

# Kamil Galeev Declares Z The New Symbol of Russian Nationalism, Causing Others To Amplify His Message, Ensuring Its Adoption By Nationalists.

## [Narrative Frame Introduction]

Is Putin's Z the new swastika? Or, did Twitter journalist Kamil Galeev's enthusiastic declaration ultimately accelerate its adoption as the "new symbol of nationalism", thereby intentionally seeding the information to his large Twitter following, knowing exactly how they would respond? Despite extensive research demonstrating the phenomenon, poor journalistic practices, and the reports they produce, directly amplify the content being denounced, boosting the message far beyond its original reach.

## [Background Section]

Kamil Galeev is an independent researcher and investigative journalist from Moscow, who now works under the so-called "non-partisan research collective", known as The Wilson Center, based in Washington, DC. Galeev is known, at least on Twitter, for his criticisms of Putin, and his policies, what some refer to as "Putinism", writing primarily on Russian identity politics, the "ethnification" of Russian nationalism, and the crackdown on the ethnic republics in post-Soviet Russia. However, Galeev has only recently become known to most, attributing his tremendous spike in popularity to his numerous Russia analysis threads and the recent surge of interest in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. In fact, according to online statistic tracker Social Blade, Galeev's Twitter profile saw an increase of over 185,000 new followers in the last 12 days, roughly 92% of his total followers, see exhibit (b). Despite a handful of dubious claims, such as those regarding telegram in the thread highlighted by this report, Galeev's Twitter based reporting remains a popular source of information for mass media news pieces and anti-conspiracists alike.

## [Substantiation Section]

In a Twitter thread on March 6th, 2022, Kamil Galeev declares Russia has gone "full fascist", see exhibit (a), outlining what he describes as an "ethnonationalism movement", which, according to Galeev, is rapidly gaining momentum and acceptance in Russian mainstream media and popular culture. The evidence for Galeev's claim, a series of images, which, he says, prove the Z symbol is already being adopted and used by neo-Nazis and white nationalists, such as: the multiple instances of the Z symbol appearing in windows, displayed on civilian vehicles, or, in one case, depicted using the passports and insignia of apparent fallen Ukrainian soldiers. The 'most compelling', and most frequently cited by those echoing his message, is Galeev's analysis of two recent propaganda videos which have circulated this week, where large groups of Russians are seen wearing matching black sweatshirts embroidered with the now infamous white Z waving Russian flags.

In response to Galeev's thread, the various leftist communities of Twitter, historically an echo-chamber of alarmists and virtue signalling, focused their attention on spreading awareness by creating memes comparing the Z symbol to the swastika, and by identifying non-military instances of the Z symbol in use. Overnight, the Z became the sole object of their discussion, which, as Twitter was designed to do, amplified the message across the platform rapidly. The discussion continued, with many commenters citing Galeev's original thread as the basis for their alarm, see exhibit (b), which, due to the algorithmic nature of Twitter, enabled his message to receive international attention. The resultant explosion of viral images and infographics, all of which claim Putin's "Z" to be the 'new swastika' or 'new Q-anon', further reinforcing Galeev's original message and causing his tweets to trend, despite a growing number of falsehoods being discussed by the commenters.

By morning, the international news cycle latched on, most journals published stories massively echoing Galeev's message, thereby ensuring "Putin's Z" would ascend in to the echelons of neo-Nazi imagery and see rapid adoption by white nationalist movements across the globe, see exhibit (c). Despite evidence to support this phenomenon, for example "the oxygenation of amplification", the endlessly voiced concern on platforms, such as Twitter, ultimately provided an efficient delivery system to consistently thrust an otherwise obscure idea in to the collective conscious of online discourse (Phillips, 2018, Data & Society).

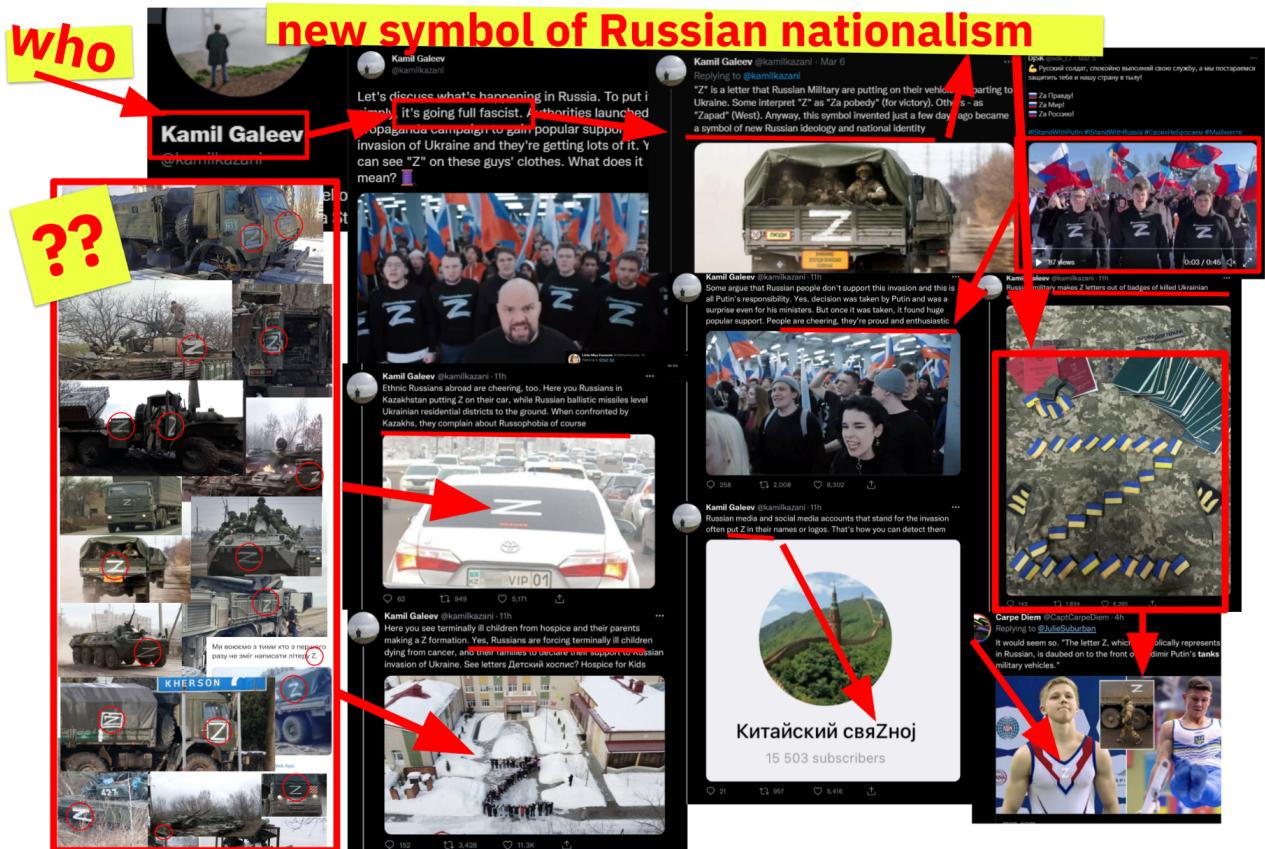
### **[Conclusion]**

As Galeev's thread demonstrates, the amplification of a message caused by frenzied discussions on Twitter, and the subsequent circulation in the mass media new cycle, while raising awareness, ultimately informed nationalist movements across the world of the Z and its actively growing propaganda campaign. By seeding his message on Twitter, Galeev successfully inspired enough outrage and concern to garner widespread discussion, which caught the attention of newsmakers, who, without a hint of irony, amplified the story to an international discussion.

**[References section in APA]**

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# Exhibit [A]: Kamil Galeev Declares Russia Is Going Full Fascist And Putin's Z Is The New Symbol Of Russian Nationalism



**FIG. 1:** Affinity diagram, which realizes the three categories of how Putin's Z is being adopted as the new symbol of Russian nationalism. Derived from the images above, the terms include: "Russian Z", "Who is Kamil Galeev", and "new symbol of Russian nationalism".

Note that Galeev's Twitter profile is not verified, however many of his posts are heavily circulated among Twitter's verified users, the blue-checkmarks, with posts regularly reaching over 50,000 likes in their first 24-hours. Despite a handful of unverifiable claims, which commenters are quick to point out, Galeev's threads remain well-regarded and considered authentic among his current following, a mix of Twitter normies, OSINT, journalists, and international news media outlets.

# Exhibit [B]: Kamil Galeev's Post Causes Discussion Among His Followers, Who Amplify His Message By Circulating Memes



**Fig 2:** Galeev's explosive growth and popularity on Twitter is a direct result of those following his daily analysis threads regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict, attaining over 180,000 new followers in the last 12 days, representing 92% of his current total. As a result, most of Galeev's 2000+ tweets have received at least some circulation, with many of his posts generating extensive discussions across different communities on Twitter, and, in this case, memes.

# Exhibit [C]: Kamil Galeev's Followers Ensure Z Is Adopted By Nationalists



**FIG 3:** Kamil Galeev incites frenzied discussion by declaring an alarming conclusion, which, some would argue, intentionally seeded the idea that "the Z is a new symbol of Russian nationalists", thereby ensuring it would be adopted by Russian nationalists. Ultimately, this serves to signal boost and advertise the active status of these nationalists movements.