

Revolutionary nationalism in contemporary Russia

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At first glance, nationalism and revolution would hardly seem to be connected with each other.¹ Consider the associations that these notions commonly evoke: nationalism targets primarily local or regional problems, with the goal of maintaining the status quo or imitating the past; by contrast, the major features of revolution are often innovation and universal change (together with violence). Shmuel Eisenstadt noted the revolutionaries' belief in 'creating a new order – total, cultural, social' (1978: 685) and listed the consequences of revolution, including the radical break with the past and the far-reaching transformation of all spheres of social life. Contemporary revolution scholars, such as Jack Goldstone, see the use of violence for establishing new institutions as a main element of revolution (Goldstone 2013: 1–9). However, Goldstone admits that, in some revolutions of the late twentieth century and the beginning of this century, violence has not played such a prominent role (*ibid.*: 104–16). Martin Malia has compared revolutions from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries and comes to the rather pessimistic conclusion that the nature of revolution could never fit into a single, coherent model (Malia 2006: 287–301). Indeed, if we look at the conservative revolution movement in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s or the Iranian revolution in 1978–9, these were hardly consistent with an understanding of revolution as an innovative and international phenomenon. Still, the connection between nationalism and revolution is far from simple and straightforward, whether in a historical or in a cross-national perspective.

This chapter examines the connection between nationalism and revolution in contemporary Russia. In doing so, we briefly discuss some general trends in the mutual development of these two phenomena and the impact they have had on contemporary Russian

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nationalistic revolutionaries. We then proceed to outline the sub-scenes of Russian national revolutionaries, discussing the development among national Bolsheviks, national anarchists, national socialists and national democrats, before offering some conclusions on the status of Russian national revolutionaries of today.

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Trends in the mutual development of nationalism and revolution

In connection with the first great modern revolutions (1789–1848), nationalism and revolution developed as a consistent unity. Later, however, they separated as many revolutionaries declared internationalism, and conservative nationalism emerged as a counterweight to revolutionary nationalism. Thus, if we imagine revolutionary nationalism of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries (from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Giuseppe Mazzini) as our thesis, conservative nationalism became the antithesis. In the twentieth century, various ideologues and politicians once again began to link nationalism with revolution. One such attempt was the conservative revolution, or the ‘revolution from the right’, which occurred in Germany in the 1920s–30s, represented for instance by the writings of Arthur Moeller van den Bruck.

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The Russian national revolutionaries of the 1990s and 2000s were influenced by the conservative revolution movement. The German conservative revolution has been particularly important as a source of inspiration, but also the Western European ‘new right’, with its attempt to reconcile racism with anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, has wielded considerable influence (Griffin 2003: 30–4). From the 1990s to the beginning of the 2010s, the national revolutionary ‘scene’² in Russia developed several sub-scenes: the national Bolsheviks, the national anarchists, the national socialists (proponents of a white racist revolution) and the national democrats (the proponents of creating a Russian political nation and ethnic democracy).

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National revolutionaries are nationalists who believe that revolution or radical political restructuring is both necessary and desirable. They include corresponding provisions in their manifestos. Russian national revolutionaries are diverse: the ideological spectrum ranges from the almost democratic national democrats to open neo-Nazis and thus mirrors virtually every branch of the Russian extra-parliamentary opposition – nationalists, leftists and democrats are represented both in the extra-parliamentary opposition and in the nationalist revolutionary organisations. In addition, the evolution of national revolutionary groups is closely linked

with the transformation of Russian public feeling. The *ressentiment* of the 1990s, which later resurfaced in 'the Crimea syndrome', triggered the emergence of national Bolsheviks. The rise of xenophobia after the turn of the century instigated a call for a racist 'white revolution'. And the upsurge of civic activity at the beginning of the 2010s stimulated the formation of national anarchists and national democrats. Overall, while national revolutionaries in Russia are marginal political groups that have been left to their own devices, they can nevertheless be said to have responded quickly to any change in the Russian political process.

National Bolsheviks

The origins of the first national revolutionary organisations in Russia date back to 1992. The ideologists behind these organisations were motivated by the frustration and bitterness caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the breakup of the former Warsaw Pact, the diminishing international role of Russia, falling living standards and growing social inequality. The most prominent among these new nationalis^{ts} revolutionary organisations was the National Bolshevik Party (NBP), headed by Eduard Limonov (real name: Savenko).

In 1993, the year of its inception, the NBP was a small radical group with only several dozen members. By the end of the 1990s, it had grown to have branches in over fifty regions and a total of 5,000–7,000 members. The bold actions of NBP activists have been in the public spotlight³ – and NBP activists have increasingly experienced the brutality of expanding authoritarianism in today's Russia.

Limonov as a charismatic yet radical leader has played a significant role in developing and expanding the NBP. Nevertheless, his leadership is not the whole explanation of the NBP's success (the NBP continued to operate while Limonov was incarcerated between 2001 and 2003). There are several reasons behind the effectiveness of the NBP (Sergeev 2004: 157–9). First, Limonov made youth the social base for the NBP: 'Our Russia is old. Every city is divided by the *nomenklatura*. Youth has no place for itself in the city . . . The originality of our party derived from the decision to recruit youth, not the local opposition' (Limonov 2002a: 113, 118). Thus, the NBP sought to position itself as a channel of social mobility for youth: 'Revolutions have always been accomplished by youth; reaction is the job of middle-aged and older people' (Limonov 2003a: 46).

Second, when most media channels were inaccessible to the party, the NBP managed to establish its own channel through which it

could address its constituencies directly: the newspaper *Limonka*, which has been published since 1994, and is subtitled *The Direct Action Newspaper*. From 1994 to 1998, this newspaper became the NBP's major party-building tool. According to Limonov, 'some months after a "Limonka" had been dropped somewhere,⁴ first a group and later a *natsbol* [national Bolshevik] cell appeared there. These boys met, discussed the paper, and then wrote to us . . . In this way we established our first organisations' (2002a: 90).

Third, the NBP attracted many Russian counterculture activists, such as avant-garde composer Sergei Kurekhin, the poet Alina Vitukhnovskaia and several rock artists, including Aleksandr Nepomniashchii, Egor Letov (of the rock band Grazhdanskaia Oborona) and Sergei Troitskii (of the rock band Korroziia Metalla). According to Ilia Kukulin, the NBP and its *Limonka* were 'from the onset envisioned not simply as political institutions, but as an art project' (2008: 303). This view is supported by Limonov, who has described the party as 'a cultural phenomenon in the first place, and not political. [The party possesses] the unique aesthetics of a revolt' (Limonov 2002b: 333).

The NBP managed to create a unique cultural style represented by skinny guys with short hair and black clothes who looked 'similar to the popular type of inner-city teenage boys: black jeans, boots, a jacket and a cap – at the same time being different from this type by their extreme asceticism . . . nothing excessive, nothing rich or fancy in their outfits' (Limonov 2002a: 238-9). The NBP did not invent this style itself: it adopted and adapted it, drawing on existing cultural models.

At the same time, this style was closely connected to ideological guidelines. In his 2002 biography, Limonov elaborates on this. There he writes that political forces in Russia have always borrowed from earlier models: monarchists and *chernosotniks* (Black Hundreds) associated themselves with models presented by the pre-revolutionary Union of the Russian People, whereas Aleksandr Barkashov's Russian National Unity (*Russkoe natsional'noe edinstvo*) and Nikolai Lysenko's People's Republican Party (*Respublikanskaia narodnaia partiia*) adopted the Nazi storm-trooper model of the 1920s and 1930s. Viktor Anpilov and his Labour Russia (*Trudovaia Rossiia*) used as a template the late Stalinist Soviet Union, and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Brezhnev Soviet regime (Limonov 2002a: 126, 169). The NBP saw themselves as the only modern party: 'We have created our party based on counter-culture and opposition politics.

We collected all the heroes who were fighting against the system, from both the left and the right' (Limonov 2002a: 169).

In 1999, the NBP underwent a transformation, redirecting its focus to public actions with symbolic implications. There were two major types of such actions. The first were attacks on 'moral targets' (Limonov 2002a: 213), in which activists publicly insulted the political and cultural establishment. NBP activists threw tomatoes and eggs and poured mayonnaise and ketchup on officials, or slapped them with flower bouquets. All these actions were decidedly nonviolent: when, for example, activists would slap their target with flowers, they used carnations, not roses, since the former have no thorns (*ibid.*). From 1999 to 2002, the moral targets were politicians and intellectuals who, according to the NBP, had harmed Russia and ethnic Russians (for example, Mikhail Gorbachev or film-maker Nikita Mikhalkov). Starting in 2003, the NBP also attacked politicians who were part of the political regime or were supportive of it. During the 2003 State Duma election campaign, the NBP carried out 'moral attacks' on the chairman of the Central Election Commission Aleksandr Veshniakov, on Prime Minister Mikhail Kasianov, on St Petersburg governor Valentina Matvienko and on several United Russia party leaders (NBP 2003).

The second type of action involved symbolic takeovers of public offices. Initially, in 1999 and 2000, the NBP conducted such takeovers in the 'Near Abroad' (Limonov 2002a: 214–17, 246–51). In Russia, the most notorious of these actions, which also grabbed international attention, were the takeover of the Ministry of Health and Social Development on 2 August 2004 in protest against the monetisation of social welfare, and the takeover of the Presidential Administration on 14 December 2004, with demands to free the activists arrested during the previous takeover.

In parallel, radical shifts took place in the ideological orientation of the NBP. Initially, the party's founding fathers – Eduard Limonov and Aleksandr Dugin – had seen the NBP as imperial-statist. According to the original party programme, the goal was to unite all ethnic Russians in one state, to be followed by the creation of a 'gigantic continental empire' spanning from Vladivostok to Gibraltar (NBP 1994). The programme combined 'an iron Russian order' with a prioritisation of the rights of the nation (including total cultural freedom). Its orientation toward 'traditionalist, hierarchical society' (*ibid.*) was, however, clearly in conflict with the party slogan 'for modernity, modernisation and avant-garde'. The relationship between state-nationalist and socialist ideas in the

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to democratic and leftist extra-parliamentary organisations. In order to challenge the authoritarian regime and support democratic civil rights, the party joined the Other Russia coalition. After NBP was banned by the authorities in 2007, the national Bolsheviks have thus operated under the 'Other Russia' appellation – since 2010 as the (still) unregistered Other Russia party.

The NBP's public actions have also changed. From 2005 to 2008, NBP organised unauthorised public rallies called Dissenters' Marches. Since 2009, it has held meetings on the thirty-first of each month which has thirty-one days (an action known as Strategy-31). The thirty-first is symbolic: Article 31 of the Russian Constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and public meetings. These walks, meetings and picket protests have brought together from a few hundred to some 3,000 people, and have always provoked an immediate and severe reaction from the authorities. Almost every protest has been dispersed by the police and the Special Purpose Mobility Unit (*Otriad mobil'nyi osobogo naznachenia*, OMON), and the participants detained and prosecuted.⁶

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In 2011–12, Limonov and the Other Russia activists participated in the mass political protests for fair elections. Limonov represented the most radical wing of the opposition, demanding that the regime be dismantled. He criticised the 'bourgeois' opposition leaders (Gennadii Gudkov, Sergei Parkhomenko and Vladimir Ryzhkov) for changing the meeting place on 10 December 2011 from Revolution Square to Bolotnaia Square, for making compromises with the government and undermining the protests:

If the bourgeois leaders had not taken dozens of thousands of protesting citizens away from the city centre, the citizens would have been protesting inside the State Duma or the CEC [Central Election Commission] tonight... Achieving freedom for the country is possible only [by] talking vigorously: from the position of citizen power knocking on the doors of their buildings with thousands of fists. (Limonov 2011)

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In 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, Limonov for the first time in his political career declared approval of the policies of Vladimir Putin (Limonov 2014). Later, he called for further steps to annex the Donetsk and Lugansk regions as well as the rest of Novorossiia (Limonov 2015a; 2015b). Volunteers from Limonov's Other Russia party participated in the military conflict against the Ukrainian army, and two are reported having been killed.

Some *natsbols* disapproved of Limonov's reorientation and opposed the new policy, which they claimed represented 'treason against national Bolshevik ideas and the future Russian revolution' (NBP 2014). A splinter group thus announced the establishment of the National Bolshevik Platform, but then proceeded to ally with other national revolutionary groups in the new National Revolutionary Bloc (*Natsional-revolutsionnyi blok*).

National anarchists

The national anarchists, or national revolutionaries, have a shorter history and are less infamous than the national Bolsheviks. Their first groupuscules emerged in Russia around 2008/2009 in the midst of a fierce struggle between anti-fascist groups and neo-Nazi skinheads. The ideological trajectories that produced nationalist and national revolutionary groups mirrored each other: the nationalists emerged from a left-to-right shift and the partial acceptance of rightist ideology by anarchists and autonomists, while the national revolutionaries came as the result of a right-to-left shift and the partial acceptance of leftist ideology by some nationalists.

The ideology of national anarchism does not fit neatly into the established trichotomy of Russian nationalism – imperial, civilisational and ethnic (Pain 2007; Verkhovskii 2007). Imperial nationalism promotes the creation of a big multi-ethnic state, to encompass, according to various approaches, the territory of the former Russian Empire or the Soviet Union. Civilisational nationalism identifies a state model with a dominant role for ethnic Russians, while ethnic nationalism advocates the creation of a state exclusively for ethnic Russians.

The *natsbols* are an example of imperial nationalism, whereas national democrats support Russian ethnic nationalism. National anarchists, however, refute the concept of a state *per se*. Their vision is of ethnically 'clean' communes as the model for the future organisation of humanity (Sunshine 2008), and this links them to the ethnic nationalists. According to the national anarchists, ethnic communes will evolve naturally, as most people prefer to live with ethnically similar neighbours. These communes will then unite in federations of ethnically related peoples, each commune remaining autonomous. A person who chooses to live with another ethnic group would have to respect that group's culture and traditions. The national anarchists may have borrowed this idea of separate living and ethno-cultural homogeneity from the New Right, from the writings of the French

9h academic and philosopher Alain de Benoist in particular (*Telos* 1993–4).

11 One of the first national anarchist groups to appear was *Volnitsa*. This group was established in 2009 by Kirill Banshantsev, a nationalist activist from St Petersburg. Prior to this, Banshantsev had been a member of the Slavic Community (*Slavianskaia obshchina*) organisation. Some sources claim that Banshantsev also had been an activist in the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (pn14.info 2012b; KRAS-MAT 2013). However, Banshantsev himself denies any such involvement (Sobeskii 2014).

The *Volnitsa* manifesto was clearly influenced by Marxism and Marxist discourse, incorporating concepts like the ‘alienation of labour’, ‘exploitation’, ‘surplus product’ and others. The language used in describing an ideal society is, however, closer to the West European Third Way of the 1950s and 1960s. This was an option in-between ‘classical liberal capitalism and the Marxist-Leninist state capitalism, between imperial chauvinism and anti-nationalist cosmopolitanism’ (*Volnitsa* 2012). According to the manifesto, an anti-globalist and anti-cosmopolitan revolution would lead to ‘direct democracy’, to ‘a Republic of people’s councils (*soviets*)’ (*ibid.*). Citizens of this new republic would elect representatives for short-term positions with an imperative mandate that could be revoked at any point.

The authors of the manifesto concede that different peoples may share the same territory if these peoples are ‘complementary’ (*Volnitsa* 2012). In addition, ‘representatives of every nation should have an opportunity to occupy a separate piece of land and establish there the rules that correspond with its culture’. Further, ‘consumption culture’ is considered ‘degenerative’, and is contrasted ‘original folk culture’, which they associate with ‘spiritual development, [and] respect for and preservation of the diversity of ethnic identities’ (*ibid.*).

The manifesto speaks against tolerance – also typical of the Russian political right. An armed militia should preferably replace the army and police. This militia would conduct ethnic and racial cleansings whenever necessary and would thus ‘rapidly dominate over any violators, oppressors and aggressors, fighting evil only with evil and with no tolerance’ in order ‘to become a master on its own land’ (*Volnitsa* 2012).

For its pantheon of heroes, *Volnitsa* made an unusual choice. It excluded not only tsars, generals, statists and bureaucrats but also the internationalist revolutionaries. Instead, it honoured the heroes of popular uprisings against tsarism and Bolshevism, from Stepan

Ukrainian authorities; according to one of its ideologists, both have benefitted from the war:

As a result of the Russian aggression, the potential avant-garde of the new revolution is dying at the frontline as members of volunteer battalions, betrayed by the corrupt authorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Staff of Ukraine. (Ibid.)

While condemning the Ukrainian authorities, Narodnaia Volia holds that Ukraine has the right to self-defence. Russia's involvement, by contrast, is regarded as extremely negative: 'There is a real threat that the imperial forces could use the revolutionary processes in Kiev to restore Putin's Russia's control over Ukraine' (ibid.). To show its opposition, Narodnaia Volia activists took part in the September 2014 All-Russian March for Peace, a protest against the war in Ukraine.

Narodnaia Volia takes a different approach to inter-ethnic relations from other national anarchists. It accepts the equality of various ethnic groups on the condition that these groups live separately, govern themselves and preserve their own ethnic identity. According to its manifesto,

Each nation shall have the right to defend its ethnic and racial identity, as well as a right to self-defence against encroachments on its rights by any hostile forces . . . Thus, taking current conditions into consideration, we are reviving the ancient traditions of popular self-governance. (Narodnaia Volia 2013)

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In 2014, Narodnaia Volia, the Nationalist Bolshevik Platform (*Natsional-bol'shevistskaia platforma*) and the Russian Socialist Movement (*Russkoe sotsialisticheskoe dvizhenie*, RSD)⁹ created the Nationalist Revolutionary Bloc (*Natsional-revoliutsionnyi blok*). The RSD had been established in the early 2010s by autonomous nationalists. The main difference between Volnitsa and the RSD had been the latter's socialist, rather than anarchist, orientation. However, the degree of nationalist identification also varies. For example, Narodnaia Volia does not use the 'Celtic' cross (or short sun-cross) among its official symbols, although one of its ideologues admits that this symbol can 'convey a meaning of national liberation in contrast to the reactionary, conservative, imperial nationalism. Besides, this cross was used in the Novgorod Republic, which many consider as an alternative to the despotic Muscovy' (Volin 2015). The RSD, for its part, uses the Celtic cross both as a separate symbol and in combination with the red and black five-pointed star. And although it does not explicitly mention

the separation of ethnic groups in its programme, it underlines the necessity of 're-ethnicisation' and the deportation of all illegal immigrants (Russkoe sotsialisticheskoe dvizhenie 2015).

National socialists

The third group of national revolutionaries are the supporters of a white revolution: radical skinheads (or boneheads). In 1995, there were only about 150 skinheads in Moscow, and even smaller numbers in other cities. By 2003/2004, there were 50,000 skinheads at the national level with 5,000–5,500 in Moscow and its suburbs and up to 3,000 in St Petersburg (Tarasov 2004).

Whereas in the USA, Great Britain and other Western European countries skinheads became racist and xenophobic in the 1970s (Hebdige 1987: 54–9), the skinhead movement in Russia was pro-Nazi from the outset (Tarasov 2004). The emergence of mass xenophobia in the early 2000s stimulated the rapid development of the skinhead movement. According to public opinion polls, the share of respondents who express full or partial support for the slogan 'Russia for Russians' in 1999 exceeded 50 per cent – and it has not declined since (Levada 2014). Most likely, an atmosphere of resentment and jealousy created such a change in public opinion. The social and economic crisis of 1998 and the onset of the Second Chechen War added to the xenophobic atmosphere in Russian society. For the ordinary citizen, the growing number of immigrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus demonstrated the humiliation and decline of Russia. Immigrants had been common in the Soviet era as well; however, their presence did not have the same effect as now. At home, sitting in their kitchens, older people would complain that 'before, they used to respect and be afraid of Russians, now they despise us'. The younger generation of skinheads, however, were not sitting idle in the kitchens – they were trying to re-establish *Russian* order in the streets.

According to the SOVA Center, after 2004 there was a steady growth in violent ethnically motivated crimes. First, gangs attacked people of non-Slavic appearance and members of youth subcultures (including punks, goths and rastas). In 2004, there were 268 such attacks, in which fifty people were killed. In 2006 and 2007, the number of attacks continued to grow, peaking in 2008 with more than 100 deaths. In 2009, attacks began to decrease, although eighty-four people were killed and 443 wounded that year. From 2011 the level of violence started to decrease markedly, and this trend has continued to this day (Table 5.1). This change can be attributed to the

assassins as well as the plotters behind this murder were arrested and sentenced to life in prison (Afonskii 2015).

Some BORN members were simultaneously members of a legal nationalist organisation called Russian Image (*Russkii obraz*), established by Ilia Goriachev. During the trial against Tikhonov and Khasis, Goriachev's testimony proved central to the guilty verdict. In 2015, however, Goriachev too was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment (Nazaretz and Muradova 2015).

The National Socialist Society–North (*Natsional-sotsialisticheskoe obshchestvo–Sever*, NSO–Sever) was another neo-Nazi group motivated by ideas of a white supremacy revolution. This group, established in 2004, sprang out of the National Socialist Society, a neo-Nazi organisation with cells in several Russian cities, including Murmansk, Nizhnii Novgorod, Riazan, Samara and St Petersburg. Its goal was to build a Russian nation-state based on the ideas of national socialism. NSO–Sever was led by Maksim Bazylev (also known as Adolf) and Lev Molotkov. The organisation used existing legal mechanisms: its members participated in municipal elections and held picket protests and meetings where they distributed neo-Nazi newspapers, brochures and books. But they also engaged in extra-legal activity: NSO–Sever members committed twenty-seven murders, twenty-four of which were classified as hate crimes. One of the perpetrators characterised these deaths as 'collateral damage of the nationalist revolution' (Fal'kovskii 2014: 6–7). In 2010, the activity of the National Socialist Society was banned, and the following year, twenty-four members of NSO–Sever were sentenced to various terms in prison, including five life sentences.

The defeat of the radical nationalist underground led to confusion among Russian nationalists. To consolidate, national socialist groups in 2012 published a joint manifesto on 'The Problems of the Nationalist Movement and the Ways to Overcome Them' (pn14.info 2012a). According to the manifesto, the primary goal of the Russian nationalist movement is 'to break down the contemporary political and economic system and establish an order that will benefit the development and prosperity of the Russian nation and the White race'. The Russian nation is defined in racial terms: 'the fight against the anti-popular regime and against Jewishness is our major goal'. The manifesto condemns liberalism, capitalism and Marxism, and tries to reconcile the priorities of the Russian nation with German-style national socialism. Finally, the manifesto rejects democracy and general elections and asserts that seizure of power must be violent.

the non-Russian ethnic republics (except for in the North Caucasus). The political regime of the new Russian Federation would be democratic but with harsh immigration laws for persons from the Caucasus, Asia and Africa (Natsional-demokraticheskii al'ians 2010).

In November of 2010, Anton Susov and Aleksandr Khramov, former members of the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (*Dvizhenie protiv nelegal'noi immigratsii*, DPNI), established the Russian Civic Union (*Russkii grazhdanskii soiuz*, RGS) movement. The main principles of this movement are basically consistent with the ideas of NAROD and NDA: the promotion of a democratic state, free and fair elections, and restrictions on immigration. The RGS manifesto talks about a Russian 'political nation' which should be built around 'the Russian ethnic core' (APN 2010). The document does not directly exclude the North Caucasus from the Russian state, but insists on cutting off funding, renegotiating borders and establishing strict border controls. At the same time, RGS renounces fascism, racism and religious fundamentalism. Instead, it promotes democratic nationalist traditions, drawing on such symbols as the Novgorod Veche, the Cossacks and the Decembrists (ibid.).

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The RGS manifesto is not unambiguous, however: although it condemns racism, it proclaims support and protection primarily for ethnic Russians, including the Russian diaspora abroad. Its views on the status of ethnic minorities within the Russian Federation that are unwilling to join the Russian political nation and to assimilate remain unclear. The manifesto notes only that their rights will be 'considered' (rather than 'protected') 'in accordance with international treaties' (ibid.).

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In March 2012, two important national democratic organisations – the Russian Civic Union and the Russian Public Movement (*Russkoe obshchestvennoe dvizhenie*) – merged into the National Democratic Party (*Natsional'no-demokraticheskaia no partiiia*, NDP) led by Konstantin Krylov. According to the manifesto adopted in connection with the founding of the new party, the National Democratic Party denounced authoritarianism, and confirmed its democratic orientation: democracy was understood as the responsibility of the state to protect the principles of democratic rights and freedoms. The authors of the manifesto tried to combine such democratic values with an ethnocentric understanding of the Russian nation: 'Russia must become the native home for all Russians (*russkie*)' and adherence to hard-line migration policies (Natsional'no-demokraticheskaia partiiia 2012: 3–5).

The national democrats also use the concept 'national revolution'. However, they speak about 'national democratic' and 'democratic'

revolutions (Khramov 2011: 44, 46, 67). The goal of such a revolution is to create a Russian nation-state – a federation of Russian territories – although existing ethnically non-Russian republics would be allowed to join. Ideally, this revolution should be legitimate and nonviolent: **Russians** 1

1 just need to come and vote in the parliamentary elections and in the elections to the Constitutional Assembly [which is intended to re-introduce a state based on national democratic principles]. If they are deprived of this opportunity, Russians will take it back in the streets. (Ibid.: 69)

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Accordingly, the national democrats welcomed the 2009–10 mass protests in Vladivostok and Kaliningrad,¹² which they saw as the beginning of ‘an emerging anti-authoritarian revolution’ (ibid.: 206–7). Likewise, they actively participated in the For Fair Elections movement of 2011–12.

The 2011–12 protest movement served to unite nationalist movements and parties, such as the Other Russia, the *Russkie* (Russians) movement, the Russian Civic Union, the Russian Public Movement and the Russian *Way*. Unexpectedly, during the protests a coalition of liberal, leftist, civil society and nationalist organisations was also established. In some cities, for example Kazan, national democrats were in charge of organising the protests. At the national level, five nationalist representatives were elected to the Russian Opposition Coordination Council. Leonid Byzov (2012) notes that nationalists who opposed imperial tradition joined the opposition. Although he labels these activists ‘leftist’ and ‘revolutionary’, the national democrats are in fact supporters of a market economy (Natsional’no-demokraticheskaia partiia 2012: 4).

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Among those arrested after the Bolotnaia Square protests on 6 May 2012 were some national democrats, although they were not numerous. Among the thirty-three protesters arrested, three were nationalists: two NDP members, Iaroslav Belousov and Ilia Gushchin, and one member of the *Russkie* movement, Rikhard Sobolev. A fourth, Oleg Melnikov, also took part in nationalist activities but did not consider himself a nationalist. In comparison, nine activists from various leftist organisations were arrested, as well as five civic activists, five liberal activists and ten ordinary citizens.¹³

After the annexation of Crimea, the national democrats split. Since 2014, Krylov’s National Democratic Party has been demanding that the Russian state give stronger support to the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk, although as a general line, the party has maintained

a negative attitude toward Kremlin policies. Writer and party activist Maksim Veletskii describes the separatist movements in Donetsk and Luhansk as the 'democratic revolution of the Russian people', whereas Putin's policies are denounced as anti-national, supportive of the oligarchy and 'filthy *ordynshchina*'.¹⁴ Such standpoints have led to the emergence of slogans like 'the government must resign' and 'Novorossiia must join Russia' (Veletskii 2015). Other national democratic leaders, including Shiropaev, condemn the 'post-Crimea' policies of the Russian government (Shiropaev 2016). However, these national democratic leaders have no independent political platform; the organisations they established have not succeeded.

Conclusions

Nationalism, in Russia as well as in general, has two distinct faces. Conservative nationalism often has the goal of maintaining the status quo and protecting the existing regime. By contrast, revolutionary nationalism is commonly opposed to the regime and seeks to achieve its radical transformation. Until recently, Russian nationalists identified themselves with conservative nationalism, and revolutionary nationalism found itself in the shadow of its twin – national revolutionaries were seen as weirdos and freaks. However, in the early years of the twenty-first century, Limonov's national Bolsheviks established themselves as a regular and steadfast opponent of the existing political system in Russia, and Nazi-inspired revolutionaries (the proponents of the white revolution) introduced street terror to Russian cities.

At the end of the first decade of the new millennium, new types of revolutionary nationalists began to appear. National anarchists have envisioned a way out of the neo-Nazi versus anti-fascist confrontation by amalgamating these two opposing perspectives. National democrats have sought to integrate Russian nationalism and democracy. This revival of oppositional nationalism has apparently worried the regime. Targeted repressions in 2012 and 2013 intimidated the opposition, including the nationalists, and the rise in jingoism after the 2014 annexation of Crimea has deprived the opposition of mass support. In addition, the annexation split the revolutionary nationalist movement into supporters and opponents of the official Kremlin policy. As a result, Russia's revolutionary nationalists have lost whatever limited influence they once enjoyed. Nevertheless, in a time of regime crisis, a revival of nationalist ideas in new shapes and forms is still possible.

Notes

1. This chapter was prepared with financial support from the Russian Foundation for Humanities, project number 15-03-00223: The Role of Nationalism in the Revolution Processes (A Comparative Analysis).
2. In describing the national revolutionaries, the term 'scene' is more appropriate than the term 'movement'. In cultural sociology, 'scene' is broadly defined as a complex of the social institutions and cultural practices of a subcultural community.
3. Pro-regime Russian youth organisations such as Nashi would later copy the NBP's style and methods for public actions.
4. Wordplay: *limonka* is slang for 'hand grenade', but also a pun on the name of the NBP leader, Limonov.
5. From 1918 to 1921, during the Russian Civil War, Nestor Makhno led an anarchist rebel army – and a republic – based in Eastern Ukraine (today's Zaporizhia oblast).
6. Such open use of force against the extra-parliamentary opposition can be seen an entirely rational elite strategy: the internally insecure elite saw organisationally independent groups as a potential threat, so such groups had to be co-opted or suppressed before becoming too dangerous (Gel'man 2010).
7. The *narodniki* was a revolutionary socialist movement within the Russian intelligentsia in the second half of the nineteenth century.
8. The Russian anti-fascist movement, which aims to resist nationalists physically, was established through Autonomous Action (Sergeev 2013).
9. This organisation should not be confused with *Rossiiskoe sotsial-isticheskoe dvizhenie*, which is closely connected with the Fourth International.
10. The abbreviation of the movement, NAROD, also means 'the people'.
11. Later Navalnyi would begin to advocate civic nationalism 'based on the unity of civil rights and freedoms' (Mikhnik and Navalnyi 2015: 58–9).
12. Protests in Vladivostok (2008–10) and Kaliningrad (2009–10) were motivated by socioeconomic reasons. In Vladivostok, the population was worried about an increase in automobile import tariffs. Many people there are engaged in trade in second-hand cars from Japan, and the rise in tariffs made this business unprofitable. In Kaliningrad, the protests were sparked by increases in utility payments and vehicle taxes. The number of protestors varied from several hundred to several thousand people.
13. For information on the Bolotnaia case and the prisoners of Bolotnaia, see <http://rosuznik.org/arrests> (last accessed 7 December 2016).
14. *Ordynshchina* was a tax collected by the Mongols from the Russian lands during the rule of the Golden Horde (from 1237 to 1480).

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