XENOPHOBIC ATTITUDES AND NEW RUSSIAN PATRIOTISM: A CASE STUDY OF YOUTH IN KRASNODAR TERRITORY

Elena Omel'chenko and Natal'ia Goncharova
Ul'ianovsk State University

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been marked by major ethnic conflicts, fuelled by growing geo-political claims and the rise of nationalistic and xenophobic attitudes in the public consciousness. These phenomena are rooted in processes taking place both on a global level (moral panic over the growth in terrorism, fear of pro-Islamic opinion, and reactions to anti-government protests about rising immigration across Europe)[i] and at a domestic level. In Russia's particular case, the spread of xenophobic attitudes has been aggravated as a result of inconsistent and ambiguous government policy and a constantly shifting media debate; new patriotic tendencies emerge in the wake of each new government resolution aimed at 'combating' the rise in publicly-aired extremist views or, conversely, fostering patriotism.

Human rights and information centres are tackling this problem primarily by monitoring demonstrations of radical nationalism and racial intolerance by extremist groups and the use of hostile language by the central and regional media (see, for example: Proiavleniia radikal'nogo natsionalizma 2007; Kozhevnikova 2006; Krasnodarskii pravozashchitnii tsentr 2002; Riazantsov 2005). In contrast, the research upon which this article draws is concerned with concealed dislike or 'everyday' xenophobia. Rather than examining systematized nationalistic or racist attitudes, therefore, the discussion focuses on relatively unstructured, irrational reactions on an emotional level to the presence of 'outsiders'[ii] in everyday life. This is not to suggest, however, that xenophobic attitudes in Russia are developing in a social vacuum. Such attitudes are closely connected to the history of xenophobia in Soviet state policy as well as to distinctive features of Russian mentality and culture and the current phase of national structuring in Russia. Thus, before moving to the more detailed discussion of how these attitudes are reproduced on an everyday level, a brief definition of key concepts and their political context are provided.

A Note on Concepts

The first distinction that must be made is between nationalism and racism on the one hand and xenophobic attitudes on the other. According to leading Russian social scientists engaged in the study of Russian and post-Soviet nationalism, 'our [Russian]' ideology can be clearly differentiated from both a xenophobic mindset and from all recognizable global models of nationalism (Gudkov & Dubin 2005; Beseda s L. Gudkovym i B. Dubinym 2006; Dubin 2006). Gudkov and Dubin define the characteristics of *Russian* nationalism underpinning the present-day model of the *Rossiianin* (the Russian citizen), as consisting of: a confidence in the superiority of the Russians above all other ethnic groups; a pride in the fact that Russians are an empire-building race giving them an innate privilege to choose where they live and to occupy high-status positions in government, the economy and education; militarism expressed in the special role played by the armed forces in building the Russian state, shaping national and ethnic identity and in the pursuit of geopolitical expansionism; and the idea of some organic unity of the Russian people perceived to have been shaped by their historic fate. As a consequence, they argue, Russian society has a tendency towards isolationism, anti-Western sentiment and the negative, mechanistic integration of a heterogeneous population by means of repression and police control, carried out with the help of the ideologeme of 'the enemy' and 'the hostile environment'. This is apparent both in the projection of negative ideas onto other societies and in the search for a 'fifth column' of non-Russians, enemies within the state. However, the form of Russian nationalism which is currently flourishing on the ruins of the country's imperial culture is unable to provide any new political ideas or to designate the goals towards which society should move in order to modernise; indeed Gudkov and Dubin argue that present-day Russian nationalism is notable for its persistently anti-modernist outlook, according to which everything 'western' is perceived as hostile.

The growth of xenophobia and the search for an enemy are by no means peculiarly

'youth' problems; they are symptoms of a disease afflicting the whole of Russian society. The image of the 'enemy' cannot be successfully promoted and accepted if it is not supported by certain demands and expectations in the popular consciousness and if it does not correspond to already existing legends, stereotypes and myths. The idea of the 'enemy' (the 'foreigner' or 'outsider') is constructed simultaneously from both sides: by the interested ruling elite on the one hand and by various popular views, explanations, superstitions and symbols on the other. The situation of social tension is a convenient environment in which to form 'social defences' and the simplest of these is everyday xenophobia (Gudkov 2005). In certain situations such xenophobia can become a deciding factor in uniting a nation against modernisation and thus it is a phenomenon that presents a real threat to the development of society.

The growing interest in the youth 'problem' on the part of Russia's current state and political elite is clearly a matter of expediency. As a result of confrontations between the former 'brothers and sisters' of the Soviet Union, the threat of 'revolutions' (of various colours);[iii] the popularity of xenophobic, extreme nationalistic views among young people and the active, spontaneous search for a unifying national idea; public activists, politicians and social scientists have been forced to direct some of their attention away from the political elite towards society's ground-level social agents (ordinary citizens). However, it remains unclear what is being labeled 'correct' (or conversely 'deviant') behaviour for young people while the spread of patriotic sentiment 'from the top down' encourages the growth of xenophobia. At the same time, not everything that takes place in the youth sphere is directly shaped by the discourse of politics and the state; young people who choose to become skinheads or join the National Bolshevik Party are making a cultural choice, which allows them to position themselves in relation to what is their 'own' and what is 'foreign'. Thus, any research of the kind reported below must consider both sides; it must examine the political/state discourse of patriotism on the one hand, and the characteristics of 'patriotic youth protest' on the other.

The Socio-political Climate and Xenophobic Attitudes

Russia has always been a multi-ethnic state within which different ethnic groups have co-existed and interacted with one another. Statistical data suggest that today more than twenty million people of non-Russian nationality live in Russia (Malakhov 2001: 9) and Moscow alone is home to representatives of 140 different nationalities. Today, both in society at large and in the media, a vigorous discussion is taking place about the problems that have arisen in contemporary Russian society in connection with spreading xenophobic attitudes, antipathy between national groups and race hatred. Studies carried out by the Levada Centre show that there has been an increase in hostile, xenophobic attitudes. In 1989, when asked 'Do you believe our country has enemies?', only 13% of those surveyed named particular figures or authorities and the most common response to the question was 'Why look for enemies, when all our problems are to be found within ourselves?' Ten years later, between 1999 and 2002, 65-70% of those questioned answered confidently: 'Yes, Russia has enemies'. Among those specified in descending order were: Chechens, NATO, Islamic fundamentalists, democrats, and China.

The search for enemies in Russia is by no means a revelation of the post-Soviet era. The foundations of a nationalistic mindset of a particularly defensive, imperialist nature were embedded at the state level and became more and more entrenched with each 'stage' of Socialism reached. This tradition has continued throughout the post-Soviet period. The crisis of 1998, when the total collapse of hope in a democratic future had an enormous impact on society's moral state, is a particularly important turning point. Over the years that followed, sociologists have observed a process of moral degradation and dramatic changes in the popular consciousness, including that of young people. These changes have included the expectation of authoritarian leadership and a general increase in compensatory chauvinism. In 1999, for example, there was an abrupt but short-lived outburst of anti-American feeling. Then came a wave of revanchism in connection with the beginning of the second war in Chechnya, shored up at state level by Putin's infamous quote in which he promised to 'flush' Chechen guerrillas 'down the toilet'; there followed a general increase in xenophobia and aggressive compensatory chauvinism. In 2004-06 the Russian political elite and the media carried out an active 'campaign' against some of the country's closest neighbours during which 'official' enemies were identified as the Baltic states, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and then all Eastern European countries

entering the EU in 2004. In this climate, xenophobic sentiments may become central to ethno-national identification, turning the identifier 'Russian' from a positive collective identification with particular philosophical or moral content into a purely negative defence against 'others'.

All these circumstances have heightened tension between the representatives of different ethnic groups. From the former members of the Soviet Union, a composite image of an enemy has been constructed, a scapegoat that could be blamed for the low standard of living of the 'principal' population because it supposedly hampered the development of the majority. 'Incomers' (which is how members of minority nationalities are usually perceived) are blamed for polluting Russia's territory, taking jobs, and so on.[iv]

Judging by the numerous media publications on the subject, the attitudes and behaviour of the younger generation are causing particular concern, not least because a country's youth is traditionally seen as indicative of its future. Moreover, at present, young people are beginning to express their feelings of protest in rather menacing forms. The greatest threat is presented by so-called extremist youth organisations: the skinhead movement, Russian National Unity (RNU), the National Bolshevik Party (NBP), and others. These are the focus of particular attention from the authorities, public organisations and the media. In the first half of 2005, it is reported that there were around 200 victims of racially motivated crimes, including ten murders, in Russia. Current trends show that - on the basis of official figures alone - the number of such crimes is increasing by 30% each year (Nekhamkin 2005).[v]

It is generally thought that youth extremism is more chaotic and elemental than 'adult' extremism. However, analysts and some parts of the media have recently noted that acts by nationalist organisations are becoming more systematic and better organised. Pickets and demonstrations are starting to be held regularly in major Russian cities. There has also been a tendency for activists within such organisations to make their activities public. They have begun to claim responsibility for crimes committed out of nationalist motives and to make open threats towards representatives of the anti-Fascist movement (Kozhevnikova 2005: 3). Young nationalists tend to target people of non-Slavic appearance whether or not they are, in fact, ethnically non-Russian. The findings of various sociological surveys suggest that the level of xenophobia in Russia - measured by the proportion of the population supporting xenophobic slogans - fluctuated between 50-60% in the first half of 2005 (Analiticheskii doklad Moskovskogo biuro po pravam cheloveka 2005). The nationalities that provoked particular antipathy were all from the Caucasus (Azerbaijanis, Chechens and Armenians or, even more frequently, those 'from the Caucasus' in general). The only non-Caucasian group to feature high in this list were Gypsies and, although significantly less frequently mentioned, Jews. Fear of immigrants in Russia also remains strong. Sociological surveys show that about 40% of the population doubt that immigration is good for the economy and more than 60% connect immigration with rising crime rates and increased unemployment among the local population. Almost 70% were in favour of allowing Russian-speaking Russians to enter the country but of limiting the number of immigrants of other nationalities (ibid.).

Skinheads, the National Bolshevik Party and Others: The Official Political View

Skinheads are recognised as the largest nationalist group in Russia; official data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs puts their numbers at around 10,000 (of whom about 1,500 are in Moscow and St Petersburg). However, according to the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, a more accurate total estimate would be at least 50,000 (Nekhamkin 2005) with 5-7,000 in Moscow alone. The idea of the 'purity' of the Russian nation is considered fundamental to the movement's ideology and skinheads sanction all available means in the war against people of other nationalities which they see as part of a socially necessary 'cleansing' of their native town of 'dirt' or 'scum'. However, it is important not to over-ideologise the movement, which is as much about young people 'hanging out' together as it is about politics.

The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs has declared the skinhead movement in Russia to be unstructured with no well-defined leadership. However, when members of the skinhead collective are exposed to a 'strong leader', they are easily influenced (Fedosenko 2004). Thus, certain media reports have suggested that the former leaders of the now disbanded official youth organisation '*Idushchie vmeste*' ('Walking Together') and ringleaders of the skinhead

movement are actually one and the same people (Shargunov 2002).

The National Bolshevik Party (NBP) is another organisation that is causing concern. Its activities are more systematic and ideologically informed than those of the skinhead movement. The NBP's publication 'General Line' ('*General'naia liniia*'), formerly '*Limonka*', which actively promotes the views of the organisation, is popular across the country. The NBP cleverly positions itself as a patriotic political party opposed to the current ineffectual authorities. This advantageous position, combined with sophisticated propaganda, may, in the context of the country's difficult economic situation, explain what attracts a considerable number of supporters, especially young people. According to Mikhail Sokolov, who has carried out research into youth extremism in Russia, the NBP offers an example of 'aestheticised' politics that is particularly appealing to alternative, left-wing, radical youth (Sokolov 2006). This aestheticisation is evident in the party's stylised politics; the acknowledged leader of the NBP, Eduard Limonov, claims that 'The NBP has its own unique style: striking and distinct. Our people are not like those from the RNU[vi]. RNU people are more ordinary' (Limonov 1998: 434). Unlike the Russian National Unity party (RNU), the NBP does not engage in political moralising and its theatrical style is more appealing to sophisticated young people. Thus, while the NBP continues to attract public sympathy, the 'tough' style of the RNU, which won support for that organisation back in the 1990s, has been barely visible since 2002, and the organisation and its followers have been thrown into crisis (Sokolov 2006).

Youth extremism is a particular form of patriotism that fills in where other values are missing. Today's young people understand patriotism as the sense of belonging to a great nation, the desire to love and defend one's motherland and, on a personal level, loyalty to, and protection of, one's family and friends. This is why, for example, the campaign against certain ethnic groups promoted in the media as 'enemies', 'foreigners ' and 'invaders' is perceived by extremists as the noble activity of 'real patriots'. Indeed, if the government fails to change its 'patriotic' political line, the skinhead movement may potentially develop some real political prospects.[vii] It has been suggested that this might be prevented by engaging in various preventative measures such as organising

activities for young people (youth clubs, sports facilities and mass events) and carrying out educational work promoting tolerance towards 'the other'. At the same time, however, some sections of the media argue that it would be more effective to capitalize on current patriotic attitudes as does, for example, the movement '*Nashi*'[viii]. Despite numerous official declarations, the position of law-enforcement agencies with regard to the problem is not entirely clear. The head of Russia's Ministry for Internal Affairs has spoken recently of the necessity to wage an active campaign against youth organisations, with particular emphasis on the skinheads. For all that, there are certain cases in which the law enforcement agencies have displayed sympathy for the skinheads, when organised assaults of a clearly nationalistic character have been described simply as 'mass hooliganism' or 'public disorder'.

Researching Xenophobic Attitudes among Young People

A fundamental principle of the research described below was the importance of distinguishing between the apparent 'concern', which conceals the underlying political interests of government agents, law enforcers and political leaders and the real problems experienced by young people related to the increase of xenophobic attitudes. In August 2005-06 a study was carried out in Krasnodar Territory for the purposes of writing a background research paper on ethnic tolerance and xenophobia among young people for a meeting of RIME[ix] partners. The aim of the research was to illuminate ethnic constructs and negative images related to specific ethnic groups currently circulating among young people as well as to understand how and why some young people move from the passive expression of ethnic intolerance to a willingness to carry out openly aggressive acts. The research was based on a case study of Krasnodar Territory and employed a range of qualitative research methods. The research devoted particular attention to the analysis of the relationship between ethnic stereotypes and style, or subcultural identities.[x] This approach to the study of discourses of xenophobia examines them in their dialogic aspect, as a product of social interaction. It presupposes that young people do not simply passively accept the manipulations of official or unofficial discourse, but rather, as they come into contact with, interpret, and compare alternative sources of

knowledge they produce their own discourses. Thus, it is not only the question of how the discourse of xenophobia is created or shaped that is important, but also the question of how it is understood by people (in this case, by young people) and of how these interpretations determine their social behaviour.

Studying xenophobia among young people is extremely challenging. Questions relating to national identity, language, religion, and the relations between members of different ethnic and religious groups are perceived by young people as profoundly meaningful and their responses can often be emotional. The methods used – focus groups and in-depth interviews – were chosen because they were sufficiently sensitive to enable an understanding of the complexity of the problems being discussed. The focus group method provided the possibility of capturing a group view of the problem and of collecting information on practices and existing stereotypes. The in-depth interviews, on the other hand, permitted the exploration of individual contexts, the motives behind certain acts, the reasons for particular attitudes, and the connection between practices described and real-life situations. The centrality of the researcher during the application of these methods brings its own challenges. It is important that the interviewer neither openly disapproves of the views expressed by a respondent, thus evoking a hostile reaction, nor demonstrates too much agreement with the informant, which might lead to key questions not being addressed. The specific nature of the problem demands an attitude of 'cautious sensitivity' from the interviewer, whereby he or she maintains a balance between dispassionate interest and supportive empathy.[xi]

Xenophobia and the Politics of Immigration in Krasnodar Territory

In analysing the relationship between xenophobic views and immigration politics, it is essential that a clear distinction be made between the public image the region presents to the outside world (via the regional media and the public statements of political and administrative leaders) and the actual situations and real relations between groups of the population. In the public speeches and statements of its leaders, Krasnodar Territory is presented as a multiethnic region in which nationalities policy is a priority. However, the point of this policy is often reduced to the question of 'whom we are against'

rather than 'whom we support' and public discourse reproduces the idea that the rightful owners of this 'land' are the Russians and the Cossacks and that the authorities should thus protect their interests in particular.

In contrast to this public face, monitoring carried out in particular by the 'SOVA' centre, suggests that Krasnodar Territory is characterised by visible tension and antagonism between the representatives of various ethnic groups.[xii] According to the report 'Human Rights in Krasnodar Territory'[xiii] (for the year 2002), a significant proportion of the region's population is prone to xenophobia and propagates nationalism in various guises.[xiv] In the opinion of civil rights organisations the former governor of Krasnodar Territory, Nikolai Kondratenko, played an important part in promoting xenophobic attitudes in the region. Kondratenko successfully employed nationalist ideas in his electoral campaign and, during his term in office (1996-2000), stirred up anti-Semitic feeling in his public speeches and in publications with financial links to his administration. Large-scale campaigns (such as city and regional festivals) ostensibly designed to unify the Russian people and reinforce Russians' sense of their own ethnic identity, also had the effect of generating fear of immigrants. Local politicians actively exploited patriotic (pro-Slavic) ideas at elections, pointing to the threat of expansion of either Western or Armenian culture (see Leibovskii et al. 2002).

The policies of the regional authorities in Krasnodar Territory in relation to the non-Russian population as a whole, and illegal immigrants in particular, have become one of the most sensitive public issues. Kondratenko's successor as governor, Aleksandr Tkachev, has more than once spoken publicly of the dominance of illegal immigrants in the region. He personally headed the campaign to deport the Meskhetian Turks and declare them the *'undesirables'* in the region's territory. In 2002 a discriminatory law 'On Residency and Domicile in Krasnodar Territory' was passed, only to be repealed in 2004. In 2004 a further law was passed 'On Measures for the Prevention of Illegal Immigration into Krasnodar Territory' and the governor issued a decree of the same name. All these documents are overtly discriminatory in character and contravene the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Moreover, according to local civil rights organisations, the governor's overtly

nationalistic pronouncements have provoked a wave of ethnically motivated criminal acts on the part of the local population and have exacerbated the already antagonistic situation in the region (Information Agency 'Regnum' 2004).[xv]

Human rights activists and journalists accuse Tkachev of legalising nationalism and xenophobia and of demanding the deportation of immigrants, who, in his view, are preventing the local Russian population from achieving a better standard of living. According to 'SOVA', an artificial division has been created between 'our own people' – that is, those Russians and Cossacks who have an incontrovertible right to live in Krasnodar Territory - and 'others' or 'deviants', under which category are included all immigrants but particularly Kurds, Meskhetians, Turks and Armenians (Centre for Ethno-political and Regional Studies 2003). Thus, the question of ethnicity is being fed to the region's inhabitants in the form of primordial conceptions of ethnicity as an innate natural endowment that determines the character, lifestyle and manners of a given people. Moreover, the political views of the governor relayed to the public establish a hierarchy between nationalities, determining which nationalities are 'better' and which are 'worse', which are 'lawful' and which 'unlawful' or even 'dangerous'. Immigrants are blamed for living illegally in the region, for being disposed to criminal activity and for displaying a lack of respect towards, and discriminating against, the Russian-speaking population. Both sociologists and human rights activists paint a discouraging picture of the region as one of the most xenophobic in the Russian Federation and declare the policies pursued by the regional authorities to be illegal, unethical and chauvinist. The question of immigration in Krasnodar Territory, therefore, has assumed an obvious political aspect, which is clearly in evidence in the political manoeuvring that takes place during election campaigns.[xvi]

One of the aims of the research was to reveal the attitudes of the region's youth to the existing ethnic situation. The comments of our informants rarely touched directly on the policies of the acting authorities; they were concerned above all with the everyday aspects of living in a multi-ethnic region. Some informants (as a rule the more tolerant among them) referred to Krasnodar Territory (and especially Sochi) as a multi-ethnic region where no one ethnic group held sway over another:

> I think that you can't say that anyone here is better or worse off, that someone has the rights to ownership and someone else doesn't. It's not the case that Russians are the proprietors and Armenians are outcasts. Everyone feels the way they should. If that's the way they are, then that's the way they'll be. I think everyone's equal here in that respect. (Female, 20 years, Sochi)[xvii]

Moreover, informants spoke, for instance, of Sochi as a Caucasian city, explaining this by reference to its history:

> I also think that we need to go back to history. There have been no rightful owners of this land for many years. They were deported from the area and cut off from it. And if there are no owners, it means that anyone can feel as if it's their own land. And anyone who comes here can feel at home here. (Female, 21 years, Sochi)

As far as situations of ethnic conflict are concerned, some are of the opinion that there is no actual conflict as such, merely an anticipation of conflict dictated by the 'historical memory' of the numerous wars that have taken place in the Caucasus. This archetype is sustained in no small part by the Chechen war and the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia. The fact that Krasnodar Territory borders the Caucasus region, however, generates a sense of vulnerability, defencelessness and the potential for threat:

> We are living in the Caucasus, so this conflict situation - Russia and the Caucasus - has been forged by history. …It is this expectation that ruins relations… First of all there was the war long ago. If you remember, the war with Chechnya lasted 60 years. Then the war began again in 1990, that was the second phase…then there was conflict with Abkhazia, so you see there's a constant expectation of aggression. Our city is a border

post. It is surrounded on all sides by Caucasian republics. …We live in peace and there are no conflicts that would lead to war. But all the same there is an anticipation of something - a feeling of anxiety. (Female, 21 years, Sochi)

The actual cultural and social experience of young people, together with the influence of the media and of political discourse, prompts them to form their own ethnic constructs. This involves the construction of a hierarchy in which different nationalities are characterised as 'good', 'bad', 'normal', 'peaceful', 'criminal', 'wild' or 'aggressive'. Young people construct their own discourse and their own practices, in order to express *their own* attitude to the ethnic situation within the region and to the interaction between ethnic groups.

Understanding Ethnic Stereotypes

Analysing the narratives of young people involved in the study prompted us to devote closer attention to stereotypes. Without a careful understanding of the forms these take and of how they are transmitted it is difficult to appreciate the persistence and durability of everyday xenophobia. Stereotypes[xviii] are formed by constructing an image of a foreign ethnic group and attributing to it various negative qualities (as a rule, the opposite qualities of those held to be typical of one's own nationality). The results of the research suggest that these perceptions are concerned above all with the structuring of space ('our' and 'others'' territories). Territorial space consists of the sites of everyday living; it is the perception of where the members of a given nationality spend their time or work, of where one can or cannot meet them and of where one may or may not go. These notions are not necessarily based on personal experience - they draw rather on what 'everyone says' or what 'everyone knows' - and they are concerned above all with: one's place of work; one's place of study; and places of recreation and leisure.

Another characteristic way in which stereotypes depict their object is to ascribe a particular type of behaviour to it:

Abkhazians, Caucasians, they're almost all the same. Any of them will invite you to their home, give you lots to drink, lots to eat -

they'll virtually dance for you. But, then, when you leave, they'll shoot you in the back. (Male, 25 years, Sochi)

In fact both Russians and representatives of other nationalities (such as Armenians) have stereotypical ideas about each other. At the root of these negative stereotypes is the idea that 'They are not like us' - they don't dress the same, don't look the same and don't act the same. Stereotypes can act as reference points in everyday life; a stereotype is a simplified plan of a situation that makes it easier for the user to perceive the object, to come to tangible conclusions about it and then to take action. Examples of such stereotypes encountered in our research include: 'It is better not to offend Armenians' or 'It is better for Russian girls not to socialise with them or make friends with them'.

Xenophobic attitudes emerge in the context of the struggle for power and the competition for resources (or the desire not to share resources). Xenophobia arises when an attempt is made to encroach on 'another's' space (or something that is perceived as such). This involves, first, the formation of an idea of 'one's own' space and subsequently the idea of 'foreigners' or 'outsiders' within that space. In the wider sense, 'one's own' space may be defined by Russia's national borders. In a narrower sense, it is the territory upon which a person spends time everyday and if 'outsiders' enter that space then they are expected to at least follow the rules and make no claims on any resources. The most common disputes and hence stereotyped perceptions arise around the claims on: 'our territory' (such as a café, a college, a bench, a table in the school canteen, etc.); 'our girls'; 'our jobs'; 'our identities' (when we are offended, threatened or humiliated); and 'our' language.

The circulation of stereotypes within groups of young people creates a fertile environment for relaying xenophobic attitudes and maintaining feelings of ethnic tension and fear. It is this climate that is the basis for the spread of everyday xenophobia and hostility. However, such is the nature of stereotypes that, given any contact with real 'others', they often cease to be the focus of potential hostility. Nonetheless, stereotypes relating to these 'others' may survive and may not even be subjected to criticism or questioning.

Overcoming stereotypes is thus a long process; that process is begun, however, precisely through communication on a personal level.

The 'Youth' Dimension of Xenophobia

Our research indicates that there is a specific youth dimension to xenophobia. Despite the powerful impact of public xenophobic discourses, young men and women elaborate their own system of relations between ethnic groups based on their own system of values as well as their style and gender identity, cultural experience and individual and group practices. It is not unusual for young people to construct their own system of attitudes and values either within, or parallel to, the discourse of 'adults', some of which assume forms that adults find unacceptable. It would be rash to claim that young people constitute a passive, apolitical multitude that can be easily manipulated by politicians during election campaigns, or whose patriotic feelings can be exploited to create and successfully perpetuate popular political programmes. It is rather that young people are particularly acutely sensitive to the socio-political situation in Russia, in which the national inferiority complex (the country's perceived transformation from one of the world's leading powers into a Third World country) prompts them to look for solutions that they find in spontaneous or organised demonstrations, in unifying and patriotic movements.

The Gender Dimension of Xenophobia

One of the most important conclusions of our research concerns the gender-specific aspects of xenophobia. Young women appeared more tolerant, both in their attitude to the outward manifestations of other cultures and as regards personal contact. They declared that all cultures and peoples were equal and of equal value and spoke of the right of all nationalities to live in Krasnodar Territory. They condemned the persecution of immigrants and the contravention of their rights.

> I know one thing - it is very hard for a non-Slavic person to rent an apartment here, for instance. It's very difficult to register. Getting a *propiska*[xix] is a real problem… If you take a paper like '*Obiavleniia*' ['Small Ads'] you'll see, 'Will rent to Slavic family' and if you ring

up they ask straight away if you're a Slav or not, and that's the kind of prejudiced attitude you get. (Female, 21 years, Sochi)

In the view of young women, the cause of any discord within their own circles, however, is not nationality but individual character. Young women alluded to their own experience of ethnically mixed friendship groups in which 'The Friendship of Nations' was not merely a Soviet political slogan but a real practice. This type of personal communicative experience can foster a tolerant attitude to non-Russian ethnic groups:

> I don't know, maybe I'm just lucky, but I don't see conflicts of that sort. Maybe somebody might say the wrong thing sometimes, but about something personal. But in relation to nationality – no, I've never seen that. We live in a quiet and peaceful region, although there are Armenians here, and Georgians, and Abkhazians and anyone else you care to mention. I think we have representatives of the whole of Russia and all the outlying republics. I look around and I see that our group of friends is very multi-ethnic. We're friends, and we have been for some time. We only argue about personal matters. (Female, 17 years, Sochi)

Young men, on the other hand, were more likely to suggest that the high percentage of immigrants living in Krasnodar Territory implied a threat to personal safety and had led to a decline in the material status of the Russian-speaking population. One particularly important trope in the narratives of young men was the fear of physical assault from 'non-Russians'. They claimed that it was 'Armenians'[xx] (but also Cherkess and Turks) who provoked conflict between groups of young people and who acted like so-called '*gopniki*' ('yobs').

> Interviewer: Who are the *gopniki*?
> Respondent: The *gopniki* are – well, to put it crudely, the sort of Armenians who wear these sort of black – well, according to people

from Sochi – black shoes, black trousers, all in black. Sunflower seeds in one hand, a rosary in the other, a cigarette in the third, something else again in the fourth. Well they wander about until they come across some dumb-ass – someone who's just here for the season. That's the kind they like to pick on because they don't know suspect anything. And then they'll try to take their money or their phone, not using force, though, just talking and hanging on every word. It's a complicated system though, it would take ages to explain. You have to walk in the shoes of the *gopnik's* victim to really understand. (Male, 17 years, Sochi)

An important theme in the narratives of (male) informants was the conflict between Caucasian and Slavonic constructs of masculinity. Not uncommonly, this conflict can take the form of physical clashes, fights between young men and groups of young men. It is safe to say that it is men rather than women who translate latent xenophobia and xenophobic discourse into direct action. Our research suggests there is a struggle for power (both real and symbolic) between Russian and Caucasian men. Our young, male, Russian informants accused Caucasians of violating the code of behaviour for 'real men'; they referred, for example, to the reliance on strength in numbers rather than physical superiority by Armenians (but also Adyghs and Cherkess) during fights:

There are a lot of immigrants. There's Armenia and Georgia, and 5 km away, Adygeia… Although they're ethnic minorities, the young people get together in gangs, usually starting from about the age of 14. And when they get together in these big groups they can hassle you, or even beat you up. Of course they won't hassle you if you're in a big group. But they're brave enough when there are lots of them against one or two people. They can be brave then. (Male, 21 years, Krasnodar)

This perception has its converse form, when young Armenians 'pick on' young Russian men who, in their opinion, do not correspond to the image of the 'real' (acceptable) man.

Competition for the attention of girls is another vitally important factor in the hostility between young Russian and Caucasian men. The Russians accuse 'Caucasians' of a disrespectful and exploitative attitude towards Russian girls. The girls themselves, should they associate with Caucasian men, are accused of 'treachery' and of 'prostituting themselves', or of being 'unwise' and frivolous. Any challenge to the discursively constructed notion of the Russians' 'right of ownership' over their 'own' girls is perceived as a direct threat to Russian masculinity.

Another significant reason for feelings of dispossession on the part of Russians was the material advantage - real or imagined - enjoyed by Armenians. During interviews there was frequent reference to the Armenians' rapid accumulation of wealth, the specific economic component of their networks and their love of publicly parading their success and prosperity. In this particular instance, the economic status of 'foreigners' serves as an indicator of their status as men and is perceived by Russian informants as an insult or threat.

Overt displays of nationalistic sentiment are generally typical of the younger age group. Open conflicts such as fights or the 'sorting out' of one's rivals tend to be associated in one way or another with the period of school, vocational school and to a lesser extent, college or university. Informants recount how their use of free time changes with age; people start work, start families, new responsibilities appear and their circle of acquaintances changes. Instances of overt displays of xenophobia recounted by informants were often connected with places of leisure and recreation, taking place in cafés, discos, in parks and on the streets. Xenophobic attitudes were less apparent among adults, it seemed, although stories were told of employers who refused to employ people on the basis of nationality and of situations in which a Slavic appearance was the deciding factor in finding tenants for rented property.

Xenophobia, 'Gopnik' Culture and Subculture

Young people's subcultural identity is one of the key factors in ethnic friction. Russian informants, for example, had a tendency to make

ironic comments about the ability of 'Caucasians' to belong to a subculture; all such displays were mocked as a kitsch imitation of the 'authentic' subculture. Informants claimed that 'Caucasians' lacked subcultural sensibility and taste and pointed out glaring mistakes in their dress and hairstyles. Particular targets of criticism were the combination of tracksuits with smart shoes worn by young Armenian men and what were perceived to be tasteless clothes and jewellery worn by the girls. In line with the recognition of dual - 'progressive' and 'normal' - youth strategies (Pilkington et al 2002) informants tended to refer to the 'Caucasians' as completely non-progressive and conservative. Indeed, this was a key site of ethnic conflict between young people.

In the course of interviews respondents noted a phenomenon they referred to as 'Armenian' *gopnik* culture. According to informants, this reveals itself in an absolute refusal to accept subcultural practices per se. In their opinion, 'Armenian culture' is conservative in nature, prescribing traditional modes of behaviour and codes of appearance (short hair, conservative clothes, no piercings or earrings). Moreover, the way respondents described such individuals mirrors exactly descriptions of members of young criminal groups:

> I remember this one time, too, when I met some here at the disco. The discos here are all divided into Russian and Cherkess discos. After this Cherkess disco (why the hell did I go there anyway?) I met this group of Armenians. [They were] boxers or something. They came up to me and said, hey, you dirty non-Russian, what you got earrings in your ears for? Back then I had a piercing. I spent a long time talking to them, until late into the night. First of all, they told me to take out my earrings and I could go, but I was too proud to do that, of course, so I refused to take them out. Then we went for a walk on the beach and had this long discussion about what a real man should look like, whether he should have long hair or earrings and whether or not he should use hair gel. (Male, 23 years, Sochi)

Different subcultures display a greater or lesser tendency towards xenophobia as a prescribed norm. Certain subcultures (such as hippies, skateboarders and rappers) positively embrace tolerance, accept, empathise with and even imitate elements of other ethnic cultures. In contrast other subcultures observe strict boundaries between one's 'own people' and 'others' or 'outsiders'. Of course the clearest example of the subcultural dimension of xenophobia is the attitude of skinheads towards the members of ethnic minorities and towards other subcultures. The skinhead movement is a movement with a unified political and subcultural identity. Thus, skinheads direct their criticism and sometimes, physical aggression towards anything or anyone that appears to be 'non-Russian'.[xxi] Apart from the 'traditional' targets of their hostility, they also single out rappers and Rastafarians as subcultures that draw on Afro-American and West Indian music, texts and styles of dress. It is important to note here also that skinheads regard the majority of youth subcultures as a product of the pernicious influence of the West and present their own culture and practice as patriotic and pro-Slavic.

Subcultural lifestyles involve the recognition of common values and behaviour, which have a significant impact on whether young people construct a xenophobic or tolerant view of the world. However, as 'pure', homogenous subcultures come to be replaced by new, more fluid post-subcultural identities, where the absence of rigidly prescribed norms allows young people to map out their relations with members of other stylistic and ethnic groups independently, it is likely that young people will have more room to form tolerant attitudes, or, at the very least, have scope for individual choice as regards relations with other ethnic groups.

Xenophobia and Nationalistic Youth Organisations

The attitudes of young people to the activities of youth nationalist movements and organisations are worthy of particular attention. The majority of informants were critical of the activities of the members of such organisations, though only a few of them had actually had any direct experience of them. Most criticisms were directed at the skinheads, who were divided into 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' skinheads. In the former category, young people included those older members of the movement who were

ideologically engaged and less likely to resort to violence. Informants regarded 'authentic' skinheads as 'clever' and said that they did not do things just 'for show'. They were said to have their own philosophical code, which included respect for sympathetic youth subcultures (particularly punks) and an ideological rigour based on the idea of the Russian population as sacrosanct. 'Inauthentic' skinheads, however, broke all these rules and disgraced the Russian nation.

It is worth noting that in the opinion of our informants, there were no 'authentic' skinheads in Krasnodar Territory.

> In theory, who are skinheads meant to beat up? Other nationalities. But this lot beats up everybody, even their own people. I don't know - they're just idiots. There are skinheads in Rostov, but they're - I don't know, less stupid maybe, more genuine. They don't just beat anyone up indiscriminately. (Male, 17 years, Sochi)

An important distinguishing feature - sometimes *the* distinguishing feature - of a skinhead is the appropriate visual code (shaved head, turned-up jeans, heavy boots, athletic build, a threatening, masculine appearance). For both young men and young women, the image of the skinhead is associated with a strong, masculine type and can arouse envy and admiration:

> A real skinhead has, like, a shaved head, braces, a checked shirt, tight jeans like this, rolled up at the bottom three times… And they have tattoos: 'skinhead white power', pumped-up muscles, the lot. (Male, 26 years, Sochi)

Another indicator of an 'authentic skinhead', according to informants, is that they must be a member of the titular nationality (Russian). Informants spoke of the phenomenon of Armenian skinheads with irony and scorn. This, they said, was the height of stupidity and turned the very idea of the skinhead upside down:

> You get ones here that don't shave their heads, they wear leather jackets, or something else. Armenians, basically. It's ridiculous. I don't know, are they idiots or something? I worked last summer selling kvass on the street. A skinhead comes up to me with a nose like this. So I'm like, 'Are you supposed to be skinhead or something?' 'Yes'. 'What are you fighting for then, for the purity of the Russian nation? What's your name?' 'Garik' (laughs). (Male, 26 years, Sochi)

Some informants sympathised with the ideology of the skinheads but only if it was outwardly expressed in the correct manner: in acceptable behaviour and the systematic and consistent implementation of specific principles and programmes. If this was not the case, informants argued that skinheads discredited the ideology they stood for and the entire Russian nation. According to informants, it was the duty of skinheads and members of Russian National Unity to inspire fear in local Caucasian young people and keep them under control. Instead, however, they 'laid themselves open' and were subjected to beatings from their 'enemies'.

> We don't need skinheads here. They disgrace the Russian people. Just like the RNU disgrace the Russian people. For instance, you know how they celebrate Paratroopers' Day in Moscow? Well, it's always a big deal isn't it? The blacks [people from the Caucasus] are afraid to go out. They shut down the markets. And the paratroopers go about triumphant, celebrating. Yeah? Well, here they just laugh at the paratroopers. On Paratroopers' Day here they all just get drunk. Our heroes. The heroes of different wars. And they get battered. Because of their behaviour. Just like the RNU lot, the skinheads here had some kind of festival and they all got battered. That's why nobody respects the Russians here, you understand? They sort of

make push a bit here, push a bit there, but they can't actually do anything. You know? There's no unity, no brotherhood. They're just a bunch of sheep. (Male, 25 years, Sochi)

Challenging Xenophobia

The extensive discussion of intolerance among young people - as part of a wider ethnocentrism typical of contemporary Russian society - has encouraged academic research to focus on revealing manifestations of xenophobia whilst often failing to examine the reasons behind it. This leads also to the tendency to ignore the ways in which young people oppose nationalistic attitudes and ethnic phobias on an everyday level. Informants in our study acknowledged that there were many members of different ethnic groups among their circles of friends and acquaintances. This is partially the natural consequence of the fact that different ethnic groups have lived close to one another for some time, and that everyday practices involve mixing with other nationalities. Another significant factor in creating such tolerant attitudes is the extent to which a given individual is, as it were, himself or herself 'multi-ethnic'.

> My Mum's Armenian, my Dad's Jewish, and then there are Greeks, Georgians, Moldovans, Poles, all sorts. I naturally mix with all sorts of different people. One friend is a Chechen. I have lots of Armenian and Georgian friends. I mix with Abkhazians and Gypsies, too. (Female, 22 years, Sochi)

Another way in which xenophobia may be surmounted is through marriage and shared activities. But, while prolonged contact with members of national minorities can help create tolerance, unfamiliarity can also encourage a tolerant attitude. This was particularly noticeable when informants spoke of their experiences in other towns or cities:

> There are no local Russians in Belgorod. You'll see maybe three or so families, but that's it. Well, I was there for three days, passing through. I'll be honest with you - I met this really sound guy there, an

Armenian. These Armenians offered me a room straight away. They said, 'You can stay here as long as you want, you need to rest a bit before you carry on.' I'd told them I was hitchhiking, and he was like, 'Come back to my place and have something to eat before you turn in for the night.' So we went back to his place, they fed me and everything, even though I had money. (Male, 24 years, Sochi)

Perhaps most interesting of all, however, is the fact that feelings of hatred or antipathy towards an ethnic group as a whole in no way deter people from making friends with members of the group as individuals. Communication within a social group initiates a particular reaction whereby an individual's ethnic identity gives way to their social identity. In other words, the actual member of the ethnic group with whom one is socialising is deemed 'alright' as distinct from all the others. Those who 'grew up with Russians' are perceived as being the most 'alright' (Male, 21 years, Krasnodar). According to our informants, isolation from one's own diaspora enables foreigners to gain a respect for Russian culture and for Russian people and to develop personal qualities that are 'appropriate' for life in Russia.

Active condemnation of skinhead activities could also be considered a practice that challenges xenophobia. A young person's personal attitude to other ethnic groups is often formed as a deliberate rejection of the skinhead ideology. At the heart of what is described as 'hatred' towards skinheads, however, is often a rejection of violence *per se*; individual perceptions of ethnic difference are thus not necessarily important.

One of the most important suppositions of our research was that the style 'supermarket' has an impact on the formation of new identities, making it possible to see the question of ethnicity as being of secondary importance or, ideally, to forget it altogether.

> And now there's this look that's in, from the fashion magazines, so now most people, even young people of Caucasian nationalities, they'll go about in ripped jeans and like trainers and with their

fringes spiked up. It's the norm there, already. (Female, 17 years, Sochi)

When an individual participates in global style trends, they are seen first and foremost as a devotee of that particular style. Thus rigid perceptual constructs are shattered and the notion of the difference between individuals can be realised; ethnic groups cease to be identified via a single semantic marker. For instance, an Armenian punk is seen as 'one of us' by a Russian punk, regardless of his ethnicity; this naturally serves as a counterbalance to xenophobia more widely. This is evidenced by the following statement by a seemingly aggressively intolerant punk:

Yeah, punks, too – there's an Armenian who plays in the Punkomaniacs (*Pankimany*) – a drummer. He's alright, that guy, I think. (Male, 26 years, Sochi)

Style identities thus hold the potential at least for young people to identify themselves and their friends in relation to youth practices, independent of ethnic context.

Conclusion

A joint research project on images of the West in Russian youth culture carried out by the Scientific Research Centre 'Region' with the University of Birmingham at the end of the 1990s (Pilkington et al., 2002), drew a number of conclusions about the development of spontaneous patriotism among Russian youth. The patriotism seen among Russian youth at that time was a particular response to a concentrated attack by the media aimed at discrediting Soviet experience, heroes and history. Conflicting processes of national disillusionment gave rise to a mass inferiority complex among the nation's youth producing a spontaneous wave of patriotism rooted in a huge sense of grievance felt by young people towards their origins, their history and their parents. And indeed since that time, no positive image of present-day Russia, let alone the Russia of the future, has been formulated. Without such an idea it is almost impossible to envisage such a movement gaining maturity. Yet, such elemental patriotism, existing outside any ethical system, is contradictory and

dangerous - a destructive rather than a civilised social force.

One motivation behind xenophobic attitudes is the desire for self-respect. Moreover, xenophobic attitudes in youth circles are very closely connected to the attitudes of the parent generation. The Soviet past and Soviet psychology, though ostensibly international in form and rhetoric, were in fact profoundly riddled with xenophobic and nationalistic sentiments. Our research showed that, while much might take place as a result of interaction with friends and acquaintances, nonetheless, poverty, a low standard of living or a sense of dissatisfaction with life could sometimes be of primary importance (especially where a young person's family had fallen into hardship during the *perestroika* period). The humiliation and degradation of one's parents, and above all, one's father, should he have lost his social status or grounds for self-respect, could seriously affect a young person's general disposition. As a result, by way of compensation, a defensive basis for pride is developed: 'I am proud because I am Russian'. Thus young people establish a new but contradictory and damaging system of values that enables them to feel self-respect. The narrow-minded, principle of material accumulation is becoming the foundation of a new system rooted in material values. A lack of moral strength is weakening national unity and, consequently, people are beginning to search for national pride based purely on the fact that one is Russian and give primitive explanations of why war should be waged on ethnic non-Russians.

These are the roots of the ethical systems of youth movements such as the skinheads; they are simple and primitive but their capacity to provide an integrated value system appeals to young people. Young people, in a variety of different contexts, seek something meaningful around which to construct their own view of the world. If the state and the political system of their country prove powerless in this respect, their only choice is to construct a system which allows them to isolate and defend themselves against the world of 'others' who are more positive and successful. Xenophobic attitudes, especially where they demand no real demonstration or corroboration (i.e. no activism) are the most fertile soil in which to grow an irrational, simplistic system of argumentation that appears to demonstrate one's own superiority whilst creating the illusion of a secure, non-threatening social order.

Notes

[1] The extent to which events in Paris in 2005 or in Budapest in 2006 were actually linked to problems of migration is a separate issue and is not discussed here.

[2] Here and elsewhere in the article the word '*chuzhie*' ('foreigners', 'outsiders') is employed not as robust theoretical concept but more loosely to reflect how respondents talked about the subjects of everyday antipathy during our research.

[3] The term 'coloured revolutions' has come to be used to describe the wave of political protests in post-socialist states which led to a change of political regime in these countries – 'rose' in Georgia in 2003; 'orange' in Ukraine in 2004; and 'pink' or 'tulip' in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. This 'revolutionary colour coding' has been represented as closely associated with democracy (Manning 2007: 171) and, therefore, with the 'West'. In the contemporary Russian Federation, in contrast, government sources present 'coloured revolutions' as examples of Western intervention in the zone of Russia's strategic interests and thus as a threat to the Russian political regime which is defined as 'sovereign democracy'. It should not be forgotten, however, that the names of some of these revolutions (e.g. the rose revolution in Georgia) originally signified flowers rather than colours.

[4] It should be emphasised again here that what is referred to are not established patterns of youth consciousness but state and media-controlled discourses.

[5] In addition to Moscow and St. Petersburg, particularly problematic areas are reported to be: Krasnodar Territory, the Voronezh, Nizhegorod, Tiumen and Novosibirsk regions and the Primorsk Territory (Kozhevnikova 2005: 3).

[6] The Russian National Unity party (RNU) is a Russian radical right-wing movement that imitates the style of German Nazism. In the 1990s, this movement appeared as a relatively powerful paramilitary-type organisation ideologically rooted in extreme Russian nationalism. Following a series of internal splits, the RNU exists today as a number of separate organisations.

[7] See http://www.moscow.hrights.ru.etnic/data/etnic11_03_2002-9.htm.

[8] Documents published by this movement to promote their political programmes actively exploit youth patriotism. In the manifesto of '*Nashi*' it is argued that the world consists of 'weak' and 'strong' nations and, in this universal scheme of things, Russia is a world leader. Global development is seen as the competition between different peoples in which 'You are either a leader, you are driven, or you are a victim'. It could be concluded that the state, too, shares this view, while at the same time attempting to combat the growth in nationalism and xenophobic attitudes among young people (see http://www.nashi.su).

[9] See introduction to this special issue for details of the RIME project.

[10] During research in Krasnodar Territory, seven focus groups and twenty-nine in-depth interviews were conducted. The project included the cities of Sochi and Krasnodar and the towns of Golovinka and Adler. Young people were recruited to the groups on the basis of sex, age (16-25), occupation and ethnic identity. The focus groups attempted to reveal the sources of xenophobic attitudes and the mechanisms for their formation, as well as the way in which intolerant views might be expressed. In-depth interviews were directed towards analysing how various ethnic groups interacted in practice and how young people perceived aggressive, violent demonstrations of xenophobia.

[11] Of course, these methods also have certain limitations. In this particular case, the geographical scope of the research, the range of young people involved and the number of interviews and focus groups conducted were all limited. One might also argue that the subject of xenophobia as a problem for discussion was imposed on the group. This, however, might be said of any research of this kind and, throughout the course of the research, direct questions or prompts were avoided.

[12] According to data published by the regional Committee for State Statistics for 1st January 2002, Russians make up 86.5% of the population, Armenians – 5.36%, Adyghs – 0.31%, Turks – 0.26% and Kurds 0.10%. The accuracy of these statistics' however, is doubtful, given that some ethnic groups living within Krasnodar Territory are not even mentioned.

[13] A project carried out under the auspices of the Moscow Helsinki Group and partly financed by USAID and the European Commission.

[14] To some extent, these findings demonstrate that the official discourse on xenophobia has been 'normalised' in the public consciousness or,

at least, some of its public arguments have found a degree of (uncritical) acceptance.

[15] On 25th April 2003, a few days after a programme was broadcast on central television in which the governor of Krasnodar Territory, Aleksandr Tkachev, delivered a speech indicating he would not be swayed from his view on ethnic minorities living in the area, there were a number of physical assaults on people from various ethnic minorities (Yesids, Armenians, Turks and Lezgins) in the village of Kholmskii. A year previously, in April 2002, skinheads vandalised Armenian graves, also following an appearance by Tkachev on Russian television (According to data from the Centre for Ethno-Political and Regional Research: see: http://www.indem.ru/Ceprs/Minorities/Krasnod/Krasnod12.htm).

[16] Over the last decade, Krasnodar Territory has seen an increase in the influx of migrants who have been obliged to earn a living and have therefore presented competition to the local population on the labour market. Our research revealed that this phenomenon has given rise to dissatisfaction among local people. However, such dissatisfaction is rarely the result of actual experiences of such 'competition'. Such opinions are, more frequently, superficial, contingent on the situation or simply reproductions of stereotypical judgments. This contradiction between xenophobic judgments and real life experiences was encountered quite frequently during the research and might be regarded as evidence of the unstable and artificial nature of everyday xenophobia.

[17] For the reasons outlined above, interviewers did not 'demand' that informants declared their ethnic identity; therefore all quotations refer simply to the age, sex and place of residence of the respondent.

[18] Ethnic stereotypes are collective perceptions that shape attitudes and behaviour towards a particular ethnic group as a whole as well as towards individual representatives of it.

[19] '*Propiska*' is an official registration document allowing an individual to live in a particular area or city in Russia.

[20] The term 'Armenians' was frequently, though not always, used by informants as a synonym for 'Caucasians', that is as a short hand to refer to all ethnic groups from the Caucasus.

[21] This is true of so-called 'brown skinheads' who profess extreme forms of nationalism and who are widely held by the public to be aggressive ('mental'), given to acts of hooliganism and responsible for perpetrating ethnically rooted pogroms and other criminal acts. Outside of Russia, however, movements of 'red' skinheads such as RASH (Red and Anarchist Skinheads) and SHARP (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice), followers of which do not necessarily have to be from the titular nationality, are quite widespread.

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