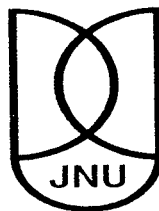


AN ANATOMY OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISM : 1991-99

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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(Neeraj Kumar)

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. A. K. Patnaik

(Chairperson)

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DEDICATED TO....

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Neeraj Kumar .
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Preface

'Russian Nationalism' has been a major theme of discussion among the intelligentsia for last some decades in east and west, both. Besides, the study of Russian nationalism has delved into the history of Russian experiment with several patterns of regime and the virtues of ideologues. What attracted my concern to this theme is its growing relevance in the academic circle, especially in Russia.

The present study aims at giving full-fledged analysis of how Russian nationalism has traversed the path of democracy in Russia after the demise of Soviet Union. The study is organized around four chapters. The first chapter has dealt with how Russian nationalism has been depicted in Russian political history and what virtues do these past phases hold. The chapter bases itself upon their contemporary relevance. The defining characteristics and major elements of Russian nationalism during the post-soviet era have been dealt with in the second chapter of this work. This study identifies major forces of Russian nationalism and their debates along with the contemporary trends in the third chapter. The performance of these forces along the political spectrum in Russia is one more interesting discussion which this chapter seeks to raise. The final chapter is devoted to the assessment of a multicultural Russia versus nationalist maneuvers. Ethnicity and the question of minorities have had a greater impact on the emergence of a multicultural society in Russia. Besides, the quest for a just social order has also been examined against these issues in this chapter. In a nutshell, this study has tried to look into all the relevant perspectives on Russian nationalism during the last decade of twentieth century.

Chapter-1

RUSSIAN NATIONALISM: LOOKING BACK

An Idea of Nationalism:

‘Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind.’¹

The problem with the dealing of the theme of ‘Nationalism’ is that the connotations and interpretations of the very term abound. Perhaps the only proper unit of political rule has been nation-state for last two centuries. It has dominated all the other forms of political rule across the globe. The most obvious repercussions of widespread nationalisms are the creation and subsequent destruction of empires, the genesis of new states and redrawing of territorial borders which give them a totally new meaning.² Factors like political, cultural and psychological are the main ingredients of a nation which vary thus, leading to the establishment of different nations.

✓ If we take a simpler definition of nationalism which is, of course, made difficult to interpret because of the variegated notions of nation, then it would be a suitable definition of nationalism: “Nationalism is an ideology that holds that ethnically or culturally defined nations are the fundamental units for human social life, and makes certain cultural and political claims based upon that belief in particular, the claim that the nation is the only legitimate basis for the state, and that each nation is entitled to its own state.” ✓

Nationalism also refers to the specific ideologies of various nationalist movements, which make cultural and political claims on behalf of specific nations. The concept of nation is not that much vague one as the concept of nationalism. The traditional concept of nationalism is starkly different from that of contemporary ones. Nationalism clearly portrays the idea that the individual nations are independent units which have their own set of defined values, aspirations (political or whatever), agenda, linguistic particularities, racial and ethnic composition and most importantly a very much cherished history. The

¹ Albert Einstein, *Letter* (1921) in Andrew Heywood, *Politics* (2nd ed.) (London: Palgrave,2002), p. 105

² Andrew Heywood, *Politics* (2nd ed.) (London: Palgrave,2002), p. 105

membership to a particular nation is not voluntary in nature and this is a good point to debate leading towards the emergence of modernist theories of nationalism.

Most strikingly what often confuses people in general that they derive the same meaning out of the two very much different terms-‘nationalism’ and ‘patriotism’. Patriotism is a sentimental expression and a kind of psychological attachment to one’s nation whereas nationalism is seen as a set of political ideas and it embodies that it is very much needed for the fulfillment of political goals and aspirations thereof. At the same time, it is not necessary that all the patriots should be nationalist too.³ Because you may not think that your nation is the only appropriate channel of delivering the political and other specified aims. Several writers have been very critical of the concept of nationalism because of this very conceptualization i.e. to see nation as the channel to fulfill political goals.

Furthermore, confusion erupts between the term- ethnic groups and nations. But ethnic groups do not have their common political aspirations. Since the nation-state has become the dominant form of state organization, nationalism has had an enormous influence throughout history.

Most of the world’s population now lives in states which are nation-states. The nation-state is intended to guarantee the existence of a nation, to preserve its distinct identity, and to provide a territory where the national culture and ethos are dominant. Most nation-states appeal to a cultural and historical mythology to justify their existence, and to give them legitimacy.⁴ Nationalist movements may or may not claim that their nation is better than others. They may simply claim that the population of a given nation is better preserved when it is permitted to govern itself, which is the principle of self-determination.

The basis lying behind the liberal type of nationalism is the idea of national self-determination which was the base of Giuseppe Mazzini’s thought. Before the discussion

³ Ibid., p. 115

⁴ Ibid.

of how and why nationalism has become to acquire significant proportion of literature in modern political science and also in international relations, it will be meaningful if we look at some of the thinker's and their ideas about what nationalism means for them.

The branding of nationalism is basically into three types: 1.pre-modernist (Anthony D. Smith), 2.modernist (E. Gellner) and 3.post-modernist (Benedict Anderson). Anthony D. Smith argues that nations are rooted in history and they have a long enriched cultural tradition and also a common linguistic bond which dates back to the ancient times. The quest for national independence and statehood comes much later and thus argues against the notion of a nation provided by Eric Hobsbawm (which states that nationalism creates a nation and not the other way round). Thus for Smith, it is altered and states that nations are the psycho-cultural construct which later provides the circumstances conducive for nationalism to emerge thereon.

Anthony D. Smith blatantly took on Ernest Gellner for linking nationalism with the idea of modernisation. Ernest Gellner argued that premodern and agro-literate societies were structured by feudal ties and loyalties, emerging industrial societies promoted social mobility, self-striving and competition and so required a new source of cultural cohesion and this was provided by nationalism. Nationalism therefore emerged to meet the needs of particular social conditions and circumstances. And we can not revert back to the society which we have surpassed long back.⁵ Anthony D. Smith criticized him for linking these two concepts of nationalism and modernization by stating that modern nations are in a continuum with the pre-modern ethnic groups which he called 'ethnies'. He further argued that modern nations came into existence only when these 'ethnies' imbibed the notion of political sovereignty.⁶ It appears that what Smith tries to propose is that nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation.⁷

⁵ Ernest Gellner in Heywood, n-2, p. 106

⁶ Anthony D. Smith in Heywood, n-2, p. 107

⁷ Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: McMillan, 2000), p.118

The concept of nation as 'political community' is just one of the two main vectors upon which the study of nationalism has been hanging on. When your individual political allegiances tend to shift towards the nation-in-formation (aspiration), it certainly leaves the other considerations like your cultural bond-seeking attitudes thus totally isolating your ethnic identity seeking attitude. This is no bad as Eric Hobsbawm argues. He draws heavily upon Rousseau who is regarded as the father of Modern Nationalism.⁸ The idea of political sovereignty was the chief determinant of the people's main thrust behind the French revolution and the nationalistic fervors it provided to the French people clearly shows that not only cultural is the nature of nationalism but from not even a single angle the envisaging of any nation as politically rooted can be neglected. Thus the idea of a French nation was one of the significant explanatorial values for the brand of nationalism which scholars like Eric Hobsbawm has talked about.

Hobsbawm never believed in the historical continuity and cultural purity.⁹ Hobsbawm never argues about totally giving up your roots which are well extended till the last strand of your historical strata. But instead of emphasizing that very strand, he suggests that it would be very much genuine to look for the possible and in fact (made) possible inventions of human society. Culture and ethnicity is there but secondary to none other than the nearest urgencies and political requirements. Even for instance, if we take up the case of national language, we are never sure as Hobsbawm suspects that ever if existed any national language because people did never speak any particular language as a whole at least in eastern Europe so the total idea and this particular presumption itself is wrongly placed.¹⁰ Nationalism creates the nations and has always created if we look at the soviet phenomena. It was the soviet-styled creation of the nation-based administrative units like Uzbek unit , Kazakh unit, Kyrgyz one and many more alike particularly during Stalin's era which clearly points out the genesis of nations which were by and large the consequences of nationalistic designs. It might be a different thing that in twentieth

⁸ Heywood, n-2, p.109

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service (eds.). *Russian Nationalism: Past and Present* (London: McMillan,1998). pp. 4-5

century, nationalism has traversed a separate path.¹¹ But here again Hobsbawm's idea seems to be fully substantiated and fulfilling the purpose of explanation.

Following the same tradition and the similar line of thinking, Benedict Anderson points out those nations are rather an 'imagined construct'. There is no guarantee that majority of a nation's population will be feeling alike or a nation will be vibrating on the same chord. What we can say is that they may not share a common and identical thought process. Nations are an artifact which is necessitated by political socialization through its several variegated agencies.¹² One more aspect which Anderson highlights is that political nations are not very much exclusive in nature rather they may incorporate various cultural nations. As we see through the example of UK as a political nation in which is embedded are the four different cultural nations-1. Welsh nation, 2. Irish nation, 3. Scottish nation and 4. English nation. That is what nationalism tends to portray. Developing nations are somewhat different in the sense that the process of their evolution has a great bearing on the nature of nationalism they have evolved through their formative years.¹³

Major Types of Nationalism:

Nationalism may manifest itself as part of official state ideology or as a popular movement and may be expressed along civic, ethnic, cultural, religious or ideological lines. Various definitions of the nation are used to classify types of nationalism. However such categories are not mutually exclusive and many nationalist movements combine some or all of these elements to varying degrees. Some political theorists say that any distinction between forms of nationalism is false. In all forms of nationalism, the majority believe that they share some kind of common culture, and culture can never be separated from ethnicity. Here are certain main types of nationalism which are regarded as an effective tool in explaining the plethora of nationalisms prevailing in our international relations' discourse:

¹¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality* (2nd ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 166-67

¹² Benedict Anderson in Heywood, n-2, p.109

¹³ Hobsbawm, n-9, pp. 169-70

1. Ethnic Nationalism defines the nation in terms of ethnicity, which always includes some element of descent from previous generations. It also includes ideas of a culture shared between members of the group and with their ancestors, and usually a shared language. Membership in the nation is hereditary. The state derives political legitimacy from its status as homeland of the ethnic group, and from its function to protect the national group and facilitate its cultural and social life, as a group. Ethnic nationalism is now the dominant form, and is often simply referred to as nationalism. Anthony Smith uses the term 'ethnic nationalism' for non-Western concepts of nationalism, as opposed to Western views of a nation defined by its geographical territory.

2. Cultural nationalism defines the nation by shared culture. Membership in the nation is neither entirely voluntary (you cannot instantly acquire a culture), nor hereditary.

3. Liberal nationalism is a kind of nationalism defended recently by political philosophers, who believe that there can be a non-xenophobic form of nationalism compatible with liberal values of freedom, tolerance, equality, and individual rights, are often thought to be early liberal nationalists. Liberal nationalists often defend the value of national identity by saying that individuals need a national identity in order to lead meaningful, autonomous lives and that liberal democratic polities need national identity in order to function properly.

4. Civic nationalism is the form of nationalism in which the state derives political legitimacy from the active participation of its masses, from the degree to which it represents the "will of the people". It is often seen as originating with Rousseau and especially the social contract theories which take their name from his book *The Social Contract*. Civic nationalism lies within rationalism and liberalism, but as a form of nationalism it is contrasted with ethnic nationalism. Membership of the civic nation is considered voluntary. Civic-national ideals influenced the development of representative democracy in countries such as the United States and France.

5. State Nationalism is a variant of civic nationalism, often combined with ethnic nationalism. It implies that the nation is a community of those who contribute to the

maintenance and strength of the state, and that the individual exists to contribute to this goal. Italian fascism is the best example:" Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State". It is no surprise that this conflicts with liberal ideals of individual liberty, and with liberal-democratic principles. However, the term "state nationalism" is often used in conflicts between nationalisms, and especially where a secessionist movement confronts an established nation-state. The secessionists speak of state nationalism to discredit the legitimacy of the larger state, since state nationalism is perceived as less authentic and less democratic.

6. Religious Nationalism defines the nation in terms of composite and shared religion. If the state derives political legitimacy from adherence to religious doctrines, then it is may be more of a theocracy than a nation-state. In practice, much ethnic and cultural nationalism are in some ways religious in character. Irish nationalism is associated with Catholicism, and most Irish nationalist leaders of the last one century were Catholic, but many of the early nationalists were Protestant.

7. Diaspora nationalism or as Benedict Anderson terms it, "long-distance nationalism". This generally refers to nationalist feeling among a Diaspora. Anderson states that this sort of nationalism acts as "phantom bedrock" for people who want to experience a national connection, but who do not actually want to leave their Diaspora community.

Russian Nationalism: A Contested Concept

Nothing can be more vague than in defining something which has a large number of solid and well-established interpretations as has been in the case of Russian Nationalism. But in general as per the widely accepted notions of Nationalism it would not be any exaggeration to argue that the chief elements of cultural and lately, political nationalism has always been among the characteristics of Russian Nationalism. It would lead to some logical conclusion as to what really is the nature of Russian Nationalism if we go into the history of the same. However, the prevailing media image of Russian Nationalism is that of a powerful and repugnant force, an overbearing imperial regime borne aloft by virulent

chauvinism and inflamed by anti-Semitism. Yet the events of past decade show that the situation is much more complicated.¹⁴

But then the moot point is that the kind of ingredients which is being enthused into the discussions about nationalism in Russia is very much debatable. And one more thing is very interesting which should be clarified in the beginning itself and that is there has been a number of nationalisms in Soviet Union and erstwhile Russia which all have their characteristics totally defined as per their choices and requirements e.g. Uzbek Nationalism, Kazakh Nationalism, Ukrainian Nationalism etc. but what is so interesting about Russian Nationalism is the fact that Russians have always identified and have often identified themselves, with 'Statism' and 'Autocracy'¹⁵. It would seem that *gosudarstvennichestvo*, the dominance of the state in every aspect of social life, has forever been a feature of Russian political culture. Against all the efforts of the nineteenth century liberal political reformers, and in spite of Lenin's initial anti-state anarcho-syndicalist notions, the autocratic state has prevailed and flourished in Russia in both tsarist and soviet times.¹⁶ One very attracting aspect of this Russian nationalism is that this Russian nationalism has for most of the times been inward looking rather than being outward in nature.

For Russians, the state has always defined the nation. Russian nationalists in the nineteenth century gave the ideological form to that conviction by framing their arguments in terms of Western European romanticism and German idealist philosophy. Nationality-the people as a natural and organic community-was identified with the economic, religious and political institutions of the state.¹⁷ For some of the Russian nationalist philosophers to obey the institutions of the state was to obey one self. So was the essence of nationalism during those eras which seems insurmountable with regard to the passion and zeal of common mass even not to be easily observed in the present days

¹⁴Hosking and Service, n-8, p.1

¹⁵ A. James Gregor, "Fascism and the New Russian Nationalism", *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, vol.31, no.1, (1998), p.7

¹⁶ Ibid., p.7

¹⁷ Ibid.

of nationalisms. But this zeal is not to be confused with something like craze or fad problem. In Russia specially, while the empires fell with some of the partial exceptions like Moldova, the people did not start parading on the street with guns and shouting provocative slogans. On the contrary they have been voting for the sovereignty of their non-Russian homelands and settling down to become loyal citizens of what used to be their own dependencies.¹⁸ But the problem there is that even after such a higher dose of liberalism, how far can the nationalist outburst can be stopped from becoming a reality?

Post-soviet Russian national identity has proved very difficult to construct. The Russian federation is not a nation-state, but rather a bleeding hulk of the empire. The break-up of the Soviet Union meant national self-determination for most of its constituent nationalities, but left the Russians as orphans. Without the imperial framework it is not clear how a Russian nation can be constituted.¹⁹ It is far from clear that who the Russians are or where the borders of the Russian nation will lie. Similarly as for the borders of the Russian state: should they include Belorussia, most of Ukraine and perhaps northern Kazakhstan? Because, very few Russians can conceive of their homeland without these territories. And what about Crimea, urban Latvia, and north-east Estonia, all of which contain large settlements of Russians. Such agendas create immense difficulties and debates for years to come.²⁰

There has also been a very fine attempt to delineate the major pointers as to define the Russian nation and its characteristics. Five main definitions of Russian nation have been put forwarded as follows:

1. Union identity-which defines the Russians as an imperial people or through their mission to create a supra-national state. Decades or sometimes centuries of existence within one state (common history) is supposed to be the basis for the continuation of a multi-ethnic state within the borders of the former USSR. Here

¹⁸Hosking and Service,n-8, p.1

¹⁹ Ibid. p.5

²⁰ Ibid. p.6

we can see the influence of Solovev, Fedotov, the Eurasianists, Danilevsky and the soviet concept of *Narod*.

2. The Russians as a nation of all eastern Slavs, united by common origin and culture. Ethno-cultural similarities and a common past are viewed as the main markers of national identity. Here the main influence of Klyuchevsky the nineteenth century philosopher can be seen.
3. The Russians as a community of Russian Speakers, regardless of their ethnic origin-Language is the main marker of national identity. The pre-revolutionary views and soviet views of the Russian language as a unifying force in the empire are evident. Those viewing the Russians as a community of Slavs or Russian speakers also place a particular emphasis on orthodoxy as a marker of Russian national identity. Here the influence of Berdayaev, Solovev and Slavophiles are often referred.
4. The Russians defined racially i.e. blood ties constitute the basis of common identity. Here the influence of the heritage of Black Hundred can be referred.
5. A Civic Russian nation- whose members are all citizens of the Russian Federation, regardless of their ethnic and cultural background, united by loyalty to newly emerging political institutions and to the constitution. Here the influence of the western theories of nationalism can be seen.²¹

Now, it is a matter of importance to look for the roots and anything which could provide us some clues so as to logically connect everything and prove them simultaneously. Obviously this task means a descriptive analysis of the periods which have been defining the major phases in the evolution of Russian Nationalism and whatever contributions given to the same by various leadership and regimes of different nature. Here are some main phases of the growth of Russian Nationalism.

²¹ Vera Tolz, "Forging the nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol.50, no.6, (1998), pp. 995-96

Main Phases of Russian Nationalism:

9th-15th century:

'Russia' from its earliest days as a state has always been a multinational conglomerate. Even the ancient Rus` of the 9th to 13th centuries brought together no fewer than 22 different peoples including the Finno-Ugrians, Balts, Turks and Iranians.²² What is really interesting and mind-boggling at the same time is that the variety and the number of these people who came rushing in has a lot of bearing on the nature of the empire which followed. And the fact should not amaze us that frequent wars used to occur among these nationalities basically for their desire to control the larger and substantial area of the empire.

The war among the group of Turks and Finno-Ugrians living on the territory of Rus`, in the area between the rivers Volga and Oka, fought together with the East Slavs to oppose the Mongol-Tatar invasion; is quite famous in this regard. Later from next some centuries the centralized russian state came to include the Volga Khanates, Siberia, part of northern Caucasus, all inhabited by numerous peoples, and also the territory of Ukraine. Finally, imperial Russia completed the formation of a huge multinational state which included the peoples of the Trans-Caucasus, central Asia, Baltic regions the south-west borderlands, Poland and Finland.²³

The flexibility of the nationality policies adopted by all the regimes throughout these eras shows us that they, the rulers of whichever sect, could not have afforded to neglect the choices and aspirations of various minorities. There has also been a tradition of religious tolerance in Russia. And, under such circumstances imposed by nationality policies, there was hardly a place for Russian nationalism. At the same time we can not ignore the fact that the embers of local nationalism were constantly smoldering in a number of regions of Russia, regardless of whether they entered Russia voluntarily or their territories forcibly

²²Hosking and Service, n-8, p.8

²³ Ibid.

annexed.²⁴ We can well measure the idea that the widespread presence of internationalism and the side by side existence of traditional popular nationalism have very much disturbed the growth of Russian nationalism. Besides that, the all-pervasive character of Russian nationalism was also absent. Only the upper echelons of certain fixed strata of populace were undergoing the nationalist discourse and its effects. Moreover, the sense of deprivation both economically and culturally was the thing which created a sort of assertive nationalism in ancient Rus` and Muscovite states.

The struggle these Muscovite states and Rus` carried on were much exhaustive economy-wise and psychologically. A feeling of national patriotism was formed in Rus` which gets reflected in folklores and various traditions of literature. Henceforth the patriotic sentiments came to be mingled with the origin of the Russian national consciousness. One significant aspect of these nationalist emotions was that no matter how intense they were but was largely outward in nature i.e. towards the external enemies of the Russian nation. The example of Russian struggle towards Mongol-Tatars over the centuries is quite known in this regard.²⁵

16th & 17th century:

Russian expansionist policies which shunned its defensive character became the hall mark of Russian nationalism. These political tendencies became fundamental to the formation of a Russian autocratic nationalist ideology, now directed within the country as well as beyond the borders. In imperial Russia, the divisions between Russians and non-Russians became sharper. And as the absolutist state was strengthened and the liberty of its people came to be harshly repressed, this distinction became more and more rigid. The old hatred for Roman Catholicism and Islam as the repositories of anti-Russian geographical traditions and reliance on orthodoxy as a national patriotic force were transformed in imperial Russia into an arrogant great power formula of autocracy,

²⁴ Ibid. p.9

²⁵ Ibid. p.11

orthodoxy and nationality.²⁶ This sudden but also a bit gradual shift of the nationalist focus in Russia clearly demonstrates the highly fragile nature of the ideological commitment of the message but at the same time we can never ignore the circumstantial urgencies and their after effects.

18th & 19th century:

There can not be found any stark contrast from the times of 16th and 17th century. But the intensity of internationalism was on the rise during 18th and 19th century Russia. The element of continuity was very much there and as has been quoted: 'Only the upper echelons of society were affected by the nationalist sentiments. On the contrary there was a natural internationalism and a calmly attitude to the non-Russian (Tatars, Ukrainians, Georgians, lets, yakuts and so on), which had arisen in this multinational, unitary state in ancient times.'²⁷

The powerful socio-economic and political processes of the new era undermined the foundations of the new empire. Revolutionary upheaval approached soon. And the people of Russia deprived of their statehood, and not having undergone the civilized stages of development that history requires, strove to resolve their destiny independently.²⁸ Orthodoxy, religious intolerance, great power chauvinism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, autocracy as the russian form of the government, noble land-ownership, a unified and individual Russia and unremitting struggle against destructive social changes and movement because the main characteristic features to delineate the era of revolutionary rule in Russia, in the context of russian nationalism. Nevertheless, these nationalist drew upon the social egalitarianism at the same time and they were interestingly pro-reformist in their stance.

A significant fallout of the nationalism taking root was the establishment of a number of nationalist organizations like 'union of russian people', 'united russian people', 'russian

²⁶ Ibid. p.12

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 13

archangel Michael national union'.²⁹ 'Russia for the Russians'-such slogans are not only the mark of the 21st century Russia, we can trace them back in to the sloganeering of those days of revolutionary Russia. But what substantiates the minimal mass-penetration of nationalist parties in Russia (influence wise) is the result of 1905's first state Duma elections where only 9% votes were cast for such groupings. But the anti-Jewish and xenophobic propagandas of masses and their representative groups certainly gave the nationalistic colors to the periods.

During the early revolutionary and post-revolutionary years, nationalistic attitudes were considerably exacerbated. Primarily, the Russian nationalist movement found additional support in what was catastrophic for old Russia, i.e., the collapse of the country. Moreover the majority of the white anti-Bolshevik movements set out their manifestos under not only restorationist-monarchist or, bourgeoisie-democratic slogans, but also under nationalist slogans. The preservation of the unified Russia and the revival of its territorial integrity were the obsessions of the governments.³⁰ The spread of nationalism was catching like a wildfire and the era of the nationalisms began. Anti-Russian nationalist movements owe their origin to those very times.

Bolshevik Era:

During Bolshevik era the same internationalist tendencies in the arena of nationalist movement continued the major task now before the Bolshevik was to crush all the nationalist movements and the chauvinism which had largely been characteristic of the imperial Russia.³¹ Moreover the collapse of Tsarism in February, 1917 at once opened up wide range of choices to the inhabitants of the Russian empire. In particular, the temporary weakness of the Russian powers, as well as the emergence of a democratic majority in Russia, which favored at least some degree of the autonomy for the non-

²⁹ Ibid. p. 14

³⁰ Ibid. p. 15

³¹ Ibid.

Russians, meant that national claims that had been far fetched previously could now be advanced openly.³²

The term 'integral nationalism' came to mark the year of Bolshevik rules but the rejection of the independence of nations was reflective of the fact that the new Bolshevik rulers were not that much tolerant of national tendencies which could have further intensified given the kind of treatment favorable for their development. One more thing and that is that there must not be any confusion between the autonomy and rejection of total nationalistic independence leading to the grant of sovereignty, which was the kind of policy adopted by the Bolshevik leaders. The grant of autonomy is more often a way to garner legitimacy for the established regime and Bolsheviks were no different.

The onset of civil war totally shifted the focus from the main streams of the politics in that contemporary Russia. But what was very fascinating at that time was that the various ethnic groups were given the opportunity for the first time of voicing demands for separation and independence. Whereas previously their aspirations were limited merely to autonomy they now started to call for independence.³³ Ultimately the Bolsheviks won the civil war and established their control over most of the areas of former empire. Since the Bolshevik party had become the sole power in the state and hence the centralization of the party amounted to the centralization of the state. This meant in turn that the non-Russian nationalities had a stark choice between going it alone, i.e., independence and entry into a centralized state which from that angle at least was a re-edition of the Russian empire they had just fought side by side with the Bolsheviks to overthrow.³⁴

It is a different matter that Bolsheviks established almost a state which was largely unified in nature and the interesting thing is that especially with the start of Stalinist era, this unified state became stronger and less tolerant of nationalism and thus constructed the concept of 'Soviet' so that they can include the multiple nations within it. But that

³² Ben Fowkes, *The Disintegration of the Soviet Union: A Study in the Rise and Triumph of Nationalism* (London: McMillan, 1997), p. 30

³³ Ibid. p.34

³⁴ Ibid. p.37

repression never discouraged the nationalist voices which were omnipresent there in the widespread ethnies of Russia. Yes, their reach was of course limited to the ruling strata of the society. For most of the times the requirements of the mass penetration remained unfulfilled. What was very specific about the Bolshevik rule was that in their view the unity of the communist party had to be safe-guarded, come what may. So did the unity of the army and the unity of the economy. There could be no separate communist party or separate national units of the Red Army. There could be no separate economic regions and no attempts to restrict e.g. economically necessary Russian immigrations into non-russian regions in order to maintain national identity.³⁵

Besides that under the Bolshevik regime, a particular framework was prepared to guide the large number of nationalities and all the policies show that what was the ground works done by these in order to fulfill their nationalist aspirations. A 'policy of indigenization' was adopted by Bolsheviks. This meant using the local language in the conduct of administration, making it obligatory for responsible workers to learn the local language, setting up local schools where the medium of instruction would be the local language, creating a Marxist literature in the local language, issuing the newspapers, journals, and books in the local language and above all involving the indigenous population of non-Russians in the work of the government, the party and the local soviet organs.³⁶

There are however debates about the success of these policies of indigenization of Bolsheviks. But no doubt they made the local language the lingua franca of Soviet Union. Hence it can not be ruled out that the total policy of Bolsheviks was against the onslaught of nationalist forces. They wanted openness and overall development but never at the cost of separatism and secession which ultimately became the fate of Soviet Union. For one various strong reason, this policy of nation building can be stated to be of utmost significance for soviet Russians and that is that these policies of Bolsheviks molded them

³⁵ Ibid. p.40

³⁶ Ibid. p.46

to follow the course of real development of all the nations in the Soviet Union through their rapid industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture from 1929.

Stalin and Russian Nationalism:

The creation of the unified which encompassed all the territorial contours of the old empire, was accompanied by the harsh repressions of nationally oriented leaders of the soviet republics and the deportations of people both in 1930's and 1940's. And hence the Stalinist leadership was to develop a firm Great Russian chauvinist stance, although be it following this policy covertly and cautiously, striving not to irritate the population of the ethnic regions of the country.³⁷ But at the same time the hidden growth of Russian nationalism among the populations of ethnic regions of the country, both those who had never enjoyed their own statehood and those who had lost it in the process of unification with Russia.³⁸

Stalinist era was to impact not only the soviet political scenario but was to cover the overall soviet way of living and the role of collectivization, the events of 1929 termed often as 'great change'. His effort was to put a socialist proletarian culture in place of the much traditional and stereotypical one which had prevailed in the tsarist Russia since time immemorial. Stalinist campaign against the 'religion' which was the main force behind the Cultural Revolution was never helping those nationalities to pamper their cause.

The policy of indigenization did not last beyond 1931, that year was in fact its highest point until 1970's.³⁹ Stalin decided at some point in the early 1930's to stop promoting the development of non-russian people, and to use instead the newly created Great Russian intelligentsia as an instrument the control the non-russian territories.⁴⁰ Stalin was always apprehensive of the various nationalisms erupting in Soviet Union and the

³⁷Hosking and Service,n-8. p.15

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ G.O.Liber, "soviet nationality policy" in Fowkes, n-32, p. 66

⁴⁰ Fowkes, n-32, p. 66

concern he used to show to these movements happened to be very tactical. Stalin rather chose chauvinist moves than to permit the nationalities to pursue their agenda. Hence in a sense he himself was a nationalist. The Jews had a rather paradoxical experience. They were encouraged especially during 1930's to settle in the remote areas of 'Birobidzhan', where most of the distinctively Jewish cultural institutions were closed down. Most of the Yiddish theatres, Jewish newspapers and journals and Yiddish language schools disappeared in the late 1930's.⁴¹ Stalinist era clearly tried to root out the Jewish effect whatever possible upon soviet polity and culture.

Besides that, the closed nature of soviet society and the complexities of soviet polity make it a difficult affair to totally unfurl the threads of whatever nationalism prevailed in the nationalist era. For russian nationalist who lived through this era, the attack on russian culture and traditions were regarded as acts of wanton vandalism, by a regime committed to its own materialistic atheistic ideology and distinguished by its own lack of culture, lack of education and cultural crudity, with its appeal to the most destructive impulses of its less educated elements in the population.⁴²

In the words of Lev kopelev, the era of Stalin was a wave of militant anti-national nihilism. The destruction of national culture and symbols like churches and monuments, icons and libraries were reflective of Stalinist period. We can argue that the emergent Stalinist regime adopted a two-pronged method and that was inclusive of the destruction of these groups which were hostile to the soviet power-bourgeoisie intellectuals, kulaks, priests etc. and also inclusive of the creation of a system of privileged bureaucracy and empowered working class.⁴³ Stalin's pronouncements and his policies reflect certain themes remarkably constant throughout his leadership. The creation of a strong state, against the background of revolution and civil war, the commitment to the integrity of the state against external enemies, associated with a long established fear of the outside world and the priority accorded to the military strength, the building up of economic might of the country, catching up and overtaking advanced capitalist states and ultimately

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 68

⁴² Hosking and Service, n-8, p.83

⁴³ Ibid., p. 87

the transformation of the soviet society and culture-these elements of Stalinists discourse on Russian nationalism have largely been defining the contours of what Russian nationalism had inherited as a tsarist legacy and their further continuation. The new policy priorities of Stalin were more associated with an explicit sense of Russian nationalism.

The period of great patriotic war (2nd world war) saw the most dramatic shift in ideology during Stalin's regime and a willingness to embrace Russian nationalism.⁴⁴ Stalin denounced Nazi aggression towards the Soviet Union and drew a curious distinction between nationalism and imperialism. He said-can the Hitlerites be regarded as nationalists? No they can not. Actually the Hitlerites are now not nationalists but imperialists.⁴⁵ The event of Second World War shows that Stalin had the greatest regards for the nationalist themes rather than his interest in the perverted issues of imperialism. Besides he had time and again showered praise upon Russians among all in the Soviet Union for their candidness and honesty. Stalin's adoption of nationalist way and revolutionary way was an intermittent affair. He chose the nationalist one during war and revolutionary one during the post war days.

These are also some prominent features of Stalin's approach towards Russian nationalism which draws heavily from the tsarist days and the existence of weak civil society, state's intervention in the economy and the system of administrative hierarchies are those characteristics of Stalin's approach to Russian nationalism.

Robert C. Tucker has identified Stalinism as 'russian national Bolshevism', a blend of Leninist Marxism and Russian nationalism. He again argues that while the policies of 1930's had some distinctly reactionary and counter revolutionary accents, Stalin was the last Bolshevik-an extreme Russian nationalist but still a revolutionary who favored a return to the past in a way fatally destructive to the Bolshevism that had seen Lenin as its

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.87

⁴⁵ I. Deutscher, 'Stalin' in Hosking and Service (eds.), n-8, p. 88

leader.⁴⁶ Using nationalism as a unifying force remains problematic in the face of radically different political programme and the deep divisions between social and national groups and regions. That is why in seeking to create a strong central state, Stalin sometimes resorted to appeals to Russian nationalism, but the priorities remained the preservation of the state itself and its ideological principles, however much they were subjected to genealogical change over time.⁴⁷

Russian Nationalism during 1960's and 70's: A less Intense Era

The latter years of soviet Russia are characterized by their heavy crystallization of nations. And the Russian ethnic consciousness was gradually developing along with the de-sovietization of Russian culture. In the time of Khrushchev, the patriotism (which Stalin invoked during the great patriotic war) became more Russian and more virulent. An alliance developed between orthodoxy and Russian nationalism.⁴⁸ What Khrushchev had done showing some leniency to the Russian nationalist has been to establish some separate purely Russian institutions. The growth of Russian literary movements of for the nationalist causes was also was one of the chief tasks performed during the decade of 1960's. Further more, the failure of a specific mass Russian nationalism to develop at least until Gorbachev years, is shown by surveys from the early decades. The majority of Russian questioned described their fatherland as the Soviet Union and not Russia.⁴⁹

During the Brezhnev era, there was some encouragement for a covert Russian nationalism but it was kept within definite limits.⁵⁰ The belief that Russians have suffered a great deal under the soviet rule had a lot of connections as to why Russia would not have liked to secede from the Soviet Union, as some nationalist even suggested during late 1980's. But the moot point remains here that the Russians could never imagine a nation without empire. They loved their empire so much that Ben Fowkes argues that had

⁴⁶ See Robert C. Tucker, "A choice of Lenin's ?", in G.R.Urban (ed.), *Stalinism: It's impact on Russia and the World*, pp. 170-71

⁴⁷ Hosking and Service, n-8, p.103

⁴⁸ Fowkes, n-32, p.118

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.119

⁵⁰ Ibid.



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they been given an opportunity to choose between the two-empire and liberty-they would certainly have chosen empire and not liberty. This adequately shows the degree of possessiveness which Russians had for their empire. Besides, mainstream Russian nationalism is predominantly defensive rather than being offensive in character.⁵¹

Russian Nationalism during 1980's:

By the beginning of 1980's the position of Russians had begun to change. In a number of republics where until recently the indigenous peoples had almost no skillful background the proportion of intellectuals and skilled workers among the titular nationalities had increased considerably. They had become comparable to the relative proportion of these social groups among Russians and thus Russians were experiencing a growing inter ethnic tension. Russians responded painfully to the new situation, their self-esteem was attacked by the decline in their nationality's social ruling the republics, then by their role being defined in the republics as that of occupiers, imperialists, intruders, and so on, definition that the leaders of the national movements began to use more and more frequently from the end of 1980's onwards.⁵²

The ideologues of Russian nationalism-which is essentially a long way from the patriotic ideal of loving Russia as the motherland of all its residents nations-contributed to the increase in negative ethnic sentiments among Russians, and to the growth of an inferiority complex. By the end of 1980's the ideology of russian national chauvinism had begun to spread, at first through comparatively respectable journals (*Nash soveremennik*, *Molodaia gvardiia*) then through a multitude of openly xenophobic newspapers.⁵³ It is very much obvious that during those eras patriotism was almost synonymic with nationalism and the media very much abetted thus growth of Russian nationalism. Besides that the establishment of democracy was very much opposed to the talk of Russian nationalism.

⁵¹ D. Pospelovsky, "Russian Nationalism: An Update", *Report on the USSR* vol. 2, no. 6, 9 Feb. (1990), p.8 in Fowkes, n-32, p.120

⁵² Emil' Pain, "The Russian Question: From Internationalism to Nomenklatura Nationalism?", *Russian Social Science Review*, vol. 41, no. 6, Nov.-Dec. (2000), pp. 49

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.50

At the end of 80's the Russian democratic public regarded the nationalist- democratic movements as its principle political ally. This was a major policy shift of the government which was almost on the verge of collapse while fighting the communist empire and defending the right of oppressed nations to self determination, the public did not notice the deterioration of Russians' national self-esteem, reducing it to chauvinist forces and their propaganda.

In the era of Andropov the fate of Russian nationalism was very much doomed. Similar was the fate during the regime of Chernenko. The much eulogized theory of controversial merger propounded by Andropov proposed that the peoples of Soviet Union will merge into one entity, i.e., soviet man.⁵⁴ The hostility towards Russian nationalism shown by Andropov totally repudiates the possibility of revival of intense Russian nationalism which ultimately became a reality even after being denied in the intelligentsia and finally led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

One very interesting and logical point inherent in Russian nationalist discourse is the fact that there have been several types and brand of Russian nationalism spread through all these decades. The emphasis of different regimes was on its own typology. And, they used to shift over on occasions. But the brand of Russian nationalism which remained prominent all through is the 'ethnic' one. The presence of statist nationalism can also be not denied because this kind of Russian nationalism which used to make news was also persistent during Bolshevik era and could be seen present in Stalin's era.

Obviously, we can say that Russian nationalism as a phenomenon has been versatile in nature. The emphasis on cultural nationalism was always there in Russian nationalist discourse. With the collapse of the Soviet Union its 15 constituents union republics entered upon a period of independence. They were now free to decide their own fate, and to build themselves into fully-fledged nation-states, in other words to continue a process which had been ripening for a long time. In a nutshell we can argue that the evolution of Russian nationalism has not been that much a smooth affair which has reflected a lot of continuities and changes, thus traversing a path full of uncertainties.

⁵⁴ John B. Dunlop, *The New Russian Nationalism* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985), p.16

Chapter - 2

RUSSIAN NATIONALISM DURING 1991-99: ELEMENTS AND SUBSTANCES

The Basic Dilemma of Russian Nationalism:

There seems to be a very close link between Russian nationalism and the ethnies of Russia because the social divisions in Russia has often superimposed itself over the national ones but what attracts our concern here is the thing that despite maintaining its character as a multi-national state, nevertheless, the nationalist tendencies in post-soviet Russia has been very much intense, often reflected in party-programs. The social divisions in Russia are mostly on the basis of ethno-cultural traits and various ethnies frame their identity on these very parameters hence their social divisions tend to be sharper but the matter of discord is that they often superimpose these divisions over the national ones, which creates the dilemma for Russian nationalism because nationalists get confused while making choices and decisions thereof and this ultimately creates the incompatibility in nationalists' agenda. This superimposition of division is not valid while deciding the nationalist questions, because they happen to be derived in a different manner.

Generally, nationalists reject any distinction between cultural and political nationalism and claim that not only the national economy but also the national folk lore, music, art, literature and traditions have a legitimate claim to protection and furtherance by the creation and maintenance of the political nation-state. The Statist school of nationalism defines the nation as a territorial-political unit while the Ethnicists see the nation as a large politicized ethnic group, defined by common culture and often alleged descent from a common ancestry.¹ Nationalism has often been said to originate without concerning the boundaries of a state in its general notion. The point here is to convey the idea that nationalist movements might well have originated very much prior to the emergence of states or nation-states. The ethnocentric concept of a nation totally repudiates the values of having any Hegelian state and in turn seems to be focusing around what might be

¹ Stephen K.Carter, *Russian Nationalism: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (London: Pinter Publishers,1987), p. 4

totally unacceptable in contemporary multicultural world. Yet there are some advantages of such states which hovered around ethnic notions, at least, for the sake of their viability.

Language has been regarded as a crucial uniting factor in case of Russian nationalism. The concept of Russian language as a lingua franca of a much larger geographical unit i.e. Soviet Union. Hence, Russian nationalism can be seen to resemble with Pan-Slavism. Therefore Russian nationalism can be seen in the perspective of ethnocentric nationalism where the people have linguistic cultural and religious aspirations.² The role of literature has been immense in the growth of Russian nationalism especially during 1990's. The journals like *Nash Sovremennik* and *Novaya Mir* have shown that the power to express the revolutionary ideas through such a mass mode can be as effective as delivering a scintillating lecture in the times of war by the leaders of a nation.

It is a matter of common observation that nation states with long and well established identities may from time to time be subject to what Anthony D. Smith has called preservation nationalism. According to Smith in preservation or renewal nationalism, a culturally demarcated ruling group aims by a mixture of discriminating and homogenizing measures to perpetuate its caste like rule, while posing as the champion of the whole unit in opposition of the outside world.³ The ethnic groups of Russia like Tatars, Russians, etc. are very much preservationist in nature because they have never shown anything lesser of their mindset about their ethnological orientations regarding their political and cultural aspirations.

Thus, the question of identity has very much to do with the issue of nationalism and it is no surprise that a particular group is formed whenever a long tradition gets entrenched in, any state, about maintaining their political regime and overall social clout. This kind of preservation nationalism appeared to be typical of a certain group within the soviet elite, associated with Mikhail Suslov during Brezhnev era. As Anthony D. Smith summarizes, 'Renewal Nationalisms occur, by contrast, in culturally homogenous groups. They

² Ibid., p. 4

³ Ibid., p. 5

usually start outside the main centers of power, and if allied to social discontents, are directed against the incumbent ruler or regime. This renewal nationalism is typical of the dissident nationalists such as Solzhenitsyn.⁴ Alexander Yanov has also pointed out that there is a strange kind of symbiotic relationship between establishment and dissident nationalists in Russia, between preservation and renewal nationalists.⁵

Russian nationalism today seeks not only to resurrect ideas which have their origins in Slavophilism and Pan-Slavism as derived from the nineteenth century, it also seeks, in some of its incarnations, to replace Leninist nationalities policy, aptly summarized by Gellner under his wrong address theory. One variety of Russian nationalism today is a neo-fascist type, with distinctly 'Dark Gods' connotations and is associated with Pamyat society. Hence, this appears therefore to be a process of substituting one of Gellner's false theories for another equally false theory.⁶

Geoffrey Hosking has pointed out that the Russian society has certain characteristics which strongly influence the nature of various informal groups.

First, they are forming in a society which has been governed until recently by a totalitarian or ideocratic system. Such system opposes group formation or sub-group autonomy.

Second, there is thus a tendency for small groups to form around a samizdat publication and these groups have inadequate mutual interaction. There are no alternatives to the ruling communist party, despite attempts to establish these and consequently there is no party political press or a genuine electoral process involving competitive political parties. The groups form around ideas or culture, rather than being parties in the traditional western sense.

Third, although systematic terror has not been exercised by the respective regimes since the time of Stalin, there is still a legacy of mutual distrust and segmentation which

⁴ Ibid., p. 5

⁵ A. Yanov, *The Russian Challenge and the Year 2000* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987) in Carter, n-1, p. 5

⁶ Carter, n-1, p. 6

discourages the real exchange of political opinion, so that Russians are politically inexperienced and the level of political maturity is rather low.⁷

The origin of various camps and think-tanks on nationalist lines along with the revival of communism in its new avatar often interposed with the centrist designs on several issues came to dawn upon Russian soil. Besides that peoples' long held aspirations were finding enough channels to get released, hence under such circumstances, nationalism was an obvious choice to be opted for at least experiment.

Can Civic Nationalism take root in Russia?

“Russian nation-builders should regard post-1991 situation not as the disintegration of the former big Russia but as the emergence of a new Russian stateThey should find a new image for Russia and a new role that Russia can play in the future development of mankind.”⁸ The optimism shown by a number of leading intellectuals is of course welcome but they must not be unaware of the prevailing ground realities and situations. One thing is clearer that the same old dream of building a Russian empire has, now at least, to be given up by the scholars as well as the political leaders. Otherwise, the constraints of a multicultural dream and development of a healthy democratic order will remain submerged under such nasty hopes.

The very idea of defining a nation in civic terms is relatively new to the Russians. The leading ethnographer Valerii Tishkov has been the main advocate of this civic definition of a nation, which he first put forward in 1989. Since the demise of USSR, he has been arguing that politicians and intellectuals should be working to form a civic Russian nation, as a community of all citizens of the Russian Federation regardless of their cultural and religious differences. The use of the word *Rossisskaya* in itself implies a civic identity, based on citizenship of the Russian Federation or *Rossiiia*, rather than on

⁷ Ibid., p. 8

⁸ Grigorii Pomerants, (a roundtable discussion in *Polis*, no.3, 1992), in Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 235

any form of ethnic Russian (*russkii*) characteristics.⁹ Arguing against viewing nations in ethnic terms, Tishkov strongly objects to the continuing use in post-communist Russian legislation, including the new constitution, of the soviet era expression “a multi-national people”, which he regards as a contradiction in terms.¹⁰

The fact is that multi-ethnicity has to be given precedence over the use of the term multi-national because the limits of sovereignty is vested in the citizenry and it is the very people of the nation who decide what kind of society they want to build up and they also decide the limits of tolerance for the ethnic and other minorities living there. This terminology emphasizes the absence, in the legal sense, of the Russian nation as a single subject of political self-determination and the source of state-sovereignty. That is to say that Russian nationalism can be easily understood if we adopt the political interpretation of nationalism and the leaders can garner the mass support only if they treat citizen irrespective of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Politics of Russian Nationalism:

Russian intellectuals are actively creating a new nationalist discourse as they attempt to forge a Russian nation after the break-up of the empire. They are redeploying old concepts, which had originally developed under circumstances markedly different from those of today, more frequently than inventing new traditions. Only the advocates of civic nationalism, who are a minority, are real innovators in the Russian context. Voluntary membership of a nation, so central to civic nationalism, is still alien to the majority of intellectuals.¹¹ The debate again comes to move around the theme of what to have? But the feasibility of desiring a civic nation is judged only on the basis of the track record of

⁹ V. Tishkov, “Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame”, in Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 249

¹⁰ Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 249

¹¹ Tolz, n-10, p. 266

Russian social order. That is to argue that ethnic groups of Russia have, as always been, sensitive about their status in the state.

By evoking various definitions of a nation, politicians only pursue their immediate economic and political interests.¹² These interests are defined first and then in some instances, and appropriate definition of a nation is found and used as an instrument in political struggles. Indeed, the leaders of ethnic autonomous territories use ethnic definitions of nationhood and oppose the concept of civic nations for purely pragmatic reasons. It helps them in their struggle to prevent ethnic autonomous areas-their main powerbases-from being abolished. In turn when a member in opposition is co-opted in to the executive branch of the government he is forced to abandon his political ideology and to act purely pragmatically. Those who do not like, Lebed and Rutskoi, lose their job.¹³ Hence the politics seems to be apparent everywhere.

We can attribute the creation of a political vacuum to be responsible for the attitude of politicians and leaders in Russia today. However in some other instances the situation is not so simple. Politicians some times use various definition of a nation in their attempts to strengthen their political legitimacy. Where a politician is seeking to achieve a clearly defined political or economic gain it is usually easy to identify an appropriate concept of a nation which he can use to strengthen his bargaining powers and when political legitimacy is at stake, there are various definition of a nation, from which politician can choose and the choice is usually not immediately apparent. The intellectuals put forward different competing definitions of a nation, and at different times one or other definitions become more fashionable. Where a definition is adopted by politicians for the purpose of strengthening their political legitimacy, that definition itself will shape part of their political agenda.¹⁴

¹² Rogers Brubaker, "Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe" in Tolz, n-10, p. 266

¹³ Tolz, n-10, p. 266

¹⁴ Tolz, n-10, p. 266

We can have a close look on the motives of the Russian political leaders while they bargain for the hot seat or some peculiar positions on the political platform. And this clears the doubt that they indeed negotiate over the definition of what constitutes a nation? The Russian government's policy towards the other newly independent state is one such example where we can see this happening. One can regard a government's claim to represent Russian speakers abroad merely as a pragmatic instrument for regaining control over Russia's formal colonies. But this claim was made and the policy of defending Russian speaking communities from alleged discrimination was introduced in a specific domestic context and that is during the president's bitter fight with the congress of people's deputies over the division of power.¹⁵ In this struggle both sides tried to strengthen their legitimacies by their claims to represent the Russian nations better. There were various definitions of the Russian nations available at that time and the choice was open.

In late 1992, the Russian government decided to abandon its adherence to de-ethnized nation building. It felt that the idea of a civic nation, so new in the Russian context would not appeal to the Russian population. Therefore the government appropriated the opposition's definition of the nation in linguistic terms, as this definition had a long tradition behind it. This definition of Russian nation, as the community of the Russian speakers in the entire former USSR for whom the Russian federation was a homeland, was an artificial construct of intellectuals.¹⁶ Therefore Russian language again became a marker for re-defining the borders of a Russian nation. It had little resonance with the Russian speakers in the near abroad and therefore Russian government eventually had to abandon it. On other occasions when government's political legitimacy has been at stake and broader popular support needed, traditional definitions of Russian nations have been chosen. During the presidential election's campaign in 1996, Yeltsin intensified his efforts to strengthen both the CIS and Slavic integration as he believed that the common

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 267

¹⁶ Tolz, n-10, p. 267

union and Slavic identities were still stronger among Russian federation citizens than the civic identities.¹⁷

Hence the creation of a civic Russian nation seems impractical and totally goes against the prevailing image of Russian polity and social set up. But, there have always been some grounds for hoping that a civic nation in Russia can be formed. The previous empire helped to create de-ethnicized Russian identities. Even if the claims of Russian intellectuals about the openness and adaptabilities of Russian to other ethnic groups and nations are an exaggerations they contain an element of truth. Moreover it seems that ordinary Russians more than intellectual elite are inclined to see a nation as a community formed on a voluntary basis. The multi-ethnic composition of the Russian federation makes nation-building along civic lines the most viable option to secure the stability of a state. Many members of the Russian political elite understand that. This indicates that the line of civic nation building is still pursued by the government, however inconsistently.¹⁸ It will be a mistake to see all non-Russians as obstacle to forging a civic Russian nation.

Finally, civic nations are only ideal types which rarely exist in purest forms. Yet the obstacles to the creations of civic Russian nations are formidable. The notion of a civic nation is alien to most of Russia's social engineers. Even some of the supporters of this concept of a nation find it safer to rely on more traditional approaches. The underdevelopment of civil society, and the major rift between political and business elites, on the one hand, and the majority of the populations, on the other, is not conducive to civic nationalism. Indeed, rich and poor in today's Russia are still two nations, divided by mutual suspicions and resentment.¹⁹

Russian states which can command the respect of the population which is a condition necessary for the formation of a civic nation is also absent. The alternatives in case of failures of a civic nation are not looking very nice. A revival of a strong Russian national

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 267

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 268

¹⁹ Tolz, n-10, p. 268

identity does not seem to be a serious prospect at the moment. Russia has neither the economic nor the military power to attempt to recreate the union. Moreover, such an enterprise is unlikely to receive popular support. A much greater danger could come from the rise of an exclusive xenophobic Russian nationalism which regards the non-Russian of the Russian federations as others. Such nationalism leads to brutal violation of the right of ethnic minorities, yet does not allow them to secede from the state because that will mean the loss of national territory.²⁰

Russian Nationalism: An Alternative for securing the future

After the disintegration of Soviet Union, the texture of Russian society underwent vehement change and some of the great transformations, which made it a necessary task to look into the feasibility query as to what kind of set up be it political or something else, will be good for Russia and its people. One of the alternatives which intelligentsia discussed and proposed was –“Russian Nationalism”. This Russian nationalism was called Slavophilism in the nineteenth century. This notion of Russian nationalism is also used to articulate the reaction against both westernism and the restriction of initiative to the state. Its accent is on the nation rather than the state, and on the organic consensus rather than organization.

Society is pictured as cohering naturally and governing itself from below on the basis of common primordial Russian or Slav values and discipline, but what results is a united, resolute and internationally imposing Russia.²¹ It is an image that leaves institutions deliberately vague, or tends to blur the distinctions among political, social, legal and economic institutions, and one can not but suspect that in practice, its politics are destined to be authoritarian, and probably an authoritarianism of the charismatic or clerical, rather than the bureaucratic kind.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 269

²¹ Amin Saikal & William Maley (eds.) *Russia in Search of its Future* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), p. 195

Divergent Perspectives of Russian Nationalism:

There is a wider section in Russia which believes that Russia's rightful role as a great power can only be performed by a strong authoritarian government. This trend or analysis shows that the growth of a nationalist movement of strong and intense nature is very much imminent there in Russia.²² For many years, Russians focused on the left; having been decisively defeated in 1917, the right no longer counted politically, and ideologically it had nothing of interest to offer. Yet today the whole spectrum of Russian politics has moved to the right and become more nationalist. This trend is a reaction to the breakup of the Soviet Union and is bound to continue.

Millions of Russians still reside in the former republics of the empire, and separatist groups inside Russia itself insist on autonomy and even full independence and allowed free rein, such pressures threaten the survival of the Russian republic. Given the strongly nationalist moods that also prevail among the non-Russian republics and ethnic groups, the stage is set for collision.²³ The age of aggressive nationalism and nationalist conflict that ended in Western Europe, by and large, in 1945 has returned with a vengeance in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Thus present conditions in Russia are not conducive to consolidating democratic ideas and institutions. Nationalist forces, some of the extreme right, others moderate, have a reasonable chance in the struggle for Russia's soul and political future, at least in the short run.

Dmitri Likhachev has been regarded as the man of letters and unanimously recognized as the supreme moral authority on Russian nationalism. Neither a politician nor head of any party, he stands to many Russians, except those of the extreme right, as the conscience of the nation. With emphasis and eloquence he has argued that true patriotism spiritually

²² Emil' Pain, "The Russian Question: From Internationalism to Nomenklatura Nationalism?". *Russian Social Science Review*, vol. 41, no. 6, Nov.-Dec. (2000), pp.

²³ Walter Laqueur, "Russian Nationalism: A Time of Troubles fuels the Right", *Foreign Affairs*, (2004), p. 103

enriches the individual, as it does the nation, and that patriotism is the noblest of feelings. Members of the educated Russian public who constitute the national liberal camp share many of Likhachev's views. They want a free Russia, not necessarily patterned on Western democracy, and are deeply saddened by the loss of large territories populated predominantly by Russians.²⁴

Among the national liberals are, for example, Sergei Averintsev, a distinguished historian of medieval culture and theology; Alexander Tsytko, one of the political scientists who acquired fame in the glasnost era; some editors of the literary magazine *Novy Mir* as well as literary critics such as Igor Vinogradov and Alia Latynina. Above all there is Alexander Solzhenitsyn and his circle. Finally there are political leaders from Boris Yeltsin to Anatoly Sobchak and Sergei Stankevich who, following the downfall of the Soviet Union, insisted with increasing frequency and intensity on Russian concerns and interests. It is probably easiest to define the national liberals if they are compared with the radical democrats, who are comparable to the West's liberal democrats.

For radical democrats the creation of democratic institutions is significant, and the absence of such institutions was the main cause of Russia's misfortunes, and they fear that individual freedom will not be secure until democratic institutions are well established. The radical democrats have no wish to follow the West, but nor do they feel any urge to follow a Russian social and economic policy.²⁵

Most radical democrats are not religious. They regard the loss of traditional Russian territories as a misfortune but see no way to undo it, at least not in the foreseeable future. They have no agreed program for Russia's economic system. Some support a classical liberal philosophy along the lines of Hayek and Friedman, others are Social Democrats. They strongly insist on a multiparty system and regard the extreme right, as opposed to the more moderate national liberals, as the main danger that if they come in power they would lead Russia back to a total disaster. They love the culture of their native land and

²⁴ Laqueur, n-23, p. 104

²⁵ Ibid., p. 104

in fact, they are often more Russian than anybody else. But they are pitiless in their criticism of the dark side of Russia's past. They are open to Western influences, and their feeling of nostalgia for old Russia is not as intense as that of the national liberals.²⁶ They hope that religion will play a crucial role in the future. They tend to idealize pre-1917 Russia and envisage a political and social regime not altogether unlike the one prevailing then, of course cleansed of its negative features, but according to the Old Russian traditions.

What future is there for a Russia deprived of the Ukraine, White Russia, the Crimea and predominantly Russian northern Kazakhstan?²⁷ This is the strongest point in their thinking, and it is shared to some extent by the radical democrats. The Balkanization of the former Soviet Union is a tragedy; it will certainly make democratization infinitely more difficult. It is paradoxical that at a time when borders are disappearing in western and central Europe, the trend in the east is toward secession and separatism. Soviet rule was in some cultural respects less repressive than tsarist rule toward the nationalities. But Soviet experiments at coalescence were unsuccessful, since they were imposed from above.²⁸

Resentment against Moscow grew and, once political controls were removed, there was no holding back the nationalities from seceding, whatever the cost. If Russia had tried to accommodate Ukrainian nationalism²⁹, the split might never have occurred. But a serious attempt based on true federation involving home rule was never made and, once the majority of Ukrainians had voted for full independence, there was little the new Russian leadership could do to maintain the union. A closer relationship may emerge in the distant future, once the dreams attached to sovereignty fade. In the meantime, however, Russian patriots will only feel impotent frustration at having to exist without Ukraine, the cradle of Russian culture and statehood. The only alternative from a Russian patriotic point of view is to invade Ukraine, hardly a practical decision.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 106

²⁷ Ibid., p. 107

²⁸ Ibid., p. 106

²⁹ For Ukrainian Nationalism, see Christopher Williams(ed.), *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Russia, the CIS and the Baltic States* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers, 1999)

What Justifies Russian Nationalism?

New Russia has no more than half the population of the old Soviet Union, and many millions of ethnic Russians now live outside Russia; they have become ethnic minorities at the mercy of intolerant regimes. The Russian shock of losing the empire is severe and such a huge loss is almost irreparable and painful. Some Russian nationalists had argued for a long time that their country would be better off without the Central Asian republics and perhaps also the Caucasus. Russia, they claimed, had been exploited and in some ways subverted by the non-Russian republics. Russian nationalists such as writer Valentine Rasputin had suggested that Russia should take the initiative and leave the union. But imperial ambitions and feelings of historical mission were still very much present and, in any case, no one had assumed that the Slavic republics would secede.

The full extent of the trauma is realized only as time goes by. As in Germany after 1918 there was much readiness to accept all kinds of conspiracy theories—the disaster had been caused by Russia's sworn enemies abroad and at home. There was growing resentment particularly against the ingrates in the Baltic countries, Ukraine, Moldova but also the Caucasus, who had after all benefited to no small extent from Russian help and protection. There is growing anger about the treatment of the Russians outside Russia. Is it not the duty of the Russian government to protect Russian interests outside the borders of the Old Russian Federation? Had not all self-respecting countries throughout history been ready to protect the lives and interests of fellow citizens if these had been in jeopardy?³⁰ This mood is widespread and would have been suicidal if the radical democrats and national liberals had left patriotism and the defense of national interests to the extreme right. As in Germany after Versailles it would have been tantamount to surrendering the country to extremists.

The great danger is that the republics that seceded might prove increasingly recalcitrant in their nationalist accommodation, unwilling to accept legitimate Russian interests. This

³⁰ Laqueur, n-23, p. 107

would make the Russians even more resentful and hostile, prompting conflicts even less amenable to solution. Appeals to reason in such circumstances are bound to fall apart, and the stage is set for the total showdown. Russia, it is sometimes said, has been condemned by history and geography to be a great power. But what if the forces of cohesion should be weaker than generally believed? What if the disintegration of the Soviet Union should be followed by the disintegration of Russia and the emergence of several smaller independent or semi-independent units, such as Tatarstan, Siberia, Yakutia and others?

This possibility had been discussed even before the Soviet Union ceased to exist, and it certainly cannot be ruled out at the present time.³¹ The argument runs approximately as follows: it is easy to imagine Russia as a great power or as a multitude of small units. Anything in between would be unstable and unlikely to last. True, there are forces opposing further disintegration, the Russian nationalists and the old communists on the one hand, and the West on the other. But how strong are they? The strength of the nationalist-communist combine can not be denied if we look at the strong public support given to the nationalist doctrines and ideas pursued by different ideologues in that contemporary Russia.

Russian nationalists and communists, who effectively adopted Russian nationalist ideas on several issues, were quick to fill the void with their own agenda. Contrary to the liberal-democrats, the nationalists, while paying little attention to the issue of economic reform, spent enormous time and effort discussing the issues of membership, national identity and state boundaries-issues at the center of Russian nationalist politics during Gorbachev era. After the collapse of communism, their ideas spread virtually unopposed, allowing them to set the terms of debate. These ideas however were neither liberal nor democratic; they preached restoration of Soviet Union and defined the Russian nation in ethnic rather than civic terms, which led them to demand that the Russian state intervene

³¹ Ibid., p. 108

to defend ethnic Russians in the former Soviet republics.³² Both communism and nationalism are adrift; this is why they may find it easy to get together on some common ground.

Moreover why Russian nationalists could have emerged successful has one answer in the thing and that is that, the inability of the liberal-democratic elite to develop an ideology of liberal nationalism that could legitimize the democratic form of government, a market economy, and the non-imperial borders of the Russian state.³³ But undoubtedly the success of nationalism can be gauged by the fact that even after falling prey to Yeltsin in 1996 presidential election, Zyuganov's alliance with the nationalists garnered much popular and a larger share of vote in 1995 State Duma elections which can be put at 53% a sharp increase from 44% in 1993 State Duma elections in Russia.³⁴

The West wants a new world order in which peace and quiet prevail, so as to be able to cultivate its own arena. A united Russia, provided it is not too strong, would serve Western interests better than a chaotic state of affairs, which would create new political and economic problems, possibly a stream of refugees and, generally speaking, an enormous zone of insecurity.

The assumption that political conditions in Russia will become normal as the result of successful economic reforms cannot be taken for granted. Quick improvement in the economic situation is unlikely and these are not the only concerns which the citizenry requires. People need spiritual beliefs, myths and symbols, and some countries such as Russia need them more than others. In this respect, post-communist Russia has nothing to offer to its people who are totally bereft of their ideals and symbols. The churches do not seem to have preaching that could generate some energy, enthusiasm and willingness which could give some sort of greater relief to the people of Russia. After the Second World War Germany and Japan succeeded in rebuilding prosperous and civilized

³² Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 263

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 260

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 261

societies without the benefit of a specific German or Japanese idea or faith. On the contrary, successive generations in Russia were educated in the belief of their overall invincibility.³⁵

Russia, Russianness and Russian Nationalism:

In a time of deep crisis, the negative aspects of Russia's polity tend to overpower Russia's harmonious features. But there always was a Russia that was a source of pride to its people, a Russian people described by J. G. Kohl in an 1842 guidebook as showing great cheerfulness in the midst of desperation, very tolerably agreeable and gay, other foreign visitors, while writing critically of the psychological effects of despotism, also noted Russian hospitality and kindness towards strangers, the sense of charity and the generous nature of the Russian people.³⁶ They had much to say about Russia's many great talents and cultural achievements, a literature that went further back in time than English, French and German, a folklore as rich as the Russian language and folk songs, sentimental, sad or gay, as moving and beautiful as any in the world. Russia's openness to new influences, they also remarked, was perhaps greater than any other country. Much of this belongs to a rural Russia that is gone forever.

But never this Russian culture emanated from rural communities. If, as Likhachev and others believe, there will be yet another cultural renaissance, it will again come from the cities. The greatness of Russia has never been in dispute and the greater the achievements, the greater the pain felt at the end of seventy years of ruin and destruction.³⁷ But the reality is that now after this much ruin, Russians are perhaps overestimating their case for greatness. As Dmitry Shlapentokh argues that Russian might have now gone down drastically and there are enough examples of this like the skirmishes with Chechnya and in other areas like economy.³⁸

³⁵ Laqueur, n-23, p. 108

³⁶ Ibid., p. 109

³⁷ Ibid., p. 110

³⁸ Dmitry Shlapentokh, "The Illusion and Realities of Russian Nationalism", *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 1, Winter,(2000), pp. 173-186

Where the national liberals (and the extreme rightists) have gone wrong is in believing that only they have been feeling the pain, whereas the radical democrats are cultural nihilists, ignoring everything Russian. This is not even correct with regard to the old Soviet regime; if under Lenin, Stalin and their successors, irreplaceable monuments were destroyed, and it is also true that many more copies of the Russian classics were printed than in the seventy years before the revolution. A wholly negative attitude toward traditional Russian culture prevailed only for a few years under Soviet rule and only in a few disciplines.

The accusations against radical democrats of showing a nihilistic attitude towards Russian history and culture are untrue, unless of course one implies that a true patriot has to admire and cherish everything that happened or was produced before 1917, however ugly or stupid, “for our country, right or wrong”. The charges of cultural nihilism and cosmopolitanism on the part of the extreme right are red herrings with some exceptions, such as the role of the Orthodox Church in a future Russian society. Not all those on the right are religious believers, and not every one on the right is true that the democrats, by and large, stand for a secular society, whereas the right, including the national liberals, is willing to give the Orthodox Church a central role in the political life of the country.

Presently the nationalist circles seem to promulgate a synthesis of Russian Orthodox Christianity with Marxism and ultra-patriotism. Russian nationalist orthodox theology teaches that Jesus Christ was Russian or Slavic; it leans toward violence and is apt to quickly change the target oppressor who is broadly defined as anyone who is non-Russian or non-Orthodox.³⁹ This is typically called ‘Xenophobic Nationalism’. The identity crisis in the post-Soviet Russia related to no longer being a world superpower has led to the rise of nationalism. Unprecedented impoverishment of masses in the 1990s due to a sudden introduction of free market economy created nostalgia for communism and fuelled a continued interest in the Marxist heritage. The loss of communism meant like a loss of religion for many people, as this is what communism had been for the Soviet

³⁹ Julia Sudo, “Russian Nationalist Orthodox Theology: A New Trend in the Political Life of Russia”, *Political Theology*, no. 6 vol. 1, (2005), p. 67

people for many decades, and soon the Russian Orthodox Church became the new religion of the new era. Combined together in a single ideology, these factors may become a powerful tool for putting up political and economic influence. Furthermore, the ultra-nationalist component tilts this new ideology toward violent means for reaching its goals.⁴⁰

Russian nationalists of the extreme right claim that patriotism, nationalism and chauvinism are synonymous. They hardly differentiate between patriotism and nationalism. As they see it, nationalism is the most sacred thing in life; only through belonging to a nation, does the life of the individual gain spiritual meaning; differences between nations are fundamental and commitment to one's nation transcends all other duties and responsibilities.

Contemporary Russians: Disbelief in Race

The versions of Russian Orthodox Church seem to convey an idea that the people who show their allegiance to it can only be recognized as a true Russian. Catholics, Muslims, Protestants or Jews can be Russian subjects, they can be tolerated and given freedom of religious practice, they even can be given certain civic rights. But since Holy Russia is meaningless for them, they cannot be true Russians. Some people on the right are willing to make concessions; certain individuals of non-Russian origin can become true Russian patriots and identify themselves through a great effort and their willingness to sacrifice for the motherland. But these will always be a very few. Others, more extreme, will not make exceptions.⁴¹

According to the most favorable polls less than half the Russian population is religious believers. To replace the religious with a racial test for belonging is not feasible, partly because as a result of Nazism this kind of doctrine has become impossible to be accepted

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 67

⁴¹ Laqueur, n-23, p. 112

by all. Even if it were different, racial doctrine would not be applicable in a country with so much mix of peoples and races. Russia's national liberals (moderate conservatives) hope for peaceful cooperation, a joining of forces in the reconstruction process in a country that has seen so much strife. But there can be collaboration only if there is common ground. With the extreme right's crucial emphasis on Russian exclusivity, fear of anti-Russians, its deep enmity against cosmopolitans and cultural nihilists, its psychological need for enemies, can the Russian right imagine and implement the removal of such obstructive designs.⁴²

What distinguishes the eastern version of nationalism from that of a western one is a good query because it raises the explanation to a substantially improvised standard for the sake of conceptual clarity and logical coherence. The basic difference between liberal western and authoritarian eastern nationalism have been noted for a long time. Nationalism in the West emerged in countries that were ethnically more or less homogenous or whose borders were at least well defined; they were economically and culturally highly developed. Nationalism in Eastern Europe arose or was invented in conditions that were altogether different; hence it shows its anti-liberal character, the suppression of minorities, the frequent conflicts and wars with neighbors and generally destructive character.

Anti-Semitism in Russia:

The trends in anti-Semitism can be very much perplexing to a large number of individuals but the point is that there are some scholars, who totally deny that anti-Semitism is widely rampant in Russian society. The views expressed by Geoffrey Hosking portray this very idea which goes as follows:

In none of the post-communist free elections has an overtly anti-Semitic party succeeded in demonstrating the levels of political support garnered by the parties such as National Front in France. The most successful right-wing party in Russia, Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal-Democratic Party is often cited as to the contrary. While his movement is

⁴² Ibid., p. 114

accurately characterized as neither liberal nor democratic, there is little in his ideology that which can be described as overtly anti-Semitic. Only two mass-circulation publications have overtly anti-Semitic overtones, *Nash Sovremennik* and *Molodaia Gvardia*. Yes, there is one area of Russian life which would appear tailor-made for anti-Semitic applications and that is the concern about The Mafia.⁴³

Three groups have resorted to anti-Semitism as an effort to find a big idea which can mobilize support within the Russian population: the extremes of political right, the political left (i.e. the former communists) and the Russian Orthodox Church:

The extreme political right proposes a program of radical nationalism and chauvinism. They reject parts of the soviet experience, and locate Russia's greatness in the past. They are well aware that anti-Semitism was an integral part of pre-revolutionary Russian conservative ideology and they have sought to resurrect it. Thus they rely upon tsarist anti-Semitism. Right wing anti-Semites have even resorted to the equation of Jews and revolution, exemplified by their claim that Jews killed the Tsar. Moreover the Russian New Right has also been synonymic with the term Russian Nationalism. The news magazines belonging to this line of thinking have also rediscovered the idea of Eurasianism. But it can be said that anti-Semitism is just one of the general elements of Neo-Eurasianism. We can not blame the whole new Eurasian idea to be inclusive of such extreme bunch of thoughts.⁴⁴

At the other extreme, the remnants of orthodox communism have invoked the idea of Jews as anti-soviet force. Such a proposal has hardly gained any audience in populace.

Moreover, the Russian Orthodox Church is still seeking a very, very dominant role in the society, by making itself the exemplar of Russian Nationalism. The various groups of Church leadership have claimed to be the leader of historical, national right demanding a

⁴³ Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service (eds.), *Russian Nationalism: Past and Present* (London: McMillan, 1998), p. 130

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 141

national legislation to ban the evangelizing efforts of foreign religious groups.⁴⁵ But the most ironical thing is that many of the Russians in the near abroad for whom Russian nationalists speak up turn out to be Jews. The chief marker of being a Russian is the ability to utter Russian language, specially when in near abroad.

At last, Prof. Hosking points out that anti-Semitism in Russia has been found lacking. He says that other targets have emerged in place like Chechens and the Blacks of Caucasus. And he concludes by saying that, at least now anti-Semitism does not pose any threat for the growth of a democratic Russian Nationalism.

Russian Nationalism or Xenophobia?

A plausible case can be made for the presence of fascist elements in the political ideology of some of the major opponents of the Yeltsin administration in post-soviet Russia. Those elements constituting grounds for identifying its proponents are right wing extremists can hardly be believed. Again, such elements are conservative is also a wrong argument. Yes, some form of anti-Semitism or other can be found in the ideas of Russia's new nationalists and it would not be any exaggeration. One more clue to the fact that Russian nationalists are fascists equally, can be seen in the counter fact that Russians have often identified themselves with statism and autocracy. It would seem that the dominance of state in every aspect of social life has forever been a feature of Russian political culture.

For Russians, the state has always defined the nation. Russian nationalists in the nineteenth century gave ideological form to that conviction by framing their arguments in terms provided by German idealist philosophy. Within this tradition, the institutions of state were treated as the expression of the collective will. For some of the major Russian nationalists, to obey the state would be to obey oneself. This is the legacy which Russia's

⁴⁵ Sergei Hackel, "Suffering and Insufferable", *Leading Light: Christian Faith and Contemporary Culture*, vol. 2, no. 1, winter, (1995), pp. 16-18

domestic opposition to Yeltsin's regime acquired. Alexander Prokhanov, Gennadii Zyuganov and Sergei Kurginian were some of those leaders.⁴⁶

In recent years nationalist politicians and groups have mushroomed all over Eastern Europe and the successor states of the Soviet Union. Since their trend is primarily towards separatism, their potential for conflict and destabilization is immense. The prospect that moderate nationalism will prevail over its worse alternatives is uncertain. Ever since its appearance, the Russian right has not made any significant progress. It has neither advanced towards acceptance of democracy nor has it made the transition to fascism. It is true that as communism is bankrupt and the Soviet Union has fallen apart, a political vacuum has come into being. But it seems unlikely that it will be filled by a native Russian fascism. Soviet leaders, on the whole, shielded their people from a whole lot of information about Nazism and Italian fascism; for over half a century only a handful of books were published on the subject which were not very interesting and illuminating.

The Russian extreme right stands for authoritarian government. The same applies with regard to the central role of the state party, an essential feature of fascism.⁴⁷ Russians are not going to permit such a veil of fascist design as they know the history well and are very apprehensive about giving such elements one more chance to destroy the Russia. There are certain features specific to Russia's extreme right. This refers above all to Satanism, the Judeo-Masonic plot and xenophobia. All fascist, Para- and pre-fascist movements believed to some extent in conspiracies; none liked Jews, freemasons and detractors of their respective history and culture. As far as fascism is concerned, there is truly nothing new under the sun, except perhaps the fact that in Russia it is post-communist in character. Only the future will show what this could mean in practice—that, despite all its opposition to communism, it may inherit certain of the same essential features.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ A. James Gregor, "Fascism and the New Russian Nationalism", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1,(1998), p. 7

⁴⁷ Laqueur, n-23, p. 112

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Russian Nationalism should be free of all orthodoxies:

Russian nationalism must be free of all the orthodoxies if it has really to get a chance to be accepted by the masses, otherwise the same old problems like the crisis of identity will resurface in its face. What Nietzsche said of nationalism was that it must get rid of its hardcore ingredients if it has to survive and appeal to the national sentiments. Whether it be in Russia or somewhere else, only the moderate form of nationalism can expect to receive some attention because the population of Russia has now come to understand what hurts them and there are enough serious players in the arena of politics and economy who are hell-bent on grabbing the power and in fact they can not take things lightly. Any sort of extremity can not be anymore tolerated by the Russians.

Chapter-3

RUSSIAN NATIONALISM DURING 1991-99: MAJOR FORCES AND TRENDS

The Revival of Russian Nationalism:

The rise of nationalism in Russia is best understood as a function of general Europe-wide historical and philosophical developments, and the specifics of Russia's post-communist situation. The current resurgence of nationalism in the industrial societies of Europe can be traced to the nation-states drive towards centralization, the increased bureaucratization and internationalization of economic and political life. These developments have created conditions in which national identity was suppressed or neglected. The revolution in communications and information technology, and the globalization of cultural trends have threatened to dissipate national cultural forms and identities. The persistence and resurgence of nationalism and national identity is easily explained, but the nature of this resurgent nationalism is a matter of great dispute.¹

Nationalism is on the wane, the current phase represents essentially negative, destructive reactions to a hostile and disorienting environment. As societies and communities fragment, the need to identify oneself with a particular group and the need to belong as manifested itself in a separatism, exclusivism, xenophobia and divisiveness.² This general tendency has been intensified by the dynamics of the post-communist situation. As Gellner points out "Russia is facing its Weimar in an age genuinely devoid of faith...communism destroyed much of civil society leaving something which must be as close to a social and moral vacuum as is conceivable in a complex relatively advanced industrial society" and 'nationalism is the most plausible and most easily available candidate for filling this emptiness'.³ For Russian politicians, it provides a vehicle for attaining power, symbols of manipulate and a means for mobilizing and exploiting public opinion. More pertinently in the case of Russia, the revival of nationalist sentiments can be seen as the response of the intelligentsia to the impact of westernizing, modernizing and global trends. The collapse of communism forced the intelligentsia to face up to the

¹ Christopher Williams and Thanasis D. Sfikas(eds.), *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Russia, the CIS and the Baltic States* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 65-66

² E. J. Hobsbawm in n-1, p. 66

³ E. Gellner in n-1, p. 66

new situation and its role in the new society. Attempting to forge an identity and a social role for themselves in the post-communist era has proved problematic. The collapse of the communist has revealed the intelligentsia as mouthpieces for the ancient regimes. In both cases, they appeared marginalized, irrelevant, and unwelcome reminder of times past.⁴ The differentiation amongst Russian nationalist thinkers and groupings is not just a contemporary version of well established trends in Russian nationalist thought; it can also be explained in terms of the fundamental divisions amongst Russian intellectuals over how to respond to the current wave of modernization and westernization.

The Major Trends in Contemporary Russian Nationalism:

Eurasianism and its Revival:

The original “Eurasians” were a group of Russians émigrés who had begun their activities shortly after the Bolshevik coup of 1917 in 1921, the fore founders of Eurasianism published a path breaking collection of essays entitled *Exit to the East*. During the interwar period, Eurasians such as linguist Nikolai Trubetskoi, historian G. V. Vernadskii, an economist geographer Petr Savitskii comprised a significant movement within Russian émigré thought.⁵

The original Eurasians had believed that Eurasian political party would eventually come to the fore and supplant the communist party as the ruling political force in Eurasia. They strongly opposed western styled democracy, favoring an authoritarian form of rule that would consult, but not necessarily hit the *vox populi*. For these Eurasians, the west represented a voracious opponent that sought to return Russia into a colonial appendage of itself. Eurasians believed that Russians were constitutionally incapable of participating in western culture.⁶ The inter war Eurasians considered that the name “Russia” was a misnomer for the historical and cultural entity in which they lived and rather than being

⁴ Ibid., p. 67

⁵ John B. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 291

⁶ Ibid., p. 291

called Russia the country, they believed, should be termed Eurasia, because it belonged to a separate cultural vault and had strong links to the so called Turanian (Turkic and Iranian) East, as well as to other Slav. Although the land of Eurasia was both Orthodox Christian and Muslim by religion, the founders of Eurasianism hoped that eventually the region's Muslims would chose to convert to Orthodox Christianity.

The resurrection of a formally obscure émigré ideology in the 1990's should cause little surprise. Russian imperial nationalism suffered the disadvantage of ignoring the non-Russian half of the soviet populace. Eurasianism, by contrast, like Marxism-Leninism, offered a meta-ethnic schema for continuing to yoke the various soviet republics together.⁷ Through out the year 1992, the Russian press featured a number of articles on the Eurasian theme. Interestingly, authors of several religious backgrounds came forward to champion the newly resurrected "empire-saving ideology".

Russia is a vast territory which expands all through Europe and Asia, and significant parts of its foreign policy will follow inherently from this fundamental duality. Richard Sakwa has referred to the new foreign policy of the Russian Federation under Adnrei Kozyrev's successor, Yevgeny Primakov, as 'the new pragmatism'. This pragmatism certainly has serious implications for Russian Nationalism. However, it does appear that Russia is turning her attention increasingly towards Central Asia, the Caucasus, Iran, India, Mongolia, China and Japan, even though progress in achieving gains for Russia seems to be proceeding at a snail's pace.⁸ It should be noted that Eurasians will never accept the independent or secessionary status of Chechnya, as negotiated by General Lebed.

After 1992, an extraordinary journal called 'Elementy' emerged in Russia edited by Alexander Prokhanov and Alexander Dugin, a former member of Pamyat. 'Elementy' aspires to unite new right thinkers across the Eurasian continent and has published articles. All the thinkers are really obsessed with the concepts of geopolitics, and they

⁷ Ibid., p. 292

⁸ Williams and Sfikas (eds.) in n-1, p. 95

challenge the supposed American drive towards a new world order, with a call for Eurasian opposition to American power and cultural influence.⁹

Modern Eurasianism is a symptom of weakness rather than strength. A devastated Russia in the aftermath of revolution and civil war seemed at the time to be at the periphery to Europe and was treated as an international pariah. The Eurasians seem to belong to a dream-world rather than a real one. However, it is not certain that Eurasianism will fail to exert influence on this account.

Slavophilism:

Slavophilism in general could be termed as a tendency which has its roots lying in the ethnological grounds of a society. Perhaps the most 'liberal' Russian nationalism is a kind of apolitical Slavophilism which is often associated with a high moral and religious tone, and which rejects secular Western influences in the name of Russian orthodoxy and even the restoration of a Royal family. Slavophile ideas seem to involve a kind of political and economic isolationism. Its main exponent being Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who many have an influence on the popular retired General and 1996 Presidential candidate, Alexander Lebed. Modern Slavophiles also stress their links with the Russian community. In fact, Lebed's party organization in 1995-96 was called the Congress of Russian communities or KRO. He believed that corrupt elite, with strong links to the old communist nomenklatura, did not stop to govern Russia in an arbitrary way.¹⁰

His thought imply that the gap between rulers and ruled can only be bridged by a shared ideology and i.e. Russian nationalism. Like many Slavophiles, Lebed was critical of the capacity of the Russian people for democratic habits and the market economy, saying that the transition period towards Western forms was too short. Lebed was critical of the high levels of corruption in government circles, and he believed that he will have to fight a resolute battle against organized crime. He stood for an abandonment of pluralism, a

⁹ Ibid., p. 96

¹⁰ Stephen K. Carter, "Russian Nationalism and Russian Politics in the 1990s", in Williams and Sfikas (eds.), n-1, pp. 92-93

single ideology, a new constitution, redistribution of wealth and control over foreign investment and trade.¹¹ In short, General Lebed in 1996 appeared to suffer from a typically Slavophile lack of political coherence.

KRO –A Revisionist-Nationalist Movement:

Of the geopolitically revisionist movements to emerge in post-soviet Russia, the Congress of Russian Communities has received little attention. The KRO (an acronym for ‘Congress of Russian Communities’) was created in 1993 by Moscow-based political entrepreneurs, aiming to reunite a putative Russian nation within a territorially enlarged state. As a nationalist organization, it came to prominence during the Duma election campaign of 1995, through the guidance of Yurii Skokov and the recruitment of Alexander Lebed, but failed to achieve the 5% vote necessary for federal list representation. During this time, activists accused the KRO leadership of co-optation by the Yeltsin administration, with uneasy ideological compromises being made. Following electoral failure, the KRO parted company with Skokov and Lebed and renounced the compromises it had made during 1995, returning to the wholehearted defense of *russkie* interests.¹² While even during 1995 the KRO was often termed ‘moderate’, it never renounced an irredentist commitment to the reunification of all Russians in an enlarged state.

The fate of the Russian nation is inseparably linked to the fate of the Russian state. The creation of an ideology of unification of Russian people is the only way to secure the survival of the Russian nation, Russian culture and the Russian state. The KRO’s ideology interprets nationalism as positive and necessary. The rejection of nationalism creates a void to be filled by ‘utopian doctrines, primitive dogmas and ideologised myths’, leading sooner or later to an historical dead end. The clear implication is that Russia’s problems have been caused by rejection of nationalism and that communism led

¹¹ Ibid., p. 93

¹² Alan Ingram, “A Nation Split into Fragments: The Congress of Russian Communities and Russian Nationalist Ideology”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 50, no. 4, (1999), p. 687

to its demise. But this creation of nationalism is problematic because other groups within Russia may deploy counter-nationalism.¹³ Russian nationalism must place limits on the right to self-determination within Russia. Nationalism is often given negative connotations of anti-Russian separatism, whereas Russian nationalism is referred to as patriotism, or an opposition is made between all national interests and local nationalisms.

The KRO's nationalism is thus entwined with question of statehood and empire. For the KRO, the realization of the project of the Russian empire is a key distinction of Russian nationalism. The empire secured the nation a living space and material resources, corresponding to its historical scale and uniqueness. In the KRO manifesto, ideological statements on the Russian nation and Russian nationalism are complemented by statement on statehood, arguments legitimizing Russia's imperial past, and claims on the status of great power.¹⁴

In post-soviet Russia, the KRO carved out a distinctive position among the Russian opposition and distanced itself from the extreme right. No other movement based its ideology so closely upon a general understanding of nationalism. This interpretation of Russia's situation was not without its difficulties. The focus on Russian identity means that many inhabitants of Russia would find it difficult to accept the KRO's ideology, and the demand for national unification embraced an irredentism which currently has little chance of being accepted as legitimate.¹⁵

The New Right:

The left side of the spectrum is represented by so-called National-Bolshevism, which despite theoretical incompatibility, combines nationalist and imperialist ideas with socialist ideology. The Russian New Right represents the right side of the left-right scale. The term Russian New Right has been used to describe a diversity of ideas, from right-wing conservatism and appeal to the pre-Revolutionary past through to right-wing

¹³ Ibid., p. 689

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 691

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 701

radicalism, calling for the overthrow of the existing government by force. Thus, the Russian New Right is represented by different forms of nationalist ideas ranging from national-republicanism to national-monarchism.

However, a distinction must be drawn, on the one hand, between those political parties for whom a nationalist argument is a central and essential part of their program and those who seek to mobilize electoral support by making a nationalist argument part of their overall ideological arsenal in response to the changes in the electorate's political values and interests and as a means of maximizing votes on the other.¹⁶ Most of the representatives of the Russian nationalist movement share some basic ideological and political values that have taken on different configurations, such as ethnic distinctiveness, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, imperialism conspiracy theory, attitude to the past, fascism and racism.

The ideology of the Russian New Right can be seen as a combination of nationalist, conservative and extremist values. In certain circumstances, nationalism can become a catalyst to transform conservative values into right-wing radicalism or fascism. The aforementioned analysis shows that some Russian political parties have been moving in this direction.¹⁷ The rise of the Russian native full-fledged fascism will not fill the existing political vacuum. National-socialism will, therefore, only be introduced through the back door.

The combination of nationalist, conservative and extremist values is also different in each case. The LDPR's program, for example, contains classical liberal ideas, such as minimal state intervention in the economy, equality of different types of property, privatization and so on. Zhirinovskiy has become isolated from the democratic movement in so far as he has been using quite different political tactics. What distinguishes Zhirinovskiy from the mainstream right is his adoption and then development of the nationalist idea as one of the key elements of the LDPR's political arsenal. Thus, anti-liberalism and anti-

¹⁶ Oksana Oracheva, "The Ideology of Russian Nationalism", in Williams and Sfikas (eds.), n-1, p. 50

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60

capitalism itself cannot be seen as a common feature of all nationalist parties, although most ultra-nationalists promote anti-liberal values.¹⁸

Whether Russian nationalism becomes a new state ideology largely depends upon the economic situation, the nature of the political system, the intellectual climate and changing circumstances. Nowadays there is tendency for recognition and acceptance of some nationalist values and beliefs by the Russian political system. This tendency is indicated by the increased use of national symbols and by the attention devoted to Russian pre-Revolutionary history and so on. The adoption of some elements of nationalist ideology by Russian politicians has meant that such beliefs have become more acceptable to the Russian public. However, Russia has a long way to go before ultra-nationalist organizations become full fledged and powerful enough to influence Russia's transition to liberal democracy.

Ultra-Nationalism:

The loss of social identity led the Russian people to seek a new vision for their nation. The desire of 'being Russian' suddenly became acute, and there seems to be three major trends of fulfilling this thirst for identity, each trend consisting of numerous more and less significant proponents. However, it may include persons of Russian ethnic origin who are not citizens of the Russian Federation:

The first trend reflects the notion of a special role of the 'Russian civilization' in world history. It first appeared among the Russian intellectuals who were trying to create a positive program of post-Soviet development through a creative revision of communism. The Communist Party of Russia today, while claiming to be a direct heir of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has stepped away from the Marxist teaching regarding the universal patterns of social and economic development, including the concept of socialist revolution where internationalism is the key issue. The party leader G. Zyuganov insists that free-market economy is impossible in Russia due to its unique identity and that Russia should walk its own path to once again become a superpower. A

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 61

similar ideology, but with a more radical twist, is upheld by the National Bolshevik Party and its leader E. Limonov.¹⁹

The second trend in Russian nationalism is 'nationalist anti-communism,' which is represented by a variety of pro-monarchic, imperial, and Christian parties. Solzhenitsyn, an influential proponent of the 'Slavic Union', suggested ridding the USSR from non-Slavic republics even before the Soviet Union fell apart. Shocked by the loss of Ukraine and Belorussia in the 1991 USSR's disintegration, Solzhenitsyn continues to advocate a 'humane autocracy' which will protect the rights of ethnic Russians. The Russian Orthodox Church is usually given an eminent place in his schemes as an adequate replacement for communist ideology.²⁰

The third nationalist trend supports the idea of a mono-ethnic state, of a 'Russia for Russians' and is characterized by extremism and chauvinism. One of the first movements in this group was the Pamyat. V.V. Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, is also in this category. The heart of his party rhetoric is 'What is good for the Russians is good for all of Russia, and what is bad for Russians is bad for all of Russia. One of the most aggressive third-type movements has been the Russian National Unity, usually called as the RNE, initially led by A. Barkashov. In spite of their primary emphasis on superiority of the Russian people over any other ethnic group, they maintain relationship with skinhead organizations all over the world and are, allegedly, funded from abroad.²¹

In the last several years, the ultranationalist movement has grown in number and sophistication. Many members of the Russian legislature have begun to voice ultranationalist positions. The National Salvation Front has gained much attention for its denunciation of the Yeltsin government and its reform program. Pamyat has grown in size and has resorted to physical intimidation and virulent anti-Semitism. Radical Russian

¹⁹ Julia Sudo, "Russian Nationalist Orthodox Theology: A New Trend in The Political Life of Russia", *Political Theology*, vol. 6, no. 1, (2005), p. 69

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71

nationalists are xenophobic, racist and reactionary.²² Increasingly so, these parties also stand among the most organized groups in current Russian politics.

While these forces present a horrible future Russia for the West, questions remain as to their mainstream support and political impact. Until now, Russian ultranationalists have been able to focus attention on themselves and their rhetoric. They have focused Western interest groups on the threat they pose both within Russia and without. It will be up to the more liberal nationalist movement in Russia to confront the ultranationalists. The failure of the more moderate forces in Russia to do so will significantly increase the likelihood of an ultranationalist victory. The movement currently thrives on the disillusionment and uncertainty of the Russian population.²³

Russian Christian Democratic Movement:

The rise of a Christian Democratic Movement in 1989 provided political expression for this religious revival. The particular mix of political, moral, economic and religious principles embodied in Russian Christian Democracy makes it an interesting and influential development in the debate on Russian nationalism. Russian Christian Democrats have suffered, in trying to form parties in the general chaos of post-communist Russia.

In the period since 1991, there has been a gradual crystallization of the basic values and tenets of Russian Christian Democracy which is a patriotic, inward-looking form of Russian nationalism. The aim is to unite Christians who are striving for the spiritual and economic rebirth of Russia and those trying to create a society based upon trust, charity, solidarity, freedom and justice.²⁴ Their particular emphasis lies in three areas: a parliamentary democratic system which would grow out of historical Russian

²² For a lengthy discussion on the current state of Ultra-Nationalism See Walter Lacquer, *The Black Hundreds: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993)

²³ Gregory Guroff and Alexander Guroff, "The Paradox of Russian National Identity", in Roman Szporluk (ed.), *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), p. 91

²⁴ Mark Sandle, "Searching for a National Identity: Intellectual Debates in Post-Soviet Russia", in Williams and Sfikas (eds.), n-1, p. 77

representative institutions, a social market economy, and a revival of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Most Christian Democrats have distanced themselves from Imperialist thinking, on the one hand, and from absorption of the westernizing tradition of liberal democracy and a market economy, on the other. In terms of Russia's geopolitical identity, they are neither Atlanticists nor Isolationists, but synthesizers of the two tendencies. The imperatives of the market-economy efficiency, competition, private property are combined with the values of social justice, welfare and equality of opportunity in order to generate economic prosperity and a society founded upon the values of Russian orthodoxy.²⁵

The Christian Democrats stress the need for a socio-political community united around a specific set of religious and moral values. They also reject the need to decentralize the Russian Federation itself. Russia must be one and indivisible. While not supporting the idea of the Russian people as the dominant ethnic group, they also reject the notion of a heterogeneous confederation. They want to create a cultural community based around Russian cultural and religious values which was non-Imperial, tolerant and yet, Russian. The Christian Democratic stress on community, solidarity, social justice within a broadly European thrust of democracy and marketisation offers a distinctive and highly relevant vision of Russia.²⁶

The Christian democratic trend, with its mixture of European political and economic forms and orthodox religious content seems very persuasive. Its emphasis on morality and spirituality, the social market, on Russian political institutions and its attempt to restore the broken links of history seems promising.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 78

²⁶ Ibid., p. 79

The Russian Orthodox Church:

The rise of nationalism in the 1990s coincided with the flowering of the Russian Orthodox Church which meant increase in membership, political influence, and material possession. It all started with the Christianity boom of the early 1990s, which coincided with the influx of Protestant missionaries from Europe and North America but was soon replaced by a period of religious stagnation.²⁷ Some converts stayed in half-baked communities forsaken by missionaries, some joined Russian Baptist churches as these offered a similar theology and familiar forms of worship but with an additional advantage of stable leadership and established traditions, and many did not feel comfortable in either. This third category partly fell prey to numerous eastern cults, but most of them turned to the Russian Orthodox Church which for the soviet people used to be the symbol of all that is religious.²⁸ At about the same time, the church authorities skillfully used the rise of nationalism to promote their key slogan, 'Russia is orthodox, and orthodox is Russian' and this led many a politician, from Zhirinovskiy to president Yeltsin, to demonstrate their ties with the church. Even today the power of this concept has not faded.

Russian nationalist orthodox theology is a rational, cynical approach to Christianity which creates the image of the savior as of a Russian Jesus who comes to save the Russian orthodox people from their non-Russian and non-orthodox oppressors. The danger of Russian nationalist orthodox theology is in its extreme intolerance to the aliens and in its proneness to adaptation. The authors of Russian nationalist orthodox theology have intentionally chosen this type of manipulating masses for the purpose of achieving their own political and economic goals.²⁹

²⁷ Julia Sudo, "Russian Nationalist Orthodox Theology: A New Trend in The Political Life of Russia", *Political Theology*, vol. 6, no. 1, (2005), p. 72

²⁸ Ibid., p. 72

²⁹ Julia Sudo, "Russian Nationalist Orthodox Theology: A New Trend in The Political Life of Russia", *Political Theology*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2005, p. 83

The Post-Industrial Patriots:

One of the most interesting and prolific figures on the Russian nationalist scene is Sergei Kurginyan. Kurginyan has combined a synthesis of technocratic modernization and patriotism. His outlook is distinct from neo-Stalinism/ National Bolshevism on the one hand, and liberal democracy/civic nationalism on the other. To restore Russia's greatness requires the transformation of Russia into a post-industrial society, through the assimilation of the latest advances in science and technology. This necessitates closing the technological and economic gap with the west, and so ensures a leading position for Russia in the 21st century.³⁰ Market reforms are rejected as alien and as running counter to the traditional structures of Russian society. Politically and economically, Kurginyan favors a statist society in which Russia carries out a state-drive modernization process. Kurginyan rejects the ethnic conception of the Russian nation; his patriotism is based upon the Russian state. Profoundly anti-western, Kurginyan wants to resurrect the spiritual basis of Russian society. Isolationist and authoritarian and yet profoundly modernizing and technocratic, Kurginyan's post-industrial patriotism eschews westernization, democratic or liberal nationalism and nostalgic Imperial nationalism.³¹

Neo-Communist Statists:

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation led by Gennady Zyuganov is the heir of the once omnipotent Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Even though the CPSU was once banned in the aftermath of the August 1991 coup attempt, its successor has emerged as the most powerful 'opposition' force in Russia. Since 1991 the CPRF has lacked a convincing ideology and it is noteworthy that Gennady Zyuganov was one of the founder members of the National Salvation Front in autumn 1992. This front was an unwieldy

³⁰ Mark Sandle, "Searching for a National Identity: Intellectual Debates in Post-Soviet Russia" in Williams and Sfikas (eds.), n-1, p. 79

³¹ Ibid., p. 80

conglomeration of 'patriotic' forces which included conspirators such as General Sterligov, genuine nationalists such as Sergei Baburin and formerly democratic politicians like Mikhail Astafiev.³² In December 1995, Zyuganov's CPRF gained 22.3 per cent of the vote on the party lists for the State Duma, and he pushed Zhirinovskiy's LDPR to 11.18 percent with the government party into third place with only 10.13 percent. Superior communist organization delivered 58 single-member seats, compared to only ten for the pro-government, Our Home is Russia. Thus, the Communists garnered 157 seats in the State Duma compared with 55 for Our Home is Russia, its closest rival Lebed's KRO did not cross the five percent barrier and won only five seats in the single member constituencies.³³ In December 1995, the CPRF seemed unbeatable and Lebed appeared insignificant. Yeltsin's personal popularity rating at the end of 1995 was in single figures.

He sincerely believed in the restoration of the USSR and its extensive social security system. Zyuganov also admired of Stalin and sometimes referred to a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. Zyuganov is probably close to the ideology of National Bolshevism and sincerely hopes to restore communism on the basis of statist Russian nationalism for which there is much support among the veterans of the Great Patriotic War and within the Armed forces.

The Empire- Restorers:

The core beliefs of the Imperial nationalists emerge from an ethnicist approach to the question of Russian nationality. They wish to create a privileged position for the Russian people within a reconstituted Russian empire. They argue that the collapse of the USSR was a disaster, and that Russia's current borders do not equate to her historical frontiers. This has spilled over into some fairly aggressive noises about expansionism and defending the rights and interests of Russian citizens in the near abroad. The Imperial

³² Stephen K. Carter, "Russian Nationalism and Russian Politics in the 1990s" in Williams and Sfikas (eds.), n-1, p. 99

³³ Ibid., p. 99

nationalists are united in their contempt of all things western. The West and particularly the USA are seen as the bearers of decadence, amorality and atheism.³⁴

Most of those seeking to restore traditional Russian norms and values see the restoration of the Orthodox Church as a key component in Russia's renaissance. Imperialists, such as Zhirinovskiy, Prokhanov and Rutskoï, argue that if Russia is to avoid the fate of the USSR, then a centralized, unitary state is necessary. A multi-national Russian federation would ultimately lead to the disintegration of Russia, and must be resisted at all costs.

“Why Russians Are Responding to Nationalist Appeals?”

When we begin to ask the status and perception of Russian Nationalist Movements there obviously arise a question in mind and that is what direction is the development of Russian ethnic identity taking at present?

A very unpleasant trend is becoming evident. The development of Russian ethnic identity is an inevitable and generally speaking, progressive thing of course. What's bad is that in the 1990s it began to take shape in reaction to other ethnic groups' aggressive forms of nationalism, which means there's a threat that dangerous, extremist tendencies could develop in Russian ethnic awareness. And then what is called great-power chauvinism will begin to have a serious influence on Russians' ethnic awareness. So far one indication of that is people's attitude toward the creation of a Russian Republic. That possibility was mentioned at the very beginning of the reforms, but, fortunately, back then there were very few supporters of the idea. After all, it would have meant the complete collapse of Russia as a federation and a war of all against all, if for no other reason than because Russians are so widely scattered throughout the country.³⁵

³⁴ Mark Sandle, “Searching for a National Identity: Intellectual Debates in Post-Soviet Russia” in Williams and Sfikas (eds.), n-1, p. 74

³⁵ The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press (CDPSD), vol. 51, no. 18. (April 28 1999), p. 7

Moreover one more very pertinent question arises here that whether Russia is threatened with eventual disintegration along ethnic lines? If virtually all the leading politicians and journalists maintain that such a danger exists that means it really does. In fact, it arose immediately after the collapse of the USSR, since the Russian SFSR was the most artificial of all the Soviet republics. It didn't have all the things the others did –academies of sciences, Communist parties etc, but its name contained the word 'federated'. It was probably a decision to take the path of federalism that saved Russia from disintegrating at the early stage. But federalization can be both a means of salvation and a destructive force. After all, a federation can evolve from a constitution based federation to a treaty-based one, which would lead to the growth of confederative elements and Russia's gradual transformation into a confederation. And that would mark the beginning of the state's disintegration.³⁶

A Measure of Russian Nationalism: People's Apathy

For some reason a subterranean belief persists among Russia-watchers and members of the media that the Russian electorate remains enamored with the political extremes of the old Communist left and the seemingly resurgent ultra-nationalist Right. A closer look proves the opposite. The majority of voters has supported the Kremlin's middle of the road 'party of power' and is set to do so for some time to come.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the so-called ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has declined relative to other parties elected to parliament since 1993. The Communists have tried to adapt to the post-Soviet reality with little success. The party continues to hold in high regard what it considers to be the best elements of the failed Soviet Union with a grafted-on element of Russian nationalism.

The LDRP is often called an ultra-nationalist party, but its voting record in parliament demonstrates that it supports the Kremlin's party of power more times than not and

³⁶ Ibid., p. 8

basically is a proponent of the prevailing status quo. But in the end his party's platform is a near-reflection of the communists with more stress on the nationalist issue.³⁷

Russia's 'left' and 'right' parties are facing a slow, but steady decline. Since 1993, voters have supported parties to deal with the post-Soviet collapse –sometimes it has been to recapture a sense of a fondly remembered past normality, but most of time it has been to get on with the job of creating a modern Russia. Russia's 'left' and 'right' offer neither in any meaningful way.

Major Nationalist Party in Contemporary Russia:

The main nationalist party in Russia is the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia. The LDPR was formed in 1991 and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy was a founding member. The goal of this party is popular mobilization through the articulation of the ideology of ultra-nationalism. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy contested the June 1991 Russian Republic's presidential elections, winning 6.2 million votes, which was 7 percent of the total votes polled. Zhirinovskiy propagated an undiluted ethnic Russian appeal, emphasizing on the greatness and uniqueness of the Russians. He and the LDPR have been consistently anti-Communist, a trend associated with ultra-nationalist ideologies. His often irresponsible and historically inaccurate statements have earned him the reputation of being a clown, but he represents the threat of a rising nationalism that is real.³⁸

The program of the LDPR advocated a unitary system for Russia where there should be no national state entities within Russia. It advocated a suspension of all aid to any other countries, stepping up of arms industry; taxation should be in favor of producers, etc.

³⁷ The Hindu, 'Russia's Left and Right Parties are in Decline', (Nov. 1 2005), New Delhi Edition, p. 11

³⁸ Anuradha Chenoy, *The Making of New Russia* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2001), p. 173

Liberal Democratic Party of Russia: Perspective on Nationalism

Officially the party vindicates the establishment of a multi-party democracy and a rule by law society. The party supports the 1993 constitution and defends the rights and freedoms of any citizen of the Russian state. The statements of LDPR's leader, Vladimir V. Zhirinovskiy show, however, that the party belongs to the ultra-nationalist wing. Judging from the nationalist statements of Zhirinovskiy, LDPR vindicates the restoration of the pre-soviet Russian empire, possibly by use of force. The party also supports the division of Russia into provinces and the abolishment of the current territorial and national division of the federation. The leader of the party argues that this would reduce the potential for ethnic conflicts in Russia. However, he overtly claims that Russians should have a leading role in the multiethnic Eurasian continent, and he has in many situations vindicated nationalist xenophobic views.³⁹

Communist Party of Russian Federation: Perspective on Nationalism

The ideology of CPRF seems to be a mixture of old and new sentiments and tendencies. The party program directs much attention towards ecological, social and economic problems, but contains also formulas of a more conservative nature. The CPRF supports the restoration of the former Soviet Union on a 'voluntary basis' and the adoption of a new Constitution by means of referendum. The CPRF also aims to bring an end to the slandering of Lenin and resurrect the Soviets. Zyuganov has been criticized for bringing the party too far to the right in his defense of a modern Uvarov-doctrine: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationhood. According to Zyuganov, unity and common cultural heritage are more essential than class-struggle and interest.⁴⁰

³⁹ Centre for Russian Studies Database, NUPI, "Party Programmes and Ideology", available on www.nupi.no

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Congress of Russian Communities: Perspective on Nationalism

The bloc represents a mood of 'moderate nationalism' which fuses a 'strong state' rhetoric borrowed from the centrist camp with a socialist oriented economic policy. The bloc has been conveniently silent on the issue of CIS integration, but judging from the stance of its leaders. CIS integration is along-term strategy of the bloc. In national policies, the bloc has supported the idea of Zhirinovsky to abolish all ethnic territories in the Russian Federation and divide Russia into territorial entities. Carefully avoiding nationalist rhetoric, CRC leaders have used a statist definition of the word 'Russian', pointing to cultural heritage/citizenship and not ethnicity. CRC has a tradition of opposing the use of force to solve ethnic problems in the Russian Federation, with Yuriy Skokov officially denouncing the use of force in Chechnya at the so-called Cheboksary meeting in January 1995. Lebed has pursued this initiative in his attempt to negotiate peace in Chechnya.⁴¹

Our Home is Russia: Perspective on Nationalism

In spite of belonging to the right-wing, OHR supports the involvement and presence of a strong state in both the social and economic sphere. The movement sees the strengthening of the state as a precondition for an effective co-operation between West and East and supports the idea of a Eurasian superpower, a bridge between the East and the West, which stabilizes the world order by its geopolitical presence and influence on both continents. The OHR supports agreements on effective arms control and disarmament, the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear arms and the comprehensive test ban treaty. It also espouses the role of Russia as peace-keeper on the post-soviet territory with the assistance of other security structures, such as the UN and OSCE.⁴²

⁴¹ www.nupi.no, "Party Programmes and Ideology"

⁴² Ibid.

The Electoral Performance of Russian Nationalism:

The results of the **December 1993 parliamentary elections** confirmed that the LDPR and its leader had a base in the Russian federation. The LDPR received 22.8 percent of the national vote for 225 party list seats in the 450 seats Duma. The LDPR thus got 14 percent of the seats. In the Duma, they were second to the centrist pro-president party, Russia's Choice that got 17 percent of the seats. Zhirinovskiy won a seat in the Duma in this election. Zhirinovskiy has opposed the CIS and Russian support to Central Asia. The LDPR promoted the myths of Russian cultural superiority, reclamation of the Russian Empire up to the borders, virulent anti-communism and anti-trade unionism. Zhirinovskiy said, "I would only ban all the parties in the country, all strikes, and all trade unions for two to three years until peace and order prevails everywhere and national conflicts are resolved."⁴³ The LDPR in its program of December 1993, called for an end to the destruction of the Russian military industrial complex, end to organized crime and support to capitalist reform along with a mixed economy. Militarist messages ran through their program and slogans. But despite their anti-capitalist rhetoric, the LDPR gave firm support to Russia's capitalist path supporting Yeltsin when and wherever necessary, like in the budget discussions and Yeltsin's military intervention to curb the civil war.⁴⁴

In the **1995 Duma elections**, the strength of the LDPR declined considerably. The number of votes they received on party lists declined to 11.18 %. Their deputies were reduced to 51. Thus, despite the very powerful propaganda, the 1993 elections showed that the base for ultra-nationalist ideas could spread through Russia if alternate institutions did not give stability to the people. The LDPR had support from the workforce in the military industrial complex, from sections of the army, pensioners and the impoverished. It had support beyond the urban pockets and had garnered votes from small towns in the far flung Russian regions.⁴⁵ Zhirinovskiy cut the social base of centrist parties in the 1993 election, but the communists gained support from this base in the 1995

⁴³ Chenoy, n-38, p. 174

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 175

election, and received 22.30 percent of the vote for party list voting. Zhirinovsky paid adequate attention to organizational matters of the party.

In the **1999 Duma elections**, the performance of nationalist parties took a plunge and that could be due to the availability of multiple choices for good and more responsive regime, which could not only give the aspirations of masses a new and meaningful opportunity to find their way towards success but also threw a lot of attractive propositions before the people of Russia. Yet, the CPRF gained 24.29% support of the total and interestingly the more radical Zhirinovsky bloc could manage only a sheer 5.98% of the total, which indicates that the population specially the new elites are not yet convinced about adopting some hard lined or aggressive nationalist programmes. The success of CPRF again shows that Russian masses are somehow still confused about what to do in a volatile situation (given the fact that extremities from Chechen rebels are making their presence felt time and again) when nationalisms are galore but yet not with justified motto.

Instead of signaling the rise of aggressive nationalism, the 1999 Duma election results also signal the rise of assertive pragmatism. This is neither a form of rabid nationalism nor liberalism in foreign affairs, a belief in the ultimate harmony of interests and institutions. Putin's popularity reflects the widely held desire for two goals, which Putin himself promised to fulfill. First, the creation of a strong Russian state is very much needed there. The state's persistent weakness is one of the main sources of problems. Russians want a leader who will rein in the wayward federal ministries, control the regional governments that ignore federal law and the constitution, reduce corruption, and improve the state's capacity. As a young leader, Putin has an incentive to make the state a more effective instrument for his government. Second, a Russian foreign policy that stands up for Russian interests in the international arena will be the most significant requirement for Russia. Russians want a pragmatic foreign policy that protects Russia's interests abroad as defined by Realpolitik.

Chapter – 4

RUSSIAN NATIONALISM *VERSUS* MULTICULTURALISM

What is Multiculturalism?

“Multiculturalism is used as both a descriptive and a normative term. As a descriptive term it refers to cultural diversity arising from the existence within a society of two or more groups whose beliefs and practices generate a distinctive sense of collective identity. Multiculturalism is invariably reserved for communal diversity that arises from racial, ethnic or language differences.¹ As a normative term, multiculturalism implies a positive endorsement of communal diversity, based either on the right of different cultural groups to respect and recognition, or on the alleged benefits to the larger society of moral and cultural diversity. Critics of multiculturalism argue that multicultural societies are inherently conflict-ridden and unstable, and view normative multiculturalism as an example of political correctness.”²

The idea of the nation as culturally and politically united whole has, particularly since 1960s, been challenged by the rise of multiculturalism. Nationalism has always been an example of the ‘politics of identity’, in the sense that it tells people who they are: it gives people a history, forges social bonds and a collective spirit, and creates a sense of destiny larger than individual existence hence in a sense it is also a form of identity politics, but its stress is rather on the ‘politics of difference’, stressing the range of cultural diversity and identity-related differences in many modern societies.³ Now what is interesting here is the debate between the politics of difference and politics of identity. The question of equality in any democratic-nationalist discourse has been accorded primacy over the issue of identity; the theme of cultural nationalism might be an exception.

The relationship between multiculturalism and nationalism is a complex affair. The nationalist traditions that accommodate multiculturalism are liberal nationalism and anti-colonial nationalism. This is due to the fact that both traditions embrace essentially inclusive model of the nation as a political or civic entity rather than a cultural or ethnic

¹ Andrew Heywood, *Politics (2nd ed.)* (London: Palgrave, 2002), p. 119

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

entity. The civic nation is always of primary significance over the concept of ethnic nation. Members of the nation are thus bound together less by a unifying culture and more by a common citizenship and shared allegiances. Liberalism, indeed, can be seen to favor multiculturalism in principle. Liberal multiculturalism is rooted, most fundamentally, in a commitment to freedom and toleration.⁴

There is a notion that liberalism and multiculturalism are somehow not compatible. In the first place, individualism, the core principle of liberalism, conflicts with multiculturalism in that it highlights the primary importance of personal and individual identity over any collective notion of identity based on ethnicity, race, language or whatever. To this degree, liberalism looks beyond both multiculturalism and nationalism, supporting the principle of internationalism. Second, liberalism is Universalist in the sense that it gives priority to a set of core values, amongst which freedom and toleration are the prominent ones.⁵

The Russian Federation's constitution starts its preamble with the remark-“We, a multinational people of the Russian Federation...”⁶ and this is totally reflective of the fact that Russian values, shared culture and all the related ties are very much significant specially when we are referring towards the question of multiculturalism in Russia and that is a very well known fact that Russia, ever since the inception of the term ‘multiculturalism’, has been a multi-cultural society, but when we talk of the theoretical underpinnings of the term ‘multiculturalism’ we come across a very, very important debate in the arena of political theory which has a lot of relevance for the nation-state or better call it a multi-nation state called Russia.

The term ‘multiculturalism’ in the arena of Russian society and polity refers to the meaning of ethnicity more than its emphasis on citizenship. The ideals of social diversity, plurality, equality in almost all the spheres of life for ethnic and other minorities has

⁴ Heywood, n-1, p. 119

⁵ Ibid., p. 120

⁶ New Russian Constitution is Adopted, Mayak Radio as quoted in *Summary of World Broadcasting (SWB)*, part-1, 21st December 1993, SU/1877

drawn back the attention to the theses on multiculturalism in Russia. The dreams of a truly multicultural and modern Russia has also drawn our attention towards the matter of participation of citizens in all the walks of life but these themes of multiculturalism are not the only ones which deserve a mention and thoughtful analysis in this chapter. The various theses and their anti-theses along with the discussion on plurality in Russian society and the issue of minority rights are also some of the queries which need some special attention. Whether multiculturalism as a state response to diversity can be considered as a realizable aim in Russia and whether it is possible to argue for Russian multiculturalism for this multinational country in a very favorable way, is a matter to be examined.

The ideas of a multicultural state is not very new rather in soviet era the people were really sensitive towards their ethnic cultural, norms, foods and everything which made them special and peculiar in the eyes of majority. Later, the soviet doctrine of internationalism presumed the supremacy in the communist ideology and the domination of the official Russian culture within the borders of the former Soviet Union. That has led to slower destruction of the ethnic minority languages and vanishing of the significance of different cultures.

Equality⁷ and its sustenance has been a project before the policy makers ever since the days of Soviet Union. But the success and its degree has been very much dubious. We can not call Russia a truly multicultural nation so far as the project of equality remains incomplete. Moreover the natives and citizens of other countries were also considered to be of minimum caliber and less-skilled. They were treated as if they are sub-humans. The recent passport reform in Russia had proved this fact that other nationalities are not treated as being equals to Russians. The anti-Semitism in Russia has also proved this fact that Jews were always apprehensive of their security in Russia. Now the same thing is happening to those who are practicing the Islam as their religion. That is one reason as to why we should refrain from terming the Russian Federation as multicultural nation-state.

⁷ Article 19 (2) of *The New Constitution of Russian Federation, 1993*/
www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/constit.html

The Constitution of the Russian Federation states that everyone has the right to use the native language right, to voluntarily choose the language of relations, upbringing, education and creation.⁸ This thing however should suffice the notion that Russian federation's constitution has at least envisaged the dreams of a multicultural Russia. The nationality issue is going to exist forever, as long as ethnicity exists. There is a sheer lack of a unified ideology in Russia so that people can be guided and also there are no elements of any sort of coherence which can be found in the Russian regions. In a nutshell what we can call is that there is no such prevalent culture in Russia which can lead us to the conclusion that Russia can be a more democratized, more multilingual and a more multiethnic society. They need to eliminate cultural differences.

Multiculturalism now can be considered as a democratic model of civil integration, where it can be a possibility that the sooner it will be seen as an alternative to the assimilation model which has failed to reflect the ethnic diversity of Russia, the more positive shifts in attitudes towards different nationalities especially among the Russian majority will take place and the more creative policies to manage ethnic diversity will be developed. Will Kymlicka⁹ argue that Russia is the only one plural liberal country which has voluntarily adopted the multinational federalism in 1993. However depending on the region, and hence on the regional political culture and regional readiness to incorporate the challenge of ethnic diversity, some particular regions may be seen as potential leaders in building a new construction of ethnicity and nationality and therefore creating new cultural competence within the institutions grounded on the pluralistic culture that reflects the interest, contributions and values of members of diverse groups to successfully navigate a multicultural society.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For Details see Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (London: Clarendon Press, 1989)

Theories of Multiculturalism:

Cultural pluralism is not a modern phenomenon. History provides many examples of different communities and cultures living side by side within the same society coexisting peacefully, and sometimes, even amicably. The ancient empires of Persia, Egypt and Rome were culturally diverse.¹⁰ There might be the presence of a whole lot of different cultures existing in a society and that is what adds the element of versatility for the sake of pluralism in any given society. And it is not surprising that cultural plurality has always been there since time immemorial. However, the existence of plurality at the societal level does not imply that multiculturalism as value prevailed in these societies. The simultaneous presence of many cultures and communities within the same social space points to a plural social fabric, but it does not betoken the presence of multiculturalism.¹¹ The latter entails something more than the mere presence of different communities or the attitude of tolerance in society.

Multiculturalism is concerned with the issue of equality: it asks whether the different communities, living peacefully together coexist as equals in the public arena and it is this emphasis on equality that distinguishes multiculturalism from pluralism. But, within the framework of plurality, the major concern is peaceful coexistence and amity.¹² The element of freedom in any given set up is the key to the peaceful existence of that social framework and it really does not matter as to how many diverse cultural groups co-exist in that framework.

Pluralism, in the other words, indicates the presence of differences and marks a departure from policies aimed at annihilating the other but that is all. It remains silent about the public status of these communities. Indeed, in most pre-modern societies, pluralism prevailed against the backdrop of a widely accepted hierarchy of cultures and

¹⁰ Gurpreet Mahajan, *The Multicultural Path: Issues Of Diversity and Discrimination in Democracy* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 11

¹¹ Ibid., p. 11

¹² Ibid.

communities.¹³ How pluralism can be associated with the theme of democracy can be seen in this proposition that “only democracy can reach out and explore formats of interaction that presume equality and respect. It is this concern for equality that precludes the possibility of democracy being ever associated with majoritarianism-either of political or cultural type. The dangers of majoritarianism are by now widely accepted.”¹⁴

Besides that, contemporary multiculturalism is more than a theory of minority rights. It is a conception of democracy in which diverse cultures are represented as equals in the public domain. The idea that different individuals and communities should be treated as equals within the nation-state is steadily gaining wider acceptance. However, the actual task of abandoning a coherent, homogenous national culture and replacing it with a heterogeneous public culture has raised a lot of debates.¹⁵

The issue of minority rights and multiculturalism is high on the political agenda of most states today since most states incorporate a variety of ethnic, religious and other diversities. The problem has become exacerbated in the recent decades because of the increased influx of immigrants into the advanced capitalist states of the west and the movements of refugees therefore most states face the problem of negotiating with diverse groups and this is reflected contemporary political theory. Not only have received theories of rights and citizenship and justice come under challenge but new concepts like multiculturalism have also been generated to address these issues.¹⁶ A strong majoritarian nationalism could define itself by reference to minorities while at the same time threatening their existence. If minorities did not exist it might be necessary to invent them. To avoid repression, a politics of difference would need to be combined with moves to democratize civil society and the state. Therefore, we need to exercise caution about invoking the alternatives outlined in the context of western societies by philosophers like Charles Taylor between equal citizenship and a politics of Difference.¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., p. 12

¹⁴ Gurpreet Mahajan, “The Problem”, *Seminar*, vol. 484, December, (1999), p. 12

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 18

¹⁶ Sarah Joseph, “Of Minorities and Majorities”, *Seminar*, vol. 484, December, (1999), p. 30

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 33

In Bhikhu Parikh's view, cultural diversity is, at heart, a reflection of the dialectical interplay between human nature and culture. Although human beings are natural creatures who pose a common species-derived physical and mental structure, they are also culturally constituted in the sense that their attitudes, behavioral ways of life are shaped by the groups to which they belong. A recognition of the complexity of human nature, and of the fact that any culture expresses only a part of what it means to be truly human, provides the basis for a politics of recognition and thus for a viable form of multiculturalism.¹⁸ Human nature are of course shaped by the ecological aspect of their life but their attitudes and acquired patterns of behaviour make it an interesting affair to examine against the given social surroundings where they might be living. Their desire for recognition is beyond doubt a very significant aspect of their life goals and here only their real identity formation takes place.

Multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine within a programmatic content nor a philosophical school with a distinct theory of man's place in the world but as a perspective on or a way of viewing human life.¹⁹ The good society cherishes the diversity of and encourages a creative dialogue between its different cultures and their moral visions. Such societies not only respects its members' rights to their culture and increases their range of choices but also cultivates their powers of self-criticism, self-determination, imagination, intellectual and moral sympathy and contribute to their development and well being.²⁰

"Multiculturalism seeks to enhance cultural diversity by preserving minority cultures. The fate of minority cultures in a society is therefore its main concern. The singular emphasis on minority cultures is linked here to the understanding that the assimilationist policies of the liberal nation-state make minority cultures weak and susceptible to disintegration. It is to correct the cultural biases of the nation-state and to promote cultural diversity that multiculturalism aims to protect minority cultures. The focus on

¹⁸ Bhikhu Parikh in Heywood, n-1, p. 121

¹⁹ Bhikhu Parikh, "What is Multiculturalism?" *Seminar*, vol. 484, December, (1999), p. 14

²⁰ *Ibid.*

minority cultures is a distinctive attribute of multiculturalism.”²¹ The talk of minority culture and its preservation becomes a more important issue especially when we are concerned with a multiethnic and multilingual society nowadays; there is one more attribute of religion which is usually attached to the notion of any multicultural imagination. Hence in such cases it has to protect such minority constructs and has also to provide an environment where they can successfully thrive.

Multiculturalism in Russian Federation:

The desirability of the Russian Federation structured to accommodate ethnic or national minorities, and whether such a model is compatible with a defensible form of social justice, are issues that continue to provoke considerable debate within Russia but which have received little attention within post-Soviet studies.²²

Federalists in Russia who question the value of a federated multiculturalism tend to focus on two sets of arguments. First, institutionalizing some of the federation along ethnorepublic lines promotes nationalism, which increases the likelihood of inter-ethnic violence and even the prospects of secession.²³ There is the one important explanation of the fact that why the crises like Chechnya keep disturbing and that is probably because of the federation being stacked along the ethno-cultural lines. The thought can be equally applied in such cases of Ingushetia or Dagestan in Russia. Hence the occurrence of Russian extreme nationalism can not be said to be of that much benefit as was expected of it from many a quarters of Right wing. Not only do such arrangements tend to solidify and make what might be temporary or partial group identities permanent, they also allow key policy areas to be hijacked by partisan ethnorepublic elites and thus increase the probability of tyranny by the minority, both in relation to federal politics in general and within the ethnorepublics, where in most cases the titular nation constitutes a demographic minority and as Fedorov argues, such ethnorepublic elites have a tendency

²¹ Mahajan, n-8, p. 79

²² Graham Smith, “Russia, Multiculturalism and Federal Justice”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 50, no. 8, (1998), p. 1393

²³ Ibid.

to use their federated status to obtain special privileges and rights through bargaining and striking political deals with the centre.²⁴

The frequency of such deals are a major highlight of minorities often being crushed under the elites who pose themselves to be the real representatives of their interests and which often turns out to be a fluke. Besides that the bargaining opportunity comes to fore only when both the partners of the deal remain unsatisfied for a prolonged period. Second, it is argued that by empowering particular ethnorepublic minorities the federal arrangement imposes limits on genuinely pluralist interests, since the demands and concerns of other forms of identity politics are downgraded or marginalized.²⁵ But this is the thesis which is often projected in the wake of crisis looming large over the majority which happens to shift to the defensive side of the line and demands illogical bargains. That is the reason perhaps as to how come the balance of profit and loss is maintained amongst different groups in the society.

In Short, for proponents of a liberal variant of federalism, of uppermost concern is countering domination by either nationalist-minded minorities or the majority national group, Russians by prioritizing the individual rights of citizens regardless of their ethnic or national affiliations henceforth, it is deemed best to confine ethnic or national identification to the private sphere.²⁶ The role of the state in this regard has been put for the mere overseeing of tasks and any minority affiliation should be condemned on the part of state.

Those who defend federal-based minority recognition hold that instead of furnishing the conditions for ethnic instability, a federation constructed on the basis of multicultural difference provides a means of managing inter-group conflicts that might otherwise develop into violence and lead to the proliferation of secessionist demands. This is what Bhikhu Parikh has called for and that is to say that the politics of recognition must be played handsomely and each and every strata of society must be given their due space for

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 1394

their thrival otherwise the secessions like Chechnya will keep emerging in the face of Russian Federation.

Here a very significant and equally relevant question lies about national distinctiveness and its response to the issue of multicultural task in Russia. In an environment newly hospitable to the idea of pluralism, if not full-blown multiculturalism, the traditional view that –the convergence and ultimate fusion of nations and nationalities –was both a possible and a desirable goal of soviet policy, came under explicit attack.²⁷ The disappearance of national diversity, it was now argued would constitute an irreparable loss. This feeling can be observed in what Gorbachev in 1989 expressed accepting the need to preserve everything of national importance that: we can not permit even the smallest people to disappear, the language of even the smallest people to be lost; we can not permit nihilism with regard to the culture, traditions and history of peoples, be they big or small.²⁸ Hence, the argument goes, in instituting such a form of multicultural governance, Russia has helped to weaken the drive for nation-statism amongst its minorities by providing an institutional alternative to secession. As importantly, federation is also defended as a means of accommodating minority demands on the basis of the social value of group liberty.²⁹

On the grounds that minority cultural self-preservation³⁰ (as well as political representation) is of fundamental importance for individuals because belonging to a minority culture provides a meaningful context for choice, the retention of minority group rights through federal support is defended as a counterweight to majority group (Russian) cultural assimilation.³¹ Despite the adoption of a federal constitution in December 1993, the need for a multicultural Russia to resolve serious ethnic conflicts is now recognized as of uppermost importance in a polity where there is no tradition of

²⁷ Archie Brown (ed.), *The Demise of Marxism-Leninism in Russia* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p. 138

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Smith, n-20, p. 1394

³⁰ See Will Kymlicka (ed.) *The Rights of Minorities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) for the detailed views of scholars on the issue of minority preservation

³¹ Smith, n-20, p. 1394-95

individual freedoms and where demands for group recognition are being played out with often tragic consequences as in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia.³²

Despite legitimate claims that Russia has still to perfect a coherent and viable nationalities policy, a series of laws and decrees since 1996 have been introduced that constitute an attempt to rethink the relationship between federation and diversity. In addressing both equality and difference between both the federation's constituent units and citizens, and in attempting to stake the federation's future on what can be best interpreted as a mixed rights perspective on multiculturalism, it lays out a more integrated approach.³³

One powerful normative conception the decree proposes is to construct the federation around an Eurasianist vision of Russia. As Russia occupies a special and unique place within Northern Eurasia³⁴, it is therefore held that Russia must find its own particular niche and solutions to its multicultural diversity. Accordingly, the goal of a multiethnic Russia is to ensure the cultural self-preservation and further development of national traditions and co-operation of Slavic, Turkic, Caucasian, Finno-Ugric, Mongolian and other peoples of Russia within the framework of Eurasian national-cultural space.³⁵

More than anything else, bound up with what has become a populist nationalist vision of Eurasia is a crisis of national identity, of what it means to be ethnic Russian in a redesignated multiethnic homeland. Russians, in short, have had far greater difficulties compared with the ethnorepublic titular nations in coming to terms with the loss of 'the big homeland', the Soviet empire.³⁶

How this federal structure in Russia will tackle the extremities of Russian nationalism?

³² Ibid., p. 1394

³³ Ibid., p. 1399-1400

³⁴ James G. Kellas, *Nationalist Politics in Europe: The Constitutional and Electoral Dimensions* (New York: McMillan, 2004), p. 241

³⁵ Smith, n-20, p. 1400

³⁶ Ibid.

The ethnorepublics display many of the features of nationalizing regimes, a term coined by Brubaker to describe those emergent multiethnic post-communist regimes whose political elites have a tendency to promote the culture, language and even political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation, to make the state what it is judged properly and legitimately destined to be, a fully realized and culturally more homogeneous nation-state.³⁷ While political elites within the ethnorepublics also display such nationalizing practices, they differ in the extent of their engagement in such practices.

What however is common within the ethnorepublics is the way in which multicultural differences are culturally essentialised and taken as absolute, in which there is little or no room for recognition of those individuals with overlapping or multiple senses of identity who through, for instance, inter-ethnic marriage inhabit more than one community's life world.³⁸ For nationalizing elites holding such exclusionist principles, promoting expulsion, limiting immigration or assimilating co-nationals are therefore often tactics to ensure ethnic homogeneity and numerical dominance of the titular nation. On this basis of infringing upon the liberties of others, such primordialist nationalism can hardly be justified with reference to group rights.³⁹

Russian Nationalism and the Multicultural Path:

While American multiculturalism acknowledges the irreducibility of different cultural traditions, thus coming very close to accepting the French New Right's 'right of difference', it operated entirely within the context of the post-modern liberal state.⁴⁰ It might be a different thing that the pattern of growth of Russian society might have largely differed from that of American or French one. But, the Russian society (as is substantiated by the history of Russia) do acknowledges that cultures existing in the

³⁷ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) in Smith, n-20, p. 1404

³⁸ Smith, n-20, p. 1404

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Pierre Bimbaum, "From Multiculturalism to Nationalism", *Political Theory*, vol. 24, no. 1. February (1996), p. 33

present day Russia can not be reduced to anonymity. Rather, we can say that Russian polity and society has learnt well that what it takes to accommodate the plurality of cultures. Moreover, the truly multicultural Russia has to go beyond the dreams of pluralistic notion of Russian society. It would not be any exaggeration to say that a multicultural society should provide for the 'right to differ'.

Refusing any racist interpretation of the idea of the Right to difference (which he understands only in its cultural aspect without any biological connotation), he adds, the 'right of difference' is not different from what you call recognition theory.⁴¹ Charles Taylor argues that the domain of each culture should preserve its authenticity. And so far as we do not assign the equal weightage to each and every culture, that means that we are not permitting a healthy and conscious dialogue among the different identities, which are the carriers of such diverse but nevertheless, unique cultures which must be preserved.

But in the case of Russia, it is really unfateful that the prevailing cultures, which were non-Slavic by origin, were always treated as the alien ones. And, given the extreme forms of Russian nationalism and all wide spread xenophobic responses of Russian elite, leadership and masses after the fall of Soviet Union, these identities were nowhere facilitated by the host culture, and any of its embodiment in Russian society so that a healthy pattern of multiculturalism could have developed. Besides that, the roots of a true multicultural Russia can be traced in a post-modernist multicultural paradigm. The shift from the liberal conceptualization of multiculturalism towards the communitarian one has of course widened the choices against which the ingredients of contemporary Russian society can be judged.

Taylor is hostile to the contractualist paradigm that issues from the Enlightenment, and he rejects any liberalism that is incapable of offering a place for collective identities.⁴² He believes that personal identity is formed in a symbiotic relation with a collective identity and is nourished by the culture that the group shares. He opposes the Rawlsian

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 34

⁴² Birnbaum, n-39, p. 34

perspective of a 'veil of ignorance' that would exclude from the public space all qualities of personal identity, in his eyes, this kind of separation of public and private space is artificial and mutilating. Cultural identity should rather fertilize any public space.⁴³

Taylor becomes the spokesperson for the recognition of the equal dignity of cultural identities in a common public space: "The politics of difference is full of denunciations of discrimination and refusal of second-class citizenship. In his eyes, each culture should preserve its authenticity: The recognition of the equal value of each culture permits the public conversation between diverse identities."⁴⁴ Taylor again holds that:

"A minority ethnicity does not feel really acknowledged by the majority with which it shares a common political form. The people of this minority are subsumed into a project which is foreign to them because they are not really recognized. This is clearly the basis of a whole sense of new nations. It is impossible for us to dictate only on the basis of a philosophical stance whether the principle of identity or that of unity should be that of constitutional patriotism.... In Europe, one has perhaps had the "luck" to have suffered the experience of the avatars of nationalism and been led to question the limits of strong national identity: this may have created the need to seek out other principles of collective identity, such as that of constitutional patriotism. However in other parts of the world including North America but also the other part of Europe, it is not necessarily the case."⁴⁵

It might have been the case in Russia, because of this persistent non-recognition of minority cultures by the majority, the crisis formation in the arena of national identity took place. And that might have projected a holistic sense of humiliation in the minds of minorities which ultimately spurred the rise of a variety of nationalisms in Russia. Hence this thesis is quite interesting and equally seems relevant in explaining the growing extremities in Russian nationalism which is adopting such postures in order to contain the spread and after effects of all the nationalisms.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 35

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Thus, we move from a multiculturalism extolling respect for the equal dignity of culture to the construction of new nations and nationalism. “During the French Revolution, the word patriotism was attached to a certain conception of law and not to an ethnicity. But there has been slide towards the ethnicisation of nationalism to such a degree that when we use the word nationalism today and when we think of the unification of a people. What comes to mind first and foremost is unification on the basis of an ethnic culture.”⁴⁶

What has been the worst result of such phenomena is the ethnicisation of nationalisms. Of course the series of long-drawn inter ethnic-conflicts in Russia can be understood against this backdrop. Possibly the Chechen crisis for Russia could not have assumed such a ferocious face, had it been Russian government realizing the worse effects of pushing through the nationalist slogans. There is also very lesser doubt Russian society is not based on ethnicized political culture. Obviously, these creations of new nations riding on the wave of newer nationalisms are a journey towards seeking the respect for plurality of cultures.

Cultural identity thus carries the day over political identity. From that moment onward, popular sovereignty and nationals are so confounded that the people have their identity outside of the collective structure. From such a univocal interpretation of a people homogenized by its culture, the right to national existence flows from the primacy of a cultural identity in which an ethnicity-people recognizes itself and wants to be so recognized.⁴⁷

Of course in case of nationalisms growing under such circumstances, the cultural identity always takes precedence over the political identity. And there arrives the recognition which was much sought after thing. The example of Ukrainian nationalism is a good case in this regard.

“The Slavonic people have to find their own path. And European colonialism ought to

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

be rolled back to give the peoples of what we now call the Third World, their chance to be themselves unimpeded. We can recognize here the seminal idea of modern nationalism, in both benign and malignant forms.”⁴⁸

Probably why Russian nationalism is facing so much of stiff resistance from almost all the quarters of society and neighborhood, is the thing that it originated in response to other nationalisms which were very much genuine in literal sense and because it was also devoid of the elements which could have justified it. That is to say that the appeals which were made were false ones and they even did not have the approval of the masses for which they posed to be self-custodian.

Herder devoted much thought to language; the difference between languages and the distortion in the thinking of a given language group when a language claims to be superior and better able to express Universality, and when it therefore represses other languages.⁴⁹ The role of the language is undoubtedly a remarkable one which has united a nation on this mere basis. A language in case of being repressed by the other languages in terms of its expression often comes to unite its vocalists who then ethnicize themselves and thus creates the basis of their separate nation.

“The new wave of nationalisms rests henceforth on language. Language is the normal foundation of nationalism which permits the expression of the character that is natural to each people.”⁵⁰

Taylor is careful to distinguish this nationalism from nationalism in its chauvinist mode, which leads to Nazism. Herder always insisted that there was on earth only one species of human beings. He is careful to affirm that the word race refers to a difference in origin which does not exist or at least contains under these general classifications of country and colors very different races; for each nation has a distinct physiognomy, as well as a particular language. However, while rejecting any kind of racism and affirming the

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 36

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

universality of human nature, Herder writes, "if each people holds as firmly their own representations, as we see that they do, It is because they are truly particular to them, it is that the work with their earth, their sky, that they derive from their way of living and have been transmitted from father to son without any break."⁵¹

Linking oneself to the originality and being true to oneself and one's culture is the key to the origin of the modern nationalism without being original and authentic; the sense of belonging to one's nation can not be realized.

For Isaiah Berlin:

"The first true nationalists-the Germans-are an example of the combination of wounded cultural pride and a philosophico-historical vision to stanch the wound and create an inner focus of resistance. After Germany, Italy, Poland and Russia and in due course the Balkan and Baltic nationalities and Ireland, and after the debacle the French third Republic, and so to our own day. With its republics and dictatorships in Asia and Africa the burning nationalism of regional and ethnic groups in France and Britain, Belgium and Corsica, Canada and Spain and Cyprus. And who knows where else."⁵²

Now he insists that the pluralism he finds there cannot lead to nationalism. He said initially that the birth of nationalism in countries of Europe and of course Russia was caused by a prolonged sense of wounded national pride and a philosophico-historical vision to fill up that wound and create an inner focus of resistance.

Later he found that 'pluralism' alone is not sufficient enough to give birth to nationalism. Had it been the case, then we could not have denied that Russian society is not plural (if not multicultural). And there could have been further disintegration of the Russian Federation. But the thesis, which Berlin himself revised is fulfilling the answer as to why Russia is not getting further disintegrated and defabricated.

Like Isaiah Berlin, Taylor believes that there are several ways of living in modernity, and

⁵¹ Birnbaum, n-39, p. 37

⁵² Ibid., p. 38

that spirit of liberal democracy does not require individuals and peoples to renounce their identity.⁵³ The point is that multiculturalism like modernity is not anti-thetical to the growth and existence of nationalisms provided it assumes the moderate forms. And any multicultural agenda has to survive only through a democratic set up, hence that is why a democracy needs to be really multicultural and plural, in a sense, so that without renouncing their identity, people can become a nationalist and can carry out their tasks.

Taylor insists that wherever patriotism, or otherwise put, the nationalist sentiment, remains an integral part of the political culture of a state and this is the case in most modern states, then the political structures retain an ineradicable dimension of identity. In his eyes, a state cannot be neutral, because it is in control of the identity of the nation. This establishes the limits of this multiculturalism. Once cultural identity is recognized and transformed into a state, the cultures that are internal to this community cannot be entitled to benefit from the same right.⁵⁴

What attaches the importance to identity is its alignment with the culture and its recognition by and transformation into a state. Here we can see that how nations and why should nations become shifted into the state. It is generally perceived that nationalism is always prohibitory in nature and the secessions are not allowed which might have (if had been a success) triggered the growth of a pluralist society which could have been very much allowing and liberal one. But seen from the other perspectives, the secessionist movements might even more downgrade the standard of pluralism and multiculturalist task in given case.

It is, however the case of a true community, that constituted by a new nation-state which is but little tolerant of its own minorities whose own cultures are expressed in still other languages.⁵⁵

One reaches here the limits of multiculturalism when understood in the framework of the

⁵³ Ibid., p. 39

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 39-40

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 40

cultural homogenization that inheres in the process of nation building. In this perspective, patriotism and nationalism mix together and prevent the survival of an internal multiculturalism and of freedom of action as it also prevents any margin of choice to individuals who are understood as the bearers of a single oppressive and quasi-essentialist idealized cultural identity from which no escape is possible. Such an immutable collective identity is not compatible with the expression of other identities (sexual, religious, etc.).⁵⁶

Russian Nationalism and Globalization:

It must be admitted that the post-Soviet Russia did indeed embark upon a road of post-communist, transition with the gradual establishment of a pluralistic political system and elements of a market economy. Giddens claims that "modernity is inherently globalizing" and in that sense, one can argue that the evolution of the past decade represents an intensification rather than initiation of the globalizing process in Russia.⁵⁷ The programme of Bretton woods institutions like IMF and World Bank like those started under the heading of 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' could not be imposed over the Russian Federation but certainly there was at least some sort of dependency on western institutions of technological and economic importance. Along with that the withdrawal of state control from over the media resulted in an increase in the Western influences casting their shadow on Russian culture and society as a whole.

Globalization theories allow for three broad possibilities of globalization's impact upon ethnic identity: an erosion of national identities as a result of the growth of cultural homogenization, a strengthening of national or local identities as a reaction or resistance to globalization, or a decline of national identities accompanied by the creation of new identities of hybridity. One could argue that the first option might be equated with the Russian Westernizer cultural tradition and has been primarily adopted by Yeltsin's

⁵⁶ Birnbaum, n-39, p. 41

⁵⁷ Leo Suryadinata (ed.), *Nationalism and Globalization: East and West* (Singapore: Institute of South-East Asian Studies, 2000), p. 336

government as its national policy.⁵⁸

The Russian sources conceptualize globalization mainly as a catalyst forcing the Russians to answer the questions relating to their own identity and to place their own house in order prior to becoming more deeply engaged in the global community. This was expressed by academician Georgy Shakhnazarov: "Russia is entering the twenty-first century in the throes of severe economic, social and political crisis. Its troubles are made even more difficult by the turmoil in people's minds. As the Soviet Union broke up, the society lost its goals and values that guided it for seventy years and the resulting vacuum has yet to be filled. The nation that has more than a thousand years of history behind it is now once again in search of identity, trying to answer the questions important for itself and for the world: 'Who are we, and what do we want?' Primary among these questions will be the issue whether Russia belongs to Europe or to Asia or perhaps constitutes a unique society which is to serve as a bridge between the two continents, a country with a unifying mission that expresses the Eurasian spirit."⁵⁹

After quoting Daniel Bell that in 'circumstances of accelerated globalization, the nation-state has become too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life', Giddens argues that at the same time as social relations become laterally stretched and as apart of the same process, we see the strengthening of pressures for local autonomy and regional cultural identity⁶⁰. The Russian case of high elitism is just being responded by the separatism of ethnic nature where they are exerting themselves for better deal in the era of globalization.

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) statistics, Russia's standard of living, as measured by life expectancy, adult literacy, school enrolment and per capita gross domestic product, placed it in seventy-first position in world ranking.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 338

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 339

⁶¹ Ibid.

While in the 1990 UNDP survey of best countries to live in, the Soviet Union was ranked twenty-fifth, by 1998 Russia had slipped to seventy-second position and the 10th Annual UNDP Human Development Report pointed out that globalization has benefited only the top 20% of the world's population.⁶² The report also feared that the people might ultimately get disinterested in the globalisational forces and they may eventually abandon it.

The final point about the impact of globalization on the nation-state, in Russia, can be made about the growing occurrences of separatism and the rise of ultra-nationalism in several quarters often finding the expression in the forms of Anti-Semitism, the apparent threat of jihad in the north Caucasus and other domestic threats in the circles of Russian polity itself. Now it would be an interesting theme to be accorded a whole new research on how globalisational forces are shaping and reshaping everything which has some concern with the creation or destruction of nation-states. Yet it can be said that the Russian experiment with Globalisation has yielded a mixed response.

⁶² Ibid., p. 340

CONCLUSION

Thomas Friedman in his book “The World Is Flat”, a famous non-fiction now, has written that ‘The World’ we are living in now has become flat. There have been numerous reasons for this flattening but what have emerged to be a major catalyst in this regard are the phenomena of Globalization. Not a single nation-state has remained untouched by this mega-trend. Old shackles keep on falling and being replaced by the newer ones. But there have always been some elements in the evolution of a nation which are just omnipresent, they might be dormant for a substantial phase of time but they are never dead. Nationalism is one such element.

Russian Nationalism has rather been very much in focus because of the reason that the demise of the Soviet Union created almost a vacuum which it was really proving difficult to fill up. The lack of versatility in the choices available before the masses was an obvious factor as to why they were in a dilemma of choosing among the options thrown before. This is not to demean in any way the significance and positive attributes of ‘Nationalism’ as an ideology, but an honest assessment of Russian nationalism is enough to make the point that, being largely xenophobic in nature and almost adopted and moulded by leaders like Zhirinovskiy and others through last some years, Russian nationalism could have provided a strong Russia in contemporary times but owing to such whimsies the project of building a healthy, democratic and an economically mighty Russia remains unfinished.

The study of Russian nationalism gained importance due to the fact that Russia while in its search of an identity somewhere zeroed in upon Eurasianism. This view of scholars argued that pursuing an agenda of playing pragmatically in the international arena and rationally in the domestic sphere would provide what Russia is in great need for today. The proponents of several brands of Russian nationalism have been almost clueless as to what makes their nation strong?

The earlier Russian nationalists argued for a nation not only to be based on the ethno-cultural lines but they were very much knowing the necessities of a civic nation without which they were pretty sure that several nations existing within one particular territorial

boundary are bound to create dislikes and these might be the genesis of inter-ethnic conflicts, which even the present day Russia is not willing to understand, thanks to her rigid and neo-imperialist leadership. Solzhenitsyn and other nationalists of his rank were very much critical of the nihilist attitudes shown towards the fascist features of Russian nationalism which successive regimes kept on adopting time to time. This is especially true about Stalinist era but one conclusion can be drawn from the history of Russian nationalism and that is 'statism' remained a vocal and most prominent feature of all the regimes ruling till present date. The role played by all the facets of Russian society in intensifying Russian nationalism can never be left forgotten, specially the role played by the literary world and the cultural bulwark.

The reforms and their repercussions were more often reflected in the national questions and various themes related to minorities in Post-Soviet Russia. The sudden fad for autonomy and more transparency began to be framed in the minds of politicians in Russia. What characterized the real Russian nationalism during 1990s were some crucial elements of continuity like rampant statism, preservationist attitude of ruling faction and regular moves towards a quasi-democratic and quasi-civic nation-building often interrupted by the questions of who are they? Moreover, the extremities of major carriers of nationalism can also be blamed for the failure of these forces to attract the mass support. Their electoral performance is the chief measure of their popularity. The three State Duma elections have pointed to the rise in the extreme form of Russian nationalism and thus their zigzag movement on the popularity curve.

Orthodoxies, the growing influence of Christian church in Russia and on political institutions, the sudden spurt in xenophobia along with the rise in anti-Semitism during last some years has led to hardening of attitude on the part of west and other significant players. Whatever be the case this extreme Russian nationalism is gradually becoming a bone of contention among the political leaders of Russia. But a large section of intelligentsia having inroads therein the political top brass, is in favour of this Russian nationalist agenda.

Their argument shows the concern about making Russia once again such a mighty nation so that she can be feared again in the international and regional circle, at least. But the perception of Russia has undergone a drastic change among the western circles. They no longer view Russia as a power to reckon with. However this might be an exaggeration of their viewpoint.

The trends available in the arena of Russian nationalism shows that people are torn apart between choosing their livelihood and remain glued to their emotions and sentiments which had been a hallmark of Russians during post-Soviet era. The programmes of different nationalist forces reflect a remarkable degree of similarities yet, they are very divergent in nature. This divergence means the kind of ways adopted to achieve their goals, their different priorities and their shifts as per the localized requirements. Nonetheless, the seriousness to pursue such a nationalist task varies from one to another actor.

The dreams of a truly multicultural society still leave people looking for better social settings and such socio-economic adjustments. It is not the masses in Russia which is intolerant of versatility of races or ethnic diversity or plural cultures. It is the leadership which for its self motives never creates the conditions for a creative and sustainable dialogue among these various ethnies. So far as the dialogue is not permitted and Russian nationalists not consider the urgencies of this new paradigm, the rift within the society will keep growing and social divisions will become sharper. The pattern of Russian society is a different one from the usual one because the dichotomy of religion versus nationality is not present there in Russia as has been with many societies. However Islam as a new force is posing some challenges for this Russian nationalism which is increasingly becoming intolerant of any kind of secessionist activities. This intolerance of nationalists in Russia is the result of various local nationalisms operating inside Russian territories, as some quarters predict. But it is again a matter of debate as to where the limits of pluralism and multicultural state begin?

The biggest problem with dealing with the theme of Russian nationalism has been the variety of interpretations on offer. The fate of Russian nationalism depends upon the kind of electoral alliances in the years to come. Besides that, the consciousness of a shared vision of their country's development might invoke a sense of pride among the citizens of Russia. The old concepts of Russia, Russianness and a Russian nation stand a good chance of their revival but this time probably in a format which will be conducive to the economic requirements and other concerns of the country. The danger of ultra-nationalism will always be there till Russians create an egalitarian social order and a just ruling mechanism free of all nepotism and inherent inadequacies. Hence, there is no such thing as Good or Bad Russian nationalism, the roots for the problems of Russia lie somewhere else, perhaps in society!!

Appendix-1

1993 State Duma Elections Results

Party	Per cent vote on federal list
Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	22,92
Russia's Choice	15,51
Communist Party of Russian Federation	12,40
Women of Russia	8,13
Agrarian Party	7,99
Yabloko	7,86
Party of Russian Unity and Concord	6,73
Democratic Party of Russia	5,52
Democratic Reform Movement	4,08
Civic Union	1,93
Russia's Future – New Names	1,25
Kedr	0,76
Dignity and Charity	0,70
Against all	4,36

Appendix-2

1995 State Duma Elections

Results

Party	Percent vote on federal list
Communist Party of Russian Federation	22,30
Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	11,18
Our Home Is Russia	10,10
Yabloko	6,89
Women of Russia	4,70
Communists-Working Russia	4,60
Party of Workers Self- government.	4,20
Russia's Choice	4,20
Congress of Russian Communities	4,10
Agrarian Party	3,90
Derzhava	2,57

Forward Russia!	1,94
Power to the People!	1,61
Pamfilova, Gurov, Lysenko	1,60
Trade Union and Industrialists	1,55
Kedr	1,39
Ivan Rybkin's Bloc	1,11
Govorukhin Bloc	0,99
My Fatherland	0,72
Common Cause	0,68
Beer Lovers Party	0,62
Muslim Social Movement NUR	0,57
Transformation of the Fatherland	0,49
National Republican Party of Russia	0,48
Pre-Election Bloc of Party Leaders	0,47
Party of Russian Unity and Accord	0,36
Association of Russian Lawyers	0,35
For the Motherland!	0,28

Christian Democratic Union	0,28
Peter I Cause	0,21
People's Union Party	0,19
Tikhonov-Tupolev-Tikhonov	0,15
Utility Workers of Russia	0,14
Social-democrats	0,13
Party of Economic Freedom	0,13
Russian Popular Movement	0,12
Federal Democratic Movement	0,12
Stable Russia	0,12
Bloc of Independents	0,12
Duma 96	0,08
International Union	0,06
Generation of the Boundary	0,06
89 Regions of Russia	0,06
Against all	2,77

Appendix-3

1999 State Duma Elections Results

Party	Support in per cent
Communist Party of the Russian Federation	24,29
Yedinstvo – Bear	23,32
Fatherland – All Russia	13,33
Union of Right Forces	8,52
Zhirinovskiy Bloc	5,98
YABLOKO	5,93
Five per cent threshold	
Communists, Workers – for the Soviet Union	2,25
Women of Russia	2,06
Pensioners Party	2,03
Our Home is Russia	1,22
Russian Party of Women’s Protection	0,81
For Citizens’ Dignity	0,62
Congress of Russian Communities and Y.Boldyrev’s Movement	0,62

Stalinist Bloc – for the Soviet Union	0,62
Movement for the Support of the Army	0,59
Peace.Work.May	0,58
General A.Nikolayev’s and Academician S.Fyodorov’s Bloc	0,57
Party of Peace and Unity	0,38
Russian Popular Union	0,36
Russian Socialist Party	0,24
Movement of Patriotic Forces – Russian Cause	0,18
Russia’s Conservative Movement	0,13
All Russian Political National Party	0,11
Spiritual Heritage	0,10
Socialist Party of Russia	0,10
Social-democrats	0,08
Against all	3,34

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