

Institute for
European, Russian,
and Eurasian Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The French Bases of the Russian National Alliance of Solidarists During the Interwar Period



Nicolas Lebourg

IERES Occasional Papers, no. 17, March 2023
"Transnational History of the Far Right" Series

Institute for
European, Russian,
and Eurasian Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**The French Bases of the Russian
National Alliance of Solidarists during
the Interwar Period**

Nicolas Lebourg

IERES Occasional Papers, no. 17, March 2023
"Transnational History of the Far Right" Series

Photo: "[Dormition Church in SGdB](#)" by JHvW licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The contents of articles published are the sole responsibility of the author(s). The Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, including its staff and faculty, is not responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement expressed in the published papers. Articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Institute for European, Russia, and Eurasian Studies or any members of its projects.

©IERES 2023



TransHistFarRight

Transnational History of the Far Right
A Collective Research Project led by Marlene Laruelle

At a time when global political dynamics seem to be moving in favor of illiberal regimes around the world, this research project seeks to fill in some of the blank pages in the contemporary history of the far right, with a particular focus on the transnational dimensions of far-right movements in the broader Europe/Eurasia region.

www.historyofthefarright.org/

The word "solidarism" was originally coined by the Frenchman Pierre Leroux and then theorized as a socio-economic doctrine of radicalism¹ by his compatriot Léon Bourgeois in 1896. Bourgeois' solidarism rejected individualism but not inequality, and viewed citizens as partners in the nation-state, which requires that the state regularize the market. This doctrine played a significant role in the French republican culture until the interwar period. At that time, it moved out of the French domestic landscape and began to strive for the unification of nations. Solidarism became a political product that could be exported: Polish solidarity, for instance, emerged with the founding of the Progressive-Democratic Union (*Związek Postępowo-Demokratyczny*) in 1904.² It also opened up to internationalism: an advocate of the League of Nations, Bourgeois was appointed its first president at the same time as he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920.³

The term, however, was then taken out of its original context and penetrated nationalist circles, first in Germany (with Moeller van den Bruck's *Club der Solidaristen*), then in various European countries—as when, in 1931, the Flemish-Belgian Joris Van Severen founded the Union of Dutch-speaking National Solidarists (*Verbond van Dietsche Nationaal-Solidaristen*). Moreover, solidarist principles inspired the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), better known by its nickname of the “Young Turks”) in the Ottoman Empire and then the Kemalist Republic. Yet it was in the Russian context that the term “solidarism” would know its most famous pages of history, thanks to the establishment of the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (*Narodno-Trudovoi-Soiuz*, NTS). Contrary to Bourgeois' vision, Russian solidarism had an unambiguously fascist flavor. Only in the 1960s, after the Algerian war, would solidarism return to its French origin, but to define a small section of the French extreme right. As part of this story still to be written, this paper draws on the documents of various French law enforcement agencies to delve into the Russian émigré communities in France that launched the solidarism movement.

Transnational Structuring of a New Political Offering

The embryo of what was to become the NTS was born in Bulgaria and Serbia in 1924. Fed up with the poisonous climate among the émigré community, young Russians in the Bulgarian region of Pernik founded the Circle of Russian National Youth with the aim of reaffirming their pride in their national belonging as well as their aspirations at fighting against Bolshevism. In 1927, as the association spread throughout the country under the name National Union of the Russian Youth (*Natsional'nyi soiuz russkoi molodezhi*, NSRM), some members migrated to work in the French mines and founded its first

¹ In France during this period, “radicalism” was the ideology of the so-called Social Republicans.

² Andrew Kier Wise, “Jerzy Kurnatowski and Polish Solidarism,” *The Polish Review* 46, no. 3 (2001): 327–43.

³ Pierre Cretois, “Le solidarisme des radicaux: un internationalisme introuvable ?” *Cahiers Jaurès* 212-213, no. 2-3 (2014): 165-179; Serge Bernstein, “Le modèle républicain : une culture politique syncrétique,” in *Les Cultures politiques en France*, ed. Serge Bernstein (Paris: Seuil, 2003), 119-151.

sections there. For its part, in 1924, Belgrade saw the foundation of a Russian National Youth Union (*Soiuz russkoi natsional'noi molodezhi*, SRNM) with a monarchist orientation. It was chaired by Viktor M. Baidalakov (1900-1967), a veteran of the White Army of the Don and future president of the NTS (1934-1955).

The two formations worked on a merger, which became effective following a congress held in Belgrade on June 1-5, 1930. The second congress, held on December 25-28, 1931 (also in Belgrade), brought together SRNM delegates from seven countries. They renamed the organization the National Union of Russian Youth (*Natsional'nyi soiuz russkoi molodezhi*, NSRM) and gave it an activist aim, explicitly opting for the use of terrorism. At the third congress (April 15-19, 1934), the organization chose the trident of St. Vladimir as its symbol and declared its ideology to be “revolutionary,” corporatist, and “national labor solidarist.”⁴ The generational aspect was important: until the end of the 1930s, only young people were allowed to join the movement, which saw itself as breaking away from the impotent and reactionary nostalgia of its elders.

At its Extraordinary World Congress of 1934, NSRM cadres decided to side with the German and Japanese regimes in order to destroy the Soviet Union.⁵ However, they emphasize that it was also the venue of an ideological clarification. First, the term “solidarism” was put forward to illuminate that the NSRM rejected the class struggle in favor of solidarity within and between nations. Second, the militants blamed Western materialism for the rise of Bolshevism and denounced the passivity of White émigrés. Consequently, the cadres concluded that an anti-communist revolution could not be brought about by the intervention of foreign armies but required a domestic struggle for national and social liberation, in which Russians within the USSR would be supported by the diaspora.⁶

The solidarists’ activist potential had been quickly denounced by the communist press, which claimed that as early as November 1930 a Patriotic Union of Russian Youth (PURY) had created “a military group from its Parisian section.”⁷ The French Ministry of the Interior, likewise worried by Russian émigré activities, sought to monitor the various solidarist movements, as well as related institutions such as the French section of the White Idea Circle (*Kruzhok 'Belaia ideia'*). But due to the multiplicity of names used by the different groups spread across French territory, the ministry received disappointing responses from its local administration, revealing how difficult it was for French law enforcement agencies to penetrate the intricacies of Russian émigré life.

In 1934, the Ministry launched an enquiry into the National Union of the New Russian Generation (NUNRG)⁸ because he had information that conspiratorial meetings were being held in their constituencies about “planning terrorist attacks in the USSR against the Soviet regime.” But there was a clear discrepancy between the minister's information and the prefectural returns. A prefect replied for instance that this group did not exist on the territory of the prefecture, which only had a section of the PURY⁹—when the two appellations were used by the same group.¹⁰ While the ministry informed the prefect of Isère that the NSRM sections in Rives-en-furs, Péggs de Roussillon, and Riouperoux were

⁴ Nicolas Ross, *De Koutieпов à Miller. Le Combat des Russes blancs 1930-1940* (Geneva: Éditions des Syrtes, 2007), 337-353.

⁵ Directorate General of National Security (DGNS), “A/S du congrès du mouvement monarchiste russe L'Union de la Génération Nouvelle,” June 14, 1934, 2 p., AN/19940500/305.

⁶ Sergei Levitsky, “The Ideology of NTS,” *The Russian Review* 31, no. 4 (October 1972): 398-405.

⁷ *L'Humanité*, January 9, 1931.

⁸ This is the official title, but in French it might better be rendered “New Generation”—this name is, for instance, the one found in NUNRG press releases.

⁹ Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône to the Minister of the Interior, October 19, 1934, 2 p., AN/19940500/307.

¹⁰ Statutes of the Patriotic Union of Young Russians, prefecture of Marseille, March 2, 1930; Administrative Police, “Union patriotique des jeunesses russes - Union nationale de la génération nouvelle russe,” November 27, 1939, p. 2 (AN/19940500/305).

drifting toward terrorism, the prefect replied that there was no such a group on his territory, only 7 individual affiliates of good reputation out of 125 “White Russians, peaceful workers, almost all affiliated to the Russian Labor Christian Movement”¹¹ (*Russkoe trudovoe khristianskoe dvizhenie*, a branch of the International Communist Entente).¹² Similarly, the prefect of the Rhône department denied that a radicalized group existed in Villeurbanne, assuring the minister that the group was merely frustrated with the Franco-Soviet convergence. The prefect of Caen expressed no more panic, responding to the minister’s information by saying that the Solidarist section in his town—one of 40 or so across France—only had about 10 members.¹³ Obviously, the minister’s overestimation of the White refugees’ subversive capacities and the prefects’ underestimation of the activity of these discreet revolutionaries are not mutually exclusive.

The NSRM gave itself the means to increase its influence by creating, in 1936, a “propaganda school” in Paris that held weekly training meetings.¹⁴ In September 1939, the French organization had 1,000 members who were divided, for the most part, into two zones: the north-west, very accessible from Paris, between the English Channel and Belgium; and the east, from the German border to Italy (the cities listed were Amiens, Belfort, Besançon, Cannes, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Nancy, Nice, Paris, Rouen, Tourcoing, and Toulon). According to the French security services, it is possible that the French branch of the movement received funding from the Yugoslav government, but most of its resources came from Russian emigrants themselves.

The NSRM leader in France was Vladimir Poremsky (future president of the NTS from 1955 to 1972), who arrived in Lille in 1925 before settling in Paris in 1932. He became the assistant of Charles Sannié, a professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, but also a director of the Judicial Identity Department of the Paris Police Prefecture between 1930 and 1955. Like the six other main leaders of the group identified by the French police, he showed discretion with regard to French institutions. Better still, a police report states that Rostislav P. Ronchevsky, the head of the South-East section, “puts himself at our disposal to introduce a qualified French agent to the leader of the movement who is currently in Belgrade.”¹⁵ Poremsky also learned to navigate the French political landscape, apparently frequenting the headquarters of the Grand Orient de France, the main Masonic Obedience in the country, at least in 1937. However, this is perhaps not due entirely to the weight of Freemasonry in French political life, since the Russian solidarists in France seem to have been in contact with Germanic lodges until 1933.¹⁶

Solidarists and the Russian Diaspora

The solidarists in France were as quick to participate in attempts to unify the White movement as they were to leave it. An agreement was sealed with the Russian All-Military Union (ROVS) in 1933. After a meeting of their leaders in Paris, a joint fundraising effort was undertaken and two Solidarist volunteers joined a ROVS mission to Soviet territory—a mission from which they did not return. In 1934, the solidarists were founding members of the Russian Agreement, together with Alexander Kazem-Beg’s Young Russians, against whom they regularly lashed out on account of the latter’s “philo-

¹¹ Minister of the Interior to the prefect of l’Isère, October 4, 1934, and response, October 26, 1934 (AN/19940500/307).

¹² On these two groups, see Nicolas Lebourg, “White Émigrés and International Anti-Communism in France (1918–1939),” *IERES Occasional Papers* 9 (December 2020).

¹³ Minister of the Interior to the prefect of Rhône, October 4, 1934, and response, January 4, 1935; Minister of the Interior to the prefect of Calvados, October 2, 1934, and response, May 14, 1935 (AN/19940500/307).

¹⁴ Minister of the Interior to the president of the Council, November 8, 1936, 2 p., AN/20010216/283.

¹⁵ Administrative Police, “Union patriotique des jeunesses russes.”

¹⁶ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), “Soviet Activities in Russian Émigré Circles,” 1958, p. 2, FOIA-CIA 5197c262993294098d50dc7b.

Soviet” ambiguities, and the International Union of the Russian Empire—but the groups’ pursuit of their own agendas contributed to scuttling unification.

The solidarists were then part of the Committee of Russian Émigré Organizations, in which participated all the White organizations except for the Young Russians. They took part in the foundation of the All-Russian National Center alongside General Turkul’s pro-Third Reich Russian National Union of War Participants (*Russkii natsional’nyi soiuz uchastnikov voiny*, RSNUV) and the Union of the Russian Empire. They were also part of the Russian Committee of the National Entente, admittedly constituted from Belgrade, from whence the Solidarist movement was directed.¹⁷ *La Renaissance*, a newspaper published in France primarily for the Russian community, openly supported the NSRM.¹⁸ Moreover, the solidarists in France were involved in repeated attempts to unify the White diaspora across the globe: in 1937, Poremsky accompanied Baidalakov to Manchuria to try to set up “the Single Front of Associations of émigrés in Europe and Asia.”¹⁹

It is true that the solidarists in France did not allow themselves to be confined to an ideological or generational box. The festivities organized by the NSRM and the *Société des Amis de la Russie Nationale* (Society of Friends of National Russia, SARN) for the 950th anniversary of the conversion of Vladimir I to Christianity in 988 bear witness to this. One day of festivities was dedicated to Anne of Russia, granddaughter of the Grand Prince and Queen of the Franks. The ceremonies involved representatives of both groups, whose biographies represent a relative concentration of social and symbolic capital. Arkady Stolypin, son of the former prime minister of Nicholas II who was assassinated in 1911 and son-in-law of a French ambassador, spoke on behalf of the NSRM. The SARN, which he co-founded in 1937 with, among others, Gustave Gautherot of the International Anticomunist Entente, was embodied by its president, Henry Lémery; this Martinican of mixed race—who was a short-lived Minister of Justice in 1934, and then Secretary of State for the Colonies for only the first two months of the Vichy regime— co-founded the SARN, which also included Pierre Taittinger and Xavier Vallat.²⁰ The NTS clearly worked to maintain its relations with both the Russian monarchist community and the French right, both unified by their opposition to communism.

In Nice, the capital of the Russian diaspora in the south of France, a “national-labor” manifesto was circulated in 1937. It made no concessions and used an apocalyptic tone, claiming that the Russian civil war had claimed 20 million lives and describing the communist Russians as “servants of Satan.” However, the police investigation into its distribution found that it had not been produced by NTS activists, of whom there were only ten in the city, nor by the Young Russians, of whom there were only four, and that it had not been printed by the only company in the area that had Russian typography. It seems the document was printed in the Far East, a few copies of which had reached France, where they were distributed.²¹ The story thus reveals the transnational links that structure the White Russian diaspora. It also highlights the importance of agitprop within this community.

¹⁷ Alexandre Jevhakoff, *Les Russes blancs* (Paris: Tallandier, 2013), p. 472; Minister of the Interior to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, “A/S du front commun chez les russes blancs,” January 23, 1935, 6p.; Police Prefecture P, “A/S du Comité des organisations d’émigrés russes,” July 9, 1936, 2p.; *id.*, note of May 4, 1938 (AN/19940500/307); DGNS, “A/S du Centre national panrusse à Paris,” March 4, 1937, AN/20010216/283.

¹⁸ DGNS, “A/S de l’attitude politique des dirigeants du journal *La Renaissance*,” December 1935, p. 1; General Information (GI), “Les émigrés russes en France et l’influence hitlérienne sur leurs groupements,” January 29, 1938, p. 18 (AN/20010216/282).

¹⁹ DGNS, note of June 14, 1937, AN/20010216/283.

²⁰ *Le Journal des débats*, November 17, 1938.

²¹ DGNS, “Tract (original et traduction) diffusé dans les milieux russes de Nice et annonçant la création d’un parti national-travailliste russe,” December 18, 1937, 8p.; Division Commissioner of the Special Police to the prefect of Alpes-maritimes, February 8, 1938, 2 p. AN/20010216/283.

How did solidarist activists present themselves to their compatriots? In a 1939 pamphlet, they claimed that the birth of their formation was forced by Soviet repression, which dismembered the terrorist Brotherhood of Russian Truth (*Bratsvo russkoi pravdy*) and successfully eliminated General Kutepov (albeit that this occurred after the establishment of the first NUNRG bases in France). The pamphlet's ideological direction reflects the fascist tone of the period:

The Nation is a spiritual, historical, cultural, ethnic and economic entity (in the order of importance of factors). The New Russian Generation is not fascist because it does not subordinate the idea of the Nation to that of the State. Nor is it racist, because racism defines the Nation as an emanation of race.²²

However, it stressed, in a clearly organicist perspective, that if the Russian nation is an indivisible whole—that is, if individuals must “form an inseparable whole with society”—it is also multiracial, by virtue of which it is an “Empire nationalism” where the authoritarian state must also be decentralized. Because the “revolution” to which it aspired was not only national but ideological, the NUNRG was convinced that the fall of the Soviet regime would “eliminate communism from the whole world.” This situation also implied that the USSR could not be defeated by an external military intervention, which would only throw the masses into Stalin's arms in the name of the fatherland, but by the power of a revolutionary ideology that would bring together an external and an internal Russian army.²³

Solidarists in a World in Transformation

The months following Hitler's accession to power saw the solidarists intensifying their agitprop in France, discussing the infiltration of terrorists on Soviet territory, and becoming even more concerned with the Far East.²⁴ During an anti-Bolshevik NSRM meeting in Paris that was expected to attract 400 people, the speakers challenged any patriotic defense of Russia against Nazi and Japanese imperialism.²⁵ The movement then went on a rampage in the November 1934 issue of its journal, *Za Rossiiu* (For Russia), calling on its militants to assassinate Soviet cadres wherever they could. The “hour of vengeance” should come by organizing terrorist “small cells” of “three to five men.”²⁶ This is the archaeology of the “molecular theory” that Poremsky would impose on the NTS in 1949: groups of three members on Soviet soil, with impulses from the central office then based in Frankfurt, each carrying out their own underground work in their sector.

The Spanish War (1936-1939) provided a first theatre of operations for solidarists' thirst for action. Its impact reorganized French political life around the question of the main enemy—was it fascism or communism?—and the risk of seeing the whole of Europe go up in flames. The Spanish front also allowed for propaganda efforts: in 1937, the Solidarity headquarters in Belgrade published a statement in which it called on those “citizens of civilized countries” moved by the Spanish war to support the creation of an international commission of enquiry to be sent to the USSR—skillfully specifying that the regime's violence against the people was such that Stalin could only hold out through a strategy of “world revolution.”²⁷

²² NUNRG, untitled French-language brochure, 1939, 34 p., AN/19940500/305.

²³ National-Labor Union of the New Russian Generation. Press Service, *Bulletin périodique d'information et de documentation* 6, January 27, 1940, 3 p., AN/19940500/305.

²⁴ DGNS, “Activité des mouvements monarchistes russes. L'Union Nationale de la Génération Nouvelle,” August 4, 1934, AN/19940500/305.

²⁵ Police prefecture, notes of January 17, 1934, 2 p., and January 18, 1934, 3p. (20100216/283).

²⁶ Police prefecture, note of January 3, 1935, 6 p., AN/19940500/309.

²⁷ *L'Express de Mulhouse*, February 6, 1937.

From July 19, 1936, the Popular Front government formed by Léon Blum adopted a rule of non-intervention that it did not follow in practice. The French aid to the Spanish Republicans was intended to be discreet, but was soon revealed, infuriating the right-wing press. At the end of the summer, the Comintern decided to create international brigades to support the struggle of the Spanish Republican camp. On November 25, 1936, the Reich and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact—directed against the Communist International, not against the USSR. Foreign volunteers joined the Franco camp, among them the White Russians of the Union of the Russian Empire and the 32 members of the French section of the Russian All-Military Union (ROVS): in February 1937, they united with the Tercio Maria de Molina unit within the Carlist organization Requetés. In 1938, during the Battle of the Ebro, Franco's forces were supported by 187,000 foreign volunteers, including a small contingent of Russians.²⁸ The solidarists also increased their contacts with Nazi Germany: Boris Nedrigailov, who was very close to Poremsky, is said to have communicated information to Germany regarding the supply of arms from France to the Spanish Republicans, while Poremsky traveled on several occasions to Germany, to the point that one of the Solidarist cadres he met in Belgrade thought Poremsky was a Gestapo agent.²⁹

Solidarists were caught up in a game of inter-influences, infiltrations, and counter-infiltrations. Several former Russian officers left the ROVS for the NSRM in protest against the line of General Miller, head of the ROVS from 1930 to 1937, which they considered too moderate. About 15 solidarist militants were expelled from Czechoslovakia for their defeatist propaganda, carried out in all the countries friendly to the USSR. On September 22, 1937, General Miller was kidnapped in Paris by men from the Soviet security services, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). While pro-Soviet circles claimed that the operation had been ordered from Germany using White Russians,³⁰ the NSRM organized a meeting in Paris on October 9 to denounce the action of Soviet agents within the Inner Line (*Vnutrenniaia liniia*), the ROVS' counter-espionage service. Arkady Stolypin asserted to the French press that from 1934 onwards, the NSRM had been the object of infiltration, and that a "relentless and total purge was our response".³¹

Even in such a context, solidarists continued to dream of action, whether by setting up military sections in cooperation with Germany in 1938; trying to send clandestine agents to Soviet Russia carrying masses of tracts (at the price of their frequent arrest); or, during the Russo-Finnish war of 1940, hoping to set up a corps of Russian volunteers from France—not least because they were widely convinced that the Third Reich had deeply infiltrated the Soviet state apparatus.³² This activist tropism resulted in a series of expulsions of solidarist militants from French territory in 1938, to which the NSRM responded with a statement—signed by each member of its leadership—that the movement would remain respectful of the law, but would maintain its course no matter the cost of repression.³³ The Munich crisis saw these leaders support non-intervention, albeit not without some reluctance on the part of their militants.³⁴ It should also be stressed that the interactions between solidarists and the French authorities were not one-dimensional; if the internal security services always kept an eye on

²⁸ Francesc Bonamusa, "Els estrangers i la Batalla de l'Ebre, 1938," in *El pacte de la no intervenció: La internacionalització de la Guerra Civil espanyola*, ed. Josep Sánchez Cervelló (Tarragona: Publicacions Universitat Rovira i Virgili, 2014), pp. 171-172.

²⁹ Inspectorate General of the Services of the Administrative Police, "Action des russes germanophiles," December 20, 1939, AN/19940500/305.

³⁰ Léo Lambert, *La société des Nations et les émigrés politiques: Gardes blancs, espions et terroristes autour de l'office Nansen* (Paris: Éditions universelles, 1938).

³¹ *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, October 3, 1937; *Le Jour*, October 21, 1937; GI, « Les émigrés russes en France et l'influence hitlérienne sur leurs groupements », 29 janvier 1938, p. 7, AN/ AN/20010216/282.

³² Administrative Police, "Note," April 13, 1938, 2 p.; *id.*, "Propagande clandestine en URSS de l'Union Travailliste de la Génération Nouvelle Russe," April 15, 1938; *id.*, "Note de renseignements," February 19, 1940, 2 p. (AN/19940500/305).

³³ Administrative Police, "Note," May 28, 1938, 2 p., AN/19940500/305.

³⁴ Administrative Police, "Note," September 28, 1938, 1 p.; GI, "Les émigrés russes..."

their domestic activities, the external security services followed closely and with interest NSRM members' attempts to infiltrate Soviet territory.³⁵

The French security services then recorded a rupture between the NTS, which was anxious to preserve its autonomy, and the Nazis, who wanted to place it under their tutelage.³⁶ Yet they overestimated the importance of this tension, as solidarist militants continued to pop up in various structures under Nazi patronage. The subsequent Paris congress included a closed session on the question of the movement's entry into the Russian National Front set up by the Nazi government. Two letters were read out: one was from a former Russian journalist in France, a philo-Nazi who, after immigrating to Berlin, had fled; the other was from Pierre Struve, who was appalled by the "cruelties of the Hitler regime." After "long debates," the congressmen adopted a resolution according to which they "approve[d] all anti-Soviet attempts but reject[ed] any joint action with other parties or party groupings."³⁷

This caution may have been prompted by the solidarists' philosophical anti-materialism more by a genuine rejection of Nazi politics. When Vladimir Poremsky judged the Nazi-Soviet pact, he opened up perspectives on the ideological positioning of his movement by arguing that any revolution has the merit of correcting the abuses of the old order but the defect of going against the human experience that is the basis of civilizations. Then he concluded: "the German-Soviet coalition would probably be in a position to dominate the world materially if it were not precisely a coalition of barbarians."³⁸

The NTS in the Second World War and its post-war adaptation

In 1940, an informant within the NSRM exposed to French intelligence services how White Russian circles were actively worked by German propaganda. The latter promised them that Hitler's plan was to defeat the democracies, then remove Soviet power and restore Tsarist Russia.³⁹ Following the French army's resounding defeat in June 1940, the NSRM declared it was putting itself at the service of the (according to its figures) 12,000 Russian refugees who had fought in the ranks of the French army to coordinate research related to prisoners, mobilized soldiers, and members of dispersed families. Obviously, the group wanted to grow in order to make itself into a legitimate interlocutor for the Vichy regime. Better still, by asking any Russian "likely to be wanted to communicate his name and address" to its headquarters, the NSRM reached out to the community in a way it could never otherwise have done.⁴⁰

Accustomed to unitary committees, the group participated with Turkul's RSNUV and the ROVS in a new structure launched a few weeks later, namely the Russian Representative Committee. Its ideological declaration on this occasion was unambiguous: "absolute intransigence against the Judeo-Marxist International and Freemasonry; a struggle against all forces that prevent the rebirth of national Russia; by considering that Orthodoxy played a decisive role in the creation of the Russian government, as it

³⁵ Benjamin Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA. Plotting to Free Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 41.

³⁶ Administrative Police, "Note," August 4, 1938, 2 p., AN/19940500/305.

³⁷ DGNS, "Note. Congrès de L'Union Nationale Travailleuse de la Génération Nouvelle Russe," November 28, 1938, 2 p., AN/19940500/305.

³⁸ Vladimir Poremsky, "Les besoins de l'Allemagne et l'accord germano-soviétique," *La Revue politique et parlementaire* 46, no. 539 (November 1939): 161-175.

³⁹ Division commissioner in charge of the services of the special police to the inspector general of the services of the administrative police, May 27, 1940, 2 p., AN/ AN/20010216/283, 27 mai 1940, 2 p., AN/ AN/20010216/283.

⁴⁰ *La Gazette de Biarritz-Bayonne et Saint-Jean-de-Luz*, August 26, 1940; *Gringroire*, August 29, 1940.

inspired the Russian imperial idea, within the faith of God, the pledge of the rebirth of our Fatherland.”⁴¹

After the war, the solidarists’ first task was to erase the memory of their active collaboration with the Third Reich as best they could, using the arrests of their members by the Gestapo at the end of the war to their advantage. The proposed narrative was that of an anti-totalitarian force that worked against both the USSR and Nazism. The solidarist program was also stripped of the elements most suggestive of fascism and (not without heated debate within the organization) of its anti-Semitism, even if the latter had much more to do with the doctrines of the reactionary movements of the late Russian Empire than with those of the Nazis.

With only 643 members in the West in 1951, did the NTS constitute a “Russian fascism”?⁴² Certainly, many of the utopian elements of fascism (palingenesis, organicist society, corporatism) were present therein, as were elements of the “fascist style,” demonstrating how Russian solidarism has nothing to do with that of Bourgeois. However, if we consider that fascism is a current defined by the existence of a militia-party that wishes to create a new man through a totalitarian state at home and an imperialist war abroad, then solidarism appears to be a specifically Russian current of this radical far right, fundamentally heteronomous to the construction of Soviet Russia.⁴³

The repositioning of the NTS during the war and afterwards naturally influenced its French branch. Having, among other things, participated in Rosenberg’s Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (*Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete*), Poremsky left to direct the movement from Frankfurt, while Stolypin continued the action within the new structure, a de facto association called *Nouvelle théorie sociale* in order to keep the then well-known acronym NTS. The association was taken in hand financially by Paix et Liberté, an anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda organization, and by being linked to the Young Friends of Russia of Boris de Kochkpo and Michel Slavinsky.⁴⁴

Among other members, we can note Vladimir I. Gestkov (head of the NTS after 1948 and linked to the French extreme right, he co-organized, with Poremsky and the support of the CIA, the import of works forbidden in the USSR);⁴⁵ Nikolai Rutyck-Rutchenko (a collaborator of the Nazi SD, accused of war crimes in Soviet territories but often suspected of being an Soviet agent); and Roman Redlich (an NTS international executive who worked for Goebbels’ services and took over the direction of the NTS when the Gestapo arrested its main executives in 1944).

Although the NTS’ links with the CIA are well known, the French services considered that the organization retains its autonomy, as the CIA funds only supplemented the financial support of the Russian diaspora contributing to the Free Russia Fund. It is also significant that despite its antisemitism, the NTS maintained links with Soviet liberal Jewish intellectuals, some of its members were Jewish, and sympathy for Israel was regularly re-affirmed. In France, the NTS limited its public

⁴¹ Cited in Jean-Yves Camus, “The Soviet Union, Russia, and Their Peoples as Perceived by French Volunteers in German Uniform, 1941–1945,” in *Entangled Far Rights: A Russian-European Intellectual Romance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Marlene Laruelle (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018), 94.

⁴² Benjamin Tromly, “Émigré Politics and the Cold War: The National Labor Alliance (NTS), United States Intelligence Agencies and Post-War Europe,” *Contemporary European History* 29, no. 1 (2019): 44-59.

⁴³ Jean-Yves Camus and Nicolas Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 21-22.

⁴⁴ Direction centrale des renseignements généraux (DCRG—Central Directorate of General Intelligence), “La colonie russe en France,” *Bulletin confidentiel*, July 1957, pp. 11-13, AN/F/7/15578.

⁴⁵ Frédéric Charpier, *La CIA en France. 60 ans d’ingérence dans les affaires françaises* (Paris, Seuil, 2008), 372-376.

activities to making contact with Soviet sailors and tourists and refocused on trying to influence the underground scene in the Soviet Union.⁴⁶

Conclusion

The Russian genealogy of the concept of “solidarism” has been dominant. In France, “solidarism” became little more than a label used by extreme-right extra-parliamentary groups to compensate for the difficulty of using the words “neo-fascism” or “nationalism” in the public space.⁴⁷ In 1969, the NTS and the Mouvement Jeune Révolution (MJR, founded in 1966 on the ruins of the youth branch of the terrorist *Organisation Armée Secrète*) joined forces to launch the Eastern Front.⁴⁸ Even more radically, in 1970 the NTS participated in the first meeting of Ordre Nouveau, the most important neo-fascist and violent movement that France has ever known.⁴⁹ In Russia, the legacy of the NTS can be found in several movements that emerged during the late perestroika years.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ DCRG, “Le mouvement des solidaristes russes,” August 28, 1968, 5 p.; *id.*, “de quelques organisations et personnalités étrangères anti-soviétiques en France,” December 1971, 5 p. (AN/19980547/23).

⁴⁷ Nicolas Lebourg, “La fonction productrice de l’histoire dans le renouvellement du fascisme à partir des années 1960,” in *Les Sciences sociales au prisme de l’extrême droite. Enjeux et usages d’une récupération idéologique*, ed. Sylvain Crépon and Sébastien Mosbah-Natanson (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2008), 213-243.

⁴⁸ Étienne Verhoeyen, *L’Extrême-droite en Belgique (III)*, *Courrier du CRISP*, March 26, 1976, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Telex from the DCRG to the Police aux frontières (PAF—Border Police), February 17, 1970, AN/20080389/16.

⁵⁰ Marlene Laruelle and Margarita Karnysheva, *Memory Politics and The Russian Civil War: Reds Versus Whites* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 14-54.