negative assessments in the group of entrepreneurs is a mere 4.3% compared to 13% for the entire sample and 22% among the technocrats). Intellectuals and technocrats along with entrepreneurs tend to have more positive attitudes toward other countries. They are joined by state office employees and salespersons if the list includes Western nations, Japan and Israel. Rural dwellers, and retirees and in some cases industrial workers and students form the opposite pole.

Unsurprisingly, wealthy people whose standard of living has recently improved tend to have more positive attitudes toward the West. The Eastern countries are more with those in the medium income group.

The attitudes of the Russians toward various countries vary more from region to region, rather than from one social group to another. The regional difference between the attitudes toward the USA reaches 20% compared to 15% across the occupational groups. The difference is even less across the income groups (13%). Positive attitudes toward Iraq vary from 7.1% (Moscow) to 45.8% (Vladivostok). The difference between the attitudes to India is 36-37%. That country evokes a positive response from 76% of the residents of Vladivostok, 73% of the residents of Nizhni Novgorod and only 37% of the residents of Syktyvkar.

On the whole, the Russians demonstrate a positive attitude toward all nations which is typical of the Russian cultural tradition. The Russian society therefore demonstrates a considerable margin of tolerance. This indicates the room for the propagation of racism and xenophobia is limited and that the threat of a totalitarian transformation of society is not apparent.

There was a more active response to the question about the role of Russia in the world today. At the same time the notion of a great power has changed considerably from what it used to be 20, 30, or 50 years ago. It is now associated not so much with military might and territorial expansion, but with economic performance, technological progress, and advanced democracy. Nearly 85% of respondents believe that Russia will enjoy the respect of other nations only if it advances its economy and asserts democracy. That point of view is held by the social groups that are closer involved in economic activities such as technocrats and entrepreneurs. Among the regional groups that view is supported by the residents of major economic centers such as Moscow, Nizhni

Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, and Voronezh. A mere 3.6% of the polled disagree with that point of view.

The prevalence of these sentiments is another safety valve diminishing the chances of a totalitarian regime. At the same time the results of the study indicate that attempts to dominate Russia and oust it from the leading group of nations will evoke considerable resistance from the Russians which may be exploited by radical forces.

## VII. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. The current state of mass consciousness in Russia is extremely contradictory and fragmented. It is a patchwork of political and ideological orientations. The democratic and authoritarian tendencies prevail over others. The social bases for the two tendencies display a very complex structure. Both tendencies may be supported besides their relatively stable following by considerable sections of the population which display democratic attributes in response to one set of questions and authoritarian attributes in response to another. That paradox, however, is a logical manifestation of socioeconomic processes characteristic of a society that undergoes transformation.

2. The authoritarian tendencies largely derive from the social stratification of the Russian society and the threats arising from the economic and political instability and the setbacks suffered by the economic reform. The signs of authoritarian tendencies can be traced both in those sections of the population which have gained from the reform and in those whose standard of living has declined notably. The social stratum whose standard of living has improved but whose perception of the future is uncertain display most democratic leanings. They are aware that a market-led economy is a combination of great opportunities and risks.

3. The economic views of the population are spontaneous and inconsistent. Some aspects of the current economic policy such as the free sale and purchase of hard currency, the liberalization of foreign trade and defence conversion are viewed positively. Most of the polled accept the idea of the free sale and purchase of land. The greatest protest is evoked by the policy of privatization, the growth of prices and the absence of state control over entrepreneurial activities. Nearly half of the polled are sharply critical of the accumulation of wealth by the new Russians and demand that the unlawfully gained wealth be confiscated. At the same time only 20% of the polled experience nega-

tive feelings in general toward all people who have grown rich in recent years. The specifics of that antagonism are due to the specifics of the economic reform in Russia and above all due to the privatization policy. The target of that antagonism is clear cut and there are no grounds for interpreting the situation expansively as the growth of the threat of totalitarianism as a result of the redistribution of property. Public opinion does not demand that.

4. The results of the study reject a number of common stereotypes about the nature of the mass consciousness in Russia concerning:

- the paternalistic nature of the system of values incompatible with a market-led economic system;
- the dominance of an egalitarian approach to social differentiation and the unwillingness of the Russians to live in socially stratified society;
- the profound crisis of the system of values of the Russians as the country makes a transition to a market-led economy leading to moral degradation and the loss of national identity.

Prevailing in the Russian society today are two types of value-related attitudes based on egalitarian perceptions and perceptions oriented toward a society of equal opportunities. The former system of values is less common than the latter. Most of the polled attach the greatest value to privacy and the opportunities to realize their ambitions.

The individualistic attitudes and the appropriate type of consciousness prevail over paternalistic and conformist attitudes. Paternalistic perceptions are characteristic of a smaller part of the Russian population.

The psychological and emotional state of the Russians follows a somewhat different pattern. It is a combination of the particular circumstances of the individual situation, shame for the present state of the country, fear of rampant crime, and inability to influence what is going on which conspire to increase authoritarian tendencies.

5. On the whole the Russians perceive democracy positively above all as a proclaimed value. Their perception of democracy as a combination of institutions, rules and procedures is clearly inadequate. Large-scale disappointment with the "democratic reforms" of the 80s and 90s generated a notable longing for the "strong hand" in society.

The myths embedded in the historical consciousness of the Russians are no doubt conducive to the emergence of personality cults and may lead to the transformation of democracy into a regime of personal power. There will be a potential for this throughout the period of transition while

the new social strata and groups are formed. The hopes for a strong paternalistic leader capable of uniting society from above and introducing order are also likely to persist during that period.

At the same time the Russians on the whole do not support violent means as the only method of overcoming the crisis. The price to be paid for social stability, law and order and higher standard of living in that case would be far too high from the democratic point of view. Recognition of democratic values even be it as icons remains a barrier on the way of totalitarian transformation of society, although it is a fragile barrier.

6. The extent of the harshness of power which the Russians are in principle prepared to accept corresponds to a moderately authoritarian system of government. In that sense authoritarianism acts as an alternative to a totalitarian transformation of power and society perceived in the present circumstances as a development that is more likely than the strengthening of democratic institutions. The historical memory of the people suggests that a moderate authoritarian regime may give democracy in Russia a chance whereas anarchy and chaos will roll the country back to renewed harsh totalitarian repression. That choice is not a matter of morals, but rather a response of the mass consciousness to the narrowing range of options of Russia's development.

7. Ethnocentrism as the basic underlying idea of authoritarian revenge does not enjoy extensive support. Most Russians do not accept an isolationist plan of reform or entertain hopes that Russia may go through a rebirth if the USSR is restored. A growing number of people identify themselves with the present Russian state and see its future as a "common home of equal ethnic groups".

8. Most Russians view their country as a great power relying on the historical component of national awareness and assessment of Russia's contribution to world culture. A desire to assert the right to the status of a great power in the world community is alien to an overwhelming majority of the Russians. A feeling that the rest of the world no longer recognizes Russia's historical status does not lead at present to mass revenge-seeking sentiments. There is a general consensus that the principal means of increasing Russia's standing in the world community today should be economic advancement and the strengthening of genuine democracy.