# National Bolshevism

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**National Bolshevism** is a political movement that combines elements of extreme [nationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism) (especially [Russian nationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_nationalism)) and [Bolshevism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshevik). It is often [anti-capitalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-capitalism) in tone, and sympathetic towards certain nationalist forms of [communism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism) and [socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism). Nevertheless, National Bolshevism is separate and distinct from [National communism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_communism).

Today, [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) is considered to be the center of National Bolshevism, and almost all of the National Bolshevik parties and organizations in the world are connected to it. Amongst the leading practitioners and theorists of National Bolshevism are [Aleksandr Dugin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Dugin) and [Eduard Limonov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard_Limonov), who leads the unregistered and banned [National Bolshevik Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Bolshevik_Party) (NBP) in Russia. Influenced heavily by the idea of [geopolitics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geopolitics), current [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) National Bolshevik movements propose a merger between Russia, [Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) and parts of Asia, in a union to be known as [Eurasia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasia).

The [Franco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France)-[Belgian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium) [*Parti Communautaire National-Européen*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parti_Communautaire_National-Europ%C3%A9en) shares National Bolshevism's desire for the creation of a united Europe, as well as many of the NBP's economic ideas. French political figure [Christian Bouchet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Bouchet) has also been influenced by the idea.

## Influences and origins

National Bolshevism is said to have roots in [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), where [nationalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism) writers such as [Ernst Niekisch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Niekisch) and [Ernst Jünger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_J%C3%BCnger) were prepared to tolerate the spread of [communism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism) as long as it took on the clothes of nationalism and abandoned its [internationalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proletarian_internationalism) mission. This tendency, although minor, continued into the 1930s when it became associated with the National Socialist Combat Movement, a dissident breakaway movement from the [Nazi Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Party) which espoused left-wing economics and which was led by [Hermann Ehrhardt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Ehrhardt), [Otto Strasser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Strasser) and [Walther Stennes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walther_Stennes).

[Karl Radek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Radek) wanted some of the right-wing nationalists he had met in prison to unite with the Bolsheviks in the name of National Bolshevism. He saw in National Bolshevism a way to "remove the capitalist isolation" of the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union). Radek had been influenced by the earlier ideas of [Heinrich Laufenberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Laufenberg) and [Fritz Wolffheim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fritz_Wolffheim), two [Hamburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamburg)-based dissident communists whose ideas about a Germany-Soviet Union alliance in a nationalist war against the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) and the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) he had previously criticized.

## Russia

### Russian Civil War

In [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), as the [civil war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Civil_War) dragged on, a number of prominent "[Whites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_movement)" switched to the Bolshevik side because they saw it as the only hope for restoring greatness to Russia. Amongst these was Professor [Nikolai Ustrialov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolay_Vasilyevich_Ustryalov), initially an anti-communist, who came to believe that Bolshevism could be modified to serve nationalistic purposes. His followers, the [Smenovekhovtsi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smenovekhovtsi) (named after a series of articles he published in 1921) *Smena vekh* (Russian: [volte-face](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volte-face)), came to regard themselves as National Bolsheviks, borrowing the term from Niekisch.

Similar ideas were expressed by the [Evraziitsi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evraziitsi) party and the pro-Monarchist [Mladorossi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mladorossi). [Joseph Stalin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin)'s idea of "[socialism in one country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism_in_one_country)" was interpreted as a victory by the National Bolsheviks. [Vladimir Lenin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Lenin), who did not use the term 'National Bolshevism', identified the Smenovekhovtsi as a tendency of the old [Constitutional Democratic Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_Democratic_Party) who saw Russian communism as just an evolution in the process of Russian aggrandizement. He further added that they were a 'class enemy' and warned against communist believing them to be allies. The movement attracted many party members, but was itself an intellectual current and not a political party. Lunacharsky supported it that Zinoviev and Bukharin condemned it. Stalin condemned it in 1923.

### Co-option of National Bolshevism

Ustrialov and others sympathetic to the Smenovekhovtsi cause, such as [Aleksey Nikolayevich Tolstoy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksey_Nikolayevich_Tolstoy) and [Ilya Ehrenburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilya_Ehrenburg), were eventually able to return to the Soviet Union and, following the co-option of aspects of nationalism by Stalin and his ideologue [Andrei Zhdanov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrei_Zhdanov), enjoyed membership of the intellectual elite under the designation "non-party" Bolsheviks. Similarly B.D. Grekov's National Bolshevik school of historiography, a frequent target under Lenin, was officially recognized and even promoted under Stalin, albeit after accepting the main tenets of [Stalinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalinism). Indeed it has been argued that National Bolshevism was the main impetus for the revival of [patriotism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriotism) as an official part of state ideology in the 1930s.

### Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn vs Eduard Limonov

The term *National Bolshevism* has sometimes been applied to [Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Solzhenitsyn), and his brand of [anti-communism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-communism). However, Solzhenitsyn cannot be labeled a National Bolshevik since he was thoroughly anti-Marxist and anti-Stalinist, and he wished a revival of [Russian culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_culture) that would see a greater role for the [Russian Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Orthodox_Church), a withdrawal of Russia from its role overseas, and a state of international isolationism. Solzhenitsyn and his followers, known as *vozrozhdentsy* (*revivalists*) differed from the National Bolsheviks, who were not religious in tone (although not completely hostile to religion), and who felt that involvement overseas was important for the prestige and power of Russia.

There was open hostility between Solzhenitsyn and [Eduard Limonov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard_Limonov), the head of Russia's unregistered [National Bolshevik Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Bolshevik_Party). Solzhenitsyn had described Limonov as "a little insect who writes pornography", and Limonov described Solzhenitsyn as a traitor to his homeland who contributed to the downfall of the USSR. In *The Oak and the Calf*, Solzhenitsyn openly attacked the notions that the Russians were 'the noblest in the world' and that 'tsarism and Bolshevism ... [were] equally irreproachable', defining this as the core of the National Bolshevism to which he was opposed.

### National Bolshevik Party

Main article: [National Bolshevik Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Bolshevik_Party)

The National Bolshevik Party was founded in 1992 as the [National Bolshevik Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Bolshevik_Front), an amalgamation of six minor groups. The party has always been led by [Eduard Limonov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard_Limonov). The group's early policies and actions show some alignment and sympathy with [radical nationalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radical_nationalism_in_Russia) groups, but a split occurred in the 2000s which changed this to an extent. Opposed to the [Vladimir Putin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Putin) regime in Russia, Limonov has somewhat liberalized the NBP, and joined forces with leftist and liberal groups in [Garry Kasparov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garry_Kasparov)'s [United Civil Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Civil_Front) to fight Putin. Some National Bolsheviks are opposed to Limonov's attempts to find allies even if they are pro-[Western](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world) politicians; some have left the NBP and formed the [National Bolshevik Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Bolshevik_Front).

## See also

* [Greater Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Russia)
* [Russophilia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russophilia)
* [Eurasianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasianism)
* [Neo-Sovietism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Sovietism)
* [Soviet socialist patriotism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_socialist_patriotism)
* [Russian nationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_nationalism)
* [Neo-Stalinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Stalinism)
* [Strasserism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strasserism)

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