

RUSSOPHOBIA CONCEPT IN MODERN POLITICAL DISCOURSE*

V. A. Gutorov

St. Petersburg State University,
7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation

A. V. Myrikova

Lomonosov Moscow State University,
1, Leninskie Gory, Moscow, 119991, Russian Federation

A. A. Shirinyants

Lomonosov Moscow State University,
1, Leninskie Gory, Moscow, 119991, Russian Federation

Russophobia is one of the most odious phenomena that Russia has been facing for several centuries. At present, the Russophobic ideology has been adopted by almost all major Western countries; it determines the political agenda in the confrontation of these countries with Russia. To effectively oppose this policy, it is necessary to comprehensively analyze the origins of the Russophobic policy. The study and criticism of Russophobia presuppose the reconstruction of historical events, social factors and political ideas that constitute the origins of this phenomenon as well as the main directions of its evolution. It is important also to identify the main trends and versions of Russophobic ideology and investigate the place and role of Russophobic stereotypes in the public consciousness and ideological conflicts in the modern world. First of all, it is necessary to define the concept of “Russophobia” and evaluate the evolution of Russophobic discourse in socio-political life of the 20th–21st centuries. The article characterizes various ways of presenting Russophobia in political science discourse, showing the multifaceted and multifunctional nature of this political and ideological phenomenon based on fear of a strong Russia which is perceived as the “despotic antithesis” of European “democratic” civilization, as well as contempt for the “barbaric” and “slavishly submissive to the authorities” Russian people. A comparative analysis of approaches to the definition of the concept of “Russophobia” is carried out. The connection of Russophobia with ideology and propaganda is revealed. The following characteristic features of anti-Russian stamps, clichés, negative stereotypes that, in fact, constitute Russophobia are determined: falsification of historical data, the reporting of ridiculous information about Russia and Russians, the use of various kinds of fakes, reader manipulation techniques — forgeries, hoaxes, half-truths etc. The authors substantiate the position that only strong and independent Russia defending its national interests and civilizational values can resist successfully this global stream of political propaganda.

Keywords: Russophobia, public consent, falsification of history, civilization, culture wars, ideological discourse, political values.

* The study was supported by the Russian Science Foundation grant no. 23-28-00182. <https://rscf.ru/en/project/23-28-00182/>.

INTRODUCTION

We have already addressed the topic of Russophobia more than once [Gutorov, Shirinyants, 2023; Gutorov, Shirinyants, 2020; Myrikova, Shirinyants, 2015; Shirinyants, Sorokopudova, 2022; Shirinyants, Sorokopudova, 2014; The russian issue..., 2015]. Everyone knows the words of the French hoax writer Jacques Peuchet “New is well forgotten old”. Modern Russophobia is the very old dress of the French queen that Peuchet wrote about. In other words, to understand modern Russophobia you need to know both its historical origins and carefully read the Russian thinkers of the past who have reflected on this phenomenon. Today, in the context of various anti-Russian sanctions imposed by Western countries and an explosion of anti-Russian hysteria, the study of the origins and meaning of Russophobia is becoming more relevant than ever — both scientific, socio-cultural, and political. Dislike and hatred of Russia, Russians, their ethno-cultural, religious and national-state identity — has been an essential, if not decisive, element of the foreign policy strategy and domestic political propaganda of a number of foreign countries for several centuries. The goal of Russia’s enemies remains unchanged regardless of the various forms of political structure that have been established on its territory over the past three centuries. This is the destruction of Russia as an independent state. At the same time, Russophobia is constantly diversifying, covering new countries and regions and is actively spreading in the modern world, sometimes without meeting proper rebuff.

The study and criticism of Russophobia involves the reconstruction of historical events, social factors and political ideas that constitute the origins of this phenomenon and shaped the main directions of its evolution; identification of the main directions of continuity of the Russophobic policy of foreign states of the modern era with its modern trends; analysis of the place and role of Russophobic stereotypes in the public consciousness and ideological conflicts in the modern world. But, before starting all this, it is necessary to consider the “life” of the concept (image) of “Russophobia” in the socio-political discourse of the 19th–21st centuries, and “to be defined in concepts”.

FEAR AND CONTEMPT TURNING INTO HATRED

Originated in the 15th century, Russophobia flourished in the 19th century. The surge of Russophobic sentiments in the West was not accidental. Suffice it to point out that it was precisely the dynastic nature of the foreign policy of the Russian Empire, aimed at preserving the European monarchies and the political “balance of power” in Europe, intervening for this purpose in the internal affairs of other states, participating in almost all European wars — all this could not but lead, and led to the emergence in Europe of a persistent fear of the expansive power of Russia. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, the clash of Russia’s foreign policy interests in the Balkans, and then in Central Asia with the interests of other European countries, especially Great Britain, the aggressive political propaganda of these countries, propaganda emphasizing cultural contradictions that were not so clearly revealed in the upper layers European and Russian societies, but became blatant

when confronted with the ordinary Russian people, who were declared by European writers and journalists to be “barbaric”, “Asian”, “insidious” and “bloodthirsty”, — led to the transformation of Russophobia into a permanent element of European political consciousness.

At one time, the outstanding Russian thinker I. A. Ilyin, in the article “The World Policy of Russian Sovereigns”, listed the characteristic features of the West’s attitude towards Russia in the 19th century and described the set of “bad affects that exist in Europe: fear, arrogance, enmity, envy and ignorant slander...”. Ilyin’s capacious, precise and expressive formulation, explaining the essence of such an attitude, can be reduced to the following: “Europeans ‘need’ bad Russia: **barbaric**, in order to ‘civilize’ it in its own way; **threatening with its size**, so that it can be dismembered; **conquering**, in order to organize a coalition against it; **reactionary**, in order to justify a revolution in it and demand a republic for it; **religiously decaying** (highlighted by I. A. Ilyin. — *Ed.*), in order to break into it with the propaganda of the reformation or Catholicism; economically untenable, in order to claim not its ‘unused’ spaces, its raw materials or, at least, profitable trade contracts and concessions. But if this ‘rotten’ Russia can be used strategically, then the Europeans are ready to make alliances with her and demand military efforts from her ‘to the last drop of her blood’” [Ilyin, 1956, p. 94].

In this case, Ilyin “modernized” the concept, which, as is commonly believed, was first introduced into public circulation by F. I. Tyutchev, who pointed out that the basis of Russophobia is hatred, a fiery, blind, violent hostile mood against Russia [Tyutchev, 2020b, p. 140]. The emergence of the image of Russia — “monster”, “cannibal of the 19th century” [Tyutchev, 2020b, p. 131] — in the public consciousness of Europeans, from the point of view of Tyutchev, was due to deep reasons underlying the civilizational differences between Western and Eastern Europe (i. e. Russia — the legitimate sister of the Christian West, not feudal and not hierarchical, but therefore itself even more sincerely Christian, the whole world, united in its beginning, solidary in its parts, living its own organic, original life [Tyutchev, 2020b, p. 134]) misunderstanding of the social system, civilization that will replace the western one: “Western people judging Russia are something like the Chinese judging Europe...” [Tyutchev, 2020a, p. 167]. To “misunderstanding” is added “moral irresponsibility” [Tyutchev, 2020b, p. 140]. At the same time, as Tyutchev subtly noted, public opinion is irritated against Russia not by the real “imperfections of our social structure, the vices of our administration, the living conditions of our lower strata” [Tyutchev, 2020b, p. 141], but by the very beginnings of civilization (history without feudalism, religious struggle, papal hierarchy, imperial wars, inquisition, chivalry); the presence of unity and the “basic principle”, which “does not give enough space to personal freedom, it does not allow the possibility of separation and fragmentation” [Tyutchev, 2020b, p. 141]. The main reason for Russophobia is the desire to oust Russia from Europe, if not by force of arms, then by force of contempt. In this regard, Tyutchev also notes the instinctive nature of Russophobia that arises among Western people in the face of the material power of Russia. This instinctive feeling is “something between respect and fear — that feeling of awe (reverential fear. — *Ed.*), experienced only in relation to authority” [Tyutchev, 2020a, p. 167].

The reflections of F. I. Tyutchev are quite consonant with the reflections of M. P. Pogodin. Pogodin believed that the basis of the Russophobic attitude is blind hatred and malice towards Russia, “unaccountable malice”, the origins of which are in the unconscious: “*the instinct of evil acts against us, which, of course, hates good, and seems to hear a thunderstorm from the East*” [Pogodin, 2010b, p. 268–269]. To this it should be added that Pogodin has shown on many examples of European politics that a “system of double standards” prevails in it: what is allowed, for example, by England or France, then, from the point of view of diplomats and politicians of these countries, is absolutely unacceptable for Russia, which must maintain some kind of “imaginary balance” in Europe to the detriment of its national interests [Pogodin, 2010b, p. 265]. This attitude is explained by the hatred of the European states (Austria, England, Prussia, France) and the Romano-Germanic peoples, which they have for the Slavic world as a whole (in general) and especially towards Russia. This hatred is not limited to magazine and newspaper Russophobia, propaganda of the backwardness of supposedly “barbaric” Russia from European “civilization”, cries against Russia “about the passion for conquest, about disgust from all education, about the immorality of the lower clergy, about peasant slavery, about cruelty to soldiers and serfs” [Pogodin, 2010a, p. 221]. Pogodin finds many examples of direct interference of the governments of these countries in Russian and Slavic affairs. Thus, Pogodin notes, the Little Russian separatism that has recently emerged in the Russian Empire is fed from Vienna, “hatred and together hope for a change of fate” of Poles — subjects of the Russian crown is fueled by Prussia; in Prussia itself, where “the people are full of malice against us”, and “the government shares hatred with the people”, and in general, German nationalism is growing in Germany, based on the opposition of the German world to the Roman and Slavic worlds; Paris and London, aiming to “satisfy the Slavs regardless of Austria, Turkey and Russia, to form of the Slavs, a new state that would stand even against Russia, like another Poland”, interferes in Slavic affairs, sending out political agents who intimidate the Slavs with Russia; England secretly supplies the Circassians with gunpowder, actively “interested” in affairs in the Russian Baltic provinces, where Baltic separatism rears its head [Pogodin, 2010a, p. 216–217]; etc. All this, according to Pogodin, urgently requires the intensification of Russia’s foreign policy, a shift in emphasis from the so-called “general European” to national Russian and all-Slavic interests. S. P. Shevyrev, who had a presentiment of the civilizational catastrophe of the West, was in solidarity with Tyutchev and Pogodin. He wrote about the hatred of Russia cultivated in Western countries: “There are two ways to explain this feeling, undeserved by us and pointlessly contradicting our previous relations: or the West looks in this case like a peevish old man who, in the wayward impulses of impotent age, is angry at his heir, inevitably called to seize his treasures over time; or another thing: he, knowing our direction by instinct, anticipates the gap that must inevitably follow between him and us, and himself, by the impulse of his unjust hatred, accelerates the fatal moment even more” [Shevyrev, 2010, p. 222].

In the future, many Russian authors, continuing what Tyutchev, Pogodin, Shevyrev started, in their work comprehensively considered the essence of the Russophobic attitude of the West towards Russia and explained it with fear and contempt, turning

into hatred. They showed that through the efforts of a huge number of people who fear Russia and hate the Russian people, a whole corpus of Russophobic literature was created in the West, which formed in the minds of the inhabitants the image of the enemy — Russia, directed against the Russian people, pushing governments to war against Russia and Russians to wipe them off the face of the earth.

POLITICS AND PROPAGANDA

In modern literature, it has been repeatedly said and proved that the Russophobic attitude is always based on certain politics, ideology, and propaganda. Usually it is not just about politics, but about “imperial politics”. It is believed that it was the clash of imperial ambitions that gave rise and gives rise to Russophobic outbursts, for example, in Great Britain, the USA, and others [Gleason, 1950, p. 1; The Rise..., 2006, p. 1], and as soon as Russia, represented by B. N. Yeltsin announced in Washington the completion of her imperial mission [Yeltsin, 1992], contempt was added to politics, mixed with relict fear and hostility [Gutorov, Shirinyants, 2020, p. 71].

As Glenn Diesen, author of the latest work “Russophobia: Propaganda in International Politics” notes: “Russophobia is largely the result of propaganda. There are enough rational reasons to be afraid of Russia, although Russophobia is understood exclusively as an irrational fear of Russia and Russians” [Diesen, 2022, p. 2]. Long before Diesen, the outstanding Soviet scientist I. R. Shafarevich convincingly showed the essential, “ontological” connection of the Russophobic attitude of the West towards Russia “according to which Russians are a people of slaves who have always worshipped cruelty and groveled before strong power, hated everything alien and hostile to culture, and Russia is an eternal hotbed of despotism and totalitarianism, dangerous for the rest of the world” [Shafarevich, 1991, p. 405] with propaganda that is, with journalistic publicism — radically different from historiosophical reflections and expressing not sincere attempts to understand the meaning of Russian history, but topical interests and feelings [Shafarevich, 1991, p. 404–405]. He quite rightly stressed the fact that, like any propaganda, Russophobia has a specific purpose, in this case — to prove “the danger, the inadmissibility of the influence of the Russian national principle on the life of the state and the need to accurately follow the model of modern Western democracies in building society” [Shafarevich, 1991, p. 405].

Nowadays, Professor Gyula Szvak, the famous Hungarian historian, writes about this: “In the everyday sense, someone who experiences a phobia is afraid of something or someone. Russophobia, however, means not only fear, but also dislike, hostility towards Russians. Russophobe considers Russians his enemies, because he is afraid of them, has an aversion to them. And, of course, this fear is widely propagandized. The media help in this. As well as politicians” [Szvak, 2022, p. 142]. Szvak drew attention to a very important circumstance, subtly noting that: “Russophobia is a concept characteristic of modernity. True, it also draws arguments from historical sources, from essentially harmless stereotypes, but its essence is a conscious, politically driven desire to cause harm... It is supported by those who need enemies” [Szvak, 2022, p. 144].

“RUSSOFOLIA” OR “RUSSOPHOBIA”

Swiss politician and political scientist Guy Joseph Mettan, who wrote the remarkable book “Russia and the West: a Thousand-year war: the history of Russophobia from Charlemagne to the Ukrainian crisis”, coined the author’s neologism “Russophobia”, which plays on the consonance in French of the words “phobia” and “folia” (letters. — insanity, paranoia, mania, delirium) [Mettan, 2016, p. 5, app.]. One of the authors on whose work Mettan relied, Canadian political scientist of Polish origin Raymond Taras, exploring various types of xenophobia, uses the term “hypopsia” as a synonym for Russophobia, denoting fear, distrust, and the West’s deliberate suspicion of Russia [Mettan, 2016, p. 12, app.]. Our colleague Professor V. E. Bagdasaryan, considering anti-Russian historical myths, suggests using the concept of “Russian phobia”: “Introducing it into wide circulation instead of the traditional ‘Russophobia’ (which implies phobic attitudes not only against the Russian people, but also Russian civilization as a whole) allows us to understand the reasons for the representation of the historical image of Russia by its geopolitical opponents” [Bagdasaryan, 2016, p. 6–7]. If we develop this idea, then it is quite reasonable to introduce into scientific circulation both the term “Sovietophobia” [Kurginova, 2022, p. 140], and the term “Putinophobia” [Vityazev], etc., It is possible, as the authors of the collection “Communism, Anti-Communism, Russophobia in post-Soviet Russia” do, to link the Western Russophobic tradition with the processes of consolidation of those political groups that, using traditional anti-communist slogans, actively counteract the desire of the modern Russian leadership, which emerged at the beginning of the 21st century, to conduct a sovereign, independent from the West of politics: “anti-communism, if you think about it, is not only a conflict of ideologies, a confrontation between social systems, but also a categorical rejection by the West of the very existence of Russia, its presence in the world as an independent state. The weakening and subjugation of Russia, the destruction of the identity of Russians as a state-forming people, the establishment of control over Russian territory and resources — this is the geopolitical, essential meaning of Russophobia” [Communism, anti-communism..., 2021, p. 10]. It is possible, as the American professor Andrei Tsygankov proposed, to understand Russophobia as “fear of the political system of Russia, which seems to be incompatible with the interests and values of the West as a whole and the United States in particular” [Tsygankov, 2009, p. 14].

The expediency of such actions depends entirely on the research optics of one or another author. But still, the fundamental thing here is to recognize the fear not of “Russians”, “Soviets”, “Putin”, “communism”, “political system”, but of “Russians”, who, according to the West, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation, are “Russians”, since they lived and live in the Russian Empire, the USSR, the Russian Federation. And in this sense, “there are no differences in the sound of ‘Russian’ and ‘Russian’ for the outside world” [Yakunin, 2013, p. 27–28]. One can endlessly argue about terms and concepts, but, according to Mettan, with whom it is impossible not to agree, “the term ‘Russophobia’ seems more understandable” [Mettan, 2016, p. 12, app.].

As S. G. Kara-Murza emphasizes, Russophobia is “a wide range of negative feelings and attitudes towards Russians, from fear to hatred”. It is based on various

“*phobias* — fears and envy of *others*”. “This is a big ideological concept, an integral part of *Eurocentrism* — the doctrine underlying the Western worldview, according to which there is one *civilization* in the world — the West (not in the geographical, but in the cultural sense)” [Kara-Murza, 2015, p. 6].

RUSSOPHOBIA AS AN IDEOLOGY

The connection between Russophobia and ideology was very well shown by O. B. Nemensky: “Russophobia is an ideology of Western origin, asserting the evil nature of the Russian people, which is endowed with some unique properties that determine its craving for everything vile. Russians seem incapable of everything that constitutes human dignity among other peoples, and this is explained genetically and culturally and historically. The logic of Russophobia is based on the opposition of Russian and European as bad and good. In connection with these properties, Russians as a people are seen as fundamentally hostile to the West, and Russia as an essentially different, alien civilization. It appears to be an existential enemy of the West and everything that is perceived in Western culture as specifically ‘Western’ — freedom, democracy, human rights, etc. From this, conclusions are drawn about the need to fight Russia and destroy everything that constitutes Russianness — physical or cultural, depending on specific interpretations” [Nemensky, 2014, p. 3].

In turn, R. V. Mikhailov draws attention to the fact that Russophobia is not just a special case of xenophobia, “it is a complex, complex, multilevel ideological system aimed at discrediting the fundamental foundations of what is commonly called the ‘Russian World’ in modern political practice... against the value foundations of our identity” [Mikhailov, 2015a, p. 74; Mikhailov, 2015b, p. 98–107].

Indeed, Russophobia was formed as a big ideological myth [Shirinyants, 2019, p. 115–130], based on the idea of a non-Christian, barbaric, Asian, despotic country, whose kings are unpredictable in their actions and therefore incompetent tyrants, and the people are slavishly subjugated to power, stupid and pathologically cruel. And this Asian empire seeks to conquer enlightened Europe, claims world domination: “whenever,” notes Kara-Murza, “when Russia was involved in a European or world war, even if defensive, domestic, Western elite was seized with a paranoid fear that the result would be a Russian invasion that would engulf Europe” [Kara-Murza, 2015, p. 13]. He is echoed by Leonid Lux, who notes the fear of the “invincible” Russian Empire surpassing the West [Lux, 1993, p. 176–177].

P. L. Karabushchenko drew attention to another important aspect of the existence of Russophobia in the history of politics and thought. Not quite correctly [Karabushchenko, 2021, p. 7, 4] defining Russophobia as “a kind of chimera (collection of fears) formed by the sum of phobias that arises on the basis of cultural and political perception of Russia as an enemy” [Karabushchenko, 2021, p. 3], saying that Russophobia is “a kind of pseudo-ideological chimera that permanently arises from national enemies and geopolitical rivals of Russia as the main ideological means in the general mechanism for containing the imaginary ‘Russian threat’, summarizing the descriptions of signs of Russophobia existing in the literature and agreeing with the main theses of the authors who have studied Russophobia as an anti-Russian pro-

ject (the irrational nature of Russophobia, fear of the Russian threat, slander against Russia and the Russian people, distortion of history, etc.), Karabushchenko asks the question “Is there a fundamental difference between Russophobia and the anti-Russian campaign?” Answering the question posed, he correctly emphasizes the semantic difference between these concepts that are close in meaning and meaning: “if Russophobia is often emotional, eclectic, irrational psychopathic in nature, then the anti-Russian campaign (politics) is systemic, rational, clearly defined goal and the choice of means for solving the set task” [Karabuschenko, 2021, p. 3].

OUTBURSTS OF RUSSOPHOBIA, RUSSOPHOBIC TECHNIQUES AND THEIR POLITICAL ESSENCE

Pointing to the irrational nature of Russophobia, Martin Malia finds significant fluctuations in the perception of Russia as the “antithesis” of European civilization and identifies two periods in the 19th — early 20th centuries: 1815–1855 (“Russia as an Eastern despotism”) and 1855–1914 (“Return to Europe”) [Malia, 1999, p. 7, 157, 168]. In our opinion, there were significantly more periods or outbursts of Russophobia, and the history of European politics and thought of the 19th — early 20th centuries was not limited to the rejection of Russia as an “eastern despotism” or recognition of its “returning to Europe”. The periods of Russophobic hysteria usually coincided with the strengthening or weakening of the Russian state and did not occur in different countries at the same time, which was determined both by political and geographical factors and historical circumstances, primarily by the nature of international relations these countries and Russia. Mettan, in particular, wrote about this, considering the content of Russophobia. He correctly noted that “hatred of Russia is a mixed feeling”. This hatred appears in passive and active forms. The passive is expressed in the desire to profit from the sudden weakness of Russia, the active comes to life when Russia gains strength.

By analogy with other types of xenophobia, Russophobia is characterized by the same techniques. This is emphasizing the difference, asserting Western superiority and using stereotypes to make judgments [Mettan, 2016, p. 18, 20]. Modern authors addressing the topic of Russophobia highlight the characteristic features of this phenomenon, among which, for example, falsification of data, the reporting of ridiculous information about Russia and Russians, the use of various kinds of fakes. Russophobic writers usually replicate “clichéd ideas about Russia” (an expression by L. Lux), using all sorts of means to describe the infernal evil of the “Muscovites”, their Asian atrocities, pathological cruelty, etc., etc., they use “technologies of psychological warfare” (an expression by S. G. Kara-Murza). In general, the essence of Russophobia boils down to a certain set of anti-Russian clichés, negative stereotypes, which, in fact, constitute Russophobia. And the use of all the techniques of manipulation by the reader — forgery, falsification of documents, hoaxes, half-truths, etc., generates the effect of the illusion of truth — repeated lies become true. Apparently, this is largely due to the long life of Russophobia in the history and politics of foreign countries.

It should also be noted that neither the volume of Russophobic writings nor their genre features, as a rule, are able to change the initially set context and the striking

stereotyping of plots and images that literally permeate anti-Russian texts for many centuries. The true reason for such stereotyping is related to the fact that the writers of Russophobic texts, regardless of the level of intelligence and structural features of the plots, perform the same task — to contribute in every possible way to the falsification of Russian history, public thought, national mentality, not to mention strategic plans for the destruction of the Russian state with all the peoples inhabiting it. That is why the politicians and intellectuals involved in these processes are constantly forced — spontaneously or quite purposefully — to descend to the level of primitive propaganda, leveling logical arguments in favor of ideological dogmas.

DEFINITION OF RUSSOPHOBIA

S. M. Sergeev tried to give a “conventional” definition of Russophobia, arguing that its essential features are: “1. Russians have a certain ontological and/or genetic inferiority; 2. Existential hatred or fear towards them; 3. Systematic and conscious desire to harm them, not good; 4. ...ignoring the basic interests and problems of the Russian people, affecting its overwhelming majority” [Sergeev, 2012]. The most universal definition of Russophobia, in our opinion, is given in the Memorandum of the Expert Center of the World Russian People’s Council “On Russophobia” (2015): “**Russophobia** is hostility, hatred towards Russia and Russians, towards manifestations of their ethno-cultural, religious and national-state identity”. Here, the ideological nature of Russophobia is noted and a clear set of dogmas of the Russophobic doctrine is highlighted, representing Russia as a world pole of evil threatening all mankind: “Russia is an aggressive state. Its enormous size is the result of its immanent aggressiveness; Russia is a xenophobic society, a ‘prison of the people’. Russians are hostile to their neighbors and cruelly exploit national minorities; Russia is a space of slavery and unfreedom. The rights and opportunities of the human person in Russia are fatally limited; Russians do not have their own opinions, their beliefs are entirely the product of official propaganda (to the point that Russians are perceived not as individuals, but as elements of a soulless state machine); Russia is a poor, backward country. The reasons for this are Russian laziness, drunkenness and the economic inefficiency of an overly influential state” [Memorandum...]. All this set was actively used in the 15th–21st centuries by French, British, German, American, Polish, Japanese, etc. authors who assumed the role of “experts” on Russia and the “threat” emanating from it.

CONCLUSION

In 2014, Nemensky noted that “the main manifestations of Russophobia — the projection of all negative human traits on Russians, the desire to impose a sense of guilt on Russians for the historical heritage of Russia, discriminatory practices based on the denial of equality to Russians by national or linguistic criteria, etc. — ultimately come down to the ban of Russia and Russians in the right to exist” [Nemensky, 2014, p. 23]. His statement is consonant with the prophetic words of the outstanding Russian philosopher A. A. Zinoviev, who in 2004 spoke harshly

about the falsification of historical facts and history in general, when “the past is retro-predictable by the present” [Zinoviev, 2021, p. 325]. Showing the connection between historical falsification, which has been elevated to the rank of historical politics in the West, and Russophobia, Zinoviev pointed out that “even now such falsification is planned, and with regard to Russians especially carefully. I emphasize: it was quite deliberately planned to completely expunge the Russians as a special great people from the history. The whole history of mankind will be falsified so that no trace of us will remain. This process has already begun. We were considered while we were a superpower, when we competed with the West and threatened it, when we could monitor how we were portrayed, when we ourselves could falsify their history for our purposes. And as soon as the USSR and Soviet communism collapsed, as soon as the comprehensive collapse of Russia began, the attitude towards us changed dramatically.

They began to present us in the most terrifying form, as fools, thieves, lackeys, incompetents, criminals, etc. From the culture, they began to mention only what is the scope of Western pseudo-culture. The achievements of the past, which shook the world not so long ago, began to be deliberately hushed up and stolen. A conscious and thoroughly developed installation has come into force, to bring us down to the level of the most primitive peoples of the planet.

Of course, it is hard to believe that the intention to completely exclude us from the historical memory of mankind is feasible. After all, the distortions of history, one way or another, are exposed. Unmasked, but not any. You can expose a separate lie. But when there are millions and billions of them, when they are selected and combined, when this is done from year to year, from decade to decade, when millions of professionally trained people are engaged in falsification, fabulous techniques and specially developed falsification techniques are used, when billions of people are ideologically fooled from generation to generation, there is no chance to overcome this world stream of lies and restore the truth” [Zinoviev, 2021, p. 327–328].

Zinoviev’s prophecy is completely devoid of optimism, but it warns us of the danger of being erased from history. Only a smart, strong and independent Russia, defending its national interests and civilizational values, can resist this world flow of lies.

References

- Bagdasaryan V.E. *Anti-Russian historical myths*. St. Petersburg: Piter Publ., 2016. 384 p. (In Russian)
- Communism, anti-communism, Russophobia in post-Soviet Russia*. 2nd ed., add., aut. team.: P.P. Apyshko et al. Moscow: Mir filosofii Publ., Algoritm Publ., 2021. 607 p. (In Russian)
- Diesen G. *Russophobia: Propaganda in International Politics*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. 315 p.
- Gleason J.H. *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950. 314 p.
- Gutorov V.A., Shirinyants A.A. “Russophobia”: word and meanings. *Tetradī po konservatizmu*, 2023, no. 1, pp. 59–65. (In Russian)
- Gutorov V.A., Shirinyants A.A. On some features of theoretical discussions about communism in the 21st century (reflections on the book *Communism. Anti-communism. Russophobia* / Auth. team:

- P.P. Apryshko and others. Moscow: Mir filosofii Publ., Algoritm Publ., 2019. 495 p.). *Voprosy filosofii*, 2020, no. 9, pp. 64–74. (In Russian)
- Ilyin I. A. *Our tasks. Articles 1948–1954*: in 2 vols, vol. 1. Paris: Russian All-Military Union, 1956. 345 p. (In Russian)
- Karabuschenko P. L. *Russophobia: the history of one chimera: monograph*. Moscow, INFRA-M Publ., 2021. 327 p. (In Russian)
- Kara-Murza S. G. *Russophobia of the West. Outlines of global transformations: politics, economics, law*, 2015, iss. 1, pp. 6–14. (In Russian)
- Kurginova D. Yu. On the Origins and Essence of Sovietophobia (Reflections on the Work of William Bullitt “The Great Globe Itself: An Introduction to International Relations”). *Bulletin of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia. Russia and the world*, 2022, no. 1 (31), pp. 138–151. (In Russian)
- Lux L. On the emergence of Russophobia in the West. *Polis. Political Studies*, 1993, no. 1, pp. 173–178. (In Russian)
- Malia M. *Russia under Western eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1999. 514 p.
- Memorandum of the expert center of the World Russian People’s Council on Russophobia. Interfax-religion*. Available at: <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=documents&div=1259> (accessed: 07.03.2023). (In Russian)
- Mettan G. *Russia and the West: a Thousand-year war: the history of Russophobia from Charlemagne to the Ukrainian crisis*. Moscow: Paulsen Publ., 2016. 462 p. (In Russian)
- Mikhailov R. V. New trends in the ideology of Russophobia. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*, 2015a, vol. 13, no. 3 (42), pp. 98–107. (In Russian)
- Mikhailov R. V. Russophobia today. *SCHOLA-2015: Proceedings of the Third International Scientific Conference “Politics in texts — texts in politics: the science of the history of ideas and doctrines”*. Moscow: Politicheskaja entsiklopediia Publ., 2015b, pp. 73–77. (In Russian)
- Myrikova A. V., Shirinyants A. A. “Internal” Russophobia and the “Polish Question” in Russia of the 19th century. *Problem analysis and state management design: political science, economics, law*, 2015, vol. 8, no. 1 (39), pp. 15–27. (In Russian)
- Nemensky O. B. *Russophobia: RISS Analytical Reviews*, iss. 5. Moscow: RISS Publ., 2014. 48 p. (In Russian)
- Pogodin M. P. The second report to the Minister of Public Education about the journey of 1842, mainly in relation to the Slavs. In: Pogodin M. P. *Selected works*. Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaja entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN) Publ., 2010a, pp. 211–228. (In Russian)
- Pogodin M. P. To Countess B.....oy, about the outbreak of war (1853, December 7.). In: Pogodin M. P. *Selected works*. Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaja entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN) Publ., 2010b, pp. 265–273. (In Russian)
- Sergeev S. M. *What is Russophobia?* 21 January, 2012. Available at: <https://www.apn.ru/index.php?newsid=25768> (accessed: 07.03.2023). (In Russian)
- Shafarevich I. R. Russophobia. In: Shafarevich I. R. *Does Russia have a future: Publicism*. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel’ Publ., 1991, pp. 389–487. (In Russian)
- Shevryev S. P. A Russian’s View of Modern Education in Europe. In: Shevryev S. P. *Selected works*. Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaja entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN) Publ., 2010, pp. 171–222. (In Russian)
- Shirinyants A. A. “Internal” Russophobia and the “Ostsee Question” in Russia in the 19th Century. *Bulletin of the Russian Nation*, 2014, no. 2, pp. 35–47. (In Russian)
- Shirinyants A. A. “Rus, where are you going?” Myths in culture and politics. *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne*, 2019, no. 4, pp. 115–130.
- Shirinyants A. A., Sorokopudova O. E. “The Russian question”: French Russo-phobia in the 19th century. *Bulletin of the Moscow State Regional University*, 2014, no. 2. Available at: <https://vestnik-mgou.ru/ru/Articles/Doc/555> (accessed: 07.03.2023). (In Russian)
- Shirinyants A. A., Sorokopudova O. E. “The Russian question”: French Russophobia in the 19th century. Article two. *Bulletin of the Moscow State Regional University*, 2022, no. 4. Available at: <https://vestnik-mgou.ru/ru/Articles/Doc/555> (accessed: 07.03.2023). (In Russian)

Szvak G. What is Russophobia? *History of socio-political thought: half a century of teaching and research: a collection of articles and materials for the 50th anniversary of the Department of the History of Socio-Political Doctrines, Faculty of Political Science, Lomonosov Moscow State University*. Moscow: Moscow University Press, 2022, pp. 142–147. (In Russian)

Russian issue in the history of politics and thought. Anthology (ed. by A.Yu. Shutov, A.A. Shirinyants). *Notebooks on Conservatism*, 2015, no. 2, pp. 175–207. (In Russian)

The Rise of Anti-Americanism, ed. by B. O'Connor, M. Griffiths. London; New York: Routledge, 2006. 225 p.

Tsygankov A. P. *Russophobia: Anti-Russian Lobby and American Foreign Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Publ., 2009. 240 p.

Tyutchev F.I. Materials for the treatise “Russia and the West”. Materials for chapter VI. Russia. *Russian socio-political thought: F. I. Tyutchev*, ed. by A.A. Shirinyants; auth.-comp. A.V. Myrikova. Moscow, Sotsial'no-politicheskaia mysl' Publ., 2020a, pp. 167–168. (In Russian)

Tyutchev F.I. Russia and Germany. Letter to Dr. Gustav Kolb, Editor of the Universal Newspaper. *Russian socio-political thought: F. I. Tyutchev*, ed. by A.A. Shirinyants; auth.-comp. A.V. Myrikova. Moscow, Sotsial'no-politicheskaia mysl' Publ., 2020b, pp. 128–143. (In Russian)

Vityazev A.K. Putinophobia in Russophobia. *Portal Proza.ru* Available at: <https://proza.ru/2020/10/04/647> (accessed: 07.03.2023). (In Russian)

Yakunin V.I. 1150th anniversary of the Russian state: historical traditions and challenges of the 21st century. *Russian statehood: historical traditions and challenges of the 21st century. Proceedings of the All-Russian Scientific and Social Conf.*, September 19, 2012, Veliky Novgorod; Moscow, 2013, pp. 27–28. (In Russian)

Yeltsin B.N. *Speech to the US Congress: “God bless America! And Russia”*, 1992, 17 June. Available at: <https://mediamera.ru/post/25615> (accessed: 07.03.2023). (In Russian)

Zinoviev A.A. Falsification of history. *Communism, anti-communism, Russophobia in post-Soviet Russia*, 2nd ed., add. Moscow: Mir filosofii Publ., Algoritm Publ., 2021. P.325–328

Gutorov Vladimir Alexandrovich — Dr. Sci. in Philosophy; gut-50@mail.ru

Myrikova Anna Valerievna — PhD in Political Sciences; an_my@mail.ru

Shirinyants Alexander Andreevich — Dr. Sci. in Political Sciences; jants@yandex.ru

Received: February 13, 2023

Accepted: March 7, 2023

For citation: Gutorov V.A., Myrikova A.V., Shirinyants A.A. Russophobia concept in modern political discourse. *Political Expertise: POLITEX*, 2023, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 166–177. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu23.2023.202>