



MOSCOW SCHOOL OF POLITICAL STUDIES



A FEW WORDS *from the Director*

Elena Nemirovskaya



The reality of Russia today is that, more than 12 years after the demise of communism, we are still struggling to establish new civil, economic and legal institutions appropriate to Russia's culture and conditions. We are making progress as we strive to reconcile conflicting aspirations: while we desire change, we also want stability. Our school has, for the past thirteen years, pursued the objective of transforming Russia into a truly open and democratic civil society which functions effectively. The school is an instrument of social and political enlightenment, striving to cope with new circumstances and to keep pace with the development of society. At our seminars, during open discussions of the most important and complex problems of modern times, we are continually learning how to think freely and to take responsibility for our own words and actions, for example.

Immanuel Kant was once asked: "Do we now live in an enlightened age?" "No," he replied. "But we do live in an age of enlightenment". Modelling my own words on Kant's, I am tempted to say that today we live, not in an age of democracy, but in an age of continuing democratisation. This democratisation is accompanied by a dangerous commercialisation of all fields of human activity, including culture, education and art. But the dangers which democratisation may entail do not absolve us from the never-ending task of trying to build a world based on the principles of freedom, prosperity and justice. While justice is an abstract principle, it is one that the human conscience urges us to adhere to.

For many decades the Russian people have mistrusted their authorities. **Trust springs from the free efforts of citizens - and it can only start to exist once there is dialogue with the authorities in the public arena.**

Russia's underdeveloped culture of civil interaction is a long-standing problem for us, with little dialogue taking place between citizens and institutions, between society and the State. This stems from our lack of experience of compromise, partnership and tolerance. It is difficult for dialogue, partnership and tolerance to get established in a country with a long history of conflict between civil society and the authorities. As we now call on our authorities to shoulder civil responsibilities not deeply rooted in Russian tradition, we cannot abdicate our individual responsibility for helping to shape the necessary cultural and psychological changes. In order to master the culture of partnership, **we as citizens need to make a constant effort, drawing on all our reserves of determination and conviction and rising above short-term difficulties.**

School team

The MSPS has a team of a dozen professionals. Mrs Elena Nemirovskaya is the Director of the School, which she founded.

MISSIONS *and objectives*



The Moscow School of Political Studies is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit-making organisation, established in December 1992 with the support of the Council of Europe. **Its mission is to contribute to the development of an open democratic society and a nation of citizens in Russia, based on respect for the rule of law, strict observance of human rights and encouragement of civic initiatives.**

Through its seminars, publications, and other activities, the school aims to make the younger generation of Russian political and business leaders aware of new ways of thinking and new approaches to political processes in the public sphere. It places a heavy emphasis on developing a better understanding of Russia's relations with Europe, the United States and western institutions. The school is regarded as an intellectual home by thousands of young leaders from every part of Russia and from several countries of the former Soviet Union. **The school's motto is "Dare to Think".**

SELECTION *process*

Seminar participants are carefully selected by the school's selection committee. **The ratio in 2006 was three applicants for every place.** The MSPS website is one of the main instruments for recruiting new participants. Website users have access to user-friendly on-line application forms for submission to the school's managers. Over 25% of members of the Federal Class of 2005 had applied to the school via the website. **The corresponding figure for 2006 was higher, at 30%.**

ACTIVITIES *and events*

In 2005, the school held 12 seminars, 5 two-day round table discussions, 5 one-day masterclasses, and 5 one-day workshops (giving a total of 85 days of activity). **It published 6 books, 4 issues of its magazine and one issue of the newsletter.** The school's alumni association held its annual meeting and set up some regional branches. Over the past year, the school's website has received a total of **over 264,000 visits.**





EVALUATION

Over the past few years, the Moscow School of Political Studies has realised the vital need for a system embracing both objective monitoring of its effectiveness and impact indicators. Such a system is needed in order to conduct a proper evaluation of the school's own work, its influence on Russia's political atmosphere and the role it plays in enlightening Russia's regional and federal political elite.

The school uses a variety of methods to measure the outcome of its programmes. Among them are:

- **Questionnaires.** The school regularly asks participants to complete special questionnaires evaluating each event. On the basis of their evaluation, the school tries to improve its programme structure and selection process.
- **Group reflection.** The final session of each federal, regional or issue-based seminar is devoted to a discussion of the seminar itself.
- **Permanent feedback from participants.** The school regularly distributes its on-line and published materials to its alumni and receives feedback from them.
- **Alumni news.** Although the career choices and career development of the school's alumni are not an end in themselves, the school believes that alumni do make significant progress in their subsequent careers.
- **Monitoring of media coverage.** The school monitors the press for references to its activities.
- **Number of website visits.** The number of visits to the school's website has been one of the best indicators of the growing awareness of the MSPS at home and abroad.

The school constantly reviews and renews its evaluation techniques, bringing new effectiveness and impact indicators into use.



FUNDING

The MSPS is supported by a number of international donor organisations, private foundations, corporations and individuals. Among them are the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Swedish Agency for International Development, the Smith Richardson Foundation, USAID.

ALUMNI

In 2005, the focus was on development of the alumni association, ie the setting up and growth of regional alumni associations, clubs and societies. Throughout 2005, efforts were focused on encouraging them to develop as institutions, forging links and working closely with regional administrations, parliaments and the social and business sectors, drawing on partnerships with, and experience from, EU countries and the USA. The work done encompassed a strengthening of horizontal ties, personal and professional link-ups via the internet, off-line meetings and the production of mailing lists.

The number of civil initiatives by students and alumni has grown significantly during the year to a current total of over 170 public organisations and groups. These include not only education centres following the methodological model of the Moscow School of Political Studies, but also independent newspapers and web-based outlets, children's activity clubs, NGO advice centres and many others.

Networking of these organisations has become a major task for the school, which is currently carrying out a project to unite all these civic initiatives on its website, thereby creating a forum for discussions and exchanges of experience.

On 12 October 2005, the annual meeting of the MSPS alumni association was held in Moscow. **Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Henry Kissinger attended as an expert.** The lecture he gave focused on the specific characteristics of international politics in the 21st century and the role played by Russia. More than 150 alumni and prominent guests, high-ranking officials and business leaders attended the meeting and subsequent discussions.

The annual meeting of the alumni association is scheduled to coincide with a meeting with one of the school's eminent expert speakers. Among the objectives of such meetings are a mobilisation of the alumni community to achieve a further extension of democratic ideals and values; a strengthening of networking activity and mutual links among member alumni; exchanges of experience of citizens' activities and projects arranged and led by alumni in their respective regions; the drawing of media attention to the event and to the activities of the school, and the drawing of more public attention to the school.



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