



The History of the Russian/Soviet/Russian Youth Policy

History or Pre-History

What is youth work?

Where did it come from?

What is the state of youth work practice today?



History starts: 2009 Year of the Youth in Russia

<http://www.godmol.ru/>

- to protect young people from becoming “a victim generation”

Russia: 38 million young people, aged between 14 and 30

“Do we have a youth policy or not? ... I mean a unified code of rules, priorities and directions of work?”

“We probably do not have it up to this day! “

V.Putin, April 2009

New approach/Problems



- young people are capable of achieving a multitude of things;
- but for that they need support, encouragement, a sound environment and reliable social guarantees

Problems:

- education, employment, social adaptation, and housing
- aggressiveness, crime, extremism and ethnic intolerance

Formation of Russian Scouting

April 30, 1909

a young officer **Colonel**
[Oleg Pantyukhov](#)
organized the first
Russian Scout troop *Beaver*
(*Bobr*)

1916

about 50,000 Scouts in Russia



Scouts vs. Pioneers

The Scout motto "Bud' Gotov" ("Be Prepared")

was modified into the Pioneer motto
"Vsegda Gotov" ("Always Prepared")



Scouts: individual leader of each group



Pioneers: foster a collectivist group spirit

Policy development

May 19, 1922

newly created organizations were united into the [Young Pioneer organization of the Soviet Union](#) (existed until 1990)



Soviet Period

1918 - The Komsomol (the Union of Communist Youth) to educate young people in communist values and to aid the party as it worked to build communism



“It was the youth of the world that were faced with the actual task of creating communist societies”

V.Lenin, 1920

Soviet Period

1958 - Youth and Students World Festival
(Moscow)

1970 s – 40 mln members



Trends in Scholarship

- communist youth organisations were less monolithic than earlier;
- youth responses to communism were more complicated than they first appeared;
- young people responded in a variety of ways to communist messages



90ies: Russian Youth Policy Aims

- the creation by the state of suitable conditions which will enable young citizens to choose their interests,
- the promotion of social, cultural, spiritual and physical development of young people;
- fulfilment of the innovative potential of young people in the interests of social development



Framework

- 1992 – National Youth Council of Russia

<http://www.youthrussia.ru>

- 1992 – RF State Committee on Youth Policy

Youth Political Activity: Apathy

- Polls: 53% (up from 46% in 2002) of youth ignore elections, 36% participate
- 75% of Russians can't name any youth organization
- Total estimated number of young political and civil activists is less than 100,000, i.e. 1% of the youth

Why should we care about youth politics?

Fundamental characteristics of state youth policy (1993)



- creation by the state of suitable conditions which will enable young citizens to choose their interests and realise their life plans;
- active involvement of young people themselves in solving everyday problems, the support of its creative public initiatives;
- fulfilment of the innovative potential of young people in the interests of social development

Federal Target Programme A Youth of Russia (1994)

- to provide the young people with the information about their rights and possibilities in the most important spheres of life and social activities,
- to create the conditions for the affective activities of the young people concerning the education, recreation, health-improvement, employment and international cooperation programs,
- to improve the living conditions, to support the young families and the most vulnerable social groups,
- to implement the system for the children and youth organisations and programmes

Strategy of Youth Policy (2006)



- Drawing youth into social practice and informing them about potential development possibilities in Russia
- “Fostering youth’s creative activity”
- “Integrating into society youths who are in difficult living situations”

Present structures

May 2008,

- the **Ministry for Sports, Tourism and Youth policy** of the Russian Federation (Minsporttourism of Russia) was established
- **Federal Agency for Youth Issues** was set up which is reported to the Ministry

Policy development



- a draft **“Statistical data to assess the effective implementation of state youth policy by the subjects of the Russian Federation”**
- **indicators:**
- the level of employment and health,
- the participation of youth in business, an assessment of the young people’s migration from the regions,
- mortality, crime, the situation of young families, the birth rate and involvement in society

Further steps RF Agenda 2020



- The concept of the government of the Russian Federation for the long-term development of the country until 2020 now includes an independent chapter on “Youth Policy”
- the objective of state youth policy is the creation of conditions for the successful socialisation and effective selfrealisation of young persons as well as the qualitative development of the potential of young persons and its use in the interest of the innovative development of the country

Youth movement

- **based on the diversity of organisational types** and the wide range of young people's choices with respect to appropriate organisations
- **“National Council for Children and Youth Associations in Russia”** has 72 affiliated organisations

General overview

- not large in terms of membership
- membership varies between several hundred and several ten thousand persons
- The biggest children organisations include^
- The International Union of Children's Associations “Union of pioneer organisations – Federation of children's organisations” (UPO-FCO)
- The all-Russian organisation “Social Children and youth initiatives” (SCAYI).

Opposition vs. Kremlin

Opposition Groups

- ❑ Oborona
- ❑ Smena
- ❑ NDSM
- ❑ Nazbols
- ❑ AKM
- ❑ SKM
- ❑ RKSMB
- ❑ etc.

Pro-Kremlin Groups

- ❑ Nashi
- ❑ DMD
- ❑ Molodaya Gvardiya
- ❑ Rossiya Molodaya
- ❑ ESM
- ❑ etc.

Molodaya Gvardiya (MGER)



- *Molodaya Gvardiya (Youth Guard)* is a youth branch of United Russia party
- MGER's goals are to attract youth to United Russia, to help fight opposition
- Major motivation is career advancement
- Has from several hundred to several thousand members

Nashi



- *Nashi* (“Ours”) is the largest and best known pro-Kremlin youth organization
- Founded in 2005 to win the streets for Kremlin
- Enormous material, political and media support by Govt
- Declared ideology: “sovereign democracy”, antifascism
- Promote: loyalty to Putin, statism, nationalism
- Methods: mass rallies, media-oriented actions, physical assaults on opposition activists
- Motivation: career, money, personal development
- Has about 1000 members

Oborona

- *Oborona* (“Defense”) is an independent non-partisan youth civic movement
- *Oborona*’s goal is to establish a more democratic, civilized political regime with strong civil society and rule of law
- *Oborona* practices methods of nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience
- *Oborona* was founded in 2005 and now it has some 1000 members in about 30 cities



Smena

- *Smena* (“*Shift*”) is a pro-democracy youth group founded in late 2004
- *Smena* has no formal leadership
- *Smena* unites several hundred activists
- Like *Oborona*, *Smena* participates in *Dissenters’ Marches* and other joint opposition activities



NDSM

- *NDSM (People's Democratic Youth Union)* is a youth branch of RNDU (Russian People's Democratic Union) – Mikhail Kasyanov's party (unregistered)
- NDSM actively supports popular protest against Moscow construction policy
- NDSM in Moscow managed to elect 2 activists in municipal authorities
- NDSM had about 1000 activists in early 2008



Nazbols (NBP)

- *Nazbols*, formerly *NBP* (*National Bolshevik Party*) is a group, mostly youth, leaded by Eduard Limonov
- Drift of ideology: from semi-fascism to left-wing mixed with nationalism
- Methods: radical nonviolent (Greenpeace-like) protest actions
- There are approx. 3000 nazbols in Russia
- NBP was banned by authorities as “extremist organization”
- Target for mass repressions, both judicial and extrajudicial



Left-wing Movements

- *AKM (Avant-garde of Red Youth)* is a non-partisan radical left youth movement
- AKM is esp. active in Moscow popular protests against city authorities
- *RKSMB (Revolutionary Communist Youth Union)* – a radical left youth movement
- *SKM (Union of Communist Youth)* is a youth movement close to Communist Party
- AKM and RKSMB have several hundred activists each, SKM has more than 1000



Future

July 2009

- a meeting of the State Council on issues of working out othe youth policy in Russia



<http://www.godmol.ru/>