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## Global Ethno-Political Trends and Their Impact on Xenophobia[9]

### The «Fair Wind» Principle

The desire of the Protecting the Future conference organizers to move the discussion of anti-Semitism and other manifestations of xenophobia from theory to practical applications is quite understandable. It is easy to predict that most speeches and projects will be dedicated to two types of proposals: first, the improvement of mass consciousness or public opinion, and, second, changes in the legal sphere. However, a significant part of such proposals, as a rule, are not feasible due to the socio-political circumstances in our country, which stipulate the nature and focus of the media's activities, education, the legal sphere, etc. In addition, it is difficult (and sometimes impossible) to find solutions to problems created by global processes within a single country. Given the limitations of approaches of a systemic nature, I will focus only on approaches to preventing and combating xenophobia that accommodate «fair wind» – i.e., those based on existing trends that can lead to positive results. In my presentation, I will specifically address two trends that are evident in Russia, but are also related to global processes.

### Global changes in the distribution of Jews and the geography of anti-Semitism

The Levada Center's sociological reports prepared for the current conference, as well as the joint report on the study of acts of anti-Semitism by the Russian Jewish Congress and Sova Center, reflected a dramatic decrease in intolerance toward Jews in Russian society and a decrease in sensing anti-Semitism as a

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real threat. The positive dynamics of the decline in acts of anti-Semitism in Russia contrasts with the situation in EU countries (and in Western Europe in particular) where there are significantly more acts of anti-Semitism than in Russia, and concerns about the threat of anti-Semitism are characteristic for a large share of the population.[10] What is the reason for the marked differences in the dynamics of xenophobia?

I believe that one of the most significant, deep, and lasting reasons for the decrease in the urgency of the issue of anti-Semitism in Russia and the simultaneous shifting of main manifestations of this problem to other regions of the world are the changes in the distribution of Jews in the nineteenth to early twenty first centuries.

The Russian Empire was the main place of residence of the world Jewry by the nineteenth century. According to the census of the population in 1897, there were 5.2 million Jews living here[11] (depending on various expert estimates), which was from half to two-thirds of the total number of Jews worldwide at that time. In the Soviet Union, according to the last Soviet census (conducted in 1989), the number of Jews was only 1.48 million people,[12] that is, about 10 percent of Jews in the world. And in present day Russia, according to the 2010 census, there are less than 158,000;[13] that is only about 1 percent of all Jews in the world. In most of the other former republics of the USSR, the decline in the number of Jews was even more drastic – to the extent that they almost completely disappeared from the population, for

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10 Parameters of xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism in modern Russia. Report on the Levada Center's sociological study commissioned by the Russian Jewish Congress. August 2018.

11 Russia. Demographics of the Jewish Population of the Russian Empire (1772 – 1917). Electronic Jewish Encyclopedia. (https://eleven.co.il/ jewsofrussia/ general/15443/ )

12 Toltz M. Jews in the post-Soviet space: New demographic data. Demoscope, No. 693694, 2016.( http://www.demoscope.ru/ weekly/2016/0693/ tema01.php)

13 Toltz M. Jews in the post-Soviet space: New demographic data. Demoscope, No. 693694, 2016.( http://www.demoscope.ru/ weekly/2016/0693/ tema01.php)

example, in Tajikistan.[14] There are notorious instances of anti-Semitic manifestations in the effective absence of Jews – this is the famous «case of Poland,» but it is famous because it is extremely rare. In Russia, it is different. The dramatic, almost four-fold, reduction in the number of Jews in the country just in the post-Soviet period led to fewer targets and hatred towards these targets decreased significantly. This conclusion stems from the Levada Center's materials, at least from conversations with townspeople in focus groups, which explain why the topic of anti-Semitism has been exhausted, with three main reasons: «The Jews are no longer here,» «Maybe they are here, but they are not noticeable,» «There are less Jews than there once were.» [15]

The conclusion about the relationship between the dynamics of xenophobia (anti-Semitism in this case) and the change in the number of Jews in the country is confirmed, with some caveats and additions, by a process opposite to the Russian one. This is the influx of large masses of Jews in a number of European countries that was accompanied by a parallel influx of other ethnic and religious groups of migrants who compete with Jews, primarily in the cultural sphere. Thus, after the Holocaust, the Jewish community of Germany was almost completely revived, largely as a result of the influx of Jewish immigrants from former Soviet republics. According to the calculations of the Moses Mendelssohn Center, Germany surpassed Israel and the United States in terms of the pace of Jewish immigration in 2000.[16] By 2009, the number of Jews in Germany was 118,000 and by 2020, this country will oust Russia from seventh place in the top ten countries with the largest Jewish population. However, wealthy Germany attracts not only Jews. In the same post-war years (and especially since the 1960s), Germany experienced a huge influx in its Muslim population, which now ranges from 3.5 to 4 million

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14 Ibid.

15 Report on the conducted qualitative research: «The problem of anti-Semitism in the eyes of Jews and other groups of the Russian urban population.» M.: Levada Center, 2018. (Unpublished material)

16 Germany overtook Israel in the intensity of the Jewish Migration. Lenta.ru. 6/6/2003. (https://lenta.ru/news/2003/06/06/germany/)

residents.[17] The relationship between the two communities of the newly-arrived population creates a constant field of tension and explains the lion's share of hate crimes recorded in Germany in 2004-2015. Germany and France lead in the number of such crimes among the states in the OSCE area of responsibility. [18]

France, too, survived the tragedy of the Holocaust, which brought about a radical change in the historical and cultural composition of its Jewish community. Before World War II, it was dominated by European Jews – Ashkenazim. In the early twenty first century, the majority of French Jews are Sephardim, natives of North Africa (Maghreb), and they are joined by the Mizrahim from the Middle East. The majority of these transplants are immigrants (or their descendants) who left the former French colonies (and primarily Algeria) after they became independent Arab states. In the same time period (late twentieth to early twenty first century), Arab Muslim migrants came to France from the same places in much greater numbers. Already for this reason, there are now at least 3 to 4 million people of Arab origin per 500 to 550 thousand French Jews in this country (the figures are approximate, since there are no ethnic statistics in France).

In the religious makeup of the French population, the number of Muslims is six to eight times higher than the number of Jews. I would like to stress that very rigid and persistent ideas about the image of a «cultural outsider» are characteristic for both Jewish and Arab residents of France. Both have a heightened emotional reaction to more than half a century of Arab-Israeli conflict (more sensitive than, for example, in Russia, where anti-Zionism is now weak[19]), and the symbolic consequences of the conflict have quickly moved to French territory, resulting in the overall growth of xenophobia in France in various forms (anti-Semitism, Arab-phobia and Islamophobia, hatred of migrants, etc.).

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[17] In Deutschland leben mehr Muslime als erwartet. Die Welt, 6/23/2009. (https://www.welt.de/politik/article3984811/InDeutschlandleben mehrMuslimealserwartet.html).

[18] Anti-Semitism. Overview of data available in the European Union 2004-2015, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, October 2015.

[19] Report on the conducted qualitative research: «The problem of anti-Semitism in the eyes of Jews and other groups of the Russian urban population.» M.: Levada Center, 2018 (Unpublished Materials).

## Two Types of Dynamics of Xenophobia and Incorporating Them into Political Practice

If there is an overlap, multiplication, and reciprocal heating up of various xenophobic phenomena in countries characterized by parallel flow of Jewish and Islamic immigration, then anti-Semitism is rather replaced and displaced by other phobias in Russia. By the middle of the 1990s, anti-Caucasus, and, primarily, anti-Chechen phobias,[20] moved anti-Semitism back on the ethnic majority's perceived cultural distance scale. As migrants from Central Asia arrived in Russia, they became the main target of malice and the peak of such sentiments was in 2013. From 2014 to 2016, these phobias were dimmed; this time it was a mixture of anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western sentiments that broke out under the influence of the «Crimean syndrome.» Finally, in 2018, Roma people became the leader in the number of unfavorable perceptions in the Levada Center surveys, and their negative image in the public consciousness greatly displaced all the former basic images of ethnic outsiders.[21]

In practical terms, it is extremely important to note that a strictly defined image of the «cultural outsider» is not fixed in the mass consciousness of Russians, so it is constantly changing. In Russia, diffuse, blanket xenophobia prevails, which is a substitute for deeper, existential, and weakly realized forms of individual dissatisfaction and the atomized society. In all its manifestations, xenophobia is perceived by society as a much less painful phenomenon than social inequality, corruption, the rising retirement age, and other problems. And this circumstance makes necessary and possible one of the most promising directions of fighting xenophobia, namely, transforming the negative energy of xenophobia and channeling it into the sphere of civic activity. On this basis, it is possible to consolidate civil society. The probability of such a transformation in the social consciousness is

[20] Pain E. A. Ethno-political pendulum. Dynamics and mechanisms of ethno-political processes in post-Soviet Russia. M.: Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2004, Pp. 239– 240.

[21] Parameters of xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism in modern Russia // Report on the Levada Center's sociological study commissioned by the Russian Jewish Congress. August 2018 (Unpublished Materials).

quite high, even without any additional stimulation. I agree with the opinion of a number of respected experts that in Russia «the potential of protest consolidation is greatly underestimated.»[22] But the consequences of such consolidation are not clear at first, and they are worth thinking about.

## Global reinterpretation of the national idea and cultural diversity

In the twentieth century, globalization was accompanied by the strengthening of universal cosmopolitan ideologies that contributed to the growth of ideas about the transition of the world to a new, post-national era. Today, however, the crisis of the concept of the «post-national world» is all the more clear. The sociologist Anthony Giddens thus stated that the world is suffering from «cosmopolitan overload,»[23] which is confirmed by many political signs: Great Britain's withdrawal from the EU, the election of Donald Trump as US president, the rise of euro-skeptics in Italy, the rise of nationalist separatism in Catalonia, and the widespread rise of national populism. Research shows that even in the EU countries, i.e., the most integrated union of states in the modern world, the vital activities and main interests of the population are mainly concentrated within the borders of nation states, and the national agenda is significantly more important for them than the pan-European one.[24] The theoretical analysis also leaves no doubt that the hypothesis on the arrival of the «post-national era» was unfounded, since the real alternative to nation states in the modern world is only more archaic political forms – empires and tribes.[25]

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[22] Stress test on half of Russia. Electoral domination technologies and their limitations: Analysis of the regional elections of 2018 / edited by K. Rogova // Liberal Mission Foundation 10/1/2018. (http://www.liberal. ru/articles/7275).

[23] Anthony Giddens: «We suffer from «cosmopolitan overload,» and we face a serious challenge – to create a responsible capitalism.» Gefter, 1/31/2018. (http://gefter.ru/archive/23882).

[24] Pain E., Fedyunin S. Nation and democracy. Perspectives on managing cultural diversity. M.: Mysl, 2017.,pp. 244–258.

[25] Delannoi G. La nation contre le nationalisme, ou la résistance des nations. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2018

The resurgence of the idea of the nation is driving the rise of nationalism in two opposing forms: ethnic (which insists on the principles of domination of certain ethnic groups in a multiethnic society) and civil political, which is based on the principle of popular sovereignty and implies the elevation of civil society's role in the political system. It is clear that the rise of ethnic nationalism is directly linked to the rise of xenophobia, while civic nationalism, on the contrary, provides a long-term basis for reducing the threat of xenophobia in society. Some positive consequences of this trend were made visible in the world's economically developed countries in the rejection of the policy of multiculturalism, more precisely its negative side (communitarianism), which causes the division of society into isolated and often feuding communities. Instead of this neo-tribalism, the policy of integrating different cultural communities into a single national civic community is increasingly being established.

Reinterpreting the idea of the nation and cultural diversity leads to one of the classic ideas of modernization theory – the need for society to move from empire to nation – regaining intellectual legitimacy. This goal is very relevant for present day Russia, which retains many signs of «imperial syndrome.» [26] But the post-imperial system cannot be described as stable: it faces a multitude of new socioeconomic and political challenges.

During the time of the Russian Empire and the USSR, the size of the Russian population in the colonized regions grew, and now it is declining in most of the republics of the Russian Federation, which leads to the ethnic majority of Russia developing not so much an imperial, but rather a defensive nationalist consciousness that influences state policy. The latter is becoming increasingly contradictory – imperial in proclamation and anti-imperial in its results. Thus, proclaiming the goal of preserving or even strengthening Russia's influence in CIS countries, the Russian authorities in many respects achieve the opposite result.

26 Pain E. A. Between empire and nation. The Modernist project and its traditionalist alternative in Russia's policy on nationality. M.: Novoe izdatel'stvo, Liberal Mission Foundation, 2003.

An example of this is the migration policy. Acting under the influence of the Russian population's demands to limit the entry of non-ethnically Russian migrants, the Russian authorities are pursuing an increasingly restrictive migration policy against ethnic minorities among labor migrants arriving from republics of the former USSR. For this category of migrants, labor quotas have been reduced every year. Since 2007, restrictions on their involvement in retail trade have been put in place; penalties for violating migration regulations have been increased. The result was quick, and, in 2017, the increase of Russia's migrant population fell by almost one-fifth.[27] At the same time, one of the main channels of Russia's influence on the CIS countries has shrunk, because remittances made by migrant workers accounted for a significant share (in some countries up to a third) of the domestic national product of these states.

This same duality of Russian policy is also characteristic for national problems within the Russian Federation. The government proclaims the goal of preserving the integrity of Russia, but, yielding to the pressure of defensive Russian nationalism in a number of republics, in the summer of 2017, it made a decision on a new procedure for studying national languages. According to these changes, the official languages of the republics of the Russian Federation are no longer compulsory subjects in schools. This immediately caused discontent among the republics' elites, with open discontent expressed in some republics (in Chuvashia and Komi for example) for the first time since the beginning of 2000. Now these forms of discontent join a much larger stream of spontaneous grassroots protest against pension reform and a wide range of social injustices. The heads of four Russian regions losing the regional elections of 2018 shows that spontaneous protest is becoming politically effective.

Russian society is approaching the crisis of its post-imperial situation, though it does not realize it. Who could be the main political beneficiary of this process? Judging by the results of

[27] Shcherbakova E. M. Migration in Russia, preliminary results of 2017 Demoscope, 2018, pp. 763– 764. (http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2018/0763/barom01.php)

these regional elections, so far only the national-populist parties Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) and Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), have benefited, which are characterized by even greater potential for imperial ambitions and xenophobia than the current authorities.

Populism is becoming an increasingly influential trend for all countries in the global North, including Russia. At the same time, it would be wrong to reduce it only to national populism and to view it as an inevitable source of xenophobia. Recent history has seen populism that consolidates different ethnic communities and acts as a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, thus the withdrawal from the communist system and formation of democracy in Poland in the late 1980s are inextricably linked with the name of Lech Walesa, who displayed clear signs of populism, but at the same time, different ethnic groups, including Jews, united around the trade union headed by him: Solidarity. The success of liberal reforms and achievements in countering corruption in Georgia in the 2000s in many ways is owed to the populist president Mikheil Saakashvili. The same can be said of the leader of the peaceful revolution in Armenia (in spring of 2018), Nikol Pashinyan. In Russia, Alexei Navalny has taken a similar stance, moving from the national populism of the mid-2000s to the current protest, civic (not ethnic at all), anti-corruption, and anti-elitist populism that may be the only real alternative to xenophobic populism.

In any case, the possibility of countering the impending rise of xenophobia will largely depend on the choice of members of civil society to support the political forces that have already made themselves known in modern Russia.