The Making of a Political Myth

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The Making of a Political Myth: Stability "po-stolypinski"[1]

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ABSTRACT. *This article analyses the emergence of the political myth of Pëtr Stolypin and its recent institutionalization as an exemplary image for Russian politics. The article considers the memory of Stolypin together with the myth of the Time of Troubles, that served the Putin regime well in its first and second terms, to demonstrate how the post-revolutionary frame of reference implicit in the latter has been replaced by the pre-revolutionary frame of "stability Stolypin-style": a new brand of stability-oriented state patriotism that taps into the very same societal fears and insecurities connected to memories of the 1990s, but is geared to fit a situation in which recent accomplishments have to be safeguarded against the perceived threat posed by domestic rather than foreign enemies. Instead of promising a stable and prosperous future, the Stolypin myth cautions that recent achievements can all too easily be lost again.*

Key words*: Politics of Memory, Stolypin, Putin, Russia, Fear of Revolution*

On 27 December, 2012 president Vladimir Putin and prime minister Dmitri Medvedev unveiled a 4.6 metre high bronze statue of Pëtr Stolypin in downtown Moscow. The statue, by sculptor Salavat Shcherbakov, was placed in sight of the House of Government of the Russian Federation. The unveiling marked the end of the Stolypin year in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of the pre-revolutionary politician. Stolypin served as minister of the interior and subsequently as prime minister from 1906 until his assassination in 1911 by Socialist-Revolutionary and secret police agent Dmitrii Bogrov. Stolypin's name is generally associated with his agrarian reforms and his efforts to repress the terrorist movement in the wake of the 1905 revolution. He is also noted for his rhetorical skills and Stolypin's speeches before the Duma have become a much-used source of

[1] "Стабильность по-Столыпински" (Nadein 2012, online source).

political one-liners. The phrases "They are in need of great upheavals, but we are in need of a Great Russia"[2] and "Give the state twenty years of internal and external peace, and you will not recognize present-day Russia"[3] are the most popular.

Stolypin has come to symbolize a political system that is characterized by reform-from-above and oppression of the opposition, combined with the aim of creating stability and stimulating economic growth. The level of authoritarianism that this system implies is portrayed as a necessary evil in achieving the higher goal of restoring and maintaining Russia's greatness. In addition, it is often justified by pointing out the unique visionary leadership of Stolypin, a tendency that bears a resemblance to the personification of state power in the figure of Putin over the twelve year period of his rule as president and prime minister up until then. This article analyses the construction and meaning of the myth of "stability Stolypin-style [*stalbil'nost' po-Stolypinskii*]" (Nadein 2012, online source) under Putin and the interplay between different actors in the political, societal, cultural spheres in this process of political memory making.

The emergence of the political myth of Stolypin and its institutionalization as an exemplary image for Russian politics is a relatively recent phenomenon. The Putin regime has actively drawn upon historical images to underline the necessity of the increase of state control, most notably by presenting the 1990s as the latest incarnation of the early seventeenth century Time of Troubles, that was brought to an end by Putin's reforms. Drawing upon widespread feelings of social anxiety, this narrative was aimed at shaping the perception of the political state of affairs as post-revolutionary and, therefore, favourable. Contrary to other political myths that have been employed since 2000, the image of Stolypin has not been actively used by a previous political regime, neither Soviet, nor post-Soviet. In fact, the image of Stolypin in Soviet historiography was explicitly negative. In their appraisal, historians followed Lenin, who "denounced the prime minister as the 'hangman-in-chief,' or simply as a hangman, tyrant, reactionary, or 'pogrom-maker'" (Asscher 2001, p. 3). The statue of Stolypin in Kiev, erected in 1913, was taken down following the 1917 revolution and, quite symbolically, replaced by Karl Marx. The bust of

[2] "Им нужны великие потрясения, нам нужна Великая Россия".

[3] "Дайте Государству 20 лет покоя, внутреннего и внешнего, и вы не узнаете нынешней России".

Stolypin in present-day Ulianovsk met a similar fate. Stolypin's name became especially associated with two images: "Stolypin's necktie" [*Stolypinskii galstuk*] and the "Stolypin carriages" [*Stolypinskie vagony*]. The first refers to a quote by Cadet Duma member Fëdor Rodichev who coined the term in 1907 to criticize the field courts-martial established under Stolypin to trial terrorist revolutionaries. In Soviet historiography, and consequently history education, it came to symbolize the cruel repressive character of Stolypin's politics. The railway carriages that were used to transport peasant migrants to Siberia also acquired a negative connotation in later years. While colonization of the Far East was actively promoted and supported by the tsarist state under Stolypin, the move was voluntary and migrants were transported on newly-built, ordinary trains (Asscher 2001, p. 323). In the Stalinist era, however, the same route was traversed by trains equipped with bars to transport convicts to the prison camps. Today, the term "Stolypin carriage" is still used to refer to carriages specially equipped to transport convicts.

The perestroika period saw a renewed interest in pre-revolutionary Russia and a positive reappraisal of Stolypin's politics. Publishing house Molodaia Gvardiia, for example, released a complete collection of Stolypin's speeches in the Duma and State Council in 1991. The volume carried as its subtitle "We are in need of a Great Russia [*Nam Nuzhna Velikaia Rossiia*]", the second half of his famous quote and indicative of the motivation behind publishing the volume in the final days of the Soviet Union's existence. The preface outlines the radically opposed interpretations of the importance of the tsarist prime minister and the "myths and legends"[4] (Stolypin 1991, p. 8) associated with his name. The hope is expressed that the publication of the collected volume of speeches will provide professional historians with the material to reconsider and correct prevalent views (ibidem, pp. 7-8). In essence, the Soviet argument was turned inside out: in the late 1980s and continuing into the 1990s advocates of his memory re-framed Stolypin, who now came to be seen as "a farsighted statesman whose policies were precisely the ones Russia needed to develop into a prosperous, stable, and powerful country" (Asscher 2001, p. 5). This position was often accompanied by the belief that, had Stolypin not been assassinated, the complete implementation of his reforms would have averted the revolution. The two seemingly

[4] "мифы и легенды".

irreconcilable assessments of Stolypin as a statesman, one Soviet and one counter-Soviet, mark the inherent complexity of the memory: both tyrannous despot and visionary leader who would have saved Russia from the horrors of revolution and war, had it not been for his tragic death. Vladimir Nadein (2012, online source) aptly summarizes how proponents of Stolypin have attempted to merge both aspects into a positive image: "Cruel, but far-sighted. For the good of the country. For the sake of a radiant future. He hanged [convicts], but also raised [the country] from its knees. He hanged, but also gave the country [a higher] GDP. All of Great-Britain spread our Siberian butter onto their sandwiches in the morning. The rouble became heavier than gold. The export of grain increased several folds"[5].

While historians and politicians "rediscovered" the legacy of Stolypin as the Soviet Union disintegrated, indicators of public opinion in Russia paint a rather different picture. Polls executed by the Levada Center over the period of twenty years indicate that Stolypin has never been very popular (Gudkov 2010, p. 39). Respondents were asked to name five to ten names of who they believed were the most outstanding persons of all times and nations. In 1989 and 1991 less than one per cent named Stolypin. In 1994, the figure rose to eight per cent. It then dropped to one per cent in 1999, to finally rise to four per cent by 2008. Considering these figures, it is surprising that Stolypin was elected as the second most popular Russian of all time in 2008 in the nationally televised competition *The Name is Russia* [*Imiia - Rossiia*], with Aleksandr Nevskii and Stalin finishing in first and third place, respectively. This article aims to reconstruct how the memory of Stolypin was mediated in the Putin period and, in this process, continually reinterpreted to such an extent that the government felt itself confident enough to adopt it officially. It furthermore reflects on the particularities of the Stolypin myth that contributed to its popularization and institutionalization in this particular period, as compared to earlier periods. In its analysis of the political appropriation and institutionalization of the myth it furthermore takes into consideration earlier indicators of political interest in this image.

[5] "Жестоко, но дальновидно. Во благо страны. Ради светлого будущего. Вешал, но и поднимал с колен. Вешал, но и давал стране ВВП. Вся Британия по утрам вмазывала в свои сэндвичи наше сибирское масло. Рубль тяжелел золотом. Экспорт зерна возрос в разы".

Institutionalization of the Myth

Stolypin has been part of Putin's political vocabulary from the very beginning of his presidency. In his first Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in 2000, Putin explicitly referred to Stolypin to discuss the difficulty in striking a balance between state interest and the rights of the individual. He stated:

> Over the past decade, fundamental changes have taken place in the country – rights and freedoms of the individual are guaranteed by the Constitution, a democratic political system has formed, and a multi-party system has become reality. […]
>
> However, the letter of the law and real life are often quite different things. Only the framework of a civil society has been formed in Russia. Collective, patient work is now required for it to become a full partner of the state. We are not always able to combine patriotic responsibility for the destiny of our country with what Stolypin once called "civil liberties". So it is still hard to find a way out of a false conflict between the values of personal freedom and the interests of the state (Putin 2000, online source).

Other commentators have also indicated a connection between the challenges faced by Putin at the start of the new millennium and those that stood before Stolypin following the 1905 revolution. In discussions of Stolypin's reforms from the early 2000s, and more specifically in the appraisal of why Stolypin would have been exceptionally adept at carrying them through, we can even trace parallels to the characterization of Putin himself. V. Loginov (2004, p. 22), for example, notes the following four characteristics: firstly, "he came, as it were, 'out of nowhere'"; secondly, "he was young – forty-four years old"; thirdly, "he gave the impression of being a tough and decisive individual, a 'strong personality' capable of imposing 'order'"; and finally, "he was able to express his thoughts in a precise and laconic manner". In the concluding paragraph Loginov explicitly embeds the discussions on Stolypin in the context of contemporary Russian politics. He states:

> In today's discussions of the mature, overblown, but still-unresolved problems of national life, the most frequently expressed fears are of a 'new dictatorship.' This is not what we should fear. It is, rather, the unwillingness to take into account popular sentiments and the people's

will that marks the high road to sweeping grass-roots upheavals (ibidem, p. 27).

In other words, the establishment of a strong state should not be judged negatively, as (Western) observers of the process of democratization in Russia have done for most of Putin's and Medvedev's presidencies, as long as the political line does not come into conflict with the sentiments of the general public.

If we consider societal actors beyond the ruling elite that have sponsored the emergence of the memory of Stolypin early on, we should note the Pëtr Stolypin National Prize for the Agrarian Elite. The award was called into existence in 2002 as a private initiative (Natsional'naia Premiia imeni Petra Stolypina n.d., online source). The first awards were presented in 2003. The purpose of the award is to decorate those who are successful in the agricultural sector and also those, who "with their work revive Russian traditions, help our rural areas"[6] (ibidem). In 2012, the award ceremony was included in the official program of festivities connected to the Stolypin year and thereby implicitly adopted by the state. The foundation behind the Pëtr Stolypin National Prize for the Agrarian Elite was one of the main initiators of the celebration of a previous Stolypin year, celebrated in 2006 (ibidem). Marking the 100th anniversary of the start of Stolypin's reforms, the event was supported by the Russian government. On 20 October, 2006, prime minister Mikhail Fradkov signed a directive establishing an organising committee, chaired by Dmitrii Medvedev (Government directive N1457-p 2006). While the government thus endorsed the 2006 Stolypin year, it did not allocate funds to the activities that were organised. Another organisation involved was the Fund for the Study of P.A. Stolypin's Legacy (Fond Izucheniia Naslediia P.A. Stolypina 2006A, online source). The Fund was established in 2001 by historian Pavel Pozhigailo, who held the position of state secretary of Culture and Mass communication between 2006 and 2008 (Fond Izucheniia Naslediia P.A. Stolypina n.d., online source), a fact which might have added to the government's decision to support the anniversary. The program consisted of, amongst other things, a requiem in Stolypin's honour in the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow and a scientific conference on the theme of "The Stolypin model of the modernization of Russia. 1906-2006"[7].

[6] "своим трудом возрождает российские традиции, помогает нашему селу".

[7] "Столыпинская модель модернизации России. 1906-2006".

During the final meeting of the organising committee, Medvedev highlighted the parallels between the Stolypin era and the present: "Today, Russia is faced by similar problems. Therefore the general interest in Stolypin as a figure is no coincidence. Many of his ideas and plans are indeed relevant as before"[8] (Fond Izucheniia Naslediia P.A. Stolypina 2006B, online source). It is important to note that the basis for the link between the two eras, as expressed by Medvedev, lies in the question of agricultural reform. The use of the image of Stolypin is principally connected to specific policy issues, rather than to his personal characteristics, to a type of leadership that he represents, or to an autocratic type of governance as we will see later on. This is consistent with the function of the historical analogy of Stolypin and Putin that Caroline Humphrey (2009, p. 234) has described with regard to agricultural reform and the efforts to "deconstruct" the remains of soviet collectivities in the post-soviet period:

> What historical analogy does is to draw a parallel between Stolypin's attempt to get more independent-minded peasants to leave their communes and set up as private farmers and Yeltsin's and Putin's policies of disbanding collective farms and promoting '*fermery*' today. Stolypin, in a famous phrase, said that Russia must now 'place a wager on the strong'. In brief, since both Stolypin and Putin attempted to impose private individual ownership of agricultural land, what they both represent is *the destruction of the commune* (Italics in original).

According to Humphrey (2009, p. 235), the generally accepted basis for the analogy is that both were "strong proponents of centralized state power", "in charge of the secret police", and that they "pushed through, against fierce opposition, a series of reforms introducing private property in agricultural land in Russia". While the importance of the elements mentioned cannot be denied, and indeed continue to inform the use of Stolypin's image, this article argues that since the time of Humphrey's writing the relevance of Stolypin has undergone a significant shift from indicating parallels in policy to serving as a personified symbol for autocratic leadership.

To Humphrey, the institutionalization of the Stolypin myth in 2012 would, in fact, have come as a surprise. Humphrey (2009, p. 240) notes that

[8] "Сегодня перед Россией стоят схожие задачи. Отсюда неслучаен общий интерес к Столыпину как к фигуре. Многие из его идей и замыслов действительно по-прежнему актуальны".

"the Stolypin-Putin analogy has died away in the last few years". She attributes this development to unresolved contradictions implicit in the memory, such as the alleged involvement of the secret police and the tsar in Stolypin's death, and the contradictory appraisals of his repressive policies. Moreover, she argues that Putin and Stolypin might be too similar in this respect, which makes it difficult to shape Stolypin into a historical image that puts his contemporary incarnation in a positive light:

> […] [T]he whole personalized tangle (the rigid Stolypin, the jealous Tsar, the corrupt secret police, the double-dealing revolutionary) is reminiscent of the environment of secret police 'provocations' that also surround Putin. It is another layer of meaning hovering around the historical analogy – one, like the assassination itself, of course, that the present Russian executive would have to eliminate from public consciousness if the analogy is to work in a positive way for the leader (Humphrey 2009, pp. 239-240).

Already in 2008 we can see the shift occurring from historical analogy towards a more symbolic function of the memory. In his first Address to the Federal Assembly as president in 2008, Medvedev referred to Stolypin in his plead for constitutional democracy and increased respect for individual freedoms. He stated:

> The Constitution paves the way for Russia's renewal as a free nation and a society that holds law and the dignity of each individual as its highest values.
>
> The cult of the state and the illusory wisdom of the administrative apparatus have prevailed in Russia over many centuries. Individuals with their rights and freedoms, personal interests and problems, have been seen as at best a means and at worst an obstacle for strengthening the state's might. This view endured throughout many centuries. I would like to quote Pyotr Stolypin, who said, "What we need to do first is create citizens, and once this has been achieved civic spirit will prevail of its own accord in Russia. First comes the citizen and then the civic spirit, but we have usually preached the other way round" (Medvedev 2008).

Here, the Stolypin era comes to represent the development of a young democracy in the context of stabilization following a period of severe turmoil, paralleling the process of democratization that has taken place in post-Soviet Russia; thus, a "post-revolution" type of historical

analogy. It points at the difficulties involved in the process of establishing a representative system of government; the issues that can arise when government and Duma must learn how to cooperate in a constructive way towards implementing necessary reforms. The balance between the collective and the rights of the individual, implicit in this discussion, tends towards the individual, which also corresponds to the hope that Russia would take important steps toward democratization under Medvedev.

In 2008 the Russian government also issued a decree that created the Stolypin medal. The medal, which is divided into first and second degree, was first awarded in 2009 by prime minister Putin. In the decree, the purpose of the medal is outlined as follows:

> The P.A. Stolypin medal is an encouragement for the contribution to solving strategic problems connected to the social-economic development of the country, including the realization of long-term projects of the government of the Russian Federation in the fields of industry, agriculture, construction, transportation, science, education, healthcare, culture and other fields of work (Government decree N388, 2008).[9]

The medal features a relief of Stolypin and the inscription "To the glory of Russia, for the good of the Russians"[10]. Recipients include such persons as former minister of finance Aleksei Kudrin (1rst degree, 2010), former minister of defence Sergei Ivanov (2nd degree, 2011), and Vladimir Zhirinovskii, leader of the ultranationalist Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (2nd degree, 2012).

In his period as prime minister (2008-2012), Putin has actively quoted and paraphrased well-known statements by Stolypin. The elements connected to democratization that we found at the beginning of Medvedev's presidency quickly lost ground. They were replaced by a symbolic charge that shows similarity to the way the myth of the end of the Time of Troubles was used to portray the Putin era as the return of peace and stability following the chaotic 1990s. Stolypin, as it were, has become yet another wrapper around the promise of stability and economic

[9] "Медаль Столыпина П.А. является поощрением за заслуги в решении стратегических задач социально-экономического развития страны, в том числе реализации долгосрочных проектов Правительства Российской Федерации в области промышленности, сельского хозяйства, строительства, транспорта, науки, образования, здравоохранения, культуры и в других областях деятельности".

[10] "Во славу России, во благо россиян".

prosperity the Putin regime has been selling to its electorate for over a decade. Consider, for instance, the following sentence Putin pronounced during a session of the Duma on 20 April, 2011 that, as is pointed out by Pavel Aptekar (2011, online source), evidently echoes Stolypin's assertion that he needed twenty years of peace to transform Russia beyond recognition: "The country needs a decade of stable, peaceful development without various kinds of rushing, [and] thoughtless experiments, entangled in, at times unwarranted, liberalism or, on the other hand, in social demagogy"[11] (Putin, as quoted in Aptekar' 2011, online source). On the investment forum "Russia calling!", Putin quoted Stolypin to substantiate his claim of Russia being an "island of stability" and "safe haven" for foreign investors. Putin's phrase "We do not need great upheavals, we need a great Russia", altering the first words of the original quote only slightly, made headlines in the Russian media (RIA Novosti 7 October 2011, online source).

The main difference between the "end of the time of troubles" wrapper and the Stolypin wrapper is, firstly, how they define the threat Russia continues to face. While the Time of Troubles narrative places its enemies outside of Russia (in particular, in Poland), the narrative of Stolypin allows its user to shift attention to enemies located within the country. The narrative is particularly adept to framing contemporary political issues since Stolypin had to deal with two groups of adversaries during his period in office: members of government and the State Duma (both conservative and progressive), and extra-governmental opposition in the form of such terrorist groups as the Socialist Revolutionary Party's Combat Organisation. Secondly, in the way the memory of Stolypin has been used in the past few years, the message changes from a post-revolutionary reassurance, to a pre-revolutionary cautionary warning. It implies that the historically founded rationale for supporting the ruling political regime is no longer connected to restoring order after chaos, but with maintaining the status quo and preventing a slip (back) into political instability and, possibly, a revolution of some sort. This shift from a "post-revolutionary" to a "pre-revolutionary" frame of reference is in accordance with the progressive stages of Putin's presidency. It reflects the development from a state of political consolidation, starting from 2000, to

[11] "Стране необходимы десятилетия устойчивого, спокойного развития. Без разного рода шараханий, необдуманных экспериментов, замешанных на неоправданном подчас либерализме или, с другой стороны, социальной демагогии".

efforts to retain Putin's position in power, in more recent years. As such, it is, in fact, a new way of tapping into the very same societal fears and insecurities connected to memories of the 1990s. Instead of promising a stable and prosperous future, the Stolypin myth cautions that recent achievements can all too easily be lost again.

Putin defended the choice of Stolypin as a role model at the All-Russian forum of the agricultural professional class in November 2011 (RIA Novosti, 15 November 2011, online source). One of the participants challenged the political endorsement of the memory by arguing that Stolypin's reforms were, in fact, unsuccessful. This casts a doubt on whether such a person should be made into a guiding figure for contemporary politics. In his reply, Putin in particular addressed the criticism on Stolypin's repressive measures by claiming they were necessitated by the tumultuous situation following the 1905 revolution. Paraphrasing Stolypin, he added: "I hope that [his] descendants can distinguish between the blood on the hands of a doctor and the blood on the hands of a hangman"[12] (ibidem). Putin furthermore contradicted the allegation of painting a one-sided picture of the great reformer. He stated: "We do not want to idealize the figure of Stolypin, but we want history to know all sides of this process [of reform] and all sides of this individual"[13] (ibidem).

The Stolypin Year

The decree on the Stolypin year was signed by president Medvedev on 10 May, 2010. The organizing committee was headed by Putin himself and consisted of several members of the government (RIA Novosti 18 October 2011, online source). While the festive year comprised numerous events, the erection of the statue can be seen as its most public manifestation. It has been extensively commented on in the press from the moment it was first announced in mid-2011 up to its revealing in December, 2012. It was decided the monument would not receive state financing and the necessary funds would be collected from Russian businesses and individuals instead. Putin encouraged all members of government to follow his example and donate a share of their salary towards the financing of the

[12] "Надеюсь, что потомки отличат кровь на руках врача от крови на руках палача".

[13] "Мы не хотим идеализировать фигуру Столыпина, но мы хотим, чтобы история знала все стороны этого процесса и все стороны этой личности".

statue (RIA Novosti 13 July 2011, online source); thereby urging them to buy into the memory of Stolypin not only symbolically, by endorsing the decision in their capacity as politicians, but also financially on their personal title. On the relevance of Stolypin, Putin commented the following during one of the meetings of the organizing committee:

> As a true patriot and wise politician, [Stolypin] understood that different kinds of radicalism are equally dangerous for the country as standing still, [as] refusing reorganisation, [and] necessary reforms; [he understood] that only a strong, capable state power, supported by the private, civic initiative of millions of people, can provide for the development, [can] guarantee the order and stability of a vast, multinational power, [can] guarantee the inviolability of its borders[14] (ibidem).

The design for the statue was subject to a competition in which both established and young artists took part (Krasnov 2011, online source). The final decision was based on popular voting and a professional jury.[15] Pavel Pozhigailo, the director of the Fund for the Study of P.A. Stolypin's Legacy that was introduced above and was involved in the organisation of the Stolypin year, has commented on how they managed to raise the required funds (RBK 27 December 2012, online source). He revealed that a total number of over 1500 people from all over the country made a donation. This group consisted of about a hundred politicians, political representatives and businessmen, and other than that of average citizens "of modest means"[16] such as pensioners and teachers, who, Pozhigailo claims, donated on average half their monthly income. Pozhigailo emphasises that the fundraising was not actively propagated and that the influx of donations therefore demonstrates that the memory of Stolypin is very much cherished by the Russian population. The latter claim can be called into question, however, since all traditional media picked up on the plans to erect the statue and Putin's call to follow his example and make a

[14] "Настоящий патриот и мудрый политик, он понимал, что для страны одинаково опасны, как разного рода радикализм, так и стояние на месте, отказ от преобразований, от необходимых реформ, что только сильная, дееспособная государственная власть, опирающаяся на деловую, гражданскую инициативу миллионов людей, способна обеспечить развитие, гарантировать спокойствие и стабильность огромной, многонациональной державы, гарантировать нерушимость ее границ".

[15] The Committee on architecture and city-planning of Moscow [Москомархитектура] hosted an exhibition of the 42 competing designs where visitors could cast their votes for their favourites. The Ministry of Culture rewarded the three most popular designs with a prize of 400 thousand roubles. A jury of experts had the final say in selecting the winning design (Belenitskaia 2011).

[16] "обычных людей, как правило, небогатых".

donation. Even so, the idea of employing popular fundraising instead of allocating state funds is highly symbolic, of course, as it would imply the statue was erected by the Russian people, and not imposed from above by the state. Its location next to the House of Government is no less symbolic, however, and emphasises the close connection between the public display of honour for Stolypin and the ruling political regime.

Erecting a statue of Stolypin in central Moscow was, in fact, not a completely new idea. It was already proposed in 2001 by Nikita Mikhalkov, a renowned film director and a highly influential figure in Russian cultural affairs. He is also a personal friend and supporter of Putin, and one of the most important sponsors of the memory of Stolypin in the cultural sphere, as is testified by his personal advocacy of Stolypin in the *The Name is Russia*-project and his documentary on Stolypin that was aired on Russian state television in 2012. Back in 2001, Mikhalkov suggested to place a Stolypin statue on Lubianka square to replace the highly disputed statue of Felix Dzerzhinskii that was taken down in 1991 (Gazeta.Ru 2011, online source). The commission on monumental art of the city of Moscow considered the suggestion in 2002 but decided not to endorse it since they believed "one monument of the reformer in St. Petersburg was sufficient"[17] (Lenta.Ru 16 March 2011, online source). In the same year the city of Saratov, where Stolypin served as governor before being appointed minister of the interior, did erect a statue of the reformer to mark the 140th anniversary of his birth (Pravitel'stvo Saratovskoi Oblasti 14 April 2002, online source). The square the monument is set on was named in his honour as well. Several years later, in 2011, the city of Krasnodar also unveiled a statue (Rossiiskaia Gazeta 6 September 2011, online source). This time, the occasion was the 100th anniversary of Stolypin's assassination, rather than his year of birth as was the case with the other celebrations.

The year 2012 has, however, witnessed the largest number of Stolypin-related events and commemorations so far. On 26 September, 2012, a statue of Stolypin was revealed at the State Agrarian Academy near Ulianovsk that carries Stolypin's name since February that same year (ARTRUSSIA 26 September 2012, online source). Its sculptor, Zurab Tsereteli, is one of Russia's most well-known artists who, on account of his close relationship with the former mayor of Moscow Iurii Luzhkov, has left

[17] "эксперты сочли, что одного памятника реформатору в Санкт-Петербурге достаточно".

a (severely criticised) mark on the post-Soviet transformation of the Russian capital (Goscilo 2009). Indicative of Tsereteli's favourable position vis-à-vis the Kremlin is the immortalization of Putin in a larger than life-size bronze sculpture of him dressed in a judo suit. Tsereteli actually contested in the selection for the Moscow monument. The design of the statue of Stolypin that was placed in Ulianovsk corresponds to the one with which he competed. Several sources intimate that Tsereteli, after failing to win the bid for Moscow, first offered the statue of a seated Stolypin to the city of Kiev. The Ukrainian capital reclined, stating that the memorial plaque on the building were Stolypin drew his last breath is sufficient (Argumenty i Fakty 28 August 2012, online source; RIA Novosti 30 January 2012, online source). For that reason, the statue ended up at the Academy that made Tsereteli honorary professor in return for his generous gift (Ul'ianovskii Portal 26 September 2012, online source). Another statue of Stolypin is to be placed in the city centre of Ulianovsk in 2013 (Chilikova 2012, online source) that will also be made by Tsereteli (BezFormata.Ru 27 September 2012, online source). Other events connected with the celebration of the Stolypin year included an exhibition in the State Historical Museum under the name "The last knight of the empire"[18]; the renaming of the Moscow city university of management, a street, and a vessel of the Russian navy; a silver two rouble coin with Stolypin's image (Tsentral'nyi Bank Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2012, online source); and a special stamp (Filatelisticheskii Obzor 2012, online source). Furthermore, the ministry of education gave suggestions on how to dedicate a class to the theme of "The lesson of Stolypin"[19] in secondary schools (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation 2012, online source).

Conclusion

How should we interpret the political institutionalization of the Stolypin myth that was discussed above? Russian historian Igor Froianov asserts that the process of "Stolypinization"[20] should be seen in parallel to the renewed efforts at destalinization (Froianov 2011, online source). While I do not endorse Froianov's views (he goes on to argue how, in fact, the memory of Stolypin can never measure up to the memory of Stalin and is a

[18] "Последний витязь империи".
[19] "Урок Столыпина".
[20] "столыпинизация".

mere "pigmy"[21] in comparison to the soviet "giant"[22]), the parallel development he points out is an interesting observation. The peak in attention for Stolypin (2011-2012) indeed came after the peak in the state's leniency toward a positive re-evaluation of Stalin's legacy abated (Sherlock 2011).

As the previous discussion has shown, it would be mistaken, however, to see the Stolypin myth as, firstly, a completely new phenomenon and secondly, a mere consequence of the need to fill the void left by the memory of Stalin. Rather, if we consider the myth of Stolypin together with the myth of the Time of Troubles, this provides us with important insights on the way the contemporary Russian political regime has tried to utilize cultural memory to its advantage. While the narrative of post-revolution, implicit in the myth of the End of the Time of Troubles, suited the political circumstances during Putin's first and second terms of presidency, the shift from consolidating toward maintaining political power required a reconfiguration of the regime's historical vocabulary. The figure of Pëtr Stolypin, constructed here as the great, but unrecognized, visionary leader of his time, has filled this gap of memory symbolism. Stability "Stolypin-style" has become the new brand of stability-oriented state patriotism, geared to fit a situation in which recent achievements have to be safeguarded against the perceived or imagined threat posed by *domestic* rather than foreign enemies. In this sense, the adoption of the myth of Stolypin and the particular way it was shaped, indeed indicates that the regime correctly anticipated that its next challenge would come from within in the form of increasing societal opposition that culminated in the series of street protests in 2011-2012. However, whether the invested effort directed at popularizing the image of Stolypin as a historical figure of importance has succeeded in familiarizing the general public with his "lessons", as the title of a 2006 TV series on Stolypin intimates,[23] remains to be questioned.

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