

NAROD [народ] (RUSSIAN)

ENGLISH	people
FRENCH	<i>peuple</i>
ITALIAN	<i>popolo</i>
LATIN	<i>gens</i>

► PEOPLE, and CULTURE, GENRE, MIR, PRAVDA, RUSSIAN, SOBORNOST', SVOBODA

The Russian noun *narod* [народ] is derived from *rod* [род], "family line, species, genus." *Narod*, exactly like "people," signifies both the population of a country and "the lower classes, the common people." For Slavophiles, *narod* has the elevated sense of the "spiritual unity" of the nation, and a large part of the Russian intelligentsia idealizes it as a natural and organic element, the "authentic life" of the people. Although it was a cliché in both czarist Russia and the Soviet Union, *narod* took on a less ideological meaning in the work of Bakhtin, who related it to the notion of *narodnaja kul'tura* [народная культура], popular culture.

I. *Narod* and *Gens*

The root *rod* [род], which in Slavic languages has supplanted the Indo-European radical **gen*, essentially signifies "birth." In modern Russian the term has the different senses of "clan, tribe, parents"; "family, line, generation"; "species, genus" (or "gender" in the grammatical sense) (RT: *Slovar' russkogo iazyka* [Dictionary of the Russian language]). All these meanings refer to entities (things or individuals) that have been created or put into the world together. In the derived term *narod* [народ] (people), the prefix *na-* still connotes more the totality of the individuals (put into the world together or unified).

In *The Russian Religious Mind*, Georgi Fedotov highlights the importance of the continuing veneration of the *rod*—a veneration that goes back to paganism and more particularly to the "cult of the dead as the ancestors of an eternal kinship community." "The Latin people and the Celtic clan," Fedotov writes, "are only pale images of social realities that were once alive. In Russian language and life, the *rod* is full of vitality and vigor." A typical linguistic manifestation of this vitality is the use of family names as polite forms of address: "The terms 'father,' 'grandfather,' 'uncle,' and 'brother,' as well as the corresponding feminine terms, are used in the language of Russian peasants to address both known and unknown individuals." In this way "all moral relationships between individuals are raised to the level of blood kinship." In Russian, family relationship is rendered by *rodstvo* [родство], an abstract nominalization of *rod*.

This linguistic habit of extending kinship relations to everyone sheds a particular light on the roots of Russian communalism and explains the importance of notions like *mir* [мир] (village community), *sobornost'* [соборность] (conciliarity), *obščestvo* [общество] (community), etc.: for Slavophiles, the archaic cult of the *rod*, to which *narod* clearly refers, is one of the characteristics of Russian civilization.

II. *Natsija*, *Narod*, and *Narodničestvo*

Observers of nineteenth-century Russian society repeatedly emphasized that the nobles (*dvorjane* [дворяне]) and the people (*narod*) often seemed to be two separate nations: their clothes, their manners, even their language—everything was different. The Russian word *natsija* [нация] (nation), which comes from the Polish *nacja* (RT: *Ėtimologičeskij slovar' russkogo jazyka* [Etymological dictionary of the Russian language], vol. 3), was created during the time of Peter the Great, whose reforms produced a sharp division within Russian society between cultivated people and the *narod*. In its contemporary acceptance *natsija* signifies "a community of people unified by a language, territory, economy, and a common mentality, developed historically" (RT: *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, vol. 2). As for *narod*, it means "the population of a state" but also "the lower classes, the common people" (RT: *Tolkovyj slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka* [Explanatory dictionary of the living language of Great Russia], vol. 2).

For Slavophiles, *narod* has an elevated sense, whereas *natsija* is neutral in value. Slavophilism is essentially an ideological reaction to the modernization of Russia and particularly to the gap between the nobles and the *narod*. Slavophiles have concentrated on the Russian way of organizing life in the village community (*mir*) and on the interpretation of the law as truth and justice (*pravda* [правда]). This way of living was contrasted with Western standards of formal law (cf. Kireevski, *Polnoe Sobranie Sočinenii* [Complete works], 1: 115–16). The patriarchal Russian village was considered the true origin of the nation's life and strength, the incarnation of traditional national virtues. Slavophiles regarded themselves as full participants in this patriarchal life and did not want to detach themselves from the *narod*, which for them expressed the spiritual unity of all Russians.

The idealization of peasants is connected with guilt feelings on the part of the intelligentsia, whose privileges depended chiefly on the maintenance of serfdom; the term itself (*intelligentsija* [интеллигенция]) appeared around 1860 in the work of Piotr Boborykin and passed from Russian into other European languages (RT: *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 10). The idea that intellectuals have a duty to the people found its practical development in the *narodničestvo* [народничество] movement. *Narodničestvo* is usually rendered in French, very inexactly, as *populisme*, and in English by "populism." An English translator of Berdyayev explains *narodničestvo* as "the movement that in 19th-century Russia was based on the feeling of an obligatory devotion to the general interests of the common folk" (Berdyayev, *Slavery and Freedom*). A *narodnik* [народник] is someone who "believes in the *narodničestvo* and practices it" (ibid.). During the 1860s and 1870s many *narodniks* "went to the people." They took up residence in the countryside in order to devote themselves

