

# Conclusion

*Natalia Bubnova*

The demolition of the Berlin Wall has remained in our collective memory as a symbol of the progressive breakthrough to positive transformation – in Europe, in the world, and in the movement toward greater human freedom. The tremendous social and political change that followed the events of twenty years ago has opened up prospects for a new, united Europe and put an end to the Cold War and the U.S.-Russian nuclear standoff. However, alongside the successes of a number of Eastern and Central European states, many countries in the region have since suffered from the dismantling of democratic reforms and an expansion of authoritarian tendencies. These latter states, like others throughout the world, are experiencing the growth of nationalism and ethnic conflict, the politicization and radicalization of religious movements, and the spread of terrorism. Having passed into the new millennium from the last century, these problems unfortunately appear likely to last longer than the Berlin Wall.

In the early 1990s, Russia made a breakthrough toward universal values and a market economy. Citizens now enjoy freedoms that they had never possessed throughout Russian history. The very establishment and successful operation of the Carnegie Moscow Center over the last fifteen years was made possible by the tectonic shifts that occurred in the world and in the country two decades ago. But despite the fact that Russia's role in the peaceful break from totalitarianism was substantial, its path over the past two decades has not been straightforward, and since the end of the 1990s, policies have been implemented that have led to the curtail-

ment of civil liberties within the country and the evisceration of basic democratic institutions.

The authorities have much to say about modernization, but it will be successful only if it means democratization together with the renewal of the technological base of the entire country. Then comes the task of rebuilding institutions, creating a real separation of powers, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and of the press, and expelling the cynicism and distrust brought about by the dominance of the imitation processes and structures – such as parliament-not-for-discussion, rigged elections, fake parties, state-controlled broadcasting, government-sponsored youth movements, etc. This is also in our history: to rebuild anew that which was destroyed. The destruction of the Berlin Wall is not a guarantee of success; yet democratic reform is a necessary precondition for credible domestic and foreign policies in a modern state, and for the well-being of citizens. For this, Russia has at its disposal extremely diverse resources, talented, educated people, a rich cultural heritage, and a tradition of enduring and overcoming.

The development of Eastern and Central Europe is facilitated by its increasing integration into Europe at large. For Russia and its neighbors, involvement in global processes and mutually beneficial cooperation with the advanced countries of the West and East should also be important resources for modernization.

The extension of freedom and dignity has taken place over the course of many centuries. This process encompasses ever more diverse population groups: ethnic and religious minorities, women, children, people of different skin colors, of different sexual orientations, and those with disabilities. Andrew Carnegie, when creating the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace one hundred years ago, proceeded from an expectation that international relations would also become increasingly humanized. If mankind succeeds in overcoming the threats to its existence, then in the future the world will become ever more removed from the politics of force and rule of the strongest and draw closer to a con-

sideration of the needs of all countries large and small and to a policy of decision-making under international law. The establishment and functioning of the United Nations and the European Union are evidence that the development of common norms is no utopia. The Carnegie Endowment is implementing the Euro-Atlantic Initiative with the goal of developing a conceptual framework for a unified security system – military, political, economic, and climatic – which along with the countries of the European Union and the U.S. would include Russia and its neighbors. Assuming that the “clash of civilizations” is not fatal in nature, that a growing gap does not further divide various ethnic groups and religious denominations, and that mutual understanding is in principle possible between groups, then all efforts should be made to move towards the development of a more equitable and effective system of relationships, both within states and on the international stage – such is the fundamental lesson from the destruction of the Berlin Wall.