

The International Expert Appraisalment

(Humanitarian and Intellectual Results of the Year 2006 in Russia and in the World)



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SDC-Rating (the Social Design Corporation Rating Center) presents the results of the International Expert Appraisal «Social Design – 2006» in the format of nominations. The Annual Appraisal is prepared by the Expert Council consisting of representatives of intellectual and academic circles and is aimed at in-depth analysis of the processes that are under way in the modern world, as well as at the revelation of the main trends of the global socio-political development.

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1. DISCOURSE OF THE YEAR

Anticipation of eve

The anticipation of changes could be traced in public opinion today. It is of a symbolic character and directly connected with the hope for the epoch change. There is a feeling that something new that will change human lives will come soon. Such public phenomenon, i.e. the discourse of anticipation, is the equivalent of theoretical vacuum. At present the humanity has no universal theory or ideology. It should be noted that such situation proves the nonlinear character of the global political system transformation.

2. SOCIAL DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Shinzo Abe

Elected in September, 2006, the new Japanese prime-minister began to implement a new strategy of state's development that was created by his predecessor. Shinzo Abe finally legalized the sovereignty of Japan that included inter alia the creation of the Ministry of Defense (the Chiefs of Staff Committee was formed in March, 2006). He also declared the plans for creation of the National Security Council (according to the U.S. sample). The mentioned moves can lead to the Japanese military status change and probably to the the revision of the World War II results (the settlement of territorial dispute in favor of Japan).

3. SOCIAL DIAGNOSIS

Symbolic resistance of intellectuals

The 2006 as a pre-election year showed that the intellectuals (particularly its public representatives) will resist the authorities' attempts to create a clear political discourse and declare it "stylistically false" and "artificial". For the reforms missed the political design stage and public discussion (that defines their status), they stay out of social discourse. As a result the corruption remains the only working form of social institutions because it exists even in the disoriented social system. The corrupted authorities are in some way the result of the current self-identification of intellectuals, because for them it is easier to bribe than to follow the rules.

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4. DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR

End of tolerance, decline of the European postmodernism

The cartoon scandal and the conflict over Benedict XVI's speech in Regensburg mean that not so much the tolerance as its definition came to the end. For an average European tolerance became a repressive mechanism for aggressive protection of minorities' rights. The collapse of this kind of tolerance is the end of European postmodernism that appeared in 1940-50s and resulted in loss of the West European identity.

5. INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

Global energy reform

After Russia became the G8 chairman in 2006 the transformation of global energy market rules began. This process can later lead to the loss of the Western political control over global energy market. The G8 accepted the Russian position that the energy security should be understood not only as a protection of the energy consumers' interests, but also as a protection of energy suppliers' ones. It is the evidence that the EU attempts to control the energy export from Russia and the countries of the former USSR as well as the U.S. policy aimed at the internationalisation of Siberian energy resources failed. Nevertheless it cannot be excluded that the West (taking into account its technological and military superiority) will be able to impose to the international community the position that natural resources are the common international property. The task of the Russia's global energy reform is to oppose this policy.

6. SOCIAL CATAclysm

The rise of radical islam

The substantial rise of radical islamists took place in many countries of the Greater Middle East in 2006. Such situation can threaten not only the global and regional stability and security, but also the nationhood of the regional states. The main demonstrations of radical islamists are the intensive growth of violence in Iraq, Hesbolla's political victory over Israel, the civil war in Palestine (where HAMAS wins).

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7. INTELLECTUAL FORUM

Russian blogosphere

The intellectual forum of the year is the Russian blogosphere with its advanced Internet communities (among them is LiveJournal blogs). It became the generator of creative ideas, important social initiatives, cultural performances. There is an essential difference between Russian and Western blog activity. Its most popular form in Europe and North American is “stand alone blog”, or Internet diary. In Russia it is open Internet communities that serve as discussion forums for intellectuals. Virtually the Russian intellectual elite started a dialogue with the population. This process can lead to the creation of a new level of the social interaction.

8. SOCIAL INNOVATION

Reunification of the Russian Orthodox Church

The reunification of the Russian Orthodox Church affords ground for its transformation into the only Russian social institute that enjoys public confidence. The role of the Church will undoubtedly rise in case of the implementation of negative scenario, i.e. the collapse of the political system and the opposition coming to power.

9. IDEOLOGIC TREND

The end of U.S. humanitarian expansion

The win of Democrats marked the final failure of the U.S. neoconservative project that purposed to creation of the new global world order based on liberal economy and open markets (with the democratic states as the only participants). Weakening of the USA means that new attempts to impose that new world order will not take place in the forthcoming future.

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10. INFORMATION TREND

Western nostalgia for bipolar system

The analysis of the large-scale anti-Russian information campaign in the Western mass media shows the growing interest to Russia. The renewed demonisation of Russia that represents it as an undemocratic country, unstable state and nuclear threat is a widespread tendency in the Western media community. The use of old stereotypes proves the existence of a powerful nostalgia for the bipolar system in the West. The West perceived the huge loss – it lost its ideal geopolitical “sparring partner”, the Soviet Union. Neither today’s Russia, nor China will be able to play this role now.

11. INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

Full political and social “emancipation” of Internet

The 2006 main global Internet-tendency is its final “emancipation”. Internet became the integral part of the political life. It should be underlined that the development of Internet was stadial: at the first stage it was a virtual place, at the second – it copied the existing social, economic and political structure, and at the third – the new ideas and structures grow from Internet and after the fashion of it. Internet will leave the traditional mass media behind and will play an independent and important role of “new media”. However the main Internet dilemma – the balance between security and freedom – is still unsolved. In this respect the main Russian trends are the coming of “big money” to Internet (due to its politisation) and the coming of a common man to it. In Russia Internet is not an elite network any more.

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12. VISUAL POLITICS

The extention of states' unofficial symbolic influence

The important event of 2006 was the consideration of the “conception of design of the Russian Federation up to 2008” and particularly the studing of a possible ruble design question. This discussion means the existence of a positive dynamics in the development of modern state communications that is strictly important for the formation of the state discourse. The new graphic desing of ruble can become the first new element of the particular new Russian vusual style. It is the crucial point of the visual communications development and an important step towards Russia's visual identity.

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THE INTERNATIONAL APPRAISEMENT EXPERT COUNCIL «SOCIAL DESIGN – 2006»

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2. KRALECHKIN Dmitry, PhD in Philosophy, Chairman the Social Design Corporation Research Council, Director of «Censura.ru» and the program of publications;
3. PILKO Alexei, PhD in History, Director of the Social Design Corporation Rating Center, lecturer at the Moscow Lomonosov State University;
4. USHAKOV Andrei, PhD in Philosophy, Scientific Director of the Social Design Corporation.

MEMBERS

5. DANILOV Vyacheslav, PhD in Philosophy, Lecturer at the Peoples Friendship University of Russia, science editor of «Censura.ru»;
6. LISENKOVA Alina, Political analyst, OAO "Public Communications" Analytical Department Chief;
7. NIKONOV Alexei, Advisor of the «Politika» Foundation President, member of the Social Design Corporation Council;
8. PESKOV Dmitry, Director of the Internet-politics Center, deputy pro-rector at the Moscow State Institute of International relations (University) of the MFA of Russia;
9. PILKO Nadezhda, PhD in History, fellow at the Institute of Slavonic studies, Russian Academy of Sciences;
10. RODKIN Pavel, Professional graphic designer, postgraduate at the Moscow Stroganov University;
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13. STREMILOVSKY Stanislav, Columnist at the Rossiyskiye Vesti Weekly (section "Society"), member of the Social Design Corporation Council;
14. SUKHIY Ivan, Content Director of «Agvir.com».

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SOCIAL DESIGN CORPORATION

Bld.1, Prospect Mira 36, 129090, Moscow, Russia;
tel.: + 7 (926) 207 13 30, e-mail: office@socialdesign.ru, url: www.socialdesign.ru

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