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digest

RUSSIAN NATIONALISM, XENOPHOBIA, IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

From an Existential Threat to a Security Risk and a Conceptual Impasse: Terrorism in Russia

By Aglaya Snetkov, Zurich

Abstract

Russia's war against terrorism has now been ongoing for over a decade, however as demonstrated by the recent *terakt* in Domodedovo airport on 24 January 2011, the threat is not going away anytime soon. This article takes stock of the way in which Russia's position towards terrorism has evolved since 1999, suggesting that the threat posed by terrorism has gone from being presented as an existential threat to the Russian state and nation to something more akin to a security risk in recent years. As it appears that currently the Russian authorities are experiencing a conceptual impasse over the direction of counter-terrorism policy, the author presents a pessimistic prognosis for Russia's attempts to successfully manage the terrorism problem in the next few years.

Introduction: Contextualizing Russia's war on Terror

On 24th January 2011 Moscow was shaken by a bomb detonated in the international arrivals terminal of Russia's largest airport, Domodedovo, killing 37 and injuring dozens. This latest attack was yet another in a series of *terakts* over recent years, which have been aimed at transport infrastructure and the Russian heartland, with the slight variation that this time foreign nationals seem to have been targeted. In recent weeks, analysts have tried to make sense of this attack. In accounting for this terrorist act experts have identified numerous failures of the Russian state and its policy in North Caucasus and have sought to examine the nature of the contemporary terrorist threat within Russia. A variety of alternative responses have been advocated for preventing further attacks, which include the need for a more efficient counter-terrorist strategy, a more sound socio-economic policy in the North Caucasus region, the need for reform of the political system across the country and the elimination of corruption, and more focus on winning hearts and minds in the North Caucasus as part of the efforts to de-radicalize the local populations in this region. In essence, most commentators argue that Russia will only be able to address the threat of terrorism if it first overcomes its much broader structural, but also leadership, challenges, which have up till now ensured that Russia remains a weakened power with an increasing and growing terrorist threat inside its territory.

Russia it thus seems is suffering both from a conceptual failure to develop a comprehensive strategy for dealing with the terrorist threat on its soil, and a lack of capacity to implement such a strategy effectively. This article seeks to examine the wider conceptual failure of the Russian leadership in relation to terrorism, by placing this within the context of Russia's evolving position towards terrorism since the re-start of the second Chechen war in 1999. It is argued that during the course of the 2000s, terrorism has been reconceptualized by the Russian authorities from an "exceptional" threat to a problem that has become the "norm" in Russian politics and merely a security "risk".

Terrorism in Russia

The terrorist bombing at Domodedovo is unfortunately not an isolated incident, but only one in a long line of terrorist attacks in Russia over the last decade. Indeed, a number of attacks have occurred in recent years, including suicide bombings on the Moscow metro on 29 March 2010, which killed 40 people and injured another 100, the derailment of the high speed train between Moscow and St. Petersburg on 27 November 2009 and 13 August 2007 and a bus bombing in Togliatti in Southern Russia on 31 August 2007. These recent attacks on transport infrastructure come on the back of the high-profile terrorist actions of the early-to-mid 2000s, in particular the infamous hostage taking operations: the Dubrovka Theatre siege in October 2002 and the Beslan school siege in September 2004.

Furthermore, in addition to these sporadic terrorist incidents across Russia, a growing and ongoing trend of insecurity and societal instability in the North Caucasus region has been evident for many years, which is often presented as the eye of the storm for domestic terrorism in Russia—a region where *terakts* have become the norm and are daily occurrences. Such situations exist to varying extents in the Republics of Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria. In addition, societal insecurity and tension is increasingly spreading to other parts of the North Caucasus, such as to Adygeya, Karachay-Cherkessia and even Stavropol Krai, a predominately Slavic area (see RAD 93, Foxall article). Terrorist activity as well as inter-ethnic tension is therefore not diminishing but growing in Russia today and

is impacting on an ever-increasing section of Russian territory and society.

Russia's Evolving Conceptions of Terrorism from an Existential Threat to a Security Risk

Since the start of the second Chechen war in 1999, the Russian authorities have constructed the question of Russian instability as a fight against terrorism. Terrorism was been cited as an explanation for a range of developments, from the restart of military campaigns in Chechnya to push back the rebel groups into Dagestan in the autumn 1999 to the way that instability across the North Caucasus region is characterized. The attempts of both Western actors and domestic groups, such as Memorial, to challenge the Russian authorities' depiction of instability by highlighting the role of issues other than terrorism, such as societal instability, human rights, police brutality or issues of governance, has failed, with the Russian leadership clinging onto this label as an all-in-one explanation.

However, this is not to say that Russia's official war on terror has not evolved during the last decade, in fact the leadership's position and construction of the terrorist threat has changed significantly, as indeed have the measures and policies put forward for dealing with it. In the initial stages of the counter-terrorist campaign in Chechnya 1999–2001, the Russian leadership securitized the terrorist threat coming out of Chechnya, by presenting it as an existential threat to both the Russian state, but also the wider international community, which was said to be originating from domestic and international Islamist inspired terrorist groups. The solution that the Putin regime advocated was large-scale security operations from autumn 1999 through to spring 2000 in Chechnya, which was said to be the heart of the terrorist threat inside Russia. This was followed by lower-scale counter-terrorist operations from the early to mid 2000s. These counter-terrorist operations were never about changing the fundamental nature of Russian politics or altering the state's security practices in response to the development of discontent within Chechnya. Instead, they were intended to strengthen the prevailing political regime and its approach to security across Russia, and specifically in areas that were perceived to be escaping from Russian federal state control. Hence, there was no consideration of changing existing norms within Russia, such as making Russia more transparent or fair to tackle disillusionment, but an emphasis on the need for a strong state in Russia by re-imposing the control of state institutions, at least in form if not in practice, and by military means if necessary.

By the mid 2000s, the Chechen issue, at least in relation to terrorism, was no longer viewed as a threat to the survival of the Russian state. The Russian authorities argued that the immediate terrorist threat had been dealt with, and that their policy of normalizing the political and socio-economic spheres in Chechnya, in conjunction with ongoing counter-terrorist operations (under the leaderships of Akhmad Kadyrov 2000–2004 and subsequently his son Ramzan Kadyrov 2007–) were working. On the basis of the proclaimed success of this approach in Chechnya, the Russian authorities began to reinterpret terrorism as merely a "risk" to Russian security, rather than a fundamental threat to the Russian state. As part of this reinterpretation, the ongoing terrorist activity of the so-called "Caucasus Emirate", under the leadership of Doku Umarov, across the North Caucasus region and other intermittent *terakty* in other cities in Russia were said to have been conducted by the remnants of the terrorist groups that had been squeezed out of Chechnya, due to the success of the policy of normalization. The groups formerly active in Chechnya were said to have moved predominately to Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. In line with this reclassification of the terrorist threat, a range of new counter-terrorist legislation was enacted, such as new Counter Terrorism law in 2006 and the creation of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee with local branches throughout the Russian Federation, which it was claimed would be capable of dealing with the downgraded "risk" of terrorism through low-level operational measures.

During the second half of the Putin presidency, the Russian leadership refused to deviate from their reinterpretation of the level of threat from terrorism or their new approach. Neither ongoing criticism, from both home and abroad, over its security operations in the North Caucasus, ongoing sidelining of questions of human rights, persistent failure to adequately address socio-economic problems and issues of political governance, nor a growth in violence across the North Caucasus region, was enough to force the Putin regime to change its approach to dealing with the threat of terrorism. The disinterest of the Russian public in the question of terrorism, in comparison with their optimism about economic growth and the influx of capital into Russia during the mid-2000s, also meant that there was little popular pressure on the government to change their approach towards terrorism, as had been the case in the mid-1990s when the Yeltsin government was almost brought down by discontent surrounding the first Chechen war. Thus, during the mid to late 2000s, terrorism had essentially become a question of risk rather than direct threat, if only because it was no longer the most important issue in Russia.

Under President Medvedev (2008–), the authorities have been more forthcoming in recognizing that

the terrorist problem in Russia is more serious than previously stated. This is in part down to his project of modernization, but also because the escalating violence in the North Caucasus has become harder to ignore. In response to the deteriorating situation in the North Caucasus, a series of different measures have been adopted, such as the change of local leaderships (such as in Ingushetia), the creation of the North Caucasus region, the appointment of Alexander Khloponin as the head of this new North Caucasian Federal District (he has put forward a 15 year proposal for the economic development of the region) and ongoing counter-terrorist security operations in several of the region's Republics. Nonetheless, despite these adjustments, more or less the same approach is advocated, which centers on the need for better economic conditions, mutes the issue of political governance, and relies upon counter-terrorist operations on the ground. Whilst it is unclear whether the measures suggested by liberal critics of official counter-terrorism policy (as outlined earlier) would in practice decrease the incidents of violence in Russia, it is clear that, at least at this stage, for these more liberal strategies to be effectively put into practice, a radical overhaul of the Russian state, as well as society at large, would be necessary. Despite the rhetoric of modernization, it is also evident that the Russian authorities are not about to undertake such a major overhaul.

Most of Russia's counter-terrorist policies over the last decade, be they large scale military operations in the early 2000s or combinations of low-level counter-terrorist operations and normalization strategies build around autocratic local regimes, have centered upon avoiding any wide-scale alteration to the Russian polity or society, by seeking to implement certain adjustments to the North Caucasus region alone. However, this attempt to maintain the status quo has had unintended consequences, as seen by the increase in Russian ultra-nationalism, growing tension across the wider North Caucasus region and the restructuring of Chechnya under President Kadyrov. The Russian authorities appear to recognize that the current policy in the region has not succeeded in providing either the North Caucasus region or Russia as a whole with greater security, however the same policies continue to be recycled and re-introduced time and time again, such as the blaming of individual officials for the events in Domodedovo without a subsequent discussion of the weaknesses of the operational

aspects of the Russian state as a whole. Thus, whilst the Russian authorities appear to have reached a conceptual impasse in how they consider terrorism can be addressed a radical new solution does not appear to be on the horizon.

A problem that used to be presented as an extraordinary threat has now become the norm (i.e. a fact of everyday life) in Russia, a situation that is now not only recognized by the Russian authorities, but also the Russian public. A Levada Centre survey of opinion polls suggests that the Russian people have resigned themselves to living with terrorism. This study demonstrates that since 2005, between 50 and 60 per cent of Russians have consistently expressed the view that the situation in North Caucasus will not change. Furthermore, in a Levada opinion poll in January 2011 around 48 per cent of respondents agreed that terrorist acts have become part of everyday life in Russia, and 34 per cent agreed that the frequency of terrorist acts in Russia will remain the same in the future. More recently, Russia's foreign allies have also significantly muted their criticism, at least in public, about its counter-terrorist strategy.

Conclusion

To understand the issue of terrorism in Russia it is important to take into account the way in which the terrorist question has evolved in Russia politics over the last decade. During this time, the Russian authorities' interpretation of the terrorist threat they face has gone through the three phases: 1999–2004 securitization as a threat to the survival of the Russian state, 2004–2008 as a risk that the restored state could manage, and most recently, conceptual confusion as the regime no longer has a clear idea of how to tackle the problem. What is common to all of these periods and different views on the terrorist threat is that any attempt to address instability in the North Caucasus or the threat of terrorist incidents throughout Russia have sought to avoid any widespread restructuring of the wider Russian domestic order—the solution advocated by many experts. In spite of promises of modernization by President Medvedev, it seems unlikely that this approach to terrorism and instability will change, and hence individual responses to specific terrorist incidents will continue, with no widespread or deep-rooted strategy deployed to address instability at large.

About the Author
Aglaya Snetkov is a Senior Researcher at the Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich. She has a forthcoming article on Russian security policy in Europe–Asia Studies, and is working on a book manuscript on the evolution of Russia's security discourse under Putin and Medvedev, as well as a project on post-Soviet regional security and Afghanistan.
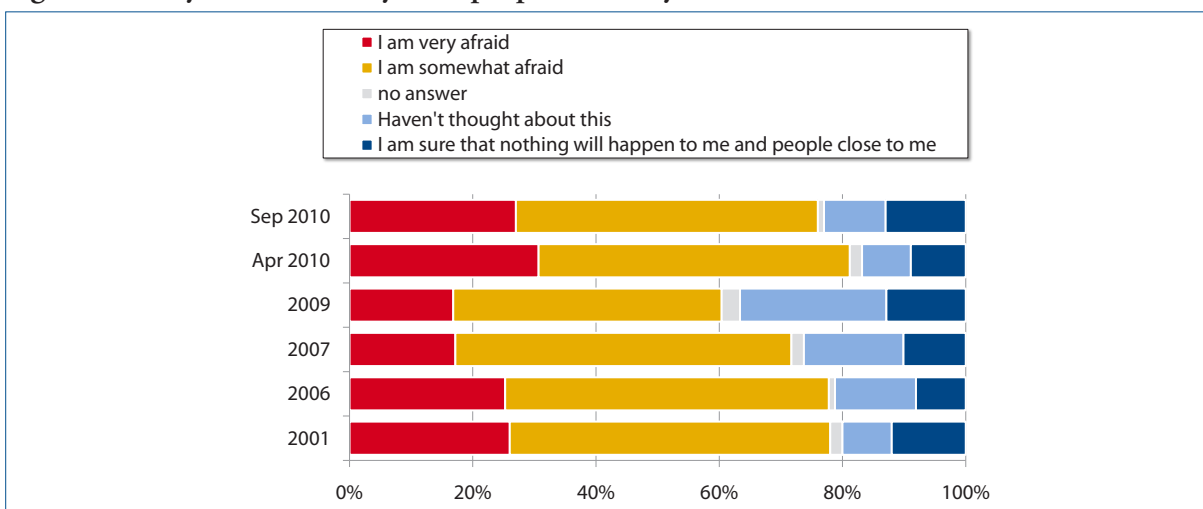
Russian Attitudes on Terrorism

**Figure 1: Do you expect new terrorist attacks in Moscow and other large cities in Russia in the near future?**
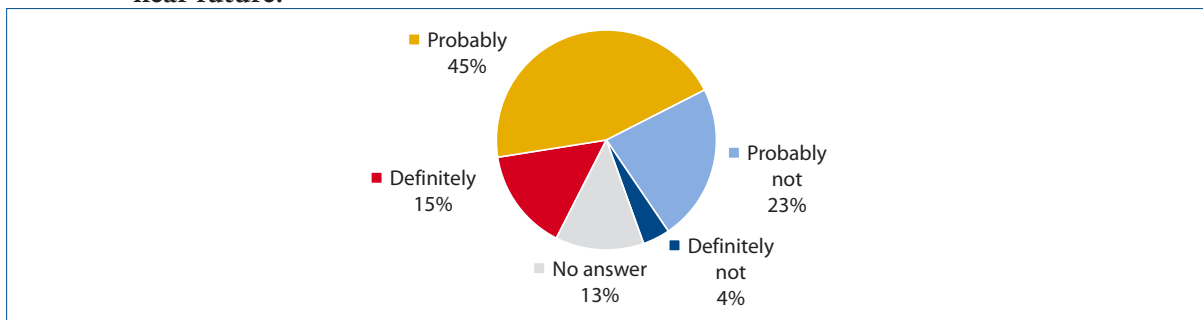
Source: representative opinion poll by the Levada Center from 9 – 13 April 2010, http://www.levada.ru./press/2010041504.html

Figure 2: Are you afraid that you or people close to you could fall victim to a terrorist attack?

Source: representative opinion poll by VTsIOM from 4 – 5 September 2010, http://old.wciom.ru/novosti/press-vypuski/press-vypusk/single/13802.html

Figure 3: Can the Russian state organs protect the population from new terrorist attacks?

Source: representative opinion poll by VTsIOM from 4 – 5 September 2010, http://old.wciom.ru/novosti/press-vypuski/press-vypusk/single/13802.html
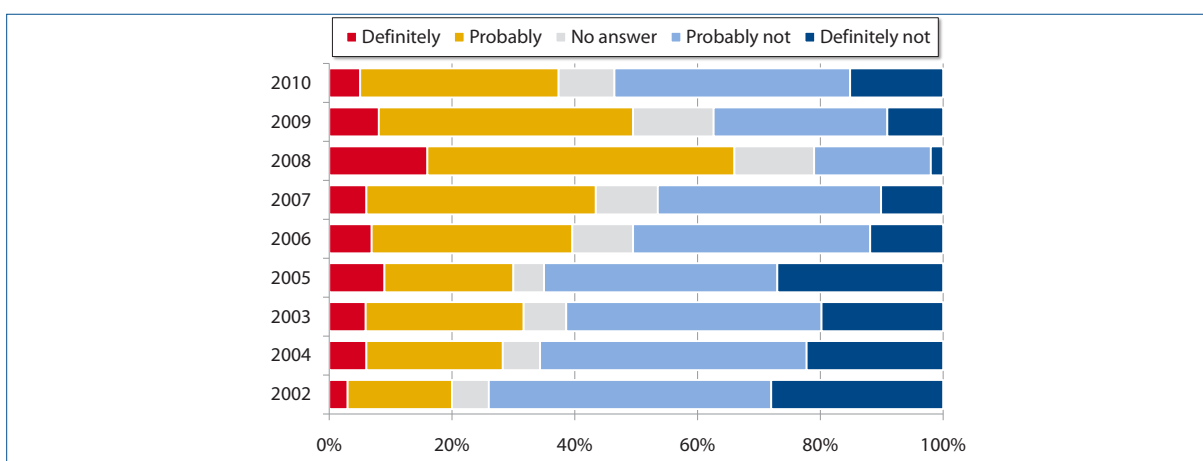
Figure 4: Have the authorities begun to seriously combat terrorism or are they merely imitating a new stage in the fight against terrorism in front of the public?
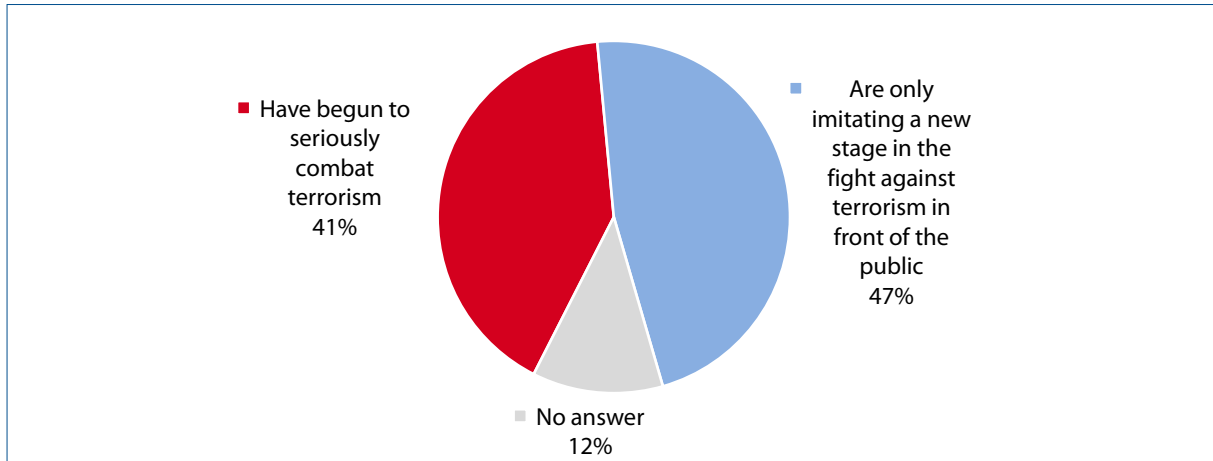
- Have begun to seriously combat terrorism 41%
- Are only imitating a new stage in the fight against terrorism in front of the public 47%
- No answer 12%

Source: representative opinion poll by the Levada Center from 9 – 13 April 2010, http://www.levada.ru./press/2010041504.html

Figure 5: What do you think, what is the main focus of the work of the Russian security services at present?
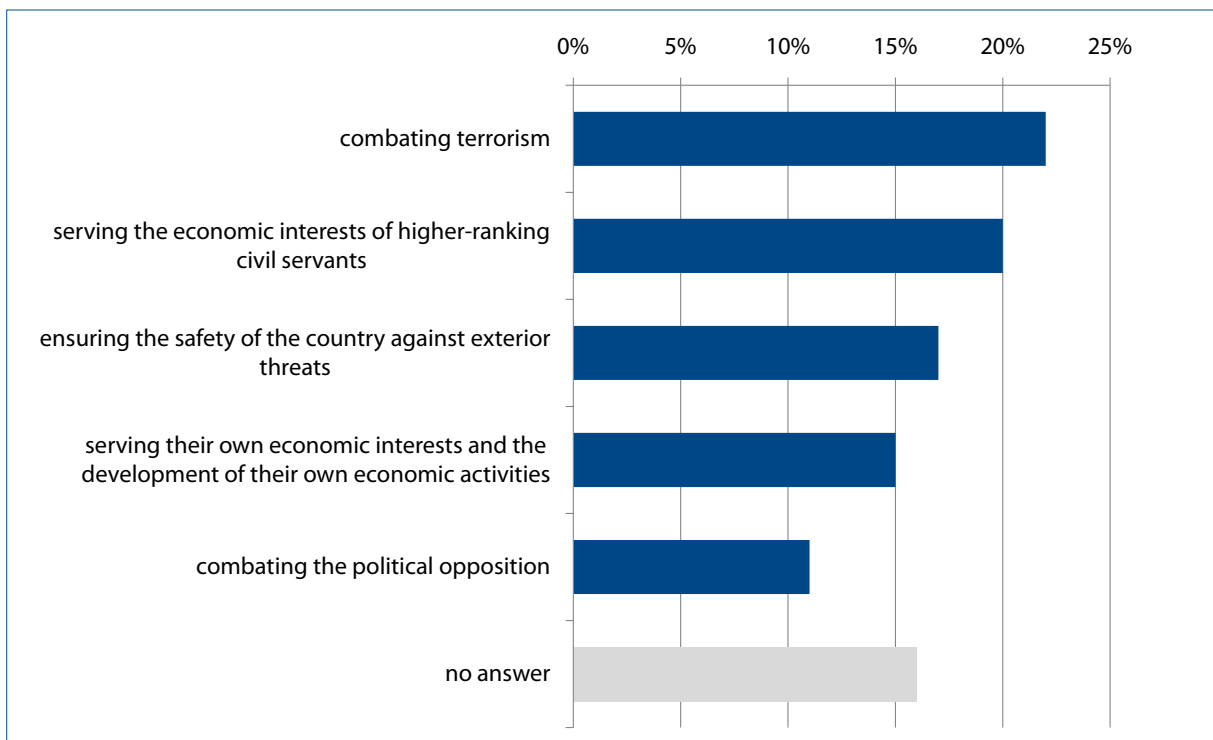
Source: representative opinion poll by the Levada Center from 28 – 31 Januar and 11 – 14 February 2011, http://www.levada.ru/press/2011030306.html

Events in Moscow 11th December 2010: Political Crisis

By Emil Pain, Moscow

Abstract

The clashes on 11 December 2011 in the Manezh Square in Moscow between ultranationalist groups, football supporters, migrant groups and the police, following the shooting of a football supporter by a migrant from the North Caucasus, demonstrated yet again that inter-ethnic tension and xenophobia continues to be a critical issue for Russia today. This article examines the way in which growing societal insecurity and discontent is being channelled and expressed through ethnic hatred, and anti-Caucasian and anti-Muslim feelings in Russia today.

A common Russian saying is that a man's life can hang on where a comma lies within a sentence, determining whether he is pardoned or sentenced. Similarly, the line between viewing societal problems as common issue for all of the population and blaming specific ethnic groups for all the ills of society is a thin one. At the heart of the events of 11 December in the Manezh Square, was the desire to redress societal problems, primarily the need for a just judicial system with no corruption, which are concerns shared by all Russians and hence should in theory serve to bind society together. However, the demands of the youth that came out to voice their frustrations on that day were channelled through ethnicity, directly blaming other ethnic groups for all societal problems. The way these demands are being articulated threaten to breakup society within a multiethnic country such as Russia, provoking dangerous conflicts and significantly lowing the probability of successful modernisation.

Where is Social Protest Directed?

Neither the summer fires in Moscow, nor the closure of airports leaving thousands stranded in Winter brought people out onto the street. Yet, 5,000 (Police sources) to 12,000 (Expert assessments) demonstrators came out onto the Manezh Square under slogans such as "Russians forwards", "Russia for Russians—Moscow for Muscovites", "Moscow is not the Caucasus". These protesters were not bussed in nor bribed by third parties, nor were they tempted by promises of a pop-concert, but turned out on their own accord. Indeed, these demonstrations spilled over into 15 other towns. The level of public support and sympathy for this political action, according to expert sociological centres, was 25–27%. About the same amount stated they were uncertain whether they supported the protests. Is this significant support or not?

In October 1922, 8,000 black shirts relying on the support of a tiny section of the Italian population marched on Rome, leading to Mussolini coming to power. Similarly to the Manezh Square protests, the ideas that united the black shirts were social justice

and the rehabilitation of a humiliated nation. This is how Italy was raised from its knees in the 1920s. However, the whole Italian nation was not behind the cause of the Black Shirts, instead support for their ideas was splintered—those from the North hated Southerners, who in return hated Northerners. A similar context is evident in Russia today in relation to the Manezh protesters and their ideas. However, there is a significant difference between the two cases. In the 1920s there was no internet, but in the contemporary world groups are able to almost instantly organize thousands of people via social networks, as happened in Moscow on 11th December. This potential of the internet as a tool for organizing large groups of people in a short space of time is illustrated by direct quotes from the social networks used to organise the Manezh gatherings: one site states that "the group itself appeared on 12th December 2010, before that we only had one meeting, now the group has over 5000 people", another outlines that "the idea of the Manezh Square came immediately, as soon as we managed to cordon off the traffic on Leningradskaya, we then immediately posted the information", while another details that "we have been in contact since the 6th December, as everyone knows the march was organized for the 11th December. 9000 people registered for the march in advance". This is the method by which these demonstrations were organized, with dozens of volunteer coordinators, aged between 14 and 20, able to bring together many thousands of people. Older organizers of the demonstrations relied on other less open ways of coordinating, including conspiratorial flats. Regardless of age, all those involved were united by a common idea, which closely resembles that outlined in an anonymous letter to General Shamanov, the head of Russian Airborne Troops, which has circulated on the internet. This letter demanded the use of Russian paratroopers to fight against not only against the lawlessness from the Caucasus but also against officials that do nothing about it. Citing both these concerns, the nationalistic youth are looking for a leader in the military sphere. In this light, the case of "Kvachkov" is not so far-fetched.

Kvachkov was accused of organizing militia groups in different Russian cities, who on his order were supposedly meant to take over military facilities and march on Moscow in support of the Patriotic Youth. A similar scenario is not impossible. Indeed, other threats and trends are even more likely before 2012.

The Transformation of Supporters to Attackers

In the 1990s Russia had many problems, but social processes were developing in the same direction as in other countries of the North. Russian youth showed a strong inclination for modernizing reforms and high ethnic tolerance in comparison with the elderly. Since the start of the 2000s the situation has changed, and it is the youth that has become the main proponent for traditionalism and xenophobia. In the 1990s football supporters often pitted themselves against nationalists and neo-Nazi groups. During this period, a common story circulated among all groups of football supporters about a Spartak supporter, who was hanged by Nazi skinheads using his own Spartak scarf. In the 2000s, this previous hatred has become love, leading to dozens of reports in many towns of incidents of armed attacks with signs of racial and ethnic hatred involving both nationalists and football supporters. In parallel, other protest movements began to take on an ethnic component, such as the 2004 protests against the modernisation of social benefits, which were accompanied in many places by xenophobic slogans, the events of Kondopoga in 2006 and other local clashes across Russia.

Increasingly the ethnic Russian Self is being constructed against an opposing ethnic Other in response to earlier consolidation of identity by ethnic minorities. This process was accelerated by the Chechen War, as well as significantly by Putin's encouragement of official suspicion—"enemies are everywhere, who want to take fat chunks out of our territory" or "foreign enemies are encouraging domestic enemies". This approach by Putin created the psychology of a victimized nation. Ethnocization was intensified by politicians of all political persuasions. The first political grouping to identify that this sense of victimhood could be utilized to mobilise mass support were the new nationalist parties, groups and movements. More established parties also tried to exploit this, such as LDPR, which changed its slogan from "cleaning our boots in the Indian Ocean" to a simpler one "we are for the poor, we are for Russians". The Communist Parties changed its position from "internationalism" towards presenting itself as a party of the ethnic majority. In the Presidential elections of 2008, the leader of the Communist Party was described as "not liked by the international governing elite and the Putin team not only because he is a communist, but because he is the only one of the candidates that is Russian by blood and spirit".

And even some politicians, who describe themselves as liberal, put forward the idea of liberal-nationalism. Within this position, the only thing that is left from liberalism is the name, but even this served to make them unpopular with Russian nationalists, for whom "liberals" is a word associated with "enemies", "foreigners" and "homosexuals". Furthermore, the ideology of the different strands of Russian nationalism is categorically against liberalism, they are against liberty, let alone equality. They demand that the dominant position of the Russian ethnic group is legally institutionalized as part of a one-nation Russia.

The Drift of Power: the Eyes Fear—the Hands Do

A common but mistaken view amongst the Russia media is that the events on the Manezh Square were provoked/orchestrated by the authorities. The Russian authorities have been scared by these events, which highlighted that they are less and less able to control the growth and behavior of Russian nationalism. The state's attempts to manufacture a certain type of nationalism, which could be controlled and manipulated have failed. Therefore, the Russian authorities have had to come up with their own nationalist project, the "Rodina" Party. Whilst the Russian authorities initially institutionalized the new national holiday, National Unity Day held on the 4th November, they are now concerned about this particular holiday and deploy OMON troops to control the thousands of people that take part in Russian-nationalist marches every year. Indeed, it was on the 4th November 2010 marches that the people involved in the Manezh Square protests were trained. Today, Russian nationalism cannot be domesticated by or allied to the authorities, because it is primarily centred upon protest movements.

While the political elites cannot control nationalism, they can push it along. Following the ethnic pogrom in Kondopoga 2006, the authorities began to speak about the need to guarantee the primary place of the titular population in Russia. In the wake of the war with Georgia 2008, quotas were introduced for foreigners coming to Russia, and in light of the events in the Manezh Square, debate in the State Council moved beyond limiting travel to Russia to restrictions on the registration regulations for internal migrants—Russian citizens, moving from one Russian region to another. Such suggestions seem absurd considering that even supporters of limiting migration from abroad have argued that the loss of external migrants should be mitigated by increased internal migration. They say "we should replace street

cleaners in Moscow from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan for the ones from Ryazan'. Indeed, internal migrants are not just street cleaners, but make up a good proportion of the Kremlin and the White House. The demonstrators at Manezh called for a limit on internal migration, but from only certain regions of Southern Russia and for migrants of certain ethnic backgrounds. Hence, it is clear for whom the tightened registration regulations have been created. However, the increased concessions by the authorities to the nationalists lead to increased demands. Currently, the nationalists demand not only controls on the arrival of migrants from other ethnic groups into Moscow, but also the deportation of those that have come earlier.

At the same time as revoking the rights of certain ethnic groups, the Russian authorities are calling for greater patriotism from all ethnic groups within Russia. How will these ethnic groups respond? A real danger exists that the response will lead to increased incidents of local clashes on ethnic grounds. The SOVA centre investigated such incidents in 2010, finding that they occurred in 44 Russian regions, resulting in 37 deaths and 368 injured people.

Religious Mobilisation

If in regions with a predominantly ethnic-Russian population social dissatisfaction is being expressed through increasing ethnic tension, in those Republics historically linked with Islam, ethnic mobilisation is being replaced by religious mobilisation.

In Russia a special zone has emerged—the Chechen Republic, in which a theocratic regime has been established that can only be compared with the regimes found in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan under the Taleban. An illustration of this brand of Islamic theocracy is that all woman and young girls (not only those working in offi-cial building, but also in universities and schools) are now required to wear headscarves and long skirts. Those that break this norm are punished. This is illustrative of the growing Islamization of Chechnya under Kadyrov.

Although little information about Chechnya reaches the rest of the country, the presence of such a theocratic regime is impacting on Russian views of their own country in ways that are hard to quantify. It also causes many Chechens to migrate to other parts of the country. Many of these internal migrants maintain official registration in Chechnya or other Republics, but live primarily in central regions of Russia. It is important to highlight that citizens of Russia from the North Caucasus attract much greater ethnic hatred than other immigrants from the CIS. Relations between the ethnically Russian populations of many towns and cities with internal migrants from the North Caucasus are often more conflictual than with other new immigrants, because these migrants seeks to demonstrate their right to preserve their own specific norms of behavior more strongly.

In other Republics (predominantly Muslim), social conflicts are framed along the lines of traditional vs. non-traditional Islam. This is a process that began in the North Caucasus at the end of the 1990s and is now in evidence in the centre of Russia as well, in the Republics of the Volga region. The deputy Mufti of the Republic of Tatarstan, Valiulla Yakupov states that "the majority of young people are supporters of foreign religious influences". He also predicts that "knowing the evolution of this movement on other Republics of the post-Soviet space, in which Islamization is greater than in Tatarstan, maybe we can see what will happen to us".

What awaits the rest of the country. For now only one thing—growing radicalization and antagonistic relations between different ethnic groups of a broken down society.
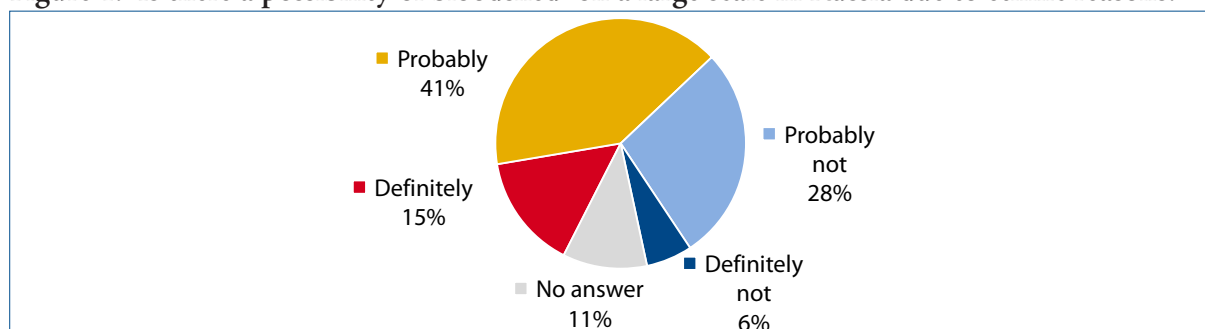
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Prof. Emil Pain is General Director of the Centre for Ethno-Political and Regional Studies and professor at Russian State University—Higher School of Economics.
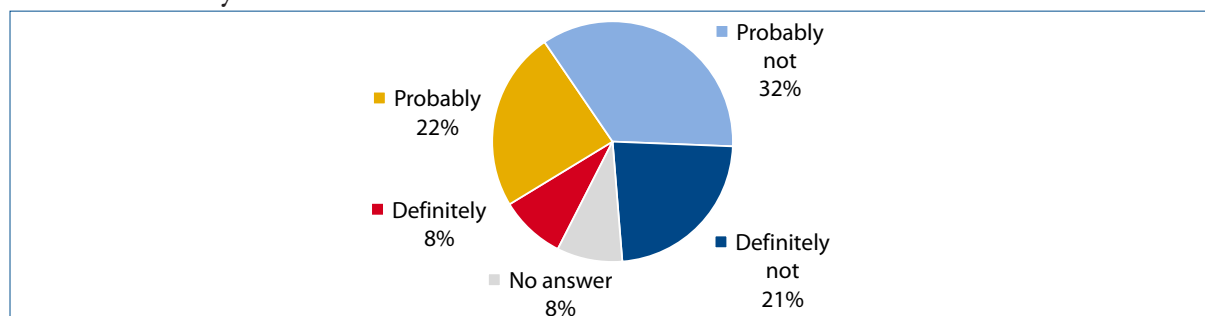
Nationalism in Contemporary Russia

Figure 1: Is there a possibility of bloodshed on a large scale in Russia due to ethnic reasons?

- Probably 41%
- Probably not 28%
- Definitely 15%
- Definitely not 6%
- No answer 11%

Source: representative opinion poll by Levada Center on 21 – 24 January 2011, http://www.levada.ru/press/2011020407.html

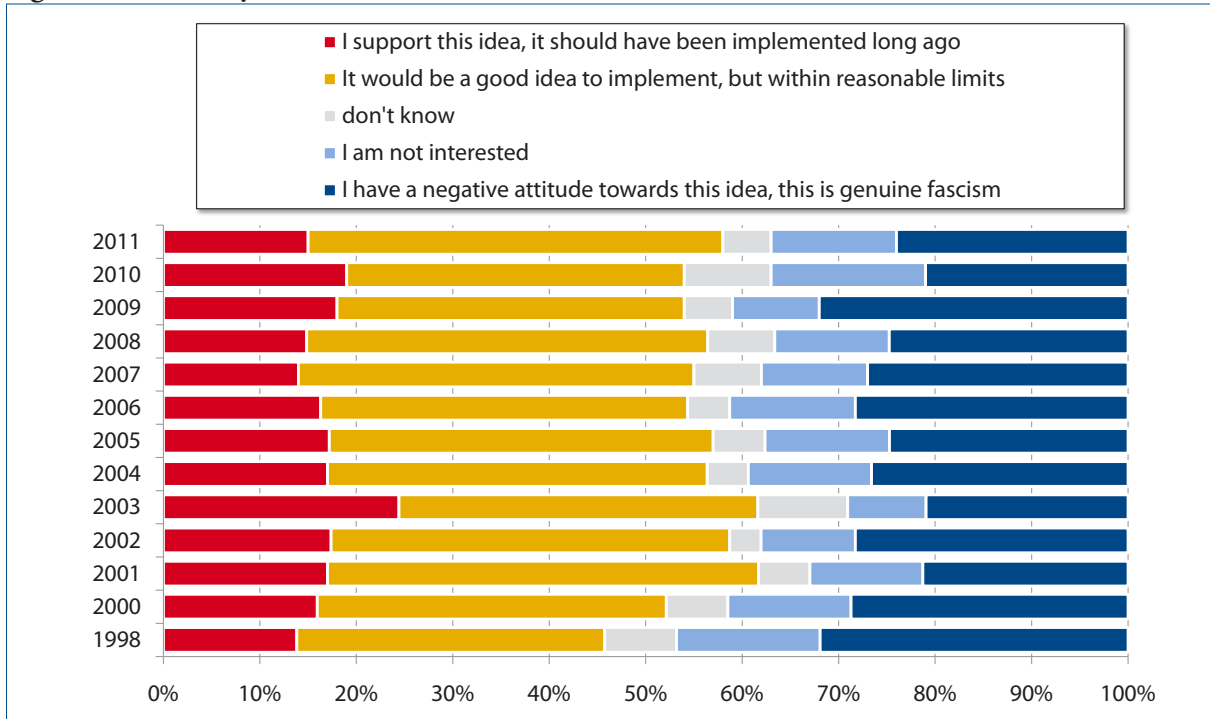### Figure 2: Is there a possibility of bloodshed on a large scale due to ethnic reasons in the area where you live ?

- Probably not 32%
- Probably 22%
- Definitely 8%
- Definitely not 21%
- No answer 8%

Source: representative opinion poll by Levada Center on 21 – 24 January 2011, http://www.levada.ru/press/2011020407.html

Table 1:   Who would you call "enemies of Russia"?

Chechen gunmen	48%
USA	40%
NATO	32%
certain political forces in the West	30%
Islamists and adherents of a fundamental Islam	27%
oligarchs, bankers	20%
former republics of the Soviet Union (the Baltic states, Ukraine, Georgia, etc.)	20%
separatists inside Russia	15%
China	13%
countries of the former Soviet bloc (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, etc.)	9%
Zionists	8%
those in power today	7%
Russophobes, "Westerners"	6%
reformist democrats	5%
communists	4%
national patriots	3%
liberals	1%
others	1%
don't know	3%

Source: representative opinion poll by Levada Center on 21 – 24 January 2011, http://www.levada.ru/press/2011020302.html

Figure 3: What is your attitude towards the idea of "Russia for Russians"?

Legend:
- I support this idea, it should have been implemented long ago
- It would be a good idea to implement, but within reasonable limits
- don't know
- I am not interested
- I have a negative attitude towards this idea, this is genuine fascism

Source: representative opinion poll by Levada Center on 21 – 24 January 2011, http://www.levada.ru/press/2011020407.html

Figure 4: What policy should the Russian government pursue in regard to non-resident aliens?
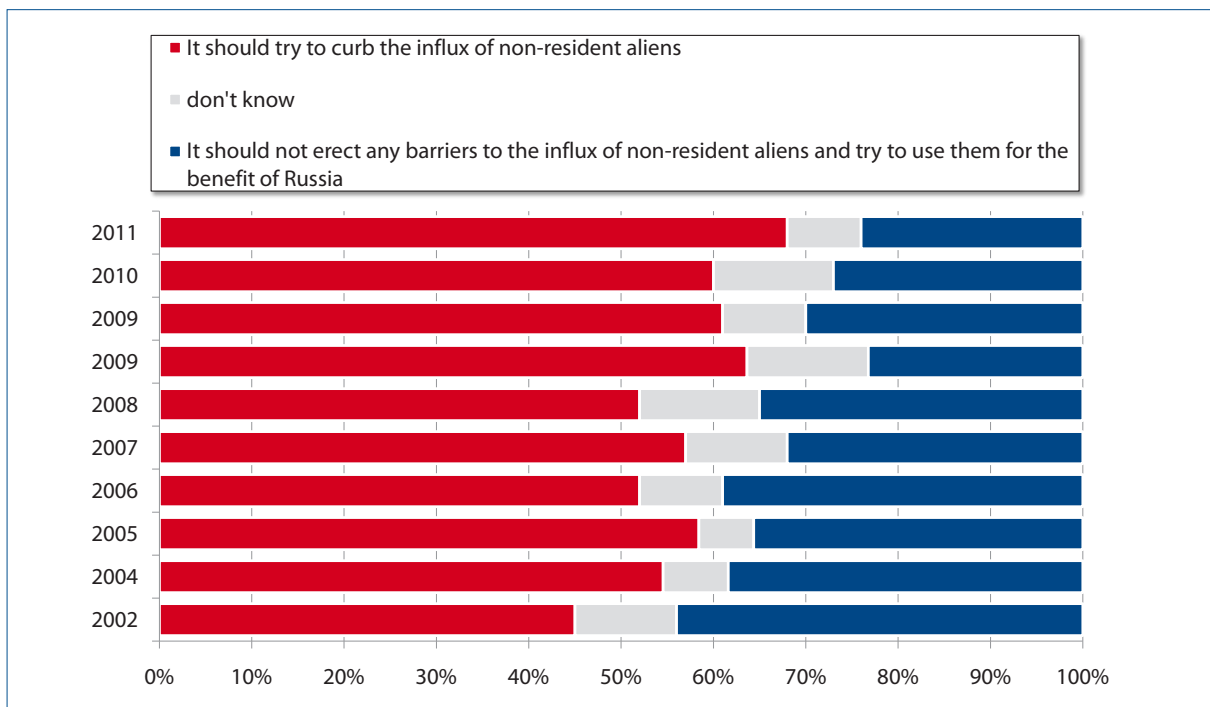
Legend:
- It should try to curb the influx of non-resident aliens
- don't know
- It should not erect any barriers to the influx of non-resident aliens and try to use them for the benefit of Russia

Source: representative opinion poll by Levada Center on 21 – 24 January 2011, http://www.levada.ru/press/2011020407.html

Recent Developments in Inter-Ethnic Relations in Stavropol'skii krai

By Andrew Foxall, Oxford

Abstract

Interethnic relations and conflicts are an increasingly important feature of contemporary Russia. This is especially true in the North Caucasus where ongoing insecurity combined with a depressed economy has lead to growing Russian nationalism, xenophobia, and fears over immigration. In Stavropol'skii krai, the only ethnically Russian dominated territory in the North Caucasus Federal District, the situation is especially acute. Here, growing levels of inter-ethnic tension and violence indicate that ordinary citizens have their own understanding of interethnic relations, which stands in stark contrast to the "eternal interethnic peace" proclaimed by the authorities.

Tensions in Inter-Ethnic Relations

On 10 September 2010, a 220-word petition was posted on the internet in Russia calling for Moscow to re-draw the boundaries of the North Caucasus Federal District to remove Stavropol'skii krai and include it in the Southern Federal District. Under a week later, on 15 September 2010, a riot took place in Stavropol' involving around 80 youths (30 ethnic Russians and 50 ethnic Caucasians). This was followed by smaller-scale mass brawls in Stavropol' on 19 and 26 September. Although the two events do not, at first sight, appear to be related, they are both indicative of a widening of Russian ethno-nationalism in Stavropol'skii krai, a territory long seen as the last bastion of Russia influence in the "barbarian" North Caucasus. While current inter-ethnic violence in Stavropol'skii krai is not of the same scale that took place in Stavropol' four years ago (in 2007), the absence of violence at a similar level in the years since does not mean that the situation is stable. Rather, SOVA Centre, the Moscow-based NGO, report that ethno-national attacks on ethnic Caucasians in Stavropol'skii krai have increased year on year since 2004. Recent events—including the internet petition and riots of September 2010—suggest that inter-ethnic violence shows no sign of abating. Amid the widening of Islamic insurgency and economic uncertainty in the North Caucasus, citizens are beginning to take matters into their hands and this is certain to contribute to further inter-ethnic tension.

Instability in the North Caucasus Federal District

The North Caucasus republics are characterized by a near continuous cycle of violence, insurgency, and repression. While initially located in Chechnya, this violence has spread to neighboring Ingushetia and Dagestan (where there is a latent civil war) and on to the republics of Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Adygeya which, according to commentators, are increasingly becoming one large battlefield. Occasionally this violence has spread into Stavropol'skii krai, most notably in the Budennovsk hospital siege in 1995 and the Essentuki train bombing in 2003. More recently, operations conducted by the Russian security and military forces to eliminate insurgents in Stavropol'skii krai is evidence, some political analysts have suggested, of the spread of insurgency.

As a result of the wider instability in the North Caucasus, ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai have become increasingly violent. This mirrors the situation throughout Russia, where levels of Russian ethno-nationalism have increased as the situation has deteriorated in the North Caucasus republics. Indeed, despite having their basic human rights guaranteed under Article 19 of The Russian Constitution, discrimination of ethnic minorities is widespread in Russia. This is particularly the case for ethnic groups from the North Caucasus as, since 1991, *Kavkazofobiya* (Caucasophobia) has permeated virtually every aspect of society. In October 2002, Lyudmilla Alekseyeva, Chair of the Moscow Helsinki Group, identified *Kavkazofobiya* as "definitely the most serious problem that Russia is faced with today. It is very widespread among the population in general, at all levels".

Demographic Anxieties in Stavropol'skii Krai

Central to the growing nationalism, xenophobia, and fears over immigration in Stavropol'skii krai is the demographic situation in the krai. According to the 2002 Census, Stavropol'skii krai is the only territory in the North Caucasus Federal District with an ethnic Russian majority population (81.6%): this compares with 3.7% in Chechnya and 1.2% in Ingushetia. This represents a decrease in the ethnic Russian population in the krai from 91.3% in 1959, 87.8% in 1979, and 84% in 1989. Such long-term "de-Russification" reflects the in-migration of ethnic Caucasians and out-migration of ethnic Russians (combined with a low rate of natural increase). This is seen as politically sensitive for the Kremlin and Russian society, as the retreat of ethnic Russians from Stavropol'skii krai has long been equated with losing control over the North Caucasus. As the ethnic populations in the North Caucasus republics have grown rapidly they have migrated

into regions traditionally occupied by ethnic Russians outside the republics. As a result of this, ethnic Russians increasingly consider themselves as an embattled minority group. For example, in Neftekumskii raion (which borders Dagestan) in south-eastern Stavropol'skii krai, ethnic Russians composed just 37.6% of the raion population in 2002, versus 52.7% in 1970. In the raions along Stavropol'skii krai's southern and eastern borders, such as Neftekumskii raion, there is a spatial segregation of ethnic groups, and there are signs that this segregation is spreading throughout Stavropol'skii krai.

Ethnic Conflict in Stavropol'skii krai up to 2007

According to Amnesty International in 2006, Russian authorities have created a state of "impunity" against violent ethnic attacks and discrimination. In Stavropol'skii krai, reports from the Moscow-based SOVA Centre suggest that while racially-motivated attacks are on the decrease (down from 21 attacks in 2005 to 8 attacks in 2009), ethnic violence is on the increase (exact figures for instances of ethnic violence are hard to obtain due to chronic under-reporting, particularly in rural areas).

For much of the post-Soviet period inter-ethnic relations have been in flux and the potential for conflict has been ever present. In the 1990s, in response to the first Chechen War and the high level of migration into the krai of ethnic Caucasians, the leadership of Stavropol'skii krai established a tightly controlled migration code. Unlike that in neighboring Krasnodar krai however, the migration code of Stavropol'skii krai was deemed un-constitutional by the Russian Supreme Court. As a result, krai authorities installed Cossack guards on the borders with Chechnya and Dagestan. At the same time, there was a marked growth of Russian nationalist movements in Stavropol'skii krai, with the Russian National Unity Party particularly active in the late 1990s. Since 2000, ethnic tension, as result of instability in Chechnya (which borders Stavropol'skii krai to the south-east) and elsewhere, has become widespread. In the southern and eastern raions of the krai, conflicts between ethnic Caucasian groups over equal access to education, jobs, housing, and land are increasingly common. Occasionally such conflicts have reached Stavropol' itself, such as in November 2010 when there was a mass brawl involving 60 ethnic Turkmen and ethnic Armenians at a construction site. More recently, the Union of Slavic Communities of Stavropol' (which emerged from a split within the Russian National Unity Party) has been particularly active in coordinating Russian ethno-nationalist initiatives, supporting the actions of militant Cossacks, and violently opposing ethnic Caucasian migration into the krai. After the bomb attack outside the House of Culture and Sport in Stavropol' in May 2010 by Russian nationalists, Vladimir Nesterov, head of the Union of Slavic Communities of Stavropol', said large-scale ethnic Caucasian immigration into the krai was deemed unacceptable by the ethnic Russian majority. While it is debatable whether, as some commentators have recently suggested, Russian nationalists and Islamic extremists feed off each other in the region, it is true that many Russian nationalist groups cite perceived "lawlessness" in the republics as one reason for their presence in Stavropol'skii krai.

Ethnic Riots in 2007

In 2007, widespread ethnic tension—which had been noticeable for a number of years—lead to the deaths of three youths (two ethnic Russians and one ethnic Chechen) during six weeks of intermittent rioting in late May and June in Stavropol'. During the riots, OMON and local police forces joined with nationalists, including members of the now-banned Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI), in attacking ethnic Caucasians. Cossacks are also reported to have joined with nationalists in calling for ethnic Caucasians to be evicted from Stavropol'. These riots—which occurred less than one year after the ethnic riots in Kondopoga (Karelia)—became central to regional authorities' attempts to manage interethnic relations, as authorities analysed and reviewed existing policies and programmes in light of the riots. Despite this, ethnic conflict has continued in Stavropol'skii krai. In early 2008, for example, as part of a wider campaign by Russian nationalists to use imitation aggression from Caucasian and Muslim groups as a means of provoking xenophobic moods and actions, a hoax bomb was left in the Nevinnomissk branch of the FSB. In 2009 there were inter-ethnic clashes in: Pelagiade, Izobil'nenskii *raion* (August 2009); Irgakly, Stepnovskii *raion* (June 2009); Georgievskii, Predgornii *raion* (May and June 2009); and Stavropol' *gorod* (April 2009). Although high profile, none of these clashes were as large as the 2007 riots.

Events since 2010

The September 2010 internet petition calling on President Medvedev to re-draw the structure of Russia's Federal Districts to remove Stavropol'skii krai from the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD) and shift it to the Southern Federal District reflected discontent, which had been simmering in Stavropol' for several months. Posted on the internet on 10 September 2010, the 220-word appeal attracted more than 10,000 signatures in the first few days of its appearance. According to the appeal, residents in Stavropol'skii krai have suffered in a variety of ways since their krai was combined with the North Cau-

casus republics in the NCFD. The level of ethnic Caucasian migration has increased, as has violence and crime in general. While three terrorist attacks did take place in Stavropol'skii krai between January and September 2010, it is unclear whether the inclusion of Stavropol'skii krai in the NCFD was the cause of them.

On 20 September, Yuri Shepelin, first deputy of Stavropol' City authorities, reported that since the appearance of the internet petition there had been a sharp escalation in the conflict readiness of ethnic Russian and ethnic Caucasian youth in Stavropol'. Such is the situation in Stavropol' that ethnic tension occurs in a radical context and often banal conflicts lead to riots or mass brawls. This happened on 15 September when a fight between two students threatened to break out into widespread rioting. In the end, 80 youths (30 ethnic Caucasians and 50 ethnic Russians) were arrested. Fearing that violence might reach the levels of 2007, local security services responded by increasing their visibility and creating armed task forces, including Cossacks, to patrol Stavropol' and stop youths from gathering in public places. Despite these efforts, on 19 September, eight ethnic Caucasians were beaten up by ethnic Slav youths in Victory Park. The following day, after meeting in Victory Park, a group of largely ethnic Caucasian youths walked through central Stavropol' randomly beating up citizens. In response, the Stavropol' City Security Council introduced restrictions on entertainment and the public assembly of individuals: in effect, all recreational facilities became sites of criminal suspicion. Despite this, on 26 September a mass brawl involving 55 youths took place near Prospect October Revolution.

While not absolving ethnic Russian youths of any responsibility, the behavior of ethnic Caucasian youths in Russia is not a new issue. After clashes in Tuapsev, Krasnodar krai, in July 2010, Vladimir Shvetsov, a deputy to the Russian presidential envoy to the North Caucasian Federal District, recommended that republican authorities in the North Caucasus instruct their youths on how to behave when they travel to Russian-speaking regions. According to Shvetsov, youths from the North Caucasian republics do not take other people's feelings and opinions into consideration when they travel to regions such as Stavropol'skii krai, and while not breaking any laws, they still breach the "norms of behavior."

While inter-ethnic tension has, since the beginning of 2011, been localized—there have been reports of several small scale brawls in Kurskii raion between ethnic Armenians and ethnic Chechens—recent events do not suggest that it will stay this way much longer. In particular, the January 2011 bomb attack at Domodedovo airport in Moscow, reportedly carried out by a member of the "Nogai jamaat" (based in Neftekumskii raion in eastern Stavropol'skii krai), resulted in clashes, in early February, between Russian security forces and suspected Islamic militants in Kochubeevskii raion (south-western Stavropol'skii krai) and lead to the deaths of five militants and three security officers. There are reports that prior to the funerals of the three security officers in Stavropol' on 17 February there were a number of skirmishes between Russian nationalists and ethnic Caucasians in the city.

Looking to the Future: Rhetoric and Reality of Inter-Ethnic Peace

With rising levels of Russian nationalism, and with the widening of insurgency and terrorism in the North Caucasus republics, there is significant potential for further escalation of xenophobic violence and ethnic conflict in Stavropol'skii krai. Ethnic violence indicates that ordinary citizens have their own understanding of interethnic relations. When combined with current levels of anti-Caucasianism, these understandings are certain to contribute to further violence in Stavropol'skii krai as individuals become radicalized due to current social, economic, and political conditions. More broadly, events in Moscow—most notably, the largest Russian nationalist riots in modern Russia in December 2010—and elsewhere—in response to the Moscow riots there were protests throughout Russia, including in Rostov-on-Don where several thousand ethnic Slavs rioted against ethnic Caucasians in the city—are evidence that anti-Caucasian feelings are now widespread in Russia. President Medvedev's muted response to the December 2010 riots suggests that the Kremlin will continue to bury its head in the sand over increasing inter-ethnic tension in Russia. Recent events in Stavropol'skii krai, however, suggest that such a strategy is no longer sustainable and the ability of authorities (at both krai and federal levels) to use the Soviet-era slogan of "eternal inter-ethnic peace" is now finally out of question. With an underdeveloped civil society in Russia, the Kremlin may be forced to incorporate more Russian nationalist rhetoric into its policies.

About the Author
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The Role of the Media in Russia's Inter-ethnic Relations: An Interview with *Chelyabinsk Worker* Editor Boris Kurshin

By Galima Galiullina, Chelyabinsk

Abstract

The newspaper *Chelyabinsk Worker* has published for more than a century in Chelyabinsk Oblast, where representatives of more than 140 nationalities live. In the Southern Urals, there have been no terrorist acts or nationalist outbursts even though, as with the rest of the country, local residents have experienced the difficulties of the economic crisis and the shock of the tragic events in Moscow, the Caucasus, and other regions. In the following interview, Editor-in-Chief Boris Kurshin explains the role of his newspaper in the stormy world of such sensational events.

Investigating the Causes of Violence

Q: Is there a connection between the nationalist demonstration on Manezh Square in December 2011 and the terrorist attack on Domodedovo Airport in January 2011 and how will these events affect the future of the country? How do you evaluate the behavior of the media in covering these events?

A: The events at Manezh Square and Domodedovo are definitely connected: they are a reaction to the actions of Moscow in the Caucasus. Thanks to my many years as an editor, I thoroughly track the reaction of the media, particularly the print press. I did not notice any gross mistakes in the coverage of these events (with the exception, probably, of the nationalist press). The style and tone of most publications was within the limits of tolerance. The events in Manezh Square were covered with sympathy for the people who suffered from the actions of the nationalists.

Some media went further. *Chelyabinsk Worker*, for example, carried out an investigation. We decided to make clear the connection between the events in Moscow and what happened in the city of Miass in the Urals. We were particularly interested in understanding how typical the use of specially-prepared groups of young people is in attacking ordinary people.

Last summer at the Tornado Rock Festival in Miass hundreds of people suffered at the hands of a group of young people who appeared out of nowhere. They were armed with truncheons, striped to the waist and had shaved heads. They beat many members of the public quickly and cruelly.

With the aid of readers and bloggers we sought to figure out why this had happened and who stood behind this battle. We published the results of our investigation in several issues of the newspaper. The first explanation was that this attack was the work of skinheads. This explanation drew a strong reaction around the world. But the investigation showed that the skinheads were not involved.

A second explanation lays the blame on an Armenian kebab seller. Initially, the authorities described the mass beating as an ordinary riot and insensitively cited the nationality of the kebab stand owner. They simply blamed him because of his nationality. The readers of our site questioned whether his ethnicity was really the main cause of the conflict.

Ultimately, the newspaper identified the organizer of the battle. The key player was the leadership of the entertainment complex where the concert took place. This complex is associated with a sports hall where a group of bodybuilders trained. They were ordered to attack the rock festivals fans after these fans had quarreled with one of the workers at the complex. Now his bosses are hiding him abroad, apparently in Cyprus.

Tolerance and the Media

Q: What are the main reasons for the collapse of tolerance in Russia? Why is xenophobia growing in a country where once there was a "fraternal family of peoples"? Is the mass media at least partly to blame for this?

A: Why has the "friendship" become aggravated between the fraternal peoples? In the USSR the differences between ethnic groups were artificially papered over. This false unity of various cultures and traditions gave rise to internal tensions. When the force clamping this "family" together weakened, the family fell apart. We have to learn how to value the uniqueness of every people. We need to see the particular charm of each people. Our strength is in diversity; it is important to understand that. …

I do not think that the media play a special role in whipping up xenophobia. Journalists are typically intelligent and delicate people. However, to some degree, there is an insufficient culture of tolerance. There are newspapers which profess xenophobia, whose staffs include "excessively Russia people." But their share is insignificant. There is only one such newspaper in our region—in the city of Zlatoust.

Probably, the media bear some responsibility for the way that they covered the events in the Caucasus. The

journalists covering the war divided Russian citizens into "us" and "them." In fact, we were all in this war. Since we did not trust the central media to cover these events, we sent our own correspondents to Chechnya. People increasingly understand—the war in the Caucasus is a tragedy for Russia. Recently I learned that General Rokhlin once refused a Hero's Star award, saying that there are no heroes in a civil war.

Q: How much tolerance is there among Urals residents—this is after all a multi-cultural society? Is it sufficient to preserve peace between ethnic groups?

A: Tolerance is natural for Ural residents. The entire history of the region is the history of joint life among numerous ethnic groups. Together they built factories, defeated fascism, survived bitter cold winters, and experienced reforms. There are no serious ethnic conflicts here. Occasionally, they find signs of Wahhabi extremism here, but it is most likely a result of efforts by the special services to justify themselves and their salaries. Maybe the reason is that in the Southern Urals there are no serious financial interests, no sharp battles to control money flows during which the various sides seek support among national clans by manipulating nationalist feelings. Here most people are dealing with the toils of daily life. The big money is in Moscow and St. Petersburg and that is where the battles are.

Are there skinheads in our region? Probably there are, this contagion exists everywhere. But we have not seen any serious disturbances or nationalists calling for blood as happened on Manezh Square.

The Role of Ethics Codes

Q: How active today are journalist ethics codes in conditions of global competition for audience share? Do they cause any problems?

A: Competition for readers has a negative impact on ethics. I've noticed how a good journalist will set up a blog and immediately turn into the kind of cheeky scribbler who allows himself all kinds of unimaginable things. He is trying to distinguish himself from millions of similar people in an ocean of information.

At *Chelyabinsk Worker* journalists observe ethical standards. And in many other traditional media, ethical standards are alive. This distinguishes us from the Internet, it is our competitive advantage, guaranteeing the trust of the reader. We do not have the right to violate it, otherwise we will lose our readership.

Chelyabinsk Worker is 103 years old. Our journalists feel the strength of these years and the authority of those who worked in the paper before us. We understand how many journalists from the paper were shot in the 1930s or were sent to the camps. The reputation of the newspaper and its history is the base of moral and ethical norms for each of us.

I remember one particularly vivid story from the history of the newspaper. In the 1930s, one of our journalists joined a group of miners to visit the hero of labor Alexei Stakhanov. Finding the journalist to be young, smart, and good company, Stakhanov invited him home. Afterwards, the journalist described this party and his open conversations with Stakhanov. Soon he was arrested and disappeared forever. It turned out that a neighbor needed his room in their communal apartment and she told the authorities about his "unsuitable" conversations. Such stories are unforgettable.

Q: When you must choose between being competitive and morality, which wins?

A: Some American mass media researchers think that in contemporary conditions transparency should replace objectivity. You can move away from objectivity, but your readers should know where and how this happened. In the US, this topic came up because of the expansion of the digital media. There is 74 percent Internet penetration in America. In Russia it is only 32 percent. If the Russian media follow this US trend, no one would notice because 93 percent of the Russian media is controlled by the state (according to Russian human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin). What kind of objectivity can we speak about in these conditions?

This problem does not affect *Chelyabinsk Worker*. Objectivity is our trump. We are independent of state structures and live exclusively on money we earn. Therefore we can conduct an independent editorial policy.

Q: What are your information policy principles in a multicultural and multi-confessional society?

A: Our main principle is to find living examples of tolerance in the South Urals and in the world and to tell our readers about them. Recently, for example, we devoted an entire page to a class for Roma in one of the oblast's raions. In multicultural Europe, some countries expel their Roma, we work to educate them. Education for Roma is an inspiring example of a multi-cultural society.

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ABOUT THE RUSSIAN ANALYTICAL DIGEST

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With a collection of publications on Eastern Europe unique in Germany, the Research Centre is also a contact point for researchers as well as the interested public. The Research Centre has approximately 300 periodicals from Russia alone, which are available in the institute's library. News reports as well as academic literature is systematically processed and analyzed in data bases.

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