

Young Army Movement

Winning the Hearts and Minds of Russian Youth

Maj. Ray Finch, U.S. Army, Retired

Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders have been searching for a usable ideology to replace the former communist creed. The promises of democracy and liberalism were largely discredited during the painful economic transition of the 1990s. Although the Russian constitution claims that there is no official state ideology, as the Kremlin leadership has turned from democratic principles to a more autocratic model over the past several years, the ideological void has been filled with a potent mixture of militant patriotism, conservative Orthodoxy, and Soviet nostalgia. While this unofficial new ideology has been promulgated among all sectors of Russian society, the Kremlin leadership has focused its greatest emphasis upon Russian youth.

Maj. Ray Finch, U.S.

Army, retired, is a

Eurasian military analyst for the Foreign Military Studies Office at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Prior to his current job, he was the assistant director of the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Kansas. Finch spent twenty years in the U.S. Army, first as a field artillery officer and then as a Eurasian foreign area officer. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Kansas.

This article examines the recently formed ЮНАРМИЯ (Young Army) movement, the Kremlin's latest attempt to mobilize and provide basic military skills to young Russians.

Even before Russia's annexation of the Crimea in early 2014, the Putin administration had been mentally preparing the Russian people for war. Besides the extensive reporting on their armed support for the Assad regime in

Syria and the pro-Russian rebels in southeastern Ukraine over the past decade, Kremlin-directed propaganda has bombarded the Russian people with the assertion that the West (the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]) harbors aggressive designs against their country. Not surprisingly, the Kremlin leadership has placed an increased emphasis upon military readiness and patriotic morale, particularly with regard to developing and channeling the patriotic sentiments of the country's younger generation.¹

Background

The Young Army movement is the Kremlin's latest attempt to mobilize and provide basic military skills to Russian youth. Providing military training programs for Russian youth is not a recent development. During the Soviet period, basic military training was incorporated into most school curricula. In addition, there were other state-sponsored paramilitary (e.g., Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy [DOSAAF]; Komsomol, Pioneer) and sports organizations (e.g., Central Army Sports Club [CSKA]) designed to both improve physical fitness and morale while providing basic and specialized military skills to young Russians.² When the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) collapsed, these programs continued, albeit with reduced funding and support. During the difficult decade of the 1990s (and the awful fighting in Chechnya), military training and efforts to inculcate a greater sense of patriotism among Russian youth were not top Kremlin priorities. It was not until after Vladimir Putin's first term as president in 2004 that the Kremlin began to search for ways to



Young Russian members of Yunarmiya attending military-patriotic games where they take part in weapons assembly, marksmanship, and physical endurance competitions. (Photo by Kirill Zykov, Moskva News Agency)

both attract Russian youth to military service and to prepare them for future challenges.

The Kremlin's newfound concern for Russian youth was likely sparked by the role that Ukrainian young people played in Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004-05 and in other political protests in the post-Soviet era.³ In response to the threat of a "color revolution," the Kremlin created political youth groups such as НАШИ (*Nashi*), which were designed to demonstrate both political support for the Kremlin and suppress unofficial youth protest movements within Russia.⁴ These groups were directed at enlisting high school and college-age students into pro-Kremlin political activities. These state-sanctioned movements were fortified during and after the Arab Spring (2011–12), which, again, was portrayed in Russian media as a Western-incited attempt to gain greater political influence in the Arab world. In return for their loyal political support, young Russians had the chance to receive education and career opportunities.⁵

Leading up to the 2011 State Duma (Russian parliament) and 2012 presidential elections, pro-Kremlin youth groups like Nashi played a supporting role in ensuring regime stability, particularly among young

Russians who spoke out against voting chicanery and Putin's automatic claim to the top Kremlin post.⁶ When these groups proved insufficient in stopping public protests, Russian authorities employed harsh measures to detain and arrest youth protesters. The subsequent trials, where detained protesters received harsh prison sentences, sent a clear message to the younger generation: street protests will not only jeopardize your future employment prospects but could also land you in prison.⁷ Rather than admit that these young Russians were angry with the country's political status quo, top Kremlin leaders alleged that these youth protests had been instigated by Western governments to weaken Russia.⁸

After the annexation of the Crimea and subsequent hostilities in southeastern Ukraine in early 2014, the Kremlin intensified efforts to militarize Russian consciousness. Instead of seeing the protests in Kiev (where, again, Ukrainian youth had played a pivotal role) that led to the removal of the Russian-backed Ukrainian leader as a genuine expression of popular dissatisfaction, the Kremlin-supported media depicted this instability as a deliberate attempt by the West (and the United States in particular) to use the façade of democratic reform to



gain a foothold within the Russian sphere of interest.⁹ Similarly, rather than portraying the ongoing conflict in southeastern Ukraine as Kremlin military support for ethnic Russians living in the Donbas region, it was depicted as a civil war, where Western-backed, ultranationalist Ukrainians wanted to oppress ethnic Russians and pro-Russian Ukrainians living in the region. In short, much of the Kremlin-supported media portrays today's conflict in Ukraine as a proxy war between Russia and the United States/NATO.¹⁰ Russian youth were soon to be mobilized to defend against this threat.

While youth organizations like Nashi had helped with channeling the political aspirations of Russia's younger generation, as the Kremlin turned toward a more assertive foreign policy, a youth group was needed to reflect this more militant approach. According to some sources, in mid-2016, Russian Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu came up with the idea of the Young Army movement. However, with Russia being Russia, other reports credited Putin, who initially suggested the creation of a pioneer-like movement six months earlier.¹¹ Regardless, the movement began to develop quickly once it fell under the mandate of the Russian Ministry of Defence.

Russian Minister of Defence General of the Army Sergei Shoigu presents the flag to the chief of the Yunarmiya staff, Olympic champion Dmitry Trunenkov, 2 June 2016 during the first rally of the all-Russian military-patriotic social movement Yunarmiya at the military-themed Patriot Park in Moscow. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation)

Alongside the desire to co-opt youth and provide them with the basics of military training, the Kremlin also tapped into widespread concerns that today's younger generation needed greater structure, guidance, and discipline. While Russian children today have lived during one of the country's most stable and prosperous periods, their society is still recovering from a difficult twentieth century.¹² The social, political, and economic strains of this earlier period have generated negative pathologies (e.g., substance abuse, social alienation, corruption) that continue to fester. For instance, up until quite recently, Russia had one of the highest suicide rates among youth.¹³ Gang activity also appears to be a growing problem, particularly linked with the spread of social media.¹⁴ Though much

improvement has been made over the past decade, drug and alcohol abuse remains a problem among Russia's younger generation.¹⁵ Although it focuses upon military readiness, the Young Army movement was partially created to address these problems and has been warmly received by much of Russian society.

Centralizing and standardizing youth patriotic education and training were also factors behind the creation of the Young Army movement. After the collapse of the USSR and the decline of state-run programs, various local and regional patriotic groups were developed, some of which did not always align with the Kremlin's narrative or objectives.¹⁶ Placing emphasis and funding on the Young Army movement has helped consolidate these efforts and standardize youth training throughout the country.

The Movement's Leadership

To generate support for this new initiative, the Kremlin enlisted well-known sports and cultural figures to serve in leadership and public-relations positions. In today's Russia, the nation's elite understand that it is essential to answer when the Kremlin comes calling.¹⁷ Former gold medalist and Olympic bobsledder Dmitry Trunenkov was chosen as the movement's first director. While he helped to get the movement off the ground, he lasted less than two years. He was likely asked to resign after the International Olympic Committee made doping allegations against him, requesting that he return the gold medal he had won in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.¹⁸ The optics of having a suspected cheater running the Young Army movement made for poor public relations, and Trunenkov was replaced in July 2018 by former cosmonaut and Hero of the Russian Federation Roman Romanenko.

The movement is also staffed by other senior military personnel, military veterans, sports and media personalities, and relatives of high-ranking officials.¹⁹ While these VIPs are mostly used for public relations and recruitment efforts, most of the real work appears to be handled by local officials, bureaucrats, and personnel attached to the Ministry of Defence. Except for the top officials and those directly employed by the military, the remainder of the Young Army cadre are volunteers. The available literature does not spell out the training requirements and qualifications of this cadre, but many appear to be veterans and associated

with other groups who work with Russian youth (e.g., DOSAAF, military cadet schools, sporting clubs, etc.). Some concerns have been expressed over the qualifications of these personnel.²⁰

The Young Army movement is funded by both governmental and semiprivate business interests, though it appears the bulk of the funding is provided by the state and, specifically, the Ministry of Defence.²¹ According to the movement's website, a number of banks, media companies, military-industrial firms, and other military and youth clubs support the Young Army movement. It was recently reported that since Shoigu has made the Young Army movement a priority, he would like to see equal support from both military officers and those companies involved in weapons production.²²

Program Objectives

There are both official and unofficial goals of the Young Army movement. According to its published mandate, the objectives of the movement are aligned with the overall youth policy of the Russian Federation and center upon "the comprehensive development and improvement of the personality of children and adolescents meeting their individual needs in the intellectual, moral, and physical realms."²³ The movement is also designed to increase "the authority and prestige of military service in the society," to "preserve and enhance patriotic traditions," and to carry out the "formation of youth readiness and practical ability to the fulfillment of civic duty and constitutional responsibilities for protection of the fatherland."²⁴ Besides providing youth with opportunities to learn about military-technical topics, participation will also help members "combat extremist ideologies, develop a sense of responsibility, and form a moral basis founded upon Russian traditions."²⁵

To carry out these objectives, the Young Army movement educates youth on the duties of citizenship and patriotism via the study of the country's military history. It also imparts upon members what are regarded as the proper moral attitudes inherent in Russian society (e.g., responsibility, collective effort). To better prepare for military service, the movement strengthens members' physical conditioning and endurance and provides them with the basics of military service (e.g., marching, first aid, weapons training).



Young Army Oath

I, _____ joining the Young Army movement, in front of my comrades, solemnly swear:

To always be faithful to my homeland and to my Young Army comrades.

I swear!

To follow the regulations of the Young Army movement, to be an honest Young Army member, following the traditions of valor, courage, and mutual friendliness.

I swear!

To always be a defender of the weak, to overcome all obstacles in the struggle for truth and justice.

I swear!

To strive for victories in school and in sport, to live a healthy lifestyle, to prepare myself to serve for the good of my country.

I swear!

To honor the memory of the heroes who fought for the freedom and independence of our homeland, to be a patriot and a worthy citizen of Russia.

I swear!

With honor and pride to carry the high calling of Young Army.

I swear!²⁶

How these objectives are being met can be gleaned from the movement's extensive promotional literature, particularly its virtual, online presence. The internet is filled with photos, brochures, videos, and presentations highlighting all the various activities of the Young Army movement. There are now branches in all eighty-five Russian regions and neighboring countries with significant Russian populations (e.g., Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus), as well as other more distant countries, including the United States. Among other activities, members, in their sharp red and tan uniforms, take part in exercising, singing, acting, disassembling AK-47s, playing sports, riding horses, volunteer work, performing tactical maneuvers, standing watch over memorials to fallen heroes, ballroom dancing, physical therapy, and marching in formation.²⁷

According to its website, as of 18 June 2019, there are now over 544,000 young Russians enrolled in the movement.²⁸

According to the movement's program guidance for 2018, the Ministry of Defence has also focused its Young Army efforts on working with orphans (seven to eighteen years) and youth who have been removed from their homes because of parental neglect. As cited in the ЮНАРМИЯ. НАСТАВНИЧЕСТВО ПРОГРАММА ДЕЙСТВИЙ 2018 (2018 Young Army Instructions Action Plan), Russia currently has more than fifty thousand orphans, and, according to their data, only 10 percent of this population ends up leading a productive, happy life.²⁹ The instructions action plan asserts that the overwhelming majority of orphans end up involved in crime, substance abuse, or suicide. It describes how the Young Army movement might provide care, guidance, and support to this population, although it leaves many of the logistical, economical, and administrative details up to local officials.³⁰

Unofficial Objectives

As suggested earlier, alongside the official objectives of the Young Army movement, the Kremlin leadership is also concerned with co-opting the protest potential of Russia's younger generation. Just as the movement was getting off the ground in early 2017, nationwide protests took place in Russia against corruption. These protests included large numbers of young people who had earlier posted videos on the internet of their teachers warning them against participation.³¹ These anticorruption protests (which again were allegedly sparked from abroad) provided impetus to those who maintain that Russian young people are susceptible to foreign manipulation. Young Army training and curriculum will likely be designed to combat this influence and teach young Russians to connote protest with disloyalty.

Similarly, another unofficial objective of this movement is to ensure that Russian young people adopt the Kremlin's narrative and pursue government employment. Recent reports such as "От МИФИ ДО СИНЕРГИИ: КАКИЕ ВУЗЫ ДАДУТ ЛЬГОТЫ ЮНАРМЕЙЦАМ" (From MPhI to Synergy: Which Universities will Give Benefits to Students) have surfaced that assert that Young Army members will be given preferential status for entrance into higher education.³² Some observers have suggested that membership in the Young Army movement will not only facilitate future mandatory military service but could also be used as a prerequisite for state employment,



particularly in what is referred to as the “power ministries” (e.g., military, Federal Security Service, National Guard, etc.).³³ Such incentives could further dampen any protest potential among young Russians.

Given the Byzantine nature of Russian politics, some observers have suggested that the Young Army movement might prove to be an effective electoral platform for Shoigu in 2024, when Putin is expected to step down. Such speculation appears rather far-fetched, and perhaps better reflects the often conspiratorial nature of modern Russian political analysis.³⁴

Preliminary Results

Numbers wise, the Young Army movement has so far enjoyed spectacular results. In just three years, it has attracted more than 540,000 Russian boys and girls from age eight to seventeen, from all eighty-five regions of the country, as well as a number of foreign countries where Russian children reside (to include Syria and the separatist regions in Ukraine).³⁵ The movement’s virtual presence is nothing short of cutting edge. Prospective members can become familiar with all the many activities

Young naval cadets prepare to celebrate the upcoming Knowledge Day, or first day of the school year, 31 August 2016 at the Vladivostok Presidential Cadet School, a branch of Nakhimov Naval School, in Saint Petersburg, Russia. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation)

of the movement, watch videos, play online games, and, most importantly, register to join. The movement’s staff compiles bimonthly reports, where all the many activities of its members in various locations throughout Russia and abroad are recorded, to include how many times the Young Army has been mentioned in the media.

One recent initiative may help ensure that the movement’s public relations remain robust. In January 2019, it was reported that the movement would now include “young correspondent” training, wherein members will learn the latest skills in digital journalism.³⁶ According to a recent video describing the plan, this training is designed to give members the basics of digital journalism, focusing particularly on how best to manipulate images to tell a story.³⁷

The movement will likely continue its exponential growth, at least for the short term. To help recruitment, it was recently announced that there would be a Young Army representative in every school in 2019.³⁸ As suggested earlier, to achieve this impressive growth, the Ministry of Defence has resorted to various forms of coercion. In some military districts, officers have been directed to enroll their children whether they want to join or not. A similar directive was apparently sent to various enterprises within Russia's military industry, where workers were ordered to enroll their children.³⁹ These strategies may be expanded to reach the one million enrollment mark by May 2020.⁴⁰

Obstacles

Many analysts suggest that the flag-waving surge in patriotism, which resulted from Russia's annexation of Crimea, has since tapered off. "Victories" such as Putin's 2018 reelection and the successful hosting of the World Cup later that summer provided temporary boosts, but there are concerns that the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, recent changes to the pension system, and continued sluggish economic growth might be eroding support for the current Kremlin leadership.⁴¹ Substituting patriotic rhetoric for economic growth and prosperity may work for children, but parents might think otherwise.

no doubt remember the military's deceit and destruction in previous and current conflicts (e.g., Afghanistan, Chechnya, southeastern Ukraine). While official regard for the Russian military remains quite positive, there are indicators that the state-sponsored patriotic rhetoric may not correspond with local reality.⁴³ Moreover, deciphering polling data in Russia has become more of a challenge since the Kremlin has reasserted control in certain areas.

Over time, systemic problems within Russian society and economy may also undermine the appeal of this movement. As Yevgeny Roizman, former mayor of Yekaterinburg, Russia, observed, "Young people in Russia today question whether the ability to assemble and disassemble a Kalashnikov represents the skills needed for the twenty-first century economy."⁴⁴ Some parents have questioned the relatively high cost of Young Army uniforms and associated gear, suggesting that some may be profiting from this patriotic enterprise.⁴⁵ While joining the Young Army movement is free, there are significant costs with purchasing the required uniforms and associated kit (approximately \$500).⁴⁶ There are also individual costs to participate in summer training camps, excursions, and some specialized training. Some Russian observers have suggested that pecuniary motives may be a motivating factor to increase enrollment in the movement to one million by 9 May 2020 (the seventy-fifth anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War).⁴⁷

Russian youth, like their counterparts around the world, are tech-savvy and exposed to alternative sources of information. Even though the Kremlin leadership appears to be moving toward greater control over internet traffic, digital access today remains largely uncensored. Combining this open information access

with typical adolescent rebellion may reduce the fervor for marching in unison or low crawling through the mud.

Implications for the U.S. Military

Over the past decade, the Kremlin leadership has promoted a narrative that asserts the United States is attempting to weaken the Russian state. In the Kremlin's

For those interested in reading more about the use of military and paramilitary organizations to foster patriotism, *Military Review* recommends, "The Role of the Singapore Armed Forces in Forging National Values, Image, and Identity," published in the March-April 2017 edition of *Military Review*. Authors Col. Fred Wel-Shi Tan and Lt. Col. Psalm B. C. Lew describe the deliberate and calculated program instituted by the Singaporean government to reify national values and a unique national identity among Singaporean youth that transcends multicultural ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. To view this article, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_2017430_art006.pdf.



Recent statistical data suggests that despite the increased focus on instilling patriotism within the younger generation, many young Russians are skeptical of the country's future and are considering pursuing a future outside of the motherland.⁴² Moreover, while the parents of these young Russians might value the opportunities and discipline provided by the Young Army movement, they

portrayal, the United States, while preaching human rights and democracy, employs its robust military powers unilaterally to ensure its global hegemony. The children enrolled in the Young Army movement, as well as their parents, have been exposed to this incessant anti-American propaganda. To date, the Kremlin's message appears to be working, where even retired American generals are targets of their wrath.⁴⁸ In polling data over the past decade, the United States has been rated as the top geopolitical threat.⁴⁹ While Young Army members pursue other objectives, training to defend Russia from an American threat likely serves as one of the movement's primary goals. In a possible future conflict, Russian military personnel fed with this anti-American diet will harbor strong antagonistic feelings toward their United States counterparts, motivated by a sense of grievance and belief that their cause is just.

Conclusion

The current Kremlin leadership remains determined to restore Russia's great-power status—at least in the military realm. They are motivated by a belief that the West (the United States in particular) is intent upon stymieing the Kremlin plan. Alongside increased efforts at military modernization and reform, the Kremlin has harnessed

and mobilized a good portion of the country's media and industry. It has also implemented programs like the Young Army movement to mobilize, train, and co-opt Russia's newest generation. Numbers wise, the movement has been an overwhelming success and will almost certainly reach the one million enrollment mark by May 2020.

Questions remain, however, over the long-term viability of this movement. There are growing doubts whether a nondemocratic, largely corrupt Kremlin leadership can foster a healthy sense of patriotism among youth, particularly in an information environment that remains largely uncensored. Moves to restrict information access among youth would likely exacerbate an already strong desire to seek their fortunes abroad. While Russia does indeed possess a rich military history to draw upon, the memories of past victories may prove insufficient in detracting from growing social and economic disparities. A lesson from the Soviet Union's collapse may be instructive: despite the incredible patriotic-propaganda efforts to prop up the decrepit regime, there were zero protests when the hammer and sickle were ultimately lowered over the Kremlin in December 1991. Russians had learned that patriotism sometimes serves as the "last refuge for scoundrels," and Russian youth may rediscover this lesson in the future. ■

Notes

1. The rationale behind these mobilization measures has been manifold but stems primarily from this perceived threat from the West and anxieties over political legitimacy.

2. DOSAAF, or ДОСААФ; Добровольное Общество Содействия Армии, Aviации и Флоту (Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy), focuses primarily on providing young Russians with specific skills (e.g., driving, flying, parachuting, engine repair, radio operation) that might be useful both in and out of the military. The organization is still alive and boasts of having over 1,200 branches throughout Russia. It is also considered a cofounder of the Young Army movement, and, after its formation, DOSAAF changed its age requirements to students eighteen years and older. Nikolay Staskov, DOSAAF deputy director, interview by Anatoliy Yermolin, *Echo Moscow*, podcast, 23 March 2019, accessed 20 June 2019, <https://echo.msk.ru/programs/voensovet/2393597-echo/>.

CSKA, or Центральный спортивный клуб Армии (Central Army Sports Club), focuses primarily on developing the country's top athletes. It is also still alive and well.

3. Kremlin leaders have been particularly concerned with gaining the political support of Russian young people. They have observed the prominent role that the younger generation played in sparking what the Kremlin refers to as "color revolutions." Digitally connected and impressionable, young people are particularly susceptible to the revolutionary notion that the state's power ought to be derived from the consent of the governed. Moreover, given their digital connectivity to nonstate sources of

information, young people are prone to question the official state narrative and, therefore, must be indoctrinated at an early age.

4. *Nashi* translates as "ours" as opposed to "theirs" (e.g., belonging to foreign powers). For excellent background on Russian youth movements sponsored by the Kremlin, see Alexander Baunov, *Going to the People—And Back Again: The Changing Shape of the Russian Regime* (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, January 2017), accessed 4 June 2019, http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-security-studies/resources/docs/CarnegieMoscow-292_Baunov_Russian_Regime_Web.pdf.

5. Julia Ioffe, "Russia's Nationalist Summer Camp," *The New Yorker* (website), 16 August 2010, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/russias-nationalist-summer-camp>. These perks were particularly attractive to young Russians living outside of major cities, where such prospects were often lacking. One of the major initiatives was a week-long forum/camping trip at Lake Seliger, located some two hundred miles from Moscow, where participants could attend lectures and other activities hosted by pro-Kremlin politicians and artists.

6. For additional background on the political maneuvers and subsequent protests, see Andrew E. Kramer and David M. Herszenhorn, "Boosted by Putin, Russia's Middle Class Turns on Him," *New York Times* (website), 11 December 2011, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/12/world/europe/huge-moscow-rally-suggests-a-shift-in-public-mood.html>. Recall that in September 2011, during a meeting of the pro-Kremlin political party One Russia (United Russia), then President

Dmitry Medvedev announced that he was going to return to the prime minister position, while Vladimir Putin would reassume the presidency (he did not bother to mention anything about an election). Many observers suggest that Putin never really left the top Kremlin position and remained in control even while serving under Medvedev.

7. "'Bolotnaya' Protester Released from Russian Prison after Serving Term," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 26 July 2017, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-bolotnaya-ushevsky-freed-prison-term/28640261.html>.

8. Ellen Barry, "Rally Defying Putin's Party Draws Tens of Thousands," *New York Times* (website), 10 December 2011, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/world/europe/thousands-protest-in-moscow-russia-in-defiance-of-putin.html>.

9. Much has been written in the Russian media regarding how the United States has stoked democratic political change via "color revolution." For instance, see Yuri Belous, "Государственный департамент США продюсирует цветные революции, как шаблонные голливудские сиквелы" [The U.S. State Department is producing color revolutions like Hollywood sequels], *Politrussia*, 7 April 2015, accessed 4 June 2019, <http://politrussia.com/world/arabskaya-vesna-i-778/>. According to the Kremlin's narrative, once the United States and NATO have secured a staging base in Ukraine, they could better plan offensive military operations against Russia.

10. Dmitry Rodionov, "Точка на карте, где столкнутся США и Россия" [Point on the map where the USA and Russia will collide], *Svobodnaya Pressa* (website), 4 May 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/199387/>.

11. See "Российское движение школьников создано в день рождения комсомола" [Russian school movement created on the Komsomol birthday], Interfax News Agency, 29 October 2015, accessed 7 June 2019, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/476307>. At the initial stage of its development, the Young Army was not an independent project but rather a subdivision of another children's and youth organization, the Russian school children movement-RDSh (Российского движения школьников-РДШ), which is subordinate to Rosmolodezh (Federal Agency for Youth Affairs). Putin signed the decree on the creation of the RDSh, on 29 October 2015, on the anniversary day when the Komsomol was formed in the Soviet Union (1918). Pioneers were junior members of the Komsomol. In the text of the decree, the president explains the task of the movement—"promoting the formation of personality on the basis of the value system inherent in Russian society."

12. The list of strains is long: World War I, revolution, civil war, purges, World War II, stagnation, collapse of the USSR, followed by the economic disaster of the 1990s.

13. Daria Litvinova, "Suicide Watch: Why Russian Teens Are Killing Themselves," *Moscow Times* (website), 27 May 2016, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/05/27/suicide-watch-why-russian-teens-are-killing-themselves-a53017>.

14. Aleksandr Boyko, "Новая криминальная чума России: Банды малолеток уже крышуют торговые центры" [New criminal plague in Russia: Underage gangs already running protection rackets in shopping malls], *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (website), 28 January 2019, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26934/3985431/>.

15. Anna Semenets, "Недетские проблемы" [Nonchild problems], *Rosbalt*, 2 June 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/moscow/2018/06/02/1707756.html>. Over the past several years, the Kremlin-sponsored media have highlighted reports of youth misbehavior (e.g., poor grades, gang activity, drinking or dancing on the graves of veterans, etc.), suggesting a need for greater discipline and accountability among Russia's younger generation. While statistics have shown signs of improvement over the past few years, according to a 2018 poll, drug addiction and alcoholism were considered the top social problems for Russian youth.

16. T. Stanovaya, "Молодежные организации в современной России" [Youth organizations in modern Russia], *Росмолодежь* [Rosmolodezh], ac-

cessed 4 June 2019, <http://rosmolodezh.ru/rosmolodezh-federalnoe-agentstvo/rosmolodezh-oficialnye-dokumenty/299-2010-10-13-10-27-11>.

17. Russian patriotic sentiments run deep, and most Russians are able to distinguish love for their country from love of the current administration. Some of the VIP involvement surely stemmed from a genuine desire to improve and strengthen the younger generation. However, since the state owns the major TV and media outlets, as well as funding for other activities (e.g., movies, arts, science), the Kremlin can easily "punish" those who fail to support government initiatives.

18. "IOC Requests Three Russian Bobsledders to Return Sochi Gold Medals," TASS Russian News Agency, 15 December 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <http://tass.com/sport/1036240>. Dmitry Trunenkov refused to return the medal. Admitting guilt might have corroborated charges of a state-sponsored doping program against the Kremlin.

19. Ilnur Sharafiyev, "Making Real Men out of Schoolchildren: Meet the 'YouthArmy,' Russia's New Hope for Military-Patriotic Education," trans. Kevin Rothrock, *Meduza*, 6 October 2017, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2017/10/06/making-real-men-out-of-schoolchildren>. For example, TV commentator Dmitry Guberniev, former pole vaulter Yelena Isinbaeva, sports network *Match TV* general producer Tina Kandelaki, and Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu's daughter, Ksenia, all hold (or have held) leadership positions within the Young Army movement.

20. For some excellent background of the Young Army movement and a critical Russian perspective, see Sergey Sukhankin, "Yunarmia: A Call from the Past, or Farewell to the Future?," International Centre for Defence and Security, 8 June 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://icds.ee/yunarmia-a-call-from-the-past-or-farewell-to-the-future/>.

21. "Semiprivate" because business ownership in Russia today remains under "provisional" control, and "private" ownership remains in the realm of theory. Should a business owner fall afoul of the Kremlin, he or she could likely be charged with a crime and have his or her business expropriated by the state. Much has been written about this topic over the past twenty years. For a recent example, see Maxim Trudolyubov and A. L. Tait, *The Tragedy of Property: Private Life, Ownership and the Russian State* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018).

22. Ksenia Mironova and Ivan Sinergiev, "Военным заводам заказали Юнарию: Минобороны просит создать отделения движения на всех предприятиях ОПК" [Military plants ordered Young Army: The Ministry of Defence asks all defense enterprises to create a branch of the movement], *Kommersant*, 12 March 2019, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3908185>.

23. "УСТАВ ВСЕРОССИЙСКОГО ДЕТСКО-ЮНОШЕСКОГО ВОЕННО-ПАТРИОТИЧЕСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВЕННОГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ ЮНАРИЯ" [Charter of all-Russian children and youth military-patriotic public movement of the Young Army] (Moscow: Constituent Assembly, 28 May 2016), accessed 19 June 2019, https://yunarmy.ru/static/docs/Устав_ВВПОД_ЮНАРИЯ.pdf.

24. Ibid.

25. Mironova and Sinergiev, "Военным заводам заказали Юнарию." Regulations and founding documents regarding the mission and objectives of the Young Army movement can be found at Юнария [Young Army], accessed 20 June 2019, <https://yunarmy.ru/docs>.

26. Ray Finch, trans., "Young Army Oath," Moscow Department of Education, accessed 11 June 2019, https://gym1583s-new.mskobr.ru/files/klyatva_yunarmeja.pdf.

27. See the weekly reports for examples of these activities at ЖУРНАЛ "ЮНАРИЯ" [Young Army Magazine], accessed 19 June 2019, <https://yunarmy.ru/magazines>.

28. "Юнария" [Young Army], Юнария.

29. "ЮНАРИЯ. НАСТАВНИЧЕСТВО Программа действий 2018" [Young Army. Instructions action plan, 2018], Yunarmy, accessed 7 June 2019, https://yunarmy.ru/static/docs/469ff-9351c893a05e73eccfafc782483_2-compressed.pdf. Most sources suggest that the orphan population in Russia is much larger (approximately

five hundred thousand), and that the Young Army movement will only be working with a small percentage.

30. Alexei Tarasov, "Детство — под ружье; Милитаризация русской жизни на марше. 'Юнармия' приходит в детдома" [Childhood — Under the gun: The militarization of Russian life on the march. "Yunarmiya" comes to the orphanage], *Novaya Gazeta* (website), 13 March 2019, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2019/03/13/79863-detstvo-pod-ruzhie>. Shortly after it was announced that the Young Army movement planned to enlist orphans into its ranks, *Novaya Gazeta*, one of the few remaining independent newspapers in Russia, conducted an investigation on this proposal, uncovering that the move may have been predicated more upon increasing the enrollment numbers of the movement than on actually helping orphans.

31. Neil MacFarquhar and Ivan Nechepurenko, "Across Russia, Protesters Heed Navalny's Anti-Kremlin Rallying Cry," *New York Times* (website), 12 June 2017, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/world/europe/russia-aleksei-navalny-kremlin-protests.html>.

32. Anna Deryabina and Elena Vinogradova, "От МИФИ до 'Синергии': какие вузы дадут льготы юнармейцам" [From MEPI to 'synergy': Which universities will give benefits to students], *Open Media*, 30 March 2019, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://echo.msk.ru/blog/openmedia/2398355-echo/>.

33. Alexander Golts, "Как российскую молодежь научат любить 'калашников'" [How Russian youth will be taught to love "Kalashnikov"], *Open Media*, 22 March 2019, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://echo.msk.ru/blog/openmedia/2393571-echo/>.

34. Oleg Kashin, "Министр-политик. Россия — наше Отечество, а отец наш — Сергей Шойгу" [Minister politician. Russia is our Fatherland, and our father is Sergei Shoigu], *Republic*, 13 March 2019, accessed 24 June 2019, <https://republic.ru/posts/93268>.

35. Specific data taken from weekly reports, see ЖУРНАЛ "ЮНАРМИЯ" [Young Army Magazine], accessed 19 June 2019, <https://yunarmy.ru/magazines>. For additional background, see Neil MacFarquhar, "Patriotic Youth Army Takes Russian Kids Back to the Future," *New York Times* (website), 22 March 2018, accessed 19 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/22/world/europe/russia-soviet-youth-army.html>; Evan Gershkovich, "Russia's Fast-Growing 'Youth Army' Aims to Breed Loyalty to the Fatherland," *The Moscow Times* (website), 17 April 2019, accessed 19 June 2019, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/04/17/russias-fast-growing-youth-army-aimst-to-breed-loyalty-to-the-fatherland-a65256>.

36. "В парке 'Патриот' стартовал первый Всероссийский патриотический форум: Я — ЮНАРМИЯ!" [The first All-Russian patriotic forum "I am Young Army!" began in the park "Patriot"], *Yunarmy.ru*, 22 February 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://yunarmy.ru/news/755>.

37. For a good example of this training in action, see "Юнармейцев учат отличать фейковые новости от достоверных" [Young Army members learn how to distinguish fake news from genuine], YouTube video, posted by "Королёв ТВ" [tvkorolev], 9 March 2017, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOxegKCSbF4>.

38. "Движение Юнармия уже в следующем году должно быть представлено в каждой школе, — заявил зам.главы Минобороны" [Next year, the Young Army movement should be represented in every school, the deputy head of the Ministry of Defence said], *Echo Moscow*, podcast video, 2 November 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://echo.msk.ru/news/2308021-echo.html>.

39. Trudolyubov and Tait, *The Tragedy of Property*.

40. Golts, "Как российскую молодежь научат любить 'калашников'" [How Russian youth will be taught to love "Kalashnikov"].

41. See, for instance, Svetlana Pavlova, "Недовольство растёт. Более половины россиян готовы к пенсионным протестам" [Dissatisfaction

is growing. More than half of Russians are ready for pension protests], *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 3 September 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29467970.html>. Despite the lack of Kremlin-media coverage, the domestic economic situation has only grown worse over the past six months.

42. Naira Davlashyan, "41% российской молодежи хочет уехать на ПМЖ за границу (опрос)" [41% of Russian youth want to leave for permanent residence abroad (Survey)], *Euronews*, updated 2 November 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://ru.euronews.com/2019/02/04/ru-41percent-of-russian-youth-would-like-to-live-abroad>.

43. Attitudes toward military service have improved dramatically over the past decade, but many young Russian men still look for ways to avoid the draft. For background on current attitudes, see Pavel Aptekar and Ivan Prosvetov, "Отношение к армии в России перевернулось" [Attitude toward the military in Russia has turned around], *Vedomosti* (website), 22 February 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/articles/2018/02/22/751758-otnoshenie-k-armii>. For additional information as to why some remain reluctant to serve and avoid the draft, see Svyatoslav Ivanov, "Хотят ли русские служить? Популярность армии растёт быстрее, чем готовность идти служить" [Do Russians want to serve? Army popularity grows faster than willingness to serve], *Gazeta.ru*, 22 February 2016, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2016/02/22/8081159.shtml>.

44. Yevgeny Roizman, interview by Alexy Solomin and Alexey Naryshkin, *Echo Moscow*, podcast, 27 February 2019, accessed 5 June 2019, <https://echo.msk.ru/programs/personalnovsh/2378597-echo/>.

45. Sergey Yezhov, "Дети войны. Кто загоняет школьников в Юнарию и зарабатывает на закупках для нее" [Children of war. Who is driving schoolchildren into Yunarmiya and making money on purchases for it?], *Sobesednik* (website), 28 November 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://sobesednik.ru/obshchestvo/20181127-deti-voyny>.

46. Alexandra Volkova, "Зачем армии юнцы" [Why does the army need youngsters], *Versia.ru*, 19 June 2019, accessed 20 June 2019, <https://versia.ru/net-li-oshibki-v-tom-cto-yunarmiya-koncentruetsya-na-piare>. One article recently claimed that for parents to purchase "the 22 most necessary items for each youngster — shoes, jackets, pants, etc. ... , will be more than 30 thousand rubles [\$500]."

47. Anastasia Khlopokova and Anna Deryabina, "Как связанная с Пригожиным фирма может заработать на Юнармии" [How a company associated with Prigozhin can earn money from Young Army?], *Open Media*, 30 May 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://echo.msk.ru/blog/openmedia/2212238-echo/>.

48. Ekaterina Timofeeva, "В Екатеринбурге школьники на соревнованиях стреляли по фото американского генерала" [In Yekaterinburg, schoolchildren in competition shoot at a photo of an American general], *Snob.ru*, 1 December 2018, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://snob.ru/news/168981>. The photo was of retired U.S. Army general Robert Scales who in 2015 allegedly advocated "killing Russians" to stop any penetration into Eastern Europe. The organizer of the shooting competition referred to Scales as an "enemy of the people."

49. "Россияне считают США и Украину основными источниками военной угрозы" [Russians consider the United States and Ukraine the main sources of military threat], TASS Russian News Agency, 27 June 2017, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/4370679>; for a more recent survey, see "БОЛЕЕ ПОЛОВИНЫ РОССИЯН СОЧИЛИ РЕАЛЬНОЙ УГРОЗУ ВОЙНЫ С ДРУГИМИ СТРАНАМИ" [More than half of Russians considered a real threat of war with other countries], Levada Center, 30 January 2019, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.levada.ru/2019/01/30/bolee-poloviny-rossiyan-sochli-realnoy-ugrozu-voyny-s-drugimi-stranami/>.