

A stylized map of Russia composed of a grid of dots. Most dots are light gray, but several are colored red, highlighting specific regions or points of interest on the map.

The Ultra-Right in Russia in 2012

ALEXANDER VERKHOVSKY
September 2012

- In the Russian Federation, autonomous neo-nazis and fierce political nationalists are dominating the politically marginalized and radicalized ultra-right scene with its activists belonging to the radical fringe of society. They all are placed outside the existing political institutions and lack access to the system.
- Although the extreme right remains a marginal phenomenon in Russian politics up to now, it is a widely held view in Russian society that nationalism is an ideology with a future and will gain more popularity in the years to come.
- The development of the ultra-right movement in Russia is currently being restrained by police pressure and repression only, while there is a lack of a real counter-strategy, albeit state-driven or deriving from the civil society.



Contents

1. The Subject of the Study	2
2. Main Actors of the Ultra-Right Movement	2
3. The Place of the Ultra-Right in Society	5
4. Lack of a Counter-Strategy	7
Annex	9

1. The Subject of the Study

Nationalists in Russia differ not only in terms of how radical they are but also in terms of which «nation» they claim to represent. The Russian ultra-right has undergone a significant evolution during the turbulent post-Soviet period. This article briefly characterises the state of the radical wing of the Russian nationalist movement during the period of mass protests that accompanied the transition from Dmitry Medvedev's to Vladimir Putin's presidency.

Accordingly, the subject of the article is not nationalistic trends in the political mainstream, nor even major national-populist projects of the 2000s such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) and Dmitry Rogozin's *Rodina* (Motherland) party, which existed from 2003 to 2006. The *Rodina* party in any case disappeared a long time ago (although it may yet be revived) while Zhirinovskiy's LDPR has not been perceived by Russian nationalists as a natural part of their movement since the mid-1990s. So, when we speak about the radical flank of Russian nationalism we are in fact referring to the entire movement usually called Russian nationalism and that calls itself by that name.

The most immediately obvious reason for the predominance of radicals in the nationalist movement is lack of access to democratic mechanisms. With the exception of the LDPR, which has long since ceased to be an ideologically motivated party, nationalists have since the 1990s been performing worse and worse in elections and were even sidelined during the Putin presidency. The only exception was *Rodina*, a party created for the 2003 parliamentary elections and manipulated from the top; it was, however, soon disbanded again by the Kremlin when it became clear that it was getting out of control and that radical elements were playing an ever more conspicuous role in it. By the time of the next parliamentary elections in 2007, the united nationalist party *Velikaya Rossiya* (Great Russia) had already been denied the right to register although it had a credible claim to legitimacy.

However, the current radical nature of the Russian nationalist movement is a product not so much of pressure from above but of a dramatic change in the movement's social base in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In place of a motley collection of ideological and social activists oriented towards agitation and party building

there appeared thousands of young Nazi skinheads who were more interested in street violence.¹ These young people have now grown up, and their youthful imitators today form almost the entire core of the nationalist movement although the skinhead subculture is receding. With such a body of activists even those nationalist leaders who would like to project an image of moderate national-populism cannot refrain from radical gestures. Avoiding overt neo-Nazi connotations is as moderate as these politicians can get, and even then they do not always do so.

We believe that these two factors together with constant pressure from the authorities and the crisis of indigenous Russian nationalist ideological trends (Orthodox monarchism, Stalinist nationalism, neo-Eurasianism) are what generated the structure of Russian nationalism that we have today and that they did so back in the early 1990s.²

2. Main Actors of the Ultra-Right Movement

Autonomous neo-Nazis

As we have said, the basis of present-day Russian nationalism is formed by numerous small (5–10 persons) and usually nameless groups who hold neo-Nazi ideas and engage in street violence. Their views are based on eugenics and are emotionally motivated by their dislike of all «foreigners», especially people from the North Caucasus. (Anti-Semitism among the ultra-right is practically de rigueur, but very seldom a motive for attacks, and in general no longer plays a systemic role.) Their dislike of «foreigners» stems chiefly from what they see as apparently insuperable «cultural differences», while economic arguments and even the alleged connection of the Caucasus with terrorism take a back seat. In that sense young radicals with a penchant for aggression

1. On the Nazi skinhead movement in Russia see Vyacheslav Likhachev, *Nazism in Russia*, Panorama Centre, Moscow 2002, pp. 108–136 (in Russian); Alexander Tarasov, «The Skinheads», *Druzhba Narodov*, No. 2, 2000, and «Skinheads in Putin's Russia: Latest Trends», *Russian Nationalism in the Political Space*, Franco-Russian Humanities and Social Sciences Centre, Moscow 2007, pp. 156–165 (in Russian); Viktor Shnirelman, «The Cleaners of Moscow Streets: Skinheads, the Media and Public Opinion», *Academia*, Moscow 2010, pp. 63–152 (in Russian).

2. For a summary of the ideological and organisational history of Russian nationalism from *perestroika* until 2010 see Alexander Verkhovskiy, «The Evolution of the Post-Soviet Movement of Russian Nationalists», *Vestnik Obshchestvennogo Mneniya*, No. 1 (107), 2011, pp. 11–35.

consider themselves, not without reason, to be the vanguard of the majority of the people.³ With rare exceptions their views are informed by a positive attitude to historical fascism, although they typically think that they have »outgrown« it. In combination with ethnic Russian nationalism this involves engaging in a difficult balancing act with regard to their assessment of the Second World War.

The movement that decisively replaced the national patriots of the 1990s about ten years ago has not produced a qualitatively new or politically clearly definable ideology since that time. Their »white supremacist«⁴ rhetoric brings to mind the new fascist movement as interpreted by Roger Griffin.⁵ Yet the majority of young neo-Nazis appear to be simply groups of racist hooligans (albeit not necessarily from disadvantaged social strata⁶) only partially influenced by various groupuscules espousing fascist ideology⁷ or by radical representatives of various subcultures. In addition to the traditional idols of the football and/or skinhead subcultures one should mention Nazi adherents of straight-edge (a subculture of hardcore punk that espouses an ascetic lifestyle), people haters and anarcho-Nazis (in particular, several groups that go under the umbrella name of NS/WP [National Socialists/White Patriots] and the »Volnitsa« group). One can assume that with the development of the Internet and broadening of international contacts the ultra-right constituency in Russia is increasingly being exposed to new western ultra-right trends: anti-Islamism, right-wing (as opposed to left-wing) anti-globalism and anarchism, etc. (although practical links between the Rus-

sian and western ultra-right remain insignificant for the development of that and all other sectors of the movement). On the other hand, there are signs of a growing interest in the Orthodox religion which was not a feature of the neo-Nazi milieu in the past. Rather it tended to be dominated by Neo-Paganism and indifference to religion and occasionally even sympathy for radical Islam.

This milieu is as a rule highly critical of public policy, and nationalists who participate in it are suspected of opportunism and often of collaborating with the security services. Therefore the number of people attending events staged by »political nationalists« in Moscow has never exceeded one thousand and even then many of those who turned up were critical of the organisers. However, the »Russian March«, an annual nationalist mass demonstration in Moscow, has in recent years attracted between five and seven thousand people.

Of course, the »political nationalists« described below do attract young people from this milieu, primarily because they have no other base from which to recruit supporters. But that does not mean that political nationalists identify themselves with this milieu, even if they have made repeated attempts to become political representatives of Nazi skinheads and their latter-day successors (often referred to as autonomous Nazis). The latest attempt worth mentioning was made between 2007 and 2009 by the Russky Obraz organisation, which maintains links with such groups as Blood & Honour (Russian group) and United Brigades-88 which are iconic for the neo-Nazi milieu. It was not successful, however.

For the autonomous Nazis the »white revolution« is an article of faith. Race is the main criterion standing out above all others, with religion, forms of government, the economic system and even Russia's borders consigned to a secondary role. The subcultural features of the ultra-right/neo-Nazis (skinheads, straight-edge, football-related groups) including their musical tastes (Hate Core, Nazi-Rap) are of course very important because they are a youth movement (mainly between sixteen and twenty years of age, although the share of over twenties is gradually rising), but these seldom lead to open conflicts (rather, conflicts tend to be personal). One should note that football hooligans with racist views and neo-Nazis are generally two different milieus, although there is some overlap at both the personal and group level.

3. Grassroots ethno-xenophobia is not of course as radical, but its main thrust is the same. See, for example, *Nationalism in Russia*, Levada Centre, 6 September 2011 (<http://www.levada.ru/26-09-2011/natsionalizm-v-rossii>); Results of a VTSIOM survey in the report by the Ministry of Regional Development, »On Measures to Strengthen Inter-Ethnic Harmony in Russian Society«, February 2011. (http://www.minregion.ru/activities/interethnic_relations/national_policy/505/902.html), pp. 15–17; see also an interesting study carried out by the Politekh Agency for the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation »Inter-Ethnic Tolerance in the Urban Youth Milieu (in the wake of events on Manezh Square)«, April 2011 (<http://www.oprf.ru/files/oprosmolodezh.pdf>), pp. 48–49.

4. »White« has a racial meaning, not to be confused with the mass protests in late 2011–early 2012 also frequently referred to as the »white revolution«.

5. Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, London, Routledge, 1993.

6. Unfortunately solid studies on the social composition of the ultra-right movement are lacking. One can merely note that the parents of those who find themselves in the dock are more often than not members of the middle class, small businessmen and officials, clerks, army officers, etc.

7. The term was introduced in Roger Griffin, »From Slime Mould to Rhizome: an Introduction to the Groupuscular Right«, *Patterns of Prejudice*, No. 37, vol. 1, 2003, pp. 27–50.

In their view the »white revolution« should be brought about through constant violence and – a more recent idea – spearheaded against »the system«, i. e. the authorities and the law enforcement organs (the militants are often former members of the security forces and in some cases even serving army officers). Obviously implementing this idea in practice is problematic, so violence is still directed chiefly against visually identifiable minorities (for the most part people from Central Asia, followed by people from the Caucasus) and young anti-fascists (sometimes also against LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender activists and other ideological opponents).⁸

Political Nationalists

Political nationalists in 2012 (after all the transformations in the 2000s) can be divided into three main types:

- the *Russkiye* (Russians) movement and its allies;
- nationalist organisations of the 1990s seeking to reinvent themselves by attracting radical youth (*Russky Obshchenarodny Soyuz*, *Russky Obshchenatsionalny Soyuz*);
- several organisations calling themselves national-democrats (the National Democratic Party, the *Novaya Sila* [New Force] party).

Of course there are also organisations, such as the Great Russia party already mentioned above, that do not fit into any of these categories, but their influence on the development of the ultra-right movement is anyway insignificant. All of them are trying to register as political parties on the basis of legislation that was liberalised in early 2012, but it is difficult to predict whether they will succeed.

All these organisations are opposed to the powers that be and would like to be part of the parliamentary opposition, but they also espouse non-parliamentary methods and are ready to support racist disturbances such as those that took place in Moscow in December 2010. They do not call for violence themselves, but they support neo-Nazis convicted of racist violence and find various ways of justifying such violence.

8. For more detail on the views and practices of autonomous Nazis and the organisations discussed below see Vera Alperovich, »To Think on the Right«, 31 October 2011 (<http://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2011/10/d22894>).

The rhetoric of the political nationalists increasingly contains elements of »civic nationalism«, but basically it remains ethno-nationalist. Since 2010 they have increasingly come out in favour of democracy (but not of course for the rights of minorities – they have a very primitive idea of human rights) and claim to be part of the opposition rather than political fringe groups. Nevertheless, the nationalists retain their fiercely anti-western and anti-liberal stance and in protest rallies resort to violence even against their partners.

The *Russkiye* movement (which is seeking to register as the Party of Nationalists) is a coalition of the Movement against Illegal Immigration (DPNI), led by Alexander Belov, Vladimir Basmanov and others and banned under a court ruling in 2011; *Slavyanskaya Sila* (Slavic Force – SS), the successor to the *Slavyansky Soyuz* (Slavic Union) banned in 2010, led by Dmitry Demushkin; the National Socialist Initiative (NSI), led by Dmitry Bobrov; and the Pamyat organisation (successor to the main organisation of Russian nationalists in the late 1980s, led by Georgy Borovikov). The size of the movement is difficult to determine, but apparently it runs into hundreds.

Russkiye combines legalistic sounding rhetoric against »migrants«, a term used to refer to all »ethnically foreign« groups, with the undisguised neo-Nazism of the SS and NSI. Many activists of the groups within the coalition have been convicted of hate crimes, and even today some activists within *Russkiye* seem to be inclined to violence. *Russkiye* has inherited the DPNI which was the main nationalist force in the second half of the 2000s, tried, without success, to become the basis of a national-populist party and still attracts the most attention and the largest number of young activists. The movement's intellectual level is very low and it is in effect a grouping of underground Nazis who have not attained full legal status.

The old nationalist organisations that have intermittently experienced a resurgence since the beginning of the twenty-first century by attracting ultra-nationalist youth are in many ways similar to *Russkiye*, but have also retained some of their original characteristics. The *Russky Obshchenatsionalny Soyuz* (Russian All-Nation Union, RONS) led by Igor Artyomov and banned in 2011, is an avowedly Orthodox organisation. The *Narodny Sobor* (National Union) created in 2005 on the basis of old groups and led by Vladimir Khomyakov and Oleg Kassim,

the latter a former leader of the Russian National Unity (RNE), the biggest organisation of Russian nationalists in the 1990s, is directly supported by the Russian Orthodox Church (though it is not by chance that the abbreviated name of that organisation is NS). By contrast, the *Russky Obshchenarodny Soyuz* (Russian All-People's Union, ROS) led by Sergei Baburin combines elements of pro-Soviet nostalgia and sympathy for the neo-Nazis and thus attempts to bring together the old and young generations of activists.

At present RONS is in decline, Narodny Sobor has never managed to gain popularity (perhaps its close links with the Russian Orthodox Church and pro-government position prevent it from increasing its influence in the ultra-right milieu), while ROS, which has regained the status of a political party, is on the rise having attracted some radical nationalists (Roman Zentsov, Ivan Mironov, Nikolai Kuryanovich).

The national democrats are only just beginning – with mixed results – to acquire an identity of their own different from the movements described above. Both the main national democratic movement, the National Democratic Party (NDP, led by Konstantin Krylov, Vladimir Tor and others) and *Novaya Sila* (led by Valery Solovei) have distanced themselves from the neo-Nazis and from *Russkiye*, although it is hard for the NDP to do this credibly because it cooperated with the DPNI for many years.

But most importantly, the National Democrats (followed by *Russkiye* and other groups) oppose the *Impertsy*, the supporters of the empire, a collection of Stalinists, Orthodox monarchists and Nazis who espouse various ideologically motivated varieties of Russian nationalism and insist that the only criterion in politics is the interests of the Russian ethnic majority, ethnicity usually being understood in terms of blood. The opposition is also between the ideal of Russia as a Russian ethnic state competing with similar states and that of Russia as a messianic and absolutely unique empire (the latter idea has been dubbed «civilisation nationalism».⁹ Back in the 1990s Russian nationalism was dominated by *Impertsy* of every stripe, but this is no longer the case, *Narodny Sobor* being a prime example of their

decline. They have maintained their position primarily in terms of ideology, although the intellectual level of the National Democrats makes them highly competitive in that field.

Although the National Democrats have a fair number of radical youth, these organisations appeal primarily to the middle classes. The National Democrats are trying to break away from the ultra-right to become national-populists. Perhaps they have a greater chance of attracting support from the broad circles of xenophobic citizens than *Russkiye*, whose behaviour is too marginal, but so far they have not realised this potential and at present the National Democrats represent a loose assemblage of local groups each numbering several dozen people.

3. The Place of the Ultra-Right in Society

The ultra-right movement on the whole remains a marginal phenomenon in Russian politics. Under the current setup, it has long been impossible to verify that statement through elections, while opinion polls reveal only mass sentiment that is difficult to translate into support for specific nationalist organisations. The number of people who turn up for mass events can, however, provide some indication. The ultra-right has clearly waned against the background of a general decline in political activity. Until December 2011 the biggest political events (only those in which participation was free and voluntary) had been mounted by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and the nationalists, with the CPRF numbers falling and those of the nationalists growing. Democratic and left-wing opposition (outside the CPRF) could not match them. But even the most numerous «Russian March» on 4 November 2011 gathered no more than seven thousand people,¹⁰ not a huge number in a capital city of more than ten million people, while other events staged by the ultra-right attracted only a fifth, a tenth or even a twentieth the number of participants.

The ultra-right movement has mainly attracted attention because of the huge number of hate crimes in which it has been involved, but in recent years active police

9. The concept was introduced in Emil Pain, «Russia between Empire and a Nation», *Pro et Contra*, No. 3, 2007. The theme of «civilisation nationalism» is discussed in detail in Verkhovsky 2011 (see note 2).

10. The organisers and even the police gave higher figures, but several members of the Sova Center, counting independently of each other, counted no more than 7,000 marchers.

work has dramatically reduced the rate of such crimes (even though it is still very high compared with other countries).¹¹ As more and more new neo-Nazi bands have been broken up (having committed dozens of killings) the subculture of violence has waned. This gives grounds for hope that the new generation of radicals will not be as readily drawn into that subculture as happened in the first ten to twelve years of the new century, but so far this is no more than a hope.

The semi-legal position and the system of autonomous groups enable the ultra-right to survive, but limit its opportunities. The disturbances on Manezh Square in Moscow on 10 December 2010, at which several thousand¹² young people chanted racist slogans and beat up passers-by in the shadow of the Kremlin with even the OMON riot police unable to disperse them, can be rated as an incredible success for them. This event was the result of a concatenation of various circumstances that are not yet fully understood, and numerous attempts of the ultra-right to repeat that success have not yielded anything remotely comparable.

The authorities use tough methods to keep the ultra-nationalists out of big-time politics, which has a dual effect: on the one hand the ultra-nationalists find it hard to reach out to ordinary citizens; on the other hand, nationalist-minded young people are more often opting to go underground. This became a stable trend during the 2000s because even the activists of legal organisations matured politically while working underground, and organisations with such a core are not equipped to effectively conduct agitation among ordinary citizens. Therefore *Novaya Sila* is trying, albeit not very successfully, to garner activists from outside the ordinary nationalist groups.

Many members of the ultra-right realised in the wake of 4 November 2011 that their own resources had been exhausted, but the start of mass anti-government protests

a month later generated new hope of steering opposition down a nationalist path (the left entertains similar hopes). At the time of writing the protests had been going on for seven months and the nationalists had managed to take an active part in them.¹³ The significance of their participation was greater when the protest actions involved fewer previously non-politicised participants. Thus, in Moscow the role of nationalists is not significant: their participation reached its peak in the march on 4 February 2012, but even then they numbered only 800–900 among several tens of thousands, and only became noticeable in the numerically small »Occupy« movement in May/June. The ultra-right also played an insignificant role in clashes with the police in Moscow on 6 May. In St Petersburg the influx of genuinely new participants into the process was less than in Moscow, and the role of nationalists was accordingly higher. But even there the nationalists in these protest rallies were perceived as a kind of »internal opposition«. On the whole it can be said that the ultra-right has not derived substantial political dividends from the protests that began in December, unlike the liberal and left-wing opposition (outside the CPRF).

Nevertheless, it is a widely held view in Russian society that nationalism is an ideology with a future, this opinion being directly linked to the fact that ethnicity is becoming a more and more sensitive issue. Simultaneously, there is a growing sense that the authorities are failing to address the existing problems (seen in different ways by different groups of citizens). For their part the authorities have tried to respond to the popular discontent by issuing populist declarations or by taking isolated measures. Because the nationalists have the greatest experience in discussing ethnic issues, the language and concepts they use exert a powerful influence on the mainstream public discourse and the actions of federal and other authorities.¹⁴ However, the federal authorities may have their own reasons for cultivating anti-western sentiments, for example.

11. The dynamic is described in detail in Sova Center reports. See the latest report: Vera Alperovich, Alexander Verkhovsky and Natalya Yudina; »Between Manezhnaya and Bolotnaya: Xenophobia and Radical Nationalism and Counteracting Them in Russia in 2011«, *Xenophobia, Freedom of Conscience and Anti-Extremism in Russia in 2011*, Sova Center, Moscow 2012, pp. 5–66; *Statistics of Crimes and Punishments*, *ibid.*, pp. 135–163 (also available at: <http://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2012/02/d23739/>).

12. The figure 5,000 is usually named. The nationalists claim it was 10,000, but all the available videos seem to suggest about 3,000 participants.

13. On the events in the wake of the parliamentary elections of 4 December 2011 see seasonal reports of the Sova Center: Vera Alperovich and Natalya Yudina, »The Ultra-Right: Protests and Party Building«, Winter 2011–2012. Published on the Sova Center website on 3 April 2012 (<http://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2012/04/d24040/>); by the same authors, »The Ultra-Right in the Streets, Law Enforcers on the Internet«, Spring 2012. Published on the Sova Center website on 29 June 2012 (<http://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2012/06/d24757/>).

14. That process is described in detail in Alexander Verkhovsky, »Contemporary Discourse between Russian Nationalists and the Federal Authorities«, *Vestnik Obshchestvennogo Mneniya*, No. 4, 2011.

Federal policy is shifting, albeit slowly and erratically, towards an ethno-nationalist policy, a process that has been underway for many years. Mass consciousness is shifting in the same direction. It is this, and not the mythical threat of »fascists coming to power«, that constitutes the real influence of the ultra-right. That said, the authorities are increasingly leaning towards »civilisation nationalism« as opposed to pure ethnic nationalism.

The federal authorities may actively collaborate with national populists such as Dmitry Rogozin who used to lead the *Rodina* party and currently holds the position of deputy prime minister. These people have ushered in more radical successors in their wake, but these successors have no chance of playing an independent role. Even as it edges in the direction of the ultra-right, the regime is not prepared to share even a modicum of its influence with them.

4. Lack of a Counter-Strategy

The ultra-right movement is perceived by society as symptomatic of the advance of nationalism, although the majority have only a hazy idea of what that nationalism actually consists of and regard it with ambivalence. In this situation many people (some actively but the majority only sporadically) try to construct their own, »acceptable« variant of nationalism.

In 2011 one could observe very diverse actors – the president and the prime minister, some opposition (including liberal) politicians and the more moderate nationalists – gradually converging towards a model of a future Russia as a state with limited immigration and a strong assimilation policy conducted not only with regard to immigrants but also with regard to »internal foreigners«, i. e. people from the North Caucasus. The contours of this consensus were still extremely vague and it was difficult to say whether it would evolve into a real ethnic policy providing an alternative to the ultra-right ideas.¹⁵ However, the winter wave of protests dramatically changed the political agenda, making the chances that serious changes will take place in ethnic policy even slimmer. Consequently, tensions will tend to increase.


15. Ibid.

It is impossible to predict how tough official policy will be in its criteria for registering new political parties, including nationalistic ones. Most probably only a few of the less radical parties will be registered. In the long term that should be reflected in the balance of forces within the ultra-right movement.

Ordinary citizens and participants in non-nationalist political and civil movements can be divided into two categories: one rejects anything called nationalism out of hand, while the other is prepared to engage in a dialogue with »moderate« nationalists, but has different ideas about them or simply does not see that there are any. The first category is fast shrinking as the extremely superficial Soviet-era internationalist and anti-fascist mentality dies away and ethnic-related tensions grow.

Public, as opposed to police, counter-reaction to the ultra-right has been based on two main elements: first, their behaviour has been condemned on account of the hate crimes they have committed or their instigation, direct or indirect, to commit such crimes; secondly, their views have been branded as »fascist«. However, the basis for such a counter-reaction has been gradually watered down. First, the level of racist violence has diminished, and the »political nationalists«, who were gaining a higher profile, were not involved in the violence and have learned to avoid using inflammatory language in public. Second, Russian anti-fascism is mainly based on Soviet anti-fascism, which boiled down to rejecting Hitler and even then primarily because of his anti-communism and external aggression and not because of his racism and totalitarianism. Therefore it was enough for nationalists to avoid flaunting their link with Hitler, something which »political nationalists« have become very adept at in order to be perceived as »socially acceptable«. Third, popular anger towards »migrants« may suggest that even the ultra-right militants are simply highly emotional young idealists who are champions of the Russian people. Fourth, widespread abuse of anti-extremist legislation has so discredited it in recent years that in the eyes of some members of the public even legitimately persecuted groups (such as the DPNI) and characters (such as Nikita Tikhonov, the murderer of lawyer Stanislav Markelov) have come to enjoy a measure of public sympathy.

With the start of the protest movement in December 2011 it became clear that its anti-Putin sentiments were manifestly more important than the differences, includ-



ing differences with the ultra-right (formerly one could observe it in the ranks of the Other Russia movement led by Gary Kasparov and others). The organisers of protest rallies regularly invited the leaders of the ultra-right to the podium, despite their extremely unruly behaviour.

So we can say that the development of the ultra-right movement is currently being restrained mainly by internal problems – the chief one being that most of its activists formerly belonged to the radical fringe. Externally, the movement is limited only by police pressure, and that only to some extent.



About the author

Alexander Verkhovsky is director of the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis, a Moscow-based Russian NGO which conducts informational and research work on nationalism and xenophobia.

Imprint

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung | Dep. for Central and Eastern Europe
Hiroshimastr. 28 | 10785 Berlin | Germany

Responsible:
Dr. Ernst Hillebrand, Head, Dep. for Central and Eastern Europe

Phone: ++49-30-269-35-7726 | Fax: ++49-30-269-35-9250
<http://www.fes.de/international/moe>

To order publications:
info.moe@fes.de

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.



ISBN 978-3-86498-292-7