

Chiara Pierobon

Youth Political Organizations and Music:  
the Case of St. Petersburg

WP 2011-01

**Bielefeld University**



**St. Petersburg State University**



**Centre for German and  
European Studies (CGES)**



**CGES Working Papers** series includes publication of materials prepared within different activities of the Center for German and European Studies both in St. Petersburg and in Germany: The CGES supports educational programmes, research and scientific dialogues. In accordance with the CGES mission, the Working Papers are dedicated to the interdisciplinary studies of different aspects of German and European societies.

The following text goes back to the PhD dissertation on the role of music in youth political organizations in contemporary Russia. The paper is based on the data collected during a field research in St. Petersburg in summer-autumn 2010, while Chiara Pierobon was hosted as Visiting Fellow by the Center for German and European Studies.

**Chiara Pierobon** is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Trento and at the University of Bielefeld

**Contact:** [chiara.pierobon@gmail.com](mailto:chiara.pierobon@gmail.com)



<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Some notes on the sociology of music.....	5
2.2. On the ideological content of music .....	7
<b>4. YOUTH POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SAINT PETERSBURG: CREATING A SAMPLE.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.1. Registered organizations.....</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1.1. Youth Guard of United Russia.....	10
4.1.2. Nashi.....	10
<b>4.2. Non-registered organizations.....</b>	<b>11</b>
4.2.1. National-Bolshevism (NazBol).....	11
4.2.2. Vanguard of Red Youth (AKM) .....	12
4.2.3. Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement (DCPA).....	12
4.2.4. Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI).....	13
4.2.5. Oborona .....	14
4.2.6. Youth Yabloko.....	15
4.2.7. People Democratic Youth Union (NDSM).....	15
<b>5. THE CONTRIBUTION OF MUSIC.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5.1. Music in the organizational life .....</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1.1. On the relation between music genre and its function .....	20
<b>5.2. Youth political organizations and events.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>5.3. Youth organizations and their musicians .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>27</b>

## 1. Introduction

Music has been a factor in many major movements, as the labor movements, the civil right movements, the oppositional movement in dictatorship Argentina, various ethno-nationalist movements, as for example the Estonian national movement against the Soviets which, in fact, was known as the “singing revolution”.

As noted by Futrell et al. (2006), compared to other examples of social movements' high cultural and pop-cultural artifacts, such as painting and literature, which all can articulate and show off shared values and pride, “only music can make you feel them and offer an immediate experience of collective identity” (Futrell et al., 2006: 280).

Talking about social movements and music, Eyerman and Jamison (1998) define movements' identity as a “collective structure of feeling” and highlight the central role played by music in its making and reproduction. According to the authors, social movements utilize the media of artistic expression to communicate with the larger society and, by so doing, often serve to (re)politicize population culture and entertainment. In music, social movements periodically provide an important source of renewal and rejuvenation, by implanting new meanings and reconstituting established aesthetic forms and genres. As they affirm, “The construction of meaning through music and songs is a central aspect of collective identity formation [...] and collective structures of feeling are actually made and reorganized through music” (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 166).

As the title suggests, the chapter investigates the relationship between youth political organizations and music in the city of St. Petersburg. In particular, it is focused on nine youth political organizations – Youth Guard of United Russia, Nashi, National Bolsheviks, Vanguard of Red Youth, Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement, Movement against illegal immigration, Oborona, Yabloko, and People democratic youth league - and aims at describing the contribution of music to their organizational life.

The choice of grounding the study in Saint Petersburg is not accidental since, as stressed also by Alexei Zivilev, St. Petersburgian leader of the Youth Guard, the city can be considered the Russian capital of music and especially of rock, where popular artists and groups, such as Yuri Shevchuk, Viktor Tsoi, Aquarium, and Alice were born or seated.

In a context as the Russian one, where two different conceptualizations of left and two right can be easily identified, one based on economic and distributional issues and the other one focused more on social and political rights and where, therefore, the employment of the conventional categories and methods can be inadequate and misleading (See also Evan and Whitefield 1998), the paper suggests an innovative approach for the study and placement of youth organizations in the Saint Petersburg's political field looking at the contribution of music to their organizational life.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Some notes on the sociology of music

There are two different types of sociological research related to culture and music: the first tradition of sociology of art focused on the decoding of social meanings from the artistic work per se' and the second tradition based on a micro-scale and detailed empirical field research investigating the processes of music production and consumption. While the first approach is concerned with analyzing the work of art, the second deals with the study of situations and contexts in which specific social practices and artistic products are produced and consumed; while Adorno is the most authoritative exponent of the first tradition, the second approach identifies in Becker its main representative.

Adorno's contribution to the sociology of music can be found in three of his works: "Philosophie der Neuen Musik" (1949), "Dissonanzen" (1958) and "Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie" (1962).

The author refers to contemporary mass music as a product of the cultural industry which is integrated component of the capitalist economy; as a result, music follows the same rules of production characterizing industrial commodities. Fetishism and degradation are the main features of popular music which requires the musician to adapt to the regularity of success, following the rules and modes of the standardized production, and thus scarifying his individuality.

Adorno conceives mass culture as a form of adaptation and adjustment not only to the market but also to the consumer himself; as he stresses, "the pre-digested quality of the product prevails, justifies itself and establishes itself all the more firmly in so far as it constantly refers to those who cannot digest anything not already pre-digested"(Adorno, 2003 [1991]: 67).

Moreover, the consumer of popular music listens atomistically, in a childish, primitive and retarded way, and dissociate the music material even if in the light music there is nothing more to decompose. As a result, contemporary mass music has a regressive effect on the listener, not only turning him away from more important music but also confirming him in his neurotic stupidity. Consequently, "If the standardized products do not permit concentrated listening without becoming unbearable to the listeners, the latter are in any case no longer capable of concentrated listening" (Adorno, 2003 [1991]: 49).

Talking about the function of light music, Adorno points out that light music cooperates with mass culture in preventing men to reflect on themselves and their world and make them believe that the world is following the right path since it provides such abundance of consolations. Through the "language of angels", a language without concepts and a tone of delight, where the minor mode is banned, light music is able to deny distress and discomfort characterizing present life.

At the same time, the author attributes to mass music the power of creating a feigned sense of community, of fictitious integration and the illusion of warmth for those who feel the cold of the harsh struggle of all against all. And it is in this way that light music

succeeds in disciplining the individuals, allowing them to virtually escape from reality without changing the status quo because, as noted by Adorno, the status quo could be modified only by those who, instead of confirming themselves and the world, reflect critically on the world and about themselves.

In juxtaposition to light music, Adorno introduces the idea of progressive music: as stated by the sociologist, "The all-powerful culture industry appropriates the enlightening principle and, in its relationship with human beings, defaces it for the benefit of prevailing obscurity. Art vehemently opposes the tendency; it offers an ever-shaper contrast to such false clarity. The configurations of that deposed obscurity are held up in opposition to the prevailing neon-light style of the times. Art is able to aid enlightenment only by relating the clarity of the world consciously to its own darkness" (Adorno, 2002 [1958]: 15). Thus, if popular music keeps humanity in its state of dark unawareness, modern music, as a form of art, is attributed the task to illuminate the human condition, making people aware of the darkness in which they live.

Adorno sees in Schönberg's expressionism the prototype of modern music and confers to his production a central role in the process of *Aufklärung*, since with his music the composer shows and forces the individual to wise up to what the cultural industry tries to hide and deny.

While Adorno focuses on music as an artistic and symbolic artifact building and giving meaning to people's experience, Becker looks at this medium taking into account the contexts and ways of its production and consumption. More specifically, with an approach influenced by the symbolic interactionism, the author concentrates on the social relations that develop between individuals and institutions that compose the various musical and artistic worlds. His main contribution in this field is the book "Art Worlds" (1982).

According to Becker, the art world can be described as "the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produce(s) the kind of art works that art world is noted for" (Becker, 1982: X). In his definition, art world is conceived as a collective action, a joint activity of a (large) number of people who are linked in a cooperation network involved in the production, commission, preservation, promotion, criticism, and sale of arts.

Despite Becker's conceptualization of art work as collective action performed by a network of people, this cooperation activity does not necessarily take place in a state of equilibrium since the art work is not exempt from the influence of internal tension and external changes.

With this regard, worthy to note is that Becker does not agree with artists and ideologists of art, as for example Adorno, who affirm that the main feature of art, conceived as expression of thoughts and mood, is its uniqueness and explain artistic variation as the result of the artist's individual peculiar contribution to the art world. Instead, according to Becker, central role in the artistic change is played by the organizational development and by the innovator's ability to create around himself an apparatus of people who sustain and further his ideas in a cooperative way, capturing an existing network or developing a new one.

Also Becker refers to Schönberg's work, defining his contribution as an artistic revolution, since the composer with the introduction of the twelve-tone system changed

not only the logic and character of the works produced, but also the conventions to produce them (Becker, 1982: X). However, for the sociologist, what is fundamental for the success and permanence of an innovative work is not its intrinsic worth but rather the extent it can be accepted and incorporated into the artistic world. Therefore, innovators introduce new ideas and visions to the artistic world but only proponents who can mobilize the support of others and give their changes an organizational basis can ensure durability to their artistic innovations.

After this theoretical excursus on the two main approaches to the sociology of music, the next section will be devoted to the study of music and its ideological content.

## **2.2. On the ideological content of music**

As noted by Keller, “that music aptly and effectively conveys ideological attitudes is proven by how often it was, and still is, the frequent object of censorship” (Keller 2007: 91). Limiting our observation to the last one hundred years, Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, and Franco represent only few examples of control and restriction of music and arts more in general on behalf of monopolized power so that it is licit to wonder why music, more than other arts, has been attributed this extraordinary importance in the course of history.

The peculiarity of music consists in its complex nature: in fact, besides being an object-sound, music comprises several processes, experiences, social and commercial activities which require the participation of people at different levels of engagement and power structure. And, according to Keller, it is in this multiplicity of processes and levels that music acquires “its uncanny potential to attract, catch and collect symbolic meanings of various kinds in magnet-like fashion” (Ibd. 93).

One of the main potentialities of this medium is its ability to create identities and foster a sense of belonging to a culture, subculture, nation, social class, religion and so on.

Central moment in the process of creation of identities and meanings through music is represented by live performances: in fact, as documented by Mc Neill (See 1995), the mutual synchronizing of sonic and bodily experience creates a precognitive bond perhaps deeper than shared conscious meaning and the effects of temporarily coordinated bodily activities such as marching, chanting, singing, dancing foster a form of solidarity richer and more robust than cognitive agreement. According to the author, “moving our muscles rhythmically and giving voice consolidate our solidarity by altering human feelings.” And it is this capability of influencing the mental and emotional condition of both performer and audience and creating a sort of shared altered state of consciousness that contributes to conferring to music its peculiar power.

Moreover, as highlighted by Keller, “whenever identity is affirmed, a musical performance may help articulate or even develop the values and attitudes of the social group claiming them” (Keller 2007: 101). In fact, during the concerts the values and attitudes of the social group are collectively performed and experienced through music: this process leads to an intensification of the sense of belonging and identity among in-group members and, at the same time, to a deepening of the gap with the Others who do not share this experience and, therefore, are not part of the *imagined community*.

### **3. Research questions and design**

The paper takes into account two of the most representative organizations in the city and analyzes the contribution of music to their organizational life.

Four main questions have been identified which lead to a logical progression through the analysis:

- how do the selected organizations relate to music?
- in what consist their music engagement?
- why do the organizations identify themselves with a specific band, song, music genre etc.
- what kind of relation ties the organizations with their representative groups and artists?

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the organizations' leaders and main representatives conducted during the summer 2010.

Afterwards, the data were processed through situational analysis, using the positional maps introduced by Clarke (See also Clarke 2003 and 2005).

Positional maps are analytic tools which can be applied to the discursive material gathered through fieldwork, participant observation and interviewing. As stressed by the author, the "lay out most of the major positions taken in the data on the major discursive issues therein.[...] They portrait issues, positions on issues, absences of positions where they might be expected and differences in discursive position which are central in the situation under study" (Clarke, 2005: 126). The maps are constructed on two dimensions or axes emerging from the data, where the different actors and their positions are placed; their main advantage consists in allowing the researcher to represent more accurately heterogeneities, complexities and differences.

### **4. Youth political organizations in Saint Petersburg: creating a sample**

This study has been focused on nine contemporary Russian youth political organizations present in the city of St. Petersburg: Youth Guard of United Russia, Nashi, National Bolsheviks, Vanguard of Red Youth, Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement, Movement Against Illegal Immigration, Oborona, Youth Yabloko, and People democratic youth league.

The sample was created looking at a survey annually conducted by the social research institute FOM on the most known youth political organizations in the country<sup>1</sup>. The results collected in 2007, 2009 and 2010 are presented in Graph 1 in the next page.

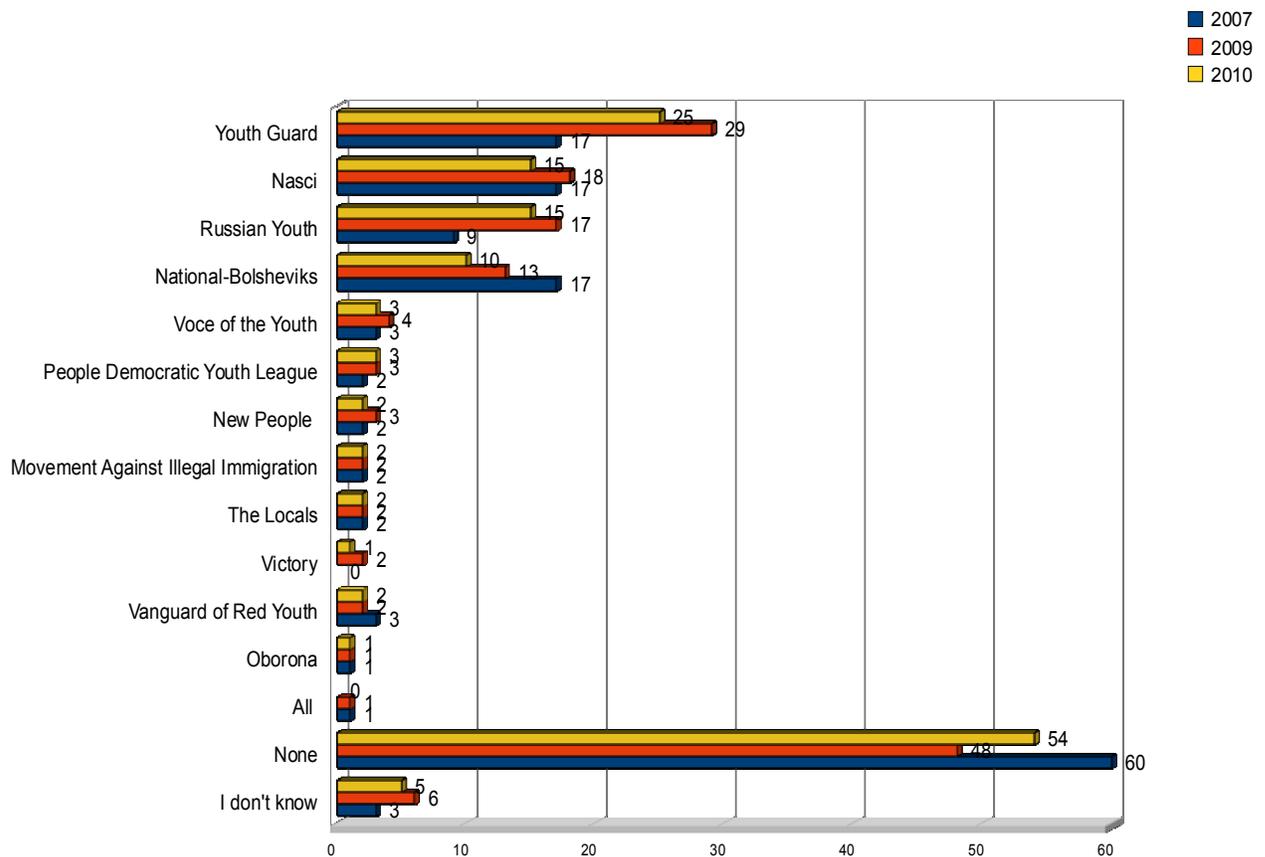
Despite the presence of a significant discrepancy in the popularity between registered and non-registered organizations<sup>2</sup>, all the groups were taken into account in the study in order to have a sample as complete and representative as possible.

---

<sup>1</sup> URL: <http://bd.fom.ru/pdf/d06molodezh10.pdf>

The sample was subsequently adjusted to the peculiarities of the St. Petersburgian political field, including the Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement - which is present only in St. Petersburg - and Youth Yabloko - which is particularly important and active in the city - and excluding Russian Youth, New People and the Locals, which were not present in the city.

Graph 1: Most known political organizations in Russia: years 2007, 2009 and 2010. Source: FOM



Before going any further, an outline of the organizations' ideology is necessary.

From a series of interviews personally conducted during the summer 2010 with the leaders of the most representative non-registered youth political organizations in Saint Petersburg, it emerges that one of the central problems faced by these organizations is the lack of traditional media coverage. For most of these groups, the Internet represents a central "expressive equipment" for the presentation of self (See also Goffman 1990) and the only permanent performance visible to the audience where organizations' symbols are produced and reproduced and resources are created and presented to the public for arousing discontent and facilitating mobilisation (Suev,

<sup>2</sup> The activities of children and youth organizations are nowadays regulated by the state through the Constitution and the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the Federal Acts "On non-profit organizations" and "On civic associations", the Federal Act of the Russian Federation as well as the Governmental Decree of 2006 which assure legal, economic, and organizational supports to organizations whose activities are oriented towards the implementation of the state's policies and initiatives. These organizations are therefore officially registered. Youth Guard of United Russia, Nashi, Russian Youth, New People and the Locals belong to this category.

2010). Therefore, the description of the ideology of the selected organizations will be based on the materials presented on their webpages.

## **4.1. Registered organizations**

### **4.1.1. Youth Guard of United Russia**

Since its foundation in 2006, the Youth Guard has become the most known youth movement of the country (See also FOM 2010).

Through the project "Полит Завод", members of the Youth Guard became deputies of the regional legislative assembly, and assistants and members of the executive authorities of subjects of the federation<sup>3</sup>. In 2007, "Young Guard" shared with "United Russia" a triumph in the parliamentary elections so that, nowadays, several young deputies from the organization are seated in the State Duma.

According to the Manifest published on the organization's webpage, Russia should be a strong country, independent from the opinion of other western democracies. The organization finds its ideological foundation in the idea of a sovereign democracy and in three different projects: "Putin's Plan", "4 I" of Dmitry Medvedev and Strategy 2020. At the same time, it recognizes the need of innovation in the country through investments, infrastructure, and the consolidation of political and civic institutions. The manifest cited a legitimate presidential power, a working party system, the implementation of the state social guarantees and obligations to the citizens, personal and economic modernization and the rule of the law as the basis for the future development of the country; central role in this process of modernization is ensured to young people.

Despite the electoral success in the parliamentary election and a development of the country registered in the past decade, Young Guard declares itself still committed to its ideology and ideals which have allowed Russia to become an independent, respected, and strong country. The next concrete goal set up by the organization is the inclusion of Youth Guard members' in the municipal assembly.

### **4.1.2. Nashi**

As reported on its webpage<sup>4</sup>, the Youth Democratic Antifascist Movement Nashi was founded in 2004 when a group of regional youth organizations took the initiative of establishing an anti-fascist political movement.

From the outset, the main purpose of Nashi was the struggle against the unnatural coalition of oligarchs and liberals who, under the influence of the "colour revolutions" taking place in Georgia and Ukraine, wanted to give up the sovereignty and independence of Russia. The groups strives for a transformation of Russia into a global leader of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the realization of a "revolution of the best", which allows the most competent managers to come into power and run the country, since the generation of the 1980s has lost faith in Russia and its prospects.

---

<sup>3</sup> URL: [www.molgvardia.ru/convention/manifest](http://www.molgvardia.ru/convention/manifest)

<sup>4</sup> <http://nashi.su/projects>

In addition, central aim of the movement was the opposition of nationalism and xenophobia in Russia as well as the fight against counterproductive fascist and nationalist organizations. In fact, according to the Nashi group, Russia is a multiethnic and multicultural country, and any conflicts based on ethnicity and religion necessarily will lead to the disintegration of the country.

As reported on the webpage, March 1, 2005 the leader of the Movement Vasily Yakimenko announced the establishment of the movement and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke in support of it. Since then, regular meetings are held by commissars and activists with top officials of the state - Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev.

Since 2005, Nashi has annually carried out an education forum named "Seliger", whose number of participants has been steadily increasing each year: in Seliger 2007, the movement registered the participation of about 10,000 people. The forum allowed young people to get in touch with political leaders, analysts and representatives of the executive and legislative authorities as well as of the business world, representing a platform for the creation of an effective innovative economic model for the country and for its modernization.

## **4.2. Non-registered organizations**

### **4.2.1. National-Bolshevism (NazBol)**

According to the program approved in 2003<sup>5</sup>, the essence of National Bolshevism is an all-consuming love for Russia and an hatred for its enemies. NBP aims at a revolutionary transformation of Russia: more specifically, through a people's revolt, the group wants to create another Russia which will allow the nation to carry out a breakthrough into the world. The new society will be built on the ideals of masculinity, collectivism and devotion to the own duties.

The NBP strives for protecting and defending the rights of Russian in the country as well abroad wherein belonging to the Russian people is not determined neither by birth nor by religion but rather by an historical, linguistic and cultural identification with the country.

The global objective of the National Bolsheviks is the creation of a great Eurasian superpower. The group aspires at a reunification of Russia and Belarus and all the neighboring territories where Russian represent a majority such as northern Kazakhstan, Eastern and Southern Ukraine, Crime and Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the Russian regions of the former Soviet Union. In their opinion, the United States and NATO are seen as the main foreign enemies which are rubbering the country and whose dominance should be destroyed.

NBP considers necessary a radical change in the political system by destroying the current state of order, beneficial only to officials, police and plunderers of the national wealth. The road to power will be open to all who have the will and talent so that a free circulation of people within the power hierarchy in accordance to their abilities will be allowed. Only in this way an overcome the alienation of human beings from the socio-economic institutions will be possible.

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://theory.nazbol.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=65:-2003&catid=31:general&Itemid=27](http://theory.nazbol.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65:-2003&catid=31:general&Itemid=27))

From the program it emerged that National Bolshevism puts the economy in a subordinate position in politics and interprets the economic system not as a goal but as a mean for a revolutionary transformation of the world. After coming to power and terminating the Russia's unequal treatment on behalf of western countries, the NBP will establish a Russian socialism, an economic system oriented to the benefit of the majority, where industries associated with the military, mining, energy, railways, and communication sectors as well as strategic companies will be nationalized.

#### **4.2.2. Vanguard of Red Youth (AKM)**

On its webpage<sup>6</sup>, the political groups describes itself in terms of a communist organization whose ideology is inspired by Marxism-Leninism and it recognizes in Marx, Hegel, Lenin, and Stalin together with Mao Tse-tung, Kim Ir Sen, and Ho Chi Minh its main teachers. It sympathizes with the real socialism, the workers of the world, the movements of national liberation, and all the anti-imperialist forces and it takes example from the experience of the "Red Brigades" and "RAF", the Paris May 1968, and contemporary anti-globalist and political communists.

The primary aim of the AKM is the development of a socialist society characterized by the triumph of the working class, the institution of a proletariat dictatorship in form of Совет, and the revival and expansion of СССР by means of a socialist and violent revolution.

Capitalism is seen as the black beast of contemporary world, as the source of all social and economic injustice, causing foreign invasion and wars, as well as national and international terrorism, and inhibiting scientific and technological progress. According to AKM, communism is the natural alternative to capitalistic society: in the communist society, social equality and equal distribution of goods among its members will dominate, the work will acquire free and creative character, the state power and authority will be replaced by self-government and the motto "от каждого по способностям - каждому по потребностям"<sup>7</sup> will apply.

In the communist society, all the people will be granted the right of a decent life, security, participation in the administration of the state, protection from exploitation and unemployment, and will be provided with comfortable accommodation, free and easy access to education at different levels, free and high-quality health services and pensions. In addition, freedom of information, of speech, of assembly and movement will be preserved. At the same time, the single individual will not be allowed to contradict the society's interests and to jeopardize the equality of all citizens for his own interest.

#### **4.2.3. Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement (DCPA)**

According to the Manifesto reported on the organization's webpage<sup>8</sup>, Russia has registered the establishment of an authoritarian regime that protects the interest of the oligarchy, big bourgeoisie and bourgeoisified top bureaucrats, who are the product of the Soviet nomenklatura.

---

<sup>6</sup> [www.akm1917.org/doc/ak6-1.htm](http://www.akm1917.org/doc/ak6-1.htm)

<sup>7</sup> "From everyone according to the talent - to everyone according to the need"

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dspsa.info/>

As a result of the economic privatizations of the 1990s, several oligarchic clans appeared; each of them wanted the appropriation of the political power to secure for itself all the results of the privatization. The political struggle between the oligarchs ended with the victory of the “clan of the force”, descendant of the KGB, which crushed the enemies and built a vertical of power.

According to the Manifesto, due to the abundance of natural resources, Russia has rapidly emerged as a raw material appendage of the West, where Russian oligarchs translate their revenues in funds and securities. Television, radio, newspapers, advertisement and various shows contribute in brainwashing people, by extinguishing protest consciousness and discrediting any form of resistance to capitalist and imperialist system.

Central aim of the Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement is the destruction of the capitalist system and its replacement by a social revolution and the establishment of a classless society based on equality and difference.

From a political point of view, the movement aims at the destruction of the old hierarchical state and the institution of a new type of state, based on the example of the Paris Commune, which is built from the bottom up, through a broad network of civil, industrial, consumer and professional organizations and which is focused on the economic emancipation of people. Moreover, the organization strives for a maximum development of federalism and autonomy for the regions, districts, towns, villages and communities and the implementation of direct democracy.

With regard to the international sphere, the movement opposes the nationalist and imperial chauvinism, ethnic conflict and xenophobia and is in favor of a union of workers of all countries against the capitalist genocide. The organization speaks up for a rapid end of military adventurism of Russian services in Chechnya.

In the Manifest, the core of the resistance movement is described as a mass organization of workers: free trade unions, strike and working committees, peasant leagues and squads together with independent civil organizations, and cultural and artistic groups.

The organization is for democracy but against bourgeois democracy, under which ordinary people have no real control over those they elected in the parliament and in the head of the state. Therefore, it aims at awakening the people, making them responsible citizens and “political animals”, who resist the capitalist system through social revolution, thus realizing their human dignity.

#### **4.2.4. Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI)**

As indicated by the name, the DPNI is a movement in opposition to the phenomenon of illegal immigration towards Russia.

On its webpage, the DPNI describes itself as a not-racist movement open to and officially representing the interest of all the people who are Russian by birth, are representatives of one of the indigenous peoples of Russia or are Russian of at least one parent who sincerely identifies himself/herself with the Russian nation and its interests. Moreover, also non-Slavic European grew up in Russia, sharing Russian culture, mentality and the position of Russian nationalists can be accepted into the movement.

On the Internet, the organization has published a program against illegal immigration which was discussed and has been adopted since the second All-Russian congress taking place in July 2009<sup>9</sup>. The document is divided into nine sections and ranges from citizenship issues to the protection of Russia's borders, from the development of a Russian civil society to the promotion of new Russian national culture and population policies.

As emerged from the program, the organization believes in the need of maintaining a strong boundary with Russian compatriots and indigenous people of Russia living abroad, by easing their acquisition and re-acquisition of Russian citizenship. On the contrary, naturalization on behalf of non-Russian people should be made more difficult through a mandatory exam of Russian language, as well as basic knowledge of Russian social culture, history and law and non-indigenous people of Russia living in the country should be prohibited to create autonomous national-cultural associations. Moreover, the organization is in favour of the installation of new borders with Kazakhstan and Caucasian countries and of the introduction of a restricted visa system and registration requirements for all the foreigners entering Russia.

At the same time, during the second All-Russian Congress other issues related to Russia and its social, political and culture future but which are not directly linked to migration were discussed, such as the development of a stronger Russian civil society, the enhancement of transparency and accountability of state and municipal authorities, the promotion of fertility and family policies and the passage of more severe laws against drug addiction and trafficking, alcoholism, and crime against persons.

Worthy to note is that since the past year the movement has straightened its position against migration and is now campaigning for a restriction of both illegal and legal immigration towards Russia.

#### **4.2.5. Oborona**

Oborona is a civic youth movement established in 2005, based on the network principle and mostly horizontal relations, without leaders or centralized structure.

Although it may have different views on the political and economic reforms implemented during the 1990s, on the declaration reported on its webpage, the group presents its members as a new and free generation of people, who grew up in a free country, does not fear authority, is not burdened by the experience of the Soviet past and is interested in the future<sup>10</sup>.

In the document, the organization states its demands for a free and prosperous country, with a professional and effective army able to protect Russian citizens. The groups strives for a democratic transfer of power via free and popular elections, free and independent media and, in general, more freedom for students and people to defend their rights and express their ideas.

It aims at more equality in the application of law, avoiding law abuses in the repression of opposition and dissent, and more security for companies against bandits and corrupted officials. According to Oborona, love for the Motherland means the

---

<sup>9</sup> [www.dpni.org/articles/dokumenti/13255/](http://www.dpni.org/articles/dokumenti/13255/)

<sup>10</sup> [www.oborona.org/about/declaration](http://www.oborona.org/about/declaration)

promotion of the economic and business sector rather than pointless patriotic declarations. Moreover, the movement aims at a better distribution of the state's budget in favour of students and public sector employers compared to the current regime benefiting state officials.

Finally, in its struggles Oborona uses only non-violent methods.

#### **4.2.6. Youth Yabloko**

On its webpage<sup>11</sup>, Youth Yabloko presents itself as one of the most known youth political movements in Russia. The first group of youth appeared in 1995 in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg; since then, the organization has significantly developed and spread its presence all over the country. Nowadays, Youth Yabloko is a section of the Democratic Party Yabloko, whose federal structure includes more than 30 regional organizations and more than 3.000 members.

Youth Yabloko is one of the most active organizers of protest actions and cooperates with different Russian youth organizations such as the «Democratic Alternative», «STOP call-up army», Youth Human Rights Movement, Moscow Helsinki Group, Movement For Human Rights, and the association “Golos”. It also collaborate with foreign organizations of Western and Eastern Europe as “Pora” in the Ukraine, “Zubr” Movement in Belarus, the liberal youth of the Baltic Sea Area (LYBS). The group is also partner of the European Liberal Youth (LYMEC), and is the observer member of International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY).

The central aim of Youth Yabloko is the institution of a democracy, a civil society and a constitutional state in Russia, by contrasting the authoritarian tendencies characterizing the actual Russian political regime and by ensuring more fairness in the electoral process. The organization hankers for its inclusion in the realization of programs for political, economical and social development of the country and for the participation in the local elections of its young members.

The group's program devolves particularly attention to young people, whom more social protection should be granted and whose families' living conditions should be improved. Moreover, youth participation in the social and political life of the country should be fostered.

The organization strives for the protection of rights and freedoms of young citizens and for the prevention of any types of discrimination, by struggling against any demonstration of xenophobia and nationalism. Finally, Yabloko campaigns for the abolition of call-up system in the army and a transition to the professional army on the base of contract as well as a reduction of the pollution in the environment.

#### **4.2.7. People Democratic Youth Union (NDSM)**

The People Democratic Youth League was founded in 2006 with the support of the Russian People's Democratic Union; nowadays it unites democratic youth in more than 46 regions of Russia<sup>12</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> [www.youthyabloko.ru/english.php](http://www.youthyabloko.ru/english.php)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ndsm.su/?cat=about>

Besides actively organizing and participating in protest actions against the incumbent power of the authorities and the for protection of constitutional rights of citizens, the organization is actively involved in the political process.

The league presents itself as strongly opposing the revival of the totalitarian regime in Russia; its main aim is the transformation of the country into a legal and democratic state.

The organization has held a series of actions protesting against the growing censorship on television, the so-called "Olympic" Law, which is actually legalizing the activities of state-raiders, and the prohibition of political parties in Russia. Moreover, the Youth League is actively involved in activities and events held by the Russian Popular Democratic Union, such as pickets in defense of the Constitution and events against the government "crisis management" measures, and in favor of Putin's resignation from the government.

Youth League was the organizer of the Forum Progressive Youth "Freedom Zone", held in August 2008 in Karelia, which was attended by representatives of youth organizations of democratic orientation from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. At the end of the Forum, a protocol of intent was signed in favor of cooperation in the defense of civil rights and political freedoms in the former Soviet Union. The union maintains relations with the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) and the Young Liberals of Europe (LYMEC).

## **5. The contribution of music**

Three main issues emerged from the interviews around which the analysis was conducted: the conceptualization of music characterizing the selected organizations and their concrete use of this medium, the relation between organizations and music events and the relation between organizations and musicians. The three fields constitute the subject of the next paragraphs.

### **5.1. Music in the organizational life**

According to Alexei Zivilev, leader of the Youth Guard in Saint Petersburg, music plays a very important role in the life of youth political organizations and movements. In line with Keller and his observation on the ideological potential of music, by making the example of the Orange revolution in Ukraine in 2004, Zivilev points out the central contribution of this medium in consolidating and carrying out the movement's ideology. In his opinion, a strong investment in music and musicians was conducted so that it is licit to speak of this medium in terms of an effective ideological machine that significantly contributed to the triumph of Mr. Yushchenko.

Looking at the relation between Youth Guard and music, its Saint Petersburgian leader highlights the central function fulfilled by its hymn. The song was recorded in different versions, - pop, classical, and etc. which are easily accessible on the Web - and, when played during political events, has a very cohesive effect on the participants so that immediately it is possible to note a different attitude on their behalf.

Figure 1: Importance of music in the life of the selected organizations

<b>Youth Guard</b>		Very important: effective ideology machine and cohesive effect		
<b>Nashi</b>			Role of no small importance: there are not so many ways to influence mankind	
<b>National-Bolsheviks</b>	Central: they were born as a music subculture and then they started engaging politically			
<b>Vanguard of Red Youth</b>		Very important: advertisement for political parties and esthetic function and cohesive element for his widespread organization		
<b>Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement</b>			Important role: goes into your heart, your soul, your emotions. Politics of the heart, move people	
<b>Movement Against Illegal Immigration</b>				Important but not central: centrality of videos and textual messages; music will be more important in the future
<b>Oborona</b>				Important but dangerous and can cause organization's "identity crisis"
<b>Youth Yabloko</b>			Important role: attractive and entertaining function	
<b>People Democratic Youth League</b>			Important role: ideological weapon for politics to whom everyone can easily access through internet	
	++	ROLE OF MUSIC IN POLITICS		--

The Molodaya Gvardiya's music engagement in St. Petersburg includes the organization of music festivals and events as well as free entrance to a classical concert at the Mariinsky Theater once a month for all its activists.

For Mihail Potiepkina, St. Petersburgian leader of the organization Nashi, music plays a role of no small importance in the political process. For him, there are not so many ways to influence mankind - visual images, sounds – and music is an instrument through which it is possible to affect the desired object.

Altogether, the movement recognizes itself in about ten songs. Potiepkina cites «Наши – это движение вперед» as one of the representative songs for his group, which is musically closed to the dance and hip-hop genre but whose lyrics are attached a *certain premise*. Moreover, some Nashi activists are making some mixes of old war songs, converting them in a more modern format.

Differently characterized and motivated is the music engagement of the National Bolsheviks. As stressed by Andrei Dmitriev, their representative in Saint Petersburg, many musicians, rock-musicians and avantgarde musicians took part in the creation and are members of the organization: with this regard, the musicians Egor Letov and Sergey Kuriokhin were cited as cross-fathers and co-founders of the movement. Moreover, according to Dmitriev, the organization was initially a subculture grounded on music and style and only since 2000 it has taken part in politics. Nowadays, music and politics are strictly connected, creating a non-conformist life style.

As affirmed by Alexei Siemionov, leader of the Vanguard of Red Youth in St. Petersburg, organizations and parties aim at enlarging their support basis and music is very often use to advertise the formation and attract the attention of new potential members.

With regard to AKM, music plays a central role in the organizational life of the group by fulfilling an aesthetic function. In fact, as Siemionov stresses, his organization is large and widespread and music represents a very effective cohesive element, linking leftist and communist activists dislocated throughout the country who are accomanated by the same music's and bands' preferences.

Siemionov points out the existence of an AKM's Rock Commune in Moscow<sup>13</sup>, a music circle composed by groups and artists who sympathize for the organization and are active in setting up concerts and events; however, nothing similar is present in St. Petersburg.

For Dmitry Jvania, leader of the St. Petersburg-based Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement, the potential of music consists in its ability to work on an emotional level and be experienced “here and now”. Compared to literature and written texts which act on a rational level and, therefore, are not so attractive for young people, Jvania affirms that music “goes into your heart, your soul, into your emotions”, thus agreeing with Mc Neill's reflection on the ability of music to alter human feelings. As he add s, while rationality is politics for bourgeois, music is politics of the heart.

---

<sup>13</sup> On the AKM's webpage, the Московская Рок-Коммуна is defined in terms of “a community of music collectives, which practice principles such as patriotism, freedom, and which are striving for social justice”. The Rock-Commune was founded in 2000 by four bands: Эшелон, Анклав, Разнузданные Волеи, and 28 Панфиловцев, has been active in the organization of concerts and music events linked also to anti-capitalistic actions. Moreover, since 2002, it has periodically collaborated with Радио Резонанс and has released several compilations.

Music is a central component of the DSPA's organizational life. The group is particularly active in the organization of protest events during which bands perform or music is played in order to move and touch people.

For Andrei Kuznetsov, spokesman for the Movement Against Illegal Immigration in St. Petersburg, music is a very important medium but it is not pivotal: in fact, in his opinion, nowadays videos and textual messages play a central role in the organizational life of his group. Nonetheless, he foresees the possibility of a more intense use of music in the future.

As it emerged in the course of the interview, one of the most significant music activities carried out by his movement is the production of the compilation “Русские для Русских”<sup>14</sup>, which is by him described as the response of the movement against the tendency to multiculturalism and the foreign contaminations characterizing contemporary Russian culture.

According to Maksim Ivantsov, one of the representatives of Oborona in Saint Petersburg, music is able to attract people, to confer popularity to ideas, to gain supports and to create subcultures. Looking at the case of the anarchists, he points out how music has significantly contributed in developing the scene and conferring to it its popularity. Nonetheless, for Ivantsov, the use of music on behalf of political groups also represents a pitfall which can lead to an “identity-crisis” as the one registered by anarchical groups in Saint Petersburg a couple of years ago, where most of the members were interested in music and only few of them were willing to engage in social and political activities.

According to Ivantsov, although Pro-Kremlin organizations have strategically and instrumentally used musicians and artists for a long time, oppositional groups only recently had turned their attention to this medium and integrate it in their organizational life. With this regards, he makes the example of the cooperation between the organization Solidarnost and the rock band Televisor. However, for Oborona's representative, the collaboration of liberal organizations with artists has not bear its fruits yet.

For Ksenia Vakhrusheva, vice-chair of Youth Yabloko in St. Petersburg, two are the main functions fulfilled by music in her organization: an attracting function and an entertaining function.

According to Vakhrusheva, music serves to attract people who are not involved in political activities; in fact, if well-known artists support the organization, people tend to consider the organization's ideals and causes more valuable and are more likely to join it. Similarly, if the organization involves artists in its events, more people will participate just to listen to their performances. Secondly, during demonstrations and political actions, music contributes to entertain the participants, making the event more interesting and involving.

Also for the People's Democratic Youth League, music can play an important role in the political life. Looking at the experiences of the 1980s and the 1990s, Pavel

---

<sup>14</sup> «Русские для Русских-V» is a White-rap compilation and it is part of a broader project started in 2003 by Сергей Юрьевич Глазьев; the initiative is already on its fifth edition. On the webpage dedicated to the presentation of this compilation, the organization shows the cover of the album characterized by the slogan: “No Drugs – No Antifa” and provides different links where it is possible to download the songs for free.

Lavrentyev, member of the organization, cites DDT, Kino, Yuri Shevchuk, Mashina Vremeni, Nautilus Pompilius as example of popular music with political character; for him, music represents an ideological weapon for politics to whom everyone can easily access through the internet. In line with Keller's opinion with regard to the uncanny potential of music to attract, catch and collect symbolic meanings of various kinds, other representatives of the organization<sup>15</sup> add that music is a familiar medium for young people with a significant attracting potential, which offers them a system of symbols in which they can identify themselves.

In the past months, the organization has established a new cultural strategy to gain support, focused on the organization of cultural events such as film club with high-quality movies concerned with politics and social problems and photo exhibitions. According to Ivan Fedorenko, although the use of music on behalf of his organization is still an embryonic phenomenon due to the very limited economic resources, some league's affiliated are already working on electronic tracks. Lavrentyev points out the contribution of music in the organization's meetings, such as the party in preparation of the Strategy 31<sup>16</sup> taking place on a boat on the Neva River in July and characterized by the presence of music. Moreover, music is also used by the group in the realization of videos denouncing critical aspects of the country and published on the organization's webpage.

### **5.1.1. On the relation between music genre and its function**

Based on the analysis, a very interesting similarity emerged in the positioning of the leaders with regard to the relationship between music genres and their function. The relation significantly reminds on the dichotomy proposed by Adorno between light music and progressive music with the only difference that in this case pop and rock are called into question.

Nazbol Dmitriev talked about rock music as a protest phenomenon. As stated by him, "it is strange that a rock musician is a deputy and then he sits in parliament and he is part of the power... But it is normal that rock musicians take part in protests, in street actions, fight against the police and so on"<sup>17</sup>. In a similar way, according to Youth Guard's leader Zivilev, rock music is the music of protest. In his opinion, rock supports an energy that does not go into the general stream and that cannot be channeled in the conventional structure of power: therefore, rock will always remain aside. Moreover, the leaders stress that, whereas rock music is associated with protest and change, pop-music with its catchy and mass character tends to confirm the status quo and is therefore better suited to foster the interests of those holding the power.

Worthy to note is also the contribution of Oborona's representative Ivantsov according which rock music, punk music and the bardic tradition can be associated with liberal movements. As the representative explicitly states making the example of St. Petersburg, in the past years some liberal organizations began cooperating with bards with the aim of involving in their activities more dissidents which tend to recognize

---

<sup>15</sup> Interviews with the People Youth League were conducted also with Ivan Fedorenko and Julia Malisheva

<sup>16</sup> Strategy-31 is a series of civic protests in support of the right to peaceful assembly in Russia guaranteed by Article 31 of the Russian Constitution since July 31, 2009. The strategy was initiated by Eduard Limonov, one of the leaders of The Other Russia coalition. It was subsequently supported by many prominent Russian human rights organizations including the Moscow Helsinki Group rights centre and other public and political movements

<sup>17</sup> Interview conducted on September 8, 2010

themselves in this peculiar genre; also Youth Yabloko's vice-chair Vakhrusheva confirms the existence of this new trend.

In contrast, Potiepkin affirms that at the annual forum Seliger organized by Nashi , a variety of groups perform regardless of their music genre, playing pop as well as rock music.

## 5.2. Youth political organizations and events

Youth Guard usually organizes in St. Petersburg a rally-concert twice a year. According to Zivilev, the use of this medium in a political event and, especially, the presence of famous artists and musicians on the stage, contributed in attracting people and in making the event more interesting and appealing. Moreover, according to the leader, music can seriously help sensitizing people to specific social and political issues on which the events are focused.

Compared to other cultural activities, such as theater and movie festivals, music events distinguish themselves for their strong communication potential, offering the participants the possibility to interact with each others. As stressed by Mc Neill with regard to the cognitive bond and shared conscious meaning created by the mutual synchronizing of sonic and bodily experience, Zivilev points out that it is especially in the course of music events that activists experience a sense of solidarity which contributes to giving cohesion to the organization, as in the case of the hymn mentioned above.

Figure 2. Positional map: Youth political organizations and music events in St. Petersburg

<b>Organization of concerts</b> ++	YOUTH GUARD: 2 rally-concert a year	DSPA: concerts for specific issues (For example anti-fascist actions)	NATIONAL-BOLSHEVISK: couple of concerts each year but problem in finding locations due to the affiliation with Limonov
<b>Music as background of political events</b>	NASHI: Forum Seliger and other actions	YABLOKO and PEOPLE DEMOCRATIC YOUTH LEAGUE just started using music	AKM: lack of forces and resources. More musically active in the past
<b>None</b> --		DPNI	OBORONA has never come to the idea and a lot on investment
++ = more so -- = less so	--	HOW DIFFICULT IT IS	++

For Potiepkin, Nashi has neither organized any music festivals nor giving concerts around political events in St. Petersburg. Nonetheless, he recognizes that music very often constitutes the background accompaniment of political meetings and, talking about the annual forum Seliger, he stresses that several bands playing different music genres usually perform there.

Although Dmitriev agrees on the importance of the concerts as significant socialization and cohesion moment, the leader denounced the enormous difficulties that the NazBol organization faces. In fact, in order to avoid possible complications with police and authorities, many Saint Petersburgian clubs' managers deny the permission of such events to take place when they hear about the group's affiliation with Limonov.

According to Siemionov, Baranov and Sineglazov, which sympathize with AKM and whose fans are AKM's activists, very often are invited to the organization's meetings and give concerts, thus making the participation to the events more captivating. However, this has very seldom been the case in St. Petersburg due to the lack of forces and resources.

In the past years, the Pyotr Alexeev Resistance Movement has organized several protest events and meetings during which music was played. With this regards, Jvania mentions the concert against fascism which was organized in the club Platform in memory of a 23-old-boy killed in St Petersburg by a fascist group, a street-concert during the G8 taking place in Russia, and other initiatives for the protection of the city.

Neither the DPNI nor Oborona has organized concerts in St. Petersburg. Youth Yabloko does not directly organize concerts but has actively taken part in and co-organized oppositional events characterized by the presence of artists and musicians.

The first music events took place in 2005 in different regions of Russia with the participation of singers and bands such as Gorky Park, Jack Pot, Briz, 9 May, Clondaik, Territory 51.

In 2008 and 2009 two big meeting-concerts were organized in St. Petersburg during which Yuri Shevchuk, Diana Arbenina, and the groups SP Babai and Televizor played.

Worthy to note is also the annual meeting organized by the movement for the preservation of the historical center of St. Petersburg in which Youth Yabloko is actively engaged, where popular artists are invited and played: in 2010, SP Babai, Yuri Shevchuk, Igor Skliar and the bards of the club "Vostok" performed at the demonstration.

The People Democratic Youth League has never organized music events in St. Petersburg but has recently used music in the course of its activities and actions, as the meetings in preparation of Strategy 31.

### **5.3. Youth organizations and their musicians**

With regard to the registered organizations, Dmitri Kaldun and Fabrika were cited by Zivilev as representative bands which are supporting and collaborating with the Youth Guard. According to the leader, these bands are big names and their popularity represents a very strong attractive force fostering youth participation and commitment to the organization. On the contrary, for Potiepkin there are no musicians specifically connected to the movement Nashi.

Also Dmitriev spook out about the musicians affiliated to Pro-Kremlin organizations, defining their commitment as not honest but rather instrumental. For the Nazbol's leader, these bands are like prostitutes, who sell themselves for money or a few TV appearances. In his opinion, completely different is the affiliation of National

Bolsheviks' musicians, which he describes as ideological. In fact, in this case, the relation is very tight since musicians tend to personally be engaged in the organization as members or even co-founders (as for Egor Letov and Sergey Kuriokhin) and have contributed in developing a new music genre peculiar to the organization known as "Nazbol rock". Messer fuer Frau Mueller, Grazhdanskaya Oborona, Soyz Sozidaiushih, Paranoia were all cited as representative Nazbol bands which, in contrast with Pro-Kremlin groups, tend to be non-conformist and, therefore, are not so popular in mainstream media.

Worthy to note is also Dmitriev's opinion with regard to musicians' engagement in the political field more in general. Looking at the example of Yuri Shevchuk, Mikhail Borzikin, Noice-MC<sup>18</sup> and Barto's group<sup>19</sup> and their participation in protest-actions and meetings, the Saint Petersburgian NazBol's leader stresses the importance of this phenomenon for his country and its political future since in his opinion for Russian young people the words of Yuri Shevchuk are more important than the words of Vladimir Putin.

For Siemionov, Shutki mao, Ivan Baranov, Adaptazia, Eshelon, Krasnye Zvezdi, 28 Panfilovtsev, Grazhdanskaya Oborona, and Grigori Flint are all groups sympathetic to AMK's causes. For the St. Petersburgian leader, the relation is ideologically grounded and based on the adherence to the same values and political ideology: as stated by him talking about the musicians, "they consider themselves communists, are with their Motherland and with the USSR, they highly appreciate Lenin's and Stalin's role in the history of our country, the role of USSR in the victory against nazism in the Second War World ... the Great Patriotic War... therefore we have a common background"<sup>20</sup>.

The leader of the DSPA cites Slaughter2017, Manu Chau, Televizor, Rage Against the Machine, Victor Zara, Lapis Trubetskoy and T.ost as representative bands for his organization. The importance of these artists is grounded not only on the content of their lyrics, which are against the power, against the bourgeois, against the political class, but also on the example they provide with their life, as in the case of Manu Chao: with this regard, the leader stresses how the singer went to Mexico, met the Commander Marcos and sponsored the rebellion in the country.

Worthy to note is also the type of relationship existing between the organization and the band T.ost. Nowadays the group has separated and is not active anymore; nonetheless, Jvania describes the ex-musicians of the band as "friends" and highlights how one of them became a member of his movement.

In line with Dmitriev, Siemionov and Jvania, Kuznetsov explains musicians collaboration with his organization in ideological terms. Talking about the compilation "Русские для Русских", the DPNI's spokesman stresses the common ideas and principles shared by the artists, which are suited to the group's ideology. In the double-album released in 2010 the following artists were included: *Белый Рубеж*, 25.17., D.A.P.A., DotsFam, Karandash feat. LENIN, Atamanskii Dvorez, GROT, Sibirskij Sindikat ft. Litsa, Spektakl vs. Potashov, Nekby & Inkvizitsia feat MC 1.8, Vis Vitalis,

---

<sup>18</sup> Noice-MC hit the headlines in the summer 2010 after he was sentenced to ten days in prison due to the caustic lyrics against police brutality sung in the course of a concert taking place on July, 31. in the southern Russian city of Volgograd

<sup>19</sup> Barto's group was persecuted according to Art. 282 against extremism

<sup>20</sup> Interview conducted on September 9, 2010

Dee-1, *Четвертый корпус*, Balabol's - Сделай Вывод, La Primera, R.ADIK, RUS, Golos Svobodi, Klim, Nikita, MedBrat and *Славяне & Крещёные*.

Despite the fact that his organization does not have any officially affiliated musicians, Oborona's representative expresses clear ideas about the modalities of possible collaboration between musicians and his group. In his opinion, central requisite is an ideological and spiritual commitment of the band to the movement and an identification with its values and program which should emerge from their lyrics. According to Ivantsov, the cooperation should not be economically rewarded. Lumen, Jack-Pot, Lapis Trubetskoy all are cited as important bands and artists for Oborona, whose songs mirror the organization's ideals.

Also Ivantsov points out the peculiar phenomenon of musicians' engagement in the political field which has recently taken place in his country, making the examples of Noice-MC and Barto's group. According to the Oborona's representative, the punishment of these musicians for their art works can be interpreted as an evidence of the enormous potential of this medium in arising hostility and fomenting hatred which contributes in making music practices so interesting.

Also for the St. Petersburgian vice-chair of Youth Yabloko, the musicians taking part in the concerts and music events organized by the ruling party are motivated by economic interests or by the gaining of other privileges. On the contrary, in the case of oppositional movements, the participation is associated with ideological commitment and the sharing of its ideas and causes.

Talking about the relationship between musicians and her organization, Vakhrusheva stresses how the artists do not officially join the organization and prefer not to be affiliated to any political parties: their participation to protest action is by her described in terms of a “conditional negotiation<sup>21</sup>” between the organization and the artist.

Yuri Shevchuk and Diana Arbenina are mentioned as musicians ideologically closed to her organization; at the same time, an identification with the music and artists presented on the Oborona's webpage emerges in the course of the interview<sup>22</sup>.

The People democratic Youth League does not have any artist or musician who is directly affiliated with the organization. In fact, according to Malisheva, although in the past years many musicians became interested in oppositional activities and have used their music to denounce the current situation in Russia, those groups do not cooperate with oppositional organizations and prefer not to enter the political field. Nonetheless, they became “stars” of the oppositions – such as Noice- MC - and non-registered organizations started using their music.

---

<sup>21</sup> Conditional negotiation means that the artist formulates specific conditions for his participation such as the presence of non-political organizations at the event.

<sup>22</sup> See [www.oborona.org/media#music](http://www.oborona.org/media#music)

## Conclusion

Despite the great number of studies devoted to the analysis of the relation between music and youth cultures and subcultures in the city of Saint Petersburg, only few of them were dedicated to formal youth political organizations. Therefore, this article should be interpreted as a first attempt to fulfill the lack of knowledge in this field.

After a theoretical introduction on the two main approaches characterizing the sociology of music and on the potential of this medium, the paper was focused on the most representative Saint Petersburgian youth political organizations and on their relation with music. In summary, two main contributions emerged from this paper.

On the one hand, the article examined the ways in which music is included and takes part in the organizational life of the selected youth political groups. From the analysis, it emerged that the medium plays an important role in all the organizations of the sample but to different extents. With this regard, worthy to note is that while the National Bolsheviks's group was initially born as a music-based subculture which only in the course of the time started engaging politically, for other organizations as the DPNI, Youth Yabloko and the NDSM the use of music is only an embryonic phenomenon, which very probably will register a further development in the future. At the same time, different connotation of music emerged: while the leaders and representatives of Youth Guard, Nashi, NazBol, AKM, DSPA, Youth Yabloko, the NDSM presented this medium in positive terms, as an effective ideological weapon and machine, able to affect people on an emotional level, and fulfilling an attractive, cohesive, esthetic and entertaining function, Oborona's representative pointed out its ambiguous effect, which can lead youth political groups to an identity crisis as the one registered by anarchist groups in St. Petersburg a couple of years ago.

Most of the leaders of the selected organizations agree on the importance of music in political meetings and on its contribution in making the events more attractive and appealing; in line with McNeill, Zivilev highlights the centrality of this practice in creating a sense of shared solidarity and consolidating the organization's ideology.

Very interesting is also the convergence registered between the leader of Youth Guard and of the DSPA according which the use of music in political events is a forceful way to sensitize and move people around specific social and political issues. At the same time, from the analysis it also emerged that the organization of music events on behalf of non-registered political groups is particularly burdened by the lack of resources and infrastructures.

When looking at the peculiar relation between organizations and musicians, a significant divergence in the affiliation between registered and non-registered groups came to light: in fact, while for registered organizations the relationship is described by Nazbol leader and Yabloko's Vice-Chair as instrumentally motivated, for non-registered groups the affiliation tends to be based on ideological commitment and on the sharing of the same values and ideals. At the same times, liberal organizations very often identify themselves with the music of "oppositional artists" who sympathizes with the organizations' causes but prefer not to affiliated with them.

On the other hand, looking at music as an element structuring the organizational life and as a source of meanings and identities out of which the organizations can construct social action and interaction, the article suggests a new methodological

approach for the study and positioning of youth organizations in the political field. In fact, by analyzing their relation with music, the paper compared the selected organizations with regard to their cultural practices, pointing out the existence of convergences and overlaps in the practices of organizations which ideologically place themselves very differently in the political spectrum.

Surely, the use of music on behalf of youth political organizations deserves further investigation, with the adoption of a multi-sited approach, which allows the researcher to conduct intra- and inter-organizational comparison, evaluating the influence of organization's structural features and of the peculiar political field in which they are seated on the ways and extent in which music contributes to the organizational life.

## Bibliography

1. Adorno, T.W. 2002 [1958]. *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Continuum: New York
2. Adorno, T.W., & Horkheimer, M. 1973. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Allen Lane
3. Adorno, T.W. 1978. "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of the Listener", in A. Arato and E. Gebhardt (eds.), *The Essential Frankfurt Reader*, New York
4. Adorno, T.W. 1982 [1956]. *Dissonanzen in der verwalteten Welt*, Goettingen
5. Adorno, T.W. 1991. "The cultural industry: selected essays on mass culture", in J.M. Bernstein (ed.), *Culture Industry*. New York: Routledge
6. Becker H. 1974. "Art as collective action" in *American Sociological Review* 39 (6), 767-776
7. Becker, H. 1982. *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press
8. Benford, R.D., 1992. "Dramaturgy and Social movements: the social construction and communication Power", in *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 62, 36-55
9. Bourdieu, P. 1991. *Language and symbolic Power*. Harvard University Press
10. Clarke, A. 2003. "Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory Mapping After The Postmodern Turn." Special Issue on Theory and Method. *Symbolic Interaction* 26(4):553-576.
11. Della Porta D. and Diani M. 2006. *Social Movements. An Introduction*. Blackwell Publishing
12. Dulman, P. 2009. "Youth movements playing increasingly important role in Russian politics", *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, Moscow, BBC Monitoring
13. Eyerman, R. and Jamison, A. 1998. *Music and Social Movements*. Cambridge University Press
14. Eyerman, R. 2002. "Music and Movement: Cultural politics and Old and New Movements", in *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol, 25, 3
15. Falasca Zamponi, S. 2004. "Why not Foucault? Reflections on power, fascism, and
16. Flick, U. 1998. *The psychology of the social*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York : Cambridge University Press
17. Frith, S. 1981. *Sounds effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock'n'Roll*, London
18. Frith, S. 1987. "Towards an aesthetic of popular music", in Leppert, R. and McClary, S., *Music and Society: The politics of composition, performance, and reception*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
19. Frith, S. and Street, J. 1992. "Rock against racism and Red Wedge. From Music to Politics, from Politics to Music", in Garofalo, R. (ed.), *Rockin' the Boat*, South End Press
20. Frith, S. 1996. *Performing rites: on the value of popular music*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
21. Futrell, R. and Simi, P. 2004. "Free Spaces, Collective Identity, and the Persistence of U.S. White Power Activism", in *Social Problems*, Vol. 15, pp. 16-42
22. Futrell, R., Simi, P. and Gottschalk, S. 2006. "Understanding Music in Social Movements", in *The Sociological Quarterly* 47, 275-304
23. Goffman, E., 1990. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin.
24. Golova, Tatjana. 2009. 'Be White!' Music in the Far-Right Youth Scene in Russia, *Kultura*, Vol. 4, pp. 17-19
25. Johnson, Hans and Klandermans Bert. 1995. "The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements" in Johnson, Hans and Bert Klandermans (ed.). *Social Movements and Culture*. UCL Press
26. Johnson, H. 2009. "Protest Cultures: Performance, Artifacts, and Ideations" in Johnston, H. (ed.), *Culture, Social Movements, and Protest*, Ashgate
27. Keller, M.S. 2007. "Why is Music So Ideological, and Why Do Totalitarian States Take It So Seriously? A Personal View from History and the Social Sciences", *Journal of Musicological Research*, 26: 2, 91 — 122

28. Kortaba, J. and Vannini, P. 2009. *Understanding society through popular music*, New York: Routledge
29. Levitskaya, A. 2008. "Youth Policy - A National Focus of Russia", Department for Youth Policy, Education and Social Protection for Children Ministry for Education and Science of the Russian Federation Moscow
30. MacFadyen, D. 2006. "Russian Pop Music Today: The Struggle for Independence", in *Kultura*, Vol. 5, pp. 11-15
31. McAdam, Doug. 2003. "Beyond Structural Analysis: Toward a More Dynamic
32. Understanding of Social Movements", in Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (ed.), *Social Movements and Networks*. Oxford University Press
33. Mc Neill, W.H. 1995. *Keeping together in time*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
34. Meyer, D.S., Whittiers, N. And Robnett, B. 2002. *Social movements: identity, culture, and the state*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press
35. Melucci, Alberto. 1995. "The Process of Collective Identity", in Hans Johnson and Bert Klandermans (ed.). *Social Movements and Culture*. UCL Press
36. Petersons, R.A. and D.G. Berger. 1975. "Cycles in symbolic production: the case of popular music", in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 40, pp. 158-173
37. Peterson, R.A. 2000. "Two ways Culture is produced", in *Poetics*, Vol. 28, pp. 225-233
38. Peterson, R.A. and N. Anand. 2004. "The Production of Culture Perspective", *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, Vol. 30, pp. 311-334
39. Pilkington, H. 1994. *Russia's Youth and its Culture*. New York: Routledge
40. Sakolsky, R. and Ho, F.W. 1995. *Sounding off! : music as subversion/resistance/revolution /*, Brooklyn, N.Y. : Autonomedia
41. Sieger, J. 2005. "Politische Jugendorganisationen und Jugendbewegungen in Russland", in *Russlandanalysen*, n. 83
42. Snow, David A. 2004. "Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields", in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, *The Blackwell companion to Social Movements*. Oxford: Blackwell
43. Watson, I. 1983. *Song and democratic culture in Britain: an approach to popular culture in social movements*, London : Croom Helm ; New York : St. Martin's Press
44. Westwood, R. and Linstead, S. 2001. *The language of organization*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE
45. Zaytseva, A. 2006. *Rock in Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Life Before and After Death*, in *Kultura*, Vol. 5, pp. 3-8
46. Zuev, D. 2010. "The movement against illegal immigration: analysis of the central node in the Russian extreme-right movement", in *Nations and Nationalism* 16 (2), 261-284
47. Zurcker, Louis A., Snow, David A. 1981. "Collective Behavior: Social Movements", in Morris Rosenberg and Ralph H. Turner, *Social Psychology*, New York: Basic Books

## Internet pages

1. <http://bd.fom.ru/pdf/d06molodezh10.pdf>
2. <http://www.dspa.info/>
3. <http://nashi.su/projects>
4. [http://theory.nazbol.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=65:2003&catidZ31:general&Itemid=27\)](http://theory.nazbol.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65:2003&catidZ31:general&Itemid=27)
5. [www.akm1917.org/doc/ak6-1.htm](http://www.akm1917.org/doc/ak6-1.htm)
6. [www.dpni.org/articles/dokumenti/13255/](http://www.dpni.org/articles/dokumenti/13255/)
7. [www.molgvardia.ru/convention/manifest](http://www.molgvardia.ru/convention/manifest)
8. [www.ndsm.su/?cat=about](http://www.ndsm.su/?cat=about)
9. [www.oborona.org/about/declaration](http://www.oborona.org/about/declaration)
10. [www.youthyabloko.ru/english.php](http://www.youthyabloko.ru/english.php)

ZDES Working Papers

Arbeitspapiere des Zentrums für Deutschland- und Europastudien

Рабочие тетради Центра изучения Германии и Европы

Universität Bielefeld – Fakultät für Soziologie  
Postfach 100131 – 33501 Bielefeld – Deutschland

Staatliche Universität St. Petersburg – 7/9 Universitetskaja Nab.  
199034 St. Petersburg – Russland

<http://zdes.spb.ru/>

[info@zdes.spb.ru](mailto:info@zdes.spb.ru)