

# Russia Has Its Own Tea Party With Rodina

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For those who bemoan the absence of Russian Republicans, here is an angry force in our politics that has all the markings of the Tea Party movement.☒

☒I am talking about the Rodina party.☒

☒Like its U.S. counterpart, it is more of a grassroots movement than a regular party. It is driven by anger and resentment toward the government and the established parties. It is a political vehicle for people of diverse ages and educational and professional backgrounds who are fed up with corruption, incompetence and the moral promiscuity of the elites.☒☒

The Russian Tea Partyers are a religious and culturally conservative force, promoting a fundamentalist brand of Russian Orthodoxy. (They endorse traditional Islam as well.) Their agenda is anti-abortion, anti-gay, anti-liberal, anti-immigrant and "patriotic" to the point of being racist.☒

They want to destroy the oligarchs and financial sharks they think have robbed the nation and are getting unearned rewards at the expense of the little guy.☒

They love guns — lots of them. They believe the defense industry is the cure for all economic woes and will one day restore the nation to prosperity and greatness.☒They endorse an imperialist, anti-Western foreign policy and think our nation, standing taller than others, should lead by example — or by force if necessary. They believe in international conspiracies, while some of their own worldviews are downright loopy.☒☒

But whereas U.S. Tea Partyers want to shrink government as much as possible to expand individual freedom, their Russian brethren believe in an intrusive government that is big, one that is willing to sacrifice individual liberties for a "greater cause."

☒Rodina worships the Russian state, both its imperial tsarist and Stalinist incarnations. That's why it supports President Vladimir Putin, who has been busy building such a hybrid monstrosity.☒☒

For Putin, Rodina provides a fiery, mobilizing ideology, which is so lacking in the bland United Russia party. Rodina's "patriotic fundamentalism" is a potent mixture to fire up Putin's apathetic political base of provincial voters heavily dependent on government largesse.☒☒

Rodina could also be a perfect weapon for cleansing the ruling elites of pro-Western liberals and opposition sympathizers. ☒Putin is now moving to make Rodina's patriotic fundamentalism the political platform for his re-election in 2018.☒☒

The danger for Putin is that he himself is not central to Rodina's ideology. He may well find himself expendable in their crusade for the larger cause.☒☒

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*The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.*

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