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### PUTIN'S RUSSIA IN *DER SPIEGEL* BEFORE 11/9/2001 – TOPICS AND TENDENCIES

*One among the most influential of Germany's print media, the weekly magazine DER SPIEGEL and its editor-in-chief Rudolf Augstein have traditionally taken a very marked interest in Russian affairs. This paper presents an analysis of the magazine's coverage of Russian politics and society during the first nine months of 2001, i. e. before Muslim fundamentalist terrorism led to a re-assessment of Russia's role and image on the world stage. For this quantitative and qualitative analysis of topics and the image of each topic an original system of evaluation was developed, the purpose of which is to trace stereotypes on Russia in German public opinion as reflected in the country's media.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Russia, politics and society, image, cultural borders.*

The weekly magazine *DER SPIEGEL* from Hamburg is the most important left-wing liberal print medium and was Germany's most often quoted medium during the first half of 2001<sup>1</sup>. Playing a decisive role in the formation of public opinion, it is popular with domestic and foreign politicians. Known for its critical attitude in the coverage of all political schools of thought, the magazine was chosen as a reference on news coverage in Germany for its marked interest in Eastern European affairs. This article is concerned with what the German press perceives as the Eastern border of Europe – and what collective features of a society define this border –, describing, which topics from Russian society are presented to the German public as relevant. Accompanying motives and stereotypes accompanying shall be pointed out on occasion. Two editorial board's agencies with three residents in Moscow and in Warsaw are responsible for information from an area of an

estimated 215,43 mln. inhabitants (RU:146,38; UKR:51,22; BY:10,11; LT:3,69; LV:2,52; EST:1,51 mln. inhabitants)<sup>2</sup>. The reader's rough orientation about e.g. Russia can thus not be achieved without recurrent motives and stereotypes. The interrelation of cliché and newly supplied actual information requires a certain harmony of both components. The reader is thus presented mostly with information designed to fit into his conception of the world and, consequently, the journal's texts allow conclusions about the public's already established idea of Eastern Europe. What is rejected there is obviously not perceived as European.

For our survey of topics and motifs 26 editions of *DER SPIEGEL* (50% of 2001's editions) between 1.1.2001 and 15.10.2001 were randomly chosen. The contents of all texts were categorized into: 1) main topic (MT) – articles/reports, in which a news item on Russia makes up the main information contents;

<sup>1</sup> 579 quotations in 16 media (compare: Bild – 428, ZDF – 246, F.A.Z – 232), source: "MedienTenor" 01.01 – 30.06.2001. Quoted according to *DER SPIEGEL* Nr. 30/01, 23.7.01. The imprint gives no number for the magazine's circulation.

<sup>2</sup> Source: HARENBERG, B. (ed.). *Aktuell '99. Harenberg Lexikon der Gegenwart*. Dortmund, (Harenberg Lexikon Verlag) 1998, p. 424, 461, 464, 490, 514, 520.

2) secondary topic (ST) – articles / reports, in which a news item on Russia makes up a substantial part of its content of relevant information; 3) topoi – an idea / a concept in connection with Russia which is applied without further discussion of its truth. Topoi make stereotypes by their repetition as text module without decisive function for the text's information contents. For more complex topoi the term motif shall be used. Topic modules which do not independently appear in texts but which constantly accompany country-specific information are topoi / motifs and stereotypes. The distinction is rather a quantitative-conventional one. Topic modules which predominantly occur in a purely accompanying function are stereotypes. Topic modules which predominantly occur as MT of texts are the topics of the day on which the reader receives actual information. Among 26 editions of *DER SPIEGEL* 46 texts with Russian MT were found in 19 editions – all before the terror attacks of 11<sup>th</sup> September.

### I.a. The rating system

The 46 texts found in 19 editions<sup>3</sup> were examined, extracting MT and ST. Thus 35 different topics were recorded, of which 26 appear as MT and 24 appear as ST. 14 or 40% out of 35 occur in MT as well as ST function. Each topic's qualitative grading by the texts' authors (journalists) was assessed and visualized on a nine-grade scale: ++:++/+:+/:o:o:/-:-: -/---:— or 1:2:3:4:5:6:7:8:9 where ++ (1) indicates "very good", "very efficient", "very desirable" etc., i.e. positive grades, whereas — (9) signifies "very bad", "very few", "very weak", "to be rejected" etc. This assessment is based on a system of values accepting parliamentary democracy, pluralism etc. as norms.

### I.b. The main topics and secondary topics of press coverage on Russia

The MT are listed here according to their frequency: A – 6 times (in 13% of all texts) referred to: Putin's character as an official; B – 4 times (8,7%): freedom of the press in Russia, space; C – 3 times (6,5%): Russia's geo-strategic interests; D – twice (4,3%): Kaliningrad, secretiveness of Russian authorities, the Russians' national character, compensation for WW II forced labourers, weapons technology, Russian aviation, natural phenomena/natural disasters; E – once (2,2%) referred to: Russia's debts abroad, Putin's private character, medicine and social issues, looted German art in Russia, historical characters, climate for foreign investment in Russia, the war in the Caucasus, technical disasters, crime and corruption, art and culture, ecology, Russia's *duma*, Russian energy and commodities combines (oil, gas, electricity), World War II, social / living conditions in Russia.

The ST listed according to their frequency: A – 12 times (26,1%) referred to: social / living conditions in Russia; B – 11 times (23,9%): the activities of Russia's secret services; C – 10 times (21,7%): Putin's efficiency as a statesman; D – 9 times (19,6%): the Russians' national character; E – 8 times (17,4%): Russia's geo-strategic interests; F – 6 times (13,0%): the (in)efficiency of the Russian administration, Russia's military; G: 5 times (10,9%): Putin's character as an official, secretiveness of Russian authorities, civil rights, the role of alcohol in family / society; H – 4 times (8,7%): climate for foreign investment in Russia, living conditions on Russia's periphery (Siberia, Far East); I – 3 times (6,5%): the war in the Caucasus, Russian energy and commodities combines, the Russian *duma*; J – twice (4,3%): medicine and social issues, technical disasters,

<sup>3</sup> *DER SPIEGEL* Nr. 1 / 01.01.01; Nr. 3 / 15.01.01; Nr. 4 / 22.01.01; Nr. 7 / 12.02.01; Nr. 8 / 19.02.01; Nr. 14 / 02.04.01; Nr. 15 / 09.04.01; Nr. 17 / 23.04.01; Nr. 18 / 30.04.01; Nr. 19 / 07.05.01; Nr. 20 / 14.05.01; Nr. 22 / 28.05.01; Nr. 23 / 02.06.01; Nr. 25 / 18.06.01; Nr. 26 / 25.06.01; Nr. 27 / 02.07.01; Nr. 28 / 09.07.01; Nr. 29 / 16.07.01; Nr. 30 / 23.07.01; Nr. 31 / 30.07.01; Nr. 33 / 13.08.01; Nr. 36 / 03.09.01; Nr. 37 / 10.09.01; Nr. 38 / 15.09.01; Nr. 41 / 08.10.01; Nr. 42 / 15.10.01. Among those Nr. 1, 4, 29, 37, 38, 41, 42 do not contain any main topics on Russia.

crime and corruption, Putin's popularity, Russia's economy in general.

**I.c. The topics in their order of importance – double count of main topics, single count of secondary topics**

Listing topics according to the frequency of their occurrence alone would not take into account their weight within the respective texts. If one counts in 46 texts MT double and ST single, the following ranking results: Putin's character as an official (6 times MT, 5 times ST = 12+5 = 17) (mentioned in 23,9% of the texts), Russia's geo-strategic interests (6+8 = 14) (23,9%), social/living conditions in Russia (2+12 = 14) (28,3%), national character (4+9 = 13) (23,9%), secretiveness of Russian authorities (4+5 = 9) (15,2%), climate for foreign investment (2+4 = 6) (10,9%), Kaliningrad and weapons technology (4+1 = 5 each) (6,5% each), Russia's energy and commodities combines, Russia's duma and the war in the Caucasus (2+3 = 5 for each) (8,7% each), medicine and social issues, crime and corruption, technical disasters (2+2 = 4 for each) (6,5% each), and art and culture (2+1 = 3) (4,3%). All topics are now listed, including double count of main topics. The aim is to visualize the news topics (appear only as MT), the core topics (as MT and as ST) and the topoi / motifs / stereotypes (only as ST) within one list, i.e. to visualize each topics "total share" of the "overall meaningful contents". This "order of overall significance" of topics runs thus: Putin's character as an official (17) (in 23,9% of 46 texts), Russia's geo-strategic interests (14) (23,9%), social/living conditions in Russia (14) (28,3%), the Russians' national character (13) (23,9%), the activities of Russia's secret services (0 MT+11 ST = 11) (23,9%), Putin's efficiency as a statesman (0 MT+10 ST = 10) (21,7%), the secretiveness of Russian authorities (9) (15,2%), freedom of the press

in Russia and space (4 MT+0 ST = 8 for each) (8,7% each), the climate for foreign investment in Russia (6) (10,9%), Russia's military (0 MT+6 ST = 6) (13,0%), the (in)efficiency of the Russian administration (0 MT+6 ST = 6) (13,0%), Kaliningrad (6,5%), weapons technology (6,5%), Russia's energy and commodities combines, Russia's duma and the war in the Caucasus (8,7% each) (5 for each), civil rights in Russia (0 MT+5 ST = 5) (10,9%), the role of alcohol in family and society (0 MT+5 ST = 5) (10,9%), compensation for Russian forced labourers (in Germany during WW II), Russian aviation, natural phenomena and natural disasters (2 MT+0 ST = 4 for each) (4,3% each), medicine and social issues, crime and corruption, technical disasters (4 for each) (6,5% each), living conditions on Russia's periphery (0 MT+4 ST = 4) (8,7%), art and culture (1 MT+ 1 ST = 3) (4,3%), Russia's foreign debt, World War II., art looted from Germany during WW II., Putin's character as an individual (1 MT+0 ST = 2 for each) (2,2% each), Russia's economy in general and Putin's popularity (0 MT+2 ST = 2 for each) (4,3%). Topics frequently referred to as MT have an important function as news topic of the day; topics often referred to as ST must be regarded as the news coverage's standard motifs. The mentioning of topics exclusively as ST points to their stereotype character (for instance: Russia as a state with high public profile of the secret services, Putin as an efficient politician in a largely inefficient country etc.).

**II. The tone of DER SPIEGEL's news coverage – the five most important topics**

Evidently, examining the tone of the news coverage leads to a qualitative assessment of the magazine's image of Russia as a state and society. The topics are ordered according to their significance established in the previous paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> In a report on Byelorus' armed forces from 6<sup>th</sup> December 2001 Byelorussian State Television used the formula '*Bojatsja – značit uvažajut*' (Once they are afraid of us, they treat us with respect). This sounds like the essence of Russia's military doctrine.

**a) Putin's character as an official**

is by far the most important topic concerning Russia and figures as MT in six texts (*DER SPIEGEL* Nr.8, p.164 "Ljudmilla staunt": +/- due to ambivalent rating; Nr.14, p.138 "Bilanz eines Buerokraten": o/-; Nr.17, p.135 "Putins Kommissar": o/-; Nr.23, p.142 "Frisches Blut fuer den Kreml": o/-; Nr.33, p.19 "Putin kommt nach Deutschland": o and Nr.33, p.116 "Putin im Glueck": o/-). The average as MT is a slightly negative 5.7: Putin is portrayed as an intelligent (if not cunning) and capable political leader, disciplined and able to assert himself, who prefers methods of manipulation and intimidation (secret service background). Putin's actions are determined by rationality, not emotion; his superior motivation are the interests of the Russian state. He is also a manipulator of his own public image; lacking direct, spontaneous emotionality, he seems cool and devious. His intelligence is considerable but thus not really fathomable. According to his own testimony, Putin's aim is a form of social democracy in Russia within the next 10 to 20 years. His acceptance of pluralism and democracy remains questionable, though, as they seem incompatible with his authoritarian methods. Putin's internal policy is presented as corresponding with the traditions of the Tsars', his foreign policy as analogous to Soviet examples. As ST, Putin's character as an official figures in 5 texts (*DER SPIEGEL* Nr.3, p.86 "Basar im Kreml": o/-; p.154 "Bulle mit Degen": —; Nr.17, p.124 "Maechtige Waffe": -; Nr.19, p.176 "Grenzen ziehen": —) with a strongly negative rating of 7.4. Russia under Putin appears as a state, where liberties exist thanks to foreign pressure and which offers its ordinary citizens little reason for optimism in political and economic respect. In the first half of 2001 assessment of V. Putin's policies is centered on freedom of the press and civil rights. Putin earns respect in Germany for his political offers (end of the Cold War; projects of European co-operation) and by his supremely good command of the German language.

**b) Russia's geo-strategic interests**

appear three times as MT. It is necessary to distinguish between the authors' assessment of Russia's geo-strategic position and those authors' understanding for Russian foreign policy (*DER SPIEGEL* Nr.14, p.135 "Frontalangriff der USA" – situation: -, understanding:+/o; Nr.23, p.143 "Rueckzug gegen Bares" – situation:o/-, understanding: -; Nr.33, p.181 "Chronik 4. Bis 10. August. Ruestung. Russlands Praesident Putin und der nordkoreanische Staatschef Kim (...) – situation:-, understanding:o). Where it figures as MT, Russia's geo-strategic position is considered a disadvantageous 6.6; the authors' understanding for Russia's policies is 5.3 - about neutral. Russia is targeted by an aggressive U.S. foreign policy, affecting several core domains of Russia's strategic interest simultaneously, which would make Russia a second rate power in world politics (the U.S. missile defence project, the U.S. interests in the commodities of central Asia and the Caucasus and corresponding political interests, and – not expressly mentioned here – NATO expansion into eastern Europe). The pursuit of American interests is reckless and apparently ignorant of consequences. An authoritarian course in Russian domestic policy may be interpreted as an answer to Western "subversion" by propagation of pluralistic concepts with the aim of weakening the Russian state. Blackmail towards weaker neighbours is presented as a *leitmotif* of Russia's foreign policy. On the whole, Russia's claim to major power status seems founded exclusively on her military capability<sup>4</sup>. Russia's economic capacity cannot match this claim, however, increasing sales of energy and commodities give cause for hope. Russian society is regarded as unstable and Putin as a leader pressed for time. Unable to effectively fend off American pressure, the magazine's coverage evokes an image of Russia as the sick man of Europe, who suggests unexpected alliances in order remain a power to be reckoned with. *DER SPIEGEL* accepts this foreign policy as the pursuit of legitimate

national interest of a state on the defensive. Thus the magazine accepts the priority of the state's coherence over transparency, candour, civil rights – i.e. *realpolitik* in journalism. Russia's geo-strategic interests figure as ST in eight texts (*DER SPIEGEL* Nr.3, p.116 “Unerwünschtes Jubiläum” – situation:-, understanding:o; Nr. 14, p. 138 “Bilanz eines Buerokraten” – s.: o/-, u.: o/-; Nr.20, p.145 “Pleite beim Geheimdienst” – s.: o/-, u.: o/-; Nr.30, p.146 “Kondom aus Gas” – s.: +/o, u.: o; Nr.31, p.110 “Traum und Tragoedie” – s.: -, u.: +; Nr.33, p.116 “Putin im Glueck” – s.: o/-, u.: o; Nr.36, p.138 “Geheimsache Kursk” – s.: o, u.: o). The average of ST is thus 5.9 for situation and 5.0 (exactly neutral) for understanding. All this is not favourably commented but accepted as legitimate policy. A strong point in favour of Russia's sympathy ratings are her space activities: the article “Traum und Tragoedie” may be understood as allegorical for Russia's geo-strategic position (as understood by *DER SPIEGEL*) as well as her supposed mental condition: Russia is proud of her former greatness, but foreign masters have lodged themselves in her own core areas of competence, have introduced their vulgar materialism and thus subverted the Russian society's discipline and capabilities. Russia is now forced against her will to co-operate with her former adversary and must even praise those new conditions.

### c) Social conditions and living conditions

figure twice as MT (*DER SPIEGEL* Nr.31, p.176 “Personalien. Swetlana Kowalenko, 28, (...)”, rating:-; and Nr.22, p.261 “*SPIEGEL TV*. Aufstieg im Untergang – russische Geschichten”, where the living conditions of the moneyed elite are rated ++, those of ordinary citizens o/-). The average rating for ordinary citizens' living conditions is 6.5. The texts describe inhumane treatment at work, the threat of poverty. Employers have almost unrestricted right of disposal of their employees. Social gatherings and (alcoholic) parties relieve everyday life for all social strata. Countless other adversities from everyday life in Russia

are also depicted. Social conditions etc. are twelve times referred to as ST (Nr.3, p.116 “Unerwünschtes Jubiläum” – rating:-; Nr.3, p.129 “Gymnastik im Schnee”:-; Nr.7, p.154 “Bulle mit Degen”:-; Nr.8, p.164 “Ljudmilla staunt”:-; Nr.14, p.138 “Bilanz eines Buerokraten”:-; Nr.17, p.124 “Maechtige Waffe”:-; Nr.20, p.209 “Russische Hochzeit”:-/—; Nr.19, p.206 “Truebes Waesserchen”:-; Nr.26, p.115 “Russlands Wunderkinder”:-; Nr.30, p.112 “System Tote Seelen”:-; Nr.31, p.110 “Traum und Tragoedie”:-; Nr.33, p.116 “Putin im Glueck”:-) with a very negative average of 7.4. Poverty and the authorities' restrictive mentality are described; problems with drug addiction, brutal and pre-rational methods of drug therapy; the erosion of civil rights under Putin; the ingenuity and talent of improvisation everyday life demands; poverty and general social chaos; increasing authoritarianism; despotism, antisemitism, need; unsafe food products as a result of criminal dealings; the cultural stratum's bitter poverty; the poverty of former forced labourers and the unco-operativeness of authorities (arbitrariness, jealousy, parasitism); the poverty of the former techno-scientific elite and misdirection of society (vulgar materialism), the lack of consensus on society's values; Soviet rituals in provincial areas – a very serious material, spiritual and moral crisis is being diagnosed. Stereotypical Russia is a land of chaos, poverty and lawlessness, where suffering is part of everyday life and in which the reader has no wish to live. There is no security whatsoever for the individual in Russia. The charming individual of the texts with all his constructive attitude seems helpless. His initiative ends up pointless in a web of shortages, enviousness and apathy. The Russian people, though, are depicted as capable of enduring great physical and emotional hardship, with a great talent of improvisation, indifferent to risk and generally of uncommon ability to take stress. At the same time they are resentful, treacherous towards the weak, undisciplined and irresponsible. But, still, Russian society

does not really seem heartless. Friendly and sentimental chaos seems what the reader expects from Russian society. Such a view implies a trivialization, a wish to not take its capabilities seriously: obviously it is opportune to present Russian society as paralyzed with domestic problems and unable to pose any threat. Russia claims the right to deviate from the 'mainstream of civilization' (Putin) to maintain her existence. *DER SPIEGEL* concedes this 'independent way (Sonderweg)' to Russia for the sake of European peace order. Russia confronts us with her own characteristic legal-political momentum, not following Western rules, for which according to Western standards there is no justification, but which is obviously being accepted by the populace and shows certain success. Russia's populace appears to value a strong state ('National-Etatismus') able to defend its interests higher than civil liberties. Western moral and political standards meet with certain limitations if universally (globally) applied, so caution is needed. The decision whether a people is correctly treated lies with that people and their own local standards in the first place. In the face of those seemingly paradox socio-political phenomena *DER SPIEGEL* has not yet found an adequate estimation and shifts its focus on V. Putin as a person and his achievements. Life is bad in Russia, but society still works somehow. Exitus by alcohol is presented as the individual's final escape in the face of misery of truly Russian dimensions.

#### d) The Russians' national character

figures twice as MT and nine times as ST. National character as MT figures in the text "Russische Hochzeit" (*DER SPIEGEL* Nr.20, p.209), rated in ambivalent manner +/-, and in "Gemeinsame Sühne" (Nr.27, p.130), rating: -. Average rating amounts to a moderately negative 6. This second text is a review of Solzhenitsyn's book on the history of Russia's Jews. Antisemitism and force-of-nature-type violence appear as natural traits of character of ethnic Russians (and Ukrainians). Concerning

secondary STs, the character ratings for individuals (exemplary for a social group) are far better than those of the Russians' majority, who will not let other Russians live well. Separate individual and collective ratings are thus necessary. The ST appears in the following texts: *DER SPIEGEL* Nr.3, p.129 "Gymnastik im Schnee" with a collective rating of o/-. This text describes Gulag-type methods in self-governed drug therapy. The collective appears weak-willed, egalitarian, sadistic, the therapy methods pre-rational and barbarous. Nonetheless these people are capable of bearing enormous physical hardship and capable of great self-discipline and effort where they struggle for their lives. The second text (Nr.8, p.164 "Ljudmilla staunt" – rating individual:+, collective:-) describes the Putins' private life and the conflicts which president Putin's duty involves for his wife's self-realization. Mrs. Putina is curious, sociable, non-rational, thrifty, resourceful, has talent for improvisation and an honest character. Russian women suffer from their drunkard, violent husbands (not Mrs. Putina). The Russians' majority appears envious, insidious, and displaying success in a provocative manner. Russians, according to Mrs. Putina, do not think that which they say. Russian society is a 'society of envy', not tolerating individual success. "Zurück zur Zensur" (Nr.15, p.162, rating:o/-) reports that, allegedly, half of the Russian people think there is enough or too much freedom of the press – more confirmation for an anti-liberal, collectivist-egalitarian basic tendency. Russian society, *DER SPIEGEL* hints, creates its own bondage. "Rueckzug gegen Bares" (Nr.23, p.143, rating:-) describes blackmail in foreign policy: Russia bullies Georgia with illegitimate claims. The text "Eroberer der Zarin" (Nr.25, p.136, rating:o/-) describes (18<sup>th</sup> century) great individual achievements of politicians and collective achievements of the Russian state. But the great mass of Russians is at their rulers' arbitrary disposal: reluctant, spiteful, undisciplined serfs. Achievements result from force. The text "Der Fall Barbarossa" (Nr.26,

p.148, rating:o) commemorates the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wehrmacht's Russian campaign. It presents facts of the Russian campaign and stresses the extraordinary brutality of both sides' warfare but presents no assessment of the Russians' national character. "System Tote Seelen" (Nr.30, p.112, rating individual:+, collective:—) describes the imperfect system of indemnification for former forced labourers of the NS-regime in their native country Russia. Between 20 and 45% of the funds paid by Germany are embezzled. The German side has come to terms with indemnification as a purely symbolic gesture – Russia is for Germans an unlegislated area. The checks on implementation are purely symbolic acts; payment relieves the German nation's collective sense of guilt. Around these financial transactions fraud thrives. The authentic NS-victims are presented as persons of integrity deprived of their rights. Russians' expectations that Western countries should guarantee the rights of Russian individuals present an interesting topos. "Traum und Tragodie" (Nr.31, p.110, ind.: ++, coll.: -) has been discussed elsewhere. The Russian cosmonauts (techno-elite) enjoy an exceedingly positive reputation: devoted, disciplined, cold-blooded, dignified, heroic, but unable to cope with present society. Majority society is presented in a crisis of values, with enrichment as the only definite aim. The text in Nr.31, p.176 (rating: o/-) about seamstress Svetlana K. and her working conditions under South Korean management presents sloth and lack of discipline as Russian attributes. The average individual rating in 9 texts with national character as ST is a positive 2.3; the average of collective ratings a negative 6.4.

**e) The activities of Russia's secret services are mentioned eleven times as ST (no MT).**

The services' political influence and their efficiency shall be rated based on "Putins Kommissar" (Nr.17, p.135, rating political influence:—/, efficiency: +), "Bilanz eines Buerokraten" (Nr.14, p.138, p. i.:—/, e.:+),

"Putin kommt nach Deutschland" (Nr.33, p.19, p. i.:—, e.:o), "Putin im Glueck" (Nr.33, p.116, p. i.:—, e.:+), "Pleite beim Geheimdienst" (Nr.20, p.145, p. i.:o, e.:o/-), "Frisches Blut fuer den Kreml" (Nr.23, p.142, p. i.:—, e.:o), "Bulle mit Degen" (Nr.7, p.154, p. i.:—, e.:+), "Truebes Waesserchen" (Nr.19, p.206, p. i.:—, e.:+), "Ljudmilla staunt" (Nr.8, p.164, p. i.:—, e.:++). The average for political influence is 7.2 (strong, objectionable); efficiency averages a positive 3.5. The domestic secret services are involved in political decisions and are professionally competent. They figure as Putin's lever against shady oligarchs, not individually characterized. In most cases, the services are mentioned in Putin contexts, manipulating or by-passing parliamentary/democratic procedures. The threat of an authoritarian regime is evoked, as solely the president appears to control them. The services support or undermine neighbouring states' governments according to political opportuneness. A suggested inter-connection between the services and administrative bodies turns any official information into possible disinformation. The services seem incapable to adequately assess the military situation in Chechnya. Putin relies on the implementation of his decisions through their channels and frequently interferes with administrative processes. V. Putin is an exceptionally well-informed man, and the magazine does not miss any opportunities to point out his secret service career. The topic KGB/FSB should be regarded within the broader context of official Russian authorities' intransparency. The services are depicted as more competent and more loyal to the interests of the Russian state than Russia's officialdom on the whole. The texts give the impression that it is the services in the first place who counteract social chaos.

### III. Summary survey of seven other important topics

Putin's efficiency as a statesman occurs ten times exclusively as ST with a moderately positive rating of 3.4. Putin is a "man of action"

making an inert system work by means of staff politics. The domestic secret service FSB is Putin's central support, and parliamentary decisions hardly figure. In foreign politics Putin proves professional and strong-nerved. On the whole Putin respects internationally accepted practice in foreign affairs. The Russian military is employed with "controlled irrationality" on a local scale. International military leadership is no longer possible. Open conflicts with the U.S. are disguised by the international anti-terror campaign. From weakness, Russia's diplomacy stresses moral principles and international agreements. The secretiveness of Russia's authorities appears twice as MT with a negative 7. Examples are the fate of the WW II. Swedish-Jewish diplomat Wallenberg and the desinformation campaign around the 'Kursk' disaster. Official secretiveness bears traits of manic character and serves no rational purpose. It is an essential trait of Russian-type rule. As ST secretiveness figures in seven texts with a very negative 7.8. In Russia, information is held back for unclear 'reasons of state', information is manipulated and verifying facts never leads to conclusive results. Media and law cannot safeguard the public's right to adequate information., and citizens distrust officialdom, who never trusted them. Nuclear accidents constitute a particularly sad chapter, throwing a sinister shadow on Russia's health care system. Freedom of the press occurs four times exclusively as MT with a very negative 7.3. Putin-critical media receive the opportunity to convey their virtually unmodified views to the public. According to opinion polls, 57% of Russians "favour censorship". Why remains a Russian mystery. Space effort is an important positive image-bearer, referred to on four occasions and exclusively as MT. Soviet / Russian achievements and the capacities of the Russian space effort need separate assessment. Achievements are rated a very positive 2, capacities a moderately negative 6. At present the Russian space effort lives off the technical experience acquired in Soviet times. The space elite suffer humiliation, as society and politics

no longer finance their effort. A 'stab-in-the-back' legend is being formed. The climate for investment opportunities in Russia figures once as MT with a positive 3. Moscow stock exchange developed exceedingly well in the first half of 2001. Oil and commodities shares offer splendid opportunities for specialists. Investment is mentioned four times as ST. Opportunities on the whole average 5.7; the business world's reaction 4.7. Thus the opportunities for successful business seem slightly overrated. The economic data for 2000 are: GNP increase of 7,0% (1999: 3,2%); gold and foreign currency reserve of 27,9 billion U.S.-\$ (1999: 12,5 billion); inflation rate 20,1% (1999: 36,5%); real wages increase 23,0% (1999: - 22,8%); unemployment rate 10% (1999: 11,7%), and a world market oil price of 28,40 \$ per barrel (1999: 18,20 \$). Russia's economic recovery is based on rising commodities prices and seems mid-term stable. An obstacle for Russia's incorporation into European markets is the tendency to subject her economy to the priorities of politics. The Russian military figures six times as ST, and (except the 'Kursk') is of little news value in 2001. Its competence is rated a neutral 5. The military's information policy is rated a slightly negative 5,7, but much worse on 'Kursk' and Chechnya. The Chechnyan campaign still has an exceedingly bad image, and Russia's brutal warfare is permanently criticized. Russia's military is potentially unstable due to inadequate provision and neglect, though not perceived as a threat to European peace. (In)competence of Russia's administration figures six times as ST with an extremely negative 7.8. It really is a Russian core stereotype. The majority of Russians trusts their president but not their administration. The Putin era, it is suggested, marks no large-scale change in administrative attitudes and methods. Secret services and tax police are Putin's loyal enforcers of discipline. The administration offers passive resistance, and the magazine doubts Putin's success fighting corruption and economic crime. The administration has carried

over a Soviet tradition of secrecy (especially health hazards) and is incapable of providing elementary social guarantees. Administrative law has no visible impact. Corruption occasionally causes international scandal, as in the case of NS-forced labourers from Russia,

and leads to the president's direct intervention. By virtue of his position as head of state he appears as the only competent authority of appeal against administrative misconduct in Russia. Civil society is still a far way from *DER SPIEGEL*'s Russia of 2001.

### **Klaus Fuchs**

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas  
Politikos mokslų institutas –  
Europos studijų centras

### **PUTINO RUSIJA IKI**

2001 M. RUGSĖJO 11 D. *DER SPIEGEL*  
VEIDRODYJE: TOPAI IR TENDENCIJOS

#### **Santrauka**

Vienas įtakingiausių Vokietijos spaudos leidinių – savaitraštis *Der Spiegel* ir jo vyriausiasis redaktorius Rudolf'as Augstein'as tradiciškai skiria daug dėmesio Rusijos reikalams. Straips-

nyje analizuojamos Rusijos politikai bei visuomenei skirtos savaitraščio publikacijos per devynis 2001 m. mėnesius – kol rugsėjo 11 d. islamo fundamentalistų įvykdytas teroristinis aktas Amerikoje privertė iš naujo apmąstyti Rusijos vaidmenį ir įvaizdį pasaulio arenoje. Kiekybinei ir kokybinei topų bei kiekvieno topo vaizdinių analizei sukurta originali vertinimo sistema, kuria siekiama išryškinti Rusijos stereotipus, viešpataujančius Vokietijos viešojoje nuomonėje.

**REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** Rusija, politika ir visuomenė, įvaizdis, kultūros ribos.

Gauta 2003 02 10  
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