

IOANA MĂDĂLINA MIRON

NATIONALISM AND XENOPHOBIA IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA:

SKINHEAD AND NASHI MOVEMENTS



PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ

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2026

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ISBN 978-606-37-2887-7

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"God is high, Czar is far away."
«До Бога высоко до царя далеко.»

Russian proverb

Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to my beloved parents, who have stood by my side and supported me unconditionally throughout this long journey.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Prof. Univ. Dr Sergiu Miscoiu, the coordinator of the doctoral thesis, for his invaluable guidance throughout my research process.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Vyacheslav Likhachev for the invaluable information he provided during this research.

I am sincerely grateful to everyone who has helped and supported me, as well as those who have sacrificed their time. I could not have completed this journey without these wonderful people.

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Foreword

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was more than a geopolitical earthquake; it was a profound rupture in historical continuity, collective identity, and everyday life for millions of people. Empires do not simply disappear from maps—they linger in memory, language, symbols, and political imagination. In the decades that followed the dissolution of the USSR, the Russian Federation found itself navigating a turbulent transition marked by economic hardship, institutional fragility, identity crises, and an unresolved relationship with its imperial and Soviet pasts. Within this volatile environment, new and revived forms of nationalism and xenophobia took shape, particularly among younger generations who grew up in the shadow of systemic collapse and ideological vacuum.

Mădălina Miron's book, *Nationalism and Xenophobia in Post-Soviet Russia: Skinhead and Nashi Movements*, addresses one of the most pressing and controversial dimensions of contemporary Russian political and social life: the mobilisation of youth through nationalist and exclusionary narratives. By examining two seemingly distinct yet structurally interconnected movements—the radical nationalist Skinheads and the pro-Kremlin youth organisation Nashi—this study offers a nuanced exploration of how nationalism functions both as a grassroots reaction and as a state-mediated instrument in post-Soviet Russia.

At first glance, the Russian Skinhead movement and the Nashi youth movement appear to occupy opposite poles of the political spectrum. The former has been associated with neo-Nazi symbolism, street violence, and overt xenophobia; the latter emerged as a state-sponsored initiative,

promoting patriotism, loyalty to the leadership, and a managed version of civic engagement. Yet beneath these surface differences lies a shared ideological terrain structured around the centrality of the nation, the construction of internal and external enemies, and the dichotomy of “Us” versus “Them.” Both movements, in distinct ways, reflect and reinforce broader processes of de-democratisation and ideological consolidation in post-Soviet Russia.

This volume situates these movements within a longer historical trajectory of Russian nationalism. From the Tsarist doctrine of “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality” to Soviet patriotism and post-1991 identity struggles, Russian political culture has repeatedly reconfigured the relationship between state, nation, and people. The revival of imperial symbols, the rehabilitation of selective historical narratives, and the persistent emphasis on spiritual and civilisational uniqueness have provided fertile ground for the resurgence of nationalist discourse. In this context, youth movements become particularly significant: they are both products of their time and laboratories for the future.

The 1990s constituted a critical juncture. The sudden transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented system generated social dislocation, unemployment, inequality, and widespread perceptions of humiliation on the international stage. For many young people, the promise of liberal democracy seemed abstract and distant, while everyday realities were defined by uncertainty and instability. In such circumstances, nationalist rhetoric—offering pride, belonging, and clear boundaries—acquired powerful emotional appeal. Xenophobia, especially toward migrants, ethnic minorities, and perceived cultural outsiders, became intertwined with narratives of national revival.

The Russian Skinhead movement emerged in this climate of frustration and identity search. Inspired in part by Western subcultural models yet reshaped by local political and historical references, Russian Skinheads transformed from a stylistic youth subculture into a vehicle for radical nationalist mobilisation. Their embrace of neo-Nazi aesthetics, Aryan myths, and violent activism reflected not only imported ideological influences but also domestic anxieties related to territorial integrity, demographic change,

and post-imperial decline. Through hate crimes, propaganda, and symbolic acts, they articulated an exclusionary vision of Russianness rooted in ethnic purity and historical myth.

In contrast, the Nashi movement, established in the mid-2000s, represented a different strategy of youth mobilisation. Often described as a pro-Kremlin response to the “colour revolutions” in post-Soviet states, Nashi sought to channel youthful energy into a state-aligned patriotic framework. Its activities—ranging from summer camps at Lake Seliger to public demonstrations and media campaigns—combined elements of civic education, ideological training, and performative loyalty. While distancing itself from overt extremism, Nashi nonetheless reproduced key components of nationalist discourse, including anti-Westernism, civilisational exceptionalism, and the defence of sovereignty against foreign influence.

By analysing these two movements together, Mădălina Miron advances the argument that nationalism in post-Soviet Russia cannot be understood solely as either a bottom-up social reaction or a top-down political strategy. Rather, it is the result of complex interactions between societal grievances, historical memory, ideological experimentation, and state interests. Radical subcultures and state-sponsored organisations may differ in methods and rhetoric, but they often draw from overlapping symbolic reservoirs and contribute—intentionally or not—to the consolidation of a political environment in which pluralism is narrowed and dissent is delegitimised.

The conceptual foundation of this study rests on a careful examination of the meanings of nationalism and xenophobia. Nationalism is approached both as a state of mind—an emotional attachment to a perceived community of destiny—and as a political principle that seeks congruence between cultural identity and state power. Xenophobia, in turn, is analysed not merely as prejudice but as a socially and politically embedded mechanism of boundary construction. Cultural xenophobia and immigrant xenophobia, while analytically distinct, frequently converge in contexts where national identity is framed as threatened or endangered.

Special attention is devoted to the Russian-language concepts of *narod* and *narodnost'*, whose semantic nuances reveal important differences

between Western and Russian understandings of nationhood. The historical reinterpretation of these terms—particularly in the nineteenth century under Count Sergei Uvarov—demonstrates how ideas of nationality were adapted to reinforce autocratic rule rather than challenge it. Such intellectual legacies continue to shape contemporary discourses about Russianness (*Russkost'*) and the “Russian Idea,” concepts that oscillate between cultural pride and political instrumentality.

Methodologically, the research combines qualitative and documentary analysis. Interviews, online materials, movement brochures, statistical data on hate crimes, and archival sources have been examined to reconstruct both the ideological narratives and the practical operations of the Skinhead and Nashi movements. The inclusion of empirical data—such as reports from independent monitoring centres on xenophobic violence—anchors theoretical reflections in observable social phenomena. This approach seeks to avoid reductionism: neither romanticising youth activism nor demonising it without contextual understanding.

The relevance of this book extends beyond the Russian case. Across Europe and other regions, youth radicalisation, nationalist resurgence, and populist mobilisation have challenged liberal democratic norms. The Russian experience offers a particularly instructive example of how nationalist energies can be both oppositional and system-supportive, both disruptive and stabilising for those in power. It demonstrates how the line between extremism and mainstream patriotism can become blurred when shared narratives of victimhood, greatness, and external threat dominate public discourse.

At a time when geopolitical tensions, information warfare, and identity politics shape international relations, understanding the internal dynamics of Russian nationalism is crucial. The construction of enemies—whether internal minorities or external adversaries—has tangible consequences not only for domestic social cohesion but also for foreign policy orientations. Youth movements, as amplifiers of ideological trends, provide early indicators of broader transformations within political culture.

This book does not seek to reduce Russian society to its nationalist currents, nor to suggest that xenophobia defines the entirety of post-Soviet

experience. Rather, it aims to illuminate how specific movements reflect structural conditions and contribute to shaping them in return. The Skinheads and Nashi are analysed as symptoms of deeper processes—economic insecurity, identity reconstruction, historical reinterpretation, and state-led narrative management. They are not the disease itself, but they reveal its contours.

Ultimately, Miron's study invites readers to reflect on a broader question: how do societies undergoing rapid transformation negotiate the tension between openness and closure, between pluralism and homogeneity, between democratic aspiration and authoritarian temptation? Post-Soviet Russia offers a powerful case study of these dilemmas. The trajectories of its youth movements remind us that the struggle over national identity is never merely symbolic—it is embedded in institutions, practices, and everyday interactions.

By situating radical and state-aligned youth movements within a comprehensive theoretical and historical framework, this book contributes to ongoing debates about nationalism, xenophobia, and de-democratisation. It is my hope that the analysis presented here will foster critical dialogue, encourage comparative research, and deepen our understanding of the forces that shape contemporary political identities—not only in Russia but in an increasingly polarised world.

If nationalism is indeed, as many scholars have argued, both a sentiment and a political principle, then its manifestations among youth deserve particular scrutiny. For it is in the mobilisation of the young that nations project their imagined futures.

Sergiu Mișcoiu

Introduction

Following the upheaval and instability caused by the Soviet Union's fall in the 1990s, far-right movements proliferated. Impelled by a huge surge of nostalgia for the empire, great power status, and the USSR economy, these movements are little more than symptoms of an illness that relapsed with the loss of this position. The Skinhead and Nashi youth movements use Nazi-style rhetoric, as well as xenophobic (anti-Russian) components, anti-Semitism, and chauvinistic nationalism. These two movements inherited elements addressed by their predecessors, the Slavophile and Black Hundred movements, such as white supremacy and the fact that Russians are descended from a pure northern race, and their role is to defend this race from all that can cause its degradation and decay. The Skinheads movement first emerged in England in the 1960s as a movement focused on a new approach to fashion. This movement's members gathered solely for recreational purposes.

Both the Skinheads movement in England in the 1960s and the Skinheads movement in post-Soviet Russia emerged as a reaction to radical economic changes. Although they began as a source of entertainment, their membership grew in stages, eventually becoming a voice of the working class in the face of a changing world in economic, political, and cultural terms. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the first legislative elections in post-Soviet Russia in 1993 disappointed those who advocated for Russia to take the path of democracy. The 1990s saw the rise of the sociopolitical movement known as neo-Nazism. This neo-Nazi organisation in Russia

gained popularity after the Second Chechen War, which resulted in a series of hate-motivated attacks against immigrants. In the 1990s, white supremacy emerged as a phenomenon among right-wing extremists of neo-Nazi ideology in Russia. The second Chechen war provided fuel for the fire, especially among the members of the Skinhead movement. Furthermore, the new presidential administration's imperialist and Stalinist syntax, as well as the authorities' lack of monitoring of these extremist formations, contributed to a large surge in membership and hate-motivated attacks. The 1990s period marks Russia's separation into Russians and non-Russians.

The theoretical background for this book describes the principles and phenomena that underpin movements like Skinheads and Nashi and explains the proliferation of imperialist and Stalinist discourse based on the idea of Aryan race identity and white supremacy among members of the Skinheads movement, especially throughout post-Soviet Russia, when Darwinian theory and the success of the Russian Army during the Second World War advocated the idea of super-human and the supreme race.

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of two youth socio-political movements known as Skinheads and Nashi that make up the image of hybridised social rules and processes of a socio-structural political post-Soviet Eastern Europe, the place where the post-Perestroika generation found itself caught between those who were nostalgic for the empire and militants for the transition to democracy. Members of the more current Skinheads youth movement, such as the one studied in this book, come from a post-Soviet area alongside other right-wing parties. This book contributes to explaining the difference between the first Skinheads, who were a working-class phenomenon who gathered only to share a certain type of music, a different style of clothing, a passion for football, and the Skinheads movement, which has become more politicised and involved in hate crimes and ethnic conflict. The Skinhead movement in post-Soviet Russia is one of the most aggressive and violent responses to the instability generated by the disintegration of the USSR, and I will explain that these two movements are symptoms of the sickness, not the disease itself. Moreover, the research contributes to the understanding of the Skinheads and Nashi movement's ideological, cultural, political, and economic context. At the same time, the

paper helps to understand the forces that create youth collective mobilisation in a post-communist society controlled by a non-official fascist ideology and an ideology that denigrates the West and the concept of democracy. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the patterns and dynamics of right-wing radicalism in this transitional climate. Explaining and assessing the reasons for collective mobilising among young people in a changing society are critical components for understanding the subject under investigation. These far-right movements have a mindset centred on the separation between Us versus Them, which is a fundamental aspect of the Skinhead and Nashi movements' philosophy. Based on their worldview, these groups draw divisions between communities with differing civic/ethnic qualities, resulting in hate crimes and ethnic conflict. The significance of this book is to provide an analysis of what the Skinhead and Nashi youth movements mean for democracy, post-Soviet Russia's economy, and how they built their way to de-democratisation.

I chose this topic for my book because Nazi ideology is an area of interest to me, and I wanted to bring up something that is an active phenomenon not just in Russia, but in other parts of the world. The reason for choosing this topic for my book comes from the desire for documentation in relation to the Nazi ideology. It is also, in some ways, a continuation of my dissertation thesis, in which I analysed the techniques used in Nazi propaganda through the speeches of Joseph Goebbels.

The issue I selected to examine in this book is strongly tied to the Nazi ideology, as it is a new generation, a new form of Nazism, neo-Nazism, a socio-political movement whose goal is to resuscitate the Nazi ideology, reinstalling the doctrine of empire.

The research questions underlying the book are:

What contributed to the emergence of nationalist and xenophobic attitudes among young people in post-Soviet Russia?

What role do the youth movement Skinheads play in the de-democratisation process of Post-Soviet Russia?

How did the Political Youth Movement Nashi pave the way to managed democracy in post-Soviet Russia?

I will answer these questions by examining the crisis society of post-Soviet Russia, a society in which nationalism and xenophobia created a favourable environment for development.

The goal is to examine nationalism and xenophobia through the lens of two young movements: the Russian Skinheads Movement and the Political Youth Movement Nashi. The goal is to investigate the primary promoters that led to the intensification of xenophobia and nationalism among these teenagers, considering their popularity during Russia's societal instability in the 1990s. However, the most significant part of this analysis remains the relevance of these two movements to Russian society.

The hypothesis relates to the role that these two youth movements had in the process of de-democratization in post-Soviet Russia, and the fact that, during the de-democratization process, these movements developed appealing messages, announcements, discourses, and activities for post-Soviet Russian youth to gain their support and transform their organisational forms and structures in a way that would allow them to achieve their goals.

I collected data using a variety of methods during the development of this paper. The qualitative process utilised includes an interview with a former member of the Skinheads movement, the usage of documents from the Nashi movement's website, and articles from specialised magazines. By the qualitative method, I interpreted the language used by the Nashi movement on their website to attract as many members as possible, the messages being written in capital letters, providing a detailed analysis of what they wanted to convey. I looked at the documents of the analysed movements, such as the Skinheads movement groups and the Nashi movement website, where I was able to analyse two brochures. Another method used to elaborate on this paper was the structured interview held on the VKontakte platform. For this study, I interviewed a former member of the Skinheads movement about his time there, but no former member of the Nashi movement agreed to give me an interview. By joining the Vkontakte group and checking the Nashi movement website, I was able to contact a few people who were part of the movement but did not want to talk.

This effort went beyond simply collecting data through interviews and analysing the documents mentioned above. To present a comprehensive image of the Skinhead movement in Putin's Russia, I analysed statistics compiled by the Moscow-based research centre of nationalism and xenophobia, the SOVA centre. On the centre's website, I was able to analyse the numerical data that surfaced monthly concerning the Skinheads movement's xenophobic acts and attacks, as well as the movement's current evolution in Russia. Although the movement is no longer widely publicised, its actions are still visible in Russia.

The first chapter of this book addresses a theoretical debate by analysing and describing the major principles that constitute the foundation of the Skinheads and Nashi movements.

The term nationalism requires an analysis that begins with the historical process of the formation of the state, a process that assumes that nationalism stems from the concept of the nation. Throughout the last two centuries, leaders used a series of strategies to unify groups under one nation-state, and after these strategies, to incorporate these groups under one nation-state. These groups developed national symbols, a common identity, and expressions of loyalty for their leaders, all of which brought a strong nationalist wave. According to the historian, Anthony D. Smith the nationalism has five meanings. The usages of the term nationalism point out the formation of a nation, the national consciousness, the language and symbols of a nation, the social and political movement, and the image of nationalism as doctrine and/or ideology. These meanings reveal the specific processes and features of nationalism and, nevertheless, presuppose a considerable amount of national sentiment concerning their country and, of course, their leader. Given the theory that embodies the term nationalism, according to all my research, the concept of xenophobia does not have such a broad theoretical basis that we cannot talk about this concept without considering terms such as race, ethnicity, nations, and antisemitism. The meanings nevertheless presuppose a considerable amount of national sentiment for their country and, of course, their leader. Based on the principle of soil and soul, that is, a strong attachment that presupposes a close connection with the place where the individual was born and grew up,

the ancestral earth. All these meanings of the concept of nationalism are related to everything about the past of a nation. An organised group or movement could show a high degree of national sentiment, possess national symbols, myths, and share a common language. On the other hand, a nationalist group or movement will come with the creation of their “nationalist world” as a reaction against the change that is taking place in society (a reaction against globalization) through historical research, songs, cultural journals, literature, activities, national flags that resonates with the historical past (the flag of the Russian Imperial Movement, inspired by Imperial Russia’s flag). In this chapter, I will emphasise various types of nationalism because, in the specialised literature, we can find a fairly large number of forms that nationalism has used over time. Hans Kohn’s classification is the most relevant; thus, we can talk about 9 types of nationalism: Jacobin, liberal (Risorgimento), integral, traditional (conservative), civic, ethnic, Western-Eastern, economic, and extremist.

The other term, “xenophobia,” is relatively new, as the term nationalism appeared in the late 18th century. But there are some examples of xenophobic sentiment in Ancient Greece (denigration of barbarians and the belief that the Greek culture and people were superior to all others), also Ancient Romans had this notion of superiority over other nations, and during this chapter, I will give a classification of xenophobia. From a social and political perspective, xenophobia manifests itself in the division of the world between ethnic groups and races. The term xenophobia is divided into two parts, namely, cultural and immigrant xenophobia. Throughout this book, I will analyse and explain in detail these two components that characterise xenophobia. Nationalism is frequently accompanied by xenophobia in the case of identifying an enemy, a nation. This mentality is part of what psychologists call the US vs THEM effect. The tendency of individuals to view the social world in terms of an ingroup (us) and an outgroup (them).

In that chapter, I will present the use of the terms “Nation” and “Nationality”/Народ – Народность. In the Russian language, the terms “nation” and “nationality”/народ - народность are seen in a different way than their meaning in English. In the Russian worldview, *народ – народность*

are the most stable concepts and most ambiguous. The term (*народность*) is the main innovation of Count Sergei Semionovich Uvarov¹. For Uvarov, nationality meant a local tradition rooted in the historical evolution of Russia, which connected politics with the Church to give both stability. The term *народность* refers to individual membership in a nation (*народ*) as a cultural, linguistic, and historic community who are faithful to Russia's distinct cultural heritage. The other term, *народ* (nation), is not the entire nation, just the working part of the nation

Moreover, I will analyse a concept often used by Russian nationalists, namely the Russian Idea, which is a concept that is at the core of the identity of the Russian people. To better understand the identity and conscience of a people, the analysis of the idea of a people is important to understand the meaning of a historical event. The national idea is closely related to the identity, conscience, dignity, and national unity of a people. This national idea dominates the consciousness of a people and is what determines the specific actions, behaviours, and goals in times of war.

The last subchapter focuses on building the meaning of Russianness/*Русскость* and what role this concept plays in the politics of the Russian state. The term Russianness is based on the idea of creating a nation-state that includes ethnic Russians (who do not live on Russian territory, but whose roots are in Russia) and the Russians living in the Russian territory. Over time, this concept of Russianness has metamorphosed into a key concept not just culturally but also physically. This led to the outbreak of various forms of ethnic violence, the best known is the skinhead movement.

The second chapter focuses on the historical background from the 19th century to the 21st century. It is an analysis of the far-right groups that have existed in Russia over time, starting with the Black Hundred and continuing with the 21st century *Nashi* movement. Aggravated by financial, political, and socio-cultural crises, the 1990s were filled with turmoil and violence, and a massive rise in crime and corruption was a distinctive characteristic of the Yeltsin years. Further endorsing the use of force and increasing tensions between ethnic Russians and non-Russians, particularly Muslims from the

¹ was an Imperial Russian classical scholar, best remembered as an influential imperial statesman under Nicholas I of Russia.

southern regions of the Federation, the First Chechen War (1994-1996) strongly influenced the nationalistic and racist attitudes of many Russians. It is also clear that the difficult social and economic situation that resulted from the troubles of the 1990s provided fuel for the fire, creating an environment of social friction, low trust, and increasing racial intolerance, particularly Islamophobia, following the First Chechen War. Xenophobia and nationalism have become the keystones of the skinhead movement, and the roots of their ideology are multifaceted.

The third chapter focuses on the extreme nationalist skinhead movement and its role in the de-democratisation process. The movement first emerged as a symptom of wider changes throughout Russian society following the collapse of communism, being part of a general rise in nationalistic and xenophobic attitudes among the wider population. The Russian skinhead movement was composed of four groups of teenagers mimicking the style (including shaved heads and heavy boots) and actions (commonly viewed as extreme right-wing nationalists or neo-nazists who exposed antisemitic and other racist views) of their western counterparts.

Referring to the Nashi youth movement, I analyse post-Soviet Russia, particularly Russia under Putin's leadership. During this time, the Russian state encompassed three distinct categories, such as: Tsarist official nationality, cultural and political nationalism. The first category establishes the criteria under which the other two nationalisms (cultural and political) gain autonomy. The Nashi youth movement encompasses all these categories of nationalism, the members of this movement did not directly experience these periods in Russian history (Tsarist Empire and Soviet Union), their political and social identity has been influenced by various factors such as books, films, and family or other officials' stories, being at a young age they were easily influenced by these factors that contributed to their political formation, all this was fed by the presidential administration, which organized camps (summer camps at Seliger) and promised them important functions in politics.

Throughout this chapter, I will examine the Nashi youth movement through the ideals that it targets, including patriotism and nationalism. The Nashi movement is an example of astro-turfing (an action aimed at

concealing an organisation's sponsor or sponsors' activity that seeks to conceal an organisation's sponsor or sponsors to give the idea that members (in the case of the Nashi movement, the kommissar in charge of activities/activist leaders) sponsor and support the organisation, rather than someone else).

These two movements are defined primarily by the concepts of nationalism and xenophobia. To define and analyse the notions of nationalism and xenophobia, I used a book written by Hans Kohn, and Anthony Smith's publications provided a very significant bibliography for understanding and classifying the concept of nationalism. Marlene Laruelle's books also helped me analyse Russian nationalism from various perspectives.

The Skinheads movement, which I decided to analyse, gained a lot of attention from the press in Russia and the West. This provided me with a wide range of bibliographic sources, including Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, on *Russia's skinheads. Exploring and Rethinking Subcultural Lives* (2010). This study explores the Skinhead movement from a sociological perspective and describes the Skinhead movement as belonging to an uncivilised class that uses violence as its only means of expression and achieving its goals. For this part of the research, I used statistics developed by the Moscow SOVA information and analysis centre. This site has provided me with access to the statistics archive for several years (from 2000 to the present), and the documents I discovered helped me gain an overview of the Skinheads movement's actions. I discovered that, while the Skinheads movement is no longer as visible in Russia as it was in the early 2000s, I was able to assemble some statistics on their vandalism and ethnic violence against non-Russians. The number of xenophobic actions is lower today than it was between 1990 and 2000, with the help of sources such as Alexandr Verkhovsky and Galina Kozhenikova, "Anti-Semitism in Russia: January-September 2006", and SOVA Research Centre. *Russian Nationalism and Xenophobia from January to November 2024*.

Unlike the Skinheads movement, the Nashi youth political movement (also known as Putinjugend) did not receive as much attention from researchers. The documents used in the chapter dedicated to the analysis of

the Nashi movement helped me to comprehend the ideology, ideals, and objectives of this youth movement. With the help of these studies, I was able to exemplify and broadly explain the relationship between the two youth movements and to draw comparisons and similarities between Skinheads and Nashi movements, which on the surface appear to be different, but a more in-depth analysis was required to see that the two are quite similar, particularly in terms of the ideologies addressed.

Furthermore, I accessed an old Nashi movement website, which served as a source for me to analyse the brochures created by the movement's representatives about the summer camp at Lake Seliger, the recruitment procedures, and all the activities carried out within this youth movement. I also had access to the registration forms for this movement.

CHAPTER I.

The Meaning of Nationalism and Xenophobia

The term nationalism is a term that belongs to modernity. Its political and social meaning goes back to the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder and the French counter-revolutionary cleric, the Abbé Augustin de Barruel, at the end of the 18th century². Throughout the nineteenth century, the terms nationalism and xenophobia were rarely utilised.

The concept of nationalism was first embraced as a sense of belonging to a nation because of a social integration process, in which individuals share common cultural backgrounds and traditions. This phenomenon is mostly cultural but can also assume political forms.³

In English, the first use of the term “nationalism” was in 1836, and it appeared to be theological, the doctrine that a certain nation is divinely elected. Later, it was associated with national egotism. However, adjectives like “nationality” and “nationalness”, which allude to national zeal or individuality, were more commonly used.⁴

Over the centuries, nationalism has undergone several changes, its traditional character being found in the fact that the past has made its presence felt frequently. Nationalism requires an analysis that begins with the historical process of the formation of the state, a process that assumes that nationalism stems from the concept of the nation.

² Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism*, USA: Polity Press, 2010, p. 5.

³ John Plamenatz, *Karl Marx's Philosophy of Man*, London: Clarendon Press, 1976, pp.23-36.

⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Vol. I, London: Routledge, p. 5.

Up until the French Revolution, the political and social unity consolidated around empires, fiefdoms, and tribal affiliation (in this century, European nations began to determine the political boundaries based on ethnic traditions and loyalties). After the French Revolution, the idea of a nation gained new connotations, one of which belonged to Emmanuel Sieyès in a book published in 1789, where nationalism is interpreted as the totality of persons who have common laws and are represented under the same legislature.⁵ Due to the Industrial Revolution, an integrated, nation-encompassing economy emerged and a national public sphere, where British people began to mobilise on a state-wide scale, rather than just in the smaller units of their province, town, or family.⁶ The early emergence of a popular patriotic nationalism took place in the mid-18th century and was actively promoted by the British government and by the writers and intellectuals of the time.⁷ For example, national symbols, anthems, myths, and flags were constructed by nationalists and widely adopted. The best example is the Union Jack, which was adopted in 1801 as a national symbol.⁸

The political convulsions of the late 18th century associated with the American and French revolutions massively augmented the widespread appeal of patriotic nationalism.⁹ Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power further established nationalism when he invaded much of Europe. Napoleon used this opportunity to spread revolutionary ideas, resulting in much of the 19th-century European Nationalism.¹⁰

Throughout the last two centuries, leaders used a series of strategies to unify groups under one nation-state, and after these strategies, to incorporate these groups under one nation-state. These groups developed national symbols, a common identity, and expressions of loyalty for their leaders, all of which brought a strong nationalist wave. For example, the eagle was a symbol of power in ancient Rome that was resurrected with

⁵ Emmanuele Sieyès, *Qué es el Tercer Estado? precedido de Ensayo sobre los privilegios*, Madrid: Alianza, p. 92.

⁶ Michael Mann, *The rise of classes and nation-state 1760-1914*, Vol.II, Los Angeles: University of California, 2012, pp. 92-94.

⁷ Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism. A cultural history, 1740-1830*, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997.

⁸ Nick Groom, *The Union Jack: The Story of Briths Flag*, London: Atlantic Books, 2007.

⁹ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism*, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 116.

¹⁰ Alexander Motyl, *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, San Diego: Academic Press, 2001.

Christian meaning into used by both Germany and the United States. Another example, Nazi Germany was inspired by the ancient Hindu swastika. While the original symbol originally meant “good luck” (and in parts of India, continues to mean this today), the German Nazi Party changed both the direction of the symbol and the meaning to represent inaccurate notions of a perfect Germanic/Aryan bloodline. Nazi Germany also focused oppression and violence on non-Aryan German people (e.g., Jews) and demanded loyalty to the Nazi party and their leader. Also, the French Revolution used symbols such as the tricolour flag of red, blue, and white, which represented Paris and the country of France as a whole. They also used a red hat known as the liberty cap, which denoted unity and allegiance to a new regime.¹¹ The liberty hat was also worn by Marianne, a female symbol of the revolution and new France. I have given some examples to highlight a few nations that have embraced the term “nationalism” and the symbols that represent the nation.

All these elements that make up the phenomenon of nationalism conceptualise different theories¹²:

1. Nationalism as an ideology, viewed from the perspective of the form of social, political, and territorial organisation.
2. Nationalism in the form of ideology focuses on the processes of strengthening nations.
3. Nationalism is an attitude or form of identity incorporating cultural and political feelings.

According to the historian, Anthony D. Smith the nationalism has five meanings:¹³

1. A process of formation, or growth, of nations.
2. A sentiment or consciousness of belonging to the nation.
3. A language and symbolism of the nation.
4. A social and political movement on behalf of the nation.
5. A doctrine and/or ideology of the nation, both general and particular.

¹¹ <https://study.com/learn/lesson/nationalism-history-overview-examples.html>, accessed 27.02.2023.

¹² Christophe Jaffrelot, *For a theory of nationalism*, Centre d'études et de recherches internationales SciencesPo, 2013, p. 31

¹³ Anthony D.Smith, *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Vol.I, London: Routledge, pp.5-6.

The five aspects of nationalism point out the *formation of a nation, the national consciousness, the language and symbols of a nation, the social and political movement*, and the image of nationalism as *doctrine and/or ideology*. These meanings reveal the specific processes and features of nationalism. The meanings nevertheless presuppose a considerable amount of national sentiment concerning their country and, of course, their leader. Based on the principle of soil and soul, that is, in my opinion, a strong attachment that presupposes a close connection with the place where the individual was born and grew up, the ancestral earth. All these meanings of the concept of nationalism are related to everything about the past of a nation. An organised group or movement could show a high degree of national sentiment, possess national symbols, myths, and share a common language. On the other hand, a nationalist group or movement will come with the creation of their “nationalist world” as a reaction against the change that is taking place in society (a reaction against globalization) through historical research, songs, cultural journals, literature, activities, national flags that resonates with the historical past (the flag of the Russian Imperial Movement, inspired by Imperial Russia’s flag). The most important part of this symbolism is proper names (a distinct feature of the nationalist movement), which are chosen from the past to express the nation’s distinctiveness, heroism, and sense of destiny, to resonate these qualities among the members.¹⁴ For example, a skinhead is a teenager of a subculture characterised by their hair cut off and heavy boots, seen as aggressive. These meanings presented by Anthony Smith place the nation at the centre of the nationalist ideology and unify the nation under one political authority. As I mentioned, over time nationalism has taken on different forms and meanings depending on each region, of course, where it was promoted by the leaders of the respective nation/region. It is therefore difficult to say that the nationalist movements have been subjected to a single model. Once the nationalist ideology has manifested itself in a certain group and has consolidated itself as part of the political discourse, one can speak of a

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 7.

nationalist movement.¹⁵ In the specialised literature, we can find a fairly large number of forms that nationalism has used over time. Hans Kohn's classification is the most relevant; thus, we can talk about 9 types of nationalism: Jacobin, liberal (Risorgimento), integral, traditional (conservative), civic, ethnic, Western-Eastern, economic, and extremist.

1. Jacobin nationalism was during the French Revolution, and its name was attributed by members affiliated with the Jacobin Club: Robespierre, Louis de Saint-Just¹⁶, etc. Its purpose was to extend the principles of the French Revolution, the main characteristics of this trend being: intolerance of internal opposition, militarism, and implicitly the use of force to achieve its purpose, confidence, and effectiveness of its mission, of frequent application of force, and religious fanaticism.
2. Liberal nationalism (Risorgimento) emerged in the Enlightenment period and was promoted by Giuseppe Mazzini, also considered to have inspired the "Young Italy" movement. At this stage, the principle of self-determination and the place of the individual in the national context were promoted, which involved the realisation of a connection between the individual and the national perspective. In the 19th century, the nationalist movements of that period wanted to create a national state based on the principles governing society, embedded in a common interest of those who live and live on the same territory delimited by political boundaries.
3. Integral nationalism appeared in the 20th century. And some of the peculiarities of this current are the influence of fascist and Russian Bolshevism. For a better understanding of this type of nationalism, it is necessary to consider the following factors: the militaristic spirit, the feeling of superiority generated by success and the third one results

¹⁵ Ömer Senan Arslaner, "Reviewing the Theories of Nationalism: Historicizing, Classifying and Inquiring the Conceptualization", *Lectio Socialis*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2022, p. 7.

¹⁶ Lauren Cottle "Jacobins in the French Revolution", *European History Study Guide*, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/who-were-the-jacobins-definition-history.html> accessed on 28.02.2023.

from the very range of operations and propagandistic instruments that Jacobin and liberal nationalism have used to unify national states.¹⁷

4. Traditional nationalism (conservative) appeared as a reaction to the French Revolution and rationalism, as an expression of a return to the ancient traditions that formed nations. The same culture, the same ideals, and sacred values are considered the essence of traditionalist nationalism.¹⁸
5. Civic nationalism combines two principles, that of individual self-determination and national self-determination, but amplifies the idea that nationalism involves several authorities and laws that are the source of equality and rights. Civic nationalism proposes a type of society in which the values, culture, aspirations, and ideas of the nation contribute to the intensification of national sentiment.
6. Ethnic nationalism promotes the ethnic community, the will of the people, folk traditions, and customs (ballads, myths). Cultural and collective identity is the central point of this ideology, highlighted and harnessed by the glorious past. From an ethnic perspective, only folk traditions and customs constituted what is now a nation. In this category, traditions and mythologies are considered the moral physiognomy of the community.
7. Western-Eastern nationalism, in Hans Kohn's view, Western nationalism promoted the idea of rationality specific to England, France, and America. German nationalism was aimed at identifying Germany as an independent state. Different from other ideologies, the doctrine of the German people promoted the exclusive and privileged history of Germany, the most beautiful of all, and with the right to dominate the others.¹⁹
8. Economic nationalism, this type of nationalism combines many forms depending on political or national influences, which explains that

¹⁷ Dan Dungaciu, *Elita interbelică: Sociologia românească în context european*. București: Mica Valahie, 2003, p. 154.

¹⁸ Kiley Bickford, *Nationalism in the French Revolution of 1789*, Doctoral Thesis, Honors College, Maine, 2014, p. 9.

¹⁹ Krzysztof Jaskułowski, "Western (civic) versus Eastern (ethnic) Nationalism. The Origins and Critique of the Dichotomy", *Polish Sociology Review*, Vol.3, No.10, 2010, pp.291-292.

disseminating this current by trying to encourage the governments of certain countries to maximise the welfare of citizens.²⁰

9. Extremist nationalism is divided between a nazi and a fascist perspective. One of the principles of this type of nationalism is that of the superhuman competing with the Other.

Here, society is divided into four categories:

1. Society and the masses need guidance.
2. Society needs an elite that distinguishes itself from the rest of the masses by heroism and sacrificial capacity to promote and preserve purely nationalist principles.
3. Society needs a leader who has the authority to guide the masses.²¹

Extremist nationalism is divided between the perspective of the masses and the perspective of the elite. As I presented above, there are too many kinds of nationalism. It is often said that nationalism has no ideology to speak of, let alone a doctrine. It is only a bundle of inchoate sentiments, elaborated by florid rhetoric.²² Nationalist ideologies have well-defined goals of collective self-rule, a territorial and cultural programme for achieving these ends.²³ There are certainly different kinds of nationalism: Jacobin, liberal, integral, traditional, civic, ethnic, economic, and so on. But all of these are for one purpose: the pursuit of nationhood. These elements mark out nationalism from other kinds of movements and ideologies.²⁴ Nationalism has gone through the most extreme forms, which, of course, have attracted the attempts of nations to defend their territories, their status as citizens, and the superiority of their race.

The other term, “xenophobia,” is relatively new, as the term nationalism appeared in the late 18th century. But there are some examples of xenophobic sentiment in Ancient Greece (denigration of barbarians and the belief that the Greek culture and people were superior to all others), also

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 292.

²¹ Bernard Baertschi & Kevin Mulligan, *Naționalisme*, București: Nemira, 2010, p. 35.

²² Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism*, USA: Polity Press, 2010, p. 24.

²³ Ibidem, pp.24-25.

²⁴ Aislinn Bronwyn McCann, “Civic Culture: Scotland’s Struggle for its Political Interests”, Virginia, 2017, p. 13.

Ancient Romans had this notion of superiority over other nations. For example, in his speech, Manius Acilius presents the notion of superiority: "There, as you know, there were Macedonians and Thracians and Illyrians, all most warlike nations, here Syrians and Asiatic Greeks, the most worthless peoples among mankind and born for slavery."²⁵

1.1. Definition of nationalism and xenophobia

It is impossible to give an exact definition of the concept of nationalism. It is also not easy to define this term in one sentence, and there is no simple basic definition/meaning. But we cannot speak of a generic definition of nationalism because such a definition cannot be applied to all states and, of course, to all peoples. Over time, many researchers, historians have tried to define this concept in two ways (as a term that reflects a political phenomenon and as a term that examines the creation/origin of the nation and other issues that I will explain later. First, I will start with the dictionary definition of this term.

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, the term nationalism is defined in two ways. First, nationalism is seen as: "the desire of a group of people who share an ethnic group, culture, language, to form an independent country"²⁶ and second, "an ideology that emphasises loyalty, devotion or allegiance to a nation or nation-state and holds that such obligations outweigh other individual or group interests."²⁷

The American historian, Hans Kohn, provided definitions on the concept of nationalism and defined this concept as an ideology based on the premise that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests.²⁸ On the other hand, Kohn described nationalism as: "a state of mind, permeating the large majority of a people

²⁵ Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, USA: Princeton University Press, p. 317.

²⁶ Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/nationalism?q=nationalism>, accessed in 28.02.2023.

²⁷ Ibidem, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/nationalism?q=nationalism>, accessed in 28.02.2023.

²⁸ Vikas Sreevatsa, "Nations, National Identity and Nationalism", *Defence Research and Studies*, 2022, <https://dras.in/nations-national-identity-and-nationalism/> accessed in 28.02.2023.

and claiming to permeate all its members; it recognises the nation-state as the ideal form of political organisation and the nationality as the source of all creative cultural energy and of economic well-being."²⁹

The historian, Carlton J.H. Hayes gives four definitions of the term nationalism, one of them is: "a condition of mind among members of a nationality, in which loyalty to the ideal or to the fact of one's national state becomes superior to all other loyalties, and of which pride in one's nationality and belief in its intrinsic excellence and in its mission are integral parts."³⁰

Another definition of the term nationalism is: "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential nation."³¹

As I mentioned in the first part of this subchapter, the concept of nationalism has received many definitions/meanings over time. After looking at some of these definitions, I was able to separate this concept into two major ways:

1. Nationalism is seen as a state of mind (the origins of a nation, the national consciousness, etc).
2. Nationalism is a political phenomenon with its origin in the late 18th century.

Furthermore, the phrase *state of mind* or *sentiment* is a pillar in the formation of nationalist beliefs. As Kohn said, the fact that nationalism is a state of mind permeates all members. And with this, the members of the nationalist groups have created a shield against globalisation. Groups or movements are associated with the idea that they constitute a solid nation and with the desire to form a strong nation-state without being influenced by what comes from outside (here I am referring strictly to what comes from their cultural past, traditions, ancestors, etc.). Kohn's definition suggests that the nationality of an individual is an expression of nationalism.

²⁹ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York: Macmillan, 1946, p. 18.

³⁰ Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, New York: Macmillan, 1926, p. 6.

³¹ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism*, USA: Polity Press, 2010, p. 9.

K.R. Minogue presented nationalism as: “a set of ideas...a form of self-expression by which a certain kind of political excitement can be communicated from an elite to masses.”³²

The Royal Institute of International Affairs (in 1939) described nationalism as: “a consciousness, on the part of individuals or groups, of membership in a nation, or of a desire to forward the strength, liberty, or prosperity of a nation.”³³ Again, these two definitions highlight the idea of national consciousness or sentiment, which encompasses a nation and its goal to create a nation-state. Apart from the concept of nationalism as a political phenomenon, ideology, or doctrine, nationalism was defined throughout history as a state of mind, a sentiment, and especially loyalty towards a nation that brings together a group of people under a common feeling, culture, traditions, and symbols. Snyder said that nationalism: “should be considered first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness, a psychological fact.”³⁴ Given all these definitions, I have concluded that, above all, the concept of nationalism is seen as a state of mind and not as a political phenomenon. Nationalism as a political phenomenon is of secondary importance to nations. Snyder speaks about “the aspirations of the nation”³⁵; the Royal Institute about a “desire to forward the strength, liberty, or prosperity of a nation”³⁶; Kohn mentions “the nation-state as the ideal form of political organisation”³⁷; and Hayes refers to “loyalty... to the fact of one's national state”³⁸. But for Ernest Gellner the nationalism as a political phenomenon is of greater importance: “Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.”³⁹ But this definition does not exclude the idea of national

³² Kenneth R. Minogue, *Nationalism*, UK: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 1967, p. 53.

³³ Bernard Spolsky, *Language and Education in Multilingual Settings*, England: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1986, p. 137.

³⁴ Gale Stroke, “Cognition and the Function of Nationalism”, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol.4, No.4, 1974, pp.525-542, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/202711?origin=crossref> accessed in 02.03.2023.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Bernard Spolsky, *Language and Education in Multilingual Settings*, England: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1986, p. 137.

³⁷ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York: Macmillan, 1946, p. 18.

³⁸ Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, New York: Macmillan, 1926, p. 6.

³⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983, p. 1.

sentiment but incorporates this in the political field. In Gellner's idea of nationalism are presented both the sentiment and the political phenomenon are presented. He also said that these two parts could be separated, but in another way, they are inextricably connected: "Nationalism as a sentiment may be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist movement is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind."⁴⁰ Trying to define this concept, historians covered both aspects of nationalism. Besides being a political phenomenon, it is also a psychological, human phenomenon, a continuous process that has changed over time. Also, nationalism has a few elements that form its basis:

- a) a common race
- b) language ("language may invite us to unite, but it does not compel us to do so..."⁴¹).
- c) traditions
- d) religion (offers a foundation for the growth of nationalism, for example, in *Holy Russia*, faith preserved in its purity; in the Russian view, the Eastern Church is equal to the Russian state, and Christianity is more important than other religions).
- e) history
- f) geography

Race is an important pillar in the creation of nationalism. For nationalists, race, like many other aspects, is a key issue; every nation may have one race. In the following, I will analyse another concept that is in correlation with the term nationalism, namely "xenophobia". Given the theory that embodies the term nationalism, according to all my research, the concept of xenophobia does not have such a broad theoretical basis that we cannot talk about this concept without considering terms such as race, ethnicity, nations, and antisemitism.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Ernest Renan, *What is a nation?* Paris: Presses-Pocket, 1992, p. 129, translated by Ethan Rundell.

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, xenophobia is "a strong feeling of dislike of people from other countries."⁴² The Italian sociologist Guido Bolaffi can be a "uncritical exaltation of another culture"⁴³ which is "an unreal, stereotyped and exotic quality."⁴⁴ A 1997 article explains the fact that xenophobia is "an element of a political struggle about who has the right to be cared for by the state and society: a fight for the collective good of the modern state."⁴⁵

From a social and political perspective, xenophobia manifests itself in the division of the world between ethnic groups and races. The term xenophobia is divided into two parts:

1. **Cultural xenophobia** involves rejecting objects, traditions, or symbols that are associated with another group or nationality, such as language, clothing, music, and other traditions associated with the culture.⁴⁶
2. **Immigrant xenophobia** – implies rejecting people who the xenophobic individual does not believe belong in the ingroup society, such as rejecting people of different religions or nationalities, and can lead to persecution, hostility, violence, and even genocide.⁴⁷ For example, after the first Chechen war, far-right groups in Russia promoted a strong xenophobic sentiment, known as Islamophobia, and discrimination against immigrants.

Nationalism is frequently accompanied by xenophobia in the case of identifying an enemy, a nation. For example, Russian and the Soviet Society

⁴² Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/xenophobia> accessed in 02.03.2023.

⁴³ Guido Bolaffi, *Dictionary of race, ethnicity and culture*, USA: Sage Publications Ltd, 2003, p. 332.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Andreas Wimmer, "Explaining xenophobia and racism: A critical review of current research approaches", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.20 (1), 1997, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01419870.1997.9993946>, accessed in 02.03.2023.

⁴⁶ Lisa Fritscher, "What is Xenophobia?", *Verywell Mind*, 9 December 2022, <https://www.verywellmind.com/xenophobia-fear-of-strangers-2671881#toc-types-of-xenophobia>, accessed in 02.03.2023.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, <https://www.verywellmind.com/xenophobia-fear-of-strangers-2671881#toc-types-of-xenophobia>, accessed in 02.03.2023.

split into two parts: “Us” versus “Them”. This mentality is part of what psychologists call the US vs THEM effect. The tendency of individuals to view the social world in terms of an ingroup (us) and an outgroup (them). People prefer to associate with those who are similar to those who are different, preferentially allocate resources to similar others, and hold more positive beliefs about similar others.⁴⁸ Finally, we can define xenophobia as an intense fear or dislike of strange people, culture, traditions, and customs.

1.2. The meanings of the terms “Nation” and “Nationality”/ «Народ – Народность»

The Russian language suggests that the Russians are not a nation in the true sense of the word, and their ethnic and cultural identity is distinct from their political one.⁴⁹ Geopolitically, any state entity on the immense open north Eurasian plain had to be either a huge empire or a tiny unit in someone else’s huge empire. Russia, or more accurately, Rus’ experienced the last condition in the Mongol Empire, but then managed to become the former, based on relatively poor resources. The result was that the Russians, as the main ethnic stock of this north Eurasian empire, had to bear centuries of serfdom, recruitment, and heavy taxation to provide the necessary resources to sustain it.⁵⁰ Throughout history, the terms “nation” and “nationality” were used interchangeably. Nevertheless, there is a difference between these two terms. The term “nation” refers to a group of people born in the same territory, and “nationality” refers to a group of people who belong to a specific nation.

Perennialists saw the process of nation-building in the following way: “the emergence of ethnicities is recognised as an adequate explanation for the formation of nations [...] the formation of ethnic communities is a

⁴⁸ American Psychological Association, <https://dictionary.apa.org/us-versus-them-effect> accessed on 02.03.2023.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 2

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

communitarian phenomenon; it is conditioned by the awareness of their members of what they objectively have in common".⁵¹

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, the term "nation" is defined as: "a country considered as a group of people with the same language, culture and history, who live in a particular area under one government"⁵² and the Longman Dictionaries propose the following definition: "a large group of people of the same race"⁵³ Both, nation, and nationality refer to groups of people belonging to a defined territory. The Royal Institute of International Affairs developed a study that attempts to define these terms in English: "synonymously with State or country to mean society united under one government... But the implications of a nation are never precisely those of the State, since the nation calls to those persons who compose a political community, State to the sovereign power to which they owe an allegiance, and which holds sway over the territory which they inhabit. Nation is also used to denote an aggregation of individuals united by other, as well as political, religious, language, or tradition."⁵⁴

In the Russian language, the terms "nation" and "nationality"/*народ - народность* are seen in a different way than their meaning in English. In the Russian worldview, *народ – народность* are the most stable concepts and most ambiguous. To better explain these terms, I thought of a scheme, represented by a matryoshka doll. The term nationality (*народность*) is the largest doll, the broadest base of the entire dolls, the highest criterion which goes back to the ancestral land and gets up to heavenly power, and it reaches spiritual power, only then to the power of the leaders. A short history of the term nationality (*народность*), it is the main innovation of Count Sergei Semionovich Uvarov, who initiated the beginning of a real education in

⁵¹ Sergiu Mișcoiu, "Formarea națiunii. O teorie socio-constructivistă", Cluj-Napoca: Fundația pentru Studii Europene, 2006, pp.14-22.

⁵² Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/nation?q=nation> accessed on 03.03.2023.

⁵³ Longman Dictionary, <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/nation> accessed on 03.03.2023.

⁵⁴ Yael Tamir, "The Right to National Self-Determination", *Refugee Scholarship: The Cross-Fertilization of Culture*, Vol. 58, No.3, 1991, pp.565-590, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40970660> accessed on 03.03.2023.

Russia, and restored the practice of sending scientists abroad for training.⁵⁵ While the term nationality was presented to the general public as the new element of the ideological system in Russia, in Uvarov's view, it was a notion of third importance, as is apparent from the memo sent to the tsar, which he did not see as an equivalent of modern nationalism. For him, nationality meant a local tradition rooted in the historical evolution of Russia, which connected politics with the Church to give both stability.⁵⁶ Uvarov wrote his program for the development of the Russian nation in French, which was still the preferred language of the Russian elites at the time. Uvarov defined the new principle of *nationalité*, which his officials then translated as *народности*.⁵⁷ The most appropriate translation of this term is *national-specific*. According to the author Serhii Plokhyy, the term *народности* was first used in 1819. It appeared in a letter from the Russian painter Piotr Viazemski, who said: "Why not translate *nationalité* with *народности*? After all, the Poles use the term *narodowość*. The Poles are not as pretentious as we are, and when words do not naturally settle in language, they force them, and that's all."⁵⁸ It was not long before this concept was accepted in Russia. In 1852, the poet Alexander Pushkin speaks of a general sympathy, but not least of all, the lack of a clear definition of this term. "For some time, we have been used to talking about *народности*, we want this *народности*, and we complain about the lack of a word in literary works, but no one has been found to describe what this word means, *народности*. One of our critics seems to believe that *народности* means to choose things that belong to the history of our country, others think that *народности* belongs to the language, and they are glad that they can express themselves in Russian, that they use Russian

⁵⁵ "Birth of Sergey S. Uvarov, Minister of Education of the Russian Empire", *Presidential Library*, <https://www.prlib.ru/en/history/619510> accessed on 03.03.2023

⁵⁶ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O Istorie a Naționalismului Rus: de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 118.

⁵⁷ Ibidem.

⁵⁸ Зачем не перевести *nationalité* - *народность*? Поляки сказали же: *narodowość*! Поляки не так брезгливы, как мы, и слова, которые не добровольно перескакивают к ним, перетаскивают они за волосы, и дело с концом. Прекрасно! Слово, если нужно оно, укоренится. Пётр Вяжемский, *Эстетика и Литературная Критика*, Москва: Искусство, 1984, с.23.

expressions.”⁵⁹ According to Count Uvarov, this term described a traditional way of life whose purpose was to have a continuity of two Russian identity elements (religion and autocracy) in an era influenced by European ideas. While in Europe the idea of a nation, closely related to the principle of popular representation, opposed political autocracy, in Russia, it was assumed to align with the traditional tsarist regime. Uvarov did not want to justify the autocratic rule of the tsar by saying that it was a divine right, as was customary in the capital of the empire at that time.⁶⁰ Uvarov made the connection between autocracy and nationality, saying that “both flow from the same source and unite in every chapter of the history of the Russian people.”⁶¹ Uvarov was selective when he introduced the Western idea of nationality to Russia. He ignored the German emphasis on national language and culture, highlighting his attachment to traditional institutions. Since the Russian Empire was multi-ethnic, the idea of ethnic particularity raised the question of mobilisation against the Russian political regime of the kind demonstrated by the Poles in 1830. There was also the possibility that Russian nationalists would outline their rights and interests as different from those of the monarchy.⁶² Uvarov wanted to unite the concepts of народности and empire in the hope that the bond would increase the power of the empire.⁶³ The introduction of the term народности into the political sphere of Russia meant the arrival of European nationalism in the Russian Empire.

⁵⁹ Александр Пушкин, *Собрание сочинений в десяти томах*, Москва: Издательство Академии Наук СССР, 1951, pp.38-39. «С некоторых пор вошло у нас в обыкновение говорить о народности, требовать народности, жаловаться на отсутствие народности в произведениях литературы, но никто не думал определить, что разумеет он под словом народность. Один из наших критиков, кажется, полагает, что народность состоит в выборе предметов из отечественной истории, другие видят народность в словах, т. е. радуются тем, что, изъясняясь по-русски, употребляют русские выражения».

⁶⁰ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O Istorie a Naționalismului Rus: de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 119.

⁶¹ оба вытекают из одного источника и соединяются в каждой главе истории русского народа. Александр Андреев, *История государственной власти в России*, Москва: Белый волк, 1999, p. 160.

⁶² Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O Istorie a Naționalismului Rus: de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 120.

⁶³ Ibidem.

Народность is also seen as a “doctrine or national principle.”⁶⁴ On the other hand, the term *народность* refers to individual membership in a nation (*народ*) as a cultural, linguistic, and historic community who are faithful to Russia’s distinct cultural heritage.

The other term, *народ* (nation), is not the entire nation, just the working part of the nation. According to the definition of an academic dictionary, the *народ* is “the main labouring mass of the country’s population (in exploitative states, oppressed by the ruling classes)”⁶⁵ and it is represented by “an official or a scientist, a policeman or a factory owner, who still work and at the very least provide something for themselves and the state.”⁶⁶ The word *народ* is used in the scientific literature in two main meanings: political and cultural. Under the *народ*, in this case, means the totality of citizens of a particular state. In this sense, the term can be found in political science and other social sciences. In the second meaning, the concept of “nation” is used in ethnology (ethnography) and disciplines similar to (cultural anthropology, historical anthropology, etc.) and means a community based on a common origin, language, culture, historical experience, etc.⁶⁷ In Russian, this term also means social justice and truth; from here, we can infer that *народ* is the personification of truth and social justice. In Russia, the

⁶⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “narodnost”. Encyclopedia Britannica, 1999, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/narodnost> accessed in 04.03.2023.

⁶⁵ «Основная трудовая масса населения страны (в эксплуататорских государствах - угнетаемая господствующими классами)», https://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/esse_narod.html accessed in 04.03.2023.

⁶⁶ «Чиновник или ученый, полицейский или фабрикант, которые все-таки трудятся и худо-бедно себя обеспечивают, к народу не принадлежат, ибо производят не хлеб насущный, а всякие ритуалы, идеи, бумажки и фикции», https://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/esse_narod.html accessed in 04.03.2023.

⁶⁷ Слово «народ» употребляется в научной литературе в двух основных значениях – в политическом и в культурно-этническом. Взятый в первом значении термин является синонимом понятия «**нация**». Не случайно в современных политико-правовых и доктринальных документах выражения «народный суверенитет» и «право народов на самоопределение» синонимичны «национальному суверенитету» и «праву наций на самоопределение». Под «народом» в этом случае разумеется совокупность граждан определенного государства. В этом смысле термин можно встретить в политологии и в др. социальных науках. Во втором значении понятие «народ» используется в этнологии (этнографии) и сходных с ней дисциплинах (культурная антропология, историческая антропология и др.) и означает сообщество, в основе которого лежит общность происхождения, языка, культуры, исторического опыта и т.д. <https://iphlib.ru/library/collection/newphilenc/document/HASH3d2ea45e4294a99c279a3d> accessed in 04.03.2023.

lovers of truth turned out to be lovers of people (only those who are part of the working class and belong to social superiority, in this case, according to the principle of exclusion, lead the people to collapse, reducing them to a barbaric state). We have the national epithets to *народ* and *правда* (truth): Russian people – Russian truth/Working people – Working truth.⁶⁸

1.3. A Russian understanding of nationalism

So far, I talked about Western nationalism; in the following, I will talk about Russian nationalism, which needs substantial attention. Russian nationalism includes a large spectrum covering several branches of the social sciences: anthropology, geography, history, religion, ethnic studies, gender, economics, and politics. Russian nationalism is shaping around two major categories:

1. Nationalism as an imaginary of the nation (cosmism). This category asserts that nations do not exist without an imaginary realm and that, in the case of Russia, the nation's imaginary of an imperial nature. Whether we consider the Soviet Union to have been an empire or not, its collapse has made it a post-mortem emblem of a defunct world that is, implicitly or explicitly, associated with a form of empire; the former territory was larger than that of the country today. Because the empire ceases to exist, it can only be recreated in a discursive world by elaborating doctrines that reinvent a virtual, alternate Russia. The nation's imaginary thus relies on the coding of three different imperial features: geography, history, and space-religion. The imperial reference implies that territorial expansion (the geographical feature) is critical to justifying the country's political relevance. The empires are often based on religious legitimacy for Russia, Orthodoxy, and its claim of being the Third Rome.⁶⁹ Yet during the atheist Soviet regime, the Orthodox perception of the cosmos as God's space blended with a

⁶⁸ «русский народ и русская правда, рабочий народ и рабочая правда», https://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/esse_narod.html accessed in 04.03.2023.

⁶⁹ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism: Imaginaries, doctrines, and political battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 11.

technological utopia that saw the conquest of space as intimately linked with Russia's territory and religiosity (the spatial-religious feature). In all three cases, this rich imperial imaginary provides a form of symbolic revenge over post-Soviet politics, its traumas, humiliations, and misunderstandings.

2. Nationalism as a doctrinal experiment. This part elaborates on a set of principles. Russia has faced many ideological experiments advanced by several figures or groups, yet only a few exhibit some theoretical substance. Three main repertoires that have reshaped the post-Soviet nationalist landscape: the first is Russia's Aryanness and its religious corollary, neo-paganism, which in a sense modifies and old Slavophile theme to bring it into line with modern ideological references and allows for the development of a feeling of shared destiny with Europe and sometimes the West more globally; the second is the repertoire advanced by Alexandr Dugin around his multiple attempts to rehabilitate fascism as compatible with modern Russia and its Eurasianist destiny (the core concept is that of the Conservative Revolution which partly resonates with the Putin regime's conservative values agenda) and the third one is the Izborskii Club's effort to forge a Putinian doctrinal synthesis of conservative values, anti-Westernism and Red-and-White reconciliation with the failed hope of nurturing a more doctrinal turn on the part of the Presidential Administration.⁷⁰

Nationalism is a political battlefield with several competing actors. It belongs not only to the realm of ideas, but also to those of action and social mobilisation. Nationalism can serve all purposes: it can ally with democratic forces as well as with authoritarian ones; it can be liberal as well as illiberal; it can consolidate the regime by offering it a consensual ideology, or it can challenge and try to overthrow the ruling elites. As a political battlefield, nationalism needs not only ideas, thinkers, funders, and patrons, but also grassroots-level actors.⁷¹ The relationship between Russian nationalists and

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 10.

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 12.

the Russian state is a contradictory one, made of several combinations: competition, co-optation, mutual borrowing, delegitimation, and repression. William Jackson analysed the three main doers of Russian nationalism and their interplay with state structures: the classic far-right groups which offer a combination of references going from Italian fascism's black shirts to US white power; the newest trend of National Democrats, embodied by Putin's opponent Alexei Navalny who supports a European-inspired populist ethnonationalism; and the resurgent militia groups, comprised of volunteer fighters dreaming about Russia's territorial expansion in New Russia.⁷²

In the following, I will present these two categories more broadly:

Cosmism (nationalism as imperial imagery) represents for Russians a school of thought fundamental for a better understanding of today's ideology. As Marlene Laruelle said: "Cosmism is rooted in the Romantic tradition that rejects divisions of knowledge, assumes that scientific progress and spiritual quest go hand-in-hand, believes in micro- and macrocosms, and cosmism's main ramifications date from 1920s, when the Bolshevik Revolution blended occult traditions and sciences of the future."⁷³ Cosmism is seen as: "a philosophical worldview, which is based on the idea of the Cosmos and of man as a citizen of the World."⁷⁴ The founding father was Nikolai Fyodorov (1828-1903). He believed that humans had an ethical obligation not only to care for the sick but to conquer death using science and technology; outer space was the territory of both immortal life and infinite resources.⁷⁵ Cosmism is also known as Fyodorovism, and it contains the idea that man is built as an image of God and must learn to raise that which is dead (the ancestors). Here is also presented the idea of having as many territories as possible because there is not enough space in the present territory. Cosmism encompasses a vast theory of natural

⁷² William Jackson, "Fascism, Vigilantism, and the State: The Russian National Unity Movement", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.46, No.1, pp.34–42.

⁷³ Marina Simakova, "Russian Cosmism: A Foretaste of Revolution", *e-flux Journal*, 2018, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/88/176018/russian-cosmism-a-foretaste-of-revolution/> accessed in 06.03.2023.

⁷⁴ «философское мировоззрение, в основу которого положено представление о Космосе и о человеке как гражданине Мира», <https://cosmizm.ru/o-russkom-kosmizme/> accessed in 07.03.2023.

⁷⁵ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism: Imaginaries, doctrines, and political battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 23.

philosophy that is combined with elements of religion and ethics. Cosmism is based on a scientific perception, which pushes it to the extreme. It can therefore be understood as a vitalist theory indirectly inspired by Bergsonian thought. Cosmism also drew inspiration from the parascientific quests of its time, such as spiritism, hypnotism, somnambulism, and telepathy, the discovery of so-called animal magnetism (mesmerism), palingenesis, and metempsychosis.⁷⁶ Cosmism also appropriated some Russian intellectual tradition. In the second half of the 19th century, several thinkers, stimulated by Darwinism, set out to investigate the relations between science and faith, as well as the epistemology of science.⁷⁷ Cosmism can be considered a product of the Silver Age and the revival of Russian philosophy embodied by Nikolai Berdiaev (1874-1948), Sergei Trubetskoi (1862-1905), and many others. The philosophers of the Russian Silver Age were driven by the Romantic will for synthetic knowledge to give meaning to the world. They wanted philosophical reflection to be meta-systematic and to provide essential responses to their interrogations. They saw the much-awaited realisation of the union among science, faith, and poetry in a renewed philosophy.⁷⁸ The cosmists are particularly indebted to Vladimir Soloviev, who himself had borrowed the notion of integral knowledge (целое знание) and had been influenced by the combination of mystical intuitions and interest in the Russian question.⁷⁹ Soloviev's philosophy lies at the intersection of the three approaches that set humanity on the path to wisdom: theosophy (thought), theurgy (emotion, art), and theocracy (will). The philosopher believed that only Orthodoxy could infuse this new philosophy with Christian principles, with the task of re-establishing the unity of the intelligible world.⁸⁰ The cosmism of the Russian view also blends

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 21.

⁷⁷ Edward Larson, "The Reception of Darwinism in the Nineteenth Century: A Three-Part Stories", *Science and Christian Belief*, Vol.21, No.1, 2009, pp.3-24.

⁷⁸ Maltsev Konstantin Gennadyevich and Zhdanova Irina Vadimova, "Philosophy and Policy: The Russian Philosophy of the Silver Age in the Situation", *Journal of Complementary Medicine Research*, Vol.11, No.2, 2020, pp.38-41.

⁷⁹ Marlene Laruelle, "Totalitarian Utopia, The Occult, and Technological Modernity in Russia: The Intellectual Experience of Cosmism", B. Menzel, M. Hagemester, and B. Glatzer Rosenthal (eds.), *The New Age of Russia. Occult and Esoteric Dimensions*, Munich: Kubon & Sagner, 2012, p. 10.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, pp.10-11.

with the history and philosophy of the origin, evolution, and existence of the cosmos and of mankind. Fyodorov imagined that with the creation of this current that humanity could use technological progress to achieve universal salvation. Characteristics of this current are to revive ancestors, to achieve immortality, and finally to conquer territories and the cosmos. For Fyodorov the conquest of space is intrinsically linked to the resurrection of the dead: "the conquest of the path to space is an absolute imperative, imposed as a duty in preparation for the Resurrection, and we must take possession of new regions of space because there is not enough space on Earth to allow the co-existence of all the resurrected generations."⁸¹ Taking this quote into account we can infer what Fyodorov called "universal resurrection".⁸² Fyodorov argued that humanity's victory over nature remained inextricably linked to Russia since it would lead the world on the path to salvation. Russia would be the key country to produce great advances in terms of mastery of the cosmos, interplanetary travel, transforming nature and climates, and establishing agriculture in space. Fyodorov also believed that the nature of Russia's ideocratic political regime was a further sign that heralded the resurrection of humanity.⁸³ Also, in this context arises the idea of the Aryan race. Fyodorov proposed organising a Russian-British scientific expedition, such as a form of Aryan pilgrimage in search of the origins of humanity on the high summits of the Pamirs.⁸⁴ After they find the "first Aryan," they would be brought back and buried in a "museum of the human species" to be located in Moscow, which would become the capital of Russia and take its place as the world centre of awareness of the paternity and fraternity of Aryan humanity.⁸⁵ Hence is evident the desire of cosmists to place Russia in a bright light in the eyes of the world, they own the "first Aryan".

⁸¹ Jean Clair, *From Humboldt to Hubble. The Cosmos and Modern Art*, Paris: L'Échoppe, 2008, p. 25.

⁸² Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism: Imaginaries, doctrines, and political battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 24.

⁸³ Ibidem, p. 25.

⁸⁴ George M. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 181.

⁸⁵ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 26.

In the Soviet period, a group of Soviet intellectuals passionate about the esoteric theses of Fyodorov named them Russian cosmism. At the meetings of this club, it was proposed to use these theses to form a basis of Russian identity. Cosmism has been a common ground for post-Soviet Russian nationalism; it has reappeared, implicitly or explicitly, in many nationalist doctrines.⁸⁶ In post-Soviet Russia was formed the Izborskii Club was formed, a right-wing think tank that promoted this type of cosmism as the basis of a global development project that Russia would propose. The Club seems to offer two issues:

1. Appealing to all supporters of a strong state (государственник), “this [Red White] fusion means integrating into the state structure and its actions a powerful element of social justice, which is inherited from the Soviet Union, and a return to Orthodox Christian spirituality and the universality of traditional Russia.”⁸⁷ In the Club’s view, the Red-White fusion should manifest in the name of the country’s sovereignty. Russia should follow “the tradition of the Russian tsars, of the builders of empire, or the tradition of Stalin, of the construction of Soviet civilisation, in both cases, what is most sacred is the sovereignty of state power.”⁸⁸
2. Orthodoxy is also a tool in the Club’s declarations of anti-Western and anti-liberal faith: “The West is the contemporary space of the anti-Christ.”⁸⁹ it argues, and it is marked by its decadent mores and consumerism, against a Russia that positions itself as a standard-bearer of conservative Christian values.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ibidem, p. 34

⁸⁷ «это [красно-белое] слияние означает интеграцию в государственную структуру и ее действия мощного элемента социальной справедливости, унаследованного от Советский Союз, возврат к православной духовности и универсальности традиционной России» Изборский Клуб: Русские стратегий 3 (2013), p. 86.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 47 «традиция русских царей, строителей империи, или сталинская традиция строительства советской цивилизации, в обоих случаях самое святое - это суверенитет государственной власти».

⁸⁹ Изборский Клуб: Русские стратегий 6 (2013), p. 12. «Запад — современное пространство антихриста»,

⁹⁰ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 143.

As Marlene Laruelle wrote in her book, the Izborskii Club failed at the doctrinal level. "At the doctrinal level, the Club has failed to generate the deep, devoutly desired reconciliation between Reds and Whites: the monarchist movements remain outside its reach."⁹¹

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter about territorial expansion, I presented the classification of Russian nationalism. The cosmists and others who came after are considering three specific elements regarding the Russian expansion: larger, higher, and farther north.

1. Russia's land is larger than other territories, hence it constitutes a continent unique to the area between Europe and Asia (Eurasianism). Developed among Russian émigrés in Western and Central Europe in the 1920s and early 1930s, Eurasianism claimed to have founded a new science of Russia, based on geography and a holistic reading of the sciences.⁹² Many intellectuals like Alexandr Dugin and Aleksandr Panarin have found Eurasianism interesting. After the fall of communism, they wanted to rebuild Russia from a spatial point of view. Both have stressed the geopolitical aspects of Eurasianism and claimed Russia's mission as an engine of stability for the Eurasian continent.⁹³ A soft version of Eurasianism, in which only the notion of Russia's role as a geopolitical driver in Eurasia is retained, has been adopted by the Presidential Administration to ground the legitimacy of the Putin regime in the nostalgia for the Soviet era shared by a large part of the population.⁹⁴ Putin's first foreign policy move after announcing that he was standing for a third presidential term was to express his desire to see the creation of a Eurasian Union, including several of the post-Soviet states. The objective of this new Eurasian Union would not be to rebuild a unified state, but to institute a few

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 143.

⁹² Dmitry Shlapentokh, *Russia between East, and West: Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006.

⁹³ Veronika Pasyukova, "The Communist Party in Contemporary Russia: Problems of Transformation. Perspectives on European Politics and Societies", *Journal of Intra-European Dialogue*, no.2, 2005, pp.237-248.

⁹⁴ Matthew Schmidt, "Is Putin Pursuing a Policy of Eurasianism?" *Demokratizatsiya*, no 1, 2005, pp.87-99.

supranational mechanisms in specific domains that would guarantee Moscow the right to oversee the evolution of some of its neighbours.⁹⁵

2. Russia is going higher in the universe – the conquest of space as a new way of continuing territorial expansion that has messianic meaning⁹⁶ (Cosmism). Cosmism was an important component of late Soviet culture during the Brejnev era, and it has become a fashionable trend in post-Soviet culture, especially among nationalist-minded elites and the intelligentsia.⁹⁷ Vladimir Dudenkov, chair of philosophy from St. Petersburg Technological Institute, suggested that there is a relationship between the Russians and the cosmos. Dudenkov was inspired by this aspect of Soloviev and Fiodorov. He offered to explain the nature of the Russian soul, which would be spontaneously oriented toward the universal and the cosmic, and seeks itself from earthly physical barriers, seeing the sky as the domain of God.⁹⁸ Evgenii Troitskii, the founder of the Moscow-based Association for the Complex Study of the Russian Nation, some of his Cosmist texts combine several classic features, including feelings of nostalgia for the Soviet regime on the basis that space conquest allowed Russia to establish itself on an equal footing with the United States: a view of human history marked by dialectical materialism (history would be divided into stages of development: traditional, industrial, post-industrial, informational, and the noospheric); and a form of cosmoeology that supposedly shows, thanks to experiments performed in the Mir station, how to live in harmony with nature.⁹⁹
3. Russia is going farther north – the Nordic location of Russia as the revenge of territory over history and of space over politics (Arctism).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Analytical Digest*, Zurich: Centre for Security Studies, nr. 165, 2015, p. 2.

⁹⁶ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire*, Washington DC: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, p. 31.

⁹⁷ Ibidem, p. 44.

⁹⁸ Marlene Laruelle, "Larger, Higher, Farther North...Geographical Metanarratives of the Nation in Russia", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.53, No.5, 2012, p. 564.

⁹⁹ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, p. 46.

¹⁰⁰ Marlene Laruelle, "Larger, Higher, Farther North...Geographical Metanarratives of the Nation in Russia", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.53, No.5, 2012, p. 558.

This category was born in the 21st century (in the second half of the 2000s). The Arctic region has quickly become a potential for post-Soviet Russia due to the discovery of energy resources. Since the mid-2000s, the Arctic region has been transformed into a flagship demonstration of Russia's statehood, a strategy embodied by the president's special representative for cooperation in the Arctic.¹⁰¹ The Arctic space exploded among a few nationalist-minded circles; they saw in this space a bridge to revive a Soviet myth, namely the Red Arctic (*Красная Арктика*), conceived in the 1930s during the period of Stalinism. For example: the Soviet exploration, the first Soviet icebreaker crossing the Northern Sea Route in one summer, the Soviet plane's world record for long-distance aviation by crossing the North Pole from Moscow to the United States, the Soviet Union being the first nation to land an aircraft at the North Pole, etc.¹⁰² In the 1990s and 2000s, the Arctic became an important aspect for many Russian nationalists, and some of them see this space as a crucial element of the revival of Russia's great-power status, leading them to focus on geopolitical competition with the West¹⁰³, and of course with the United States. Also, Alexandr Dugin sees the Arctic space as a Hyperborea. He defines the Hyperborean continent as the birthplace of the Aryans, of whom the Russians are the purest descendants.¹⁰⁴ The Eurasianist Youth Movement, which embraces Dugin's thinking, has organised several demonstrations in support of Russian territorial claims in the Arctic, calling for the Arctic continental shelf to be integrated into the borders of the Russian state and transformed into a new federal district.¹⁰⁵ "The North is not only a base of economic resources, our future in the material sense, but also a territory of the

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, p. 566.

¹⁰² Terence Armstrong, *The Russians in The Arctic: Aspects of Soviet Exploration and Exploitation of the Far North 1937-1957*, London: Routledge, 1958, p. 182.

¹⁰³ Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Paul Stronski, "Russia in the Arctic. A Critical Examination", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2021/03/russia-in-the-arctica-critical-examination?lang=en>

¹⁰⁴ Alexandr Dugin, *Mysteries of Eurasia*, Moscow: Arctogeia, 1996, p. 78.

¹⁰⁵ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 48.

spirit, of heroism, and of overcoming, a symbolic resource of central importance for the future of our country.”¹⁰⁶

These three categories, Eurasianism, Cosmism, and Arctism, have in common several traits: all the researchers were educated in the Soviet regime and were/are nationalist-minded officials. The Cosmists' narrative projects Russia's grandeur into their space; the Arctist framing hopes to conquer the last swath of virgin land on the planet and expand Russian territory by doing away with climatic realities and technological limits. They all epitomise the revenge of space over politics.¹⁰⁷

The first category of Russian nationalism can be explained by the fact that the cosmists had this aspiration to connect with the past, with their ancestors, and the rebuilding of a strong state by scientific and esoteric methods. Cosmism is a non-conventional spiritual tradition that combines strong allusions to Christianity (redemption via resurrection), a pan-psychic reading of the universe, and belief in still-unknown cosmic forces and an extra-terrestrial future for humanity.¹⁰⁸ So, cosmism can be seen as a return to the past, a vision of the future, and the resurrection of ancestors. Although over time this current has not been given much attention, it is the main core of Russian nationalism and an important element of the Russian Idea (the idea that the Russian people are the Chosen People). This current is related to the Russian Idea (Русская идея) that I will talk about in another subchapter, and it highlights the fact that the purpose of the Russian people is to rule the world and to secure a place on the world stage. The study of this current is an important step in understanding the Russian political characteristics (such as the conquest of territories, are one that it has its origins in this current, the presentation of Russia as the whole world and the calling of this higher race to establish total power over the earth and cosmos and finally to provide immortality for every living person).

Nationalism as a doctrine is represented by three movements that form Russia's uniqueness: Slavophilism, Pan-Slavism, and Eurasianism.

¹⁰⁶ Alexandr Dugin, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 50.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*.

Slavophilism is: “advocacy of Slavic and specifically Russian culture over western European culture, especially as practised among some members of the Russian intelligentsia in the mid-19th century.”¹⁰⁹ The term “Slavophil” was used by government officials in 1840. The Slavophiles were based in Moscow and took the question of nationality (Slavic in general and Russian in particular).¹¹⁰ The Slavophiles’ views coincided only in part with the way the government understood the concept of nationality, as presented by Count Sergey Uvarov in the triad of Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality. The Slavophiles had great respect for the Orthodox Church, but they were not very enthusiastic about the government. The Slavophile movement emerged in contrast to Westerners among the intellectuals and politicians and was analysed in depth in the philosophical Letters written by Pyotr Chaadaev. In this paper, Chaadaev criticises the social and intellectual scene in Russia, claiming that his country has lagged the West. Written in the years after the Decembrist revolt, the letters were first published in 1836 and sparked a negative reaction, not only from the new Slavophile movement led by the theologian, philosopher, and famous poet Alexei Khomiakov.¹¹¹ The poet Alexei Khomiakov (1804-1860) and his friends wrote about the work of the Holy Fathers of the Russian Orthodox Church; they developed a traditionalist doctrine that Russia has its way forward and does not need to imitate or copy the West.¹¹² They were influenced by the ideals of Friedrich Schelling, a friend and later rival of G.W.F. Hegel, whose interpretation of society as a living organism attracted them. Their texts emphasised the Russian historical tradition, the importance of the Church, and the differences between Russia and the West.¹¹³ Mikhail Bakunin wrote about them: “by the very nature and in their very being, the Slavs are not a political, that is, state-minded people...The Slavs are predominantly peaceable and

¹⁰⁹ Merriam-Webster dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Slavophilism>, accessed in 09.03.2023.

¹¹⁰ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O Istorie a Naționalismului Rus: de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 145.

¹¹¹ Ibidem.

¹¹² Michael Soroka, “A study in the Slavophile Ideology of Aleksei Khomiakov”, Senior Honors Thesis, Ohio State University, 2006, pp.5-7.

¹¹³ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O Istorie a Naționalismului Rus: de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 145.

agricultural...Living in their separate and independent communes, governed according to patriarchal custom by elders, but on an elective basis, and all making equal use of the commune's land, they...put in practice the idea of human brotherhood."¹¹⁴ The Slavophile's profile is that of an accuser of the culture of the West and the process of "Westernisation". They considered everything from the West as a bad influence for Russian culture, and from all this resulted this trend in which the Slavophiles adopted the clothing and haircuts before the coronation of Peter I precisely to create a defence shield against the Western current. Slavophiles also promoted the image of the authentic peasant and peasant commune (община мир). The concept of община has its origins in this Slavophil ideology. In Russian history, община is a self-governing community of peasant households that elected its officials and controlled local forests, fisheries, hunting grounds, and vacant lands.¹¹⁵ For example, the Родноверие (Ethnic Faith or Mother Faith) represented a religious movement that aimed to revive the pre-Christian rites and beliefs of the Slavs and reject the paganism of the West, and was close to the image propagated by the Slavs, the image of the peasant commune. The groups that embraced this ideology have some preferences regarding symbolism: traditional animals, like wolves, ravens, and the phoenix, are associated with the deity in question.¹¹⁶ The six or eight-branch swastika remains a key component of the accession to the upper world. For Родноверие groups, the Orthodox cross is the Slavic version of the swastika (коловрат). Some Russian nationalists have been pushing this claim since the 1970s.¹¹⁷ The transition to pan-Slavism was made by the Slavophiles. They wanted a Union of all the Slavs,¹¹⁸ but also a higher stage in the

¹¹⁴ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 25.

¹¹⁵ The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "mir" Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mir-Russian-community> accessed in 09.03.2023.

¹¹⁶ Stan Stepanic, *The Symbolism of Russian Neo-Paganism*, (paper presented at the Southern Conference on Slavic Studies, Charlottesville, VA, March 26-28, 2009).

¹¹⁷ «ПОСОЛОНЬ Символ заходящего Солнца, символ завершения созидательного труда, символ Духовности и Покоя. КОЛОВРАТ Символ восходящего Солнца, символ победы Света над тьмой и Жизни над смертью». <https://slawa.su/nasledie/svastika.html> accessed in 09.03.2023.

¹¹⁸ Merriam-Webster dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Pan-Slavism>, accessed in 09.03.2023.

formation of the Russian national consciousness. Among the most representative figures of the Slavophile movement are Mihail Pogodin and Stepan Shevyrin. Both were professors at the University of Moscow. The two were co-editors of the newspaper *Москвитинин* that had become the mouthpiece of the Slavophile movement in 1840. Pogodin was one of the personalities of the new Pan-Slav movement, which considered all Slavic peoples to be part of the same family.¹¹⁹ Highlighting the uniqueness and self-awareness of the Russian people, the Slavophiles, despite their Pan-Slav ecumenism, served as an example to the non-Russian Slavic peoples who wished to assert the distinctive character of their nation and, consequently, the right to autonomy and independence.¹²⁰

Pan-Slavism is: “a political and cultural movement originally emphasising the cultural ties between the Slavic peoples but later associated with Russian expansionism.”¹²¹ This current took shape in the insurrectionary Pan-Slavism of Bakunin. In Bakunin's view, “most Pan Slavs held the egalitarian solidarity of the peasant commune,”¹²² and in this context is present the image of the peasant commune (община мир). Like Bakunin, most Pan-Slavists claimed the fact that this egalitarian solidarity of the peasant commune was completed by universal veneration of the tsar. During the 1860s and 1870s, the Pan Slavs proposed their reading of the Russian Empire, which envisaged that it should renew its identity by sponsoring nation-building among the Slavs and Orthodox peoples of Eastern Europe, and by leading a crusade for them against the Ottoman and Habsburg empires.¹²³ Pan-Slavism founded both the diplomatic caution and the obsession with autocracy: “if will and decision-making are transferred from the government to any kind of popular assembly, that will be a revolution, the downfall of the government and the downfall of Russia.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O Istorie a Naționalismului Rus: de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 146.

¹²⁰ Ibidem.

¹²¹ Merriam-Webster dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Pan-Slavism>, accessed in 09.03.2023.

¹²² Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 26.

¹²³ Ibidem, p. 24.

¹²⁴ П.А. Зайончковский, *Писма К.П.Победоноостсева к Александру III*, объем.1, Москва, 1925, p. 381.

Eurasianism is: “a Russian political ideology that envisions Russia's re-emergence as a conservative world power in opposition to the hegemony and liberal values of the West.”¹²⁵ This movement was influenced by the elements in the “Scythianism” of Ivanov Razumnik and Aleksandr Blok. They said the fact that the Eurasianists saw the European and Asian peoples of the former Russian Empire as neither European nor Asian but as composing an organic, united Eurasian people and the fact that the Russian revolution had been partly a negative phenomenon, since it was a destructive rebellion of God, but it was primarily a positive phenomenon, since the old world has been destroyed and popular forces unleashed.¹²⁶

The first two refer to Russia's Slavic identity and solidarity with its brothers,¹²⁷ and the third one refers to Russia's Eurasian destiny.¹²⁸ These right-wing ideologies claim that the essence of Russia's origin and nature is the autocratic Tsarist traditions. What I want to mention here is that these two trends (Pan-Slavism and Eurasianism) were strongly influenced by Slavophilism. The anarchist Mikhail Bakunin developed a form of revolutionary pan-Slav messianism with a special role for Russia. His participation in the Pan-Slav movement, initially at least, was primarily by his aim at channelling the Slavs in a revolutionary direction. The social basis of the Russian Revolution was the община. In 1862, in his appeal “to Russians, Poles and all Slavic friends,”¹²⁹ he called for freedom for all the Slav nations, land for peasants, and a Slav federal government. He demanded that the Russians should expel the Tatars to Asia and the Germans to Germany,¹³⁰ “and we shall be a free, purely Russian people.”¹³¹

«если воля и принятие решений будут переданы от правительства какому-либо народному собранию, то это будет революция, падение правительства и падение России».

¹²⁵ Collins Dictionary, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/submission/17330/Eurasianism>, accessed in 09.03.2023.

¹²⁶ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 60.

¹²⁷ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 73.

¹²⁸ Ibidem.

¹²⁹ Михаил А. Бакунин, *Русским, Полским и всем славянским друзьям*, Женева, 1888, p. 28.

«русским, полякам и всем друзьям-славянам».

¹³⁰ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 63.

¹³¹ Ibidem.

Beyond these three ideologies presented in the Russian area, there is **Aryanism**. This identity appeared in the Byzantine period, but it only took on a larger form in contemporary Russia. As in other European countries, Russian society had a strong sense of superiority in being part of a pan-European white identity. The father of Slavophilism, Aleksei Khomiakov (1831-1872), alleged that “Russians constituted one of the most important branches of the Aryan family, if not its most direct representatives.”¹³²

What should be mentioned in this category of nationalism as doctrine is Alexandr Dugin’s views. Dugin’s views can be divided into four branches:

1. Esoteric Nazism (Aryanism, Hyperborea, Thule, conspiracy theories)
2. Traditionalism or Perennialism, inspired by René Guénon and Julius Evola.¹³³

In 2014, excited by the war in Ukraine, Dugin revived his calls for action: “Traditionalism is not valid without policy. Who claims the contrary is a sheep and a scoundrel. To live in the world and be content with any anti-tradition and peripheral hallucinations of Hyperborea and the Golden Age, this will not work. If you are a traditionalist, change the world, challenge the surrounding filth, democracy, human rights, liberalism, materialism, equalitarian ideas, and parties, and erase them from the face of the earth. Conquer or die.”¹³⁴

3. The German Conservative Revolution of the 1920s and 1930s. Alongside German *Geopolitik*, Dugin refers to another German Russophile intellectual tradition, that of the Conservative Revolution.
4. The European New Right (a reframing of far-right theories under the influence of some leftist doctrines, which incorporates anti-capitalist rhetoric as well as regionalist and ecological stances.)¹³⁵

¹³² Ibidem, p. 74.

¹³³ Mark Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 6.

¹³⁴ Александр Дугин, <https://paideuma.tv/video/seminar-12-vechnost-i-mnozhestvennost-vremen-temporalnaya-priroda-veshchey/#/?playlistId=0&videoId=0> accesses in 21.04.2023.

«Традиционализм недействителен без политики. Кто утверждает обратное, тот овца и негодяй. Жить в мире и довольствоваться всякими анти традициями и периферийными галлюцинациями Гипербореи и Золотого века так не получится. Если вы традиционалист, измените мир, бросьте вызов окружающей его грязи, демократии, правам человека, либерализму, материализму, эгалитарным идеям и партиям и сотрите это с лица земли. Победи или умри».

¹³⁵ Peter H. Merkel and Leonard Weinberg, *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties*, Portland: Frank Cass, 1997.

Dugin rehabilitates national socialism, identifying three main pro-Russian forces in Nazi Germany:

1. The leftist Nazis, personified by Sturmabteilung (SA), many SA officers had an anti-capitalist orientation that made them sensitive to the Soviet experience and discourse.
2. The pro-Russian force was located within the SS, embodied by its scientific section, the Heritage of the Ancestors, which oversaw the Nazi regime's historical production. Its activity is centred on the quest for the original Aryan cradle, from Scandinavia to Tibet.¹³⁶
3. A "new" Russophile – Reinhard Heydrich, the architect of the final solution. Dugin stated that "Heydrich was himself a convinced Eurasianist, and because of that, he became the victim of the Atlanticists' intrigues."¹³⁷

In his fight against Atlanticism, Dugin is convinced that Europe must unify at any cost. The idea of European unification was first promoted during the 1930s by the Europeanist faction within the Waffen-SS and then supported by many European collaborationist groups during the war years. Today, all far-right groups that call for withdrawal from the European Union demand a Europe of nations.¹³⁸ Nowadays, Dugin argues vehemently for the need for a European union that includes Russia. During the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, he declared the following: Our revolution will not stop in Western Ukraine. It must go further in Europe. [...] Europe faces a Revolution in both cases: if we, Russians, win, and if we stop somewhere under NATO pressure. If we win, we will begin the expansion of liberation [from American] ideology into Europe. A Great Eurasian Continental Empire. And we will build it. This means the European Revolution will be a Eurasian Revolution. This is our last horizon.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Heather Pringle, *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust*, New York: Harper Perennial, 2011.

¹³⁷ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 100.

¹³⁸ Ibidem, p. 116.

¹³⁹ Александр Дугин, *Горизонты нашей революции: от Крыма до Лиссабона*, 2014.

«Наша революция не остановится на Западной Украине. Он должен идти дальше в Европе. [...] Европе грозит Революция в обоих случаях: если мы, русские, победим, и если мы где-то остановимся под давлением НАТО. Если мы победим, мы начнем экспансию освободительной [от американской] идеологии в Европу. Это цель

All of this suggests that, for Dugin, national socialism should be understood as no more than a German socialism.¹⁴⁰ More specifically, Dugin's theory of Russian Aryanness, his advocacy for iconic Nazi intellectuals and philosophers, was directly inspired by the Nazi tradition. His belief that totalitarian violence will give birth to a new mankind and his paramilitary training for youth, and his commitment to a white, unified Europe.¹⁴¹ Also, Dugin uses some of Nazism's philosophical principles to explain Russia's imperial claims, which are all on a few principles:

1. Grossraum (Large spaces)
2. Totale Krieg (Total War)
3. Autocritas (Authority)

Moreover, those who have proposed this ideology of Aryanism have not brought any innovation. They repeated, translated, and updated the existing documents about the white race that had already existed in Europe and the United States, for example: the right group that first adopted Aryanism as their main ideology was the Society of the Magi, based in Leningrad and led by Viktor Bezverkhii (1930-2000) published a samizdat version of *Mein Kampf* in Russian. They wanted to place Russia at the centre of the world and of all ancient civilisations. A famous Aryanist theoretician, Vladimir Danilov, claimed that "Russia is destined to create a Fourth Reich, a new Aryan empire of global dimension."¹⁴² The doctrine of Russia's Aryanness has been gaining support, both in its core version of racialism and its milder interpretation of Russians being part of a white Europe, which must protect itself against migrants.¹⁴³ In a 2014 online survey via the social network VKontakte, 43% of the 360.000 participants agreed with the sentence: Our race displays many qualities superior to other races, while

полного евразийства, Европы от Лиссабона до Владивостока. Великая Евразийская Континентальная Империя. И мы его построим. Это означает, что Европейская революция будет евразийской революцией. Это наш последний горизонт».

¹⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 102.

¹⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 104.

¹⁴² Ibidem, p. 78.

¹⁴³ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 90.

more than 50% supported the idea that migrants degrade the gene pool (миграция портит генофонд).¹⁴⁴

Over the years, the Aryan identity of the Russians was presented in several newspapers, such as *Истоки* (Sources), *Наука и религия* (Science and religion), and *Природа и человек* (Nature and man), and many others that represented the Russians as the purest nation, and of course, the image of the world's Saviour.

Finally, I would like to mention the main stages of Russian nationalism:

1. Defensive Nationalism: It is known that Ancient Rus' and then the Muscovite state took shape much later than the other major state formations of their time. Both Ancient Rus' and the Muscovite state were discriminated for many centuries, both economically and politically. This fact provoked assiduous efforts on the part of Ancient Rus' and the Muscovite state to assert themselves, to attain a higher level of international prestige and independent statehood, and to repossess lands which had previously belonged to them. For example, both the Rus' and Muscovite states were forced to wage desperate struggles against the onslaught of the Steppe nomadic peoples, the Pechenegs, Polovtsy, and the Mongol-Tatars, which was the legacy of the long-gone times of the Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Avars, and Khazars. This was an age-old, exhausting struggle, in which the people's strength was worn down, their best lands were lost, towns and villages were destroyed, and the Russian capitals were more than once subject to siege, assault, and arson.¹⁴⁵ Considering all these events, a strong sense of nationalism was born. This sentiment also had strong roots in the desire of the Russian nation to preserve its own culture.

Later, in the period of stabilisation after the Time of Troubles (1598-1613), the demise of the Rurik dynasty (1598) ended with the establishment

¹⁴⁴ Иваи А.Гринко, «Социальный портрет сетевого расизма в Рунете (по данным социалниих сэтэи)» в *Российя – не Украина:современние актсенты национализма*, Москва: СОВА Цейтр, 2914, 62-73.

¹⁴⁵ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 11.

of the Romanov dynasty.¹⁴⁶ Other facets of Russian nationalism started to take shape, inspired by the great power claims of the tsars and the boyar-noble factions. Russia turned towards expansion, from regaining its ancient lands to winning new territories in Siberia and in the South (Crimea, Moldavia, Wallachia).¹⁴⁷

2. Autocratic Nationalist Ideology: In Imperial Russia arose a sharp division between Russians and non-Russians. The famous formula of Sergei Uvarov, "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality," was expected to fill the gap between the empire and nationality in Russia by creating the so-called "official nationality," or dominant nationality, and by "marshalling a growing Great Russian nationalism behind the throne."¹⁴⁸
3. Chauvinism, Racism, and Militant Nationalism: This is a strong sign of racial superiority over other peoples of the world. In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the situation changed in Russia. The powerful socio-economic and political processes of the new era undermined the foundations of the former empire. The people of Russia, deprived for various reasons of their statehood and not having undergone the civilised stages of development that history requires, strove to resolve their destiny independently.¹⁴⁹ The Russian society turned into nationalism as a shield against "aliens" (the non-Russians). In this period, some nationalist organisations were formed, such as: "Union of the Russian People" / *Союз русского народа*, United Russian People / *Всероссийская политическая партия*, and the "Russian Archangel Michael National Union" / *Союз Михаила Архангела*. With the rise of these groups, Russia began to be more vocal. The most important feature of these groups was the fact that the nationalist madness only penetrated a part of the population, such as parts of the clergy, the nobility, the merchant classes, and some strata of the urban population. These nationalist groups were not

¹⁴⁶ Vladimir and Eva Hnidzo, *History of Russia from St. Vladimir to Vladimir Putin*, West Virginia University of Public Health, 2014, pp.20-21.

¹⁴⁷ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, New York: Verso, 2006, p. 87.

¹⁴⁹ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

numerous; they worked as a united front. Their propaganda and their aggressive actions, in particular the anti-Jewish pogroms and the clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis that they provoked, had wide social repercussions, and gave the times a definite nationalistic aura.¹⁵⁰

The Russian nationalist groups found a strong support in what they call the old Russian catastrophe, namely the collapse of the country, the destruction and loss of all the old social values, and the falling away from Russia of old imperial territories that had been gathered by her over centuries.¹⁵¹ This bloom of Russian nationalism was very specific because it was brought to life by the serious situation in the country, by bitter reflections on the fate of motherland, and by the loss of its earlier priorities, as understood by the nobility, the bureaucracy, the officer corps, the Orthodox clergy, the entrepreneurial classes, the prosperous residential strata and the more well-to-do peasantry.¹⁵² As the author Geoffrey Hosking said, this awakening of Russian nationalism was not of an aggressive, racist, or Great Power nature, but of a defensive, protective one. At its base lay the tragedy of the Russian people, the tragedy of Russian national consciousness.¹⁵³ This is something that suggests that nationalism is, by its nature, protective in the perception of Russians; it protects them from what they call non-Russians and their bad influence in the sphere of Russian politics, economy, and culture.

These feelings were given a politically aggressive and genuinely nationalist and even chauvinist character by several public figures, the leaders of newly created nationalist parties and groups, such as Russian

¹⁵⁰ Andrei Sakharov, "The Main Phases and Distinctive Features of Russian Nationalism", Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service (eds.), *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 7.

¹⁵¹ Anthony Constantini, "Reforging the Russian World: Gorbachev, Putin, and Russian Nationalism", *American Affairs Journal*, Vol.III, No.2, 2024, <https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2024/05/reforging-the-russian-world-gorbachev-putin-and-russian-nationalism/> accessed in 23.04.2023.

¹⁵² Ibidem, <https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2024/05/reforging-the-russian-world-gorbachev-putin-and-russian-nationalism/> accessed in 23.04.2023.

¹⁵³ Andrei Sakharov, "The Main Phases and Distinctive Features of Russian Nationalism". In: Hosking, G., Service, R. (eds) *Russian Nationalism Past and Present. Studies in Russia and East Europe*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.7-8.

National Unity / *Всероссийское общественное патриотическое движение Русское национальное единство*, the National Socialist Party / *Русская Национальная Социалистическая Партия*, the Front for National Revolutionary Action / *Фронт национал-революционного действия*, the Corps of Custodians of Orthodox Russia / *Русская православная армия*, the National Democratic Party / *Демократическая Партия России*, and many others. In the programmes of these organisations figured such aims as the rising of Russian national consciousness, the regeneration of Russia in all social-economic, political, and cultural aspects, a reliance on Orthodox values, and anti-Semitism.¹⁵⁴ Several of these organisations have proclaimed imperial goals, appealed for national solidarity, and a struggle against the enemies of the Russian people.¹⁵⁵

Table 1: The schematic table of Russian Nationalism and its relationship to state structures¹⁵⁶

Full opposition nationalists	All those committing racist violence and referring to the Nazi repertoire and organising street actions. This includes skinheads, DPNI (The Movement Against Illegal Immigration/ <i>Движение против нелегальной иммиграции</i>), Russkie, Slavic Union, RONS, National Socialist Initiative, as well as Eduard Limonov's different structures: National Bolshevism/ <i>Национал-Большевизм</i> , Other Russia/ <i>Другая Россия</i> , and the National Democrats, including Alexei Navalny.
Mid-opposition nationalists	New Russia (<i>Новороссия</i>) groups, among others, Igor Strelkov, may benefit from some support from the military or security services, but get disbanded when they become too autonomous or radical.
Co-opted statist nationalists	Those who express statist nationalist sentiments in any of their myriad forms and are therefore seen as supporting the regime beyond their mild critique of it: Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Gennadi Ziuganov, Aleksandr Prokhanov, Alexandr Dugin, Nikolai Starikov, and Egor Kholmogorov.
Official nationalists	The figures with a status inside the state apparatus who act as brokers between grassroots movements and state institutions: Deputy Prime Minister: Dmitri Rogozin, advisor to the President.

¹⁵⁴ "Antisemitism as Perceived by the Jewish Population of Russia", *Levada Center*, Moscow, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Andrei Sakharov, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 10.

1.4. The concept of Russian Idea/*Русская идея*

In this chapter, I will analyse a concept often used by Russian nationalists, a concept that is at the core of the identity of the Russian people. To better understand the identity and conscience of a people, the analysis of the idea of a people is important to understand the meaning of a historical event. The national idea is closely related to the identity, conscience, dignity, and national unity of a people. This national idea dominates the consciousness of a people, is what determines the specific actions, behaviours, and goals in times of war.

Karl Haushofer stated that: “the idea of a people, or pan idea, is a force capable of reshaping or disarticulating the mental maps of a population (...) a local idea, into which the soul of a community is translated along with the desire to universalise that idea. The idea becomes hegemonic because it possesses a force of conversion or spiritual perversion of the other: It protects itself by perverting the other.”¹⁵⁷ Historians and scholars believe that the idea of a nation is the basis of its identity. This idea exists only within the nation; the nation can control whether this idea goes through or chooses a historical route. This concept dominates the entire nation.

The term that I have chosen to analyse in this subchapter, namely the Russian Idea (*Русская Идея*), historically refers to a considerable number of texts that discuss the substance of Russia’s national identity. This term took shape in the 19th century, but this concept is currently being used to encapsulate nearly two centuries of controversy, whose background is shaped around two main questions:

1. The relationship with Europe: Whether Russia is part of Europe, part of Asia, straddles both worlds is separate from both?
2. The relationship between the state and its population: Whether Russia is a nation-state, an empire, or a multinational federation, with a political nature that is autocratic, democratic, or ideocratic?¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Ioana Elena Secu, *Revoluția contaminată. Ideea rusă și noua politică internațională a Kremlinului (1925-1953)*. Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2022, pp.24-25.

¹⁵⁸ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 127.

This multitude of texts builds up atemporal traits of the nation's substance, combining in various ways:

- a) Messianism (the myth of Moscow as the Third Rome). At present, this messianism reveals that the Russians are not the aggressors, but only those who defend their ancestral land. Fiodor Dostoevskii's messianism is, on the one hand, religious and on the other national. He believes that the Russian people were called to save the world because they were the Jesus Christ, the nation of freedom and social justice: "We Russians have two homelands: Russia and Europe even in cases when we call ourselves (...) the greatest of all the great missions that the Russians realize lies ahead of them is the common human's missions."¹⁵⁹ The author Geoffrey Hosking stated the fact that Russian messianism, the concept of the Russian people as the Chosen People, as the force reconciling the intelligentsia with the revolution: the God-seeking nature of the Russian people would be concentrated in the intelligentsia. The Russian intelligentsia will be penetrated by the mystique of the state, and through it, the Russian state would become the way of God on earth.¹⁶⁰
- b) Orthodox spirituality
- c) Соборность – "Spiritual community" (a Russian term that has been used frequently in the 19th century by Slavophil Russian writers Ivan Kireyevski and Aleksey Khomyakov, and refers to the need for cooperation and spiritual harmony between people based on freedom and unity).
- d) Личность - "Personality" (a Russian term with two senses: 1. The individual as a subject of relations and conscious activity, and 2. A stable system of social features that characterises an individual as a member of a particular community.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 23.

¹⁶⁰ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 58.

¹⁶¹ 1) человеческого индивида как субъекта отношений и сознательной деятельности (лицо, в широком смысле слова) или 2) устойчивую систему социально-значимых черт, характеризующих индивида как члена того или иного общества или общности. <https://slovar.cc/enc/bse/2013036.html> accessed in 16.03.2023.

- e) The belief in a central role for the state and/or the autocrat in guiding the people.
- f) Veneration of the peasant masses as a bearer of the original culture.
- g) The idea that Russia and its imperial margins constitute a separate world and unique civilisation that the West does not understand or respect.¹⁶²

The Russian idea was shaped in the form of a purpose; over time, it has been a powerful engine and is the source of cultural, economic, and especially political demonstrations. As I mentioned at the beginning of the subchapter, this idea represents the identity, conscience, and dignity that form the basis of a nation's identity. In this case, they form the basis of the identity of the Russian people. The Russian idea has two meanings:

1. The Universal Mission of Supremacy - Russian nationalists believe that they have a special mission, the mission to save, lead, and unite humanity under their rule. It follows the image of Russia as the Chosen People by the Divinity.

This first meaning highlights the three images of the Russian people that are: the Saviour, the Liberator, and the Civiliser of nations.

2. Identifying the Russian people, culture, and civilisation through opposition to the Other/the Enemy (the Enemy here translates into the Western current). For example, the dissociation of the Russian space from the West, an image of evil (Russia and its enemy, the United States).

What the Russian idea represents is, first, the need to achieve supremacy on the international stage, and secondly, the fulfilment of the mission of Saviour, Liberator and Civiliser/Leader of the world.

Throughout the existence of the forms of political leadership/organisation: the Duchy, the Empire, and the Republic under which the Russian people lived, the Russian idea had the following performances:

1. The myth of the "besieged fortress" by the Other/the Enemy (the Russian people are considered the Chosen People of God and specially chosen to lead the world, and all the others are considered enemies).

¹⁶² Ibidem, p. 127.

This myth arose with the idea of leading the world, but the leaders of this state were unable to carry out this project; to hide their lack of understanding, the best solution was to “fabricate” enemies.

2. The strong faith as a Chosen People.
3. The belief in the existence of a bright future of the universal union of peoples under the leadership of the Russian state.
4. Faith in the capacity of the Russian people as the only world actor able to sacrifice itself, to sacrifice itself for the benefit of all humanity. For example, it is believed that it was Russia that saved Europe and the entire world from the Nazi “disease”.

Moreover, the Russian idea is composed of two dimensions:

1. The geopolitical dimension: the Russian idea was the engine of the expansion of the Russian people and the one that brought together, at the level of collective consciousness, the goal of winning the world supremacy of the Russian state.¹⁶³
2. The ideological dimension: in this sense, the Russian people are regarded as the chosen one of God and the only state capable of leading humanity on the single path of faith, in the spiritual and/or religious sense; Russia is therefore the “tool” of Divinity, the only “bearer” of absolute truth, the orthodoxy, Following the Revolution of 1917, Soviet Marxism-Leninism alone can offer its sacrifice for the salvation of the world.¹⁶⁴

The Russian idea is the core of the identity of the Russian people. All of this includes the unique features, deep desires/ideals, and motivations of the Russian people in justifying this national feeling. In other words, this knowledge of the idea of the Russian people is important because it provides answers to the questions that arise around this people, their historical past, the events, and invasions that are still taking place today.

“A century later, following the imposition of victory over the German armies at the end of World War II, Soviet power became, through territorial expansion into the centre and east of Europe, through political influence,

¹⁶³ Ioana Elena Secu, *Revoluția contaminată. Ideea rusă și noua politică internațională a Kremlinului (1925-1953)*. Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2022, p. 37.

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem.

through the influence of the Soviet Union (...) This was a confirmation of the prophecy of the great writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, according to which very soon, Russia will be the most powerful nation in Europe (...) and the future of Europe belongs to Russia. Was the Russian idea that contaminated the Soviet system by imposing Russian political values and culture as the main ally of the USSR on the stage of the Great powers?"¹⁶⁵

In the next chapter I will present this concept of a Russian idea to every leader in the Kremlin and try to answer to these questions by referring to what is happening today, to be able to understand the complexity of the Russian idea in the case of the current leader of the Kremlin and also to see what the role of the Russian idea in the current politics is. Just as the Russian idea was the basis of the Soviet leader, Joseph Vissarianovich Stalin, it was considered that Russia saved mankind from Nazi expansion. In the case of Vladimir Putin, one can see this concept of the Russian idea on the one hand by invoking the "denazification" of Ukraine, and on the other hand, by trying to create this trinity of Saviour, Liberator, and Leader.

1.5. The radical definition of Russianness/*Русскость*

This subchapter will focus on building the meaning of Russianness/*Русскость* and what role this concept plays in the politics of the Russian state. The term Russianness has a close connection with the term *народ* (nation) that I have already outlined in this chapter. Russia has the intention to create a nation-state that includes ethnic Russians (who do not live on Russian territory, but whose roots are in Russia) and the Russians living in Russian territory. Post-Soviet Russian national identity has proved very difficult to construct. The Russian Federation is not a nation-state, but rather the bleeding hulk of empire. The break-up of the Soviet Union meant national self-determination for most of its constituent nationalities but left the Russians as orphans.¹⁶⁶ When it comes to Russianness, the Izborskii Club

¹⁶⁵ Ioana Elena Secu, *Revoluția contaminată. Ideea rusă și noua politică internațională a Kremlinului (1925-1953)*. Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2022, pp.22-23.

¹⁶⁶ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 5.

does not limit itself to historical and cultural debates; it tries to advance concrete migration policies. It demands, for instance, that official status be given to the Russianness of the Russian Federation to protect ethnic Russians from what it describes as discrimination, and to consolidate Russian culture and language.¹⁶⁷

The term Russianness has two approaches:

1. The civic approach is represented by everyone who lives on the Russian territory.
2. The ethnic approach nation is ethnic Russians (Russian speakers), but they do not live on Russian territory. Even if a part of the Russians emigrates to another country, "ineluctably, organically they remain members of the community of their birth [Russia] and are forever stamped by it."¹⁶⁸

But first, I would like to focus on how these two categories differ from each other, because civic and ethnic Russiannes are problematic in the Russian context. These two terms can be understood in two ways:

1. As a nationality (народность): a citizen of Russia, *россиянин*. The corresponding adjective, used to refer to national symbols, is *российских* and *российский* is used for the state and multinational empire.
2. As an ethnicity *русских* (adjective is the same), ethnically Russian (not Tatar or Chechen, for instance) and *русский* (this word has a powerful emotional overtone, referring to grassroots Russia, rural, religious and either medieval, pre-imperial or disengaged from the imperial state)¹⁶⁹.

Both categories are important factors in the construction of the national identity. The Russian state can be described as Russian (*русский*), Rossian (*российский*), or Eurasian (*евразийский*), without distinction: Rus', Russia and Eurasia are synonymous.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 145.

¹⁶⁸ Anthony Smith, *National Identity*, England: Penguin Books of London, 1991, p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998, p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 144.

Many Russian officials have shunned the definition of the population of Russia from a national point of view. In the official speech, the inhabitants of the Russian Federation were rarely called the Russian people.¹⁷¹ Yeltsin's speeches did not refer to the Russian people or the Russian nation. The most disappointed with the word *nation* being taken out of use was Valeri Tishkov, director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Academy of Soviet Sciences and then the Russian. At the beginning of 1990, Tishkov was at the forefront of the campaign to promote the notion of a Russian civic nation, made up of citizens of the Russian Federation belonging to different ethnic and cultural groups.¹⁷² He called that nation *российская*, the adjectival form of the name of the Russian Empire, as opposed to *русская*, the term usually used to define the group of ethnic Russians, either in the limited sense of *Великороссия* (Great Russians) or under the broader umbrella of the eastern Slavs. He saw the nation, *российская*, united by ethnic and cultural elements through loyalty to common values and institutions, with symbols that did not originate in the imperial past but in the liberal revolution.

Tishkov protested the use of the term multi-ethnic Russian people, considering it not only contradictory but also politically dangerous, because he denied the right to political legitimacy of the Russian civic nation, granting this right to ethnic groups that could proclaim their statehood as separate nationalities. As happened with the collapse of the USSR.¹⁷³ Russian leaders actively promoted the civic model of Russian identity during the first two years of Russian independence. Tishkov was appointed Minister of Nationalities, and his ideas formed the basis for the Russian citizenship law, adopted by Parliament in November 1991. The text of this law calls the citizens *россияне* instead of *русские*, and obtaining Russian citizenship did not depend on the nationality or language of the applicant.¹⁷⁴ But Tishkov's model of the new Russian identity began to face serious difficulties. In the autumn of 1993, when Yeltsin forcefully suppressed the nationalist and

¹⁷¹ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O Istorie a Naționalismului Rus: de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 371.

¹⁷² Ibidem.

¹⁷³ Nevzat Torun, "Soviet Nationality Policy: Impact on ethnic conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia", *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, Vol. XVIII, No. 70, 2021, p. 257.

¹⁷⁴ Serhii Plokhyy, *op.cit.*, p. 371.

communist opposition, the idea of defining the Russian nation via civic commitment to new political institutions lost appeal.¹⁷⁵ The ethnically autonomous units of the Russian Federation were not very pleased to adopt the civic nation project *россиская*, for example, Chechens wanted total independence, while Tatarstan and the other autonomous republics wanted more rights. After Russian troops entered Chechnya, they wanted to end the *de facto* independence from Moscow. The Russians faced the problem that other imperial nations had faced: The implosion of the empire had given rise to a class of underprivileged citizens who considered themselves either members of the former dominant nation or sufficiently compromised by their cooperation to feel unsafe in the former colonial provinces.¹⁷⁶

The Russian government is more likely to assert the feelings of Russianness in terms of a civic nation, rather than an ethnic group with elements of populism that divide inhabitants along the temporal line of established residents, outsiders and essentialize and biologize difference both Russian people and in the civic nation, especially in terms of our people.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, a significant criterion of this concept is the language. The ethnic Russianness can be seen in designating the language as the touchstone of the civic Russian identity. Speaking Russian is seen as an ethnic approach. After all, it determines belonging based on cultural rather than civic criteria, because it establishes the belonging based on cultural rather than political or territorial principles. If the ability to speak the Russian language is used as a test to determine somebody's Russianness, although this criterion is much less in conflict with multi-ethnic federalism than others (ethnic Russians or Eastern Slavs), the belonging of subjects of different races remains contested: "If someone speaks Russian but is black, can this person be our compatriot?"¹⁷⁸ In the policy, there is no clear answer to what Russianness is. The answers are ambiguous.

¹⁷⁵ Vladimir Gelman, "Paving the Way for Violence. The Constitutional Crisis of 1993 and Russia's Political Trajectory", *On Matter Constitutional*, 2024, <https://verfassungsblog.de/paving-the-way-for-violence/> accessed in 18.03.2023.

¹⁷⁶ Serhii Plokhyy, *op.cit.*, p. 373.

¹⁷⁷ Nikolay Zakharov, *Race and Racism in Russia*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp.175-176.

¹⁷⁸ Oxana Shevel, "Russian Nation-building from Yeltsin to Medvedev: Ethnic, Civic or Purposefully Ambiguous?", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.63, 2011, p. 188.

Over time, this concept of Russianness has metamorphosed into a key concept not just culturally but also physically. This led to the outbreak of various forms of ethnic violence, the best known is the skinhead movement. Many famous writers such as Mikhail Sholokhov and Leonid Leonov tried to define the Russianness. But their work does not explain what Russianness (*Русскость*) really is and what kind of truly Russian culture wants to prevail.¹⁷⁹ More recently, in 1991, according to Valentin Raspuntin, Russianness is simply the nation's general direction, which it received when coming of age. This trend might be artistic, or religious, or pragmatic. But every nation has something specific on top of the universal human qualities, and it is called to develop and fertilise that toward which it has a specific inclination.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, the Russianness, as critics noted, has no contemporary content but refers with longing to the past, the distant past.¹⁸¹

The roots of nationalism, with its racism, xenophobia, and aggressive soul, have a strong impact on the formation of Russian nationalism and its struggles. In the next chapter, I will point out the suffering history of Russianness and the Russian multi-ethnic space.

¹⁷⁹ Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, New York: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1993, p. 130.

¹⁸⁰ «Русскость, так же как немецкость французскость, есть общее направление нации, внутреннее её стремление, выданный ей при мужании, когда обозначаются успехи, аттестат на особую роль в мире У одних эта роль практическая, у других художественная, у третьих религиозная но каждая нация призвана на оплодотворение собой, помимо общих усилий, чего-то отдельного, к чему она имеет склонность.» <https://www.rusobschina.ru/2010-08-25-18-51-29/3024-2014-10-15-10-09-11> accessed in 28.03.2023.

¹⁸¹ Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, New York: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1993, p. 131.

CHAPTER II.

Classification of Russian Nationalism

To capture all the impulses underlying the phenomena of Russian nationalism, a classification of Russian nationalism from imperialism to Putin's government is required to see what has changed and what has remained from the nineteenth century to the present. I will discuss conceptions that arose during the Tsar Nicholas I regime, concepts that arose during the Stalin and Gorbachev era, and concepts that arose during Putin's era. As a result, I will show a trail of nationalist ideals and ideas that have been at the heart of every administration that has ruled Russia over the years, as well as a picture of right-wing extremism over time. Reporting on the theory of nationalism in the previous chapter, Russian nationalism has emerged under a different facet in each ruling regime over the years, it has been closer to the Church, the most appropriate example here is the imperialist period, and then nationalism from the communist period, presented here under the guise of Soviet patriotism, and immediately after the fall of communism, we have the original form of imperialist nationalism under the Putin's regime. James Miller developed the following classification of Russian nationalism under the tsar¹⁸²:

1. Tentative constitutionalism 1815-1830
2. Romantic and official nations 1831-1855
3. State and nation 1855-1881

¹⁸² James Miller, *Encyclopedia of Russian History*, USA: Macmillan, 2004, pp.127-132.

4. National optimism and pessimism 1881-1905

5. Mass movements and Russian retrenchment 1905-1917

In this chapter, I will look at the final phase of Russian nationalism during the Tsarist empire, namely, mass movement, and Russian retrenchment (1905-1917). This was the time when a new sort of Russian nationalism emerged, one that was concerned with the people (народ). There was no Russian national movement before the Russian Revolution (1905), and the народ were completely excluded from political discussions. Given the circumstances of the 1905 revolution, monarchists only appealed to the Russian people to defend the tsar, giving rise to the famous phrase Russia for Russians. In the framework of the revolution, there is also the idea of forming a nation capable of fortifying the Russian Empire's borders with the other states. Under Stalin's reign, Russian nationalism changed, being known as Soviet Patriotism or Russian national patriotism. When it became clear that the world revolution had failed, Stalin chose the path of establishing socialism in a single state (the USSR). This policy called for the establishment of Soviet patriotism under communist control, as well as Russian cultural dominance.¹⁸³ In this part, I will analyse the policy of indigenisation (korenizhatsya) implemented by the Soviet Union, which promoted the leaders of the Soviet republic's titular nations and ethnic minorities to leadership roles in local governments, bureaucracy, and nomenklatura in administrative regions of lower rank. Furthermore, following Perestroika, Russian nationalism is separated into three orientations:

1. The maintenance of the state.
2. The resurrection of supposedly lost ethnic Russian values.
3. Nationalist ideas that seek to establish a new national system in a changing political environment.¹⁸⁴ For example, Russian borders were always coextensive with those of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, which were, for the most part, centred in Moscow, where the

¹⁸³ Nelly Bekus, *Struggle over identity. The official and Alternative Belarusianess*. Budapest: CEUP collection, 2010, pp.43-50.

¹⁸⁴ Timothy Michael Spencer, *The development of Russian Nationalism under Gorbachev (1985-1991)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

Slavophile movement began. However, during Perestroika, the concept of the Russian state/boundaries was considered in isolation from certain Soviet territories that had greater autonomy and potential independence from Moscow. This feature impacted individuals who opposed an imperialist statist vision and wanted to reinstate traditional ethnic Russian values, as well as those who wanted to come to terms with a new Russian entity independent from its former satellite colonies.¹⁸⁵

Regarding the preceding chapter, where the theory that provides a well-defined image of Russian nationalism was produced, three inclinations are formed:

1. Imperialist nationalism refers to the preservation of the status quo, namely, the image of the Russian Empire as a unitary Russian state.
2. Isolationist nationalism aims to establish an isolated Russian state from the West based on distinctiveness, particularly Russian traditional values.
3. Liberal nationalism is a response to a changing environment, reestablishing Russia's image within a changing and dissolving political framework.¹⁸⁶

These three Russian nationalist tendencies are emblematic of the historical periods I will cover in this chapter. Finally, I would like to show that Russian nationalism, particularly in Putin's government, is cyclical.

2.1. The Russian Empire 19th century: "Nationalism thrives"

2.1.1. *The Slavophile Movement*

This subchapter will focus on the political ideas established by the first expression of Russian nationalism, namely the Slavophile movement during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I. I will pay great attention to the fact that these social and political ideas were transmitted from one generation to another.

¹⁸⁵ Ibidem, p. 27

¹⁸⁶ Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000-15*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, p. 28-32.

It was the period when their political and social ideas received more attention from historians because of the Decembrist Revolt in 1825. This revolt had few dramatic repercussions in the spheres of Russian life, namely political, cultural, and social, repercussions that are visible nowadays. The Slavophile movement's thoughts during the reign of Nicholas I were a reaction against the contemporary problems. Slavophiles wanted to protect the uniqueness of the Russian Orthodox Church, traditions, and cultural values against foreign influences and rejected individualism. In this period, the Minister of Education, Count Sergey Uvarov, introduced the slogan "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality/Православие, Самодержавие, Народность" as a dominant aspect of the imperial ideological doctrine of Tsar Nicholas I. The slogan wanted the total authority of the Tsar while suppressing political ideas that seemed destructive to Russian unity.

The doctrinal trinity was adopted later by the Establishment against to the accusation by philosophers such as Piotr Chaadaev that Russia reached a political decay and her salvation lay in the adoption of Western political institution such as: parliamentarianism, it cast doubt upon the possibility of a sectarian Russia or one which might move closer to Rome and proffered higher status to those of Russian nationality¹⁸⁷/народность. The Slavophile movement, especially the co-founder Aleksey Khomiakov, gave a response to the affirmation of the Westernizer Piotr Chaadaev. The answer contained harsh criticism of Chaadaev; the Slavophiles believed that what comes from the West is harmful to traditional Russian life. Also, the two camps, Slavophiles and Westernizers, often had dialogues on the origin and future of Russia, making a clear distinction between the Slavophiles' vision of the people and lands of Russia. The Slavophiles highlighted the concept of самобытность (the originality of the Russian people), advocating for the social organisations:

1. The peasant commune (община) or (мир) that represented peasants settled in a single village. The peasants had the right to the allotment, on some uniform basis, of a holding that each member cultivated

¹⁸⁷ Timothy Michael Spencer, *The development of Russian Nationalism under Gorbachev (1985-1991)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, p. 28.

separately. A holding could not be sold or bequeathed without the consent of the *мир*. As a consequence of its collective tenure, the *мир* had the power to repartition households. *Мир* dealt primarily with the household and not with the individual. The peasant had a right to a holding but not a particular holding, and he could not dispose of it freely.¹⁸⁸

2. The boyar (*община и земщина*) was a village community to distinguish itself from the peasants' commune/communities, which operated on individual farms. This institution was decreed by the Bolshevik Revolution and the collectivisation of agriculture.

Given the concepts that arose during the Slavophile movement, it turns out that they cherished orthodoxy, orthodox culture, and were able to differentiate Russia from the West in cultural and religious aspects. At one point, Ivan Kireevski, one of the founders of the Slavophile movement, said that: "Three elements in the West: The Roman Church, Ancient Roman development, and the statehood which arose out of the violence of conquest are completely foreign to Rus'."¹⁸⁹ Moreover, the Slavophile movement pointed out the concepts of unity and faith of the Russian people and blamed the West for its deficiency of *соборность* (spiritual community, the term referred to the cooperation between people and combines the religious, moral and social elements), claiming that the West is not as close to the Church/religion as they are.

According to Nikolay Berdyaev, the first Slavophiles: "were not enemies or haters of Western Europe, like obscurantist Russian nationalists were. They were enlightened Europeans. They believed in the great vocation of Russia and the Russian people, in the truth hidden within, and they tried to characterise certain original features of their vocation."¹⁹⁰ Also, Berdyaev

¹⁸⁸ Lazar Volin, *A century of Russian agriculture. From Alexander II to Khrushchev*, United States: Harvard University Press, pp.78-79, 81.

¹⁸⁹ «Три элемента на Западе: Римская церковь, древнеримское развитие и государственность, возникшая в результате насилия завоеваний, совершенно чужды Руси» Иван Васильевич Киреевский, *О характере просвещения Европы и о его отношении к просвещению России*, https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Ivan_Kireevskij/o-haraktere-prosvesheniya-evropy-i-o-ego-otnoshenii-k-prosvesheniyu-rossii/ accessed in 26.12.2023.

¹⁹⁰ «не были врагами и ненавистниками Западной Европы, как русские националисты-мракобесы. Они были просвещенными европейцами. Они верили в великое

described the Slavophile: “our first populists, although populists on religious soil.”¹⁹¹

Hans Kohn referred to Slavophiles as: “religious anarchists who deeply disliked the state and above all the bureaucracy, an element which they regarded as of Byzantine or Germanic in origin, and which interfered with the organic life of the people’s community.”¹⁹²

The profile of a Slavophile is represented by several distinct features; it is a member of a 19th century movement whose orientation is especially directed towards a bright future of the Russian Empire based on preservation of the Russian traditions and values. The circle of Slavophiles was positioned in Moscow and attracted members of the upper class of Russians (well-educated people, rich people, and people who travelled extensively abroad). As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the Slavophile circle consisted of philosophers, writers, theologians, poets, and historians. The idea that the Slavophiles conveyed about the Russian Empire and the Russian people mostly influenced the generations that followed them, thus giving them an image of a religious empire that held to culture and traditions. I decided to explain this word by separating it into two: Slav and Phile.

1. The word Slavs represents one of a group of peoples in Eastern, Southeastern, and Central Europe, including the Russians and Ruthenians (Eastern Slavs), the Bulgars, Serbs, Croats, Slavonians, Slovenians, etc (Southern Slavs), and the Poles, Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks, etc. (Western Slavs).¹⁹³
2. The word Phile represents a combination of the meanings “lover of”, “enthusiast for”.¹⁹⁴ Another explanation is “someone who enjoys a

призвание России и русского народа, в скрытую внутри истину и пытались охарактеризовать некоторые оригинальные черты его призвания» Николай Бердяев, *Русская идея*, Париж: Переизд, с.33.

¹⁹¹ «наши первые народники, хотя и популисты на религиозной почве» Николай Бердяев, http://vphil.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1050 accessed in 26.12.2023.

¹⁹² Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology*, New York: Vintage, 1960, pp.149-155.

¹⁹³ Anna Kłosowska, “The Etymology of Slave”, Karkov, C. E., Kłosowska, A., & van Gerven Oei, V. W. J. (eds.) *Disturbing Times: Medieval Pasts, Reimagined Futures*, 2020, pp.153-154.

¹⁹⁴ Eliška Charvátová, *Morphological productivity of selected word-formation processes*, Czech Republic: Masaryk University, 2013, p. 64.

particular thing or has it as a hobby, or who likes a particular place.”¹⁹⁵ For instance, an anglophile likes England/Britain, or a bibliophile likes books.

The word Slavophile can be translated as a lover of Slavs. Therefore, we can talk about Slavs who love their values, cultures, traditions, and everything related to their people. In a nationalist view, there is a rejection of what is strange, considered to be pagan, or, in terms of the founders of the Slavophile movement, the West is seen as an alien. The word Slavophile had a stronger resonance in Russia, considered to be the leader of all Slavs because here the historians were considering the three aspects of Russian nationalism: Russia is larger than any other country, is higher, and is farther north: “territorial size and location in space are drivers of the country’s mission in the world, and of nature of its state and culture [...] these elements gives Russia its uniqueness among nations: Russia’s territory is larger than other countries in the world and forms a specific continent (Eurasianism); Russia is going higher in the universe (Cosmism); and Russia is going farther north (Arctism).”¹⁹⁶ This is the plausible reason why the Slavophiles’ movement developed only in the Russian space, and here we have the idea of territorial expansion that was passed on to later generations, which I will talk about a little later in this chapter.

The Slavophiles saw the uniqueness of Russia in their people (народ), in their nationality (народность), and, of course, the most important, the Russian Orthodox Church (Русская Православная церковь). The Slavophile movement it is a movement composed mostly of intellectual people from the 19th century that used some ideas from Romantic Nationalism to provide an image of their country’s greatness and as I said before, the movement it is part of the sixth category of Russian nationalism developed in the empire/country period, namely mass movements and Russian retrenchment because they was the first mass movements with many followers in Russia 19th century.

¹⁹⁵ Anna Kłosowska, *op.cit.*, p. 155.

¹⁹⁶ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields*. New York: Routledge, p. 38.

Intending to perfect the Russian society and to change the leadership and the church, they have elaborated a series of reforms:

1. The emancipation of Serfs
2. Curtailment of the bureaucracy (freedom of speech, press, and conscience)
3. The establishment of an institution representing the whole people (вече or земски собор of pre-Petrine Russia).¹⁹⁷ Вече (Popular Assembly) was used from the 10th to the 15th century. This concept originated among the Slavic tribes settled in permanent trading centres, which later became cities. The concept remained as an element of democratic rule, sharing power with a prince and an aristocratic council.¹⁹⁸ Земски собор (Assembly of the Land) was used in 16th and 17th centuries in Russia, an advisory assembly convened by the Tsar or the highest civil authority in power. The Slavophile resurrected these two concepts, considering them to reflect the Russian people. A proposal to reestablish the institution resulted in the dismissal of the minister who suggested it, N.P.Ignatiev.¹⁹⁹

2.1.2. The Pan-Slavic Movement (mid to late 19th century)

The Pan-Slavists movement appeared in the mid-19th century and was a political ideology concerned with the promotion of integrity and unity for the Slavic people. The movement experienced a sense of unity and nationalism among the Slavic population.

Pan-Slavism was a movement that first arose among the Slavic peoples of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. The key event that took place in this movement was the Congress of Prague in 1848. The principle of this congress was the union of all the Slavs, especially those from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Representatives of the Russian state at this congress

¹⁹⁷ The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Slavophile", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2013. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Slavophile> accessed in 27.12.2023.

¹⁹⁸ The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "veche", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/veche> accessed in 27.12.2023.

¹⁹⁹ The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "zemsky sobor", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2012. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/zemsky-sobor> accessed in 27.12.2023.

were absent, except for the Russian revolutionary anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. Among the topics discussed at this congress were those related to Russian universalism (it included some ideas that had universal application), which was discussed from a negative perspective. The representatives of the Russian state responded to the Prague Congress that put them in a bad light as follows: "Russians looked at the Prague Congress of 1848 with undisguised hostility. Palacky had confined its membership to representatives of Slavs inside the Austrian monarchy...But others believed that Pan-Slavism should extend beyond a call for cultural union and should be politically unified under Russian leadership. The movement needed the support of a state power, and the natural choice, geographically and power-wise, was Tsarist Russia."²⁰⁰

The Russian Idea developed from the Pan-Slavist Movement followed the Slavophiles Movement, which highlighted the fact that: "after Russia's defeat in the Crimean War (1853-1856), a vague Slavophilism was transformed into a militant and nationalistic Pan-Slavism. Pan-Slavism would be run from Moscow...What had originally been a shadowy dream was thus transformed into a new aggressive, expansionist Pan-Slavism."²⁰¹

After the Prague Congress, the Pan-Slavists movement moved to Moscow, exemplified by the Second Pan-Slav Congress, which took place in Moscow in 1867. The Congress expressed distress regarding the Russian people and their friends Slavs: "To them, Pan-Slavism meant the equality of all Slavs. Their Russian hosts, on the other hand, saw the movement as dedicated to the supremacy of the Russian language, the Orthodox faith, and the Russification of all Slavs even in the Balkans."²⁰²

Hans Kohn said that the "earliest concise formulation of Russian Pan-Slavism"²⁰³ was covered in a letter from Mikhail Pogodin to Alexander II in 1838.²⁰⁴ One of the founders of the Pan-Slavist movement was the philosopher and historian Nikolay Danilevsky. One of the most important works of Danilevsky that covered Pan-Slavism was *Russian, and Europe, an Inquiry into the Cultural and Political Relations of the Slav to the Germano-Latin*

²⁰⁰ Louis Snyder, *Macro-nationalisms: A History of the Pan-Movements*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984, p. 25.

²⁰¹ Ibidem, pp.26-27.

²⁰² Ibidem, p. 40.

²⁰³ Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology*, New York: Vintage, p. 141.

²⁰⁴ Ibidem, p. 142.

World, published in 1869, which represented the Slavic civilisation as a superior class to the Westerners and proclaimed the fact that the Russians would be the leaders of the Slavic world. In his work, Danilevsky said that under the Russian authority, the Pan-Slavists movement can lead not only the Russian Empire but most of Eastern European parts, including Hungary, Albania, Romania, Greece, and Constantinople.²⁰⁵ If the Slavophiles desired the union of all Slavs, the pan-Slavists had the same ideas but concentrated more on the territorial expansion of Russia. Also, in Danilevsky's work, he suggested that Russia needs to be separated from Europe, the Russian expansion will bring more territory to Russia, so once it is larger, it will have a more important status in front of Europe, which, as Danilevsky said, will be a fallen empire.

The Russian Pan-Slavists adopted the Slavophile notion that Western Europe was spiritually and culturally ruined, and it was Russia's mission to revitalise Europe by gaining political dominance over it.²⁰⁶ The Pan-Slavists said that this mission can only be carried out with the help of the Slavs and eventually unite in one political organisation and one territory, the Russian Federation of all Slavs.

In the early 20th century pan Slavists tried to organise a new Pan-Slav congress and tried to revive the movement, but the nationalistic rivalries among the various Slav peoples prevented their effective collaboration.²⁰⁷ Their era came to an end with the disintegration of Tsarist Russia at the end of the First World War.

2.1.3. The Black Hundred Movement

The Black Hundred (Чёрная Сотня) or the black-hundredists (Черносотенцы) belonged to an ultra-nationalist movement in Russia in the early 20th century. They supported the House of Romanov and opposed any

²⁰⁵ Ibidem, p. 200.

²⁰⁶ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Pan-Slavism." Encyclopedia Britannica, October 15, 2013. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Pan-Slavism> accessed in 27.12.2023.

²⁰⁷ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality." Encyclopedia Britannica, January 26, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Orthodoxy-Autocracy-and-Nationality> accessed in 27.12.2023.

retreat from the autocracy of the reigning monarch.²⁰⁸ This movement was known especially for its xenophobic sentiments, incitement to pogroms, and support the Russian Nationalism, antisemitism²⁰⁹ and anti-Ukrainian sentiment²¹⁰. The movement had the same slogan as the Slavophile movement developed by Count Sergey Uvarov: "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality." The Black Hundred represented a strong political movement at that time, being spread over large territories of the Russian Empire, with a huge number of members, who were part of all social spheres of the society, all united by one purpose, that of protecting Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality (Народность). There were various organisations within this movement, the most important of which I recall: League of the Russian People (Союз Русского Народа), League of the Archangel Michael (Союз Михаила Архангела), and Council of United Nobility (Совет Обединенного Дворянства).

The name of this movement has had numerous approaches over the years; the researchers have tried to explain this term, leaving room for interpretations of the term. The terminology of the name Black Hundred was planned to be used in a derogatory sense in the newspapers at the time of the revolution. Those who wrote about the Black Hundred movement at the time were thinking back to the black lands where peasants, merchants, and craftsmen paid taxes to the government (lands owned by the nobility and church were called white lands), and the hundred existed as a feudal administrative division. In the right-wing extremist imagination, it was the loyal people of the black hundreds who gathered to fight Poles and traitors when it was needed.²¹¹ Newspapers published during the revolution wrote about this movement as a gang of hooligans who, as I mentioned above, came from the lowest class sponsored by the Russian government at that

²⁰⁸ Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, London: Serif Publishing, 1966, p. 61.

²⁰⁹ David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789-1939*, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp.140-141.

²¹⁰ Peter Potichnyj, *Ukraine and Russia in their Historical Encounter*, University of Alberta, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992, pp.576-582.

²¹¹ Johannes Dalfinger and Florin Moritz, *A Transnational History of Right-Wing Terrorism: Political Violence and the Far Right in Eastern and Western Europe since 1900*, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2022, pp.24-25.

time. Another rationale for the Black Hundred designation or the Black Hundred Movement is that it refers to all far-right parties. When it comes to this movement, the terminology is a jumbled mess. In English, researchers studying the Black Hundred movement do not distinguish between the singular and plural forms. Both the singular and plural forms of the phrase "Black Hundred" are interchangeable and refer to the movement as well as the specific organisations. The concepts of party, organisation, union, movement, monarchists, right-wing, far right, extreme, and radical right are synonymous with the Black Hundred when used in its plural form. The Black Hundred is synonymous, both singularly and plurally, with the Union of Russian People (URP), the movement's most well-known organisation.

1. The words "organisation", "party", and "union" refer to a particular Black Hundred organisation.
2. The words "movement", "conservatives", and "monarchists" refer to the Black Hundred in general.

In the Russian version, the name Black Hundred received the following explanation: "taxable, subject to general state service, not enjoying benefits" was the meaning of the term "black", as opposed to "white." For instance, the following are some old Russian phrases: black settlement: "a settlement inhabited by taxing people who do not have any benefits"; black court, black people, and black proctors; black tribute: "universal national tax" (black forest). The term "black hundred" is defined as "the lower class of urban inhabitants, divided into the living room, cloth, and black hundred" in the 1847 dictionary.²¹² In the article "On the rights and obligations of the Russian merchants before the beginning of the 19th century", the merchants of the Black Hundreds and settlements, as well as the townspeople's tax people of the best, average, and lesser classes, engaged in petty trade in a variety of goods and operated their shops. Among them were people of all ranks,

²¹² Сюда, например, примыкают древнерусские выражения: *черная дань* — 'поголовная народная подать' (ср. *черный бор*); *черная слобода* — 'слобода, населенная тяглыми, не имеющими никаких льгот людьми'; *черный двор*, *черные люди*, *проторы черные* и т. п. В словаре 1847 г. термин *черная сотня* истолковывается так: 'низший класс городских обывателей, разделяющихся на гостиную, суконную и черную сотни' (ср. — с *суконным рылом да в калашный ряд*). https://etymolog.ruslang.ru/vinogradov.php?id=tschernaja_sotnja&vol=1 accessed in 28.12.2023.

including patriarchal peasants, metropolitans, rulers, monasteries, boyars, okolnichi (old Russian court), and all ranks of people, including the children of priests, coachmen, hunters, and various free servicemen and craft people. By the 18th century, the term "Black Hundred" had become obsolete in this historical context. However, it was also employed in the 19th-century literary language in the forms of historical drama, historical narrative, and historical novel.²¹³

The Black Hundred movement engaged in actions such as church-based oral dissemination and street demonstrations. They had strong ties to the Russian monarchy and church, as Georges Luis, the French ambassador in Russia, said: "the tsar was bitterly disappointed with the helplessness and inactivity of the other right-wing organisations [...] The Black Hundred are ruling the country, and the government obeys them because it knows the emperor is inclined to sympathise with them."²¹⁴ Its efforts to incite and promote anti-Semitism led to pogroms and terrorist attacks because one of its goals was to fight against the Jewish community, whom the members of the Black Hundred claimed was to blame for the Russian Empire's troubles. The black-hundred movement was particularly successful in carrying out the objectives and aims formed within the movement throughout the years 1905-1907. Moreover, the movement gathered a considerable number of supporters, 400.000, over these years. This figure established the movement as one of the most powerful far-right movements of all time. For example, the General Jewish Labour Bund (the only Jewish Party from Russia) gained just 34.000 members.

²¹³ в статье «О правах и обязанностях купечества Российского до начала XIX столетия»: «Черных сотен и слобод купцы, также посадские тяглые люди лучшей, средней и меньшей статей производили мелочные торговые промыслы всякими товарами и имели свои лавки; в числе их находились всякого звания люди, как то: крестьяне патриаршие, митрополичьи, владычьи, монастырские, боярские, окольных и всяких чинов людей, поповы дети, дьячки, пономари, ямщики, охотники и всякие вольные служилые и ремесленные люди» (Вестник Европы, 1826, № 23 и 24, с. 183). В этом историческом смысле термин *черная сотня* к XVIII веку вышел из бытового употребления. Но в стиле исторической драмы, исторической повести и исторического романа он употреблялся и в литературном языке XIX в. https://etymolog.ruslang.ru/vinogradov.php?id=tschernaja_sotnja&vol=1 accessed in 28.12.2023.

²¹⁴ Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, New York: HarperCollins, 1993, p. 19.

The ideology of the Black Hundred movement focused on the Count Sergey Uvarov trinity of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality" and advocated traditional and religious values, one of the most important being the Tsar's limitless power, autocracy, which gave the Russian Orthodox Church a privileged position and heightened a powerful image of the Russian people (народ). One of the most important aspects of their worldview was antisemitism. The Black Hundred Movement also had its newspapers, namely: "The Banner" (Знамя), "Russian Banner" (Русское знамя), "The Pochayev Page" (Почаевский Листок), "Thunderstorm" (Гроза), "The Bell" (Колокол), "Popular Assembly" (Вече), and many others. In addition to anti-Semitic writings, there were pictures representing Jews in various forms, akin to the Nazi journals *Der Sturmer*, where Jews appeared in horrible and frightening forms to portray these people negatively. The content of the journals concentrated on the fact that Jews were granted civil liberties in post-October Russia to subjugate the autocracy, widen the extent of political change in a self-serving manner, and dominate the Duma.²¹⁵ The editors of these journals offered powerful images that also conveyed a subliminal message about the destructive influence of Jews on the Russian empire. The drawings complemented the textual message and added another dimension to the understanding of politics and culture during the final decade of Tsarist rule, and the Black Hundred saw the press as an important component of their arsenal. They also used the press to gain as many followers as possible to support the Tsar. Some of the most prominent leaders of the movement were Alexander Dubrovin, Vladimir Purishkevich, and Nikolai Markov.²¹⁶ To unite their forces and objectives, the leaders of the Black Hundred Movement held four major Russian Congresses in October 1906. They voted for the главная управа (board of directors) to create a new all-Russian Black Hundred organisation (Объединённый русский народ or Russian People United).

The culmination of this movement was between 1905-1907, as mentioned above, it was the period with the most members who were very

²¹⁵ Robert Weinberg, "The Russian Right Responds to Revolution: Visual Depictions of Jews in the Black Hundred Press in Post-1905 Russia" in *Swarthmore College*, 2008, pp.4-5.

²¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp.4-5.

active and united in all their purposes through these Congresses. Following this period, historians and experts discussed a progressive fall in the Black Hundred movement until their end in 1917. But, as I said regarding Slavophile ideals passed down from generation to generation, there can't be a complete stop here either. On the contrary, the Black Hundred movement's ideology was passed down to the generation that came after the revolution. Following generations attempted to resurrect this movement, for example, Alexander Shtilmark (a former member of Pamyat) decided to build a modernised version of the Black Hundred Movement. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, remnants of the Black Hundred movement were made known by other movements such as the Russian Imperial Movement and the Union of Orthodox Banner-Bearers, the latter fought on the side of pro-Russian separatists during the early years of the Russo-Ukrainian War.

2.2. The Soviet Union – 20th century Russian Nationalism under the facet of Soviet Patriotism “Nationalism changed”

Following the breakup of the Russian Empire, there was an increase in many nationalist movements across the former Empire's territory. At the time, the Bolshevik administration was founded on Marxist-Leninist doctrines. These ideologies emphasised the idea that every nation must fade away over time, and that the phenomenon of nationalism is a phrase derived from Marxist theory of the capital holding class, but noting the nature of the revolution, which had all the necessary chances for success as an integral part of the nationalism, Bolshevik leaders maintained nations' rights to choose their own political status and path of economic, social, and cultural development.

On 21 November 1917, a month after the October Revolution, a declaration targeted at the rights of the Russian people was issued, containing four fundamental concepts:²¹⁷

²¹⁷ 1) Равенство и суверенность народов России.

1. Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of the Russian Empire.
2. The right of nations to self-determination.
3. Abolition of all privileges based on nationality and religion.
4. Freedom and cultural development for national minorities (dispersed nationalities and those living outside their historic territories).

After these principles were officially declared, the Soviet government resisted their realisation. For example, Lenin recognised Poland's independence, and the Bolsheviks reluctantly restored it. The Bolshevik rulers attempted to establish a pro-Soviet government in Poland during the Russo-Polish War of 1920, but eventually lost the war, and the plan to establish a pro-Soviet government in Poland failed. Only Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania gained independence a month after the October Revolution of 1917, out of all the states that coexisted under the Russian Empire. However, they did not enjoy much independence because they were seized by the Soviet Army in 1940. For Soviet authorities in the early 1920s, it became clear that these countries would remain independent. The Soviets likewise attempted to unite nations in a universal union. During the national-bolshevik period, it was proposed to reveal the Russian Empire as a prison for all peoples and countries, because the nations did not rush under the yoke of another empire. In the face of the Soviet regime, the resistance of certain nations to defending independence proved insufficient. For example, when the Ukrainian National Republic declared independence in 1918, the Russian Soviet government launched an invasion of Ukraine. A civil war that lasted more than three years and was eventually halted by the Soviet Union's annexation of Ukraine.

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- 2) Право народов России на свободное самоопределение, вплоть до отделения и образования самостоятельного государства.
 - 3) Отмена всех и всяких национальных и национально-религиозных привилегий и ограничений.
 - 4) Свободное развитие национальных меньшинств и этнографических групп, населяющих территорию России. Presidential Library, <https://www.prilib.ru/en/history/619724> accessed in 31.12.2023.

2.2.1. *National Bolshevism*

National Bolshevism was a name originally introduced in 1921, when defeated White Russians and emigres tried to rationalise the Bolshevik victory and eventually declared their support for Bolshevism and Soviet Russia.²¹⁸ The white Russians and emigres were considered by the government, opponents of the Bolsheviks and were influenced by the publications *Накануне* (The Day Before) and *Смена век* (The Age of Change). These newspapers asserted the fact that in 1921, the Soviet regime was the only Russian National power despite its internationalism. Mikhail Agursky said: "Bolshevism was not even a lesser evil; in specific historical conditions, only the Bolsheviks would be able to restore the Russian National state, the Russian state power. Bolshevism was the Russian national phenomenon."²¹⁹

The right-wingers and nationalists said that Bolshevism is not the Destroyer of Russia but the Saviour, reuniting the country and re-establishing the Soviet army. Again, Agursky defined the term National Bolshevism: "National Bolshevism is the Russian etatist ideology that legitimises the Soviet political system from the Russian etatist point of view, contrary to its exclusive Marxist legitimacy. Etatism can be distinguished from cultural nationalism...I would like to define etatism as a powerful form of nationalism...National Bolshevism does not reject Communist ideology, though it strives to minimise its importance to the level necessary for legitimacy. National Bolshevism in its original form strove for world domination, conceived as the universal Russian Empire cemented by Communist ideology. It is not excluded that in some circumstances National Bolshevism might limit itself to the etatist concept of Russian Superpower."²²⁰

National Bolshevism was considered an imperialist ideology whose supporters, to protect what they thought to be "Holy Russia" or the Russian Empire, streamlined their ideals.

²¹⁸ Mihail Agursky, *The Third Rome: National Bolshevism in the USSR, USA*: Westview Press, 1987, pp.195-199.

²¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 248.

²²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

2.2.2. What has changed since the Slavophile movement?

If during the time of the Empire the peasant represented something holy, during the Stalin regime the process of dehumanisation took place to create a new Soviet man, as Lynne Viola said, the Communist regime “slipped into demonology, pushing the process of dehumanising the peasantry to its greatest extent”.²²¹ “Since the main of the Holy Russia of icons and roaches, presented the main obstacle to the elevation of the Russian people народ to a higher, national level of existence, Russian peasant culture was objectively unredeemable.”²²² But what remained in common with the Slavophiles and panslavists was the xenophobic sentiment towards the West: “Stalin’s doctrine of socialism in one country was related to his anti-Westernism. In this respect, the fact that virtually alone among the Bolshevik leaders, Stalin had raised the possibility that Soviet Russia could become the country that would lay the road to socialism.”²²³ Stalin explained that: “the West has become a breeding ground of destruction and slavery. The task is to destroy this breeding ground, to the joy and comfort of working people of all countries.”²²⁴

Stalin created Soviet Russia (Советская Россия) to destroy the vestiges of ancient Rus’ and turn the peasant into a proletarian and create a new Soviet man. The Russian language was made required in all elementary schools in non-Russian states in 1938, since it was deemed at the time to be the sole mode of communication capable of imparting the proletarian message, a process known as linguistic Russification. I want to mention that it is wrong to relate to the process of Russification separately from Sovietization. According to one of Stalin’s lectures, Russian was the form, and Soviet was the content. The connection between these two (Russification

²²¹ Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin. Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 35.

²²² Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1960, p. 94.

²²³ Veljko Vujacic, “Stalinism and Russian Nationalism: A Reconceptualization” in *Post Soviet Affairs*, Vol.23, No.2, 2007, pp.156-183.

²²⁴ Iosif Stalin, “Light from the East” (December 1, 1918), in *Works*, Vol.4, 1917-1920, pp.395-406.

and Sovietization) was made by Ushakov in 1939 dictionary, where the word Russian (Русский) was represented by Turgenev's phrase on the "mighty, truthful and free Russian language" and Stalin's phrase of "the Russian revolutionary sweep" as a "life-giving force which awakens thought, propels one forward, crushes the past, opens up the future".²²⁵

2.2.3. *The policy of Korenizatsiya*

During the period 1920-1930, the Soviet Empire's primary impetus for the national policy was korenizatsiya (policy of indigenisation, derived from the word коренной народ, meaning indigenous people). The integration of non-Russian nationalities into the governments of their respective Soviet republics was part of this policy. In the 1920s, the policy encouraged representatives of the titular country and their national minorities into the lower administrative levels of respective Soviet republics' local government, bureaucracy, and nomenklatura. The korenizatsiya's principal goal was to develop communist cadres of all nationalities.²²⁶ The Soviet leadership thought that the indigenous policy encouraged non-Russian nations to assist the Soviet regime's creation of the new Soviet man. This policy was not particularly effective. Non-Russian ethnicities provided only limited assistance to the Soviet central government. Minorities were not treated fairly during the Russian Empire, and after that, they favoured internationalism and national equality. The policy of Korenizatsiya had long-lasting effects and promoted national cultures and national consciousness among the different nations.²²⁷

National languages were only optional in basic schools, institutions, theatres, books, and newspapers in the USSR. Many nations were incorporated into the Russian language and culture, but resisted the policy

²²⁵ Gregory Freidin, "Romans into Italians. Russian National Identity in Transition" in *Stanford Slavic Studies*, Vol.7, 1939, pp.241-275.

²²⁶ Kalypso Nikolaidis, *Echoes from the Empire: Memory, Identity and Colonial Legacies*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014, pp.12-23.

²²⁷ "Nationalism in the Soviet Union", *National Post*, 12 December 2013, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/nationalism-soviet-union> accessed in 02.01.2024.

of Korenizatsiya. Many parents opposed sending their children to national schools, and there was significant opposition to the official usage of national languages in the national republics.²²⁸ The Russian population, particularly those from the republics regarded to be the most politically powerful in the Russian Empire, were sceptical of the strategy of indigenisation. Russian nationalists did not consider the Soviet Union's other nations as equals at the time.

The establishment of national territorial administrative units and national cultures coincided with the earliest stage of indigenisation. The latter was most visible in the fields of language formation²²⁹ and education²³⁰ because a few nationalities did not have a literary language, the Committee of the North was established.²³¹ to create alphabets so that the national languages could be taught in schools and literacy could be brought to the people in their native languages, and the minorities would thereby be brought from backwardness to the modern world.²³²

In 1930, at the 16th Party Congress, Stalin claimed that the period of socialism was a time when national cultures flourished, and the final goal was to unite them into a unified international culture with a common language. There was a “cultural revolution” atmosphere between 1928 and 1931, which was followed by many violent incidents. For example, Russian cultural heritage was attacked, churches were shuttered and demolished, old specialists were fired, science, art²³³ Slavophile peasants were proletarianised.

The end of Korenizatsiya can be divided into two parts:

1. The persecution of national cadres: between 1933 and 1938, the persecution of national republic leaders began. Non-Russians were

²²⁸ Ibidem, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/nationalism-soviet-union> accessed in 02.01.2024.

²²⁹ Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, Or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism” in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No.2, pp.414-452.

²³⁰ Barbara Anderson and Brian Silver, “Equality, Efficiency, and Politics in Soviet Bilingual Education Policy: 1934-1980” in *American Political Science Review*, Vol.78, pp.1019-1039.

²³¹ Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994, p. 150.

²³² Ibidem, p. 150.

²³³ Timo Vihavainen, *Nationalism, and Internationalism. How did Bolsheviks Cope with National Sentiment?* Helsinki: Chulos&Pirainen, 2000, p. 81.

accused of inciting riots and causing harm to Russians. The Russians chastised local administrations for hiring foreigners in public service, and the fact that their goal was to break free from the Soviet Union, to live independently, and national leaderships of the republics and autonomies were liquidated en masse.²³⁴

2. Cancelling Russification: the mid and late 1930s brought a new version of the policy of indigenisation, the so-called great Russianization or the attempts to assimilate the minorities.²³⁵ The Russian authorities in Soviet Russia demonstrated an interest in reducing the number of officially recognised nationalities. The creation of national schools in which each minority's mother tongue was taught persisted, but the Russian language became compulsory. The existence of the indigenisation policy was abandoned and was replaced by a more bureaucratic terminology: Подпор и Ресстановка Национальных Кадров (selection and placement of national frameworks).

This policy glorified the Russian people, called them the big brother of the socialist family of nations, and during this period nationalism was hidden under the facade of Soviet patriotism, emerged with national survival taking priority over ideological conflicts between communists and fascists.²³⁶ With the implementation of the Russian language as a compulsory subject in non-Russian schools, it reflected the main purpose of the linguistic russification imposed by Stalin and his Soviet patriotism.

2.2.4. Russian Nationalism from Brezhnev to Gorbachev

Under Brezhnev's leadership, three classifications of Russian nationalism appear:

1. The Liberal Nationalists "in favour of accommodating minorities in a loose federation and of granting them those rights guaranteed in the Soviet Constitution. For these rights and for the privilege of

²³⁴ Ibidem, p. 84.

²³⁵ Vernon Aspaturian, "The Non-Russians Peoples", in *Prospects for Soviet Society*, New York: Praeger, 1968, pp.143-198.

²³⁶ Ibidem, p. 85.

participating in the federation, minorities would have to pay their fair share for development and defence."²³⁷

2. The Neo-Slavophiles "called for the consolidation of Russian lands into a unified Russian state, discarding the empty notion of a Russian-dominated federation."²³⁸
3. The Neo-Stalinists who think that "Stalin's brand of centralised and militarist leadership is what the Russian empire still requires, would prefer a greater Russian empire in which minority cultures could be exploited for the Russian state."²³⁹

Briefly, during the Brezhnev era, there were three varieties of Russian nationalism: the first sought a more liberal interpretation of Russia and the recognition of non-Russian ethnicities' rights, the second desired the Russian state's isolation from the West and the Russian Orthodox Church's leadership in the goal of saving the world. The last one, the Russians' desire to preserve the Soviet Union and transform it into a powerful/dominant empire over all other states.

2.2.5. Russian Nationalism under Gorbachev

American political scientist John B. Dunlop pieced together the categories of Russian nationalism during Gorbachev's presidency. Several names are used to characterise the component of the Russian nationalism classification. His thoughts are grouped into two categories:

1. The first category is about supporting the idea of rebuilding the empire.
2. The image of a new Russian state that is independent of other nationalities and territories that formerly formed the empire.

Political scientist John Dunlop classified Russian nationalism into three categories in a 1988 study: Liberal Nationalists, Centrists, and the National Right/National Bolsheviks.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Enders Wimbush, "The Russian Nationalist Backlash", in *Survey*, Vol.24, No.3, 1979, pp.44-45.

²³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

²³⁹ Hal Draper, "The Neo-Stalinist Type. Notes on a New Political Ideology", *New International*, Vol.XIV, No.1, 1948, https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/ni/issue3.htm#ni48_01 accessed in 02.01.2024.

²⁴⁰ John Dunlop, "The Contemporary Russian Nationalist Spectrum" in *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Special Edition December 19, 1988.

Therefore, the Liberal Nationalists had the idea of preserving Russia's orthodoxy while supporting Gorbachev's reforms. The Centrist Nationalists supported nationalist beliefs and were opposed to Gorbachev's liberal reforms (fearing the influence of Western models and ideas in Russian space), being in opposition to the communist regime. The National Bolsheviks shared the same ideals as the second category, with the exception that members of this category held prominent positions in the Soviet system and supported the Marxist-Leninist philosophy as the foundation of Imperial Russia. Dunlop saw the neo-Stalinist group from the Brezhnev era as an alliance with the nationalist Bolsheviks rather than an independent party of nationalists.²⁴¹

In another analysis, Dunlop talks about Liberal Nationalists and the conservative coalition that includes the National Bolsheviks, Conservative Nationalists and Neo-Stalinists. The Liberal Nationalists were advocating for: "...political democracy and a market economy; they advocate for peaceful relations with the minority peoples of the Soviet Union and with the West. They are distinguished from Western-style liberals, with whom they are frequently allied, by their attachment to Russian Orthodoxy and Russian national traditions. The liberals' nationalists are prepared to grant the non-Russian republics complete freedom...to secede from the Soviet Union."²⁴²

The determination to keep the Soviet Union's geographical integrity and its government's position in Moscow is the glue that holds the conservation alliance together. The Neo-Stalinists were not Russian nationalists, but rather conservative Marxist-Leninists and Soviet Patriots who, like Stalin, were willing to use Russian nationalist sentiment to support the party state.²⁴³ Both the Conservative Nationalists and the National Bolsheviks were Russian nationalists with opposing political ideologies. These two groups were connected by the following sentiments: "an ardent Russophilia, a deep suspicion of the market and of the capitalist West, anti-

²⁴¹ Ibidem.

²⁴² John Dunlop, "The Return of Russian Nationalism" in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.1, No.3, 1990, p. 115.

²⁴³ John Dunlop, "Russian Nationalism Today: Organizations and Programs" in *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.XIX, No.2, 1991, p. 150.

Semitism, and resentment of nationalist and separatist sentiments in the periphery.”²⁴⁴

Dunlop, the same author, analyses the political processes associated with the Russian national question using terminology such as empire-saving and nation-building.

1. The empire savers are concerned with the conservative coalition.
2. The nation-building can be split into two parts, namely, authoritarian and democratic.

We cannot speak of Boris Yeltsin’s government as a manifestation of Russian nationalism; rather, he chose the second component, that of nation building; Yeltsin’s government was more associated with the phenomena of Westernism, which “played the Russian card”.²⁴⁵

The historian, Alexander Yanov, stated the fact that: “any single definition fixed for all time of a dynamic ideological movement in Russia, be it Russian nationalism or Russian communism, seems to me a contradiction in terms. Any political change in the system alters the function of the movement within the system as well as the balance of liberal and reactionary elements within the movement.”²⁴⁶ Russian imperial nationalism was used to describe the new Russian right's nationalist ideals, where imperial alludes to nationalist ideas belonging to the empire's dominating state. Yanov provides a definition of Russian nationalism that appears to reflect a Soviet meaning of the term, distinguishing patriotism, chauvinism, and nationalism (he pointed out that these terms are different in the Russian context): “A patriot loves his country, but this does not prevent him from loving humanity. A chauvinist loves his country but dislikes humanity, especially if it is of Jewish origin. A nationalist loves his country but sees humanity as an invading force ready to conquer it with the Jews in the vanguard.”²⁴⁷

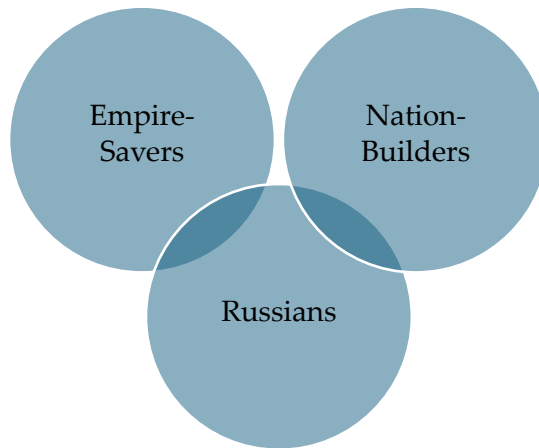
²⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 118.

²⁴⁵ John Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp.54-59.

²⁴⁶ Alexander Yanov, “Russian Nationalism as the Ideology of Counterreform” in *Research Bulletin*, 19 December 1988, pp.43-52.

²⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 49.

Of course, we could argue that Russian nationalism is a much bigger phenomenon that presents itself in a variety of ways, not only the ones described above. The classifications provided by Yanov above are essentially values that indicate nationalist behaviour. Patriotism is a positive phenomenon, while nationalism is negative, and Chauvinism is atrocious. Many terms were referring to Russian nationalism from the Gorbachev period. Roman Szporluk thought that the Russians, since then, have faced what I mentioned above: empire-savers and nation-builders.



On the one hand, according to Szporluk, the first category was about the renewal of the empire. The empire-savers perceived the Soviet Union on the other hand as the most important sovereign space of the Russian country and the Nation-builders portrayed those who saw Russia “as something very different from the USSR as a geographical, historical, and cultural entity that does not encompass what they recognize to be non-Russian lands and nations, even if these are part of the USSR. The geographical extent of Russia is not identical for all nation builders [...] What unifies them is a national position and the political goal of establishing a Russia that is a nation-state.”²⁴⁸

As a result, we can refer to empire-savers as imperialists. Those who formed the group of empire-savers were: “the military and the police, the state and party bureaucracies, members of other structures and apparatuses,

²⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 17.

such as the foreign ministry or cultural officials engaged in foreign relations.”²⁴⁹ The empire-savers included Marxist-Leninists as well as right-wing extremists who supported the Soviet Union, and all decisions were made in Moscow. The nation-builders incorporated the Russians who wanted to see themselves as a subset of a state's autonomous nation. They are divided into three categories: “first, there are those Russians who reject communism and Sovietism and who look for an alternative in a nationalism rooted in culture, especially in religion. The second model of Russia proposes a democratic, liberal, Western-style modern nation-state. A third model is advanced by those who are critical of the imperial structure of the Soviet Union and expect a change for the better if the RSFSR were to become a full-fledged republic. They seem to believe that the national needs of Russia might be addressed and met if the RSFSR acquired an identity that was separate from the USSR and its government, party, and other organisations.”²⁵⁰

It should be noted that Szporluk's analyses cover the full Russian political agenda, which includes Soviet nationalists who wished to preserve the Soviet Union as a unitary base for the Russian people and liberals who wished to establish a democratic country while putting the Russian nationalism phenomenon on the back burner.

Yitzhak Brudny's 1985-1988 study of Russian nationalism highlighted three stages of development:

1. Bringing Russian nationalists together to support the diversion project.
2. The Liberal Nationalists who agreed with Gorbachev's reform projects.
3. The opposition represented by neo-Slavophiles and neo-Stalinists.

The Liberal Nationalists advocated for a modern country/society, the neo-Stalinists fought for the revival of Stalin's regime, the neo-Slavophiles fought for anti-urban/anti-intellectual aspects of society and did not appreciate the Western development model, and the conservative Russian

²⁴⁹ Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *The End of the Soviet Empire: The Triumph of the Nations*, Basic Books, New York, 1993, p. 126.

²⁵⁰ Alexander Yanov, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

nationalists supported liberal nationalist ideals but expressed xenophobic sentiments towards the West.

Helene Carrere d'Encausse spoke about three categories of Russian nationalism²⁵¹:

1. Liberal Nationalism
2. Radical Nationalism (left-wing and right-wing extremism)
3. Conservative Nationalism

In her view, the Liberal Nationalism wanted to protect the Russian culture and national heritage, but what differentiates them from the other types is that they were attempting to avoid leading nationalism to xenophobia. Liberal Nationalism is based on the ideas of authors such as Berdyaev, Bulgakov and Franck. The Radical Nationalists (the right-wing) were National Bolsheviks who rejected Marxist-Leninist doctrine, but for the left-wing, nationalism was less significant than Soviet modernisation philosophy. The principles of conservative nationalism were to resurrect Russia's history. For them, the Marxist-Leninist theory was comparable to a Western philosophy, and they saw these Western ideas (imported foreign concepts) as distorting Russia.

Russian writer, Andrei Sinavsky is similar to Yanov, Synavsky made a parallel between the concepts Russian Patriotism and Russian Nationalism: "Russian patriotism is ready to attach itself to anything as long as the Motherland is implied by that thing or shines through it [...] Russian patriotism is by no means always reduced to nationalism, although, equally, nationalism quite often gives rise to it and feeds on it...patriotism binds Russians into a kind of family, like family relations these are far from ideal and are accompanied by bitter feuds and strife not characteristic to such a degree of other peoples inspired by nationalism or patriotism."²⁵² According to the author, when we speak about national identity/national consciousness, we are referring to the symptoms of nationalism.

²⁵¹ Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *op.cit.*, pp.180-185.

²⁵² Andrei Synavsky, "Russian Nationalism" in *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, New York, 1993, pp.180-185.

Nicolai Petro depicted three elements of groups with nationalist leanings²⁵³:

1. Leftist-Radicals
2. Conservatives
3. Christian Democrats

Independent government and economic institutions in various regions within Russia would strengthen their political and economic autonomy.²⁵⁴ In Petro's vision, the conservatives "advocate a five-point agenda consisting of moral revival; scepticism of Western intellectual imports, especially Marxism-Leninism; fear of market competition and opposition to windfall profits; return of peasants' land; and a sense of honouring military service. Unlike the left-radicals and Christian Democrats, however, the conservatives rely on the Communist Party to reform itself."²⁵⁵

The second group, the leftist radicals, include persons who hold anti-Stalinist sentiments and support the democratic process. The Christian Democrats militated for the separation of the church from the state and governance, which tended to return in the twentieth century, when the intelligentsia abandoned Marxist Leninist theory in favour of a religious orientation.

The last author I chose in this part is Victor Zaslavsky, who talks about the imperialist and national-separatist phenomenon: "Recent years have witnessed a deepening polarisation of the [Russian] nationalist ideologists into imperial and national-separatist camps. Imperialist nationalism has been losing ground, and many ideologues of the imperialist persuasion have promptly changed their allegiance. The turn from imperialist nationalism to separatism has been promoted by changes in Russian mass consciousness on the one hand and by the growing influence of liberal nationalists and the

²⁵³ Timothy Michael Spence, *The development of Russian nationalism under Gorbachev (1985-1991)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, p. 48.

²⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 47.

²⁵⁵ Stephen E. Deane, "Russian Nationalism as a Political Force" in *Meeting Report*, Kenan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Vol.VII, No.13.

dissemination of nationalist ideas among the Russian liberal-democratic intelligentsia on the other.”²⁵⁶

Zaslavsky discussed how, during the Perestroika period, there was an inclination to isolationism and separatism, which grew stronger at the end of Gorbachev's presidency. The Solzhenitsyn's pamphlet *Как нам обустроить Россию?* (How to rebuild Russia?) talks about “isolationism and separatism were emerging as the one platform unifying all the major strands of Russian nationalism?”²⁵⁷

Although isolationism and separatism were clear occurrences among parties defending the image of the Russian Empire's founding, I disagree with the notion that isolationism and separatism connect the major strands of Russian nationalism. The Gorbachev classification of nationalism provided a series of principles that demonstrated the distinction between empire-savers and nation-builders (nation-building), Westernizers and anti-Westernizers, pro-Marxism Leninism, and anti-Marxism Leninism. As previously said, the nation-builders do not always position themselves as representatives of Russian nationalism; they want to create. During Brezhnev's administration, some Soviet nationalists believed in the notion of the new community. The creators of the country also agreed that non-Russian states would declare their independence from the Russian state; they worried that if the union were dissolved, there would be order in a civil society located on Russian territory. Brundy's radical Slavophiles, Carrere d'Encausse's conservatives and Synavsky's fascists and Laquer's right-wing extremists are oriented towards Russian exclusivity. And what emerges from this description of Russian nationalism is that the anti-Western attitude was always present, most of the time, and all this feeling enhanced the desire to reconstruct the Russian empire (a unified state). The unitary state came first in the ideals of Russian imperial nationalism. Unlike these nationalities that supported the restoration of the empire, there was a minority percentage of people who believed that the union with non-Russian states harmed Russia's uniqueness.

²⁵⁶ Victor Zaslavsky, “The evolution of separatism in Soviet society under Gorbachev” in G.W.Lapidus, V.Zaslavsky & p. Goldman (eds.), *From Union to Commonwealth: Nationalism & Separatism in the Soviet Republics*, CUP, 1992, pp.82-83.

²⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 86.

The concept of the Russian nation is critical in forming an understanding of the many forms of Russian nationalism. During the Gorbachev regime, most far-right parties embraced the notion of rebuilding the Soviet Union or Imperial Russia. This included Память (People's National-Patriotic Orthodox Christian Movement), RNE, Отечество (Fatherland), Единство (Unity supported Leninist-Communist ideals), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) and many others. These movements represented a wide spectrum of political and social orientations, including Marxism-Leninism, Orthodoxy, and, of course, Zhirinovsky's Russian authoritarian regime. Although these movements were inspired by various ideologies, the most common link between all of them and, of course, those that followed (the skinheads and Nashi movement) was the establishment of a unitary state that included all Russians regardless of whether after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russians remained or not inside the country, because of this, several alliances were born between these movements, for example, the United Council of Russia, the Bloc of Public-Patriotic Movements, Co-ordinating Council of the Patriotic Movements, and the Brotherhood of Slavs (Славянский собор). This force was divided into two parts: those who wanted to rebuild the empire and those who wanted a new Russian state. The Liberal Nationalists militated for a civil society and a market economy, but they were attached to Orthodoxy, to the values and culture of Russia. The Liberal Democrats saw Russia as a unique country and tended to the West. Isolationist nationalists, those who rejected any association with the first type and fought for the restoration of the empire or the Soviet Union. They believed in the ideals of the Slavophiles (especially in *самобытность*, self-essence, the originality and superiority of Russia). As can be seen, classifying Russian nationalism is challenging, with some stating that Russian nationalism defines exact categories, but the language of numerous concepts or types remains mostly undefined. In the following subchapters of this chapter, I will attempt to concentrate on the concept of the Russian nation and its goals. I will also dwell on the interpretation of concepts: *русский* and *российский*. I examined these terms in the first section of the paper, but in the following section, I will examine them through the speeches of Presidents Yeltsin and Putin. These Russian

nationalist tendencies (русский and российский) also reflect specific links/alliances between far-right groups, which I will examine in this paper.

2.3. The post-Soviet Russia (the end of 20th century)

The breakup of the Soviet Union remained a “formative experience”²⁵⁸ for Russia's nationalist rhetoric. The post-Soviet Russia was a new place where Russians had to deal with a few problems regarding the nation-state/nation-building. According to Marlene Laruelle, many Russians expected a change, but they did not want or expect the Soviet state to dissolve.²⁵⁹ Around this breakdown, a political identity crisis arose. The years that followed were accompanied by several problems:

- deterioration of the economy
- increased crimes
- the constitutional conflict between the President and the Parliament peaked in the autumn of 1993 (when army tanks shelled the Russian White House in Moscow).

Considering all the challenges associated with the democratic process, one can see Russia's decline, which had previously presented itself as a great power. Sergey Oushakine has described the fact that how the feeling of loss translates into ideas of national belonging, which did not emerge from events in one's private life, but the shared experience of losing a Motherland.²⁶⁰ The same author talks about the “patriotism of despair in the 1990s has provided the main support base for Russia's new, assertive national identity in the 2000s.”²⁶¹ The turbulent 1990s, in contrast to the stable 2000s, have remained a commonplace in public discourse.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Veera Laine, *Nationalism as an Argument in Contemporary Russia. Four Perspectives on Language in action*, Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Science and Letters, 2021, p. 77.

²⁵⁹ Ibidem.

²⁶⁰ Sergey A. Oushakine, *Patriotism of Despair. Nation, War, and Loss in Russia*, London: Cornell University Press, 2009, p. 7.

²⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 7.

²⁶² Olga Malinova, “Faming the Collective Memory of the 1990s as a Legitimation Tool for Putin's Regime”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10758216.2020.1752732> accessed in 08.01.2024.

The government led by Boris Yeltsin adopted the image of a civic nation, frequently using the term россияне (the term refers to the Russian people as a historical and socio-political community. A community of citizens of the Russian Federation belonging to different ethnic, religious, social, or other groups, which was consolidated based on the Russian historical statehood.) The term россияне has a very complex ethnic and religious composition. It comprises more than 190 ethnic communities, including Orthodox Russians, and other religions such as Judaism and Islam. Regarding the community, the term multinational people is used (shown in the Russian Constitution as well).²⁶³ The phrase dates to the nineteenth century, specifically the Slavophile period, but it was revived in the political language of the 1990s. It was most used in President Yeltsin's speeches to counteract xenophobic attitudes and stereotypes.²⁶⁴ The Scientific Council of the Russian Academy of Sciences offers the following definition of the term россияне: "the Russian nation is a civil and political community, consolidated based on historical Russian statehood, whose members have equal rights regardless of ethnic, racial, and religious affiliation, common historical and cultural values. The multinational purpose of the Russian Federation is a community of citizens united by common interests, historical and cultural values, and aware of their belonging to the community of the Russian nation."²⁶⁵ In the mid-1990s, it was clear that nations were not

²⁶³ Россияне/Российскийи-народ-сторическая и социально-политическая общность, политоним, политическая, или гражданская нация, сообщество граждан Российской Федерации различной этнической, религиозной, социальной и иной принадлежности, которая консолидировалась на основе исторической российской государственности¹. Имеют комплексный этнический и религиозный состав. Включают более 190 этнических общностей, из них большинство составляют русские; большинство россиян владеют русским языком; большинство считают себя православными; распространены также ислам, буддизм, иудаизм и другие религии В отношении общности используется термин «многонациональный народ» (в частности, в Конституции России). В.А.Тишков, «Россияне», Большая российская энциклопедия, 2015, с.685-686.

²⁶⁴ Даниил Терещенко, «Снова ложные друзья переводчика или россияне и русские», <https://web.archive.org/web/20160811171326/http://www.tereschenko.info/rossiyane-i-russkie/> accessed in 08.01.2024.

²⁶⁵ Российская нация — гражданско-политическая общность, консолидированная на основе исторической российской государственности, члены которой обладают равными правами независимо от этнической, расовой и религиозной принадлежности, общими историко-культурными ценностями, чувством принадлежности к единому народу, гражданской ответственностью и

pleased with the usage of this term, which somehow led to a unitary state including all these states, because, before the dissolution of the empire/ Soviet Union coexisted more than one hundred and twenty nationalities lived nearby, often geographically inseparable from one another.²⁶⁶

After the dissolution, facing the rise of nationalism and xenophobic attitudes, the road to autonomy and the request for national separatism in post-Soviet Russia were alarming processes, because both phenomena (nationalism and xenophobic sentiments) led to violent conflicts. The rise of nationalism in former Soviet Russia is the result of the conditions of the democratization process and the transition from socialism.²⁶⁷ In the following, I shall undertake an analysis of the phrases that arose shortly after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, namely, Russian and non-Russian nationalism under Yeltsin.

As I mentioned before, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, in December 1991, the non-Russian citizens acknowledged the destruction of the two states, the Soviet Union and Russia. They wanted this segment of the non-Russian population to break away from the empire that bound them together. The empire quickly colonised many states following the 1917 October Revolution. For example: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was founded in 1922 the brief independence that some of them had enjoyed after the October revolution ended and there was no doubt in their minds that the impetus for the formation of the USSR came from Russia (the independence of the Baltic states lasted until their annexation by the Soviet Union on the eve of the Great Patriotic War. Bessarabia was a Romanian territory in 1918, while Western Ukraine and the western region of Belarus were handed to the Polish state in 1920 before being taken over by the USSR during the Yalta Conference at the end of World War II.

солидарностью. Многонациональный народ Российской Федерации — общность граждан Российской Федерации различных национальностей, объединённых государственным единством, общими интересами и историко-культурными ценностями и осознающих свою принадлежность к общности российской нации. Роман Крецул, «Российской нации дали определение», <https://iz.ru/news/687767> accessed in 08.01.2024.

²⁶⁶ Margot Light, "Nationalism and identity in the former Soviet Union" in *METU Studies in Development*, vol.27, No.3, London: Department of International Relations, 2000, pp.301-319.

²⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 306.

For the non-Russians, the Soviet power was no different from Russian power. It is worth mentioning that the most important functions in the Soviet government were occupied by the Russians and the Slavs. Many Russians living in the other republics were skilled workers or civil servants. The Russian language was also an important component in the life of the Soviet Union. Everyone, regardless of their position, had to know Russian. The dominant power came from the Russians, not from non-Russians. The non-Russian people accused the Russians of being considered inferior, but the Russians did not consider themselves guilty of these accusations. As a result, immediately following the August 1991 coup, supposedly non-Russian states announced their separation and independence from the dominance of the USSR and Russia.

Russian and non-Russian nationalism, developed under Yeltsin, continued to interact with each other. Researchers feel that non-Russian nationalism was exacerbated by Russian nationalism. This issue of Russia's identity is viewed as a solution to the problem of non-Russian nationalism.

The constitutional arrangements had rather negative consequences. The governments of the independent states were made up of members who belonged to the dominated state. They wanted to create a unitary state by abolishing the nominally autonomous status of areas within their borders.²⁶⁸ For example, the fall of the Soviet Union coincided with the dissolution of the North and South Caucasus. In the north, Ossetia (which was part of the Russian Federation) opposed neighbouring Ingushetia, which desired control of the Vladikavkaz suburbs. Ingushetia severed ties with Chechnya, which sought independence from Russia. In the south, Armenians and Azeris fought for control of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory.²⁶⁹ Briefly, these areas desired to be part of two different countries: the Russian Federation for Abkhazians and South Ossetians, and Armenia for Nagorno-Karabakh. In the instance of Chechnya, which has declared independence, an attempt to restrict non-Russian nationalism is met with a very deadly struggle. Even though the conflict was over, no acceptable solution for Chechnya's political

²⁶⁸ Thomas de Waal and Nikolaus von Twickel, *Beyond Frozen Conflict. Scenarios for the Separatist Disputes of Eastern Europe*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020, p. 20.

²⁶⁹ Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *U.R S.S. a murit, trăiască Rusia!* București: Artemis, 2010, p. 174.

status was discovered. The Russian reason for this invasion was to maintain the integrity of the Russian Federation. And the hostilities in the North Caucasus lasted until a resolution was reached.

Non-Russian nationalism fuelled the power struggle that led to the Soviet Union's disintegration. The primary cause of this breakdown is nationalism, which developed in Russia, because non-Russians saw Russia as the dominant force, and the country of the union had a lot higher influence in this process than the other smaller republics that did not see Russia as a dominant power.

Boris Yeltsin exploited the content of this classification of Russian nationalism in his campaign against Soviet authorities and, of course, Gorbachev. It is unclear whether Yeltsin was a devout nationalist, but given that Russian nationalism had become extremely popular among the movements by 1990, he saw it as a tool to help him in the election campaign. For example, he employed this broad spectrum of Russian nationalism to ensure Russia's exclusive control over natural resources and industry on Russian soil. He also stated that Russia will not give up territory such as Kaliningrad or the Kurile Islands. Yeltsin's words, which had a strong nationalist tone, created the initial doubts among non-Russians about the idea that the new Russian government would not easily give up specific lands that comprised the old empire. For example, the Ukrainian government's declaration of independence and sovereignty (after the August 1991 coup) prompted a delayed response from Russia to back these non-Russian separatist aspirations. The Russian administration thought it unfathomable (still available) that Ukraine and Russia would be separated after 300 years of unity because Ukraine declared independence. The Yeltsin administration responded by stating that Russia would withdraw its borders from the republics that declared their independence from Russia, but that the vast majority of Russians who remained outside Russia's borders desired to incorporate the populated territories. These assertions were met with fear and reluctance in republics with large ethnic Russian populations, including Estonia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, because they saw President Yeltsin's declarations as forces leading to the empire's rebirth. After the Soviet Union broke up in December 1991, the Russians found it repugnant that the 25

million Russians residing outside the Russian Federation had become national minorities because of the separation.²⁷⁰ Despite their rejection of the central Soviet authority, most Yeltsin-era movements found it difficult to imagine Russia without considering the empire. Most of this was attributable to their perception of national identity. For Russians, national identity, Russia's identity, and the concept of a national state were all inextricably linked to the image of the Russian Empire. According to Russians, the Russian Empire and the Russian state grew together, and there was never a Russian national state. The first constitutional prime minister of the Russian Empire, Sergey Witte, said that "ever since the time of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, there has been no such thing as Russia; only a Russian Empire."²⁷¹ In his image of the core Russian state, Witte included tiny Russians (Ukrainians) and white Russians (Byelorussians), as do many other Russians. For Witte, Russia consisted of all the Slavs in the country, while the Empire comprised the non-Slav areas which had been colonised by Russia.²⁷²

Historically, most Russians consider Russia's identity as being inextricably linked to the Empire and the USSR. According to surveys conducted by the Levada centre, 1600 people were interviewed, especially young people and people who have experienced living in the USSR on regret about the loss of empire and the status of great power, the percentage of Russians from 2014-2017 who regret the collapse of the Soviet Union fluctuates around the level of 54-58%²⁷³

Nationalist extremists claim that it is difficult for them to accept the loss of some regions that were part of Russia during the Soviet era. As a result, by the late 1990s, the new Russians were looking for a new identity, as well as a new role for Russia. In the 1990s, Yeltsin directed his advisers to develop a new concept for the Russian state. At his first inauguration as president of the Russian Federation in June 1991, Yeltsin addressed the

²⁷⁰ Margot Light, "Nationalism and identity in the former Soviet Union" in *METU Studies in Development*, vol.27, No.3, London: Department of International Relations, 2000, pp.301-319.

²⁷¹ Michael Mandelbaum, *The Rise of Nations in the Soviet Union. American Foreign Policy and the Disintegration of the USSR*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1991, p. 26.

²⁷² Margot Light, *op.cit.* p. 302.

²⁷³ "Nostalgia for the USSR", *Levada Center*, 2017, <https://www.levada.ru/en/2017/12/25/nostalgia-for-the-ussr/> accessed in 08.01.2024.

country's inhabitants and committed to preserving their rights. Yeltsin replaced the Soviet Union with the Russian Federation. Yeltsin used the term "people" without providing any additional information during his second inauguration in 1996. Several Russian leaders have avoided describing Russia's population on a national scale.²⁷⁴ In official speeches, the Russians were rarely called the Russian people. The logical conclusion would be that the term "Russian nation", or "people", was avoided because it was intended to adhere to traditional liberal values of freedom, equality, and individual rights. Valeri Tishkov, director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Academy of Soviet Sciences and then Russian Sciences, was most disappointed with the decommissioning of the word nation. He spearheaded the push to popularise the concept of a Russian civic nation. Civic nationalism can be traced back to Yeltsin's presidency. It is also Tishkov who introduced the terms of *росийская* and *русская*,²⁷⁵ which we will discuss in the following.

There were numerous disagreements between the two Russian and non-Russian groups, one of which was that the Russians accused non-Russians of being ungrateful to them for the benefits they received before the fall of the Soviet Union. Non-Russians had some difficulty adapting to Russia's new identity and role. Here we can discuss the word "near abroad". The Russian Federation uses the phrase "near abroad" to refer to the 14 Soviet successor states other than Russia. During the Yeltsin era, Russia had to deal with the fall of Communism, the transition to a market economy, the end of the Cold War, and the loss of superpower status. This resulted in a national identity crisis, which prompted significant revisions in Russian foreign policy towards what it calls the near abroad (some leaders continue to call the fourteen other former republics of the Soviet Union, the near abroad).²⁷⁶

This demonstrates the importance of Russian nationalism in this process, especially for the extremist nationalists. Another key part of Russian

²⁷⁴ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O istorie a naționalismului rus. De la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București: Litera, 2022, p. 371.

²⁷⁵ "Nationalism and Ethnic and Civic Identities in Russia", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2007, <https://carnegieendowment.org/events/2007/09/nationalism-and-ethnic-and-civic-identities-in-russia?lang=en> accessed in 09.01.2024.

²⁷⁶ Wynne Russell, "Russian Policy Towards the Near Abroad: The Discourse of the Hierarchy", *Working Paper*, no.7, 1997, p. 1.

identity is related to the geopolitical challenge caused by the collapse of the Empire. Many scholars wonder if Russia is still a European power or if it has evolved into an Asian or Eurasian one. From a geographical point of view, it is further from Europe now than it has been for 300 years. A band of independent countries, most of which are turning their backs on Russia and facing, or embracing, Europe, separates it from Europe.²⁷⁷ According to Slavophiles, Russia's Eurasian identity provides it with a distinct role and a special mission. Nationalist extremists claim that Russia is neither Western nor Eastern; it can choose a singular Eurasian third continent to give it a path of political and economic development.²⁷⁸ Boris Yeltsin exploited non-Russian nationalism to suppress the Supreme Soviet of Russia in the same way as he did the Central Soviet of Russia during his battle with the first Russian parliament. During this process, Yeltsin granted authority to the Soviet Union's constituent national republics. Non-Russian administrative areas, some of which are significantly wealthier than national administrative regions, have responded to this dynamic by delegating more power. When the Russian state's opposition began to wane, Yeltsin attempted to bolster federal power by proposing a new constitution that would uphold the status of all federal divisions while centralising the state. The constitution was adopted, but the drive for decentralisation and a looser state structure could not be halted. The federal government has had to sign separate agreements with each unit within the federation, ceding variable amounts of autonomy and control over local economic resources to regional governments.²⁷⁹

Extremist parties' victory peaked in December 1993's legislative elections, and the political spectre adopted certain more rationalistic positions. Furthermore, the union of radical and communist nationalists (known as the red-brown coalition) persisted among Russian reformers and their international backers. Russian nationalism instils more dread outside of Russia than non-Russian nationalism. The violent battles that preceded the Soviet Union's breakup were driven by Russian nationalism, not non-

²⁷⁷ Margot Light, *op.cit.* p. 311.

²⁷⁸ Paolo Pizzolo, *Eurasianism: An ideology for the multipolar world*, Libra Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali, 2019, p. 82.

²⁷⁹ Janusz Bugajski, *Failed State. A Guide to Russia's Rupture*, Washington: The Jamestown Foundation, 2022, pp.150-151.

Russian nationalism. To some extent, these conflicts contribute to Russian political destabilisation and are viewed as a justification for Russia to intervene in other republics' territory. For example, in Crimea, Russian nationalism fuels violence between Russians and Ukrainians.

As previously stated, the analysis of Russian nationalism versus non-Russian nationalism is a unique phenomenon in post-Soviet Russia. During the Yeltsin era, Russian nationalism had a considerable impact on Russian-Western ties. The Yeltsin government urged Western governments to recognise Russia's right to maintain peace in the former Soviet Union. In essence, Russia has agreed to keep the peace since it is in everyone's best interests to prevent problems from spreading further. Non-Russians, however, saw Russia's peacekeeping efforts as an attempt to recreate the empire. In reaction to this peacekeeping operation, non-Russians have issued an international call for a security guarantee against Russian expansionism. All of this highlights the dangers of Russian nationalism. The process of democratisation, soon following the disintegration, is one of the most difficult issues of the twenty-first century.

My original definition of non-Russian nationalism incorporates the political concept of state independence and sovereignty, as well as the suppression of imperialist desires. I will relate what I said in this section, following my tendencies.

Non-Russian nationalism is the ideology of the states not characteristic of Russia and of the Russian people that, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, followed the path of independence, sovereignty, and the desire to grow independent economically. At the same time, they could not adjust to the new Russian identity.

2.3.1. Extremist nationalism

The transition from the USSR to post-Soviet Russia undoubtedly brought poverty, pain, and a shared sense of loss. Unchecked inflation and food shortages caused most Russians to feel that the country was descending into chaos and anarchy.²⁸⁰ Russian birth rates were declining due to these

²⁸⁰ Eugene M. Avrutin, *Racism in Modern Russia. From The Romanovs to Putin*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, p. 85.

transition effects, and increased birth rates and migration (migrantophobia) were higher among those in the group of dark-skinned people. Social scientists charted the discrepancy in the birth rates among ageing Slavs in the heartland and young people from the Caucasus and Central Asia, the poorest of the Soviet Republics.²⁸¹ I believe that these features have only provided fuel for the fires for the movements and parties that sought to establish the empire.

In Russia, extremist nationalism is commonly associated with extreme right and far left political parties and movements. It is frequently associated with fascism, but the vocabulary does not fully suit the term fascist or the forms of fascism; it is more debauched and associated with chauvinism²⁸². Furthermore, extremist movements differ throughout a broad spectrum. For example, some parties view nationalism as a tool of the state (such as the National Bolshevik Party, headed by Eduard Limonov), whereas others (such as Russian National Unity, led by Barkashov) advocate using various techniques against Russia's so-called opponents or enemies.²⁸³

As previously stated in this chapter, the first extremist movements were the Black Hundred from Imperial Russia, the Fascist Organisations, and the Russian Fascist Party.

In 1997, the Moscow Anti-Fascist Centre estimated that 40 nationalist extremist groups were operating in Russia.²⁸⁴ The same centre reported 35 radical newspapers, the greatest among which was *Завтра*. Even though the government has declared a recession, a far-right extremist organisation has emerged in Russia.²⁸⁵ Pamyat was the movement that provided the foundation for this radical nationalism. While this movement has moved away from politics, it has spawned new movements. There were four primary groups of political movements in the 1990s:

²⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

²⁸² "Radical Nationalism in Russia and efforts to counteract it in 2006", Moscow SOVA Center, 2007, p. 17.

²⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

²⁸⁴ "Nationalist and fascist parties in Russia", *Centre for Russian Studies*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070930155535/http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe?1081> accessed in 10.01.2024.

²⁸⁵ Robert Kusche, "Racist Violence and Neo-Nazi movements in Russia", in *Russian Analytical Digest* Dresden, No.135, 2013, p. 10.

1. The National Republican Party of Russia, NRPR (Национально-республиканская партия России, НРПР) – they continued to work until 1998. They were motivated by Solzhenitsyn's views; they desired the establishment of a state comprised of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and northern Kazakhstan, as well as the revival of Russian culture through migration and globalisation.
2. The People's National Party PNP (Народная национальная партия; ННП) - founded in 1994 by the film director Aleksandr Ivanov-Sukharevskii and the poet Aleksei Shiropaev. The party was influenced by Italian fascism. The defenders of the Russian Orthodox Church declared themselves. Their worldview was founded on the concept of Russism, which combined populism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitic mysticism. It influenced the radical scene through newspapers such as *Я Русский* (*I am Russian*), *Наследие предков* (*The Heritage of Ancestors*), and *Эра Руси* (*the Era of Russia*). They also promoted with the aid of these newspapers' interethnic hatred, and the party was banned in 1999.
3. The Russian National Union (Русский Национальный Союз) was founded in 1993 by Aleksei Vdovin and Konstantin Kasimovskii and combines references to the monarchy, the Black Hundreds, and Orthodoxy, but also appeals to a non-Marxist kind of socialism and the restoration of a pagan order.²⁸⁶

They had their own party-specific periodical, named *Штурмовик* (The Storm Trooper), which had a neo-Nazi reference²⁸⁷. The party was banned in 1997.

Russian National Unity RNU (Всероссийское общественное патриотическое движение Русское национальное единство) – headed by Aleksandr Barkashov. The RNE presented itself not just as a political party, but also as a popular movement prepared to defend Russian interests against enemy forces, and during the October 1993 standoff between Yeltsin and the parliament, the RNE patrolled

²⁸⁶ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 157.

²⁸⁷ Thomas Parland, *The extreme nationalist threat in Russia: the growing influence of Western rightist ideas*, London: Psychology Press, 2005, p. 67

around the White House on behalf of the dissident parliamentarians and controlled access to the Supreme Soviet buildings.²⁸⁸ This party adopted Nazi emblems such as the swastika, Nazi salute, the slogan "One nation, one people, one state," black uniforms for party members, and many other characteristics of the Nazi party NSDAP²⁸⁹. Throughout its history, this party has established its version of Russia's ethnic worldview. The primary goal of this party was to prevent the spread of non-Russian and non-Russian nationalism, defending themselves by the fact that they live outside of Russia, and, of course, beginning the famous slogan Russia for Russians. They especially targeted the Jewish people (promoting antisemitism), South Caucasian migrants, including Azeris, Georgians, and Armenians, as well as Central Asian nations like Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and others. Their vision of Russia is divided into two groups: privileged ethnic Russians, who would be assured majority political participation, and non-Russians who live in Russia and consider it their national homeland, including indigenous populations from the Russian Far East, North, Turkic, and some other minorities.²⁹⁰ Between 1993 and 1997, this party was the largest and most extreme in Russia, with 15,000 active members and 50,000 to 100,000 supporters, approximately 10 per cent of the population.²⁹¹ This party, or, given the number of its members and supporters, I would call it a movement, had 350 regional organisations, 100 of which were formally registered, making it Russia's fourth largest organisation after the previous ones. We chose these four Yeltsin-era parties because they all stem from the Pamyat group, which existed during the Gorbachev era and is now the largest

²⁸⁸ Marlene Laruelle, *op. cit.*, pp.157-158.

²⁸⁹ "Origins of Neo-Nazi and White Supremacist Terms and Symbol", *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/what-is-antisemitism/origins-of-neo-nazi-and-white-supremacist-terms-and-symbols> accessed in 06.09.2024.

²⁹⁰ William D. Jackson, "Fascism, Vigilantism, and the State: The Russian National Unity Movement" in *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.46, No.1, pp.34-42.

²⁹¹ «В период с 1993 по 1997 год эта партия была крупнейшей и наиболее экстремистской в России, насчитывая 15000 активных членов и 50000-100000 сторонников, что составляет примерно 10% населения» Виктор Шнирельман, *Чистильщики московских улиц: скинхеды, СМИ и общественное мнение*, Москва: Академия, 2007, с.89.

party in post-Soviet Russia. One example of an organisation that emerged from this huge party was the National Bolshevik Party (Национал-большевистская партия, NBP) headed by Eduard Limonov. First, the organisation was called the National Radical Party, then the Revolutionary Opposition, and later the National Bolshevik Party. Similar to RNE, the National Bolshevik Party connected with the events of October 1993: although the conservative putsch against Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991 sparked resistance among countercultural milieus, the 1993 conflict drew these counterculture groups out into the streets, this time in opposition to Boris Yeltsin.²⁹² This organisation quickly adopted a distinct style of political expression and a culture of violent protests, which influenced the younger generation, including skinheads and the *Nashi* who followed them. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, these nationalistic and xenophobic attitudes were passed down from generation to generation.

2.3.2. The Aryan Myth

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the Aryan myth began to emerge in the Russian public sphere. Various collections of writings by supporters of the Aryan notion began to emerge, among the most important works are: *Тайны русской земли* (*The mysteries of Russian land*) and *Подлинная история русского народа* (*True history of the Russian people*). These two volumes, as well as many others disputing the Aryan idea, may be found on the shelves of Russian libraries, Russian Orthodox Churches, and municipal and university libraries, with tens of thousands of copies distributed.²⁹³ Extremist nationalists who created the Aryan concept were frequently staff of key institutions that arose during Yeltsin's presidency in the 1990s. In these

²⁹² Marlene Laruelle, *op.cit.*, p. 159.

²⁹³ «Многочисленные серии сборников работ популяризаторов арийской идеи такие, как *Тайны русской земли* или *Подлинная история русского народа* лежат на полках российских книжных магазинов, на лотках православных церквей, на стеллажах муниципальных и университетских библиотек [...] их тиражи достигают десятков тысяч экземпляров. Вокруг Света, *Арийский миф - русский взгляд* <https://www.vokrugsveta.ru/telegraph/theory/1125/> accessed in 12.01.2024.

writings, the Slavs are described as the first civilised people of the human race, having existed for thousands of years. Extremist nationalists claim that the Slavs taught the ancient Greeks to philosophise, the Indians to cultivate the soil, the Europeans to write, and the Semites to believe in a single god, among other things. Considering the characteristics of Russian nationalism discussed in this chapter, radicals defend themselves by utilising the Aryan concept to highlight the claim to the territory of post-Soviet Russia, which they regard as the cradle of the Slavic-Aryans. Russia's past as a major power is idealised, allowing it to show its forefathers as great, victorious individuals. According to the ideas developed by radical nationalists, the Russian people possess heroic Aryan power. At the same time, they believe that returning to the ancestors' faith and Slavophile principles can help to overcome economic challenges and lead post-Soviet Russia out of its crisis. During this period, the slogans from the Conservative Revolution of 1920 came back into use (Russia for Russians), and the extremists who identify as Aryans are striving for the white race's supremacy, resulting in ethnic conflicts (violence against migrants and other non-Russians). In terms of Slavic Native Faith (родноверие), Russians are regarded as having historical, cultural, and racial superiority over other peoples. This ideology emphasises Russian messianism, with the Russian people regarded as the only power capable of battling global evil while still dominating the world.²⁹⁴ The Aryan myth emphasises Russia's duty to establish the Fourth Reich²⁹⁵ that will serve as a continuation of the Third Reich. The Aryan myth rejects any territorial disputes since the Russian people are thought to be completely indigenous throughout Eurasia. Extremists reject the ethno-national state paradigm, which is related to separatism in certain Russian regions. It sparked the division of Russia into multiple Russian national states devoid

²⁹⁴ «Ведь, с одной стороны, он включает идею изоляционизма, издавна присущую русскому национализму (уникальное происхождение своих предков едва ли не от каких-то космических пришельцев), а с другой – русский мессианизм (русские как первопродки всего человечества или только белой расы, а также как творцы культуры и всех ранних цивилизаций)» Виктор Шнирельман, *Арийский миф в современном мире*, Москва: Академия, 2015, с.280.

²⁹⁵ «Арийский миф подчеркивает обязанность России создать Четвертый Рейх» Вокруг Света, *Арийский миф - русский взгляд* <https://www.vokrugsveta.ru/telegraph/theory/1125/> accessed in 12.01.2024.

of ethnic minorities. In this regard, extremists believed that the new state's social cohesion should be based on a single "native faith".²⁹⁶ In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a movement emerged that accepted this Aryan concept, which mixed Stalinism with Hitlerism, known as The Internal Predictor of the USSR. In the collections of materials developed by this movement, it was emphasised that the Kremlin government would safeguard the country from any Western influence and build a state akin to that of the Tsar. The text circulated among several Duma and Federation Council political factions in 1996, and Putin allegedly accessed it while he was the head of the Federal Security Service (FSB).²⁹⁷

The Predictor movement spawned the People's Movement for Theocracy (Народное движение к богодержавию), led by General Konstantin Petrov. The Predictor Movement won the 2003 legislative elections with 1.3% of the vote. Its primary influence was not in electoral politics, but in lobbying state organisations; some of its members served as specialists at the Duma Committee for Security and co-wrote reports for the Federation Council.²⁹⁸

As I stated in the first chapter, in which I hypothetically presented this myth, hardline nationalists did not add anything new to the Aryan idea; instead, they just repainted and translated pre-existing information regarding the supremacy of the white race. They believed that the white and Slavic worlds placed Russia at the heart of all civilisations. This Aryan myth serves only as the foundation for far-right beliefs. The Pamyat movement brought together personalities close to the idea of neopaganism, for example, the antisemitic supporters Emelianov and Skurlatov. They later released an anti-Semitic book called *Zionism and Apartheid* and taught a course called *The Critique of Zionist Ideology* at People's Friendship University in Moscow. Also in 1982, Vladimir Chivilikhin wrote a novel called *Memory (Pamyat)*, which underlined the Pamyat movement's contention that Russians, not Germans,

²⁹⁶ «Соборный храм родной веры» Виктор Шнирельман, *op.cit.*, p. 67.

²⁹⁷ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields*, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 80.

²⁹⁸ Эвгении Мороз, «История Мертвой воды от страшной сказки к большой политике: политическое неоязычество в постсоветской России», *Московские новости*, 2004, <https://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/2003/11/d1377/> accessed in 13.01.2024.

should be regarded as Aryans.²⁹⁹ During the Soviet rule, other instances of neo-paganism were mentioned, for example, in 1980-1982, the Soviet authorities furiously planned for the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kulikovo, which allowed many Russian nationalists to express their thoughts while putting some of the Party's directions into practice.³⁰⁰ If we believe the nationalists of the time, the victory of Russian prince Dmitri Donskoi was only possible due to the Orthodox religion, which provided the people and the Prince with the physical and moral strength to defeat the Mongol invasion. Other voices from 1988 argue that paganism is the authentic Russian national belief, for example, the author and the leader of a neo-Slavophile group, Apollon Kuzmin, who wrote about this aspect of neopaganism in the paper *The Fall of Perun*.

The movements first arose on the political stage in Russia in the 1990s, drawing influence from all these works while also borrowing the esoteric symbols of individuals who supported neopaganism and the Aryan myth. For instance, the skinhead movement in Russia adopted emblems such as коловрат (swastika, a key element in neo-Nazi groups), other geometric shapes or runic writings, which I will discuss more in the next chapter. Many organisations in Russia did not adopt neopaganism, and it is still a minor player in comparison to the Russian Orthodox Church, which has grown significantly.

2.4. Contemporary Russia 21st century: Nationalism under Putin's regime

Throughout history, Russian nationalism has impacted economic development, political stability, and public prosperity. What is the legacy of Russian nationalism in modern Russia? Tsarist leaders did not use Russian nationalism to develop their ties with society. Russia has stifled nation-

²⁹⁹ Владимир Чивиликин, «Память», *Роман Газета*, No.17, Москва: Кудожественная Литература, 1982.

³⁰⁰ Yitzhak Brundy, *Reinventing Russia*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 136.

building initiatives, which are required for nationalism's political empowerment. Nation-building takes into consideration two aspects:

1. Cultivating faith in shared origins, destiny, and a people's particular character.
2. Develop a common sense of engagement in group issues, as well as a shared knowledge of rights and responsibilities among all members of a collective (including rulers and ruled).³⁰¹

Why was nation-building stifled in Russia? There are two viable responses to this question.

1. Russia is a multiethnic empire, and those who ruled it until the twenty-first century had a tough time establishing a distinct Russian ethnic identity. At the start of the 19th century, there was a disproportionate number of foreigners among the nobility, as opposed to ethnic Russians, who were in the majority. A cultural divide (large peasantry and westernised nobles) existed among ethnic Russians as well, dating back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
2. Russia's autocratic administration stifled nation-building efforts. What was left behind was the most crucial aspect of the nation's development: the formation of a shared feeling of involvement in governance. For example, the Tsar viewed the autonomy process with distrust and sanctioned those who sought to redefine the people's responsibilities and commitments to the country.

The historian, Vassily Klyuchevsky, accurately defines the phenomenon of nation-building in Russia: "the state grew fat, but the people grew thin."³⁰² In Russia, nation-building entailed making use of all the country's valuable resources to maintain its status as a great power. The overdeveloped state phenomenon and the undeveloped population endured for a long time after the fall of Tsarist Russia. Communist authorities emphasised the country's resources without establishing a shared national

³⁰¹ Astrid Tuminez, "Russian Nationalism and Vladimir Putin", *Council on Foreign Relations*, American International Group, Inc. 2000, p. 1.

³⁰² Stephen Kotkin, "Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics: Putin Returns", *Historical Pattern Foreign Affairs*, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2016-04-18/russias-perpetual-geopolitics> accessed in 16.01.2024.

identity. The Soviet leadership regarded the state as the holder of political power. The Soviet administration harnessed Russian nationalist sentiment to mobilise people. During World War II, Stalin, for example, exhorted Russians to fight for their Motherland.

As I said earlier in this chapter, the search for a national idea obscured the demise of the Soviet Union. Former President Boris Yeltsin's attempts to bring a national idea have been unsuccessful. Who makes up the Russian nation? The Russian Federation's 1993 Constitution has the following lines: "We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation united by a common fate on our land establishing human rights and freedoms preserving the historically established state unity, proceeding from the universally recognized principles of equality and self-determination of peoples, revering the memory of ancestors who have conveyed to us the love for the Fatherland, reviving the sovereign statehood of Russia and asserting the firmness of its democratic basic, striving to ensure the well-being and prosperity of Russia, proceeding from the responsibility for our Fatherland before the present and future generations, recognizing ourselves as part of the world community"³⁰³ During Boris Yeltsin's administration in the 1990s, the word россияне (community of Russian Federation citizens regardless of nationality, religion, and other elements) was widely used. But in the late 1990s, this term was removed from the official speech lexicon. While President Yeltsin respected this word throughout his presidency, Vladimir Putin favoured the term русские (Russian community on Russian Federation territory, ethnic Russians living outside of Russia, practicing Orthodox Christianity, and belonging to the white race). For Vladimir Putin,

³⁰³ «Мы, многонациональный народ Российской Федерации, соединенные общей судьбой на своей земле, утверждая права и свободы человека, гражданский мир и согласие, сохраняя исторически сложившееся государственное единство, исходя из общепризнанных принципов равноправия и самоопределения народов, чтя память предков, передавших нам любовь и уважение к Отечеству возрождая суверенную государственность России и утверждая незыблемость ее демократической основы, стремясь обеспечить благополучие и процветание России, исходя из ответственности за свою Родину перед нынешним и будущими поколениями, сознавая себя частью мирового сообщества», Конституция Российской Федерации, <http://www.constitution.ru/index.htm> accessed in 16.01.2024.

русские is the politically correct term when they talk about the Russians. I'm going to provide a short analysis of these terms since they're significant, particularly for the Skinhead and *Nashi* movements. The distinction between these terms is far-reaching and extends beyond semantics.

The nouns россияне and русские draw attention to the divisions among Russian nationalism's numerous branches. There is typically a significant distinction between civic nationalism (with inclusive accents) and ethnic nationalism (which promotes and protects the ethnically defined Russian people, with xenophobic and racist accents). To explain the relationship between the two strands of Russian nationalism, author Pal Kolsto states that "ethnonationalists fight for the interests not so much of the Russian state but of the Russian people, ethnically defined. These two groups distrust, even hate, each other in their pursuit of opposing political goals."³⁰⁴ This ethnonationalist face is also distinguished by a sceptical attitude towards migrants and workers from Central Asia and the Caucasus who come to work in cities such as Moscow, as well as those who take a more activist approach to protecting themselves and others living outside the country in the face of ethnic violence. In connection with the two terms, россияне and русские, Vladimir Putin has taken a centrist stance; his nationalism can be defined as favouring the establishment of a strong state that emphasises Russia's status as a great power, and these elements fall under the category of moderate statism.

Moderate statism applies to ethnic Russians, Russian speakers, and people who live in the Russian Federation. This moderate statism defines the national task as restoring the state of a great power and unifying the state and society. The Russian government's attitude/behaviour towards the outside world (from the West) is derived from the fact that it advocates a robust defence of Russian national interests, even if it means periodically deviating from Western powers' preferred policies.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, ethnicity, and authoritarianism 2000-2015*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, p. 1.

³⁰⁵ Astrid Tuminez, "Russian Nationalism and Vladimir Putin", *Council on Foreign Relations*, American International Group, Inc. 2000, p. 3.

Putin's moderate statist nationalism can be characterised in three ways³⁰⁶:

1. The good (Patriotism)
2. The bad (Putinism)
3. The ugly (Chauvinism)

The first is President Putin's rhetoric about love of the motherland, his wish for Russians to live a fulfilling life (достойная жизнь) and be proud of their country's history and achievements. The president's broadcast remarks and appearances are continually extolling the value of national pride, without which Russia would degenerate as a nation and "no longer have the capacity for great deeds."³⁰⁷ For example, Putin has repeatedly decried the imperialist past, alluding to the Soviet invasion of Hungary and Czechoslovakia as "major mistakes whose fruit is the present Russophobia among Eastern Europeans."³⁰⁸ Putin emphasises the significance of internal needs and welfare over global objectives, arguing that the nation's most pressing aims are to restore values and national pride, eradicate poverty, and create a Russia that Russians will be proud to pass down to their children.³⁰⁹

The second, it implies a lack of faith in the concept of democracy as a useful organisational tool for the Russian state. For example, Putin has frequently spoken about liberal values, as having no "deep historical roots in Russia [...] and the state is the source and guarantor of order, the initiator and main driving force of all change."³¹⁰ Putin prefers a "super-centralised state as a desirable future laid down in Russia's genetic code, its traditions and the mentality of its people."³¹¹

What is the best way to define Putin's regime?

³⁰⁶ Ibidem, pp.3-4.

³⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 3.

³⁰⁸ «основные ошибки, плодом которых является нынешняя русофобия среди Восточной Европы», Елена Яковлева, «Трудно ли любить Россию во времена моды на русофобию», *Российская Газета*, <https://rg.ru/2020/09/01/trudno-li-liubit-rossiiu-vo-vremena-mody-na-rusofobiui.html> accessed in 27.01.2024

³⁰⁹ Astrid Tuminez, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

³¹⁰ Vladimir Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millenium" in *Независимая газета*, <https://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/Putin.htm> accessed in 27.01.2024.

³¹¹ Carlos Lozada, "How to read Vladimir Putin?" in *Washington Post*, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/03/putin-essays/> accessed in 27.01.2024.

Since President Putin's administration, a form of autocracy known as Putinism has emerged. As Steven Fish classified the Putinist phenomenon, that is a form of autocracy which comprises three branches³¹²:

1. Conservative - by pursuing and supporting a social traditionalist agenda while preserving the status quo, enmity towards sources of instability emanating from the West (Western transformational programmes, such as the globalisation process), the Putin government regards the stability of the Russian state as sacred. They believe that development of any kind enters into a direct conflict with Putinism, the best example given by the authors Lilia Shevtsova and Vladislav Inozemtsev is that in technology-driven modern economies, developmentalism threatens to spawn a plethora of strong economic actors who might compromise the ruler's monopoly on power [...] developmentalism can lead to destabilizing social change including mobilization by rising social groups who seek a more accountable government.³¹³ Another characteristic of Putinist philosophy is that persons in important positions within the government are hired, promoted, and fired by the president based on their loyalty to the leader and the ability to preserve stability. When he created this conservative worldview, Putin made his talks in such a way that he mostly targets the "genderless and infertile morality of the liberal West."³¹⁴
2. Populist - it blends with conservatism. It manifests itself in the form of efforts praised by a segment of the populace by Russian authorities for decaying liberal inclinations, such as homosexuality and violence against women, both of which Russian leaders oppose. It also helps to explain an unusual feature of Putinism, as opposed to Western populism: its stress on multiethnic and multiconfessional

³¹² Steven Fish, "The Kremlin Emboldened: What is Putinism?", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.28, Issue 4, 2017, pp.62-63.

³¹³ Lilia Shevtsova and Vladislav Inozemtsev, "What is Putinism?" in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.4, No.4, 2017, p. 62.

³¹⁴ "Russia is defending traditional family values against genderless and infertile Western tolerance, Putin says" in *National Post*, <https://nationalpost.com/news/russia-is-defending-traditional-family-values-against-genderless-and-infertile-western-tolerance-putin-says> accessed in 27.01.2024.

coexistence.³¹⁵ One of the components of populism emerging from Putinist ideology is the desire to regain Russia's status as a great power, which it lost with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The international sanctions imposed immediately following the invasion of Crimea spurred the Putin government to project an image of a beleaguered fortress to the domestic people. "Our only real friends are ourselves. America and its allies are intent on keeping us down. Only if we stand together behind our ruler who defends the nation against myriad menacing foes, can we achieve security and make our nation great in the world."³¹⁶

3. Personalistic - It is predicated on unfettered one-man rule and the marginalisation of parties, institutions, and even individuals other than the president as independent political players. Putinism represents a personalistic style of dictatorship in which a single person rules entirely for himself. All key government decisions align with his views, and no one in positions of political or economic influence can openly challenge him without jeopardising their jobs, fortunes, or right to live in Russia. Putinist ideology brings to the forefront a cult of personality; for example, on Nashi's website, there are photos of the president displaying his semi-magnificent torso while riding horseback or wearing T-shirts with the president's face. The mass media make the Putin administration shine every time it appears on screen, which is not unusual when considering leaders like Hitler, Stalin, or Mao, albeit with a more modern facade. I regard Putinism as one of the most imposing authoritarian governments of the twenty-first century; however, it has its flaws, such as petroeconomics. Its predatory petroeconomy cannot generate the kind of sustained gains in official probity, economic growth, or social equity that would enhance the regime's legitimacy; its ideology fails to provide a

³¹⁵ Steven Fish, "The Kremlin Emboldened" in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.28, No.4, 2017, p. 61.

³¹⁶ "Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security", *Government Publishing Office*, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-115SPRT28110/html/CPRT-115SPRT28110.htm> accessed in 27.01.2024.

compelling vision of the future; and its extraordinary personalization makes its operation entirely dependent on one fallible individual. At a time when global surveys indicate a long-term trend in favour of greater public acceptance of sexual diversity and gender equality, Putin's reaction to revelations of torture camps for gay men in Chechnya risks making Putinism appear contemptuous rather than impressive or imposing to audiences in the advanced industrialised world and some developing countries. Aligning with Trump and other right-populists who leverage the ethnonationalist card in domestic politics risks undermining Putin's efforts to portray himself and Russia as adversaries of ethnic and religious chauvinism. I believe that this ideology grants the elite the right to express their opinions on certain decisions made at the parliamentary level, but what grants them power is solely the president's decision to enforce and communicate it. We no longer have a Political Bureau (Politburo); there are only Putin's people; there is only the Putin administration; and there are no longer strong parties, merely parties devoid of authority. There is no discussion about potential presidential candidates this year. The third aspect of Putin's statist nationalism, its negative component (chauvinism), reveals a lack of trust in the democratic process as a means of regulating and organising interactions between the state and the people. Putin describes liberal ideas as having no "deep historical roots in Russia; the state is the source and guarantor of order, the initiator and primary driving force of any change." The increase of state power may pose a challenge to an age-old development process that produces a potent state and weak individuals. The Chechen War exemplifies the "ugly" side of Putin's nationalism, as he refers to Chechens as bandits, terrorists, dark forces, and filth. All these remarks indicate a strong chauvinist character, which does not correspond to the situation in Russia, where at least one-fifth of the population is non-ethnic. These forms of Russian nationalism that have evolved around the Putin administration enable him to

legitimise himself as a leader by claiming to represent the country and its vital interests. Considering the disintegrating empire, Russian nationalism compensates for numerous states of the population, such as shame, resentment, helplessness, and so forth, all of which contribute to the spread of collective optimism, leading to the belief that the empire is not yet lost. These elements of nationalism serve as the foundation for these collective beliefs, without which Putin would struggle to implement his goals, ideals (such as redefining Russia as a great power and achieving recognition of this status by the West), and the economic, political, and military measures deemed essential to restoring the country's standing. Only the less positive aspects of this nationalism (particularly chauvinism, which is not limited to Chechens) impact communal wealth and national unity.

Constantly emphasises Russia's standing as a major power and the inclusion of its inhabitants; nonetheless, his preference for the term *русские* provides some ambiguity. In 2012, at the start of President Putin's third term, there was an increase in Russian ethno-cultural features, but the president showed some reluctance to more vocal ento-nationalist movements, for example, the riot on Moscow's Manezhnaia Square on 11 December 2010 that marked a turning point in the authorities' relations with radical nationalists, this event prompted the federal authorities to undertake not only a series of police operations and populist gestures, but also to formulate a more intelligible and stable position.³¹⁷

Vladimir Putin had been in power for 20 years (first as prime minister, then as president) by 2019. He was elected president four times (in 2000, 2004, 2012, and 2018) and, according to the Russian constitution³¹⁸, can continue to serve as president until 2025. In the first round of elections and the monthly surveys supplied by the Levada Centre, President Putin's

³¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

³¹⁸ «Президент Российской Федерации избирается сроком на шесть лет гражданами Российской Федерации на основе всеобщего равного и прямого избирательного права при тайном голосовании», Конституция Российской Федерации, <http://www.constitution.ru/10003000/10003000-6.htm> accessed on 17.01.2024.

popularity has not gone below 60%. According to the Levada Centre, it has consistently remained considerably above 80% for extended periods. Despite the situation in Ukraine, it remained at the top of the Russian population's preferences in the last few months of 2023.

PUTIN'S APPROVAL RATING

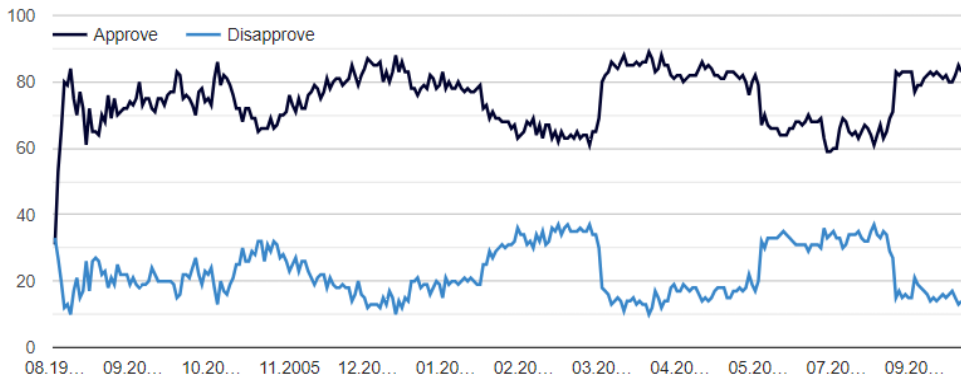


Illustration 1: Putin's Approval Rating posted by the Levada Centre³¹⁹

Again, the Levada Centre is conducting a study of President Putin's popularity (from July to December 2023), and the results show a minor shift. For these parties/movements, Putin positions himself as being at the top of the preferences. Putin is seen as an experienced patriot who believes that Russia should be regarded and treated as a major state in terms of economics, military force, and, most importantly, Orthodox culture and religion. I believe President Putin's success and admiration were spurred by President Yeltsin's shortcomings (the economy was in decline, relying on loans from the US and other Western countries).

³¹⁹ "Putin's Approval Rating", *Levada Center*, <https://www.levada.ru/en/ratings/> accessed in 17.01.2024.

Do you approve the activities of V. Putin as the President (Prime Minister) of Russia?

	07.2023	08.2023	09.2023	10.2023	11.2023	12.2023
Approve	82	80	80	82	85	83
Disapprove	15	16	17	15	13	14
No answer	3	4	3	3	2	3

Illustration 2: Putin's Approval Rating posted by the Levada Centre³²⁰

According to British historian Mark Galeotti, Putin "has no ideological commitment to anything."³²¹ I disagree with what the author says, I think that there is still an ideological side, albeit it is sometimes unclear, that Russia has a special mission, namely that it is a big power that must be acknowledged by other countries. All these points contribute to the notion of Russian national identity. The desire for national identity is not something new in Russia. As Putin pointed out, "Here in Russia we have this old tradition, a favourite pastime of searching for a national idea."³²²

The national idea of President Putin is state-centred (русский-центрированный), the Russian people (Российский народ) are described as a multiethnic population that lives within the country's borders. According to Putin, the concept of a shared community was shared by people of all ethnicities who formed the basis of the Russian people. The Putin-led government adopted the term Yeltsin used, россияне, to encourage patriotic identity in the same way as his imperial and Soviet predecessors, a civic non ethnic nation model with significant cultural and political rights to non-Russians, held together by a broad set of common values and traditions.³²³

In his essay, the *Millennium Manifesto*, Putin believes that the formation of the national idea is essential to the effective consolidation of the Russian

³²⁰ Ibidem, <https://www.levada.ru/en/ratings/> accessed in 17.01.2024.

³²¹ Mark Galeotti, *we need to talk about Putin: How the West Gets Him Wrong*, London: Penguin, 2019, p. 50.

³²² «У нас в России есть старая традиция, любимое занятие – поиск национальной идеи», Владимир Путин, *Ежегодное послание Федеральному Собранию*, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24203> accessed in 18.01.2024.

³²³ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-Ethnic History*, Harlow: Longman, 2001, p. 275.

state. According to his famous essay *Millennium Manifesto*. Putin also identified three key pillars for a successful Russian resurgence³²⁴:

1. An effective economy
2. A strong state
3. Consolidation of the national idea (россическая идея)

During his first two terms, Putin prioritised the first two pillars, and Russia's economy recovered spectacularly. Putin presided over the comprehensive re-centralisation of a wide range of sectors within Russian politics and society.³²⁵ Finally, the national idea, or the current government's strategy for building the nation, appears to have an impact on civic nationalism. In his essay, *Millennium Manifesto*, Putin singled out such patriotism together with great-powerness (державность), state-centredness (государственничество), and social solidarity as primordial, traditional Russian (российские) values.³²⁶ If the Yeltsin administration distanced itself from the Soviet past and drew inspiration from 18th-century Russia, the current government was inspired by the Soviet past (given the status of great power during World War II), adopted the Soviet anthem with new lyrics, and Putin supports the vision of restoring Russia's rightful place among great powers.

However, the Kremlin encourages the actions of nationalist movements that are primarily geared at defending the past and Russia's high-power status, such as Dmitri Rogozin's Motherland (Родина), and the pro-Kremlin youth movement *Nashi*. The government also supports and promotes the annual Russian March, which brings together Russian nationalists, including members of the skinhead movement and other neo-

³²⁴ «Эффективная экономика, Сильное государство и Укрепление национальной идеи», Владимир Путин, «Россия на рубеже тысячелетий» в *Независима Газета*, 1999, https://royallib.com/book/putin_vladimir/rossiya_na_rubege_tisyacheletiy.html accessed in 18.01.2024

³²⁵ Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, *The New Russian Nationalism. Imperialism, ethnicity, and authoritarianism 2000-2015*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, p. 251.

³²⁶ Владимир Путин, «Россия на рубеже тысячелетий» в *Независима Газета*, 1999, https://royallib.com/book/putin_vladimir/rossiya_na_rubege_tisyacheletiy.html accessed in 18.01.2024.

Nazis; however, the government also assures that these movements do not become separate political parties.

Since the commencement of Putin's presidency, two major subjects have been mentioned in his agenda:

1. Legislation, order, and stabilisation
2. Recognition of Russia as a superpower in the West

These important themes are linked because home stability is a prerequisite for gaining a high-power position, which is a major concern for the Russian people, and achieving this status is critical for preserving internal stability. A third theme was added to the previous two, namely, warnings from foreign actors destabilising Russia. For example, Chechens and oligarchs who deny Russia the right of a great power. According to the Kremlin, the most prominent external actor is the United States, a great competitor power, as evidenced by the development of NATO bases and the United States' vows following the Cold War to spread democracy and human rights around the world. If we analyse Russia's idea of preserving traditional values against the degenerative West, it aligns with the Russian Orthodox Church's traditional image of Moscow as the Third Rome, with a messianic mission to promote spiritual and moral principles around the world.³²⁷ Similar to Aleksandr Dugin's teachings, modern Russia has assigned its function as a bulwark against the disintegration of family values, denigration of religion and culture, and the international spread of homosexual propaganda and LGBT rights.³²⁸ This self-provided feature elevates Russia to a worldwide mission, even if Putin does not take it as far as Dugin, who declares war against the West. According to Eurasianist ideas, with which the name Dugin is intimately associated, Russia is in the midst, that is, between Europe and Asia, and has been chosen throughout time with a mix of Slavic and Muslim influences; thus, it is regarded that Russia should not deny its Asian roots. Eurasianists reject the notion that Russia is a country outside of Europe, attempting to catch up to the West. Eurasianists regard

³²⁷ Jardar Ostbo, "Securitizing spiritual moral values in Russia" in *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol.33, Issue 3, 2016, pp.200-216.

³²⁸ Emil Edenborg, *Politics of Visibility and Belonging: From Russia's Homosexual Propaganda Laws to the Ukraine War*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2017, p.

Russia as having its own culture; the country's geographical location makes it legitimate to pursue the fourth messianic route, replacing outdated ideologies (liberalism, socialism, and fascism). Given this logic of the Eurasianists, Western democracies do not suit Russian criteria, and therefore, Russia must resist the West. The administration under Putin's leadership distanced itself from Alexandr Dugin, but some of the ideas he expounded found their way into the president's political platform. Despite his distance from Alexandr Dugin, President Putin was inspired by the white movement's senior ideologist, Ivan Ilyin. At the start of the Cold War, Ilin authored an article titled *What Promised the World the Deconstruction of Russia*, which was an attack on the Western conspiracy to demolish the Soviet Union.³²⁹ "Russia will not disappear as a result of the dismantling", Ilyin cautions Western governments, "but then begins to repeat history: like a huge organism, it will once again begin to gather its members, travelling along rivers to the oceans, across mountains, accumulating coal, grain, oil, and uranium."³³⁰ Putin first mentioned Ilin in a 2006 speech to the Russian Parliament, when he unveiled plans to modernise the army. Nationalist intellectuals piqued the president's interest as he re-examined Russian history and culture in an ongoing endeavour to secure and expand Russian dominance in the post-Soviet world.³³¹

In 2007, Putin formed a separate foundation for the post-Soviet government and space, the Russian World (Русский Мир).

2.4.1. *The Russian World (Русский Мир)*

The term "Russian world" refers to a cultural, civilizational, geopolitical, and theological notion that entails bringing together the Russian-speaking population from around the world. The author Marlene

³²⁹ Serhii Plokhyy, *Imperiul Pierdut. O istorie a naționalismului Rus de la Ivan cel Groaznic la Vladimir Putin*, București : Litera, 2022, p. 385.

³³⁰ «Россия не исчезнет в результате демонтажа, а затем начнет повторять историю: как огромный организм, она вновь начнет собирать своих членов, путешествуя по рекам к океанам, через горы, накапливая уголь, зерно, нефть и нефть, уран» Иван Ильин, *Что сулит миру расчленение России?* <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/2444.html> accessed in 18.01.2024.

³³¹ Serhii Plokhyy, *op.cit.* p. 386.

Laurelle characterises this notion as a “floating empty signifier open to all kinds of rebranding and re-articulation.”³³² This means that the Putin administration can interpret it in ways that are helpful in a variety of situations. The authors of this concept are members of the Moscow Methodological Circle, which established the SMD technique in the 1990s. Methodologists published the manifesto “1111 signs of the 1111 days before the millennium”, in which the Russian world was referred to as territories of the Russian-speaking population abroad, capable of providing Russia with much greater economic momentum, development, and unification of the common culture based on Russian. Here arises the notion of the Russian world as a network of great and small communities that think and speak Russian. And when these communities come together, they can help Russia join the globalised world. According to methodologies, the Russian world emerged “in the twentieth century as a result of historical shifts, international conflicts, and global advancements”.³³³ This manifesto also presents the truth that “the social, cultural, and universal world is a unity of will and imagination. If there is nothing behind the idea of the Russian World except words, if there are no actions, if there is no component of will, then of course there will be no Russian World. Exactly the way it would have happened if tens, then hundreds, then thousands of people had not begun to form Greater Europe, then this, of course, would not have happened.”³³⁴

The vast majority of members were connected to the political administration at the time. However, since 2008, this concept has been employed to develop and protect the Russian world as a foreign policy

³³² Marlene Laruelle, “The Russian World. Russia’s Soft Power and Geopolitical Imagination” in Center of Global Interests Papers, Washington: Center of Global Interests, 2015, p. 25.

³³³ «в двадцатом веке в результате исторических сдвигов, международных конфликтов и глобальных достижений», Сергей Кочеров, «Русский мир: проблема определения» в Вестник Нижегородского Университета, Vol.1, No.5, 2014, pp.163-167.

³³⁴ «Социальный, культурный и общечеловеческий мир есть единство воли и воображения. Если за идеей Русского мира ничего не стоит кроме слов, если нет действий, если нет составляющей воли, то конечно Русского Мира не будет. Именно так, как это произошло бы если бы десятки, затем сотни, затем тысячи людей не начали формировать Великую Европу, то и этого, конечно, не получилось бы», П.Г. Щедровицкий, «Русский мир. Возможные цели самоопределения» в *Независимая газета*, 2000, <https://www.shkp.ru/lib/publications/25> accessed in 22.01.2024.

ideology.³³⁵ This term refers to the unification of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, as well as an increase in Russian influence in nations where a large proportion of the population speaks Russian, such as the Baltic countries. Between 2014 and 2022, the Putin administration used this Russian global paradigm to legitimise its invasion of Ukraine. The term "Russian World" has extremely deep roots from the 19th century, the Russian intelligentsia such as Alexandr Ostrovsky who see the Russian worldview as a spiritual community of Orthodox Christians and Count Sergey Uvarov used this term in a framework that was based on the doctrine of official nationality (the Russian Empire's state ideology), which comprised conservative, reactionary aspects in education, science, and literature.

The concept of the Russian world provides a vast spectrum of significance³³⁶:

1. The geopolitical imagination
2. An uncertain mental atlas on which the many areas and their various links to Russia can be described fluidly.

First and foremost, this concept is used to justify Russia's actions in the near abroad, as well as its role in monitoring the resolution of disputes amongst its neighbours. Another way Russia uses the concept of the Russian world is to appeal to its Soviet and pre-Soviet past to "pace" itself with the Russian diaspora outside Russia. Furthermore, this concept is critical for Russia's place on the world stage and for making its voice heard. The author Mark Galeotti remarked that "in his opinion (Putin) great power must have a say in all matters of meaning, not necessarily because of interests, but rather because it is a symbol of the status he has."³³⁷ Finally, this concept is quite elastic and is used by presidential administrations for all spheres of Russian public life (economy, non-governmental organisations, culture, media, language, etc., various multilateral organisations, citizenship and

³³⁵ The Economist, "The New Russian Cult of War", March 26th 2022, <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2022/03/26/the-new-russian-cult-of-war> accessed in 22.01.2024.

³³⁶ Marlene Laruelle, "The Russian World. Russia's Soft Power and Geopolitical Imagination" in Center of Global Interests Papers, Washington: Center of Global Interests, 2015, p. 1.

³³⁷ Mark Galeotti, *we need to talk about Putin: How the West Gets Him Wrong*, London: Penguin, 2019, p. 58.

passport policy, and various repatriation programmes, which I will discuss a little later) and for audiences of all types.

In the conceptual structure of the Russian world, the term "world" can be regarded in antiquity as a civilizational space: ancient sources spoke of the Greek world, the Roman world, and the Byzantine world as a method to identify a wide territory under the sway of a single centre.³³⁸ As a result, the concept of the Russian world is an interpretation elevated to another level: that of a space of civilisation divided into numerous zones. In the early years of employing the notion of the Russian world, in the nineteenth century, it was written with the ancient Russian alphabet (sometimes called the pre-revolutionary alphabet), for example, 19th century – Русский миръ and nowadays – Русский мир, the letter ъ is a strong sign and this simply emphasises the word, and those who employed it in this manner aimed to strengthen the term by adhering to the country's historical governing style.

In the presidential administration's lexicon, the concept of the compatriots surrounding the concept of the Russian world is rather unclear. In the early 2000s, President Putin discussed the flexibility of his countrymen, "the compatriot is not only a legal category. More importantly, it is not an issue of status or favouritism. It is primarily a matter of personal choice. Of self-identification. I would even say, of spiritual self-identification."³³⁹ The concept of the Russian world includes several types of compatriots:

1. Russians living outside Russia (not the near abroad) are closely linked to Russians who live in Russia (относящиеся).
2. Russians who turn their faith, political orientation towards Russia.
3. The Russians who remained established in the near abroad following the fall of the Soviet Union.
4. All those who speak Russian and cherish Russian culture, customs, and ideals.

³³⁸ Marlene Laruelle, *op.cit*, p. 3.

³³⁹ «Соотечественник - это не только правовая категория. Главное, это не вопрос статуса или фаворитизма. Это прежде всего вопрос личного выбора. Самоидентификации. Я бы даже сказал, духовной самоидентификации» Владимир Путин, «Выступление Президента Российской Федерации В.В.Путина на Конгрессе соотечественников», http://old.nasledie.ru/politvnt/19_44/article.php?art=24 accessed in 23.01.2024.

These concentric circles depict the Russian world, according to the author Marlene Laruelle. This notion extends from expatriate citizens to a bigger group that is attracted to Russia from all points of view. As a result, it is impossible to describe exactly this concept from an ethnic point of view, as author Marlene Laruelle explains, "this formulation prevents a purely ethnic or linguistic definition of ethnic Russians."³⁴⁰

As previously stated, the Russian world embraces practically all aspects of Russian life.

1. Economic aspect - In the early 2000s, the presidential administration leveraged oil riches to undertake international investments, allowing private and state enterprises to gain prominence in Western countries. With the assistance of Gazprom, Rosneft, Itera, and Lukoil, the presidential administration has designed a soft power policy based on energy provided to Ukraine and Central Asia. Of course, the Kremlin has authority over pipelines and may build new plants to process and supervise these petroleum enterprises. Companies that produced electricity: RAO Unified Energy System and private companies symbolised Russia's dominance in the surrounding region, including Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia. Banks and investors involved in these enterprises exerted significant influence on these sectors, which impacted the whole CIS banking industry. Russia may also have an impact on its neighbours' economic sustainability through significant boycotts or embargoes on food goods from unwilling neighbours, as well as communications and infrastructure.³⁴¹
2. Multilateral organisations - Since its inception, the Commonwealth of Independent States has proven to be inoperable or with many gaps in communication between members of its regions, because many former Soviet Union members did not want to be a part of this organisation and instead preferred to join Western-affiliated institutions. In the 2000s, Russia founded various multinational organisations, such as: Collective Security Treaty Organization which included Belarus,

³⁴⁰ Marlene Laruelle, *op.cit*, p. 8.

³⁴¹ Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield, 2011.

Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for security and an organisation to form an economic bond, for the first time was known as Economic Community, then Customs Unit and finally known as the Eurasian Economic Union which included: Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. These states that are members of the organisations listed above are directly tied to Russia, as opposed to other states that have followed the West's lead.

3. Non-governmental organisations - the presidential administration sponsors foreign organisations close to the Kremlin at various levels, depending on the country's internal condition and the attitude or position of the respective politicians towards the Kremlin leader. These organisations are intended to support pro-Russian society and include a variety of entities that attempt to represent the Russian minority, such as folk clubs and school politics (identity curriculum). These organisations also encourage pro-Russian youth political groups. For example, the activities and camps organised by the political youth movement *Nashi* are exclusively funded by the presidential administration.
4. Russian Culture (the cultural aspect was known as Russophone), Media, and Language – the organisations targeting this triad are trying by various methods to promote Russia's historical and cultural heritage. Over the years, numerous tactics have been implemented to promote the Russian language and culture, including the establishment of a cultural centres at Russian embassies, historical commemorations, maintaining the graves of Russian soldiers fallen abroad, exchange programs, joint universities and joint curricula, and grants and fellowships for CIS students and professionals who want to study in Russia (not to mention the thousands of CIS soldiers and officers trained in Russian military academies).³⁴² Since the second half of the 2000s, the Kremlin has made it a priority to invest in the media realm, seeing that a stranglehold over the information space was one

³⁴² Michael Gorham, "Virtual Russophonia. Language Policy as Soft Power in the new Media Age", in *Digital Icons. Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, No.5, 2011, pp.23-48.

of the smartest strategies to ensure its role in the Near Abroad [...], such as cyberattacks, with the famous cases having targeted Estonia.³⁴³

5. Repatriation programmes - Moscow established the "Programme of State Assistance for Voluntary Travel of Compatriots to Russia" in 2006.³⁴⁴ The governmental agencies in charge of this programme have been seeking means or alternatives to bring back expatriate nationals and those with dual nationality, regardless of where they live (near abroad or the West). In truth, the real face of this project piqued the interest of primarily Russians and Russian speakers from the CIS.³⁴⁵ Since its commencement in 2006, the programme has returned approximately 125.000 persons, significantly less than the intended 450.000, while the rate of return is increasing.³⁴⁶
6. Citizenship policy and passports - the process of applying for citizenship in the Russian Federation is liberal. According to a legal prescription, people of the former Soviet Union can apply for a temporary or permanent residency permit to get Russian citizenship. However, given the liberalism of the process, the statute was repealed in 2009. In 2014, new, simpler, and speedier standards were established for giving citizenship to those who speak Russian and have at least one ancestor who was a permanent resident of Russia or the Soviet Union.³⁴⁷ A new law was filed to provide a simpler method for Russian-speaking residents of the former Soviet Union, regardless of

³⁴³ Heiko Paabo, "War of Memories: Explaining Memorials War in Estonia" in *Baltic Security & Defense Review*, No.10, 2008, pp.5-28.

³⁴⁴ «Непонятно, что сыграл решающую роль, но в 2006-м власть опомнилась», Сергей Градировский, «Репатриация как моральный долг» в *Русский Архипелаг*, <https://archipelag.ru/authors/gradirovsky/?library=2956> accessed in 24.01.2024.

³⁴⁵ Sebastien Peyrouse, "Former Colonists on The Move: The Migration of Russian-Speaking Populations," in Marlene Laruelle (ed.), *Migration and Social Upheaval as the Face of Globalization in Central Asia* (London: Brill, 2013), 215-237.

³⁴⁶ «С момента своего запуска в 2006 году программа вернула около 125 000 человек, что значительно меньше запланированных 450 000, при этом темпы возвращения растут» Григорий Коган, «Проблему демографии в России решит репатриации» в *Демоскоп*, 2013, <https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2013/0549/gazeta020.php> accessed in 24.01.2024.

³⁴⁷ Oxana Shevel, "The Politics of Citizenship Policy in Post-Soviet Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* Vol. 28, no. 1, 2012, pp. 111-147.

nationality, who are at risk of ethno-cultural, political, or professional discrimination, to get Russian citizenship.³⁴⁸

7. Military participation - Since 1992, the Republic of Moldova has recognised two Russian military participations in former USSR regions, including the 14th Army, which supported the authorities in Tiraspol in their desire to declare Transnistria's independence from Chisinau. The Russian army's second intervention in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008 was justified by the need to defend ethnic Russians in these regions from Georgian aggression. The notion of soft power is defined as "the ability to influence others to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion or payment."³⁴⁹ Russia's attitude of overseeing its close surroundings is justified by its property, and the belief that state sovereignty is a potential victim in the face of the West, and the Russian World must safeguard the near abroad.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Russian world was perceived as a cultural and historical concept of an international, interstate, and intercontinental society that aims to unite Russian-speaking countrymen who do not dwell on Russian territory.³⁵⁰ However, it came to light in 2014, when President Putin exploited it to motivate Russia's annexation of Crimea "the Kremlin's actions in the so-called near abroad are motivated by its perception of Russia's national security interests and the need to protect the

³⁴⁸ «Новый закон был принят, чтобы упростить русскоязычным жителям бывшего СССР, независимо от национальности, которые подвергаются риску этнокультурной, политической или профессиональной дискриминации, получить российское гражданство» «Для жителей СНГ упростят процедуру получения российского гражданства», в *Интерфакс*, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/361446> accessed in 24.01.2024.

³⁴⁹ Joseph Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1, 2008, p. 94.

³⁵⁰ «В начале 1990-х годов русский мир воспринимался как культурно-историческая концепция международного, межгосударственного и межконтинентального общества, целью которого является объединение русскоязычных соотечественников, не проживающих на территории России», Алейникова Светлана Михайловна, *Русский Мир, Каноническая Территория и Святая Русь: Соотношение Понятий*, Минск: Академии управления при Президенте Республики Беларусь, 2017, с.6.

country and the current political regime from destabilizing influences, be they coming directly from abroad or fed by domestic factors.”³⁵¹

In his speeches, President Putin makes many references to the concept of the Russian world.

In one of his addresses, he states that 2007 was the Year of the Russian Language. He said that “the Russian World can and should unite all those for whom the Russian language and culture are dear, whether they live in Russia or beyond its borders. Use this term, Russian World, more often.”³⁵² Later, the presidential administration formed the World Fund of Russia, which is overseen by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education and Science. The formation of this entity just perpetuates the ambiguity of the Russian World concept, which focuses on countrymen and all those dedicated to protecting Russia in front of the West.

In a speech on March 18, 2018, President Putin cites the Russian World concept while justifying Russia's annexation of Crimea. Putin stated that he hoped Germany, a once-divided country, would understand and support the Russian World's aspiration, as well as Russian history, to rebuild unity.³⁵³ President Putin's perspective is also endorsed by his administration, such as Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin's press secretary, who expressed his opinion immediately following this speech: “Russia is the country that serves as the foundation for the Russian World, and its president is Putin. Putin is the primary guarantor of the Russian World's security.”³⁵⁴ As these views suggest, the Russian world attracts the diaspora (ethnic Russians), who, according to the presidential administration, are threatened by the West. Sergey Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, views the Russian world from a cultural rather than political standpoint. In 2015, Lavrov addressed those who accused Russia of seeking to conquer more territories. He said that “You began by saying that everyone is afraid of Russia's desire to reestablish the Soviet Union, to seek the reunification of Russian lands. I ask, I you have concrete sources to show

³⁵¹ Marlene Laruelle, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

³⁵² «Русский Мир может и должен объединять всех, кому дорог русский язык и культура, независимо от того, живут ли они в России или за ее пределами. Чаше используйте термин «Русский мир», «В комплексе «Дом Державина» прошла встреча Владимира Путина с представителями российской интеллигенции», *Президент России*, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/36733> accessed in 24.01.2024.

³⁵³ «Германия, некогда разделенная страна, поймет и поддержит стремление Русского мира, как и российскую историю, к восстановлению единства», Владимир Путин, «Обращение Президента Российской Федерации», в *Кремлин.ру*, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> accessed in 25.01.2024.

³⁵⁴ «Россия — страна, которая служит основой Русского мира, а ее президентом является Путин. Путин — главный гарант безопасности Русского мира», «Песков рассказал о зашкаливающем рейтинге Путина», *Лента.ру*, <https://lenta.ru/news/2014/03/07/rating/> accessed in 25.01.2024.

me the official Russian citations proposing to reestablish the Soviet Union or reunify the Russian World (собирать Русский Мир). The Russian World is different. The Russian World is about culture, language, values, and religious orientations. One can draw an analogy (albeit imperfectly) with Francophonie, the Ibero-American community, and Confucius, Goethe, or Cervantes institutes. [...] Like any normal country [we] wish to preserve [our] cultural heritage.”³⁵⁵ In my opinion, Lavrov's perception of the Russian world contradicts the president's and Peskov's assertions. I believe that the first comments reflect an ethnic nationalism that seeks to safeguard ethnic Russians, which is why the Russian World promotes itself as a haven for them. As previously said, the concept of the Russian World remains unclear and elastic in terms of definition.

Speeches by the president and the presidential administration have been developed surrounding the notion of the Russian world since the early 2000s, and during this period, they were intercepted by extremist groups such as the Skinheads and the Nashi (Putinjugend) movement, which are supporters of President Putin and will be discussed in the following chapters.

Two institutions are recognised as having the meaning of this notion, such as:

1. The Moscow Patriarchate - they exploited the concept of the Russian World to show Russia as an Orthodox culture. Russian civilisation is firmly anchored in conservative beliefs. The use of the phrase morality and the adjective spiritual in Putin's speeches has increased in recent years, particularly since his return to the presidency in 2012.³⁵⁶ According to the presidential administration, morality is defined as

³⁵⁵ «Вы начали с того, что все боятся стремления России восстановить Советский Союз, добиться воссоединения русских земель. Я прошу, если у вас есть конкретные источники, показать мне официальные российские цитаты, предлагающие восстановить Советский Союз или воссоединить Русский Мир (собирать Русский Мир). Русский Мир, он совсем другой. Русский мир – это культура, язык, ценности и религиозные ориентации. Можно провести аналогию (хотя и несовершенную) с франкофонией, иберо-американским сообществом, институтами Конфуция, Гете или Сервантеса. [...] Как и любая нормальная страна, [мы] хотим сохранить [наше] культурное наследие», Выступление и ответу на вопросу СМИ министра иностранных С.Л.Лавров в ходе соименостной пресс-конференций по итогам переговоров с министром иностранных Латвий Е.Ринкевич, Russian Embassy in Washington DC, January 13, 2015, <http://www.russianembassy.org/node/1854.14:4712.01.2015> accessed in 25.01.2024.

³⁵⁶ Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, “The Pussy Riot affair and Putin's demarche from sovereign democracy to sovereign morality,” *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 4 (2014): 615–621.

respect for traditional values such as the non-recognition of LGBT rights, respect for the elderly and hierarchy, emphasis on having children as a foundation for individual life, the country's demographic health, and the fight against alcoholism.³⁵⁷

2. The neo-Eurasianists are founded on geopolitical rationalities that present Russia as a Eurasian civilisation. Both institutions are caught up in what analysts refer to as Soviet nostalgia, which portrays Russia as a unique civilisation that is both Orthodox and Eurasian; this is the primary Russian presentation given by Alexander Prokhanov and Gennady Zyuganov's communist party.

As Russian political scientist Boris Mezhuev said, "Russia wants to integrate Europe, but a conservative Europe. If the Russian World wins, the European family would likely offer a place, possibly the pride of place, to a new and better Russia, with its large population consisting of many ethnic groups. If the Atlantic wins, we would live in a world described in the dystopian novels by Aldous Huxley and Anthony Burgess, a debilitated, hedonistic society, one oblivious of the values of homeland, family, and God."³⁵⁸

Marlene Laruelle pointed out the fact that the Russian world is not unique to the Russian space; the term Francophone is closely associated with the term Russian world and reflects the same ambiguities and similarities. In June 2007, Putin issued an order to establish the groundwork for forming an organisation named the Russian World Foundation. This organisation's mission was to promote the Russian language, literature, and culture both within the former Soviet Union and outside. The organisation was inspired by Alliance Française to increase the influence of Russophone (Russian language and culture) in other regions. The Russian world is divided into the categories indicated above (economic, military, etc.), but I also include the categories of culture and spirituality. The Russian Orthodox Church is also a powerful actor, with numerous representatives in the Foundation of

³⁵⁷ Marlene Laruelle, *op.cit.*, 2015, p. 21.

³⁵⁸ Boris Mezhuev, "The Russian World Is Coming to Europe," Valdai Club, April 22, 2014, <http://valdaiclub.com/europe/68320.html> accessed in 25.01.2024.

the Russian World organisation; they feel that only people who practise Orthodox Christianity are one of the most essential foundations of the Russian world.

One of the critics of Russian foreign policy, Marcel H. Van Herpen, said that "Russian World is part of a much more ambitious project that aims to give the Kremlin again the global influence it had lost with the end of Communism."³⁵⁹ The Russian World is that bubble that binds together the ideals that represent post-Soviet Russia, such as:

- The near abroad (ближнее зарубежье)
- The historical facet of Russia (историческое пространство Росий)
- The territories where the Russian language is spoken (пространство русского языка)
- The territories that represent a responsibility for Russia (территория российской ответственности)

As I have stated, the term Russian World appeared before Putin assumed the presidency. With Putin's second coming in 2012, the Russian world has become a more powerful and prominent notion than it was previously. The Russian world has recognised the presidential administration as a realm different from others, with its strong civilisation. The Russian world opposed concepts such as the West and Atlanticism. Finally, we may speak about the Russian World as an ideological construct of the multi-polar world's concept as a cornerstone of Russian foreign policy.³⁶⁰ Immediately after Putin took power in 2000, the Concept of Foreign Policy was adopted, encouraging opposition to unipolar global frameworks and US hegemony. This concept emphasises the term soft power and uses the Foundation of the Russian World as a foreign policy weapon.³⁶¹ Community groups should encourage the possibilities of communication,

³⁵⁹ Marcel H. Van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine. Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*, Washington: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016, p. 149.

³⁶⁰ John O'Loughlin, Gerard Toal and Vladimir Kolosov, "Who identifies with the Russian World? Geopolitical attitudes in southeastern Ukraine, Crimea, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria", in *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.57, No.5, USA: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, p. 751.

³⁶¹ Agnia Grigas, *Beyond Crimea: The New Russian Empire*, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2016, p. 30.

technology, and other techniques. We will see that, in the case of the present youth movements chosen for the examination, technology, particularly social networks, supports the Russian World's beliefs and principles.

When the notion of the Russian World is skipped over in the Foreign Policy Concept, the Russian World is used as an excuse or justification for Russia's unique position and influence on the worldwide political scene, an organic and natural element of its soft power and a confirmation of the world's diversity and multi-polar structure.³⁶² Given the various interpretations of the Russian world and the categories that this concept encompasses (economic, cultural, linguistic, military, different types of organisations, non-governmental or governmental), we can conclude that this notion does not have a set and basic meaning. These elements, on the one hand cultural and on the other geopolitical, peculiar to the Russian World, provide a hazy picture of this notion. The concept of the Russian world peaked in speeches after the 1990s, and his interest in defending his compatriots (for Putin, compatriots are individuals who share a common vision for Russia's future and support the enhancement of the reputation of their motherland, he presidential administration has launched a statute that supports these compatriots in their quest to safeguard their rights and preserve the language and culture to which they are related) in the near abroad raised a warning signal in these regions, the best example being the current war in Ukraine and the constant invocation that Russia has to clean up Ukraine, not just militarily, but also culturally by other foreign influences (continuous repetition of denazification of Ukraine) and to "russified" the area.

President Vladimir Putin's regime has assumed several forms and reactions throughout the last decade. One of these was the commencement of the Second Chechen War, during which the presidential administration and a major portion of the Chechen rebels blamed their adversaries for kidnappings, looting, and killings. At the same time, it was the time when an immigration wave broke out in Russia, which was in the process of recovering economically. From an economic standpoint, a lack of jobs was one of the reactions of the youth, who were having difficulty finding work

³⁶² John O'Loughlin, Gerard Toal and Vladimir Kolosov, *op.cit.*, p. 751.

at the time, and on this economic background, attacks on immigrants, particularly those from the Caucasus, arose. Young people in huge numbers began to join various extreme movements oriented primarily at combating immigration, which they referred to as non-Russians who came to Russia to steal their jobs. Through the concept of the Russian World (Ruskii Mir), the Skinhead youth movement that I chose for the next case study tried to build its world, an All-Russian state.

Chapter III.

The Russian Skinheads Phenomenon: voices of the de-democratisation process

Skinheads, a neo-Nazi youth movement in post-Soviet Russia, served as the research's original case study. I chose this movement because I wanted to provide a more in-depth assessment of what the far right meant to young people in post-Soviet Russia, as well as the visions that drove the youth to resuscitate and reconstruct Nazi ideology. The vast majority of young people in post-Soviet Russia have chosen to join the Skinheads movement; this chapter discusses their decision, what motivates them to enter, how they are classified, and what each group faces.

This chapter focuses on Russia's democratic transition since 1991, as well as the movement that will put the process to the final test. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia attempted to move toward democracy in the 1990s but ultimately failed. The first elections held in Russia following the collapse of the communist dictatorship revealed factions fighting for democratisation on the one side and authoritarianism on the other. The case study discussed in this chapter falls into the second group and has a significant impact on the decline of democracy. They campaigned and continue to struggle for the establishment of an authoritarian state following the Russian election era in the 1990s. Boris Yeltsin was at the head of a public movement, not a political party, in the 1990 election for Russian sovereignty and the dissolution of the USSR, and it is possible that the threads that have impeded the accomplishment of democracy arose from this. In the early and mid-1990s, communist regime

researchers felt that post-communist governments needed to achieve extreme economic and social reform, as well as radical political upheaval. However, on Russian Federation territory, the consequences of a fraudulent privatisation process were severely detrimental to democratic institutionalisation. The formation of a strong civil society is frequently a key step in the process of transitioning a state to democracy. The barriers underlying Soviet society's development, as well as the conditions that triggered weaknesses in post-Soviet Russia's development, have caused members of the leadership to undermine reforms, ensuring that authoritarian control trends will face fewer obstacles after 2000. The procedures and reforms that fuelled a significant anti-communist movement in most of Eastern Europe did not materialise in Russia. The inability of a fusion between the democratic process and national identity on Russian soil revealed a lack of a strong national majority in support of political and economic development.

In this chapter, I will also show how Russia's political and economic developments in the 1990s were a prime example of a cosmetic transition. Russia's experience on the path to democratisation necessitates a more thorough examination of the long-term guidelines that impede Russia's progress toward democratisation. I shall prove that Russia is not an authoritarian state but rather exhibits indications of authoritarianism and the importance of the Skinhead movement in building an authoritarian order. Suppose I have discussed the oscillations of nationalist sentiments in various periods/regimes in previous chapters, such as the Tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet regimes, in this chapter. In that case, I will focus on the phenomena that occurred in post-Soviet Russia, specifically the period of Boris Yeltsin's leadership and Russia today. There are many similarities to the preceding regimes, but there are also significant differences and novelties. The most significant impediment to Russia's transition to democracy was nostalgia for previous administrations, as well as the major issue of national identity. Iurii Afanasev argued that "the public consciousness has not yet reached the required level. That there existed a certain regime and that a return to it is

out of the question is acknowledged only by individuals, not yet by society.”³⁶³

According to Afanasev, a selective memory of the past is concentrated around the skinhead movement for two reasons:

1. Choosing an appropriate moment in history to be viewed as a salvation from the hardships suffered by Russia in the 1990s, the best example is the Nazi regime and the outlining of Nazi ideology on the territory of Russia.
2. Provide a new interpretation of each regime. For instance, the Tsarist double-headed eagle as the state emblem, the Soviet national song with new lyrics as Russia's official hymn, and the democratic tricolour as the national flag, and to reconcile the conflicting national narratives.³⁶⁴ The great majority of newspapers feature a column about Russia's history, as well as Nazi-specific newspapers. Television programs about the past, and many archive documents and books have been published over the years.

Since the beginning of the Skinhead movement in Russia, two major problems have dominated:

1. The lack of a stable foundation for democracy.
2. The necessity to construct a government akin to those of the past, when Russia was a major power, as well as Nazi Germany.

In this chapter, I also intend to explain the impact of the slogans employed by this movement regarding who remained “in” or “out” of the USSR following its disintegration, as well as its xenophobic dimension. Russia experienced various difficulties and challenges on its route to democracy: the battle for a society that deals with community needs, the shift to a market economy, and the revival of national consciousness to overcome both imperial mentality and the problem of minority secession and immigration.

³⁶³ Daria Khubova and Vitaly Chernetsky, “The Case of the Russian Archives: An Interview with Iurii N. Afanasev, *Slavic Review*, Vol.52, No.2, 1993, p. 315.”

³⁶⁴ Richard Sakwa, “Russian Politics and Society”, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 444.

The Skinhead movement was caught up in a Russia undergoing a variety of political, economic, cultural, and national identity changes. Russia, as the successor of the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union, has radical differences from these empires, and young Skinheads discovered that they built an authoritarian shell while living simultaneously in a changing world, and instilled in them the family that witnessed the great power of the USSR.

3.1. Description of the movement and its background

The Skinhead movement in the United Kingdom served as the primary catalyst for this movement. This movement was the promoter for the youth subculture. The skinhead movement re-created the working class based on group solidarity and masculinity. John Clarke suggested that “this class or community-based defensiveness was coupled with a sense of exclusion from the existing youth subculture dominated in the public arena by music and styles derived from the underground among lower-working-class youth, producing an intensified Us-Them consciousness.”³⁶⁵

The first wave of skinheads as Nick Knight stated, “took shape as a style-based movement emerging out of the mob scene in the United Kingdom at the end of the 1960s, as hard or gang mods took the short, shaven heads represents a tough masculinity³⁶⁶, Ben Sherman shirts and Levis of mod style in a more fight-friendly (donkey jackets and combats) and industrial (heavy industrial boots and work clothes: jeans and braces) direction.”³⁶⁷ Their style was something that alluded to a worker model, as I mentioned above. The second wave, the movement was born in a period of economic downturn and the emergence of a migration surge. By giving the movement a territorial defence boost, members of this movement quickly became the target of potential recruits in extremist movements or parties

³⁶⁵ John Clarke, *Football hooliganism and the skinheads*. Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1973, p. 99.

³⁶⁶ Phill Cohen, “Subcultural Conflict and the Working-class Community”, *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no. 2, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1972, pp.24-25.

³⁶⁷ Nick Knight, “Skinhead”, London: Omnibus Press, 1982, p. 10.

such as the UK National Front. If the first wave of skinheads had no political affiliation and were only there for fun at football games or reggae/punk music concerts, the second wave, which emerged following economic hardships, began to display Nazi emblems and be fans of Oi music! The latter has spread more quickly in many nations, serving as a key figure in the de-democratisation process. The second wave of the Skinheads movement, which is associated with extreme right-wing ideologies, is best represented by the Skinheads movement in the United States.

According to Jack Moore, the first wave of the Skinheads movement did not extend to the United States because there was no cultural space in America for a young class expression of discontent and open, ugly hostility towards the middle class.³⁶⁸ Skinheads in the United States are divided into two categories: racists and non-racists. During this time, the Skinhead movement acquired xenophobic, racist, and anti-Semitic attitudes. According to some members of this movement, being a skinhead is about embracing an emotion rather than wearing a uniform.³⁶⁹ The usage of the Internet, which debuted in Eastern Europe, namely post-Soviet Russia, encouraged the global expansion in the number of Skinheads.

The Skinhead movement in the Russian Federation originated in the early 1990s, in a time of chaos and scarcity surrounding Gorbachev's reform attempts and the disintegration of the USSR. The first skinheads stood out in 1992 in the magazine *Под ноль* (Below Zero) in Moscow, a true veteran of the skin press, the first magazine writing about the customs, traditions, subculture of the movement, as well as the special musical direction of white rock style.³⁷⁰ In September 1993, President Boris Yeltsin issued an order to bomb the parliament building and to protest the dissolution of parliament, all of which constituted violence as a political expression for the Skinheads.

³⁶⁸ Jack Moore, "Skinheads Shaved for Battle: A Cultural History of American Skinheads", London: Popular Press, 1994, p. 30.

³⁶⁹ Klaus Farin, "Skinhead: A Way of Life: Eine Jugendbewegung stellt sich selbst dar" Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen/Thomas Tilsner, 2005, p. 6.

³⁷⁰ Владимир Беликов, «Бритоголовые», «журнал московских и российских бритоголовых, настоящий ветеран скин-прессы, первый журнал, пишущий об обычаях, традициях, субкультуре движения, а также об особом музыкальном направлении стиля (ОЙ) белого рока», <https://pub.wikireading.ru/120060> accessed in 08.05.2024.

A more notable example was the Chechen war, which resulted in a state of emergency in Moscow and the arrest and expulsion of 10,000 persons with Caucasian features, creating an environment of ethnic cleansing. All these events contributed to the Skinhead movement becoming a phenomenon in a relatively short period.

According to Tarasov, in a few weeks, these incidents propelled the skinhead movement to new heights.³⁷¹ During the first Chechen War (December 1994–May 1996), not only did the authorities fail to oppose racial speech and brutality, but skinhead groups frequently believed that law enforcement agencies implicitly endorsed their conduct.³⁷²

Just as England is characterised by economic problems, lack of jobs, and inadequate housing, especially for the young, Russia in the 1990s formed itself precisely around these problems, generating a growth that, while initially sluggish, accelerated quickly. There is a significant difference between the first and second waves of the formation of the Skinheads movement; for example, the second fosters brotherhood among group members, whilst the first promotes xenophobic, racist sentiments. The first encourages trust, whereas the second fosters distrust, hostility, and aggression. The basic facts of Russian Skinheads lay forth the fundamental criteria for good Nazi-Skinhead behaviour and are supposed to govern not only the social but also the interpersonal practices of active skinhead groups.

For the vast majority of skinheads on Russian Federation territory, a skinhead is defined as an individual who convincingly displays aggression towards foreigners, particularly immigrants who came to Russia in search of work following the disintegration of the USSR, and who has the task of inhibiting any interaction between a white (a Russian) and a non-Russian. As previously said, the Skinheads movement in Russia has adopted the image of the Skinheads movement in the West as portrayed in the media and films in terms of fashion style, but philosophy and speeches have been tailored to the actions and events unique to post-Soviet Russia.

³⁷¹ Alexandr Tarasov, "Порождение реформ : бритоголовые, они скинхеду", *Свободная мусль*, Vol.XXI, No.4, pp.39.

³⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 43.

In Russia, the Skinheads movement has developed in various branches:

1. It entails essentially replicating the Skinheads movement in the West (the United Kingdom and America).
2. It entails an innovative development, more specific to the concerns of Russia concerning the transition process towards a three-level organised democracy (universal, local, and individual).

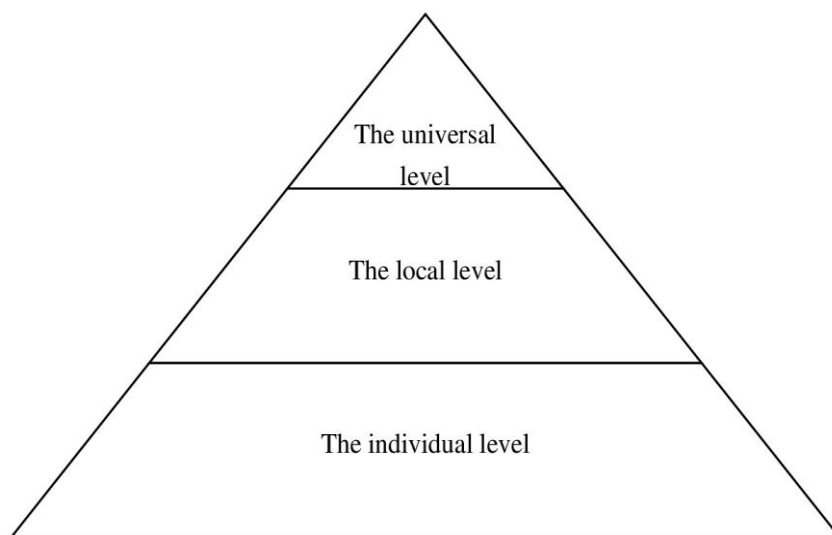


Illustration 3: Development levels of the Skinheads movement

The first level, the universal one, evaluates young individuals who develop their life tactics targeted not just at personal accomplishment, but also at standing out from their peers. Such actions are influenced by a variety of factors, including family, various political affiliations, and the cultural landscape, and they are carried out and motivated, in particular, by the desire of these members to be free of a particular location. This level is understandable because it demonstrates the organisation's ambition to exceed the constraints given by the location.

The second level, the local, the Skinheads formed a circle of solidarity among members from similar backgrounds, and they only pursued personal interests. With the turbulence and destabilisation of the late 1990s, Skinheads

began to expand in number and activity. The landscape at the time enabled them to generate terror, particularly among immigrants.

The third level, the individual, the Skinheads instilled a sense of self-overcoming in response to the daily denial of social rights they experienced, while also highlighting the social inequities that existed in Russia during the 1990s. Understanding the Skinheads' existence and survival tactics is critical in determining the motivations behind the attacks and hate crimes. The so-called залы (hall) sports halls in the basements of various buildings are where this movement originated, and they serve as the primary meeting location for Skinheads. This component encompasses the last two levels: local and individual, because it gives a private area in which participants of this movement can prepare individually to deal with tasks.

The last wave of development in this movement came from the Vorkuta area, where young people connected with others who were already members and used the Internet. The Vorkuta group had no ideology; it was simply a group that represented the members' social relationships.

The Skinhead movement in Russia is divided into five age categories. Their acts contradict this point of view:

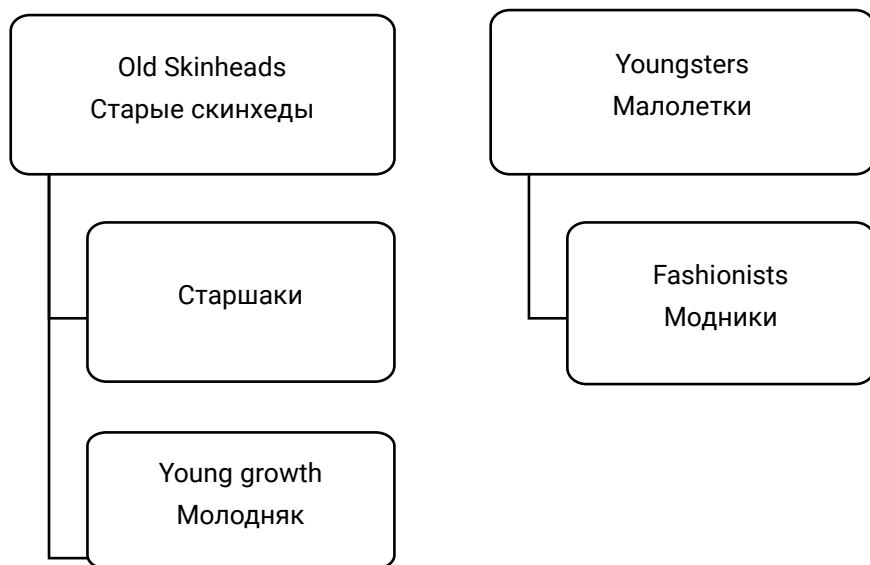


Illustration 4: The hierarchy of the Russian Skinheads

The Skinheads movement has a well-established organisation among its members, who are divided into age divisions. The first category is very limited in comparison to the overall movement, with an average age of over 20 years. They are believed to be the most knowledgeable about the Skinhead movement's ideology, values, and practices, and they serve as the primary guides for the other, smaller members. Each member of this age group has had an experience ranging from 3-5 years to 10 years in which they learnt movement habits and developed a movement lifestyle that adheres to all orders and principles.³⁷³ Interrupting such work among members is prohibited, as is transitioning from one movement to another and then returning to the previous movement. They must be a Skinhead committed to the primary movement for life. This category is at the heart of the Skinhead movement; it includes trainers and individuals who bring the movement together. Their primary responsibility is to encourage members to engage in acts of violence and hatred.

The second type attends Skinhead demonstrations and meetings, exhibits a strong political orientation toward authoritarianism, can support the key points of the movement's political platform, and participates in propaganda efforts. This category is closely associated with far-right parties in Russia.³⁷⁴

The third category, the young growth, includes people between the ages of 14 and 16, who actively participate in Skinhead marches and other meetings. Members of this category have a well-defined political stance and can coherently articulate the key concepts of the Skinhead movement.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ «Каждый из них имеет определённый стаж пребывания в движении скинхедов, от трёх-пяти до десяти лет, в течение которых он должен жить и действовать, соблюдая все принципы и заповеди скин-движения», «Иерархия движения скинхедов», Альтруизм, 2000, <https://altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/13/61/5/5/6?page=&print=1%3E> accessed in 09.05.2024.

³⁷⁴ «помимо участия в митингах, сходках и собраниях обладают твёрдой, достаточно прочно сложившейся политической ориентацией, умеют не только связно изложить основные пункты политической программы своего движения, но и ведут агитационную работу», «Иерархия движения скинхедов», Альтруизм, 2000, <https://altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/13/61/5/5/6?page=&print=1%3E> accessed on 09.05.2024.

³⁷⁵ «активно участвующие во всевозможных неонацистских митингах и собраниях, собирающиеся в большие группы. Эта категория бритоголовых обладает более чётко оформленной политической ориентацией и умением более или менее связно

The fourth type is among the most numerous, with an average age of 12-14 years, who have no idea what it means to be a Skinhead but have absorbed the most importance from Nazi symbols and racist behaviours. Their actions are characterised by emulating their larger and more experienced peers. This group of Skinheads wears Nazi emblems and other outward symbols of the movement, such as the Celtic cross.³⁷⁶

Fashionists are a distinct type from the others we've discussed; their key distinguishing feature is their utter lack of political affiliation. Participate in other Skinheads' concerts and meetings, but do not conduct any heroic acts that reflect the correct masculinity of the Skinheads members. This category represents the image of the Skinhead subculture, particularly in terms of clothing, which adheres to the subculture's representative uniform.

The great majority of members range from 15 to 20 people and are developed within a local universe. This subculture, which emerged in Russia, portrays different concentric circles, with individuals on the periphery having a vague understanding of what is going on closer to the centre. Their opinions range from the urge to assault and kill ethnic minorities to the belief that Russia's hostility towards democracy only leads to anarchy, a lack of, and other societal ills. Most Skinheads are so-called Gopnik, who are combative, well-organised, and proud of their group's attire. However, the most essential characteristic of all these categories is that they constitute a sort of social protest, economic chaos, and all the negative processes that have wrecked the country. And the expression of this social protest often takes the form of completely terrible crimes against non-Russians living on Russian soil.

In the decade 1993-1994, the breakdown of national identity, as well as the vast number of immigrants from other Soviet states who came to Russia

изложить главные принципы движения скинов», Ibidem, <https://altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/13/61/5/5/6?page=&print=1%3E> accessed in 09.05.2024.

³⁷⁶ «которые ещё толком не знают, что это такое — быть настоящим бритоголовым, но уже нахватились нацистских или расистских лозунгов, уяснили некоторые основные нормы поведения, присущие бритоголовым. Чаще всего это происходит при прямом подражании старшим и более опытным товарищам. Эта категория активно использует внешнюю символику и атрибутику движения скинов — кельтский крест, нацистскую символику. Хотя надо заметить, что одного единого устоявшегося образца униформы на сегодняшний момент не существует», Ibidem, <https://altruism.ru/sengine.cgi/13/61/5/5/6?page=&print=1%3E> accessed in 09.05.2024.

in pursuit of a better life, provided fuel for the fire for the emergence of extremist forces, particularly the skinhead movement. The economic crisis of the 1990s, the dissolution of the Soviet system, the transition from a leftist ideology to one with an extremely fascist aspect, the use of state violence to resolve conflicts, and the accelerated growth of hate crimes due to immigrants and the poverty faced by most of the population all contributed to the development of the Skinheads movement. In the 1990s, this movement grew slowly and went largely unnoticed, being regarded in Russian society as a strange phenomenon or a creation of the news media. It wasn't until the mid-1990s that the first attacks, robberies, and hate crimes against non-Russian immigrants began, and this social movement has evolved into a political movement with a strong anti-government stance.

The Skinheads movement's ideas and principles remain rooted in the past, specifically in the eras of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union; the political ideology that has grown around this movement is rooted in fascism; and the movement evolved, intending to propose an ultra-nationalist alternative to the 1990s situation.

3.2. Ideological features and influences on the 90s scene in Russia

The ideological features of the Skinheads movement in Russia in the 1990s consist of several philosophical principles and ideas, but they lack a coherent and merged ideology, which is why the ideologies that this movement is accessing place them in a broader framework, that of ideoscapes, which represents a combination of concepts to denote a specific idea.³⁷⁷ Therefore, we have a series of ideologies: ultra-nationalism, right-wing extremism, fascism, neo-Nazism, antisemitism, nationalism, socialism, national-socialism, racism and white supremacy. The dominant feature of

³⁷⁷ Roshan Gurung, "Ideoscape: The flow of idea", *Meaningful view*, 2023, <https://www.meaningfulview.com/2023/01/globalization-ideoscape.html> accessed in 09.05.2024.

this movement is white supremacy, which is built on discourses of the global movements of the white race, as well as influences from all the realms mentioned. Political narratives within the group also contain strong tropes of neo-Nazism, including extensive symbolic borrowing or reworking, and are rooted in a central palingenetic myth that lies at the core of fascism.³⁷⁸

3.2.1. Ultra-nationalism and right-wing extremism

With Vladimir Zhirinovsky's emergence into post-Soviet Russia's political sphere, arguments arose that exposed the threat posed by ultra-nationalist parties and far-right formations. They focused on the timing of the emergence of anti-democratic forces. Specialists shifted between Italian fascism and Nazism in an attempt to establish a clear description of far-right parties' philosophy and political strategies in the context of the broader idea of fascism during World War II. Roger Griffin's distillation of fascism into an ideal type of political ideology as a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism rooted in a core myth of the rebirth of a decadent national, racial, imperial, or religious community and promising to replace gerontocracy, mediocrity, and national weakness with youth, heroism, and national greatness.³⁷⁹ However, there is still some disagreement over the extent of fascism fostered by these organisations and indeed the degree to which one can trace a fascist tradition in Russia that could be mobilised for this purpose.³⁸⁰ Shenfield also noted that there is a unique branch of radical Russian nationalism that is either fascist or on its way to being fascist.³⁸¹ Andreas Umland remarked that the rising post-Soviet political environment, which includes parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties, as well as a growing uncivil society, raises the question of whether fascism is a meaningful concept in this context.³⁸²

³⁷⁸ Roger Griffin, "The Nature of Fascism", New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 26.

³⁷⁹ Ibidem, pp.32-39.

³⁸⁰ Stephen Shenfield, "Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements", New York: M.E.Sharpe, 2001, p. 47.

³⁸¹ Ibidem, p. 50.

³⁸² Andreas Umland, "Concepts of fascism in contemporary Russia and the West", *Political Studies Review*, Vol.3, No.1, 2005, p. 39.

Moreover, with the advent of the Putin government in post-Soviet Russia in the 2000s, he already had more authority than ultra-nationalist parties such as Russian National Unity (RNE), the National Bolshevik Party (NBP), and the Liberal Democracy Party of Russia (LDPR). Although they drastically diminished these groups' support, the philosophy they promoted continued by bringing ideologues like Alexandr Dugin, a former NBP member, into the presidential administration. The question remains: where does the Skinhead movement fit into the ideological scenery? Over the years, academics who have studied this movement feel that this question will ultimately remain unanswered. Kurti points out in his attempt to understand the ideology of this phenomenon among young people that in Russia, where extreme nationalist parties are legitimised, and the state is openly hostile to minorities, all adolescent rage is directed into legitimate parliamentary and state-level political organisations.³⁸³ At the same time, the relationship between the Skinhead movement and ultra-nationalist and far-right parties remains unknown; their only political and social collaboration and compatibility are with the Nashi youth movements, the Young Guard, and We Go Together. The Skinhead youth movements have formed a stumbling block for Russia's major political parties.

Tarasov made it evident that the skinhead subculture serves as the reverse and sociological base of fascist and radical right-wing parties, despite active relations between them being tenuous [...] since skinheads, who cannot bear discipline and routine tasks, rarely survive long in formal parties.³⁸⁴ On the other hand, in contradiction, Mihai Varga stated that the apparent political division of labour between skinheads (meting out

³⁸³ László Kürti, "The emergence of post-communist youth identities in Eastern Europe: from communist youth, to skinheads, to national socialists and beyond", *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subculture*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998, p. 195.

³⁸⁴ «Субкультура скинхедов служит обратной и социологической базой для фашистских и радикальных правых партий, несмотря на то, что активные отношения между ними слабы... так как скинхеды, которые не могут нести дисциплину и выполнять рутинные задачи, редко выживают долго в формальных партия», Aleksandr Tarasov, "Skinheads ou naturel", *Неприкосновенный запас*, Vol,5, N.7, <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB41EE/BE04249> accessed in 10.05.20204.

violence) and formal political organisations (shaping political agendas) obscures a series of ways in which the two parts of the far-right scene are engaged, among them direct involvement in violence by formal organisations (RNE, the Slavic Union and the Freedom Party) support for skinheads, the provision of ideological literature and the brokering of links between different groups to form broad umbrella-type alliances a function associated with the Movement against Illegal Immigration DPNI.³⁸⁵ As far as I learned from a small number of Skinheads on VKontakte, I missed the nuanced political commitment and relationship between them and another ultra-nationalist or extreme party in Russia represented by Mihai Varga. According to what I saw in their various groups, the Skinheads movement remains autonomous. It is difficult to trace the Skinheads' relationship and ideological commitment to other extremist parties because the Skinheads have distanced themselves from them, claiming that there is no mutual trust, only exploitation. But that doesn't mean the Skinheads movement is untouched; Griffin believes that smaller, slightly less organised groups are politically significant, whether they expand or not. Gryphon defined these so-called groupuscules as intrinsically small political, frequently meta-political, but never primarily party-political entities formed to pursue palingenetic (revolutionary) ideological, organisational, or activist goals with the ultimate goal of overcoming the decadence of the existing liberal democratic system. Despite being completely constituted and autonomous, they have low active memberships and little to no public awareness or support.³⁸⁶

We can discuss the Skinhead movement as a group that has become the primary instrument for the manifestation of post-Soviet nationalism, as well as right-wing movements that emerge from embracing groups with a specific style of clothing and culture that distinguishes them from other extremist parties. Their relevance is seen at the individual level, as I have

³⁸⁵ Mihai Varga, "How political opportunities strengthen the far-right: understanding the rise in far-right militancy in Russia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.60, No.4, 2008, pp.568-570.

³⁸⁶ Roger Griffin, "From slime mould to rhizome: an introduction to the groupuscular right", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.37, No.1, 2003, p. 30.

discussed above, to offer a different aspect to feelings of hatred in a special mission to do something about the problems caused by the chaos of the 1990s, a system regeneration.

3.2.2. *Fascism and neo-Nazism*

Fascism, or neo-Nazism, is one of the philosophies prominent in the Skinhead movement. Nazi emblems and Hitler's visage have appeared on Russian social networks throughout the years, and they performed the Nazi salute, even though they do not want to be called fascists, nazis, or national socialists. There is a fascination with Hitler because he imposed respect and purified the race. One member of the Skinheads movement justifies their interest in this ideology by stating that, "contrary to popular belief, Hitler never relegated the Slavs to a third-class status. Mein Kampf states that the Slavs appeared to me to be a more gifted race than the Germans. Friedrich Nietzsche, from whom Hitler stole many ideas, also wrote this [...] the inclusion of Slavic blood helped the Germans achieve their current level".³⁸⁷ According to this assertion, the Slavs believed themselves members of the Aryan race, as Dugin argued that Siberia was the birthplace of the Aryans. The neo-Nazi movement that began in post-Soviet Russia is founded on the idea of the upper Aryan race, which, along with immigrants who arrived in Russia in search of work in the 1990s, felt threatened by the disorder of this upper race. The worldview of neo-Nazis in the Skinheads movement is closely tied to Slavic neopaganism (rodnovery). This religion is popular among skinheads and frequently involves pagan rituals. Several Skinhead groups were considered rodnovery, for example, Schlutz-88 and Combat Terrorist Organisation of Nevograd (BTO). They had issued leaflets titled "Paganism as the spiritual and moral underpinning of Russian national socialism", which were about building a new northern race and hunting persons with non-Russian or non-Slavic appearances. For these parties

³⁸⁷ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, "Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives", New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 102.

founded on the ideology of the Aryan race, Hitler was the key figure. On April 20, the youth neo-Nazi National Front Party led by Ilia Lazarenko commemorates Hitler's birthday. This group declared itself white and purely Russian.

3.2.3. Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is a further aspect of the Skinhead ideology. Anti-Semitism is very relevant to the conduct of Skinhead members regarding Russia's issues in the 1990s; they consider a conspiracy of the Jewish community that lived on Russian Federation territory at the time, both politically and socially. During the 1990s, antisemitism was a persistent undercurrent and source of concern, as evidenced by freely accessible antisemitic newspapers and other media, as well as street or popular antisemitic behaviour.³⁸⁸ The frequency of antisemitic incidents increased dramatically following the 1998 Russian financial crisis, the ruble's devaluation, and the resulting economic troubles that affected a large segment of the general public.³⁸⁹

Additionally, among the adherents of the Skinhead movement circulated publications such as Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, *The Protocols of the Soviet Wise Men* written by Grigory Klimov, *Dezionization*, and *The Dispute about Zion* by Douglas Reed.

3.2.4. Nationalism, socialism, and national socialism

The ideology of the Skinheads movement provides us with a framework for identifying potential perpetrators for the situation of Russia in the 1990s; yet the image of a new order constructed by Skinheads is

³⁸⁸ "Anti-Semitism in Russia. Russian disinformation and inspiration of anti-Semitism", *Info OPS Polska*, 2020, <https://infoops.pl/anti-semitism-in-russia-russian-disinformation-and-inspiration-of-anti-semitism/> accessed in 10.05.2024.

³⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, <https://infoops.pl/anti-semitism-in-russia-russian-disinformation-and-inspiration-of-anti-semitism/> accessed in 10.05.2024.

experiencing ruptures; the members refer to this process as national socialism. The two sides, national and social, result in the necessity to safeguard Russian society while also purifying it racially and ethnically. This includes reducing the number of non-Russians, or those who do not blend ethnically with the Russians. During this process, the slogan “the 14 words/ 14 слов”³⁹⁰ was created to “make a better future for white children, our children. Our idea is based on a soul inclination. You care about Russia; you love Russia. But it's also a loathing, mixed up with a striving, a struggle not for oneself, but for Russia's future. Our own lives have been impoverished by the aggression of foreign invaders, and we must ensure that our children do not suffer the same fate”.³⁹¹ Given the anti-Semitism and racism espoused in this movement, the participants had various perspectives on nationhood and nationalism. A party regards the nation only ethnically (Russia), while others see Russia as part of a Eurasian empire where race and culture provide opportunities to make a difference without resorting to racist language. Shenfield asserted that contradictions between these beliefs are common across the extreme nationalist political spectrum.³⁹² While neo-Eurasianism theories talk about the symbiosis of cultures and religions within the Eurasian space, Marlene Laruelle suggested that in practice, many people support nationalism, openly espousing endogamy (Gumilev), classifying peoples by spiritual races (Dugin), and rejecting transcivilizational borrowings (Panarin).³⁹³ Laruelle continues and states that, situates neo-Eurasianist ideology within a broader New Right neo-racism which rejects the hierarchical ordering of races, as in classical racism, but views different races understood in a cultural rather than

³⁹⁰ “General Hate Symbols”, *Anti-Defamation League*, 2007, <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/14-words> accessed in 12.05.2024.

³⁹¹ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, “Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives”, New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 105.

³⁹² Stephen Shenfield, “Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements”, New York: M.E.Sharpe, 2001, p. 16.

³⁹³ Marlene Laruelle, “Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire”, Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008, p. 212.

biological sense as incommensurable, and thus rejects cultural mixing and borrowing.³⁹⁴

3.2.5. Racism and white supremacism

The racist repertoire defined in the Skinhead youth movement is diverging from the young White Power Movement. Claims of ethnic injustice, similar to the minoritization of whiteness in worldwide White Power rhetoric, were especially common.³⁹⁵ Members of the Skinheads youth movement emphasised that prejudice and violence against ethnic Russians who stayed beyond Russia's borders after the fall of the USSR were less widely publicised than hate crimes and attacks on immigrants. According to Skinhead members, they argue that "If you say you're a Georgian, that's great, but if you declare you're a Russian, you're considered an extremist. Nobody is protesting against non-Russians as such, but rather against people coming here and imposing their customs, religion, and rules."³⁹⁶ Politically, we can deduce from the ideologies emerging around the Skinheads movement that an appeal is made to form a Russian separatist republic that will bring together ethnic Russians who do not live on Russian territory, given the multiethnic construction of post-Soviet Russia. In terms of this racist repertory, the authors Hilary Pilkington and Albina Garifzianova's focus groups (particularly the starshaki and old skinheads' categories) indicate that "to be convinced that this theory explained white racial superiority, we distinguished between nationalities based on skin colour, for example, Germans, English, Italians, and Spanish as different nationalities but all constituting us whites, and for one white European to marry another white European was perfectly acceptable, but racially mixed unions

³⁹⁴ Ibidem, p. 213.

³⁹⁵ Les Back, "Wagner and power chords: skinheadism, white power music and the internet", *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture*, Chigaco: University of Chigaco Press, 2002, p. 131.

³⁹⁶ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, "Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives", New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 106.

endangered the nation because the offspring would be half-bloods.”³⁹⁷ All of these racist reasons show that racism and white supremacy are the primary driving forces behind the Skinhead movement. I feel that the ideology of the Skinheads movement cannot be characterised by a single term because it incorporates elements of each of the aforementioned ideologies. It's hard enough to pinpoint the actual ideology within the Skinhead movement, which some deem racist. Some claim true Skinheads members are racist. "Nationalist slogans are employed to simplify topics so that the masses may understand them; all skinhead leaders are racists. They aren't nationalists. Why are slogans like Russia for Russians, Moscow for Muscovites popular? Because the average human is incapable of grasping racial superiority. So, get the immigrants out of there, which is why slogans that most people comprehend are propagated. The vast majority of knowledgeable skinheads share the same racist ideology.”³⁹⁸ I think that because the members of Skinheads share a common ideology, this movement was not positioned in a certain order on the political stage. They were recruited into Russia's right-wing extremist groups, as well as other youth movements like Nashi. The relationship between their ideological discourses and the visual portrayal of propaganda items is linked to Nazism and fascism.

The most crucial point to remember is that the basic part of the ideology inside the Skinhead movement is the tendency to appeal to an enemy, accusing the Other (Westerners, the enemy) of the problems that arose throughout the 1990s. The Skinheads movement continues to promote what ours (nashi/наши) mean, and the schism between ours and others reinforces the notion of Slavic/Aryan superiority. We cannot characterise the ideology of the Skinheads movement by referring to only one feature, but the umbrella of terms that encompasses the ideology of this movement falls within the spectrum of nationalism and xenophobia.

³⁹⁷ Hilary Pilkington, "Xenophobic Youth Groups in Vorkuta Russia: Skinheads", *Grupés Ir Aplinkos*, Issue 2, 2012, p. 193

³⁹⁸ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, *op.cit.*, p. 108.

3.3. Dissemination of information (propaganda), recruitment, and mobilisation

Ian Stuart Donaldson and the Skrewdriver band, noted for their far-right ideas, played a key role in the establishment and expansion of the Skinheads movement beginning in 1977. This was a key feature in re-reading and mobilising only for political goals, which occurred through special recruitment efforts, such as Rock against Communism (RAC) was the name of white power rock concerts in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s and early 1980s³⁹⁹ and White Power Noise Club, funded by the National Front of the United Kingdom. Ian Stuart recognised and realised the potential for music to connect racists all over the world in a transnational, centreless, politico-cultural entity through lengthy tours with Skrewdriver and the Blood and Honour group he founded in the mid-1980s.⁴⁰⁰ Skrewdriver's production of a string of records on Rock-O-Rama Records, as well as the establishment of a German chapter of Blood and Honour, were essential in the formation of right-wing skinheads in Germany.⁴⁰¹

Later, these meetings/concerts became the primary recruiting tool for Skinheads and a key location for sharing information. According to Jack Moore, in the early 1980s, some organised skinhead gangs shared the xenophobic, racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic views expressed by bands such as Skrewdriver, and were actively recruited by organised racist groups, most notably the White Aryan Resistance (WAR) movement.⁴⁰² About the Skinheads movement on Russian territory, right-wing extremist parties in Russia were actively recruiting and cooperating with members of the

³⁹⁹ "Rock Against Communism: A Visual Database of Extremist Symbols, Logos and Tattoos", ADL. Anti-Defamation League, 2018, <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/rock-against-communism> accessed in 13.05.2024.

⁴⁰⁰ Les Back, "Wagner and power chords: skinheadism, white power music and the internet", *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 106.

⁴⁰¹ Timothy Scott Brown, "Subcultures, pop music and politics: skinheads and Nazi Rock in England and Germany", *Journal of Social History*, Vol.38, No.1, 2004, p. 164.

⁴⁰² Jack Moore, *Skinheads Shaved for Battle: A Cultural History of American Skinheads*, Madison and London: Popular Press, 1993, p. 106.

Skinheads movement. For example, Ilia Lazarenko's National Front Party is believed to be the most active recruiter of members of the Skinheads movement in Moscow, and from St. Petersburg, partnered with Skinheads, the National-Republican Party.

Most Skinheads stayed in small groupings, unaffiliated with any political party. In Moscow, there were approximately twenty skinhead gangs, the more organised of which had a name, a leader, a regular meeting place, and a structure that allowed rapid mobilisation for participation in some kind of action. There were also several other major skinhead groupings in Moscow, each with 100 to 150 members. Blood and Honour- Russian branch, Hammer skins-Russia, and Объединение бригаду 88 (Brigade Association 88) were created in 1998 when approximately 100 skins from the Белые Булдоги (White Bulldogs) and Лефортовский Фронт (Lefortovo Front) merged.⁴⁰³ Marlene Laruelle pointed out that, in the 1990s, many of the skinhead recruits appear to have been street kids, schooled dropouts with no career prospects or means of economic survival other than petty delinquency; in the 2000s, the movement gentrified: recruits began to come largely from the middle classes, and they no longer considered their enemies to be only foreigners; they included cultural opponents such as punks, rappers, anarchists, National Bolsheviks, alter-globalists, LGBTQ communities and so on.⁴⁰⁴ Members of the Skinheads movement recruited from large cities had easy access to other Skinheads in the West and were more intensively politicised than those from Russia's remote districts. It is undeniably true that the Internet has accelerated the global traffic in skinhead culture and helped forge and sustain a trans local whiteness characterised by an ethos of racial separation, and the fact that young people, despite their

⁴⁰³ «В Москве было также несколько других крупных групп скинхедов, каждая из которых насчитывала 100-150 членов крови и Честь-Российская ветка, Скинны Молотов-Россия, and Объединение бригаду 88 (Brigade Association 88) были созданы в 1998 году, Белые Булдоги и Лефортовский Фронт».

Вячеслав Лихачев, *Нацизм в России*, Москва: Панорама Центр, 2002, сс.116-11..

⁴⁰⁴ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries Doctrines, and Political Battlefield*, New York: Routledge, 2019, pp.164-165.

territorial isolation, move and feel at home within this cyber culture exemplifies its reach and ability to negotiate national and local boundaries.⁴⁰⁵ As we can see, the Internet has enabled Skinhead members to communicate effectively with one another and with people in the West. According to Roger Griffin, the use of the Internet to create a type of fantasy racial utopia in which racial ambitions, no matter how unrealistic, may be depicted as a venue in which virtual communities rehearse their specific mission while evading any sort of reality check.⁴⁰⁶

In addition to the Internet, Skinheads used television channels to watch news and crime-related movies/serials. This racist renaissance and murder-motivated attacks were inspired by these two major sources of recruiting, particularly the Internet. Another recruitment strategy was the Russian March, which has been held yearly since 2005. It was an opportunity for various ultra-nationalist or far-right parties to acquire Skinhead recruits, and the youth movement Nashi actively recruited such people. The only political group in Russia that recruited members of the Skinheads movement, they spent more time practising with this party than any other, particularly with Родина (Motherland). Some of the Skinhead members said that Several people with ties to the NS movement were members of the Rodina party during the most recent parliamentary elections. And they were on the party lists. Therefore, all the skinheads voted for the Rodina party. The websites even carried messages such as vote for Rodina, they are our people, but then just a few days before the parliamentary elections, the government insisted that these people be removed or the party would be barred from competing, so the party had to remove these people from its lists.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Les Back, "Wagner and power chords: skinheadism, white power music and the internet", *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture*, Chigaco: University of Chigaco Press 2002, pp.110-130.

⁴⁰⁶ Roger Griffin, "From slime mould to rhizome: an introduction to the groupuscular right", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.37, No.1, 2003, p. 45.

⁴⁰⁷ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, "Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives", New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 113.

Despite Skinheads' aspirations for these extremist and ultra-nationalist parties, they had their aspirations and plans in mind; most Skinheads were not drawn to these parties, even though the Skinheads wanted their assistance in preparing themselves to solve the problems created by the 1990s without the involvement of political parties. Particularly notable is the lack of considerable involvement with the National Bolshevik Party, which appears to be the most similar to the organisation in terms of social demographics (primarily youth), anti-system and counter-cultural position, and ideological indeterminacy.⁴⁰⁸ According to Andreas Umland, the attractiveness of ultra-nationalist organisations has been hampered by image difficulties, which manifest as conflicts between their declared doctrine and actual history, profile, or leadership.⁴⁰⁹ Andreas Umland, representing the NBP party, emphasised the counter-cultural components of Limonov's artistic biography and political activity, whereas the RNE focused on the use of Nazi symbols.⁴¹⁰ A more appropriate argument here is Sokolov's, which shows that closer collaboration between the NBP, RNE, and skinhead groups was impossible not due to ideological differences, but because their political styles were incompatible, as evidenced by the carefully orchestrated theatricality or symbolic nature of NBP actions would be alien to the group of skinheads, while the paramilitary discipline of the RNE would also be intolerable given the anti-authoritarian outlook of many within the group.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ Stephen Shenfield, *Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements*, New York: M.Sharpe, 2001, p. 190.

⁴⁰⁹ Andreas Umland, "Image dilemmas of the post-Soviet Russian extreme right: a hermeneutic explanation of the stagnating performance of ultra-nationalist parties under Yeltsin and Putin", paper presented at National Identity in Twentieth-Century Eurasia conference, New College, Oxford, 22-4 March 2009, p. 6.

⁴¹⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹¹ Михаил Соколов, «Национал-большевистская партия: идеологическая эволюция и политический стиль», *Русский национализм: идеология и настроение*, Москва: СОВА Центр, 2006, с.143, «Более тесное сотрудничество между НБП, РНЕ и группами скинхедов было невозможным не из-за идеологических разногласий, а потому, что их политические стили были несовместимы, о чем свидетельствует тщательно организованная театральность или символический характер действий НБП.»

3.3.1. Dissemination of information

There are several newspapers and journals dedicated to disseminating information about the work and ideology of the Skinhead movement. *Русская воля* (The Russian Will) had officially joined the National Socialist Association; this publication was distributed in glossy magazine format and included information on how to form your own NSO cell and the importance of physical fitness, photographs of training in fighting without rules, an interview with a skinhead, Hitler salutes, and an article about Hitler's car.⁴¹² Also, magazines such as *Atheneum* and *Our Opinion*. The Skinhead movement's websites were the most numerous, but due to sanctions, many of them are now blocked. The Skinhead websites were: Slavic Union, Unites Slavic National-Socialist Forum, Russian Will, National-Socialist Front, Combat-18 Russia, and Brangolf.⁴¹³ Dmitry Demushkin administered the Slavic Union website, which could be accessed from major Russian cities. The United Slavic National-Socialist Forum and the National Socialist Front were online forums for adherents of the Skinhead movement. Russian Will, Combat-18. They have groups on VKontakte, but the messages are minimal and have only a tiny racist tone. Brangolf was a website that supported Skinheads' official religion, Paganism. All the above groups or websites address racist messages and promote the white supremacist movement. The Sova Centre also catalogues organisations that do not have an online presence. Sova publishes monthly and annual reports mentioning Skinheads and their publications.⁴¹⁴ These were augmented with the works of connected Russian academics, who, unlike the list of web radicals, focus solely on skinhead gangs.⁴¹⁵ The Skinheads movement's smaller organisations, which come from less accessible areas of Russia and have limited access to the internet, produce and distribute their own journals and periodicals locally.

⁴¹² Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, op.cit., p. 109.

⁴¹³ Richard Arnold, *Russian Nationalism and Ethnic Violence. Symbolic violence, lynching, pogrom, and massacre*, New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 59.

⁴¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 59.

⁴¹⁵ Виктор Шнирелмань, *Чистилщики московский улиц*, Москва: Наука, 1994, «Они были дополнены работами связанных русских ученых, которые, в отличие от списка интернет-радикалов, сосредоточены исключительно на бандах скинхедов.»

3.3.2. *The slogans*

There are a few slogans that very effectively characterise the ideology addressed by the Skinheads movement, for example: “Москва для Москвичей” (Moscow for Muscovites). The message provided by this phrase is comparable to the one I will analyse in this section of the paper, but the most notorious is the slogan “Russia for the Russians.”

Russia for Russians / Россия для Русских – it encompasses a wide range of concepts from the nationalist rhetoric of the Skinheads movement. The message communicated by this slogan suggests the exclusion of individuals who do not fulfil the requirements of the white/Aryan race, i.e., non-Russians. The phrase is not new; it began in the nineteenth century during the Tsarist Empire, and it has grown in popularity since then, particularly among young people linked with neo-Nazi activities, ultra-nationalist and right-wing extremist parties. The ideologist to whom this statement is credited is unknown; nonetheless, it is suggested that it belongs to a Black Hundred movement ideologist named Vladimir Gringmut, General Mikhail Skobelev (1843-1882), or perhaps Tsar Alexander the Third of Russia (1845-1894)⁴¹⁶. Vladimir Gringmut certainly used this slogan for the first time in his publications, attributing it to the Russian Monarchist Party. He stated that “clearly sees that if Russia is left to the people of alien stock and religion, and foreigners, not only will it not be the Autocracy, but Russia itself.”⁴¹⁷ Alexander the Third asserted that “Russia should belong to Russians, and all others dwelling on this land must respect and appreciate this people.”⁴¹⁸ The nineteenth-century nationalists fervently supported the

⁴¹⁶ Андрей Иванов, *Россия для русских»: pro et contra. Правые и националисты конца XIX – начала XX вв, о лозунге русского Возрождения*, «Традиционно принято считать, что словосочетание «Россия для русских» впервые было озвучено в царствование Императора Александра III», <https://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=174842> accessed in 15.05.2024.

⁴¹⁷ Андрей Иванов, «Россия для Русских. Правые и националисты конца XIX – начала XXв», *Русская линия*, 2007, «ясно видит, что если Россия будет оставлена людям чужого племени и религии, а для тех, кто вершит, то не только будет автократией, но и самой Россией» » <https://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=174842> accessed in 16.05.2024.

⁴¹⁸ Андрей Иванов, «Россия для Русских. Правые и националисты конца XIX – начала XXв», *Русская линия*, 2007, » <https://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=174842> accessed in 16.05.2024.

idea that Russians deserved more rights than other nationalities because they believed they laid the groundwork for an Empire, then a Great Power, and they accused non-Russians of failing to be sufficiently grateful for the empire's riches. The political parties that arose during the Russian Revolution of 1905 made For the Russians their battle cry, yet were determined to preserve one and unite Russia through the Russification of the non-Russians.⁴¹⁹ The first hostile Other to be targeted was the Jews, and "Russia for Russians" was soon augmented with the slogan "Beat up the Yids and save Russia!"⁴²⁰

The slogan Russia for the Russians reappeared in the 1980s, when the far-right Pamyat mother-movement organised the first placard marches, including the phrase "Russia for the Russians." With the commencement of the Second Chechen War (1999–2009), an animosity against foreigners arose on Russian Federation territory. I believe that the growing percentage of supporters of this slogan between 1990 and 1999 was strongly tied to the instability caused by an empire's disintegration and the increase in the migrant wave from the Caucasus and Central Asia. The total number of its supporters increased from 46% in 1998 to 58% in 2005.⁴²¹ Skinheads frequently use the term "Russians" to refer to ethnic Russians, preferably with a Slavic facial appearance, rather than Russian nationals. This chant has been a common theme at nationalist demonstrations during the annual Unity Day holiday.⁴²² Victims of ethnic and racial violence reported hearing

«Россия должна принадлежать русским, и все, кто живет на этой земле, должны уважать и ценить этот народ».

⁴¹⁹ Андрей Иванов, «Россия для Русских. Правые и националисты конца XIX – начала XXв», *Русская линия*, 2007, «Политические партии, возникшие во время Русской революции 1905 года, сделали Россию своим боевым кличем, но были полны решимости сохранить одну и единую Россию через русификацию нерусских» <https://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=174842> accessed in 16.05.2024.

⁴²⁰ Eric Kaufmann, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities*, New York: Routledge, 2004, pp.138-139.

⁴²¹ Lev Gudkov, "Xenophobia: Past and Present", *Russia in Global Affairs*, No.1, 2006.

⁴²² Simone Schlindwein, "Neo-Nazis on the march in Moscow", *Spiegel*, 2007, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/neo-nazis-on-the-march-in-moscow-we-russians-are-part-of-the-white-race-a-515380.html> accessed in 16.05.2024.

slogans of "Russia for Russians" during attacks.⁴²³ As an example, a group of five Skinhead members attacked a Dagestani child near his school.

3.3.3. *Propaganda*

Members of the Skinheads movement typically distribute journals or fliers to spread their ideals and ideologies. Skinhead members who deal with movement propaganda print, distribute, and publish in forums or groups on the Russian social networking site VKontakte. They have a wide range of materials, from wall sheets to brochures with propagandistic content; photos retrieved from the Internet include the Nazi Germany flag, different SS emblems, and the Tsarist Empire's flag, symbols predominated 33 to 72 images followed by White Power images or slogans 13 images, while only 11 images might be categorised as Russian or Slav and seven were subcultural skinhead images.⁴²⁴ The brochures and other materials significantly help in the promotion of Russian nationalism, and the slogans are anti-non-Russians (anti-Caucasian, anti-Islamic, and anti-Semitic). Messages issued through these channels urge the русские population (Russians on Russian territory, as they are frequently referred to in President Yeltsin's speeches) or Slavs to defend their homeland at all costs against immigrants or individuals with non-Slavic characteristics. The set of propagandistic materials produced within the Skinheads movement is a clear representation of the fact that, through the messages sent, members of the Skinheads movement draw attention to immigrants who invade Russia, work in various jobs, and are frequently accused of selling drugs to Russian children. All of this is comparable to the methods of propaganda utilised under the Nazi era; it presents the people with a misleading image of the opponent.

⁴²³ Patrick Jackson, "Living with race hate in Russia", *BBC News*, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4737468.stm> accessed in 16.05.2024.

⁴²⁴ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, "Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives", New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 138.



Illustration 5: "Immigrant, this is not your country, the owners here are Slavs!" Source: VKontakte



Illustration 6: Global white power and Russian national symbols

Propaganda materials contain a large amount of text that aims to incite hatred in those who come into possession of them; it particularly promotes hatred of Jews and Caucasians. The first image depicts an immigrant from the Caucasus who came to Russia to look for work and is aggressive with anyone who stands in his way. The text concludes with an anti-Islamic metaphor, threatening that the half-moon and crescent would fly over the Kremlin.⁴²⁵



Illustration 7: Stickers used for propaganda purposes.

The four photographs are propagandistic materials for the Skinheads movement and were shared on a VKontakte community dedicated to them. The message of the image in Russian means: “For Russians! We will not give Russia to the Caucasians! We must keep it for our children.” The second image contains the following text: “Take it, you idiot! Caucasian, you visited Russia as a guest, and visitors must return home.” The third image conveys the following message: “Russia's honour is worth more than the Caucasians' work.” The final image shows the following message: “Caucasian threat. They came for our bread, money, women, and jobs. Will we tolerate new Russians like this? Drive out the Caucasian occupants.” These images provide a clear insight into Skinheads' reaction to immigrants, particularly those from the Caucasus region, and that Russian territory is reserved for the offspring of Russians. Messages highlight the significance of white

⁴²⁵ Ibidem, p. 140.

supremacy, which seeks to defend its land, and these depictions build a distorted image of immigrants.



Illustration 8: “Russians are coming! Russia for Russians and Moscow for Muscovites!” Source: VKontakte

3.4. The destructive deeds of the Skinhead movement

In this subchapter, I will look at the term *aktsiia*, which refers to the ethnic violence of Skinhead members that reached a high level in post-Soviet Russia, notably in the 1990s, and compare it to the 2023 figures.

Regardless of the recruitment methods used (different meetings, concerts, or the Internet), and even if ideologically several currents (nationalism, fascism, etc.) that form the ideology of the movement are combined, the members of this movement consider themselves Skinheads, capable of hate-motivated attacks and murders, all of which are precursors to the events that messed up Russia in the 1990s. They were and continue to feel themselves responsible for restoring order through their competence and capability to act (*aktsiia*). This word, which perfectly embodies the political ideology of the Skinhead movement, can be explained in several ways:

1. Чистки (Purge)
2. Зачистки (Cleaning out)

3. Симметричный насилие (symbolic violence)
4. Линчевание (Lynching)
5. Погром (Pogrom)
6. Масакры (Massacre)

These xenophobic crimes send diverse messages to victims, and each type of violence targets different nationalities. For example:

Table 2: Axes of varieties of ethnic violence⁴²⁶

Scale of violence/targets			
Targets	Few		Many
	Property	Symbolic violence "сжаться!" / "cower!"	Pogrom "оставить!" / "Leave!"
		Lynching "вести себя!" / "behave!"	Massacre/Purge/Cleaning out. "погибнуть!" / "perish!"

Below, I will detail with examples the four major categories of ethnic violence. As shown in the chart above, there is a distinction: if some sorts of violence do not harm individuals, they do cause damage to their property. If we examine closely, the signals delivered to persons targeted by ethnic violence are the same. Skinheads use the term "lynching" to describe any sort of punishment that targets the data subject, not just murder. For example, members of the Skinheads movement initially attack the property, but it is critical that they also attack the victim to avoid resistance and potential attacks from him. In the case of the victim, this is known as качики (is used widely in everyday racist speech to refer to those of Armenian or of undefined ethnic origin but presumed to be from the Caucasus region).⁴²⁷ And the difference between the number of fatalities being fewer or higher; for example, at a massacre carried out by members of the Skinhead movement, the number of casualties ranges from 3 to 5. According to Richard Arnold, the message of an attack on more than 10 individuals is substantively different from one on three; therefore, grouping them is a

⁴²⁶ Richard Arnold, *Russian Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict. Symbolic violence, lynching, pogrom, and massacre*, New York: Routledge, p. 8.

⁴²⁷ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, "Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives", New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 252.

stretch; yet the gap in meaning between attacks on three and ten people is not as big as that between two and three.⁴²⁸

According to the same author, symbolic violence destroys property if it occurs in numerous places (synagogues, residences of ethnic victims). Skinheads also assault victims and their places of sale at marketplaces; for example, if four such places belong to the same ethnic group (Armenians, Georgians, etc.), are in the same city, and are attacked on the same day, Skinheads refer to this as a pogrom. The lynching and massacre have very similar messages attached to them. For Skinheads, a massacre is more than just killing the victims; it also includes rape and mass beatings. The data below shows that between 2006 and 2009, xenophobic attacks of any kind reached relatively high proportions, but nowadays, between 2023 and February 2024, these types of xenophobic acts are much lower:

Table 3: Ethnic violence between 2001-2009 by type⁴²⁹

Year	Symbolic violence	Lynching	Pogrom	Massacre
2001	12	8	11	6
2002	38	49	18	12
2003	23	35	6	11
2004	21	53	8	13
2005	23	81	13	15
2006	21	73	14	20
2007	24	100	4	12
2008	17	117	5	10
2009	15	62	4	10
Total	194	578	83	109

For example, in 2001, the number of crimes committed against the bodies of ethnic others accounted for 40% of all crimes against ethnic groups. In 2006, the figure was 72.4%, presuming that crimes against the body are more serious than those against property.⁴³⁰ Each type of ethnic violence targets a certain ethnic group. Violence against Jews is most common

⁴²⁸ Richard Arnold, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

⁴²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 34

⁴³⁰ Alexandr Verkhovsky and Galina Kozhenikova, "Anti-Semitism in Russia: January-September 2006", www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/conference-papers/2006/10/d9301/, accessed in 14.05.2024.

because it is part of the Skinheads movement's basic ideology. According to the Nazi period, Jews were accused of various acts that led to the destabilisation of society, and even today, members of the Skinheads movement accuse Jews of the chaos caused by the downfall of the USSR. The Jewish people face symbolic violence, whereas the Caucasians face lynching and pogroms, and the Roma population face massacre. As stated above, lynching also targets African citizens. The following representation shows the four categories of attacks on several categories of minorities (non-Russian).

In connection with the vandalism produced by Skinhead members, according to UCSJ reports, fully 20 anti-Semitic signs which were posted in public places in various cities of Russia between 2001 and 2006, bearing demonic pictures of Jews and messages such as “Jews, return to your homeland.”⁴³¹ Over nearly a year, I developed many strategies using statistics provided by the Moscow Sova Centre. I divided it into three parts: hate-motivated attacks, murder, and xenophobic vandalism.

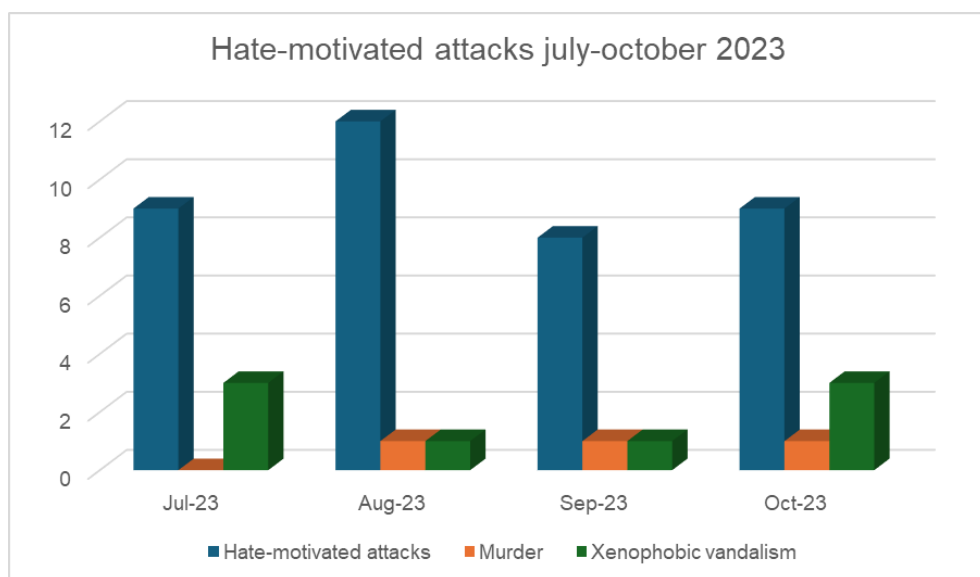


Illustration 9: “Hate-motivated attacks from July to October 2023”

⁴³¹ “Union of Councils of Former Soviet Jewry”, *Bigotry Monitor*, 2000-2009, <https://www.ucsj.org/> accessed in 14.05.2024.

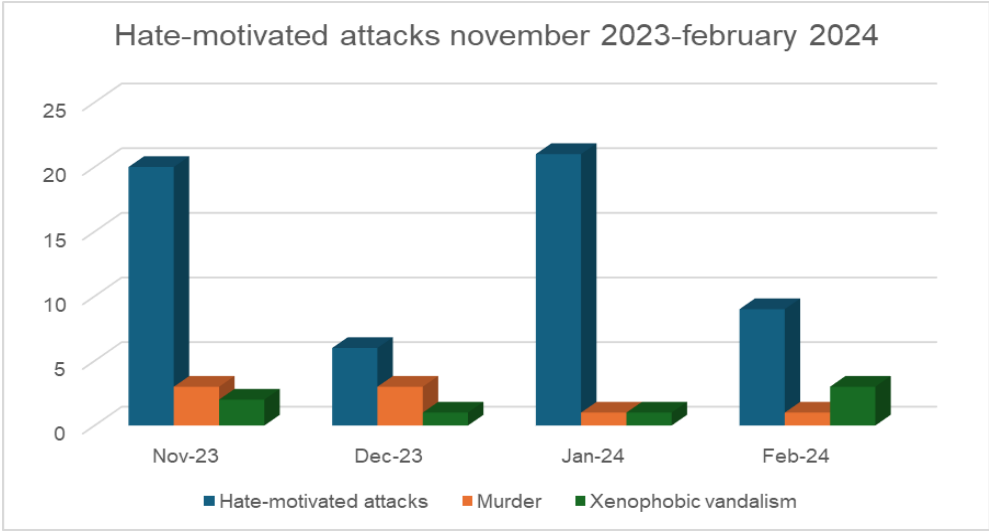


Illustration 10: "Hate-motivated attacks from November 2023 to February 2024"

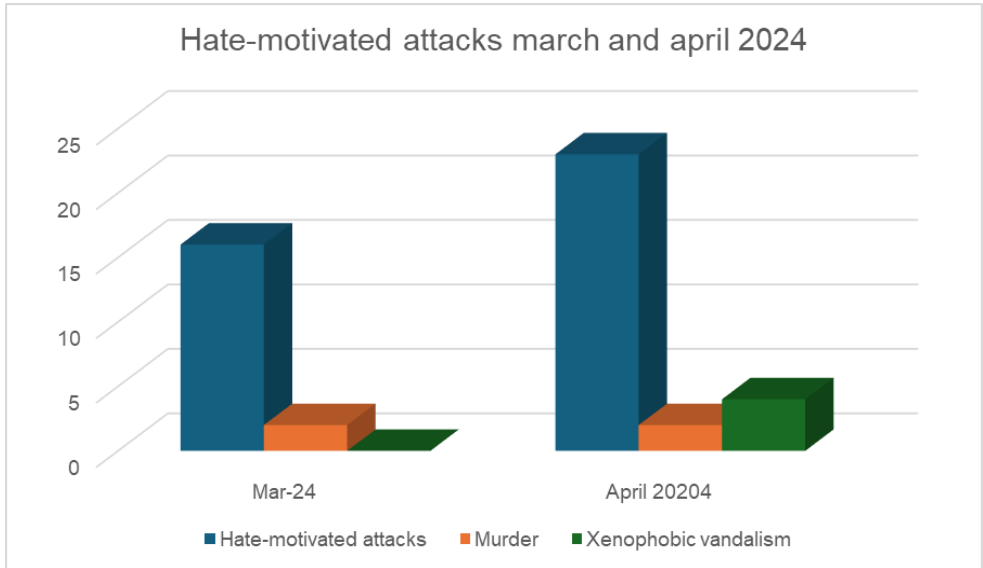


Illustration 11: "Hate-motivated attacks from March to April 2024"

There were 38 ethnic attacks between July and October 2023, including about 10 acts of vandalism, and approximately 6 persons were killed as a result. For example, on August 21, 2023, a Gabonese graduate of a Yekaterinburg faculty was slain by stabbing in a pub, where a group of Skinheads were performing a concert.

Between November 2023 and February 2024, 54 ethnic incidents were identified, with about six individuals killed and five acts of vandalism. For example, the Moscow SOVA Centre was based on several videos posted on the Telegram channel, where Skinheads members posted scenes of brutal attacks by minorities in Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as attacks on non-Slavic-looking people. It is difficult to discuss these numbers from 2023-2024 because of the sanctions imposed on Russia; we did not have access to all the data about such attacks.

According to statistics reported by the SOVA Centre in Moscow between March and April 2024, the number of hate crimes has doubled, with the major reason being the terrorist attack on Crocus City Hall in Moscow. Members of extremist and ultra-nationalist groups on Telegram explained their activities, claiming that they perceived them as retaliation for the terrorist assault. According to the Moscow SOVA Centre, the total number of acts of far-right violence this month was approximately twice as high as in the previous month.⁴³²

The evidence presented with the help of statistics from 2000-2024 demonstrates that there are certain fluctuations in the crimes and ethnic attacks of the Skinheads movement, which are, the years 1990-2000 have resulted in the highest figures among the victims, because in my consideration, the government at the time did not prioritise it, given the economic and social climate at the time. The four action categories represent each ethnic group that Skinhead members target. The figures depicted here vividly demonstrate several sorts of violence. Jews are targeted by Skinheads through systematic violence, African citizens through lynching, Caucasian civilians through pogroms, and Roma by massacre. Skinheads consistently utilise violence against a specific ethnic group.

Author Richard Arnold points out the thick theory of ethnic violence, the so-called ethnic vigilantism. He asserted that five approaches described that kind of violence, but taking the case study of the Skinheads movement, I will focus on the categories that best fit the situation in Russia in the 1990s and, in my opinion, led to such actions, namely: the modernisation approach and cyclical approach.

⁴³² "Russian Nationalism and Xenophobia in March 2024", *SOVA Research Center*, <https://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/news-releases/2024/04/d47075/> accessed in 17.05.2024.

The Modernisation approach - Emil Pain, a Russian ethnographer, stated that disputes in the former Soviet Union are a result of modernisation and the revelation of ethnic diversity; he utilised the notion of cultural distance to explain the exodus of ethnic Russians from the union countries.⁴³³ According to research, the closer the ethnic gap between Russians and the majority communities, the lower the rate of Russian emigration.⁴³⁴ The fall of Russia's communist system also brought a wave of modernisation and the revelation of ethnic differences; while all Russians were present before the disintegration, each was divided ethnically in the 1990s, resulting in a chasm between Russians and non-Russians. Pain believed that cultural differences limit the capacity for mutual adaptation to the presence of the Other, particularly in the 1990s, and that the proliferation of stereotypes of minorities, as well as the role of the media in instilling fear, leads to violent behaviour.⁴³⁵ Furthermore, modernist theorists argue that throughout the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union, the modernisation process had a significant impact on the Russian economy and social infrastructure, which were comparatively modernised. Modernisation theorists would argue that the Soviet system had been its gravedigger, modernising society to the point where it could no longer be constrained by the Soviet regime's authoritarian carapace, the maturation of Soviet society had led to the democratic revolution, but the nature of Soviet modernisation was highly ambivalent, as was its relationship to democracy.⁴³⁶ In Russia in the 1990s, democracy was looking for a foundation, but what transpired was the establishment of a roof-down democracy. Russia existed in two parallel universes at the same time in the 1990s: one in a changing modern world, and the other in a world

⁴³³ Ibidem, p. 45.

⁴³⁴ Эмил Паин, *Этнополитический маятник: динамика и механизма этнополитический Процессов в Постсоветской Росий*, Москва: РАН, 2004, с.7, «Согласно исследованию, чем больше этнический разрыв между русскими и большинством общин, тем ниже уровень русской эмиграции».

⁴³⁵ Эмил Паин, *Этнополитический маятник: динамика и механизма этнополитический Процессов в Постсоветской Росий*, Москва: РАН, 2004, сс.190-191, «культурные различия ограничивают способность к взаимной адаптации к присутствию других, особенно в 90-е годы, и что распространение стереотипов в отношении меньшинств, а также роль средств массовой информации в нагнетании страха ведут к насильственному поведению.»

⁴³⁶ Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, London, and New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 455.

of authoritarian mentalities dominated by those with Weimar syndrome and nostalgic for communism.

The cyclical approach – Mark Beissinger argued that the disintegration of the Soviet state could not have occurred without the effects of tidal influences of one nationalism on another; as union republics claimed sovereignty and independence, it encouraged others to do the same until the impossible became the inevitable; the same logic can be applied to the use of violence in these bids for independence, with later independence bids being more lethal than earlier ones.⁴³⁷ In the previous chapter, I talked about a cyclical nationalism that only leads back to the ideology of a great power, such as the USSR. In the case of the Skinheads movement, while not all are politically associated, they are attempting to destabilise the democracy that was intended to be established in post-Soviet Russia because they see this process of democratisation as a product of the decadent West.

As a result, when it comes to ethnic violence, we must take a thin and thick approach, as the author Beissinger described it:

1. Thick approach - explains it in terms of the perpetrators' motivations and subjective realities.
2. Thin approach - explain violence by referring to the forces that shape a certain context, sometimes without using the concept of ethnicity.⁴³⁸

Beissinger, for example, alludes to the Skinheads' conduct on a universal level, but other authors concentrate solely on the individual level. We cannot declare that both types are correct because not all Skinheads are politically active and aggressive; many have chosen this path solely for fun and fashion. One of the primary obstacles that contributed to such a high level of ethnic violence was the 1990s' economic problems, as well as the fact that there was considerable rivalry for jobs. The Skinheads movement was more active between 1990 and 1999, before Putin took power, because there was a severe labour shortage, and people who relocated from other parts of the USSR accepted low-wage jobs of any kind. The Skinheads movement is mostly a reaction to market liberalisation, which encourages the migratory flow of the workforce. This, in my opinion, is what led to ethnic violence among immigrants as well as social animosity.

⁴³⁷ Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 272.

⁴³⁸ Ibidem, p. 273.

Richard Arnold proposed that the observed consequences of this line of theorising would be that perpetrators of ethnic violence will use economic rationales to justify their conduct, and that higher economic threats would be met with the most violent reactions.⁴³⁹ Another reason for ethnic violence is the Skinheads' belief in white supremacy. According to Berger and Luckmann, otherness in this view is threatening since it contradicts previously held community understandings and hence is subject to annihilation.⁴⁴⁰ Direct provocation is a component of the thin approach of ethnic violence. We can discuss how ethnic violence has nothing to do with a person's ethnicity and is simply a reaction to external variables such as ensuring protection. There is a typical table that explains some of the characteristics of the Skinheads movement in terms of ethnic violence and victim-dehumanising discourse.

Table 4: Coding guidelines and examples⁴⁴¹

Classification	Guidelines	Examples
Crime	Criminal activity (coded according to imminence and nature of targets).	"Thieves", "swindlers", "murderers", "Zionist occupied government", "Gypsy death camp", "drug dealers"
Dehumanizing rhetoric	Accusations of primitiveness, comparison to animals.	"Which one is the monkey?", "Caucasians are less intelligent."
Economics	Non-criminal behaviour that detracts from the economy of the country.	"They are stealing our jobs", "Armenians control the markets."
Direct provocation	Commands to execute a particular sentence, idolization of violence, and photographs of violent acts.	"Drive the Чёрные (Black men) from Kondropoga and other Russian cities".

As we have seen thus far, ethnic violence is inextricably linked to modern-day economic concerns formed by hate speech and, of course, Skinheads' music, which we'll discuss later. According to Shenfield, the

⁴³⁹ Richard Arnold, *Russian Nationalism and Ethnic Violence. Symbolic violence, lynching, pogrom, and massacre*, New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 55.

⁴⁴⁰ Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1966, p.

⁴⁴¹ Richard Arnold, op.cit., p. 63.

question remains whether the appeal to violence is philosophically linked to the evolution of a pre-modern era free of the humanistic, victim-centred discourses of violence that characterise the modern era, or if it is a core component of an intrinsically violent and destructive modernism.⁴⁴² The Skinhead movement is using ethnic violence not to conclusively reject modernism, but to return to an early modern position, a period when Russia was regarded a great power or the Nazi Germany. From this perspective, members of the Skinheads movement agreed with Limonov and Dugin: "they appear to agree with Eduard Limonov's defence and celebration of violence in and of itself, as opposed to Aleksandr Dugin's more philosophical argument for legitimising violence, which has been naturally rejected by modern humanistic civilisation."⁴⁴³

The breadth and form of everyday xenophobia, and its infiltration of public discourse in post-Soviet Russia, are widely documented.⁴⁴⁴ According to VTsIOM, the growth of xenophobia in the population began in 1989, when approximately 20% of the Soviet population expressed xenophobic attitudes, with 6 to 12% potentially aggressively xenophobic. By 1990, the proportion of the population expressing ethnic antipathies had risen to 35 to 40%, with ethnic negativism centred on negative attitudes towards people from the Caucasus region and gypsies.⁴⁴⁵ Mutual ethnic and national hostility in Russia continued to rise until 1996, then fell slightly in 1997 before rising again after the 1998 financial crisis. Now, more than half of Russians consistently share ethno-xenophobic sentiments. Political groups, most notably Rodina and DPNI, have successfully combined elements of social

⁴⁴² Stephan Shenfield, *Russin Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements*, New York and London: M.Sharpe, 2001, p. 195.

⁴⁴³ Ibidem, p. 206.

⁴⁴⁴ Александр Верковский, *Цена ненависти: национализм в России и противодействие расистским преступлениям*, Москва: Сова Центр, 2005, «Широта и форма повседневной ксенофобии и ее проникновение в общество в постсоветской России хорошо задокументированы.»

⁴⁴⁵ Лев Гудков, *Негативная идентичность*, Москва: Новое Литературное Оборение, ВТсОМ-А, «рост ксенофобии среди населения начался в 1989 году, когда примерно 20% населения Советского Союза выражали ксенофобские настроения, а от 6 до 12% - потенциально агрессивную ксенофобию. К 1990 году доля населения, проявляющего этническую антипатию, составляла 35-40%, причем этнический негативизм был связан с негативным отношением к выходцам из Кавказского региона и цыганам».

populism with the exploitation of ethnic xenophobia to mobilise widespread anti-migrant sentiments.⁴⁴⁶

3.4.1. What caused the increase in xenophobic feelings among these young individuals in the Skinheads movement?

The youngest generation (16 to 25 years old) has a higher level of ethnic intolerance, and their xenophobia is more extreme. Specialists such as Gudkov believe that the loss of the status of high power contributed to such feelings; however, he also states that the main issue is not the loss of this status and national identity, but how the strategies aimed at managing the crisis caused by the dissolution of the USSR were implemented, and how the term *russkie* was used by evoking the past, national values, and symbols. In terms of explaining the rise of fascism, Leonova stated that the data refute the hypothesis that the most educated segments of the population show greater support for modern ideas and principles, and that, on the contrary, the most socially and economically active segments of the population are more likely to express intolerant attitudes towards other nationalities.⁴⁴⁷

Research of xenophobic behaviour among Skinheads members is required to show that "circumspection and hostility towards others have become an underlying element of everyday life and have no direct relation to any real interethnic relations and competition."⁴⁴⁸ The analysis presented in this chapter provides an overview of the traits and racial messages associated with the Skinhead movement. Members of the Skinheads

⁴⁴⁶ Александр Верковский, *Цена ненависти: национализм в России и противодействие расистским преступлениям*, Москва: Сова Центр, 2005, с.96, «Взаимная этническая и национальная враждебность в России продолжала расти до 1996 года, затем несколько снизилась в 1997 году, а затем вновь возросла после финансового кризиса 1998 года. Сегодня более половины россиян последовательно разделяют этно-ксенофобские чувства. Политические группы, прежде всего Родина и ДПНИ, успешно сочетают элементы социального популизма с эксплуатацией этнической ксенофобии для мобилизации широко распространенных антимигрантских настроений.»

⁴⁴⁷ Anastassia Leonova, "Electoral choice, cultural capital, and xenophobic attitudes in Russia, 1994-2006", in M.Laruelle (ed.), *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, London and New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 146.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 153.

movement employ different terminology and types of violence depending on their ethnic group. For instance, качики, нелегалый, чёрные and нерусские these are terms that target people of colour and those who come from the Caucasus (Armenians, Komi, Muslims, and Jews), More blatantly racist language, such as blacks and whites, are used to reject nationalism theory and emphasise racism as the genuine ideology of skinhead.⁴⁴⁹

3.5. The sound of hate: Neo-Nazi music

David Moore established a separation between visual and performing style.⁴⁵⁰

1. Visual style - Refers to the visual aspect of the overall style, such as hairstyles, clothing, and tattoos.
2. Performative style - It refers to the types of activities in which skinheads engage, such as fights and concerts.

Moore believes that the visual style is what distinguishes the Skinhead movement. The visual component of style is important to a skinhead's cultural world...visual style serves as the grammar of everyday contact for members of these groups. Instead of a formalised organisation, skinheads employ a visual style to organise their connections, identify friends and foes, categorise social sorts, and announce their affiliation. Visual style is more than a collection of garments that can be discarded at any time; it is an attitude towards life shown via clothing and behaviour. Wearing a skinhead visual style indicates a categorical hostility to the mainstream world.⁴⁵¹ Performative style refers solely to implementing and promoting the visual style of Skinhead members, which is the identity that defines the Skinhead movement. Performative style is intertwined with the visual style of Skinhead groups. According to David Moore, performative style is more

⁴⁴⁹ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, "Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives", New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 133.

⁴⁵⁰ David Moore, *The Lads in Action: Social Process in an Urban Youth Subcultures*, Aldershot: Arena, 1994, p. 17.

⁴⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 36.

than just a set of actions; it constitutes the identity of the Skinheads movement and establishes specific boundaries for people who are not members of this type of movement. Skinhead identity can be understood as constituted through performative style activities.⁴⁵²

In this section, I will examine this performative style concerning the music it approaches, as well as the influence it has on both the performers and the victims.

Blood and Honour and Hammerskin are two organisations that have had a significant impact on performers' styles. They were involved in writing music that affected the 1990s scene. The music of white power, as it is sometimes referred to, entered the Skinhead movement in America and England in the 1970s, as well as the Russian scene. For Skinheads members, these are more than just music to listen to in their spare time; they include messages that symbolise a philosophy of hatred and violence. With the rise of the Skinheads movement's racist offshoot, they produced a white supremacist variant of the skinhead-related rock genre dubbed Oi! (also known as the purposeful euphemism Rock Against Communism or RAC).⁴⁵³

This kind of music grew fast in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Several causes contributed to the growth: economic problems and the surge of migrants have led to the growth of right-wing extremist movements. As a result, the number of people distributing this type of music increased, and the most effective way to distribute this music was the Internet. The Internet played a significant role in the propagation and spread of white power music, allowing purchasers of white power music to bypass traditional channels of music distribution, channels that effectively locked white power music out.⁴⁵⁴

Skinheads saw these concerts as an important occasion in forming the group's cohesiveness. Concerts organised by bands whose musical genre

⁴⁵² Mary Jane Kehily and Anoop Nayak, "Gender undone subversion, regulation and embodiment in the work of Judith Butler", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol.27, No.4, 2006, pp.460-461.

⁴⁵³ "The Sounds of Hate. The White Power Music Scene in the United States in 2012", ADL, 2016, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/sounds-hate> accessed in 15.05.2024.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibidem.

was white supremacy rock are held in front of a relatively small audience, consisting solely of members of such movements as Skinheads. The bands chose their unique names to send a xenophobic message, firstly, inciting animosity against foreigners (non-Russians). And the message communicated by the lyrics promotes hatred and violence. Musical preferences have long been associated with subcultural solidarity because they allow people to feel like they belong to a community.⁴⁵⁵ Furthermore, Hesmondhalgh stated that music remained a location for the expression of group identity⁴⁵⁶, while Brown emphasised that for the Skinhead movement, music has also been a source of conflict over subcultural validity, as conventional reggae and ska tastes gave way to the more punk-influenced Oi!⁴⁵⁷

The most visible example of this white supremacist bands' politicisation is Rock Against Communism (RAC), which eventually became part of the socialist national black metal musical genre. On the local scene in Russia, specialised literature presenting and analysing this type of music receives little attention. According to Russian academic Vyacheslav Likhachev, "a skinhead specialist in post-Soviet Russia, song lyrics play an important role in the spread of skinhead ideology".⁴⁵⁸ Among the most well-known Nazi rock bands in post-Soviet Russia are: Штурм (The Storm), Русское гетто (The Russian Getto, from 1997 this group has changed its name to Коловрат/Swastika), Белые Булдоги (White bulldogs), Вандал (The Vandals), Дэвизион (The Vision), and the band called Totenkopf from Sankt Petersburg. The music created by these white supremacist rock bands is recognised in Russia as коррозия металла (Corrosion of Metal) From my perspective, this moniker can also be translated as the metal that tears since

⁴⁵⁵ Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock*, 1983, London: Constable, p. 215.

⁴⁵⁶ David Hesmondhalgh, "Subcultures, scenes, or tribes? None of the above", *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol.8, No.1, 2005, p. 26.

⁴⁵⁷ Timothy Brown, "Subcultures, pop music and politics: skinheads and Nazi rock in England and Germany", *Journal of Social History*, Vol.38, No.1, 2004, p. 157.

⁴⁵⁸ «Будучи специалистом по скинхедам в постсоветской России, тексты песен играют важную роль в распространении идеологии скинхедов». Вячеслав Лихачев, *Нацизм в Росий*, Москва: Панорама Центр, 2002, сс.113..

the lyrics have a great impact on the listeners, and in these verses, the influence of the philosophies mentioned above in the paper is mixed. The bands' songs have a racist, fascist, and Nazi undertone, with the message emphasising a war against invaders (immigrants, anyone without Slavic or Aryan traits). According to academics studying the Skinhead movement, the most listened to bands are Kolovrat (Swastika) and Terror. For example, one of Kolovrat's songs is dedicated to the Russian nation, to the pride of national identity: "I will cut open the rotten apple and /clean out everything rotten. /We will do the same with Russia / and we will live freely. Pride in race and nation/The taste of real struggle/We will win with this feeling/Knowing that we are not slaves."⁴⁵⁹ Another example is Russia's actual youth, which emphasises the individual level previously discussed, and concentrates on the individual in question: "We are the real youth/We bring the flame of freedom to Europe/You can never kill the Spirit of Struggle/ the nations stood up for the Last Battle."⁴⁶⁰

According to an interview with a member of the Skinhead movement, he stated that: "You could say that the music drew me into the movement... How? Basically, in 2001, I went on a vacation to Orel and met a guy there... who was listening to the band Королишутъ...I started to listen to them. A year later, I met up with him again and inquired what he was listening to now, to which he replied Kolovrat. That's an NS group. I was already interested in this...so after a few days, I went and asked him to shave my head."⁴⁶¹ Music is one of the motors that brings these young people together, and it serves as the focal point for their introduction into the Skinheads movement. Most of the time, these musical genres are influenced by skinhead ideology, a fondness for Russian paganism, and above all, the

⁴⁵⁹ Группа Коловрат, «Я разрежу гнилое яблоко/Вычищу всё, что сгнило/Точно так же поступим с Россией/И заживём свободно/Гордость за расу и нацию/Вкус настоящей борьбы/Мы победим с этим чувством/Зная что не рабы» <https://www.nomorelyrics.net/ru/song/9360.html> accessed in 16.05.2024.

⁴⁶⁰ Группа Коловрат «Это мы - настоящая молодежь/Мы несем Европе пламя свободы/Дух Борьбы никогда не убьешь/На Последнюю Битву встали народы» <https://www.nomorelyrics.net/ru/song/9360.html> accessed in 16.05.2024.

⁴⁶¹ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, "Russia's Skinheads. Exploring and rethinking subcultural lives", New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 81.

Aryan concept. The rock of white supremacy intersects with the cultural and political setting of the Skinhead movement. It is frequently regarded as a stimulating topic for conversation and idea exchange among members. According to Frith, music is rarely a cultural purpose in itself; rather, it serves as a background for other activities.⁴⁶² These bands routinely perform performances in regions such as Vorkuta, generally in the House of Miners or the House of Culture of one of the adjacent mining settlements, with local and travelling groups, including foreign ones [...] Concerts were also used to demonstrate subcultural identification, both visually and through active involvement in slams and hostile behaviour towards members of other subcultures.⁴⁶³ Music has a twofold purpose for members of the Skinheads movement, first on an individual level and then on a local level. It combines with the ideals addressed by the Skinheads movement, and such bands' concerts serve as a means of recruiting new Skinheads.

On a global scale, participants of the Skinheads movement were exposed to the music of Western neo-Nazi movements via the Internet. Tarasov emphasized that "delegations of Nazi-skins from both the USA and Europe have visited Russia on numerous occasions and brought with them racist and Nazi audio and video materials and other Nazi paraphernalia, while reliable channels for supplying Russia with Nazi symbolica and literature have been established via the Baltic states."⁴⁶⁴ It is undeniable that the Internet has hastened the global spread of skinhead culture and contributed to the formation and maintenance of a trans local whiteness marked by a racial separation mentality.⁴⁶⁵ The Internet was how Skinheads

⁴⁶² Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock*, London: Constable, 1983, p. 212.

⁴⁶³ Hilary Pilkington, Elena Omelchenko, and Albina Garifzianova, *op.cit.*, p. 84.

⁴⁶⁴ «Делегации нацистских шкур как из США, так и из Европы неоднократно посещали Россию и несли с собой расистские и нацистские аудио- и видеоматериалы и другую нацистскую атрибутику, а также надежные каналы снабжения России нацистской символикой и литературой были созданы через страны Балтии», Aleksandr Tarasov, "Skinheads ou naturel", *Неприкосновенный запас*, Vol.5, N.7, <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA24686BB41EE/BE04249> accessed in 16.05.20204.

⁴⁶⁵ Les Back, "Wagner and power chords: skinheadism, white power music and the internet," *Out of Whiteness: Color, and Politics and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp.110-130.

communicated with each other. Back suggested the use of the Internet solely for the building of a kind of fantasy racial utopia in which racial ambitions, however impossible⁴⁶⁶, can be depicted at a pace at which virtual groups practise their unique mission while evading any sort of reality check.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁶ Les Back, John Solomons, and Michael Keith, "Racism on the internet: mapping neo-fascist subcultures in cyberspace", *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subcultures*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, p. 86.

⁴⁶⁷ Roger Griffin, "From slime mould to rhizome: an introduction to the groupuscular right", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.37, No.1, 2003, p. 45.

Chapter IV.

The Political Youth Movement *Nashi*: the road to managed democracy

Under Putin, nationalism has become an increasingly important and coordinated role in Russia; the Kremlin's approach to politics might be described as controlled pluralism, and its approach to nationalism as managed nationalism.⁴⁶⁸ The managed nationalism is grouped into three distinct categories, which encompass the historical roots of the political youth movement *Nashi*.

1. Tsarist Official nationality - it refers to the fact that the interests of the state take precedence above the interests of the nation; this type aims to unite a collective patriotic sentiment to establish the country's internal equilibrium. This is most evident in the presidential administration's statements in the Kremlin, which delineate the stereotype of a *gosudarstvennik* (*gosudarstvennik* has two meanings here: a supporter of state power, and a person who acts in the highest interest of the state).⁴⁶⁹ In the Russian Empire, a revolutionary but amorphous youth opposition took precedence over the institutionalisation of the proletarian class and the mass revolutionary strikes of 1905, and the youth's organisational capacity increased only marginally after the appearance of an organised working class, and the

⁴⁶⁸ Luke March, "Nationalism for Export? The Domestic and Foreign-Policy Implications of the New Russian Idea", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.64, No.3, 2012, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁹ «сторонник твёрдой государственной власти / человек, мыслящий по-государственному, действующий в высоких государственных интересах», *Грамота*, <https://gramota.ru/meta/gosudarstvennik> accessed in 24.05.2024.

two social classes interacted in such a way that each influenced and was influenced by the other.⁴⁷⁰ The Tsar's youth movements were focused on overthrowing the Tsarist Empire, not on establishing a communist dictatorship. The precursors of the Nashi youth movement were similarly opposed to an autocratic system. However, from the time of the Tsar, the strength/capacity of young people in the process of altering a mindset has been acknowledged, and as a result, leaders have exploited the youth for their interests. For example, the state-funded Tsar Nicholas the Second's youth organisation, the Amusement Forces (Потешные).

2. Cultural nationalism - this category investigates the notion of sustaining the historical and social components of the Russian people, intending to establish a solidarity-based society.
3. Political nationalism - it covers the process of political and social engagement. For example, Lenin's youth political movement, the Komsomol (All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth/ Всесоюзный Ленинский Коммунистический Союз Молодёжи), the state empowers the movement to build an autonomous society while being committed to the state authority.

Referring to the Nashi youth movement, we naturally analyse post-Soviet Russia, particularly Russia under Putin's leadership. During this time, the Russian state encompassed all three groups listed above. The first category establishes the criteria under which the other two nationalisms (cultural and political) gain autonomy. The Nashi youth movement encompasses all these categories of nationalism, the members of this movement did not directly experience these periods in Russian history (Tsarist Empire and Soviet Union), their political and social identity has been influenced by various factors such as books, films, and family or other officials' stories, being at a young age they were easily influenced by these

⁴⁷⁰ Григорий Зиновьев, *История Российской Коммунистической Партии*, Ленинград: Государственное издаиельство, 1925, с.76, «Вся история большевизма есть не что иное, как борьба за воплощение в жизнь идеи гегемонии пролетариата. Начиная с «Друзей Народа», через «Вперед» и «Пролетарий» 1905. Движение ширилось, росло, и, вместе с тем, студенческая молодежь, брошенная п казармы, зажигала и там искры недовольства, ведя пропаганду среди армии.»

factors that contributed to their political formation, all this was fed by the presidential administration, which organized camps (summer camps at Seliger) and promised them important functions in politics and other institutions. In addition to all these features, in this chapter, I will examine the identity of this youth movement, which is based on three key aspects:

1. The legacy of goodwill amongst people has been preserved since the era of Soviet Russia. For example, the reference to the friendship of people stamped by the Soviet tradition of essentializing so-called ethnic differences is combined with xenophobic statements against the allegedly inappropriate behaviour of migrants towards Russian culture.⁴⁷¹
2. Supporting anti-fascist views; for example, the Nashi movement declares itself anti-fascist and fights for the abolition of fascism. They do not endorse the migrant violence performed by the other Skinhead youth organisation, but they also engage in anti-migration marches.
3. The concept of the Great Patriotic War, members of the Nashi movement promote the concept of Soviet nostalgia; the vast majority of the projects they implement and run within the movement involve various commemoration activities, such as restoring soldier's tombs and war monuments, holding regular meetings with veterans, taking memorial trips to the sites of major battles, and so on.⁴⁷²

Throughout this chapter, I will examine the Nashi youth movement through the ideals that it targets, including patriotism and nationalism. The Nashi movement is an example of astro-turfing (an action aimed at concealing an organization's sponsor or sponsors activity that seeks to disguise an organization's sponsor or sponsors to give the idea that members (in the case of the Nashi movement, the kommissar in charge of activities/activist leaders) sponsor and support the organisation, rather than someone else). The Nashi youth movement is also an example of managed

⁴⁷¹ Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism, Foreign Policy, and Identity Debates in Putin's Russia. New Ideological Patterns after the Orange Revolution*, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2012, p. 89.

⁴⁷² Ibidem, p. 92.

nationalism because the Kremlin supports the activities and “aggressive actions of this organisation.”⁴⁷³

I am going to examine the historical, political, and geopolitical trajectory of the Nashi youth political movement that inspired its actions; in short, this trajectory is divided into two parts: contentious politics (2005-2008) and civil transfer during the Putin-Medvedev administration (2008-2012). Two fundamental approaches underpin the establishment of this movement, and I will explain all of this throughout this chapter:

- Street approach (sovereign democracy promotion and the protests, for example, the Bronze Soldier Crisis).
- Projects-megaprojects approach: Our Houses, Run with Me, Piggies Against (campaign against expired products in stores), and Stop Kham! (campaign against human trafficking and other illegal activities).

Furthermore, I will analyse the propaganda utilised, particularly during the events of the summer camp at Lake Seliger between 2005 and 2012, which discussed recruiting “exceptional” young people from both Russia and outside, in tandem with the Ministry of Sport, Tourism, and Youth Policy. Organised camps were somewhat like those of the Nazi regime, and because the Nashi movement was extremely loyal to the state and particularly loyal to President Putin, they were dubbed Putinjugend or Hitlerjugend 2.0, especially given that a personality cult was formed around Putin's image, as Hitler was described in the glory period as a Messiah who saves the world, in this case the decadent West.

4.1. Description of the movement and its background

4.1.1. Explaining the name

The Nashi movement's name has long been discussed in Russia, with the founders, Yakemenko and Surkov, giving it that name. Nashi was first

⁴⁷³ Armand Goșu, *Putin obsesia imperiului*, București: Polirom, 2022, p. 31.

used by journalist Alexander Nevzorov in 1991 as the title of his documentary film, before the Nashi movement emerged. The documentary was created to illustrate an incident that occurred in the city of Vilnius, Lithuania (previously a member of the USSR), during which the Soviets faced an unsettling reality: independence. Lithuania declared independence from the USSR in the 1990s, becoming the first country to do so. The journalist Nevzorov founded the Nashi movement to defend the Russian population who remained outside the Russian border following the disintegration of the USSR; however, due to the chaos that ensued, no one backed this movement, and it swiftly disbanded. By the 2000s, I believe that attention had shifted to an important principle for Russians: us versus them. After the breakup, there were not all (brothers and sisters) of Russia, and with the increase in the flow of immigrants and the numerous ethnic attacks, movements, particularly youth movements, that supported this cleavage between US and THEM gained momentum and support from the Kremlin. When asked about the situation between US and THEM, a few members of the Nashi movement had differing viewpoints, for example: "It's not just supposed to be, there surely are! It was exactly because there are so many of them that we decided to confront them. Others? Well, they are people who want to harm Russia, move the country to the edge of chaos and lawlessness."⁴⁷⁴ Although in my opinion, this response seems to instigate hatred and violence when it comes to them (adversaries or foes), the Nashi movement is not regarded as a violent (physical) movement based solely on threats and propaganda. No data shows any acts of violence against anyone, as there are in the Skinhead movement. Other members of the movement, who were asked about this cleavage, believe that "well, no! It is just Vasya's (Vasily Yakemenko) imagination. Apart from this, it's just a very proper word, our, our own, dear, and home. It sounds good!"⁴⁷⁵ And others are

⁴⁷⁴ Oleg Belov, "Nashi versus Nazi: Anti-Fascist Activity as a Means of Mass Youth Mobilization in Contemporary Russia", *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Vol.26, No.2, 2008, p. 54.

⁴⁷⁵ «Ну, нет! Это просто воображение Ваши (Василия Якеменко). Кроме этого - просто очень подходящее слово наше, наше собственное, дорогое и домовое. Звучит

claiming that “read our manifesto! If you do not agree with it, then you are not one of us, but this does not mean you are an enemy of the people; that’s your choice. If the manifesto does not contradict your principles, then you are one of us, but this does not necessarily mean that you are obliged to join our movement. Simply, you can agree or disagree.”⁴⁷⁶ In Russian grammar, the word Nashi is a possessive pronoun, plural for all genders, and is only declined in the nominative case to indicate who is acting. The Nashi movement is defined as a person who belongs to our community and acts following the movement's demands and goals.

The Political Youth Movement Nashi (Молодёжное демократическое антифашистское движение Наши/Youth Democratic Anti-Fascist Movement Ours!) in Russia is characterised as a component of a long legacy of youth organisations financially supported by the state; it is analogous to the youth movement Amusement Army (Потешные) of Tsarist Russia, the Komsomol of Soviet Russia, and Walking Together (Идущие Вместе) of contemporary Russia. It is an organisation established and funded by the Kremlin to support and promote the state's objectives. The Nashi Movement had no power over policies and practices aimed at the purposes of presidential administration; it was just an easily influenced tool for the state to attain its objectives. Nashi was a government-organized non-governmental organisation (GONGO) rather than an independent NGO.⁴⁷⁷ The most important contact between the Nashi movement and the state is the originator of this movement, Vasily Yakemenko, an important person in Putin's presidential administration. He also formed the movement Walking Together (Идущие Вместе). The principal organisers of Nashi were Deputy Chief of Staff and Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov and Kremlin political consultant Gleb Pavlovsky⁴⁷⁸ another top Kremlin founder and collaborator

неплохо!», «Обукновенный фашизм», *Kommersant*, 2005, <http://www.inosmi.ru/stories/01/05/29/2996/235818.html> accessed in 02.06.2024

⁴⁷⁶ Oleg Belov, *op. cit.*, pp.54-55.

⁴⁷⁷ Charles Hauss, *Comparative Politics – Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*, Ninth Edition, Stanford: Cengage Learning, 2015, p. 244.

⁴⁷⁸ Walter Laqueur, *Putinism: Russia and Its Future with the West*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015, p. 230.

is Vladislav Surkov, also regarded as President Putin's ideologist. Their meetings before the formation of the Nashi youth political movement were pro-Russian, nationalist-patriotic, and frequently anti-Western or anti-liberal. During the meeting and subsequent street demonstrations, young people took to the streets to support these acts, heralding the beginning of this youth movement in the spring of 2005.

The Nashi movement began its political course as a patriotic movement that encouraged support for the Kremlin at a turbulent time: the severe political issues that arose shortly after the Orange Revolution, when many opposition movements arose. The Orange Revolution was a moment when the vast majority of young people with opposing political views gathered, with the Nashi political movement attracting approximately 50,000 young people and Kremlin sympathisers.

There are four causes behind the creation of the youth movement Nashi:

1. The fundamental reason is an aversion to the idea that the Orange Revolution may expand to Russian territory. This dread of overturning the Kremlin regime, that the opposition may not be able to win elections. Given the context of the Orange Revolution, Oleg Belov refers to the Nashi movement as a tool for suppressing the so-called Orange Danger⁴⁷⁹, political scientist Valerie Sperling identifies the Nashi movement as a force that maintains the status quo to avert a colour revolution⁴⁸⁰ and the authors, Maya Atwal and Edwin Bacon, spotted the Nashi movement as a pro-regime force to be mobilised against the opposition.⁴⁸¹ According to these experts, the primary goal of establishing this youth movement was to implant in other young people a sense of anti-orange revolution to prevent the development

⁴⁷⁹ Oleg Belov, "Nashi versus Nazi: Anti-Fascist Activity as a Means of Mass Youth Mobilization in Contemporary Russia", *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Vol.26, No.2, 2008, p. 49.

⁴⁸⁰ Valerie Sperling, "Nashi Devushki: Gender and Political Youth Activism in Putin's and Medvedev's Russia", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol.28, No.2, 2012, p. 237.

⁴⁸¹ Maya Atwal and Edwin Bacon, "The Youth Movement Nashi: Contentious Politics, Civil Society, and Party Politics", *East European Politics*, Vol.28, No.3, 2012, p. 256.

of *en masse* mobilisation of the young population against the Kremlin. The previous movement, Walking Together, was not prepared politically or socially for such a campaign against the orange confrontation; because it had very few members and had minimal impact on the Russian youth of the 2000s; consequently, the movement quickly disintegrated, giving way to the Nashi youth movement, which had more power and influence among Russian youth.

2. The second reason to explain the Kremlin's decision to form the Nashi movement is connected with national legislation No.122 FZ, or The Law on Monetisation (Монетизация), which was passed in August 2004.⁴⁸² The law went into effect on January 1, 2005, and was a key reflection of neoliberal ideals in Russia, resulting in considerable social and economic consequences, particularly for veterans, disabled persons, and retirees.⁴⁸³ The law proclaims that the state will no longer provide certain advantages (free public transportation, free health care, housing subsidies, and so on) to various social categories. Since August 2005, the issued law has sparked a wave of street protests across the Russian Federation. In addition, the protests received widespread support; according to a public survey published by the journal Monitoring Общественного Мнения in May 2005, 70% of the Russian populace had a positive opinion towards protestors, stating that they either supported or understood their purpose.⁴⁸⁴

Given the decisions that supported the development of the Nashi youth movement, it has been employed by government institutions in two ways:

⁴⁸² Julie Hemment, "Soviet Style Neoliberalism? Nashi, Youth Voluntarism, and the Restructuring of Social Welfare in Russia", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.56, No.6, 2009, p. 37.

⁴⁸³ Anastasia Alexandrova and Raymond Struyk, "Reform of In-Kind Benefits in Russia: High Cost for a Small Gain", *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol.17, No.2, 2007, p. 155.

⁴⁸⁴ «протесты получили широкую поддержку; согласно опросу, опубликованному журналом Monitoring Общественного Мнения, в мае 2005 года 70% россиян имели положительное отношение к протестующим, заявив, что они либо поддерживают, либо понимают их цель», Юрий Левада, *Ищем человека. Социологические очерки 2000-2005*, Москва: Новая Издательство, 2005, с.4.

1. Working in collaboration with official social welfare organisations, the Nashi movement organised public campaigns to support the needy and destitute, the majority of whom were casualties of recent neoliberal transformations.⁴⁸⁵ For instance, Nashi members used to visit war veterans and support them with various household tasks such as cleaning, grocery shopping, consulting the doctor, and cooking. The intention of these actions was quite simple: these more vulnerable social categories, victims of monetisation, depended on the help of these state-controlled organisations, like Nashi, to be able to cope with everyday activities and needs, so it was quite easy for Nashi members to gain their trust and loyalty to the presidential administrations of these vulnerable people. This means that the Russian advocate of neoliberal reform would, ironically, gain support from the reform's victims thanks to Nashi's function of mitigating the reform's impacts.⁴⁸⁶
2. The creation of the Nashi movement, both in terms of street policy and civic actions carried out by them, may diminish the actions of other organisations that do not have as much state or opposition support, because the much larger Nashi movement would divert attention away from such actions and the other organisations would not have as much momentum to manifest them. For example, the Nashi movement has received extensive media coverage since its inception. They were extremely popular, appearing on all television stations, and posters and brochures were distributed throughout Russia. Both presidents, Medvedev and Putin, were present in the camp near Lake Seliger.
3. The third reason for the formation of the Nashi youth movement was to promote nepotism to ensure allegiance to the Kremlin. Consistent with this purpose, the Nashi movement was founded as a de facto recruitment agency with strong ties to the Kremlin regime. The Nashi

⁴⁸⁵ Julie Hemment, "Soviet Style Neoliberalism? Nashi, Youth Voluntarism, and the Restructuring of Social Welfare in Russia", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.56, No.6, 2009, p. 37.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

movement has accomplished this in the following ways, for instance, Gazprom officials chose internship candidates at Nashi's summer camps⁴⁸⁷ federal ministries, the presidential administration, regional governments, and state-owned television channels all hired many Nashi trainees, and some Nashi members went on to become parliamentary deputies for the ruling party, United Russia.⁴⁸⁸ Furthermore, the Nashi kommissars were viewed as intermediaries for potential members and the presidential administration, or among businessmen. Those who wished to be members of this movement were offered an informal relationship with the ruling class. Hundreds of Nashi activists' projects got funding from the government through these channels and networks.⁴⁸⁹ Kommissars and other high-ranking members of the Nashi movement were paid to participate in numerous camps, trainings, and events. Many young individuals have decided to be a part of this movement because of the perks, money, and potential advancement in their political careers, all of which support the nepotistic practices.

4. The fourth reason that forms the basis for the creation of the Nashi movement is strongly linked with Russian foreign policy. Aside from the main reasons for the formation of this movement, I think that the Nashi movement was intended to be a (private) organisation that mirrored the Russian state's foreign policy. Nevertheless, the Nashi movement's task was limited to ensuring the successful execution of foreign policy programmes intended for young people approved by the presidential administration. When a few members of the Nashi movement attempted to break through the barriers imposed by the presidential administration and gain some autonomy from the state,

⁴⁸⁷ Anselm Walderman, "The Nashi Movement: Russian Youth and the Putin Cult", *Spiegel Online*, 2007, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-nashi-movement-russian-youth-and-the-putin-cult-a-514891.html> accessed in 04.06.2024.

⁴⁸⁸ Maya Atwal and Edwin Bacon, "The Youth Movement Nashi: Contentious Politics, Civil Society, and Party Politics", *East European Politics*, Vol.28, No.3, p. 256.

⁴⁸⁹ Ivo Mijnsen, *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia I Back to the Future! History, Modernity, and Patriotism according to Nashi, 2005-2013*, Germany: ibidem-Verlag, 2014, p. 92.

they wanted to implement projects and activities free of government influence. The pre-independence administration had significantly reduced its revenue for the movement to the point where it couldn't organise various activities, and the movement gradually faded away. Within the framework of this final plea, the presidential administration's objective concerning Russia's foreign policy was to send a global message to the Kremlin regarding the existence of an active and committed young movement.

4.2. Recruitment, mobilisation, and propaganda: analysing Nashi's website

To discuss the Nashi recruitment procedure, we must turn to the texts in the Manifesto that support it. On the Nashi movement's website, there is a manifesto indicating a strong patriotism among young people, as well as an ambitious objective (to restore Russia as a great power on the international stage) that they must complete if they want to be part of the movement:

Historical Perspective
Russia in the Modern World
Russia is the Country of Our Dreams
Changing the Format
At the Start of Modernisation
Our Revolution
Our Goals⁴⁹⁰

Looking at another section in this Manifesto that offers a picture of the Nashi movement and how they portray themselves to the youth interested in such organisations: “history is a change of generations, each generation has the chance to carry on unnoticed, or to change the world.

⁴⁹⁰ «Историческая перспектива/Россия в современном мире/Россия - страна нашей мечты/Изменение формата/В начале модернизации /Нашей революции/Наши цели», Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182043/http://nashi.su/manifest> accessed in 10.06.2024.

Today, we, the generation of young Russians, have this choice. We are the ones who believe in the future of Russia and believe that its future is in our hands. We are the youth movement, Nashi. We invite you to join the megaproject of our generation, the megaproject of Russia. The 20th century was already the century of Russia. Three times during this century, Russia set the format of world history. The October Revolution was a historical explosion that, in the end, set the world's political agenda for the 20th century. Russia's victory in the Great Patriotic War laid the foundations of the world agenda for the second half of the 20th century. Russia's rejection of the communist system served as a push toward the formation of the 21st century world."⁴⁹¹

The Nashi movement envisioned that these texts would appeal to as many Russian teenagers as possible by emphasising so-called vital features of Russian society. In general, all of the materials used for recruiting bring attention to a change in the country's national concerns and promise a bright future if the youth join this movement. In this Manifesto, the Russian state is portrayed as an essential force on the global arena, and its victory in the Great Patriotic War is viewed in a magnificent light. A significant example is the October Revolution, which demonstrates Russia's greatness, and at the end of the text, the Nashi movement manifesto emphasises Russia's repudiation of the communist dictatorship. The text frequently relates to "our" possessive pronouns. The Nashi movement's text is written in two parts: it refers to Russia, in parallel, and to Us, implying that the participants of this movement are Russian. These two components

⁴⁹¹ «История - это смена поколений. Каждое поколение имеет шанс остаться незамеченным или изменить мир. Сегодня у нас, поколения молодых россиян, есть такой выбор. Мы верим в будущее России и верим, что ее будущее в наших руках. Мы - молодежное движение NASHI. Приглашаем присоединиться к мегапроекту нашего поколения, мегапроекту России. XX век был уже веком России. Трижды в этом столетии Россия устанавливала формат мировой истории. Октябрьская революция была историческим взрывом, который в конечном итоге определил мировую политическую повестку дня на XX век. Победа России в Великой Отечественной войне заложила основы мировой повестки дня на вторую половину XX века. Отказ России от коммунистической системы послужил толчком к формированию мира XXI века», Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182043/http://nashi.su/manifest> accessed in 10.06.2024.

converge in the above piece on their intended use, because, as I already stated, Russia is We, and we are Russia. The Nashi Movement's political strategy for recruiting explicitly demonstrates that present members and those who would join along the way seek a new world order in which Russia promotes political action. These characteristics might be viewed as a sort of protest against other opposition movements and the West, which, according to the Nashi movement's manifesto, wants the degradation of Russian society, values, and culture. This trend is also perceived as a reaction from the young who choose to be a part of such a global-scale picture of a collapsing Russia and the dissolution of authority and order that he enforced throughout the reign of the great empire. Mary Douglas has the following impression about the relationship between representational symmetry and cultural and socioeconomic integrity: "Dirt and culture imply two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt is the by-product of a systemic ordering and classification of matter, insofar as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. This idea of dirt takes us straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity."⁴⁹²

This statement implies that the Nashi movement's cleaning procedure is an attempt to ensure a world order provided by the Russian state; they consider socio-cultural dirt coming from the West and the fact that it represents a worldwide disorder for society, and through these texts, they hope to recruit youth to avoid this type of disorder or dirt. By following what Douglas says, "shoes are not dirty themselves but they are dirty on the dining-room table; food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom; similarly, bathroom equipment is not appropriate in the drawing room, out-door things in-doors, and so forth."⁴⁹³ From the standpoint of mobilisation, this Manifesto is initially composed of the personal pronouns you, you, and the entire manifesto

⁴⁹² Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo*, London: Routledge, 1966, p. 35.

⁴⁹³ *Ibidem*, pp.35-36.

focuses on the idea of creating a certain familiarity between those who make the recruitments and those who apply; the texts are composed of short sentences that are simple and are closely related to Russia's history, future, and international relations. The Nashi movement maintains a great emphasis on stimulating Russian youth; unlike other movements in Russia, the Nashi movement's process and recruitment texts provide more tangible instances of the relationship between stimulation and teaching, such as the passage below:

YOU

Do you want to realise your project?

Do you want to change the world around you?

Do you want to influence the future of your country?

Do you want the world to remember you?

Do you search for your place in your life?

You have a chance to change your life, influence world politics, and become a new intellectual elite

Our people are already in the Public Chamber, political state organs, and in the biggest Russian companies.

Are you worth the higher education at our university with the best teachers in the country?

Are you worth a traineeship at the company you want, in Russia, or abroad?

Are you worth realising your project?

Prove it! Fill the form!

Come to our team.⁴⁹⁴

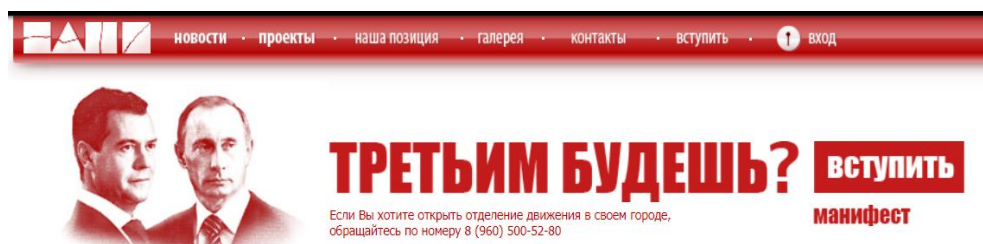
This text, meant to attract as many members as possible, was used by the Nashi movement on all methods of information transmission until 2009, when the movement's website was changed with a new text. However, it is the best example of speech intended to stimulate the youthful population.

⁴⁹⁴ «ВАС/Вы хотите реализовать свой собственный проект?/Ты хочешь изменить мир вокруг себя?/Вы хотите повлиять на будущее вашей страны?/Хочешь, чтобы весь мир тебя запомнил?/Ты ищешь свое место в жизни?/У вас есть шанс изменить свою жизнь, повлиять на мировую политику, прийти к новой интеллектуальной элите/Наши люди уже находятся в Общественной палате, политических/государственных органах и крупнейших российских компаниях./Стоите ли вы высшего образования в нашем университете с лучшими преподавателями страны?/Стоите ли вы/стажировки в той компании, которую хотите, в России или за рубежом?/Вы стоите реализации/своего собственного проекта?/Докажите это! Заполните форму!/Иди в нашу команду», Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182033/http://nashi.su/join> accessed in 10.06.2024.

The speech focuses on the appeal of individuals who come into contact with such a text, suggesting that future members can influence change in Russian society and will be able to do so, given their position in the governing elite. The discursive technique that dominates in texts meant to recruit members can be analysed using the theory introduced by Louis Althusser. According to Althusser, ideological reasoning constitutes subjects through interpellation; subjects are interpellated by those who feel they are capable, and those who are interpellated are changed into subjects.⁴⁹⁵ However, Althusser's theory is rather difficult to assimilate into the Nashi movement because Althusser's concept of interpellation forms the basis of how the Nashi movement presents its practices to the public through recruitment texts, imbuing them with special symbolism. An example I mentioned above is that of bringing Russia into a position of world saviour and, of course, as a great power on the international stage. For Althusser, ideology has no history, and the individual is always an already ideological subject⁴⁹⁶ for the Nashi movement. Althusser's concept of interpellation rather highlights the belief that this movement is not an integral part of a single ideology (as was the case with the Skinheads movement, this movement is not just about one ideology either). The concept of interpellation in recruitment literature emphasises how a future member should seem and behave within this movement. After 2009, a more modern version of the Nashi movement's website was built in a way to further attract potential members. For example, at the top of the main page of the site is a picture showing the two presidents of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin, the image accompanied by the question written in red capital letters, "Are you going to be the third?"/ «Третьим Будешь?»

⁴⁹⁵ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press, 1971, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm> accessed in 12.06.2024.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibidem, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm> accessed in 12.06.2024.



On the other side of the main page, the word “Join”/«Вступить» is marked in red, and a link to the registration form appears below it.

The actual recruitment language, which appears behind the join link, is more helpful than the preceding one because it contextualises the movement's importance with Manifesto principles.⁴⁹⁷

Now you need to fill out a short questionnaire, the answers to which will help us get to know each other faster. Take these 457 questions seriously :)

Questionnaire

Photo

I would like to see my interlocutor.

No file chosen

Surname *

Name *

Surname *

Telephone *

Any contact number where you can always be found.

+7 () -

Email *

Email. If not, then it's worth getting one. It will come in handy at work.

⁴⁹⁷ Jussi Lassila, *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia II. The Search for Distinctive Conformism in the Political Communication of Nashi, 2005-2009*, Germany, Stuttgart, 2014, p. 61.

Skype *

Where do you live? *

City

Indicate the address (street, house, apartment). Maybe we're neighbors?

Project *

Select the project you are participating in

Can you be found on social networks?

If yes, then leave a link to your profile

In contact with

In the format <http://vkontakte.ru/idID>

LJ

In the format <http://www.liveinternet.ru/users/LOGIN/>

Twitter

In the format <http://twitter.com/LOGIN>

Youtube

In the format <http://www.youtube.com/user/LOGIN>

Send

The form ended with two possibilities, namely:

1. FIRST, you close the site, and nothing is going to change; everything goes on in the same way, all the way to your old age.
2. SECOND, you fill the form, and your life starts to change. Well, now think about it...go to the form.⁴⁹⁸

Althusser's concept of interpellation has been applied in analyses of advertisements in terms of scrutinising how ideology functions through the interpellation of viewers in advertising discourse, a discourse of the inner voice used in advertisements that addresses the reader as YOU, continuously

⁴⁹⁸ «ПЕРВЫЙ ты закрываешь страницу, и в твоей жизни ничего не меняется, всё идет своим чередом до самой старости. ВТОРОЙ ты заполняешь анкету-заявку, и твоя жизнь начинает меняться. Вот теперь задумайся...и переходи к анкете ...или не переходи.» Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182033/http://nashi.su/join> accessed in 12.06.2024.

telling you what you want and need. Advertising, as an ideological practice, interpellates individuals as subjects.⁴⁹⁹ The message delivered by members of the Nashi movement through the projection of the two presidents' images and numerous promising messages exemplifies discursive practice that justifies the meaning of the term interpellation. From my perspective, the ads used for recruitment by members of the Nashi movement create tension and impose a specific strategy of behaviour towards the Russian state and national values, while also promising various important functions in Russian institutions and sending a promising message about future members' careers.

4.2.1. Mobilisation

The mobilisation of the Nashi movement is separated into numerous stages. Phases that all members must accomplish before moving further within the movement. These phases are posted on the Nashi movement's website immediately after submitting the recruitment form⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ Mojca Pajnik and Petra Lesjak-Tušek, Petra, "Observing Discourses of Advertising: Mobitel's Interpellation of Potential Consumers", *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No.3, 2022, p. 278.

⁵⁰⁰ **«На первом** этапе мы познакомимся. Ты напишешь в анкете о себе и немного о том, какой ты видишь свою роль в Движении, чего хочешь добиться через год, два, пять лет, какой видишь Россию в будущем и что готов сделать, чтобы осуществить свою мечту. **На втором** этапе мы попросим тебя прочитать несколько статей и книг, посмотреть несколько фильмов. **На третьем** этапе мы дадим тебе ряд несложных практических заданий. **На четвертом** этапе мы предложим тебе выбрать одно из 8 направлений работы и начнем обучать тебя согласно твоему выбору. Кроме того, мы передадим тебе технологию и все необходимые инструменты для проведения ярких креативных мероприятий твоего направления. Ты проведешь его в своем городе, и о тебе узнают тысячи людей. **На пятом** этапе ты сможешь получить доступ к самому современному дистанционному образованию в стране и приступишь к обучению в Национальном Институте «Высшая школа управления». Уже весной ты получишь возможность открыть в своем городе или районе полноправное отделение Движения. **Шестым** этапом станет для тебя Всероссийский Инновационный Форум «Селигер» - визитная карточка Движения, на который ты привезешь команду единомышленников и свои идеи, которые станут проектами в рамках выбранного направления. На Форуме ты сможешь обсудить проекты с ведущими российскими и мировыми специалистами, получить поддержку своей инициативы от государства и бизнеса», Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182033/http://nashi.su/join> accessed in 12.06.2024.

1. In the first stage, we will meet. You will write about yourself and a little bit about how you see your role in the Movement, what you want to achieve in a year, two, five years, how you see Russia in the future, and what you are ready to do to realise your dream.
2. In the second phase, we'll ask you to read some articles and books, and watch some movies.
3. In the third stage, we will give you several simple, practical tasks.
4. In the fourth phase, we will invite you to choose one of the eight lines of work and start teaching you according to your choice. In addition, we will give you the technology and all the necessary tools to carry out bright, creative activities in your field. You'll spend it in your city, and thousands of people will know about you.
5. At the fifth stage, you will be able to access the most modern distance education in the country and start learning at the National Institute «Higher School of Management». In the spring, you will have the opportunity to open a full-fledged Movement office in your city or district.
6. The sixth stage will be for the All-Russian Innovation Forum «Seliger» - a visiting card of the Movement, on which you will bring a team of like-minded people and their ideas, which will become projects within the chosen direction. At the Forum, you will be able to discuss projects with leading Russian and world specialists, get support for your initiative from the state and business.

The Nashi movement's major task was to establish its presence among apolitical youths. The majority of those who entered this mobilisation period were disoriented young people in terms of their careers. However, the creation of these texts and phases of mobilisation was intended to pique the interest of the youth, whether they were apolitical or not. Although many young people declared themselves apolitical, such statements were very appealing to them, and they eventually became receptive to such messages or promises. They initially referred to themselves as a youth movement with no apparent ties to politics or the state; nonetheless, engagement with state policy began later (after these phases of mobilisation). According to Serghei Oushakine, Nashi expertly mobilised 1990s discontents and appealed to

many provincial young people's senses of dispossession and fury about politics, the close relationship between political and economic elites, and persistent bureaucratic privilege systems.⁵⁰¹ Between 2006 and 2010, the Nashi movement attracted the most members of the province. The target audience for these recruitment processes, as well as those who mobilised to be a part of the Nashi movement, falls into two categories: high school and middle school students, mostly from rural areas of Russia, who wanted to invest their energy in civic projects that promised a bright future in important Russian institutions (professions including: leaders and active agents). In addition to all these components of mobilisation, I have included some more particular approaches in the mobilisation process:

1. Street technologies/Mass mobilizational strategies - one of the main and most essential mobilisation strategies distinctive of the youth movement Nashi; the most fitting instances are the Nashi movement's frequent mass protests (the case of Estonia's Bronze Soldier). Furthermore, early-stage movements, such as the Skinheads movement, were tasked with mobilising to adopt a street policy. Researchers in charge of studying these movements discovered that this street agitation paralleled communist-era activities, with Lenin's Komsomol serving as the most prominent example. They also wore outfits that distinguished them from other movements (t-shirts with Putin's face, which, in my opinion, represent a subtle personality cult, not as overt as in the Stalin or Hitler eras). The Nashi Movement provided many young people who were, of course, members of the movement with the opportunity to take control of the street. During these demonstrations, Nashi Movement members borrowed from the agendas of other subcultures, both international and national; these demonstrations always had a show aspect. Specifically, elements were borrowed from the NBP repertoire. Street methods, such as numerous demonstrations or rallies, included Soviet-era iconography (paintings of Stalin's portrait and Soviet-era youth organisations), accompanied

⁵⁰¹ Julie Hemment, *Occupy Youth! State-mobilized contention in the Putin era (or, what was Nashi and what comes next?)*, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Amherst, p. 13.

by techno music. One of the Nashi movement's commissars explains an event as follows: "the stage where we gathered was covered with giant cartoon-like pictures illustrating the upcoming exchange: a beaming, crinkly-eyed elder surrounded by young people dressed as Grandfather Frost (Russian version of Santa Claus). It was also heavily promoted through the media. TV cameras zoomed down, infringing on the view, recording signs and snippets of youth enthusiasm that were transmitted back to us on the massive displays in front of us."⁵⁰²

2. Project design technologies

These two technologies are well-suited to each of the times described above. Street techniques and mass mobilisation strategies were unique to the Nashi movement's nascent contentious politics phase, which lasted from 2005 to 2008. The project design methodologies are special to the movement's last phase, which lasted from 2008 to 2012. A specific timetable for the so-called modernisation of the Medvedev government. The Nashi movement's success in mobilising a huge number of young people can be attributed to the presidential administration's massive funding and unrestricted access to the country's resources. It is claimed that the government spends several hundred thousand dollars every month to fund Nashi and other young organisations that have proven to be regime supporters.⁵⁰³ The most well-known Nashi sponsor is Gazprom. The presidential administration recognised the Nashi movement's ability to mobilise such large numbers and granted the movement's leaders access to Russian state-controlled media resources, allowing them to disseminate information such as the denazification of Ukraine and many others that target the West in particular. The Nashi movement was able to mobilise Russian youth because its protests and actions were entertaining, merging Russian folklore with techno music, and aimed to remove resistance from the Russian political scene. The movement's most crucial component was its strong relationship with Putin

⁵⁰² Ibidem, pp.16-17.

⁵⁰³ Regina Heller, "Russia's Nashi Youth Movement: The Rise and Fall of a Putin-Era Political Technology Project", *Russian Analytical Digest*, Vol.50, No.8, p. 3.

and his entourage. Many officials of the presidential administration, including Putin, paid visits to the Nashi movement's summer camp.

4.2.2. Propaganda

I selected to do a more in-depth investigation of the Nashi movement's propaganda materials, namely two booklets. The brochures are numerous, and I selected them based on their importance and relevance. The first is called "Anti-fascism/Антифашизм" and the second, "Fascists: Yesterday, today, tomorrow? / Фашистами: Вчера, сегодня, завтра?" In my opinion, the brochure is critical to provide an analysis of these pamphlets and the methods of analysis. Because the text of the brochures is a different form of literature than I approached, and both brochures highlight the Nashi movement's anti-fascist operations, they saw themselves as Russia's defenders, with a duty to combat fascism. What counts most in these brochures is what the anonymous authors wanted to say, realise, and how they sought to achieve the results of their anti-fascist actions. First and foremost, even a cursory examination of the brochures reveals that their primary goal was to elicit strong emotions and feelings in readers. They were designed in such a way that they produce negative emotions towards the West and fascism while also producing a positive reaction towards the Nashi movement and the presidential administration.

The second brochure necessitates a larger investigation because the authors used several photographs, various photos from the movement's archive, and all of this combined to create a dramatic contrast of colours to highlight the key aims and projects. All of this is similar to Nazi propaganda materials, which featured a high contrast and strong visual representations that influenced readers. The language of the second brochure emphasises that the fascist wave raging in the West is the supreme catastrophe for the Russian state. Fascism is depicted here as a dead stream that is still present in contemporary Russia, casting Russia in a positive perspective towards this current, he added. The most widely used example in these brochures is Russia's defeat of fascism during World War II. Photographs of Nazi concentration and extermination camps are on exhibit, as are photographs

of the National Bolshevik Party (NBP) and other modern-day Russian groups labelled as fascist descendants.

The second brochure, entitled “Fascists: Yesterday, today, tomorrow?/ Фашистами: Вчера, сегодня, завтра?” includes a part dedicated to the stories of several Nashi commissars' families who perished protecting Russia from Nazi forces during World War II (Great Patriotic War). These testimonies are followed by accounts of crimes committed in Nazi death camps, as well as warnings from Nashi members that fascism is still alive and well in Russia, fueled by the Skinheads and the NBP movement. All these anti-fascist arguments are supported by visual depictions that have been modified to illustrate the connections between Nazi Germany and Russian adherents of this ideology. The visual effects in the second brochure are quite crucial. The prominent colours are black, red, and white; the cover of both brochures is black, and the title is in large red letters. Everything is designed to display the Nazi flag as well as the colours associated with the Nashi movement's flag. Inside the second brochure is a prominent question about who is reviving and supporting fascist ideology in Russia, he said, and the answer is also shown in this brochure, that NBP (and the West-inspired Skinheads movement) are the only ones responsible for promoting and supporting this ideology. And, to back up their arguments, the authors of this brochure use Eduard Limonov's book *Anatomy of a Hero*, where the author said that: “Yes, I am a fascist...we are using the fascist experience along with the other experiences, why not?”⁵⁰⁴ I can deduce that due to this statement, the Nashi movement points out that the major perpetrator of the penetration of fascist ideology in Russia is the NBP; furthermore, in this brochure, supporters of this party are referred to as entitled degenerates, Limonov fans, and so on. The brochure also mentions the legendary nationalist Dimitri Rogozin and his organisation Rodina, presenting him as a prominent and well-known nationalist in the Russian Federation. The brochure's creators also updated some of its slogans to better show its perspective, for example: “Russia for Russians, Moscow for Muscovites!”⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁴ «Да, я фашист...мы используем фашистский опыт наряду с другими, почему бы и нет?» Эдуард Лимонов. *Анатомия Героя*, Смоленск: Русич, 1998, <https://znamlit.ru/publication.php?id=1053>, accessed in 14.06.2024

⁵⁰⁵ Oleg Belov, “Nashi versus Nazi: Anti-Fascist Activity as a Means of Mass Youth Mobilization in Contemporary Russia”, *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Vol.26, No.2, p. 50.

Although there are quite a few far-right groups on the territory of Russia, only Limonov and Rogozin representing the Rodina party are included in the Nashi movement brochure, the authors explained this choice as follows: “why did we devote so much space in our brochure to Rogozin and Limonov while not mentioning other fascist organisations such as Russian National Unity, Memory, and so on? Because politicians like Limonov and Rogozin seek to legalise fascism.⁵⁰⁶ Moreover, the authors of this brochure frequently refer to fascist ideology; there are no concrete facts in the brochure to support this philosophy. There is no explanation for this ideology in any of the brochure's paragraphs; instead, the authors refer to it through depictions that create a negative image. The authors believe that: “fascism is based on racial intolerance, which is a twin sister of another type of fascism - nationalism. We can unquestionably regard anyone who has yelled heil, worn a swastika (even if it is a simulation), or claims that there are bad ethnic groups, Russia for Russians, Moscow for Muscovites, as a fascist.”⁵⁰⁷

Furthermore, the brochure's text makes no mention of the phrase that represents the Nashi movement, which is anti-fascist. The authors discuss Russia as a multiethnic state, the globalisation process, and immigrants, but they make no direct reference to anti-fascism or the fight against fascism on Russian territory. The second brochure supplements the first brochure with explanations that provide context for what I have written above. It is far more concerned with the notion of anti-fascism and the projects on the agenda of the Nashi movement, which I shall discuss later in the article. The structure and construction of this brochure are fairly similar to the first brochure. A black, white, and red background is utilised in the section where the fascists are written, and their evil activities are described, and several photographs of Hitler and other Nazi symbols are included. Along with graphic representations of NBP-organised demonstrations, the authors of these brochures employ imagery and light colours to portray the Nashi movement and their acts positively. When it comes to fascist ideology, the

⁵⁰⁶ Regina Heller, “Russia’s Nashi Youth Movement: The Rise and Fall of a Putin-Era Political Technology Project”, *Russian Analytical Digest*, Vol. 50, No. 8, 2007, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁰⁷ Oleg Belov, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

writers say it is an imprecise phrase that can only be defined according to the place and period. Also in this brochure, the authors tried to discuss the genesis of the name fascism; they believe that: “strictly speaking, the term itself is not precise, fascism derives from the word *fascio*, which meant an axe in a bunch of rods, a symbol of power in ancient Rome. For Italian fascists, who derived their name from this word, it stood for the nation united around one leader Duce.”⁵⁰⁸

The authors also highlight the following traits of fascism:

1. Fascism involved overpowering violence, indoctrination of the masses, and the use of symbols like the swastika.
2. The concept of natural discrepancy among individuals and races.
3. The idea that one nation has a fundamental power over others.

The authors of these brochures have frequently maintained that these are the most representative traits of fascism; yet, as we all know, not all fascist governments share these qualities; others include authoritarianism, militarised societies, anti-Communist sentiment, and xenophobia. Even though the brochure's title is Anti-fascism, the authors do not clarify what this term means from their perspective. They exclusively discuss the purpose and objectives of this anti-fascist diligence: “the goal of anti-fascist work is effectively opposing the spread of ideas of xenophobia, racism and neo-Nazism in Russia.”⁵⁰⁹

The brochure also addresses the four primary goals of the anti-fascist political strategy:

1. Political, historical, and psychological education of youth aimed at the prevention of the spread of neo-Nazi ideas.
2. Collaboration between various social groups and anti-fascist groups in society to resist neo-Nazi groups.
3. Implementation of steps to marginalise and isolate neo-Nazi and fascist groups and movements, in particular to prevent their

⁵⁰⁸ Merriam Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fascism#dictionary-entry-1> accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁰⁹ Jussi Lassila, *The Quest for Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia II. The Search for Distinctive Conformism in the Political Communication of Nashi, 2005-2009*, Germany, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2014, p. 122.

cooperation with state officials, leading political parties and businesses.

4. Active and efficient blocking of neo-Nazi and fascist propaganda.⁵¹⁰

In addition to these goals, the authors highlight two strategies that serve as the foundation of the antifascist campaign:

1. Mass Illumination – correct education for Russian citizens about the dangers of fascist ideology.
2. Anti-fascist propaganda

The authors think that if the public is properly educated and informed, it can combat the power of fascist ideology.

4.2.3. The annual summer camp

The camps in the Seliger Lake area, which have been held every year since the Nashi movement's inception until 2010, had an important role in influencing young people who were a part of it. For the first three years after these camps were established, numerous political observers identified them as the location where significant and influential members of the presidential administration carried out their brainwashing efforts. In 2005, 3,000 Nashi-commissars attended over 870 hours of lectures, as well as 400 individual sessions, seminars, and workshops spread over two weeks.⁵¹¹ Among the speakers were renowned individuals such as Vladislav Surkov, political scientists Gleb Pavlovski and Viacheslav Nikonov, and Duma member Andrei Kokoshin. The camp was estimated to cost roughly \$2 million.⁵¹²

The camp schedule was demanding, with sports activities such as trekking, cycling, rafting, and survival tactics in extreme weather and places.

⁵¹⁰ Oleg Belov, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁵¹¹ Douglas Buchacek, «NASHA Pravda, NASHE Delo: The Mobilization of the Nashi Generation in Contemporary Russia», *Democracy and Human Rights*, 2006, http://cgi.unc.edu/uploads/media_items/nasha-pravdanashe-delo-the-mobilization-of-the-Nashi-generation-in-contemporaryrussia accessed in 21.06.2024.

⁵¹² «Среди спикеров были известные личности, такие как Владислав Сурков, политологи Глеб Павловский и Вячеслав Никонов, депутат Госдумы Андрей Кокошин. Стоимость лагеря оценивалась примерно в 2 миллиона долларов», Виктор Эремин, «С кем и за кого Борюся Наши и Местные? », *Российская Федерация Сегодня*, объем 18.

The participants in this camp awoke around 8 a.m., escorted by Russia's national anthem, and gathered in front of a scenario where a political leader would normally appear to give his address. There was also a guard to guarantee that order and discipline were maintained, and participants were not permitted to leave the camp unless escorted by security and for camp-related activities. Violation of the camp's rules resulted in the person being sent home and left to fend for himself. The number of participating commissars at Seliger increased to 5,000 the following year, and in 2007, Nashi opened the camp to members of pro-Kremlin organisations such as New People; the groups lived in separate sections of the tent city that comprised the camp; based on available information, relations between the various groups were largely peaceful.⁵¹³

Just as the Skinheads movement had the distinctive songs of the ideology of the movement, so did the Nashi movement have its specific patriotic songs. For example, in 2009, a special event was held at the Seliger Lake camp, the Russian Year of Youth, and the next song began this event:

"We didn't make a revolution
Yes, we know, it's complicated
We change our lives for the better
We are Russia, we can do it
We remember our forefathers
No use to think of us as others
We are proud of our history
Russia's youth is Russia's strength."⁵¹⁴

This song portrays some of the Russian youth's visions; it depicts youth opposing external elements that harm the Russian state, as well as young people who appreciate national ideals and wish to continue the struggle against the West. Another example is the song Forward Russia! it conveys a message equivalent to the first song:

⁵¹³ Ivo Mijnsen, *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia I. Back to Our Future! History, Modernity, and Patriotism according to Nashi, 2005-2013*, Germany, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2014, p. 135.

⁵¹⁴ «Мы не сделали революции/Да, мы знаем, что это сложно/Мы изменим нашу жизнь к лучшему/Мы Россия, мы это сможем/Не забыли мы подвиг прадедов/зря нас считают другими/Мы гордимся нашей историей/Россия сильна молодыми», Ibidem, p. 147.

"Be strong, be bold!
We can follow a hundred paths
But among them, there is only one for us
Always forward, and we will win!
We are opening our wings, we are finding strength
Forward, Russia!
And only the wind is at our backs
For this, we thank the heavens
Forward, Russia!
Russia, forward!
It's a different time, a different generation
Moving forward with new ideas and without doubts
It is time to be leaders, not followers
Time to make our new history, together we're united
We can dream, lead the economy, and steer a ship
And there are many of us."⁵¹⁵

The song emphasises the power and momentum of the youth involved in the Nashi movement. It is seen as a key component of Russia, influencing the country's destiny as a global power. Members of the Nashi movement believe they have Promethean powers⁵¹⁶ and are resistant to the West's degenerating acts. Many members of the movement have stated that they are the builders of a great nation and the ones who create true history. Youth is the driving force that forms modern Russia in both songs cited above, and modernisation without the influence of the West is emphasised in each.

In addition to these songs, classes were held, and the camp was organised by Nashi members who were divided into numerous sections. Throughout their period at the Seliger camp, each group was expected to attend six classes. Richard Lachman, a noted sociologist at the University of Albany in New York, took such a course titled *Balancing the Oligarchy: The role of Civil Society*, which focuses on the role of institutions.

⁵¹⁵ «Ты сильным будь, ты будь смелей/Пройти сумеем сто путей/Но, среди них наш путь один/Всегда вперёд, мы победим!/Мы раскрываем крылья, мы обретаем силы/Вперёд, Россия!/И только ветер нам в спину, за это небу спасибо/Вперёд, Россия!/Россия, вперёд! Пришло другое время, другое поколение/С новыми идеями вперед и без с оменья/Время быть лидерами, а не ведомыми/Время создавать свою новую историю/Вместе мы едины/Мы можем мечтать, управлять экономикой/Водить корабли, и нас много таких» Ibidem, p. 148.

⁵¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 149.

According to him, these corporations are much more powerful today than they were in the past because globalisation processes have removed many of their traditional restraints, including unions, national borders, and markets. His pessimistic conclusion was that civil society in the modern United States is largely powerless.⁵¹⁷ This course does not apply to Russian society, which is not criticised in the camps and is solely analysed in terms of achievements; rather, it refers to US institutions that do not follow pro-Russian patterns. The premise of this training demonstrates how the global population is being misled by informational wars led by anti-Russian governments; the young people in this camp are taught that these anti-Russian states are filled with suspicious and pro-war attitudes towards Russia.

The second session was presented by Tatiana Alekseeva, professor and director of the Department of Political Theory at MGIMO in Moscow. Alekseevna explained that the main Soviet legacy that needed to be overcome in Russia was the atomization of society and the lack of trust that exists in formerly totalitarian societies; anyone attempting to build a democracy in Russia had to overcome both popular distrust of political institutions and vast disparities in development between centres and provinces.⁵¹⁸ The course emphasises that Russia will never follow the example of democracy in the West because it distances itself quite a bit from the past, which is somewhat inadmissible in the case of Russia; all these pro-Russian movements like Nashi cling to the glorious past that has made Russia a great power, and in contemporary Russia, it is desired to return to the past, that is, to the time when Russia was a power on the international political stage.

According to Alekseevna, democracy is simply the continuous limitation of violence from above; all other aspects vary by country to establish a democratic system in Russia, this process needed to occur

⁵¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 156.

⁵¹⁸ «Любой, кто пытается построить демократическое общество в России, должен был преодолеть как народное недоверие к политическим институтам, так и огромные различия в развитии между центрами и провинциями», Владислав Сурков, «Суверенитет – это политический синоним конкурентоспособности», *Политнаука*, 2006, <http://www.politnauka.org/library/public/surkov.php> accessed in 17.06.2024.

gradually; she stated that Putin and Medvedev had taken significant steps towards democratisation.⁵¹⁹ Furthermore, during the second course, the obstacles Russia faces in the democratisation process were identified: vertical power (election reforms in 2005), Alekseevna argues that this process was an important leap towards the process of democratisation, stating that Putin is the most suitable man in the state to ensure this process. Of course, it is vehemently ignored that the Putinist regime has negative effects on the process of democratisation, but all of this is aimed at indoctrinating the youth who were inspired by the idea that Putin saved Russia from the economic collapse of the 1990s-2000s, and that the road followed by Russia then was correct.

The courses are part of post-Soviet Russia's identity curriculum and have a fairly clear goal: to create an ideology that denies Russia's past activities (particularly those of Soviet Russia, crimes, and many other things) while emphasising the great deeds of Russia's leaders throughout history. The author, Marcel Van Herpen, effectively illustrates this ideology, or as we would term it in this chapter, the mode of thinking prevalent in the Nashi movement, stating that Putinism inherits the vocation of confrontation from the collapsed USSR. Claiming for himself the majesty of the Stalinist inheritance, stirring undeniable desire for the USSR's apotheosis after 1945, connecting the tsarist lineage with that of the Soviet nation, leveraging resentment and developing suspicion.⁵²⁰

Considering these two courses, there are numerous, but I opted to analyse only the two that appeared more essential to me and corresponded to the idea of the Nashi movement; it makes me think of what Laclau said, "a systematic decentering of the West."⁵²¹ By offering such seminars, the Nashi summer camp organisers attempted to persuade young people that there is no degree of comparison between Russian democracy and Western democracy. However, there was no emphasis on Russian politics or the current regime at the camps, and young people were not allowed to raise questions about what was going on in contemporary Russia. Courses at the

⁵¹⁹ Ivo Mijnsen, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

⁵²⁰ Marcel Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars: The rise of Russia's new imperialism*, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, p. 39.

⁵²¹ Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)*. London: Verso, 1996, p. 34.

Seliger Lake Camp were taught in the traditional manner of a typical high school or middle school hour. In addition, there are no questions at the end of the course addressed to the instructor. The courses obsessively repeated the fact that Russia has re-entered the hierarchy of great powers; the professors admitted that Russia does not have a perfect democracy, but that with the help of the pre-independence administration, it can achieve much better modernisation without foreign influence in the future. As the author Ivo Mijnsen pointed out, the Russian government is the only guarantor of this process. Patriotic discourse has become an integral element of official youth culture in the same way that it has permeated Russian society in general. Banal patriotism fosters a nebulous sense of national pride and community among young people in an apolitical manner.⁵²²

The Kremlin's ideology, as reflected in the programme of courses given at summer camps in Seliger, portrays Russia as a victim while creating victims. It is firmly argued that Russia was a great power that emancipated countless peoples from fascism, which is why the Nashi movement considers itself anti-fascist, anti-fascist, since it continues the struggle against fascism, which, as they say, has not yet vanished. In these materials, young people are presented with Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union as distinct times in Russian history, and the people of that time were content to be members of both empires.

The brochure supporting the theme of these seminars is entitled "Some Inconvenient Questions about the Russian Authorities"⁵²³ provides various crucial themes of Russia's modernisation:

1. Economic modernisation of Russia without external assistance
2. Strengthening Russia as a global power and fighting against the external factors

These essential groups sought to undermine all forms of collaboration with the West, except for pro-Russian republics with whom collaborative links were maintained. However, considering all of these analyses and summer camp activities, the nodal point of modernisation and economic cooperation with the West appears to remain a discursive necessity to

⁵²² Ivo Mijnsen, *op.cit.*, p. 171.

⁵²³ Ivo Mijnsen, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

legitimise official activity in Russia's public sphere in times of declining growth rates and to secure funds for youth-oriented projects. With the end of activities at Lake Seliger, the Nashi movement's summer camp remains an emblem of soft power.

4.3. Nashi's political projects

The actual activities carried out within the camp are unknown; the Nashi movement's website only provides a basic overview of these activities.

In the final section of the brochure, the Nashi movement's projects are outlined⁵²⁴:

1. Free zone – this initial project emphasises a campaign against existing fascist gathering locations. Meetings, pickets, protests, collaboration with law enforcement agencies, and so on are all recommended actions.
2. Youth anti-fascist committees of internationalists – emphasis is placed on the formation of committees comprised of members from various youth organisations and people of different ethnicities.
3. Brown smoking – the fight against fascism in government organisations.
4. All faces of Russia – organising ethnic culture festivals and friendship festivals, among other things.
5. Cabaret Anti-fa (anti-fascist) – perform anti-fascist plays.

⁵²⁴ «Свободная зона - этот первоначальный проект подчеркивает кампанию против существующих фашистских мест сбора. Встречи, пикеты, протесты, сотрудничество с правоохранительными органами и т.д./Молодежные антифашистские комитеты интернационалистов" - особое внимание уделяется формированию комитетов, состоящих из членов различных молодежных организаций и представителей различных этнических групп/Коричневое курение" - борьба с фашизмом в государственных организациях./Все лица России - проведение фестивалей национальной культуры и фестивалей дружбы, среди прочего./Кабаре Антифа (антифашист) - исполнять антифашистские пьесы./Антифашистский молодежный университет - учебные занятия по фашистской и антифашистской пропаганде./ Наша победа - поминки воинов, погибших при защите своей родины.» Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182020/http://nashi.su/projects> accessed in 18.06.2024.

6. The anti-fascist youth university – teaching classes on fascism and anti-fascist propaganda.
7. Our victory – commemoration of soldiers who died in defence of their homeland.

During Dmitry Medvedev's tenure, the Nashi movement's projects centred on entrepreneurial spirit, creative thinking, and a variety of social initiatives, for instance, Our Houses (Наши Дома). The Nashi movement's projects that began after 2009, such as Run with Me, Piggies Against (a project that banned the sale of expired products in retailers), and StopKham! (a project to combat traffic violations). The most important project remains Our Victory (Наша Победа). This project brought together a vast audience, with only young people gathering on Gagarin Square and Kaluzhskaya Square. Two thousand buses with activists from different parts of the country arrived in the morning and dropped off 60,000 young people on Gagarin Square, where they began to march towards Kaluzhskaya Square. Between these two points, the organisers set up a stage, and the mass of Nashi activists stretched over two kilometres.⁵²⁵ All of the patriotic young men donned white T-shirts with a red print on the front reading Our Victory and a few words from the Russian anthem on the back in black letters. Several marches took place, with songs from the Great Patriotic War playing and people holding the Nashi movement's flag, a red cross on a white backdrop: Nashi uses red and white symbols because red is the colour of our heroic past, white symbolises our free future, but the actual design of our flag, the cross, refers to the Andreevskii flag⁵²⁶ (Russian Tsarist Empire's flag) and St. George ribbon.

Members of the Nashi movement use the name of this big undertaking to allude to both the movement's name and its aim to preserve the memory of those who perished in defence of their motherland. Laclau stated that "Our Victory event, carefully staged, executed, and represented, created the

⁵²⁵ Ivo Mijnsen, *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia I. Back to Our Future! History, Modernity, and Patriotism according to Nashi, 2005-2013*, Germany, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2014, p. 62.

⁵²⁶ Ibidem, p. 63.

new space of representation on which the myth sense played out.”⁵²⁷ This project sought to spotlight Russian youngsters who can stabilise the street political situation while also contributing to patriotic education and love of the motherland. Although, as previously stated in the contents of the two brochures, in the projects produced by the Nashi movement, only young people from the provinces and even NBP members were recruited who had similar links to the Nashi movement and shared the same beliefs.

The Nashi movement's projects do not involve violent acts, as the Skinheads movement does. While former NBP members have frequently complained on the internet about the Nashi movement's violent actions against immigrants, these charges have not been proven. As previously stated, these programmes are largely focused on stopping the rise of fascism on Russian territory; nonetheless, members of the Nashi movement have frequently said that they are law-abiding and do not use violent and radical techniques against participants or the public. However, many members of the Nashi movement believe that these programmes are effective tools to oppose fascism, and that the prescribed aims are usually met. However, the public occasionally presents concerns about the Nashi movement, particularly among the most liberal, who regard it as fascist. I will explain in the next subchapter why this statement was reached.

Another project, namely *Your film about the war* (Твой фильм о войне), encourages youth to film an interview with a war veteran. The archive on the project's website is a valuable source of information on war for future generations. However, this project envisions the execution of a series of steps to combat historical falsification, particularly against Western writers who, according to Nashi members, have been known to fake and slander the history of the Russian people and everything associated with the Great Patriotic War.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁷ Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Times*, London & New York: Verso, 1990, p. 61.

⁵²⁸ «Архив видео-воспоминаний о войне от ее непосредственных участников, полученный по итогам программы, станет источником знаний о войне для всех последующих поколений. Проект также предусматривает реализацию комплекса мероприятий по противодействию фальсификации истории, в частности, по борьбе с писателями, публикующими ложь и клевету о Великой Отечественной войне и ее

The project *Ecology / Экология* handles an alien topic for the Russian Federation, namely, greening. The goal of the project is to persuade factories to employ methods and equipment that are less hazardous to the environment and people. This project aims to promote environmentally friendly technologies, such as the usage of biodegradable bags throughout Russia.

In Russia, the project *Drug Free Pharmacies / Аптеки без наркотиков* is known that approximately 57% of individuals believe drug addiction is a big problem, particularly among the young population. According to the State Agency for Drug Control, dependence on prescription medications, particularly those with narcotic qualities, is growing more harmful.⁵²⁹ According to statistics, hundreds of young people in Russia have fallen victim to such substances. The Nashi movement proposed this project to combat the prevalence of narcotic substances and medicines in pharmacies. A real example of this effort is when a few members of the Nashi movement entered a drugstore in a Russian city, discreetly filmed the process of selling narcotics, and then sent the footage to authorities. The Federal Drug Control Service also provided funding for the study, which resulted in the cancellation of a small number of pharmacy licences.

The Steel / Сталь project is the Nashi movement's final initiative, and in my opinion, it most closely aligns with the movement's ideology, which I shall discuss in the next subchapter. This project is about learning the concept of patriotism. Given one of the Nashi movement's goals of bringing Russia to the forefront on the international stage, patriotism is an essential element for Russia's security, and some members of the movement believe that even if they succeed, Russia will still need to be defended from external factors coming from the West that can negatively influence Russian nationalism, disguised as patriotism. According to Nashi members, the recognition of Russia's standing as a significant power and international leader elicits a response from competing governments seeking to increase

участниках.» Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182227/http://nashi.su/projects/95> accessed in 18.06.2024.

⁵²⁹ «При этом наибольшую опасность, по мнению директора Госнарконоконтроля Иванова, представляют героин и аптечно-лекарственная наркомания», Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313182227/http://nashi.su/projects/95> accessed in 18.06.2024.

their influence over our state. The Steel project aimed to encourage Russia to take active, effective, and strong action if necessary.⁵³⁰ The Nashi movement used all available means and technologies for this endeavour, including events, volunteer actions, and the utilisation of various Russian state-controlled media channels. The Nashi movement has exploited these resources over the years because its members believe it is more beneficial to use all available measures to restore Russia's prestige. The description of the Steel project on the Nashi movement website provides a clear perspective on one of the movement's most important goals: "as part of the patriotic movement, Steel, work has begun to develop pro-Russian networks abroad, intending to create a long-term positive image of Russia. This will grant us a strategic advantage. We will turn the world around, from ignorance and misunderstanding of Russia to respect and, more importantly, fashion for Russia."⁵³¹

After analysing these Nashi movement projects (there are only about 9 on their website), I believe that anyone who encounters these descriptions can be easily influenced, because the descriptions are quite captivating, and I think that any young person (especially those in rural areas) would want to be a part of these projects. As previously stated, when a young guy joins the Nashi movement, he/she must first choose the project which he is a member of. I consider this a form of coercion because you are obliged to choose such a project, or you will be unable to participate in the movement. On the site page, under the header intended for projects, write the following: "Here we provide a brief overview of the project. If you are connected to the OUR

⁵³⁰ «Утверждение статуса России как крупной державы, мирового лидера, вызывает ответную реакцию государств-конкурентов, которые пытаются усилить своё влияние на наше государство. Поэтому основной идеей проекта «Сталь» стал призыв к действию - активному, эффективному, жесткому – если это нужно России» Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313183119/http://nashi.su/projects/51> accessed in 19.06.2024.

⁵³¹ «В рамках патриотического движения «Сталь» запущена работа по развитию пророссийских сетей за рубежом, которая направлена на создание устойчивого позитивного образа России. Это даст нам стратегическое преимущество. Мы перевернем Мир - от незнания и непонимания России к уважению России и, более того, к моде на Россию» Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313183119/http://nashi.su/projects/51> accessed in 19.06.2024.

Movement, we are ready for you.”⁵³² In addition to the registration form, the rubric where you choose the project is required.

4.4. Ideological features and influence on the 2000s scene in Russia

Similar to the previous chapter on the ideologies addressed by the Skinheads movement, the Nashi movement lacks a single and well-established philosophy, instead approaching concepts and topics from eight philosophies. It is known as an anti-fascist movement. Despite its anti-fascist language, detractors have connected it to radical far-right groups and, on occasion, referred to it as a fascist organisation.⁵³³ This is because Nashi's apparent efforts to combat radicalism and extremism clash with attempts to purposefully exploit nationalistic sentiment to attract and inspire young Russians to their cause.⁵³⁴

1. **Anti-Americanism:** Surkov, one of the Nashi movement's architects, stated in an interview that this ideology is explicitly applied, “decision-makers in the United States and Europe are living on the phobias of the Cold War and see Russia as a potential enemy. They take credit for the nearly bloodless collapse of the Soviet Union and want to further that achievement. These external enemies are working in Russia through a fifth column of pseudo-liberals and Nazis who share a common hatred of Putin's Russia, as they call it, and common foreign backers.”⁵³⁵ A member of the movement claims that: “We think that America is Russia's main enemy, one must remember that we always

⁵³² «Тут мы пишем о проекте коротко...Если Вы имеете отношение к Движению НАШИ, Мы ждем Ваш блог в нашем рейтинге. Для участия достаточно» Nashi's website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313183119/http://nashi.su/projects/51> accessed in 19.06.2024.

⁵³³ Oleg Belov, “Nashi versus Nazi: Anti-Fascist Activity as a Means of Mass Youth Mobilization in Contemporary Russia”, *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Vol.26, No.2, p. 50.

⁵³⁴ Maya Atwal & Edwin Bacon, “The youth movement Nashi: contentious politics, civil society and party politics”, *East European Politics*, Vol.38, No.3, 2012, p. 261.

⁵³⁵ Robert Coalson, “Running Against Washington”, *Radio Free Europe*, 2005, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1057827.html> accessed in 19.06.2024.

have had enemies. The goal is to stop Russia from becoming a subsidiary of the United States and a supplier of raw materials.”⁵³⁶

2. **Anti-democracy:** as I indicated above, the Nashi Manifesto materials state that the movement's goal and core objective is to reinforce and promote Russia's development as a great power in the twenty-first century by economic and social methods rather than military authority and political tactics. The manifesto focuses on Russian sovereignty, freedom, and independence in determining global game rules, as well as the abolition of American (Western) hegemony. The manifesto also covers the struggle against oligarchism (the concept of anti-oligarchism is special to the Nashi movement's worldview), portraying Putin as a saviour of Russia and emphasising the fact that he has restored power to the Russian economy, which was in decline in the 1990s. The Manifesto also harshly criticises liberalism, claiming that liberal countries place the most severe demands on democracy.
3. **Authoritarianism:** the Nashi movement was founded largely to maintain the power of the Russian state. The movement's main issue was to keep out parties that did not fit into the authoritarian landscape and hence were deemed apolitical. Another issue was recruiting young people who were sceptical of this movement, particularly in urban areas; few young people from urban areas signed up for this movement, and the vast majority of these young people felt that such movements are tools for political manipulation. This scepticism has resulted in the development of several local youth movements within Russian higher education institutions.⁵³⁷ Stanovaya's words provide an acceptable explanation of the Nashi movement's position within authoritarian ideology, describing it as an image of virtual democracy, a youth movement that falsifies true democratic philosophy. This is not an incorrect or untrue remark, but after reviewing the propagandistic materials utilised by the Nashi movement in the recruitment process,

⁵³⁶ Ibidem.

⁵³⁷ «Этот скептицизм привел к развитию ряда местных молодежных движений в российских высших учебных заведениях», Татьяна Становая, «Молодежные организации в современной России», Политком.ру, 2005, <https://politcom.ru/320.html> accessed in 19.06.2024.

it is not a strategy that represents the concept of authoritarianism. Stanovaya regards the Nashi movement solely as a political tool beholden to the Kremlin. Author Maya Atwal proposes another explanation that is much closer to the ideology of Authoritarianism: growing authoritarianism. Nashi appears as an attempt by the Russian state to undermine the development of independent political youth movements, and its main flaw is that it assumes the passivity of Nashi activists and the state's absolute ability to determine the movement's growth.⁵³⁸ According to Maya Atwal's explanation, Dmitry Andreev states the following on the role of the Nashi movement in Russia under Putin's leadership: "Nashi can be regarded as a pure model of manged passionarity (управление пассионарность) in the framework of Putin's regime's managed democracy, where passionarity refers to the feelings of people whose objective is to devotedly serve goals assigned to, or by, them."⁵³⁹ He also stated that the primary objective for such passionate people is to organise, or reorganise, everyday life around them with the help of a constructed enemy or with negative examples, and that the Nashi movement acts as a pro-Kremlin movement and is supported to some extent by it; however, any type of emotional commitment is prohibited within the Kremlin's political guidelines.⁵⁴⁰ According to Andreev, while the Kremlin seeks total ideological freedom, passion, such as Nashi's political style, is not only unnecessary but also dangerous if the Kremlin wishes to distribute its ideas according to its administrative vertical.⁵⁴¹ Given the Nashi

⁵³⁸ Jussi Lassila, "Making Sense of Nashi's Political Style. The Bronze Soldier and the Counter-Orange Community", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 2011, p. 259.

⁵³⁹ «Наши можно рассматривать как чистую модель испорченной пассионарности в рамках управляемой демократии режима Путина, где пассионарность относится к чувствам людей, чья цель - преданно служить целям, поставленным перед ними или поставленным ими», Дмитрий Андреев, «Наша основная миссия — изменить образование в России», *Первое областное*, <https://www.1obl.ru/news/ekonomika/dmitriy-andreev-nasha-osnovnaya-missiya-izmenit-obrazovanie-v-rossii/> accessed in 19.06.2024.

⁵⁴⁰ Jussi Lassila, "Making Sense of Nashi's Political Style. The Bronze Soldier and the Counter-Orange Community", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 2011, p. 259.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

movement's actions and objectives, we can conclude that the managed democracy of the presidential administration is its greatest asset because, as we will see in the movement's next ideology, a cult of personality was created around the image of the Kremlin leader, from which the movement derived its name, the Putinist Youth or Hitlerjugend 2.0.

4. **Putinism:** from my perspective, Putinism for the Nashi movement is more of a style of thinking than an ideology in and of itself. Because this kind of thinking has instilled xenophobic attitudes in these young people, even if their demonstrations do not include violent attacks, the concepts presented are intended to indoctrinate them to be hostile to strangers. The author Francoise Thom defines the Putinist regime as follows: "the Putinist regime is like a chameleon, hard to distinguish, leaning towards Western liberalism, then to neocommunism of the type Ghenadi Zyuganov, then to Bonapartism of the type Alexandr Lebed; inspired by Stalin and Stolypin, Nicholas II's last reforming French minister."⁵⁴² The author says that his talent is to influence public opinion and then integrate it with the false opinion he produced by controlling state media.⁵⁴³ The Nashi youth movement is strongly tied to this type of Putinist thinking, as they are fostered by the present presidential administration, and the Kremlin specifies whom to revolt against. Except for a few significant achievements, projects, and presidential encounters, nothing in the Nashi Manifesto suggests a relationship to Putin. What stands out is the following paragraph, which emphasises Russia's role on the international stage: we do not understand Russia's leadership as military-political dominance over other countries and peoples, but rather as Russia's influence in the world, based on the attractiveness of Russian culture, the Russian way of life, and its political and social system. To be a leader involves always striving for the new and creating circumstances for success.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² Francoise Thom, *Putin și Putinismul*, București: Humanitas, 2018, p. 71.

⁵⁴³ Ibidem, pp.71-72.

⁵⁴⁴ Ivo Mijnsen, *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia I. Back to Our Future! History, Modernity, and Patriotism according to Nashi, 2005-2013*, Germany, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2014, p. 74.

5. **Sovereign Democracy:** for this ideology, I choose two articles authored by Vladislav Surkov, namely *Sovereignty is a Synonym for Competitiveness* and *Ideological Horizon*. Surkov stated in the first article, which is much more accessible than the second, that: “the ideology of Sovereign Democracy sees the strengthening of the state as a precondition for both the economic and democratic development of society; in the 1990s, Russia lost the ability to make sovereign decisions, distorting democracy and making it meaningless.”⁵⁴⁵ Inspired by this article, the Nashi movement frequently emphasises Russia's role as a world power during the Soviet Union; they believe that the main culprits for the loss of this status and the collapse of the USSR are those who were not useful at the time to maintain it. According to political researcher Andrei Okara, Sovereign Democracy posits a collectivist view of the people, barring against the extension of democratic procedures to the level of institutions.⁵⁴⁶ The manifesto of the Nashi movement, which we discussed in this chapter, advises readers to “cease talking about safeguarding human rights and dismisses liberal criticism of Putin as an ideological weapon and an expression of Western double standards on democracy.”⁵⁴⁷ According to Surkov's articles, the Nashi movement was founded to advance Russia's modernisation and maintain its position in the great power hierarchy. This movement's activities, marches, and initiatives all aim to restore Russian society in the style of the Soviet Union. It is difficult to discuss the philosophies of this movement because, like the Skinheads, they approach various ideas from multiple viewpoints.

⁵⁴⁵ «идеология суверенной демократии рассматривает укрепление государства как предпосылку как экономического, так и демократического развития общества; в 1990-е годы Россия утратила способность принимать суверенные решения, искажая демократию и делая ее бессмысленной» Владислав Сурков, «Суверенитет - это политический синоним конкурентоспособности владислав сурков», *Политнвука.ру*, 2006, <http://www.politnauka.org/library/public/surkov.php> accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁴⁶ Andrei Okara, “Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea or a PR Project?”, *Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol.5, No.3, p. 19.

⁵⁴⁷ Ivo Mijnsen, *op.cit.*, p. 76.

4.5. Nashi's role in Russia's post-1991 nation-building process and Foreign Policy

In this subchapter, I have chosen to discuss four major circumstances concerning the Nashi movement on the worldwide stage:

4.5.1. Russia – United Kingdom problem

The first context in which I may discern the Nashi movement's foreign policy is the friction between Russia and the United Kingdom. In 2003, tensions arose between Russia and the United Kingdom over the English internationalisation of various local political discussions in Russia involving human rights issues. In this context, British authorities have granted political refuge to Boris Berezovsky, a Russian oligarch facing fraud accusations in Russia, Ahmed Zakaev, a Chechen opposition leader, and Yulia Dubova, the former CEO of the Logovaz automotive manufacturer.⁵⁴⁸ Following an investigation into the poisoning of former KGB officer Alexandr Litvinenko in the United Kingdom in November 2006, British courts charged Andrey Lugovoy, another former KGB officer, with the murder. Britain officially requested extradition for Andrey Lugovoy, but it was denied by Russian authorities.⁵⁴⁹

I chose this context because it represents the pinnacle of hostilities between Russia and the United Kingdom. In the same year, 2006, the Nashi movement launched protests against Britain. Antony Brenton, the British Ambassador to Moscow, attended an opposition movement conference called *The Other Russia* in July 2006. Since then, Nashi members have gathered outside the British Embassy in Moscow on several occasions to

⁵⁴⁸ «В этом контексте британские власти предоставили политическое убежище российскому олигарху Борису Березовскому, лидеру чеченской оппозиции Ахмеду Закаеву и бывшему генеральному директору компании Logovaz automotive Юлии Дубовой» Никита Сергеевич Чекулин, *Березовский – Ни Своя Игра*, Петербург: Питер, 2011, с.61.

⁵⁴⁹ *Global Security: Russia – Second Report of Session 2007-2008*, London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2007, p. 48.

demand an apology from Brenton for his attendance at the conference.⁵⁵⁰ The Nashi movement members planned to use this process to force the dismissal of the British ambassador to Moscow; the movement's head, Vasily Yakemenko, outlined these measures in a harassing tone: "Brenton addressed the gathering of fascists. If he does not apologise, he has to leave our country."⁵⁵¹ This campaign, whose main goal was to harass the British Ambassador, included the following actions: Nashi members followed the ambassador on his way home from work, left threatening tickets on his car windscreen, and interrupted his speeches in Samara and Ulyansk.

Following these episodes, the British Ambassador issued many statements accusing the Nashi movement of using intimidation tactics against the Kremlin and accused Russia of breaking the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations between the two countries. The Kremlin has publicly acknowledged that it supports the move, given the protection of Russia's national values. A concrete example of this statement is in July 2007, during his visit to Nashi's summer camp at Lake Seliger, Vladimir Putin accused Britain of insulting the Russian people. Putin saw Britain's extradition request for Andrei Lugovoy as evidence of its continued colonial attitude.⁵⁵² Putin expressed his gratitude for the Nashi youth movement in the following way: "if you need my or the state's support, we are ready."⁵⁵³ Putin supported the Nashi movement on every occasion from its inception until 2007, but his support dwindled after the Bronze Soldier issue in Estonia, when the Nashi movement's goal to be an autonomous movement free of government influence became clear.

⁵⁵⁰ David Nowak, "Nashi Won't Take Tea with Brenton", *The Moscow Times*, 2006, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/sitemap/free/2006/9/article/nashi-wont-take-tea-with-brenton/202300.html> accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁵¹ Evgeny Finkel and Yitzhak Brundy, "Russia and the Color Revolutions", *Democratization*, Vol.19, No.1, 2012, p. 24.

⁵⁵² Richard Holt, "Putin Accuses Britain of Colonial Thinking", *The Telegraph*, 2007, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1558374/Putin-accuses-Britain-of-colonial-thinking.html> accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁵³ «если вам нужна моя или государственная поддержка, мы определенно готовы», «В Таллине демонтировали памятник советскому Воину-освободителю», *Лента.ру*, 2007, <https://lenta.ru/news/2007/04/27/tallinn4/> accessed in 20.06.2024.

4.5.2. Bronze Soldier crisis and cyber-attacks on Estonia

In January 2007, a dispute between Russia and Estonia occurred when Estonian President Thomas Hendrik Ilves signed legislation authorising the transfer of a Second World War Soviet memorial Bronze Soldier, from Tallinn's city centre to a military cemetery.⁵⁵⁴ Cyberattacks against Estonian banking, communications, and government infrastructures began on April 27, 2007, during the transfer of the monument by Estonian government workers and lasted several weeks.⁵⁵⁵ Protesters also fought the Bronze Soldier's removal, resulting in one death, 153 injuries, and 800 arrests on Bronze Night in Tallinn.⁵⁵⁶ The Nashi movement was the primary driver of this conflict, which included hacking and street protests. Nashi's activity about the Bronze Soldier Crisis began on April 27, 2007, with the siege of the Estonian Embassy in Moscow.⁵⁵⁷ Members of the Nashi movement demonstrated again, disrupting a briefing by Estonian Ambassador to Russia Marina Kaljurand and yelling one of the organisation's slogans, "Say no to fascism."⁵⁵⁸

On May 1, 2007, the leader of the Nashi movement made a statement about the incident on the movement's website, stating that he wanted the Estonian embassy in Moscow dismantled, with a date of demolition set for June 12, 2007. The Nashi movement also staged a protest on the Estonia-Russia highway, obstructing traffic and preventing freight trucks from reaching Estonia. They organised protests against the Estonian trucks in Ivanograd, a Russian town on the Estonia-Russia border, with the slogan

⁵⁵⁴ Thomas Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, p. 98.

⁵⁵⁵ «Кибератаки на эстонские банковские, коммуникационные и государственные инфраструктуры начались 27 апреля 2007 года во время передачи памятника эстонскими государственными служащими и продолжались несколько недель» *Лента.ру*, 2007, <https://lenta.ru/news/2007/04/27/tallinn4/> accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁵⁶ "Tallinn Tense After Deadly Riots", *BBC News*, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6602171.stm> accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁵⁷ «Деятельность Наши в связи с кризисом бронзового солдата началась 27 апреля 2007 года с осады эстонского посольства в Москве» Андрей Стенин, «Если мы откроем двери, они вас поубивают», *Газета.ру*, 2007, http://www.gazeta.ru/2007/04/28/oa_237922.shtml accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁵⁸ Marcel Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars – The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*, Washington: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2015, p. 130.

"Don't let SS trucks pass," which drew clear parallels between Estonia and Hitler's rule.⁵⁵⁹ This demonstration did not have the anticipated impact because the trucks transporting the merchandise were on their way to Narva, an area on the Russia-Estonia border populated by Russian speakers. Finally, two Nashi commissioners, Konstantin Goloskokov and Sergei Markov, issued different statements regarding the event. On March 3, 2009, Markov indicated that his colleague was planning cyberattacks on important Estonian institutions' websites. Markov's position as a State Duma deputy from Putin's United Russia Party fuelled debate regarding the state's role in assault planning; however, the Estonian Defence Ministry downplayed Markov's assertion by emphasising the operations' highly coordinated character.⁵⁶⁰ Furthermore, on March 13, 2009, Konstantin Goloskokov told the Moscow Times that he led the squad of specialists who targeted Estonian websites in April 2007.⁵⁶¹

4.5.3. Nashi's summer camp and foreign policy

The Nashi movement's summer camps located in the Seliger Lake area were always accompanied by visual representations, the most visible of which were the symbols, which represented foreign entities viewed as Russia's foes or threats. The symbols were the most significant weapon; thus, they were carefully chosen to depict the opponent as accurately as possible. For example, emblems from the Nazi era, particularly swastikas, were displayed throughout the camp to highlight the dangers of neo-Nazi activities and parties. Oleg Belov claimed that in Russia, being labelled a

⁵⁵⁹ «Они организовали протесты против эстонских грузовиков в Иванограде, российском городе на границе Эстония-Россия, под лозунгом "Не пропускайте грузовики СС", который имел четкие параллели между Эстонией и правлением Гитлера», Пьер Сидибэ, «Наши намерены пикетировать посольство Эстонии до Победы», 2007, <https://www.rg.ru/2007/05/03/nashi.html> accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁶⁰ "Behind the Estonia Cyberattacks", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 2009, https://www.rferl.org/a/Behind_The_Estonia_Cyberattacks/1505613.html accessed in 20.06.2024.

⁵⁶¹ "Nashi Activists Says He Led Estonia Cyberattacks", *The Moscow Times*, 2009, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/archive/nashi-activist-says-he-led-estonia-cyberattacks> accessed in 20.06.2024.

fascist is equivalent to being removed from the political arena.⁵⁶² The Nashi movement uses the terms fascism and strict Nazism to label the threat from the West/America. The camps organised during the summer months are specifically designed to indoctrinate people towards the West, and to combat these threats, Nashi movement members emphasise that they are defenders of national values and that the fight against Nazism did not end with the end of World War II. For example, during the summer camp in 2007, photos of political activists such as Gari Kasparov and leader Eduard Limonov (NBP) were displayed, their photos were edited in various ways, and the leaders' faces appeared on female bodies, followed by text highlighting the fact that these leaders sold their country for substantial amounts of money from abroad. Another example, a photo portraying Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet wearing Hitler's moustache, with the phrase "Who is he, if not an enemy?" / «Кто это если ни враг? »⁵⁶³

Members of the Nashi movement also attacked Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves at the summer camp in 2008. For example, they built a specially designed space to house a pig they named after the president of Estonia, as well as a Nashi member dressed in an American army uniform, claiming to be the animal's caretaker. Through this performance, Nashi members hoped to express the friendship between the United States and Estonia. In 2010, it is considered to be the last meeting in the summer camps at Lake Seliger, another series of politicians, both American, Russian and Estonian activists, were parodied, such as Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili, the judges of the European Court for Human Rights, members of the Estonian parliament, Russian human right activists, writers, opposition leaders Lyudmila Alekseyeva, Nikolay Svanidze, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Eduard

⁵⁶² Oleg Belov, "Nashi versus Nazi: Anti-Fascist Activity as a Means of Mass Youth Mobilization in Contemporary Russia", *Anthropology of East European Review*, Vol.26, No.2, p. 48.

⁵⁶³ «Битва за сердца и умы молодежи», АПН, 2007, <http://www.apn-nn.ru/537573.html> accessed in 21.06.2024.

Limonov, Valeria Novodvorskaya and Boris Nemtsov, were portrayed as puppets wearing Nazi caps.⁵⁶⁴

4.5.4. Reanimation of the Nashi movement and stepping out of the political circle in Russia

When President Dmitry Medvedev ran for president and won in 2008, his ascent in politics and closeness to the West left the Nashi movement without the backing it required to survive. As Marlene Laruelle and Stanislav Belkovsky note, since 2008, the Russian administration, including Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, has grown increasingly concerned about Nashi's aggressive and autonomous acts, such as those directed against British and Estonian embassies.⁵⁶⁵

The new leadership began to blame the Nashi movement for disruptive behaviour and distanced themselves from it, finally leading to the cessation of operations and a severe reduction in the movement's autonomy. Under Borovikov's leadership, Nashi saw systematic organisational degeneration, and the organisation's regional branches were reduced to only five: Tula, Voronezh, Ivanovo, Yaroslavl, and Vladimir.⁵⁶⁶ Under the presidential administration, Vladislav Surkov, one of the Nashi movement's main founders, was dismissed and replaced by Vyacheslav Volodin in 2011, who saw the Nashi movement as quite dangerous, particularly in terms of the country's foreign relations, following the events at the Seliger camp, where the vast majority of international politicians were parodied and thus exposed online. As a youth organisation that has repeatedly accused opposition groups of receiving foreign funds, Nashi was charged by a Russian court in 2011 with failing to report receiving foreign funds.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁴ "ROAR: Youth at Seliger Camp Use Nazi Symbols to Portray Ideological Enemies", *Russia Times*, 2010, <https://www.rt.com/politics/roar-seliger-installation-scandal/> accessed in 21.06.2024.

⁵⁶⁵ Marlene Laruelle, "Negotiating History: Memory Wars in the Near Abroad and the Pro-Kremlin Youth Movements", Marlene Laruelle (Ed.), *Russian Nationalism, Foreign Policy and Identity Debates in Putin's Russia – New Ideological Patterns after the Orange Revolution*, Stuttgart: Verlag, 2014, p. 88.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibidem, pp.49-50.

⁵⁶⁷ "Nashi Office Closed over Foreign Funding", *The Moscow Times*, 2011, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/nashi-office-closed-over-foreign-funding/450244.html> accessed in 21.06.2024.

The purpose was not to fully collapse this movement, but rather to suppress the authority to make decisions regarding the organisation of activities and goals that were steady at the start. This attempt at suppression is best explained by a reduction in orange panic in government circles following the Russian election marathon, the Kremlin's preferred parties and candidates were safely shepherded through the critical election phase, the regime's political continuity is assured, and mass protests in Russia's streets have not materialised.⁵⁶⁸ Furthermore, according to records made by the Russian State Duma, in 2023, specially selected Kremlin members organised various courses to teach children and adolescents about free and fair Russian elections.⁵⁶⁹ Members of the Duma consider that more young movements should be formed because the current struggle in Ukraine is long-term and requires a much greater mass of sympathisers and recruits to go to war⁵⁷⁰. Since the end of 2022, multiple such movements funded and supported by the Kremlin have emerged on Russian territory. Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, the groundwork was laid for the establishment of the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (from kindergarten to higher education), which will offer courses that incorporate elements of pro-Kremlin ideology, intending to instil nationalism and xenophobia in young people. On September 12, 2023, a law called the "Systematisation of Youth Policy" was published expressly for this aim, "instilling in young people the desire to accomplish their constitutional obligation to defend their motherland."⁵⁷¹ Former Nashi members led such movements that arose because of the conflicts that broke out between 2023 and 2024.

⁵⁶⁸ Regina Heller, "Russia's Nashi Youth Movement: The Rise and Fall of a Putin-Era Political Technology Project", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No.50, 2008, pp.3-4.

⁵⁶⁹ Lionel Beehner, "Russian Duma To Strengthen Pro-Kremlin Youth Movements", 2024, <https://fmso.tradoc.army.mil/2024/russian-duma-to-strengthen-pro-kremlin-youth-movements/> accessed on 23.04.2025.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibidem, <https://fmso.tradoc.army.mil/2024/russian-duma-to-strengthen-pro-kremlin-youth-movements/> accessed on 23.04.2025.

⁵⁷¹ Artem Metelev, (a member and spokesperson of the State Duma), posted on Telegram (a social messaging app) from 2 September 2024. <https://t.me/artemmetelev/7162> accessed on 23.04.2025.

Conclusions

Russia has a long history of turbulent far-right movements, but this current and active phenomenon among youth is relatively new, as is the concept of nationalism. This phenomenon has existed in Europe since the nineteenth century, with the French Revolution serving as the catalyst, but it was first regarded as an emotion rather than an ideology. Nationalism and xenophobia fostered youth activism and mobilisation, while categorising young people based on their political allegiance facilitated access to political plurality. However, in Russia, the extreme right, particularly among young people, differed from that in the West. As I discussed in the second chapter, where I presented a history of far-right movements from the time of the Tsar to the present, I can conclude that since then, the Kremlin leadership has exploited the young population by establishing youth movements financed and controlled solely by the state and ultimately supporting them.

In this study, I tracked the behavioural differences of youth movements with a nationalist and xenophobic tinge in Tsarist and Putinist Russia. This in-depth examination focused on two youth movements that, although they appear different at first glance, share the same philosophies and ambitions. The youth movement under Tsar Nicholas II, the Komsomol of the Soviet Union, and subsequently the political youth movement Nashi are eloquent examples of young political formations solely controlled by the state and the entourage of the presidential administration. They illustrate the trajectory that Russian nationalism has taken from the nineteenth century to the present. I

conclude that Russian nationalism embodies cyclical nationalism; since the Skinheads movement and the Nashi movement, their goals and objectives, established from the movement's inception, appeal to the foundations of nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively. The Nashi movement referenced the USSR era, when Russia was regarded as a major force on the global stage, with one of its goals being to restore Russia's former renown. I presented and analysed the factors that triggered actions within the Skinheads movement, described as a neo-Nazi faction within far-right movements. Throughout this paper, I emphasised that not all members of the Skinheads movement were affiliated with extremist parties; rather, they often acted in gangs, many of whom did not wish to engage in Russian politics.

The most compelling explanations and responses to the study topic, which emphasises the emergence of nationalism and xenophobia among young people in post-Soviet Russia, focus on both external and internal sources. The first ensemble of explanations is based on nationalist and racist beliefs. They focused on the socioeconomic stagnation in Russia in the 1990s, on the cleavages between us and them that were caused by the process of immigration, unemployment, and economic crises, and on the weakening of Russian national values by all of these. Many young people have found themselves having a hard time finding a job; in the villages and some of the cities of Russia, people lived in poverty, and with the increase in the flow of immigrants into the territory of Russia, I concentrated on young people since they were relatively young when they joined these movements, with many of them in their adolescent years, wanting to establish themselves at all costs. Many of them are perplexed during economic turmoil. The person (a former Skinhead member) who consented to give me an interview admitted that he wanted to be a part of such a movement since its ideals and aspirations were entwined with his own, particularly those concerning the influx of immigrants.

According to the first set of explanations for the rise of nationalism and xenophobia among post-Soviet youth, all processes, whether economic or otherwise, have paved the way for far-right youth movements to develop and grow in surveys, and both the Nashi and Skinhead movements had thousands of sympathisers and members when they first

appeared on the Russian political scene. The transition to modernity and democracy caused a rather deep subsidence between the cleavages between Us and Them, or reactivated those that already existed but were not very visible, because Russia was a superpower, and one can still see this struggle to reclaim the Empire's state today.

The second set of explanations for the major study issue on the increase of nationalism and xenophobia among young people is sociological, focusing on the components that contribute to political opportunities. The concept of political opportunity has become more popular in the Russian Federation as a key engine for the potential of collective action to effectively mobilise Russia's youth. This notion of the offer implies that young people, particularly those from impoverished origins, are drawn to potential career prospects in prestigious Russian institutions only if they follow the path outlined by the leaders of youth political parties. My investigation has revealed that the transition to democracy and modernity created schisms between us and others (the latter being deemed enemies), as well as the reality that this democracy is a creation of the decadent West, which did not follow the same path as Russia.

Chapter 3 examined the Skinheads movement in Russia (the ideology pursued, the mobilisation action, recruiting, propaganda, and so on), which arose in response to the hardships of post-Soviet society in the 1990s. To a significant extent, external causes that contributed to the acceleration of nationalism and xenophobia, disseminated the everyday racist mentality, which is rather prevalent among modern Russian youth. It is crucial to note that the Skinheads movement was not just nationalistic from the start, but that some of its members did not adopt this theory or the other beliefs that I outlined in this work. Both the Skinheads and the Nashi movements exhibit a detachment from everything exotic or different, which ultimately defines their identity. Nationalism and xenophobia are the major components of the Skinhead movement; nevertheless, in their case, these phenomena are considerably more prominent. We have shown that the Skinhead movement is an extreme right-wing mentality that grew nationally in the early post-Soviet era. I can conclude that the Skinheads movement is a socioeconomic disorder that has significantly contributed

to the rise of nationalist and xenophobic visions, elements that acted as a protective capsule against the factors that affected post-Soviet society, namely the economic crises of the 1990s and the propaganda and immigration flow of the Chechen Wars. With the Chechen War, xenophobia became a natural reaction of the Skinhead movement to hate crimes and ethnic crimes committed against refugees fleeing the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The results I obtained utilising data from the SOVA Centre website on the xenophobic actions/attitudes of the Skinheads movement demonstrate that these types of behaviours are currently decreasing, compared to the 1990s, when the rate of these actions was extremely high. Except for the sanctions imposed on Russia following the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine, it signifies economic stabilisation with Putin's rise to power. The person who conducted the interview had a more positive assessment of Putin and what has changed with the new presidential administration than of Russia under Boris Yeltsin. Not all Skinheads are neo- Nazis, but those who study Nazi Germany's ideology have been drawn to Nazi aesthetics, such as uniforms. It should be noted that the clothing has modernised; we see that the members of the Skinheads movement are all dressed in jeans and T-shirts, and the key element in this uniform is the boots up to the ankle, which are trimmed to zero. Another aspect of Nazi aesthetics, the cult of a flawless body, derives from what I discussed in Chapter 4. In the 1990s, white supremacy became the principal proponent of far-right movements. The economic recession and the disintegration of education, the system, and jobs during the reformist period of the 1990s were the primary reasons why the Skinheads movement gained momentum, exacerbating the chaos of the 1990s.

The wars in Chechnya fuel animosity for the Caucasus native population, while the number of Skinhead members has increased, according to the numbers presented in the report. The Skinheads movement accepted an imperialist discourse that began to grow among its adherents, as well as an Aryan Slavic identity, with its racial identity informed by Nazi propaganda and aggressively criticising globalisation and modernity. I can conclude that the Skinheads movement heavily pushed the image of the superhero and the notion that the Slavs are a pure Nordic race. The

decline in the number of skinheads and hate crimes can be attributed to the application of the law to these acts of violence. Given the fact that during the events in Ukraine in 2004 (the Orange Revolution), the Ukrainian authorities accused Russia of harbouring many neo-Nazis, including members of the Skinheads movement, and collaborating with the Russian state, resulting in the end of Skinheads operations.

The Political Youth Movement Nashi played a more direct and profound role in the emergence of nationalism and less xenophobia; the latter phenomenon existed, but not as visibly as in the Skinheads movement, and there are no statistics on hate-motivated acts of violence among the Nashi. Despite its official position, which first indicates that it opposes fascism or any form of nationalism, the Nashi movement has evolved into a nationalist movement rather than a patriotic one, as suggested at the outset. Since the movement began to recruit from the outside, members of the Skinheads movement or other radical parties have attempted to dominate it. As a result, the movement evolved from a promoter of anti-fascist ideas to a state organ disseminating fascist nationalism and ideas, and how these phenomena were disseminated with a fascist tinge contributed significantly to an increase in extremist attitudes towards justice among young Russians. The yearly summer camps held at Lake Seliger, as well as the activities and courses offered, are the most evident parallels to the Hitler Youth; this personality cult from the Nazi German period can also be found in the Nashi movement. The investigation in Chapter 4 shows that the Nashi youth political movement is a modernised version of the Hitler Youth. Unlike the Skinheads movement, the Nashi youth movement received financial assistance from the presidential administration and a few pro-Kremlin organisations.

The Nashi Movement was a pro-Kremlin instrument used to counter the potential threat of the repercussions of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, as well as the economic results of the 2004 reforms. I explained that the Nashi Movement represented a movement of nepotist practices that could guarantee the loyalty of Russian youth and was a dynamic player on the foreign policy scene, which carried out Kremlin orders. As I explained in Chapter 4, the Kremlin significantly reduced its funding to the Nashi youth

movement because it moved beyond the boundaries imposed by the presidential administration and desired to be an autonomous movement, separate from the state, and formulate and implement its projects and objectives. Not only did this result in the breakup of this movement, but the street politics of the 2007 Bronze Soldier Crisis, mobilisation tactics, recruitment, and practices of the summer camps at Lake Seliger did not deliver the expected results for the Kremlin. However, the message intended to be conveyed in the West was that it was important for the outside world to recognise that Russia's Kremlin system has an active and devoted youth population.

Despite this, the political youth movements Nashi and Skinheads, with their activities, were viewed with scepticism about Russia's democratic system. I can conclude that the Skinheads and Nashi movements reflect a democratic fragility in Russia. Both youth movements provide an example of a superficial transition to democracy. The Nashi movement, which began as a pro-democracy, anti-fascist movement, gradually undermined the democratic transition. The movement's leaders, who were once considered the primary agents of democracy, were ultimately responsible for establishing a government and an authoritarian system.

The contributions that this paper brings to the study of right-wing extremist youth movements in post-Soviet Russia are:

- Using the Internet for dissemination of information and recruitment (movements have utilised the internet to promote their programmes, events, pamphlets, and so on, as well as photographs and videos featuring old members of these movements sharing their stories).
- I proposed the phrase "cyclical nationalism" to describe how both movements were rooted in a certain moment in Russia (Tsarist Empire, Nazi Germany, and Soviet Union).
- I used the term "ideoscapes" to describe the flow of these ideologies that work together to create a certain idea, phrases, and images of what they wish to portray, which shape the youth's perspective of reality. Both movements encourage principles found in the philosophies they approach while suppressing those they believe are destructive to the country's progress, such as the democratisation process.

In conclusion, there was a transition in Russia, but it did not take the road that the West had envisioned. The transition to democracy was superficial; even though they no longer funded the Nashi movement, and the state began to apply punishments to the Skinheads movement, with many members imprisoned, their ideals persisted. The Nashi movement's still-operational website advertises their fight against fascism, but as I previously indicated, all of this is merely surface; Russia's path was towards a semi-authoritarian dictatorship. Furthermore, since the collaboration between the Nashi youth movement and the Skinheads movement, which is a far-right movement, the presidential administration has done nothing but support extremist nationalism and allow such an ideology to permeate the spheres of influence of Russian youth. This action on the part of the presidential administration was an incentive for the Skinheads movement to allow itself to promote its propaganda and the ways of recruiting and mobilising its members; therefore, the leadership did not suppress this movement, and the influence it had until 2018 increased. Their groups on Vkontakte, where they were discussing, propagating, and recruiting members, had posts until 2018, when the movement stopped, according to statistics. But there are still people who use these groups only for strictly entertainment purposes. The members of the Skinheads movement do not talk about the reason that prompted them to get out of this movement. The person who gave me the interview avoided this question, eventually providing a rather vague answer. What I can conclude is that the Nashi movement was a more peaceful mirror of the Skinhead movement. According to statistics, the Nashi movement was not involved in acts of violence, he said; however, he was an active contributor in the process of rising nationalism among young people through their activities, messages sent, career offers, and so on. All this was extremely appealing to the Russian youth.

Both the Skinhead youth movement and the Nashi youth political movement played significant roles in propagating nationalism and xenophobia among Russia's youth population. The Nashi youth political movement and the Skinheads movement have mastered nationalism and xenophobia as integral parts of their political agenda, spreading these two

phenomena interactively and with a rather high intensity inside the borders of the Russian world since the period of Boris Yeltsin's government, respectively, and the current government, led by Vladimir Putin. The then and present presidential administrations played an extremely significant role in the rise of nationalism and xenophobia. Given the close but little visible cooperation between the two movements, the statement said that the presidential administration not only allowed them (by financing the activities of the movements) but also gave them the courage to spread nationalism even more among younger generations through their access, especially the Nashi movement, only to state-controlled media channels. Like a totalitarian regime in which media elements were controlled by the state before being exposed to the public, I can conclude that everything posted on the Nashi movement's website was previously controlled by those in the presidential administration tasked with analysing such posts. The Nashi movement's website contains entries that praise and exalt the government's and pro-Kremlin's achievements in various aspects of the Russian world. The forms designed attracting as many people as possible implies the prerequisites and advertising they use before accessing this sort of form, which is a constraint for those who wish to participate in this movement. This option is no longer optional due to the format of the advertisements and the form's requirements. The answer to the question of the rise of the far right among young people through such resources is, above all, quite a big challenge for the future of Russia, which is slowly beginning to return to the past. The cyclical nationalism developed with these two movements turned from the originally planned road to democracy, towards an imperialist future, and a re-Stalinization of the Russian state. The future is that of the Empire, of the USSR, in which Russia has the status of a great power.

My research focused on the elements that concern on socioeconomic development, the social and cultural aspects we observed in the study of the two movements, the impact that the flow of immigrants had on these two movements, the most important factors that stood at the foundation of the actions of the two movements, namely the unemployment rate and the lack

of jobs, and later on, the challenges generated by the modernization and globalisation processes.

In this study, I explained why young people chose to join these movements by examining the policy of the offer developed by these movements, particularly the Nashi youth political movement, whose recruitment offers are presented on their website to attract as many young people as possible. With the support of these two youth movements' strategies, I discovered that the Kremlin's presidential administration found it easy to govern these movements by giving them numerous possibilities and access to state-controlled media channels. The Political Youth Movement Nashi was employed to defend Russia's status quo. The Kremlin sought to subdue these movements by imitating democracy on a global scale through managed nationalism. I discovered that these nationalist-patriotic youth movements formed an indispensable component of post-Soviet society. The newly constituted, semi-authoritarian state in Russia justifies the aims of nationalist youth movements merely by being its major purpose. The transition to democracy is greatly hampered by the government's continued backing and encouragement of far-right movements. Through indirect observation of the youth political movements Nashi and Skinheads, I was able to gain a better understanding of the role these two movements played in shaping Russian youth attitudes, public opinion towards immigrants, Russian youth perceptions of the Russian world, and the fact that what lies beyond Russia's borders is a decadent element. They established a personality cult around Putin through posts on the Nashi movement's website, in which the president is praised, and his accomplishments are highlighted. And the mobilisation of these young people, as well as cooperation between the Nashi and Skinhead movements, has fanned hostility towards outsiders and the West.

Former Nashi movement members now lead the StopXam movement. The ideology, activities, and personality cult centred on President Vladimir Putin's image have remained unchanged since the period preceding the Nashi movement. What has changed is the movement's image, along with the name and page of the website used to recruit and mobilise participants.

Future academic research may examine the impact of these two youth movements, Nashi and Skinheads, on younger generations today, as well as what was inherited from them, because these movements are no longer as active as they were in the late 1990s and 2000s, but their ideologies, actions, and objectives are still present in current youth groups. An analysis that will allow us to see the long-term trajectory of young Russians, as young people today will hold crucial positions in the state, because, as the slogan on the Nashi website states, someone will be the third man after Putin in charge.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview with a former member of the Skinheads movement

И: Как вы оказались вовлечены в движение скинхедов? Что вас привлекало?

А.Т.: Была такая ситуация до меня и мои ломы доебалась трое не русских людей не славянской насти грузусь так, которые разными способа и пытались у нас вымогать деньги чуть тоже после этого один из них ударил мою мать. Я разбил ему рожу. Они позвали будет вчера, чел. Меня это ответ, но первый вопрос, что мне привлекло, мы не на машине.

И: Как вы впервые встретились с ними?

А.Т.: Я написала на хорошем руле, которая очень хорошо знает за это культуру, он меня познакомил с ними мысли, сошлись на одних, если.

И: Можете рассказать нам немного о идеологии группы, в которой вы были?

А.Т.: Если человек не русской Национальности не должны саранска, но место он просто приехал работать в Россию просто работать зарабатывать деньги не выебываются в нашем государстве, мы его не трогаем. Он нормальный, Он адекватный к нему претензий нет. Вот

например, если есть такие люди, такие даже людьми тяжело назвать уебки, ебанные блять, которые приезжают в Руси, начинают качать права, не могут ся до женщин девушек несовершеннолетних пиздить наших, а именно русских идей после этого их улавливаю и очень сильно пиздос обычно после таких ситуаций они переезжают или или приходится очень плохо.

И: Как вы проводили время? Какие занятия вы проводили?

А.Т.: На самом деле утром мы обычно сидели дома, где, но где-то собирались там у кого-нибудь у кого-то дома собирались, обсуждали дальнейшие планы, идеи гуляли, но вот когда выступал вечер, ну можно сказать, выходили на.

И: Я читал, что в 1990-х годах разразились кризисы и был создан хаос. Каковы были причины? Как вы думаете, какая была главная проблема в России в 1990-х?

А.Т.: Ну так да, это было правительство, а конкретно правительство.

И: Можете ли вы рассказать нам о одежде скинхедов? Татуировках? Имеет ли она особый символический характер?

А.Т.: Ну что могу сказать конкретно об одежде одежда особо смысла никакого не иметь обычные из ботинок, это берцы. Это Гресева, В общем, достаточно, так и тяжело или немного обычен на обл, в которой удобно бегать, и даже если ты будешь на приступить не стекло не ломать и такое приходило делать, то в такие моменты это об быть никак не подвела, прям могу привести пример то же самое не стану по доши, иначе называется где очень удобно лично практике. Хорошо насчет ботинок сказал дальше, но в пример одежду именно одежду, которую не футбол киникулы, потому что это обычно не имело значение в нем именно куртки бомбер и много там подобное самое главное, чтобы Бондер был достаточно такие крепкие, если бы за тебя случились, ты бы мог спокойно отбиться сватели, например, за куртку, ты можешь руками выбить свою куртку из его рук, то есть, чтобы как была такая. Насчет татуировок получается татуировки. Это что-то коловрат. Это достаточно такие редко свастики, потому что достаточно-таки очень многие люди путают нацизм с фашизмом. Это жизнь. Это отдаление на Симона Цина. Наши раз самая пиздатая и все типа на это тебе никто не

имеет права посягать на нашу нацию на нашу опу нашли, а фашизм. Это проявление нацизма через насилие очень сильно сильно, например, могу привести пример самый хуевый примитель, ный цизм. Это Гитлер просто такой уебак.

И: Как бы вы охарактеризовали скинхеда?

А.Т.: Ну, как бы я ризовать, это достаточно-таки спокойные люди, то есть после дневности, например, я стал где-нибудь в университете или до того, ты увидишь человека, ты, ну, скорее всего, если человек есть не фанатик какой-то или подобное, ты в жизни не поймешь, что это как обычно не с головы, либо не выснил просто коротко сижую, но чтобы за волосы не мога сватиться, что волосы на голове одно из самых ных место человека, ты сейчас человек низкий болевой порог, я достаточно и с этим.

И: Что такое иерархия групп?

А.Т.: Верно. Четвертый вопрос продолжает отвечать на вопрос, в чем смысл идеологии можно сказать отдаленное национал социализм, то есть наши раз и все, если кто-то покушается на наш, не должны этих люде, вот примерно такая идеология была.

И: Давайте перейдем к современности. Есть ли сейчас скинхеды? Действует ли движение скинхедов сегодня?

А.Т.: На данный момент ходов нету, есть что-то подобие цильно, примерно с две тысячи одиннадцатого года товить, и вот настоящие скины, которые знают, что такое жизнь и многое подобное. Они не хуже. Почти что.

И: Как вы видите иммигрантов?

А.Т.: Я считаю, что мы все люди, что у всех типа есть право. Держи Национальная страна. Главное,

И: Можете ли вы рассказать нам о нападении или о более жестоком обращении с меньшинствами?

А.Т.: Ага. Получается, они ходили хуйня. Сама машина видит людей, доебывались, Вышли втроем. Это Никита и Ваня вышла толпу извесны человека по головке погладили очень хорошо.

И: Как вы видите текущий конфликт между Россией и Украиной?

А.Т.: Я считаю, что надо лить Украина себе сто раз оделась в себя и заступление в НАТО и много тому подобное. Я очень сильный патриот России, то есть, я люблю свою родину. Люблю Россию. Я уважаю наших правителей получается и читаю то, что Украина в данном лице совершенно не права. Тот может сказать то, что Россия первая это начала специально военную операцию, но это была полная необходимость из-за постоянных быть даже Баса луганской многих других регионов и республик.

И: Что вы думаете о Путине?

А.Т.: А что Владимир Путин очень хороший пролител президент. Человек очень хорошая, потому что они в одно из самых хорошо на одно и самых хороших место, родители и вообще там то, что я уважаю наше правительство очень прекрасно.

И: В какой период вы были членом движения скинхедов?

А.Т.: Я был движение с две тысячи восемь года, две тысячи четыре года в.

И: По какой причине или по каким причинам вы ушли?

А.Т.: Я ушел из скинов буквально по одной причине скинов. Можно сказать, как распустили Вот это стало абсолютно.

И: У меня будет только одно любопытство. Есть ли какие-либо стратегии, когда вы хотите покинуть движение скинхедов?

А.Т.: Абсолютно никакой не было поину моих их либо посадили, а либо убивали, вот кто-то в один момент уйти, а остальных присадили короче, перепостивали за пропаганду нацизма и разные.

Appendix 2: Interview with a former member of the Skinheads movement

The person who gave me this interview wanted to know in advance what I wanted to ask, saying that he was not willing to answer any kind of question. I set a few questions that I asked that person about the aspects of the Skinheads movement. To some extent, the interview allowed me to gather information about various aspects of the Skinheads movement and understand the experience of this person within the movement, to gather data on what this person's Skinhead experience meant.

I: How did you get involved in the skinhead movement? What attracted you?

A.T.: There was such a situation when my friends and I were attacked by three non-Russian people who had no Slavic characteristics, who in different ways tried to extort money from us a little, too; after that, one of them hit my mother. I broke his face. Like it happened yesterday, man. This is the answer.

I: How did you first meet them?

A.T.: Someone came to the place where I was repairing cars and told me about them, someone who knew this culture very well; he introduced me to their thoughts and agreed with some of them.

I: Can you tell us a little about the ideology of the group you were in?

A.T.: If a person of non-Russian nationality should not go to Saransk, but he just came to work in Russia, to earn money, they don't attack us in our state; we don't touch him. He is normal, he is adequate, and there are no complaints about him. For example, if there are such people, it's hard to even call them people, idiots who come to Rus', desecrate our country and promote their values, can't attack our underage girls and women, and if that happens, I catch them and usually beat them up very hard after such situations they move, or otherwise things get very bad. One might say

distantly that national socialism, that is, our times and everyone, if someone encroaches on ours, should not be owed to these people; that's roughly what the ideology was.

I: How did you spend your time? What "routine" did you have?

A.T.: In the morning, we usually stayed at home, but usually we would gather at someone's house, discuss additional plans and ideas, but when the evening came, well, you can say, we went out.

I: Can you tell us about skinhead clothes? Tattoos? Does it have a special symbolic character?

A.T.: Well, it doesn't make sense to have ordinary boots; these are ankle boots. This is Greseva (a local brand); in general, it's enough; it's hard when you have to run because they're heavier. It's not necessarily about how much it costs. And of course, the most important thing is that the boots should be strong enough; you could calmly fight off the guy. Well, I've said enough about the boots, as an example, clothes, namely clothes that are not football, because this usually did not matter; it was bomber jackets. As for tattoos, this is something, Kolovrat. These are quite rare swastikas, because quite a lot of people confuse Nazism with fascism. That's life. Ours is the most messed up, and everyone is like. No one has the right to encroach on our nation; they found fascism. This manifestation of Nazism through violence is very strong. I can give an example of the worst primitive, Nazism. Hitler is just such an asshole.

I: How would you characterise a skinhead?

A.T.: Well, how to say, these are quite calm people, for example, some of us can also be university students if you see such a person, well, well, if there's no fanatical member or anything like that, you won't understand this is usually we're advertised as aggressive or fanatical people as I said before, the most important feature is the hair for ordinary people, for us it means to be trimmed to zero.

I: Let's move on to modern times. Are there any skinheads now? Is the skinhead movement active today?

A.T.: The movement is no longer active; there is something like Tsilno (a small organisation, like Skinheads), active from 2011, Tovik (another

organisation), and here are the real skinheads who know what life is and much like that. They're no worse than they were. Almost.

I: How do you see immigrants?

A.T.: I believe that we are all human beings, that everyone has a right, but keep the country national, if you know what I mean.

I: Can you tell us about the attack or the more brutal treatment of minorities?

A.T.: Yeah. It turns out they were acting like crazy men. There was an incident with my colleague's car; they were attacked by a non-Russian, and the two of them got out of the car. It was Nikita and Vanya (my colleagues) who came out to the crowd and patted the man on the head.

I: How do you see the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine?

A.T.: I think Ukraine must think a hundred times about joining NATO, and many others like that. I am a very strong patriot of Russia; that is, I love my homeland. Love Russia. I respect our leaders, and it seems that Ukraine, in this case, is completely wrong. He can say that Russia was the first to launch a special military operation, but it was completely necessary due to the constant pressure from many other regions and republics.

I: What do you think about Putin?

A.T.: And that Vladimir Putin is a very good president. The people are very good because they are in one of the best places. I respect our government very well.

I: During what period were you a member of the skinhead movement?

A.T.: I have been in the movement since 2004-2008.

I.: What led you to leave the movement?

A.T.: I left the skinheads because of certain aspects. I simply left the movement for no reason. There was no reason for me; they were either imprisoned or killed, so someone left at one moment, and the rest were imprisoned, arrested for promoting Nazism and various other things.

Appendix 3: Enrollment form within the Nashi youth political movement

ВСТУПИТЬ

Сейчас тебе необходимо заполнить небольшую анкету, ответы на вопросы которой помогут нам быстрее узнать друг друга. Отнесись со всей серьезностью к этим 457 вопросам :)

Анкета

Фото

Хотелось бы видеть своего собеседника.

Choose file No file chosen

Фамилия *

Имя *

Отчество *

Телефон *

Любой контактный телефон, по которому тебя всегда можно найти.

+7 () -

Email *

Электронная почта. Если нет, то стоит завести. Пригодится в работе.

Skype *

Где ты живешь? *

Город

Укажи адрес (улица, дом, квартира). Может, мы соседи?

Проект *

Выберите проект в котором участвуете



Тебя можно найти в социальных сетях?

Если да, то оставь ссылку на свой профиль

Вконтакте

В формате <http://vkontakte.ru/idID>

ЖЖ

В формате <http://www.liveinternet.ru/users/LOGIN/>

Twitter

В формате <http://twitter.com/LOGIN>

Youtube

В формате <http://www.youtube.com/user/LOGIN>

Отправить

Напиши, если у тебя возникли проблемы в заполнении или отправке этой анкеты

Email *

Электронная почта. Если нет, то стоит завести. Пригодится в работе.

Комментарий *

Отправить

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ISBN 978-606-37-2887-7