



The Changing Relationship between Russia and Europe

We and Them – an essay about the Russian idea

Bengt Jangfeldt

nonfiction, about 200 pages

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Russia's view of the West throughout history

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From Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin, the question of Russia's relationship with the West and Western values has occupied and divided the rulers, thinkers, and people. The contradiction between those who see Russia's only passable path in approaching the West and those who advocate "the Russian way" is a recurrent phenomenon in the country's history. The same dualism characterizes another distinctive feature of Russian history: the relationship between rulers and people. The Russians like to see their country as morally superior to the countries of the West – a perception strongly influenced by the role of the Orthodox Church. By outlining the main features of the Russian "civilization myth", the authority on Russian history Bengt Jangfeldt helps us to understand not only the history of ideas of our neighboring country but also the peculiarities of today's Russian politics and culture.

Vladimir Putin is neither crazy nor particularly capricious. His plan for Russia rests on a centuries-old tradition of thought.

"One must never underestimate the inferiority complex of my expatriots."

Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky to Bengt Jangfeldt

Bengt Jangfeldt

born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1948 is an author and Professor of Russian literature. His books have been translated into fifteen languages. He also works as a translator.

Bengt Jangfeldt has received several prizes for his books, including the August Prize (twice) and the Swedish Academy's Biography Prize.

