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Author(s)	Boiter, Albert; ボイター, アルバート
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CONFLICTING VIEWS OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISM

Albert BOITER*

Nationalism is the least predictable of the forces that shape the historical development of nations and sovereign states. Although nineteenth century Europe was dominated by the nationalist movement, no significant thinker of the era predicted for it, as Sir Isaiah Berlin notes, "a future in which it would play an even more dominant role," becoming "the most powerful...single movement at work in the world today... No influential thinker, to the best of my knowledge, foresaw its future—at any rate, no one clearly foretold it."¹ In the Marxist vision of the future the eventual demise of nationalism altogether was anticipated, with national consciousness giving way to *class* consciousness, national boundaries becoming meaningless, and enmity disappearing from international relations in a milieu of governments guided by identical sets of socialist ideals. Lenin carried over these notions without revision and they became enshrined in Marxism-Leninism as the official ideological explanation for nationality policy in the multi-ethnic Soviet state as well as for relations between communist states, the doctrine of "proletarian internationalism."

Long before 1967, when the Soviet system celebrated a half century in power, it had become evident that the old Marxist prognosis had miscalculated badly on all its major premises. The Sino-Soviet conflict had made clear that even war between communist states was not unthinkable. On the other hand, it was possible to think in 1967 that the early Marxist prediction had been correct, at least partly, with regard to traditional Russian nationalism, for many of the cardinal attributes that distinguished the earlier rural Orthodox culture of Russia in the nineteenth century had apparently disappeared from the Soviet scene. Because so little convincing evidence existed at the time to argue to the contrary, few could have rejected the view that self-identification with historic Old Russia on the part of the Russian population of the USSR had deteriorated to the status of a peripheral force in Soviet society, that Russian "national" sentiment and feelings had become identified mainly with the Soviet state, and that the old national identity, to the extent it existed at all as a

* The author is Research Fellow in Soviet Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University, Washington, D. C. During 1979-1980, he was a foreign visiting professor at the Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University.

1) Isaiah Berlin, "Nationalism. Past Neglect and Present Power," in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*. New York: Viking Press, 1980, p. 337. See also his article, "The Bent Twig: A Note on Nationalism", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (1972), pp. 11-30.

cohesive entity, survived only among a few older people or in the truncated, expurgated, sanitized, and officially encouraged new synthesis called "Soviet Patriotism" or, by many outside observers, "Soviet Russian Nationalism."²⁾

Since 1967 that perception has changed drastically. Today Russian nationalism with all its traditional connotations is a topic of wide-ranging discussion and passionate controversy, debate, and polemics in many forms and forums among intellectuals, both inside the Soviet Union and in many other countries. The great debate is producing a vast and ever-growing literature in books, academic and literary journals, public policy magazines, even government reports.³⁾ It finds place in one guise or another on the agenda of major conferences and meetings of Soviet affairs specialists in Europe and the United States.⁴⁾ Despite irreconcilable, sharply conflicting views, all participants in these debates now assume that Russian nationalism is vitally alive, that it has a potential mobilizing force among ethnic Russians far greater than that of communist ideology, and that it undoubtedly will exert an influence on Soviet official policy in the 1980s—a fact which is admired, welcomed, and encouraged or lamented, feared and condemned, depending on the viewer's own assumptions and basic point of view.

While there can be no precise scientific definition of either nationalism or nation, scholars exercise care to use these words in a limited general sense that would apply to the phenomena they describe wherever it may occur in the world. In popular speech and journalistic usage the terms often are used loosely, with an ambiguous or value-judgment meaning that is both inaccurate and unnecessary.⁵⁾ The word "nation" is particularly misapplied, being made synonymous with the "state" or even a geographical area ("a cold wave is sweeping across the nation"). British historian Seton-Watson points out that it is precisely when the interests and aims of a nation clash with those of a sovereign state that nationalism becomes a potential danger to peace: "National consciousness is a powerful force..., neither good nor bad in itself but potentially constructive or destructive... Nationalism becomes dangerous and a potential cause of wars when the national consciousness of a significant number of people within

2) This was the title of the first major book on the topic to be written since 1917 by an American scholar. See Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

3) The sources cited in footnotes to the present article represent only a minute portion of the relevant published material available in various languages.

4) For example, several papers for scholarly panels at the Second World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies held at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in September-October 1980, and at the 13th national convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in Monterey, California, in September 1981.

5) It should not be used as a substitute for *chauvinism* ("exaggerated and bellicose patriotism") or *xenophobia* ("fear and hatred of foreigners and things strange or foreign"). If "nationalist fanaticism" is meant, two words instead of one should be used.

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one or more states conflicts with the existing frontiers of one or more sovereign states and the interests of the dominant political class within that state or those states”⁶). He suggests that “the word ‘nationalism’ should be confined to two main meanings: a doctrine about the interests and aims of a nation, and a movement to achieve these alleged aims.” Seton-Watson sees the role of the Russian nation in the present-day Soviet state as follows:

“Soviet policy differs somewhat from that of the last Tsars. It is not its overriding aim to Russify the non-Russian peoples: rather, the intention is to impose on Russians and others alike the same synthetic totalitarian culture, in essence an amalgam of residual Marxism-Leninism and an imperialist chauvinism which is not explicitly Russian. However, the instruments of the policy are mostly Russian bureaucrats impregnated with that parochial intolerance of any deviation from uniformity, and that absolute lack of generosity toward other outlooks, which has been the mark of the species for the last 500 years. It is also true, and an important truth, that the Russian nation is a victim, not a beneficiary, of this policy, which is a denial of the true tradition of Russian culture as expressed in Orthodox saintliness and in nineteenth century literature.”⁷)

Clearly a discussion of Russian nationalism has many ramifications—past, present, and future—and in brief space no more than one or two aspects can be dealt with adequately. The present article will try to cast some light on just two questions: how and why the written evidence of Russian nationalism has grown so rapidly in recent years and, secondly, why the many historical facts and interpretations involved in the present debate are so controversial.

II

At least four developments in the late 1960s and early 1970s stimulated the rise of great controversy over Russian nationalism. The first was an outburst of Russian ethnocentrism in works published in some Soviet literary journals in 1968–1970, but especially in the youth journal, *Molodaia gvardiia*. These works went beyond the “respect for the past” and borrowings of historical symbols permitted under Stalin to arouse and channel patriotic feelings. Dozens of poems, short stories, and essays were devoted to the resurrected “national spirit” and “land and soil” in a manner directly relating Russia’s history and cultural heritage to current Soviet realities. These authors are often referred to as “Russophiles” or “Russites” and their ideological orientation as “pseudo-Slavophile” (*pseudo* because they are

6) Hugh Seton-Watson, “Nationalism, Nations, and Western Policies,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1979), pp. 91–92.

7) *Ibid.*, pp. 100–101.

careful not to exalt the contribution of Christianity or the Russian Orthodox Church to the cultural heritage)⁸⁾.

Simultaneously, a second and even larger “unofficial” Russian ethnocentric literature began to circulate in *samizdat*, which became after 1967 a major channel of communication within the Soviet Union and for transmission abroad of unpublished writings. It is in this medium that one finds the writings of the “neo-Slavophiles”—those whose focus is on ethical-religious patriotism and who decry the moral and cultural decay that threatens the Russian ethnic group.

A third relevant factor was the emigration abroad in the 1970s of thousands of Soviet citizens, including many who had been articulate scholars and writers involved in the internal intellectual ferment and who continued their publication activity in the freer circumstances of the West.

Then there was Solzhenitsyn. Or to be more precise, there was Solzhenitsyn’s decision in 1973 to direct his great literary talent to publicistic writings about the fate of the Russian nation under Soviet Communism and to compose on this subject his famous *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*⁹⁾. He is, of course, the archetypical “neo-Slavophile”, the most articulate and forceful exponent of this school of Russian ethnocentric thought. He brings to the topic his talents of powerful prose and literary imagination and the strong response this evokes both in the Soviet Union and abroad puts him in a category by himself. He has been a prime catalyst in broadening the implications of the debate on Russian nationalism from internal aspects of the Soviet system to its relevance in current superpower relations.

III

The surfacing of a within-establishment Russian nationalist interest group, distinct from the national-bolshevism cultivated by the regime, is usually dated from two articles by Viktor Chalmaev published in *Molodaia gvardiia* in 1968 that created a sensation in Soviet intellectual circles¹⁰⁾. In his articles, Chalmaev chided Soviet Russians for their tendency to undervalue the traditions and achievements of Russia,

8) Frederick C. Barghoorn, “Four Faces of Soviet Russian Ethnocentrism”, in Edward Allworth (ed.), *Ethnic Russia in the USSR. The Dilemma of Dominance*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1980, p. 57.

9) The letter was dated September 5, 1973. When no response had been received after six months, it was sent abroad and published in Russian. See A. Solzhenitsyn, *Pismo vozhdiam sovetskogo soiuza*. Paris: YMCA Press, 1974. For an English translation by Hilary Sternberg, see Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

10) *Molodaia gvardiia*, Nos. 3 and 9, 1968. The actual initiator of the movement of turning to history in search of Russian “roots” was the talented writer Vladimir Soloukhin with his article “Letters from the Russian Museum” published in two issues of *Molodaia gvardiia* in 1966 and as a book in 1967.

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particularly prerevolutionary Russia. Citing from medieval Russian history and borrowing analogies once used by nineteenth-century Slavophiles, he lauded the uniqueness and superiority of the Russian national “spirit” as compared to the “vulgar satiety” of western cultures. He denounced the increasing “Americanization” of modern nations as the single greatest threat to human civilization and described the United States as the “first country...which, though educated, lives without ideals”¹¹). The Soviet Union, he argued, could avoid this fate because of the “fluid Russian spirit” at its core, a spirit that could never be satisfied by mere pursuit of material prosperity nor content with such trivia as parliamentary government. But Chalmaev went even further. He asserted that the Bolshevik revolution was in large part a product of this distinctively Russian outlook and on this basis he found genuine continuity, not abrupt rupture, between Russia’s past and the Soviet system.

Exponents of these pseudo-Slavophile ideas (which came to be identified as “Chalmaevism”) had drawn a two-edged sword, one not wholly in conformity with Marxist-Leninist ideology but at the same time opposing the liberal critics who favored democratic reforms. In effect, it established a third magnetic pole between the contending political currents that had dominated Soviet intellectual life since Khrushchev—destalinization versus neo-Stalinism, democratization versus authoritarianism. The new Russophilism attracted many adherents, especially among young Russians. Roi Medvedev wrote in the winter of 1970–1971 that the “Russites” had strong support in the Komsomol Central Committee and in the Soviet Army’s Main Political Administration¹²). But Chalmaev also immediately came under fire from both the Establishment ideological dogmatists and the more liberal writers (the “westernizers” by historical analogy) long identified with the journal *Noviy mir*¹³).

The CPSU leadership permitted, or at least tolerated, continuation of the public debate between the “Russites” and their various opponents until the end of 1970, despite the obvious doctrinal heresy of many of their ideas. One can only speculate about the reasons for this toleration. A common assumption is that the Soviet rulers consciously desired a moderate increase in Russian patriotism to offset the declining appeal and lack of inner vitality of official ideology. The context of the time also is important: the Sino-Soviet controversy was near its peak, the influence of Czechoslovakia’s turn toward “Socialism with a human face” in 1968 had an unpredictable constituency, and mainstream dissident movements that appeared in the USSR after the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial in 1966 (including dissent among the non-Russian ethnic groups) were percolating.

11) *Molodaia gvardiia*, No. 9 (September), 1968, p. 2.

12) Roi Medvedev, *Kniga o sotsialisticheskoi demokratii*. Amsterdam/Paris: Alexander Herzen Foundation and Editions Grasset & Fasquelle, 1972, p. 108.

13) See, for example, the lengthy article by Aleksandr Dementiev in *Novyi mir*, No. 4, 1969.

The writings of the Russophiles tended from the outset in a neo-Stalinist direction and this bias became more explicit as the movement continued. In fact, it was excessive admiration of Stalin¹⁴⁾ that finally moved the party bureaucracy to throw up the caution flag. An article by Sergei Semanov in August 1970 even glorified the Stalinist policies of the 1930s as a crowning achievement of the Russian *national* revolution¹⁵⁾. Such openness clearly went too far because it made too explicit a presumption of superiority of the Russian nation vis-a-vis the 100 or more non-Russian nationalities in the Soviet Union, thus contradicting official nationality policy.

The authoritative party theoretical organ *Kommunist* in a November 1970 article, "Socialism and the Cultural Heritage", criticized *Molodaia gvardiia* for its "mistaken direction" and instructed Chalmaev and other contributors to that periodical to refrain from a "non-Marxist" approach to Russian history and culture, but at the same time sharply criticized the *Novyi mir* staff writer who had attacked Chalmaev, A. Dementiev, for excessive tolerance toward Western "bourgeois" ideology¹⁶⁾. Shortly after this article appeared, the CPSU Politburo decided to "strengthen" the *Molodaia gvardiia* editorial board by replacing its editor, Nikonov, and most of his colleagues. The "Russites"—and ethnocentric village prose writers (the *derevenshchiki*)¹⁷⁾— have continued to write for publication, but they now stay within the diminished ideological boundaries prescribed by party authority. Thus discussion of Russian national themes has been toned down in the Soviet press, but evidences from occasional unofficial sources indicate that it remains intense behind closed doors¹⁸⁾.

IV

Russian history has known only two long-standing and steadfast traditions: the religious tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church and the political tradition of an expansionist authoritarian statehood. The basic elements of both traditions figure prominently in the thinking of all participants in the controversy about Russian ethnocentric patriotism today. Like the nineteenth-century Slavophiles, however, the new Russian nationalists put emphasis on different parts of the historical legacy, resulting in a division of opinion into two broad currents. One current, reminiscent of the romantic early Slavophiles, conceives of Russian ethnicity as basically cultural or spiritual in nature. It attaches fundamental importance to native homelands (soil),

14) *Inter alia* Feliks Chuev's poem about Stalin in *Molodaia gvardiia*, No. 12, (December) 1968.

15) S. Semanov, "On Relative and Eternal Values," *Molodaia gvardiia*, No. 8, 1970.

16) *Kommunist*, No. 17 (November) 1970, p. 97.

17) John B. Dunlop, "Ruralist Prose Writers in the Russian Ethnic Movement", in E. Allworth (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 80-97.

18) See *Arkhiv samizdata* No. 1009 for an interesting conflict of opinions on Russian nationalist attitudes at an officially organized literary "seminar" and at meetings of the party organization of the Union of Soviet Writers.

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language, literature, and religion as the chief hallmarks of Russian identity, and it tends to judge political rule on the basis of its conformity to these nonpolitical dimensions.

The second current, more akin to the reactionary imperial state chauvinism of the former Pan-Slavists, views Russian history as an essentially political process and the state as the most genuine expression of the Russian heritage¹⁹). The modern "pseudo-Slavophiles" or "Russites" generally reflect this second current: ideologically, their intellectual effort is aimed at a better synthesis of the Russian past and Marxism-Leninism; culturally, their quest for roots in the past concerns a "Russian soul" that is almost entirely secular. Not surprisingly, their efforts gravitated toward party dogmatists and neo-Stalinists who found their views ideologically comfortable. Despite support in certain party circles and the Komsomol, however, they were suppressed from the top because their writings introduced more ideological pluralism than the guardians of Marxism-Leninism can allow.

The ethical-religious, or "neo-Slavophile" current of Russian ethnocentric nationalism is significantly different both in regard to the Russian ethnic group's relationship to the Soviet regime and to the position of the Russians among the other ethnic groups of the USSR. This school of thinking does not seek to reconcile the Russian past with Marxism-Leninism but rejects that ideology as incompatible with the historical Russian outlook. It sees Marxism as "un-Russian," an import from the West that has reduced the Russian nation to a weak, colonial entity. It blames the imperial strivings of "proletarian internationalism" for the suffering of the Russian people and the decline of Russian culture generally. For these reasons many of them, like Solzhenitsyn, consider the Russian "nation" more repressed and less privileged under communist rule than any other ethnic group in the Soviet Union.

The claim of the "neo-Slavophiles" to be nonpolitical and thus disinterested in political theory or in the mechanics of exercising state power—and, in any case, that these are secondary matters—is the most controversial and hardest to understand part of their philosophical views. How can a movement that rejects both communism and democracy on grounds of principle not be basically political? By all normal definitions the alternatives would seem to be anarchy or some type of fascist dictatorship—or, in the Russian case, a longing for return to tsarist autocracy. The non-political claim nonetheless has a valid intellectual content, based on the specific Russian history over many centuries of noninvolvement of the popular masses in the political process. In this view tangible state power was far away and others (*oni*) exercised it; it touched peasant village life only in the form of spasmodic contact with state bureaucrats whose demeanor inspired neither awe nor respect. Orthodox Christianity was the

19) Roman Szporluk, "History and Russian Ethnocentrism," in E. Albright (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 41.

dominant influence, nurturing a mystical world outlook that enjoined people to see themselves as members of the unitary “body of Christ” rather than as citizens of a temporal state. This self-perception of the Russian peasantry was the basis for praise of its moral superiority by the romantic liberal Slavophiles of the last century and by the “neo-Slavophiles” today.

The first samizdat “journal of Russian patriots,” *Veche*, which appeared in nine large issues in 1971–1974²⁰⁾, was founded by Vladimir Osipov, its chief editor, as a forum (like the ancient town assembly or *veche* in old Novgorod) of debate about the Slavophiles and Dostoevsky. He specified that “political questions will not be among the themes treated in our journal”²¹⁾ and proclaimed intentions of loyalty to and support of the Soviet state system. This did not save the journal from forced closure by the authorities and Osipov’s arrest in 1974.

Solzhenitsyn, in his 1973 *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, drew the contrast between ethnic culture and political power even more starkly. He proposed that the CPSU should remain the only organized political force and whether it chose to remain a conspiratorial, closed organization would be its own business. He also would retain the existing electoral system: “Leave it as it is, which guarantees all posts to you and those selected by you”. Then, he added an often quoted paragraph:

You will still retain all the levers of power, a separate, strong and exclusive party, the army, the police force, industry, transportation, communications, mineral wealth, a monopoly of foreign trade and an artificial rate for the ruble—but let the people breathe, let them think and develop!²²⁾

The authors appearing in *Veche* and other sources²³⁾ called on the CPSU to loosen its monopoly on ideology and to allow ideas to compete freely; Solzhenitsyn urged party leaders to cast off the “dead ideology” completely, arguing that they thereby would be acting as true Russian patriots and this could only enhance their personal power and prestige.

The political conceptions of the “neo-Slavophiles” become comprehensible only in the light of the religious tradition of Orthodox Christianity from which they derive.

20) The Russian text of all nine issues may be found in *Sobranie dokumentov samizdata*. Munich: Samizdat Archive Association. Vol. 21-A (1973) and 21-B (1976).

21) *Arkhiv samizdata*, No. 1020, p. 2.

22) A. Solzhenitsyn, *Letter...*, *op. cit.*, p. 57. See note 9.

23) Although more numerous, the writings of the “neo-Slavophiles” are more widely scattered in published sources than those of the “Russites”. Besides *Veche*, the largest number sent abroad from the USSR have been printed since 1972 in the Russian-language journal *Vestnik RKhD* (*Herald of the Russia Christian Movement*) in Paris. By 1977 more than half of the articles published in this periodical came from authors in the Soviet Union. See also *Iz-pod glyb* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1974), a book-length collection of articles by Solzhenitsyn *et al*, which also appeared in English under the title, *From Under the Rubble* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975).

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In the ecclesiastical concept of *sobornost*, for example, a nation is seen as a collective person entrusted by God to the care and responsibility of a national church. This defines the purposive character and the moral foundation of a national culture. A political order, whatever its forms, is natural only if it harmonizes with and exemplifies the underlying spiritual strength of the nation. The Soviet communist dictatorship is rejected not because it is a dictatorship, but rather because it is the first dictatorship in history that seeks to destroy the national culture and the national church, something that would have been inconceivable to Napoleon or Hitler. Solzhenitsyn's critique of western civilization, as in his commencement address at Harvard in June 1978, flows from the same perception of a decline of the spiritual side of national consciousnesses as a result of pursuing only goals of material well-being to the neglect of "other human requirements and characteristics of a subtler and higher nature, ...as if human life did not have any higher meaning."²⁴⁾

Another basic attribute of Christian culture in "neo-Slavophile" thinking is what the Rev. Alexander Schmemmann, Dean of St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary in New York, has called the "triumphant intuition of creation, fall, and redemption", which gave birth in Russia to "a deep and all-embracing, although possibly unconscious perception of the world, man, and life..."²⁵⁾ Creation involves the notion of the original goodness of the world and life; evil enters into the world not as some independently formed force that can be neutralized by explanation, but by man's personal choice to betray his humanity, his conscience, and thus his *fall* from a higher plane; but redemption is always possible if only man finds his conscience and repents. The redemption of Russia as a collective person, in the perception of the "neo-Slavophiles", requires genuine repentance, renunciation of the evils of the communist system and a return to the healthy moral roots of historical Russian culture.

Such moral and religious conceptions, which in western democracies are relegated to a background role in shaping social and political public policy, are moved to the foreground as policy relevant by many Russian ethnocentric patriots of all camps. The broad human rights movement, which began within a Marxist-oriented milieu and had no ethnocentric ideology, but stressed instead mainly age-old western values of justice, democracy, and humanitarianism, evoked so little mass response that the regime could suppress it gradually with impunity. Thus the ideology of the human rights movement began to evolve toward existentialism and Christianity. At the same time, the "neo-Slavophiles" came to realize that no cultural renaissance would be possible in the absence of guaranteed constitutional rights and freedoms. Osipov, as

24) Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *A World Split Apart*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979. See also *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard* (Washington, Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980), p. 17.

25) Alexander Schmemmann, "On Solzhenitsyn," *Vestnik RSKD*, No. 98 (1970), pp. 72-87. English translation in John B. Dunlop *et al*, *Aleksandr Sozhenitsyn: Critical Essays and Documentary Materials*. Belmont, Mass: Nordland Publishing Co., 1973, pp. 28-44.

early as 1972, said “*Veche* and the ‘democrats’ are a joint embodiment of the Slavophile principle, that is simultaneously both national and liberal.”²⁶⁾ Thus, in contrast to the move of the “pseudo-Slavophiles” in an ultraconservative, neo-Stalinist direction, the trend among the “neo-Slavophiles” has been in a liberal direction.

The crucial test of the political essence of various Russian ethnocentric currents of thought lies not in theoretical differences, however, but in something more tangible : namely, their attitude toward other nations and ethnic groups. Here the position of the “neo-Slavophiles”, though ambiguous on specific details, is quite clear in general. The basic tendency is isolationist and antiimperialist. The most dramatic statement of the isolationist tendency was Solzhenitsyn’s proposal in 1973 that the Russian population withdraw “to the Northeast” (i.e., to Siberia), perhaps even abandoning Moscow since it could no longer be called a truly “Russian” city. In a footnote at this point in the original version of his letter to the Soviet leaders he wrote : “Sooner or later...we will have to loosen our hold on Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, and perhaps even a part of the Ukraine. There can be no thought whatsoever of keeping any peripheral nation within the bounds of our country by force.”²⁷⁾

V

The two models of Russian nationalism issuing from the internal Soviet debate, each containing interpretation of Russia’s past history, present situation, and future outlook diametrically opposed to the other, have been replicated in recent controversy between western scholars on the subject. Once again, Solzhenitsyn has been the main catalyst and made himself the eye of the storm in this controversy by virtue of his strong views and sharply stated formulations. His long article in *Foreign Affairs* in early 1980 warned nations of the West that their “misconceptions about Russia” pose a danger to their own national existence because they engender and perpetuate a totally false perception of the inherently “anti-national” character of “international” communism²⁸⁾. He heaped particular scorn on the long prevailing interpretation of “Stalinism” by western authors as some kind of throwback to “primordial Russian tradition” and as betrayal by Stalin of the original goals of the 1917 Revolution.

26) Quoted from Michael Aksenov Meerson, “The Influence of the Orthodox Church on Russian Ethnic Identity,” in E. Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

27) Quoted from a typescript of the original version not published. The basic meaning of the footnote was retained in the published version, but specific mention of the Baltic States, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, and the Ukraine was deleted, presumably because the author felt that reference to areas by name would focus attention on explosive details of geographical dismemberment of the Soviet Union and thus dilute the general principle he was advocating.

28) Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, “Misconceptions about Russia are a Threat to America”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Spring 1980), pp. 797-834.

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Replying in a second article to critics of his views, Solzhenitsyn reiterated that there was in fact no such distinctive phenomenon as “Stalinism” because “each of the essential traditions of the Stalin era was inherited ready-made...from Lenin and Trotsky” and Stalin merely “consolidated the Leninist legacy dutifully and consistently within the forms in which he inherited it.”²⁹⁾ But this was a side issue, or rather an example of the more sweeping, total view of the unchanging nature of communism that he wished to expound.

Solzhenitsyn believes that communism and nationalism are antithetical historical phenomena. Communism as an international phenomenon was born in the combined traditions of militant atheism and the revolutionary terrorism of 1793 and these still constitute its core motivating forces. Thus any communist regime, wherever attaining power, inevitably will seek to suppress the nation’s historical heritage and can never base its policy on fundamental concern for the welfare of its own people. “Neither in Estonia nor Poland nor Mongolia nor anywhere else has communism ever served national interests”. The concept of “national communism” is a contradiction in terms ; no real variance in communism from country to country is possible because “it is everywhere alike, everywhere bent on crushing individuality, conscience, even life itself, everywhere backed up by ideological terror and everywhere aggressive.”³⁰⁾ For Solzhenitsyn the future of civilization hinges not on a struggle between communism and democracy, but between communism and national culture.

* * * *

Extension of the debate about Russian ethnocentric patriotism (nationalism) into the realm of global politics underlines the boundless scope of relevant subject matter that can become involved and helps to explain why, with an ever growing number of participants, the debate spread so rapidly. The rising level of acrimony can be attributed to the ability of public discussion of Russia as a nation to evoke powerful emotions in all participants, jogging the historical memory, challenging deep-seated convictions, long-held preconceptions, and unspoken or even unconscious prejudices. But a certain role has been played also by the conflicting and ambiguous uses made of the term nationalism. Clearly some major elements of the historical Russian national consciousness even today militate against the Soviet model of authoritarian rule and also against an aggressive, expansionist foreign policy.

29) Same author, “The Courage to See,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Fall 1980), p. 204.

30) *Ibid.*, pp. 205-206.