

Part 6.

SCIENCE. CULTURE. EDUCATION

In the year of the “reconfiguration” of the regime, even non-political areas were included in the electoral processes and the political struggle of the groups of elites. It equally concerned science, culture, and education. It was caused by the following circumstances.

First of all, at the time of the elections, the position of the artistic and scientific communities, whose support, in view of their greater visibility, could bring additional votes for this or that political structure or party has become important.

Secondly, as a part of their political strategy, the opposing groups of elites tried to realize a project in this field in order to, on the one hand, strive to position themselves as modernizers and as a political force with great potential, and on the other, to make every effort to put any assets left under their control.

The regime and the “intelligentsia”

It should be admitted, that on the whole, the regime succeed in reaching a consensus with the “patriotic” intelligentsia as well as with the “liberal” one. The work of the Public Chamber, which consists of representatives of very different groups of professionals and prominent public figures, is the result of such cooperation. In general, the Public Chamber as a political project should be considered successful. During the time since it was created, the PC was able to become an institution that represents civil society and to position itself as intermediary between it and the regime, especially its executive branch. Among the most well-known events in which the PC members took part were “the case of private Sichev”, the “Butovo conflict” about the compulsory resettlement of some Moscow residents by the Moscow administration, the protests of the cheated co-investors, the case of the driver, Scherbinskiy, accused of the death of the Altai governor Yevdokimov in a car accident, and the creation of the NCO coordination counsel of public control in December of 2006.

In the end, in spite of some rotations in the PC that took place from time to time, the power balance in it remained basically unchanged. For example, on September 28, Vladimir Putin signed a decree “About the confirmation of the members of the

Public Chamber of the Russian Federation”, which did not cause much of a change in the presence of the artistic intelligentsia in it. The actor Alexander Kalyagin was substituted by three of his colleagues – Chulpan Khamatova, Fiodor Bondarchuk, and Vasilii Lanovoy. And the Rector of the Higher School of Economics Yaroslav Kuzminov was replaced by the scientific director of the same institution, who, incidentally, has a reputation of being a “bulwark of economic liberalism, Yevgeniy Yasin. In the list remained those members of PC who occupied managerial posts and/or demonstrated a high level of social activism, like, for example, the Secretary of the Public Chamber, a member of the Russian Academy of Science, the President of the Scientific Center Kurchatovskii Institute, Yevgeniy Velikhov.

By the way, some PC members even got their status raised. Thus, Vyacheslav Nikonov, for example, was appointed to the post of executive director of the Russian World foundation, the main goal of which is to promote the Russian language (there is a reason to believe that this organization is being personally curated by Lyudmila Putina). According to Nikonov, this new organization is going to promote the Russian language, and will also include the arrangement of special events dedicated to this goal, the support of various Russian speaking organizations and cultural events in different countries, internet-projects, and many other things. In addition to that, the National Russian Language Support Fund, which was mentioned by Putin in his speech to the Federal Assembly, will be the part of the Russian World foundation. Nikonov also said that he will take into account the experience of other foreign foundations of the same origin: “There are many examples in the world that we can follow, such as the British Council, the Institutes of Servantes, Goethe, Dante, Confucius, the Francophone program, etc. There are plenty of wonderful precedents that we’ll carefully study”⁹⁶.

In general, the flexible policy of the government towards scientists, artists and other people in the field of culture practically removed the concern of the latter not being loyal. It’s interesting to mention that even the pretty famous “great power-nationalist” writer Alexander Prokhanov moved to a sufficiently constructive position, developing the idea of “Putin’s Fifth Empire” in his works and magazine articles. And the Nobel Prize winner Jorez Alferov, according to certain information, was pondering for a long time, the question of whether he should or should not be on the KPRF party list, because on the one hand, he was dissatisfied with the party’s excessively nationalistic rhetoric, and on the other he saw and felt the end of the communism project.

⁹⁶Gazeta.ru June 25, 2007

Priorities in scientific development (nanotechnology)

The new developments in science mostly took place in the applied disciplines. Thus, on February 19, 2007, at the State Council Collegium field session in Volgograd, Vladimir Putin endorsed the ambitious task of developing a modern innovative economy in Russia (not long before that, there was a meeting of the RUIE where Putin came up with the idea of the necessity to increase the government effort to take Russia off the “oil pipe”).

“The diversification of the economy is one of the main aspects of the economic policy” – stated Vladimir Putin at the opening of the session in Volgograd. “The contribution of the manufacturing industry to economic growth is still insignificant”. “Russia needs a model of industrial development which is naturally integrated into the interregional and global network”.

Putin pointed out that the legal and institutional base for innovative growth is being formed in Russia: “Large holdings in airplane construction, in microelectronics, in the Defense Industry Complex were created and many different truly large break-through projects are ready to be realized...And of no small importance is the fact that state institutions of development, the innovation fund and the venture fund, and the legislative base for the organization of the special economic zones and industrial parks to expand the practice of concession agreements are already in place in our country”.

On April 26 of 2007, in his annual speech to the Federal Assembly, Putin set a goal for Russian scientists to make significant advancements in the leading fields of science, in particular in nanotechnology that in his opinion will allow Russia to regain its lost leadership positions in science. This is founded upon the belief that Russia shouldn’t play catch up but should place its bet on the development of those sectors, where competition is still possible and no side has significant advantages.

Particular steps were taken for the realization of this project. Thus, on June 4, 2007, the parliament approved the law about the formation of the nanotechnology state corporation. And on June 21, 2007, the first deputy premier, Sergey Ivanov in his speech at the session of the government counsel for the development of nanotechnology stated that Russia is ready to support its nanotechnology industry by all means and is going to allocate around 200 billion rubles for its development by 2015.

However, according to expert assessment, the formation of the nanotechnology state corporation appears to be an administrative rather than a scientific project. Although the “Rosnanotech” supervisory board, which was

elected in September, while considering the mission of the state corporation in February of 2008, declared that with the 130 billion rubles that the corporation received in November, the Russian Federation is assured to become the “world leader in nanotechnology”, the fierce inter-elite struggle around this project makes such an outcome doubtful. Particularly because a power parity has set in: the state corporation practically turned out to be divided between the “teams” of Anatoly Chubais and Mikhail Kovalchuk. For this reason, it’s doubtful that the continuation of the power struggle between them after March of 2008 will actually permit the accomplishment of such an ambitious mission, at least in the near term. Especially since this involves the fight over such substantial financial flows: the FTP The Development of Nano-industry Infrastructure in the Russian Federation for 2008-2010 makes a provision for allocating 24 billion, 944 million rubles from the federal budget in addition to 2 billion 788 million rubles from non-budgetary sources for the project.

On the top of that, there are certain doubts that nanotechnology will actually give an impulse for the development of Russian science. In fact, such fields require substantial and long term investments. On the ground, under the current practice of getting quick returns, it is unlikely that long-term investments will get a priority. In 2007, something similar happened to the technology oriented Special Economic Zones (SEZ), which were previously portrayed as “points of growth” for the Russian economy. In the end, instead of them, the bet was made on the development of port SEZs, which would bring a quick and easy return.

The state and RAS: the confrontation is over

For several years, the government has been trying to conclude the reforms of the RAS and the other specialized academies. At the beginning (from 2004 to 2008), the academic community was allowed “to reform” itself, and was it trusted to chop off its “dead weight” – 20% of its members, but soon the Ministry of Education begin to insist on more drastic changes concerning the foundation of Academy operations.

Encroachment on the positions of the RAS intensified starting from the summer of 2006. In fall of 2006, the ministry succeed in lobbying through some amendments to the law “Concerning science and the government policy in science and technology”, which considerably limited the independence of the RAS and of the five so called state academies (medical, agricultural, education, art, and

architecture and building). The amendments stipulated for two major provisions, which were met with utter hostility by the academic community – the approval of the nominee for the post of the president of the RAS by the president of the Russian Federation (for the presidents of specialized academies – by the government), and also the approval of the RAS charter by the government.

Almost simultaneously with the passing of the amendments, the government, on the grounds of the provision about the government approval of the academy charter, began drafting a model charter for all state academies. The official reason for such a step was given as a practical way to minimize the disagreements and shorten the time for the government approval of the academy charters written according to the provided model. Nevertheless, this spring at the general assembly, the academic community approved its own draft of the chartered that didn't take into account the major provisions of the government model (in particular, the provision about the separation of the financial and scientific functions of the RAS governing body).

During the conflict, rumors were spread that the brother of Yuri Kovalchuk, the “Russia” bank co-owner, Mikhail Kovalchuk, the Kurchatov institute director, could take up the position of the chairman of RAS Supervisory Board or RAS vice-president of management and finances. In May of 2006, he made an attempt to raise his status from the Corresponding Member of RAS to full RAS member, which would allow him to become the RAS president, but his candidacy didn't find any support among the academic community.

The lobbyists of the reform chose a strategy that was at the beginning underestimated by the Academy leadership. The main point of it was not in open opposition, which because of the big splash in the media right before the election would not be to the advantage of the government (at all levels), but in the creation of parallel structures that little by little could take the management of the government funds for theoretical science into their own hands. As a good example, we can point out at the nanotechnology state corporation (“Rosnanotech”), which has a budget for 2007 somewhere around of 30 billion rubles, whereas the RAS budget for the same period is about 20 billion. A Similar approach was also used towards some “stubborn” specialty academies. In particular, after the head of Federal High-tech Medical Assistance Agency (Rosmedtech), Ivan Demidov was turn down for the post of the president of Russian Academy of Medicine, nearly all the budget funds allocated for the acquisition of expensive medical equipment went to the Agency headed by Demidov and not to RAM.

The plan of the masterminds of this strategy proved to be simple and effective. The ongoing relocation of budget funds for fundamental science from under the authority of RAS and the specialty academies to parallel structures will undermine the material base of the “academic Fronde”, which in addition to the “natural losses” of the population of Academic community will gradually drive its lobbying potential down to zero. The first to realize the threat was the leadership of the RAS, which to all appearances agreed to a compromise – they appointed Mikhail Kovalchuk to the post of acting vice-president of the RAS. Such an “exchange” is advantageous for the Kovalchuks – regardless of their influence in “Rosnanotech” they now acquired an additional ground for the appropriation of funds, which now allows them to ask for additional budgetary funds.

And on November 19, 2007, the government approved the new Russian Academy of Science charter that turned into a kind of “compromise” between the authorities and the scientific community.

The new charter approved by the cabinet of ministers stipulates for much more financial freedom for the Academy than the model document would have allowed at the beginning. As before, the Academy may conduct business activity and rent out its federally owned property, but now it’s necessary to have a resolution passed by the Academy Presidium in coordination with the specialized department of the government (which is responsible for the state property management). Moreover, the government know also has control over how this rent income is used.

In its own turn, it quite possible that at the general assembly of the RAS in May, 2008, Mikhail Kovalchuk will be elected head of the Academy or vice-president for finances. And before that, at the special procedure for awarding academic rank, where with a high degree of probability, the Head of the Kurchatov Institute will be made an academician.

Such a compromise suited both parties, to which the words of the Head of the Ministry of Education and Science Andrei Fursenko testify. In his 2007 review, he specifically stated the following: “The academy is doing the constant, systematic and long awaited work of its own modernization. In particular, the new RAS Charter, which included some absolutely necessary innovations and changes, was developed and adopted by the General Assembly, and approved by the government. This charter considerably expanded the opportunities that the academy now has; it gave it unprecedented independence in financing and choice of research. And at the same time, which is absolutely reasonable, the RAS has taken upon itself a far bigger responsibility. At the end of the last year, within the

same framework, the Fundamental Research Program of the State Academies for the years of 2008 – 2012 was presented to the government. For the first time ever, such significant amount of money – more than 250 billion rubles from the Federal budget has been allocated for research in fundamental science”⁹⁷.

The scientific community and The Russian Orthodox Church

In 2007, the appropriateness of the introduction of religious education in school was widely discussed in Russia. Thus, the Russian Orthodox Church was vigorously lobbying for the introduction of the course “The Base of the Orthodox Culture” and some other similar proposals into school curriculum. In answer to it, ten Russian academicians (including two Nobel Prize winners Vitaliy Ginzburg and Jores Alferov) petitioned president Putin with an open letter “The Policy of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchy: consolidation or disintegration of the country?”, where they expressed their utmost concern for “the ever growing clericalization of Russian society”. At that, the scientific community specifically criticized the plans of the Russian Orthodox Church to introduce “The Base of Orthodox Culture” course in the school curriculum, as well as the attempt of the Patriarchy to lobby through the dissertation defense in specialty of Theology. Their letter provoked serious discussions in Russian Society. It was mostly the liberal and orthodox-communist circles that came out in support of “The Letter of Academicians”. For example, there came a statement from a member of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, Vyacheslav Glazychev, who also expressed his concern for the “creeping clericalism” and for the interference of the church in state affairs and articulated his support for the defense of the principle of “separation of church and state”. In their turn, the “patriotic” part of society supported the Church initiatives and came out against Ginzburg and Alferov. Thus, on November 1 of 2007, the letter of academicians G. S. Golytsyn, G. A. Zavarzin, T. M. Eneev, and the correspondent members of the RAS G. V. Maltsev and F. F. Kuznetsov was distributed, in which they disagree with the position of their colleagues⁹⁸. And the Dean of the Moscow State University Sociology Department, professor Vladimir Dobrenkov criticized the “anticlerical letter” even more harshly: “The position of Ginsburg is not the position of the Russian intelligentsia, but of a godless intelligentsia”.

⁹⁷ V. Obratsov, The Minister of Education and Science Andrei Fursenko: “We are ready for the new revolution. The revolution of Nanotechnology.” // *Izvestiya*. February 8, 2008

⁹⁸ See, for example: <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=documents&div=681>

By the way, the letter of the academicians-atheists was in its own way an answer to the demarche by the St. Petersburg student Maria Schreiber and her father who, at the beginning of the year, came out with a law suit against the Ministry of Education and Science, demanding to stop the teaching of the Darwin theory in school, declaring that it “offends their religious feelings” and “infringes upon their rights for a quality education”. More over, the plaintiff Cyril Schreiber stated that the Darwin theory fosters fascism, extremism and Marxist-Leninist ideas in children. Nevertheless, in February of 2007, the court denied Schreiber and her father on their claim on the basis of article 199 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation⁹⁹.

Therefore, it’s quite possible that the opponents of “clericalization” later tried to deliver a “counterblow” to the positions of their adversary.

Education Reform: The Bologna process in action

Education remains one of the least government controlled by spheres of public life. On the one hand, it’s caused by the “spirit of freedom” which is traditional for institutions of higher learning, and on the other, by the unwillingness of the ruling elite to aggravate the relationship with the rector community and the student body right before the electoral cycle of 2007-2008. *Never the less, little by little, the process of unification will touch the institutions of higher learning as well.*

First of all, it’s necessary to note that the high priority national project in the field of education is being gradually put into effect. On one hand, after the harsh market reforms of the first half of the 1990s, our education system was on the periphery from the point of view of government priorities, since it could not deliver quick “commercial” returns and was in the red. But with the strengthening of statehood and with the budget surplus, step by step the money began to flow to the education system. More over, in fall of 2005, education became one of the most important national projects, which are all now under the control of the first deputy premier, Dmitri Medvedev. On the other hand, government assistance and the additional funding of the education system are accompanied by the increase in government control and the imposition of strict rules for the relationship between the bureaucracy and the universities and also the unification and standardization in teaching.

⁹⁹ St.Petersburg court denied the anti-Darwinist student claim:
[//http://www.rian.ru/society/20070221/61083714.html](http://www.rian.ru/society/20070221/61083714.html)

The goal of the national project Education is to allow the Russian education system to keep its advantages and at the same time to modernize it in order to meet the challenges of today. From the beginning, the project envisioned the foundation of two new universities (the Southern and Siberian Federal Universities), two business schools (Higher School of Management in St. Petersburg as one of them), grant distribution, creation of the system of incentives for the best school and university teachers as well as for the talented students from school to post graduate level, continued military education, solving the textbook and rural school transportation problems.

In 2007, the implementation of the Bologna Agreement intensified in order to narrow the gap between the Russian and European education systems. The Minister of Education and Science, Andrei Fursenko is the main proponent of the reform. And in spite of the fact that a part of the education community supports this endeavor, the majority of the teaching corps is strongly set against it. The leader of the opposing faction is the Moscow State University Rector Victor Sadovnichii, who is making an effort if not to directly bring the transformation to a standstill, then to “sabotage” it. As to the student body, it’s also quite skeptical towards the Bologna reform. Mainly, this skepticism is due to the vagueness of the reformists’ proposals, the uncertainty of its effectiveness, and the influence of the “conservative” professors on the student body.

The proponents of the Bologna reform put forward the following as its advantages:

1. The recognition of diplomas. It’s well known that up till now, our diplomas of higher education were accepted only in a few European countries. That is why if the Bologna Agreement will be ratified by the country, this problem will be eliminated. As a result, it will be much easier for our young graduates to find a job in European countries and get adjusted to life abroad. In conjunction with this, one of the specific elements of the Bologna reforms is the implementation in the Russian Federation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as the single European education content evaluation method. It simplifies teacher and student evaluations, the calculation teacher salaries and the cost of education, etc.
2. Mobility. The liberalization of the education system will lead to the increase in student exchange and the establishment of the principles of pluralism in the field of teaching and scientific research. In this way, within the Bologna system, all barriers on the path of free movement of student, teachers, and management are removed.

3. One more argument for the renovation of our education according to the Bologna standards is the assertion that the new system will make Russian students more independent and responsible for their decisions regarding their education; and will give them a better chance to adjust their schedule and man-hours. Particularly, the Bologna system proponents point out that our system of education stifles student initiative on the school level as well as on the level of higher education; that the stiff structure of compulsory courses doesn't allow students to make their own course choice. Unlike in Europe and the USA where 70% of all courses are elective, in our educational model such courses comprise only 30%, in other words, the proportion is the opposite. That is why in the opinion of the reform proponents, if Russia is serious about joining the Bologna process, the question of the fundamental restructuring of the existing system of subject-object relationship in our education will come up. The student in such a system will become a highly responsible individual with the right to choose the vector of his education as well to make a mistake, in another words, he becomes accountable for all his or her initiatives, positive and negative alike. In the words of one of the architects of the reform based on Bologna standards "joining the Bologna process will allow us to advance in educational culture itself, to move from the 19 century traditions toward the system, I hope, of the 21 century where every individual has a right to take charge for oneself and one's time and be responsible for it."
4. Some reform advocates point out that within the new system the course selection and the student-teacher relationship will radically change. From now on, (since students will have more choice in picking their classes) the teacher won't have the right to impose his course, but will have to compete for students by making an effort to offer high quality material and masterful teaching.
5. And at last, most reform proponents presume that it will further the integration of Russia into the "common European house" as well as to help it to overcome the legacy of the repressive Soviet educational model. In particular, the signing of the Bologna declaration may well become an important argument for Russia joining the WTO, since according to the rules, the education system of the country joining the organization should conform to EU standards.

At the same time, the opponents of Russia joining the Bologna process have their own arguments.

Most of them point out that such a reform won't be cosmetic, but will lead instead, to a fundamental restructuring of the very base of the education policy and the teaching process in the Russian Federation. They believe that the adaptation of the European educational principles will collide with the traditions of the Russian higher education of the Soviet as well as the pre-Revolutionary periods. In particular, the opponents of the Bologna process raise an objection to the narrow specialization of students, which is provided for by the European standards, that leads to the elimination of most fundamental courses in exchange for the system of specialized classes. In this case, in their opinion, the Russian higher education will lose its distinctive depth and universality of preparation, and the graduate's understanding of his profession will be partial and random.

Other opponents of the Bologna process consider the implementation of its principles in Russia a little premature for another reason. They point out that a 6 year program (4 years for a bachelor's degree + 2 year for a master's degree) doesn't yet have the necessary legal base in the labor legislation. Thus, today on the labor market, a bachelor's degree is in less demand than a specialist and no assurances that their professional training is comparable can convince the employer. At the same time, the master's dissertation is not considered equivalent to the Candidate's of science dissertation, which makes one additional year spent in the master's program (in comparison to the Specialist's Program) senseless.

A serious concern is also caused by the attempt of the Bologna reform architects to dismantle the whole system of compulsory courses at once. The bet placed on elective courses (they are to comprise up to 70% in the course of modernization) could lead to chaos and a serious decline in the quality of education especially considering the Russian paternalistic mentality of our students. More over, such a reform will be a complete breaking-off with the traditions of not only Soviet but also the pre-Revolutionary period when the priority was given to compulsory lectures.

Finally, there are objections against the so called modular system of instruction required by the Bologna Agreement. The former traditional system of subject oriented education will be drastically changed or will altogether disappear, which would amount to a revolutionary transformation. The module constitutes a number of educational objectives, which is reached through a variety of assignments or through the study of some related but different subjects. In this way, through the modular form of education, a firm commitment is made towards a narrow specialization and to the applied nature of educational training, which practically breaks with the basic traditions of the Russian as well as European education.

Nevertheless, it seems that the principal decision to implement the education reform was made at the very top and therefore the universities began to surrender their positions. The majority of the institutions of higher learning, including the most conservative ones (the Finance Academy, MGIMO) received directions to produce in 2008 a new educational plan for the bachelors and the masters programs in the spirit of the Bologna Agreement.

Another problem that is being discussed in the Russian higher educational community is the universal introduction of the Universal Government Examination (UGE) that in reality in some cases substitutes for college/university entrance exams.

The law that passed last year made the UGE the main form of final student evaluation. The main argument for its implementation was the evidence of wide spread corruption during university entrance examinations. According to Fursenko, “now there is much less cheating during the examination than before”. In addition, he mentioned that “the control content of exam materials became better... and the number of questions that measures understanding and the ability to apply the received knowledge is growing”.

Nevertheless, the educational community, especially the leadership of elite universities, actively resisted the change stating that on one hand, the UGE is unable to uncover the creative potential of a university entrant, but only his or her formal knowledge, and on the other, that the UGE will cause the sharp drop in quality of the student body, since the level of the UGE in the regions rarely can be compared to the level of the UGE in the capital. However, the officials from the Ministry of Education and Science succeeded in pushing through the UGE even in conservative Moscow State University. Nevertheless, MSU Rector Victor Sdovnichiy, through his United Russia party connections, postponed for some time the implementation of this reform. Thus, in January of 2008, the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Science approved the preservation of the autonomous procedure of the MSU entrance examination after 2009 when Universal Government Examination (UGE) law takes effect. State secretary – Deputy Minister Yurii Senturin said to the newspaper “Gazeta” that MSU like all other institutions of higher learning will have to take into account the results of the school tests in all subjects. But the main university of Russia will have the right to conduct additional testing in order to preserve a stricter selection of students¹⁰⁰.

¹⁰⁰ MSU has reconciled with the UGE // *Gazeta*. January 24, 2008.

In 2007, the financial base of the Russian education system has been strengthened on the whole – the teacher’s and professor’s salaries were rising, more funds were allocated to educational facilities for the renovation of their technical equipment, etc.

Thus, in January of 2008, the Public Counsel of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation summed up the results of the first year of the experiment in the increase in teacher salaries. The essence of modernization is in the switch from the universal pay roll scale to the system when the compensation is paid-out for all teaching related activities not just for the number of classes taught. In addition to that, teachers may also receive a bonus. Its size is determined by the school council according to a number of criteria: students’ grades for the subject, responsibilities of a homeroom-teacher, number of classes missed by his students, the number of parents’ complains etc. The experiment yielded encouraging results, in particular, after 2 years, in 31 regional winners of the competition within the national project Education and in three so called regions-consultants: Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tyumen region. The teachers’ salary for October of 2007 due to extra payments increased 47 % up to over 10 thousand rubles. And, for example, in the Kaliningrad region in the last three months of last year, teachers received on the average, 16 thousand rubles a month.

Cinematography as a tool in the creation of political mythology.

From the time of Vladimir Lenin, there is a popular saying that the “movie is our most important art form”. It’s all about the wide audience of the “big screen” and its ability to bring to a significant number of viewers political ideas and form certain values. In Russia, after a period of stagnation in the development of cinematography, there is a real boom, and cinema once again is a very popular form of art and is in great demand.

In 2007, there were two tendencies in cinema.

On the one hand, movies for pure entertainment (comedies or melodramas) were created for the mass audience. Among those, we can mention such movies as *Love-carrot* or *The irony of fate – 2* (a virtual remake of the old comedy by Eldar Ryazanov of the same name).

On the other hand, a number of pictures were of a propagandistic nature. In this regard, there were attempts to include Slavic mythology into a fantasy plot

(The young wolfhound, The wolfhound from the Grey Dogs family) as well as movies based on a historical plot such as 1612 about the “overcoming the Time of Troubles” and the victory over foreign enemies of the Orthodox faith. The latter was quite possibly ordered directly by the “political wing” of the presidential administration of the Russian Federation. And the movie Mongol” about Chingiz-Khan’s youth and his ascend to power. This was supposed to clearly awaken the “Eurasian” motif in the minds of Russian people.

Nevertheless, entirely different movies were made for the elite and for the international community. In particular, the politically correct film by Nikita Mikhalkov about the conscience of the jury who had to come to a decision about the fate of a wrongly accused Chechen teenager received the acclaim of the liberal public, the press and the movie forum panel of judges. There is no doubt that this film could hardly be a crowd-puller in the situation when the nationalistic and xenophobic mood is on the rise (especially regarding people from the Caucasus), but in the end, it was nominated for an Oscar by the professional community (where liberal mood is prevailing).