

Futures research in contemporary Russia.

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Abstract

The objective of paper is the analysis of Russian institutions and researcher's teams, involving in futures research. It was a good traditions of futures researches in Soviet time, it's leader was sociologist Igor Bestuzhev-Lada, one of the establishers of WFSF. In contemporary Russia the main trend in social-economic research was neo-institutional approach and Russian choice theory, which was not interesting in futures research. Traditions of long-time cycles, traditions of Kondratyev's waves and Chizhevsky's cycles was used by EgorGaydar's reformist government opponents mainly. The only exception this time was activity of non-governmental SPb Center for humanity and political science STRATEGY, which organized together with Igor Bestuzhev-Lada group two summer schools 'Futures of Russia – Futures of Baltic Regions' in 1994-1995 and Regional Conference of WFSF in St.Petersburg in 1996. This schools and conference was organized together with president of WFSF PenttiMalyaska. This meetings results in establishing of Russian Academy of Prognostics headed be IgorBestuzhev-Lada, but this initiative has not development.

After financial crisis in 1998, the 'Club 2015' was established be some future oriented businessmen and politicians, with objective of future researches. The first report of Club 2015 consists from three scenarios of Russia development in 2015 – negative, neutral and positive. But this reports had no serious influence to Russian politics. Later. In the middle of 00th, some scenarios of development of Russia were elaborate in democracy oriented Russian think tanks – foundation INDEM (Information for democracy), headed by GeorgySatarov and other formerly advisors of Boris Eltsin.

Futures research in USSR

In the first decade of Soviet state (20th) many social scientist were involved in futures researches, and some community of ‘concerned about future’ people existed around them. It was some analogy with Words Futures Study Federation (WFSF) in this early soviet time. Then, during the growth of Stalin’s repressions all futures researches were cancelled and researchers were repressed (died in Stalin’s prisons). Than, in totalitarian time in USSR was no future research. Situation started changes in Khrushchev time, when some visions of desirable futures was created in stories of ‘science fiction’ writers, as Ivan Efremovor Arkadiy and Boris Strugatsky.

Some later, in 1966-1968, during period of so named Kosygin’s economic reforms, prognostic science was approved in Russian Official Academic science and some self-government initiatives took place in soviet sociological community. The real initiative Soviet Association of Scientific Prognostic was created this time. Professor Igor Bestuzhev-Lada, one of the establishers of WFSF, was one of the leaders of this Association. He was also the chair of Research Committee for social prognostics of Soviet Sociological Association. But the 1968 events of Prague and the growth of oil prices results in the end of Kosygin’s reforms and growth of ideological repressions. Plans for creation in 1969 of Academy of prognostic sciences was cancelled, Soviet Association of Scientific Prognostic was closed, and future researches were repressed¹.

Later, in 1974, some seminars for prognostics work in semi-underground conditions. Two years later Soviet council of science and technique societies legitimated this seminars as its commission. This commission was transformed later into more powerful Committee for scientific and technique prognostic and creation of programs for science-technique progress, with ten profile commissions and regional branches. In 1989-1990 activity of this Committee was decline together with destroying of soviet plan system². Simultaneously with this commissions for science-technique prognostic, the problems of possible futures was in center of discussion of hemi-underground clubs of ‘science fiction’. Very famous Arkadiy and Boris Strugatsky and their colleagues starts to create not only visions of desirable futures, but undesirable futures also.

¹Rossiyskayasociologiyashestidesyatyhgodov v vospominaniyakh I dokumentakh. / G.Batygin, ed. – SPb.: Russian Christian humanity institute, 1999.<http://cdclv.unlv.edu/archives/Documents/prognostication.html>

²IgorBestuzhev-Lada, GalinaNamestnikova. Socialnoyeprognozirovanie. Kursleksiy.– Moscow, 2002.

Futures research in Russia, 90th

In Russia of 90th the main trend in social-economic research was neo-institutional approach and rational choice theory, which was not interesting in futures research. Traditions of long-time cycles, traditions of Kondratyev's waves and Chizhevsky's cycles was used by opponents of EgorGaydar's reformist government mainly. Nikolay Kondratyev's International Foundation was established in 1992, headed by Academician, director of Institute of Economics of Russian Academy of Science Leonid Abalkin (<http://www.ikf2011.ru>). This foundation organized annual 'Kondratyev's Reading' with publication of reading materials. One of the objectives of this conferences was critics of economy reforms in Russia.

Other approach to Future research was realized in 1994-1996 by St. Petersburg liberal think tank - non-governmental SPb Center for humanity and political science STRATEGY (www.strategy-spb.ru). This center organized together with Igor Bestuzhev-Lada groups of futures researchers in suburb of St-Petersburg – Petergof two summer schools for young scientists 'Futures of Russia – Futures of Baltic Regions' in 1994-1995, where participants from many Russian regions and from Baltic countries took part. This summer schools were organized together with World Futures Research Federation, and president of WFSF professor Pentti Malyaska was a key speaker in this summer schools. Soros Foundation was a main sponsor of this schools. Later, in June, 1996, SPb STRATEGY Center was local organizer of Regional Conference of WFSF, which took place in Pushkin, St. Petersburg. One of the results of this activities was establishing of Russian Academy of Prognostics, headed that time by professor Igor Bestuzhev-Lada. President of SPb Strategy Center and vice-president of Russian Academy of Prognostics, author of this paper, participated in WFSF World Conferences in Turku, Finland in 1993, in Nairobi, Kenya in 1995, in Brisbane, Australia, in 1997 and in Bacolod, Philippines in 1999.

After financial crisis in 1998, the 'Club 2015' was established in Moscow by some future oriented businessmen and politicians, with objective of future researches (<http://www.club2015.ru>). The first report of Club 2015 consists from three scenarios of Russia development in 2015 – negative, neutral and positive. But this published reports³ had no serious influence to Russian politics.

³Scenarii dlya Rossii / Klub 2015. – Moscow, 1999.

Futures research in Russia, 00th

Five years later, in 2003, 'Club 2015' together with Institute of National Project – Public Agreement (President – professor Alexander Auzan, member of Council for development of civil society and human rights affiliated to President of Russia) prepared 'Scenarios for Russia – 2'. In the middle of 00th, some scenarios of development of Russia were elaborate in democracy oriented Russian think tanks – foundation INDEM (Information for democracy, www.indem.ru), headed by Georgy Satarov and other formerly advisors of Boris Eltsin. This scenarios were used during citizen opposition to Putin during Putin's second term.

In 2000 in St.Petersburg was established Group 'Construction of Future'. This group defined itself as non-governmental research organization or think tank with objectives of long-term prognostics and researches in the field of future's management (<http://future-designing.org>). Group was established by Sergey Pereslegin, futurologist and active member of science fiction fan club, publisher Nikolay Yutanov, science fiction writer Andrey Stolyarov and doctor of science in techniques and culture studies Dmitry Ivashintsev. This group works by contracts with many governmental offices, and we can defined their approaches as very conservative, they used approaches of classic geopolitics, which are very popular in Russian officials now.

In the middle of 00th real interest for future studies (prognostics) occurred in Foundation INDEM (Information for Democracy). President of this foundation, mathematician and former advisor of Russian President Boris Eltsyn (1994-1997) Georgy Satarov was involved that time in liberal-opposition movement to the line of Vladimir Putin. He and his colleagues prepared in 2008 prognosis report based at scenarios approaches. This scenarios received such titles as 'Smart Russia', 'Sluggish Russia', 'Tyananmyn', 'Political chaos'. 'Revolution' etc. During the winter 2-11/2012, in the time of growth citizen opposition to Putin's regime, INDEM foundation together with foundation 'Liberal mission' prepared two prognosis report based at the same scenarios approaches.

It was the only example of political prognosis. Other prognosis groups worked outside of political field. Some of them continued tradition domestic approach for prognostics, by use of Nikolay Kondratyev big cycles, see for example the monograph by the edition of Vakentina Bondarenko, director of Nikolay Kodratiev foundation⁴. In 00th we can see prolongation of activities of Russian Academy of Prognostics, this Academy together with International institute

⁴Prognozirovanie buduschego: novaya paradigma / G. Fetisov, V. Bondatenko, eds. – Moscow, ZAO Izdatelstvo Ekonomika, 2008.

of sociology of Trieste University in Gorizia established International Futures Research Academy, which is partner of WFSF (www.maib.ru). This society works together with Institute of Economic strategies Russian Academy of Science (general director – professor Alexander Ageev) and with Center for geoeconomic strategies (director – professor Alexander Neclessa).

Other direction in contemporary Russian futures research is the more applied and technical approach, connected with use of conception of Foresight. The example of this direction is the Institute of statistic research and economic of knowledge (<http://issek.hse.ru>) of National Research University 'Higher School of Economics', which published journal 'Foresight' (director of Institute and chief editor of journal – professor, first vice-rector of HSE Leonid Gohberg. The mission of journal 'Foresight' – is support of culture of Foresight-research in Russia (<http://foresight-journal.hse.ru>).

More practical tasks must be resolved by Department of strategy, analysis and prognosis of Russian Ministry of education and Science (head - Grigory Andruschak). One of the nine objectives of this department – is development of prognosis of scientific and technology development of Russian Federation. This activity realised through active collaboration with prognostic groups in Russian academic community.

We can see, that now in Russia we have a wide spectrum of future research, which take place as in institutes of Russian academy of science, as in Russian universities and in non-governmental research groups and centers. Some of them have more technical or practical approaches, other – have more academic orientation. They worked in the wide spectrum of ideology – from very liberal, as INDEM Foundation or Higher school of economics up to very conservative, as petersburg group 'Construction of Future'.