



Forum Neuzeit
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Conspiratorial Thinking: Narratives in Modern History

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Fortress Russia: How Conspiracy Theories became the Driving Force of Post-Soviet Politics

After Vladimir Putin's return to the Kremlin in 2012 the country seems to be turning into an isolated fort where anti-Westernism is a basis for rapid social cohesion. Leading Russian conspiracy theorists are listed as top global philosophers who have a direct influence on the president and even allegedly encouraged him to occupy the Crimea. Russian media are turning into the propaganda mode 24/7 spreading lies and deceptions about 'the geopolitical rivals' of Russia who strive to attain Russian natural resources. These narratives emerge on a daily basis in the media, among scholars and in the speeches of leading politicians.

How this can be interpreted? Is Russian society going crazy or conspiracy theories are a rather cunning way used by the elites to find public support? In this lecture, I shall analyze the reasons of popularity of conspiracy theories post-1991 and will outline the main ways these theories develop in Russian society nowadays.

Dr. Ilya Yablokov is a Teaching Fellow in Russian Studies at the University of Leeds. After graduating from Tomsk State University, Russia, (BA) and the Central European University in Budapest (MA), he was associated with the University of Manchester (PhD in 2014). His major interests have extended from the history of post-Soviet Russian media and self-censorship in post-Socialist countries to the study of Russian conspiracy theories. His forthcoming publication is the study *Fortress Russia: Conspiracy Theories in the Post-Soviet World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).