

**REFLECTIONS ON THE FORMATION OF THE RUSSIAN NATION**  
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**Abstract:** *the article analyzes the issue of national self-realization in Russia, what is ethnic identity and the very concept of ethnos, how it all originated, and thanks to what critical historical moments (The Tartar Yoke, the Time of Trouble, and World War) the modern Russian nation was formed as it is today.*

**Keywords:** *Russian nation, ethnos, history, political system, philosophy.*

**РАЗМЫШЛЕНИЯ О ФОРМИРОВАНИИ РОССИЙСКОЙ НАЦИИ**  
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**Аннотация:** *в статье анализируется вопрос национального самосознания в России, что собой представляет этническая принадлежность и само понятие этноса, как это все зародилось и благодаря каким критическим историческим моментам (Монгольское вторжение на Русь, Смутное Время, Мировая Война) сформировалась современная российская нация такой, какой она наблюдается на сегодняшний день.*

**Ключевые слова:** *российская нация, этнос, история, политическая система, философия.*

The question of nation has always been an exceptionally relevant one in Russia, as well as worldwide. The discussion on the status of the Russian nation that takes place today justifies the relevancy of the issue. The idea of nation has for a long time been inseparable from the idea of ethnos, so the problems of defining the borders of the category of “nation” as well as revealing the nature of the phenomenon are of great interest.

In the Soviet times, the preference was given to the primordialist approach towards ethnos and nationhood, which consisted in the fact that a person’s ethnicity is an objective reality that cannot be imposed or artificially created. This approach makes it possible to highlight certain characteristics of a person belonging to a given ethnicity as well as to see how ethnicities differ from each other. Such an approach can be called an organic and nature-oriented one, since ethnicity defines the heritage, culture, common language, beliefs, etc.

Today the top administrative position concerned with the official ethnology research of the Russian Federation belongs to the authoritative proconstructionist – V.A. Tishkov. He defines the notion of the ethnic community (the people) as a “group of people, members of which have either one or several common names as well as common elements of culture; they enjoy a certain myth (a version) of the common ancestry and, therefore, have a so called common historical memory, so they can associate themselves with a specific geographic territory and express the feeling of the group responsibility” [1]. A social community is presented by the author as a certain programme, that helps to find areas of common interests and to start feeling devotion to one’s Motherland, culture, etc. In other words, the members of a certain ethnicity or nation are aware of themselves as a part of some extraordinary imagined community. This idea has been expressed for the first time by B. Anderson in his study “Imagined Communities” as early as in the beginning of 1980’s.

In brief, B. Anderson claims that as soon as the two foundational elements of the traditional cultures are gradually dying – that is, the religious community and dynastic state, as well as the transformation of time

perception (the idea of cyclic and predeterminate time has given place to the notion of “empty”, homogeneous and eternal time) – the popularization and domination of national communities begin. Having made multiple scientific and social discoveries and developed the ever accelerating communication lines that have forced a wedge between history and cosmology, people start to search for a new way to consciously knit together the power, time and culture [2, p. 59]. These changes are encouraged by the printing capitalism, whose influence on the culture is especially recognized by Marshall McLuhan. In his study, “The Gutenberg Galaxy”, he describes the new opportunities of the self-consciousness of the communities, as well as the possibilities of the completely new methods of communication [3, p. 115]. Such communication results, in particular, in the idea of nation that rapidly gains popularity.

For a long time, the notions of ethnos and nation were considered the same in Russia. This is related to the way of the Russian historical development. Tradition and religious beliefs have always been strong in the Russian culture, and they are the backbone of the ethnic identity. However, three major events that have gradually destructed the ethnic self-consciousness and transformed it into a nation can be highlighted in the history of Russia: The Tartar Yoke, the Time of Trouble, and World War I including the Civil war that followed.

The formation of nation is usually linked to political reasons, that is, the uniting of people is made “from the top”. Before the Tartar Yoke there were a lot of ethnic elements that presented a considerable force during the princely strife on the Ancient Russian territory. The Tartar Yoke encouraged the princes to forget their quarrels and unite in the face of the common enemy. This fact had a great impact upon the course of the Russian history and the formation of the first elements of the national self-consciousness [4, p. 59-62, p. 69-70].

The next period that has influenced the formation of the Russian nation is the Time of Trouble. The instability of the power and the invasion of the Tsardom of Russia by Polish troops helped to unite the Russian nation for the sake of retaliation. Under the influence of the Romanov Dynasty, the cultural turn to Europe began. These events have also impacted the formation of the nation [4, p. 92, 101-104].

The critical point that has brought the formation of the Russian nation to a close and simultaneously transformed it into a Soviet nation was the 1917-1922 Civil war. At the moment the Russian society experienced the collapse of many traditional values, that served as the basis for the Russian culture as a whole for centuries (in particular, the collapse of the czarist regime and religious outlook) [4, p. 344-352].

After the USSR breakup, the Russian nation features as an “imagined community”, an obvious political construct. By yet another reform of the formation of the Russian nation idea in 2017, the government must be trying to meet its requirements to settle the internal conflicts by means of creating an “image of enemy” using instrumentalist methods [5, p. 287-300] for the sake of diverting the people from social problems. However, the formation of a nation requires long historical periods and cannot result from a mere legislative act. The Russian nation has already been formed in many aspects and what it requires now are not legislative initiatives but a transition to a new “post-national” level that is going to emerge in the foreseeable future [6, p. 180].

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