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## CONSERVATISM AND REALISM IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to present the main historiographical trends in contemporary Russia in connection with the political realities of the country. History becomes a tool of utmost importance for the political leadership since it forges the future Russian citizens. The author explores the ways in which many historical subjects are analyzed by the Russian historians and seeks to emphasise the differences of views and interpretations between them.

**Keywords:** Russian historiography, intellectual disputes, national consciousness, political interference.

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One of the constant features of Russia's history is its being under the sign of people pretending to embody ideas and hardly ever under the sign of values represented by people. In Russia, no matter how generous and exciting the project that inspires the majority might be, it is the qualities of the personality representing the idea that gives viability, force, chances of success to that project and not its adequacy to the objective data.

The concepts used in an interpretative approach of Russia should be placed in the context, not only by referring to the preceding events in the past, but also and especially by relating them to the main political trend of today. Still today in Russia, as well as in the former communist countries, there is an inseparable link between the political effort of building the state and the new national consciousness on the one hand and the main historiographical trends on the other hand. In fact, not only today was the state at the core of Russian historiography as it has always been the main analysis criterion and the supreme reference. With the exception of a few tumultuous break years, such as Pokrovski's first revolutionary epoch or the perestroika period, placed under the sign of I. Afanasiev, L. Batkin or G. Popov' productions<sup>1</sup>, the state has been the principal criterion that the majority of past or present historians used to assess the facts, projects, qualities and defects of a leader, party or group of people. Other very solid concerns related to history-phenomenon, culturology, anthropology or history of mentalities are less visible, as compared to those of the majority group.

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<sup>1</sup> See I.N. Afanasiev (Coord), *Sovetskaia istoriografia*, Rossiiskii Gosudartsvennai Gumanitarnai Universitet, Moscova, 1996.